

MEDIA RELEASE

Prime Minister joins campaign to empower young Australians

The Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. John Howard, has thrown his support behind Youth Insearch and the on-going campaign to tackle some of the biggest problems confronting our Australian kids, including drug and alcohol addiction, emotional and physical abuse, bullying and low self esteem.

Mr Howard will join a host of prominent Australians as the Guest of Honour at a Gala Fundraising Dinner on September 22 for Youth Insearch, a unique, non-religious organisation. Alan Jones will host the event which will be held at Sydney's Luna Park.

Youth Insearch was founded 21 years ago by a most remarkable Australian, Ron Barr, OAM, who has dedicated himself to caring for children who have been dealt an unfair hand in life. In those 21 years, Ron and his wife Judith have provided the opportunity for over 27,000 young Australians to change their lives.

The unique approach allows young people to actually address the real reason of why, they are either experimenting or abusing drugs and/or alcohol, why they are partaking in anti-social behaviour, turning to crime or just lack any motivation to obtain employment or continue with their education.

Through Weekend Camps and follow up Support, young people establish new goals and directions in their lives.

Over the last 21 years, Youth Insearch have achieved outstanding success and this year it will assist more than 1000 kids throughout Australia.

“Youth Insearch's mission is to empower young people to take responsibility for their lives by giving them the opportunity and skills to develop their self esteem and play a positive role in society,” Mr Howard said.

“Youth Insearch empowers young Australians with the skills they need to chart their way through adolescence and take control of their lives in a positive way. Youth Insearch has already made a significant difference in reducing the incidence of violence, crime, alcohol, drug abuse and suicide in young Australians.”

“I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to support the work of this fantastic organisation which has made such a difference to so many thousands of young people over the years. The life stories that I have heard are truly compelling and unfortunately the demand for the programme is not diminishing. Australians are extremely generous donors and I've no doubt that Youth Insearch's fundraising campaign will be generously supported by corporate Australia as well as individuals so that this invaluable work can continue.”

Youth Insearch Chairman Mr Sean Howard said the initial response from corporate Australia to the Youth Insearch fundraising challenge had been positive.

“During my involvement with Youth Insearch, I have been touched by the amazing stories of personal triumph of young people who perhaps haven't had the best start in life. Ron Barr is a quiet achiever. It's taken some convincing to get Ron and Judith to agree to stage an event to celebrate 21 years of selfless service to the Australian community. Youth Insearch is an

organisation which is making a real difference at Ground Zero and is saving the lives of thousands of young Australians in our community. Once people learn about that difference, it's very hard not to support it."

A number of high-profile entertainers are also supporting the Luna Park event on Saturday September 22.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Paul Simpson, Youth Insearch (02) 9659 6122 or 0410 66 5961

LJ Loch, REPUBLIC Consulting 02 9380 4599 or 0439 633 429

Interviews with Ron Barr and Youth Insearch Leaders and participants are available