

# High on Life

Healthier Lifestyles Project is a community initiative in Toowoomba aimed at educating youths and adults about making healthy life choices.

The project aims to encourage people to make wise life decisions, especially steering clear of licit and illicit drugs.

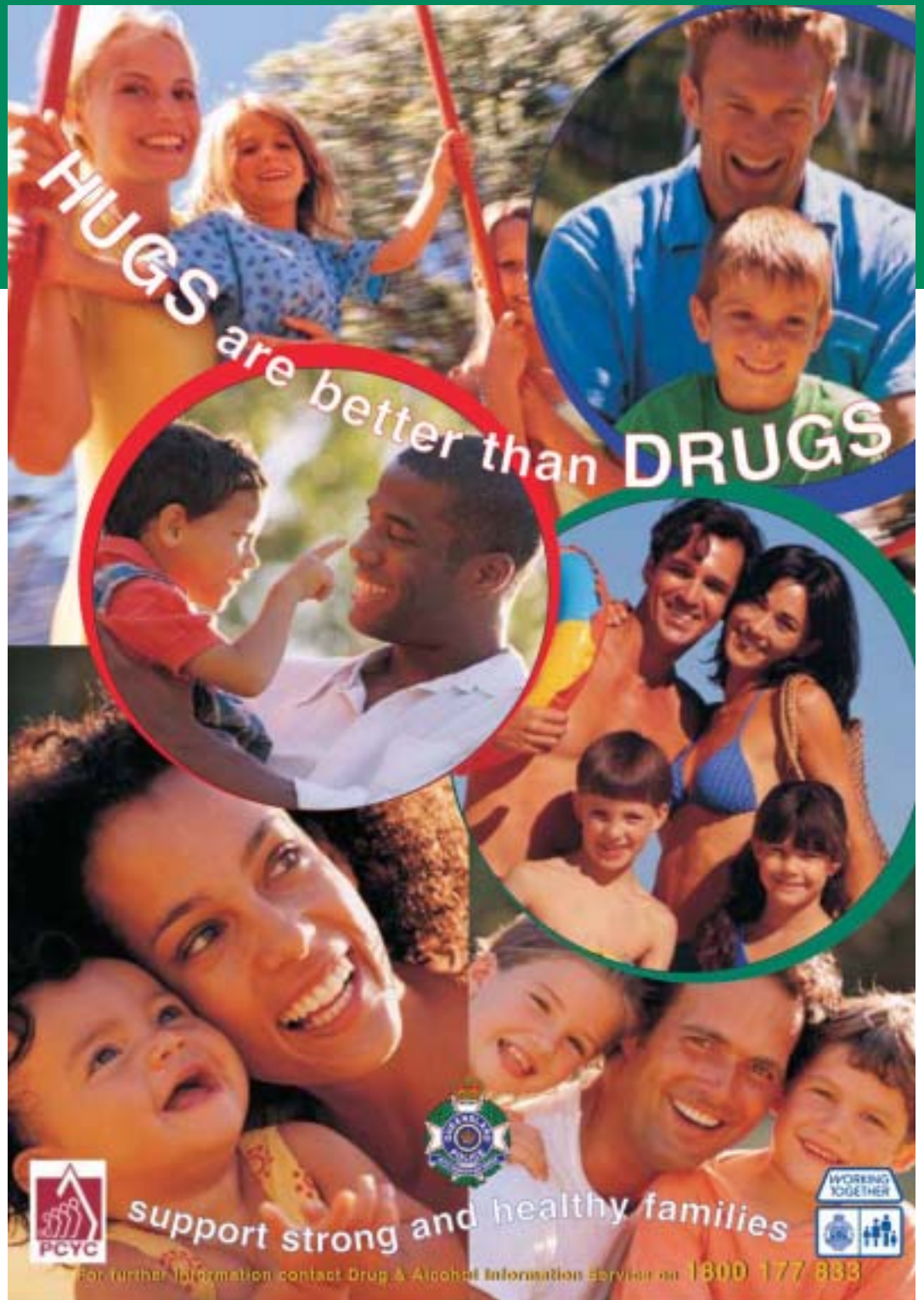
Project Coordinator Sergeant Cam Crisp, Officer in Charge, Toowoomba Police District Crime Prevention Unit said the campaign had been a way of encouraging positive choices by young people and their families.

“We wanted to highlight to people that the use of drugs, both licit and illicit, was an unwise option that impacted on not only themselves, but their family, friends and the community,” he said.

“It is our aim to show them that there are other choices out there besides drugs, that there are safer options for having fun and enjoying their lives.

“Sometimes they do not realise just how serious the consequences of their actions could be to their health and future careers,” Sergeant Crisp said.

Stage one of the project involved the Toowoomba District Crime Prevention Unit, Toowoomba Crime Prevention Partnership Inc., the QPS Media and Public Affairs Branch, the QPS Graphic Design Services, the Queensland



One of three posters designed to encourage young people to make healthy life choices by not getting involved in drugs.

Police-Citizens Youth and Welfare Association and Queensland Health working together to produce three stickers and posters with the slogans: *Live Life; Keep them high on life and Hugs are better than Drugs.*

The posters and stickers were distributed within the Toowoomba Police District and also to District

Crime Prevention Coordinators within Southern Police Region.

“The posters showed pictures of young people participating in healthy activities, such as sports, music and options that do not involve breaking the law,” Sergeant Crisp said.

“Stage two involved the

development of a community education presentation with representatives from the QPS and Queensland Health delivering the talks to various schools and community groups.

“Everyone from senior citizens who were concerned about their grandchildren, to members of the teaching fraternity, children and

community groups were targeted.

"We have spoken at numerous schools, both public and private, and talk to them about options they have in their lives.

"It would be fair to say that kids don't truly realise the implication of using drugs, particularly cannabis.

"At presentations to school children and Medical Practitioners on the Darling Downs, we were lucky to have a physiologist present.

"You could feel the mindset change among the audience when the links of cannabis use to schizophrenia and depression were explained from a medical perspective.

"The success of the project was highlighted when I was invited as a member of the Toowoomba Safe Community Task Force to present at the World Health Organisation Conference in Hong Kong in 2003 and also the Australian Institute of Criminology Conference in Toowoomba.

"These were amazing opportunities because we did not realise just how well received the program had been and how such organisations held it in high regard," Sergeant Crisp said.

"Stage three of the project involved developing three radio and four television community service announcements, which were launched in 2002 prior to 'Schoolies'.

"The Toowoomba community has worked in unison to bring these concepts to a reality with an advertising consultant from River FM writing and producing the commercials, a production team from WIN Television making the commercials, and the University of Southern Queensland Performing Arts providing the actors.

"Other key players in the community that freely gave their

time and services, were the Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Col Wilkie Body Works, Symonds Towing and Tusconny on Tor.

"Without their help, this program would not be where it is today. As evidenced from the response we have had, Toowoomba is a tremendous city with an outstanding community conscience.

"Everyone here is dedicated to improving the atmosphere and safety of the town, as well as providing the young people some positive development. It has also meant the young people of Toowoomba have a say in their future, not only for themselves but for the community," Sergeant Crisp said.

"Self esteem is an essential character trait which can ultimately lead to addictive tendencies in youth.

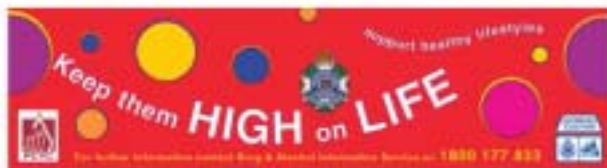
"The project built up self esteem within our youth, providing them with answers to a number of questions.

"As with all crime prevention initiatives involving social change, we will see in the upcoming years if the advice offered has made an impact on the future of our youth.

"With the continued support of local government, State and Federal members and local business, crime prevention will continue to strive within the community," Sergeant Crisp said.

By Karen Crook, Media and Public Affairs Branch.

Encouraging young people to get involved in healthy activities, like sports and music, was the motivation behind the design of the posters for the Healthy Lifestyles Project.



Stickers devised for the program promote healthy living.

