

EDITORIAL:

Community program, community spirit

For the past nine years, the Max Potential program has been guiding young adults in the Mid-Western Region to recognise their full potential in the last years of school.

But more than that, Max Potential has been encouraging the young adults to engage with their local communities and give back by volunteering in some way.

A major part of Max Potential is the implementation of a community service project.

Each participant is required to identify a group in the community that has a need that isn't being met, and volunteer their time and effort to try and meet that need.

Over the years, more than 100 local young adults have visited nursing homes, instructed primary school children, started phone trees, volunteered at Vinnies, created murals, and brought attention to endangered species - and that's only the tip of the iceberg.

A recent study commissioned by Max Potential found that between 2010 and 2013 more than 600 young adults contributed between 6000 and 9000 hours towards meeting community needs.

Of these 600 young adults, 70 per cent of them have continued to volunteer in community projects, causes or groups.

This is in contrast to the 17 per cent of young adults not involved with Max Potential who volunteer in their local community.

Most of our region's volunteers are in their 60s, 70s, and 80s and there seems to be a gap between them and the next generation of willing volunteers - the high school students.

Max Potential is just one avenue to getting young people involved with the world around them; just one program encouraging them to step out of their comfort zones and help out someone in need.

We can only hope they continue to do so for another nine years.