

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE & JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

“WEED IT OUT” and ‘CAPE YORK CANNABIS PROJECT

**Reducing the Harms Associated with
Cannabis Use in Indigenous Communities
in Cape York and Torres Strait.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- QPS: Kevin Goan and Gary Hunter
- QPS Charleville: Mick Dowie and Mick Maguire
- JCU Chief Investigators: Alan Clough, Jan Copeland, Petra Buttner, Ernest Hunter, Yvonne Cadet-James, Peter d'Abbs
- QPS funded by Department of Health and Ageing until April 2013
- JCU funded by National Health and Medical Research Council (#601002) until December 2012

TRIGGERS AND TRENDS

- **Two significant seizures of Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) destined for remote indigenous communities**
- **Significant increase in cannabis abuse in Cape York and Torres Strait indigenous communities**
- **Cannabis is being used to supplement reduced availability of alcohol through Alcohol Management Plans**
- **Communities generally accept or ignore cannabis use and are reluctant to provide intelligence to law enforcement agencies**

THOUGHT

Gray et al 2007

“ Interventions are most effective when they are undertaken systematically and holistically by a well-trained workforce in partnership with government and other key stakeholders”.

AIMS

- The 'Weed it Out' project is consistent with the aim of the *Addressing Indigenous Needs – National Illicit Drugs Strategy – Capacity building in Indigenous Communities Initiative*
- 'The Cape York Cannabis project' aims to reduce the demand for cannabis
- Assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to deal with problems related to drug misuse.

OBJECTIVES

- Reduce the harms associated with cannabis use in indigenous communities in indigenous communities in Cape York and Torres Strait
- Collaboration between QPS and JCU to undertake research into patterns of cannabis use and its harms in communities and present findings to community members in a culturally appropriate manner
- Change community attitudes to cannabis use
- Implement crime prevention strategies

ROLES

- To work in partnership with communities so that the problems associated with cannabis use is seen as a “whole community problem” not just a policing problem.
- To educate and empower service providers
- To encourage community ownership of the cannabis related problems
- To effectively target major drug suppliers into the communities and to educate bottom end cannabis users about cannabis harms – Supply reduction.
- Introduce strategies that prevent or minimise the uptake of cannabis – Demand reduction

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

- **Customs Drug Detection Dogs utilised to search air and road cargo, passenger services and Aust. Post**
- **Community awareness and empowerment. Change of attitude towards suppliers**
- **Early prevention strategies in schools**
- **Capacity building of existing drug and alcohol services to remote communities**
- **Partnership agencies coordinated and supportive approach**
- **Establishment of partnerships with sporting bodies to promote healthy lifestyle**
- **Community champions used to create resources**
- **Working with council to establish policy development in community safety plans**

PERCEIVED OUTCOMES

- Reduction in cannabis consumption and associated mental illness
- Reduction in personal safety offences (Child Safety, Domestic Violence, Assaults) including self harm
- Reduction in property related offences.
- Increased available finances for provision of food, clothing
- Enhanced intelligence networks enable disruption of drug distribution networks strategically managing ATS introduction
- Changes in community attitudes towards cannabis and dealers

CHALLENGES

- Breaking down the barriers
- Cultural observances
- Tyranny of distance
- Cost of doing business
- Staffing
- Maintaining core business
- Participants reporting illicit drug use and confidentiality of this information
- Trust to speak to researchers

BRANDING



CAPACITY BUILDING AND ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

 Imparja

23rd February 2011

Snr.Sgt. Gary Hunter
Queensland Police Service
Cairns
QLD

Dear Gary,
Thanks for opportunity to be involved in the great initiative.
The issue of drugs use in the general community is a major problem but the effects on indigenous communities are catastrophic. There are already financial pressures on the families but the cost and use of illicit substances actually takes food out of the kid's mouths. We applaud the actions of the QPS in taking this initiative to combat a growing problem in remote communities.
As an indigenous media company, Imparja Television is involved of many projects that are aimed at making a difference to the lives of people living in remote Australia. We would certainly like to form a partnership with the QPS in the "Weed it Out" projects.
As our part of the partnership I would offer you a dollar for dollar in advertising time and look at any other opportunities that help get this crucial message out. We run daily news updates that could be utilised for this.
I look forward to joining with you and QPS in making a difference in the community.

Yours Sincerely,



Steve McIntyre
National Sales Manager
Imparja Television



JOINT AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS



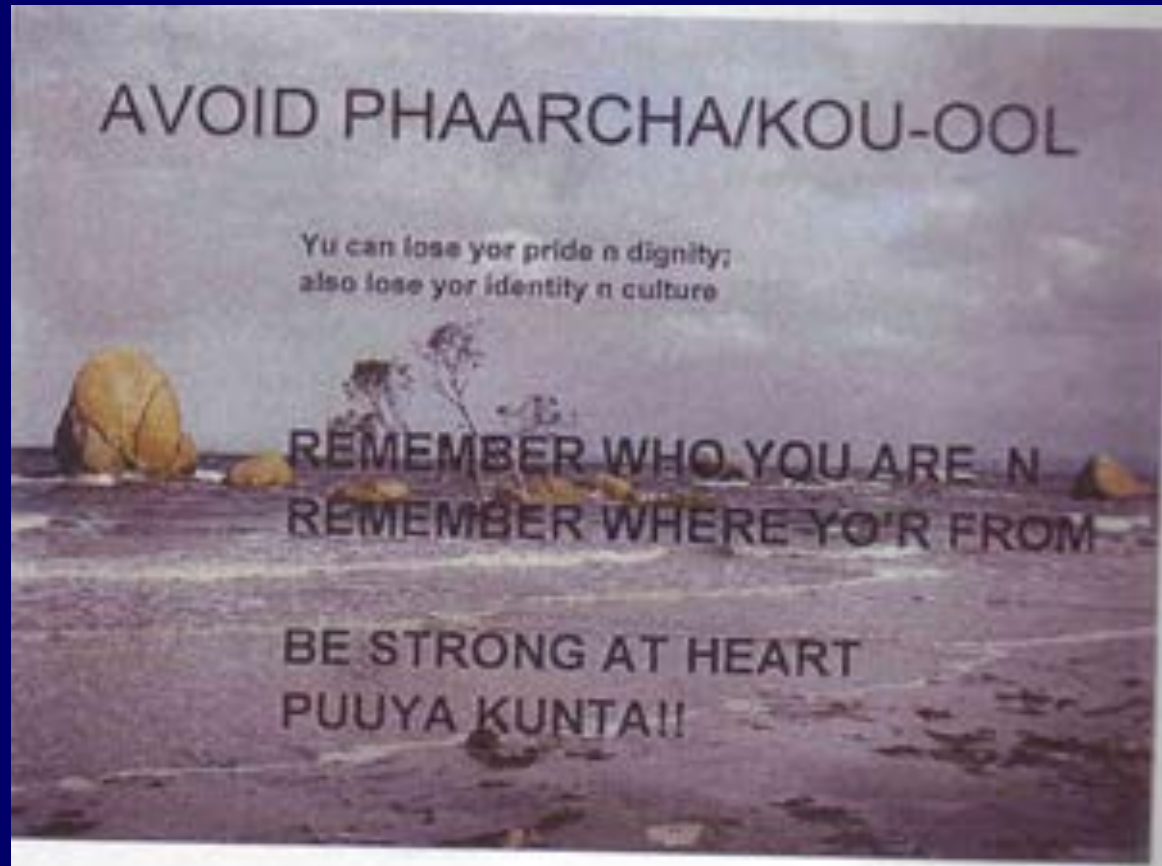
WORKING PARTNERSHIPS

- Seaswift transport
- Silent World transport
- Skytrans Airlines
- Australia Post
- NCPIC
- QLD Health
- RFDS
- QRL
- NQ Cowboys
- Imparja Television
- Print Media (Torres News, Cairns Post, Western Cape Bulletin)
- Kids Living Safer Lives
- Domestic Violence No Way
- Be strong Be heard
- Australian Crime Commission/Crime Misconduct Commission
- Australian Customs and Border Protection Services
- Australian Federal Police
- QCS – Lotus Glen, Townsville Womens & Parole and Probation
- PCYC
- Apunipima
- Community Mens & Womens Groups
- TSIRA & ROCCY
- Education Queensland

RESOURCES

- Engagement with local community members – adults and children and inmates
- Local languages used with translators
- Branding, giving back to community, project awareness and engagement
- Opportunities for sustainable events through local police community engagement officers, schools and PCYC

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



What Indigenous peoples say about cannabis:

Words from Lotus Glen

[The text in this section is too small to transcribe accurately but appears to be a collection of quotes from Indigenous people.]

Capra York Cannabis Project
 40th Anniversary
 Thanks to Lotus Glen 2017
 For more copies of the poster please call 4942 1407
 JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA 40

Smoking Dope is Not our Culture



"You can call it grass, weed or marijuana, it is affecting our people our children and the community. Our culture is fading away because of it. Smoking dope is not our way of life."

Capra York Cannabis Project
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GUNJA n

It Hurts Yourself So Please
 It Hurts Your Friends Don't Do
 It Hurts Your Family It !!!

David Kavanagh 2011

THE BRAIN KILLER!

killing our brain killing our culture
 killing our future
 it's not cool
 we don't be a fool

Cape York Cannabis Project
 NRMAC project#401000 2011

CHILDREN SEE, CHILDREN COPY
 It's not good to smoke weed kids...

More than 10 million children under 17 Facebook fans by the number
 they had in 2010 and the numbers are growing like a weed.

PROTECT OUR CHILDREN
 FROM MARIJUANA

FEEDBACK



Appendix 1: Feedback survey used to collect community feedback on results

Thanks @Health James Cook for the feedback and for a year healthy...

1. How clear was the information you were given? Yes / No
2. How useful was the information you were given? Yes / No
3. What are your views on the results?

Feedback survey results are available on the website...



RESULTS QPS

- 1751 Cannabis Plants (\$3.5m main stream – two to three times as much to indigenous communities)
Located and destroyed along with 83.3 kilograms (83300 grams @ \$50 - \$75 per gram = \$4.1m - \$6.25m) of dried cannabis
- Potential financial detriment to Cape York and Torres Strait communities
- The Source of supply of cannabis to the communities of Lockhart River, Napranum, Aurukun and NPA immediately disrupted

RESULTS QPS

- No substantial intelligence holdings in relation to ATS being distributed into communities
- An approximate 7000% increase in intelligence submissions/crime stoppers reporting since 2006 (Cape York and Torres Straits)

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

TORRES STRAITS

- 2006 - 6 intelligence submissions/crime stoppers
- 2008 - 25 intelligence submissions/crime stoppers
- 2011 – 169 intelligence submissions/crime stoppers

CAPE YORK

- 2006 - 6 intelligence submissions/crime stoppers .
- 2008 - 28 intelligence submissions/crime stoppers.
- 2011 – 259 intelligence submissions/crime stoppers.

RESULTS JCU

- 101 Interviews at far north Correctional Centre
- 431 Community baseline Interviews
- 12 Awareness raising workshops with 145 participants at Correctional Centres
- NCPIC organised workshops for service providers in Weipa, Lockhart River, Kowanyama, Napranum, Bamaga and Cairns with over 250 participants
- Interventions by service providers
- Establishment of cannabis working parties
- Project NHMRC#1020514 to measure cannabis withdrawal

RECOGNITION

- 2010 - Gold lantern winner of Queensland Police Service Awards of Excellence in Partnership policing
- 2010 – Finalist for National Drug and Alcohol Awards
- 2011 – Finalist for Indigenous Health Awards
- 2011 – Finalist for Queensland Reconciliation Awards, Partnership Category
- 2011 – National Winner for Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards, Partnership Category

LEGISLATIVE AND DIVERSIONARY PROPOSALS

- Utilise Governing Authorities and JCU research to support amendments to legislation to include a circumstance of aggravation for supplying or trafficking to or in indigenous communities
- Utilise JCU research to support proposals for diversionary programs in communities such as the drug court program or Intensive Correctional Orders

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

