Cape York Cannabis Project Artwork Posters

This set of posters was created as part of the Cape York Cannabis Project and the Weed It Out initiative, produced by the Queensland Police Service and James Cook University. The four posters offer an Indigenous perspective on the impact of cannabis use in their communities and on their culture.

Each year many health promotion resources such as this are produced. If your group or organisation has resources which are available, the Aboriginal & Islander Health Worker Journal can help to publicise them in the Indigenous Health Promotion Resources Guide – 7th Edition, out in April 2012. Complete the form on page 13 and return it to us.

Right: 'What Indigenous peoples say about cannabis: Words from Lotus Glen': Posters were created from 12 workshops attended by 145 inmates from Lotus Glen prison. A focus group selected the most important quotes and designed this poster which was used to feedback the workshop results to all inmates. The overwhelming response is that the inmates wanted to have their stories told and didn’t want young ones to follow in their footsteps.

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

Thanks to Lotus Glen 2010

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"Smoking Dope is Not Our Culture" shows a strong Aboriginal man who has connections with his community and people however, with gunja the strong man is pushed into the background and connections can be hurt or lost. Most importantly, if the gunja is taken away the strong man is still there. Quote from artist: "You can call it gunja, weed or marijuana; it is affecting our people, our children, and our culture is fading away because of it. It has effects on the community and extends to other communities. Smoking dope is not our way of life."
Indigenous peoples say about cannabis:

from Lotus Glen

"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."

"Go bush, no drugs out there."

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

"Take young fellas fishing."

"Mens groups can do something about it – traditional cooking."

"Youth centre in our community – run by the council."

"Take them camping, show them where they came 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 got no one else to look up to."

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

"Gunja 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?"

"Cannabis is breaking up friendships. There are family fights, the kids, health problems and most of all going to prison..."

"Cannabis is not our culture" was created by an artist from the Torres Strait Islands, who says, "My painting represents the circle of cannabis in our community. Cannabis is not our culture. I believe everybody has a gift from the day they were brought to this world, Cannabis can take away that gift."