



27<sup>th</sup> March 2023

### **Schools hail police Copen awareness**

Schools that have received the Copen awareness program delivered by the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) and Australian Federal Police (AFP) have hailed the program as a success.

The copen awareness program, which is supported by the RSIPF-AFP Policing Partnership Program (RAPPP) and other stakeholders, has covered 11 high schools in and around Honiara. The program aims to reach 30 high schools.

RSIPF Honiara City Operations Manager, Inspector Tex Tafoa, said copen is a concern for the police due to its harmful effects on children.

Operations Manager Mr Tafoa attended a recent awareness session at St Johns school on 23 March.

He said cases relating to Copen have ended up at Police Stations for settlement with parents complaining to Police about their children being affected by Copen.

Inspector Tafoa said a more proactive approach needs to be taken to deal with Copen.

Police are working to increase awareness about the effects of Copen on users and consequences on sellers if any user died as a result of taking Copen.

Sergeant Tristan Collett of the RAPPP Health, Wellbeing, Gender, Youth and Community Engagement (HWGYCE) team said it is estimated that the Copen messages delivered through the awareness program has reached over 6,000 people including students, teachers and parents.

“Student participation in the program has been fantastic. We have designed a number of interactive games and role-playing scenarios to assist in delivering our Copen awareness messages,” Sergeant Collett said.

He said students also engaged with the awareness team by asking questions concerning copen and are provided with answers.

“We received many positive comments especially from teachers and principals. The RAPPP Copen awareness program reaffirms and supports the messages schools delivered to the students against the use of Copen as it is harmful,” Sergeant Collett said.

He said there is no doubt that Copen is an emerging issue facing youths of the Solomon Islands and the fact that Copen is relatively cheap and accessible to youth is concerning.

It is clear from the school visits that students are well aware of Copen.

The Copen awareness program is designed to bring a collaborative approach with partners in engaging and educating students on the harmful effects of copen.

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**Media inquiries**

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The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) was established in 1954. Its mission is 'To provide a safe and peaceful Solomon Islands by strengthening relationships with the community'. The RSIPF strive to provide efficient and effective policing services for the Solomon Islands and expect RSIPF officers to adhere to the RSIPF values.

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