

SUNBURY

Freed from ice prison

A young mum's life has been turned around for the better, thanks to a community health program

Barry Kennedy

SUNBURY resident Alana Barrett believes she is gathering the tools she needs to empower herself in life.

The 32-year-old mother of two was last year living alone with an ice addiction, her two children being cared for by her sister.

Last July she started seeing a drug and alcohol counsellor and seriously committed to ridding her life of drugs.

Later that year she enrolled in Sunbury Community Health's The Art of Change, a six-week group course aimed at understanding the stages of recovery and exploring innate creativity to help carve out a new future.

Ms Barrett said the work she and others did during the course was inspiring.

"I saw a write-up in the paper about the course and I signed up straight away," she said.

"Having done it and having got so much from it I really want to encourage others to consider it too."

Ms Barrett said concepts such as a vision board and creating positive intentions proved a powerful base for change in her own life, skills taught within the Art of Change.

"There is a big emphasis that you are the driver of your own life," she said.

"I put my intentions to-



Alana Barrett has benefited from the Sunbury Community Health Art of Change program. Picture: KYLIE ELSE

wards working with horses and within a week I found a job in harness racing."

Another achievement was her picking up a snake, a fear she had also harboured.

"I had to do something I'd never done, so I went to my friend's house and picked up the snake – it was a lot easier

than I thought," she said.

Ms Barrett has now set her sights on further study and building a career in human services, starting with a Certificate IV in Community Services which she begins within weeks.

"I'd now like to help others," she said.

While there was lots of growth promoted in the Art of Change, it's not all easy.

"You are encouraged to talk about your experiences, so it can and does dredge up feeling that leave you really drained," she said.

"But other days you leave feeling you can walk on air."

The next six-week course of the Art of Change will begin on Tuesday, February 28.

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