

2015 PLAY YOUR PART AWARDS FOR INSPIRING PREVENTION INITIATIVES NEW SOUTH WALES

To: South Coast Child Wellbeing Network

For: Ongoing commitment to promote the wellbeing and safety of children in the Illawarra region

The South Coast Child Wellbeing Network was formed under the ethos that *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business*. The network joined together to promote the wellbeing and safety of children and young people as a community responsibility in an area with a significant number of vulnerable families.

The collaborators Family Services Illawarra, Barnardos, CareSouth, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, local government, Good Start, Illawarra AMS, TAFE, NSW Department of Education & Communities: Home and Family and Community Services work together in an equal partnership to host the annual Family Fun and Professional Development Days.

The events aim to raise awareness of the risks associated with poor outcomes for children within the Illawarra Shoalhaven and highlight strategies to improve those outcomes.

Around 50 families attend the Family Fun Day each year. The event is a soft entry opportunity, with all families in the area, who have children from zero to five years invited to participate.

The event features low-cost / no cost interactive play activities for children from play dough to painting, in a supported and fun environment led by college and TAFE students. The families are also given a resource bag so they can replicate the play activities and prepare healthy meals at home.

Parents can engage with and become aware of the services available locally including aboriginal, multicultural and disability services at the Family Fun Day, which increases the likelihood of them contacting these services if they are ever in need of support.

The Professional Development Days, are attended by up to 120 people who work with children and families, to showcase local community projects alongside national speakers, such as Associate Professor Darryl Maybery and the founder of Cara House, Centre for Resilience and Recovery, Mary Jo McVeigh, to provide training on best practice and

practical skill development.

These low-cost days aim to engage professionals from childcare, supported playgroups and child protection to bring them together with professionals from health, education and community organisations in order to network and learn together.

The South Coast Child Wellbeing Network is an inspiring example of community partners coming together to play their part to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and their families.