Organisation: Southern Area Health Service
Name of Project: QTY Bereavement Project

Project Summary:

The project will establish a formalised coordinated Bereavement Service for the Queanbeyan, Tallaganda and Yarrowlumla Shire areas (QTY). The initial stages of the project will involve identifying existing community resources and establishing links between existing services, building on existing volunteer bereavement services and establishing a resource library and serivce directory on bereavement issues. The latter stages of the project will focus on facilitating education sessions on bereavement to members of the community, nursing home staff and health professionals. The Southern Area Health Service will work in partnership with a number of organisations, including the National Association for Loss and Grief, Tobin Brothers Funeral Directors, O'Rourke's Funeral Directors, and the ACT Eden Monaro Cancer Support Group, throughout the life of the project.

Main Message

What we did together

- Worked directly with local communities and organisations. By respecting their knowledge and sharing ours, we have been able to produce resources and services that enhance those already existing. Power and control of those services remains local and hence sustainable;
- Established special collections on *Loss and Bereavement* throughout QTY public libraries;
- Incorporated resource lists of bereavement services within pre-existing regional *Contact* directory of community services with links nationwide;
- Developed education packages for health professionals;
- Developed community resources – grief bookmark and pamphlet;
- Recognise the contribution everyday interactions make in the support of bereaved people.

What has been learned?

- "It's amazing how much you can get done when you don't care who gets the credit" (Richard Hettrick) ;
- Capacity recognition within communities and organisations is a first, essential step before presuming to 'build capacity';
- Creating sustainable services requires imaginative and flexible responses to situations as they evolve;
- Community development processes are time consuming but inherently rewarding when we establish genuine partnerships.

What is useful and available to other projects/communities?

- Resources developed can be used directly by others or modified to suit their own situation;
- Education packages can be accessed via Queanbeyan Community Health, 02-6298 9233;
- Grief bookmarks and pamphlets can be obtained via NALAG, 02-6292 6847;

- Think creatively about how resources in any community can be shared, developed and owned by all.

What have been the benefits of disseminating information about this project?

- Raised community awareness has involved new people in conversations about bereavement; and
- It is hoped some will become directly involved in ongoing steering group activities.

What needs to happen in order to sustain the key achievements of this project?

- The steering group needs to reform, engage new participants to continue current momentum for community activities around bereavement.