

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
IN THE COMMUNITY

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*Mt Theo - Yuendumu Substance Misuse  
Aboriginal Corporation.*

*Mt Theo program Stage Two - Beyond  
Sniffing in Yuendumu.*

# Mt Theo Petrol Sniffer Program Working Party

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## Mt Theo Program Stage Two - Beyond Sniffing in Yuendumu

*A proposal developed by the Mt Theo Program Working Party in consultation with Walpiri Tribal Elders, Traditional Owners and Managers .*

### **Background:**

After six years of tireless hard work the Mt Theo Program appears to be on the verge of achieving it's ultimate goal - the total elimination of petrol sniffing in Yuendumu Community. This achievement is a tribute to all who have supported the Mt Theo Program and believed in it during it's long years of struggle.

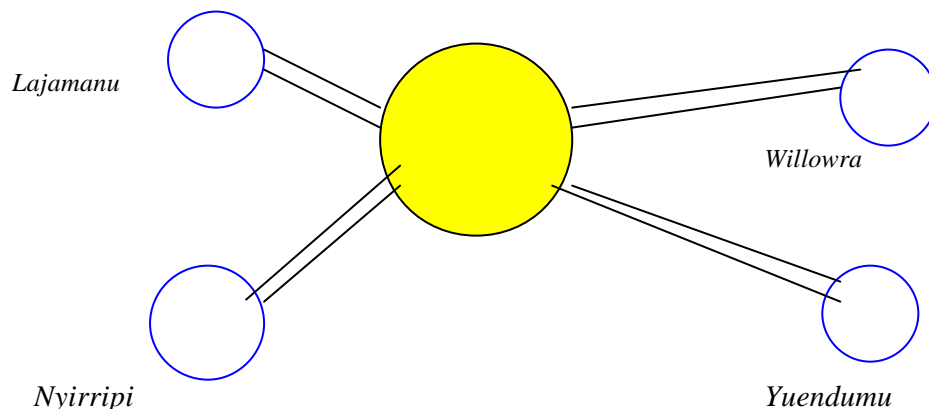
All the indicators over the last six months in Yuendumu appear to suggest that petrol sniffing is a declining practice amongst our community's youth. For example no new kids have taken up sniffing in 1999. During most nights this year there has been no sniffing at all. Over the last six weeks no evidence of petrol sniffing has been found at all in Yuendumu.

This is not to claim that the elimination of petrol sniffing in our community will be a permanent achievement. Researchers such as Maggie Brady have observed that **petrol** sniffing often recurs in communities in a cyclical pattern. We are concerned that young people in Yuendumu may at some stage in the future may be tempted to sniff again. Because of this we need to keep Mt Theo operating so that the community has an effective mechanism to deal with petrol sniffing as it arises.

Currently, however, we actually have no more Yuendumu petrol sniffers to send to Mt Theo, simply because no one is sniffing in Yuendumu any more.

We the working party are very pleased with this situation, and are now keen to develop "Mt Theo Program Stage Two - Beyond Sniffing In Yuendumu."

## Mt Theo Program Stage Two - Beyond Sniffing In Yuendumu.



*"Working to free the Walpiri Nation from petrol sniffing."*

The idea of Stage Two is to work in partnership with other Walpiri Communities with the aim of trying to free the wider Walpiri Nation from the menace of petrol sniffing.

This would be done as an extension of the current services the program already delivers to Yuendumu Community.

The service that Mt Theo would like to offer to the wider Walpiri Nation is a respite service for petrol sniffers. A place where young people can be sent to for time out from the cycle of petrol sniffing. We will offer transport to and from the young person's home community at the beginning and end of their placement at Mt Theo. We would expect that placements would last from between one and three months.

For communities to get the maximum benefit from this service we strongly recommend that our service be used in conjunction with other community strategies such as a seven night a week youth program and night patrols. Mt Theo people will come to the community to pick kids up, but it will be up to the home community to locate the petrol sniffers and persuade them to go to Mt Theo.

Transport from home communities will be direct to Mt Theo, except for medical emergencies we will not bring petrol sniffers from other communities into Yuendumu as we do not want to run the risk of them encouraging Yuendumu kids to sniff.

We propose to offer this service to the Walpiri communities of Willowra, Lajamanu and Nyirripi. There are roads connecting these communities with Mt Theo that avoid going anywhere near Yuendumu.

The routes we plan to use are the following:

Willowra to Mt Theo via Mt Bennett

Lajamanu to Mt Theo via the Tanami Road and Chilla Well

Nyirripi to Mt Theo via Minyirri Palangu, Yulmulpa and Chilla Well

We are interested in working to support these communities to deal with petrol sniffing and will make ourselves available to help volunteers and staff in these communities to develop youth programs and anti petrol sniffing strategies.

In working with these communities we see our role as one of offering a service which communities can choose to use. We wish to emphasise that we do not have any miracle cure for petrol sniffing and we do not want to be seen as big or important people who will tell other communities what to do. Rather we come in a quiet way as members of one tribe who can help each other.

We are also interested in having discussions with representatives of the Courts, Legal Aid, the Police and Correctional Services to explore productive ways we can work together.

It is the expressed wish of the working party and Yuendumu elders that we do not engage in any media coverage in regards to this program. We are happy that petrol sniffing has declined in our community and we can talk quietly about that. We began this work to save our children's lives, not to make a big name for ourselves.

This proposal has been developed in consultation with the following people:

**Founders of the Mt Theo Program**

Bamey Japangardi Brown - Traditional Owner

Johnny Japangardi Miller - Traditional Owner

Peggy Nampijimpa Brown - Yuendumu Councillor and Tanami Network Director

Andrew Stojanovski - Youth Services Manager

and

Perry Japanangka Langdon ~ Traditional Owner and Supporter jimmy lapanangka Langdon - Traditional Owner and Supporter Dennis Japanangka Williams - Traditional Owner and Yuendumu Councillor Johnny Japanangka Williams - Traditional Owner and Tribal Elder

Warren Japanangka Williams - Traditional Owner and School Teacher Ivhchael Jangala Watson -  
 Kurdungulu and Council Worker Tommy Jangala Watson - Kurdungulu and Yuendumu Councillor  
 Eddie Jampijimpa Robertson - Kurdungulu and Yuendumu Councillor Francis Jupurrula Kelly -  
 Kurdungulu and Jnr.Vice President Yuendumu Council Murray japanangka Woods - Traditional  
 Owner, Yuendumu Councillor and Aboriginal Community Corrections Officer Alec Japangardi  
 Tasman - Traditional Owner and Vice President Yuendumu Council Shorty lampijimpa Robertson -  
 Kurdungulu and Tribal Elder Roy Jupurrula Curtis - Aboriginal Community Police Officer Thomas  
 Jangala Rice - Kurdunou and Tribal Elder, Tanami Network Director,  
 and School Council Chairperson

Robin Japanangka Granites - Tanami Network Director and Walpiri Media Chair  
 Rex Japanangka Granites - Tanami Network Chairperson  
 Ned Jampijimpa Hargraves - Yuendumu Councillor and Trained Health Worker  
 Lynette Nampijimpa Granites - Yuendumu Clinic Health Worker  
 Harry Jakamarra Nelson - Yuendumu Councillor and Tribal Elder  
 Michael Morgan - Youth Development Co-ordinator

Authorised by:

(signed)	(signed)	(signed)
Peggy Brown	Johnny Miller	Ned Hargraves

(signed)	(signed)
Andrew Stojanovsky	Barney Brown

For the Mt Theo Petrol Sniffer Program Working Party