

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE
IN THE COMMUNITY

DATE: 16 July 2002

TABLED:

SUBMISSION NUMBER 0043

*RECEIVED FROM:
Ms Cathy Stewart
72 Hillside Gardens
ALICE SPRINGS*

Cathy Stewart
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Alice Springs 0870

7th June 02

Attention: The office of Mr Richard Lim

Please read the following and Pass On to any relevant parties.

Feel free to contact me with input you have relating **to** this rather difficult topic as I am interested in any feedback you may have.

Kind regards

Cathy Stewart

Cathy Stewart
72 Hillside Gardens
Alice Springs 0870
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7th June 02

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to forward to you some ideas that I have on the much talked about drinking and antisocial behavioural problems that we are experiencing in Alice Springs.

After much thought on this subject, and being directly related through work and lifestyle with many of these issues, I feel that I am in a position to make several relevant observations, and I hope that you will do me the courtesy of looking at the following and perhaps getting back to me with any feedback or the like that you may have.

- The three key words that are directly related to improving the (alcohol) situation in our society are...

RESTRICTION, EDUCATION, AND MOTIVATION.

- **RESTRICTION** refers directly to the availability of the offending product, being alcohol.
- **EDUCATION** relates to many areas, but, briefly for this exercise, I am talking about educating extensively on alcoholism as a non prejudiced disease, health and personal hygiene, "tough love" and how to raise children in western society, financial aspects.(how to handle money, and its value) and cultural elements, including indigenous people learning about and strengthening their own culture and white people learning about indigenous culture and its place in today's society, so that we can nurture feelings of empathy, tolerance and understanding rather than the "finger pointing" exercises that are far more prevalent at present.
- **MOTIVATION** relates to giving people a purpose in life, (in our society) and a reason to stay sober, be healthy and maintain personal pride in oneself, and ones culture, and passing this on to our children.

(Having a productive, Place in the world, a reason to get up in the morning.)

I have an idea for some sort of programme ~ can relate to all of the above, and although I am not too well versed in this kind of thing, and you may find it rather simplistic, I feel confident that this is the sort of path that we should be experimenting with to obtain some sort of positive result

Programme 1 - Say we work diligently at going around picking up drunken citizens, (and I mean black and whites) and putting them in DASA overnight to "dry out" and get cleaned up etc. I think this is what we do now to some degree After 3 times at DASA; you are then placed in a compulsory 6 week (length of time is irrelevant at present as this is just an idea) programme at CAAPU.

The first 4 weeks are living on the grounds, and includes drying out, making a contribution to the running of the centre and extensive education programmes into all of the above mentioned areas (under EDUCATIW) any financial benefits received (Pensions etc.) are forfeited by you , as they go to CAAPU to help fund the running of the centre. The final 2 weeks involve being released back into the community, but attending CAAPU everyday, from 8.00am – 5.00pm to continue with the education programme, and or to be involved in community work, under supervision, (pensions and benefits are still retained by the centre until the whole 6 week programme is complete).

"IMPORTANT-every time an individual offends or re-offends they go through the whole programme over again – ZERO TOLERANCE.

Education on both sides is the only way a culture that runs so parallel to our own is going to be preserved and integrated into today's society, and as you can see, the above is focused mainly on education and taking responsibility for the consequences of our individual actions.

- MOTIVATION is the next step from education, once we become educated we can then put further programmes in place, (work for the dole?) or something aimed at getting people employed in some sort of productive place in our society.

Lets not forget that indigenous culture is a victim in our society, and alcoholism is the "bandaid" that has been used by black and white for generations to "fix" things that we feel we have no control over. Let us as a society take responsibility for this situation, and be prepared to do whatever it takes from a ZERO TOLLENACNCE . "TOUGH LOVE" perspective to help people affected by this disease, because the truth is everyone in this town is affected by this disease, not just the drinkers – we are all sufferers, and bottle shops and liquor outlets must take responsibility for the role that they play in this destructive cycle, as suppliers, they are feeding the problem. Not trying to point the finger here, but just to stress that our society too must accept responsibility for our roles in the situation.

As far as the younger generation is concerned, until we educate the elder people as to how to bring up these children in a world that is very different to what they are more accustomed to (let's face it, it's a difficult world to be bringing up all children) and how to discipline these children from a "TOUGH LOVE" perspective, we are not going tom get anywhere. And as far as saying there should be "one rule for everyone" all kids should be in school 5 days a week etc....let's face it, that's the system we have in place now, and it obviously doesn't work. Lets focus on programmes that are based on the needs of this culture and its present situation, and make necessary allowances, to get better results.

(What about a travelling school system that goes to communities 1-2 days a week to teach kids to read and write – if the kids wont go to the school, take the school to them. Importantly, lets educate the elders on the IMPORTANCE of those kids learning to read and write.)

I could go on for hours here, but wanted to keep it brief. Like I mentioned, you may think it all rather simplistic, but I think there are some positive things here that can be utilized, to the benefit of our society.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any input.

Kid regards

Cathy Stewart