

Kids kept out of strife

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"The kids are also more communicative and less distrustful of police which is extremely important if they are dealing with issues of family dysfunction or violence at home," he said.

But the program is not just helping young people.

Sgt Bird said the communities had come on board, some people being employed and mentored to run activities while others volunteered their time.

"They had no activities up there before we moved in. PCYC has given them something to do."

While Wujal Wujal has a community centre as a base for the program, Sgt Bird said Hope Vale's hall was in urgent need of repairs and only outdoor activities could be held at present.

It was hoped an upgrade could be funded by September, he said.

The program will be expanded into Lockhart River and Kowayama in June, and into other communities as funds become available.

Family and Community Services Department spokeswoman Bev Lauder said the aim was to help young people develop a sense of their worth by channeling their energies and talents.

4 The Cairns Post, Monday, April 25, 2005

Crime beaters

Activities program offers bored kids way out of trouble

YOUTH crime in the remote Aboriginal communities of Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal has plummeted by nearly 70 per cent in the past year, thanks to a program that keeps the kids busy.

The good news was released by Cairns police Senior Sergeant

Margo Zlotkowski
Indigenous reporter

David Bird to highlight the success of "My Way", a new sports and activities program introduced in the two Cape York Peninsula communities in June last year.

The popular program, which for the first time is offering about

70 bored youngsters in each community daily after-school activities such as basketball, hockey, football, discos, movie nights, arts and craft sessions, computer games and supervised homework sessions, was developed by the Police Citizens Youth Club.

It was seen as a positive way to support the new Cape York

community alcohol restrictions. The first stage was funded with a federal grant of \$132,770.

My Way's Cairns-based project manager Sen-Sgt Bird said there had been a noticeable drop in petty crime, night-time wandering and mischief-making since the program began.

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