



## Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth

Working together to enhance the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people.

<b>Final Report to ARACY/ARC NHMRC Network Seed Funded Collaboration</b>			
Project title	<i>Resilience and Rural Change: Kids Facing an Uncertain Future.</i>		
Convenor of collaboration	Associate Professor Barbara Rugendyke		
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email	brugendy@une.edu.au	Total grant amount	\$16,500
Major activities undertaken (expand section as necessary)			
Activity	Date	Description	
Preparation of a comprehensive literature review to support project research, subsequent research, and a large grant application.	January 2009 – October 2009.	Ongoing process of literature searching and review. A brief annotated bibliography was supplied by the team at Southern Cross University to support preparation of this literature review. The majority of the work was undertaken and written by Anna Todd, with oversight from Dr. Debra Dunstan and editing support from Dr. Colin Hearfield. The resulting review, entitled <i>Heroes in Hardship</i> is attached. It is not yet at publication stage, but the team hopes will be used to support preparation of a large grant application and subsequent journal article publication.	
Preparation of statistical information to support the team at Southern Cross University as part of a collaborative process	January – June 2009	SEIFA data related to the North Coast and Northern Rivers district were prepared and sent to Judith Wilkes at Southern Cross University in 2009.	
Literature searches and census data analysis to support preparation of a community profile for Tenterfield, NSW	January 2009- November 2009.	A detailed community profile, which briefly documents the history of Tenterfield, and details its demographic, socio-economic, historic, geographic and climatic characteristics was prepared. The profile was used to provide the context for research which focused on the resilience of local school children. A copy of the community profile is supplied with this report. The intention is that this will be used as a basis for subsequent application for large grant funding.	
Literature searches and census data analysis to support preparation of a community profile for Brewarrina, NSW	January 2009 – November 2009.	A second detailed community profile was prepared, which provides a background to Brewarrina, and details its demographic and socio-economic characteristics, along with its historic, geographic and climatic context. This was to be used to provide background contextual material for subsequent research with local children. However, due to sensitivities which arose in Brewarrina during the time frame of the research project, the research team decided it was inappropriate to commence research which involved children as participants. That stage of the research had to be abandoned in that community.	
Focus group held in TenterfieldNSW, with key stakeholders	Held 30 October, 2009. Report summary prepared in November	A focus group was held on Friday, 30 October, 2009, at Tenterfield TAFE. A copy of the summary of the group discussion is supplied with this report. Attendance was disappointing. A representative from the local police arrived, and was called away at the start of the meeting to attend an assault. Several others who had committed to attend did not do so. However, the discussion was useful and	



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	2009.	animated and provided insights into issues relevant to children and youth in the community. A summary of the findings of this focus group are supplied with this report	
Survey and focus group of primary and high school students in Tenterfield NSW.	November, 2009 – February 2010.	This additional work, not originally part of the ARACY application, was funded and completed by Dr. Debra Dunstan. Debra used her own research funds to employ Anna Todd, who completed the attached comprehensive literature review entitled <i>Heroes in Hardship</i> , as well as assisted Debra in the survey work in Tenterfield. A report was prepared to present the results of this work; this is supplied with this report.	
Benefits arising from the project and how these align to ARACY goals			
<p>The project has allowed the research team to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare two community profiles using available literature and drawing on relevant census data as background for further research and as a model for further case studies in other rural communities.</li> <li>• Trial a methodology for primary research to 'give children a voice' in describing the issues which affect them and the coping strategies used in response to those issues.</li> <li>• Prepare a comprehensive literature review as the context for a broader study into the resilience of children in rural communities.</li> <li>• Commence some preliminary exploration of the extent to which rural children are affected, by or concerned about, the impacts of climate change.</li> <li>• Through trial of a methodology and preparation of background information, the project has allowed the team to collect appropriate information which may be used to prepared a subsequent large grant application, depending on the ongoing availability of staff and of appropriate industry support.</li> </ul> <p>This collaborative project has enabled building and consolidation of a cross-disciplinary team to explore the experience of children and the extent of their resilience as they are affected by, and cope with, the environmental and socioeconomic changes facing some rural communities in NSW. Depending on funding availability, it is hoped that this will form the basis for embarking on a subsequent large-scale, multidisciplinary project which will 'give children a voice'. This project falls within ARACY's research priority <i>Experience of social exclusion for children and youth in rural areas</i>.</p>			
Project outputs			
Grant applications (expand table as needed) Application for ARC industry linked grant, with the Benevolent Society as an industry partner, anticipated in late 2009.			
Granting body	Date of application	Title of application	PIs
		Grant application planned to ARC, but not now until October 2010, and this in part depends on industry partner plans and funding availability, and on the ongoing commitment and availability of all team members.	
Was application successful? N/A			
Yes Amount granted		No	Pending (give date of notification)



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Publications ( Provide full details and current status - published, in press, under review, etc) (expand table as needed)
Paper 1 Formal publications were not anticipated as an outcome of this project – only background papers to assist in grant application. However, members of the team anticipate at least one publication arising from the data collected.
Paper 2
Unpublished papers placed on ARACY or other websites (expand table as needed)
Paper 1 Tenterfield Community Profile
Paper 2 Brewarrina Community Profile
Paper 3 Literature review – Heroes in Hardship
Paper 4 Report on primary research in Tenterfield.
Please comment on the collaboration process, successes and obstacles (expand section as necessary)
<p>The collaboration process enabled the building of links between an industry partner and some research academics. This was useful in shaping the focus of the research project to reflect the practical concerns of an organisation actively engaged in child protection and in supporting better futures for rural children and youth.</p> <p>The selection of case study communities as a focus for the research was largely determined by the interests of the industry partner in the area. While this was practical and usefully enabled material to be prepared which is of use to the industry partner, this also posed problems in that one of the locations, Brewarrina, had to be excluded from the primary data collection stage of the project because of concerns about child protection in the town and the involvement of the industry partner, the Benevolent Society, as a service provider in that town. Unfortunately, this meant the study did not yield comparative data as was anticipated. The limited funding also meant that only two communities could be focused on during the study, and left no room for adding an additional case study community to enable comparative data analysis. This means that findings are very limited, to one community only.</p> <p>The collaboration with another institution turned out to be, with hindsight, a digression which complicated the research process, particularly given that the basis focus of the two research projects was somewhat different. Given the very limited amount of funding available, the time involved in negotiating with additional people around meeting their needs, and no doubt for them in meeting those of our team, was probably not the best investment of time. However, the additional funds did enable each team to collect some additional material, although it was not able to be 'shared' because of different project foci and because each team was working in a different geographical area.</p> <p>However, the project enabled trial of a methodology designed to 'give children a voice', gave a cross-disciplinary group of academics the opportunity to work with each other and to engage with an industry partner, and provided background material which would be useful in supporting subsequent large grant application. The resolution of issues confronted by the team in developing the methodology and working in these communities has been useful is a learning opportunity. In these ways, the project was beneficial and the team is grateful to ARACY for financial support to facilitate this learning journey.</p>

Name: *Barbara Regerdyke*

(Convenor) Date: 15 April, 2010