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NEWS 03

HUME

Quest to prevent violence

Natalie Savino

GROUP SEEKS TO ENGAGE COMMUNITY TO FIND SOLUTIONS

A NEW mission is under way in Hume to prevent violence against women before it starts. Dianella Community Health has teamed up with social, sporting, and cultural groups throughout Hume to find a collaborative answer to stopping violence before intervention is necessary. It comes just months after Our Watch, together with VicHealth and Australia's

National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, unveiled Change the Story – a national shared framework to prevent violence against women and their children. It looks at the drivers of violence and the things that work to prevent it. Hume has one of the highest rates of family violence in the state. Latest Crime Statistics Agency data

showed there were 3035 family incident reports between October 2014 and September 2015, a 6.2 per cent rise on the previous 12 months (2859), the highest across the north-west metropolitan region. Neighbouring Moreland had 1747 incidents in the same period, while Moonee Valley had 1046. Dianella health promotion officer Erica Gurner said their focus was on

building respect and equality and boosting collaboration around primary prevention. "What if we could identify different sectors in the community and find out what they're doing in this space and get more collaboration (happening)?" she said. "While socio-economic disadvantage is not a driver of violence, it's most likely to occur where there are other

socio-economic difficulties. Hume has one of the highest socio-economic disadvantage (levels) in the state. "There's good reason to try and provide some education, awareness and support." Representatives from various parts of the community will come together at an upcoming stakeholder forum to discuss ways they can help prevent violence.

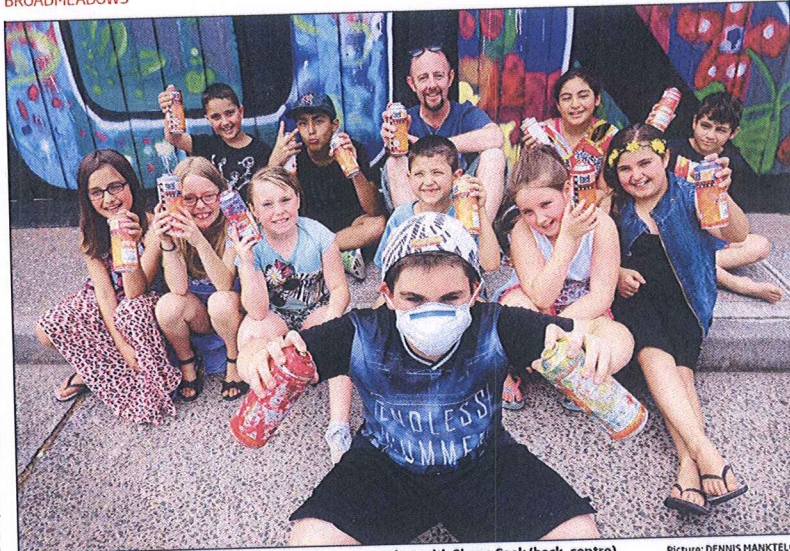
Among them are sporting clubs, namely via the Essendon District Football League, which Ms Gurner said were influential and a good tool through which to reach the community. Others include interfaith networks and school hubs in Hume, which have created welcoming spaces for women to join. "The idea (is to) bring the different sectors together and share the experience of how people are meeting the problem," Ms Gurner said.

DALLAS

Police on lookout for arsonist

POLICE are searching for a Dallas firebug believed to be responsible for at least 25 blazes since December. Almost 10 fires were deliberately sparked last week alone, including six fires lit on January 20 between 10-10.40pm. Three others were responded to on January 18, 19 and 20. Hume CIU detective Acting Sergeant James Marsden said the blazes appeared to be linked and warned the community to be vigilant. "All fires, depending on the weather conditions at the time, have the potential to cause property damage and threaten lives," he said. Each fire has been lit in bush and grassland near Laura Douglas Reserve on King St. Police believe a male riding a pushbike, who was seen in the vicinity of several of the fires, could help with their inquiries. Detective Senior Sergeant Mick Gaul said it was fortunate the fires had been quickly contained. Anyone with information should contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or crimestoppersvic.com.au

BROADMEADOWS



Luke (front) and some friends join in the Crime Stoppers project with Shane Cook (back, centre). Picture: DENNIS MANKTELOW

Young crime stoppers spray it to say it

A NEW art project in Broadmeadows is helping to provide early intervention against crime. The Department of Justice has funded an art project on the Banksia Gardens Hous-

ing Estate, encouraging seven to 14 year olds to paint a Crime Stoppers message. Youth worker Shane Cook said the program would instil responsibility in vulnerable children.

"It's about youth participation, giving them a voice," he said. "It's also about personal ownership – owning where they live. "And because it's visual, it instils a bit of pride and

responsibility. It will get the kids to stop and think about the Crime Stoppers message." Melbourne art group Artful Dodgers helped the kids start painting late last week.

fast lane

Expert on hand

Need help with understanding your energy bill? Have your questions answered by an independent energy expert, who can talk you through it tomorrow from 2-5pm at The Age Library, 1093 Pascoe Vale Rd, Broadmeadows. No bookings required.

Event a success

The Gurukul in Craigieburn celebrated its first Lohri, an Indian Festival, in style on January 12 with more than 100 people attending, including senior citizens (the Chopal), families and children. The colourful event included songs, dances and a traditional Bolian performance.

Kinder program

Hume kindergartens can apply for an expanded trial program of the Polygots languages app. Its success could lead to a similar app encouraging children's interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as part of the Federal Government's Innovation and Science Agenda.

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HUME LEADER, Tuesday, January 26, 2016 03

V1 - HOVEI201HA

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