

# ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

## 2017 NSW RURAL HEALTH AND RESEARCH CONGRESS

27 – 29 SEPTEMBER 2017, WAGGA WAGGA

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**Title:** 'Respect–Ed': preventing relationship violence.

**Author/s:** Danielle Allen – Author and presenter

Social Worker, Cowra Community Health, Cowra NSW Australia

**Background:** Cowra, a rural township, is listed in the top twenty towns in NSW for high rates of Domestic violence. Schools and service providers observed young people becoming in entrenched unhealthy relationships at an early age. Community development approaches are needed to decrease Cowra's future relationship violence statistics and positively influence the social and cultural determinates of health. In line with best practice recommendations for relationship violence prevention, the aim of Respect –Ed was to increase healthy relationships education in local schools to empower young people to have healthier relationship in future.

**Approach:** The Health team collaborated with local schools and services to run an education campaign, involving 4 primary and 2 secondary schools. The project included creative, visual and performing arts based education activities over 2 terms culminating in the 'Respect Ed' event which showcased student learning. Resources were developed for the community. Health was able to lead the project with legitimate expertise and linked it to other domestic violence campaigns like White Ribbon Day and Our Watch. By involving many different services, all working beyond their 'siloes' boundaries meant the local community took ownership of this project. Media coverage meant our health promotion message was spread far and wide, involving the wider community.

**Outcomes:** Students from six rural school attended the Respect – Ed showcase. Over 300 entries were received in the Respect themed writing competition. A resource was created for the community and 800 students took this home to their family. Media coverage, improved access to services for youth, strengthened service networks and schools seeking Health involvement for ongoing health promotion activities were additional results.

**Take Home Message:** This project is now a bi annual event for Cowra. Respect -Ed is currently a finalist in the Western NSW Health Quality and Innovation Awards 2017. We learnt that Health has the expertise in domestic violence and empowering others to help create an effective community health prevention campaign. Working with local services improves patient access to services and health outcomes.