

Australian National Council on Drugs recognises important contributions to reducing overdoses and saving lives—29 August 2008

The Red Cross ‘Save a Mate’ (SAM) Program



SAM delivers training to more than 10,000 young people each year and directly reaches more than 30,000 people through its peer education initiatives.

SAM is delivered in all states and territories and has over 300 volunteers nationally who deliver training courses and attend youth festivals and events conducting first aid and health promotion.

The program was originally designed to address the rise in heroin overdoses that were occurring in young people and in 2008 was recognised for its work with an International award presented during the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs meeting in Vienna. The award was for “Innovative Drug Policy — for contributing to Global Drug Policy by promoting and implementing effective health-based solutions to the drug problem”. In particular save-a-mate was commended as “an important initiative in drug policy and a powerful illustration of how a health based approach to drug policy effectively and poignantly relieves suffering and reduces drug-related damage to individuals, families and society.”

The model of the SAM program is now being implemented by a number of Red Cross Societies internationally including NZ who will be launching the initiative in September.

Red Cross Contact: Ms Kate Marshall 02 9229 4184 or 0448 326335

