

Powerful and Free – amplifying the voice of the lived experience through co-design and consultation. A short film encourages First Nations communities to yarn about hepatitis B.

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Background

First Nations Communities engage and share information through storytelling, which can be successfully replicated for the provision of health information. The shame surrounding hepatitis B has resulted in generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being unaware of their medical history, creating stigma and a lack of hepatitis B knowledge within First Nations communities.

HQ is breaking down the barriers to reach, educate and reduce stigma in First Nations communities through the creation of a short film titled *Powerful and Free – an honest conversation about hep B*.

Analysis/Argument

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities comprise only 3.2% of the Australian population, yet they make up 7.2% of the population living with hepatitis B. Through true co-design, HQ has produced a short film which depicts Bec's story as she bravely and poignantly explores her ongoing journey living with hepatitis B.

Outcome/Result

Through storytelling, Bec Johnson, a proud First-Nations and South Sea Island woman shares her story and encourages her family, Mob and community to *be tested, be vaccinated, be stronger* through yarning about a health issue that has been largely silent across generations.

*“Many people in my community who have been diagnosed have never been able to speak openly, and that needs to be addressed in a way that is culturally safe.”
Our health needs to be considered holistically, to include spiritual, cultural, mental and physical health”.*

Powerful and free: an honest conversation can be viewed [HERE](#).

Conclusions/Applications

HQ hosted a successful launch which saw key stakeholders invited and a robust panel discussion. HQ continues to distribute the film through an extensive social media campaign, and a small grants program targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused services.

Powerful and Free showcases the successful outcomes when there is meaningful engagement and true co-design with people with a lived experience in destigmatising hepatitis B.

Disclosure of Interest Statement

Queensland Health funded the creation of this film, and Gilead Sciences sponsored the launch event.