



DARWIN REGION INDIGENOUS SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK

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DRISPN SUBMISSION TO THE 'ICE' SELECT COMMITTEE

The Darwin Region Indigenous Suicide Prevention Network (DRISPN) is grateful for the invitation to provide a submission into the review of the prevalence, impacts and government responses to the use of the drug colloquially known as 'Ice' in the Northern Territory.

DRISPN was formed in late 2010 by community members who were concerned about the number of suicides occurring in the Darwin region. The main focus of the group was to have a community owned and driven group to promote suicide prevention within the Darwin region. The DRISPN motto is "Get involved. Give hope. Save a life".

DRISPN is a community-driven group that works alongside local service providers to add value to their programs and services by advocating for the needs and considerations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Although the main focus of DRISPN is Indigenous suicide prevention we are aware that the majority of people who take their own life in the Northern Territory have alcohol or other drugs in their system at the time of their demise. As such, we feel it is important to provide input into this investigation.

a. The reliability of government data on Ice use and measures to enhance the collection of data to ensure that the scale of the problem and its impacts on the health, justice, drug and alcohol, and law enforcement efforts of the Northern Territory Government are understood and measured as accurately as possible.

We understand that there is a lack of data surrounding the use and impact of Ice in the Northern Territory. Therefore, it is important that such data is collected through a variety of methods including through direct contact with users of Ice and those who are care for users of Ice, e.g. family, friends, colleagues, team mates, medical staff, service providers, etc.

b. A comprehensive survey of the various government responses to the abuse of Ice in the Northern Territory and assess their effectiveness or otherwise.

No comment.

c. The social and community impacts of Ice in urban, community and remote settings.

DRISPN members have received communication from a variety of remote communities within the Northern Territory where community members have reported Ice use.

DRISPN is supportive of the regular local community forums titled "Families Crying out for Help" that are coordinated by Ms Donna Hunter. The forums provide a secure and supportive environment in which those who have been impacted by Ice can come together, share stories and advice, and know that they are not on their own in this battle.

Ms Hunter invites a counsellor to sit in on the forums to provide support to participants, if needed. This support is outlined at the beginning of each forum to ensure that participants know that they can ask for counselling during the forum or receive advice on where they can receive counselling outside of the forum.

Community driven groups are vital to the moral fabric of society and should be supported to help improve the wellbeing of community members and the atmosphere within the community itself. As such, each community should be encouraged and supported to establish similar groups to combat Ice.

d. Government and community responses to Ice use in other states and some assessment of the effectiveness of these responses in terms of prevention, education, family and individual support and withdrawal and treatment modalities.

DRISPN is aware that the Victorian Government released an Ice Action Plan and committed funds of \$45.5 million to tackle the state's Ice problem.

The Action Plan provides a coordinated and targeted approach and DRISPN would like to see this type of approach followed in the Northern Territory and to ensure that all Territorians have the opportunity to know what is being done to combat Ice in the NT.

e. The sources of Ice including cross border trafficking, local manufacture and derivation from legal pharmaceuticals and other legal precursors.

No comment.

f. Best practice work place health and safety measures for those in the health system who come into contact with users of Ice.

No comment.