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17.85.1.2
NAR #12392

4 May 2015

House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs
PO Box 6021
CANBERRA ACT 5001

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs 5th May 2015. This is additional to our submission made in April 2014.

Please find attached the summary of the submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs for 5 May 2015. This submission also includes a copy of the Joint Communiqué released by Yalata Community Council and the District Council of Ceduna on 21 April 2015.

Yours faithfully

Allan Suter
Mayor

Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs 5th May 2015. This is additional to our submission made in April 2014.

Most of the issues highlighted in our April 2014 submission continue to exist, however it is fair to say that considerable progress has been achieved since then. This should be credited to the combined efforts of the Australian and South Australian Governments together with those of local Indigenous bodies and Council.

In recognition of this Council, together with the Yalata Community Council, released a joint communiqué on 21st April 2015 and have both committed to continue to work together in efforts to reduce the harm being caused by excessive alcohol consumption.

The South Australian Government has appointed Jacqueline Costanzo as Manager – Aboriginal Policy and Projects, and this new initiative has resulted in effective coordination of the various departments working in this field. Funding for this position has recently been extended for another 3 years and we see this as an extremely good outcome which is certainly producing excellent improvements.

The introduction of Income Management by the Australian Government has also proved to be a most worthwhile initiative and there are many anecdotal accounts of good outcomes from this system. The one disappointing aspect has been a slow introduction of this system for vulnerable people however progress continues to be made.

The current situation is as follows;

- The problem certainly still exists despite some very encouraging progress.
- There is a current surge of numbers of intoxicated people aggregating around the licensed premises at night seeking opportunities to access alcohol.
- We believe that this is partly as a consequence of the reduced levels of availability of alcohol.
- The numbers of people needing the services of the Sobering Up Centre continues to be too high.
- There is a growing belief among our elected members that the cost of the Safety and Security Patrol should not be a burden on ratepayers after the end of the current contract period ending June 2016. This will leave a void should it be discontinued.
- Despite the above concerns it must be said that progress towards addressing this serious problem has been outstanding in the past year or so.

Where to from here?

Council is very supportive of a trial of the Healthy Welfare Card in our area subject to the support of the Aboriginal community. Initial signs indicate that this support may exist.

This initiative would replace the need for Income Management and has the potential to address many problems which are caused by excessive consumption of alcohol. It would help family members who suffer in so many ways because of the problem we are trying to fix because of neglect and missed meals and so on.

The Income Management system, as good as it is, does lead to “humbugging” where drinkers demand money from participants. It also leaves options to obtain money for grog from those who do not drink. We have found that the drinking group is particularly clever at finding ways to circumvent the rules. The use of a healthy welfare card would help to remove this loophole.

This possible initiative coupled with continued efforts to make it harder for drinkers to access alcohol will see steady progress towards combating this terrible problem.



Yalata and Ceduna Councils tackle the challenging issue of alcohol - Let's stop the blame and work together

As Chairperson of Yalata Community Council and Mayor of the District Council of Ceduna, Mima Smart OAM and Allan Suter are pleased to advise that both Councils have met in Ceduna and have jointly agreed to work together to address the harms that alcohol is causing to Yalata Community members in Ceduna.

As Mayor Suter says "We don't have a simple solution as there isn't one. Working together however we may find ways that Anangu can help Anangu to break the grip that alcohol has on their community members in Ceduna."

"This isn't a quick fix but a new way of thinking and working to address the alcohol problem and build better relationships for the future"

Mima Smart also sees this as a positive step for the future. "This problem has been going on for a very long time and too many lives have been lost. We can no longer blame each other while our people continue to drink themselves to death. It hurts our community, our families and our children." "What will our children's future be if we do nothing?"

Both Councils have agreed to meet again in early 2015 with the Ceduna Council being invited to attend a Yalata Council meeting. The K-9 Security Patrol team will also visit Yalata to gain a better understanding of the community and Anangu culture.

Maureen Mima Smart OAM
Chairperson
Yalata Community Council

Allan Suter
Mayor
District Council of Ceduna

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A Happy, Healthy and Safe Community

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A Wealth of Opportunity

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