



# Look After Your Blood – Developing A Blood-Borne Virus Social Marketing Campaign For Young Aboriginal People

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## BACKGROUND

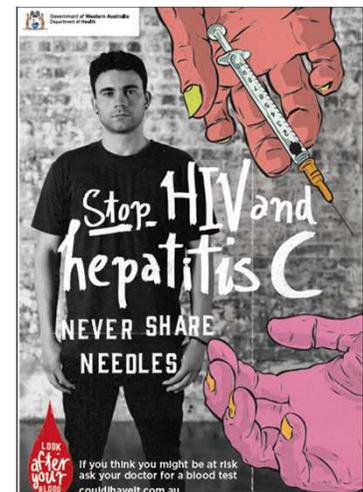
- Aboriginal people are disproportionately affected by blood-borne viruses (BBVs) compared to non-Aboriginal people.
- In Western Australia (WA) in 2016, hepatitis C Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal rate ratios for newly acquired and unspecified infections were 29:1 and 9:1 respectively, and five Aboriginal people were notified with HIV<sup>1</sup>.
- The Kirby Institute reports from 2012-16, more newly diagnosed HIV infections were related to injecting drug use in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than in the Australian-born non-Indigenous population (14% vs 3%)<sup>2</sup>.
- In 2016, the WA Department of Health developed 'Look after your blood' – a social marketing campaign targeting young Aboriginal people about BBVs.

## ANALYSIS

- The WA Aboriginal Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Strategy 2015-18 advocates Aboriginal-specific and Aboriginal-inclusive social marketing for BBV prevention messages.
- The campaign was developed in consultation with Aboriginal people including an Aboriginal Reference Group of health professionals.
- The Aboriginal Health Council of WA Youth Committee and young Aboriginal actors from the WA Academy of Performing Arts provided input into the campaign through focus groups and participating in campaign development.
- Focus groups with young Aboriginal people included feedback that there should be clear representation of injecting drug use, not just metaphors; and that 'real people' should appear in the advertisement, not cartoons or celebrities.

## RESULTS

- The primary target group was young Aboriginal people aged 16-29. Campaign objectives included to:
  - increase awareness of BBV testing and treatment
  - increase awareness of the consequences of sharing needles and other injecting equipment
  - reduce the incidence of hepatitis C and HIV in young Aboriginal people in WA
  - increase testing rates for hepatitis C and HIV.
- Key messages for the campaign centred around :
  - testing – "If you've ever shared needles you could be at risk of HIV hepatitis C – ask your doctor or health worker for a blood test"
  - treatments – "Treatments ARE available"
  - prevention – "Never share needles".
- 'Look after your blood' launched in September 2016. The 'Could I have it' website was updated with new blood-borne virus content to become the destination url for all campaign advertising ([www.couldihaveit.com.au/BBV](http://www.couldihaveit.com.au/BBV)).
- Campaign channels included social media and digital advertising (Facebook and YouTube), statewide and community radio, and regional television.
- Radio advertisements were translated into Kriol and Wangkatja languages for specific community radio stations.
- Posters were distributed to Aboriginal Medical Services, GP surgeries, needle and syringe programs, and non-government health service providers.
- Radio activity reached more than 20 remote communities, in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Goldfields regions of WA.
- The campaign has achieved strong engagement, achieving nearly 250,000 video views online alone since launch and generating nearly 2,000 comments, likes, shares or reactions (to May 2018).



Campaign poster.

## CONCLUSION

- While a formal evaluation is planned to measure the impact of the campaign, feedback from Aboriginal healthcare workers indicates that the concepts are culturally appropriate, the key messages are clear, and the adverts are catchy and graphically interesting.
- Engaging young Aboriginal people in developing and delivering strong, culturally sensitive messages about BBV prevention, testing and treatment to their peers is a Western Australian first and provides a base for future campaign development.

NB: To view campaign videos, visit [couldihaveit.com.au/BBV](http://couldihaveit.com.au/BBV).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- WA Academy of Performing Arts : Simone Detourbet, Chanelle Hawkins, Alan Little, Damian Foley and Nelson Baker
- Francine Eades
- Kathryn Kerry and Daniel Vujcich
- Chop Shop Media

## REFERENCES

1. Department of Health, Western Australia. *The Epidemiology of Notifiable Sexually Transmitted Infections and Blood-Borne Viruses in Western Australia 2016*. Department of Health, Perth; 2017.
2. Kirby Institute. *Blood-Borne viral and sexually transmissible infections in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: annual surveillance report 2017*. Sydney: Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney; 2017.