

# Your Mob, My Mob, Our Mob

Hep C  
peer education  
project



## Introduction

*Your Mob, My Mob, Our Mob* is a peer education project for young Aboriginal people with a focus on hepatitis C transmission prevention. *YMMMMOM* was developed by the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW (AH&MRC), and delivered in partnership with Hepatitis NSW.

## Background

The project was initiated as a pilot project in June 2012, due to higher and increasing rates of hepatitis C among Aboriginal people in NSW; and limited innovative hep C programs targeting Aboriginal young people.



## Collaborations, partnerships and capacity building

Collaborations and capacity building were essential components of the project. Local and state-wide partners involved were Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS), NSW Juvenile Justice, Justice Health and Forbes High School. Local Aboriginal Workers were essential partners, given their strong connections with young people.

## Project sites

- Wellington - Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health
- Wagga Wagga - Riverina Juvenile Justice Centre
- Grafton - Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre
- Dubbo - Orana Juvenile Justice Centre
- Forbes - Yorana-Gunya Family Healing Centre & Forbes High School
- Narooma - Katungal Aboriginal Corporation Community & Medical Services
- Campbelltown - Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre
- Kariong - Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre

## Street art

Street Art was the draw-card in attracting young people's participation in the project. A professional street artist was recruited to teach the history and techniques of street-art and assist young people in the development of murals depicting messages around hepatitis C. The mural canvas included: ACCHS Outreach Caravan, skate park, brick walls and on framed canvases.

## Methods

The project uses peer education to:

- prevent hep C transmission
- reduce stigma & discrimination
- advocate for at risk/affected community members.

### STAFF TRAINING AND PEER RECRUITMENT

- Week 1** 1 x day of staff training and 1 x day of peer recruitment training. This involved basic hepatitis C education, with an overview of the project for all participants.

### HEPATITIS C AND PEER TRAINING

- Week 2** 2 x days of training for young people with interactive activities on hepatitis C, and peer education. Young people designed street art murals under the guidance of a professional street artist.
- Day 3 was a graduation day which showcased the street art mural.

### GRADUATION CEREMONY

At most sites guests and services attended the graduation day and BBQ. Graduates were presented with certificates, goody bags of resources, logo beanies and drink bottles. Elected peers spoke of the project, what they learnt, and messages in the art mural.



## Results

The project successfully met its aim of piloting a peer education program with Aboriginal communities in NSW.

The project ran from June 2012 to February 2014 and was delivered at 5 Juvenile Detention Centres and in 3 Aboriginal community settings.

In total 133 Aboriginal young people participated, with 72 graduating as Peer Educators.

43 staff participated in training, including their roles in supporting Peer Educators

There are 7 permanent locally developed hep C murals. Posters and postcards of the artworks were developed and have been distributed across NSW.

A Facebook page was also developed to promote the project to young Aboriginal people.

The internal evaluation found that young people had:

- readily engaged in the project
- increased knowledge about hepatitis C
- increased knowledge in their roles as peer educators
- developed greater confidence in their ability to be a hepatitis C peer educator
- had increased commitment to sharing hepatitis C information with other young people, as well as the wider Aboriginal community.

### CHALLENGES

- Some challenges of the project were in peer follow up and financial constraints delivering the project state-wide.
- For local services, sustainable peer education has been difficult without ongoing support and resources.
- Additionally, in the juvenile justice setting the participants are often on short term sentences and the follow up is lost once they return to the community.

### CONCLUSION

The use of street art was very successful, and complements other AH&MRC evaluations that show arts based projects are effective at promoting health messaging among young Aboriginal people.

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- Bruce Cherry and Kerry Walker, HNSW project officers involved in the project
- The Street Artists involved with the project
- The Aboriginal young people who graduated as Hepatitis C Peer Educators

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