



Indigenous Affairs Committee to visit Far North Queensland and Groote Eylandt

The House Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs will be holding hearings in Far North Queensland and Groote Eylandt for the inquiry into the harmful use of alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Committee will hold public hearings in Cairns on Tuesday 17 February and Groote Eylandt on Wednesday 18 February 2015.

The Committee Chair, Dr Sharman Stone MP, said: “The Committee feels it is most important to visit the far north region of Queensland, to hear more about community alcohol restrictions which have been in place for over 10 years now and to hear about the alcohol-related issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in this region.”

‘The Committee is aware that there is an association between increasing alcohol restrictions and falling rates of serious injury in Cape York, however we are interested in hearing from those who live in affected areas how the restrictions are working or any suggestions for improvements.’ Dr Stone said.

The Committee will also visit Groote Eylandt to hear first hand about the whole-of-island liquor management plan, which was instigated by and continues to be run by the community.

‘Communities such as those from Groote Eylandt have obtained alcohol restrictions, which apply to all people living on or visiting the island. They have taken a bold and proactive step for their people. The Committee would like to investigate how models such as this could be more widely applied and the strengths and any pitfalls in applying such restrictions,’ Dr Stone concluded.

In Cairns the witnesses include Associate Professor Alan Clough, Apunipima Cape York Health Council, Mr Alfred Lacey Mayor of Palm Island, Cape York Partnership and Youth Empowered Towards Independence.

On Groote Eylandt the witnesses will include Anindilyakwa Land Council and community members involved in the establishment of the liquor management plan.

Details of the hearings are as follows:

Cairns

Tuesday 17 February
9.00am – 4.15pm
Rydges Esplanade
209-217 Abbott Street Cairns, QLD

Groote Eylandt

Wednesday 18 February
10.30am – 4.00pm
Dugong Beach Resort
1 Bouganvillea Drive, Alyangula NT 0885

Members of the public are welcome to attend.

The terms of reference and full programs are available at www.aph.gov.au/indigenousaffairs
The proceedings will be audio webcast live on: www.aph.gov.au/live

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair Dr Sharman Stone MP on (03) 5821 5371. **For background information**, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or indigenousaffairs.reps@aph.gov.au