

# Best year for youth money

BY ELLEN EBSARY

HALF a million dollars of state government funding will support five projects to motivate young people across the North East.

This round of Engage funding, awarded every three years, has been Wodonga Council's most successful yet with \$110,000 awarded. A leadership program for

about 25 secondary school students will be facilitated each year until 2020.

The funding, announced by Northern Victoria MLC Jaclyn Symes on Friday, will also allow for 15 young people to attend the Portsea Youth Camp each year.

Council's family, youth and early years manager Marcia Armstrong said the \$20,000 increase in funding

this year enabled the leadership programs, aimed at young people aged 13 to 16.

"By providing positive 90-minute sessions each week over an eight-week period, young people will look at positive role models, embrace who they are and lead their peers to improve our community," she said.

"They will be led by one of our GPs, Alfeen Varghese,

who has a very great interest in inspiring young people - she has been involved in similar programs before, also in England and America."

The Portsea Camp has run for 70 years, funded by a range of sources across the state including many within the North East - where 123 young people travelled from to participate in 2015. Ms Armstrong said many

participants wouldn't otherwise access such programs.

"Many young people don't have the opportunity to attend unless they're fully supported and we find that camp will improve young peoples' health and well-being and gives social connection," she said.

Ms Symes said the North East recipients joined 107 local government and com-

munity organisations across the state to share in the \$12.3 million funding round.

- Other grants included:
- NESAY: \$150,000 for Healthy Eating And Living
  - Indigo Council: \$100,000, A Voice for Indigo's Youth
  - Alpine Council: \$100,000, Alpine Opportunities
  - Corryong Neighbourhood House: \$90,000 to build on the Resilience Project