

Watch out for COP THIS!

By Hannah Roe, NT Legal Aid Commission

This month a group of enthusiastic Indigenous students were involved in the film production of "Cop This!"

The "Cop This!" film is based on the popular "Cop This!" booklet, a publication that provides information to young people about their rights when dealing with police.

The booklet is co-produced by the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission and the North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service and has been so popular with high schools, young people and youth service providers around the Territory that it has been reprinted three times since the first edition in 1999. The latest edition was published in 2003.

The necessity for a video version of "Cop This!" arose out of a recognition of the language and literacy difficulties faced by many young Indigenous people in remote communities. These same young people, particularly males, have a disproportionately high rate of contact with police and the criminal justice system in general.

The film production of "Cop This!" has been a school project with students from Ludmilla Primary School. The school caters for those young people (primarily Indigenous) who have slipped through the mainstream school system.

Over the last 12 months, the students have been involved in developing the script, rehearsing their roles as the main characters in the video, as well as writing a rap song that will



An interpreter is called to assist police to interview James.

accompany the video. Through this process the students have developed their reading, writing and interpretation skills.

Their involvement in this project has given them a thorough appreciation of the rights and responsibilities of both the police and young people when dealing with the police.

The NT Police have been heavily involved in the script development and production of the film. Participants were able to interact with members of the police force who played themselves in the video. This developed their understanding of the work the police do as well as having both young people and the police interact in a fun and creative endeavour.

The film was shot on location at Bagot Community, NAALAS office and the Mitchell Street Police Station.

The "Cop This!" video was filmed with the assistance of the Law Society Public Purposes Trust. The project was produced by local production company @PRODUCTION. The project organisers would like to thank Ludmilla School Teacher Donna Minchum, the Bagot Community Council, NAALAS, NT Police, Jaime Dallas and Evelyn White for their assistance. Once editing of the film is completed, the film will be widely distributed.

For further information about the *Cop This!* video and/or booklet contact the NT Legal Aid Commission on 8999 3000.①



The police present the Sports and Rec Officer with a search warrant.



Scott is charged at the police station and accompanied by his father. In the video his father is played by former AFL player Chris Lewis.