The work of young bush artists is bringing positive health messages to patients at the Alice Springs Hospital.

Two panels painted by young artists from Yuendumu were unveiled at the hospital today by Minister for Central Australia, Dr Peter Toyne.

The panels were produced using some of the cans of spray paint purchased in May by Dr Toyne after local retailer Mad Harry’s decided to stop selling this product.

“This project shows what can be achieved when people work together to solve a problem and how a situation that was endangering kids can be turned around into something positive,” Dr Toyne said.

“We had a situation in Alice where kids were chroming, putting their health and safety at risk, and action by retailers, youth workers, police and Government had an immediate effect in curbing chroming around Alice.

“Now we have these great artworks with their healthy life messages, produced using the spray cans that were causing so much harm.”

The panels are on display at the Alice Springs Hospital paediatric section.

The Jara Pirrjirdi project in Yuendumu, with artist Ochre Lawson, worked with young artists to draft designs which were then painted on to the boards.

“The paintings tell stories about strong ways of living and the dangers of sniffing,” Dr Toyne said.

“They’re bright and colourful and will really get a positive message across to young patients.

“I’m proud we’ve had such a great outcome with this project and I’d like to congratulate everyone involved in producing these great paintings.

“The Territory Government is preparing legislation that will back-up the great work that is being done in tackling volatile substance abuse.”

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