

ACSO Heidi Taylor Medal 2016 Tod Stokes

Club Connect was started by Tod in **2009** as a response to a number of suicides (4 suicides in 3 years) in his football club community in Port Noarlunga. With the support of the footy club he decided to run a series of seminars, designed to address social issues with younger boys, issues like depression, domestic and aboriginal family violence, safe driving, to name a few.

In 2010, he rolled out the program for the first time, with 4 seminars at the Port Noarlunga FC and over 300 people attended the 4 seminars.

Tod was determined to do more to raise awareness of the DV issue in football networks, so he decided to stage a White Ribbon round, in the entire Southern Football League. 2500 men joined Tod to raise awareness around DV. This event was the first in the state and is now in its 7th year.

Tod, as a White Ribbon ambassador, then approached SANFL club South Adelaide, to see if they would be interested in holding a White Ribbon Round. They agreed and Tod has been running that event with South Adelaide for 4 years now.

In 2011 Club Connect began to roll out its program to other clubs. When approached by Macclesfield Sports Complex, Tod ran 8 seminars throughout the year and 3 major events.

In 2012, the SANFL asked Tod to roll out his Club Connect program to some selected clubs, statewide. As Tod had been volunteering with Sammy D for 2 years, he sought support from them, to assist with the delivery of 64 seminars. Tod still runs the Club Connect seminars in clubs south of Adelaide and helps to organise the South Adelaide White Ribbon event annually.

In 2013, he organised the South Music Festival to raise funds for a Mental Health Nurse in the southern part of Adelaide.

He completed a Diploma of Mental Health and took up a placement at Kornar Winmil Yuntil (Ngarrindjeri Men Working Together). On completion of his placement, Tod volunteered for that organisation for 2 years, addressing Aboriginal family violence. He ran the hugely successful National DV conference last year, with speakers from around Australia.

His commitment to ending Aboriginal Family Violence saw him at the round table with the Duchess of Cornwall at Government House in **November 2015**.

He is a 5 year member of the Southern Domestic Violence Action group and was Chairperson of that group. He is also a member of the Onkaparinga Collaborative Approach, leadership group which meets to discuss service delivery, work issues, successes and gaps across the domestic violence sector,

Tod now works full time for Kornar Winmil Yunti, but will deliver a project as part of the 16 Days of Activism, **in 2016**. For the last 2 years he has organised the FOCUS awards that recognise the outstanding achievements of the homeless and DV sector.

When SI Adelaide first started selling White Ribbons in the Central Market, Tod was one of the first White Ribbon ambassadors to offer to help. His commitment was such, that he arrived for duty, with a broken arm. This first impression of dedication has grown each year.

Congratulations Tod on your award, you are a very deserving winner.