

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

2 October 2002

Meeting Pirlangimpi

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Madam CHAIR: You are appearing before the Committee today to brief it in relation to its terms of reference in relation to substance. If required and if you want after this meeting you want copies of that terms of reference and what it is doing that can be obtained from the Committee secretary. This meeting is open to the public and it is being recorded and a transcript produced which may be eventually tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Please advise us or through me if the Chair if any part of your evidence is to be 'in camera' and what I mean with that is that if you feel there is information that you want to disclose to the Committee that you feel it is sensitive and you do not want it to be transcribed or recorded, let me know and we will organise it. The decision regarding this will be at the discretion of the Committee. You are reminded that evidence given to the Committee is given is protected by parliamentary privilege. Just for the purposes of Hansard record and when we are doing the recording, it would be good if people could state their name, their full name, and just in the capacity in which they will talk. Like Henry as president of the Community Board and repeat if at all possible each time you speak, and I know it is going to be hard, but it will be good just to say your name. With that, and before I ask, invite any of the representatives to, if they want to talk or have discussions. I will just get each of the Committee members to introduce themselves and just a short spiel and then also introduce the staff that travel with us, which is Pat Hancock who is the secretary and Liz McFarland who are our support backup on the travel with the Committee. We also have Miss Eileen Cummings who is also here with the Committee as an observer who is doing the indigenous family violence strategy.

Dr LIM: I am Richard Lim and I am from Alice Springs. I am a member of your Committee and I have been on this Committee since it was formed because of my interest in health issues particularly but also you know having been involved with this for a little bit, a couple of years now and I just want to make sure there is improvement.

Ms CARTER: My name is Sue Carter. I am the member for Port Darwin which is the inner city electorate of Darwin. Before I became a member of parliament I was a nurse and I also worked in health promotion, particularly in the 'quit smoking' area. I have had a long term interest in the issues of drug use and substance abuse and that is why I am on this Committee now.

Mr WOOD: I am Gerry Wood, I am an independent member for Darwin. My area covers Howard Springs and Humpty Doo, the rural area around Darwin. I worked for about 8 years from 1974 to 1981 so I have had an interest in what is happening in this part of the world. Many years ago I used to play at Garden Point and I have had an interest in this area for a long time since two of my children were born there and I have very fond memories of this part of the world.

Madam CHAIR: Well thank you. I suppose how we start the meeting, and rather than any formal sort of set agenda when we went through a lot of issues regarding the terms of reference and what the, when the Committee was established in parliament in October last year, although our terms of reference and what we can do as a committee is quite broad and there is a number of things that we can look at in terms of you know substance abuse, drugs that are both licit and illicit, we thought as a Committee and to start things off we would just target three areas. Those three areas are not just problems in remote communities, there are also problems that we see in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. However, the Committee feels that we should address the remote areas as a matter of urgency. Those three areas are abuses of alcohol, both the abuse and misuse of alcohol, ganja which we know is in our communities and petrol sniffing which might not be a problem up this end but certainly in Central Australia and some areas of the Top End in West and East Arnhem there are certainly some real issues with petrol sniffing. So given over the past couple of months there has been some publicity and issues regarding the Tiwi Islands with not just the number of suicides but also the issue of the effects of grog and what is happening. There have been a lot of media reports with the issue of domestic violence and the issue of violence coming out of substance abuse, so I mean I will leave it open and put it to the members to open the discussion.

Mr DUNN: Do you want to say something first John?

Mr BANKS: I can provide an overview of what happened at yesterday's alcohol management committee meeting. Yesterday 24 senior members of the Tiwi community came together, and included within that 24 were the four licensees of the clubs, to discuss the recent alcohol issues, in particular the closure of the clubs and the suicides and the need for an alcohol management plan. The meeting had

four objectives, and I will just run through those briefly. First one to discuss in some detail the need for a Tiwi Islands.....management plan and that included a brief review of the.....report related to the 1998 deaths and1999. It discussed the establishment of a liquor management committee and discussed in detail the membership of that committee which I can go through briefly. It also discussed the process in which the liquor management plan may be developed and time frames that sort of thing. And finally the funding of that plan, who was going to actually pay for the engagement of a consultant to complete the work thathas already undertaken.

So just to go through that in a little more detail. I forgot to mention my name is John Banks for the tape. The actual problems that were identified in terms of discussion was referring to the Coroner's report and the extracts of that report were presented to the Committee. In particular the recommendations relating to alcohol and the Coroner's recommendations that back in 1999 urgent action be taken on the Tiwi's to address the health issues, the social issues, the domestic violence, the availability of take-away alcohol and the trading of the licensed premises. There were representatives from the Liquor Licensing Commission, Racing and Gaming, there yesterday and the day also highlighted the need for development of a plan and the expectation that the Tiwi Islands would come up with a plan in the very near future. So having briefly discussed the potential role of the Committee, and it was described on the white board, as at present you have the Liquor Licensing Commission setting the licensing conditions for the licensed clubs and then the permit conditions for those who have permits on the Island. So there is at present no formal group on which the alcohol related issues on the island is discussed as one issue. It is discussed a bit by the Health Board, a bit by the Police, a bit bythe Correctional Services people and a bit by the communities. So the idea of forming a single committee was to bring all those groups together to see if one plan could be developed. In order to develop a single plan it was thought that it needed to have very senior people from the Tiwi Islands

Tape 2A Commences.

I know people with the clout to actually carry it through. So the membership of the committee and this was a substantial discussion item yesterday. It went probably about a good 40 minutes of the discussion was the committee membership, but we have arrived at the President of each Community Management Board, one representative from the Liquor Licensing Commission, one representative from the administration of TILG, that is probably going to be myself or John Cleary, one representative of the Tiwi Health Board, one representative from the Police, the Licensee of each community club and then there was considerable discussion about the involvement of women, and the meeting split into two unfortunately. One part they resolved that there should be one woman representative from each community and that each Community Management Board select that person to be on there, then right at the end there was some move not to involve the women in it. So the model that I am going to be working on at the moment is the one which there was the majority of the discussion was that the women, there should be at least four women represented on the committee and that they would be selected. Now that may alter, and other people may have different views, but for those that were at the committee, the meeting had actually closed and then someone reopened it on that issue.

Madam CHAIR: To exclude women? What was the reason for that?

Mr BANKS: The reason given was about the size of the Committee at that stage. It was up to

Madam CHAIR: Isn't it important, sorry, I just think that the importance of women on that, and I know I have.....senior traditional owners of Nguiu have actually stated that there need to be women.

Mr BANKS: Well that was certainly the view that was put forward by myself and John Cleary that there should be women on there

Dr LIM: The comment that you made

Mr BANKS: No it is not that big. There were 24 people present yesterday and the size of the committee would be 17, which I think for something of this scope is probably a manageable size.

Mr WOOD: Were the 24 people here yesterday, all men or a mixture of men and women/

Mr DUNN: Patricia was present. You were the only female?

?????????????????: Unintelligible

Madam CHAIR: Was it just a TILG meeting or was it a

Mr DUNN: No it was just to form this committee for the Alcohol Management Plan.

Mr BANKS: I did cover the role of TILG at the meeting yesterday, because that was obviously going to be one of the questions, that TILG does not have any direct role in the licensing.

Madam CHAIR: No I am just trying toyou said that 24 members, in a community population of 350. It wasn't a community meeting it was just a meeting.

Mr BANKS: This meeting was held in TILG in Nguiu and involved the presidents of all the communities, the licensees of all communities

Madam CHAIR: And it was at Nguiu.

Mr COSTA: So it was apublic meeting.

Mr BANKS: It was not advertised as a public meeting. The objective of the meeting was to establish a committee and set out those objectives that Iearlier about who was going to fund it, how it was going to run, and the next step was to go about establishing

Mr WOODS: If you did not have the women on it you actually would not have any members of the public, unaffiliated people. Everyone else has got a position from, so there would not be any public input.

Mr BANKS: No, Henry was present there.

Mr DUNN: Well there was a few on the committee that felt that we should get women involved, because a lot of it has got to do with women being hurt after their husbands comes from the club or whatever. So a lot of it.....should get for.....individual people outside to recogniseon the committee.will be called for nominations to

Mr BANKS: The way that I interpreted it at the meeting I took the formal close to be the actual close, did include the formal invitation for the women to be nominated by each of the community groups. So that is what is going to go within the brief forIt was a good meeting and a lot of issues.....were put forward and I'll go through some of that. Just to, some of the other outcomes of the meeting. Having established the committee, in terms of payment for it, it was determined that it and how it should proceed that we really want to have this concluded within about two months. We saw it as an urgent matter. In order to facilitate that we thought that there needed to be a consultant or suitably qualified person engaged to complete the work that has already started, and to go around to all the communities and carry out the public consultation. We estimated that a fee for such a job would be somewhere in the range between \$5 000 and \$10 000, and we put it to the licensees that as they were the ones, beneficiaries of the alcohol trade to a certain extent and with a major stake in that if the clubs closed that they should be the ones to pay for it, and they agreed to pay.....up to \$10 000 at the moment. The agreement was that that would be split proportionally between the clubs based on population. So Nguiu Club will pay the majority of it. So, there was a deliberate strategy yesterday at not attempting to go into individual controls relating to alcohol. Some people started to bring that sort of thing up again at the meeting and there was some discussion about permits and things but really that was not the intent of yesterday's meeting. This committee, now established and once the consultant is engaged will cover those issues. So that is what happened yesterday. Patricia or anyone want to add a bit more.

Mr WOOD: Can I ask, when is the consultant going to report back to the committee?

Mr BANKS: Well, within the brief I will be setting out a two month time frame.

Mr WOOD: Will those meetings be, as with the community, be public meetings?

Mr BANKS: Yes, I have already prepared a draft management plan which has in it the methodology for consultation which does include full public meetings in each of the communities. That will form the basis of the draft and I have already supplied a copy of that to

Mr WOOD: I am not saying that it would happen, but is it possible for an outsider to attend those public meetings?

Mr BANKS: Yes, yes.

Mr WOOD: So a member of this Committee was, if a member of this Committee would just like to hear what people were saying, because it would be a good way for us to hear a broader cross section of the community.

Mr BANKS: In a previous discussion Marion did ask me to advise when those meetings were going to be held.

Mr WOOD: She did not tell us that.

Madam CHAIR: But that could be debated whether I do that in my capacity as a Labor member or whether we as a committee could attend and I suppose that is something that, I mean whether we write as a committee and ask to see if we can attend because I think it would be good if the Committee to be present and to be able to observe at those meetings, but it would be up to the community at the end of the day, they could turn around and just say no.

Dr LIM: Well personally I believe it is better to let the community committee only attend and ask them to give us feed back. Because I think as a local member.....but I think coming as a committee we would actually cause a bit of.....discussions.....let the community have their own discussions and then give us information, I think is a much better way to do it.

Mr WOOD: I would not even have thought about interfering with anything I would have just been sitting there.....

Dr LIM:Committee it will constrain the

Madam CHAIR: Yes there is, I tend to agree with.....for a change. It would, I mean something as a local member I would certainly be writing to committee members and sending input as the local member, which could be fed back to the Committee. I mean in terms of implications of what we may link to the fact, but I think people tend to get intimidated too and feel a bit harassed when you have politicians or parliamentarians staring over the top and I think we have a clear role. I certainly take myfurther, I mean just like you mob, as a local member where I would like to see the support of the implementation and moving forward on this, I would rather not choke up the process. Any questions, Sue?

Mr COSTA: I can see where you are coming from but we are also looking at the corporate aspects to it as well. Like a lot of the women would like to see that.....

Mr??????????:but there are also aspects on the Territorian politicians, not just the members of this community and the only way I learn sometimes is actually to go out

CHATTER

Madam CHAIR: Yes, I mean one of the things and I suppose in that just thisis to try and encourage the women. I mean I have seen for a long time in the past where the women have not been included in and some time of the time they have never said 'yeah well we have invited the women and they have not had a say', but in reality it because they have set it up where the women are going to feel intimidated by it.

Tape 3A Commences.

Mr BANKS: Henry, did you want to talk a little bit about the membership at the club, and the reintroduction of that?

Mr DUNN:since last year in September when we were discussing about membership at the club to start it up again, we finally got it going two weeks ago. It is not only that but we had a large influx of people coming to buy grog here, so we put restrictions on their take-aways and reintroduced a membership so now if somebody blows up it is up to the bloke who signed him in that gets it. And we find that we do not get as much visitors now as we have got a membership and they know that. We are really serious about this alcohol problem that we do have and we are trying to overcome it through membership plus our restrictions on The Liquor Commission has been real supportive of us. Just that we felt we were treated unfairly when we got closed with everybody else and the problem was not actually in our community. And I have just thought we got a raw deal out of that. We were treated as second class citizens. I brought that up with him yesterday. I said 'well if somebody in Darwin say runs amok at the Casuarina Club are you going to shut all the pubs in Darwin?'

Mr WOOD: Do you think you would have had extra visitorslately to here because you were the only ones open?

Ms BOURKE: That is what happens if Milikapiti or Nguui is shut people come here to drink. However before that they just all come into the club but with this membership now someone has to sign them in, they can not just go in, and a member can only sign two in.

Mr WOOD: So there is some controls that have only just started to take place.

Mr DUNN: And we have found that it has slowed the influx of people right down.

Madam CHAIR: Which I think for some time and it is good that those measures are being put in place. The pressure was coming I mean there was pressure on the Liquor Commission because of the problems happening at Nguui and what is coming out of that was if you closed the Nguui club then all the people would then go toor they would come across here and go to Milikapitiso it was decided to shut all of them, to give everybody a rest and allow people to think a bit about the problems that was happening. We did have a meeting with Peter, the representatives from the Liquor Commission and there were representatives from the Land Council that came into my office and we had a meeting, and I mean even the meeting that I had with the Tiwi Land Council.....everyone was quite angry that all the clubs had been closed, but it was a matter, I mean what it has produced is getting everyone to take stock and to finally look at some sort of plan that has to be put in place. We have got to stop the number of women that are getting flown into Darwin that are always being bashed up and our kids have got to stop living the lives that they keep going through. So, it was giving everyone an opportunity to say well enough is enough now. We have to start looking at this issue and addressing it properly.

Ms BOURKE: That one week break was quite nice

Madam CHAIR: That one weeks break? Well we heard that at Milikapiti people were saying 'yeah we were angry first when it shut, but the week actually was very good' and for the first time they saw men participating in sports.played basketball and joining in games so you know.all the drinkers I think everyone enjoyed the peace and quiet and

Mr PURUNTATAMERI:plus normallyclose down the clubs that day we fax of that at 4 o'clock that people were closing the club, and it was too late.at least morning to let us know the club was closed, and we were very upset.

Madam CHAIR: I think the Liquor Commission recognised that the lack of notification, I mean 4 o'clock on a Friday, I think they realised that that was a bit harsh on the communities, that it should have been done, you know the time should have been some time in the morning or something, but sometimes when the decision comes through you know, it said you have to do it now, and unfortunate it was 4 o'clock on a Friday afternoon.

Mr DUNN: Just on that again, the loss of revenue, everybody got their tax back that Friday. All that money has gone out of the community now. Our bank, we had no money in our bank for nearly a week, because we rely on the club, the shop to bank money so it just circulates around the community. This bank had no money for three days.

Ms CARTER: Why was that, where did the money go?

Mr DUNN: We.....\$10 000.....

Mr COSTA: It basically went to Darwin.

Ms CARTER: So people got their tax return

Mr COSTA: Yes, got on a plane and went to Darwin.

CHATTER

Mr DUNN: Everybody went to Darwin for a week. So are they going to close Darwin when they close ours next time? Just the loss of revenue really hit us, and it really upset the whole community. We had no money in the bank, nobody could draw money out.

Mr WOOD: Who owns the club?

Mr DUNN: The Progress Association.

Mr WOOD: Is it at all related to theCouncil? And it's money goes where? It's profits?

Mr DUNN: It's profits come back into the community.

Mr WOOD: And how do they come back, through the Association, or do they give some of it to community government or

Mr DUNN: No well we are just looking at starting up programs for the school kids, sponsorship, anything to help the community out.

Mr BANKS: I think the Progress Association is in a rebuilding phase itself, and financially I think it is just starting to get back on its feet again, so there has not been a lot of money really to put back into things up until now. But as Henry said they are now looking at sport and rec programs, some renovations on the club and the committee members of the Progress in the main are mostly members of the communityso there is a bit of an overlap.

Mr WOOD:concern at Milikapiti we had a lot of money for programs well the Council did not have access to that money that came from the club. It had its own sort of agenda. I just thoughtunderstanding of how they worked. This is a question I asked at Milikapiti Thursday, is there many people, especially men who do not drink at all?

Mr DUNN: There are a few in the community, but there are a lot of men who do not drink everyday, they may come up once in a blue moon.

Mr WOOD: Is there pressure on them to drink? Are they ostracised for not being drinkers or

Dr LIM: If you went to the club and you said 'oh, lemonade' would your mates around you pressure you to drink?

CHATTER

Mr PANGIRAMINNI: I mean, look for me I am actually a drinker, like everyone elsethe week I just drink the weekends, but now and then I go to the club. I would normally get a

soft drink and I think you have friends, friends oftenhave a drink or have a taste of the beer but I say no I do not actually drink so, probably just the weekends I probably drink.

Dr LIM: I think that is good because there are some communities where you find that it is a 'shame job' if you go to a bar and all your mates are drinking and you have a bottle of water, and then the pressure is, even though they do not say it, the pressure is all on to drink up or why do you think I am 'woosy', you know this sort of thing.

CHATTER

Mr COSTA: I think it is an individual's choice if he go to the club and decides. Like you know if that person has got the money at the time, yeah he will probably drink but if he hasn't got the money he will probably just want to drink water or lemonade. I do not think it is a problem here. I certainly do not think it is a 'shame job' orand meant to be that. That is.....their pride.

Mr WOOD: It sounds like you have a few more people who do not drink here than they have over the road.

Tape 4A Blank

Tape 5A commences after Tape 3A

Madam CHAIR: Beer has always been a bit more manageable hasn't it?

Ms CARTER: In terms of consumption it has been better managed here. Why do you think that is?

Mr DUNN: I think because they have had a permit system, and they have been given a fair go, and they have, yeah, over the years you can noticeeverybody

Ms CARTER: Learnt how to drink responsibly.

Mr DUNN: Yes, you look when we get visitors that have been from Bathurst or Snake Bay. When we get visitors we got big lines. When it is just the community you can go in there are probably two or three people in front of you, and that is it.

Ms CARTER: With regard to the club is it only open for a couple of hours every day, and is it like one day you can have take-away, one day you can drink there or how does it work here?

Mr DUNN: No you can take away five days a week, six days a week sorry, from the club plus

Ms CARTER: So say I turned up at the club and I had plenty of money, what could I drink there? Do you get like you are only allowed to have six cans maximum, or what is the story?

Mr DUNN: You can drink as much as you like

Ms CARTER: for those two hours

Mr DUNN: three hours, providing you behave yourself. Then you have got till 6 to get your take-away

Ms CARTER: and I could buy a carton?

Mr ??????????: and that is providing you have a permit.

Ms CARTER: If I have a permit I can say have four cans of beer plus a carton to take-away, would that be right?

Mr DUNN: If you did not have a permit you would be refused.

Ms CARTER: Do most people have a permit?

Mr DUNN: A lot of people do.

Dr LIM: The permits are issued by whom?

CHATTER

Dr LIM: Who issues the permits?

Mr COSTA: Us, ah the Liquor Commission issues them.

Dr LIM: The Liquor Commission issues permits to people in.....

Mr DUNN: The process that it happens, a person would apply for a permit for the Community Management Board. The Management Board will approve it or disapprove it. If it is approved it then goes on to the Police. The Police will check, that goes to the Liquor Commission, then the Liquor Commission issue.....

Dr LIM: So who established that system?

Madam CHAIR: That has been around for a long time.

Dr LIM: Was it established by the Pirlangimpi Council and then, really the Liquor Commission is just the issuer, that is all. The real permit comes from here. Yes, you can drink. Okay fill in the paper work and all that, put it through and the Licensing Commission will issue it, but really the permit comes from.....

Mr BANKS?????: There are different classes of permits too.

Madam CHAIR: You can either have an open permit which allows you to have anything

Mr ??????????: No more, no more permits

Madam CHAIR: No more open permits

CHATTER

Madam CHAIR:gave me that theMilikapitiat Nguiu they did have permits there but they revoked it. One of the things that they had discussion with the Liquor Commissioner was to look at, I mean people did raise, well how come thesegot permits and we don't. Part of this plan and the work that we are trying to do through the plan with the Liquor Commission is to get consistency right across. Because Nguiu mob are saying well we are being discriminated against as well. We should be able to, cause a lot of them are saying we do not want to go to the club. If we had permit we could drink at home and not get the humbug in the club, but stay at home and drink. So a lot of that has to be addressed through this plan.

Mr WOOD: Can I just get an explanation? You can be a member of the club and you can drink what you like. You can also get a permit to import cartons, one spirit and one wine.

Mr ??????????: Import

Mr WOOD: No I am saying, when you say permits you mean you canbuy it from Darwin.

Mr COSTA: You can buy it from Darwin but you can not bring it to the island if you haven't got a permit.

Mr WOOD: That is alright, but I am just trying to work out how much alcohol can one person basically get. What is the maximum a person can have?

Mr DUNN: Four cartons, a cask of wine and a bottle of rum.

Mr WOOD: As well as that they can use the club.

Mr COSTA??: They can use the club to consume alcohol in the club, but they can not take it away.

Mr WOOD: So there is no take-away then?

Mr COSTA??the four cartons you can not get any more.

Ms CARTER: Is that a week? And what was the 'B', what did you get if you were 'B'?

Mr DUNN??: Two

Ms CARTER: Two cartons and what about the cask and the bottle of spirits.

Mr DUNN??: No it is just flat.

Ms CARTER: Just two cartons a week.

Mr DUNN: Or one carton. We did have open permits but we found that we were getting too much visitors coming in to buy grog, so we cut it down. The community was not happy we had to do that.

Dr LIM: How, if I lived here and had a permit, a class 'A' permit, I can go to Darwin and bring anything in, how would you know thateven thoughat home, I could go to the club and buy some more. I mean I would not bring it in here I would leave it at home under the bed. Go to the club and say I will drink here nowtake-away.

Mr DUNN: Okay, I do not see where we can monitor that, but a lot of people when they take away from Darwin they do not go to the club. A lot of people they get their take-aways, we go and have a game of golf, we go for a swim. We do not necessarily have to go to the club every day. And with that take-away system we have found that it works a lot better, because a lot of people.....one day so they might not go to the pub, they will just get a heap of take-aways and go home.

Mr WOOD: When you mean take-away you mean the permit. I was thinking like a drive in bottle shop. Locally that is the take away I am thinking of. That is likeit is really a permit system that is a take-away. Okay, gee I thought there is going to be a lot of alcohol consumed here, isn't there.

Dr LIM: It isother communities we have heard that when a person has a take-away, they can take four cartons away on a Class A, somebody who can not....., who has not got a permit, can you sell and buy on the black-market. I have four cartons at home, do you want a drink? Come with me, but it will cost you \$12 a can, or \$2 a can or \$5 a can.

Mr DUNN: Oh that happens, except they pay a lot more than you.

CHATTER

Mr DUNN: Yes well it was getting to that stage. That is why we cut, we put the restrictions on the permits. We could see at that barge..... we were getting influx of people from Bathurst and Snake Bay and a lot of them were the leaders that were doing it. So we cut it out.

Ms BOURKE:cut it down, like the people want to try ask you if you can get them a carton on your permit, that is only going to leave you with one carton. They say no.....

Mr WOOD: Is that illegal under your license? Is it illegal for someone to on-sell the grog? I mean it might be.....

Mr DUNN: Yes, well if we get any evidence that somebody has done that, we ban that person and take his permit off him.

Mr WOOD: Would it put your licence at risk too if people found that you were not sort of trying to police that?

Mr ???????: It is a condition on the permit. Yes the.....would be in trouble.

Mr COSTA: The permit states you can only drink within, well like within your house or another permit holders place, at his request.

Dr LIM:you can not drink up the street and

Mr COSTA: Not down the beach things like that.

Ms BOURKE: And if you invite someone to drink and they run amok well you going to lose your permit.

Mr COSTA: You are responsible. Same as for the signing system here. Just say if you came to the club this afternoon, before you went to go to Nguiu you run amok, like I signed you in, I lose my permit until.....

Dr LIM: I would be interested to, whether there is anything on records here about howthat sort of permit system.

Mr DUNN: Well it is about 77 I think.. It has been here for a while.

Dr LIM: So youthe Liquor Commission

CHATTER

Mr PURUNTATAMERI: When I first come here.....and that was unlimited. You could buy ten cartons, twenty cartons, not a problem. We used to sit out here, drink out here,.....

CHATTER

Mr WOOD:it would be a dangerous occupation coming home from football here. If you.....they used to do a lot of drinking before they went home. You could not do that so easily now.

Ms CARTER: How do you feel your alcohol situation is here now? Is it getting better, and you know, compared to other problems in life is it still a big problem? How do you feel about it?

Ms BOURKE: It is not as big as it used to be before

Ms CARTER: And how far back are you going to say that? Has it got better over how long?

TAPE 6A COMMENCES

Ms BOURKE: Compared what, 10 years.

Mr COSTA: See, you tend to know who the trouble makers are, so that is not really the problem because once they start.....

Ms CARTER: They do not get the permits though they might leave?

Mr COSTA: See, when you find, once the permits are taken off some of the people here they will try to go to Milikapiti or Nguiu and then because of the banned list, once they are banned from here they are not allowed to drink at the other three clubs. So what a lot of them tend to do is go to

Darwin.....they drink in Darwin. But there is a banned list of every person that is banned from drinking.

Mr WOOD: Domestic violence, one of the issues that comes up often, is that a serious problem at Garden Point or just

Unknown: It used to be

Unknown(possibly Mr COSTA): No, well nothing.....improved a lot

CHATTER

Madam CHAIR: The suicides are also pretty low here aren't they? You do not hear of suicides.....

CHATTER

Dr LIM: Anotherhave you got problems with your ganja?

Unknown: No not really, ganja is taking a lot more of, because it is affecting the young up here.

Ms BOURKE: The non-drinkersnot drinking age yet, those mob now.

Madam CHAIR: They are smoking?

Unknown: Yes.

Mr WOOD: And the quite young people?

Unknown: What is the youngest you have?

Ms BOURKE: I heard at Milikapiti someone there was about 13, youngest, maybe younger.

Dr LIM: Inaudible

Ms BOURKE: Brought in.

Madam CHAIR: I will ask Richard's question, what he has been asking about this. When you look at the problem what would be worse between alcohol and ganja? What would be a bigger problem? Is it ganja, or is it alcohol or is it both?

Mr PURUNTATAMERI: I reckon it is the mixture.

Madam CHAIR: When they are mixing it, then it becomes a problem?

Mr DUNN: I think that one thing that is really relevant to this Committee is gambling. I reckon gambling is our biggest problem, and they say that is not a problem. I think it is the start of everything. Cause the mothers can sit there, eight to twelve hours a day without even worrying about their kids. Their kids could be doing whatever. But it is gambling, that is the major problem.

Madam CHAIR: And does that cause a lot of the, do you reckon that causes a lot of the family problems Henry, when women are gambling all the time and that makes the man angry, and causes problems?

Mr DUNN: Well, just an example, last year tax time. This bloke he went to the club and he spent a hundred bucks at the club. His missus got the shits, but let alone she went to cards and lost two grand and it was nothing to her. But she was wild at her husband for going down to the club and spending \$100. Yet they can lose their whole pay and they will sit there and sit there until somebody chucks them in, and their kids are running around, smelly nose, dirty Kimbies whatever, you know.

Mr WOOD: This is under the street light all night?

Mr DUNN: Yes, all day, all night.

Mr WOOD: Things have not changed much then.....long time.

Mr DUNN: Yes but I am finding that that is the major problem

Dr LIM: Is it a woman's thing, not the men doing the gambling?

Mr DUNN: Men gamble too, but women, you know, and a lot of the blokes work here and their wives are there nearly every day of the week.

Unknown: But some women work themselves too.

Mr DUNN: Yeah, but you look at them lunchtime, bang, straight to the card game. After work straight to the card game. They do not go home and feed the kids. You know we have to be truthful and try and find out what is happening, what is causing all this problems.

Ms BOURKE: With the alcohol, you got your domestic violence and stuff like that, and with the ganja you got all this mental stuff coming out problems.

Mr DUNN: And this gambling is just plain neglect. Once they are gambling I have seen them piss off, tell their kids to piss off because they are losing. What has the poor kid got to do with that.

Dr LIM: Petrol sniffing?

CHATTER

Ms BOURKE: We did have once and we put them out onIsland there.

CHATTER

Mr WOOD: How do you think the gambling could be, you see any solutions for gambling cause as I said in my time on Bathurst Island kids would be starving. I used to see them go to their club, Mum would be playing cards and the kid would be home with no food at all. The way you speak is as though nothing has changed.

Mr DUNN: It has got worse if anything else. They sort of accept like it

Mr COSTA: Part of culture.

Mr DUNN: Yeah but you know

Madam CHAIR: When gambling is quite a serious problem.

Mr DUNN: Yeah it is a problem and yet they do not see it as a problem.

Unknown: But they wouldcomplain about the men.

CHATTER

Mr WOOD: We once tried on Bathurst to offer the men to take their beer home, they used to be able to take their beer to the club if the women would stop playing cards at the same time. So they would all be home together, but you could not get an agreement.

Dr LIM: In gambling, it is not the winning, it is the losing that causes the thrill, the thrill of gambling is the threat of losing, and you find it with poker machines. If you win it is not much thrill, but when you start, and people play because, and ultimately you lose the money and that proves your point that you never win and for some reason you get more excitement out of it.

TAPE 7A COMMENCES

Mr DUNN: Last year at tax time.

Dr LIM: Unintelligible.

Mr DUNN: Yeah, but they do not see it as a problem or anything, it is just like it is a part of life when, it is a big problem.

Ms CARTER: I got told when I was living in Katherine, the people in Burunga were having a problem with gambling, and the comment, and this is like say ten years ago when I was down there, was that it was not a problem because for cultural reasons whoever won the money then had to sort of share the money back out again, but then I heard another time that one woman won \$14 000 in a game, immediately raced into Katherine and bought a car.and the kids were left starving. What happens here you know, when one or two people win all the money do they keep it or what do they do?

Ms BOURKE: You give it to your close relations but not the whole lot.

Mr DUNN: And gamblers have got their partners who they give money to and who they will not give money to.

Ms CARTER: And so would it be unusual, common, for want of a better word, to win say \$2 000 or \$3 000 on a payday if you were a good player, go into Darwin and blow it in Darwin? Would that be something that people would do? What do they do with the money, is that

Mr DUNN: Well they either fly in or they just lose it back.

Ms BOURKE: Some go in and get washing machines, something like that and bring them back.

Ms CARTER: So there is more, one of the big issues is not so perhaps to some degree it is losing money but it is also losing for example the mothers caring role of the children because she is not there at times, so the kids are just left.

Mr DUNN: Yeah they just run around and do whatever they like.

Mr WOOD: There was one community introduced bingo as a means of kind of overcoming it and the only prizes were household goods, it could have been a washing machine or a freezer or, and that was all they allowed, so the community could be part of the, it was gambling to a point but you got something that was at least reasonable, the value was not cash, it was a stereo or a cassette recorder or something like that, and that was an attempt to try and break down that problem of all the money just going. I do not know whether that is a solution, they used it in that community, and it became a sort of function every Friday night, a bit of a social function.

Ms CARTER: With regard to ganja, are the young people making use of the 'bucket bongs' as the means of using it?

Ms BOURKE: Yeah, 'bucket bongs'.

Ms CARTER: And what do you do when you know a young person is using it, is there anything that the adults can do, or do do about it?

Mr DUNN: Well, the family try to stop them, as awe feel that is a private thing that the family should do.....take it to the 'skin group'.

Mr WOOD: It is also to some extent an illegal matter of course because the use of marijuana is an illegal drug. Private to a point, but it is also a police matter. Do you have people check the planes here on occasions.

Ms BOURKE: Sometimes, yes.

Mr DUNN: Yeah, and they do have some dogs at the airports.....

Mr WOOD: Have they been able to trace where it comes from? I mean, I presume it all comes in by plane.

Ms BOURKE: Plane or boat.

Mr WOOD: So you do get boats come in with it?

Mr DUNN: The problem with the plane too, is they have got too many carriers. You get one bloke, it will just go to another.

Dr LIM: But if you, do the community people know that the ganja is coming in on a boat or an aeroplane?

Mr DUNN: No you do not know when it is coming, you only know when it is here. You never know when it is coming.

Mr COSTA: We will see them

Mr WOOD: Is there any programs in the schools to sort of try and get kids to think differently that grog and ganja are the only things in life? And have you got a strong youth program?

Mr DUNN: Yeah, well they do that through school and the nuns run a

Mr COSTA: And with.....we are trying to set programs up through Tim.....

Mr DUNN: The pool has been a great success because it drags the kids away from the pub and they have a ball.

Ms CARTER: So you have a pool here, and is that sponsored by the Council and funded by the Council, run by the Council? How much did that cost to put in?

Mr COSTA: Round about \$217 000.

Mr DUNN: With Dawn Fraserand Pirlangimpi Council.....

Mr WOOD: You have CDEP program going? And do you have people on the CDEP but still get unemployment benefits?

Mr COSTA: Not very many.

Mr WOOD:another question here. Do you think it would be better if CDEP did not exist, if the Commonwealth gave full employment? In other words no-one could claim they could be unemployed?

CHATTER

Mr WOOD:talking about saying you will have a job on Garden Point.

Mr DUNN: No I think it is up to the individual.

Mr WOOD: No what I am saying is you are only unemployed if there are no jobs. If the government supplies enough money to, for all people to work, do you think that would have some, reduce people just sitting around saying I am unemployed and I will work CDEP?

Mr DUNN: Yeah I would say it would, because we have a lot of people in the community that will not work unless they have got a full time job.

Mr WOOD: Yes, because I mean, I mentioned the history of Bathurst where we did not have unemployment until about 1979, because you could employ everybody You could make the hours vary for whoever wanted to work half a day but then they introduced the unemployment benefitsand people who had a job could just sort of turn up for work and get the sack and then go up the roadunemployment, even though there was work. And I am just wondering whether we should get back to a system where the government says

Mr WOOD: Well that would help a lot I reckon. See if they have got a decent job and they get a decent wage, it builds their self-esteem. They will feel better about themselves.

TAPE 8A COMMENCES

Mr WOOD: And no shortage of work here really. Looking at say maintaining houses or fixing the roads or doing fences or

Mr COSTA: See we have already gone through.....and I would say close to that, nearly 50%..... civil works.....schools, a golf course, a golf club, the shop, so there is different areas where.....

Mr WOOD: But if you had the money there is plenty of work. I mean I think, I know we are talking about one aspect which is alcohol and ganja, but the other thing is trying to get people to have a decent life with a decent job, go and have a game of footy in the afternoon, have a beer or go to sleep. I think people are pretty reasonably, a good life if they are not bored.

Mr DUNN: Well that is why the gambling is coming in place because they have not got enough money. That is one of the reasons.

Madam CHAIR: When you think the women, I mean just boredom, I mean is that some of it? You know a lot of the women are not involved in CDEP just said a lot of the women are not involved in CDEP. A lot of the men are working but the women aren't. Could some of the gambling, because the gambling, I mean when you look at it those circles are men's in which the women interact, thatsocial event you know and that is where, look you get the best stories at those card games you know, that is where everyone learns and you exchangeand that is where a lot of our women you know, they use that game and I know the effects of\$100 in a pub and \$2 000 in a card game is, and apart from our mob need to recognise that gambling is a problem, that the concept of the game is that interaction for our women. I mean, it is a means of us sitting together, getting together, exchanging the gossip.

Dr LIM: Well.....that is what the Chinese women used to do before

Madam CHAIR: But that is what I am saying. Is it because the women, I mean is CDEP included, are the women being included as part of the CDEP program? I mean, in terms of getting them involved in more activities. And what about childcare, that is the other thing is that they have no childcare facilities.

Mr WOOD: There should be childcare facilities if the mothers home, basically who could be looking after children. I mean if you are going to have childcare facilities where Mum plays cards, put someone else in charge of the kids, someone with some responsibility.

Mr DUNN: That isargument is not the interaction but the neglect of the kids that happens on a regular basis. It is not a once a week thing, it is full on.

Dr LIM: But I thinkif the women stay home to look after the children they are also isolated. In Alice Springs, in Darwin, many women will say 'for six years I talked baby talk, I have got no adults to talk to' and it drives you know people socially insane and if you want to go tofor that reason so that they have other adults to interact with. Now if we have a CDEP program that includes the women and maybe somehow design a program that will bring the kids into it as well then the women will have a place where they can communicate with adults and at the same time provide care for the children. Maybe there just needs to be a bit of lateral thinking about how can we do something like that,.....get together and bring the kids in at the same time and part of the CDEP project.

Mr DUNN: Well we have already discussed

Mr COSTA: We have tried over the last five years to set up programs, not only for the men but for the women as well. and Therese they know we have been trying to set up a women's committee for the last five years. We have only had a meeting about a month ago to tell themturned up was only about seven women. All the rest, and they knew about the meeting

Madam CHAIR: Not interested or

Ms BOURKE: I do not know what it is.

Mr DUNN: Lazy.

Mr COSTA: Just from the Jabiru Regional Council there is a lot of funding that has been given to both Milikapiti and here for administratives and we are talking about fundingand the money is there it is just thatmobthat is there money they use if for what they want to.....it is their money.

Madam CHAIR: Yeah, 'cause one of the, I mean there is also an angle of education in terms of you knowthe promotion of gambling and it's pitfalls and what gambling does to someone. I mean I was trying to look for some information about gambling in terms of some of the communities in that Katherine region, because a lot of the members say a lot of our grief is because our wives are sitting down losing all our money at cards and when we come home there is no food and the kids are hungry and so we were trying to look at how we work with the women and a lot of it was there was no resource materials around that was appropriate to be you know working with our women.

Mr DUNN: Because we have discussed this in our Council meeting and we were thinking of building a shed for them but, we are still discussing it.

Dr LIM: Building a shed for

Madam CHAIR: Is that just hiding them inside a shed though?

Mr DUNN: No it is going to be an open shed.

Dr LIM: A shed for the women though.

Mr DUNN: Yeah well hopefully we can build a shed for the women and build a play area for the kids.

Dr LIM: You should get the women to build a shed for themselves and the children and that might be better than for the men to build a shed for the women, to get the women to do it.

Mr DUNN: But there is always the problem of money, that is the answer

TAPE 9A COMMENCES

Mr WOOD: And you have toone of the most commonly found phrases in theI reckon, Tiwis love gambling, I reckon any sort, it is , andit just seems to be something inbuilt into them, the excitement of gambling, not just cards.

Madam CHAIR: At lot of our communities too, I mean you mention cards is the problem and they do not, I mean there is a denial factor there too, that cards is not a problem. I mean I have seen that

Unidentified Male: See we have even got kids now gambling, playing cards

Madam CHAIR: I watched it over the other side.

Mr DUNN: Two 11 year olds up till 12, 2 o'clock in the morning gambling under the street light. I find that unacceptable.

Madam CHAIR: The hardest thing I saw was when school first opened this year, when school opened and it was the first day of school supposed to be.....and there was a handful of kids at school. All the rest were under thetrees playing cards.

Ms BOURKE: Unintelligible.

Ms CARTER:gambling are they also drinking alcohol?

Unidentified Female: No

Ms CARTER: So they are sober when they are gambling?

Unidentified Male: No

Unidentified Female: Sometimestake-aways.

Ms CARTER: So most of the time they are sober?

CHATTER

Mr DUNN: It all depends where they are playing I think. If it is in someone's house or yard then they ask that person can I drink while I am playing cards and it is up to the owner to say yes or no.

Mr COSTA: They ask permission.

Unidentified Female:find the drunken ones after the club closes.

Mr WOOD: Have you looked at alternatives to things to try and give people options? I mean it is a recreational thing as well, I mean filling in time, playing cards. What else is there in the community say for young people? There is swimming I presume?

Mr DUNN:go for walks, say hello to each other

Mr WOOD: I probably totally agree with you.

Mr DUNN: Sit down at the laundromat

Mr WOOD: Go fishing

Mr COSTA: See what we are trying to do is the 'dog house', they call that the 'dog house' for instance. We want to start looking at taking our youth out camping . Getting the old fellows to start teaching them the culture again, language, song, dance. Just getting them out hunting.

Mr WOOD: Women do that too, or could?

Mr DUNN: Well the women do most of the hunting but most of it is on weekends now. It is not a weekly occurrence like it used to be.

Madam CHAIR: Is there a strong men's group here, and also the strong woman's ?

CHATTER

Madam CHAIR: How is the strong men's group going?

Unidentified Male: They are going pretty

Unidentified Male: The.....this set-up here,open for the last what, three weeks, it has been open nearly every day, and we have been getting a pretty good response.....

Madam CHAIR: What, the discussion is about alcohol and just how they feel generally?

Unidentified Male: Anything. We have got another meeting I think, Friday. I think some people are coming out to run some workshops. See what we are also looking at for the men's set-up is running courses in first aid, chain saw courses, carpentry, not carpentry, carvings and all that type of stuff for the men. Anything that we can try get our hands on through Training and Employment, to try to set something up. Just to keep them occupied instead of before.

Dr LIM: Who facilitates all this sort of thing?

Ms CARTER: Like this Committee has been around to a few communities now. We have done a trip down Central Australia and places like that. Coming into here, this is the first time I have ever been here, it strikes me as being the cleanest looking and tidiest community I have ever been on. Is that a result of the CDEP program that you run?is there sort of a mind set by people to look after their.....?

Mr COSTA:I would not say entirely CDEP. I would say itit is just the people themselves. And they have a sense of pride within their community, andbut theyto three, four o'clock in the afternoon and the rubbish is collected five times a week here. And we tell them like have a day off, 'oh no, you're right'. Maybe it is because they like driving the truck you know, but that

CHATTER

Mr COSTA: Like I say, I keep telling people I am only the manager, but it is a participants program, not my program.

Ms CARTER: And does the shop have plastic bags?

Mr COSTA: Calico bags, all that type of stuff.

Ms CARTER: Very impressive.

Dr LIM: You know, a medal, Keep Australia Beautiful., look, look there, trophies.

Ms CARTER: I know, I can see them.

CHATTER

Madam CHAIR: They nearly got national award.

Mr COSTA: And I think it is just a sense of pride.

Madam CHAIR: And that is the difference, is the pride, but something more importantly too we have over here, I mean here, is leadership, and that is important, because we have had some good leaders around the place.

Mr COSTA: Like I think it is the way you manage.

Mr WOOD: There are some strong families here.

Madam CHAIR: And they have got

Mr WOOD:do not get paid if they do not turn up/

Mr COSTA:but sometimes I believe them and sometimes I do not.

Mr WOOD: You take it as it comes.

Mr COSTA: Because a lot of our fellows and our ladies work that extra couple of hours, soit has got to be fair.

Mr WOOD: Give or take a few, but some of them turn up at all.

Mr COSTA: No

Mr WOOD: Because that is one of the problems on some communities where they put pressure on the youth

Mr COSTA: Well, every Friday I am

Mr WOOD: Unintelligible

Mr COSTA: If there was a boss to ring me.....

Mr WOOD: You are a big fellow you could take it.

Mr COSTA: I guess every program is run different.....

Madam CHAIR: Why is that?

Mr COSTA: Because it is all indigenous staff. Patrick is my assistant. I have another assistant Joseph. Patrick does all the ordering, purchasing. I have Patsy as book-keeper and it is just different.

Mr WOOD: It sounds like you are reasonably strict. Those communities where CDEP seems to break down is where people are getting paidputting pressure on to get paid?

Mr DUNN: That policy has been in since Day One,.....

Mr COSTA: But I have seen other communities, other CDEP organisations and it is the management.

Mr WOOD: Well if you think some other communitiesand this community has got CDEP, it is chalk and cheese, and you would have to say why isn't it working on other communities, and what are people getting paid for? I mean really they should have to earn the money, that is what the whole idea is about. But no, I

Mr COSTA:mechanics the whole lot. My background is

Mr DUNN: If we all go in the one direction I reckon that should be alright because we also support each other.

Mr WOOD:housing program. Do you build the houses, or you get a contractor in to do it totally, or do you try and

Mr DUNN: Oh we tried tobut we had a change of management and that went out so

Mr WOOD: Is the contractor going to build..... Because I always thought that is where the CDEP should be

Mr DUNN: Well at one stage, we were building the slabs so we got a bit of money out of all of the houses,.....slabs.

Mr COSTA: Most of our plumbing we do ourselves now, just general maintenance as before, contractors used to come in left, right and centre and the money was

Ms CARTER: We, my understanding is we have to go back to the airfield by 3 30 this afternoon. As I say I have never seen a community that has looked as good as this and I have only come from the airfield into here, is there any chance we could break earlierif we could be taken on a little tour of the place, because we have not seen much of it but what I have seen so far is really impressive.

Madam CHAIR: They could show you the pool andThis is quite a beautiful little piece of paradise up here.

Mr WOOD: It was nearly British country once.

Mr PURUNTATAMERI: Or Dutch.

Madam CHAIR: Look we will close early because it would be good for, so you can have a look around. Thank you very much for

TAPE FINISHED