

# New auspicing role for Oak Tasmania

On January 1 this year, Oak Tasmania became the auspicing body for the successful youth diversionary and restorative program, Chance on Main. This important partnership provides an increased level of support for staff and participants of Chance on Main, whilst strengthening Oak Tasmania's significant role in delivering outcomes that improve the State's social infrastructure. Oak Tasmania CEO John Paton said the partnership was established after the steering committee invited a number of not for profit organisations to submit a tender to replace the

Glenorchy City Council as the auspice.

"The tender process for an auspice organisation was completed in July 2008, with Oak Tasmania being the successful tender and taking over responsibility for the ongoing management and administration of Chance on Main on 1 January 2009.

"Our vision is to auspice organisations that work with disadvantaged Tasmanians, assist them to build capacity by offering our expertise in HR, IR, payroll, research, marketing and governance, whilst ensuring our partner organisations retain their identity and uniqueness."

## **Programs, activities and methods**

Chance on Main (CHoM) works with young people aged 10-19 years who are often seen as 'high risk' by mainstream service providers and are often the source of much concern for police, education and health personnel. Many are at risk of entering the juvenile justice system, disengaging from school or training programs, or experiencing difficulties living with their family.

Using restorative practices, CHoM supports young people to develop life and decision making skills, increase academic competence and job readiness. It also improves the health and wellbeing of young people involved in the program through offering opportunities to address issues of anger management, mental health, nutrition, alcohol and drug use and sexual health.

Chance on Main uses a variety of methods to achieve these aims: mentoring by high profile



**His Excellency, The Honourable Peter Underwood AO, Governor of Tasmania (right) congratulates CHoM participant Cody Faltusz on his efforts building a fully-operational billy cart.**



**Participants in the Heavy Metal Program learn a range of skills linked to the metal trades area in a safe and supportive workshop environment.**

community and sporting personalities, intensive individual support and counselling, support to the families of young people involved in the program, and hands-on activity programs offered on and off site (for example; metal work, computer training)

## **Funding**

National Community Crime Prevention Program funding is time-limited, and as such the last of the funded programs will be delivered by Chance on Main in March this year.

A successful submission to

round 17 of the Tasmanian Community Fund resulted in a grant which will ensure the survival of Chance on Main up until June 30, 2009. However it is vital that recurrent funding is established to avoid the demise of the Program.

A submission has been made to the Tasmanian Government's 2009 – 2010 State Budget Process, with a view to securing recurrent, indexed funding for Chance on Main. The submission also outlined Oak Tasmania's strategic plan to expand the program state-wide into the Disability, Child, Youth and Family Services Area Boundaries (North-West, North, South-East and South-West Tasmania) Chance on Main is an extremely cost effective in comparison to the costs the community bears in



**Programs such as Chix @ Risk and Artworks provide intervention and mentoring for young people, and allow participants to express themselves through various forms of artwork.**

are repeat offenders. Chance on Main represents considerable savings to Government even if it only prevents a small number of young people from entering the youth or adult prison system. If the costs to the broader community in terms of Police and Youth Justice Personnel, vandalism and anti-social behaviour are factored into the equation – the savings are even more substantial.

the form of crime, anti-social behaviour, under-achievement in education, unemployment and the resulting social issues then picked up in the wider health / welfare sector every year.

By way of example, it costs approximately \$20,800 per month (\$250,000 pa) to maintain a young person at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre (Youth Justice, September 2008), and an average of \$6,700 per month (\$80,400 pa) to maintain an adult in prison in Tasmania (Department



of Justice Annual Report 2006-2007)

In contrast it costs approximately \$5442.00 per participant to operate Chance on Main. To date, more than 70 young people per annum attend Chance on Main.

In May 2007, a Legislative Council Select Committee Report found Tasmania spent more than any other state on youth detention and very little on community-based diversionary and restorative programs. Unfortunately there have been very few changes in

the time since the release of the Select Committee Report.

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released in December 2008, showed 66.4 per cent of Tasmanian prisoners had been in prison prior to their current sentence. This indicates that a staggering two-thirds of all prisoners in Tasmania

Chance on main's strength lies in its' dedicated staff and their ability to deliver contemporary restorative practices and crime prevention principles. New programs have been added and the participant base has increased – with the majority of referrals now coming from the State's Education Department.

For further information about Chance on Main visit

[www.oak.org.au/services](http://www.oak.org.au/services)



**Participants and staff eat meals together on a large timber setting built by program participants.**

**Diet, nutrition and hygiene are taught to participants at Chance on Main as they prepare morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea for staff and fellow participants using fresh, healthy ingredients.**



### Mission Statement

*Your Chance, Make the Choice.*

To give young people at risk the opportunity to discover their skills and abilities and to support them in their journey along the pathways to achieving their potential.