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## Press release

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### **Local school tackles adolescence head on**

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Pioneer State High School has launched a new programme aimed at helping the school's community cope with the challenges that can be faced during adolescence.

The programme is tackling everything from drugs and alcohol, cyber-bullying, and peer pressure to brain development, and the journey from a teenager to an adult.

Hail Creek Mine's Community Development Fund has contributed \$14,000 to the programme, which uses a variety of support agencies to help build a culture of engagement within the school community.

Pioneer State High School deputy principal Cath Jeffrey said the aim of the programme is to develop resilient and confident teenagers.

"Parenting and teaching children is one of the most precious responsibilities many people undertake in life and is not without its highs and lows," Mrs Jeffrey said.

"They can be confronted with the teenager's desire for independence, susceptibility to social pressures such as drugs and alcohol, the need to fit in, and raging hormones.

"Our daily interactions with them showed that there was a need for more information to help them understand and support adolescents during this time.

"At the same time, we were also aware that teenagers also struggle to cope with the boundaries imposed on them and needed support to manage their personal well-being.

Support agencies in the programme include the Child Youth Mental Health Centre, Queensland Police, Youth Support Services Mackay, and chaplains from Mackay Chaplaincy.

Pioneer State High School parent and mother-of-five Katherine Hillman said the programme has been a positive move by the school.

"Children are growing up more quickly these days and as a parent, it can be difficult to get them to follow the rules and standards you set in place," Mrs Hillman said.

"This programme shows us that no matter what decisions are made, there are many services and agencies out there to help us, and our teenagers, work through them.

"My eldest is 23 and my youngest is 15 so we've already raised children from teenagers into adulthood and have developed some experience managing issues that face them.

"However, the programme has been great in reassuring my husband and I that we're on the right track and I congratulate the school in going this extra yard to support all the school's families.

"I think parents who have children only just entering their teenage years will find the programme even more beneficial."

Hail Creek Mine general manager operations Andrew Woodley said the programme is about creating an ongoing culture of engagement amongst parents, teachers, students, and support agencies.

"We are pleased to be involved in a programme that provides a shared sense of hope in dealing with the challenges of adolescence," Mr Woodley said.

“It’s about empowering parents, teachers, and young people in the local community by providing the skills to cope and be more resilient, and know where to access information and support.

“By working together, we can help develop positive relationships within families and the school to create a stronger and more sustainable community for Mackay and its surrounding areas.”

Pioneer State High School will hold its next community information session on Wednesday 28 July 2010 at the school, starting from 6pm to 9pm.

This session will be run by education consultant Mr John Joseph – widely known as ‘the brain man’. He will discuss the impact of the brain’s development on student behaviour choices. For more information, please contact Cath Jeffrey on (07) 4955 9222.

#### Attached photo



**Pictured** - Sexual Assault Unit’s Hannah Lupo (right) discusses community resources with a member of the public at one of the workshops.

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