



MEDIA RELEASE

Substance Abuse in the Community

3 April 2002

Seeking Public Input into the Substance Abuse Committee

The Northern Territory Parliament's Select Committee on Substance Abuse in the Community has commenced advertising for public input to its inquiry.

Established by the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly in late-2001, the Committee is charged with inquiring into community concerns regarding substance abuse, trends in the use of the various legal and illegal drugs and their impact in the Territory at the urban, regional and community level, as well as the services currently available for addressing the problems.

The Committee is to report to the Legislative Assembly on these issues, as well as appropriate policies and services for the prevention and treatment of substance abuse.

Its initial focus is on alcohol abuse, petrol sniffing and the use of cannabis.

The Member for Arafura, Marion Scrymgour, is chairing the Committee, which consists of three Government, two Opposition and one Independent MLA. Other Members are as follows:

Dr Chris Burns, MLA, Member for Johnston
Ms Sue Carter, MLA, Member for Port Darwin
Dr Richard Lim, MLA, Member for Grotorex
Mr Elliot McAdam, MLA, Member for Barkly
Mr Gerry Wood, MLA, Member for Nelson

Ms Scrymgour said that, in recognition of the breadth of its charter, the Committee has, initially, set itself the task of investigating the results of earlier parliamentary and other inquiries into substance abuse.

"The work of the Government Taskforce on Illicit Drugs recently established by the Minister for Health cuts across the Committee's charter to some extent and we are keen not to duplicate work.

"The Committee met with members of the Taskforce last week to discuss their respective programs and a close liaison will be maintained during the course of the Taskforce's investigation.

"However, the bodies have distinctly different charters. While the Taskforce is to report to the Minister in May this year, the Committee's inquiry is broader and is established by the Legislative Assembly to which it reports.

"The Committee will be prioritising its inquiry over the following months and is keen for community input to its deliberations. It also hopes to meet with representatives of a federal parliamentary committee which is looking at aspects of substance abuse Australia-wide.

"That committee has received submissions from Territory-based organisations and individuals and met with a number of service providers in Darwin in May 2001. A meeting will ensure that the Territory committee is not going over old ground," said Ms Scrymgour.