

CLOSE KNIT

Beaconsfield Community Scarf Project

May 2006 - May 2007

Project Description

This was a community recovery project that began in the euphoria after the rescue of two trapped miners, Todd Russell and Brant Webb, from the Beaconsfield Gold Mine. People from around Australia and overseas participated in knitting more than 2 kilometres.

Host Organisation

Beaconsfield District Health Service

Funding sources

Health Promotion Unit, Temco & Dept Health and Human Services

Outcomes

Over 2 kilometres of scarf, photographed and archived; Children learning to knit from senior citizens; 25 Primary school children showcasing at Fashion Fantasia Scarf prominent in anniversary ceremony; Scarf toured Tasmania, June – Dec 2007

Highlights

Reading 25 pages offering comments in the visitor's book and receiving 6 folders of comments from participants.

Project workers

Rebecca Bushby (Social Worker)
Anne Young (Textile Artist)
Francis Seen (Minister, Uniting Church)

Keywords

Craft, Beaconsfield, General population

Project Contact

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Beaconsfield Museum
www.beaconsfieldheritage.com.au

This project arose spontaneously between Rebecca and Anne, both of whom are familiar with arts health activities. They agreed it was essential to have a project and, given the widespread publicity over the mine rescue, it should include broader Australia. They wanted to invite all the people who were touched by the rescue to celebrate its success. In doing so, the scarf would become a tribute to community spirit.

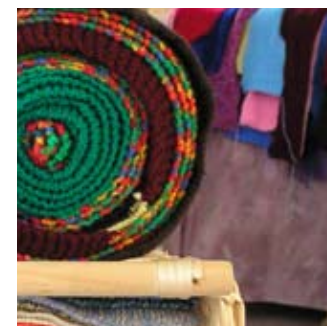
Their aim was to receive 925 metres of scarf, and present it at the one-year anniversary. This was the depth below ground where the miners were trapped. Within 10 weeks this target had been reached, and by 16 weeks, it had doubled.

25 groups participated, along with thousands of individuals from Australia and around the world. Members from a Venturer group from Victoria were inspired to knit for the first time. Along with their knitting, they sent two neck ties. They made Todd and Brant honorary life members because the resilience and determination these men showed emulated the ideals they strive for as Venturers.

The scarf featured prominently in the anniversary events. However this project is interesting, in that, while it most definitely struck a chord with thousands of people from around Australia, and even the world, it was not widely embraced by the Beaconsfield community, for whom the recovery element was mostly intended. Unlike some other regional towns, such as Deloraine, Beaconsfield does not have an arts and craft culture ... it is a mining town where, in the main, people just get on with living. Then again, there's just no prescription for an event like this; which is why the fundamentals of this project were of significant interest to other health workers.

Another highlight was receiving one small knitted square with a hole in the middle. The accompanying note said:

"As I was knitting, I realised how important it is to have an escape hole".



Images

Some of the 2000 metres of knitted scarf received.
Photographer: Rebecca Bushby