

# Club puts players in the picture on substance abuse



**GAME ON:** ATODS health promotion officer John Fitzgerald (left), Central Comets players Jared Hoare and Marc Fickling and chief executive Scott Minto talk tactics on drug and alcohol awareness.



Robert Schwarten.

## Member to have surgery for reflux

MEMBER for Rockhampton Robert Schwarten goes in for a stomach operation on Monday to fix his gastro reflux problems.

Mr Schwarten, who convincingly held onto his seat at the recent state election, said he would be having the same procedure, a fundoplication, as he had four or five years ago.

However, despite the procedure, he said he was in good health otherwise.

"I've never felt fitter," Mr Schwarten said yesterday from his Rockhampton office.

He said Member for Keppel Paul Hoolihan would help his office staff, who were more than capable of handling his affairs for the fortnight.

Member for Mackay and Primary Industries minister Tim Mulherin will deputise in his ministerial role of Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology.

Mr Schwarten said he wouldn't be able to eat solid foods for a couple of weeks after the procedure.

"It's a pretty common complaint," he said.

PHOTO: CHRIS ISON C102/0409/8

# Comets ready to take a stand

By **AARON KELLY**  
aaron.kelly@capnews.com.au

CENTRAL Comets players Jared Hoare and Marc Fickling are packing down for the fight against drugs and alcohol.

While rugby league has been in the headlines for all the wrong reasons in recent times, the Comets are set to kick drug and alcohol abuse out of the park.

The club's Queens-

land Cup under-18 and under-16 teams will attend a drug and alcohol education program called Putting Youth in the Picture at the Rockhampton Leagues Club on Monday, April 27.

Putting Youth in the Picture is a unique educational program that has been developed in regional Queensland to help communities deal with issues confronting youth.

The inspiration be-

hind the program is solicitors Adair Donaldson and Peter Shannon, who for years have seen youth involved in life-changing situations.

Comets chief executive Scott Minto said the workshop would better educate his players when it came to drugs and alcohol.

"It's going to give them a third degree on what the implications of drugs and alcohol are these days," said

Minto, a former Brisbane Broncos and North Queensland Cowboys NRL player.

"We're getting on the front foot in light of some things that have happened with our club this season.

**"With our boys being in the public eye, they have to realise they have to make the right decisions.**

"Your whole life could change in a split second because of one bad decision."

Mr Minto said the program would greatly benefit the club's next generation of players.

"Obviously they're our next generation of players and we want to get that in their heads early on what happens when you take drugs and alcohol excessively," he said.

Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Services (ATODS) health promotion officer John Fitzgerald, of Rockhampton, praised the

Comets for getting involved in the program. There will be four other Putting Youth in the Picture presentations in Rockhampton on Tuesday, April 28, and places are still available.

Those wishing to attend, please reply by email, fax or phone prior to April 22 to Mr Fitzgerald. Phone 4920 5500, fax 4927 9126 or email johnk\_fitzgerald@health.qld.gov.au.

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