

ALCOHOL TOLL REDUCTION BILL 2007

SUBMISSION by:

Rev. Selwyn John Tully OAM.

SUMMARY/INDEX OF SUBMISSION.

Rev. Tully, born in 1933, has been involved with therapy and preventive education regarding alcohol and poly addictions since 1960 or earlier. He worked as a farm labourer in sugar cane, vegetable and tropical fruit production and as a Public Servant in the Agriculture industry. He then began training as a Minister of the Methodist Church, and became a Minister of the Uniting Church working in, inner city Glebe – Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Kurri Kurri Coal fields area, and the Gold Coast. In 1985 he became a full time Addiction Counsellor, an occupation approved by the Uniting Church in Queensland.

Summary: Recalling the 1977 Senate Inquiry:
“DRUG PROBLEMS IN AUSTRALIA – An intoxicated Society?”

Page 2. 1977 - Recommendations now inadequate.

Page 2-4. Hoteliers and the liquor industry avoiding Patron Care, and Duty of care obligations by promoting Bottle Shop and Carton Sales of Liquor. Points A to H.

Page 4.

- **Personal experience.**
- **Note. NSW Branch of The Australian Hotels Association**
- **Additional comment.**

Page 5 - 6.

- **Strengths of the Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007.**

Page 6 – 7.

- **Changed Law regarding the defence of “Intent” with regard to motor vehicle crashes. Introduction 0.05% blood alcohol.**
- **“Has your fun been costing too much?”**

Page 8 – 9.

- **Addiction to be regarded as Rational “Game Theory”.**
- **The thinking and behaviour that allowed the problem to grow cannot fix or solve the problem.**

Pages 9 – 24 Addendum

- **Multi-Modal and holistic approach necessary!**
- **NEW UNDERSTANDING AND NEW THINKING DEMANDED!**

ALCOHOL TOLL REDUCTION BILL 2007

SUBMISSION by:

Rev. Selwyn John Tully OAM.

Introduction

In 1975-76 a Minister of the then Federal Government led by Prime Minister the Hon. Gough Whitlam approached me saying:

“John, you are right to be concerned about alcohol. The Government has received a Report indicating that although the Government receives huge revenue from Taxes on Alcohol, the cost of alcohol to the Community is far greater than the revenue raised – costs like motor vehicle accidents, associated injuries and deaths, industrial accidents – time lost from work – John, the cost outlined in this new Report has frightened the pants of us”.

In his Second Reading Speech of the 19th September 2007, Senator Steve Fielding has reminded our Nation of the **“COST OF THE TOLL THAT ALCOHOL EXACTS”**. **Although alcohol does bring joy to many a human heart, it has very often proven to be the alchemistic catalyst in much human misery.**

I personally congratulate Senator Fielding, and Family First for his initiative. I also congratulate all concerned with the work of the Selection of Bills Committee of the Australian Senate on the 14th February 2008 in referring this proposed Bill to the Committee of Inquiry

This will then be the second time in thirty years that the Australian Senate has produced a Report into (Drugs) Alcohol in Australia. That earlier Report (1977) was set up to examine the drug problem but quickly found that the Legal Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco were the major cause of problems.

The earlier Report, Published in 1977 was entitled:

“DRUG PROBLEMS IN AUSTRALIA –An Intoxicated Society?”

In my mind that was a very excellent Report and served the Nation well as a landmark report on:

- **Drug and Alcohol problems existing in the late 1970,s and;**
- **A platform for community education as it was extensively reported in the media, and assisted in**
- **Shaping future policy directives on into the 21st. Century.**

May the work of this Committee of 2008 be as thorough, and as far reaching.

A thorough review of the work of the earlier inquiry is sorely needed, as the Statistics that Senator Fielding outlined in his Second Reading Speech on the 19th September 2007 demand immediate examination.

Some measures adopted following the 1977 Senate Report are inadequate in today's economic climate.

SOME REASONS FOR THAT INADEQUACY ARE:

1) A higher percentage of alcoholic beverage is being sold in Bottle Shops, Supermarkets and by Internet and by direct home delivery.

RESULT:

- A) Personal responsibility for Patron Care and the Responsible Service of Alcohol is being evaded and avoided by Hoteliers and those involved in the alcohol industry.**
- B) This means that a Hotelier, with knowledge of responsible alcohol usage and service avoids his or her "Duty of Care" under Common Law.**
- C) That duty of care is either drifting from the Hoteliers and those who commercially serve**

alcohol, or it is being deliberately relocated by retail and service industries responsible for serving alcohol in licensed premises.

- D) Alcohol is increasingly being served and consumed in un-licensed situations, in the home or other private venues. The family and private individuals, who have fewer legal rights than hoteliers in licensed premises may well be exposing themselves to complex 'duty of care' provisions of the Common Law where and when alcohol is being served.
- E) The family and individuals in the general community have less information, less training and support, and less legal power to appropriately deal with the need for appropriate and careful use of a legal and socially acceptable drug that is dangerous if it is taken in excess.
- F) The proliferation of smaller and large retail centres (*bottle shops and wholesale liquor merchants*) means more advertising, and more aggressive advertising as each centre competes for sales, and market share of their designated product – Bulk Alcohol sales in all its forms.
- G) As more alcohol is being served in the home, the young who are excluded from licensed premises have alcohol readily available in the family home and drink alcohol at a younger age, or may well drink in the home when adults are at work. In some instances teachers have had to deal with intoxicated students after lunch hour.
- H) Party crashers – Home invasions and unruly crowd behaviour is becoming increasingly beyond the control of householders and the Police.

Instance: A rowdy party developed in our street. A fearful sixteen – twenty year old male person knocked on our door, late at night. His 'friends' were threatening him and he asked to enter our home for his personal protection. My wife is very sick.

Had she been home alone it would have caused her great distress. The young victim used our phone to seek help from his parents. The young man's Father was fearful of the drunken group, and was too afraid to drive his car into the street. My adult son had to (secretly) drive the young victim to a safe place so that his parents could take their son home.

**I quote: Sun-Herald Sun. March 16, 2008: Page 7. (Sydney)
"Don't Blame the Hotels" –'Ms. Sally Fielke, chief executive officer of the Australian Hotels Association said hotels were unfairly blamed for too many evilsshe said:**

- 51% of alcohol related violence occurred in homes.....
- 21% of alcohol related violence is happening in parks
- 'which ties in with under age binge drinking'
- 'they're not on our premises because they're not allowed in'
- 'Youth binge drinking is happening in parks and at family barbecues'
- '-we're (Hotels) are getting a bad rap.....'

Question : Does this statement by the Executive Officer of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Hotels Association indicate that the Hotels have been pursuing a deliberate policy of avoiding blame – ie of avoiding their 'Duty of Care' under the responsibilities that are associated with the privilege of having a licence to sell a socially desirable, but dangerous substance sold under strict legislative provisions?

THE GREAT NEED IS FOR A MORE VIGOROUS AND ADEQUATELY FUNDED COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM REGARDING THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS ASSOCIATED WITH MIS-USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.

THE FIRST AND IMMEDIATE BENEFIT OF THE PROPOSED ALCOHOL TOLL REDUCTION BILL IS THAT IT WILL ESTABLISH A VEHICLE FOR MUCH NEEDED, BALANCED SOCIAL EDUCATION REGARDING THE PERSONAL USE OF ALCOHOL.

THE STRENGTHS OF THE BILL.

The proposed “Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007” clearly addresses problems associated with alcohol use, misuse and abuse in several vital areas that will be commented on later.

These important elements are:

- **LEGISLATIVE AND LEGAL – that is a good starting point.**
- **EDUCATIONAL covered by ‘Objects’ a, b and c, and firmly addressed by Schedule 87 A.**
- **MEDICAL addressed by 3 (c) and division 3A.**
- **NEUROLOGICAL – as above.**
- **PHARMACOLOGICAL – as above**
- **PHYSIOLOGICAL – as above**
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL – as above**
- **SOCIOLOGICAL – By appropriately amending the Broadcasting Services Act 1992, and the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991.**
- **RELIGIOUS and SPIRITUAL –**
 1. Suggested amendment to Division 3A, to specifically consider those individuals and community groups who choose to exclude alcohol from their diet altogether – ie Zero Use is one aspect of ‘responsible drinking’ of alcohol that is constantly overlooked. – ie *The suggestion is that all people should consume alcohol, but consume it in a responsible manner often discriminates against the person who rationally chooses not to consume alcohol at any time or in any situation.*
 2. Such groups are Religious eg. Salvation Army – Temperance Groups – Seventh Day Adventists - Alcoholics Anonymous Groups and especially ISLAMIC GROUPS for whom alcohol consumption is generally forbidden, in accordance with the Koran –Sura 5 A 89-91.
- **BIOLOGICAL – to specifically mention the threat of damage to the unborn child if alcohol is consumed by the expectant mother – ALCOHOL EMBRYOPATHY . Note that expectant fathers ought also to act**

responsibly by not consuming alcohol when their wives are pregnant.

- **DEATH BY DROWNING** – Death by drowning is more likely if alcohol has been consumed prior to entering the water -
- **CULTURAL** – Lifestyle advertising should specifically be addressed.
- **LEGAL and REGULATORY** aspects of the problem
- **ECONOMIC** – The Broadcasting Services Act, Section 122A and (c) (ii) by directing that alcohol advertisements should not suggest that alcohol contributes personal, social, sporting, sexual, **ECONOMIC** or other success in life.

The measures proposed in the Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007, will make more members of the community consciously aware to the dangers and public duties associated with the service and responsible use of alcohol. Each Member of the community will have more opportunities to be more appropriately informed, and hopefully may have a little more power to make increasingly responsible choices concerning personal and family consumption of alcoholic beverages.

2) Following the 1977 Senate Report, legislation was eventually enacted to remove the legal defence involving “Intent” especially in the instances of Motor Vehicle Accidents.

No defendant can claim to have been too intoxicated to form the ‘intention’ to do the act or do harm to the other person or the property. Intoxication became the offence, so eventually after much argument in some States, especially Queensland, it became an offence to drive a Motor Vehicle if the persons Blood Alcohol Concentration was over 0.05%

It is INCONSISTENT AND IRRESPONSIBLE to allow the sale of alcoholic beverages without that information, (*It is illegal to consume multiple standard drinks of alcohol in one hour, and drive a motor vehicle. Blood alcohol concentration must not exceed 0.05%*) being printed on the label of the bottle – The substance and the offence must be linked.

3) Over the more than forty years that I have been involved with preventive education, counselling and rehabilitation of people and families regarding Alcohol, Gambling, Drug and other addictive behaviours, I have formed the opinion that abusive and addictive behaviour is a choice made by individuals.

The process of making a personal choice is certainly negatively affected when the thinking processes are clouded by the ingestion of alcohol.

If a person has any sense of the personal self and can begin to live with himself or herself, that person is less likely to offend.

As I have worked with troubled people, whether in the community or in the Prison situation, if there was relevant and appropriate information made available in the discussion, the most challenging open ended question that can be asked is:

“HAS YOUR FUN BEEN COSTING YOU TOO MUCH?”

Some clients will say “It is too painful to stop”. Those clients need to be reminded “It will be more painful and more costly if you don’t!”

New research based on the mathematics of ‘Game Theory’ concludes:

Addiction is entirely rational. “People who consume addictive products – cigarettes, alcohol, slot machines – calculate that the pleasure of the habit will outweigh the pain”. –Tim Harford, The Logic of Life – Page 57 Little, Brown Publishers 2008. Harford quotes earlier research.

“.....People calculate that the PLEASURE –ie. ‘*some relief from pain*’ of the habit will outweigh the pain of living without that relief – ‘*life sux*’.” As is often said by some young people who are hurting inside.

These emerging facts are being proven as the community struggles with the public health issues arising from past ignorance, inertia and inaction that surrounded the Tobacco Industry. More aggressive Community education programmes are proving to be effective as individuals increasingly give up buying tobacco products.

The community has been behaving in a very irrational manner in not providing appropriate educational material concerning alcohol on product labels, Billboards advertising alcohol, and attaching warnings to all material, Radio, Television, Internet and Print where alcohol is advertised. .

Legislators need to remember:

“The thinking and behaviour that allowed the problem to grow is incapable of fixing or solving the problem.”

NEW THINKING AND NEW POLICIES ARE ESSENTIAL.

The “ALCOHOL TOLL REDUCTION BILL” represents a significant change of thinking regarding the use and marketing of alcohol in our community. This Bill is well named and well chosen and is very likely to lead to significant reductions in deaths and injuries in the community, especially those deaths and injuries that have in

the past been associated with the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

The policy may be confrontational. We need to speak the truth with CARE and empathy, and at the same time be able to point to the facts, without apology, if we are to develop the hope of building a safer community. I personally have found great success in helping addicts, as I helped them work on that premise – “The way you are drinking alcohol is rational. It is in fact your choice”.

I thank all Honourable Senators and Committee Members for considering this submission.

**Yours faithfully,
Rev. John Tully OAM. 2ND March 2008.**

ADDENDUM:

I suggest that the Senate Committee note some important elements that deserve attention during the course of the inquiry.

THE TOLL OF ALCOHOL RELATED PROBLEMS TOUCHES EVERY STRATA OF SOCIETY AND EVERY GROUP IN SOCIETY.

We need constantly and consistently to remember that as we celebrated the feats of many young Australians in many walks of life, academically, on the fields of sporting endeavour and socially, there are those who find the challenge all too difficult and become casualties to life itself in many ways.

Those who become casualties in the prime of life, remind us that there is something very wrong in our society and something wrong with our culture. This society offers amazing material wealth, opportunities for academic education, technology that opens opportunities to behave as gods with undreamed of power and bountiful leisure, but there is something wrong, when so

many young people are dying. We are perhaps the best-nourished society in history, with foods that even the wealthiest potentate, in past ages, could not command to his table. There are opportunities to travel more freely than the gods of ancient Myth.

When young people with such privilege are “dumbing themselves down”, self harming or taking their own lives, there must be something wrong in our society. Drug related illness, alcoholic ‘blackout’ and un-necessary deaths are so frequent. I commend the Parents and Friends of deceased drug users, and the parents and friends of many others who have lost their lives very prematurely, in accidents or by their own hand, for refusing to let DIE, the message these young people have given their lives to send to this community.¹ This message should not fade away or be forgotten.

The 1977 Inquiry noted that the problems associated with alcohol were related to the total amount of alcohol consumed by that community. The higher the rate of consumption of alcohol, the more people would present with problems. These problems were not confined to one demographic group or social strata.

Legislation was passed to keep the price of alcohol related to the cost of living index. The States were encouraged to strictly regulate the conditions of serving alcohol within the Industry, so encouraging the Hotel industry to adopt various Patron Care Programs.

Measures that were relevant in the 1970’s and 1980’s are not adequate for the changing economic environment of the Twenty First Century.

NEEDED!

A THERAPY FOR LIFE THAT IS

¹ In 1997, 28th Sept. grieving parents erected a memorial in a Surfers Paradise beachside park to young drug users who had lost their lives - Dedication by Senator Brenda Gibbs.

MULTI-MODAL HOLISTIC.

A therapy or education to enable people to cope with the 21st Century, such a therapy or education will incorporate and promote our insight of what it is to be human, and will include the following elements of human understanding.

BIOLOGICAL: We need to take seriously some of the wisdom of past ages. Some ancient thinkers taught that mankind is on the earth with the gifts that we have, to be in the midst of life on this Planet, to play a unique part because of our self conscious awareness and our ability to reflect on issues and inform our awareness of those issues. We are able to modify the world around us, and our perception of it as we direct with a little insight and knowledge the shape of creation and our environment. Some have said we are gods, others that we are ‘like gods’ or we are ‘Vice Regents under God.’

The basic mapping of the Human Genome was completed in the year 2,000 AD. Even now, almost every week new discoveries are made concerning one or two of the near to 100,000 Genes that mark our individuality. This is a crowning achievement and an awesome responsibility (will fear lethargy or sloth limit our ability to make an appropriate response) to rethink our justice system? A new and great challenge is before us as we begin to see the part that genetics, education and environment play in our behaviour, together with our mental, physical, social and spiritual health.

CULTURAL solutions are essential if we are to experience joy and hope in life. The culture that promotes Alcoholic beverages has changed since the possibility of a victim taking legal action against the one who serves the alcohol under legal Tort, has become a reality.

Individuals are dependent on a society that cares. The Common law that has adopted, “Love your neighbour” is likely to be

overlooked when it comes to “Doing what I like”. The most costly drug to our society is **Tobacco, and next to it is Alcohol**. The cost of gambling to the community may be greater than either of the above. Until we have a culture that genuinely cares that the young and unborn may be affected by our actions we will share a sick and needy society. In about 40 years of working with Heroin Addicted persons, I have met only one or may be two who did not commence his or her ride on the escalator of addiction by smoking cigarettes, and or drinking alcohol. The culture of addiction was learned as people followed the habits of using chemicals to change feelings. “Addiction is an innocent attempt to find completion in a substance or situation.” Joseph V. Bailey, President of the Minneapolis Institute of Mental Health. –The Serenity Principle . Harper Collins Page 1.

ECOLOGICAL understanding is essential if the human race is to have hope. Increasingly we know that the earth is a remarkable space ship, and as human beings and fellow crew-members we share the air that every other living creature breathes. Without a vision of healing that includes the healing of individuals and the environment, those who would help may well run the risk of teaching, or immersing our children in a spirit of helplessness and hopelessness. To be with a person who begins to experience the change in his or her life that enables him or her to move from depression and despair or hopelessness, to hope and realistic optimism, to experience life as symphony, harmony, peace, and serenity is an experience that must be shared. To fail to share this hope is to fail to care.

ECONOMIC rationalism has long been the creed of the criminal world. ‘If there is money in it, go and get it’ is the rationale behind much crime. Governments of various persuasions have baptised that rationale. Money was made to serve human beings, not human beings made to be consumers, or workers for the sake of monetary profit. In the desire for

financial profitability, that which is now identified as “Social Capital” or mutual group and community care and interaction, is being sacrificed to the gods of comfort and greed.

EDUCATIONAL insights that build self-care, self-management and a sense of ‘Responsibility’ viewed as a personal ability to make response and choice in the face of every situation. The response each person makes will affect some other person or persons. **Encourage empathetic insight**, not simply comfortable personal individual existence, or even greed and aggression

Education for the parents of young families at risk is most essential. Help is needed for many troubled families with young children if these are to parent their children more appropriately.

FORENSIC solutions to crime must be noted more carefully. Many deaths are not adequately investigated and information that may enable the cause of death to be consigned to a different cause may help us become more effective in pro-active crime prevention and in the prevention of addictive behaviour. Some time ago a senior detective said to me, “We are only interested in catching criminals, we are not interested in what caused the person to commit the crime.” Adequate intelligence and appropriate research regarding crime and drug culture is essential.

JUDICIAL solutions are essential. A criminal justice system that fails to recognise that many of those who commit crime may more truly be considered to be sick or ill than criminal. Much drug related crime is related to psychological and sociological illness rather than being criminal. Many formerly law-abiding individuals have lost all sense of morality as they crave a chemical, or habitual solution, like gambling, to ease, still or avoid their mental, emotional, social, spiritual and physical pain.

Dr. John Currie, a member of the team conducting the trial on accelerated detox and Naltrexone treatment at Westmead Hospital Sydney for the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, stated:

“The fundamental premise of the trial is the recognition that drug addiction is a chronic, relapsing disease of the brain. For this reason, the treatment of drug addiction should follow the same principles in treating other remitting diseases such as asthma or arthritis.”²

Some States have **“Drug Courts”** where those who have offended because of their drug addiction are arrested and brought as quickly as possible to continuing intervention and appropriate therapy. Effective intervention in drug related, and addiction related crime will bring the moments of **detection, arrest, appropriate therapy, rehabilitation, restitution and punishment** (if that is felt to be essential) within the family group and the community, as close to each other as possible, and as quickly as possible.

LEGISLATIVE AND LEGAL: Legislation and the law itself must always come up for re –examination and careful scrutiny. Changes need to be made carefully, and not in haste. There has been a gap of too many years between the 1970’s Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare report “Drug Problems in Australia – an intoxicated nation?” and this forthcoming Senate Committee of Inquiry..

MEDICAL science has constantly been looking for a ‘quick fix’, a scientific fix for every illness, perhaps like the wonder drug penicillin.

Increasingly Neurological Science is bringing understanding to bear on mental illnesses like depression. A whole group of anti-depressant and psychoactive medications do offer a great

² CEIDA Druglinks – Professional Development –Hot Spots. 04/14/98. 13: 15: 59.

potential in helping the victim of dependency, addiction or habituation manage his or her life in a more satisfactory manner.

Addiction, in the past, has generally defied the medical model. It is a fact that a number of our highly educated Doctors and workers in the Medical field are themselves victims of the process addictions like workaholism and gambling along with drug addiction. One worker in the field quoted Sigmund Freud to remind us;

“Life as we find it is too difficult for us; it entails too much pain, too many disappointments, impossible tasks. We cannot do without palliative remedies ... There are perhaps three of these means: powerful diversion of interests which lead us to care little about our misery: substitute gratification’s which lessen it: and intoxicating substances which make us insensitive to it.”³

NEUROLOGICAL science is throwing a great deal of light (through such procedures as PET, *positron emission tomography*) on the dangers and effects of drug abuse and possibly on a person’s susceptibility to become a victim of dependent or addictive behaviours. I have in mind, Attention Deficit Disorder, Autism and associated conditions.

PHARMACOLOGICAL advances are now continually advancing the tools available to medical science to assist victims in managing their addictive behaviour. These advances are becoming available with increasing rapidity. Some herbal remedies need investigating.

PHYSIOLOGICAL: The physiology of addictive behaviour has been understood with greater clarity eg, foetal alcohol syndrome. Many of the extreme effects of malnutrition associated with alcohol dependency have almost been eliminated with the timely use of supplementary vitamins,

³ Medical Journal of Australia October 1978 Page 406-7. M.S Dalton and D.W.Duncan, quoting Sigmund Freud.

especially those of the B group. The use of Massage, relaxation and Acupuncture techniques have often proven helpful in managing recovery from Addictive behaviour.

- *At the time of the 1977 Inquiry Alcohol related brain damage (Korsakow / Korsakoff's syndrome/ dementia) especially in young people, was of great concern. Subsequently bread has been fortified with Vitimin B. Complex, and younger people at least have benefited. .*

POLITICAL The political will to control Customs and our air space and to protect our coastlines have not been adequately demonstrated. The political will to effectively implement innovation has not been consistently evident. The political will to do other than imprison a few 'unlucky' offenders has not been demonstrated. When a number of High Rollers were excluded from New South Wales Casinos⁴ because of their believed or know relationship with the drug industry, those same persons were welcomed in Victoria and Queensland.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: The mapping of our human genetic make-up will call for a new understanding of our mind and soul and being. The understanding that Genetic Psychology brings to human kind challenges, and demands that we acknowledge that no problem can be answered apart from seeing, at some time, the whole. Already we know and are reluctant to take the information seriously, that various foods affect the health of some individuals, and that common instruments of pleasure like Alcoholic Beverages and Nicotine negatively affect the developing foetus, and damage the adult human being. We still actively promote and use these instruments of pleasure. How will we behave more responsibly as even more startling discoveries are made?

REGULATORY measures in relation to drug related problems must constantly be reviewed. Regulations will be bent to benefit

⁴ The Sydney Morning Herald Thurs. Sept. 11 1997.

the economic rationalism of the criminal mind. Why and how does the Drug dealer maintain his or her Phone Number so that if an addict comes out of prison after two years he has no need to find a new phone number to have his or her order delivered close to the door of his new home? This is all too reminiscent of many elements that Commissioner Fitzgerald discovered with regard to illegal bookmaking in his Commission of Inquiry 1987 to 1989. Certainly the technology of the cellular phone and Internet has changed our lives forever.

RELIGIOUS elements, in addition to the Theological and Spiritual, in human nature need to be better understood. Most addictive behaviours are so basic to human nature that they have an ancient religious origin. ‘Ritual’ fascinates and comforts people, so that the ritualistic and religious elements of “Binge Drinking – it the consumption of alcohol in excess, along with the religious elements in gambling and illegal drug use (observe the ritual of two nicotine addicts who meet) need to be understood and incorporated in any successful therapy. Similarly, new or strange rituals, need to be appropriately evaluated by each human being, before they become personal practice.

It is sad that the Churches generally are viewed by young people as being out of touch with their reality, and that a staid and unfeeling Church is unable to help them in this complex world we all live in. I apologise that the church today appears to be so out of touch.

SOCIOLOGICAL: We understand that we have been given our Genetic Code. The Social structures that surround us feed our consciousness with information that will shape our perception, our thinking, our feeling and being for a considerable part of our future. We need to take seriously the nurturing function that takes place in our families, and the intentional and unintended function of nurture and entertainment or amusement performed by our Marketing agents and

institutions like television. In 1972 the late Bruce Gyngell appeared before s Senate Standing Committee and said:

“Commercial Television’s prime role is to provide entertainment for the majority of people who are tired, bored and disillusioned with life. The majority ... don’t like the job they have, don’t like their lifestyle, and a lot don’t like the person they are married to....they are people who want to escape from what who and where they are into a more palatable world.”⁵

TECHNOLOGICAL fix has not only enabled us to produce greater quantities of alcohol and proof spirit, but it has permitted the production of designer drugs to help us manage depression or hyperactivity and lack of the powers of concentration or sleeplessness that some individuals face. The chemical (drug fix) can be abused and end up taking control of the individual, as he or she becomes addicted to substances like nicotine, alcohol, amphetamine and heroin.

The technological fix has reduced the world to a ‘global village’ and the increasing supplies of heroin from South America, The Golden Triangle, and from areas East of the Caspian Sea (*brown sugar*) where many wars that must be financed are raging. Traditional demand for heroin is possibly falling. Local drug dealers are attempting to sell heroin and other illegal substances to younger and younger children.

Dealer wars may erupt, as debts cannot be collected. The Police will need to be very vigilant as this state of disruption provides an optimum time for law enforcement agencies to act.

We give thanks for the development of substances like *Naltrexone* that block the effect of opioids, and almost eliminate the craving for opioids and alcohol. Also *acamprosate calcium*

⁵ Page 3. The Australian, July 20 1972. Bruce Gyngell before a Senate Standing Committee.

These need to be affordable. Any technological fix can be abused, and these particular chemical tools need to be associated with appropriate counselling for maximum effectiveness. Human beings need to learn to be able to take control of their personal destiny for the good of themselves, to benefit others, and all creation, while causing harm to no one person.⁶

THEOLOGICAL and SPIRITUAL: Ours is perhaps the first truly secular society in the history of Planet Earth. A Higher Power, a Deity of some dimension or form has been a part of human thinking, being and living from time immemorial. It seems that if we have no God we create a god, a Spiritual relationship or a form of worship develops in which the devotees lose themselves as they become slaves to gaining and keeping power at any price, gambling, anger, possessions or Alcohol. *“You see, ‘alcohol’ in Latin is ‘spiritus’ and you use the same word for the highest religious experience as well as the most depraving poison. The helpful formula therefore is: ‘Spiritus contra spiritum’⁷ - Spirit against Spirit.*

One writer reminds us that ‘The appeal of heroin is the void. The warm soft cocoon of nothingness.... It is of interest that the heroin addict and the illuminated Buddha end up at the same place. The void. To cure the junkie and the Alcoholic you must humbly admit that he is a more deeply spiritual person than you.’⁸

HOLISTIC AND MULTI-MODAL: Above I have outlined a multi-modal and holistic approach to the problems of our

⁶ John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism and other Essays*, Ed. Alan Ryan Penguin 1987.

⁷ Carl Jung, the great Psychiatrist wrote to Bill, confounder of Alcoholics Anonymous in a letter dated 30th January 1961, Published in Grapevine 1963.

⁸ Politics of Ecstasy. Timothy Leary. Page 36-37.

society. Only Society itself can approach these matters, but you, as an individual may and in fact can shape public opinion. You as an individual have more power than you think. Individuals may choose to form interest groups and learn to grow *Social Capital* and use their untapped power for the public good.

ALSO, WE MUST CONSTANTLY KEEP THE ECONOMIC COST AND SOCIAL PAIN OF THE ALCOHOL TOLL BEFORE THE CONSCIOUS MIND OF THE COMMUNITY, THROUGH PRESS, TELEVISION AND RADIO, INTERNET etc. – AS THE COMMUNITY CONSTANTLY COUNTS THE COST, AND IS BEING MADE AWARE OF THE TOLL ASSOCIATED WITH TOBACCO AND NICOTINE .

The KEY to that rational choice is appropriate information, healthy thinking and healthy emotion with emphasis on understanding the human emotion “SHAME”.

“SHAME is generally recognised as a particularly intense, and often incapacitating, negative emotion involving feelings of inferiority, powerlessness and self consciousness, along with the desire to conceal deficiencies.” British Journal of Clinical Psychology 2002 41 29-42 Bernice Andrew, Mingyi Quian, and John D. Vaslentine.

Shame has been overlooked in Western Sociology and psychology. Sigmund Freud bypassed shame and centred on guilt. Shame is a ‘Who I am’ attitude. Guilt is a “What I have done” statement.

“Shame is a threat to a person’s basic sense of being. The shamed person feels small, weak vulnerable and exposed. He may rage against himself because he feels unacceptable. He might also find this self hatred un-endurable. Sometimes he

might also find this self hatred un-endurable. Sometimes in order to survive, a person who is shamed transfers his hatred onto others, treating them with disdain and contempt.Shame and addiction are natural partners. The more chronically shamed a person is, the more likely he will be attracted to anything that promises relief from internal pain and emptiness. The answer must lie outside himself in the magic of alcohol, other drugs etc.” Dr. Ronald Potter-Efron and Patricia Potter-Efron, “Letting go of SHAME” Page 44., Hazelden. 1989.

“Wherever feelings of shame are encountered, they are reduced by becoming addicted to something. Addiction negates intense negative affect....” Dr. Gershen Kaufman, The Psychology of Shame. Page.123, Springer Publishing 1996.

I contend that, granted the power of that basic and foundational emotion, ‘shame’, advertising that uses the powerful and successful to promote alcohol, prompts the ‘deeply shamed’ person to feel more shamed.

In the face of feeling useless, hopeless, and powerless, the person knows that if they consume the product in the advertisement, they will immediately feel “relief from bad feelings and feel empowered to take on life and the whole world

The power of advertising is not that it imparts factual information, but that it promotes a new lifestyle, a dream, a vision and so offers escape “into a more palatable world”. See above quote from William James – Varieties of Religious Experience.

OVERCOMING ADDICTION REQUIRES ENDURING EFFORT TO WIN THE STRUGGLE.

The story of addictive/abusive, self harming behaviour for each person is different. The progress is always very similar. It is as if the victim invited a likable and amusing ‘friend’ into his or her home. The so-called friend introduces other interests or friends. Eventually the ‘guest’ takes over the running of the house and family. The owner of the house is eventually sent to live in the toilet, while believing that he or she is still the owner and in control of the whole household.

To reverse this process will involve the true owner of the house in a very intense struggle, a struggle that is more intense than any conflict the person has been involved in before.

- 1) **YOUR AIM** - Select and maintain your aim to seek **serenity and good health** — mental, emotional, physical, social, spiritual.
- 2) **MORALE** - Maintain your morale - look at your strengths and abilities, even if these have been damaged. Seek healing for your shame — Build self- esteem.
- 3) **OFFENSIVE ACTION** - To achieve your goal to seek serenity and good health, you will need a plan to engage in offensive action, so strengthen your resolution, and maintain your courage.
- 4) **SECURITY** - Keep yourself in a secure environment with appropriate caring people. Avoid dangerous and inappropriate places, things, events and people who are still practicing the unhealthy habits you have planned to overcome. Cultivate the habit of good health.
- 5) **SURPRISE** - Your old unhealthy habits will try to surprise you or try to get back into your life when you least expect it. Surprise yourself with the persistence of your power to endure, resolve, and to confirm your new healthy rituals and habits.
- 6) **CO-ORDINATION** - Be sure to co-ordinate your efforts with those who are positively supporting you, and trying to help you strengthen your new healthy habits.

- 7) **ECONOMY OF EFFORT** - Avoid being Hungry; Angry; Lonely or Tired. Save your energy, effort, time and money, and that of your friends and family, to invest after you have become firmly established in your new way of living.
- 8) **FLEXIBILITY** - Grow to be flexible (not impulsive) in your struggle to establish your new habits and thoughts to support good health and balanced joy in your life.
- 9) **CO-OPERATE** - Learn to co-operate with appropriate, healthy, caring people who love you and wish to see you overcome the feeling of shame in your life and establish your self-esteem.
- 10) **ADMINISTRATE** - Learn to administrate and manage your many resources as you take many small steps toward your living with joyful serenity. It is your perfect right to have joy, and serenity in your life. You will share this new quality of life with your family, your friends and the whole community.

The modern word ‘SERENITY’ has a many sided history with its origins in Latin; It gathers meaning from Greek and Hebrew Cultures, as it comes to us today. It is an active dynamic word. It describes a person who is in control of his or her personal life, and is able to ‘Keep harmony in all situations’. In the life that is lived with serenity, decisions and choices are always being made. With royal wisdom, the person who has serenity chooses to avoid those things that do not bring **edification** into his or her life and the life of the community. See 1 Corinthians 10:23; I Cor 6:12; Rom.14:19, Philippians 4:4-7 Pain and joy, disappointment and awe, fear and love are all elements to be appreciated in the symphony of life.

“**Edify**” – English means to build up or strengthen as in strengthening character. The Greek word that St. Paul used meant to build or strengthen a house, as when one wall is added to another, and finally the roof is on and the structure is strong and complete.

Further notes that may be useful:

“I refer to the consciousness produced by intoxicants and anaesthetics, especially by alcohol. The sway of alcohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature, usually crushed to earth by the cold facts and dry criticism of the sober hour. Sobriety diminishes, discriminates and says no: drunkenness expands, unites and says yes. It is in fact the great exciter of the “Yes” function in man. It brings its votary from the chill periphery of things to the radiant core. It makes him for the moment one with truth. Not through mere perversity do men run after it. To the poor and unlettered it stands in the place of symphony concerts and of literature; and it is part of the deeper mystery and tragedy of life that whiffs and gleams of something that we immediately recognise as excellent should be vouchsafed to so many of us only in the fleeting earlier phases of what in its totality is so degrading a poisoning. The drunken consciousness is one bit of the mystic consciousness, and our total opinion of it must find its place in our opinion of the larger whole.”

William James. VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE –A study in human nature. P.387 Longmans Green and Co. London 1929.

In a letter from Dr. Carl Jung to Bill W. co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, dated 30th January 1961, and published in “Grapevine” 1963 (Magazine of A.A.

Organisation Jung says: “You see, ‘alcohol’ in Latin is ‘*spiritus*’ and you use the same word for the highest religious experience as well as for the most depraving poison. The helpful formula therefore is: “*spiritus contra spiritum*”. (spirit against Spirit).

Notes by Rev. John Tully OAM.