

# 2005 Rural Victorian Alcohol & Drug Conference

Thursday 11 & Friday 12 August, 2005 Warrnambool Victoria

E: [enquiries@wadac.wrad.org.au](mailto:enquiries@wadac.wrad.org.au)

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## Paul Weight

*Manager*

*BAYSA Youth Services*

*Geelong*



Paul Weight's origins into the Youth Sector commenced in 1993 post University and overseas travel as a generalist Youth Worker at Grampians Community Health Centre in regional Western Victoria.

Paul successfully completed a Degree in Graphic Design and has also attained a Graduate Diploma in Education, Diploma of Management and Diploma in Alcohol and Other Drugs along with extensive workplace training.

A constant theme whilst working in the Youth and Alcohol and Drug sectors has been actively involving young people in service and policy development and collaboration. Paul established the first regional Youth Group in the Grampians Region called the "Yawning Cows" and a regional after schools program for young people living in the Mornington Peninsula Shire as Youth Activities Services Coordinator.

Paul is on numerous Committees, Working Parties, and Reference Groups and presented at many forums, conferences and seminars focusing on young people and collaboration.

From his origins working in regional and rural settings Paul secured a senior position with the Mornington Peninsula Shire as the Coordinator of Youth Activity Service while his partner completed her studies at Monash University. Upon the completion of studies and exposure to competitive tendering a decision was made to move to the Surf Coast and commence work within the welfare sector in Geelong. Paul was appointed the Coordinator of School Support Programs at BAYSA Youth Services in 1997 responsible for all school based early intervention programs.

In the year 2000 Paul secured a position with the Barwon South West Youth Alliance as a Community Development Worker and later appointed as a Senior Project Officer. The Alliance was originally formed between three drug and alcohol services BAYSA Youth Services, Youth Substance Abuse Services, Barwon Health and has expanded to six in the spirit of collaboration to now include Clockwork Young People's Health Service, Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre and Glenelg Southern Grampians Drug Treatment Services.

Paul has extensive professional experience working in the Youth Services sector in both rural and metropolitan settings over a period of 15 years. Youth Service positions held over this 15 year period include Youth Worker, Health Educator, School Based early Intervention Programs Coordinator, Youth Activities Services Coordinator, Accommodation Coordinator, Youth Day Program Coordinator,

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Senior Project Officer and now Manager of BAYSA Drug Prevention and Treatment Programs.

Paul has recently been appointed the Manager of BAYSA Drug Prevention and Treatment Programs that includes community development, day program and team of youth outreach workers, regional AOD development operating in the Barwon South West Region.

Paul's areas of professional experience are in case management, community development, supervision, strategic planning, policy development and collaboration focused on enhancing and enriching the health and wellbeing of communities in the Barwon South West. Paul is committed to social justice, supporting young people from marginalized backgrounds and community building.

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## WITHIN REACH PRESENTATION: An Overview of BAYSA's 2005 Arts Project

### WORKSHOP

*Within Reach: The Youth Access Program*

Presented by Paul Weight, Josie Taylor & Tony Harrison

BAYSA Youth Services is a dynamic community based organisation that provides a broad range of youth specific services to the young people and their families living in the Barwon South West Region. BAYSA has been developing and delivering innovative programs and services for marginalised young people for over 2 decades and is a key stakeholder in service development in child protection, juvenile justice, youth health, accommodation and drug and alcohol.

The ***Within Reach*** presentation will actively demonstrate one of the regions most adventurous and dynamic programs currently in operation across the South West of Victoria. The team will provide an insight into the development, progress and future of the Youth Access Program. The program is an innovative model of youth outreach that provides a rich contrast to urban models as its origins are within rural and regional settings.

In 2003 the community development worker from BAYSA developed a submission to the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AERF) for a team of Youth Outreach Workers to operate in the Barwon South West Region in consultation with the Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre and the Barwon South West Youth Alliance.

The submission was successful and the new Youth Access Program commenced in September 2004 with two youth outreach workers operating from WRAD in Warrnambool and the Coordinator operating from BAYSA Youth Services in Geelong.

The Youth Access Program currently operating across the Barwon South West Region of Victoria has proven to be extremely successful resulting from the professional practice of our three youth outreach workers and partnerships with drug treatment services in Geelong, Warrnambool, Colac, Portland and Camperdown.

A recent progress report for the AERF demonstrates the effectiveness of this regional program that only commenced in September 2004 and has already engaged with up to **315** young people resulting in **\*140** episodes of care. (\*ADIS data 2005)

The report also demonstrates facilitated access of young people into drug treatment services through regional outreach including **18** admissions into the YSAS youth

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residential withdrawal unit in Geelong and others providing a significant contrast to the 2 young people referred from the South West Region into youth residential withdrawal in 2001-2002.

BAYSA DPTP's is engaging Turning Point to externally evaluate the outreach team and develop a new model to ensure the effectiveness is evident and regional youth outreach model developed, whilst seeking ongoing funding from State and Federal Governments and other sources.

The primary purpose of the **Regional Youth Access Program** is the professional provision of coordinated pathways and supported referrals of young people into regional drug and alcohol treatment services and day programs.

This innovative program has significantly reduced the regions' high rates of relapse by young people with alcohol and other substance use issues, which leave either home based or residential withdrawal treatment services whilst increasing access into regional DTS services. The regional day program at BAYSA has been pivotal in achieving positive outcomes for young people linked with DTS in both Geelong and South West Region.

This structured youth specific outreach program facilitates access for young people into drug treatment services, drug and alcohol counselling, supported accommodation, therapeutic and personal skill development programs for young people aged 16 – 21 years with substance use issues.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the partnerships of this program namely Glenelg Southern Grampians DTS, Colac Area Health, Western Region Alcohol & Drug Centre, YSAS Geelong and the Barwon South West Youth Alliance, as I am extremely confident the **Youth Access Program** will be effective and long lasting.

For further information contact the Manager of BAYSA DPTP – Paul Weight on 52214466 or via email [pweight@baysa.org.au](mailto:pweight@baysa.org.au)