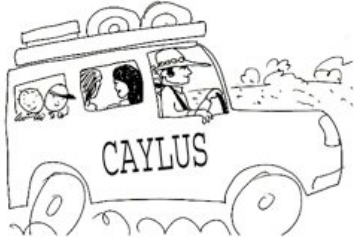


Tangentyere Council
Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service
(CAYLUS)



Po Box 8070
Alice Springs NT 0871
Ph: 8951 4236

5 February 2010

To Senate Inquiry into NTER Bill

This is a submission from Central Australian Youth Link Up Service – see attachment 1 for background information about CAYLUS. This submission is brief but the issues we raise are significant in this region and we hope they can be addressed.

Effectiveness of proposed amendments to :

improve the social and economic conditions, social inclusion and life outcomes of all the disadvantaged individuals and communities affected by the measures, including but not limited to the Northern Territory

deliver measurable improvements in protecting women and children, reducing alcohol-related harm, improving nutrition and food security, promoting community engagement and strengthening personal and cultural sense of value in all affected communities, including but not limited to Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory;

We would argue that the way the NTER was imposed does little to address the real issues regarding Indigenous disadvantage. It seems this group has been subject to a variety of social experiments over many generations by successive governments that have resulted in creating the most impoverished group in Australia, with the worst life expectancy of any Indigenous population in the world. This impoverishment is surprising as the group has vast land holdings and a wealth of culture and knowledge. It is sad to see this group blamed for the failure of government policy, and demonised as part of a strategy to shift blame from the real causes of the problems in their communities.

In relation to social inclusion, the media image of Indigenous communities being “hell holes” full of paedophiles does little to foster social inclusion. The promotion of this image, which has been found to be spurious, divides the Australian community and promotes racism. It has made it harder for agencies to recruit to positions in these communities, and needs to be addressed with a positive media campaign as soon as

possible. It seems clear that eventually a Prime Minister will have to offer an apology for the NTER in the way one has been offered for the Stolen Generation. Why wait?

CDEP

Changes to CDEP mean people are no longer electing to participate in this program because CDEP is now thru Centrelink and is income managed. Despite it's problems, CDEP was a long term program that provided Indigenous people with some meaningful employment in their home communities. People we know were proud to have this work, and it gave young people in remote communities something achievable to aim at in an otherwise bleak work environment. Strategies should be developed to support this program and expand it's role as a local employment and training option. One way of doing this would be to redirect the numerous Job Placement programs into the CDEP system. At the moment, a number of private companies are paid substantial amounts of public money to train people for non-existent jobs. This is based on faulty reasoning, and is the reason another NTER initiative – the Community Employment Brokers - were recently discontinued. Jobs do not spring forth from nowhere – they are a product of economic activity. It is a fallacy that these expensive job training and placement services can provide jobs in this region when there is no economic basis for employment.

Income management

Further changes will mean pensions are no longer income managed. This will result in the most vulnerable portion of the community being subjected to increased social pressure for access to their cash. The situation was bad before Income Management started, but if the changes are introduced now while other Centrelink payments are still income managed, the pressure will be worse than ever. Another problem is that some of our clients are brain damaged from inhalant use and have been assessed as needing to be on a pension. These people are not capable of managing their money.

Re the assessment of the benefit of Income Management in terms of food purchased etc, it seems the research done to establish this has not been of a high standard. For such an important and expensive measure, a comprehensive and valid study would seem appropriate. It is hard to imagine any other field in which a \$100 million initiative would be funded based on so little concrete evidence.

Alcohol Policy

Re Income Management addressing substance abuse, we suggest a targeted approach would be better than the current shotgun approach of reducing the amount of disposable income in people's control and hoping this will reduce the amount spent on alcohol and other intoxicants. International research indicates the best way to address excessive alcohol consumption is to sell less. It's not rocket science, but it is unpopular and something that governments do not like to implement. Under the Emergency conditions

that justify the NTER, there is no better opportunity to bring in measures to reduce the availability of alcohol through increasing the price per standard drink to \$1 and reducing the hours of availability of retail alcohol.

In relation to the alcohol consumption, a Menzies School of Health Research report – the Evaluation of the Alice Springs Alcohol Restrictions 2009 - found that alcohol restrictions in Alice Springs introduced by the NT government in 2006 prior to the NTER resulted in an 18% reduction in alcohol consumed, with an associated reduction in crime. It is also common sense : if you want people to drink less, sell them less. With these findings at their disposal, the way is clear for the Federal Government to reduce the levels of dangerous drinking and crime in Alice Springs by increasing alcohol restrictions. It is a condemnation of government policy that alcohol retailers are allowed to make substantial profits from the misery of the local people of this region. Many initiatives that are being funded under the NTER are **after** the event – dealing with the damage caused by alcohol on the lives and families of those with alcohol problems. We would rather see the government provide some leadership and deal with prevention rather than cure.

Cost of Administration of NTER measures

Re the cost of administration and delivery of the measures in place, we suggest an assessment of the value of GBMs and associated infrastructure should be undertaken. A cost/benefit analysis undertaken by an independent research agency such as Access Economics would be appropriate. It seems on the ground that there is little real value in this expensive undertaking. Especially in the context of the crisis in Indigenous housing, it is demoralising to Indigenous people to see the infrastructure provide overnight for bureaucrats when they have been advocating for years for basic services to improve the health and education potential of their families. Instead of Commonwealth Public Servants with vague job descriptions, an alternative approach could have been to use their wage allocation to provide a subsidy to good food in the remote communities, and spend the infrastructure money on community services rather than services to government. It's not too late to redirect these resources : the GBM complexes could be given to the local Shires for local worker accommodation and the wages could be redirected to community based needs.

It would be illuminating to have an analysis of how much money allocated to the NTER has been spent on Public Servants, their travel and accommodation and associated costs, versus how much on services and infrastructure directly for Indigenous people. When the NTER promised jobs and houses, no-one realised this meant jobs and houses for public servants.

The need for and Evidence-based Approach

In relation to improving the social and economic conditions, decisions about the allocation of responsibility for this improvement should be made on evidence. It is alarming to note that Tangentyere Council has been accused of not providing adequate

housing to residents of the town camps and responsibility transferred to the NTG. This is especially ironic considering the funding provided by the Commonwealth for this task to Tangentyere was clearly inadequate in the light of the funds that are now being committed to this issue. We understand Paul Phaleros of Health Habitat did an assessment of the housing in town camps in 2006 while they were being looked after by Tangentyere Council. While some of the houses were in shocking condition, on the whole the houses were significantly better than the NT average for public housing, and in some categories better than the national average. He stated on Late Night Live on 13 January, 2010 that after some minor work – about \$7000 per house – the town camp houses were better than the National average in almost every category. It is confusing that under these circumstances control of these houses is being given to the NTG, given their worse performance in this matter.

The RSD or “Growth Town’ Policy

The protection of women and children can be addressed by the alcohol restrictions outlined above. The recent decision that NTER funding will only go to some remote communities and not others is baffling if the purpose is to provide protection to this vulnerable group. Are the people in the smaller communities not entitled to this protection? This decision is clearly an economic one and should be reconsidered. As outlined above, there are ways of redirecting funds that would mean they went a lot further.

Attachment 1

About The Central Australian Youth Link Up Service

Mission

To support community initiatives that improve quality of life and address substance misuse affecting young people in Central Australian remote communities and town camps.

Background

CAYLUS started as a petrol sniffing prevention project in November 2002 from funding committed by the Howard government in response to a series of articles about petrol sniffing by the journalist Paul Toohy in *The Australian*. In its early years the program employed two community development workers and a caseworker.

CAYLUS supported interventions have included rehabilitation projects, youth programs, a responsible retail of solvents program, night patrols, policing initiatives, football carnivals, video and radio projects, and more. Whilst many supply-reduction measures specifically targeted inhalants, the demand-reduction measures such as development of community-based youth development programs have had a myriad of other health, substance misuse prevention and community safety outcomes.

CAYLUS staff worked closely with families to facilitate access to rehabilitation programs and worked with these services to varying degrees to help develop their programs and services.

Alpurrurulam Lake Nash



CAYLUS was first contacted by Lake Nash (Alpurrurulam) Council in response to outbreaks of petrol sniffing in the community. Some visitors to the community had been sniffing there and some local youth had also started experimenting. Families and workers in the community were concerned and got together on several occasions to move visitors back to Mt Isa and other communities. Mostly this slowed the sniffing for a while and local youth didn't sniff once this had happened. After several outbreaks, community members asked CAYLUS to assist them in getting Opal Fuel. They were also concerned that there were few meaningful activities and opportunities available to young people in the community. Since the introduction of Opal there has been only sporadic sniffing in the community.

There are nearly 250 young people and children in Lake Nash and CAYLUS has been working with government and the council to try and improve opportunities and supports for youth in the community through developing a youth program. There is a sport and recreation program and staff have recently changed over. Anna Flouris is the new worker, and Anna says that

despite limited program resources community members value and support activities for young people and actively engage in running activities for youth. One of the initiatives Anna is supporting is a community newsletter, and she has just finished the second edition.

CAYLUS has been working with the Alpurrurulam community to try and pull together funds for a full time youth worker to work in the community. Our experience is that the minimum level of resources required for a youth program in a community like Alpurrurulam is 2 youth workers with suitable housing, 2 program vehicles and a youth program centre such as a Rec hall and money to employ local casual workers. CAYLUS will continue to support Alpurrurulam in working toward this model, which is the basic level of services needed to start addressing the underlying causes of sniffing.

CAYLUS also helped the community to secure funds through the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) and NT Health and Commonwealth Health to run holiday programs in the community. We engaged Rahm and Melika from Multivision Media who ran a fantastic program with help from the Women's Centre, Council and store. The program ran for 4 weeks in the winter break and included daily activities for all ages and families.



Anna Flouris





To Contact Anna Flouris,
Alpurrurulam community
Sport and Rec worker
phone 07 478483048.

Legislation

CAYLUS staff worked with other stakeholders to advocate to the Northern Territory government for a range of measures including better data collection, better policing around petrol sniffing and better rehabilitation options. This resulted in the introduction of the NT Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act 2005 and a complementary investment in support programs by the NT government. One of the most useful outcomes of this legislation is that it gives communities the ability to make possession of sniffable petrol illegal altogether within their bounds, thereby making petrol dealing far more difficult.



Opal Fuel

Staff initially promoted use of aviation gas as a non-sniffable fuel, along with promoting the use of the Misuse of Drugs Act (NT) to prevent dealing. The workers offered a hotline service whereby community members were able to name dealers of petrol. 12 dealers were reported to police in this way in the first few months of the service. With the advent of Opal fuel in 2005, it became feasible for the first time to implement a non-sniffable fuel across the region. CAYLUS staff worked with communities promoting the use of the fuel. They also advocated for a change in Commonwealth government policy, first to allow roadhouses to use the fuel and eventually to support a region wide rollout in Central Australia. Although data collection has been patchy, staff estimate at the time of writing that numbers of people sniffing in the region have been reduced from 500 to less than 20 as a result. Staff continue to work toward rolling out youth programs to all communities in order to engage youth who were previously sniffing in positive activities and programs.

Governance

The project is overseen by a reference group of organizations and key stakeholders from the region:

- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
- Papunya Community
- 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
- Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi
- Pintubi Homelands Health Service
- Mt Liebig community

Communities serviced

CAYLUS services the following communities, which are spread geographically over more than 600,000 square kilometres:

- Alice Springs
- Ampilatwatja
- Aputula
- Areyonga
- Bonya
- Docker River
- Harts Range
- Hermannsburg
- Kintore
- Lake Nash
- Mt Liebig
- Mutitjulu
- Nyirripi
- Papunya
- Titjikala
- Willowra
- Yuendumu
- Mt Theo and Ilpurla and outstations

In addition CAYLUS has provided assistance to the communities of Ali Curung, Balgo, and Amoongana.

Activities

For many years CAYLUS was the only service that provided support in relation to inhalant abuse to remote communities in the Central Australian region. In recent years some additional Commonwealth and NT funded treatment and diversionary services have started, partly as a result of CAYLUS work. CAYLUS now employs three community development

workers, who work with remote Indigenous communities to create education and treatment strategies that address substance abuse particularly by young people. We also employ a caseworker, a supply reduction worker and a youth program support worker.

CAYLUS support includes:

- development of community plans to address the substance abuse,
- assistance in locating funding to support community actions,
- coordination and funding of training for youth workers and community members,
- work with retailers to support responsible sale of solvent,
- education about the consequences of inhalant and other substance abuse,
- networking communities with existing service providers,
- production of indigenous language resources,
- a media strategy to complement other activities,
- advocacy to promote useful strategies to address substance misuse affecting youth, and
- casework to assist individual youth.

School holidays

The school holidays are widely recognised as a time of increased substance abuse, violence, self-harming behaviour and injury for young people in Central Australia. As a part of on-going activities CAYLUS has been coordinating resources, staff and money for summer and mid year school holiday programs since its inception.

Current Initiatives

Youth Infrastructure Upgrades

One of the biggest obstacles in terms of developing youth services is lack of essential infrastructure including houses for youth workers, recreation halls and facilities to work in and program vehicles. CAYLUS currently estimates that the cost of bringing this infrastructure up to standard across the service region at \$17 million.

In early 2008 we succeeded in gaining a \$3million contribution towards this need from the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA), a mining royalties fund set up under the NT Land Rights Act. We have subsequently commenced upgrades on the most pressing sites and are on schedule to complete works by Dec 2009.

As well as the infrastructure, there is a need for youth program resources, such as computers to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of participants, music and recording equipment to engage the older at risk youth in positive activities, sporting equipment to promote healthy activity, and a host of other operational needs.

CAYLUS continues to work with government and other agencies towards addressing these needs.

Workforce development

A key challenge across all sectors in the region is the recruitment and retention of quality staff. In a cross language and culture environment skilling up new workers requires lots of resources. It also a high stress environment and that means that the resources programs have invested in terms of developing staff can be lost with alarming regularity. Some additional challenges when working with children include ensuring all safety requirements in terms of criminal history and working with children screenings are met.

In order to address some of these issues CAYLUS is working with employer agencies across the region supporting youth workforce development initiatives.

Some of our work in this area to date includes:

- Developing volunteer placement as a way of improving the pool of potential workers;
- Making links with universities and partner organisations to develop student placement schemes and encourage appropriate graduates to apply for work in the region;
- Providing a regional coordination point/knowledge base that employers and potential workers can both access; and
- Working with government and employers to improve conditions and support for workers, including provision of professional supervision, counselling and emergency support.

Staff

Blair Mc Farland CAYLUS Coordinator

Blair has worked with remote communities in Central Australia on community justice issues for more than 20 years. He lived at Papunya for four years and has first-hand experience of life in traditional Aboriginal communities. He worked for eight years as a Probation and Parole Officer with the Western Desert as his field area. Following this, he worked for Tangentyere Council establishing the Remote Area Night Patrol Support Project, which assists remote communities establish and resource Night Patrols. Due to this long association with the communities, and his continuing commitment to social justice, he is well known in the region. He recently received the 2008 Prime Ministers Award for Excellence in the drug and alcohol field.

Tristan Ray CAYLUS Joint Coordinator

Tristan joined CAYLUS in 2003 prior to this he worked with young people in Community Media Production for over 10 years. He lived in Yuendumu for 4 of these years working as a training coordinator at Warlpiri Media Association. In this time he worked to establish the Pintubi Anmatjerre Warlpiri (PAW) Radio Network, this service now spans 11 communities. Tristan is currently studying a Masters of Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development through the ANU.

Phil Hassall CAYLUS Caseworker

Phil moved to the NT in 1987. In that time he worked for 8 years for NT FACS in the remote team, establishing the Adult Guardianship and Good Beginnings programs in Alice Springs and worked as a probation and parole officer for NT correction. Phil has a law degree and Degree in social work. He joined CAYLUS in 2004.

Yarran Cavalier Juvenile Diversion Unit Youth Program Support Worker

Yarran has lived in the NT since 1992 and has worked in a number of remote communities working in various capacities including; youth program provision, aged care, pre-school teaching and establishing a youth diversionary ranger program. He has lived with his partner and three girls at communities including Maningrida, Docker River, Yuelamu, Areyonga and Nyirripi.

Anna Flouris CAYLUS Community Development Worker

Anna joined CAYLUS in 2009; her role is to support remote communities to deal with sniffing, especially by developing youth programs and supply reduction. She lived in Lake Nash for 2 years, first working as a youth worker and then the Regional Sport and Recreation Coordinator for the Barkly Shire Council. In the last 10 years Anna has worked in Indigenous health, international development and training GPs/doctors.

Emma Trenorden CAYLUS Caseworker

Emma has been living in Alice Springs and working with young people in Central Australia for six years. She has worked with remote communities in the SA/WA/NT cross border region through NPY Women's Council Youth Team. She has also worked with young people in Alice Springs town camps through her work with ASYASS, coordinating their Youth Drop In Space, and now with CAYLUS as a Caseworker. Her previous role with CAYLUS involved working with retailers to implement supply reduction measures around glues,

paints, aerosols, and other volatile substances.

Majella Bowden CAYLUS Supply Reduction Worker

Majella joined CAYLUS in 2009 after completing a double degree in Arts and Education.

Majella was born and raised in Alice Springs and has ties with Pitjantjatara, Luritja and Arrernte families in Central Australia. She is passionate about Indigenous education, and also has experience in cross-cultural training. Her work with CAYLUS involves engaging with local retailers to ensure the effective supply reduction of volatile substances in Alice Springs.

The provision of support and advocacy for Indigenous young people on a regional basis – the CAYLUS model

Introduction

The Central Australian Youth Link Up Service (CAYLUS) provides a service which links young people (aged 5 – 25 years) to diversionary activities and drug and alcohol treatment programs; and which links remote communities with assistance in offering their young people an enhanced quality of life through addressing the lack of diversionary and treatment options. It receives funding from a wide range of sources, with core funding of \$425,580 being provided by the National Drug Strategy and Combating Petrol Sniffing from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, a further \$165,000 from the Department of the Attorney General, and \$88,000 from the Juvenile Diversion program. CAYLUS is located in Alice Springs, and is part of Tangentyere Council, an organisation which primarily provides services to the town camps located around Alice Springs.

The region served by CAYLUS is covered by four local government Shires – the Barkly, the Central Desert, the MacDonnell and the Alice Springs Shires. Together these Shires cover 873,821 sq kms with over 30 main communities¹. Most of these communities have amenities consisting of a single shop, a school (to early secondary level), a health clinic and varying levels of sport and recreational infrastructure. Excluding Alice Springs, the region has a population aged 5 – 25 years of approximately 4450 Indigenous young people living in remote communities². These young people have an average median income of approximately \$215 per week³, which is less than half the national median weekly income. The average life expectancy for the Northern Territory is 57.6 years for men, and 65.2 years for women, which, again is substantially less than the national figures⁴.

The region is populated by people of the Pintubi, Luritja, Warlpiri, Pitjantjatjara, Anmatjere, Altyawara and Arrernte, groups. English is spoken as a second language through much of the region. Many of the people living in the region follow a traditionally oriented lifestyle in which hunting, gathering and ceremonial activity play important parts in everyday life. The region is also characterised by high levels of alcohol use, with the Northern Territory as a whole consuming 13.82 litres per capita (national average 9.32 litres per capita), and consumption rates in Central Australia

¹ Local Government Regional Management Plan, 2008;

http://www.localgovernment.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/57073/Final_CENTRAL_AUSTRALIAN_REGION_RMP_09.pdf

² 2006 Census – this is likely to be an underestimate due of the difficulty is gaining accurate assessments as reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The population of young people in Alice Springs has been excluded from this total because CAYLUS principally provides services to young people from remote communities who are in Alice Springs for the purposes of substance use.

³ *ibid*

⁴ *ibid*

being higher than average for the Northern Territory (15.5L per capita)⁵. There are also high levels of use of marijuana with 24.4% of people over the age of 14 years reporting using marijuana in the last 12 months (national average 12.9%).⁶ Petrol sniffing has also been an issue in the region, with 244 young people documented as sniffing petrol and other solvents on a regular basis between the years 2005 and 2007.⁷

The region is therefore characterised by vast distances, considerable levels of poverty, poor infrastructure, low levels of educational attainment, poor health, and high levels of substance use. The data available does not allow for an accurate picture of the lifestyle of young people in the region to be drawn. However it is safe to assume that at the lower end of the age range targeted by CAYLUS (5 – 12 years) are negatively impacted by the conditions of life described above, and at the higher end (12 – 25 years) they are participating fully in the pattern of life prevalent in the region.

The CAYLUS model

CAYLUS's primary role is to work towards the improvement in the quality of life for young people living in remote communities in Central Australia. They achieve this through implementing two key strategies. The first of these is to assess gaps in service provision to young people in the region, and to fill those gaps through a mixture of direct service provision, supporting other service providers, and advocating with policy makers to address the needs in the sector. CAYLUS hold a pool of money known as 'brokerage funds', which it is able to deploy quickly in order to cover immediate and vital gaps in service provision on communities. The second key strategy is to identify issues which have a negative impact on the lives of young people, and implement strategies to address those issues. Examples of this are working towards reducing the supply of drugs and alcohol, and particularly of unleaded petrol; and working to improve the capacity of the network of appropriate drug and alcohol treatment services.

CAYLUS currently has a staff of six, which is a small team with which to address such entrenched and difficult issues over a large area. The model through which CAYLUS implements its' two key strategies is to gather information, respond to requests for assistance, and to function as a point which links stakeholders together so that they can work more effectively to address specific issues. For example in supply reduction of volatile substances they have formed linkages between suppliers, retailers, police, service agencies and consumers in order to reduce easy access to sprays and glues which are on sale in Alice Springs. This has resulted in a substantial drop in levels of volatile substance misuse in Alice Springs. In the area of demand reduction they link youth programs with support structures, and funding bodies and the wider political environment in order to increase the number coverage and quality of youth services in the region.

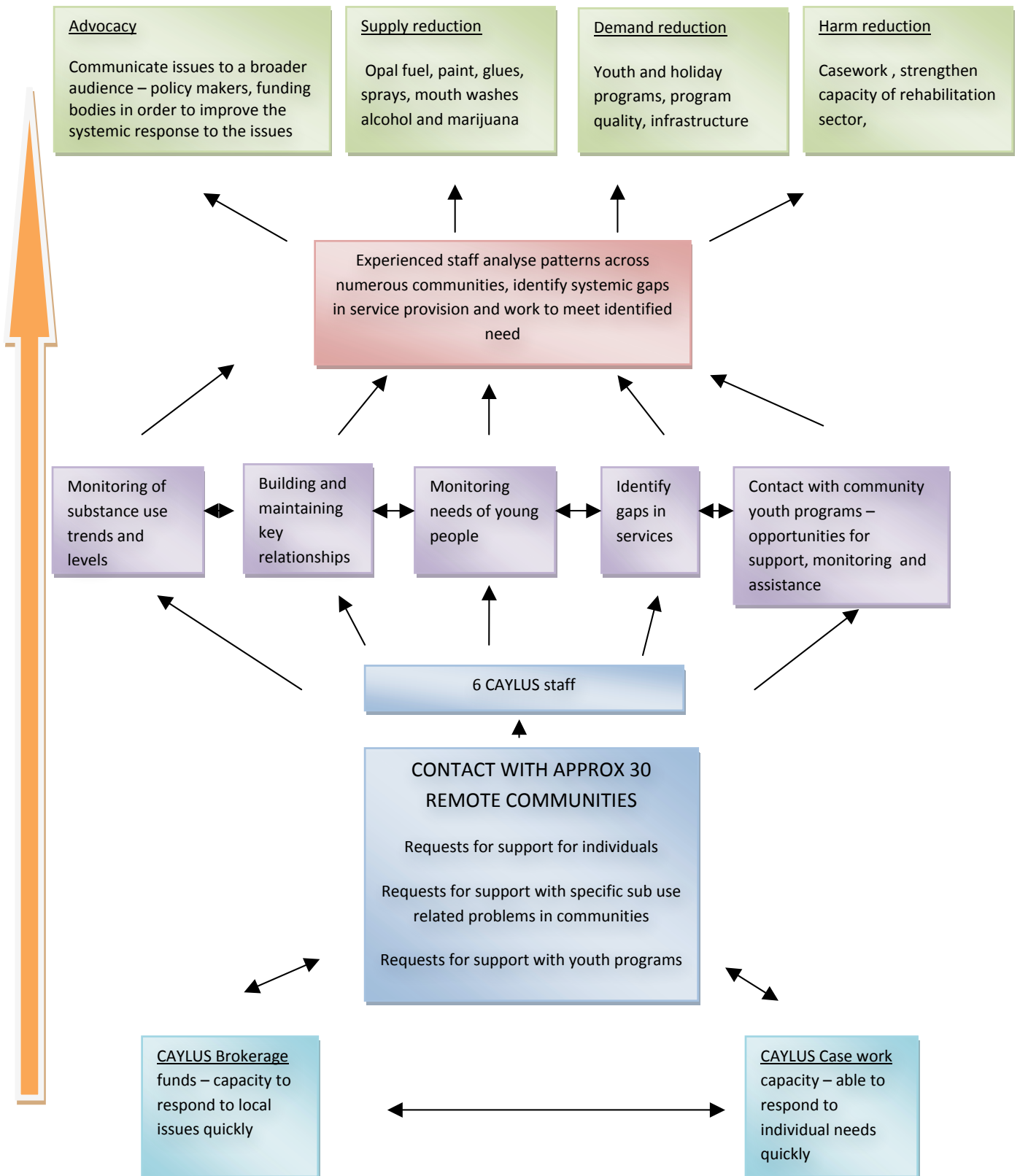
⁵ Northern Territory Treasury, 2004 a, in Alcohol and Other Drugs Program Profile of Services and Intervention Report, HMA and Associates, 2005

⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2002a

⁷ d'Abbs and Shaw, Data collection for the petrol sniffing prevention program, 2007

Underpinning the implementation of the two key strategies is the base level of the work done by CAYLUS, which is in the field of individual harm reduction – casework. CAYLUS employ a full time caseworker, and actively manage approximately 20 cases at any one time. This work on the individual level functions to inform CAYLUS of current trends in sniffing and other substance use, the needs of individuals, and the barriers to meeting those needs – that is an intimate picture of what is going on ‘on the ground’. The individuals and their families also provide linkages between CAYLUS and their home communities in remote areas. Through these linkages CAYLUS derive further information on the lives of young people on remote communities. Their staff become known as points of contact for youth issues. This leads to both advocacy and potential service provision roles.

Figure 1: The CAYLUS Model



CAYLUS has now been operating for seven years, and wherever possible, employs staff who are already well known in the communities before their tenure with CAYLUS. The result of this is that they have personal relationships with the senior Indigenous and non Indigenous decision makers in most communities in Central Australia. In conjunction with contacts made through casework, this network of relationships enables regular contact with these communities. CAYLUS therefore receive requests from communities and individuals for support in specific circumstances, and are able to access senior Indigenous and non Indigenous people to quickly establish the parameters of any situation and negotiate solutions. Such requests lead to the direct service provision undertaken by CAYLUS, and to the provision of support to other agencies. An example of this is that communities regularly contact CAYLUS when they have a group of young people sniffing solvents. CAYLUS then visit the community, talk through the options for action with senior Indigenous and non Indigenous community members, and then arrange immediate action. The action in this case is often to facilitate the placement of leading sniffers with an outstation rehabilitation program, which generally leads to a cessation of sniffing activity.

The ongoing provision of case work service and the existence of the network of contacts across communities and service provision organisations in Central Australia has led CAYLUS to develop expertise in the provision of services to young people in remote communities. This is primarily in the form of 'youth programs', which typically provide diversionary activities in the form of arts, crafts, sport and multi media. These youth programs are provided in both ongoing, and school holiday contexts. CAYLUS's role in the provision of youth services is both to directly provide services, and to undertake a range of activities that improve the quality of services run by other agencies. Examples of this are assistance with recruitment, provision of job descriptions, de-briefing workers, assistance with particular events and provision of equipment and logistical support.

Involvement in the provision of youth services for a number of years has resulted in CAYLUS developing an awareness of the structural barriers to the provision of quality youth programs in remote areas. They have therefore expanded their operations to overcome some of these barriers. They are currently doing this by sourcing funds and procuring the creation of infrastructure such as recreation halls and accommodation for youth workers in remote communities; by undertaking a workforce expansion program through liaising with the tertiary education sector to promote the sector to students, and by arranging systems of work experience for students studying relevant disciplines.

Their knowledge of the needs of young people who are abusing drugs and alcohol in Central Australia has also led CAYLUS to recognise the lack of access to appropriate rehabilitation services. They have therefore become involved in providing support to remote outstation rehabilitation centres which are the services that best suit the needs of young people from remote areas. The support provided to the two major services of this type in Central Australia is in assistance with logistical issues, financial support and advocacy.

Major achievements of CAYLUS

CAYLUS started in late 2002 with a single staff member, a small budget of and no vehicle. In the intervening years it has grown to six full time positions, seven vehicles (many of which are on long term loan to youth programs in remote areas) and a total annual operational budget of approximately \$678,580 . During the seven years of operation CAYLUS has had major achievements in the following fields.

Petrol sniffing and other volatile substance misuse

The number of people sniffing petrol in the remote communities of Central Australia has dropped from 244 in 2005 – 07, to 9 in 2008⁸. This decrease has been attributed to the almost universal use of Opal fuel, which is specifically designed and produced because it has no hydrocarbons, and therefore does not produce intoxication when sniffed⁹.

CAYLUS played a key role in advocating for the need for a complete regional rollout of the fuel. In 2005 they formed what was known as the Opal Alliance which was a lobby group comprised of another non government organisation, and a major commercial operation in Central Australia. This group commissioned a cost benefit analysis of a widespread roll out of the fuel from Access Economics, a conservative economic think tank. This study clearly showed the economic cost of sniffing, and therefore the economic gain of putting in place a measure that would drastically reduce the levels of sniffing in the region. In 2006 the Department of Health and Ageing agreed to the widespread rollout advocated by the Opal Alliance. Since that time CAYLUS have continued to educate communities about Opal fuel, and to monitor outlets that continue to sell unleaded petrol (ULP).

In addition to their work in supply reduction measures for petrol, CAYLUS have also worked on supply reduction for volatiles in Alice Springs. This has been necessary because volatile substance users came to Alice Springs to access volatiles when ULP was no longer available in their communities. CAYLUS has employed a full time staff member to work with retailers, police, suppliers and consumers to monitor volatile substance use levels and trends in Alice Springs, and to design and implement effective supply reduction measures.

Building the capacity of youth services in Central Australia

In 2002 the provision of youth services in the remote communities of Central Australia was sporadic, with only five communities having a youth service, and in two of these five, the service delivered was only occasional. Most communities had some funding from sport and recreation grants, however typically they struggled to recruit and supervise workers to the positions available. Some communities obtained specific funds, however these programs tended to run for short periods and then collapse.

⁸ D'Abbs and Shaw, Evaluation of the Impact of Opal fuel, 2008

⁹ ibid

CAYLUS has addressed this situation by working with Community Councils, and more recently the new Shires to assist with recruitment, resourcing and funding programs. They utilise four main strategies to achieve this:

- Employment of a full time staff member to support youth workers in remote communities to improve the quality of their programs. This is done through through community visits to provide assistance with specific events, de-briefing, mental health first aid training, and coordination of logistical support from Alice Springs.
- Direct provision of youth programs (as distinct to holiday programs) to 11 of the communities in the region for various periods; direct provision of school holiday programs to 20 communities in the region over a number of years;
- Access funding for youth initiatives across the region.
 - \$1m disbursed in brokerage fund for fast and flexible support to individuals and youth programs since 2002;
 - \$\$1.458m sourced and administered through CAYLUS for youth programs since 2002; and
 - \$2.961m provided to other youth services providers where CAYLUS supported the application and assists with the implementation of the program through provision of expertise and logistical support
 - Total of \$5.419m disbursed to support young people in rehabilitation and to provide youth programs across the region
- Access funding for the construction of infrastructure for youth programs
 - \$3.34m accessed and administered for the construction of youth related infrastructure (recreation halls and staff housing) for 12 communities in the region;
 - assisted access for \$2m for the refurbishment of an outstation rehabilitation centre
 - Total of \$5.5m accessed for improvement of infrastructure for program delivery to young people in the region

CAYLUS has also played a pivotal role in increasing the total funding for young people's programs to the region. As part of their advocacy work for the regional implementation of Opal fuel for supply reduction purposes, CAYLUS also strenuously and successfully advocated for increased funding for youth programs for diversionary activities¹⁰. When the Commonwealth Government made the decision to fund the regional rollout of Opal fuel in 2006, they also allocated \$3m to the provision of

¹⁰ Urbis Keys Young, 'Review of the first phase of the petrol sniffing prevention program', 2008

diversionary activities in the Northern Territory¹¹. This funding was augmented in 2007 by the additional of \$12m to fund diversionary activities for the four communities in the southern region of Central Australia¹². Finally in 2008 a further \$5.4m was made available through the Department of Families and Communities, Housing and Indigenous Affairs for youth projects¹³. The funding was made available through the Northern Territory Emergency Response. This brings a total of \$19.6m into the Northern Territory for the provision of additional youth services.

Improving the capacity of remote rehabilitation treatment services in Central Australia

The Central Australian region has two remote residential rehabilitation services – Ilpurla and Mt Theo. Both these services offer culturally based residential rehabilitation for young people from throughout Central Australia. They are a vital element of the response to young people's substance use in the region because they offer a place where young people can go and receive assistance by in an environment controlled by senior people from within their own culture.

Both of these services face the challenges of running a service in an extremely remote environment, and trying to incorporate traditional Aboriginal values and practices into their program; while still meeting the financial and accountability requirements required by funding bodies.

CAYLUS has worked in several ways to improve the capacity of these two services through implementing the following strategies:

- Accessing funding from the Department of the Attorney General to pay the food, transport and equipment costs for individual clients;
- Coordinating referrals to the services from the Justice system, Indigenous families, the Alcohol and Other Drugs services in Alice Springs and the Department of Family and Community Services;
- Assisting with sourcing funds for wages and equipment for both services;
- Advocating both the need for, and the benefits of remote rehabilitation services

Conclusion

CAYLUS have delivered a holistic substance use service to the remote communities of Central Australia for seven years. They have developed a model that has its roots in delivering a flexible,

¹¹ Minister for Health and Ageing and Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2005; Wilson 2005

¹² Urbis Keys Young, 'Review of the first phase of the petrol sniffing prevention program', 2008

¹³ Monitoring Report – Measuring the progress of NTER activities, FaCSHIA;
http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/nter_reports/Documents/monitoring_report_2/part3.htm

speedy and responsive service based around satisfying requests for assistance from its constituents; and then synthesising the knowledge built up through this process to advocate for a strengthening of the government response to the issues faced by young people living in remote communities in Central Australia. They have been very successful in delivering successful supply, demand and harm reduction services to the region.

It is important to examine the basis for their success, to investigate the key factors that have delivered such benefit to the region with a view to seeing if they can be replicated in other areas. A recent evaluation which obtained feedback from numerous stakeholders identified the main success factors as :

- the experience and longevity of the CAYLUS staff;
- their ability to disburse funds in a fast and flexible fashion to meet immediate needs;
- the network of personal relationships that CAYLUS staff have developed with key stakeholders throughout the region.¹⁴

These three factors can all be replicated in other regions. The first can be achieved by careful recruitment of people with existing experience of youth services within the target region, the second through negotiation with funding bodies and the third by allowing a project time to mature within a region.

¹⁴ Shaw, 'An evaluation of CAYLUS – 2007 – 2009, 2009, unpublished