

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

3 October 2002

Nguiu

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Mr KURRUPUWUA: On behalf of the Tiwi Islands Local Government I would just like to welcome everyone and Parliamentary Ministers are here in regard to substance abuse in our local area, thank you.

Madam CHAIR: Thank you. Because we've got to go through an official thing because we're actually recording I've just got to go through an official transcript so if it all sounds a bit official, don't worry about it. And thank you for the official welcome.

I declare open this meeting of the select committee on substance abuse in the community and welcome everybody from the community of Nguiu, or most representatives who are appearing before the committee to brief it in relation to its terms of reference. Last year when we got elected, after the election the government established the select committee on substance abuse, that was October last year, and that committee has a broad terms of reference which covers a number of things with both legal and illegal of drugs.

And you can look at a number of things of what we call drugs, but the committee thought that rather than covering all of the issues we would look at three areas that are really affecting, not just our remote communities, but also there are issues in Darwin and Katherine so it's an issue covering the whole of the Northern Territory. Three of those issues were alcohol, ganja and petrol sniffing. So we thought that we would just go into those three areas first as part of our inquiry. The meeting is open to the public, part of this is ... and we've had some meetings and some briefings that we've had in Darwin and other places where it hasn't been open to the public and most of the select committee's briefings which have been closed to public have been the briefings that we've had for government agencies and other people.

All the meetings and briefings we've had have been recorded. There have been some informal meetings where we haven't recorded those but we have taken notes, and when we finish doing all of the recording, we will be doing a transcript which will then be produced and tabled in the Legislative Assembly. When any of you mob want to have a talk and you want to say something to the committee, if what you're going to say is sensitive and you don't want us to have that recorded please let me know and we will make sure that doesn't get included as part of it, and it won't be put as part of the transcript in the Assembly.

That decision regarding this will be at the discretion of the committee and I'd like to just all remind you that the evidence that you give to the committee is protected by parliamentary privilege. Like I said before, for the purposes of Hansard, and Hansard is just a recording thing when we're in the House, it records everything that we as parliamentary members say in parliament, the Hansard people record everything so that's what that's for and I ask that when we talk one at a time, if people can just say their name and the capacity in which you speak and it doesn't have to be that you're representing an organisation. You play a key role because you're community members and that's the capacity in which you speak, is as a community member.

Everybody knows me but what I will do is just go through and allow each of the members of the committee, I must put in an apology for two other members. The committee is made up of a six member panel. Two of our members however were unavailable for this trip and that was Dr Chris Burns and Elliott McAdam who is the member for Barkly. They weren't able to be on this but I'll start down the end with Sue who can introduce herself.

Ms CARTER: My name is Sue Carter and I'm a member of parliament for area known as Port Darwin which is the inner city area of Darwin. I've spent many years in the Northern Territory as a nurse and I've got an old patient sitting next to me right now and I've had a great interest, particularly in alcohol and substance abuse particularly as I also worked for quite a few years as a health promotion officer and at that time specialising in the quit smoking area and that's why I asked my parliamentary colleagues to let me go on to this group here.

Mr WOOD: I'm Gerry Wood and if you're over 20 you might remember me but if you're under 20 you might not. As you know I worked here for some time so I've got an interest in substance abuse. Even my time on Daly River there were a lot of problems with alcohol and now of course it's compounded with ganja so hopefully some of my time in parliament may be spent looking at ways of

making things better. I've only been elected in the last year so I'm a new boy and I'm an independent, I don't belong to any political party.

I was on Litchfield Shire Council for about 13 years and I noticed that photograph on the wall, Litchfield Shire Council actually wasn't far away from here; the bottom part was Litchfield Shire, a little bit on the mainland, so we weren't too far away and Tiwi has had a connection of course with that part of the world as well as around that beach area there. So I hope I can contribute to some of the things that happen in the future to make things better.

Dr LIM: My name is Richard Lim, I'm from Alice Springs in the desert country so I look forward to coming here to Darwin a bit to see some water; we don't get much water in Alice Springs. But I've been in politics now for nine years and I'm a doctor, before I became a parliamentarian, and worked in communities as well and particularly interested in equal sharing of resources for everybody in Australia and I think it's important that not only does Australia have opportunities, but that everybody can have access to those opportunities, that's more important and drugs and alcohol has caused a lot of problems in our society and we're trying to find ways to make it better.

Madam CHAIR: And with any committee when we travel around, and the work load which is quite big and it's quite huge, somebody has to keep politicians on the straight and handle the burden of all the work and sometimes goes very unappreciated, but we certainly appreciate our staff who work tirelessly for us and make sure that all our minutes and agendas and our food when we go on these trips is taken care of and I'd like to introduce Pat Hancock who is the secretary and is with the Legislative Assembly, and Liz Mcfarlane, they do a great job in making sure that we're looked after and great cooks.

And I'd also like to introduce Eileen Cummings who isn't with the committee but we've invited Eileen along just as an observer because Eileen is also doing the indigenous family violence strategy for the department and that is just to pick up and listen and observe. So we could go into the discussions of this. But I say, one of the questions that was something that was put to us this morning at a meeting that we had prior to coming to here was, you know, a lot of our communities have seen politicians and inquiries, one after another, people coming in and out of communities, you know, just what is the commitment and what's going to come out of this inquiry.

I can say not only from my own point of view and I know I speak for all the members that were selected from their respective parties to be on this committee that there is more commitment to have government do something with this, that it doesn't just become another report and sit on someone's shelf and gather dust and it is something that we are quite seriously committed to making sure that government addresses. I will open discussions to the forum. Anyone want to start off the discussion. Would you like to say something?

Well, I suppose when we look at the terms of reference that I'd like to hear from a lot of our mob in terms of the alcohol and the ganja problem and just how our communities, our women, how they're affected and let's talk about this problem that's here. Is there a problem here?

Mr C. TIPUNGWUTI: Can I say something? If you go back to the early 60s, early 50s as well, we had a lot of problems with petrol sniffing that year, you know, and a lot of things are really happening here with petrol sniffing and it seems to be in the 70s it was getting less and 80s, 90s we were doing pretty well and we didn't have much petrol sniffing. We never heard anything about what's the problem with petrol sniffing here in this community, so what we're doing is we have alcohol here and you know, quite a problem, that's all.

Dr LIM: So you think alcohol is the biggest problem?

Mr C. TIPUNGWUTI: I think so, yes.

Dr LIM: Worse than ganja?

Mr C. TIPUNGWUTI: In a way. Look I only know about alcohol. I don't know much about this ganja.

Mr WOOD: More people affected by alcohol?

Mr C. TIPUNGWUTI: I think so, yes.

Ms CARTER: Why do you think alcohol is such a big problem? Why do you think so many people drink a lot of it?

Mr C. TIPUNGWUTI: Well you know you get this when you turn 18, you know and then we know a lot people, you know, old people, they relax when they're drinking, older people, you know? And a lot of these young people, you know, they want to catch up, they want to drink more, more, you know, drink, you know, like racing or something or something to drink more beer and the more they drink and the more the hours and they want to catch with the hours. They drink, they don't want to drink.

Ms CARTER: Do the girls drink as much as the boys or is it, when I say boy, is it young men drinking?

Mr C. TIPUNGWUTI: I don't know about that. You'll have to get someone out who knows about it.

Ms CARTER: Can anyone else comment on that? Is it more young men drink, or young women when they start off?

Mr N. MUNGATOPI: There are more young boys, may be one or two young girls drink.

Mr WOOD: Do the women think there's an alcohol problem and have they got any ideas how it could be reduced?

Ms T. PURUNTATAMERI: We hear that some of the women who are abused by their spouse, and like with the women, there is a problem because I think the alcohol abuse is affecting not just the person that's drinking but the whole family and a message to the whole community is that how can we deal with that problem.

I know we've got alcohol awareness program going on in our community, but there are family who have alcohol problems go to this group of people who are running the program.

Ms CARTER: Is that the four mile program?

Ms T. PURUNTATAMERI: Everybody had that meeting this morning, we go there. The four mile is the place where family go with there problems and stay there for may be a month. Before, when they have that program, five mile, and that place was set up for this group of families to go there and to prepare themselves before they went to four mile at Daly River to do the program. The five mile is finished and we've only got our own people here who are running the program.

And the four mile here, the family goes out and camp there for a few months I think, a few weeks, and then they come back to the community. Some stay there up in Daly River. I'd like to see the group here who are running the program to go out to those people at four mile to build a course there with them, but I don't know if that's happening, but I'm busy myself too. I would like to see that.

Mr WOOD: You're saying CAAPS should go to that place, and built a place at the 4 mile?

Ms T. PURUNTATAMERI: Something like that. Build a place there where those people all stay there, have programs going on, something like five mile.

Mr WOOD: Do you think five mile should kept going or it's better that it's here rather than go to Daly River.

Ms T. PURUNTATAMERI: Well I didn't have that or anything.

Mr WOOD: That's all right. But there was some talk whether it was good or bad to close it down.

Ms T. PURUNTATAMERI: I think, this is from my experience seeing it happening in the community with ganja I think young people, some of them attempted suicide and some of them died because they took their lives. I think it involves things like after they leave school, there's no path for them, I've experienced this. When they left school there's a path they see, when they leave school there's the club, that's the path I'm talking about. But there is no other paths there, path, where they could do something for themselves.

Mr WOOD: So even if they wanted to be a good footballer it's associated with the club?

Ms T. PURUNTATAMERI: Mm.

Mr WOOD: There's no place you could do it without ...

Ms T. PURUNTATAMERI: No place, no path for them to develop their skill, to become, you know, footballers. Or prepare them for employment.

Mr WOOD: So the club is about the only path most of them see?

Ms T. PURUNTATAMERI: Yes. And in the 90s. That's when I started to talk to some people and then I wrote a letter to Mr Adamson who was at that time Education Minister. And also I went to Perron and with Tim Baldwin and about the ganja and about what's happening to our young people. And then after that meeting we had I then put in a submission to the Aboriginal Benefit, that is for some funding to help young people to run a program and that's when I got some money to spend, get the new equipment, the van now that they're having at the club and that started to get young people involved in music, I thought about that was the path for them when they leave school to be involved in music and that was good for the boys and young girls; they had music programs every night.

And then because some of the equipment needed to be repaired the program stopped for a while. But I would like to share that with everyone, my experience with ganja and how I, you know, got something going for the young people.

Mr WOOD: Do you think the club should be in the centre of town or somewhere else? Do you think it becomes the focus, where it is? Do you have sport next to the club? Do you do things in the middle? Do you think it would be better if it was away from town?

Ms T. PURUNTATAMERI: I think it's too much back into the community as we see it in the middle of the community and it's like trapping the community. I'd rather see it may be somewhere else?

Dr LIM: Is anybody in the room here a member of the board of the club? Anybody who is on the board?

A member: I'm not from here but I'm from Ranku.

Dr LIM: From Ranku? But the club here, is anybody in this room here a member of the board. I don't think you need to tell me how much the club earns every year, but what do you do with the profits of the club? What happens to the money that the club earns from all the things that it sells? I mean the club sells alcohol, I suppose it sells food also, may be, pies and stuff like that, so the club must make profits, money. What does it do with the money?

A member: The club manager knows all about the money.

Dr LIM: All right. How does the club decide where the money goes?

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: It is spread around the community, mainly the money goes out to the school kids and things like that and each school gets a certain amount of money, may be \$14 000 to a child

Dr LIM: To each child?

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: To each school, and they receive a certain from the club. And with they get that from the club they do what they like.

Mr C. TIPUNGWUTI: Even as sponsors to the football, the club sponsors the football, the league team, the money goes for the league team.

Dr LIM: And is all the money, all the profits, all the money you made go back to the community.

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: That's right, yes. It goes back to the community.

Mr C. TIPUNGWUTI: They are over there trying to develop budgets for development for the community, for special trips, overseas trips or any kind of event.

Dr LIM: We hear that alcohol causes some problems in the community like domestic violence or whatever and I think that the health services try give help. Does the club give some money to help in the domestic violence program in Nguuu?

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: It does. Recently, a few months ago, three or four months ago it gave 20 grand to the diversion program. That's money from the club which goes back to the community for the kids and setting up the diversion program and that \$20 000 from the club.

Mr WOOD: Is that money from the club or money from the government for the diversionary programs?

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: Money from the club.

Mr WOOD: For diversionary programs?

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: For diversionary programs.

Mr WOOD: But is that anything to do with domestic violence directly?

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: 20 grand. I would have to check on that.

Mr WOOD: What about for mental health? Does any money go perhaps to those programs to help them?

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: Yes it does. The club does that, yes.

Unidentified MALE: I think because the club gives the money to the health board too for whatever program is running; the Tiwi Health Board.

Mr N. MUNGATOPI: We don't see the money it goes to mental health so, so I think, so I think I don't know, mental health or whatever. We spend a lot of money too on the programs.

A member: You said that. Whenever you need some, you know? You should write a letter too.

Mr M. KURRUPUWUA: See, the club donates a lot of money to the community. It's a matter of people putting in a request or a submission for the money.

Madam CHAIR: Do people know when the club is meeting? There is a sign put up that the club is meeting so if the club is meeting they can put in.

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: Notice board goes up every – when the meeting is on. A lot of people say “Look, I haven't seen the notice on the board”. Always – council says there is a meeting on next week, so that day it's on the board, for everywhere around town. It's no excuse if someone if someone says “Well I haven't seen the letter”.

Dr LIM: So anybody can actually apply to the club for financial assistance?

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: The group but not individual.

Dr LIM: Not individuals?

Madam CHAIR: No, but if the mental health mob saw that they needed money, if they put in a request for the next time the club – one of the things that we were going to do and people we were going to meet with is the club committee. We actually wanted a meeting with the club committee but I think the licensee had to go to town for a hearing so we couldn't meet with the club otherwise we would have had a separate meeting with the club executive. So if the mental health mob said we need some money to help deal with the program in the community they could put that to the club executive at the next meeting and the club executive would consider that and they would get that funding?

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: Yes.

A member: Excuse me, could I just say something please? Look you're talking about funding, like who are the right people for funding sort of thing, sources but are you people willing to also put up funding towards mental health?

Madam CHAIR: One of the things – when we've been going around and when we've been talking to a lot of communities, I mean, government has got an obligation to put money towards these programs but government can't – I mean the purse is getting smaller and smaller and somehow – I think what nobody has ever looked at for a long time is making the industry accountable all right? The alcohol industry for a long time has caused a lot of the domestic violence problems. We look at chronic diseases and the rates of chronic diseases in our communities.

A lot of that is alcohol related, all right? So it has got to be a partnership between what government can put in, but I think the industry needs to put some in too. The club, even though it puts in money for excursions and stuff like that, I mean, there's nothing wrong with the mental health mob, if they see a shortfall and they can't find money.

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: The other day we had – everyone noticed we had a special meeting the other day, everyone went. None of the women were available at this meeting the other day. We were meeting and we set up a committee. One old lady came, I think we'd like to get women involved.

Mr M. KURRUPUWUA: One of those things we left out, we left out the women and so we said we need to have a strong woman there, you know, in that committee so that they can say – so they can bring out something that they want to say. You know, we want to be able – all the women, you know.

Mr H. TUNGATALUM: So those women who wanted to be on the board but they weren't available, the ladies to be on this management board.

Mr CLANCY: Could I just add to what Hyacinth was saying. It has been agreed that we do need a lady representative from the community. Even they weren't present at that meeting the committee that is being established to put together the alcohol management plan, there is a position for a woman to be represented on that committee. So it was recognised that there is a need to have the ladies represented and they have a very important role to play but we haven't nominated or picked those women yet to be on the committee but there is a position because we think it is important.

Mr M. KURRUPUWUA: Each representative on each community will be on the board.

Madam CHAIR: So you'll have one from Nguuu, one from Ranku.

Ms CARTER: What sort of things would you like to see that board do?

Mr M. KURRUPUWUA: I think I'd like to see a change.

Ms CARTER: In what way?

Mr M. KURRUPUWUA: More instruction, more facilities and fun more – get people active instead of sitting down drinking, drinking, like they do.

Ms CARTER: What sort of activities at the club?

Mr M. KURRUPUWUA: A game or they reckon that, I don't know exactly, but they put everywhere in the club, there was, what do you call those things.

Ms CARTER: Poker machines?

Mr M. KURRUPUWUA: Poker machines.

Mr WOOD: But that might be the way a club thinks, because it's in the business of making profits and making its club popular, but you spoke about putting money into domestic violence programs; that's after it happens, that's the end result. We're getting domestic violence because of the problem at the other end, that is, people drink too much grog.

Does the community accept that alcohol is the reason you have to put money in the bottom end? Does the community accept that alcohol is the reason you have to put money in the bottom end? What is – does anyone realise there's a problem at the top, at the start? Or is just "Well, we'll keep drinking and will pour money into the end result, the bashed up families. Does anyone look at ways of reducing how much people drink, or preventing it?

Because what we're looking at the moment, mental health, domestic violence, is the end, but the beginning doesn't seem to be looked at. It seems to be okay. Does anything happened from that point of view or are people not worried?

Madam CHAIR: Education and prevention, you know, awareness.

Mr M. KURRUPUWUA: I think that that could be a possible way that could be done. At the moment the are looking at setting up a budget for programs, a project.

Mr WOOD: I suppose what I'm asking ... I'm not asking so much for the club, I'm asking people, the Tiwi people as you, not as a club because the club is there to make money, so it does not want people to stop drinking. What about as a community; do you see a problem about drinking?

Mr C. TIPUNGWUTI: I might answer that from my experience I think it is up to individual we're looing at, like you or me. wouldn't understand they fill up there with drink, but these days now they say, a lot of these young people, they say 'You can't stop me now. I'm not you, you're not me'. That's what they say today.

Mr WOOD: This is not about stopping.

Dr LIM: That's true but let me try and give you a little concept. Before alcohol you had a happy community. Then alcohol came in and then you have domestic violence, crime, everything else and sick people. So there is happy Tiwi, alcohol, problems. Somewhere between i's up to the Tiwi people, not individuals. The community says we want back this; we don't want this and that. Because this and that causes the problems.

Now may be we have a look at alcohol but the Tiwi people, in general, they've got to say, somehow, we've got to stop there. What Gerry, I think, is asking, and what I want to know is, do the Tiwi people in here, want this back, or do they want this? That's what I'm trying to work out for myself. Do the Tiwi people here want this sort of happy life or may be they want this alcohol and get all this illness, disease, crime and everything else. What do the Tiwi people want? If the people of Tiwi want this thing then they have got to say, alcohol, we've really, really got to cut it right back, don't drink as much as now. That's what I think.

Mr F. GREEN: Maybe when we get this alcohol drinking board going, may be we will.

Dr LIM: I like that because I think a lot of the desire for this is not in money, it's in here, inside your head. I don't want to drink any more because it won't affect my health, it won't affect my life in Tiwi. It does need one cent, it needs you to make up your mind, that's what it is.

Ms M. FEEDANDO: I'd like to answer that. I've now got Tiwi for Life. I'm a Tiwi and Tiwi for Life ladies and the violence of men we decided to do better so we've got to continue that in talking to Tiwi people so we've got to present that to our people. That is a matter that we look at. I'm on that committee so we will, ladies and the men said, meet this October and we will present that to our people so present that to them.

Mr L. TIPUNMANTUMIRI: What I would like to see, our problem is domestic violence. I see a lot in court because I work for court and what I would like to see here is a program running for family violence, living with alcohol. I see it every time I go to the prison to check up on my clients they're doing programs in prison, you know, living with alcohol, they do domestic violence in there and when they come out there is nothing, nothing here on the island and every time it is the same people that re-offend and they've come back to court again. And what I see here is that, but what I would like to see here is to have a respect for alcohol, yes, that's the problem.

Mr G BROERSON: One thing going from what Luke just said, Gerry Broerson, Tiwi Health Board by the way. Quite a few months ago at one of the strong men's meeting, it just reminded me of one of the suggestions that was made a long time ago that someone said 18 year olds, like when you go and get your licence to drive a car you have to have a licence? Maybe to go to the club you have to do an alcohol awareness course beforehand so you have some sort of knowledge about what alcohol does to your body and what it can potentially do to your family and all the rest of it, before you actually start drinking. That was just a suggestion that was made a long time ago but Luke just reminded me of that.

Madam CHAIR: It would be really good to hear from some of the young ones in this room and give me the young people's view because sometimes we all talk about the issue of alcohol and ganja and the effects on us as older people, and a lot of the younger one, I know some of them do drink and drink quite sensibly or they don't drink, they make a decision that I don't want this so this is what I will do with my life.

A member: We have to educate our kids in school, you know, like teaching them, you know, like grog and drugs so as they grow up they will probably understand what grog does to them and what affects their , and affects their family.

Madam CHAIR: I think we've got to get that awareness happening in the schools. We've got to be able to get programs happening both with grog and with drugs, education. But we've also got to as parents, make sure that our kids go to school. I mean, our kids have got to go to school and we have to make sure that they go to school so that they can get education, because it's when we talk about education it's broader than just getting in and just having education about drug and alcohol, it's literacy, it numeracy and it's learning to read, it's learning to write, it's learning to do your maths and other things, and I know you could probably say something on that, but it is about getting education is an important key to that because you mob have that education you know? So you're able to make that decision for yourself.

Mr WOOD: Even with that education do you think they still run into a lot of pressure to drink when they turn 18? Are they afraid of being called a girl, or weak or a wuss? How do they fight that pressure. I know what it's like to get dragged into a group, 'C'mon, c'mon. Go on, have a drink, come on, you're a girl if you don't. That's a hard pressure for people. Do you understand?

A member: Yes, that is hard for young ones.

Mr B. PURUNTATAMERI: I said I came about that alcohol and drugs because that's where we've got the biggest problem. What I'd like to see is all the community hot having a wake ... in six months we lost five, committed suicide; five in six months this year and that's pretty bad. It does affect the young people today. Four attempted Tuesday, four attempted.

A member: We've had as many as seven in a week.

Mr B. PURUNTATAMERI: Seven in a week, yes.

Madam CHAIR: Seven attempted suicides?

Mr B. PURUNTATAMERI: We, as the leaders of this island we've got to start to work. We've got to work together. We didn't see the problem. We see the problem is happening but we're not doing anything, we're not fixing the problem. We're just sitting back and looking at our own people as they kill. We've got to start looking at the club and ganja, they are the main factor in this community. They bring ganja, they get sick, make them better, fix them. They go back and forth to mental health workers and the health workers treating people, domestic violence. We just can't let that problem go on forever. Somewhere we've got to put a full stop to it.

People start fighting during pay week, they get drunk, what the family, the whole of the family get involved the next morning. That's what grog does. Grog and ganja don't mix together, that's the problem. I've seen it. I went from the program, I had an alcohol problem before my wife will tell you and I wasn't afraid. I went to Family Recovery to make myself better. It's not hard. I wasn't frightened, I wasn't scared. I had to face my family and this helped me. 19 years and I haven't been drinking and I've been leader here 17 times because as the Council President.

And I'm here seeing the problems. I've seen those problems for so many years I've seen them, young people committing suicide, harm themselves, domestic violence, women get bashed up and half the time for a few health workers. We've got to do something, we Tiwi people who live here. Time to fix it and live as a happy family and a better community too because the other community are best then ... we're down now, we're down. The community doesn't want to know about us. They hear a lot of bad stories. This is a time when we've got to work together, time to stop these problems.

This government, the official one, they won't help us. We're the community, we're the grass roots, we've got to stop that problem today.

Ms CARTER: Thank you for that, Barry, I appreciated hearing that. I was just wondering perhaps some of the younger people who might like to comment, what do young people think at the moment about what's happening with the suicides? Does it worry the young people in the community?

Mr B. PURUNTATAMERI: Yes.

Ms CARTER: How do you feel about that?

A member: They do worry.

Ms CARTER: Talking amongst your group, what sort of things do people say? Well, on a different track, could it be any young person or do you think there is a certain type of person that is more likely to do it? Is it sometimes a surprise to you or were you sort of thinking that might happen to that person.

A member: Yes, it might happen to that person, yes.

A member: I've always boked at some of the young people that committed suicide and they always seem to be the quietest ones, so I've seen the quiet boys taking their lives because I think they needed someone there lives because I think they needed someone there to help them. You need people there to talk to you.

Ms CARTER: Do you think they might be a bit lonely?

A member: Lonely, that's the problem. There's a lot of young people I've seen, that have lost their life, they were quiet and didn't talk much. They need someone there to talk to.

Mr B. PURUNTATAMERI: When you see the problem today, when ... for example using my son, he asks me for money and I say 'No I refuse to give you money' and he turned around and said 'All right, I'll go and hang myself'. Just for use as an example, go and commit suicide.

Mr WOOD: Could I ask, is it just related to ganja and alcohol or is there something else?

Mr B. PURUNTATAMERI: Something else still in there.

Mr NORRIS: Let me give you some stats on suicides. Over the last 12 years there has been well over 30, probably 38 suicides on Tiwi Islands. Now Barry said there's been five in six months and actually there's been eight in six months. There has been some Aboriginal people go to Darwin and die in Darwin, kill themselves away from people. The other thing is that it is not only youth that kill themselves, we've had people, elders try to hang themselves. So it's not just youth, it's the a whole broad range of people and also women, there are quite a lot of women, and also now we talk about, some of the people are talking about killing the babies also as well as themselves. So suicide at this stage is really bad.

Mr WOOD: And do we know why people do it.

Mr NORRIS: Most of them are related with ganja and alcohol but they are not the only problem. What Barry said was right. All of a sudden somebody will say 'I want money for ganja' and they'll get knocked back say for instance, and they say 'No, we're not going to give you money for ganja' so he says well nobody loves me and up the power pole he goes. So that means from the time he asks for ganja to the time he kills himself is only about an hour so it really means that we can't intervene.

Mr LIM: So suicide is then used as some form of gesture.

Mr NORRIS: Yes.

Mr LIM: All right, why has suicide become that particular end result rather than a temper tantrums, yelling, screaming 'I want money, I want money'. Some people would just complain but for some reason the youth of Nguuu have chosen suicide as that gesture.

Mr NORRIS: It's a gesture, the culture now. It's part of the, this is what you do when this is your problem. It's part of the culture and we've got to kind of change that culture round.

Madam CHAIR: Break the cycle. Like we do with domestic violence.

A member: You said something, you're program or what?

Madam CHAIR: There is but I mean, we can blame grog and we can blame ganja. Why are people drinking and why are people smoking? I mean that's what we have to look at, you know? I mean, why are our kids picking up the bombs and blowing them up and being like that. Why are they, as soon as they turn 18 and going into the pub? Why? That's what we have to ask ourselves, why are they doing this and that's when we find the answer, of why, because you can remove the club, you can remove the ganja out of their lives but there are still those underlying issues that have arisen, and that's what we have to look at.

Why are our kids doing it? Why are our older people because I know through looking at the statistics, it's not only our young ones that this is affecting, it's also our older ones. So why our older people who are going to be our elders in the future, we're going to have no elders soon. Why are they doing it?

Mr NORRIS: And maybe the opposite question to that is why are some of those good people here not doing it? Why are they standing up. I mean, it must be hard for some of them. It can be done because there are people here that can do it. It's a matter of making this the popular, the right way to go and these people should be lifted up and shown as the way to go. At the moment it always appears that the way to go is down the path of getting pissed at night and belting up your misses, that seems to be number one, whereas that's got to be number last and the good people have got to somehow be given the support to show, this is the way we've got to go.

At the moment it seems it's the other way, as we said, is the cultural way which seems real crazy to me and it seems so sad if you just take the young people, I mean, I like football, it means you've got a bunch of good footballers. I looked at some of the figures the other day and we had four names, I

won't say who they were, they were all born in 1977 when I was here; they're all dead. I was born 27 years before that and I'm still alive and that made me really feel that wasn't right. They haven't lived their lives. I don't know how you'll change that.

Mr N. MUNGATOPI: Young people drink, because you know what? They can see the club is open, they see their parents. They can drink grog and the kids say 'When I grow up, I'll be like him'.

Ms CARTER: Are you saying when they see their parents at the club they're saying to themselves there's no other alternative for me, that's how I'm going to end up, and that makes me feel very unhappy. They're looking at that as a bad thing? Is that what you're saying?

A member: It is close.

Madam CARTER: Yes, and they see it in their face.

Mr N. MUNGATOPI: We love what we do, the centre of the community seems an awful long time ago and weren't those people in those days members in the first place? They should put that outside this committee.

Ms CARTER: But it's not really the club that's the bad thing we are seeing, it is their parents. The parents' behaviour and I understand that because I see that from my family too but I did not want to end up like something that I had in my family and I remember as a child thinking I do not want to end up like that and making steps to avoid doing that, but what you're saying is that I might have had options to do something different to escape, but for the Tiwi children they can not see any escape or any way to avoid doing what their parents did. So really part of it is to may be provide them with some insight as to how to find a different way of life because probably it is almost impossible stopping the parents doing what they are doing now.

A member: Best then that we do it like this.

Mr B. PURUNTATAMERI: Probably.

Ms CARTER: A spectacle. That's an interesting point because we know of course that suicide happens all around the country, and certainly in places like Victoria and country New South Wales, where there is a lot of unemployment, a lot of the young men suicide, and it is upsetting their communities down in Victoria and New South Wales as well. But I suspect they are doing it privately, whereas as we have just brought up, that this is a public thing that is happening here, which is a big difference.

A member: There is so much gunja too, they smoke in front of their children, you know, children in Maningrida are looking at them.

Unidentified MALE: Maybe another thing too you have got to start looking at, they have been drinking plastic cups in the club for a very long time to slow them down, maybe try to reduce the cans, to one can, so that they can walk around with it so if you give them a cup, you know, just two seconds they can be, ... it is just another option to look at. Maybe, I mean we can not limit it, they can not even take my carton, and I mean what are we looking at, four cans a night to six cans a night. I mean, that is my opinion, you know, this racing, you know.

Ms CARTER: Yes, I mentioned that before. You get rid of the tab fares but you put the can fares, but that is still not going to resolve the problem, though

A member: Can you stop playing cards for cans?

A member: That is against the club committee.

A member: I know, they have been still doing it, nothing has changed.

Madam CHAIR: I will just, Michael and then Jamie.

Ms J PURUNTATAMERI: I am telling you, listening to all these problems, that is how I have been treated, so like myself, I have just been through hell, and have seen a counsellor myself. Nobody asked me to come to Darwin to see a counsellor, this my experience.

Mr C TIPUNGWUTI: I have to listen to these problems, you know, look at, talking about this. I am just how long sitting with your kids. Anyone know that, anyone seen the services provided for our young people, for our people. And do something about that kava. Remove it, and forget people there, run that club, yours, you mob, do something about it. So that it is my opinion.

A member: Thank you.

CHAIR: REPLACED BY MR MARALAMPULA

Ms M PUANTULWA: I would just like to say something about this problem we are having. Over the years, through our lives, and it has not stopped, it has been on, so I think we have to see ourselves as the strong leaders in our communities. We have got to some action, we have got to do something. Because it is us, not the ones who are, the young people looking at the future, but I mean the grown up people; because we are the leaders, it is our role. And for us, we have got to do something that can help our own people today. So which people can go back to the month or year. So it does not stop.

So how about us getting together and talking about this problem. Because there is no one else making a lot of problems; it is the community, it is our people. There are no other people giving us a problem about the alcohol; it is our people, ourselves; our children, they are with us, with the hardness and the centre for Aboriginals. So I hope you can support the young man from the centre. So maybe one day we will have a talk together, talk to the man about the alcohol; because that is the only thing that is destroying us. And we are suffering. People, young people, pass away; because of that knowing, understanding about the alcohol and the gunja. So we need to support them, encourage them, talk to them about the drugs, the drugs that are the killer for us all. So us today, we have the means, we can make it, we can do it for our young future.

Mr C TIPUNGWUTI: Just on what you said. I think we should set up a committee, young committees and the board. You know, get our young people to get involved in these board meetings. They need to learn something. You know, simply if you have old people always on the board all the time. So that, give them the chance for the young people to learn something, what is going on, and they might pick up something that is theirs. You know, fresh ideas, and you know, since Phil came on people ...always on the board all the time, so we need young people to get in, so that they learn more.

Mr CHAIR: Well, they are going to replace you mob. And I think at this board level it is good but I think that the other place too where a lot of our young men have got to start becoming part of with you leaders is the land council. You know, I think the youth have got to start getting involved with the land council because that is land and law issues there, and with all the issues, you two are right.

Mr C TIPUNGWUTI: So that we can pick it up something there, you know, for young, to help the young people that, you know, to show them.

Mr CHAIR: To show them there is things other than grog and gunja you know.

Ms M PUANTULWA: Yes, running their own programs, the young people, everyone can, anyone and young people should come. Young people come together as one and make decisions and planning what they are going to do, young people they are the future of society. If you look at young people, they have got to start to come together, and make programs and start running their own agenda. You know, nobody is coming to the meetings. They are not learning, the young people, have got to learn about how to live along with each other and work together and, like to make a planning to go to like bush, like go out bush, and together young people, so they can share their problems, you know? It is not old people. But young people coming together as one, as a group, young girls and young boys. But now they have got to change. Going back, they have not got to think of a way back. They have got to think of what they are. They have got to think together, you know. Like YMCA. There for a long time, somewhere around the 60s, somewhere around the 70s I think. They put some young girls, and young boys coming together, and they start their program.

So they are not, young people together are not really trying to get involved with a church, where they can have singing and dancing, we have policy. We have good sharing, you know. We help ourselves. We have got to learn that we are running a program of our own. In those days, we did not learn in school. Way back, to the 50s and 60s, I mean before 1940, some 50, I was born in 1948 and I am 54 years old and I am still with people. And I am looking at today, it is not changing. My father's days, my mother's days, we have got to leave that past. We are going back, all of us, we are going all of our decisions, we are going forward. We are not going backwards because if we are going backwards things do not work. We want an education. Our parents had good education. And just, I mean my father and mother, my mother had a good education too, and she knows, she taught me how, how you can help yourself on your own. You can start to help yourself. I remember my mother, my father was a fisherman and he made fish at that place... My mother, she was a council worker, she know about the church, she was supporting in church. And all of us was supported by them. And we know God, God can exist to help us.

But now it is new. Changing. New things coming in. Things are new, they need more new changing. You know? Young people are going to school, left school, they need proper programs. Not proper work. Who is going to support them? Us. Not us, there is other people we can bring in. One people come together, and Aboriginal people have got to work together as one people and you change one another, you know. You have got to educate one another. Because you have got the stew, we have got the stew. You know? Aboriginal people have to work together as white people. So white people have got to listen to Aboriginal people. It is fine. What are we going to do? We can not sit, sitting up... You see, I am just bringing up this, it is my theme, you know, we have got to change. We are not going back, we are going forward. We have got our children now. We have got our children today. So.

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: It does not matter what circumstance we try to make, we have got to try start from some level and organise.

Ms CARTER: How much of an impact do you think unemployment has on people in the community.

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: Well, not much.

Ms CARTER: Why is that?

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: I think there is no employment, we are looking at trying to create employment.

Ms CARTER: Do you think unemployment, is there a relationship between unemployment and the people who commit suicide?

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: Well, if we can start looking at creating employment or income for our mob. It would work.

Mr WOOD: Is there people getting unemployment benefits? I know there is CDEP but are there some people still getting unemployment benefits?

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: CDEP not much. That is why there is such high employment.

Mr WOOD: Do you know how many people there would be.

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: We have tried to, about 220 participants, went and that is why they went down.

Ms CARTER: You know on that point, I have heard that with regard to the forest workers and that, that people did not want to work there. Is that a fair comment?

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: Yes.

Ms CARTER: Why did they not want to work there?

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: Well, I mean, there are a lot of issues that we are trying to give participants access to so the participants always prevent.

Ms CARTER: It is an alcohol thing.

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: Yes.

Ms CARTER: So the forests were too far away, too much travel.

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: Yes. That is why we are trying to look at ways to find, like the alcohol, where they can stay.

Ms CARTER: Like a canteen.

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: Yes.

Mr WOOD: Do you think, if the commonwealth scrapped CDEP and said there will be full employment, in other words, they gave enough money to do you for everyone to have a job, and those who did not want to work could not get any money. Because you say, I have always got a job. The council a long time ago always had work.

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: Well you look, if the Commonwealth provides funding, more funding, only CDEP.

Mr WOOD: But even if it was not only CDEP, it just said, we will not call it CDEP, we will just make sure that everybody who wants work, will get paid and we will provide enough goods and materials to make sure that everyone has a job. Because we used to employ a lot of people here before. But they were not unemployed, there was a lot of jobs you could create on the council. But now they have turned it into CDEP and some people are not working at all.

Mr M KURRUPUWUA: Today, they are looking at that pay, for when the pays come in, they look, hey, it is more than that, I am getting – that is why they go back to unemployment, because it is more money they are getting on unemployment than.

Mr WOOD: Yes, I have heard that.

Mr C TIPUNGWUTI: Can we add about 120 registered, that much in our community. We tried to put those on top. We tried to do that. We could put people on that, that way it became a role model for young people, we have Trisha Brogan, she is a role model for young people so they can see what is happening.

Mr WOOD: How many people are listed as council employees now, today.

Mr J CLEARY: All of the communities have a total employment of about 500, but the bulk of those are people on CDEP programs.

Mr WOOD: What would be the fully, what would be the, say, on this community, boards, full time employment; or when I say full time, not CDEP employment.

Mr J CLEARY: I would need to talk to our payroll officer, but probably it would be about 50 full time positions.

Mr WOOD: It was 110, 20 years ago on the same council doing the same work. You would have to ask if there is something wrong.

CHAIR: The CDEP program, if I can, is a good program, but what it needs now, it needs to be more substantial in terms of, you know, our mob need to be given more incentives, you know, if you build up the CDEP program and they get proper wages, and you get sick leave and you get annual leave...

A member: They didn't get a proper wage.

Mr C TIPUNGWUTI: That is what I said, CDEP is not, there is a lot of work there, a lot of CDEP work, but it is less wages.

Dr LIM: Something more basic than that. Okay, suppose you earned normal wages, good wages. At five o'clock in the afternoon, you would still be going to the club. And that is my point of difficulty and I just want to draw a quick picture and see if I can ask a question here. If there is CDEP, now we talk about domestic violence, alcohol and health problems, suicides, and a host of Tiwi people are here and because of these things, alcohol. You can put the full amount of here that would fix it, you can have all sorts of programs to help fix it. You can have mental health, you can have services in Darwin, all the help you can get from here and you fix this thing here. But this is caused by that. And I have not heard many people say this is what we have got to show somehow. If this is there, it will always happen. You can put all the bandaids you want from here but it is not going to fix it. You can have all the employment in the world. Five o'clock the work is over and you come back from here to there again. So what I am asking is, is there some how of making this a little bit better. Then this would be increased, then you need lessons, and then the Tiwi people will then be stronger and be taught. That is what I want to find out.

Mr G TIPILOURA: I think I can answer that. My name is Gawin Tipiloura and I am the new service officer. The problem is gunja and alcohol, that is the main topic here. Council have already told the police to search every plane that comes out every week. It has already started. There have been probably seven, eight busted, okay, in a week. The problem is gunja and alcohol. The thing is, how can you help us. Is there any way you can help us? Any way. What can you provide, help, how can you provide it. I think we as a community might be able to recommend the government to, you know, have more policing to try and reduce that, it is all we can do.

Well the thing is, we need security. We need security. There is... nearly every week, every night, every night that comes it feeds, and my own feed in my own house, and there are these families that come and ask for my help and just I can not give anything. Gunja and alcohol is a problem but if you went to the school, now what sort of education do they have at the school? What do they do at the school? Is there English, science, things like that? What do they do at the school? Did you go there this morning?... No, you did not go there this morning. Well, I think what we need to do is educate those kids. Not only with our culture, but what we have got to do now is we have to adapt to white society. We have got to adapt. And what I mean by adapt is, to get jobs, you have got to have education. Now, our cultures, it is not going to give us a job and it is not going to make us smart up here. Now what we need is an education, some sort of education, like the one that is around Darwin, and around Australia or around the world. Now what we need is we need a strong education. In my understanding I think there is, what is the point of education. What is it that? Have you ever heard of anything like that? I would like to know what it is.

A member: I have a program started here.

A member: You have got to learn Tiwi and English.

Mr G TIPILOURA: Tiwi and English. So what we have got to do, is we have got to learn more English, and Tiwi on the side. And if we can do that, we can have strong, and we can be strong people. Now, in the past, my father went to school down south, his children went down south, okay. Most of our leaders that are born and around, they have been to school down south. Now, this is where, they come back, and they become good strong leaders. And they do have education and they are strong people. So this is what we have got to do. We have got to push strong education. And I think if you can find some education for us, some sort of education, we need to make education strong. Now, with a bilingual education, it is alright, we need our culture as well. But we do not have our kids going to ceremonies. You see no kids around ceremonies. Now, I go to ceremonies, now I have a great respect for myself, it makes me stronger. None of our young people go to ceremonies, and none of our parents, grandfathers, uncles, encourage our kids to go to ceremony. So what do we do there, I reckon the only thing we have got to be strong, is education.

Now, like up there, what Richard said, that is always going to be there from now on. It is always going to be there. And all the things we try to do, again I think it will be like a bandaid. Now, I did not want to say anything earlier. I just wanted to see what others had to say. Now like I said, for us the community, we told the police to search all the stuff that comes in. Now, all I can ask the government now is if you can find an education for us. Like a bilingual one, but something much stronger. Because need a strong education. I reckon that is the ... I see parents, the way parents handle their kids in this generation, there is no discipline at all. There is no discipline. This is why they get run over and they use gunja, as an excuse to go and do something. Now, I have lost my brother from suicide, and I have watched my brother battle for his life for two hours. I have seen my brother passed away, and it changed me. That is why I am here in this council now trying to make a change and trying to help. But I think we can only do so much as the council, so I am here to join, okay, what we have got to do, we have got to fix the local government first, get up get back on our feet. It will probably be a week for our finance to be alright, but like I said, I can only ask the government now if you can find a good education, whatever you call it, but what we need is; other than the bilingual one, we need more education here...

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI: Just follow what was said about education. We have two schools on Bathurst Island. The school I am principal at is the primary school and it is a bilingual school. Next door is Xavier Community Education Centre, it is a CEC. But what the educators in the school are pushing, is to have Xavier CEC, at the moment it is junior secondary, but I would like to put a push for maybe five years time, Xavier could become a secondary school. AT the moment it is a CEC.

Ms CARTER: What does CEC stand for?

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI: Community Education Centre. It is not a proper high school.

Ms CARTER: I will just say from government, where you talk about education, one of the things that have come out of, and one of the things that government has said, is that Tiwi here is the site of the under the learning lessons, you know, one of the pilot sites where we are going to be looking at the literacy and numeracy and giving the control of how education should be to a board. So that is going to start happening, where the community will take control of education, with the support of and resourcing of government, to look at how do we start changing the direction of education on the islands. Because you are right, I think, hearing you speak just about made me all teary. And everything you said was so right. And I think, I do not know if anyone else wants to add any more, because I think we should just finish on that note because I think what she said was just completely right.

A member: It is like what you said there was really good, you know, because if you finally put some money in, you know we need more funding for the education.

Mr G TIPILOURA: See it works out for this, I can see in the room there, Jeremiah right there, can you stand up? Now, he has been down south and now he is back here trying to help the community. This is what we have got to do, back in the past, we used to send, our fathers, uncles, used to go down south, and come back when they were educated and strong. And we were everything. We were sportsmen; we were well educated; we looked after ourselves; we were fit. Today, you see young boys walking around like they are 50 or 60 year olds. For me, education is important, I reckon.

And the way we treat our kids back at home. I have a problem with my own kids; I have got a problem with my eldest now; and my second eldest is doing pretty good at school but she is her own boss from my eldest one. My eldest one is trying to be like my daughter. Now, I pushed all my kids through education. I always push them their education so they can have a better life. Now, that is all I ask, that is all we need, and at the moment we need security for the community. We need security. Maybe more police, we need security at the moment because every night, the pub shuts, and there is a threat coming right up to the community. So what I do, is I lock the house and shut off all the lights, because it is too much, and it is really, like when you asked the question in the room, it just went all quiet. It went all quiet. So like I said, me and John, we went to the police station and said to check every plane that comes in, and yes, check all the planes that come in and that is the best we can do.

We will probably think of other things to try and do, but at the moment we try to get the local government on their feet, and yes, I think we need education, but all we need now is security.

Ms CARTER: Do you have night patrol?

Mr G TIPILOURA: Yes, night patrol do patrol but they have no power. They can not grab them and lock them up because they are not allowed to. Like Gary, the policeman, came to the meeting yesterday for the community board to be set up, and at that, Gary told us in one two and three weeks, there has been an incident all that week, so I mean, Gary's two police aids is not enough. So if we can get more police out over here. We need security. Yes, the night patrol, I do not think they have got any legs to stand on with this. They can not do anything, and even if they do try to do something they end up getting bashed or threatened; so what we need at the moment is, you know, you can not just click your fingers and get things done. The only thing we can ask for now is security. And like I said, the main problem is going to be gunja and alcohol. So we need security straight away and that is what we need because a lot of people have been getting bashed, and there have been a lot of fights, and there is nothing we the local government can do, and that is to try to do something but like I said, we need help, as well. But what we ask for is for security to arrive now and education.

Mr CLEARY: Could I reinforce what Gawen said, and I think it is a great decision.

Mr C TIPUNGWUTI: Just talking about that gunja, what everyone is saying. How are you people going to help Tiwi people, I mean the gunja coming through, I mean how are you going to stop people from getting it from there? From Darwin?

CHAIR: Look, the only, what I said this morning, I mean, usually when they know that it is a big pay day out here and people are flying in, the drug squad and the police will be at the airport. I mean, but they need to know when the big pay days and when the movement is coming in and out. I mean they do not do it all the time but it is only when usually, the end of tax time, or towards that Christmas time when everyone gets all that social club or whatever, that is when the drug squad and the police keep an eye on the airports.

Mr C TIPUNGWUTI: What I am saying is, drug dealing is there. Right? They are there. How are you people going to stop them.

CHAIR: Well when they grab these people, people know, and usually they know who they have bought off in Darwin, and sometimes they even know who those people are. But the police and government can not do anything unless people say who those names are.

Mr C TIPUNGWUTI: And they would be hearing in the news, in the newspapers and that, you know, the same people, it is still happening.

CHAIR: Yes but sometimes it needs names too, there. They have to give those names.

Mr CLEARY: People in the community know and there is a need for the people in the community to start being stronger, letting the police know. Because you all know what is happening. You all know who your dealers are. Gawen and I spoke to the police the other day and I have been speaking to the commissioner and I have suggested, we know when gunja is coming in; we know it is coming in when there is money in the community; they are not coming in here when there is no money in the community. So we know and I think it, look, to have some sporadic blitzes on the aircraft coming in; you can not check every aircraft, the resources required to do that, because you have got three flights into this community a day and there is probably anything up to, on a really busy day, probably 30 or 40 once a week. So to do that, to have the drug sniffer dog at the airport, on odd occasions, so you certainly then create some deterrent, this needs to happen. And we know that most of the drugs are coming in on pay days. But people within the community also do know who is peddling. So I think we do need people to be stronger in the community and to tell the police so they can act.

The other thing, just getting back to education; education is the key to all of this. What has been really frustrating for me since I have come here is to try and identify people in the community with the skills that can do the jobs that we need, to run the community. There is a great demand by people to take more control over their own decision making and there is lots of things we need to do, but there is a real gap in the community at the moment. Now, what you are trying to do is solving education with self managed schools, which is all a very important step forward. But there is a big gap of the last

twenty or thirty years that there is very, very few people that have in fact gone on further in their education, that can do a lot of the jobs that we need doing, and that can be the leaders. And I am a little bit worried about what happens with the next generation, because there is not a lot here. When we advertised for community service officers, it was really disappointing, and I am really pleased with the officers we have got, but there were very few that put up their hands, that were prepared to come forward, and actually get involved in council and to play the role; and as I said, I am very proud of the ones that we have appointed. Gawen has been on board only two weeks and as you have seen today, he has got a lot of feeling, which I think is important.

But perhaps some of the answers might be to look at scholarships, to try and identify some of the younger people with potential in the community, to get them away, to be able to get their training, to get to university, and so start getting some accountants, people with skills to come in and work in the community, so we do not have to bring in people like myself all the time. You know... I can and we have not spoken but ... this principal down south and that school has offered ... scholarships in this community. You know, to take kids from year eight, to give basically a good education. But probably more of this sort of thing, we need immediately, so we can start picking up people, identifying people and ... bringing their skills up because that is really what we need. Because without those skills, really most likely... we are living in a modern age whether we like it or not. So they are the skills...

A member: Can I say, last one.

Mr N MUNGATOP: That is our culture, for each one of us. Gunja come through, alcohol come through, it is breaking our culture again. There is a piece hanging down, an example. We have got to try and make that an example. Now, that can be good, the violent and with drugs are trying to destroy our culture, where all the good things and bad things happen. Now, there are many young people who do the ceremony. Sometimes we have to play ceremony, and even young people attend that ceremony. They sometimes attend, we got to find a way to involve them. We want our culture to be strong and when we die we want it. Because we have got to stop this, all that fighting and to tell young people that we do not want that [speaking language] because maybe next year, couple of years, our young ones will be falling down, and we do not want that. We want our culture standing up straight.

Ms M PUANTULWA: [speaking language] We have our own culture. You lie when you do ceremony. People in our culture give a message, that is a message stick. Olden days, they send a message for the tribal ceremony, but we have got to look back in those days, old people, we sent the message. When the time for ceremony, they come together as one. And they made one ceremony for the group, for the dead person or deaths, you know. But we can look back and think about that. I think that we should be changing for young people, got to look at and we will look at Markaria, and Markaria we have got to learn to save the place. We are changing, we have got a house, we support, we have got children, it is changing. But the month of July, that is Dry Season, July is the month when we can educate school children. It is the month of holiday. We have got to come together, I do not know how, but I am just saying it, I am just saying it, when the people can [speaking language] understand it in Tiwi. I am not talking to these white people; I am talking us, Tiwi. How we can start to plan for our future for our children, you know. And there is a time, there is a month, and we have got to use the month and the days, when we can have ceremony. Like other people, they have money; but money is not that, it is not a part of culture. We have our own. The land is there for us. We have got to look our own land, instead of look at white people. We have got to look at our own land. And we have got to do better today. There is no resource, there is no better environment. We are looking today, there is no better environment, there is no better resources for us in Tiwi. You mob looking at everyone listening to resolve the question. I do not know if anyone can answer my question.

Ms P HANCOCK: Since this alcohol and drug has started in the beginning, why didn't we care about all this? It could have got worse, now it is getting worse and worse, now we are looking at it? Can anyone answer my question? Anybody.

Mr G TIPILOURA: The thing is, that is why I brought up the education. Parents, aunties, uncles, we spoil our kids too much. And it is not up to me to tell you mob that, even myself. It is just, I was a strong kid, you know, everybody cared for me, my grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, they all cared, even my fathers, my father, I remember, they all cared for me. And not only that. It is the way we treat our kids. Okay. Now, I have got four girls, I have got another one coming up, now I have got responsibility. You know about kids who have been taught responsibility. If we can do that through

education, we will be strong people. But that is the only answer I can give, is that the way we treat our kids, if we let them off they will want more and more. It is not only others around the community. Now, my kids, they ask for too much as well but I try and break it down. I try and give them, what I give them, is they go earn, that is why they get something off me. Maybe wash up, or pick up the rubbish around the yard. Things like that. Now, that is the only thing I can think of, is you know, really, giving too much to our kids, okay. That is all I have to say.

Ms M PUANTULWA: We have got night patrol, right, night patrol doing patrol every night. I would like to see this committee maybe reinforce that, that the people doing night patrol are empowered, to go, it is not a strong thing where these people who do night patrol, because we are family and they do not have that. Whereas if a non-indigenous person does the night patrol, then they have power. But I would like to see that the night patrol people to have some power to remove persons who has for example, bashed his wife; to remove that person in the van and put him in the cell or take him out bush. Because night patrols people, they are sometimes being abused by drunks. And also, police aids. They should have some power too. What I know, about police aids, is they have a duty statement, but I do not know if they have the real power as a non-indigenous policeman. So I would like to see your committee to maybe bring that to you, when you have a parliament hearing, to reinforce or to empower the police aids, to take more action in our community.

Ms CARTER: Really what we want is the police, because that comes up in every community including my one in Darwin. The night patrol is basically a good thing, the person who is drunk will only go with the night patrol if they want to, and then go to the sobering up shelter. And it frustrates the people on the night patrol because they do not have the powers to say, "You've got to come with me to that sobering up shelter." But really it is a voluntary thing meant to be a bit lower key than the police, because once you get involved with the police you can sometimes end up in a bit more trouble than what was really hoped for in the first place. But the way things are set up, because of the training that police get that goes for a long time, and the authorities that they have, they are the only ones that come along and take any of us if we are misbehaving. And so it has been a problem in many places, that the night patrol and the people that feel that night patrol should be able to say, "You must come with me." But often, I believe, it is just, what people really want is more police there, because the police can do that, and the solution may be to have a few more police here as well. Because if you train up a night patrol person in the law, you have got to basically give them power, you have basically got a police man or woman, so it is just a different level of the powers that people have.

CHAIR: I think what Mum was saying is that it is an issue that has been going on for a long time, for many years. I mean, I do not know how many years I have heard communities saying that they want their ACPOs to have the same powers as non-indigenous police, and yes it is good to have, and let's get more police, because we do need more police in Darwin too. But in communities, I mean what we have to look at is how do we give our ACPOs more powers. Not only powers to arrest but also, I mean, because the community gives our Aboriginal community police that status. They have that status. So if we give them the status, there has got to be a government that has got to be able to give them and they come up with that same status. And that is something that I know all the indigenous members in parliament would be, and are wanting to do, in terms of the Aboriginal community police, because we have to look at that whole area of ACPOs. Because the reality is, we are flat out getting police in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice, so how are we going to get those police out in remote areas as well? So that we have got to look at, and the problem with trying to get more of our ACPOs employed in the system, that if you give them the same meaningful jobs that we give whitefellers. I mean, we have got to be able to, because the police officers; like nurses in remote clinics, nurses work hand in hand with Aboriginal health workers, because the Aboriginal health workers and the Aboriginal workers working in that setting are the cultural brokers. And they are the ones that are going to be able to diffuse a lot of it. So we have got to look at the moral issue of, and you are right, I mean, ACPOs

Ms CARTER: But if ACPOs got more training then they should be able to do, have more responsibility and have more powers.

Mr WOOD: The path for an ACPO is to be a full policeman and that is what is the good thing about it, and the path is there now. It used not be so easy but now it is there, with stronger education...

Ms CARTER: That is what I was saying, that is what they need to move in. And the police force are wanting to take ACPOs down that line, I think there are some ACPOs who have gone on to become constables.

Mr C TIPUNGWUTI: What can you tell us about the bouncers, security mob; what powers do they have compared to police officers?

Ms CARTER: The security mob, I mean, you have security and bouncers in pubs and clubs and they can only keep you know, the peace and make sure people do not misbehave and drink too much, they can ask them to go.

Mr C TIPUNGWUTI: What I am looking at, we would like to train our own people, you know, to be bouncer, and same things, other people from my side....be a bouncer, you know, we have our own people.

Mr J CLEARY: Charles, the only thing about that is the security man has an understanding of law. He has no more power than you or me. All he has is a very good understanding of law itself, he can use the laws to his, the establishment he is working for, benefit. He has no more power than you or me or anyone in this room.

CHAIR: One more question.

Mr P BABUI: About gunja. Someone say, bringing it in from Darwin, and say if someone talking to him, and that person has got to have protection from the, you know, try to do something to him.

CHAIR: Yes. There is protection for those people, if, and the police, or even I, as a local member, I mean if you know somebody ...

A member: I think I do.

CHAIR: You could tell, I mean if you want to go to the police, we can, I mean you do have and you can be protected; there is a thing called the witness protection where you can be protected.

A member: But you should be able to do it anonymously.

CHAIR: Yes, without even putting your name, you can even ring up. You could tell Barry.

Dr LIM: If we find out he is the local drug dealer then he is going to be in trouble. So that is very scary, and I mean, if I knew of a big dealer who is multi million dollars and I ring up the police, and he finds out, he is going to come looking, and that would be the end of that. So the thing to do is we have got to be very careful about how we do it, and probably the best time to do it is when the police every so often they call for this telephone number, you know, for a week or a month or whatever. Operation Noah, for a week, anybody from the Territory can ring up and speak, so it becomes anonymous that way and they tend not to be able to find out who rang up. If I am the wrong one then that is the risk people take. And the best way to do that I find, is in Alice Springs, I get people to come and talk to me. They talk to me, I know where the source is but I do not tell anybody. I just ring up the police and say that this is Richard Lim ringing, I have information, I do not care where it comes from but if you do not want to find out from me, but I have got information that so and so is dealing. And then I am the target if the dealer comes. But my constituents are protected. That is where you can do that.

Mr G TILOURA: There was only, is there enough to find them education? Is there enough or what?

Ms T PURUNTATAMERI: Bilingual education is there because the community asked that their children to learn about, to read and write in their language, to us, to learn more English. Strong Tiwi and standard English. So that is what, that came from that community.

Mr G TILOURA: Now for us to get a job you have to have a good education, and to have a good education you are going to be dealing with Murrakai. You will be dealing with them. Now,, we can only do so much for the education mob, us and our local government mob and like, we like the local

government to get on their feet. The thing is, well it sounds pretty good, and we learn, we have got to learn our culture, we have got to learn English as well. But I think to be learning better, you have got to be learning more English than Tiwi. But that stuff is pretty good, that is alright. But if you can find more education stuff that we need over here, take it right to the school.

Dr LIM: This is the sort of thing that people might disagree, but let me tell you about my one experience. I grew up in Malaysia, and I grew up in a time when the British government was in charge of Malaysia. I grew up for five years, I was brought up speaking my mother's traditional language. And then I went to school, I went to a missionary school where I was taught in English. A British school, from seven o'clock in the morning to two or three o'clock in the afternoon, I all English. I come home, I speak to my mother, my grandmother, my great grandfather, in my mother's traditional language. And my culture was taught to me at home. I go to school, I learn English. And that is how I went. Now I speak both my mother's traditional language and English. My father, my mother, knew if I was going to improve in any way, I must be educated; and like you, my father pushed and pushed for education, and now I am a doctor and I am a politician. Okay. And also in a foreign country. I mean, I do not come from this country, I do not come from Australia, I come from overseas. But now I live here, this is my country now, and I speak English, I speak also my traditional language, and I also understand my own traditional culture. And I do Chinese things, in Darwin there is the Chinese community. Now, is it bilingual, no my education was only English; but my traditions, my language, my culture, continued through my great grandfather, my grandmother, my grandfather, my parents. And that is how I grew up. And unfortunately I did not teach my children my language but at least I teach them my culture. My Chinese culture. So at least they know that. But I think, I agree with you, I think if you are strong in English, it is very important because if you do not understand English, you do not understand Australia, and if you do not understand Australia, you will always be the base, you know. It is very important.

CHAIR: And you then also acknowledge that education is the key. And as I said before, hopefully with going towards these self managing schools, and looking and putting the focus on education, and changing that education, and now it is been in getting our kids educated, we might have a better future.

Mr G NORRIS: I think also, that education starts from the time you are born until the time you die. So I still read books, I am still studying at my age. A lot of people think that education finishes when they leave school but it is not. It never ends.

CHAIR: No, it is not. Look, life is education.

Mr G NORRIS: It not just education too. And I think we need more awareness programs, and I think that is an initiative, so that can be actually stopped at the beginning.

Mr WOODS: You have got a Collingwood hat on!

Mr MARALAMPUWU: Yes, we need security.

CHAIR: Yes, I will take up the police.

Mr MARALAMPUWU: I mean, it is too much over here, there are a lot of problems, and women getting bashed, and their kids, you know, it is a nightmare. I reckon we need security on there, an Elcho meeting three or four weeks?

A member: Two weeks ago.

Mr MARALAMPUWU: Two weeks ago. And one thing that we learned, one of the workshops, we learned, is we looked at past, present and future. Now, time where our ancestors, until they were really old, grey, and they died of old age, really old age. We looked at the present, present where we do things, I mean, like do things, interviews, all this stuff, and it is affecting us, plus gunja, education, domestic violence, suicide, you know. Now, we have got to try to overlook this problem to the future. But how are we going to do it? It is up to us, the leaders. Every one of us in this room, we are all leaders. Parents are leaders, even council, health board, land council, and parents. We are all leaders. And we have got to start to stand up on our feet and say, let's make it work. What I mean is, this time actually, you mob, we have got that skin group going, skin group B, so we will bring that up as well,

eh, in that meeting, John should be in that skin group meeting and we will start from there, with this. We will bring it up like, we will give out the answer why our kids and others, fathers, are doing, so we will bring it up at the next. We can only do so much but that is a start. So we ask the government now to put more in education and security. I thought I would bring it up, skin group, because you know when we hold a meeting a lot of people, they don't have that confidence to go.

CHAIR: But in their own skin group.

Mr MARALAMPUWU: Skin group, you know, people can bring out, they can. Again, there are these many people would be, this is representing skin group or percent, you know, of what the outcome from their skin group.

CHAIR: That would be really good because for a long time over here, those skin groups have not been working.

Mr MARALAMPUWU: Everybody love it, they want more meeting. So [language]

Mr B PURUNTATAMERI: Just a quick one, before you leave. We have been talking about security, about that gunja comes through the community. So that is going to be, it is your committee eh, is going to discuss that.

CHAIR: That is something I will take up.

Mr B PURUNTATAMERI: But the other one I was talking about is the limit of the tickets they are buying here every night. You know, the ticket, well the ticket. It is almost the crocodile type. That is how much they are buying, you know. It is true. I mean, something has got to be done. You have got to talk to the licensee.

A member: Are the people being served, are they drunk?

Mr B PURUNTATAMERI: I do not go there, I have not been there for a long time. They are not supposed to. For your ticket, for one person, it is too much. That is why they create a problem every night. You are walking up the street.

Mr MARALAMPUWU: Last one. While we have got everyone here and the members here, I would like to input with your assistance.

CHAIR: All the committee can do in its report is recommend to government certain things that are needed, I mean they are recommendations. The government could turn around and say okay, we might pick this, this and this, but we are not going to, we can't or for whatever reason, do this, this and this. But like I said before, there are six members on the committee and the six members are pretty committed to making sure that government meets its commitment. And that is the only thing that we can do. I can not give you any more commitment than that, Francis, because at the end of the day, it is only recommendations to government, and it is up to government to pick it up. And I would like to thank everybody for their attendance and their input.

END OF MEETING