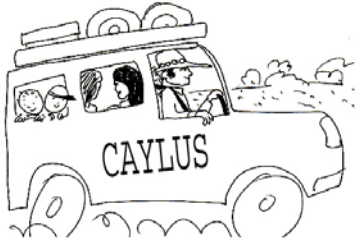


**Tangentyere Council**  
**Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service**  
**(CAYLUS)**



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This is a submission to the Senate Inquiry into petrol sniffing in remote Aboriginal communities from CAYLUS. It will address the following :

**(2) That the following matters be referred to the Community Affairs References Committee for inquiry and report by 9 November 2005:**

**(a) the effectiveness of existing laws and policing with respect to petrol sniffing in affected Indigenous communities;**

CAYLUS has been working with the NT Police in relation to this issue since the start of the project (November, 2002). Some legislation we have utilised regularly includes :

- 1) Section 18 of the NT Misuse of Drugs Act.
- 2) Trespass Orders under the Trespass Act Northern Territory 2004.

**1) Section 18 of the NT Misuse of Drugs Act,**

This law has been moved into the Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act 2005 with one significant change – the protection of informants. This was one of the suggestions we made to the NT Attorney General in January, 2004.

The act was as follows : “**18. Volatile substances**

(1) A person who sells or supplies a volatile substance to another person and who knows or who ought to know that the other person intends to use the substance by administering it to himself or herself or a third person or to sell or supply it to a third person for use by the third person to administer it to himself or herself or to a fourth person, is guilty of an offence.

Penalty: \$2,000 or imprisonment for 2 years.”

In 2004, CAYLUS promoted this law through a media campaign in three local languages on the three local radio stations that cover our region of Central Australia. In the ads, we offered to be an informant for people who felt they were unable to report petrol dealers directly to the police for fear of retribution. Over the course of the media campaign, we were informed of more than 20 people who were allegedly dealing in volatile substances, and reported them to the police.

The law was enforced in remote areas depending on the individual Police involved. To our knowledge there has been no prosecutions at Papunya, despite there being no sniffable fuel in the community since 2004, a permanent police station and the highest number of petrol sniffers in Central Australia. In contrast, the Kintore Police Station has made a number of successful prosecutions under this Act since it was opened two years ago.

It is our observation that the laws are enforced sporadically. We hope the new legislation will be enforced in a more conscientious manner, and will be assisting remote communities report problems in this regard to the NT Ombudsman when appropriate. CAYLUS suggest that resources be made available to the NT Ombudsman's office to increase their service to remote communities. We outline this position in more detail in the attached Coronial Submission (see attachment 1).

That this law has been so difficult to mobilize indicates that more is needed than pure legislation. It is our understanding that the law was established at the suggestion of The Senate select committee on Volatile Substance Abuse in 1985. It had been hoped by that Inquiry that this legislation would have allowed remote communities to identify ringleaders and get them into custody and thence into treatment. Without more community information about their rights, and supervision of police action, it appears such laws will not perform the function envisaged when drafted.

**Recommendation a1: that the Senate recommend that the NT Ombudsman be resourced to provide a better service to remote communities in relation to the service provided by the NT Police in relation to the VSAP legislation and other laws.**

**Recommendation a2: That the NT Police have a strategic campaign, to train staff and prioritise the use of this law in remote areas.**

**Recommendation a3: That the police systematically review the use of this law particularly in those areas where it is know that volatile substances are being supplied. That this review process include stakeholders from the community and relevant agencies working in the area.**

## **2) Trespass Orders under the Trespass Act Northern Territory 2004.**

This legislation has been used with some success by Aboriginal communities to evict petrol sniffers from other communities. It has also been used in Alice Springs Special Lease Areas (Town Camps) in the same way.

Again, the NT Police response has been patchy. Some officers support the communities' attempts, and some do not, arguing that the law is ambiguous as to the scope of the Council's capacity to evict people. Changes to the Act that make it clear that community councils have this power would assist.

**Recommendation a4: That the Senate recommend that the NT Government review use of the NT Trespass act by Aboriginal Communities in relation to removing unwanted people . That this review should aim to compliment and build on community use of this act in relation to sniffing.**

**Recommendation a5: That police provide active support to communities that are wanting to enforce the use of Trespass notices**

***(b) the effectiveness of diversionary initiatives and community level activities;***

CAYLUS has been generating and supporting these sort of initiatives since the start of the project. There are a number of necessary conditions for these initiatives to succeed :

1) **the initiative must be well supported by local Indigenous people.** The importance of this aspect is reflected in the attached Coronial submission re Willowra community. In essence, the youth program was developed through consultation by the youth worker with the local community over the first three months of the funded period. This was to get important guidance and to engender a sense of control and ownership of the program in the community. There is much to learn from the Willowra process, which is fully outlined in the attached Coronial submission.

However, this does not propose that the problem of substance abuse can be solved by members of the community without serious ongoing support from government and non-government agencies. The proposition that "it's up to the community" or that "the elders have to rise up and stop the sniffing" cannot be taken seriously. We attach a draft document, "OTHER DRUGS, OTHER PEOPLE, OTHER PLACES: THE POLICY RESPONSE TO INDIGENOUS PETROL SNIFFING IN AUSTRALIA" by Dr Peter d'Abbs, Associate Professor School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, James Cook University and Maggie Brady, ARC Fellow Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University.

The paper details the lack of strategy in the response by government to petrol sniffing in the past. Most responses are made following public attention, usually after some media focus. There continues to be an unrealistic response that Aboriginal communities have the resources to deal with this sort of substance abuse without help from the wider community. The “elders should fix it” proposition was opposed by both SA and NT Coroners, who were scathing about it as a way of shifting responsibility onto an already disadvantaged and disempowered community. It was interesting to note that the Commonwealth Health Minister Mr Abbott has continued to use Yuendumu as an example of elders taking responsibility for solving the sniffing problem even after a delegation from Yuendumu went to Canberra and lobbied for Opal fuel in their community. This is an excerpt from his interview with Leon Compton on Darwin ABC on Wed Oct 12 (the full transcript is attached)

“SO WE ...(line drop out)... DOING A GREAT DEAL, WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEE WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE, BUT IN THE END, THERE IS AN IMPORTANT ROLE FOR COMMUNITIES THEMSELVES AND THE INDIVIDUALS IN THESE COMMUNITIES TO TAKE STOCK OF THIS SITUATION AND DO WHAT THEY CAN TO PREVENT THEIR YOUNGER MEMBERS DESTROYING THEIR LIVES IN THIS WAY. IN THE END, THE COMMUNITIES, WHICH HAVE EFFECTIVELY TACKLED THIS PROBLEM ARE THE COMMUNITIES LIKE YUENDUMU WHERE THE ELDERS HAVE SAID, THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE AND THEY HAVE QUITE LITERALLY FROGMARCHED SNIFFERS OFF TO REHABILITATION CENTRES SUCH AS THE MOUNT THEO CENTRE, WHICH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS ALSO SUPPORTING.”

The Yuendumu example in many ways serves better as an illustration of how community elders in conjunction with skilled and dedicated workers stood up and took control of petrol sniffing.

Mt. Theo is an example of strong partnership between indigenous and non-indigenous people, combining both systems of intelligence and expertise. Whilst its routes were firmly in a community movement, a core feature of the movement at Yuendumu was that Non Indigenous Community Staff with a range of skills helped on the program. By the time sniffing was clearly beaten, the Mt Theo Yuendumu Substance Misuse Aboriginal Corporation was one of the best resourced youth initiatives in the region ( for a comprehensive report on the program see attachment 5 Mt Theo Story 1999). Comment from the Mt Theo program on this submission is attached as appendix 10.

**Recommendation b1: That programs in remote areas must be directed by the Community, however provision must be made to allow strong partnerships between the indigenous and non-indigenous community.**

**Recommendation b2: Indigenous communities are entitled to the same help as any other citizen of Australia. This should be reflected in government funding and assistance to the Indigenous community.**

**2. The initiative must be evaluated rigorously by an agency reporting to the funding body and this evaluation should inform the initiatives future direction.** This was well demonstrated by the lack of success of the NT Police funded Community Development Unit (CDU) at Papunya. More than \$500,000 went into that program, which was badly run and caused a reduction in services to youth in the community over the course of it's operation. When the program started, Papunya had two World Vision workers, a Waltja Reconnect worker, two Council recreation positions, one CDU funded youth worker position and funding for a second position. Due to poor management practices used by the local Council CEOs, World Vision and Waltja pulled out of the community. The Council was unable to recruit to the recreation worker positions (thereby nearly losing the community's Commonwealth funding). One CDU positions (filled by a qualified chef rather than a youth worker) left the area before the end of the project and the other position was never filled. After two years of operation and \$500,000 of public funds spent, Papunya had gone from seven funded positions to one, and the number of petrol sniffers had risen to approx 100 according to Clinic records. Although the funding body was informed of problems in the administration of the CDU grant, it took no effective action. In the case of resources directed towards this issue, it is clearly crucial that the taxpayer gets value for the investment.

As an example of our commitment to the value of the evaluation process, we attach the evaluation of CAYLUS commissioned by our funding body. The timing and response to the evaluation was slow meaning that the program operated for nearly six months without program funding (July to December 2004).

An example of where the evaluation and research has been done but has been put on the shelf and not acted upon is the program at Ilpurla run by Barry Abbott. Barry operates a credible and successful program where he looks after young men that no one else can handle. He has been responsible for saving many lives over the 40 years he has provided this service to the community. He was the 2005 winner of the Prime Ministers Award for Drug and Alcohol (see attachment 6). A number of buildings at Ilpurla are made of Asbestos and the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health committed several years ago to replacing them under a capital upgrades program. They still haven't been fixed and Barry says that instead in the meantime he has had three

feasibility studies and evaluations. CAYLUS has only operated since 2002 but has been a part of 2 of these. Meanwhile Barry looks after 12- 18 young men 24 hours a day on an operational budget of less than 200k per annum ( a figure which pales in comparison to operational budgets of city based residential services).

**Recommendation b3 : that VSA programs be evaluated annually by the department and that the government department act promptly on recommendations made. These evaluations should not be self evaluation and do not necessarily need to be external evaluations. They can be undertaken by relevant project officers within the department to save on the exorbitant costs of external evaluators.**

**3) Youth services should be designed to support local indigenous control, with the provision of external agencies or people assisting where required to provide an accountable and effective service**

Due to the difficulties with administration and local training and experience, youth services in remote areas often require support of external agencies or workers. The SA and NT Coroners commented on the inadvisability of leaving the provision of youth services solely to community organisations and councils. The result of this reliance is very patchy services, and in some cases, no services whatsoever, which jeopardises the funding as funding bodies will withdraw funding if communities do not use their allocation.

An example was outlined in the NT Coronial, wherein the Mutitjulu Council, arguably one of the better resourced community councils, was unable to recruit a rec worker for nine months. Papunya Council nearly lost it's FaCS allocation twice in the last three years due to non-compliance with reporting conditions. CAYLUS assisted in holding on to this crucial funding through negotiations and administrative support. Without this funding, there would currently be no rec workers or rec program in Papunya, which has more petrol sniffers than any other community.

We argue and NT Coroner Greg Cavanaugh agreed, that youth services are essential services, like schools and police and clinics. As such youth services should be organised and provided regardless of the ups and downs of community council politics and circumstances. The central co-ordinating body can provide these essential services in partnership with local bodies, and can develop the capacity of these local bodies to provide the service over time. Some communities already have this capacity, although this depends on the staff at the community at that time. We have seen programs flounder when staff turn over. A central body could provide ongoing support to the programs, hold the corporate memory, recruit well, develop local capacity and oversee the delivery of youth programs regionally. If given the choice, we believe most communities would

elect to be part of a regional service. See appendix 9 for a discussion of the role of this co-ordinating body.

One of the most crucial aspects of the central support proposed is in human resource management. This is to reduce the possibility of poor recruiting practices, poor evaluation of work during the first three month probationary period of new workers and lack of appropriate action when people are found to be unsuitable for the work.

This was demonstrated by the problems of Docker River community. A NPY Women's Council funded Caseworker position was recruited in 2004. During that time, there were a series of Community CEOs, with little or no handover and little capacity for realistic supervision of the Caseworker position. The individual holding the position was clearly unsuitable, but due to the lack of capacity of the local Council during the crucial probationary period, this issue was not addressed. He stayed on in the position till the end of his contract, when NPY changed their funding arrangements and undertook to employ the next Caseworker directly. This proved to be a better model and the Docker River Youth program is now a model that shows the positive changes that can flow when a youth program is well run. This is outlined below in more detail. However, the problem of poor HR practices is well exemplified by this community, and the causes (lack of council administrative capacity, lack of continuity of administration, lack of skills and understanding of process by Indigenous Councillors) are evident in almost all communities in the Central Australian region.

Tangentyere, through CAYLUS is currently negotiating with the NT Police for funding for a position to improve the HR capacity of remote communities they service in order to prevent these sort of problems. The position is titled "Youth Workforce Development worker" and the role is to assist remote communities recruit, interview, employ and supervise youth worker positions. The position would also provide orientation, training and logistical and administrative support to the workers, as well as liaising with Universities regarding appropriate youth worker course development that would equip workers for work in the region, and arrange student and volunteer placements, especially over the summer holidays when schools are closed and young people are bored and hot. A description of the position is attached in the form of a submission to the Police for funding. We suggest this is a model that could be replicated in any region to increase the capacity of communities to have sustainable youth programs, and to develop a workforce that can deliver these essential programs in the future.

There is an argument that these services should be delivered by local people. The best way to get Indigenous people involved is through having a fully functional rec program delivered by professionals operating in the community.

With a functional service, the core work gets done and local people can participate and learn the skills required to keep the service running. To expect local people to run such services without experience or adequate support jeopardises the delivery of the service, which increases the tendency for youth to participate in substance misuse.

**Recommendation b4: That youth services be organised regionally, with a central body co-ordinating all aspects of program delivery. This would include consultation with the local community council and would pass funds direct to functional local services where they exist, but would not rely on overburdened local councils to provide the administrative support for the programs.**

***(c) lessons that can be learned from the success some communities have had in reducing petrol sniffing including the impact of non-sniffable Opal petrol.***

**1) Opal has incredible potential to reduce inhalant abuse and should be rolled out regionally.** We draw the Committee's attention to the attached Coronial submission that has a section about Opal.

Prior to Opal becoming available, CAYLUS assisted remote communities in the Western Macdonalds to implement Av Gas, the un-sniffable fuel option prior to Opal becoming available. There was a sustained reduction in sniffing prevalence in two of the communities in that region (Mt Leibig and Kintore), but no long term reduction in Papunya.

In fact, it seems there was an increase in sniffing in Papunya due to its proximity to sniffable fuel, being Ikuntji, a community approx 40 k away, a roadhouse approx 50 k away on the Tanami Road, and the proximity of Alice Springs, which is the next community 250k to the East of Papunya. Proximity seems to be the key to the effectiveness of this strategy. This was found by the Commonwealth Evaluation of the Comgas Scheme: Report prepared for the Comgas Evaluation by the Comgas Working Group and Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Council (SA) Inc (ADAC) 2004, page 9:

“ Avgas is effective in reducing levels of petrol sniffing in a range of situations defined in terms of:

- distance to the nearest outlet for unleaded petrol;
- length of time Avgas has been used; and
- types of other interventions for reducing petrol sniffing. “

In Mt Leibig, the introduction of Av Gas had a profound effect on the number of sniffers in the community. Prior to its introduction, nearly every young person in the community was sniffing petrol. Family members had tried to stop them, but



the group of sniffers was beyond the control of individual families. Council stated there were 60 sniffers in the community before Av Gas was introduced. Once it was brought in, the numbers went down to 6 sniffers, and has stayed in this range ever since.

Before Kintore brought in AvGas it seemed every youth on the community was sniffing petrol. This included primary school kids, who were mimicking the sniffing of the older youths. Once an un-sniffable fuel was brought in, the primary school kids stopped using fuel. Black market supplies started coming in, but the young kids did not have access to the money charged for sniffable fuel. As stated elsewhere, the Kintore police were active in prosecuting people for dealing petrol. Numbers dropped considerably, and now there are about 25 regular sniffers.

Nyirripi had a similar excellent result from the introduction of Opal this year (2005). The community has been able to keep regular sniffing out of the community since one sniffer murdered another about 7 years ago. For a period afterwards sniffers from other communities were treated harshly by the elders. This strategy has decreased in effect over time, with regular sniffing starting about three months prior to Opal replacing sniffable fuel in the community. Once Opal was introduced, the elders called a public meeting and gave the sniffers Opal. “Sniff this” they said to the sniffers, who tried to get high with Opal but failed. The elders reported that “it broke the sniffers hearts”. After this, sniffing stopped in that community and has not resumed. This was the only intervention. The community has little recreation program support, with no FaCS funding or Sport and Rec funding. There is a part-time Rec worker funded from Mining Royalties. Clearly, Opal was the primary reason sniffing stopped in that community.

An interesting effect of Nyirripi going onto Opal was the reduction of the number of petrol sniffers in the next community to the West – Kintore – from 35 to 25. This demonstrates the regional advantages of rolling Opal out.

**Recommendation c1: that Opal be rolled out regionally.**

**2. That the NT Government be resourced to prevent a shift from petrol to other volatile substances.** As stated above, CAYLUS plays an important role in relation to service support and development in the region. I will outline an example of our work, and our attempts to pass it on to a government agency that is independent of the stop-start funding that has characterised petrolsniffing programs. In Alice Springs in 2003 early 2004 there were major issues with paint sniffing amongst young people, many of them permanent residents of Alice Springs. At one point youth services got together and identified nearly 100 individuals sniffing in the town. CAYLUS and the Police worked extensively with retailers however to get them to stop selling to sniffers and dealers with some success. This project although not a standalone measure had immediate

noticeable impact and this impact has been sustained to date as has the work by CAYLUS and the Police. This is another example of supply reduction stopping sniffing amongst a target group.

One aspect of the problem regarding the continuation of successful strategies may be illuminated by a current debate which CAYLUS is having with ADSCA - the AOD section of Territory Health in Alice. As outlined, we run a retailers strategy that reduces the supply of sniffable spray paint through tightening up security at the point of sale, thru education in the retailers right to not sell, and through collecting the license numbers of people sold to, cross referencing brands of paint found to be used by sniffers and making referrals to the police about potential dealers. The initiative has substantially reduces the volume of paint being abused, but as CAYLUS has a limited funding life (ending mid 2007), we are trying to get ADSCA to take on the project. Although they are keen that the strategy continue, and are seeking a way to be involved, they are more comfortable with medical interventions and training programs and may not have the capacity for the ongoing liaison work required to make this strategy continue to work. However, supply reduction is probably the most effective strategy we have used in Alice Springs, and one which will require even more resources should Opal be rolled out extensively through the region.

**Recommendation c2 : that the Senate recommend that the NT Government provide support to strategies that have shown good results in reducing the availability of other inhalants.**

**3. There is a formula for reducing demand for volatile and other substances amongst the youth in remote communities that can be replicated in any remote community.** The formula is well known – supply reduction, demand reduction and treatment/casework. In relation to demand reduction, CAYLUS has been fostering and supporting youth programs because successful youth programs have shown to be directly reducing petrol sniffing in remote communities where they operate.

For example, now that they have good staff, Docker River has been very successful at reducing petrol sniffing. At the time of writing, there are no people sniffing at Docker River. This will probably not be sustained in the long term, but a couple of years ago, it would have seemed impossible. At that stage, there were a group of sniffers who brought sniffable fuel into the community regularly and there was serious sexual exploitation occurring with young people and the supply of inhalants. The main positive influence on the situation is the youth program. Thanks to a NPY funded position and some inspired recruiting, there are now two skilled and committed youth workers in the community, one male and one female. This gender balance assists with accessing the youth of the community, who are traditionally not expected to mix. These workers have started a youth committee of local youth who design and assist in the implementation of a youth program. They have two troop carriers, which is

needed due to the number of young people needing transport, and due to cultural reasons – it works best to separate the males from the females according to the youth workers – less fighting. Attendance at both primary and secondary classes at Docker River is around 95% thanks to the youth program's support of these educational services.

The Docker River model is one that we consider would give the best opportunity to break the cycle of substance abuse in remote communities. It should be remembered that in remote communities, there are almost no alternatives to participation in council rec programs. There are no public swimming pools, no movie theatres, no cafes, no restaurants, no YMCAs or similar institutions, only one shop, no public transport, few paved streets. The recreational activities that most young people take for granted in urban centres are lacking in the home communities of Indigenous youth from remote areas. Without a well supported youth program, the youth of the community have no recreational options and substance abuse is an easy option, especially if sniffable fuel is plentiful in the community.

To summarise the Docker model in relation to resources required on the ground : two youth workers (one male, one female), two Troop Carriers, suitable accommodation in the community, a recreation hall, external support for recruiting and supervision (in this case provided by NPY Women's Council). This is the base level of resources required to run an effective youth program in a remote community. Most communities do not have this level of support, and thus cannot be expected to produce the same positive results. It should be remembered that the demand reduction strategy works across a number of issues, and can reduce the tendency towards any form of substance abuse as well as have a positive affect on school attendance and health. In the long run, the investment required to bring the remote communities up to the standard currently exemplified by Docker River would pay dividends in a number of areas beyond petrol abuse.

**Recommendation c3: that all remote communities be resourced to the level of the current Docker River project**

In relation to the special town leases in Alice Springs, the same level of ongoing support to a community can have the same positive affects. The Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre has been a Tangentyere initiative that has broken a cycle of substance abuse that went back five generations in a portion of that town lease community. The model is outlined in the attached powerpoint presentation, and shows the positive affect that flows from dedicated workers helping community members address a range of issues that increase the risk of substance abuse among the children of the lease.

Currently, there is a funded co-ordinator and a caseworker, though for most of the five years of operation, there was only a co-ordinator. The project supports a

learning centre which has succeeded in getting the young people of the community into structured education and has provided a focus for adult education and a number of other programs. Various programs including CAYLUS has supported the project through supply reduction strategies, including the use of Trespass Orders, the placement of chronic petrol abusers at outstations in collaboration with NT FaCS, and some casework in collaboration with the Centre's caseworker. It should be noted that the funding for the caseworker is due to run out in April 2006, and that the value of the project will be substantially reduced if this position cannot be refunded. It is our experience that without a caseworker, the co-ordinator position gets too inundated with the immediate needs of the client group to undertake the work required to develop the program.

There are several other special town leases in Alice Springs with the same needs as Yarrenyty Arltere Special Town Lease, with the same levels of seemingly intractable multigenerational substance abuse. Each could benefit from the levels of resources that have shown to make a real difference at Yarrenyty Arltere.

**Recommendation c4: that funding be provided for urban projects based on the Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre model.**

2. It should also be noted that it took five years of sustained effort to make the improvements at Yarrenyty Arltere. This is a common theme of successful projects – sustained funding produces good results. The Mt Theo project has been operating for more than ten years, and is an example of how a community can deal with petrol sniffing if given enough support over the long term.

We propose that government support existing strategies that prove effective. The stop-start funding of programs addressing petrol sniffing has been commented on by Coroners in the NT and SA as a serious impediment in sustainable results.

For example, CAYLUS' funding ends in June, 2007. CAYLUS has been an important ally to remote communities in the effort to stop petrol sniffing. We have had a number of successes and continue to provide the support required to systematically address petrol and other inhalant abuse. Our mission statement is to address substance abuse by young people through supporting community initiatives that improve the quality of life of young people. This goal has lead us into numerous partnerships with agencies and community bodies in remote areas and we have seen a substantial improvement in remote communities due to our actions. We can report on these actions in more detail if required, but the evaluation already attached outlines some of our work.

CAYLUS arguably has the runs on the board that demonstrate that we do know what we are talking about, and have gleaned understandings that can lead to an elimination of petrol sniffing in Central Australia. Part of the funding contract with

the Department of Health and Ageing is that we advocate on behalf of the client group. We have been doing so, and have drawn a great deal of media attention to the petrol sniffing problem faced by Central Australia.

We hope we have portrayed a positive message – that petrol sniffing can be stopped – but at times the media has it's own agenda and seeks more controversial spins for their stories. However, we are one of a number of lead agencies with the knowledge of the situation in Central Australia and experience in community development designed to address the issues around volatile substance abuse. As such, we are bound by our obligation to the client group to advocate on their behalf and to draw the government's attention to the resources required.

We acknowledge that the Commonwealth Government has put substantial resources into combating this problem, but that more are required to win the battle. Advocating for these resources places us under scrutiny from the Government at times, however we must ensure that we continue to advocating for community need, while at the same time recognising the steps made by government to date.

**Recommendation c5: That projects that are shown to be working well be resourced to provide the required services in the long term.**

## **Conclusion**

The above provides some recommendations that have the potential to stop petrol sniffing in Central Australia. In essence, they are not different from the recommendations of the Coronials or the many other papers and reports on this subject, except that they are coming from a service that has concentrated on this issue since 2002, and has developed an in depth understanding of the circumstances surrounding petrol sniffing. We know what is happening, and we know that it can be solved with the right resources allocated in the right way.

The current wave of interest in petrol sniffing has the potential to generate the political will to finally and comprehensively deal with the issue once and for all. The international political kudos for being the Australian government that took this bull by the horns and defeated it would be enormous, and a very practical form of Reconciliation with the Indigenous community that has suffered with this problem for more than 50 years. As stated, the demand reduction strategies outlined above would work in relation to all forms of youth substance abuse and create the conditions for better engagement with health and education services.

Submission prepared by  
Tristan Ray and Blair McFarland  
CAYLUS Co-ordinators

## **Summary of recommendations**

**(2) *That the following matters be referred to the Community Affairs References Committee for inquiry and report by 9 November 2005:***

**(a) *the effectiveness of existing laws and policing with respect to petrol sniffing in affected Indigenous communities;***

**Recommendation a1: that the Senate recommend that the NT Ombudsman be resourced to provide a better service to remote communities in relation to the service provided by the NT Police in relation to the VSAP legislation and other laws.**

**Recommendation a2: That the NT Police have a strategic campaign, to train staff and prioritise the use of this law in remote areas.**

**Recommendation a3: That the police systematically review the use of this law particularly in those areas where it is known that volatile substances are being supplied. That this review process include stakeholders from the community and relevant agencies working in the area.**

**Recommendation a4: That the Senate recommend that the NT Government review use of the NT Trespass act by Aboriginal Communities in relation to removing unwanted people. That this review should aim to compliment and build on community use of this act in relation to sniffing.**

**Recommendation a5: That police provide active support to communities that are wanting to enforce the use of Trespass notices**

**(b) *the effectiveness of diversionary initiatives and community level activities;***

**Recommendation b1: That programs in remote areas must be directed by the Community, however provision must be made to allow strong partnerships between the indigenous and non-indigenous community.**

**Recommendation b2: Indigenous communities are entitled to the same help as any other citizen of Australia. This should be reflected in government funding and assistance to the Indigenous community.**

**Recommendation b3 : that VSA programs be evaluated annually by the department and that the government department act promptly on recommendations made. These evaluations should not be self evaluation and do not necessarily need to be external evaluations. They can be undertaken by relevant project officers within the department to save on the exorbitant costs of external evaluators.**

**Recommendation b4: We propose that youth services be organised regionally, with a central body co-ordinating all aspects of program delivery. This would include consultation with the local community council (as per recommendation b1) and would pass funds direct to functional local services where they exist, but would not rely on overburdened local councils to provide the administrative support for the programs.**

***c) lessons that can be learned from the success some communities have had in reducing petrol sniffing including the impact of non-sniffable Opal petrol***

**Recommendation c1: that Opal be rolled out regionally.**

**Recommendation c2 : that the Senate recommend that the NT Government provide support to strategies that have shown good results in reducing the availability of other inhalants.**

**Recommendation c3: that all remote communities be resourced to the level of the current Docker River project.**

**Recommendation c4: that funding be provided for urban projects based on the Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre model.**

**Recommendation c5: That projects that are shown to be working well be resourced to provide the required services in the long term.**

## ***Attachments***

- 1 CAYLUS Submission to The Coronial Inquiry into the Deaths of Kumanara Coulthard and Brumby and Kumanjayi Presley
- 2 D’Abbs Brady Other Drugs, Other People, Other Places: The Policy Response to Indigenous Petrol Sniffing In Australia
- 3 CAYLUS Evaluation Gill Shaw
- 4 Transcript of Tony Abbott Interviewed by Leon Compton on Darwin Drivetime Radio on Wednesday Oct 14
- 5 Mt Theo Story 1999
- 6 “Of Substance” Draft Article on Barry Abbott
- 7 Job Description Youth Workforce Development Project Worker – contained in application for funding to NT Police.
8. Powerpoint presentation about Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre
9. Discussion paper re Remote area youth work support position
10. Comment of this submission from Mt Theo Program



Attachment 1

**Tangentyere Council  
Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service  
(CAYLUS)**



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**SUBMISSION**

To the Coronial Inquiry into the  
Deaths of  
Kunmanara Brumby, Kunmanara  
Coulthard and Kumanjayi Presley

From  
Central Australian Youth Link Up  
Service

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## About CAYLUS

The Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service is a community development project designed to address petrol sniffing managed by Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs.

CAYLUS takes direction from a reference group which includes:

- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
- Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Programs Unit (CAAAPU)
- Papunya Community Council
- Mutitjulu Community Council
- Intjartnama Treatment Outstation
- Drug and Alcohol Services Association (DASA)
- Mt Theo-Yuendumu Substance Misuse Aboriginal Corporation (MYSMAC)
- Alice Springs Youth Accommodation Support Service (ASYASS)
- Tangentyere Council
- NPY Women's Council
- Ilpurla outstation
- Ipolera Outstation
- Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi

CAYLUS works to address petrol sniffing through supporting community initiatives to improve quality of life for young people.

## About this document

This submission is divided into three sections.

**SECTION ONE** relates to the death of Kunmanara Brumby in Mutitjulu.

**SECTION TWO** relates to the death of Kumanjayi Presley in Willowra.

**SECTION THREE** summarises Recommendations made by CAYLUS and contains additional comments on these Recommendations.

**ATTACHMENT ONE:** Complementary Prevention and Diversionary Programs for Willowra Community Youth.

**ATTACHMENT TWO:** Mt Theo-Yuendumu Substance Misuse Program – Background.

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SECTION ONE  
Submission relating to the death of  
Trevor Brumby  
and Recommendations

**CAYLUS relationship to Trevor Brumby**

**DASA Rehabilitation**

Trevor Brumby first came to the attention of CAYLUS staff, including myself (Blair McFarland) when he elected to go into the Drug and Alcohol Services Association ('DASA') Residential Rehabilitation program in Alice Springs to get off the petrol. He was there for three and a half weeks from 24 February 2004 to 19 March 2004. Trev was on remand for an offence and referred to DASA through the NT Department of Corrections. It had been his first time in gaol and he didn't like it. DASA requires a support person to stay with Indigenous clients to help with translation and to provide more support, but no such support person stayed with Trev. His brother was supposed to come but did not stay.

Brumby spoke very little English, and as such the counselling part of his rehabilitation experience was negligible. To address his potential boredom, we arranged to get some Pitjatjantjara language videos for him to watch. CAYLUS paid for Ken Hansen, a linguist and Lutheran Minister. Hansen helped explain the rules of DASA to Brumby in a way that ensured he fully understood. We told DASA to get the Minister in any time they needed to and we would pay.

Tristan Ray, my co-worker and I would drop in on Brumby on occasion and chat as best we could. Once we played soccer in the DASA rec room. He became a lot more responsive after a week or so. We thought he might have a hearing problem and referred this to DASA, who said they would arrange the hospital to look into this on their next visit. Because DASA is in Alice Springs, it is easy for them to get the medical attention that long-term inhalant abusers sometimes require.

**Ilpurla Outstation**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of March, we spoke to Brumby about his post-DASA plans. We had been talking to Barry Abbott, the Manager of Ilpurla, about Brumby going there for a while. Abbott was agreeable, and we put this option to Brumby, who agreed that this would be better than going straight back to Mutitjulu. It has been our experience that it does not take long for sniffing to resume once people return to a sniffing environment, especially when there are a number of other chronic sniffers. We arranged his transport by another Tangentyere program, the Return to Country program, who took him out on 19 March, 2004.

In early May, Brumby asked Barry to get him back to Mutitjulu in order to be around for the distribution of Gate Money, royalties paid by National Parks. This was a lie, as the Gate Money is always distributed in November, but there was no way Abbott could hold Brumby against his will, so he allowed him to return to Mutitjulu.

### **Youth culture and petrol sniffing**

We saw him at his mother's place in Mutitjulu in early May, 2004. He was back into sniffing. We asked him if he wanted to come back to DASA or return to Ipurla outstation. Some of his relations pressured him to go with us on that occasion as they were worried about him, but he refused. Partly the issue was trying to reason with someone who was high on petrol, but mainly Brumby didn't really want to stop.

In my opinion, without external pressure, Brumby was totally unwilling to stop sniffing. This supports the NT Governments strategy in their Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act (VSAP) to make treatment compulsory.

Brumby was in a sense a typical case. Sniffing culture is now a strong part of the youth culture in remote areas. It is seen as a viable lifestyle choice by the young people there. The other option is to work, which is very difficult to find and even harder to hang on to due to cultural pressures. Going to college is an option for people a bit younger than Brumby, but one would have to ask oneself why go to college? Their relations mostly gain access to resources through their relationship to the land rather than an application of whitefella skills. And in any case, Brumby was probably incapable of learning even the most basic literacy skills. He had been sniffing for more than fifteen years, and probably has pretty severe brain damage. S. Carney of Menzies School of Health Research found that there could be a full recovery by the brain after eight years of petrol sniffing, with diminishing recovery potential thereafter.

Brumby was one of literally hundreds of long term Pitjatjantjara petrol sniffers. The Pitjatjantjara homelands has 222 according to their records. There are about 500 more in the Southern part of the NT according to our records, and a grand total of approx 700 sniffers in cross border Central Australia. Many will die of petrol sniffing related causes over the next ten years. Many have already suffered irreversible brain damage. Unless the situation is addressed with some serious resources, this will be the fate of the youth of those communities. The situation is in crisis, as immediate action is required if the current inhalant abusers are to avoid permanent brain damage.

***Recommendation 1 – Application of royalties to community development***

**That the NT Government enter into negotiations with the CLC regarding a financial partnership in relation to the prompt provision of improved youth services and substance abuse programs in the remote Indigenous communities of the South West region of the NT.**

In “Financial aspects of Aboriginal land rights in the Northern Territory” {Altman and Pollack, CAEPR Discussion Paper 152 (1998) p 45} – a paper about the distribution of royalties paid to Indigenous communities, the authors argued that royalties distribution should “include that the moneys are to ameliorate impacts of resource development projects by providing opportunities for enhanced community development, greater participation in regional economic development, and the creation of opportunity for future generations.”

The Central Land Council (CLC), under the direction of the traditional owners, have gone in this direction through a recent move to cap the amount going to individuals from Gate Money and direct the rest into community development. The CLC commissioned a research process in which CAYLUS and numerous remote communities were consulted and asked for suggestions regarding the development of youth services. This is an excellent response to the situation, but at the same time, it is imperative that the Indigenous community not be expected to pay for services that are the responsibility of the NT and Federal Governments. However, due to the crisis situation currently existing in remote communities, there is much progress that could be made through the NT and Federal governments and the CLC undertaking negotiations regarding the prompt provision of these services and acting in partnership. Consideration could be given to government funding being provided to enhance the communities funding. The CLC has indicated they would also consider arrangements through which some portion of government funding could be repayed with future Gate Money.

The agenda for these negotiations would include funding and support for the provision of culturally appropriate education, training, recreation and youth services, policing issues, substance abuse treatment options and the eventual creation of remote community environments in which substance abuse is not the main lifestyle option.

## ***Recommendation 2 – Support for Ilpurla and Other Outstations***

**That the NT Government provide support for Ilpurla and the other two inhalant oriented outstation programs (Ipolera and Mt Theo) in the form of targeted resources that would allow for the services to develop in the ways suggested by the last coronial. This would include :**

- **a dramatic increase in funding for operational positions to work with the clients – a minimum of ten positions in each service would be more realistic;**
- **provision for administrative services, which would increase accountability and thus provide justification for further resources;**
- **funding for professional caseworkers who would undertake referral and after-care placement support and monitoring;**
- **funding for training and education programs at the outstations.**

The only placement possible for Brumby after DASA was at Barry Abbott's outstation, Ilpurla. Abbott has been looking after other people's kids since the 60s, and in June this year he was awarded the Ted Noff Award by the Prime Minister for his services to the community.

There are two other outstations dealing with inhalant abusers : Ipolera and Mt Theo. Mt Theo is well established, with sound administrative capacity but Ipolera is just starting and has only \$25k recurrent core funding. However, in the following I will focus on Ilpurla, the outstation that Brumby could have stayed at longer if the VSAP legislation had been in place, and which could have done more for him while he was there if it had better funding for this crucial work.

The previous NT coronial into petrol sniffing (E. Mueller) related to a death at Ilpurla outstation. That coronial made recommendations to enhance the service at Ilpurla and the other outstations providing care for inhalant abusers. Although funding bodies have attempted to get Barry to improve his operation and implement the recommendations, they have not provided the resources to do it.

Ilpurla receives \$160k annually from OATSIH, though the amount was \$120k till this year. From this amount, Barry has to pay for a service that provides 24 hour care for an average of ten people in a location hundreds of kilometres from Alice Springs. In reality, it means two salaries and some operational funding, which Barry distributes through his extended family who assist him in this work. Ilpurla has no administrative capacity to call on beyond the assistance which CAYLUS provides. After the coronial, the funding bodies felt they had to try to pressure Abbott into complying with the coroner's suggestions, for example the requirement that all staff have First Aid Certificates, and that all clients receive a full health check before going to the outstation. These are great ideas, but

without funding to support them, they are beyond the capacity of the service to provide.

Abbott does not take the pressure from the funding body too seriously, as he knows he is the only agency providing this crucial service in the region and it would be very unlikely he would be defunded. Especially with the impending VSAP legislation, this would be a serious blow to the NT's capacity to deal with the projected increase in numbers of petrol sniffers requiring treatment.

It should be noted that the NT has committed \$25k recurrent to Ilpurla for the next three years in support of the increased workload anticipated due to the VSAP legislation, which is nearly another half position and in no ways reflects the actual needs of the service.

So, without the resources to match the suggestions, the previous coronial accidentally created more humbug for the outstation, and pushed it one step closer to being driven out of the business, strangled by red tape.



**SECTION TWO**  
**Submission relating to the death of**  
**Kumanjayi Presley**  
**and Recommendations**

**Executive Summary**

On March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2004 Kumanjayi Presley, possibly a first time sniffer, died in a preventable incident.

On the day that Kumanjayi Presley passed away in Willowra many things that could have happened which would have prevented his sniffing episode did not occur.

For instance, a well functioning local council and governance structure would have been providing youth services. In the absence of strong local government, Territory and Federal governments committed to eliminating petrol sniffing could have ensured that youth services were present.

Undoubtedly people saw Kumanjayi sniffing prior to his death but were resigned to seeing young people sniff in the community and did not move to stop it. At the time of his death in Willowra, people lived without adequate housing, health services, food and shop services, sanitation services, policing, power, water and social security services and did not govern their own community. Under these circumstances it is unreasonable to expect that a community could have moved to stop petrol sniffing.

Essential services and adequate governance are related but independent issues. The authorities attitude at the time appears to have been that local people, through Willowra Council, had failed to provide these services therefore they should go without. This attitude is unacceptable and contributed to Presley's death.

**Petrol sniffing in Central Australia**

Over 40 sniffers have died from sniffing in Central Australia since 1998. Although there is currently no systematic regional data collection on prevalence of Volatile Substance Abuse in our region CAYLUS collects names of people who have been associated with sniffing as they cross our desks. We currently have approximately 400 names from the Northern Territory. There are approximately 700 sniffers in the cross border region of Central Australia.

## **Background to the death**

### **Introduction**

The majority of Warlpiri families who reside on Warlpiri Lands, NW of Alice Springs in Central Australia live in the communities of Yuendumu (pop. 1000), Lajamanu (pop.1000), Ali Curung (pop.500), Willowra (pop.320), Nyirripi (pop.315). Willowra is a largely Warlpiri Community, with some Anmatjerre people also living there. It is situated on the Lander River approximately 250kms north west of Alice Springs.

Many young people in Willowra have been sniffing petrol over the last 15 years. Over the last 10 years there have been continuous outbreaks of petrol sniffing in Willowra. It is generally held that Willowra youth were introduced to sniffing by visiting Pitjantjatjara and that it caught on because of boredom (3). To understand the context of this activity it is important to understand the recent history of Willowra community, particularly in relation to its governance and services.

### **Recent history of local government in Willowra**

Willowra is surrounded by sites of Massacres from the 1928 Coniston Massacre an event which is in living memory in the community. Willowra has a reputation as being one of the more traditionally oriented Warlpiri communities; it has a strong school and many strong families. It has a growing youth program. Willowra community managed one of the more successful Aboriginal owned cattle enterprises for many years.

The Lander Warlpiri/ Anmatjirra Land Claim to Willowra pastoral lease in 1980 paints a picture of a thriving community based near or on traditional land with intact traditional authority structures.

“The Willowra community is relatively free of the symptoms of social breakdown which are evident in certain other Aboriginal communities in Central Australia. The people of Willowra are recognised by other Warlpiri as being very conservative in their adherence to traditional beliefs and practices and as having a high degree of expertise in Ceremonial life.....The Willowra people have not suffered the effects of institutionalization seen so often in government settlements and missions. They want to make their own decisions about their lives and the lives of their children” (1)

However, Willowra community has been subject to inadequate service delivery and maladministration in numerous key organisations for close to 15 years. The period in which service delivery broke down is strongly associated with the introduction of “local government”, a system which is considered by many to have undermined the traditional structures which had maintained social harmony and good governance in the community until the mid 80’s.

This period of dysfunction has resulted in the recent abolition of the Willowra Community Government Council and the near ceasing of basic municipal service delivery from 1999 to date. We set out the process of disintegration in more detail in the following paragraphs

From 1987-2001 Willowra Community Government Council had over ten Town Clerks. Town clerks are the key administrative position in many Northern Territory remote Indigenous communities. Some are described as being good and some as bad. There is little doubt though that the Willowra Town Clerks had more demands upon them than they had a hope of meeting, were heavily burdened with assisting community members in dealing with urgent basic needs and by and large were under skilled, unequipped, and underpaid for the job. Day to day these Town Clerks have been accountable only to the elected council which was structurally dependent on the Town Clerk for its effectiveness.

“Today they play cunning tricks on us. They are cheaters that’s what they are. They cheat us. A few white people stole our money. They stole and hid our money and made themselves rich with it. They took off with all our money” (2)

In 1986 a key Willowra elder passed away. This person had been able to walk “two ways”, communicating effectively with government, with agencies and with employed workers from outside the community, but also having the clear respect and mandate of his community. He was a key part of a group of elders who mediated community disputes and kept grog out of the community.

From 1987- 2001 the Willowra Community Government Council ran poorly. By the late 90’s it was widely known that funding for essential services was not being used for its intended purpose. This was common knowledge in the community and in the region. In 2001 Willowra was stripped of its Community government status by the Minister on the recommendation of the then Office of Local Government. It was reported that the act was the result of the council in 1997/98 under the management of a previous Town Clerk diverting funds intended for housing development to purchase a restaurant in Alice Springs. The Town Clerk at the time (who had now left the community) was regarded as having a personal stake in the restaurant.

By the time the Willowra Community Government Council was stripped of its status it had already experienced several years of drip-fed funding from ATSIC and NT Government sources as a result of maladministration preceding 1998. This period from 1998- 2001 had already been characterized by the nearly nil service delivery from the Council. The previously successful Cattle Company had shut down, its profits were missing and the store was in crisis.

In Willowra, as in many remote communities today the Council only meets if the Town Clerk organizes the meeting, it will only have governance training if the town clerk brings it in and will only have proper recruitment processes and elections if the Town Clerk facilitates them. Willowra, like most NT local councils, was responsible for the delivery of a wide range of services these included:

- rubbish collection
- sewerage
- electricity
- water
- Maintenance of roads and airstrip
- Housing construction and maintenance
- Aged care
- Women's centre services
- Night patrol
- Sport and recreation
- Provision of social security (centrelink) services
- Organizing funerals
- Development of outstations
- Youth services
- Banking services
- Environmental health initiatives such e.g.: dust control to prevent trachoma
- Maintenance and development of television and radio retransmission facilities
- Liaison with government departments
- Adult education and training

When the Council stopped functioning and when it was defunded these services ceased, including at times both power and water.

“No maintenance and repairs were being conducted, live wires were hanging from the ceilings and walls and water often sewerage on the floor. Doors and windows were non-existent, houses couldn't be locked. There was no rubbish collection and rubbish piled up on the streets; we are talking years of unreliable essential services.” (5)

During the years of Council dysfunction prior to the withdrawal of services it was common knowledge amongst public servants, external agencies and amongst politicians that things were drastically wrong in Willowra. Stories of gun toting Town Clerks, mislaid funds and payola were common

“We had senior women from the community coming regularly into our office over two years to bring attention to the maladministration in Willowra. We took it to the funding bodies and local government authorities constantly, meetings were held and nothing changed in Willowra” (6)

Despite this, little was done to assist the people of Willowra in getting service delivery back on track.

“The problems in Willowra were seen as a community problem by funding bodies and local and federal government authorities. Despite the community seeking outside intervention and support from funding bodies none was forthcoming. When government agencies finally did act it was to blame the community and withdraw all services” (7)

In 2002 Yuendumu Community Government Council located in Yuendumu, a Warlpiri Community 130kms south west of Willowra, agreed to auspice some municipal and other funds for Willowra. From 2003 to date a series of Yuendumu council staff members have been based in Willowra. This is a situation that nearly everybody expresses discontent with. In May 2005 the Yuendumu Town Clerk, several weeks prior to leaving the Yuendumu community, sacked the Yuendumu Council and declared that the body was trading insolvent. The sacking was based on constitutional provision that individual members having missed a number of recurrent meetings were no longer able to sit on council. As a result, the minimal funds which were available for Willowra under Yuendumu’s auspices have become even less accessible through this process.

To date people in Willowra still have no formal mechanism through which they can have input into the running of their community. Essential and municipal services are still not present in any reliable form in Willowra, there are still stagnant pools of water around town from broken down plumbing and housing in the community is still substandard. It is within this context that petrol sniffing, alcohol, marijuana use and police issues in Willowra must be understood, and that the death of Kumanjayi is directly related to the state of his community must also be clearly understood.

“Over the last few years petrol sniffing has become an area of major concern to the community. Although it is a minority of youth who sniff, the fact that any one sniffs at all is regarded as problematic. Willowra adults recall earlier days when the community was cohesive and positive, petrol sniffing was non-existent and other forms of substance misuse relatively non-problematic. ... Boredom is perceived to be a result of a lack of facilities and activities/opportunities for youth at Willowra.

The community morale is extremely low as a result of lack of administrative autonomy, resources, and maintenance of aboriginal housing and apart from the school and clinic the general lack of functional community facilities.” (8)

Under the current circumstances in Willowra, is not reasonable to expect that the events leading up to Kumanjaji's death would be any different if they happened today and we address this topic further in this submission.

## **Petrol Sniffing, Alcohol and Marijuana use in Willowra**

### **Petrol sniffing**

Over the last 10 years there have been continuous outbreaks of petrol sniffing in Willowra. It is generally held that Willowra youth were introduced to sniffing by visiting Pitjantjatjara and that it caught on because of boredom (3). Over the last year 6 months the youth program has identified 19 individuals who sniff at some level.

Also relevant as background is the situation with sniffing on the Warlpiri Lands as a whole. As mentioned above, roughly the majority of Warlpiri families live in the communities of Yuendumu, Willowra, Nyirripi, Lajamanu and Ali Curung.

At the time of writing Ali Curung, Yuendumu, and Lajamanu all occasionally have some form of an outbreak but are able to contain it. In Ali Curung and Lajamanu this is largely through a zero tolerance approach. Roughly “zero tolerance” means that visitors who sniff have to leave and the community simply does not accept sniffing, it is not considered acceptable and families and organisations have acted successfully to date to stop outbreaks.

In Yuendumu it is through the community acting through its Mt Theo Yuendumu Substance Misuse Aboriginal Corporation (‘MYSMAC’ but usually referred to as ‘Mt Theo Program’). The Mt Theo Program is clearly the most successful petrol sniffing prevention program in remote Australia. Mt Theo staff emphasise that they use a whole community approach though, which includes the council, church, police and other organisations. Nyirripi, at the time of writing, has had recent outbreaks of up to 9 local youth sniffing, this follows years of successful zero tolerance.

Willowra, being a Warlpiri community, has been able access limited services from Mt Theo Program. Over the years sniffers from Willowra have been taken to Mt Theo Outstation, a remote outstation, to dry out before being returned to the community. In more recent years Mt Theo organised for some sniffers to reside in Yuendumu as a non-sniffing community after their time at Mt Theo.

At times Willowra's use of the Mt Theo program has been troubled due to families in Willowra concern at handing care for their children over to a program operated by distant family largely in another community. At times families in Willowra became worried about their children being away and went and collected their children from the outstation prior to their completion of the program. The Mt Theo program however is well regarded in Willowra as it is in many communities.

From 1998 to date the Willowra School has arguably been the most functional organisation in the community. During this time the school maintained one of the strongest Two-way learning programs in the region, retained staff comparatively well and maintained strong community participation and direction of the school through the school council. For a number of years it provided the single consistent youth recreational activity, a band room which was open at nights when equipment was available.

In November 2003 Willowra School Council (by then the only functioning governance structure in Willowra) asked CAYLUS to assist it implementing a program to address petrol sniffing and other young peoples' issues in the community. CAYLUS worked with Willowra school, Mt Theo and Yuendumu Council over the next year to source funding and develop a program. This program is now running, funding has been directed through the Mt Theo program. The program has met with some success and is described in detail in Attachment 1.

### **Alcohol use**

Nugget Coombs describes management of grog at Willowra in his 1993 discussion paper as follows

“Antagonism to grog is almost universal in the community and is strongly felt and expressed. Those of the community who offend may be, and usually are, forgiven, but if the offence is repeated the offender is likely to be summoned before a special community meeting where he or she is shamed and reminded that:

This is not a settlement, we are on Warlpiri land and we respect and live by the law.

An Aboriginal youth who returned to Willowra carrying a party of drunken youths and supplies of grog, found a welcoming party waiting at the entrance and had his tires destroyed beyond redemption.” (4)

During the years that Willowra was unfunded a good deal of the community relocated to live elsewhere. In particular a number of young people moved to Alice Springs and engaged in regular alcohol abuse. In the community, conflict between families escalated as quality of life for the whole community decreased. The nearest police are at Yuendumu 130kms and Ti Tree 120kms and no Night Patrol operated, so alcohol freely entered the community and abuse by young people in the community grew. Families and agencies in the community increasingly have had to deal with harmful effects of alcohol abuse by young people including several recent road accidents, domestic violence and various forms of assault.

### **Marijuana use**

Marijuana is a widely acknowledged as significant problem in the community. It is strongly associated with depression and suicide in remote Central Australia. Use of Marijuana in Willowra like most Central Australian remote communities is on the rise.

However, marijuana and alcohol are less available than petrol which is free in every car.

### **Services in Willowra**

Young people in Central Australia sniff petrol because it is the best thing on offer. They sniff because their friends do, because their family is drinking or dead, because petrol is readily available, because they are hungry and they sniff to get away from pain.

Undoubtedly people saw Kumanjaya sniffing prior to his death but were resigned to seeing young people sniff in the community and did not move to stop it. At the time of this death in Willowra people lived without adequate housing, health services, food and shop services, sanitation services, policing, power and water and social security services and did not govern their own community. Under these circumstances it is unreasonable to expect that the community could have moved to stop petrol sniffing.

On the day that Kumanjaya Presley passed away in Willowra many things that could have happened which would have prevented his sniffing episode did not occur. A well functioning local council and governance structure would have been providing youth services. In the absence of this, Territory and Federal Governments committed to eliminating petrol sniffing would have ensured that youth and other services were present. But little was done to assist the people of Willowra in getting service delivery back on track.



Essential services and adequate governance are related but independent issues. The authorities attitude at the time appears to have been that local people through Willowra Council had failed to provide these services therefore they should go without. This attitude is unacceptable and contributed to Kumanjayi Presley's death.

Local government authorities should have done more to ensure that the people of Willowra received delivery of essential services including a youth program. The freeze of essential services and the lack of provision of appropriate governance and accountability to the community of Willowra was a major contributing factor to the breakdown of traditional structures in Willowra. Until the late 80's these structures kept Willowra community largely free of the substance abuse epidemic which has overtaken much of remote Central Australia.

CAYLUS works with 20 remote communities in Central Australia on petrol sniffing and in our experience there is a strong correlation between quality administration and governance and a community's ability to deal with petrol sniffing. Much of the work of CAYLUS has been about assisting councils and other community operated bodies in meeting paperwork requirements and in recruiting staff and facilitating meetings in order to get youth programs off the ground.

To date people in Willowra still have no formal mechanism through which they can have input into the running of their community. As described above, essential and municipal services are still not present in any reliable form in Willowra. Any assumption that Willowra community lacks capacity to self govern strongly contradicted by the success of the school which has maintained a strong level of community direction and involvement and is one of the more successful schools in Central Australia. The new Youth program (set up with the assistance of CAYLUS) has a reference group that is broadly representative of the community and other stakeholders, this has worked well.

### ***Recommendation 3 – Self governance for Willowra***

**That self governance is a basic human right is recognised. That the Northern Territory Government meaningfully engage with local agencies and community members in Willowra to develop and support a governing body for Willowra.**

An external agency should be adequately resourced through Local Government funds to work with Yuendumu council and staff, CDSCA and Willowra community members to develop a formal mechanism through which Willowra community members can have input into the management of affairs at Willowra. The support of the external agency should be long term and should include governance training and support.

#### ***Recommendation 4 – Essential services delivery for Willowra***

**That essential service delivery reliably resumes to Willowra. This should be adequately funded through Local Government the ICC and other relevant agencies.**

Adequate funding should include additional investment in the administrative capacity of Yuendumu council, so that dedicated Willowra workers with decision making ability, preferably based at Willowra are working full time developing service delivery to Willowra. Staged independent evaluations of service delivery are funded and that if services do not improve within 6 months, alternate funding arrangements are made to replace the current auspice arrangements with a functioning system.

#### ***Recommendation 5 – Role of NT Ombudsman***

**That the role of the NT Ombudsman in relation to local government is adequately funded, developed and promoted.**

The ombudsman has power to act in relation to provision of adequate governance and essential services, however it would appear that this aspect of their role is only minimally resourced and rarely used. The role of the ombudsman in relation to local government should be actively promoted amongst remote communities in relevant indigenous languages. In particular use should be made of Aboriginal Media Associations such as Warlpiri Media who cover Willowra.

#### ***Recommendation 6 - Recruitment of Town Clerks***

**That it become local government policy that best practice is followed in the recruitment of senior administrative workers (town clerks) to communities.**

This best practice should include reference checking and police checking and include independent scrutiny of process in relation to all appointments. LGANT currently assist in some recruitment processes and by all accounts do very well. However we do not consider them adequately independent to be the third scrutinizing party. A number of town clerks involved in mismanagement of Willowra reportedly had police records and poor work histories. They arguably would not have been appointed by a proper process.

## **Role of Youth Services**

The Mt Theo Yuendumu Substance Misuse Aboriginal Corporation is widely recognised as having stopped petrol sniffing in Yuendumu. Mt Theo itself is a remote outstation 170kms north west of Yuendumu where a few Warlpiri families have looked after petrol sniffers and kids in trouble for a number of years. Kids who sniff in Yuendumu (and less systematically Willowra, Nyirripi and Lajamanu) are forced to go and stay at Mt Theo, where there is no petrol and they receive care, counseling and support. Kids then go back to community and if they sniff again are returned to Mt Theo.

Mt Theo is rehabilitation but importantly it is also a deterrent/ punishment mechanism. The Mount Theo program has been able, over its 12 years, to systematically improve youth services by providing activities such as discos, pool tables, art and cultural programs within Yuendumu and, in addition, provide aftercare to clients returning to the community from the Mt Theo Outstation. This model of using deterrents as well as providing positive alternatives to sniffing is sometimes called the carrot and stick approach. For many years and at the time of Kumanjayi Presley's death Willowra's carrots were missing. The carrots now in place through the new Willowra youth program are young and without proper resourcing and support, may only be temporary.

Although it is often not recognized, youth services are an essential service in remote communities. It is a national shame that despite a youth suicide and substance abuse epidemic in Central Australia a majority of communities still do not have even the most basic youth program. Where there are youth programs they are under-resourced, poorly coordinated and subject to the vagaries of local councils, uninformed bureaucracy and unreliable funding.

CAYLUS, Willowra School, The Mt Theo Program, Yuendumu Council and NT Family and Community Services ('FACS') have worked together to develop a youth program in Willowra. The program centres around a youth worker and a group of unpaid young people and community members who are developing and conducting activities for young people in Willowra. The program has a reference group made up largely of local people with a range of organisations local and external also sitting on the group. Unsurprisingly given the strong skills and commitment of local families the program is working well. The reference group model however diversifies the programs interests and ensures that no one organisation or individual can misdirect the program.

There are a number of factors which could lead to the program ceasing at any point. The program is highly dependent on skilled staff. Currently Alison Gillies is the sole employee of the program. She is a particularly skilled and committed worker, she has her own housing in the community as her partner manages Willowra clinic. A group of highly committed community members support her and contribute to the program, this is in part because she has facilitated and supported that.

Alison works long hours, late at night sometimes with substance-affected people in potentially dangerous situations. She is under constant demand as there is constant need. Under these circumstances a likely scenario is that Alison works until she can work no more, and leaves the community at short notice, after suffering the recognized condition of “burn out”.

There is no dedicated housing in Willowra for the youth worker position so it cannot be recruited based on merit, instead it will be recruited based on who is already living in the community, if it is recruited at all. If a new recruit is found, it is unlikely that any handover happens so most of the work goes back to square one. In the likely gap between Alison’s hypothetical departure and the commencement of her replacement there has been a long gap in service delivery and the local people involved in the program will fall away.

CAYLUS works to support communities similar to Willowra across the region. In particular we work with communities who have petrol sniffing problems. ‘Youth program’ is a broad term but it refers to having paid staff living in communities who work with families, local organisations and external agencies to identify ways to improve things for young people and then to take action. This action is often in the form of provision of recreational options such as discos, sports and music. In other cases it is provision of training and employment opportunities, health information and advocacy. A number of successful youth programs are actively working with young people to involve them in broader governance and direction of the community.

At the time of writing there are a number of successful local programs in Northern Territory communities but only one, Mt Theo Program, which is separately incorporated and could be said to have a solid future. While many excellent youth programs are happening, they are all subject to a range of factors, which could mean they are extremely vulnerable and could cease at any time. These factors include:

- high turnover of staff
- ability to recruit appropriate staff
- housing
- orientation and support of new workers
- continuity of funding
- workforce development
- systematic training and recruitment of indigenous workers.

Recently the Southern NT Region Juvenile Diversionary Unit program based in Yulara and servicing 3 communities ran out of money and a 2 year old youth initiative ceased operation. Key workers were given minimal notice that the program was to cease. The same NT funding agency's program based in Papunya seems to be near to a similar end. The combined programs will have cost over \$1 million, when they end it is hard to say whether any of the work they were doing will continue. The factors involved in the failure of this major project are all of the above.

As mentioned above youth services should not be seen as optional extras in remote Aboriginal communities, they are essential and should be delivered well. To those ends it is worth looking at other essential service delivery models to see how things could be improved.

One which CAYLUS has learnt from is the Remote Health Workforce Development Strategy. There are a number of things that could be done in our region based on this model that would improve youth service delivery. These could include:

- centralised coordination and support for recruitment processes
- building links with university social work youth work anthropology and other related programs to coordinate and resource placement of short and long term volunteers in remote communities
- organising professional development activities, staff supports such as relief workers, mentoring programs and a crisis line for youth workers in remote communities
- remote supervision and management of workers where local agencies do not have the capacity.

At CAYLUS we attempt to provide these types of service in addition to our ongoing work. The Commonwealth Government has been clear, however, in saying that they do not want to continue funding CAYLUS beyond its current three year life. We believe the best way to continue and to develop this type of service would be in the creation of a centralised service based at Aboriginal organization such as Tangentyere Council, NPY Women's Council, Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi or similar organisations.

As there is almost no secondary school curricula or resources in remote communities there are a very large number of young people with nothing to do all day. Children drop out of school very early, particularly after initiation. A time of high risk for substance abuse, self harm and suicide in remote communities is during school holidays. Remote community schools rarely provide or promote holiday activities for their students. In Central Australia, the long holidays include mid year, one month, and over Christmas more than 6 weeks.

During Christmas in particular, food is often short, days can be hot and very boring and services are few. Over Christmas in many communities it is also characterized by ceremonial business which can tie up many the key family resources. In this context in many communities additional resources are required in order to ensure in the absence of school some good activities happen for young people. CAYLUS has provided external assistance in doing this to communities in our region. Our work has been limited by lack of funds.

Over a number of years, prior to the death of Kumanjayi Presley, the Yuendumu council workers in Willowra attempted to secure NT Sport and Recreation funding. Like many communities, however they found the process to cumbersome, without enough likely benefits. Current NT Sport and Recreation funds are minimal, they are hard to apply for, difficult to achieve grant success, and tied to inappropriate outcomes. CAYLUS and numerous other agencies have attempted to engage with various Ministers and the Department over this with little result or improvement.

### ***Recommendation 7 – Provision of youth services and infrastructure***

**That the NT and Australian Federal Governments recognise youth services such as recreation, leadership and community development programs are essential services and commit to a timeframe by which at least one territory funded youth worker position will be available in every remote community. That this roll out off youth services is complimented by a roll out of relevant infrastructure, i.e. housing and youth centres.**

### ***Recommendation 8 – Regional coordinating body for youth services***

**That this provision of youth services is supported by a regional coordinating body. Where there is not local capacity to deliver and manage a program that an outside service agency facilitates the program.**

### ***Recommendation 9 – Youth workforce development service***

**That 3 year funding is provided for a Central Australian youth workforce development service.**

Startup funding could be minimal with a position based in an existing regional youth program and a brokerage to support initiatives.

### ***Recommendation 10 – Review of NT Sport and Recreation***

**That an independent review of the NT Office of Sport and Recreation and its programs is conducted involving Central Australian stakeholders including remote communities and regional agencies.**

The review should recommend methods by which Sport and Recreation funds and initiatives can be better used regionally and better and more easily accessed by communities that need them.

### ***Recommendation 11 – Youth services in Willowra***

**11 (a) That Commonwealth agencies such as OATSIH, and NT Government agencies including FACS, NT Sport and Recreation, Alcohol and Other Drugs, DBIRD and CDSCA work together with the youth program reference group to allocate additional operational funds to the Willowra youth program through the auspices of the Mt Theo Program.**

Operational funds should be sufficient to recruit and employ at least one more experienced youth worker and a pool of local casual workers.

**11 (b) That Commonwealth agencies such as OATSIH, and NT Government agencies including FACS, NT Sport and Recreation, Alcohol and Other Drugs, DBIRD and CDSCA work together with the youth program reference group to allocate funds to erect dedicated duplex youth program housing in Willowra in order that 2 positions can be permanently housed.**

As the attached youth program report (Attachment 1) indicates, employment and business creation is a key aim of the program making it an ideal program for DBIRD and CDSCA to meaningfully engage with.

**11 (c) That the NT Government prioritise the Willowra Youth Program for a quality troop carrier vehicle under the NT government gifting scheme.**

If the car cannot be gifted by Dec 05 that the car is direct funded through NT Sport and Recreation or other funds.

## **Petrol, AvGas and Opal issues**

### **Availability of petrol**

A large part of CAYLUS work in the Central Australian region has been in supporting communities to implement the use of non-sniffable fuels. These fuels have included Av Gas and Opal. These fuels are subsidized to achieve price parity with sniffable fuels through a commonwealth government excise refund scheme. The scheme is currently under resourced, meaning that remote communities with current sniffing problems are on a waiting list. They are unlikely to be added to the scheme in the next few years and thereby are unable to use non-sniffable fuel. The current subsidy scheme also will not support regional centres and roadhouses in using non-sniffable fuel.

Although not a stand-alone solution to petrol sniffing, use of non-sniffable fuels has had very positive results in a number of communities. The most pronounced of these in our region has been Areyonga a community that was not a part of the Commonwealth Subsidy Scheme for Av Gas, but subsidized its own use of the fuel, with a drop in numbers of known sniffers from 15 to 2-5 consistently since the introduction of the fuel in 2003.

The commonwealth funded Comgas evaluation also found positive results:

“Avgas was found to be safe, effective and popular in reducing petrol sniffing....

Av Gas is effective in reducing levels of petrol sniffing in a range of situations defined in terms of

- Distance to the nearest outlet for unleaded petrol
- Length of time Avgas has been used; and
- Types of other interventions for reducing petrol sniffing

While these factors do impact on the degree to which Avgas is effective this study has shown that it has some positive impact in every situation”. (9)

Use of non-sniffable fuels has led to a situation where Petrol is now trafficked to remote communities and sold to and exchanged with sniffers, however it has still dramatically impacted on the availability of sniffable petrol. Instead of petrol being readily available at any time and in nearly every car, supply for sniffers is sporadic particularly to the more remote communities. In CAYLUS experience there has been a marked decrease in availability of petrol to very young kids as they have less access to money and can not participate as readily in the black market.



In the NT since 1985 there has also been legislation under the Misuse of Drugs Act, which prohibits this supply of fuel, and we have had some success in promoting dobbing in and prosecution of dealers. Kintore community particularly has used this legislation actively as some of the only legislation currently available in relation to petrol sniffing. (see NT VSAP legislation in a later section).

In another part of the West MacDonnells, Papunya a community which also uses Av Gas, the supply issues are greater. Papunya is 40 kilometers away from Ikuntji a community which uses sniffable unleaded fuel and approximately 100 kilometres from Tilmouth Well Roadhouse another source of petrol. Papunya is also relatively close to Alice Springs. There is reported to be a number of active dealers in Papunya and many cars a go to and from Ikuntji and Alice Springs every day. As a result the impact of non sniffable fuels is far less evident in Papunya. In addition, a number of chronic sniffers from Kintore and Mt Liebig (Av Gas/Opal communities) who have moved to Papunya because of its ready fuel sources. There are recent stories from Ikuntji of groups of sniffers from Papunya raiding the community in search of sniffable fuel.

### **Availability of Av Gas and Opal**

Av Gas was not always a popular intervention as the fuel damaged engines. The damage to vehicles was minor but permanent. Many communities with sniffing problems chose not to use the fuel. In Ntaria, (Hermannsburg) for instance, it was considered that the fuel would impact on the profits made from supplying petrol to tourists coming through the community. In 2005 however the formula of Av Gas is being changed to reduce harmful engine emissions. This will increase hydrocarbon levels and make the fuel sniffable. So the use of AvGas will not longer be a preventative measure for remote communities.

In the response to this the Federal Government, BP and the Petroleum Manufacturers Association have developed a new non-sniffable fuel Opal. The new fuel may be used universally in the region as it does not damage cars. Opal offers an enormous potential for a serious reduction in petrol sniffing right across the cross border Central Australian region. However this potential is not able to be utilized due to current limitations on the rebate scheme.

Both Av Gas and Opal cost more due to manufacturing and government excise, this means that in order to make them available to the consumer at the pump at price parity with unleaded petrol the Commonwealth Government has had to provide an excise refund system. This system is managed at the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and is known as the Comgas Scheme. The Commonwealth Government Dept of Health and Ageing Comgas Evaluation found that the bigger a petrol free area the greater impact of non-sniffable fuels on sniffing, levels of mortality and fitting.

The use of non-sniffable fuel in Willowra and other communities would reduce the likelihood of such deaths happening again. Willowra has applied to use Opal, as have many neighboring communities and Alice Springs Town Council. But Willowra is unlikely to be granted access to the fuel which would cost approximately \$36,000 per annum (12). The Commonwealth Government has indicated it is unwilling to allocate sufficient funds to the scheme to encompass all of the communities which want to join and the adjacent non-community fuel outlets such as roadhouses. The Government has only committed to minor extension of the old Comgas program which will not include all of the other communities that would like to use the new fuel.

At a recent community meeting in Willowra and later on the ABC TV 7.30 report the Yuendumu council appointee in Willowra, John Bennett, stated that it was such a priority in the community that the community would subsidise the fuel out of store profits. This is a major commitment given that at the time of writing the store is reported to be recovering from being left \$190, 000 in debt by previous managers.

Universal roll out of Opal Fuel across the Central deserts region is a practical but not final solution to inhalant abuse in Central Australia. It does not address the causes of inhalant abuse, but if non-sniffable fuel is less available it will create a window of opportunity in which the root causes can be addressed.

Every year that passes sees a larger number of the youth of the Indigenous communities in the region suffering brain damage. Without serious changes to the environments in which the Indigenous communities live, there will be 700 dead or permanently brain damaged sniffers within the next decade, and another generation taking up sniffing in their shadow.

***Recommendation 12 – Roll out of Opal fuel***

**12 (a) That the Commonwealth Government subsidise the comprehensive regional roll out of Opal fuel in the Central Australian Cross Border region.**

**12 (b) That the NT Government ensure the implementation of the proposed Opal package, being the replacement of sniffable fuel in the region with Opal fuel in the area from just north of Coober Pedy to just west of Mt Isa, to just south of Tennant Creek to Laverton - a geographic area that contains the largest cluster of sniffers in Australia.**

**12 (c) Where there are feasibility and supply issues that the Federal Government meaningfully engages with State and Territory governments, community organisations and corporate stakeholders in order to resolve these issues.**

## **Policing issues**

Policing in Willowra comes from Ti Tree approximately 120kms away. As in many remote communities response to flashpoint situations can be days away. There is little in the way of routine patrolling. One community member described visits as unproductive.

“Something major happens and the police are called, half a day later they arrive and drive around for five minutes and then head back.” (13)

This experience is unsurprising given the size and nature of the region the Ti Tree police are expected to service 9 communities across 45,000 sq km, with only two officers. The police on have reportedly been instructed that safety on the Stuart Highway is their priority. It is not reasonable to expect that programs move forward and that social outcomes are improved in Willowra unless based on a foundation of law and order, and available policing services.

Recent experience reported by Mt Theo and Willowra youth program staff is that Ti Tree police are not as experienced as Yuendumu police in working with the Mt Theo program to take sniffers from the community to the outstation. This police support is essential in dealing with chronic and violent sniffers in Willowra and police must be trained to deal with such situations and to support youth workers.

### ***Recommendation 13 – Police training and support***

**13 (a) That Ti Tree police routinely patrol Willowra community.**

**13 (b) That Ti Tree police collaborate with the school clinic and youth program in pursuit of health and social outcomes.**

**13 (c) That a police post be committed to Willowra community.**

This could be stationed at Ti Tree where a station is in place or supported by additional resources at Willowra. The other outcomes should not be dependent on this happening.

**13 (d) That peer support/training is conducted between Yuendumu and Ti Tree Police.**

That on several occasions Yuendumu police support Ti Tree police in working with Mt Theo and sniffers in Willowra in order to pass on skills and info that will assist the Ti Tree Police in developing this role

## **NT Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act**

This legislation is the first of its kind in Australia. The Act and its proposed Regulations empowers police and communities to take legally supported steps to deal with petrol sniffing. The legislation is a major step and could support communities in declaring legally enforceable sniffable-fuel free areas, forcing sniffers into treatment and taking petrol and other sniffable substances away from sniffers.

The legislation is backed up by some significant resource commitments, but further resources will be required in order to provide people with treatment and assistance in getting to treatment programs.

The legislation should also be externally evaluated after it has been implemented for some time, say one year. Critical lessons will be learned in early experiences and it is important that resources be directed in the most effective way. External evaluation will also maximize the body of research available to other governments and all communities in taking action against petrol sniffing.

### ***Recommendation 14 – Legislation implementation review***

**That an external evaluation of the implementation and operation of the NT Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Bill and attached program is conducted and that findings are made public.**

## SECTION THREE

### Summary of CAYLUS Recommendations

#### ***Recommendation 1 – Application of royalties to community development***

**That the NT Government enter into negotiations with the CLC regarding a financial partnership in relation to the prompt provision of improved youth services and substance abuse programs in the remote Indigenous communities of the South West region of the NT.**

#### ***Recommendation 2 – Support for Ilpurla and other Outstations***

**That the NT Government provide support for Ilpurla and the other two inhalant oriented outstation programs (Ipolera and Mt Theo) in the form of targeted resources that would allow for the services to develop in the ways suggested by the last coronial. This would include :**

- **a dramatic increase in funding for operational positions to work with the clients – a minimum of ten positions in each service would be more realistic;**
- **provision for administrative services, which would increase accountability and thus provide justification for further resources;**
- **funding for professional caseworkers who would undertake referral and after-care placement support and monitoring;**
- **funding for training and education programs at the outstations.**

#### ***Recommendation 3 – Self governance for Willowra***

**That self governance is a basic human right is recognised. That the Northern Territory Government meaningfully engage with local agencies and community members in Willowra to develop and support a governing body for Willowra.**

An external agency should be adequately resourced through Local Government funds to work with Yuendumu council and staff, CDSCA and Willowra community members to develop a formal mechanism through which Willowra community members can have input into the management of affairs at Willowra. The support of the external agency should be long term and should include governance training and support.

#### ***Recommendation 4 – Essential services delivery for Willowra***

**That essential service delivery reliably resumes to Willowra. This should be adequately funded through Local Government the ICC and other relevant agencies.**

Adequate funding should include additional investment in the administrative capacity of Yuendumu council, so that dedicated Willowra workers with decision making ability, preferably based at Willowra are working full time developing service delivery to Willowra. Staged independent evaluations of service delivery are funded and that if services do not improve within 6 months, alternate funding arrangements are made to replace the current auspice arrangements with a functioning system.

#### ***Recommendation 5 – Role of NT Ombudsman***

**That the role of the NT Ombudsman in relation to local government is adequately funded, developed and promoted.**

The ombudsman has power to act in relation to provision of adequate governance and essential services, however it would appear that this aspect of their role is only minimally resourced and rarely used. The role of the ombudsman in relation to local government should be actively promoted amongst remote communities in relevant indigenous languages. In particular use should be made of Aboriginal Media Associations such as Warlpiri Media who cover Willowra.

#### ***Recommendation 6 - Recruitment of Town Clerks***

**That it become local government policy that best practice is followed in the recruitment of senior administrative workers (town clerks) to communities.**

This best practice should include reference checking and police checking and include independent scrutiny of process in relation to all appointments. LGANT currently assist in some recruitment processes and by all accounts do very well. However we do not consider them adequately independent to be the third scrutinizing party. A number of town clerks involved in mismanagement of Willowra reportedly had police records and poor work histories. They arguably would not have been appointed by a proper process.

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### **References**

- (1) The Lander / Warlpiri Anmatjirra Land Claim to Willowra Pastoral Lease J and P Wafer April 1980
- (2) Molly Nungarrayi- Warlpiri Womens Voices IAD press 1995
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- (9) An Evaluation of the Comgas Scheme, Australian Govt Dept of Health and Ageing 2004
- (10) Northern Territory Police Fire and Emergency Services SCDOC 2004/3327 Internal memorandum From Constable Damian Shaw undated
- (11) Letter from Andrew Stojanovski Manager of the Mt Theo Yuendumu Substance Misuse Aboriginal Corporation entitled Information for the Ti Tree Police in Regards to Mt Theo Program-prepared in the context of an enquiry into the death of Naptom (sic) Presley 23/3/04 dated 21/4/04
- (12) Based on supply of 110,000 litres (Willowra unleaded consumption between Nov 03 and Nov 04) at the current subsidy rate of \$.33 per litre
- (13) Personal communication from unnamed community member Willowra Community 28/6/05

## Review of Petrol Sniffing prevention programs in the Northern territory

### Executive summary

The Central Australian Youth Link Up Service (CAYLUS) was awarded funding in September 2001. The intention was to provide a service addressing petrol sniffing and young people's needs to twelve target communities in the Central Australian region. The program was auspiced by Tangentyere Council, however there was a great deal of difficulty in negotiating a governance and management structure that was acceptable to all stakeholders. These difficulties caused significant delays, and a Coordinator for the program was appointed in November 2002.

Since that time CAYLUS has developed into a program that has undertaken a regional approach to addressing petrol sniffing and youth related issues. It offers a range of community development, advocacy and direct service provision to individuals, communities and small treatment services in the Central Australian region. The emphasis within this work has been on community development through operating a brokerage fund which disperses funds to target communities. Considerable funds have also been raised via submissions to other funding sources.

The CAYLUS program received strong endorsement from the stakeholder interviews conducted for this evaluation. The CAYLUS program has also demonstrated evidence of achievement against their objectives through documentation of the number of programs they had facilitated in target communities, the total funds accessed for target communities, the number of individuals they had assisted through casework, and the diversity of petrol sniffing and youth related issues in which they have become involved as advocates for the region..

### Issues

In conducting this evaluation across three sites it has become clear that there are several issues that are of relevance to more than just the individual program. The first of these is the efficacy of a regional approach to addressing petrol sniffing. Two of the three programs had a regional approach. The CAYLUS program developed an approach characterised by an emphasis on community development and advocacy. They distributed over 50% of their resources to projects under community control. They have also developed a diagnosis of the weaknesses of the regional system, and have addressed their advocacy work to ameliorate these. The DSDS program used an alternative approach through which they used their resources in employing youth workers to work in target communities. This approach has not been associated with the same level of achievement of outcomes. However both approaches demonstrate that a regional approach to petrol sniffing can deliver benefits to target communities.

A regional approach must address the issue of competing needs for direct service provision, community development and advocacy. The experiences of the DSDS and CAYLUS programs suggest that most benefit is gained from an emphasis on community development and advocacy functions. However both programs experienced difficulty in containing the pressure from stakeholders to engage in extensive direct service provision to communities (for example casework or the provision of school holiday programs).

## Background

- Prime Minister's announcement
- Department of Health and Ageing calls for submissions
- Criteria specified for programs to be eligible
- Selection of successful applicants
- Description of each program at time of selection (brief)
- Appointment of evaluators

## Evaluation

### **Terms of reference (outline only)**

### **Methodology**

#### **Framework for comparative analysis**

### **Limitations**

#### **Time**

#### **Absence of baseline data**

### **Structure of report**

History of implementation of the programs

### **Overview of structure of this chapter**

## **CAYLUS**

### **Context**

*Petrol sniffing in Central Australian communities.*

Central Australia is characterised by a large number of small remote communities that surround Alice Springs most of which have experienced episodic petrol sniffing since the mid 1970's. Since approximately 1997 there has been a marked increase in sniffing, and it would appear to have become endemic in many communities. The Central Australian region has experienced 16 deaths due to petrol sniffing from the years 1998 – 2003 . This is the highest mortality rate of any region in Australia (Biven et al, 2004).

Current estimates of the number of young people sniffing petrol in this region are between 200 – 300 individuals. This estimate was formulated by CAYLUS staff. The

methodology used to formulate this estimate was to ring each community Council and ask how many people were sniffing petrol in the community at that time. There is no other source of evidence from which to triangulate these assessments, these numbers represent the most accurate count currently available. ,

#### *Relevant infrastructure in Central Australian communities*

Most communities in this region are administered by a local Council who have responsibility for housing, essential services and a variety of other programs. The Council Clerks vary widely in capacity to attract and acquit funds with which to expand the basic functions of the Council to address needs such as Sport and Recreation and Youth Services. Furthermore the rate of turnover in these jobs tends to be high, which means services in communities are often in a state of flux.

Within this environment many communities have tried a variety of strategies designed to reduce their number of petrol sniffers. These local programs tend to be short lived. It is very difficult for them to access recurrent funding, and they therefore finish at the end of the funding period. Alternatively they experience problems with recruiting staff who are able to do the job required.

The other community context in which CAYLUS operates is Alice Springs. Alice Springs functions as a gathering point for young people from the Central Australian region. There are sporadic outbreaks of sniffing – though this is generally not petrol sniffing, but other volatile substances such as paint. CAYLUS is the only organisation specifically set up to deal with sniffing related issues. It therefore receives a lot of pressure from other youth service organisations to address the sniffing issues of Alice Springs. Staff report that these calls for help can take a lot of time, making the demands of remote communities and Alice Springs hard to balance.

#### *Prior history of interventions into petrol sniffing in the Central Australian region.*

The Central Australian region has a history of regionally based interventions into petrol sniffing. The Healthy Alternative Lifestyle Team developed a methodology through which they offered casework to families in remote areas. Petrol Link Up developed an approach of offering to support communities implement their chosen petrol sniffing strategy.

The model through which CAYLUS has operated could be seen to be a development and combination of both these approaches. They offer casework – albeit not through the same model as HALT, and they offer community development and capacity building in a similar way to that used by Petrol Link Up

#### *This evaluation.*

The fieldwork for this evaluation was conducted over a week in late March. The evaluator visited five communities in which CAYLUS has been active- Papunya, Mt Liebig, Areyonga, Hermannsberg and Alice Springs. Over thirty interviews were conducted with stakeholders from schools, clinics, Councils, related youth programs,

community members and individuals with expertise (Anne Mosey, Bob Durnan and Nick Gill).

## **Implementation**

### *Establishment Phase*

The establishment phase of this program was long and difficult. It is covered in some detail here so that the challenges of establishing a program with such a broad group of stakeholders can be appreciated.

The proposal to run the CAYLUS program was of interest to many organisations in Alice Springs. A Consortium of stakeholders was developed to be the body to have oversight of the program. DOHA File Note 14.9.2001 details membership. This Consortium was responsible for the design of a program that would achieve the objectives set out in the Funding Agreement. It was also intended that the Consortium decide on the management of the program. This was a cause of considerable tension between stakeholders. DOHA Filenote 2001.11.28 documents the concerns of some stakeholders that the auspice arrangement with Tangentyere Council should not include line management of the program; whereas Tangentyere Council insisted that because they had responsibility for accountability for the program, they could not reasonably undertake this without also having responsibility for line management (DOHA filenote 2001.11.28)

The initial design set out in the Funding Agreement between DOHA and Tangentyere Council was to create five regions from the five distinct cultural and language groups in the area (DOHA 2002.02.18 (Agreement Final).doc). Each of these regions was to create a Youth Committee with representation from each community. Each region would then employ a part-time Project Officer. These Project Officers would be supported by a Coordinator who would be based in Alice Springs. To achieve this program design the budget was divided to allow approximately half of the funds to go to the host communities (\$20,000 per community in the region), and half for wages and other expenses associated with the Coordinator and operational costs for the organisation.

The Consortium then designed a recruitment process to recruit someone for the position of Coordinator. Stakeholder interviews suggested that this recruitment process proved lengthy, and further strained relationships among the Consortium group. One section within the Consortium wanted to recruit an individual with a high level of skill and pay them accordingly; the other wanted to pay the position a lower wage and recruit two individuals – one with skills for implementing the program, and the other for management (2002.06.02 (filenote).doc). This division reached an impasse and the program was re-designed. The new design was for one Coordinator position at the lower rate of pay, and an increase in allocation to each community. Each community was now to receive \$36,000. The position was re-advertised along these lines. The delay caused by this process was approximately 9 months and placed great pressure on all concerned.

The current Coordinator applied for and won the re-advertised position and began to implement the program design. The Coordinator started work in November 2002. He began visiting communities to set up the regional committees outlined in the program

design. This process was hindered by the fact that he did not have a vehicle (the program re-design had taken the funds intended for a vehicle in the original budget and added them to the allocation to communities). He therefore went to communities in tandem with other agencies who were going. His initial strategy was to “get some runs on the board” in order to gain some credibility for the CAYLUS program. He helped communities to do access funds for whatever strategies they had in mind. During this phase he accessed funds for a motorbike program at Mt Liebig, music programs at Willowra, Papunya, mt Liebig and Titjikala, a youth worker program at Willowra, support for NAIDOC and a youth worker conference.

The negotiations regarding the regional committees also took place on these trips. They found that the target communities did not want to be part of regional committees. The communities made it clear that they wanted direct access to the amount of money that had been allocated to them, as oppose to any pooling of these funds. From this position the brokerage fund was developed whereby communities put a proposal to CAYLUS regarding how they wanted to spend the money. If this was approved by the CAYLUS Board of Management the community received the funds. An accountability system was developed through which the organisation demonstrated that the funds had been correctly spent. This proved problematic, and some communities were only allowed to access their allocated funds through Purchase Order given out by Tangentyere Council – a system that created an administrative burden for Tangentyere Council.

At this point there was a final re-negotiation of the budget. The Coordinator proposed that the communities return to the \$20,000 allocation and put the unallocated money into leasing a vehicle for the use of CAYLUS staff and extending the life of the project to June 2004 (that is from twelve to nineteen months). This proposal was agreed to, and the current budget was then in place. At this point (February, 2003) a Variation to the Funding Agreement was negotiated with DOHA . The new Agreement retained the original statement of Goals and Objectives, but stipulated new strategies and performance measures and a the new budget (DOHA 2003.02.17 letter of offer agreement variation.doc).

The establishment phase of the CAYLUS program took 17 months from the initial awarding of the funds to this final variation. This lengthy process was due to the difficulty of developing a structure that could successfully accommodate the diversity of organisations involved. However this process was ultimately successful in that it established a program that has been able to function in such a way as to deliver the services expected of it.

#### *Service Delivery Phase*

As outlined above, some service delivery took place during what has been termed the 'establishment phase'. However most service delivery has taken place since that time - February 2003 – March 2004 (the time of this evaluation).

A regular pattern of office work, case work and community visits now evolved. This has been dictated by requests from communities for assistance over particular issues such as

the implementation of Avgas; by the issues involved with disbursing the community funds (termed the 'brokerage funds') across the twelve sites of the program, individual casework arising from contact with Tangentyere's Night Patrol program and contact with various communities, advocacy on regional issues that arose from the contact with communities and agencies involved.

The following range of services have been delivered by CAYLUS staff:

- Education about the consequences of inhalant substance abuse;
- Develop of community plans to address the issues of petrol sniffing;
- Assistance in locating funding to support community actions designed to reduce the number of petrol sniffers;
- Provision of funding and personnel to run holiday programs in remote communities;
- Facilitation of intra-community efforts to reduce petrol sniffing;
- Coordination and training for youth workers and community members;
- Mentoring of existing community youth workers;
- Networking communities with existing service providers;
- Coordination of the CAYPIN network, which links youth services across the region;
- Monitoring of number of petrol sniffers across the region;
- Information for remote communities about the installation and impact of Avgas;
- Mapping services and programs of the region;
- Casework to assist individual petrol sniffers;
- Advice on petrol sniffing related cases to the Courts and other associated organisations;
- Support services to the treatment outstations in the Central Australian area;
- Advocacy of petrol sniffing issues on a regional level;
- Responsible sale of solvents education and awareness campaign in Alice Springs;
- A media strategy to complement other activity.

### **Outcomes of activities**

CAYLUS has been active in the following communities and services: Docker River, Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Amoonguna, Alice Springs, Areyonga, Hermannsberg, Papunya, Mt Liebig, Kintore, Yuendumu, Nyirripi, Willowra, Larapinta Camp, Titjikala and Ipolera, Injartnama, Ilpurla and Reconnect.

CAYLUS Activities have had the following outcomes for host communities:

1. Accessing \$506,000 from other funding bodies for communities to use in youth related activities in the region. (\$134,000 of this is recurrent funds for an after school and vacation care program). Dispersal of \$260,000 of funds spent on community controlled programs through the brokerage fund.. There is a further \$260,000 for a youth worker program for Willowra pending taking the possible total of funds accessed for host communities to \$1.026million. CAYLUS has also accessed \$291,000 to expand the services it is able to offer the region. They have received funding to employ a caseworker, run a media strategy (the responsible sale of



solvents), and to provide holiday programs to the region. This brings the total funding CAYLUS has contributed to the region to \$1.3million.

2. CAYLUS has been instrumental in initiating 22 youth related programs into the Central Australian region. These activities encompass conferences, music programs, salaries for youth workers, purchase of capital equipment, Night Patrols, school holiday programs, training and motorbike programs. This has been done through a combination of the CAYLUS brokerage fund and funds accessed through other sources.
3. Approximately forty (40) individuals have been assisted through counselling, relocation to home communities, support while undergoing rehabilitation, and access to outstation placements.
4. Twelve (12) communities have been assisted to run school holiday programs over 3 holiday periods (that is thirty six (36) holiday programs in total). The CAYLUS Newsletter (undated) reports that one of these programs run in Alice Springs (where Avgas is not an option) resulted in the town camp avoiding severe substance misuse problems among its young people over the holiday period ;
5. Two communities have been able to utilise funds that they had received from various jurisdictions, but had been unable to use. This was either due to lack of competent supervision for workers, or because the funds were inadequate for the purpose. In these cases CAYLUS has provided supervision for youth workers at Papunya, and have negotiated a merging of funds from two different sources at Mt Liebig so that one program can be undertaken;
6. CAYLUS has been active in lobbying the NT Police, the Coroner's Office, the Chief Magistrate's Office, the NT Parliamentary Select Committee on Substance Abuse in the Community, the NT Office for Central Australia, Community Corrections and the NT Department for Sport and Recreation on a variety of youth and petrol sniffing related matters.
6. Four communities in the region have commenced the use of Avgas. Three of these have been as a direct result of meetings initiated and conducted by CAYLUS staff, and one as a result of the cumulative effect of the other three communities using Avgas. Three of these communities visited for this evaluation reported a marked drop in the number of people sniffing petrol on their community. The fourth community is only 80 kilometers away from a source of petrol, and is actually reporting an increase in petrol sniffing as young people move there from other communities that now only sell Avgas.
7. Eight communities have held meetings to discuss strategies to reduce the impact of petrol sniffing in their community. One of these communities has a formal strategy that has been written up and approved by Council, the others are underway in implementing the informal strategies agreed at these meetings;

8. Central Australia's three outstations which offer treatment to petrol sniffers have been supported by CAYLUS staff. They have received assistance in meeting their accountability requirements to funding bodies, support for the purchase of capital equipment, referrals, payment for acceptance of referrals and peer training through visiting other treatment outstations. This has meant that the treatment system available for sniffers in Central Australia is more robust than would otherwise have been the case.
9. CAYLUS has addressed the issue of supply of solvents in Alice Springs through running a 'Responsible Sale of Solvents' campaign. This has offered education on customer management and the impact of volatile substance misuse to retail outlets supplying solvents in forms that are easily 'sniffable' by young people. As a result of this campaign "Mad Harry's" no longer sells small tins of paint. This has been reported by staff to coincide with a marked decrease in volatile substance misuse in Alice Springs – however there is no quantitative evidence to support this claim.
10. A number of individual communities report changes in the number of young people sniffing on their community. Mt Liebig reports a change from "20 – 30 twelve months ago to 4 – 6 now." (Council Clerk). Hermannsberg reports a change from "40 – 50 at the beginning of the year to about 20 now" (School Principal); Areyonga reports a change from "12 – 13 at the beginning of the year, to 4 – 5 now" (Clinic Sister). Balancing these decreases two key communities report increases. These are Papunya, which had mixed reports for this evaluation - one person estimated a "marginal decrease" (School Principal) while others reported a large increase; and Alice Springs, which unanimously reported a large increase in sniffing since the introduction of Avgas to remote communities. These reports reinforce the accuracy of attempts by CAYLUS staff to track the number of young people sniffing in the region. Their estimates over the period of the program have remained stable at between 200 – 300, although the numbers are differently distributed over the communities at varying times. It is therefore not accurate to attribute any overall decrease in the number of people sniffing in the region to the CAYLUS interventions. However it would appear that it has had an impact on where people sniff. Over time this may translate into a decrease in the overall number of people sniffing as successive interventions reduce the number of places in the region in which it is easy to sniff.

## **Governance arrangements**

CAYLUS has two layers of governance – a Consortium which meets annually and considers policy and the model through which the program runs; and a Board of Management which meets every six weeks and is responsible for overseeing the management of the program. Both bodies have representation from a wide range of stakeholders.

Interviews with stakeholders indicate that this system is ineffective on two levels. Firstly it is ineffective in giving CAYLUS clear direction. Most meetings of both levels of governance have failed to gain a quorum. Staff comment that this is partly because some members are from remote areas and find it hard to attend meetings in Alice Springs. However staff commented that once the brokerage monies were allocated to each community, the level of interest in being involved in the Consortium and the Board waned considerably, leaving both bodies much less effective.

The second level at which this system is ineffective is that it is burdensome for staff members. Blair McFarland (the Coordinator) estimates that approximately one tenth of his time is spent on governance issues – getting signatures for expenditure of the brokerage fund, organising meetings and providing secretariat to them. This is a significant proportion of his time, and represents time lost to service delivery to target communities.

### **Income, expenditure and acquittals**

The program has arrived at a balance of just over half of the grant monies being delivered directly to communities through the brokerage fund, and the remainder of the money being allocated to the operation of the CAYLUS program.

Of the CAYLUS program monies the income and expenditure statement of March 2004 indicates that the program is overspent in the Motor Vehicle Fuel and Oil, and Meetings and Coordinator wage lines; and underspent in Travel Allowance and the Brokerage Fund lines. Overall the program is within budget.

The ratio of administration cost to service delivery costs has remained static. However the onerous nature of administering the brokerage funds has meant that the Tangentyere Council has not be adequately compensated for the administration resources it has used on the program.

### **Obstacles to implementation**

#### *Organisation Environment*

Many of the non-government organisations in Alice Springs have a long history of tension between them. The aim to give the CAYLUS program legitimacy among a range of these organisations by establishing it as a cooperative venture resulted in the difficult establishment phase described above, and flowed through to an impractical initial program design.

#### *Program Design*

The compromises necessary to reach a final agreement amongst the Consortium members left CAYLUS with no vehicle and only a 12 month period of operation. With only these resources program would have achieved very little. It was enormous good fortune the the Coordinator recruited to the position had a long history and was very well regarded in the host communities, and able to re-negotiate the program design and the budget.

### *Governance*

As described above the system of governance has proved difficult for CAYLUS staff. The lack of a quorum has compromised the validity of the direction is has given the program.

### *Low Capacity of staff in host organisations*

The description of the context in which CAYLUS operates refers to the issue of a lack of capacity among staff at the community level. This can result in unrealistic expectations of the program. These unrealistic expectations can lead to disappointment and a souring of the relationship between CAYLUS and the host community. Interviews conducted for this evaluation indicated that this was the case in two communities – one where disappointment was expressed that CAYLUS has failed to get a house for the youth worker, and another where an inappropriate project was refused access to brokerage funds.

### *Brokerage*

The documentary evidence indicates that the brokerage funds have been a difficult issue for the CAYLUS project. The initial budget agreed with by the Commonwealth had the total brokerage budget at \$120,000. However negotiations with stakeholders increased this amount to \$260,000, and specified the amount each community would receive.

The effect of this pre-allocation was to limit CAYLUS's impact on how the brokerage fund was spent. The purpose to which the funds were put had to be approved by the CAYLUS Board, however at the end of the day the community would still get the funds. CAYLUS staff report that it has been extremely difficult to agree on any accountability structure with the communities receiving the brokerage money, and that they believe that reporting from most communities has been insufficient to demonstrate that the money has been spent on the purpose for which it was intended. A File note (DOHA 22.5.03) indicates that DOHA Project Officers shared this opinion.

The way in which the brokerage fund has operated for this phase of the CAYLUS program is clearly problematic. The CAYLUS and DOHA staff, and the individual experts interviewed for this evaluation all concurred that the brokerage fund should not be structured this way in future.

## **Solutions adopted to obstacles**

The obstacle of the organisational environment in which CAYLUS operates has been nullified by the achievements of the CAYLUS program. Interviews done for this evaluation indicate that CAYLUS now receives support from its Consortium members. Similarly organisations that are represented on the Board are keen for the program to continue because they recognise its achievements.

The problems with program design were responded to through the Variation to the Funding Agreement (February, 2003). It should be noted however, that the program

design still has significant problems, and the next phase of the program needs to remedy some of these.

*Low capacity in host organisations.*

The solution to low capacity at the community level leading to misunderstandings of, and high expectations of the program has not been adequately answered by the program. There is an urgent need for CAYLUS to develop a pamphlet outlining the service they offer, and the limitations to that service.

*Governance.*

The primary disadvantage of the current arrangement with Tangentyere Council is that the CAYLUS staff are paid through the Tangentyere Award. This has occurred at Tangentyere's insistence that they maintain the integrity of their Award for all workers paid through their organisation.

This has resulted in the CAYLUS staff being paid approximately \$50,000pa.. It is our opinion that this creates a situation whereby CAYLUS will not be able to attract and keep staff with the skills that the success of this program relies upon. This program is dependent of staff being able to offer oral communication, negotiation and written skills of a high order. A person possessed of these skills is likely to be able to command a salary at least the equivalent of a Level 6 in the Department of Health and Ageing. That being so, the inferior wage offered by the CAYLUS program is likely to lead to a situation of difficulty in attracting sufficiently skilled staff, staff turnover and program instability.

This issue was discussed with Tangentyere management. They have requested that this evaluation recommend that Tangentyere examine their Award structure and capacity to see if it would be possible to pay CAYLUS staff a salary in the range of \$60,000 – \$65,000.

### **Assessment of program in current form: an overview**

The most recent variation to the Funding Agreement between DOHA and Tangentyere Council (DOHA 2003.02.17 letter of offer agreement variation.doc) lists the objectives of the programs as follows:

- 1.To reduce the incidence of petrol sniffing in Central Australian communities;
- 2.To improve the social and emotional well being of young people in Central Australian communities;
- 3.To increase the capacity of Central Australian Aboriginal communities to address petrol sniffing problems at a local level;
- 4.To increase the level of positive activities for young people on Aboriginal communities in Central Australia where petrol sniffing is an issue;
- 5.To facilitate collaboration between service providers and to work collaboratively with communities to implement community determined strategies to address petrol sniffing problems;

- 6.To support existing services and programs to develop plans , seek funding and implement programs;
- 7.To facilitate the development of a coordinated regional approach to youth services in Central Australia;
- 8.To assist in the development of an infrastructure that will enable communities to continue to provide youth programs beyond the life of this program.

The outcomes of program activities listed under the section 'Implementation' in this report indicate that the CAYLUS program has implemented activities that have had some success in meeting all of these objectives.

- -Objective 1 : success in contributing to a reduction of numbers of petrol sniffers in some of the host communities ;
- Objective 2 : the implementation of 22 youth related activities and provision of case work to 40 individuals;
- Objective 3 : Holding community meetings in 8 communities to determine strategies for reducing petrol sniffing and accessing funds to achieve these strategies;
- Objective 4 : This Objective is achieved through the activities cited under Objective 2.
- Objective 5 : Work done by CAYLUS to utilise funds already held by communities, and advocacy work done to achieve a better referral outcomes between the Justice system and local treatment centres;
- Objective 6 : Support given to local treatment programs and activity through the CAYPIN network;
- Objective 7 and 8 : Through its contacts with individuals, services and communities in the region CAYLUS has been able to diagnose gaps and weaknesses in the regional infrastructure and systems. Its work in advocating the solutions to some of these issues with regional bodies achieves these Objectives.

This assessment suggests that while CAYLUS faced significant obstacles, they have achieved a notable level of success in achieving the Objectives of the program. It is our opinion that this success is due to the competence of the individual recruited for the Coordinator position. Fortunately this person has long experience and high standing in the region, and a flair for community development and accessing funds. He also understands the model through which CAYLUS operates. Without these attributes in the Coordinator, it is our opinion that this program could easily have foundered at the obstacles inherent in the organisation environment in which it must operate, and its initial program design.

### **The Next Phase – the development of the CAYLUS program.**

The evidence gathered through the analysis of documentary evidence and stakeholder interviews indicate a number of issues which need to be addressed in the consideration of how the program should be conducted during its next phase.

The issues are as follows:

- Role of CAYLUS
- Placement of the program and governance,

- Brokerage Fund

### Role of CAYLUS

#### *Current Perceptions of CAYLUS*

The majority of interviews done for this evaluation were very supportive of CAYLUS's work. It is clear that CAYLUS is providing a service to its stakeholders which is appreciated. However the stakeholder interviews also gave a perception that some people were confused about exactly what CAYLUS is offering. Stakeholder interviews showed some people thought that CAYLUS has access to large amounts of money, others wanted CAYLUS staff to come and take their young people out for bush trips – that is the direct provision of youth worker style activities. Still others had the impression that CAYLUS ran a treatment program and had 'clients'. Others again wanted CAYLUS to provide a counselling service to their families who are struggling with how to deal with their sniffing offspring; and yet another different demand was to work with Police to close down a particular individual who is supplying paint to sniffers in Alice Springs.

This range of expectations and demands reflect the diversity of needs associated with petrol sniffing and youth issues in Central Australia. As a service offering a regional approach to petrol sniffing CAYLUS could indeed be legitimately involved in all of these activities.

At present it seems that staff are trying to meet all the needs expressed by their clients – organisations, communities and individuals. It is possibly this versatility that has led to the degree of confusion among recipients of their services about exactly what it is they offer.

#### *Definition of what CAYLUS offers.*

This diversity in expectations and need means that CAYLUS needs to be clear about what it is offering. As the organisation consolidates active consideration needs to be given to the organisation's priorities, and their areas of expertise. The objectives and strategies for the program are very broad. They encompass both community development approaches (Objectives 3,5,6,7 and 8) and direct service provision (Objective 4). In putting these objectives and strategies into action CAYLUS has delivered both elements of community development and direct service provision.

This evaluation presents the opportunity to examine the balance between these two approaches. CAYLUS has become involved in two major areas of direct service provision – casework and the delivery of school holiday programs. Both of these are activities which will achieve the goals of the program – Objectives 1 and 2. In this they are unquestionably legitimate activities for CAYLUS. However both of these undertakings are potentially very demanding in terms of staff time. It is possible that activities related to the direct provision of services to communities could grow to consume the majority of staff time. The need after all is enormous, and the activities done through this work would meet CAYLUS objectives.

CAYLUS staff have made the point that providing a level of casework is essential to give the organisation credibility among their stakeholders, and is an effective diagnostic tool for identifying problems within the policing, justice and treatment systems. There is no question that CAYLUS should undertake some casework. Similarly school holiday programs are far more effectively provided on a regional basis, than having every single community chasing the same funding sources to organise a program for their own community.

The question here is to what extent CAYLUS should involve itself in direct service provision; and to what extent should community development and advocacy be their priority. The Objectives and Strategies set out in the variation to the Funding Agreement emphasise community development approaches (DOHA 2003.02.17 letter of offer agreement variation.doc). And indeed this approach would seem to be more appropriate for such a small staff team who offer skills in advocacy and community development. These skills are more effectively used in addressing Objectives 3,5,6,7 and 8.

#### *A 'seeding' function.*

It is possible that CAYLUS could view some of the direct service provision initiatives (for example school holiday programs) as having a seeding function. CAYLUS can demonstrate that it is an effective strategy to decrease sniffing over holiday periods, and then try to find an organisation that is positioned to deliver the service on an ongoing basis. In this way CAYLUS can act as an exploratory or seeding body, but can maintain its prime focus on community development approaches.

Once this prioritising has been done it will be possible to create material informing clients of what CAYLUS offers. There is a pressing need for a pamphlet with information about what services CAYLUS offers, and profiles of their staff to be widely circulated to all youth, justice, law enforcement, educational and family services agencies in Central Australia.

#### Governance

The current structure was designed for the situation of Tangentyere Council auspicing the program. The governance was intended to ensure that all stakeholders had a say in the conduct of the program. Much of the tension that led to the need for such stringent oversight structures has eased now that the program is seen to be delivering a quality outcome. One Board member was reported as saying that it was now really important to make sure the program kept going - never mind whether or not everybody got their share.

This easing of tension allows for a consideration of a governance structure which gives the program informed and influential guidance and is efficient in terms of the energy it takes to maintain. However before an appropriate governance structure can be considered the issue of the ongoing organisational location of the CAYLUS program needs to be addressed.

#### *The placing of the CAYLUS program.*



The program is currently auspiced by Tangentyere Council. There is a discussion above of the problem this creates in paying CAYLUS staff a competitive wage. If this problem can be addressed, then it would seem most advantageous for CAYLUS to remain with Tangentyere, as they have provided them with a stable home.

However if this issue cannot be addressed, we believe that in order to create a viable structure in which CAYLUS can achieve its aims there is a need for CAYLUS to become a separately incorporated.

*Governance Structure if CAYLUS become separately incorporated.*

The legislation under which CAYLUS incorporates will dictate some of the elements of the structure of the organisation. The issue to address here is the composition of the Board of a separately incorporated organisation.

This matter was discussed during several of the stakeholder interviews. Three clear and complementary views emerged on the issue. One was that remote communities are the primary stakeholders in CAYLUS, and they should be on the Board. The other was that the CAYLUS model is a development of earlier work done in Central Australia, and there are a body of people who understand the aims, challenges and opportunities inherent in this model. These people should therefore be on the Board. Other interviewees suggested that it would be good to get representation from the Police and other stakeholders on the Board in order to increase the power of any advocacy that CAYLUS undertakes.

All these positions have merit, and can co-exist. There should be representation of all these sectors. Given that remote communities are to have a place on the Board, provisions need to be made to ensure that their participation is successful. This means that some meetings need to be held in remote locations, and arrangements need to be made for Board members to travel to meetings. These expenses need to be included in any budget for the program.

*Governance structure if CAYLUS remains with Tangentyere Council.*

The standard governance arrangements for Tangentyere projects are that each project has a reference group of people with relevant expertise, but the responsibility for decision making about the program lies with the Tangentyere Board of Management.

Should CAYLUS remain with Tangentyere, their Reference Group could have a similar composition to the arrangements described above for a separate Board.

*Governance Structure if Tangentyere Council remains the auspice body.*

If Consortium and Board members agree to re-structure the current governance structure, but want the program to remain an auspice of Tangentyere with its own governance structure, then alternative governance structures can be addressed.

The proposed composition of the Board of an independent body put forward above - with representation from remote communities, knowledgeable individuals and associated entities such as the Police – could be used for the auspice body.

### Brokerage

It has been acknowledged that the brokerage fund has been a difficult issue for the CAYLUS program. It has given the advantage of an immediate profile for the program, and funded some worthwhile projects. However it has also been burdensome, and created a strain on relationships with some host communities. The issue to be resolved is twofold – should the brokerage fund be continued in any form, and if so, how.

### *Efficiency of CAYLUS administering the brokerage fund.*

The administration of the brokerage fund has been a major focus of the program to date. As such it has placed a high demands on program staff time. The issue that needs addressing is whether this is the best use of staff time.

In total CAYLUS has channelled \$1.057 million dollars into youth related activity in Central Australia (with a further \$260,000 pending). Of this total \$260,000 has been through the CAYLUS brokerage and \$506,000 has been through a diversity of other funding agencies. With these totals in mind it is interesting to note that staff estimate that the dispersal of the brokerage funds (\$260,000) has taken three times as long as the funds gathered through submissions to other funding bodies (\$506,000). This time differential is caused by the need for CAYLUS staff to negotiate, approve and acquit the brokerage funds; whereas the approval and acquittal responsibilities for funds accessed via submissions rest with the funding body. Staff comment that most of the work that led to \$506,000 being accessed through submissions was done before the system of brokerage funding was agreed upon. After the brokerage fund commenced there was much less time to write submissions.

This breakdown suggests that in terms of funds dispersed, it is more efficient for CAYLUS to access funds through other agencies than to place great weight on its own role as funder.

### *Duplication*

Furthermore the CAYLUS brokerage fund is duplicating two other brokerage funds offered in the region. These are the Remote Area Aboriginal Alcohol Strategy which is administered by the NT Department of Health, and the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Fund which has an funding round for projects requesting less than \$20,000. If approved both these sources of funds can be given to the community within six weeks of their request.

It is the recommendation of this report that CAYLUS maintain a brokerage fund of \$100,000. This fund should not be pre-allocated amongst communities. An accountability structure that is realistic for the quantity of money and the capacity of the recipient to report needs to be designed and used.

This system will minimise the opportunity cost inherent in a large brokerage fund. It will also make available additional funding to enable CAYLUS to recruit in order to expand their own skills base and thus the services they can offer communities.

## **Recommendations for the next phase of the CAYLUS program.**

### Recommendation for the continuance of the CAYLUS program.

The summary of impacts and outcomes recorded in this report give strong evidence that the CAYLUS program is operating effectively, and providing a service that is needed in the Central Australian region. It is therefore a recommendation of this evaluation that the program be continued.

This raises issues of what form the program should take as it enters its next phase. The evidence gathered through the analysis of documentary evidence and stakeholder interviews indicate a number of issues which need to be addressed in the consideration of how the program should be conducted during its next phase.

- The CAYLUS maintain a balance whereby the bulk of their work focuses on a community development approach to achieving their goals;
- That CAYLUS staff publish and widely distribute a brochure describing what services they offer and introducing their staff;
- That CAYLUS explore the possibility of passing the school holiday program initiative to another organisation;
- That the governance of CAYLUS be re-negotiated for the next phase of the project;
- That a Board or reference group be comprised of representation from remote communities, knowledgeable individuals and associated entities such as the Police;
- That Tangentyere Council examine their Award structure and capacity to see if it is possible to pay CAYLUS staff a salary in the range of \$60,000 – \$65,000. This needs to be done during any period of bridging funding, and should not take longer than three months.
- Should Tangentyere be unable to accommodate this pay level, then CAYLUS should become a separately incorporated body governed by its own Board of Management. However CAYLUS should continue to co-locate at Tangentyere Council.
- That CAYLUS maintain a brokerage fund of \$100,000. This fund should not be pre-allocated amongst communities, but should be allocation according to need. An accountability structure that is realistic for the quantity of money and the capacity of the recipient to report needs to be designed and implemented. This shrinking of the brokerage fund needs to be balanced by an increase in resources allocated to accessing other funds for use in communities.

## **Darwin Skills Development Scheme**

**Context**

**Implementation**

**Outcomes of activities**

**Governance arrangements**

**Income, expenditure and acquittals**

**Obstacles to implementation**

**Solutions adopted to obstacles**

**Assessment of program in current form: an overview**

## **Oenpelli Youth Wellbeing Program**

**Context**

**Implementation**

**Outcomes of activities**

**Governance arrangements**

**Income, expenditure and acquittals**

**Obstacles to implementation**

**Solutions adopted to obstacles**

**Assessment of program in current form: an overview**

Issues and challenges

## **Toward a regional approach**

These programs have added to the growing perception that substance misuse is best tackled through a regional approach. The data collected by CAYLUS program suggests

that sniffers move around depending on where petrol is easily available. This means that efforts by individual communities may change that single environment, however it only has a marginal impact on levels of sniffing across the region. The result of single focus projects can be that harms associated with petrol sniffing have been re-distributed, rather than reduced.

Two of the three programs worked through a regional approach to achieving the goals and objectives of the program. The two regional programs employed differing models in implementing this approach. The DSDS employed youth workers to work in individual communities, while the CAYLUS program facilitated communities to design and implement their own strategies.

Although we don't have sufficient empirical data to argue the point strongly, we believe on the evidence available that the CAYLUS model has led to more significant gains across their target communities. This is backed up community support demonstrated in stakeholder interviews; the number of projects that have been initiated in target communities; the number of relevant issues on which CAYLUS is involved in advocating for the sector on a regional basis, the reduction in levels of sniffing in individual communities, the level of resources accessed for youth related projects in the region and that more than 50% of CAYLUS resources were placed in community control – thus facilitating community development.

The CAYLUS approach develops a model that has had marked success in the Central Australian region, and could be transferred to other locations. The hallmarks of this model are as follows:

- Staff who are effective in casework, community development strategies, accessing funding and advocacy as well as being knowledgeable about remote Aboriginal communities;
- A limited amount of casework is used to establish credibility among stakeholders;
- Community work and casework function as diagnostic tools to establish the barriers and opportunities of the regional infrastructure and system;
- Staff take up an advocacy role to address identified regional barriers with relevant bodies;
- Community development is achieved through work on developing and implementing each communities' preferred strategy to reduce sniffing in their community;
- Staff take an entrepreneurial approach to accessing funds on behalf of other organisations, and so increasing the resource base for youth related activity in the region;

- Stakeholder relations are articulated through Memorandums of Understanding between complementary groups.

To achieve good outcomes with this model the following conditions appear to be needed:

- Very high quality staff able to function in all the roles referred to above, preferably with a pre-existing knowledge of the region;
- The organisation situated in a non-government context so that it is placed to negotiate between different government entities;
- A small project team who can be highly mobile in function and geographic location.

These hallmarks are not difficult to reproduce in other regions. Two issues arise from the experience of CAYLUS to date.

Firstly the interviews conducted for this evaluation indicated that many stakeholders felt that the success of CAYLUS depended on the prior experience and profile of its staff. They felt that the CAYLUS positions were quite specialised, and the present incumbents could not easily be replaced. This suggests that if this model was to be replicated in another location, close attention would have to be paid to the qualities of the staff recruited.

The second issue is the early history of attempts to set up CAYLUS within the context of various Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs. The File Notes provided to this evaluation by DOHA and the stakeholder interviews both confirm that this was a difficult process due to old tensions between the various organisations in Alice Springs. In transferring this model to other locations it is likely that a similar situation would exist. This would necessitate a careful strategy that could achieve the aim of different stakeholders cooperating to achieve an organisational structure that allows for effective and efficient governance, and constructive linkages with the wide variety of stakeholders involved.

### **Sniffers' access to mainstream alcohol and other drug services**

### **Auspicing arrangements: fund-holding and line management**

### **Program dilemmas: community development vs service provision vs advocacy**

In establishing a regional approach to the reduction of petrol sniffing and related harms several dilemmas arise. Any region will have a myriad of demands that could be filled by a substance use program. These are likely to include the following:

- Individual casework;
- Provision of school holiday programs;
- Transport services to relocate individuals away from sources of substance use and home to their own community;
- Provision of youth worker services in communities;
- Support of treatment facilities;
- Liaison with Police;
- Support of individual communities to design and implement petrol sniffing reduction plans;
- Advocacy for individuals and regional issues;

These needs can be broadly divided into the roles of community development, direct service provision and advocacy. It is unlikely that any single program will be able to completely fill all of these needs for any region. There is therefore a need to prioritise which functions a regional approach will prioritise.

The CAYLUS program has found that it is necessary for its credibility and effective diagnosis of regional systems that it undertake a level of casework. It is therefore reasonable to prioritise a casework function. The CAYLUS experience has shown that this needs to be carefully limited so that it does not consume the entire program's resources.

Beyond this priority there is a dilemma between direct service provision, and a community development approach. The DSDS program opted for direct service provision in employing a network of youth workers to deliver youth work services in target communities. This consumed up to 86% of the program's resources, leaving very little for a community development approach. CAYLUS too has become involved in direct service provision to its target communities. However the CAYLUS program has expended the bulk of its resources (over 50% of budget) on activities such as developing community plans and supporting community driven strategies that are likely to result in community development. (The bulk of its direct service provision activity has been funded by grants from other sources.)

Community development and advocacy activities function to advance the regional system as a whole; whereas service provision, while meeting a specific need (such as that for school holiday programs) does not further develop the region. It is therefore the opinion of this evaluation that regional programs need to prioritise their community development and advocacy functions.

**Feasibility of program**

**Reporting requirements**

Summary, conclusions and recommendations



**PROGRAM:** 105.7 – 8DDD FM – DRIVETIME  
**TIME:** 4.40PM  
**DATE:** Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005  
**REPORTER:** LEON COMPTON  
**INTERVIEWEE:** TONY ABBOTT  
**RE:** CORONER'S RECOMMENDATIONS INTO  
PETROL SNIFFING

**05T1752**

**\*\*\* PROOF FOR OFFICE USE ONLY \*\*\***

Now earlier this week, Coroner, Greg Cavenagh handed down his report into the deaths of three men in Mutitjulu and Willowra from petrol sniffing. The report contained the language of tragedy, it told the story of young men who didn't feel like, they had a future of hopelessness, stories of community dysfunction and unwillingness of Government to act. The Coroner said he couldn't disagree with the use of the word, pathetic to describe the Government response to date. I caught up with the Minister for Health, Tony Abbott a little earlier today and I mentioned to him that it was a powerful report and I asked him how he felt when he read it.

ABBOTT I THINK THAT THE CORONER WAS JUST A LITTLE UNFAIR TO THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENT. CERTAINLY THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT STARTED THE COMGAS SCHEME TO PUT UNSNIFFABLE PETROL INTO THESE REMOTE COMMUNITIES A FEW YEARS BACK. WE ANNOUNCED THEY'D BE GETTING AN EXPANSION IN ...(line drop out)... FROM 40 ODD TO WELL OVER 60 COMMUNITIES AND JUST A COUPLE OF WEEKS BACK, WE ANNOUNCED THAT THE UNSNIFFABLE PETROL PROGRAM WOULD BE EXTENDED RIGHT ACROSS THE

CENTRAL DESERT COMMUNITIES, FOCUSED ON AYERS ROCK. SO WE ...(line drop out)... DOING A GREAT DEAL, WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEE WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE, BUT IN THE END, THERE IS AN IMPORTANT ROLE FOR COMMUNITIES THEMSELVES AND THE INDIVIDUALS IN THESE COMMUNITIES TO TAKE STOCK OF THIS SITUATION AND DO WHAT THEY CAN TO PREVENT THEIR YOUNGER MEMBERS DESTROYING THEIR LIVES IN THIS WAY. IN THE END, THE COMMUNITIES, WHICH HAVE EFFECTIVELY TACKLED THIS PROBLEM ARE THE COMMUNITIES LIKE YUENDUMU WHERE THE ELDERS HAVE SAID, THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE AND THEY HAVE QUITE LITERALLY FROGMARCHED SNIFFERS OFF TO REHABILITATION CENTRES SUCH AS THE MOUNT THEO CENTRE, WHICH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS ALSO SUPPORTING.

REPTR

We talked about the fact that communities need to tackle their problems and yet, some of the evidence we heard in the Coronial report talked about the dysfunction in the communities that were being investigated. One of the youth workers that was praised in the report, Greg Andrews who we heard from earlier on in the week said 80% of the members in the Mutitjulu community are in denial about the problem and he basically outlined the fact that community councils are dysfunctional themselves, that they are not in a position to act in the best interests of community members, particularly sniffers?

ABBOTT

WELL, I SUSPECT THERE'S A GREAT DEAL OF TRUTH IN THOSE COMMENTS, BUT THAT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT GOVERNMENT CAN SIMPLY WAVE A MAGIC WAND AND CHANGE, I MEAN, NO OUTSIDER CAN WALTZ INTO THESE PLACES AND SUDDENLY

PERSUADE THEM TO TAKE PETROL SNIFFING SERIOUSLY IF THEY'RE NOT PREPARED TO DO THAT THEMSELVES. FOR INSTANCE, WHY DIDN'T SOMEONE IN MUTITJULU SIMPLY TAKE THE PETROL OFF THAT YOUNG MAN WHO WANDERED INTO THE CORONER'S HEARING WHILE IN THE VERY ACT OF SNIFFING, I MEAN, WASN'T THERE SOME RESPONSIBLE PERSON IN THAT COMMUNITY THAT WAS CAPABLE OF JUST TAKING THE PETROL AWAY?

REPTR Doesn't that tell us how dysfunctional the community is, the fact that, that didn't happen?

ABBOTT AND THAT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN FIX SHORT OF BASICALLY TAKING PEOPLE OUT OF THESE COMMUNITIES OR SHORT OF PUTTING IN AN ADMINISTRATOR AND REVERTING TO A MODERN VERSION OF THE OLD MISSION SYSTEM.

REPTR Are we scared in Australia of talking about these things because of the political correctness that's marked our attitude towards indigenous communities over the past 30 years. There are many that argue Mr Abbott that, that in fact, has not been a good thing in some cases.

ABBOTT WELL, I CERTAINLY DO THINK THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABSOLUTELY BEDEVILLED BY POLITICAL CORRECTNESS IN THIS AREA AND THANK GOD FOR PEOPLE LIKE NOEL PEARSON AND MORE RECENTLY, WARREN MUNDINE WHO HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO SAY, IT'S GOT TO STOP AND THINGS WHICH ARE RIGHT AND PROPER EVERYWHERE, RIGHT AND PROPER FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES AND I CERTAINLY THINK THAT IN THESE PLACES WHERE

THERE HAS BEEN A COMPLETE BREAKDOWN OF AUTHORITY, WE NEED TO LOOK AT NEW AND RADICAL WAYS OF ENSURING THAT AUTHORITIES CAN ...(inaudible)... SERVICE. ONE OF THE HOPES THAT PEOPLE HAVE FOR THIS WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE WHICH CAME OUT OF THE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS PROCESS A COUPLE OF YEARS BACK IS THAT, IT MIGHT INVOLVE THE RESTORATION OF A SENSE OF AUTHORITY IN THESE PLACES, WE CERTAINLY HAVEN'T GOT THERE YET.

REPTR

There was a dismissive approach in the evidence taken towards an English language education kit launched by yourself recently saying and I quote *'it's no answer to communities where people can't read or write and where English is a second language'*.

ABBOTT

YEAH AND ISN'T THAT PRETTY TRAGIC THAT THESE KIDS EITHER AREN'T GOING TO SCHOOL OR THEY'RE GOING TO SCHOOL WHERE THEY'RE NOT LEARNING ANYTHING BECAUSE ENGLISH IS A NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND REGARDLESS OF WHAT INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE IS BEING TAUGHT, IS BEING SPOKEN IN THESE PLACES, PEOPLE DO HAVE TO BECOME FLUENT IN THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE IF THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE ANY HOPE ...(line drop out)... AND I WOULD BE THE LAST TO SAY THAT I AM NOT PERSONALLY FRUSTRATED AT JUST HOW LIMITED THE PROGRESS THUS FAR IS. BUT I HAVE TO WARN YOU LEON THAT THERE ARE NO EASY ANSWERS HERE AND THE THINGS WHICH I MIGHT THINK AND PERHAPS EVEN YOU MIGHT THINK NEED TO BE DONE, WOULD AROUSE A STORM OF OPPOSITION INCLUDING

THE PREDICTABLE CATCH CRIES OF RACISM  
...(inaudible)... ACTUALLY PUT TO PRACTICE.

ENDS.

## **Attachment 6**

### **Barry Abbott: recognition for an outback hero**

Not many people gathered at the Awards ceremony had heard of Barry Abbott before he climbed the stage to receive his Prime Minister's award for [excellence and outstanding contribution in drug and alcohol endeavours](#). However, his remarkable story, told by Major Brian Watters - and their endearing conversation on the podium - will ensure people remember him for a long time.

Treatment services don't come much more remote than the Ilpurla Aboriginal Association's outstation, in a south-west corner of Central Australia. It's here that Mr Abbott and a small team of paid staff and volunteers take in young people from mostly Pitjatjantjarra speaking traditional Aboriginal communities. The geographical area would cover approximately 500,000 square kilometres to the south and west of Alice Springs, with an at-risk population of approximately 10,000 people. The client age can range from 8 – 25 years.

#### **A long tradition of care**

A stockman by trade, Mr Abbott has opened his door to hundreds of young Aboriginal people and has given them guidance to get back on track at the outstation on the Finke River. He has been looking after people in this way since the 1970s. He has 'grown up' literally hundreds of young people over this time, and is a locally known resource that families call on when their young people have problems with substance abuse.

Mr Abbott and his family model behaviour that may have been missing from the life experience available in the Aboriginal settlements. He relies on the isolated setting of the outstation to remove the clients from influences that exist in their home settings towards substance abuse. His program links them with another way of life, in which there is valuable work to do, and a group that relies on their contribution to that work.

Mr Abbott ran this service to the community for many years without any funding, using his own money. In the mid 1980s he began to receive recurrent OATSIH funding to pay his wage, the wage of a part-time assistant and some operational costs.

#### **Treatment program at Ilpurla**

When a client is first referred to Ilpurla, Mr Abbott assesses their ability to respond to the program. No one still under the influence of drugs is accepted, nor are clients who have behavioural problems that are beyond the capacity of the outstation program. This phase involves talks with the client's family, and getting an outline of the support that that family will provide.

A medical assessment is organised through the Kings Canyon Clinic (the closest medical facility – 258kms away). Any medical conditions are addressed and the outstation staff is made aware of any drug or treatment programs.

The next phase of treatment includes undertaking work at the outstation. This phase can run for a couple of months to a couple of years, depending on the client. The outstation has a range of station work going on, including stock work, mechanics and some housing/construction activities. The client undertakes this work alongside residents of the outstation, including Mr Abbott, and is brought into regular work patterns. The clients exit the program when they and Mr Abbott agree that they are ready.

### **Speaking openly about Indigenous living standards**

*Of Substance* spoke to Mr Abbott to find out more about his views on inhalant and drug use in Central Australia, plus his plans for the future. He is often asked about his attitude to inhalant users, in particular:

‘The outstation has petrol, glues and sprays in use all the time – I don’t lock them up. People often ask me why not, and I tell them that I trust the young people not to abuse them while they’re here, and they don’t let me down’, says Mr Abbott.

‘The problems with the petrol sniffing and the harder drugs is only getting worse out here. It’s frustrating to see the government spend money on things like the Opal fuel [a non-‘sniffable’ fuel alternative], when communities out here are so needy. I see kids all the time that are hungry, that don’t have good schools or community resources – this is what’s leading to their drug taking.’

‘I’d like to invite more people, especially politicians, to come and visit us – not just in Alice Springs, but out in the bush, where they can see for themselves the work we do, and the conditions Indigenous people live in.’

‘I’d like Ilpurla to get more funding and more staff, and for us to involve the parents in the program – get them out here staying with their kids, so that we break the habits of whole families, not just one generation.’

Mr Abbott was soon to go on his first holiday in ten years, or so he counted. Ilpurla will be managed by his son and other volunteers while he goes fishing for a few weeks. We hope he enjoys his well-earned break.

[PIX?]

7 Job Description Youth Workforce Development Project Worker – contained in application for funding to NT Police



## Juvenile Diversion Division

:juvenile@pfes.nt.gov.au  
PO Box 39764  
WINNELLIE NT 0821

e-mail

Phone: 08 8999 1566  
Fax: 08 8999 1555

# Juvenile Pre-Court Diversion Scheme Program Funding Application Form

*Applications must address all headings. Use only the form provided. Contact the Juvenile Diversion Units in Darwin (89991566) or Alice Springs (89515994) for further information. Grant applications should be submitted to the address indicated above.*

## 1. Name of the community group or organisation

This is the name of the group/organisation applying for funding.

<b>Name:</b>	Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service, Tangentyere Council Inc
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## 2. Contact Person

The person responsible for the project and contact for all enquiries regarding the project.



	Blair McFarland	<b>Position/Title</b>	CAYLUS Co-ordinator		
<b>Address</b>	PO Box 8070, Alice Springs NT 0871				
<b>Telephone</b>	0889514236	<b>Facsimile</b>	0889528521		caylus@tangentyere.org.au

### **3. Information on Project Group/Committee or Council**

List all other groups involved in the implementation of the program, including the full names of any Directors or Committee.

CAYLUS is a federally funded project with a reference group made up of the peak youth work agencies and outstation treatment programs in Central Australia – Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Programs unit, Papunya Community Council, Mutitjulu Community Council, Injartnama Treatment Outstation, Drug and Alcohol Services Association, Mt Theo-Yuendumu Substance Misuse Aboriginal Corporation, Alice Springs Youth Accommodation Support Services, Tangentyere Council, NPY Womens Council, Ilpurla Treatment Outstation, Ipolera treatment Outstation, Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi.

### **4. Other project history**

Provide a brief description of other similar projects or programs of your group/organisation that have received funding over the last two years and the sources of funding.

	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service	Nov 2002 - current	Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing	Address petrol sniffing through supporting community initiatives to improve quality of life for young people
CAYLUS Caseworker	Nov 2004 – Oct 2006	Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation	Casework with petrol sniffers and their families
Remote Community Holiday program support	July 2004 – August 2005	NTHCS	Funding to support Mutitjulu, Ntaria and Docker River school holiday youth programs
Ipolera support funding	June 2005	NTHCS	Funding to Ipolera to support their outstation program – operational costs and a second-hand vehicle

**5. Do you intend to apply for funding from any other organisation in relation to this program?**

Please provide details

Name of organisation	
no	

**6. Project Name**

Write down the preferred name of the program.

	CYDU Youth Support Program
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## 7. Target Group

*Is there a specific target group?*

	This project will provide support all youth in the Central Australian region by supporting the existing youth services through workforce development and volunteer co-ordination
--	--

## 8. Brief Program Description and Aims

Write a clear description of the program. Attach Program Profile if applicable.

The position will improve the quality of worker at the coalface through assisting individual remote communities funded by the CYDU (Kaltukatjara, Kintore, Papunya, Mt Leibig, Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Ikuntji) in the following : designing jobs, submission writing and acquittal, recruiting and supporting qualified and experienced workers. The position will provide regional support to the CYDU programs and workers through regional networking and training co-ordination. The position will also co-ordinate volunteers and make links to universities to arrange placements of students from appropriate disciplines (sport and rec, youth work, anthropology, medicine etc). This regional support is currently not available, which reduces the effectiveness of the individual community based programs and hence reduces the service delivered on the ground to the youth of the region. See attached job description. The establishment of this position was one of the recommendations that CAYLUS made to the NT Coroner in the 2005 Inquest into three petrolsniffer deaths. If our suggestion is adopted by the Coroner, the NT Government will be asked to report on progress in this direction later this year.

**9. Estimated dates of commencement and completion of the program?**

Please allow at least six weeks for grants of \$10,000 or more for the assessment/approval process

<b>Estimated date of commencement</b>	As soon as possible	<b>Estimated date of completion</b>	12 months from commencement
---------------------------------------	---------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------

**10. Indicate here the Outcomes being sought. Also describe how many juveniles will benefit from the program and how. Explain how the program will be holistic in approach and be in partnership with the other agencies and the NT Police. As well, you should address supervision and safety issues affecting the juvenile's welfare and progress.**

The outcome sought is improved delivery of services to youth by CYDU programs. Many programs flounder in remote communities due to inappropriate appointments of unqualified and inexperienced workers. Many enthusiastic workers burn out due to a feeling of isolation and lack of support. Even with good workers, there is seldom time in a remote community context to write submissions for extra projects to add to the quality of life of the youth of the community, nor to effectively network with other services in the region. Thus, primary outcomes would be a better workforce with more resources to undertake the work with youth. This sort of regional support is what is missing from the remote areas. Individual projects may have good results, but without consistent support, they will eventually flounder, and the next worker will have to start from scratch with an increasingly disillusioned community and youth client group. This has been the history of remote community programs to date, and until consistent support is provided to the workers on the community, this will continue to be the reality of remote area youth projects.

All the juveniles in the Central Australian communities will benefit from this project, with particular focus on existing CYDU funded communities. It is a holistic program because it creates a level of support for programs that has the time and resources to engage with the many existing agencies that could provide support for remote youth. It is impossible to expect that the CYDU workers who are engaged with youth on a daily basis will have the time or resources to make the connections that can result in the holistic approach required to address the issues facing the youth of remote areas. A position in CAYLUS can call on our programs well developed connections to government and non-government agencies and marshal support for the programs in remote communities.

The position would be able to undertake community infrastructure development that would be beyond the scope of individual community based workers, such as lobbying for accommodation, writing submissions for recreation centres and other resources that support the delivery of programs to youth. The position could co-ordinate volunteers and

liaise with training institutions for a regional client group, and with tertiary institutions to integrate student placements into existing CYDU programs. With the support of the position, these students may have a positive experience of remote youth work and become the workforce of tomorrow.

The assistance in recruiting to remote community positions will provide an extra layer of support through careful checking of references and criminal history checks of applicants. At the moment, this is left to individual community administrators, who may not have the time to put into this process, or who may be abusing their positions to employ friends who are not qualified to undertake the work. The existing system's lack of capacity to systematically undertake reference and Police checks creates a danger to the Indigenous youth of the region.

## 11. Evaluation Framework

An Evaluation of Program Report form will also be provided to successful applicants to fill out at the completion of the initiative/project.

<i>Objective(s) of the Program</i>	<i>Strategy(s)</i>	<i>Performance Indicator/s</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>
What is/are the objective(s) of your program? <i>Provide support to remote communities' CYDU youth programs</i>	How will you get there? <i>Hire an appropriately qualified worker to provide the support</i>	How will you measure how you got there? <i>Best practice recruiting procedures will be undertaken</i>	By when or during what period will you do this? <i>This process will take two to three months, depending on the quality of the applicants</i>
<i>Assist communities develop job descriptions and recruit to CYDU positions</i>	<i>Work with the local council administration and provide administrative support and training to Council members regarding the process</i>	<i>Improved recruiting process', including comprehensive reference checks and criminal history checks for workers</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Assist recruited CYDU workers with orientation and intensive support especially during the first three months</i>	<i>Work with the Council and worker to address employment expectations</i>	<i>Realistic appraisals regarding the worker's suitability for the position and appropriate actions should the worker not have the capacity to perform as required.</i>	<i>Due to employment conditions, this will be an intensive support in the first three months of employment.</i>
<i>Assist in the further development of youth programs, including sourcing and applying</i>	<i>Work with the Council, NT Government and Worker to design the programs and write the</i>	<i>There will be program plans for each community and submissions as required</i>	<i>Ongoing with an intensive period of planning at the start to facilitate each</i>

<i>for funding</i>	<i>submissions required</i>		<i>communities program development</i>
<i>Provide ongoing support for each program, including volunteer co-ordination</i>	<i>Liaise between the program and other agencies to increase the resources available to the youth of the community</i>	<i>Structured support programs for each community</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Liaise with training institutions to provide training to the workers, and to create student placement systems to enhance service delivery and promote the career option of remote community work to undergraduates in various fields.</i>	<i>Liaise with training and tertiary studies institutions</i>	<i>Student placement programs</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

## **12. Publicity and Dissemination**

Explain how you would disseminate information about the results of your program ie to whom and how.

CAYLUS would promote the scheme through the media nationally, and would document the achievements of the position through feedback letters from the communities serviced.

During the funding period, we will seek ongoing funding for the work. Should the Coroner propose that our recommendation regarding the provision of this position be enacted by the NT Government, we would report to the Coroner regarding the establishment of the position and the outcomes.

## **13. Budget**

Provide a detailed breakdown of how the money will be spent. Identify other sources approached to fund the project and whether funding has been confirmed. Successful applicants will be required to submit a detailed acquittal of funds at the completion of a project.

<b>Expenditure Item</b>	<b>Cost \$</b>
Recruiting	2,500
Salary at level 6 Tangentyere award inc on costs super	65,000
Travel budget	5,000
Vehicle lease	10,000
Admin costs	14,175
Operational budget	5,000
Computer/office equipment	7,000
<b>Income</b>	<b>nil</b>
<b>Total requested from the Juvenile Pre-Court Diversion Scheme</b>	<b>\$108,675</b>

**14. Do you have an Australian Business Number (ABN)? Please ✓**

Yes Please provide ABN \_\_\_\_\_

No If No and another organisation is sponsoring this application please provide their ABN \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Are you GST registered? Please ✓**

Yes

No *If No and another organisation is sponsoring this application please advise if that organisation is GST registered:*

**16. Declaration**

We declare that the information on this form is correct and that the grant is made subject to the guidelines stated. Three signatures are required, including the Public Officer if the organisation is an incorporated Association.

<b>Position/Title</b>	
<b>Date</b>	



<b>Position/Title</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

<b>Position/Title</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

**Checklist**

- ✓ **Supporting data or letters attached. Is a Program Profile attached ?**

**Comments by OIC of Local Police Station (if applicable)**

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Name

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Rank

Date

**Forward Application to:**

**Superintendent  
Juvenile Pre-Court Diversion Scheme  
PO Box 39764  
Winnellie NT 0821**

## Appendix 8 YALC Powerpoint

Appendix 9: comment from Mt Theo Program on the senate submission.

Blair / Tristan

Susie asked me to look over your submission from our Mt Theo side and it looks fantastic to me. Very comprehensive and clear. Couple of suggestions/thoughts if you are so inclined :

1) Certainly able to quote us as saying that the Mt Theo Program wishes it to be clear that we firmly support the Opal roll out and that we do not wish to be used as an argument against it. From our perspective we believe a multi-pronged strategy is essential (restrict supply - positive diversion - outstation etc) and opal can present a crucial element in that strategy.

Similarly the demands placed on Mt Theo Staff in Yuendumu over the last 12 years cannot be reasonably accepted as normal or expected. As per the argument about services in remote communities should be similar to those available in regional and metropolitan centres. indeed it has obviously taken its toll on some of the previous staff who worked here such was the excess workload that they carried.

Moreover Mt Theo works now on a broad community scale because of its resource development. this resource support enabled Mt Theo to make the transition from 'crisis' mode to 'development' mode whereby we are able to provide extensive youth services and begin to help establish meaningful futures for young people. a lack of resource support will see communities forever battling in crisis mode which is tiring and ultimately disheartening.

2) Also in regards to poly abuse and the need for resources to cover other substance abuse we are also happy to be used as a reporting example that despite success with petrol sniffing we are now heavily engaged in a battle with gunja here at the moment and related problems such as attempted suicide, domestic violence,

poor mental and physical health. Underlying causes crucial otherwise we will end up back where we started.

3) Also with regard to youth services can perhaps present model like Jaru where 1 or 2 professionals and a team of 10-15 local youth are paid workers (divided through 1-2 positions for sports and rec worker and paid by voucher system for shop eg: \$20 per activity. main 7 or 8 workers also on cdep and get voucher for top up where exceed hours. these youth essentially run the youth program. this enables lots of activities (7 days and nights per week, 3-4 activities per day), youth leadership and empowerment on a broad scale and young people freedom to learn how to work etc. good training ground for employment as well as providing provisional employment such as CDEP. in current cdep climate is a real growth area for communities. real source of pride, risk supervision, meaningful activity as well as youth services.

really looks great and like lots of hard work!

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