

## WITH UNDERSTANDING COMES OPTIMISM

By Rachel Loveday

The signing of a memorandum between two major Illawarra organisations has provided invaluable opportunities for disadvantaged youth.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Illawarra Venues Authority (IVA) and the Southern Youth and Family Services (SYFS). The memorandum enables the SYFS free use of the WIN Entertainment Centre to hold fundraisers, meetings, functions, as well as providing work experience to SYFS clients.

Both chairpersons of the IVA and the SYFS-Chris Christodoulou and Jenny Thompson respectively have stated that the memorandum is the first agreement of its kind, which Ms Thompson describes as a “quasi legal document” between the organisations.

Ms Thompson also stated that the memorandum will provide positive experiences to SYFS clients and help change their lives for the better.

“This new relationship offers us (the SYFS) the opportunity to enrich the lives of our clients to support them as they pass through a very difficult decision making and developmental stage of their lives,”

“This gives our young people a chance to experience the full range of options and opportunities that they might otherwise be denied.”

Mr Christodoulou stated that the purpose of the agreement was to provide clients of the SYFS a positive experience.

“We (the IVA) want to provide people with a positive experience. The day we signed the agreement, we gave SYFS clients tickets to the basketball.”

The memorandum was signed on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 after months of meetings and consultations between the two organisations.