

1. **Your submission outlines change you have observed in your community since the Stronger Futures legislation was sunset, including an anecdotal increase in alcohol related violence in a number of our communities, an increase in an unproductive workforce as staff travel to Alice Springs to access alcohol and get stranded there, and an increase in the number of remote road accidents due to driving under the influence**

a. What do you think are the underlying factors to these challenges?

My thoughts as to the underlying factors to these challenges are:

- *Increased access to alcohol*
- *availability of alcohol*
- *lack of adequate implementation and enforcement of alcohol policies particularly in remote communities*
- *inadequate enforcement of uniform penalties for secondary supply*
- *pattern of drinking, particularly those patterns which are associated with episodes of large sporting events, big royalty payments and large gatherings*
- *Insufficient data to develop and better target efforts and resources to reduce the impacts of excessive alcohol consumption as well as access to alcohol*

b. Do you think the Stronger Futures legislation addressed any of them?

The Stronger Futures legislation;

- *Supported high risk communities by declaring them 'dry' communities and forbade the consumption of alcohol within clearly marked areas or boundaries*

c. What needs to be done to address these underlying factors?

- *An increased or renewed focus on regulating and restricting the availability of alcohol*
- *raising awareness of the health and social challenges caused by the harmful use of alcohol for both individuals and society at large*
- *ensuring adequate resources and funding support for enforcement of alcohol policies*
- *implementing early intervention, diversion programs and referral options for to treatment services*
- *Increase the capacity of health care services to deliver prevention and treatment interventions in remote*
- *Identify and develop relevant data sets, sources of data and surveillance*
- *Develop and implement family support programs*

2. What measures are you taking to address the challenges you have described since the Stronger Futures sunset? What support do you require?

Council has undertaken the following initiatives:

- Supported staff to access the [Return to Country program](#) through Tangentyere Council. The program provides community visitors to Alice Springs assistance to return to home community.
- We also share information and flyers about financial management and assist staff to access these services through [MoneyMob](#)
- We also provide staff with access to employee assistance programs where they can access free confidential sessions to help manage difficult situations which can extend to a variety of situations including personal circumstances
- Seen an increase in antisocial behaviour and our community safety patrol officer have undertaken crowd control and mediation training so that staff are trained and responsive to these initiatives. Consequent increased patrols at night by community safety patrol officers and the emerging need to increase the number of days to include weekends
- Partnered with CAYLUS to develop a youth mentorship program to reduce impact of antisocial behaviour and other socioeconomic triggers
- Provision of school drop off services to ensure kids attend school

Assistance

- Increase in Community Safety Patrol funding from NIAA to support the increased number of patrols to include weekend cover. Currently NIAA only funds delivery of this program for 5 days a week – what happens to the days not covered, this leaves communities, families and youth exposed and lacking access to adequate services. To be able to provide a 7 day program additional funding from NIAA would need to be approximately increased by \$930,000 for all our communities to be able to respond to the increased antisocial behaviour and include mentoring programs by elders
- NIAA to increase funding to include school drop offs in remote communities, average cost of provision of this service is \$112,000 for Council with existing resources
- Provide indexation on youth funded programs by NIAA for example current programs are underfunded by approximately \$280,000 for Council to be able to effectively deliver the program with respect to staff, activities and mentoring for youth to get them off the street at night.

3. Your submission states that the preparation work undertaken by the Council 'did not prepare residents to: clearly evaluate the intervention due to no statistics available or the absence of measurable data to show the before and after'.

- a. Are you aware if the Australian or NT government is collecting data about community safety and wellbeing to understand the impact of ending the Stronger Futures measures? Is anyone working with the community to monitor any changes?**

The NTG has commenced the creation of an alcohol website which will be the source of truth for anything alcohol related data. Further to this an NT group with members from AMSANT (of note Central Aboriginal Congress) will be established to monitor, review and analyse the alcohol data and the effectiveness of early intervention programs so that the NT is responsive to alcohol on country and reduce its impacts

4. In your submission, you noted that residents experienced lack of clarity and confusion regarding who was the responsible entity for leading consultation and the meaning of cessation of the Stronger Futures Act.

a. What kind of support did you receive from the Australian or NT governments in your preparatory work with the community?

The NTG provided information for dissemination and staff to attend local authority meetings to explain to residents the meaning of the change.

b. Your submission indicates preparatory work is ongoing as the deadline for communities to opt-in is in January 2023, how do you continue to engage with the community? Are you acting in line with the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent?

Council as an organisation has no jurisdiction with respect to getting communities to opt-in/out, however we continue to advocate for residents on matters of importance when they arise which this is – the Central Land Council is the lead organisation and worked with NTG to consult with resident for them to make an informed decision. We continue to share any information that we receive on our noticeboards and at local authority meetings however the NTG remains the lead on this initiative, Council plays a supportive role through information dissemination

c. What further support do you require to properly engage with your community to make an informed decision?

Council is willing to continue its supportive role through information dissemination as a means of assisting residents to understand the changes however engagement of residents remains in the full responsibility of NTG and CLC. Council if engaged as a service provider to undertake the exercise is willing to facilitate meetings with residents and forums to ensure engagement occurs with measurable participation records unfortunately financial support will be required at approximately \$2,000 per community within our catchment.

5. You state in your submission that you are a Community Development Program (CDP) provider in the North West Alice Region. What are your views on reforming to the CDP?

- *Our CDP is moving to a placed based model of operation to ensure that services are available on community wrt case management and activity design with targeted local based solutions and attractions to training and local job opportunities with the main goal of creating real jobs with real outcomes*
- *Current model after the removal of mutual obligations with respect to activity participation does not work as it has led to the visible imbalance of social constructs/norms where parents who previously under mutual obligations woke up and went to work to access their payments now no longer have to and this has seen an increase in children not going to school, increased antisocial behaviour and low interest in participation in activities by residents*
- *Limited availability of training providers or their willingness to travel remote*
- *Inadequate supply of local jobs on major projects and when awarded the jobs are short term – however recent projects such as the Tanami sealing project and new housing builds are longer term projects that will give residents the opportunity to develop new skills and trades together with the longer term employment fulfilment. Our focus is industry development for our region to ensure longer self-sustaining jobs and investment in infrastructure to develop the region*
- *Flexibility of CDP funding agreements to design local or place based activities that meet the requirements of participants and communities – currently there is limited flexibility and activities need to be approved by NIAA*
- *Regional employment targets set by NIAA are not always reflective of the local jobs available to residents and are generally higher than what is actually achievable in practice.*

6. You state that the current model, after removing mutual obligations, doesn't work?

a. What reasons for this have you observed?

Removal of mutual obligations, this refers to Job seekers only being required to volunteer to participate in activities. As mentioned above is not effective/does not work because;

- *This gave residents practical experience to work that was available and allowed them to identify areas of interest so as to ensure enriched employment outcomes and targeted training*
- *Activities also allowed participants to undertake community development activities that were akin to resident interests such as firewood collecting for the elderly, yard cleaning support, carpentry, plumbing which not only resulted in skills development but also improved housing infrastructure for residents as well*
- *Lack of activity participation has led to the visible imbalance of social constructs/norms where parents who previously woke up and went to work or activities to access their payments now no longer have to and this has seen an increase in children not going to school, increased antisocial behaviour and low interest in participation in work by residents as they can still access payments with the bare minimum participation*
- *CDP training does not support apprenticeship programs which generally require longer than 12-24 months full-time work for individuals to be qualified. This increases the gap in job levels and salaries that can be accessed by participants*

b. What are your suggestions going forward?

Suggestions include but not limited to;

- *providing work and on-the-job training to ensure people doing real work are paid real wages*
- *creation of a remote workforce*
- *removal of barriers for participants to move to mainstream employment (attributable to the combination of CDP and welfare payments)*