

Community in line to grow from program

SUNBURY could become one of 12 Australian Learning Sites where community leaders are identified to champion and progress their neighbourhoods.

Sunbury Community Health Service submitted an application to be an Australian Learning Site anchor, where seven to 12 people open "community conversations" to identify the strengths and challenges within up to four smaller communities in the town.

These community builders work with a professional community connector either employed specifically or seconded to secure relevant development funding.

The UK has a 12-community program which has been credited with progressing towns, villages and neighbourhoods, and the not-for-profit agency Bank of Ideas will announce 12 Australian communities from May.

Sunbury Community Health would pay for and run a two-year program with the support of Nurture Development (UK), Bank of Ideas and the Municipal Association of Victoria.

SCH executive manager Bernadette Hetherington said the town was well-placed to become an Australian Learning Site with the Sunbury and Goonawarra neighbourhood houses supporting the proposal and community organisations already on the ground.

"To become a learning site would put Sunbury at the centre of some pretty exciting community development concepts with some leading thinkers coming to visit and support it," she said.

Ms Hetherington said both neighbourhood houses would play a leading role if the application was successful.



Sunbury Neighbourhood House co-ordinators Lee Palumbo (Sunbury) and Alфина Sinatra (Goonawarra) with Sunbury Community Health Service's Bernadette Hetherington and Meredith Hedge.