

Yarnin’ About Hep B in Custody: Supporting Our Mob Inside



Our People, Our Challenge

Our people – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – continue to feel the heavier impact of hepatitis B and C than the wider population. For mob in Correctional Centres, the risks are even higher.

Overcrowding, limited access to healthcare, no sterile injecting equipment, and **high incarceration rates** all add to the challenge.

Correctional settings can be tough places to look after your health. Shared living spaces and a lack of culturally safe care make it hard for our mob to get the support they need.

Community-Led Is Key

Programs that are **led by community** – and include **Aboriginal health workers, Elders, and people with lived experience** – are more likely to work.

Mob trust people who speak their language, understand their culture, and have walked in their shoes. That’s why when health messages come from us, they hit home stronger.

Making Resources That Work for Mob

To properly support our people inside, health resources need to **look, sound and feel right**. That means:

- Using our languages, artwork, and storytelling
- Speaking plain, respectful truth
- Respecting oral traditions and visual learning styles

When information is shared in ways that suit our ways of learning, more people:

- Start treatment
- Stick with it
- Take steps to prevent passing on hep B

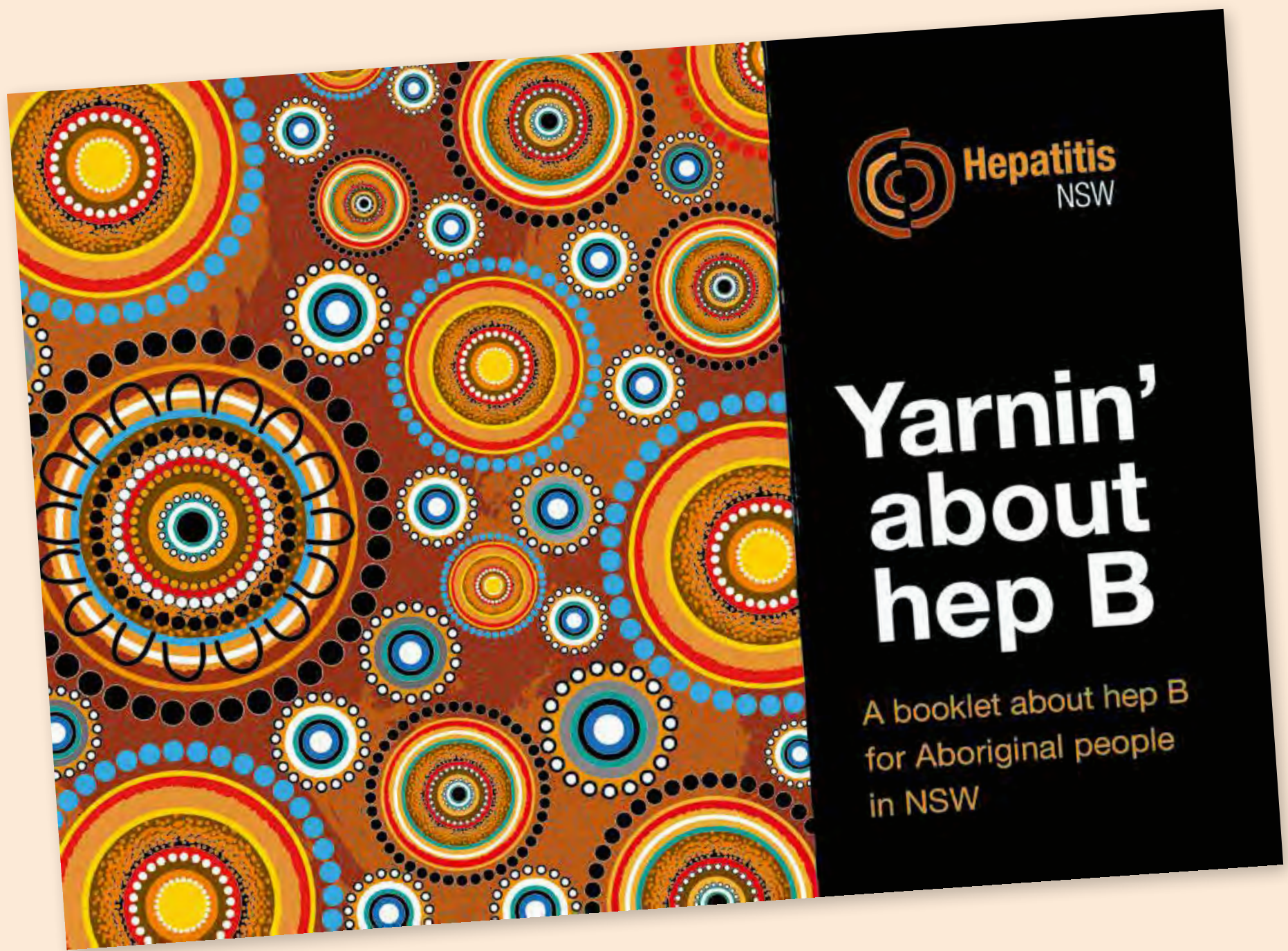
Culture Is a Strength

Connection to **Country, family, culture, and tradition** isn’t just spiritual – it’s **protective**.

When health programs respect and strengthen culture, mob are more likely to:

- Take up care
- Feel strong in their identity
- Stay engaged in treatment
- Reduce reinfection risk

This **holistic approach** – supporting physical, mental, cultural and social wellbeing – helps break the cycle of poor health, stigma, and going back inside.



Yarnin’ about hep B cover

The Role of Resources Like Yarnin’ About Hep B

At Hepatitis NSW, we’ve seen how powerful culturally grounded tools like **Yarnin’ About Hep B** can be. It’s not just a booklet – it’s a yarn starter.

It creates a space for honest conversation, guided by trusted workers using art and language that mob connect with.

This kind of approach **cuts through the shame and misunderstanding**.

To make sure it was culturally safe and appropriate, we:

- Worked with Aboriginal artist **Jasmine Sarin**, who created the booklet’s artwork, to protect its meaning and integrity.
- Had the content reviewed by the **AHMRC**.
- **Focus testing for booklet was Facilitated by Indigenous Communities in the Hunter New England and South West Sydney Local Health Districts (Annie Slater and Beverly Tyson).**
- Collaborated with Aboriginal people with lived experience and Aboriginal Health workers to guide the final messaging.



It’s not just a booklet – it’s a yarn starter.

Where We Go From Here: Our Journey With Justice Health New South Wales

We’re now working with **Justice Health NSW nurses and Aboriginal Identified staff** to turn the booklet into a **video resource**, available on tablets in correctional facilities.

(Thanks to **Kelsea**, a proud FN worker from Justice Health NSW and other nurses from Justice Health NSW, who all took part in reviewing and giving recommendations).



Walking With Mob Beyond the Walls

It’s not enough to just deliver information.

We must:

- **Connect with identity**
- **Build trust**
- **Respect different ways of knowing**

That’s how we walk alongside mob – **inside and after release** – supporting their health and healing journey. By backing culture, we’re not just treating hep B – we’re **restoring dignity**, reducing stigma, and giving our people the tools to thrive.

We’re not just treating a virus – we’re restoring dignity.

IMAGES FROM TOP: Artwork by Jasmine Sarin, Yarnin’ about hep B cover artwork by Jasmine Sarin, comic image from Tx! Mag, artwork by Jasmine Sarin, comic image from Tx! Mag.