

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Ms J Carney

to Minister for Family and Community Services

Residential Drug Rehabilitation Centres

Minister you will be aware that Green Gates Inc has been lobbying unsuccessfully for a number of years to have a residential drug rehabilitation established in Alice Springs.

In August last year you wrote to the Association providing further details on a Mapping Project being done in Alice Springs and how it will be completed by December 2004. In your letter it also talks about conduct of public consultation forums.

1. Minister is there any hope that your government will establish a residential rehabilitation program for drug addicts in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Alice Springs currently has a range of services available for people with drug problems. These range from opiate pharmacotherapy services, out patient and residential withdrawal services and residential drug treatment facilities operated by Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Program Unit (CAAAPU) and Drug and Alcohol Services Association (DASA).

DASA caters for short, and medium term stays and operates a structured program for aboriginal and non-aboriginal clients. They accept all substance users no matter what their primary drug of choice. CAAAPU is a longer term residential service that caters for people with alcohol problems and accepts both aboriginal and non-aboriginal referrals.

To ensure there is a range of services to meet the needs of all Territorians, the Alcohol and Other Drugs Program commissioned Health Management Advisors to conduct a review of services and interventions. The objectives of this review were to analyse current treatment services, as a whole and within each region. The report was received in July 2005.

Consultations with existing service providers in Alice Springs did not identify a need for residential services for people with illicit drug problems. Any decisions about new facilities and service models would need to be justified as a priority and there would need to be some certainty that there was a critical mass of people who would benefit from this type of service. Across Australia, treatment models are moving away from residential models and embracing models which are more flexible and which work with people in their current environment, home or supported accommodation environment.

It is the case that illicit drug users will benefit from some distance from their drug taking environment or lifestyle. However, this does not necessarily lead to the need for a new service provider or facility and could be accommodated with existing service providers and options.

The recommendations generated from the review will be used to consider the issues around service models and service mix. It will also provide a basis for working with existing alcohol and other drug treatment services to ensure:

1. we are providing the best possible service mix in each region;
2. that all people are able to access a full range of services, and
3. that services are working towards the provision of current evidence based best practise.

There was a comprehensive review of services and service need, followed by a forum of all stakeholders and service providers.

These processes identified that there was sufficient residential capacity in Darwin and Alice Springs.

The outcome of these processes is work on service standards, service accountability and improvements in working relationships.

This work will ensure that existing services are efficient and effective and position the Territory to seek new services and resources through negotiations in the Australian Government.