



Highlighting you in youth

AS always the area's councils have a great deal planned for National Youth Week (April 1-10).

Activities planned include an art exhibition, which will give young people a chance to express their creativity.

Other fun activities include a Push Cart Challenge and Youth Cooking Class.

While Youth Week is a good time to celebrate being young, it is also an opportune time to highlight more serious social issues affecting young people.

Homelessness Australia has chosen National Youth Week to stage Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2011 – which was yesterday.

The organisation said the day was a timely reminder that of the 105,000 people who are homeless on any given night in Australia, nearly half are aged under 25.

With Census night planned for August, Homelessness Australia's

Narelle Clay believes it will be important to identify the region's "hidden homeless" – those sleeping on couches and moving from friend's house to friend's house.

As well as homelessness, Youth Week is being used to reinforce important health messages relevant to young people.

The CaddyShack pilot project, a partnership between Healthy Cities Illawarra, the HIV/AIDS and Related Programs Unit, and Illawarra Sexual Health Service, will be engaging with young people, creating awareness about sexual health and offering Chlamydia screening on-site.

Smoking is another issue being targeted during Youth Week with the help of an innovative project titled *It's Your Choice Now* – a commercial produced in partnership with Beyond Empathy, Barnardos South Coast and the Aboriginal Health Promotion Program.

The community awareness commercial has been created by youth from Bundaleer Estate, Warrawong and its benefits have been multiple - in allowing young people to educate young people on the dangers of smoking and gain experience in research, performing and production. A success on all fronts.

