

# **Condom Tree Report**

## **Shire of Broome**

**May- August**

**2006**

## **Condom Tree Report:**

Sexually transmitted infections in the Kimberly region have some of the highest rates within Australia. Sexually transmitted infections can have serious effects on the health of newborn infants and on reproduction, causing infertility in both men and woman; they can also enhance the transmission of HIV.

Prevention of Sexually transmitted infections and HIV infections depends largely upon the promotion of safe sex practises, such as abstinence, fewer sexual partners, using condoms, not sharing injecting equipment, and early treatment of sexually transmitted infections. These issues will be discussed more in depth later in the report. In line with the National Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Sexual Health Strategy recommendations around affordability and accessibility to condoms and prevention programs the condom tree is a start to ensuring that people have free access to condoms in the Broome community.

The Condom Tree Program has been successful in other Kimberley towns, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Kununurra, Halls Creek for the past few years, and now a trial is underway in Broome.

The condom tree holders are made from PVC pipe that has been painted by the youth of Broome and placed in 5 discrete locations around town. The locations are denoted on maps, which are displayed in various community venues. HYPE workers upon request also distribute these maps. The condom tree provides private access and availability to condoms on a 24-hour basis.

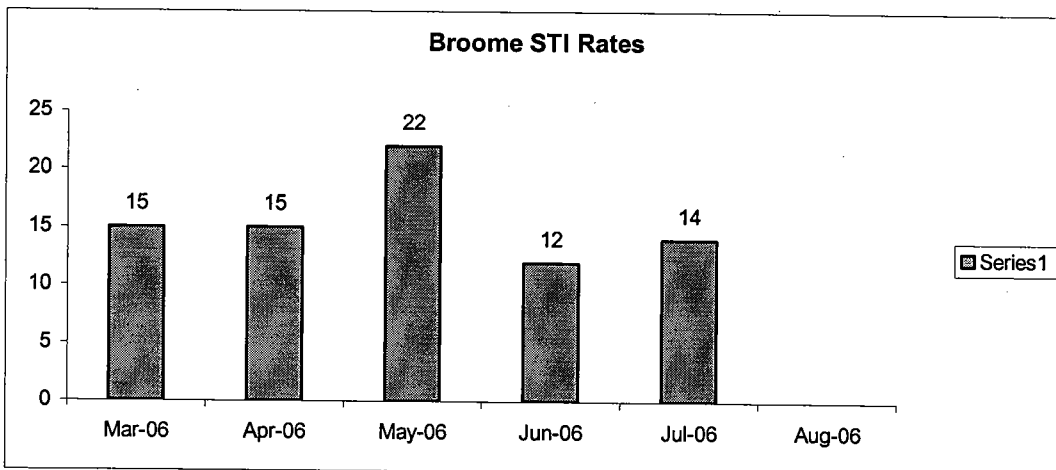
Gonorrhoea and Chlamydia are even more common in the 14-25 year age group. When community events like basketball carnivals, Football matches, Rodeos, SHINJU and tourist season are happening the rates can increase. Most times when these events are taking place and condoms are needed most service providers are not open, for example weekends and evenings. This is of major concern in targeting and trying to reduce the rate for sexually transmitted infections within the Kimberly region. There are also other factors like cost, shame and being related to or knowing someone that works in local health services that can become barriers to accessing sexual health protection.

Many communities have had condom vending machines installed, but the machines can be extremely expensive to maintain as they are vandalized on a regular basis.

### **Relevant outcomes of the program:**

The graph below shows that numbers of reported cases of sexually transmitted infections for the months March to August 2006. The graph shows only Gonorrhoea and Chlamydia for the town of Broome. The condom trees were put around the various locations in the month of May. As seen in this graph, the numbers for the two STI's increased in May, however this is more likely the result of other factors including more opportunistic testing and contact tracing for positive contacts in the previous months, and also more awareness campaigns in schools and youth groups. The numbers have since fallen again for the following two months.

**Figure 1: Gonorrhoea and Chlamydia notifications for Broome March- August 2006:**



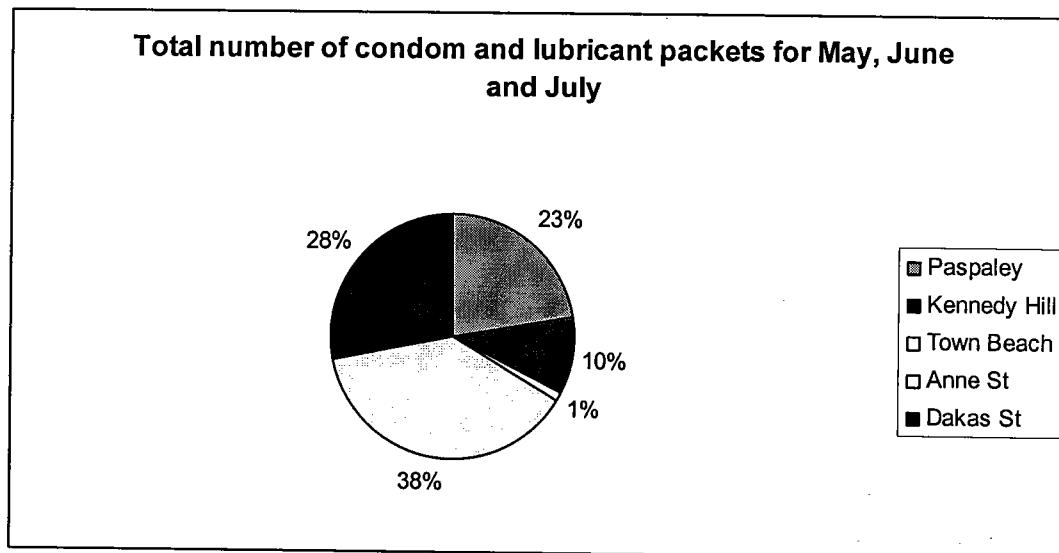
The following table depicts a summary of the condom trees for the months of May, June and July. In addition, each of the graphs illustrates the number of condoms and lubricants distributed at each site as well as the amount of condom rubbish left behind. (This excludes general rubbish e.g. cans, glass)

Table 1: Number of materials distributed and rubbish at condom trees, Broome, May-July 2006

Site	Condom and lubricant packets	Condom wrapper		Lubricant packet	
		unused	opened	unopened	unopened
Paspaley	945	7	11	12	29
Kennedy Hill	422	0	0	3	5
Town Beach	47	0	0	1	0
Anne St	1590	6	15	6	31
Dakas St	1193	10	19	2	17

As depicted in the table the most popular locations are Anne Street and Dakas Street, which are popular hangouts for our target group 15yr-25yrs. Kennedy Hill is less because of missing canisters and decisions about appropriate site by community elder. There has been minimal rubbish at sites in comparison to the usage.

Figure 2: Condom Distribution, Broome condom trees, May-July 2006



#### Total Number of condom and lubricant packets at each site

As can be seen from Figure 2, the most used condom trees were Anne Street, followed by Dakas Street and Paspaley. Thirty eight per cent of all the condoms and lubricant packets distributed were at the Anne Street site. On the other hand, Kennedy Hill and Town Beach only accounted for 10% and 1% respectively. This may have been due to missing canisters and sites not being operational for a few weeks whilst awaiting condom canisters to be made.



## **Programs in place addressing such issues as needle syringe:**

Needle and Syringe programs have prevented thousands of cases of HIV and Hepatitis C infection among people who inject drugs and in turn have protected the wider community. KPHU (Kimberley Population Health) operates a FREE fixed site NSP (needle and syringe program) from every hospital in the Kimberley region –including Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Wyndham and Kununurra. Additionally fit packs can be purchased from the 3 pharmacies in Broome and one in Kununurra.

Equipment supplies at Needle and Syringe programs includes:

- Fit packs, which contain 5 sterile syringes in a hard case “sharps container for the safe disposal of injecting equipment. Once the used needles are locked into the container, they cannot be retracted and the container can be closed and discarded in household rubbish bins.
- Additional equipment is the inclusion of sterile water, alcohol swabs and an educational pamphlet.

NSP coordinators at every hospital undergo training in Perth and all new staff in the Kimberley hospitals are orientated about the program regardless of whether they are nursing staff, doctors, cleaners, orderlies etc.

It is important for all staff to have a non-judgemental, friendly approach to ensure clients are treated respectfully, as often this is their first point of contact to seek help.

Assessment and treatment for Hepatitis C is now available in the Kimberley (rather than being transferred to Perth) and it involves specialist care and services. For further information please contact: Rhona Dawson, viral hepatitis nurse KPHU 0427 444 189

Preventative education in school and youth groups around blood borne viruses and sexually transmitted infections is done in conjunction with a health promotion graduate, who is in Broome on a 6-month secondment. Knowing the importance of preventative education in this area Kimberley Public Health unit have dedicated time in education and training for the teachers so that the education in this area can continue when the graduate has returned to Perth.

### **Early treatment of sexually transmitted infections:**

Preventative education in school and youth groups is an important element of a comprehensive strategy to reduce rates of sexually transmitted infections. There are many programs around that are designed by Aboriginal people in the community and service providers and they include:

**The Mooditj Program:** This program was designed by Family Planning WA in one of the largest Aboriginal community consultations processes held in WA. This program is aimed at indigenous children 11-14 years and looks at topics such as puberty, relationships, positive lifestyle, sexually transmitted infections, teenage parenting, future goals and dreams and how to achieve them and protective behaviours.

Mooditj programs are being held all through the Kimberley including Broome.

**Lets talk about sex:** This program was designed by Perth Population Health with young Aboriginal youth acting in the video. There is an easy to follow manual and a visual video to follow. This program looks at sexually transmitted infections and relationships.

**Growing and developing healthy relationships:** This program was developed by the Department of Health as curriculum support materials for school-based education. The program consists of 3 phases: Early Childhood builds foundations for healthy relationships, Middle Childhood enhances healthy relationships, Early Adolescence addresses healthy relationships and sexual health. The policy framework for implementation is based on three key principles:

1. Promoting abstinence and postponement of sexual activity for young people.
2. Supporting sexual activity in the context of respect, intimacy, readiness and love.
3. Encouraging harm reduction strategies for those young people who are sexually active.

Relationship education aims to ensure young people have accurate information that will enable them to make informed decisions.

**Family Life Education (FLE):** This program is run in the Catholic schools in and around Broome. Several years ago sexual health in Catholic schools was unheard of. The knowledge around the STI rates has led to Catholic schools acknowledging the importance of prevention programs.

**One on one education:** There are many service providers within the Broome area that utilise opportunities to educate young people about sexual health, including STI prevention. Services which are accessible and acceptable to young people are critical in encouraging attendance for both health and illness checks, and for promoting all aspects of health and well-being – sexual health included.

One of the issues that young people discuss with health professionals on a regular basis is the accessibility and affordability of condoms. Young people are mostly having sex at night when there is no health service open. This is a barrier to accessibility of condoms. Also not all young people have access to money to be able to buy the condoms from the chemist.

### **The HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C What You Need To Know Program!**

A brand new program aimed at youth aged 13-17 is being developed in Broome to raise their awareness on HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. The program focuses on what each blood borne virus (BBV) is, how each BBV is transmitted and how they can be prevented. The program has a total of four sessions and they run for approximately 45 minutes each. Each session encompasses a power point presentation with speaker notes and an interactive activity, which gives the youth the chance to apply what they learnt from the session.

The overall aim is to raise the youth's awareness on BBVs and by running this program it provides them with the information they need to protect them from contracting these illnesses.

**Goal:** To promote the awareness and prevention of viral hepatitis within the youth of Broome

**Objectives:**

- To increase the awareness of viral hepatitis within the youth of Broome
- To increase the knowledge of prevention of viral hepatitis within the youth of Broome

**Decorating of the PVC piping:**

The young people that attend the Burdekin youth centre donated their time to decorate the PVC piping that is used to store the condoms on the trees around the community.



# **Appendix one:**

## **Evaluation of Condom Tree**

### **Program Survey**



## Appendix one: Evaluation of Condom Tree Program:

There were 10 forms sent to each of the following Health Service providers:

- Broome Regional Prison
- Broome Aboriginal Medical Service
- Broome Community Health
- Broome Hospital
- Dakas Street
- Broome Medical Centre

Of the 60 surveys sent to the service providers 18 were returned.

### **Question 1: Are you male or Female?**

Male = 7  
Female = 11

### **Question 2: Do you use condoms?**

Sometimes  = 11                      Always  = 2                      Never  = 5

### **Question 3: Do you think that condom trees are a good thing?**

Yes = 18    No = 0

### **Question 4: Can you tell me where some of the condom trees are?**

No = 4                                      Dakas St = 4                                      Anne St = 4  
Kennedy Hill =                      Town Beach = 1                                      Paspaley = 4

### **Question 5: Do you ever get condoms from these trees?**

Yes = 10    No = 8

### **Question 6: Should the trees be located at any other place and where?**

There were several responses to the question and they included:

- Where people are sexing
- Everywhere
- Oval, beach and park
- Where people are drinking
- Public toilets
- Where ever necessary
- Backpackers hostels
- Near the shopping centres
- No

**Question 7: What may stop you from using condoms:**

There were several responses to this answer and they included:

- It is hard to get boys to use them
- Shame
- No cash, family working at the clinic
- Clinic shut when you need condoms the most
- Shame buying condoms in the chemist
- They stop you from getting sick
- If I get none
- I like it bareback
- To far to go to get them
- Money
- Don't usually have a supply on hand
- Mans don't like wearing condoms