

# Life's a circus for Bianca

By ANIKA HUME

Mudgee High School Year 10 student Bianca Crooks has never been the quiet one in school, but thanks to Club Mudgee's Max Potential program she's finding ways to turn her class clown behaviour into a constructive community initiative.

After having her first idea for her Max Potential community service project declined, Bianca immediately answered the call of her cousin, a Lifeskills Plus client, to offer the organisation's clients something different.

"On August 8, I will be holding a Circus Skills Fun Day that will be a full day of circus-themed games, face painting and craft activities like making clown hats," she said.

"The team including Caroline Peek, Belinda Bateman, the Lifeskills staff and I will all be dressing-up in costume for the event and we've got 20-odd people coming so I think it should be a good day."

Bianca said she hoped to gain a sense of satisfaction from holding the event.

"It will be nice to know that I've gone out of my way to offer them a fun day and given them some experiences they wouldn't usually be able to have," she said.

Bianca's mentor, Mid-Western Regional Council Youth Services Manager Cathy Leisfield, said the project was a prime example of Bianca's positive approach to achieving goals, recently developed through her participation in Club Mudgee Max Potential.

"She's achieved her goals pretty self-directedly throughout the program - she looked at what she wanted to improve, thought of her own strategies on how to make it happen and she has implemented them herself, which is great," she said.

"Learning how to sell her ideas and convincing others that they are good ideas has been a good experience for her and I think having that initial knockback and being able to think of another project quite quickly shows a lot of tenacity, innovation and creativity on her part."

While Ms Leisfield may have initial-



**CLOWNING AROUND:** Club Mudgee Max Potential student Bianca Crooks is using her outgoing personality to develop and host a Circus Fun Day for the disabled with the help of her mentor Cathy Leisfield.

JULY 29/MAX POTENTIAL/001

ly been made to use the promise of Tim Tams as a way of luring an unenthusiastic Bianca to Club Mudgee Max Potential meets, Bianca said she was now learning "to have a bit of fun" with the program.

"I'm focusing more at school, my class

behaviour has changed a lot since I've started and I never would have approached and talked to adults before the way that I do now," she said.

Bianca hopes to become an engineer or a physiotherapist after school, and is looking forward to university.