

GUD WUN POR PLES | COMMUNITIES CREATING FOR COMMUNITY: A SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE PROJECT

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Background/Approach: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain at greater risk of acute hepatitis B (HBV) infection compared to other Australians and HBV continues to be responsible for a significant burden of ill health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Far North Queensland (FNQ).

Undiagnosed and untreated chronic hepatitis B (CHB) can have dire outcomes, particularly for those who acquire the infection early in life. Eliminating hepatitis B from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities requires concerted efforts to engage communities in culturally appropriate and significant ways.

Through GUD WUN POR PLES our Indigenous consultant/artist Arone Meeks worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at risk of or living with the hepatitis B virus (HBV) in Cairns, Northern Peninsula and the Torres Strait to raise awareness and knowledge of HBV and encourage access to testing, appropriate management and treatment for CHB infection.

The project workshops utilised cultural activities and ways of communication to provide meaningful engagement and interaction within identified communities. The workshops included:

- Acknowledgement of cultural protocols and stakeholders
- Flip-board presentation
- Creation of art work – core component
- Hep B Stigma and community expectations discussion
- Safe Sex practice and Condom use
- Encouragement to visit local health centres

Outcome/Results: Final artworks were formed to create a mural representing the “Hep B Family Tree” and to serve as constant messaging within the broader community.

Feedback demonstrated that by using art as a means of expression and interpretation and connecting to the communities on an individual level we successfully ensured that the message was heard and understood.

“This art work-shop really help me sabe Hepatitis B, and I go spek my pamle about this no-good sick, I go spek doctor more questions at next doctor clinic”

Conclusions/Applications: The project remains in high demand.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Hepatitis Queensland (HQ) received funding from Hepatitis Australia for this project. HQ recognises the considerable contribution that industry partners made to this project.