



## Valuable lessons learned

A LARGE number of Sunraysia-based secondary school students have benefited from a hands-on leadership workshop held in the region last week, with close to 100 students taking part in the 2011 Impact Student Leadership Conference.

An independent not-for-profit organisation that exists to develop leadership skills amongst young people, in six years the ISLC has grown from 300 attendees to more than 15,000 secondary and primary student across the country.

An interactive, hands-on and practical event, the day aims to prepare participants for their roles and responsibilities as student leaders, while also equipping them with the right tools to achieve those goals.

The overall goal is to see students leave the conference with a solid understanding of leadership, while also passing on ideas on how they can make an impact as a school leader.

One of the many local schools to take part included Red Cliffs Secondary College, with staff member, Amanda Black, saying the conference had proved a major hit amongst participants.

"It was great to have such an amazing conference held in our local area," she said.

"Usually we have to travel to either Adelaide or Melbourne to participate in this type of event, which makes it even more worthwhile for our students.

"It meant we were able to include more students in the conference than we normally would have otherwise.

"We sent a group of seven students - all members of our Student Representative Council - to the event, with each of them getting a real kick out of the program."

Amanda said emphasis had been placed on providing students with ideas on how they can use

their position as school leaders to benefit the wider school community.

"It was a really motivating experience for all those involved," Amanda said. "The kids have already taking some of the advice on board to run a successful social."

Other schools to take part in the program included Chaffey Secondary College, Irymple Secondary College, Merbein P-10 College, Mildura Senior College and Trinity Lutheran College.

Amanda said Red Cliffs was already looking at taking part in the program again next year.

"All of our students really enjoyed the program, and took a lot out of it," she said. "It's certainly something we're looking at continually being a part of."

More information about Impact Leadership program is available by visiting [www.impactleadership.org.au](http://www.impactleadership.org.au).

## Research produces new outlook on breast cancer management

A STUDY focused on breast cancer has provided new hope for sufferers across Australia, with an international group comprising of the Griffith University, the Specialised Breast Unit in Cremona, Italy, and the Peter McCallum Institute in Melbourne producing the 'International Expert Consensus on primary systemic therapy in the management of early breast cancer' paper.

The study proposes that the disease should be managed by pre-surgical therapies combined with keyhole surgery, rather than the now traditional combination of surgery and/or chemotherapy.

The paper suggests that this new method of breast cancer management could help improve the quality of life of patients.

Dr Derek Kennedy - research leader for cancer biology at Griffith's Eskitis Institute for Cell and Molecular Therapies, and member of the study's consensus committee - said the research was a big step forward.

"Up until now we have had a situation where patients could potentially have a delay of up to eight weeks between presentation of a suspicious lump in the breast, diagnosis and subsequent treatment," he said.

"This can often result in requiring aggressive chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy to combat the disease.

"From this new research, we now know if the patient can be convinced to leave the tumour in place during primary pre-surgical therapy, the outcomes can be better.

"Our consensus is that an immediate biopsy on the day of presentation, combined with targeted cancer therapies and further regular biopsies, can improve chances for a complete clearance of the tumour."

Dr Kennedy said this new procedure could help patients exploit a window of opportunity to act quickly once diagnosed with breast cancer.

"The new strategy allows us to administer an approved, tar-



geted therapy on day one, then in four weeks assess the treatment with a second biopsy, with the aim to assess the progress of the therapy almost immediately, not months or years later.

"In this way we can rapidly review treatment, improve outcomes and patient confidence, and simultaneously supply a new battery of data that will inform the next generation of therapies."

Dr Kennedy said until now, patients had often been waiting for appointments with a range of health professionals.

"An advantage of addressing breast cancer like this is that it provides a co-ordinated approach in which health professionals can treat and improve breast cancer therapy, while also paving the way for improved anti-breast cancer therapy development," he said.



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Good for U and your community

## Mildura postnatal depression summit

MILDURA will host the second biennial Sunraysia Postnatal Depression Conference next week.

The venue for the two-day event, next Thursday and Friday, will be the Mildura Working Man's Club between 8.30am and 3pm daily.

Coinciding with national PND Awareness Week (November 13 to 19), Sunraysia's conference will aim to increase both community and health care practitioner awareness of PND, and how best to help struggling families.

Recent statistics have shown that more than 15 percent of Australian mothers - and 10 percent of fathers - will suffer post and/or antenatal depression and anxiety.

With the annual birthrate currently sitting at 1000 in the Mildura Rural City Council area alone, that equates to 150 women, and 100 men who are likely to be affected each year by PND.

Mildura psychologist, Jodie Marshall, ABOVE, said the conference would be typical of similar events held in metropolitan areas.

"It's unusual to have a postnatal depression conference held outside of the major cities, and to have an event such as this here is thanks to Sunraysia's pro-active community," she said.

"This year's conference will focus on emotional health in pregnancy and parenthood, with some great speakers to be in attendance.

"It also provides us with a good way to share with others the innovative things we are doing in this region."

Participating organisations and speakers at the conference will include the St John of God Raphael Centres, the Post and Ante Natal Depression Association (PANDA), the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and Drs Jo Pollock and Kimberley Sleeman to name just a few.

More information, or to register for the event, is available by contacting Jodie Marshall on 5018 7900.



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