

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### OUYEN KEEPS DEB BALL TRADITION ALIVE

**There was a focus on youth development and team building as young people from Ouyen held the region's annual debutant ball.**

The tradition, dating back to the 1950s and overseen since 2005 by the Mallee Track Health and Community Service, brings the community together to welcome the debutants with a night of food, music and dancing.

Organiser Kim Darley, from the Ouyen Neighbourhood House, said the event was a chance for young people involved to develop their skills in dancing and working with others to plan and deliver an event highly valued by the community.

"Our focus is really on youth involvement, built around the principles of inclusion, teamwork and respect," Ms Darley said.

"We get the kids taking part to shape how the night looks – allowing them to drive decisions around things like music – so it's really a deb with a difference."

The five debutants and their partners received valuable support from a volunteer committee made up of MTHCS staff and community members, with former deb participants teaching the newcomers their dance steps. "We are all very grateful to Nick Coe and Dimity Birch who have volunteered many hours to plan and train the deb set for their presentation."

This year's event, held on July 7 at the Ouyen Community Centre, also raised \$1000 for the P-12 school, with the Parents and Friends committee providing the catering.

There was a 'rainbow pastel' theme this year, with debutants wearing matching colours and patterns.



**Picture: The 2023 Ouyen Debutant set**

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