



MEDIA RELEASE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE COMMUNITY

Tabling of First Report to Parliament

The first report of the parliamentary Committee inquiring into substance abuse in the community was today tabled in the Legislative Assembly. In tabling the report the Committee's Chairperson, Marion Scrymgour, MLA, Member for Arafura, made mention of the important and onerous responsibility placed on herself and other Committee Members by the Terms of Reference. She also referred to the need for intervention in any area where substance abuse has reached crisis level.

The Committee has focussed upon alcohol, petrol and cannabis as the three substances which are creating misery for many Territory communities and individuals and constituting threats to community health and wellbeing.

The Report is interim, detailing the process of the inquiry to date. It also notes six issues which it considers sufficiently important to include in an interim report.

“The Committee is raising these issues in its interim report as a means of encouraging debate and discussion in the community” said Ms Scrymgour. “In cases where substance abusers and innocent bystanders alike are impacted upon, intervention becomes a necessary action to minimise harm.”

The six issues of particular concern to the Committee include:

1. availability as a factor in alcohol abuse;
2. the adequacy of mental health services and coordination of mental health services with substance abuse services;
3. the contribution of substance abuse to high suicide rates in Indigenous communities
4. issues of cannabis supply and distribution in Indigenous communities;
5. coordination of Government services to and consultation with remote communities; and
6. legislative measures for addressing petrol sniffing in remote communities.

While the committee is yet to complete its planned program of community consultation, it looks forward to receiving feedback in relation to these issues and others noted in its Interim Report.