

# Peer education based brief interventions increase safer injecting practices in street based sex workers

Presented By

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Sex Workers Outreach  
Project

*I find people are either repulsed or fascinated by it....the ordinary, extraordinary lives of sex workers*

**Amber- sex worker**

# About SWOP- Our Vision

- Elimination of HIV and other sexually transmissible infections in the NSW sex industry.
- A strong, healthy, resilient and empowered sex industry workforce in NSW.
- Elimination of discrimination experienced by those involved in the sex industry.
- A society that respects the link between health and social justice.

# We believe in...

- Inclusiveness, respect and self determination
- Peer education and support
- Social justice
- Working in partnership
- The equal right to health and workplace safety
- Harm minimisation
- Portraying sex in a positive way
- Sex work as a valid occupational choice

# SWOP Services and Programs

Services and Programs informed by NSW Health's:

- HIV & STI Strategies
- HEP C Strategy
- Implementation Plan for Aboriginal People

Service Models include:

- Peer education & outreach
- Harm minimisation (NSP)
- Health promotion
- Community development.

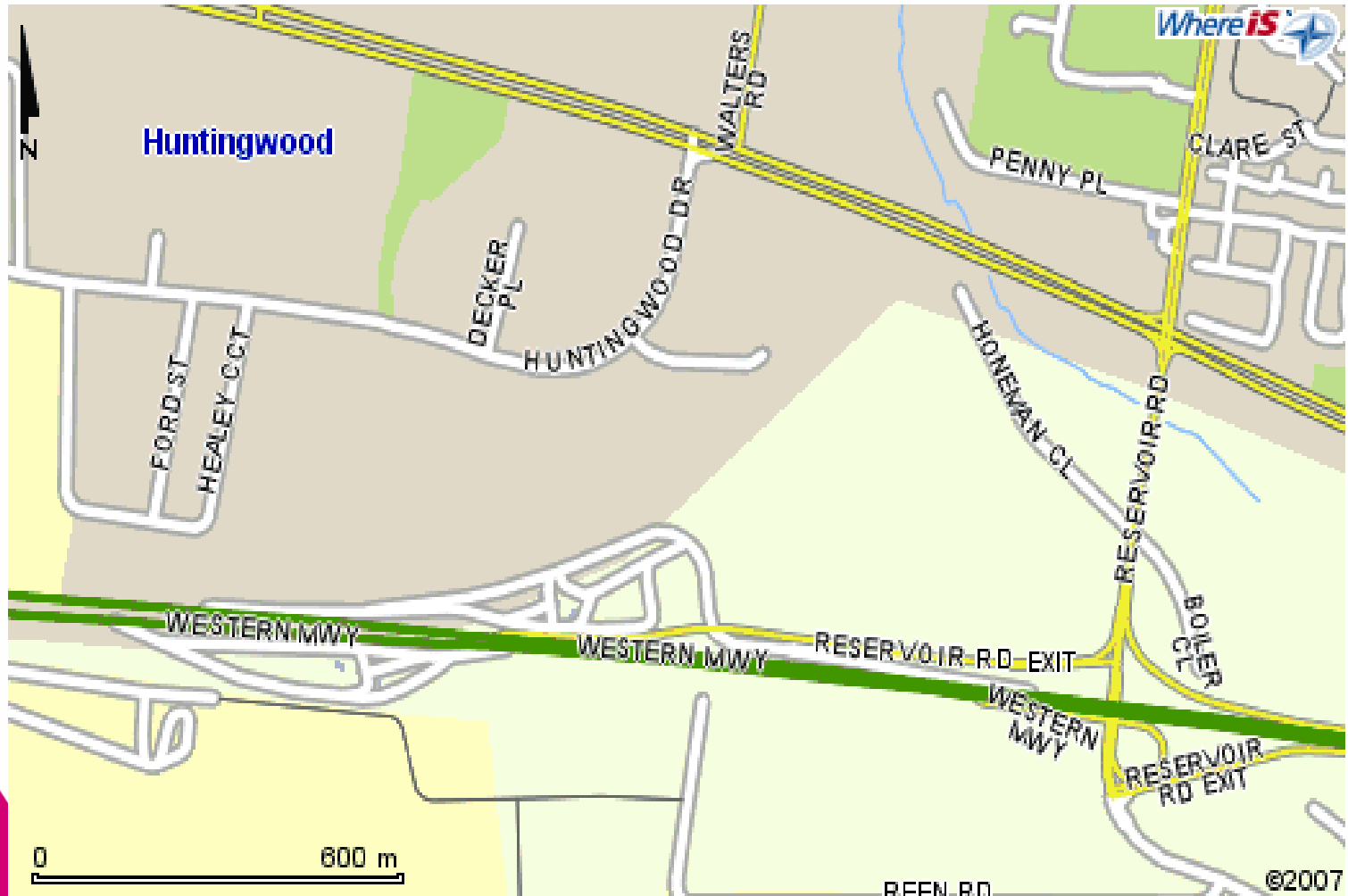
# Project Background

- Established street based sex work area
- Regular sex workers, many been regular workers in area over past 5 years
- 2003-MIOS report (internal, not published) documented that *43% of GWH sex workers regularly observe direct sharing of IDU equipment and 29% admit to using their own equipment.*

# Project Background

- 2004- WSAHS and SWOP employ part time project worker through COAG funds
- 2005-May 2007 SWAHS NSP responsible for service delivery
- May 2007 Part time SWOP project worker recruited through COAG funds
- December 2007 Part time becomes full time

# Outreach Area



# Street Based Sex Workers May –November 2007

- 21 regular sex workers
- Aged between 18-65 years
- Female and Transgender
- High rates of homelessness
- High rates of violence
- Mental health issues
- 83% of the sex workers stated that they regularly reuse and share injecting equipment.

# Project Aims and Objectives

- To increase safe injecting & safe sex practices
- To improve health & safety
- To establish & support peer standards of safe behavior
- To minimise the transmission of HIV/HEP C & STI's
- To increase sustainable access to relevant, appropriate harm reduction & primary health care services.
- To maintain an effective street based outreach service for these sex workers
- To increase their opportunities for health interventions

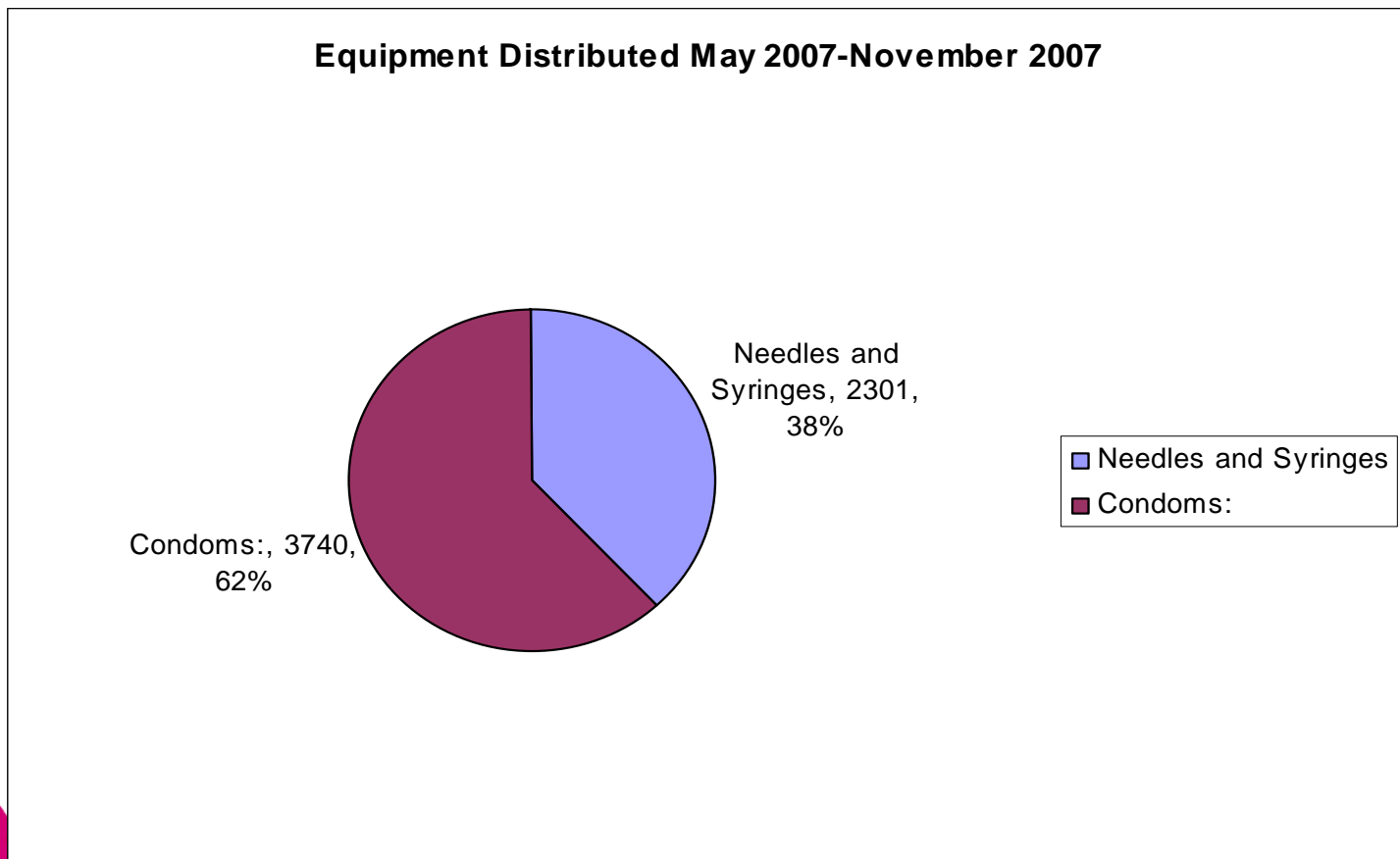
# Sex Workers

- An average of 121 needles and syringes and 196 condoms were distributed per outreach
- 25% requested information around issues of violence.
- Heroin is the drug of choice however increasing rates of methamphetamine use have been reported.
- 83% state they regularly reuse and share injecting equipment due to the lack of access to NSPs.
- 66% state that they don't access any services other than the SWOP GWH outreach.
- 60% requested information on safer injecting.
- 15% requested information on safe sex.

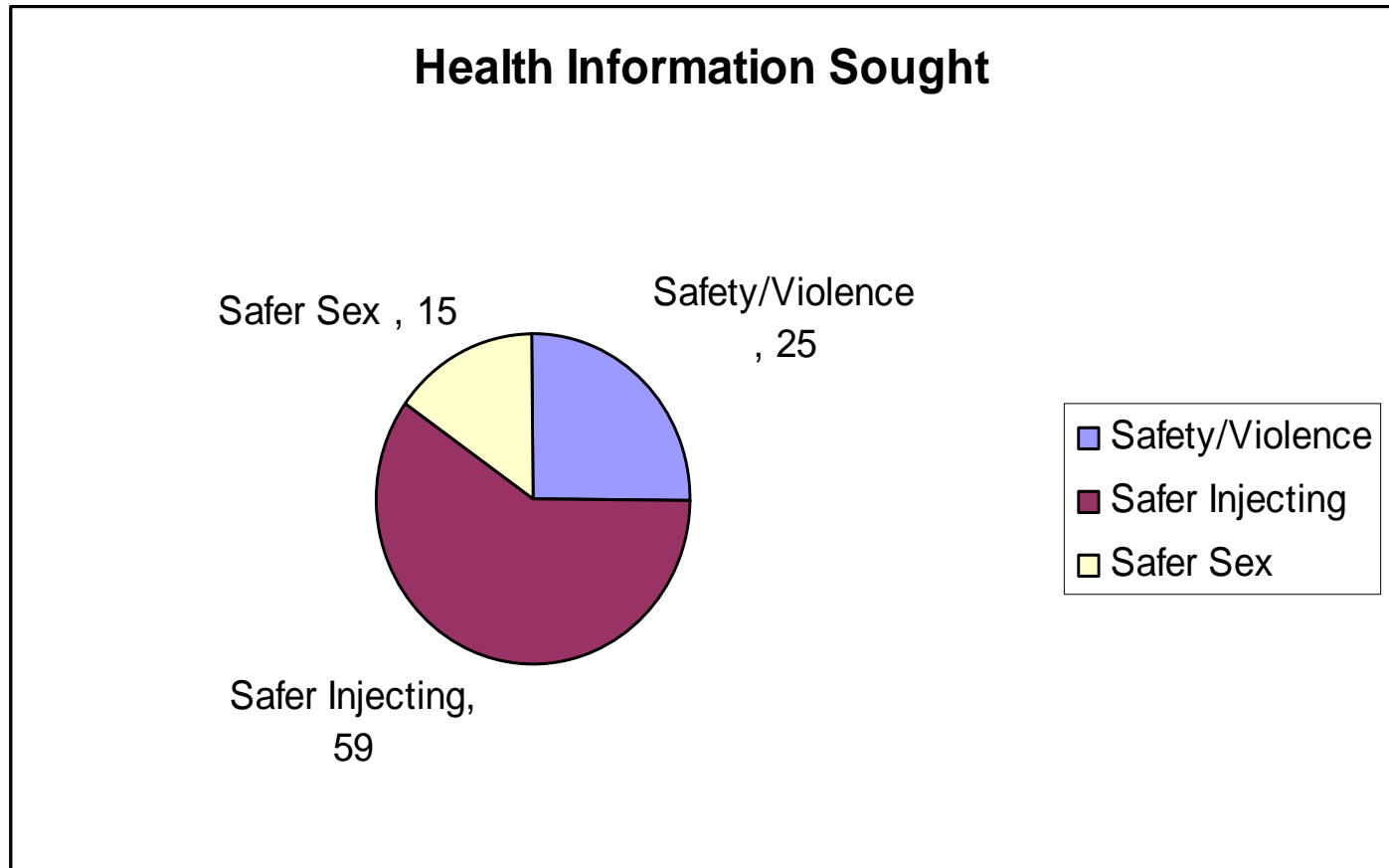
# Outreach



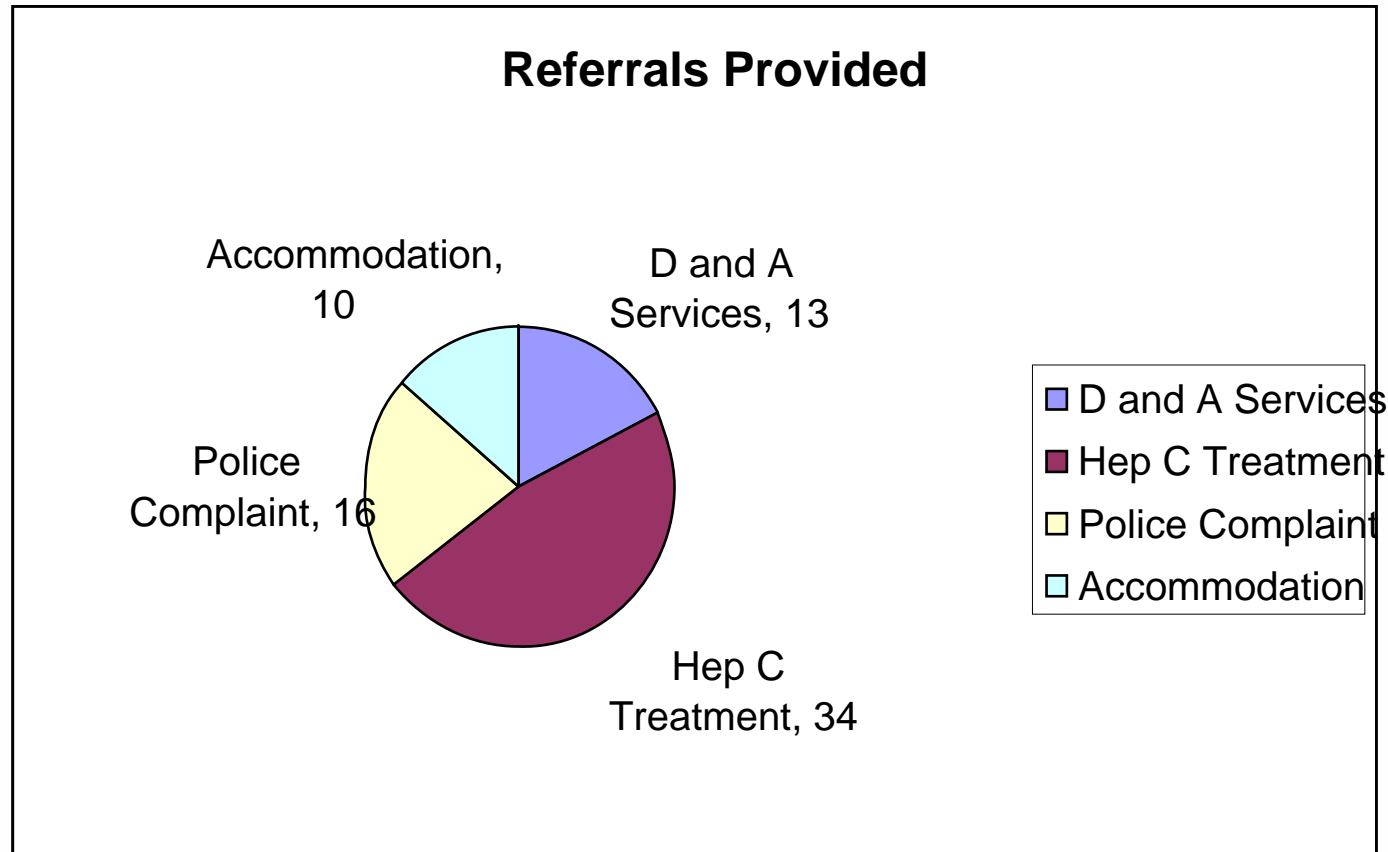
# Equipment Distributed May 2007- November 2007



# Health Information Sought



# Referrals



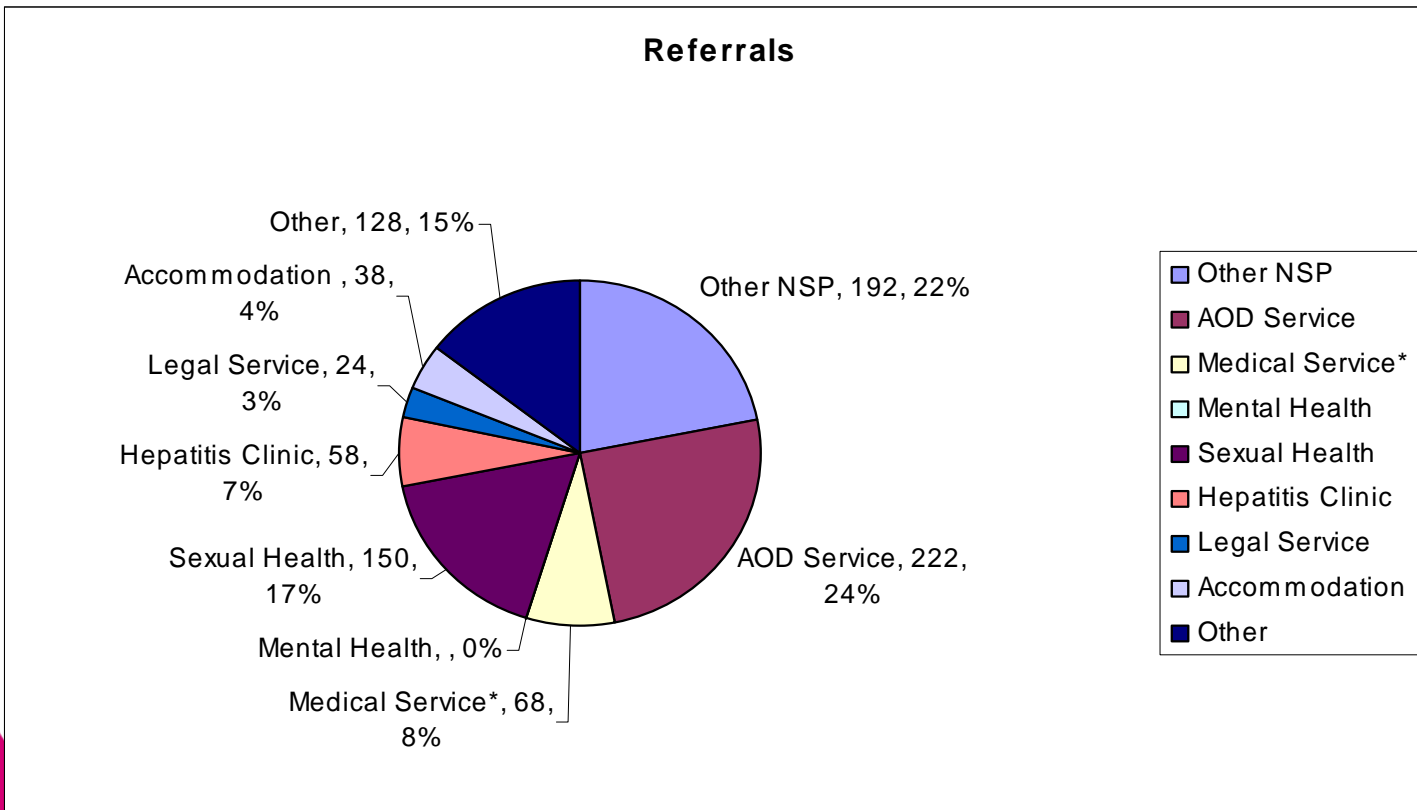
# December 2007-June 2008

- Full time Project Worker
- Non health partners- NGOs
- New sex workers to area
- Change of outreach night
- Busy Summer period in industry

# December - June 2008 Results

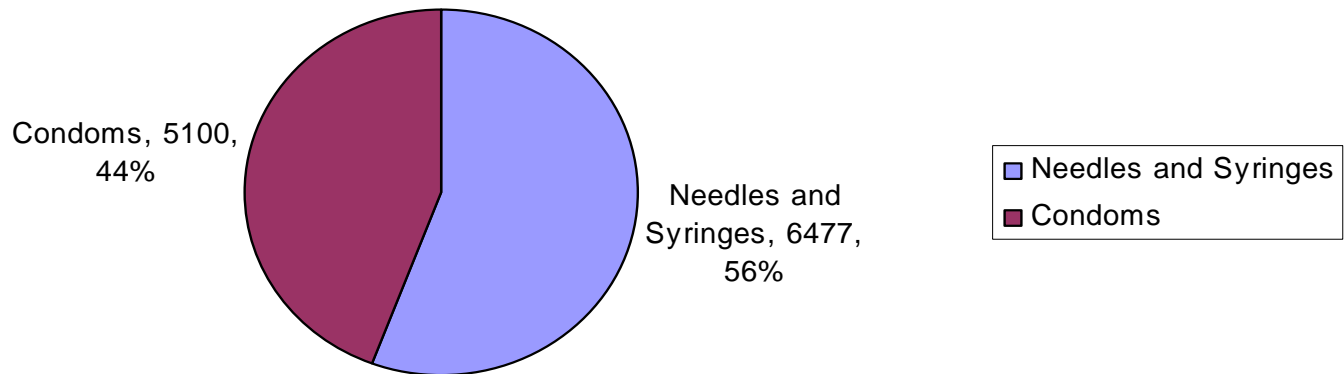
- Decrease of 63% in sex workers stating that they regularly reuse and share injecting equipment.
- 16% increase of sex workers accessing other services. Previously 66% of sex workers only accessed SWOP, and no other service
- 11% increase in referrals to D and A Services
- Outreach partners from counseling services
- 18% increase in amount of needles and syringes distributed

# November- June 2008 Results



# December - June 2008 Results

Equipment Distributed December 2007-June 2008



Every flavor for you at  
the end of the rainbow!



I have a feeling  
we're not in  
Kansas anymore!



# Current Issues

- Poly drug Use
- Alcohol use during the day
- Transient, new workers- brothels
- Increase of homelessness- no services available
- Violence between workers
- Mental health

# Summary

- Providing regular, consistent outreach to marginalised, isolated IDUs results in a significant decrease in IDU risk taking behaviour
- Need to look at non traditional outreach partners that can assist clients
- Need for accommodation services for IDU in Western Sydney
- Supportive relationship with Police

# Thank you

