The Entertainment Group Forum Project

Youth and the Law Project
Campbelltown
New South Wales

The entertainment group set out to improve entertainment for the youth in the Macarthur area. The aim was to find out why the Macarthur area needed new and improved entertainment, to find out exactly what the youth wanted and set up an appropriate entertainment venue involving the council, local business, and the youth, in setting up and running the entertainment venue.

A survey of the needs of Macarthur youth was conducted. This survey showed that the majority of youths wished for:
- evening entertainment;
- an accessible entertainment venue;
- affordable costs of entrance fee and drinks and food; and
- sufficient supervision so that parents would not worry about their children and that the youths' fun would not be overly interfered with.

When the need was ascertained, the information gathered was presented at a public meeting to which the following groups had been invited: local nightclub and pub owners; police; community youth organisations; parents and citizen associations; school principals; contact teachers; and young people involved in project support groups.

At the meeting a detailed plan of the nightclub sought (based on 'Shockwave' the under 18's night club in Newcastle) was shown. It included:
- a floor plan;
- a list of all features and facilities and their benefits; and
- the benefits of the under 18's nightclub to the community.

Resulting from the meeting contacts were developed in the community, and the group was able to demonstrate its opinions, research and organisation. Valuable information was received from people in different fields and the group gained an awareness of future possibilities.

After the Public Meeting an attempt was made to establish a community support group, but people were unable to commit themselves.

The group then visited local real estate agents to find out about vacant factories or buildings. Many problems occurred:
- real estate agents reacted negatively to the group because it was more interested in finding out about buildings rather than buying or renting;
• there was a lack of suitable vacant buildings or factories available in the Macarthur area; and
• the suitable buildings were costly.

The Campbelltown Rollerena Fitness Centre had been trying unsuccessfully to run a disco at their fitness centre. The Manager contacted the group's Project Officer, and the Rollerena management was impressed with the work of the group and the Rollerena Advisory Committee was formed to help run a nightclub for under 18's.

The committee meets on a regular basis at the Rollerena office in Campbelltown. Issues discussed included:
• a name change from 'Club Teen Disco' to 'C.T.'s under 18's Nite Club';
• new ideas relating to non-alcoholic cocktails;
• organising bands; and
• designing promotional materials.

Initially, about fifty people were attending 'Club Teen Disco' but with word-of-mouth advertising, numbers grew to 120 people, an almost 200 per cent improvement within weeks of the advisory committee's involvement with the Rollerena. New members joined the group who were interested in becoming involved in the running of C.T.'s.

Members of the group went regularly to the C.T.'s and took notes on how to improve the nightclub. A suggestion box was made available for other people. Dress regulations were set, similar to those of licensed nightclubs. Bands make regular appearances—approximately once a month.

The success of this project can be measured by the regular attendance of around 700 youths.