



Media Release: 11 March 2011

## **Bunbury Courthouse Benefits from Choose Respect**

The Bunbury Courthouse has put up Choose Respect signs around the Courthouse waiting areas as part of an effort to remind people of the importance of Choosing Respect. The request to put up the signage came from the South West Branch of the Royal Association of Justices. The local Justices of the Peace agreed that promoting Choose Respect in the courthouse would be beneficial.

Choose Respect is being adopted across the community of Bunbury, thanks to funding from the Department of Local Government and Regional Development, to help encourage people to treat each other with care and consideration, and discourage anti-social behaviour.

The initiative has so far been very successful in local schools in helping to reduce bullying and creating more cohesive social environments.

The idea of putting up Choose Respect posters in the courthouse waiting areas was first suggested by Alison Companti and Kevin Coote, both Justices of the Peace.

Choose Respect Project Facilitator Sarah-Jane Smith said it was great to see Choose Respect being applied in so many diverse settings.

"Both Alison and Kevin are Choose Respect Champions," Ms Smith said.

"A Champion is someone who makes a conscious effort to Choose Respect on a daily basis and helps to promote the Choose Respect message within their circles of influence.

"This is a perfect example of how a Choose Respect Champion can use Choose Respect to benefit the greater community "

The Bunbury Choose Respect Management Team agreed to cover the cost of framing the Choose Respect signage. The committee members agreed this was an important project to support. Southern Picture Framers framed the posters at a discounted price.

"The courthouse deals with a wide range of issues, people attending the Court are often under stress, hopefully the Choose Respect message can give those waiting in the court waiting area some tactics to deal with the stress they are feeling; being especially mindful of others around them. The Choose Respect philosophy provides a moral code to live by, and we would like to think that by providing the posters as a reminder, we may be able to encourage more to follow the philosophy in all their

dealings with others". President of the South West Branch of the Royal Association of Justices Alison Companti said.

Kevin Coote stated that although Choose Respect commenced in a local Bunbury primary school to prevent bullying, it is a greater community project that should be promoted outside of schools and in the general community. "The Choose Respect Program should be promoted by all members of the community," Mr Coote said.

The Choose Respect Code of Behaviour poster will be hung in all three courthouse waiting rooms and two will also be placed in the Document Witnessing Centre, as a reminder to those waiting for a JP's signature.

If your business is interested in the benefits of adopting Choose Respect or to find out more about it call Sarah-Jane Smith, Choose Respect Project Facilitator on 0409 167 804 or e-mail [sarah-jane.smith@chooserespect.org.au](mailto:sarah-jane.smith@chooserespect.org.au)

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