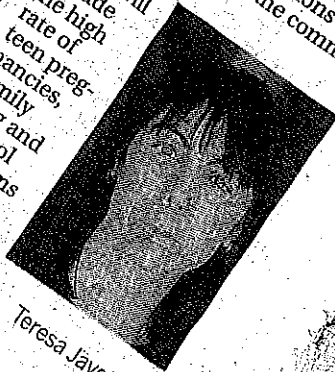


# Group searches for root causes

A SUNRAYSLIA group is attempting to get to the core issues that have led Mildura to be ranked as the third most disadvantaged city in Victoria.

An initiative of the Northern Mallee Community Partnerships, Hands Up Mallee (HUM) aims to draw on the experiences, expertise and knowledge of various sectors of the community.

Priority issues will include the high rate of teen pregnancies, family drug and alcohol problems and juvenile crime, which are all double the state average.



Teresa Jayet

Northern Mallee Community Partnership chair Teresa Jayet said HUM has a key role of state and federal policies to achieve large-scale social change.

"We need to take ownership of the problems facing our community and every person, every organisation, needs to do its part," Ms Jayet said.

"We, as a community, have the most knowledge about the issues we face day in day out, what works and what must change.

"We need to hear the thoughts and ideas from people across our whole community, especially people living with the issues daily."

Ms Jayet said the group would work with everyone from non-profit organisations, social services, businesses and philanthropics to various levels of government.

Sunraysia locals can get involved by filling out a survey and providing feedback about issues in the community at [www.handsupmallee.com](http://www.handsupmallee.com).

# Case highlights extent of violence

In December, when she was threatened with the scissors, Marcia ran down the street and was picked up by a concerned passer-by who drove her to the police station.

In a victim impact statement, she said how her life was torn apart by the assault and was still terrified Robbie will come back to kill her.

"I am scared every day, I re-live the attack every day," she said.

"I believe if he does find me, he will rob me."

Robbie's defence counsel Bert Wood said the escalation in his alcohol consumption, which occurred alongside an assault on his wife, was dealing with the matter at the time and was not a defence.

Robbie was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment by a community magistrates court.

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