

Case study

Just us project

Details

What:

A grey brick wall at the Coen Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) is now a work of art, following a project between Coen Police, Coen Justice Group and the wider community.

Coen Police had previously observed a slight increase in illegal graffiti in Coen and sought to show young people there was a time and place to take part in street art without breaking the law.

The *Just us* project in Coen engaged professional street artist, Daniel “Wally” Wallwork to educate and engage children and young people around positive graffiti art. The project aimed to foster positive relationships between police and the wider community through engaging children and young people in a community project over the school holidays.

Daniel Wallwork worked with more than 50 local children, young people and members from the community including local Police over four days, teaching graffiti art skills, positive street art and spray techniques.

Guided by the community and with input from many, a mural was painted in the Coen CYAAA campus reflecting the school motto, values and the special animal totems of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clan groups based in and around Coen.

When:

July 2016



Wall Mural Graffiti artist Daniel Wallwork working on the mural at CYAAA. Photos courtesy of Coen Child and Family Support (CAFS)

Where:

Coen

Key stats:

- 1 artist
- 4 volunteers
- 50 children and young people participated in the activity

Financial contribution:

\$5538 – Regional Arts Development Fund

Contact for further information:

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Links:

<http://mypolice.qld.gov.au/farnorth/2016/07/28/police-help-coen-kids-bring-wall-life/>

Outcomes

- Participants developed new skills and knowledge in using street art in a positive manner.
- The project has increased pride in the school environment. Police have since recorded zero incidents of graffiti or willful damage within public spaces in Coen.

The kids helped transform a boring wall into a colourful piece of art, something that they can now sit back and proudly look at for years to come.

(Acting Sergeant Derek Hicks)

- Feedback from participants involved in the project was positive. Ninety per cent of respondents rated the project as good or excellent.

It was fun learning how to use the spray can properly and watch the wall as it transformed into the mural which we all helped paint

(Child participant)

- The project has strengthened positive relationships between the community, the Police and the Coen Justice Group.

- Street art projects will continue to be used in Coen to support community cohesion. There was initial discussion in the group around other areas in Coen that could benefit from similar projects.

Learnings and reflections

The project has improved relationships between the community and police, created a new artwork and increased community pride.

One challenge experienced at the beginning of the project was engaging participants aged 12 to 18 years old. Organisers found that engagement increased once this group were more aware of the project and the painting started.

The tips for those planning similar projects:

Don't be rigid with plans and directions, allow flexibility.

Seek and accept input and feedback from community members and don't be afraid to chop and change.



Completed Mural at CYAAA. Photos courtesy of Coen Child and Family Support (CAFS)