



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

***SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON USE AND ABUSE OF
ALCOHOL BY THE COMMUNITY***

ANNUAL REPORT
for year ended 30 JUNE 1994

**REPORT NUMBER 5
DECEMBER 1994**

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ANNUAL REPORT OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Annual Report is to inform the Parliament, the Executive and the general public about the purpose and responsibilities of the Sessional Committee on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community, its membership and its activities during the past financial year. This is in accordance with part 3 of its Terms of Reference that, inter alia, "the Committee shall make an annual report to the Assembly of its activities".

The Annual Report is in addition to other reports the Committee may make to the Parliament from time to time. These also are provided for under part 3 of the Terms of Reference and usually relate to a specific inquiry it has undertaken in accordance with its charter, or the Committee's stance on topical issues. The Committee also provides an overview of its operations in the Annual Report of the Department of the Legislative Assembly.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Sixth Assembly: as at prorogation on 17 May 1994

The Honourable E H POOLE, MLA
(Chairman)

Mr N R BELL, MLA

Mr W W LANHUPUY, MLA

Mr T R McCARTHY, MLA

Mr M H ORTMANN, MLA
(appointed 12 October 1993)

Mr M J PALMER, MLA
(discharged 26 August 1993)

Mr R A SETTER, MLA
(appointed 26 August 1993 — discharged 12 October 1993)

Seventh Assembly: As at 30 June 1994

The Honourable E H POOLE, MLA
(Chairman)

Mr P F ADAMSON, MLA

Mr N R BELL, MLA

Mrs L M BRAHAM, MLA

Mr W W LANHUPUY, MLA

COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT

Ms P J HANCOCK

Secretary to the Committee

Mrs R VOGELI

Administrative Assistant to the Secretary

GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 0801

Telephone: (089) 461-411

Facsimile: (089) 816-158

Telex: AA 85154

Telegram: COMPARLAS



CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

The Terms of Reference of the Sessional Committee on Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community require that:

"the Committee shall make an annual report to the Assembly of its activities."

On behalf of past and present members of the Committee I am pleased to present this report on the Committee for the financial year 1993-94.

The period since the Committee was initially set up in November 1989 has seen a number of changes in what could be called the "alcohol culture" of the Northern Territory. Of greatest significance to me, as Chairman since the beginning of its inquiry, is the more open discussion on the problems which now takes place at the community level. I consider that this greater frankness is a result of the challenges we have seen to the image of alcohol in the Northern Territory, a process in which I am pleased to say that this Committee has taken a driving role.

The part played by others in this process is also noted. The Government should be commended for the risks it has been prepared to take in introducing innovative and at times revolutionary policies in its determination to lower the Territory's high alcohol consumption levels and the incidence of concomitant problems. Industry representatives have also played their part, exhibiting a willingness to cooperate in the various strategies to help the process along. Their participation on the Alcohol Consultative Committee is an example of this, as is their positive reaction to policy changes which at times have had a financial impact on their livelihood.

Not least amongst those who have effected change are the many individuals and organisations who continue to devote time, effort and resources at the grassroots level to fight the problems which result from alcohol abuse.

In presenting this report I should note that the Committee still awaits an official government response to its recommendations contained in the report on the inquiry into the operation and effect of Part VIII "Restricted Areas" of the Liquor Act. Presented in December 1993, this report was the outcome of discussions and meetings with many people both resident of restricted areas and of those urban areas which feel the impact of alcohol restrictions. I trust that a considered and positive response will be forthcoming in the near future.

I thank all members of the Committee and in particular commend the contributions made by past members during 1993-94. This Committee continues to be an example of the progress which can be attained from a truly bipartisan approach by all members to the challenges before them.

I also extend my appreciation to the staff of the Committee and others in the Department of the Legislative Assembly for their efforts on our behalf during a time of change and challenge to all staff of the Department.

PART II: THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Eric Poole, MLA

December 1994

THE COMMITTEE

Establishment

The Sessional Committee on Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community was established by resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 23 November 1993. This was a result of an initial motion of the Member for Macdonell (Mr Bell) on 15 October 1993, amended by subsequent motion of the then Minister for Racing and Gaming, the Hon. F A Finch.

The establishment of the Committee was supported by both Government and Opposition Members of the Legislative Assembly, reflecting a high level of concern regarding the financial and social costs of alcohol use and misuse in the Northern Territory. Five Members—three Government and two Opposition—of the Assembly were appointed.

It was re-appointed on 4 December 1993 at the commencement of the Sixth Assembly. As a Sessional Committee it subsequently ceased to exist with the prorogation of the Assembly on 27 June 1994.

PART I: THE COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference are shown at Appendix 1.

THE COMMITTEE

Establishment

The Sessional Committee on Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community was established by resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 23 November 1989. This was a result of an initial motion of the Member for Macdonnell (Mr Bell) on 18 October 1989, amended by subsequent motion of the then Minister for Racing and Gaming, the Hon. F A Finch.

The establishment of the Committee was supported by both Government and Opposition Members of the Legislative Assembly, reflecting a high level of concern regarding the financial and social costs of alcohol use and misuse in the Northern Territory. Five Members—three Government and two Opposition—of the Assembly were appointed.

It was re-appointed on 4 December 1990 at the commencement of the Sixth Assembly. As a Sessional Committee it subsequently ceased to exist with the prorogation of the Sixth Assembly on 17 May 1994, and was re-established on 27 June 1994.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference are shown at Appendix 1.

PROFILES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

as at 30 June 1994

The Hon. E H POOLE, MLA (Chairman)

Country Liberal Party

Member for Araluen

First elected 1986

Minister for Correctional Services

Minister for Sport and Recreation

Minister for Work Health and Territory Insurance

Minister Assisting the Chief Minister on Central Australian Matters

Mr P F ADAMSON, MLA

Country Liberal Party

Member for Casuarina

First elected 1994

Deputy Chairman of Committees

Other Committees: Environment, Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers

Mr N R BELL, MLA

Australian Labor Party

Member for Macdonnell

First Elected 1981

Deputy Chairman of Committees

Other Committees: Privileges, Standing Orders, House

Mrs L M BRAHAM, MLA

Country Liberal Party

Member for Braitling

First Elected 1994

Deputy Chairman of Committees

Other Committee: Public Accounts

Functions

As a committee of the Assembly, the Sessional Committee on Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community derives its authority from the Commonwealth *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978* and the *Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act*. It was appointed for the duration of the present Assembly, with no fixed time limit on its investigation.

In undertaking its enquiry on behalf of the Assembly, the Committee is empowered to:

- send for persons, papers and records;
- sit in private or public session;
- sit during any adjournment of the Assembly; and
- adjourn from place to place.

It also has leave to:

- report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken;
- make any interim recommendations it deems fit;
- publish information pertaining to its activities from time to time; and
- publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it.

The Committee is required, unless otherwise ordered by it, to publish a daily *Hansard* of such proceedings as take place in public; an annual report is to be made to the Assembly of its activities.

Charter

The Committee's Terms of Reference provide for it to inquire into all aspects of alcohol consumption in the Northern Territory, in terms of the demographic, industrial, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of the population, with a view to identifying the factors contributing to the higher per capita consumption rate experienced.

Included in this are the issues of accessibility and availability of alcohol, incorporating the number and types of licensed outlets and their location, as well as other regulating influences on a community's ability to access and/or consume alcohol.

Its charter allows it to investigate social and economic consequences of current patterns of consumption, and assess the services which are presently available to deal directly or indirectly with the consequences.

It can make recommendations for appropriate policies and services to prevent or treat alcohol problems in the Northern Territory.

PART II: THE TAKING OF EVIDENCE

THE TAKING OF EVIDENCE

Role of Committees

The purpose of committees is to undertake those tasks which the Assembly as a whole is not well suited to perform—investigating, hearing witnesses, examining evidence and drawing reasoned conclusions. They provide for greater mobility in investigations and a less formal process in eliciting information from the community.

Process of the Committee

The collection and assessment of information is undertaken in a number of ways. The Secretariat is proactive in some areas, identifying and researching specific issues, but importantly ensuring that information on the Committee and its purpose is widely disseminated throughout the community.

From the time a committee is set up to the time of its final report, this provides it with the opportunity to examine the evidence, calling witnesses as required for further analysis or public discussion.

PART II: THE TAKING OF EVIDENCE

While the Terms of Reference empower the Committee to summon a person to give evidence and be examined, in most cases witnesses appear on a voluntary basis. The bipartisan attitude of Committee Members to the work it undertakes is notable.

Meetings and Hearings

Meetings and hearings are in one of the following formats.

• Deliberative Meetings

These are the formal process of the Committee's decision-making, allowing it to discuss and resolve matters of procedure and administration, as well as decide on policies relating to its role.

Deliberative meetings are always held in private and recorded.

THE TAKING OF EVIDENCE

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Process of the Committee

The collection and assessment of information is undertaken in a number of ways. The Secretariat is proactive in some areas, identifying and researching specific issues, but importantly ensuring that information on the Committee and its purpose is widely disseminated throughout the community.

From this flows community input in the form of oral or written submissions. This provides the Committee with the information on regional or other specific aspects of its investigation, and the ability to examine the evidence, calling witnesses as required for further briefings or public discussion.

While the Terms of Reference empower the Committee to summons a person to give evidence and be examined, in most cases witnesses appear on a voluntary basis. The bipartisan attitude of Committee Members to the work it undertakes is notable.

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Meetings and hearings are in one of the following formats:

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Deliberative meetings are always held in private and minuted.

- **Briefings**

The Committee may request the attendance of Government or other officials or representatives of community organisations to provide information to it as part of a deliberative meeting.

Such meetings are not open to the public and are usually recorded. Depending on the nature of the information, transcripts may be confidential.

- **Public Hearings**

Public hearings are held to promote the open nature of the Committee's inquiries, allowing members of the community to observe the workings of the Committee and participate as required.

These are open to any member of the public, including media representatives who, unless ordered otherwise by the Committee, may report any public session. The facility does exist for a witness to request that evidence be given *in camera*. The Committee may decide on this, subject to the Assembly's ability to overrule its decision.

Forthcoming public hearings are advertised in the local media and relevant organisations and persons invited to attend and present either oral or written submissions, or both.

Public hearings are recorded and transcripts of proceedings produced by the Hansard Unit.

- **Public Meetings**

These may be in two forms. First, as a public forum to allow for open exchange of information between members of the public and the Committee, these are useful in keeping the public informed of the Committee's activities as well as providing the Committee with an overview of a particular community concern or issue. These may be recorded, the transcript providing reference material only to the Committee.

The second form is usually utilised as a means of taking evidence in situations where formal recording would be technically impractical or not conducive to information being provided to the Committee. In such cases a written record of the meeting is taken, with minutes produced for confirmation by the participants and the Committee.

Written Submissions

Written submissions may be presented for the Committee's consideration at any stage or as a prelude to an oral submission. The Committee may decide to invite persons who have submitted written material to appear before it to provide further information or clarify points made.

Sub-Committee of the Committee

To facilitate the broadest possible consultation with communities throughout the Northern Territory, the Committee resolved that for the purpose of conducting hearings and taking oral submissions, any three members of the Committee would constitute a sub-Committee.

The relevant sub-Committee memberships at each meeting and hearing are indicated in the summaries provided at Appendices 2 and 3.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR

Meetings and Hearings

During 1952-53 the Committee met on 48 occasions. The majority of meetings were deliberative with briefings by various agencies in relation to alcohol programs and services, as well as by industry representatives. All meetings were held in Darwin with the exception being a Public Hearing held in Katherine in February 1954.

The Committee met with members of the Alcohol Consultative Committee at its October meeting. This body consists of representatives of various industry organisations. As well, the Northern Territory Police, Department of Health and Community Services (Alcohol Policy Unit) and the Liquor Commission are represented with the latter chairing the body and providing the necessary secretarial support. As a result of this meeting it was decided to request regular six-monthly briefings by the Alcohol Consultative Committee as a means of maintaining formal contact with the industry representatives.

PART III: COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR

The Committee's efforts to develop greater liaison with the various Northern Territory regional councils of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) continued, resulting in a meeting with the Mulgun Regional Council in February. This meeting, held in Darwin, followed on from the hearing held in Katherine on 9 February, at which a total of 14 witnesses representing eight organisations gave evidence to the Committee. The Committee also visited a town camp near Katherine, to examine the alcohol program being undertaken there.

Details of meetings and hearings as well as key items discussed and, where appropriate, witnesses appearing before the Committee, are contained in Appendices 2 and 3.

Written Submissions

A total of 5 written submissions on a range of issues in relation to the Terms of Reference were received during the year. Two submissions were copies of correspondence to the Liquor Commission regarding the problem drinking that was

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR

Meetings and Hearings

During 1992-93 the Committee met on ten occasions. The majority of meetings were deliberative, with briefings by various witnesses in relation to alcohol programs and services, as well as by industry representatives. All meetings were held in Darwin, with the exception being a Public Hearing held in Katherine in February 1994.

The Committee met with members of the Alcohol Consultative Committee at its October meeting. This body consists of representatives of various industry organisations. As well, the Northern Territory Police, Department of Health and Community Services (Alcohol Policy Unit) and the Liquor Commission are represented with the latter chairing the body and providing the necessary secretariat support. As a result of this meeting it was decided to request regular, six-monthly briefings by the Alcohol Consultative Committee as a means of maintaining formal contact with the industry representatives.

Other briefings included meeting with staff of the Alcohol Policy Unit, specifically in regard to its survey of alcohol related behaviour and attitudes in the Northern Territory.

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Details of meetings and hearings as well as key items discussed and, where appropriate, witnesses appearing before the Committee, are contained in Appendices 2 and 3.

Written Submissions

A total of 5 written submissions on a range of issues in relation to the Terms of Reference were received during the year. Two submissions were copies of correspondence to the Liquor Commission regarding the problem drinking that was

occurring at the various roadhouses adjacent to the Pitjantjara lands in the southern region. The recognition of this problem resulted in the introduction of "Operation Sunshine" by the Liquor Commission.

Two submissions were received in conjunction with the hearing held in Katherine in February, one from the then Member for Victoria River, Mr Gary Cartwright, and one from the Northern Territory Police.

The last submission related to health problems experienced by residents at Nauiyu Nambiyu (Daly River) because of the ready availability of alcohol in the region.

Specific Reference — The Operation and Effect of Part VIII "Restricted Areas" of the Liquor Act

During the year, the Committee finalised its inquiry into dry areas legislation. As reported in its previous Annual Report, the Committee consulted with members of various communities, restricted and not, during the course of its investigations. It also took evidence from individuals and bodies regarding the impact of restrictions on adjacent non-restricted areas and urban centres.

The report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in December 1993.

PART IV: ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANISATION

ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANISATION

Staffing

Secretary: Ms Pat HANCOCK
Administrative Assistant: Mrs Roseline VOGELI

The work of the Committee is resourced through the Committee Secretariat of the Department of the Legislative Assembly, with the services of a Secretary and an Administrative Assistant. Support facilities are provided to the Committee's Secretary by other staff of the Department, in particular the Table Office, Hansard Office, the Office of the Serjeant-at-Arms, the Human Resources and Finance Office and the Parliamentary Library.

There is the facility to co-opt other resources for specialist or additional work as required.

The role of the Secretary is to provide the executive, administrative, research and evaluative support necessary to the Committee for the conduct of its business. This includes the day-to-day management of the Committee's work on behalf of the Chairman.

The Administrative Assistant provides the necessary stenographic support, as well as having responsibility for arranging travel, recording hearings and meetings, taking minutes, and maintaining the data bases and systems on witnesses and evidence taken.

Finance

Total Committee expenditure during 1993-94 amounted to \$113 211, compared with \$139 790 in 1992-93. The total expenditure during each financial year since the Committee's establishment in November 1989, according to category of expenditure, is shown in the following table:

Committee Expenditure by Category of Expenditure, 1990-91 to 1993-94^(a)

Category of Expenditure	1990-91 \$	1991-92 \$	1992-93 \$	1993-94 \$
Personnel Costs:	77 010	84 948	92 658	91 499
Salaries	67 188	76 139	83 102	76 164
Other	5 845	8 809	9 556	15 335
Office Administration Costs:	9 623	8 296	4 080	5 452
Furniture and Fittings	971	1 295	258	—
Computing	5 913	1 907	1 481	590
Stationery & General	2 739	4 319	1 872	1 810
Training/Study	—	775	469	3 052
Committee Activities:	79 485	54 866	43 050	16 260
Travel	68 530	35 522	40 380	11 769
Advertising	6 048	—	156	409
Printing	3 182	18 372	—	3 480
Public Relations	1 725	972	814	602
Total	166 118	148 110	139 789	113 311

(a) The Committee was established in November 1989 and commenced activity in March 1990 with the engagement of a permanent Secretary. Administrative and other Committee costs during 1989-90 were absorbed into the overall Departmental budget.

The reduced level of expenditure in 1993-94 compared with that of the previous year (a drop of \$26 478, or 18.9%) reflects in the main a reduction in travel expenses and advertising, a result of the Committee placing an emphasis on the scrutiny of alcohol programs and services during the year.

Office administration costs absorbed 4.8% of the budget in 1993-94, with 80.1% attributable to salaries and other staffing overheads. The high fixed costs in relation to the Committee's overall budget allocation continues to be a considerable constraint on the scope of the Committee's inquiries. In 1993-94 only 14.3% of the total budget was expended directly on Committee activities.

Detailed information on Committee expenditure in the context of the Committee Secretariat is contained in the Financial Statements contained in the Annual Report of the Department of the Legislative Assembly.

APPENDIX 1

TERMINOLOGY APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

That—

1. A Committee to be known as the Sessional Committee on Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community be appointed comprising, unless otherwise ordered, Mr Adamson, Mrs Braham, Mr Poole, Mr Bell and Mr Lanhupuy.
2. The Committee be empowered, unless otherwise ordered, to inquire into and from time to time report on:
 - (a) current trends in alcohol consumption in the Northern Territory and, as far as possible, differences in consumption patterns based on regions, age, sex, other demographic characteristics and ethnic factors;
 - (b) the social and economic consequences of current patterns of alcohol consumption with special reference to the well-being of individuals and communities and to the demands placed upon Government and non-government services;
 - (c) the services currently available within the Northern Territory by both Government and non-government agencies to deal with issues directly or indirectly related to alcohol consumption;
 - (d) factors which directly affect the level and nature of alcohol consumption in the Northern Territory community or parts of that community, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing:
 - (i) the accessibility/availability of alcohol within communities including the number of outlets, nature of licences and proximity of geographic location;
 - (ii) the demographic, ethnic and industry structure of the Northern Territory; and

- (iii) the correlation between socio-economic conditions and alcohol consumption; and
 - (e) appropriate policies and services for the prevention and treatment of alcohol problems in the Northern Territory.
3. The Committee be empowered to send for persons, papers and records, to sit in public or in private session notwithstanding any adjournment of the Assembly, to adjourn from place to place and have leave to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and make such interim recommendations as it may deem fit, and to publish information pertaining to its activities from time to time: the Committee shall make an annual report to the Assembly of its activities.
 4. The Committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it and, unless otherwise ordered by the Committee, a daily *Hansard* be published of such proceedings as take place in public.
 5. The Committee be empowered to consider, disclose and publish the Minutes of Proceedings, evidence taken and records of the Committee on the use and abuse of alcohol in the previous Assembly.
 6. The foregoing provisions of the Resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with Standing Orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders.

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIVE MEETINGS 1993-94

SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIVE MEETINGS, 1993-94

Meeting No., Date and Place	Key Agenda Items	Witnesses
36 of 24.8.93 Darwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report 1992-93 • Proposal: Liaison between Committee and Alcohol Consultative Committee • Alcohol programs and services: Draft report on Committee's resolutions • Restricted area legislation: Plan for finalisation of inquiry 	
37 of 21.10.93 Darwin <i>In Camera</i>	<p>Briefing —Alcohol Consultative Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft report on inquiry into Part VIII "Restricted Areas" of the <i>Liquor Act</i> • Workshop "Alcohol Availability, Consumption & Harm: Current Research Issues" • NT Liquor Commission's policy on "Book Up" for alcohol 	<p>Mr G. Curnow, NT Liquor Licencees Association Mr C. Drummond, Wayside Inns Association Mr G. Odgers, Licensed Clubs Association, Southern Regional Mr T. Dowling, NT Hotels & Hospitality Association Mr A. Berg, Dept of Health & Community Services Assistant Commissioner R. Chalker, NT Police Force Mr J. Maley, Chairman, NT Liquor Commission Mr B. Thomas, Licensed Clubs Association Ms M. Oakes, Licensed Clubs Association</p>

Summary of Deliberative Meetings (Cont.)

Meeting No., Date and Place	Key Agenda Items	Witnesses
38 of 27.10.93 Darwin	Sub-Committee: Mr Poole, Mr McCarthy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry into the Operation and Effect of Part VIII "Restricted Areas" of the <i>Liquor Act</i> - draft recommendations 	
39 of 22.11.93 Darwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft report - dry areas inquiry 	
40 of 5.12.93 Darwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted areas legislation • Alcohol Consultative Committee: Further regular meetings • Mulgun Regional Council: Arrange meeting 	
41 of 10.2.94 Mirambeena conference Room, Darwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing: ATSIC Councillors, Mulgun Region 	Ms M. Allen, Chairman Mr T. Jack; Mr P. Woods Mr Jack Little Ms H. Fejo-Frith Ms R. Frith Mr S. Bush Blanas Ms L. Fletcher, ATSIC Secretariat
42 of 1.3.94 Darwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol programs and services: Future meetings in all NT centres • Decriminalisation of drunkenness • Alcohol-related behaviours and attitudes in the NT: Brief to be provided • Outcomes of national symposium on alcohol and violence • Alcohol consumption in Nhulunbuy • Translation of tapes of meetings at Aboriginal communities 	
43 of 27.4.94 Darwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing: Alcohol and Other Drugs Program, Department of Health & Community Services 	Dr I. Crundall, Research and Evaluation Coordinator Dr A. Duquemin, Consultant, Evaluation

Summary of Deliberative Meetings (Cont.)

Meeting No., Date and Place	Key Agenda Items	Witnesses
1 of 30.6.94 Darwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Election of Chairman• Briefing of new members• Drafting of program for July to December 1994	

APPENDIX 3

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MEETINGS
1993-94

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MEETINGS,
1993-94

Meeting Number, Date	Where Held	Members Present	Evidence Given
3 of 13, 14	R. M. ...	Mr P... Mr S... Mr McCarthy Mr O'Connell	KATHERINE ALCOHOL AND DRUG ASSOCIATION Mr J. Anderson, Manager Society Up Shelter Mr J. Wastade, Vice-President ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY Mr D. McMurrich, Manager KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES KATHERINE REGION ABORIGINAL LEGAL AID SERVICE INC. Mr B. Martin, Treasurer Les L. Nielson, Director in Training Mr G. Treleaven, Administrator Mrs W. Ward, Executive Member NT POLICE FORCE Mr W. O'Neara, Superintendent Mr M.C. Pope, Senior Sergeant KALANG COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION Mr D. Jackson, Director Mr C. Miller, President

APPENDIX 3

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MEETINGS
1993-94

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MEETINGS, 1993-94

<i>Meeting, Hearing No. and Date</i>	<i>Where Held</i>	<i>Members Present</i>	<i>Evidence Given</i>
PH16 of 9.2.94	Katherine	Mr Poole Mr Bell Mr McCarthy Mr Ortmann	<p>KATHERINE ALCOHOL AND DRUG ASSOCIATION Mr J. Anderson, Manager, Sobering Up Shelter Mr J. Winslade, Vice-President</p> <p>ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY Mr D. McMurrich, Manager</p> <p>KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL Aldermann G. Maynard Alderman K. Short</p> <p>DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES Mr S. Gelding, District Manager</p> <p>KATHERINE REGION ABORIGINAL LEGAL AID SERVICE INC. Mr S. Martin, Treasurer Ms L. Nielson, Director in Training Mr G. Treleaven, Administrator Ms W. Ward, Executive Member</p> <p>NT POLICE FORCE Mr W. O'Meara, Superintendent Mr M.C. Pope, Senior Sergeant</p> <p>KALANO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION Mr D. Jackson, Director Mr E. Motor, President</p>

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED 1993-94

Number	Date	Name	Subject
121	26.11.93	Barry, B. J.	Availability of alcohol adjacent to Pajantjara lands
APPENDIX 4			
122	27.01.94	Barry, B. J.	As above
WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED 1993-94			
123	2.02.94	Colonna, Roger W.	Police submission, native title rights
124	18.02.94	Walters, D. R.	Health implications for Nauyas - Nambiya residents of alcohol availability

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED 1993-94

<i>Submission No.</i>	<i>Date Received</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>Subject</i>
131	25.11.93	Barry, Mr J.	Availability of alcohol adjacent to Pitjantjatjara lands
132	27.01.94	Barry, Mr J.	As above
133	9.02.94	Cartwright, Mr G.R. (MLA)	Alcohol situation in Katherine
134	9.02.94	O'Meara, Super. W.	Police submission, Katherine region
135	18.02.94	Mullins, Mr M.	Health implications for Nauiyu Nambiyu residents of alcohol availability

TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT, SUBMISSIONS AND TRANSCRIPTS

26 August 1993

APPENDIX 5

STATEMENTS BY CHAIRMAN TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

- A.** Tabling of Annual Report, Submissions and Transcripts:
26 August 1993
- B.** Restricted Areas Legislation — Tabling of Report on Inquiry:
2 December 1993

A. TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT, SUBMISSIONS AND TRANSCRIPTS

26 August 1993

Mr Speaker, I lay on the Table the Annual Report of the Sessional Committee on Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community, for the year ended 30 June 1993.

Mr Speaker, the Committee's Terms of Reference require it to make an annual report on its activities.

This report provides information on the status, as at 30 June 1993, of the various inquiries currently before the Committee, and details the activities of the Committee in pursuing its Terms of Reference during the 1992-93 financial year.

Mr Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity while tabling this report to provide an update on the Committee's affairs since I last made a statement to the Legislative Assembly in March this year.

I also table submissions received and transcripts of meetings and hearings held up until 30 June 1993, which have not been tabled previously.

In all these total:

- 44 written submissions;
- 6 transcripts of briefing meetings;
- 20 transcripts of evidence taken at public hearings; and
- 1 record of public meeting.

Mr Speaker, in view of the volume of paper these represent individual sets are not being distributed to all members.

However, a list of the relevant paper is provided and, as in the past, a set of these papers is available for perusing in the Parliamentary Library, or they can be accessed through the Office of the Clerk of Tabled Papers.

As well, the Secretary of the Committee would be pleased to provide Honourable Members with copies of any of the submissions or other information pertinent to the Committee's inquiries if they would like to contact her.

Mr Speaker, as I said my last report to the Legislative Assembly was in March this year and centred mainly on the current inquiry into restricted areas legislation.

Since then the Committee has progressed on a number of inquiries, details on each of which are given in the Annual Report.

It should be noted that all the current inquiries apart from that into restricted areas legislation have been internally generated by the Committee.

With regard to the inquiry into the operation and effect of Part VIII of the *Liquor Act* — the dry areas legislation — I can report that consultation with the various community interests is continuing.

The Committee is in the process of drafting a discussion paper on the issues raised to date during meetings and hearings, and in particular the specific views of those people who have contributed to the debate so far.

The intention is that this would provide a catalyst for continuing community input in the form of public hearings over ensuing months, culminating, it is hoped, in a report to the Legislative Assembly by the end of the year.

Mr Speaker, I feel I should make one point with regard to the ongoing role of the Committee and indeed the alcohol situation overall in the Northern Territory.

I have stressed before, Mr Speaker, that the problems with alcohol are not restricted to any particular sector of the community or socio-economic group.

The resultant impact on the immediate family and community may be different in black and white societies but regardless of this the effects in each are similarly disastrous, from both a social and financial point of view.

If anything, the difference is that in the Aboriginal population, with underlying economic and social factors contributing to or caused by alcohol abuse, these effects are more visible and, because of closer living conditions, impact upon a wider circle of the community.

I wish to make this point, Mr Speaker, to lay to rest any lingering attitude that it is "their" problem and that alcohol is not a problem in mainstream society.

This attitude may have been inadvertently fuelled by the work of the **Committee** itself which in recent times has been concentrating its efforts on issues such as social security-funded alcohol problems, restricted areas legislation and other matters more relevant to alcohol abuse in Aboriginal communities.

Contrary to any misconception which may be held, Mr Speaker, the way in which Aboriginal communities are willing to accept that alcohol abuse is a problem which must be solved if they are to develop into the future, and the way in which many communities have opened the issues up for debate, are indicative of a positive approach to solving their problems.

They are saying that alcohol is a disease and like other diseases it will run rampant if not kept in check.

This contrasts with the attitude of denial so often found amongst others in society:

- who do not consider that the effect on their health of regular unsafe levels of consumption has anything to do with the rest of the world;
- who refuse to see that their reduced productivity — and sometimes unsafe practices — at work the morning after a binge impacts on our economy;
- who do not acknowledge that violence which is so often related to drunkenness is the concern of everyone in our society;
- who believe that it is worth the risk to drive home after a couple too many.

Mr Speaker, the Committee has often stated that there is not one "alcohol problem" and therefore the answer lies in a range of solutions aimed at achieving different things.

In presenting this summary and review of its various activities during 1992-93 I emphasise that the Committee certainly does not consider its role to be to inquire into the alcohol problems of any specific sector of the community.

It will continue to examine the problems, as provided for in its Terms of Reference, across the whole of the Northern Territory society.

Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note the Annual Report of the Sessional Committee on Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community for the year ending 30 June 1993 and the submissions, transcripts and records of briefings, public hearings and meetings relating thereto, which are hereby tabled.

I also move that the Annual Report be printed.

B. RESTRICTED AREAS LEGISLATION — TABLING OF REPORT ON INQUIRY

2 December 1993

Mr Speaker, I lay on the table the report by the Sessional Committee on Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community, on its inquiry into the restricted areas legislation which is incorporated in the *Liquor Act*.

Mr Speaker, on 20 May 1992 the Legislative Assembly referred for the consideration and report of the Sessional Committee on Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community *the operation and effect of Part VIII "restricted areas" of the Liquor Act*.

The deadline for reporting on this reference was *on or before 1 March 1993*. However, in view of the need to consult further with representatives of bodies which are directly affected by the legislation, on 25 February this year I sought and was granted an extension of time.

Mr Speaker, this is the first inquiry into the effectiveness of the restricted areas legislation since an investigation was commissioned by the Department of Health and Community Services in 1987, the results of which were made available in 1990.

In gathering information for consideration during the course of the inquiry the Committee has, as always, recognised the need to spread its net as widely as possible, to visit as many communities as possible, to gauge the views of those people whose lives are directly influenced by the legislation.

Before going on to detail the findings of the Committee, Mr Speaker, I should make honourable members aware of difficulties which the Committee has encountered in liaising with representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) on this and other matters within the Committee's charter.

Mr Speaker, ATSIC regional councils were established to provide a mechanism whereby the views of all Aboriginal people could channel through to Government decision-making.

Accordingly, the Committee decided that it would be beneficial to seek the views of these bodies as elected representatives of those people most affected by restricted areas legislation, and set out to meet with each of the 12 ATSIC regional councils which represent all Aboriginal people from all areas of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, the Committee has been greatly disappointed with the response from the ATSIC regional councils to its approaches to meet with their members.

Despite numerous approaches from both myself and the Secretary to the Committee over the past 18 months, attempting to set up meetings, the response on the whole has been poor.

Mindful of the many demands on the community representatives who make up the membership of the regional councils, the Committee proposed meetings to coincide with regular regional council meetings.

However, I regret to say that the response from the ATSIC councils has been less than overwhelming.

Out of 12 councils the Committee has to date met with one, that is the Miwatj Council which represents communities in the Gove/East Arnhem region, which we met with in May this year.

I should make special mention of the efforts of the staff of the Alice Springs regional secretariat of ATSIC, who have endeavoured to expedite the Committee's meeting with the four councils which it services, but to no avail.

The last such meeting was planned for September this year, between myself and my fellow Committee member, the Member for Macdonnell, on one hand, and members of the Alice Springs Regional Council on the other.

The Member for Macdonnell and I arrived at the planned meeting place at the scheduled time only to discover that ATSIC's conference room had been double booked, and that they had taken the liberty to relocate the meeting to the office of the Member for Macdonnell.

Needless to say — and I should take some responsibility for this for having set up a meeting on the Monday morning after the grand final — the meeting did not eventuate, although thanks are due to one Council member, Mr Kenny Windley, for attending.

Mr Speaker, I am not implying any intention by the ATSIC councils to avoid meeting with the Sessional Committee on Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community.

However, I can only assume that having input into policies on alcohol through consultation with the Committee has low priority for those bodies.

This is extremely frustrating to the Committee in its efforts to ensure that evidence put to it is fully representational.

And it is doubly frustrating to receive a letter from one of the councils, as I did two weeks ago, saying, and I quote,

" . . . Council noted that the Sessional Committee have not held Public Hearings or Meetings in the Mulgun region . . . "

and

" . . . Council believe the issue of alcohol use and abuse to be an important one for Aboriginal people and would be pleased to see the communities views in the Katherine area included in the Sessional Committee's deliberations."

Mr Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with the Mulgun Council and will again pursue a meeting with that Council, hopefully to be held in the near future.

The lack of response from ATSIC councils is in marked contrast to the welcome extended to members when the Committee has held meetings and hearings in various individual communities throughout the Northern Territory.

In all cases members of these communities have been keen to contribute their views on the various issues regarding the control of alcohol and its subsequent problems, to participate in the process of investigation into, in this particular case, restricted areas legislation.

That said, I will now address the Committee's findings as detailed in the report, and in particular the specific recommendations with regard to restricted areas legislation.

Mr Speaker, the Committee's findings regarding the effectiveness of the legislation can be summed up in a few words.

Yes, the legislation is an effective means of controlling the impact of alcohol abuse and it is still relevant.

However, the Committee considers that a number of issues regarding the operation of the legislation should be addressed.

With regard to effectiveness the consensus is that the system of allowing communities to control access to alcohol by residents or visitors, with the formal support of the law, should be maintained.

Inevitably though, Mr Speaker, traditionally orientated communities will have to come to terms with the presence and use of alcohol, as will individuals.

Eventually, restrictions will need to move from sanctions on where or what one can drink, to sanctions against individuals who abuse their right to drink alcohol.

Recognising this the Committee has recommended measures which would first, encourage and support communities to take greater responsibility for those of their members with alcohol problems, and second encourage the development of regulated drinking environments where this is the wish of the community.

Hand in hand with encouraging communities to take greater responsibility for the drinking problems of their members is the need to maintain liaison between restricted communities and the Liquor Commission.

The Committee would like to see regular, biennial follow-up hearings by the Liquor Commission to ensure that the restrictions in place continue to be relevant, and more importantly representational of the majority view.

Mr Speaker, at the commencement of the inquiry the Committee wrote to Ministers whose portfolios included the relevant responsibilities, to ascertain the sort of information that is kept by agencies on communities on various indicators of alcohol related harm, and whether this information is compiled into useable data.

The indicators that the Committee identified were:

- the number of protective custody arrests;
- presentations at health clinics, particularly for injuries associated with alcohol abuse;
- the health and welfare of the children — malnutrition, neglect, missing school;
- persistent vandalism of housing and other structures;
- police statistics on homicide and violent assaults;
- prosecutions (and convictions) under Part VIII of the *Liquor Act*;
- car accidents and drink-driving arrests.

The outcome of this exercise was it appears that very little is done to utilise the information which could become available through the normal course of activities.

Mr Speaker, I do not want this to appear as a criticism of the dedicated people involved in service provision in these centres.

I am well aware that probably too much is already demanded of them in terms of tasks and responsibility and that form filling is a low priority in agencies which are often stretched for resources.

However, something should be done with the information which is or could be provided in terms of developing an objective basis for determining the effectiveness or otherwise of alcohol restrictions within individual communities.

The Committee has held preliminary discussions with Dr Peter d'Abbs of the Menzies School of Health Research in relation to drawing on work that has commenced at the national level to establish indicators of alcohol-related harm in communities.

One of the recommendations in this report is that funding be provided to the Committee specifically to allow it to sponsor the Menzies School to first, establish the relevant and readily available indicators, and second, devise an efficient means of collecting and using information on them.

I would consider the Sessional Committee, with its ongoing charter to monitor alcohol problems throughout the Northern Territory, the appropriate sponsoring body for this project.

Mr Speaker, a commonly expressed and popular view of dry areas legislation is that all it does is move the problems from the communities into the larger centres.

While acknowledging that this of course does happen — kicking up your heels in the big city has always been a pastime favoured by many, regardless of race or the alcohol restrictions at home — the Committee does not consider that access to drink is always the driving force.

People go to town for all reasons — business, health, to visit friends and relatives, and so on.

However, one question which should be investigated further is that once in town, if transport home is not readily available, does the extended stay result in a drinking binge?

Given the lack of alternative activities which are available when stranded away from family, normal responsibilities, etcetera, drinking problems can develop, and be very visible if there is no accommodation available to the visitor.

The Committee considers this is sufficient a problem to warrant further investigation of the feasibility of various options for providing some transport to and from isolated communities, and has recommended that the Minister for Aboriginal Development arrange for this to be undertaken.

It may even be, Mr Speaker, that a transport service of some sort could open up possibilities for the development of other economic enterprises in communities, in tourism, crafts and such like.

The service itself could be a community enterprise.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I wish to address an area of restricted areas legislation which attracted a high degree of comment to the Committee in the course of its discussions with various community representatives.

The Committee considers that the whole process of the permit system should be overhauled and has made eight specific recommendations in this regard.

Mr Speaker, currently there are 21 restricted areas where the communities have provided that some or all residents or visitors may have some degree of access to alcohol.

Restrictions vary from saying the local priest, or white Australians residents only, may drink, or are based on the type or amount of alcohol that can be drunk or where and when this can happen.

The end result is that members of these communities can apply to the Liquor Commission for permits, and if the local council and the police agree, these are issued.

The problems develop from the fact that once permits are issued they are not monitored to ascertain whether or not the holder still requires it, or even if he or she has left the area.

The result, in some communities, is a proliferation of permits which have never been culled.

A number of communities has made representations to the Committee to the extent that they would appreciate the ability to be able to have an individual's permit suspended or cancelled for causing problems to him/herself or the community through alcohol.

They believe — and this is very logical — that the removal of a person's drinking rights when the drinking has caused problems would be a rational approach to resolving a situation.

Accordingly, Mr Speaker, the report contains eight recommendations for changes to the permit system, namely that while the Liquor Commission would remain the approving authority, the community councils would make the decisions on whether permits be issued, reviewed, cancelled or suspended.

At the same time, all current permits should be revoked and applications taken for permits to be issued on an annual basis, with an application fee — and the Committee has recommended \$10 per annum — applied.

Recognising that the community councils may wish to allow permits for people temporarily working at their communities, a category of "visitor permits" should be instituted, and these would also be issued by the Liquor Commission along guidelines supplied by communities.

It is envisaged that these would be valid for three months only, renewable only if necessary.

While the permit fee system is not going to result in an inordinate level of revenue — the largest number of permits at any community is 582 at Maningrida, while most have considerably less — the income could be held by the Liquor Commission and made available to the relevant communities when required for administration of the system, provision of alcohol education or related programs, or even the repatriation of locals who are on a binge in town.

One issue which the Committee feels strongly about is that the permit system can provide an "out" to communities who are only paying lip service to restricting alcohol.

Accordingly it is recommending that where more than 25 per cent of the adult population of a community has been issued with permits that its restricted area status be reviewed.

In closing, Mr Speaker, I wish to place on record my appreciation of the dedication of my fellow members of the Committee in undertaking this inquiry.

As in the past inquiries, their bipartisan approach has been instrumental in arriving at conclusions which we believe can be of genuine benefit to the people of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the report on the Inquiry into the Operation and Effect of Part VIII "Restricted Areas" of the *Liquor Act*.

I also move that the report be printed.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Members	Period
Adams, Mr F P	27 June 1989 to date
Brennan, Mrs J M	27 June 1989 to date
DeV, Mr R R	23 November 1989 to date
Finch, Mr F A	23 November 1989 to 5 October 1992
Holmes, Mr S P	4 December 1990 to 12 November 1991
Lanbury, Mr W W	23 November 1989 to date
McCarty, Mr T R	12 October 1991 to 17 May 1994
Ormann, Mr M H	12 October 1993 to 17 May 1994
Palmer, Mr M J	23 November 1989 to 28 August 1992
Pool	23 November 1989 to date
Sayer, Mr R A	28 August 1993 to 12 October 1993

APPENDIX 6

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 23 November 1989 to date

* Mr Poole has been Chairman since the Committee's inception.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

<i>Members</i>	<i>Period</i>
Adamson, Mr P F	27 June 1994 to date
Braham, Mrs L M	27 June 1994 to date
Bell, Mr N R	23 November 1989 to date
Finch, Mr F A	23 November 1989 to 5 October 1990
Hatton, Mr S P	4 December 1990 to 19 November 1991
Lanhupuy, Mr W W	23 November 1989 to date
McCarthy, Mr T R	19 November 1991 to 17 May 1994
Ortmann, Mr M H	12 October 1993 to 17 May 1994
Palmer, Mr M J	23 November 1989 to 26 August 1993
Poole, Mr E H ^(a)	23 November 1989 to date
Setter, Mr R A	26 August 1993 to 12 October 1993

(a) Mr Poole has been Chairman since the Committee's inception.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report Number	Title	Date
1	Annual Report, Year Ending 23 November 1990	April 1991
2	Measures for Reducing Alcohol Abuse and Abuse in the Northern Territory	August 1991
3	Annual Report, Year Ending 30 June 1993	August 1993
4	Inquiry into the Operation and Effect of Part VII "Restricted Areas" of the Liquor Act	December 1993

APPENDIX 7

COMMITTEE REPORTS 23 November 1989 to date

COMMITTEE REPORTS

<i>Report Number</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Annual Report, Year Ending 23 November 1990	April 1991
2	Measures for Reducing Alcohol Use and Abuse in the Northern Territory	August 1991
3	Annual Report, Year Ending 30 June 1993	August 1993
4	Inquiry into the Operation and Effect of Part VIII "Restricted Areas" Of the <i>Liquor Act</i>	December 1993

