

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" project.

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 Rattray
National Sales Manager
Imparja Television



JOINT AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS



We propose the creation of a 'Cannabis Working Group' facilitated by the men's and women's groups, who know the Community and Culture.

Aims of the working group are to:

1. Create and implement initiatives
2. Facilitate communication on cannabis related issues between the community and outside groups (such as JCU)
3. Promote health positive 'role models' or 'community champions'
4. Keep 'cannabis' on the community agenda
5. Promote in their various working environments, quit cannabis support
6. Support individuals motivated to quit cannabis

Facilitator: Anna Remwick

Contact : Aileen Addo

Contact 2: Peter Boshart

Members (but not limited to): Peter Boshart, Aileen Addo, Marietta Matasia, Frank Fell, Anna Remwick, Rex Burke, clinic staff, Yana O'Brien, Connie Port, James Hughes, Angela Lai, Derek Carter, Ray (tranger) and former users. Tracy Redburn, Leva Boswell

27th March, 2012

Ernest Madua, Paula Ludwick, Patricia Mark, Konev Akhtue, Lynn Jones, Juan Mena, TRACY REDBURN

Anna Remwick

JOHN SEANIGER - REGIONAL MANAGER C.E.H.
 c.d.seaniger@cea/Hot.com.au
 and
 Anna Remwick 1800s

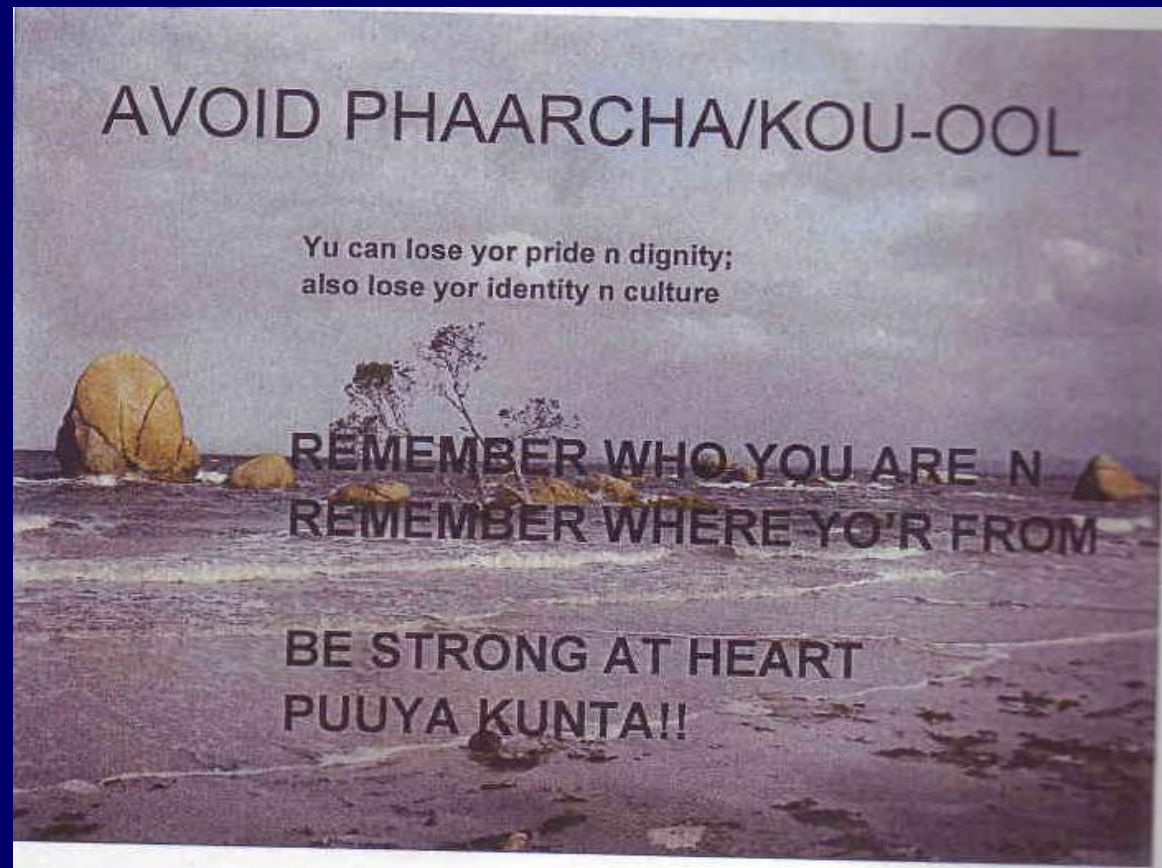
WORKING PARTNERSHIPS

- 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

"Kids see their parents do it so the kids do it"

"What parents do, the kids follow"

"It breaks up family"

"You fake drugs, drugs fake you, if it takes your relationship, your focus and everything"

"Leaders in our communities are letting it happen"

"Some people abuse it"

"Verminalise it"

"I feel like I had no life"

"The thing (opium) was taking control of my life"

"I thought I was smart enough to control my own mind, but I found out I wasn't"

"When people carry pain inside, that's what makes us drink and smoke"

"I get 'booked bang' fold on the lungs"

"Boredom an issue Nothing to do"

"You become a different person"

"Even the old fellas smoke it with alcohol, I stabbed my Aunty, but didn't remember I'd done it"

"Wake up the next morning and the cops were there"

"If you over abuse it you start to get into harder drugs, like heroin. Some fellas I know, they on the needle now"

"Alcohol bans are good, but what's replaced them"

"Alcohol was the problem - Liquor license taken away - then younger ones started sniffing and smoking weed"

"In schools there used to have culture so when boomerang making etc kept us in touch with all that stuff"

"Education for the young"

"Find a way to talk to the kids - sports"

"We need to work with the kids"

"You should focus on young ones, aged 10 that way you can stop them before their brain changes"

"They start young"

"Kids don't know the effects"

"Can't get brain cells back"

"Young fellas don't know about gunja - if you get the word out, they might change their way"

"In our country it's getting worse - the little fellas are starting because they see their brothers and friends doing it"

"We need to tell young one, this is how it can affect your life tell them our story as inmates, then they can tell the next generation"

"Wrong message around gunja - kids think it's cool"

"Raising awareness as a community as a whole"

"No bush, no drugs out there"

"Too much emphasis on young ones, you don't always need money i.e. going hunting, connecting with country"

"Take young fellas fishing"

"Mums groups can do something about it - traditional cooking"

"Can't get brain cells back"

"Youth centre in our community - run by the council"

"Take them camping, show them where they come from, show them what they have to eat to survive"

"Get everyone involved in hunting and fishing"

"If you get people to work on cultural things - the other problem will go away"

"Need positive role models"

"Older people need to make the change for younger people"

"I want to change it for the next generation"

"I don't want to see my kids do it"

"Damage to custom and culture has happened over time, kids need to see this story and how it affects the present day"

"Slowly slowly they steal something from you and you don't even realise"

"For us in here - We don't want the young ones to follow bad footsteps. They look up to us, they get no one else to look up to"

"We can see this issue from far away - clear for us"

"Doina makes you become a different person - respect and love is lost"

"Nothing given back to parents"

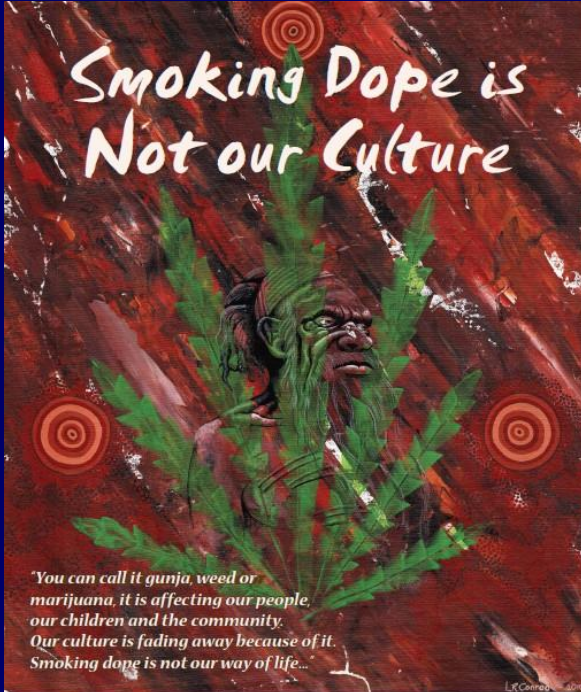
"Community elders are important"

"When the love goes, the respect goes"

"People don't respect elders these days"

"How did we get to this point?"

*Illustration designed by feedback group participants for Australian government

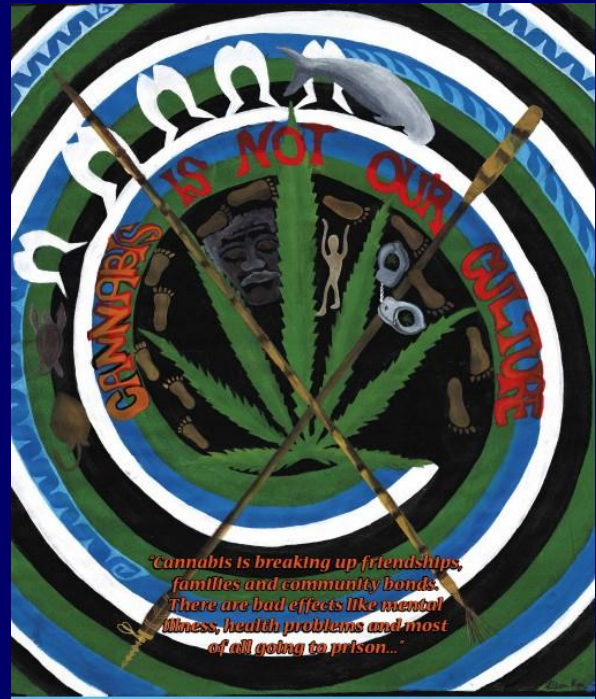


"You can call it gunja, weed or marijuana, it is affecting our people, our children and the community. Our culture is fading away because of it. Smoking dope is not our way of life..."

Cape York Cannabis Project
NHMRC project grant #601002

Thanks to Lotus Glen 2010

For more copies of this poster phone 07 4042 1657



"Cannabis is breaking up friendships, families and community bonds. There are bad effects like mental illness, health problems and most of all going to prison..."

Cape York Cannabis Project
NHMRC project grant #601002

Thanks to Lotus Glen 2010

For more copies of this poster phone 07 4042 1657

● GUNJA n

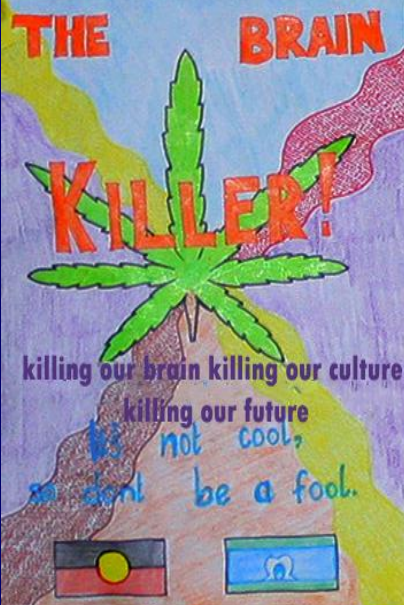
It Hurts Yourself So Please
 It Hurts Your Friends
 It Hurts Your Family Don't Do It !!!



Daniel Kawangka 2011

THE BRAIN KILLER!

killing our brain killing our culture
 killing our future
 be not cool,
 so don't be a fool.



JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA Cape York Cannabis Project NHMRC project#601002 2011

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



Photo of an 11 month old baby posted on Facebook 2010, by his mother. She was investigated and eventually charged with a drug offence.

WEEED IT OUT JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA
 Cape York Cannabis Project 2011 NHMRC project#601002
 For more info please 07 4942 1887

FEEDBACK

NAPRANUM RD

Your people
Your community
Your story

Napranum Cannabis Survey 2011

Cape York Cannabis Project, JCU Cairns
Susanne Koppes, Bernadette Rogerson, Ray Green, Alan Cichon

Phone: (07) 4042 3834, 4042 1802, 4042 1857
Susan.koppes2@jcu.edu.au ph: 40421802

How many people smoking gunja in Napranum?

Napranum Cannabis Survey 2011

We interviewed 142 men and women aged 15 to 49 years

Napranum
5/10 don't smoke gunja
5/10 smoke gunja

Half the people we spoke to smoke gunja

All of Australia
9/10 don't smoke gunja
1/10 smoke gunja

That's more than double the Australian average

Rates of gunja use in men & women

Napranum Cannabis Survey 2011

MEN
1/10 never
2/10 former
6.5/10 sometimes, daily or weekly

8/10 men said they had tried gunja, 2/10 had quit

WOMEN
2.5/10 never
4/10 former
3/10 sometimes, daily or weekly

7 out of 10 women have tried gunja, but 4 out of 10 have quit

People who want to quit and why

Napranum Cannabis Survey 2011

Men & women smoking gunja

Most current smokers want to quit or cut down
job family health money mental health

Happy smoking

The most common reason to want to quit is to find or keep a job

People who have quit

Napranum Cannabis Survey 2011

Men & women who have quit
family family family family money job health mental health

The most common reason that people have quit is for family or kids

How much money do people spend on gunja?

Napranum Cannabis Survey 2011

Average smoker is spending: \$62 per week
\$3250 per year

Napranum Community is spending: \$4100 a week
\$215,000 in 1 year

Smokers under 20 years old

Napranum Cannabis Survey 2011

Young people smoking gunja
2/10 sometimes
8/10 weekly
9/10 average age of first use

9/10 young people (under 20) said they smoked daily or weekly

Average age of first use all smokers 16
Average age for people under 20 was 14

Starting Gunja YOUNGER, increases the RISK for a LIFETIME of MENTAL HEALTH problems

Quitting gunja is everyone's problem

Napranum Cannabis Survey 2011

- We are starting 'Program gunja' in 2012
- With ATODS, clinics & workplaces, we will work with families and communities to offer support
- "Smoking gunja is not our culture"

Appendix 1 Brief survey used to collect community feedback on results

Napranum Cannabis Survey 2011: Read the flyer and tell us your thoughts....

- Do you think gunja is a problem? (circle one)
No Yes – a little bit Yes – a lot
- Do the results of the survey true? (circle one)
No Yes – I was surprised Yes – I wasn't surprised
- What are some ideas that could help?

This information will assist James Cook University to work with service providers with community involvement to help with any concerns so your say is very important.



Napranum 2010-2011

We talked to 133 Napranum men and women aged 15 to 49 years

Not smoking gunja (50%) Smoking gunja (50%)

8/10 men said they had tried gunja, 2/10 had quit

7 out of 10 women have tried gunja, but 4 out of 10 have quit

Most current smokers want to quit or cut down
job family health money mental health

Happy smoking

The most common reason to want to quit is to find or keep a job

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

