

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

SUBSTANCE ABUSE COMMITTEE

Membership:

Ms M Scrymgour MLA (Chairperson)

Dr C Burns MLA

Ms S J Carter MLA

Dr R S H Lim MLA

Mr E McAdam MLA

Mr G Wood MLA

COMMITTEE BRIEFING

Tape-Checked Verbatim

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 3 October 2002

Womens Group, Nguiu, Bathurst Island

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SUBSTANCE ABUSE COMMITTEE - 3 OCTOBER 2002

TAPE 1C

Madam CHAIR: Most of you were here this morning, I mean one of the things the Committee is doing is going around all of the remote communities, or we are trying to visit as many as we can.

Last year parliament established this Committee. There are six members but there are only four of us on this trip and we are doing an Inquiry right through the Northern Territory looking at the issues of alcohol, ganja and petrol sniffing, and the impact of that. What we will do once we get a lot of those views put together, we will put a report to parliament with a number of recommendations, recommending to the House how different recommendations on those three issues. As well as remote communities we are also planning to do public hearings in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice.

We have heard a number of views, both, yesterday we were at Garden Point and Milikapiti and again this morning meeting with various groups. And, although sometimes it is hard when a lot of the views that come through on this issue sometime it is mainly a lot of the men and the women sometimes do not get a chance to voice their opinion about, especially if it is grog and the ganja. So this is an opportunity to maybe talk through and tell us what some of those Before we go I will get both members and Gerry, I think a lot of you know Gerry Wood. He has gone to visit Sister Annso it is going to be taken up with..... Sister Ann. But I will get Sue and Richard to just give a briefand some of you.....this morning

Ms CARTER: My name is Sue Carter and I am the member for Port Darwin which is the electorate that picks up the inner city of Darwin. I have been in the Northern Territory for about 22 years most of that time in Darwin and Katherine and I have spent most of my time in the Territory as a nurse and particularly in the area of orthopaedics which is looking after people with broken bones.

And I can remember as a young nurse being quite shocked at the number of women who would come into Royal Darwin Hospital with fractures as a result of domestic violence. And in the Northern Territory the most common fracture amongst women is the radius and ulna, here, from defending themselves from a blow. In the rest of Australia it is a fractured hip for women which you get from getting old enough to get osteoporosis and your bones getting brittle and falling away. But it is different in the Territory. It is the fractured radius and ulna. And it always used to upset me when I would see a room of fourAboriginal ladies all with their arms in plaster, their faces beaten up. And that is why I am very interested in the issue of domestic violence, and one of the causes of that is alcohol of course. And that is why I particularly wanted to come on this group, and to see if there is anything we can do to help.

Dr LIM: My name is Richard Lim. I am from Alice Springs, from the desert country. I have lived there 21 years now. I wasbecause of my parliamentary role. I am a doctor by training and have lived in Alice Springs for the last 21 years.hospital as well as my own private practice and I think domestic violence, you know, alcohol and all the issues related with it are ofconcern for us whether in Alice Springs, the Top Endanywhere.....we have lots of Aboriginal men attacking Aboriginal women. That is only because of the alcohol, and also vice versa. In Central Australia lots of women getand I think it is important for us to learn respect for each other and maybe somehow through the parliamentary process we can help improve the situation.

Madam CHAIR: As well as our Committee we take along our staff. Pat Hancocksecretary looks after all our travel and just looks after us.and look after them. And Elizabeth Farland works for the Legislative Assemblyand they come with usnot just today but yesterday andsome trips and you might see her a couple of times back here with me is Eileen Cummings who most of you know.....because Eileen is doing the indigenous family violence. And something that I am very very, just like Sue, committed to, earlier this year we did a motion in parliament on domestic and other violence against women. One of the things that I was disappointed though and I did not say it, and I should have said at that time when that motion went through was that it was only all the female parliamentarians that stood up and spoke in relation to that violence, that motion and there was not one male parliamentarian.....chatter.....and I am not

saying that they did not care but it was certainly an issue that affects us all, and something that Eileen observing and coming along on these meetings with us is to pick up on some of those things, because we are looking at a strategy and she will be taking that up. So that is what her presence in this.....

But it would be good to get the women's view on the grog and the ganja. The impact on our kids, we listen and we heard about the impact that it has on the community in general and on individuals. We see that impact. I mean every time we hear of a suicide and the impact of that suicide. But there is very, we need to look at and listen to, I mean that impact on our kids is just what it is about there. So, we have come here to listen to you women.

Ms CARTER: How do you feel it is going at the moment? Is it getting better or worse?

Ms JOHNSON: Worse.

Ms CARTER: It is getting worse. Why is that?

Ms JOHNSON: Worse, because we got grog,..... and ganja, and I do not know how we can stop it.

Ms CARTER: Can you remember back to a time when it was not a problem?

Ms JOHNSON: It was a happy time.

Ms CARTER: A long time ago. What happened, what was it like when it was good and then what happened?

Madam CHAIR: When there was no problem you know, no problem.

Ms JOHNSON: It was no problem at all. We used to have.....every day, our kids.....every day.....know what there was.....at the club. We used to have a club too.....before we used to have six can.....

Ms CARTER: And things were better then were they? So you were able to have like a club with six cans but still the community was working pretty well, and it was still happy. So what has changed?

Madam CHAIR: Where they have that thing there? Is it that tap beer, where they have bought in that tap beer and they have got their little cups and they are drinking too much or is it on a, you know guzzling.

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI:consuming just too much in that time.....set a limit.....I am just defusing it down a bit.

Madam CHAIR: So if they got rid of that, just say if they did not have that tap beer and they had say limits, say six can limit or something, and even then they had that time span, if they had can limits, would that make it better do you think?

Ms CARPENTER: They would not panic so much. People got to get there and you know, drink as much as they can before it closes. They would not panic they would sit down and relax.

Ms CARTER: So is what you are saying that once upon a time you could get six cans and if you had not drunk three of them, you could take them away? Is that what people could do?

Madam CHAIR: Could they take them cans home out of the club?

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: In 1960take away only six cans, and bring it home. There was no problem.

Madam CHAIR: So they could take their can and sit down and drink.

Ms JOHNSON: Yeh and drink at home.

Madam CHAIR: So just say if they introduced, say they introduced in the club, got rid of that tap beer, cause I think that tap beer down the little clubs.....they are trying to drink big mob of it. If they had six can limit every person right can only have six cans, and you only drank three in there, do you reckon if they took the other three home, that would be a good thing?

Ms JOHNSON: We don't know.....drink the whole six can in the club

Unknown woman- just drink it all at home.

Chatter

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: I think it is better to drink a can of beer in the club.closing time and everyone go out. I think that thing with tap is no good, is too much

Madam CHAIR: Should the hours that the club is open be extended?

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: It open from 4 o'clock and then shut about 4 o'clock, I mean 7 o'clock I mean

Ms CARTER: That is now isn't it?

Unknown female: Now

Ms CARTER: Do you think it should be changed, like say maybe hours longer, say 4 until 8 or 4 to 9 so that people might not rush as much, panic as much

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: When it is time, 7 o'clock everybody rush hey, 6 o'clock I mean, 6 o'clock everybody rush for to buy their beer.

Ms CARPENTER: Still you know when it is about to closeten minutes before it is going to close everybody goes buy more beer and panics, you know everybody does. Especially now cause we think it might not be open tomorrow.

Ms FERNANDO: It is a very hard question, a hard question to answer.

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: So some people will get free beer, they are banned from the club for one week and when they go back to the club we know that next weekbanned from the club for one week, likefor one week and then when I go back to the club, next week, back of the club for one week. On that list, they put their name up on that list for one week. And then when I go back to the club I still pay for the free beer that I drank. If I drink free beer, full glass, and I pay, that's \$3.51 for a glass of beer.

Ms CARTER: That's expensive, isn't it?

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: Mm.

Madam CHAIR: That's equivalent to what, 6 beers in Darwin? \$15.00 for six beers?

Mr McADAM: I don't know, I haven't bought it for a long time.

Ms CARTER: So would six cans be less beer than what people would be drinking in those clubs?

Interjection: Yes, yes. For sure.

Dr LIM: A cup of beer would be about half a can at the moment.

Ms CARTER: So you're saying on average people are drinking more than 12 of those cups when they go in?

Ms CARPENTER: They could be, yes. It depends what day it is and it depends what day was pay day

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: So when they look at the time, we look at the time we see going to 7 o'clock with our ticket.

Ms CARTER: How many cups of beer do you reckon you drink?

Ms CARPENTER: Only two. Before it used to be the biggest mob, but today we've got the rule, every person has two glasses.

Ms CARPENTER: At the end there, just the end there you can only put two glasses down.

Female UNKNOWN:

Ms CARPENTER: He used to but he only puts down two now at just before seven. Because everybody's rushing and rushing. Can't put ten, people won't get theirs.

Ms CARTER: In a normal night, say you've got money ... have enough money and money is not a problem, and get there right at 4 o'clock and leave at seven, how many cups of beer do you reckon you might drink that night?

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: You mean at four?

Ms CARTER: You start at four and you finish at seven?

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: I drink one glass from four 'til half past six. I have to go and buy another glass; get another glass.

Ms CARTER: So you might only have two drinks that night, all up?

Ms CARPENTER: How many do you fill up? Were there tickets ... how many tickets were there when you used to drink?

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: \$21.00, that's four tickets isn't it? Six. I've got \$21.00 and six tickets.

Ms CARTER: So ...

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: I drink slowly and when I see the time coming to half past six, then I ...

Ms CARTER: No, no, I believe you.

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: I look at the time.

Unknown FEMALE: So that's only three cans, so that's pretty good really.

Dr LIM: But I also heard this morning that most people go to the club and buy \$100 worth of tickets, for the three hours. Is that right? That's what I heard this morning, they said they bought \$100 ...

Madam CHAIR: They might buy bulk tickets. They might buy bulk tickets but they'll keep it for next night ...

Unknown FEMALE: They keep it for the next day.

Ms CARPENTER: And family too, I mean there a lot of them giving it to family.

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: Keep the ticket for next day.

Ms CARPENTER: So the next day you go straight in and get that ...

Ms K. TIPUNGWUTI: always crowded. It gets really crowded pay day days so people don't have a chance to have beers. Every pay day people rush, in a panic, pushed ...

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: Crowded.

Ms CARPENTER: Too crowded, can't get in.

Madam CHAIR: we were just talking about the issue of whether you ... there's tap beer at the moment, or whethertalking about the 6 o'clock swill ...

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: and have a can of beer.

Mr WOOD: Well my argument was ... I'm not saying it wouldn't work but previously when they had four cans and six cans they went and played cards and they played cards for cans of beer and two people went home very, very drunk and may be the others didn't, but that still created some fairly major problems. They used to say it wasn't allowed but people would go under a tree and play for cans. Now if that changes I don't have a problem with it.

Ms K. TIPUNGWUTI:

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI:play for a can of beer, no.

Mr WOOD: It was a long time ago. And then someone will drink twenty cans and the others will drink one.

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: I can tell you, you were saying that we used to play for a can of beer, we used to play on the right person. I used to drink in the club and we used to drink only a glass of beer and we used to play cards, and we used to give him one, one glass of beer.

Mr WOOD: Yes, but that was before the glass. When they had cans they'd play for cans, yes. My memory goes back a fair way. I used to see the sights a can of beer, we used to pick it all up.

Ms POANTUMILIN: But there was no problem that time.

Ms K. TIPUNGWUTI:

Ms PURANTATAMERI: Early in '60s, '70s there was not problem. The only problem we had is only, you know, sniffing petrol; that all the problem we had.

Madam CHAIR: Petrol sniffing?

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: In the '70's there were real problems. There were people dying on the roads from drinking, car accidents. person dies taking cartons to drink. It's Just got more ... and you've got more, you've got drugs thrown in as well now.

Madam CHAIR: If there were no problems or there was a little bit of a problem back then, why is it then we've got problems now?

Ms JOHNSON: Maybe the ganja; ganga and grog.

Ms M. TIPUNGWUTI: There are a lot of young people missing out on getting help from social workers. They're missing out on help from social workers.

Madam CHAIR: What, like mental health ...

Ms M. TIPUNGWUTI: Mental health in that time. Not many help.

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: Not enough support.

Ms M. TIPUNGWUTI: No support.

Mr WOOD: Do many women drink?

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: Few

Ms CARPENTER: one third or ...

Mr LIM: How many people in this room don't drink?

Ms C. PURANTATAMERI: I drink.

Mr LIM: Don't drink, don't drink.

Ms CARPENTER: do you think about a third of women drink and the other two thirds don't drink? From Like we've got, about 15 or something and I think about a third of them drink and the others don't.

Ms J. PURANTATAMERI: I don't know ... I like to ... the day for a drink because we work hard enough. Just like to have a drink and go home and relax. You know, use your common sense with drinking. Social drink, everything, even if it's with family.

Mr LIM: But with men sometimes you will sometimes find that there is pressure for them to drink, all right?

Ms J. PURANTATAMERI: With the men? Yes.

Mr LIM: You know, like you're a sissy or you're a wussy and all that and you must drink. Is there any pressure to make women drink? Do you friends say you must drink?

Madam CHAIR: I've seen a lot of women when I've come back sometimes and I go and look in that club, I've seen a lot of women that never used to drink, and they now drink, you know, and they used be part of that strong women and a now a lot of them are in there.

Mr LIM: Why? What has happened? Why, because peer pressuring them? Why?

Ms CARPENTER: family problems and they family problems and it's one way to get out of it.

Mr WOOD: Is it cool for young people? Is it cool to drink? Like, you know, when you use the word cool, means is it right to drink now, you know?

Unidentified FEMALE: For young people?

Mr WOOD: Yes, well cool is the work they use.

Unidentified FEMALE: Young teenagers are picking up ...

Unidentified FEMALE: Deadly.

Mr WOOD: Deadly, yes.

MS J. PURANTATAMERI: The other thing is I think that what I've been thinking all the time, the alcohol people, men and women, they should, or they like to come over and understand what the real alcohol does to the families, because as you said on the program, visit the families and talk to them and talk about the alcohol because you can't say to a family alcohol is terrible; you can't say you've been drinking all the time, so it's not on. We have to share the understanding about the alcohol to a

person who is on alcohol, so maybe, if we've been worried about it, take them on the program and take them to see the program and what it's all about.

And then see and find out there that the alcohol is to a family. It's not a person. But you can understand what the alcohol is. So it's not a person, it's the alcohol that does that to a person to destroy the family's life. So a person should understand alcohol and it can destroy the family's life. It would be good for our people to understand about the alcohol so they can really understand what it does to a family. Especially our young people today. They just can't go and drink and drink. They've got to know what the alcohol is.

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: I think it depends on how people consume it though, how they drink it, depending on the individual person.

Ms J. PURANTATAMERI: And that's a problemthere.

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: The trouble with alcohol is the people consuming it.

Madam CHAIR: each individual because sometimes they drink ...

Ms J. PURANTATAMERI: We just have to go over it, they've got to understand.

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: It's how they behave afterwards ...

Madam CHAIR: ... how they carry on after.

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: It's how they carry on later.go to that club to socialise.

Mr WOOD: Do you think that alcohol itself is stopping Nguiu grow as a place for people to get employment and to expand?

Ms CARPENTER: Ganja seems to be ...

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: But I think it started with alcohol and then there are various issues.

Mr WOOD: No, I mean do people ... for instance does alcohol cause people not turning up for work.

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: No I don't think so. It's just up to the individual to get up then.

Ms J. PURANTATAMERI: I think

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: If they have a strong cuppa

Mr WOOD: Yes, all right, I'll put it another way. He might get to work but can he work as well as you should? If you had a hang over and he'd d been drinking every day of the week. Does that help him ... does this place have people working at their best or are they at 50%?

Ms CARPENTER: I'm finding that with young staff, I want young girls to come and work here, but it's really hard to find young girls because they, you know, they don't wake up in the mornings with the ganja, they can't get to work in the morning.

Madam CHAIR: And is that because of grog or is that because of ganja?

Mr WOOD: Or both?

Madam CHAIR: Or a mixture of both?

Unidentified FEMALE: Anything, not just ganja and grog. They must be or anything, don't blame ganja or alcohol,

Madam CHAIR: Because sometimes when we ... can I just ... I mean sometimes when we're discussing these issues and the committee, I mean they are the three things, alcohol, ganja and ... and sometimes people, when there's all these problems happening you can blame ganja and you can blame grog, but there are other things that are underlying that. That's what I was saying this morning. You know, why are our young kids going to the club? Why are drinking? Why are they smoking ganja. There are other things as well that are causing them to ... and problems, people say problems. I've heard people say I'm drinking because I've got problems. I'm having this smoke because I've got problems.

Mr WOOD: What about gambling? Playing cards late a t night, is that one reason for not getting out of bed?..... money.

Ms CARPENTER: It's definitely one reason I have knocked staff up to turn out to a creche; once in a while. It's not ... but it's definitely one reason that they're tired, like, we're really tired. But, you know, get to work, keep the discipline. Okay, if you want to play cards all night, that's all night but just get to work because that's your job, but they're tired.

Unidentified FEMALE: They'd be tired from playing cards.

Ms CARPENTER: Especially after social club.

Mr LIM: Just now a lot of you put up your hands saying you weren't drinking. Do you try and convince your husbands not to drink also, and your children? Would you stop your husband from drinking, or say don't go to the pub tonight or don't go to the bar tonight, stay home. Do you tell him that or do you get scared that they might hit you? They try to hit you instead?

Ms CARPENTER: My husband does; I let him go twice a week. Other than that, you know, I do cut him down, I say, no you only go twice a week, and he's been known to spend that much money. I lecture him, yes. I don't want him coming home drunk because of the beers. It's no good, changes how you think.

Mr WOOD: Do people worry about their personal health from drinking too much. Just forget all the violence and all that stuff, but if you have ganja or if you have alcohol continually, for a long period, your body starts to have problems, diabetes, obesity, all those sorts of problems. Do people worry about their own health or having too much of the ...

Unidentified FEMALE: not aware of it.

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: some don't.

Mr WOOD: I'm not sure they're not aware of it. I've seen many a program here about how to make people aware of it, but whether they take it on board, I don't know. But most people know that a lot of people die

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: Some people know about kidney disease and ...

Mr WOOD: I just think sometimes people worry about the violence and all that and the other effects, but sometimes people seem to think well as long as we get rid of the violence and we turn up for work and all that, but we sometimes don't worry about our own health, keeping our bodies in good nick.

Dr LIM: For a desert person I'm feeling very cool in the airconditioning.

Mr WOOD: You should be right after last night, Richard.

Mr LIM: So you were the one who had the air conditioner on last night?

Mr WOOD: I had ice starting on my nose last night it was so cold.

Madam CHAIR: Have you got any more questions?

Dr LIM: Well, with ganja, how much of a problem is ganja compared to alcohol? Which causes more problems? Alcohol or ganja? Which one?

Ms M. TIPUNGWUTI: They like to mix it I think.

Dr LIM: When they mix it.

Ms M. TIPUNGWUTI: Sometimes if they drink and they and then they ...

Unknown FEMALE: we don't drink, we don't smoke.

Ms M. TIPUNGWUTI: to be honest, my husband smokes and he goes to drink at the club and

Mr WOOD: Do they sell ganja at the club?

Ms M. TIPUNGWUTI: No he doesn't.

Mr WOOD: No, do they sell it at the club as well?

Ms M. TIPUNGWUTI: They're not allowed.

Mr WOOD: I know that, but you know, out the back around the corner?

Ms M. TIPUNGWUTI: No, no.

Madam CHAIR: So when they're mixing those, that's when a lot of the problems come when they're just mixing it.

Ms CARPENTER: Sometimes they have problems when they try and get ganja and if they haven't got enough money and they have to get a loan for their ganja, so loans and things like that, that sort of thing. At least with that beer, you know it's not much money and all that sort of stuff and there's no trouble with that about money about that, but ganja is trouble with money, you know, from that person that sells you that ganja and all that sort of stuff. That causes big troubles, about who's getting in and all that, the dealers.

Dr LIM: You were talking about, you know, about being married and your husbands; what about your children? Are your children causing a lot of problems with ganja? And we heard this morning that some children are coming to their parents asking for money for ganja and you say, no I can't give you money and so they say, if you don't give me money I will kill myself. Is that happening to you?

GROUP: Yes.

Dr LIM: So how do you deal with it? How do you deal with it when your child comes to you and says, give me money for ganja. If you don't I will kill myself. What do you do? How do you ...

Ms FERNANDO: Run away.

Dr LIM: You run away?

Ms FERNANDO: I talk to myself. I have my son. Sometimes he asks me for money, I say no, and he's threatened me, I just walk away. When I come back I feel sorry, I feel sorry with a smile, I feel sorry at him and what he needs.

Dr LIM: So you give the money to the child?

Ms FERNANDO: I have my son, I've got one son.

Dr LIM: You give it to him or you don't give it to him?

Ms FERNANDO: I gave him money once.

Ms CARTER: How old is he?

Ms FERNANDO: He's 29.

Ms CARTER: So he's not young.

Ms FERNANDO: Only once I gave him ... I worked for the money. I worked.

Ms CARTER: Where do you work?

Ms FERNANDO: At that but I didn't ... I work for myself, I don't give him my pension. I did once when he asked, no I do like, no.

Ms CARTER: You had to.

Ms FERNANDO: I had to. Only once

Dr LIM: When you son or your daughter says give me money or else I will ... if you don't give me money I will kill myself, do you believe them? Do you believe they will do that or do you think that is just a silly ...

Ms T. PURANTATAMERI: Sill talk to just give them money I think.

Unknown FEMALE: We do, do and they come out and say I'll hang myself and we have the fear inside us.

Dr LIM: You get scared? But do you think that it's silly talk or do you think it's real?

Ms FERNANDO: Because they might do something, you know?

Dr LIM: Yes, and what do you think? Do you think it's silly talk or do you think it's real, that they're going to do it. What do you think?

Madam CHAIR: Some of it has been real. Some of them have done it.

Ms FERNANDO: Had happened to me with my son.

Ms JOHNSON: It's very real. It is very real.

Ms FERNANDO: But I was lucky.

Ms CARTER: What, he tried to do it did he?

Ms JOHNSON: I was wrong my son, it was really for ganja. he drinks and comes home talking, saying ... he said ... he used to look at people and he used to them. Then after that he comes and says things about me, but I don't take notice. I'm there to help him and I told him straight 'I want to help you. Alcohol and ganja, it's not right for you. Because I'm a mother I'm able to him properly, it's my job. And then to go along many, many years and put up with it, but it took me a long time. asking for ganja and before I used to give him, I used to get parent pension and sometimes I used to give him \$10, \$30.

But he was spoiled, he wanted more and more; give, give, give. But I had enough, I'd had enough I did. I've got to be hard this time. Then I went home ... he had this girlfriend, I don't know ...said 'Why are you doing that?' Banging himself on the cement, on the post. That's all I do, I have to pray because I went back to look after my house, he came back. That time I was very hard on him and said had no money for ganja and beer and he cut himself here, with scissors.

Then I got all Friday night and all day long. So they took him to hospital, they brought him back, and the police came along too, and then they said to him 'Could we take your son to that police place. and I told them 'No way', and they said 'No. Don't you want your son be helped we'll have to take him to a sober up shelter. Then they came back. They brought him back

Ms CARTER: How old was he?

Ms JOHNSON: he's hurt me, you know? Instead of shouting who can I go to? Who can help me? I had to do it by myself. So when I he came to my house and I said 'No, you've got to find a way. You found yourself in, you put yourself in you've got to find your way out and he took maybe two or three months and then I after he came back he said no, I'm going to give up grog and ganja but I didn't believe him. I said to him 'That's good' there was nothing to think about, you know. Then he got than thing you know.

.....and I explained to him and I said 'No, you've got to go out'. But today now he never goes away, he never goes with people, his friends; he's got a lot of friends; he is just stuck in his room. And people want to know, when can he come back and talk to people. Even in my mind you knowand thencame to help. so today he's alright, he's working.

Dr LIM: So what changed him? How did he come good?

Ms JOHNSON: By talking to him and telling him that I love him, care for him, so he's better now. He's working, he's going out, got good friends, playing cards sometimes. Like me, I play cards. So I'm happy now.

Ms CARTER: How long has he stopped using it now?

Ms JOHNSON: What's today? What's this month?

Dr LIM: Before bush. Before bush holiday.

Ms CARTER: So June.

Dr LIM: June, July.

Ms JOHNSON: July. The first time I took him out bush and I was thinking, when he asked his brother to come for wallaby, me and my grandchildrenit was alright, he got two wallabies.

MR WOOD: His own was still good.

Ms JOHNSON: So you know it was really sad for me, but to help our children, you know, by talking to them, caring, just to love them and care for them but we have to be hard too. When he asks me for money or bucks, I said 'I've got no money. I've only got a little bit of money left.' go bush. He'll change, he's young and sometime he'll listen to me now, then he came back home, otherwise he walks around saying things to me and I tell him, not to take any notice, be yourself. That's all.

Ms CARTER: Do children ever physically attack their parents in order to try and get money? I ask that because I know it happens in white communities now, like in Darwin and Palmerston. Teenage boys in particular are physically attacking their mothers to get money. Does that happen here?

Ms JOHNSON: It happens here too.

Ms J PURANTATAMERI:it's not only old people in this community, we support them, the families and the men, especially the children. We are looking too, we support them. And the problem seems to me when I see around the community, my feeling that the ganja is the

biggest problem, by looking at the ganja and the alcohol. It's the community, as we're not trusting each other, we are not dealing with the good things together, like the community as a better community. It is what we want. Because it's not the first time we are having this meeting together and discuss the community. We see the good side and we're trying to make an even better side for the community. We are the ones supposed to do this and deal with that and if we get young people involved and the older people involved.

For today we have got fourin group so maybe Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday we meet withgroups. There we can spend our time talking to them of good things like when we are getting a job and talking to the young people about this ganja and beer. That is too much coming to one group so we providing a tribes, four tribes, so each time whenI would today, maybe today, they going to come together with the families and we sit and we will talk about what the good side for us toour community for the benefit is planned for this next year, year 2000. Then the other group comes, otherone day a week they discuss about it, then from the four groups we come together and share what else in group says, you know, we come and share together. So we look at the other side, we look at the big side of that plan that we do and if the support plan from the different tribes says we keep that. So we are the strong ones

Ms CARTER: It sounds like a good idea

Ms J PURUNTATAMERI: But that is what we are looking at. That we don't going to stop. If we find that way that it is working, the community, then we keep doing it, the whole season.

Ms CARTER: Well that sounds good

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI:be a better community. So every night I stronglycome together and discuss about it.

Ms CARTER: Does that include young women as well?

Ms J PURUNTATAMERI: It includes the youngChatter.....when they see us.....chatter.....that is where we have got to share some thingsat the community what seems to be good, better.....It is us people thathow we can change it. We have to see how we can change it.

Ms CARTER: You have just mentioned the Church. Is the Church still strong in Bathurst or in the Tiwi area or is it fading away?

Ms J PURUNTATAMERI: Just little school like us about 30, 40, 50.

Ms CARTER: So the Church is not as important to people and others involved with it as they used to be?

Ms J PURUNTATAMERI: So everyone today are not involving in good sides, even that Church. For everyone to go out to school and makeinvolving the culture with children. There maybe about 4, 5.

Ms CARTER: And is that not many?

Ms J PURUNTATAMERI: It is not many. So the children are always there. The elders fromcome over involved in there.

Mr WOOD: So you are saying even cultural matters people are not taking interest any more. Not only the church but the culture. People are losing interest.

Ms M TIPUNGWUTI: Language.

Ms J PURUNTATAMERI: That isat the school and outside the community that culture is just the same. And the Church is just same.

Mr WOOD: You are not worried about, people are not worried about the bigger issues?

Ms J PURUNTATAMERI: No, cause if you go at the football you can see everybody
.....

Ms M TIPUNGWUTI: At concert everybody there.

Mr WOOD: It is not the only part of the world where it happens

.....Chatter.....

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: It is only women, we are not as strong.this community.

Mr WOOD: I am married to some, one. One is some. Chatter.....One, but I know

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: I would like to share this with you. In the early days the ancestors, men was the leader, today, and we, and the women used to follow footsteps. But today, we are looking at today, is us ladies in the front. We in the front, we leading.

Mr WOOD: Why, what has changed?

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: I don't know, but the men

Madam CHAIR: Because a lot of them are drinking?

Mr WOOD: It's the same in a lot of communities now.

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: Men should be the leaders.

Madam CHAIR: Then there's positive things happening like the strong men's groups are getting better. I mean there is some positive stuff happening. I think one of the biggest problems that has happened over here is the breakdown of the skin groups. We haven't had skin group meetings like used to be, and I think that getting all those skin groups to start you know

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: We started one last month.

Madam CHAIR: talking andculture strong again and that the problem is dealt with, that is where the key is.

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: And we are not looking at only the alcohol and the ganja, but other issues like HIV, STD that is the main problem in ourit is not only looking atwe have got a big problem ahead of us. So we are trying to go and go slowly working with the young people and

Mr WOOD: Is there wrong marriages, wrong, are people crossing over?

Madam CHAIR: Oh God, there has been a big mob of that, and a lot of it has been the cause of the breakdown of skin groups and that is where theseare

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: So what we looking at, we got a problem of ganja and alcohol. Now we've got the health problem too, so slowly we are working amongst young people

Ms M TIPUNGWUTI: And education too, and education.

Ms CARPENTER: But that wrong way relationships that, I know it is making very sad

Madam CHAIR: And that's why they do smoke and they do drink and they do do everything else. I looked at myChatter - Language.....

Ms J PURUNTATAMERI: so it is not only from thecommunity. We care about any other community.....it wantsso we just play them good messages around the amenities.

Madam CHAIR: The skin groups are important.

Ms J PURUNTATAMERI: That's what we do.

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI: I'm not sure but I've just lived here for three years. I am not sure about the women.....by their.....shelter here. Are women sheltered withChatter.....

Unknown person: so we haven't gotresource centre. We needfor this year, for next year. We haven't got for long time, maybe five years.

Mr WOOD: Was that the building on the corner? They took it down. There was one on the corner.

.....Chatter.....

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: That's why our women, we use the Church. That's where we meet. That's where we discuss. That's where we make plans.

.....Chatter.....

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI:I'm wondering where the ladies go next year. Is there somewhere they can meet.....

Ms CARPENTER: The clinic, I mean if they areget funding, but

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI:the building where they could go tosleep for the night.Chatter.....

Madam CHAIR: Oh no never used to be. This has been a problem for a long time, even when I was living here I used to have all, some women used to come and stay with me. We should have, there should have been a women's shelter.

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI:never seen a building.....Chatter.....

Unknown female:we need to have a women's centre, where women talk about We haven't got money.

Ms CARTER: Would the men be against it? Do you think the men would be against a women's shelter or a women's centre?

Mr WOOD: They had one here before, they had a sort of one. It's been pulled down. The building next to

.....Chatter.....

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI:I've been living here for three years now.

Ms C PURUNTATAMERI: We got to get that house, that building, that NORFORCE old building. I think they going to renovate that.....Chatter.....

Ms CARPENTER: The Health Board though say they haven't got any money. They are stopping lots of things. They haven't got any money.

.....Chatter.....

Unknown female: I am sure they can renovate an old building.

.....Chatter.....

Madam CHAIR: I think we should sit down and talk about that. Chatter..... I went to come and talk to you , you mob were still in first aid.

Mr WOOD: They were doing first aid today. There were all these women lying on the ground with bandages over them I thought there had been a bus accident.

.....Chatter.....

Madam CHAIR: I'll come back and we'll just talk about that.

Mr WOOD: Can I just ask about this youth centre here? What is the place next door here, behind us? Does it close at 4 o'clock or something? Someone said

Ms CARPENTER:get enough staff or making programs all the time. They can't get a lot of staff.

Mr WOOD: The only reason, I am only thinking across the top of my head, but someone said to me we're looking at trying to say have an alternative for people having, young people having to go to the club. Could that be an alternate for your strong, what is it strong men.

Ms CARPENTER: They would find it hard to get staff that want to work there.

Mr WOOD: What about the strong men, they themselves staffed it?

Ms CARPENTER: I just know thatChatter.....

Unknown person: But would the strong men allow it?

.....Chatter.....

Ms CARPENTER:the Territory is very intensive about public liability andchatter... but they have triedpopular butto do so many activities all week

Madam CHAIR: How about the pool? I mean that was the other thing I noticed, that none of the kids are in the, I mean is it broken?

Ms CARPENTER: It has got a hole in it.

Mr WOOD: Get it repaired Monday, I

Ms CARPENTER: At the bottom of the pool there is a hole and it should be open in one month but it is really good for younger kids. Older kids don't seem to go in it so much. It is good for the kids under 14 year olds, that have

Mr WOOD: It is a pity we can't have something that is an alternative for that.....not just for little users, but bigger users as well.

Ms CARPENTER: But after 4 o'clock it is very hard to get the people.....

Unknown female: I will talk to you about that after.

.....Chatter.....

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI: I was just thinking about those beer tickets what they give out.....have to pay for those tickets. And they use them on the next day and so on. Shouldn't we have a system where they put a date on , with a day on.....instead of saving up for the next

couple of days and getting more beer. With the days on the ticket.....use them. All different coloured tickets with the date on and for the day. Cause thatmaybe another idea I don't know,use the same thing over and over the next couple of days, look at something that.....stamping dates on them, and get some colours or whatever.

Ms CARTER: I wonder why they use tickets? Why don't you just buy them?

.....Chatter.....

Madam CHAIR: No it puts pressure on carrying that cash and then having to pull out that cash at the time they go.....family members.....Chatter.....

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI: With different colours for the day. You know the date on it.

Madam CHAIR: So they can only buy so much for that day and they can only use it that day.

.....Chatter.....

Madam CHAIR: I asked the licencee last time for me to be invited to that meeting. I would love to come. Club executive invites me I would love to come.

Mr WOOD: You better push. Use that same energy.

Madam CHAIR: There are a some issues that I would love to talk to the Club Executive about. Not in this capacity, but as the local member. There are issues that I would like to take up with the Club.

Mr WOOD: You can do both.

Madam CHAIR: But can still talk on behalf of this Committee I might

Ms CARPENTER: One thing that Maggie and I talked about when we sort of heard about this meeting was that we could just say quickly that the little kids.....we often see that money going for beer and ganja instead of food, and that is a very big issue, especially with little kids. The smaller kids don't get so much food

Mr WOOD: Does money go on cards as well?

Ms CARPENTER: Cards, ganja, grog. So the little kids sometimes, they are hungry, especially just a day, two days before pay days or pension days or whatever. They are really hungry.

Mr WOOD: Those issues were around, I mean that is why you find it hard.....

Ms CARPENTER: It is the same thing that people found

Madam CHAIR: In your.....do any of the parents pay for those kids for their meals Wendy?

Ms CARPENTER: Yeh, slowly we are getting that system that parents pay \$10 per week.

Ms M TIPUNGWUTI:30 to 35

Madam CHAIR: And most of them will pay, or some of them won't because they want to keep the money for.....

Ms CARPENTER: For regulars, it is not much to pay, \$10 per week is not much but that is meant to cover food, Council won't, department were really concerned that they were meant to pay for something and that \$10 was meant to cover their food, and the parents will take responsibility for knowing that the children are there and that sort of stuff. So about half of the children pay at the moment probably, but we always bring those ones in first that pay, and I know it might be the same issue but it.....

Mr WOOD: Children will hardly be

Madam CHAIR:the parents find it hard to pay \$10?

Ms CARPENTER: Oh well, actually most of them don't mind

.....Chatter.....

Ms CARPENTER: you can relate that cause they're all playing cards.....not wanting to take care of their kids, or ganja they're all smoking.

.....Chatter.....

Ms CARTER: This happens in Darwin as well. I go to the St Mary's School board meetings and my electorate picks up some very wealthy areas as well as some very poor areas, and I have heard from Sister Helen who runs St Mary's Primary School that one of the groups that are the worst at paying their school fees, and the school fees are about \$200 a semester are the rich people. You know. They will go on an overseas holiday, no worries, but they won't pay their school fees, and maybe some of the people here can afford to pay the \$10 but would just rather spend it playing, gambling or something like that.

Ms CARPENTER: It is just the responsibility of knowing where their children are and knowing oh well you know

Ms CARTER: And people know that if I don't pay, nothing happens. You know, St Mary's aren't going to kick kids out of school because they didn't pay.

Ms CARPENTER: Same with us it is not as if.....not going to feed them or whatever.

Ms CARTER: And parents know that.

Mr WOOD: There is always a question about Social Security payments about whether they should be all cash or whether they some form of a food

Ms CARPENTER: Well, we get those fees from Centrelink or through CDP so we actually getmost of the fees come from, we have organised through Centrelink from their family payments. So that is quite a good system really, cause it comes out of their

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI: Before we close, I don't know what time you close, but I just have one other issue of great concern. I am looking at the counselling for young teenagers. I mean you say they might be involved with ganja and alcohol, and maybe sometime in their life they may need counselling. I mean they could have withdrawal symptoms, I don't know what they call them but that is what I call them, they might need help and there is no-one there to really go to and to confide in someone if they have a problem they need to get out. I don't know whether, I just have a problem why people.....

Dr LIM: Would you think the team at the Health Centre

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI: I think we haven't got a counsellor to put in place yet, and I think we really need that.

Mr WOOD: Mental Health people, they seem to

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI:some of those people don'tconfide in those mental health

Mr WOOD: Well they haven't got much money of course, that is one of the problems.

Ms CARTER: There are lots of men there as well. I didn't see women mental health

.....Chatter.....

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI:to be able to trust those people maybe not enough, telling somebody oh.....confidence in those people.

Madam CHAIR: Do you reckon it would be better to have counsellors from, I know one community they didn't want their local people to be counsellors because they didn't feel comfortable with going and talking to their own mob. They wanted someone from outside.

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI: Someone from outside

Madam CHAIR: They didn't feel comfortable talking to their own mob, especially if it was family.

Unknown female: They just have an outside.

Madam CHAIR: So external counsellors, people that are not family members, cause I know a lot of communities used to ask for people from outside the community. They felt

.....Chatter.....

Ms CARPENTER: Certainly the women's mental health one or women's, we have never really had.....that blonde hair, she was a good member of.....

Unknown female: Sometimes young people don't trust

Ms CARPENTER: She was here for about two years. She was really good, but.....she used to really go outwe need people more like her, more mental health and more counsellors definitely.

.....Chatter.....

Unknown female: But still there is a crisis and so

Madam CHAIR: Alright, thank you very much.

END OF SESSION