



**CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN
ABORIGINAL ALCOHOL
PROGRAMMES UNIT**

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*SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE
STRONGER FUTURES IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
BILL 2011*



A Place of Health, Hope and Healing

*SUBMISSION OF THE
CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL ALCOHOL PROGRAMMES UNIT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ALICE SPRINGS
JANUARY 2012*

This submission of the CAAAPU Board of Directors, Alice Springs was authorized by a Board of Directors meeting on 16th January 2012 at the CAAAPU Conference Room

Eileen Hoosan (Chairperson)

Kevin Corby (Deputy Chairperson)

Delores Furber

Gwen Gillen

Robert Hoosan

Georgina Iles

Theodore Nelson

Christobel Swan

Patricia Webb

Our philosophy is to live our life in total sobriety with alcohol and drugs and be role models for the Aboriginal Communities

The CAAAPU definition of sobriety is the maintenance of sober habits from alcohol consumption and other substance abuse.

BEATING THE GROG TOGETHER

CAAAPU STATEMENT

The CAAAPU Board of Directors wish to make a submission to the Senate Inquiry into tackling alcohol abuse and the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory.

The CAAAPU Board of Directors are concerned that;

- Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory and the affected communities may have no understanding or knowledge of the Stronger Futures in the NT Bill 2011.
- The Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011 is a legislation of rules and regulations that will govern the lives of Aboriginal people for ten years (too long) in the Northern Territory.
- The provisions under the Stronger Futures Legislation is about undertaking partnerships between Aboriginal people / Aboriginal Communities and Aboriginal organizations.
- The proposed joint Commonwealth - Northern Territory review of the Stronger Futures legislation.

“A stronger future can only be built in partnership with aboriginal people and communities because we know that the issues we want to tackle are issues which many Aboriginal people confront each single day.”

Rather, the implementation of the Stronger Futures legislation is to be for the Aboriginal people and Aboriginal Communities and not by the enforcement of legislation by governments and public servants.

Provision of the 2011 Bill's review must be by the Aboriginal people and the 73 NTER Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal organizations to assess the effectiveness of the Stronger Futures Legislation. Change for a good future will only come from a whole of community approach and not by the whole of government approach.

CAAAPU recognises the need to provide the Senate Committee with CAAAPU's views about the proposed legislation and CAAAPU's role in making a real difference in tackling the alcohol abuse in Central Australia.

CAAAPU is a Aboriginal Corporation (incorporated 1992) located in Alice Springs which provides care and support to Aboriginal people who wish to lead an alcohol and drug 'free' lifestyle. CAAAPU was established to address these issues by providing culturally appropriate services that will assist Aboriginal people to regain control over their lives and to re-establish themselves within the community.

The CAAAPU Governing committee is in a position to be an advocate for tackling alcohol abuse in the NT as we think it is fair to say we have had the relevant experience to speak on behalf of our people about this subject.

CAAAPU recently has gone through significant corporate governance reform and improvement with the Australian Government's Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations support. CAAAPU would welcome the opportunity to being involved with helping to provide solutions to the alcohol abuse and therefore reduce the alcohol – related harm.

The Australian Government needs to genuinely listen to the indigenous communities to bring about a focus of change for a stronger future. Aboriginal Communities all need to be appropriately consulted. CAAAPU supports and encourages Alcohol Management Plans (AMP) that are developed by the communities with professional support and input from our organization. AMP's should be completed with professional assistance from persons qualified and experienced in the field of alcohol, substance misuse or drug abuse.

The policy is mainly about tackling the supply of alcohol. We feel this will only solve part of the problem. We would like to see the Australian Government commit to increasing the support to provide more funding for treatment and rehabilitation facilities to Aboriginal people especially in the area of residential treatment for families. Implementing a holistic, preventative approach, will reduce the demand for alcohol and problem drinking.

It is critical to help reduce the demand for alcohol through increasing employment opportunities and training, improving health services, early intervention at school, improving community stores, better housing schemes and building community capacity and leadership to bring about good governance. We support the priority areas and future directions. The focus of change for a stronger future needs to be community driven.

We recognize that there are some good decisions in the Stronger Futures for the NT plan including the NT Government's *Enough is Enough* Alcohol Reforms campaign and referral to the Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment court for alcohol related offences. The CAAAPU organization are doing everything possible to support the NT Government's campaign by providing culturally appropriate rehabilitation treatment services delivered by highly qualified Aboriginal employees and elders.

CAAAPU has a responsibility to provide indigenous people from the central Australian region to:

- Provide a safe, non-discriminatory healing place that equips clients with the tools with which to live a healthy, sober, active and productive life.
- Be a leading advocate in the areas of alcohol and other drug dependency as recognition of the unique spiritual and cultural strengths of Aboriginal people.
- Ensure that it incorporates practices that enable clients to develop their full potential
- Work towards the reduction of the harmful effects of alcohol and other drugs on individuals, families and the community, thus contributing to the well being of our society.

The CAAAPU Board of Directors would welcome the opportunity to address the Senate Committee.