

Media Release

Embargoed until Midnight Saturday March 1, 2003

Fishing for health

It's official – fishing is not just fun, it's also good for your health. So say the organisers of the Charleville District Health Service Fishing Club, who will present a paper on the project at the 7th National Rural Health Conference, held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart from 1-4 March, 2003.

The Queensland project aims to help socially isolated people to participate in group activities, by providing a small group setting that is culturally appropriate.

“Current mainstream activities only reach those who are socially competent and self-motivated,” say the organisers of the project, Jill Carroll and Carmel Baker.

The health care workers at Charleville pursued their belief that there were still opportunities for those people who felt they did not fit in, and so did not participate in social activities. Giving these people a say in what they wanted provided them with an opportunity to interact in a social setting of their choice.

“Fishing was the perfect choice,” says Jill Carroll. “It was something they had been involved in during the days when they used to be included in society; something they had in common.”

The Club has been successful in creating healthy living practices by breaking the vicious cycle of social isolation and exclusion, described by the Department of Health as the ‘breeding ground for poor health.’ The participants’ enthusiasm for the activity is evident with their suggestion to get to the fishing hole before daybreak when the fishing was at its best.

By providing an opportunity for social interaction, and a focus outside their homes, the fishing trips have given the participants a more positive outlook on life, resulting in less visits to the doctor and less hospital admissions.

Other services in the Charleville community have become interested in the Fishing Club. It is hoped that its success in improving the health of those people who are socially excluded will encourage existing clubs to take up the challenge and incorporate such activities into their own programs.

Jill Carroll and Carmel Barker will present their findings to the Conference delegates at 11:15am on Sunday March 2 in the Ballroom South meeting room.

-ends-

Media Contact: Marilyn Chalkley 0418 624 304 ah and during conference. Office (02) 6260 6500

7th National Rural Health Conference, 1 – 4 March 2003, Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart
National Rural Health Alliance, Deakin, Canberra ph: 02 6285 4660 www.ruralhealth.org.au