

**\*\* MEDIA RELEASE (21 July, 2008) \*\***

## **Stylin' UP Regional Comes to Hope Vale**

Stylin' UP Regional, a program that uses arts and culture as a tool to work with young people in Indigenous communities, has recently begun work in Hope Vale.

From the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> July, the Stylin' UP Regional team visited the Hope Vale community to conduct their first series of creative arts workshops.

More than 30 young people participated in dance, music production, song writing, MCing and lyric writing at the Hope Vale PCYC.

The workshop participants then recorded their own song, which is currently receiving airplay on Hope Vale Radio 107.7 FM.

"The young people who took part in the workshops were so keen and open to the process of creating song and dance," observed the program's coordinator, Steph Walton.

Steph also highlighted that the program is entirely community driven.

"We are working in Hope Vale at the request of the previous mayor and community leaders.

The reception we've had has been amazing and we are really enthusiastic to continue working with the community to shape the workshops around both young people's interests and community business."

"It was inspiring and, together with the level of support from the whole community, it's really exciting for us to help make this happen."

Guided by the message - Pride in self, Pride in community, Pride in culture – Stylin' UP Regional also provides a forum for young people to tell stories, share yarns with elders and a space in which young people experience elders as role models.

Some of the foundational messages include health, wellness and well being, and living drug and alcohol free.

The Stylin' UP Regional program has emerged from the Stylin' UP Festival, an annual event coordinated by the Inala Elders and Brisbane City Council.

Established in 2001, the festival is now Australia's largest Indigenous event, with an estimated attendance of 15,000 people in 2007.

Stylin' UP Regional is coordinated by SpeakOut, an innovative not-for-profit organisation that equips young people to overcome disadvantage and change their world through creativity and enterprise.

SpeakOut's approach to working with Indigenous communities and young people who participate in the workshops is based on a five step process, that begins with direct invitation into the community and putting together an advisory group of community leaders and people who work with young people already.

“Establishing a Community Crew or advisory group is an essential step in adopting a whole-of-community approach to tailoring the program to meet particular community needs,” explains Steph.

“On this trip we met for the first time with the newly formed Hope Vale Community Crew and we hope this group will continue to grow and help shape how young people participate in the Stylin’UP Regional program.”

The remaining steps in SpeakOut’s approach include conducting skills development workshops in a wide range of arts practices, including dance, music production, singing, circus, visual arts and drama.

Young people then have the opportunity to travel to Brisbane for the annual Stylin’UP Festival as well as participating in local and regional showcases and events.

Constant evaluation and review of the program, with young people involved and with the wider community completes the process and informs the program’s future development.

With appropriate consultation and community engagement Stylin’ UP Regional hopes to achieve similar outcomes in Hope Vale that have been facilitated and experienced in other communities including Woorabinda, Cherbourg and Logan.

The Stylin’UP Regional team will next be in Hope Vale from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> August and will be conducting workshops at the Hope Vale PCYC and potentially at schools in the area. For more information or to get involved, contact Steph on 07 3229 8055 or at [steph@speakout.com.au](mailto:steph@speakout.com.au).

People can also talk to Tisha at Hope Vale Aboriginal Council on 4083 8000.

The work of Stylin’ UP Regional in Hope Vale is funded by Arts Queensland through the Backing Indigenous Arts initiative.

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