

# RAP NEWSLETTER



Volume 7

March 2010

## Resilience in the Police

*Special points of interest:*

- **Promoting resilience in Police recruits**
- **RAP in South Africa**
- **Adapting RAP-A**

Promoting Resilient Officers (PRO) is a new program that is currently being developed as an extension of the Resourceful Adolescent Program (RAP) and Promoting Adult Resilience (PAR) programs. Queensland University of Technology (QUT), the Queensland Police Service (QPS), and Griffith University were awarded a substantial grant from the Australian Research Council (ARC), to develop a program that supports resilience in employees working in high stress occupations. New recruit police officers have been chosen given their roles involve considerable administrative and operational stress. It is expected that the resilience program will help prepare the officers to think resiliently when faced with personal or professional crises.

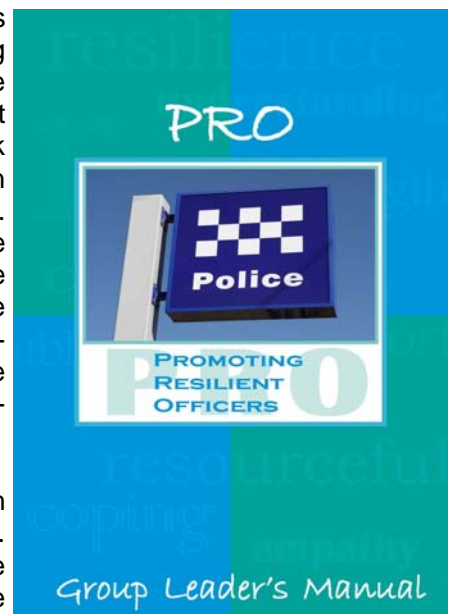
The PRO program involves 7 sessions delivered over 7 weeks. The officers participate in groups facilitated by psychologists from within the QPS. Email boosters are sent to the officers weekly, between the face-to-face sessions. Online boosters are currently being developed to be delivered to the officers in their first year on the road as constables. This is an important aspect of the program given the many stressors police officers face in their first few years, such as being faced with violent or potentially violent situations, learning to work effectively with members of the community who have complex needs and difficult behaviours, adjusting to shift-work, extensive paperwork, and potential interpersonal conflicts in the workplace.

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Promoting positive mental health in the workplace is a national research priority in Australia. Mental health problems such as depression and stress can have devastating social and productivity costs, similar to those due to physical health conditions such as heart disease. The Australian Government and peak health bodies strongly endorse prevention strategies as a way to address this burden. Effective workplace strategies for positive mental health promotion will not only reduce burdens on the health care system and the community, but they will also increase workplace productivity and the quality of life experienced by both employees and their families.

The effectiveness of the PRO program with new recruits is currently being evaluated. Feedback so far suggests that the officers have enjoyed and engaged in the program. More detailed results from the questionnaires completed by the recruits will be presented as they become available. It is hoped that this innovative resilience building intervention will have positive impacts on psychological well-being, mental health symptoms, and organisational functioning.



# RAP in South Africa

Who taught us about self-esteem and resilience?

*RAP in South Africa*

By Janine Shamos

When I met Ian and heard about the RAP Program I was so excited. I have been working with youth and in teen suicide prevention and bullying for over 10 years and with a teen suicide rate of 9.5% of all teen deaths, I thought this program was quite literally a life-saver.



South Africa is quite different in terms of the education system and schools are reluctant, to have outsiders come into the school for lessons or courses during school time. One school though puts the needs of their children first and recognized how important this program was – particularly for their school.

Forest Town School in Johannesburg caters for 350 children between the ages of 3 and 18 with various special needs, many of which come from disadvantaged, poverty stricken communities. Not only do they provide social welfare and rehabilitation support, but also education, skills training, and job creation programs for children and youth with disabilities who otherwise would not be in any form of education. Originally started as a school for children with cerebral palsy, the school has evolved into an organization that provides both mainstream and modified education, speech-, occupational and physiotherapy, to children with a wide spectrum of disabilities.

I consider myself incredibly lucky to have been given the opportunity to work with 6 classes of Forest Town kids – building their coping skills, communication and problem solving skills, teaching them confidence and seeing them blossom and their self-esteem grow has been incredible. I adapted the program slightly so there was more creative and activity work against written as many of the kids are unable to write due to spasticity. The highlight of course is their end of year concert – tissues all round, and I'm even starting to learn some sign language.

One of the groups I worked with were the Grade 7's who this year started in mainstream High Schools. They were terrified of moving out of the safe, nurturing and non-judgmental environment of Forest Town into a new and possible hostile one. We worked on facing their fears, boosting their positive view of themselves, how to cope if certain situations arose – and I am still in contact with many of them and they are loving their Grade 8 High School lives.



I have seen so many children who at the start of our sessions broke my heart – kids who were 'beaten' and degraded and felt they were worthless; kids who couldn't communicate with parents and peers; kids who were locked in a cycle of negative thoughts and perception, who left as happy, smiling, confident children, and who broke my heart for all the right reasons!

I am very excited that Judy Henry from Cape Town is onboard as another RAP facilitator– it's great to have another South African to bounce ideas off and chat about obstacles and opportunities with. Thank you to Ian and Astrid, without whom South Africa's children wouldn't have this opportunity.

See page 3 for letters from participants.

Dear Janine:  
 Thank you 4 letting  
 me know that there is more  
 a life than just breathing  
 air. thank you!  
 from: Bheka Nd  
 Knowledge

Dear Janine Thank you for being so  
 kind 2 us even when we were badly  
 behaved and a very Big thank  
 for teaching us hw to  
 make us better people and  
 teaching us hw to have self  
 confidence.  
 Mind regard's Monky

Dear Janine:  
 Thank you  
 for teaching  
 me to respect  
 myself love Kaiteso

Dear Janine  
 thanks for  
 teaching us  
 more about  
 our selfs and  
 I will realy  
 miss you xxx  
 Keaton 5

Dear Janine  
 I thank you for  
 building my self  
 confidence. I have  
 learnt how to deal  
 wit my problems  
 thanx to you.

Dear Janine  
 Thank you for the fun we had.  
 Love  
 Amine

Oh...  
 Thank for  
 telling me  
 how to deal  
 with my  
 problems  
 Love  
 Zanele

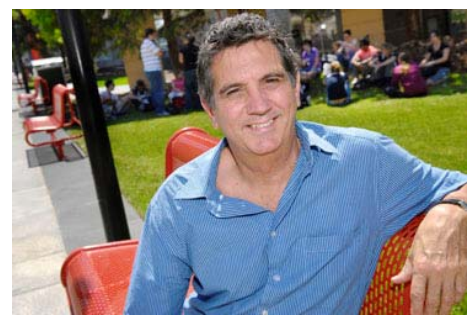
from yours sansial  
 regards and love  
 Tshepang Malingo  
 chat

Dear Janine  
 I would like  
 to thank you  
 for teaching  
 me to respect  
 my self and  
 others  
 love Kaiteso

Dear Janine  
 I would like to  
 thank you for teaching us how  
 to be a  
 better people and building our  
 self confidence even though we were  
 hard

# Welcome!

We would like to take the opportunity to welcome **Kevin Glasheen** to the RAP training team.



Kevin ran RAP for many years at his school on the Gold Coast and has consented to share his experience in his capacity as a RAP Trainer.

Although Kevin has been training for us since last year, we would like to formally welcome him to the RAP Training team. Welcome Kevin

# RAP-A Indigenous Supplement

In our supplement we said we would bring you new ideas as they surfaced, so I would like to share some details of Tracy Robinson's project in Western NSW (a description of how this project was set up can be found in our May 05 newsletter).

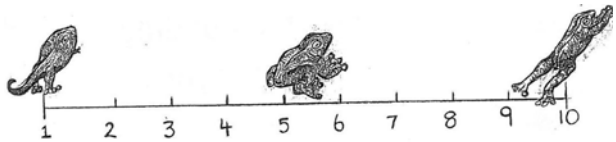
Tracy, together with a steering committee consisting of teachers, education assistants, aboriginal workers, health workers, TAFE teachers and community members, used the guidelines presented in the supplement to adapt the program for their community.

As the river is an important icon in the area, the group decided to use this as the metaphor on which to base the program. Instead of building a house of bricks, participants designed a "healthy river" each session they added to the river, with lily pads and fish.



The circles in the RAP model were represented with turtles, who carry their resilient houses with them on their backs. the shell can get knocked or cracked, but a strong shell can heal the crack.

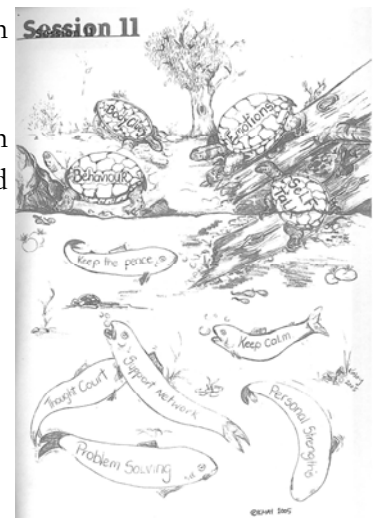
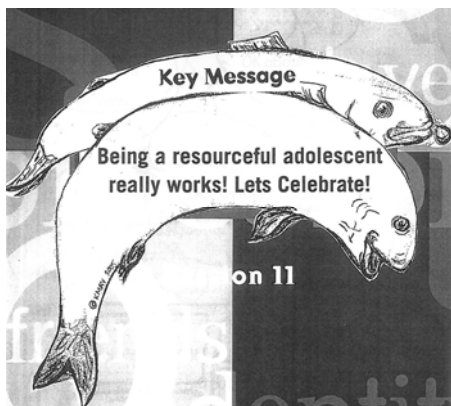
The selfenometer has a tadpole at 1, a frog at 5 and a happy jumping frog at 10!



Besides changing the metaphor, the major change was to broaden activities around self esteem to include country.

One other change was to the language challenging negative self-talk; e.g. "where is the evidence?"; "what would you tell a friend?"; "are you being too hard on yourself?"

In summary, all participants, both Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal children responded very well to the program and revised metaphor.



**Congratulations to all those who put it together and thank you for sharing it with us.**

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**We're on the Web!**  
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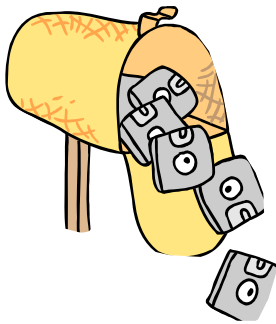
**NEWSLETTER COMPILED BY  
ASTRID WURFL**

## RAP OFFICE TEAM

<b>Ian Shochet</b>	Director
<b>Astrid Wurfl</b>	National Coordinator of Training & Program Development
<b>Kyran Hynes</b>	Admin Support

## RAP TRAINERS

NSW	QLD
Lorraine Cushing	Kevin Glasheen
Ros Montague	Astrid Wurfl
Tracy Robinson	
WA	TAS
Marcelle Cannon	Sharon Cowles
Maree Dawes	Sharon Rush
Tanya Graham	INTERNATIONAL
Trish Travers	Anne Lazarus
Belinda Wainwright	Emilie Rivet



## We Want to Hear From You!!!

Do you have any tips for implementing RAP?

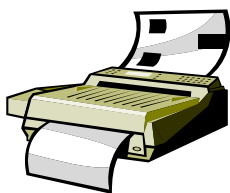
How did you get your school staff interested in RAP?

We want your input for the next newsletter.

What changes have you made to RAP to suit your population group?

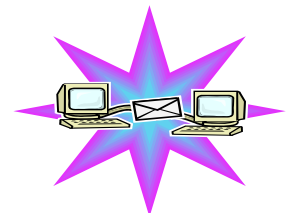
What success have you had in "whole school" implementation?

Email or fax your stories and questions.



What ideas have you got on recruiting parents for RAP-P?

What questions do you have regarding RAP?



**Next edition due  
December 2010.**