



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

**HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL
AFFAIRS

Reference: Crime in the community

FRIDAY, 13 JUNE 2003

NGUIU (BATHURST ISLAND)

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Friday, 13 June 2003

Members: Mrs Bronwyn Bishop (*Chair*), Mr Murphy (*Deputy Chair*), Ms Julie Bishop, Mr Cadman, Mr Kerr, Mr Melham (until 11/8/03), Mr McClelland (from 11/8/03), Ms Panopoulos, Mr Sciacca, Mr Secker and Dr Washer

Members in attendance: Mrs Bronwyn Bishop, Mr Cadman, Mr Murphy, Ms Panopoulos and Dr Washer

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

The extent and impact of crime and fear of crime within the Australian community and effective measures for the Commonwealth in countering and preventing crime. The Committee's inquiry shall consider but not be limited to:

- a) the types of crimes committed against Australians
- b) perpetrators of crime and motives
- c) fear of crime in the community
- d) the impact of being a victim of crime and fear of crime
- e) strategies to support victims and reduce crime
- f) apprehension rates
- g) effectiveness of sentencing
- h) community safety and policing

WITNESSES

CLANCY, Mr Brian, Co-Principal, Xavier Community Education Centre 1121

CLEARY, Mr John, Chief Executive Officer, Tiwi Islands Local Government 1121

DOOLAN, Mr Kevin, Coordinator, Diversionary Program, Tiwi Islands Local Government 1121

FRY, Superintendent Don, Tiwi Islands Divisional Officer, Northern Territory Police Force 1121

GALATI, Constable Chris, Northern Territory Police Force 1121

KERINAUIA, Mr Adam, Member, Tiwi Islands Local Government 1121

KURRUPUWU, Mr Maralampuwi, President, Tiwi Islands Local Government 1121

ORSTO, Mr Peter, Co-Principal, Xavier Community Education Centre 1121

PURUNTATAMERI, Mr Barry, Manager, Tiwi Health Board..... 1121

PURUNTATAMERI, Mr Luke, Member, Tiwi Islands Local Government 1121

**TIPILOURA, Mr Gawin, Community Services Officer, Nguiu Community Management Board,
Tiwi Islands Local Government..... 1121**

TUNGATALUM, Mr Hyacinth, Member, Tiwi Islands Local Government..... 1121

Committee met at 10.10 a.m.

CLANCY, Mr Brian, Co-Principal, Xavier Community Education Centre

CLEARY, Mr John, Chief Executive Officer, Tiwi Islands Local Government

DOOLAN, Mr Kevin, Coordinator, Diversionary Program, Tiwi Islands Local Government

FRY, Superintendent Don, Tiwi Islands Divisional Officer, Northern Territory Police Force

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PURUNTATAMERI, Mr Luke, Member, Tiwi Islands Local Government

TIPILOURA, Mr Gawin, Community Services Officer, Nguiu Community Management Board, Tiwi Islands Local Government

TUNGATALUM, Mr Hyacinth, Member, Tiwi Islands Local Government

CHAIR—I acknowledge that we are the guests here today of the members and the President of the Tiwi Islands Local Government Council and that we are honoured to have with us the president and chief executive officer of the council. We will begin this morning with some words from our distinguished host, the President of the Tiwi Islands Local Government Council.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—I welcome members of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. We look forward to having the opportunity to speak with you about crime in the community. Unfortunately we have a funeral in the community today which may prevent some people from being able to speak with you.

We have had a dream for a long time to take greater control of our lives. After many years of talking, two years ago the Tiwi Islands Local Government was formed. I have a dream to form a regional government and bring all our organisations together. I liken it to building a big ship that can head us all in one direction rather than what we have seen in the past—a number of small ships all heading in different directions. Our plan is to build our organisation together under one umbrella. We have been encouraged by the Territory government announcement last month that they will support the formation of a regional authority. We hope it will not be too long before we can have our own regional authority.

As you would be aware, we have many problems. The main ones are alcohol and drug abuse—ganja. We are lucky that, unlike other communities on mainland Australia, we do not have a problem with petrol sniffing, but we have a serious problem with ganja. Increasingly, large quantities are being brought onto the island and this is causing a major problem for my people. You may be aware that we had a number of suicides last year; a number of young adults took their lives. This caused a lot of unhappiness in the community. All of those who took their lives were under the influence of ganja and alcohol.

We are trying to deal with the alcohol problems and are helping to prepare an alcohol management plan. We are talking about this at the moment with the Licensing Commission. The plan will attempt to put in place better ways of dealing with alcohol, although we have a long way to go. The area we are having most trouble dealing with is ganja use. It is still coming into our communities and not being stopped. Some time ago the police were using sniffer dogs to stop drugs being brought to the island. But these dogs have been taken away from Darwin, and since then it has been difficult to stop.

Unfortunately we have problems with violence in our community, poisoned by both alcohol and ganja. We have no place to separate those who we suspect are causing the problems. We need shelters for those who are affected by violence. We talk about having a spin-dryer—a centre where people are put away to sober up and come back in the morning spin-dried out—where we can take those who are causing trouble.

We are pleased that some positive things are happening. We have just started a diversionary program to deal with the young people's problems. Captain Doolan has another meeting on, but he will probably be here soon and he will speak with you about the program. We are pleased that we now have people with the program working with our young kids. That is where we are at.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for those introductory comments. Why were the sniffer dogs taken away?

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—That is a difficult question. I think some legislation took place some months ago or last year; I am not sure.

Mr John Cleary—I believe it was a Customs dog which has been withdrawn from the Territory. There is no longer a dog.

Supt Don Fry—The dog was not ours; it was a loan arrangement from Customs. I guess that was a financial arrangement. In the first place, to bring in and maintain the dogs costs around \$400,000 a year, so we have some difficulties with obtaining a dog ourselves. We see the need for it. Customs took it away primarily because they have a different role for the dogs. They concentrate on amphetamines and other substances and, if they overuse the dogs with cannabis, it can interfere with their capability and competence in other areas.

CHAIR—I do not find that reason very acceptable. There is a problem here and we are hearing that Customs have washed their hands of the Tiwi Islands. Was the dog effective?

Mr CADMAN—Was it good to have the dog—did it get results?

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—Yes, it did work.

CHAIR—And there were seizures of drugs that then did not get to be used in the community?

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—Yes.

CHAIR—Do you know who is importing the drugs?

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—We are not sure.

Supt Don Fry—I support wholeheartedly President Maralampuwi's opening remarks. I think that what he has reported is very accurate. From our perspective, ganja is a problem but at this point in time alcohol is probably a far more immediate and urgent problem. We see the long-term effects of ganja or cannabis as being fairly significant. Our strategy has been to try to curtail the alcohol issues early on. We have done that, as I have indicated in my briefing paper, through more stringent control of the clubs. We can probably elaborate on that later. We think we have seen an improvement there which means that we will be able to focus better on the cannabis problem.

You will appreciate that alcohol creates violence and violence creates significant trauma and injury to a lot of Tiwi Islanders, so there is an immediate need to do something about alcohol problems. The effects of cannabis may be just as significant but longer term. We also feel—and I would certainly be encouraged to hear from anybody who holds a different view—that there is a degree of sympathy towards cannabis on the Tiwi Islands. The fact that alcohol is a more immediate problem here probably interferes with our ability to get intelligence about ganja. We generally have a reasonable idea of who is bringing it in. The sniffer dogs would be a valuable asset to us, but there needs to be better intelligence and we are also giving more resources to the Tiwi Islands at the moment.

In 1999 Nguuu was a patrol base for police from Garden Point at Pirlangimpi, which is across from here on Melville Island. That is at least an hour away by road and then you have to cross the Apsley Strait to get here by boat. It was serviced by two ACPOs. In 2000 we placed a police officer here permanently. Now we have two police officers on permanent placement as well as two ACPOs, which is four staff. That is a significant increase for this area. We are also negotiating with Tiwi Islands Local Government about getting permanent accommodation and improving the infrastructure of the police station. Those are not things that can happen overnight. We are in the process of gearing better towards cannabis, bearing in mind that enforcement of the law is only one part of solving that particular problem. We believe that it is our responsibility to reduce the availability of cannabis and enforce the law relating to it, and we are certainly gearing ourselves to that.

CHAIR—I have a bit of a problem with that, in that there has been a benign view permeating mainstream Australia for a long time about marijuana/cannabis/ganja which has resulted in the drug being far more widespread than it ever needed to be if the truth about it had been spoken in the first place. It accumulates in the body. It results in psychosis, which does not happen from alcohol. The fact that five young men committed suicide under the effects of taking marijuana does not surprise me at all. If it is allowed to get a foothold, the problem will become even

greater. I know that you have your hands full but, as for the attitude of 'Let's deal with alcohol and forget cannabis and worry about that later', I do not see them as being mutually exclusive.

Supt Don Fry—I would not say that we ignore cannabis; we deal with it as effectively as we can within our resources. The people here would probably testify to that. We do not have access to a dog, and that would certainly be an asset, but that is not to say we are doing nothing about it.

CHAIR—I did not say 'nothing'. I am saying, 'Do not think of cannabis as the lesser of the problems.'

Supt Don Fry—I totally agree. I have always had the view that cannabis is a significant problem in the community and right across Australia.

CHAIR—It is. Right across Australia it has effects such as leading on to other drugs and problem behaviour and so on, but we hear that ganja is an increasing problem in communities.

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—We can say that we will talk about ganja later on and that we are dealing with the alcohol problem, but I think ganja is more damaging to our young kids, especially our 10- and 11-year-olds. If we could have a dog and a handler and accommodation for them so that they could be based here, it would be very good. It would be very good if we could have them working full time on the Tiwi Islands. In that way, maybe we would have less of a problem than we have now.

CHAIR—How long was the dog here for?

Supt Don Fry—The dog was in Darwin on and off for quite a few years. It was used for a variety of tasks and they changed from time to time, but we no longer have access to the dog.

CHAIR—Did you bring the dog here?

Supt Don Fry—No.

CHAIR—It did everything in Darwin?

Supt Don Fry—Yes.

CHAIR—So Darwin now does not have a dog?

Supt Don Fry—Not for that particular role.

CHAIR—Only for amphetamines?

Supt Don Fry—That is a Customs job, yes.

Dr WASHER—Just to keep it in perspective, in relation to dysfunctional behaviour, problems with alcohol here would be of far greater magnitude than problems with ganja. Would you agree that alcohol would still be the No. 1 drug in causing dysfunction in the community?

Supt Don Fry—Yes, I would agree with that.

Dr WASHER—Secondly, if the community is very closely networked, I assume that a dog would not solve the problem. If the community is close, the people running the drug would know where the dog was. If you put the dog back in Darwin to stop everything coming across and people knew the dog was there, I assume that things would not necessarily come across on the standard routes. It might reduce it a bit, but would it reduce it that much? I do not think just having a dog there would stop the problem.

Supt Don Fry—It is one of a range of options. Enforcement alone will never stop cannabis coming into a community like this. We will restrict it and we will impact significantly on it, but there needs to be a working partnership with every other agency and organisation.

CHAIR—Since our Tough on Drugs strategy began, drug usage across Australia has dropped—that is, since 1998. Harm minimisation and ‘let’s be soft on drugs’ were at their height in the lead-up to the period before we took office and brought in Tough on Drugs. Since then, the number of drugs seized has increased fourfold—from 2.5 tonnes to more than eight tonnes—and usage has dramatically declined, including in the Territory where usage is above average figures. I am saying that by having a tough policy you actually have an impact, whereas people who want legalisation of drugs have always said that our policies do not work—‘People still take it, so why bother?’ That is an argument we just have to refute. Seizures do stop usage.

Supt Don Fry—Absolutely. I agree with you totally.

CHAIR—Have you changed the operating hours of the club?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—Yes.

CHAIR—Has that helped?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—I am not sure, but we are working on some programs towards helping. We have set up a committee to participate in a lot of things and we are working with the police to make some changes. Some reports have been made and recommendations through the Liquor Commission. Some changes were made by the Liquor Commission or the police or whatever and they have brought in some rules that do not favour some communities here. So lots of talk has been had and we have yet to come up with some decisions with the police and the commission.

Mr CADMAN—When I was here some years ago the two islands were quite different in character. Snake Bay was a den of alcohol with plane loads of it coming in. Bathurst was happy and clean and there was not much alcohol abuse. What has happened?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—As far as I can remember, back in the eighties or seventies laws were made but no-one looked at them. The mission was running the settlement here and it was selling grog without a permit. At Snake Bay on Melville Island back in those old days there were patrol officers who came from Darwin. The DAA—the Department of Aboriginal Affairs—used to run Snake Bay back in the seventies. They used to take a plane load of alcohol because they

had permits. Every one of them who was resident on the island had a permit. We were not allowed to have them. A permit was for—

Mr CADMAN—Twelve cans a night.

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—No, it was two cans a night and then it ended up being four cans a night.

Mr CADMAN—That is here?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—That is here. Over on Melville Island, Snake Bay and Garden Point it was a carton a night and all that. But in 1972 or something like that we could drink from four to seven—any amount—at our club but not take away. At Milikapiti it was probably the same. They used to take away whatever amount they wanted to at Garden Point. That is why the changes have been made through the Liquor Commission, the police and the Tiwi Islands Local Government.

Mr CADMAN—Part of the change would have been to make the laws the same on both islands. Is that right?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—I do not know. Snake Bay and Garden Point are different from us. We have a bigger community and they have a smaller community. They have smaller problems and we have bigger problems because we have a bigger population. Snake Bay council got it the way they wanted it. I do not know whether we have the same law about the time of opening and what days and hours it would be opened. I think that has to come before—

Mr CADMAN—That comes to your council here?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—Through Bathurst and Melville too—Tiwi Islands Local Government.

Mr CADMAN—Does every community have its own laws, or is the law consistent throughout?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—They have different laws at the moment.

Supt Don Fry—The Licensing Commission is responsible for the conditions of each of the licences. There are four liquor outlets on the Tiwi Islands. I am advised that they operate as independent associations. They obtain a licence through the Licensing Commission. The Licensing Commission will consult with each of the communities and include consultation with the police, but primarily those conditions are community based.

There is great diversity on Melville Island, particularly between Pirlangimpi and Nguuu. Pirlangimpi, or Garden Point, has quite liberal amounts of alcohol available. Nguuu used to have takeaway but, through the Licensing Commission, we have intervened and stopped it so that you can only have alcohol at the club. Milikapiti has a slightly different set-up. As Hyacinth has pointed out, it is a cause for concern having different standards throughout the community. It creates a bit of jealousy. However, they are significantly different communities and each will

argue quite strongly about their own particular wants and needs, which makes it difficult to get a consensus and a uniform decision at the end of the day.

CHAIR—But why should there be uniform outlets? If one community says, ‘Our community says that you can have alcohol for three hours a day,’ and another community says, ‘We can manage 12 hours a day,’ surely that is good local decision making.

Mr John Cleary—As far as the council is concerned, we have no control. We have ended up being a facilitator in the debate amongst the communities about how we manage alcohol. The Licensing Commission became involved because of some problems last year here at Nguiu. The suicides and other things precipitated action by the Licensing Commission. There has been a strong suggestion by them that there is a need to develop an overall alcohol management plan, and we have been working towards that. As Superintendent Fry has mentioned, each of the liquor outlets in each community is run by its own association or club. Most of them have their own elected members who form the executive of the club and set the rules for how that club operates. Again there is oversight by the Licensing Commission. They cannot just do what they want; they have to get a licence and the Licensing Commission will often impose certain conditions on that licence.

The decision last year to close the Nguiu club for an extra day was for a good purpose: to reduce the amount of alcohol consumed in the community. But the council had a different opinion from the police. Although they are seeing an improvement on some issues here at Nguiu, we are seeing that it has only transferred the problem to other communities. There are people in this community who, because the club is closed here, go elsewhere. That highlights the need for some uniformity in rules and regulations between the communities. If the rules are not consistent, there are ways for people who want alcohol and have an alcohol problem to go elsewhere. So that has created some problems.

Right now some of the management boards that operate under the umbrella of the Tiwi Islands Local Government—the one council we have now—do get involved in the discussion about how their club should operate. At last month’s meeting of the Garden Point or Pirlangimpi Management Board they were expressing some concern that one of the conditions on the licence of the club here is that it will be closed for bush holiday, which is about to happen in this community. That caused some concern at Garden Point, because they believe that it could well bring an increase in problems in their community. So at their last management board meeting they decided themselves that they wanted to stop alcohol coming into the community by plane for the period of the bush holiday. They have also made some recommendations to the Licensing Commission to restrict those who can drink in their club. We are encouraging the local community as best we can to start dealing with problems as they arise, and the commission is about to conduct hearings in each of the communities to talk about how we can best manage alcohol.

CHAIR—Could you explain the concept of bush holiday?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—We used to call it school holidays. In other states you go to town; here we go out to the bush, onto the country. That is why we call it bush holiday.

Mr John Cleary—It is a great tradition. It is the time when most of the families go to their country. It is a four-week period in the middle of the dry season coinciding with the school holidays. Most of the Tiwis go back to their country, if they can, and hunt and gather food. It is a time everybody looks forward to.

Mr CADMAN—Would it be unfair to say that, for the simplicity of non-Indigenous administration, we have changed from the way local communities want to operate? That is what occurs to me.

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—I agree.

Mr CADMAN—To make the whitefellas' law work, we have made Indigenous people change the way they do things and they have not wanted to make those changes—and maybe those changes have turned out to be bad, as with alcohol. There has to be one law for alcohol for everybody. No-one can have their say because the commission says that everybody needs to be the same.

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—I agree. Each and every one of us has been brought up differently. We are not all the same. Some people can take certain things and some cannot. Some people cannot take alcohol and some can. All of that is human. That is the way we are all made. It is what you are given and what you are not given.

Ms PANOPOULOS—The police have said that they have a fair idea of who is bringing marijuana into the Tiwi Islands. Can you tell me who distributes it amongst the community?

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—That is a difficult question. God knows who brings in supplies of it.

Ms PANOPOULOS—We know that supplies of marijuana come in but, once they are in, it must be local people who distribute them. Who are those people? Are they community leaders? Are they other people? Surely people must know who they are.

Mr Adam Kerinauia—They are just normal people who go to Darwin, probably shopping for the day, who are supplying the marijuana. Marijuana is a big issue over here, especially with young kids. Young kids need to be encouraged to go and play sport. When I was growing up, marijuana did not exist in the community.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Although we have touched on the problems of alcohol and marijuana, no-one has spoken yet about any problems—they may not exist; I do not know—related to domestic violence and sex with under-age girls. Do those sorts of problems exist on the Tiwi Islands?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—I work for community corrections on both islands. I see people coming through for domestic violence—mainly in young families, mainly from drugs and all that. Yes, it really happens.

Mr Kevin Doolan—I have only been here for 12 weeks, but I have lived at Milikapiti and was town clerk there for 12 years. I used to smoke marijuana; I have not done so for 10 years. I

do not drink alcohol and I do not take drugs. I keep reasonably fit. I eat the right food et cetera. I speak Tiwi too. I lived on Melville Island in the late sixties. I have had a lot of association and connection with the people here. Domestic violence and all these other issues are very strongly related to marijuana and alcohol, particularly alcohol. As Hyacinth said, people are entitled to drink. Before I worked here I worked in CAAPS, which is the Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services. A lot of very strong ladies came through as students. At that stage we were delivering certificate 2 in alcohol and other drugs. The ladies were saying all the time that there were major issues in the community: domestic violence, deaths, injuries and assaults of all different descriptions. The main issue is alcohol—loss of control because of the sickness of alcohol and drug addiction.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Are you saying that domestic violence and sex with under-age girls have only existed as follow-ons from alcohol?

Mr Kevin Doolan—I cannot say that. What I am saying is that most domestic violence is as a direct result of people being intoxicated. There is a lot of shame and anger involved with this, so it is a hard one. Most domestic violence occurs when people are intoxicated. I am sorry, but the reality is that it is a very delicate issue.

Ms PANOPOULOS—What is the situation with sex with underage girls? What is done to prevent it occurring, or is it considered okay because it used to be customary law?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—I think it is connected with drugs, marijuana and all that. Under-age sex comes about when a person gives a young girl—an under-age girl, meaning a 12- to 14-year-old kid—a drug or something like that, but not alcohol. It is only with marijuana—ganja.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Are you saying that sex with under-age girls only occurs as a result of marijuana?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—Yes.

Ms PANOPOULOS—So customary law that allows adult men to have sex with under-age girls is no longer practised?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—That seems to have been forgotten now. Back in the old days, promises were made to old men about having three or four wives. When they were first born, the old man was told, ‘There you are; that is yours when she grows up.’ But today they make their own choice; they choose whoever they want.

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—The young have the relationship with drugs.

CHAIR—The problem of violence and alcohol is not limited to Indigenous peoples; it is also a problem in society at large. There is an interesting article in the current *Bulletin* written by Deborah Light, a journalist, who as a child growing up in a white family was abused by her father. Her sisters were also abused by her father and her mother was beaten by her father. The article talks about the fact that alcohol is not the cause of the violence; the cause of the violence is really a lust for power and an exercise of power, and people use alcohol because it removes inhibitions. Alcohol does not make people violent; they are violent to begin with. The alcohol

simply removes some of the restraints. But it will happen anyway if people think that exercising power through violence is okay, and there are people who think it is. Is that a problem here?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Yes, I think it is.

CHAIR—So when we say that all the problems come from alcohol, in a way we are making excuses for people. We really have to go back a bit further. Do you agree with that?

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—Yes. I think it is a problem all over Australia and all over the world. Communities have to sit down and deal with these sorts of problems.

CHAIR—You are trying, with your limited hours of trade. Has that had an impact? Has limiting your hours of trade been good?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—If you start limiting the hours of drinking at the club, you carry the problem to other places where there are extra hours. That was said a while ago by John Cleary.

CHAIR—But does everyone do that or only some people?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—Seventy-five per cent do that.

CHAIR—That means that 25 per cent do not.

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—Yes.

CHAIR—Is that better for your community?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—I do not know. I have not thought about that. I have not gone around asking people about changing the hours of the club.

CHAIR—When people go to the club, do they drink to enjoy the alcohol? For instance, anyone around this table after having done a hard day's work might want to go home and enjoy a beer. It is refreshing, you like the taste and it is a social event. But if people drink simply for the purpose of getting drunk, that is a different matter.

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—It is different. As we said a moment ago, some people have a problem in their system. A few beers and, bang, the problem can be brought out of you and you can go and do whatever. Nothing can stop you. The alcohol does it and you have that emotion.

CHAIR—How much of drinking is addiction and how much is binge drinking?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—I do not know. I tell you truthfully that I am addicted to alcohol. Some people are addicted to drugs. I enjoy drinking daily.

CHAIR—So do I. With me it is wine, not beer.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—I have been working for the council for about six months. Ganja was not in the community when I was growing up; we had never heard of it. Now it is around in the community and in other places. A lot of the blame for drugs is being put on the club. For my kids, the most important thing to make them able to say no to drugs and alcohol is education. I talk to my kids every day and encourage them to go to school so that they can get an education and a good job and get paid good money. I have heard a lot of blame being put on ganja and alcohol, but what about our kids' education? Here, education comes under the Catholic education system. My kids are bilingual, but learning two languages is not going to get them a job. I was taken around the school yesterday and I saw the kids learning a lot of Tiwi and a bit of English. They learn more English in year 7, which is way too late.

I have had a bit of a yarn with Kevin Doolan about what we can do. Later we had a talk with the principals, Peter Orsto and Brian Clancy, and set up a leadership camp, which I think is very good. My job is to organise meetings for the Nguju Community Management Board and look after them. With the leadership camp, I work with Brian Clancy. I want our kids to be taught leadership at school. I do not know who to go to to get our education system changed. Instead of learning English in year 7, they should be learning it from the start. If they learn English from the start, they will not get frustrated and muck up. I know this for a fact because I have been through it.

CHAIR—You believe that the kids need to learn English right from their first day at school?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—They need to learn it from the first day at school. They need to learn it through years 1, 2, 3, 4 and so on. At present they are learning it in year 7, and that is way too late.

CHAIR—When you are young, you are much more able to learn.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—That is right. We do not know who to go to to get this changed. We asked the social abuse committee to do something about getting better education for our kids. It is really important for our kids to get a good education. Why is the behaviour in the community today really bad? Because of the lack of education.

Dr WASHER—I agree with that. With all due respect to prohibition, once drugs have come into the community, as much as possible should be done to reduce the supply of those drugs—the chair is right about this—but trying to make alcohol illegal is inappropriate. Total prohibition does not work. The demand has to be cut off; otherwise, all you do is transfer the problem. Currently, bikie gangs are running amphetamines across Australia and making millions, because the problem gets transferred.

We need to have an education system and a society in which people have pride and dignity, opportunities and jobs, and a social life in which they can restrain themselves. In other words, the demand needs to go. Once the demand goes, we can win the day. But while there is a demand you have to put up all the fences and barriers possible. That is why I am so keen to hear about what is being done here to educate people, give them jobs, make them feel worthwhile and give them a future. If I had nothing to do, I would drink all day and so would a lot of other people. That is why I am so concerned about social change. The community itself has to change.

CHAIR—I would like to hear more about the way you are talking to your kids.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—In my view, problems in the community come down to a lack of education, the drugs out there and the pub. The kids see that there are drugs and they are influenced by their friends, and the social club is there. Where else can they go? I am the coach of a footy team. I talk to my players all the time. I have been a successful coach for two years. I am young; I am not going to shut my eyes to my people's education and, more importantly, the education of my kids.

CHAIR—You want to be able to say, 'The kids must be taught English at school right from day one.' You want that to be mandatory for your kids.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—Yes. Behaviour in the community is really bad. If you tell a kid to get off the roof, they will not listen. A good education at school means that they will be taught not to do this and that and to enjoy sports and learning. It is like teaching your own kids at home. If our families are not able to teach their kids at home, school would be another way of doing it. I went to the school yesterday and I felt hurt and sad because I realised that our kids are growing up learning Tiwi at school. It is for our families—our grandfathers and uncles—to teach us our culture and how to write in Tiwi. It is okay for my kids because they lived on Melville where the education is more down to the NT government.

Mr Brian Clancy—It is not bilingual there.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—My kids are now here with me, where they are going to be taught in a bilingual school. I am a bit worried about that and about the behaviour in the community. I have only been working here for about six months, and I am not going to shut my eyes and let our kids grow up and be nothing.

CHAIR—You have also said that you want the young people to learn some leadership skills. Do you have any programs to do that?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—My cousin in the community cannot read or write. All she does is head down to the club. I put up with her when I had no kids, when I was younger. I have put up with her all my life. What is that telling me? I think it is telling me that the kids have got to have a proper education.

CHAIR—And that will give them an opportunity.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—Yes. It will give them the opportunity to say no to the club and no to ganja; they will know what it is and what it can do. For many years it was the club and now it is ganja. Now I think there must be good education. We have the police here, and they can do their job. But it is education that I worry about now. We have lost a lot of young people, and I think we need a change in our education. It must be a stronger education from grades 1 and 2. It really hurt me yesterday when I had a look at what is happening in the school. I went because I wanted to see what my kids are learning at school. The behaviour of our kids in the community today is bad. No matter where you go, you can see that they will not listen to anyone. They are not being taught at home and they are not getting a proper education at school, except for primary. I feel

really proud and glad about what Peter Orsto and Brian Clancy are trying to do. But, as they say, they need more help; they need all the help they can get.

Mr Brian Clancy—This is probably a good time for us to speak about education at Nguiu. I started here in 1987. I was here for six years and then I moved to Darwin for six years at St John's College. I have been back for four or five years. My wife is Tiwi. There are two schools. In the past, only three or four years ago, MCS, which is now the primary school, was known as the girls school. There they had boys and girls up to grade 5. Then the boys would come over to our school, Xavier, for grades 6 and 7. We just kept the boys then and the girls would stay at the girls school. So they were known as the girls school and the boys school, and people still use those terms. This is the first year it is a primary school—and it is bilingual—which goes up to year 7. Now we get boys and girls from grade 8—or that age. They are not grade 8 level, obviously, but they are at the age of about 13. At the secondary school we are not bilingual.

What Gawin has just said is 100 per cent accurate. I think there is a place for bilingual education in keeping culture strong, but I agree 100 hundred per cent that kids cannot possibly learn how to read and write in English and access mainstream whitefella stuff if they do not have the basic education, and they must start from day one. I think it is halfway through grade 4 that they start English reading and writing. They do oral English before that, but halfway through grade 4—I know Gawin was saying grade 7—is too late.

The department wants us to do years 11 and 12. At the moment we are doing foundation and general studies, which are supposed to be bridging courses into year 8. They are ESL, and there is no problem there, but the problem is that the kids cannot really read enough even to access these courses. I do not know whether you are aware of profiles and so on, but our average kid is probably at level 3 in the framework. People tell us that that is okay. We have all the evidence that they are at level 3, but they read slowly and disjointedly. To me, that is not reading. They cannot access all this other stuff. They give us a curriculum and we are supposed to do science and all this sort of stuff. How can we do that when they just cannot read? What about information technology on the computers? No-one has computers at home and they cannot read.

Peter Orsto and I—Peter is actually my brother-in-law—started this semester as co-principals; it is a first. We see major problems here. There are problems with attendance, for example. Our attendance rate last week was 72 per cent—and people say that is all right. They say that at other places it is 50 per cent. People say that our kids are at level 3 and that that is all right. But I am saying it is bullshit; it is not good enough. These kids are better than that.

Mr CADMAN—They are smart kids; you can tell by looking at them.

Mr Brian Clancy—I will give you an example which I heard from my wife. There are 1,500 Tiwi people on Bathurst Island. If you put them all on the oval, say, and randomly choose any two of them, the first could relate the second to the other 1,499. They could tell you their skin group, their dreaming, their dance, their country. They could tell you everything about each of those 1,499 people. We cannot do that. In the whitefella way, to have that level of knowledge would be like having a doctorate. To be able to do that with all the connections and relationships of 1,500 people, surely you would have to be a professor. It is incredible. My point is that these kids are smart. I do not think we are giving them the tools to—

CHAIR—Utilise their talents.

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes. We know that they are smart, so they should be able to read much better than they are. We have started to do certain projects in our first semester but getting money, as always, is a problem. We have found the Soundwave program. It is a new program—it has been shown on *A Current Affair* and details of it are on the Net—based in Western Australia. The video from *A Current Affair* shows examples of Koori kids at schools in Sydney and other places reading very slowly and disjointedly at the start of the program. After 10 weeks or perhaps two terms of the program, these kids' reading ages have come up by five or six years. I am not saying that this is definitely going to win, but we are very confident about it.

CHAIR—Their comprehension rate comes up with it?

Mr Brian Clancy—Everything is supposed to come up with it—their spelling and their writing as well. That is what it is advertised to do. My point is that, even if it does not work, at least we are having a go. We are trying to find something. We have to find something, because what we are doing at the moment is just not good enough. I have a foster child now, and my wife and I are trying to have kids. I would not send my kids to my own school. As far as I am concerned, I need a good hiding; the fact that I would not want to send my kids to my own school is criminal. We have not been offering a basic education.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Why isn't English taught from day one?

Mr Brian Clancy—We really need someone representing MCS, the primary school. What I saying is probably not fair, because I am a bit biased.

Ms PANOPOULOS—But from your knowledge, why isn't English taught from day one?

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—It started back in my days. When Whitlam came into power, he changed it. There were people working all around Australia. Through the government, they said, 'We want our kids to be taught our culture in school.' We think our kids should be taught our culture at home.

CHAIR—You feel that culture should be taught in the home and that the school's responsibility is to give your kids the tools to learn for life.

Mr Hyacinth Tungatalum—There is an education theory that, if you get people familiar with writing a language they speak easily, they can move more quickly into learning English. That is the theory.

Mr Brian Clancy—That is the theory. The problem is that, if you were given a full page of Tiwi, you could read it; you would not understand a word of it, but you could read it. I have been here for 17 years and all I know are Tiwi swear words. But you could read Tiwi because you know English and you would use your English tools and phonetics and so on. That theory is good but it has not worked.

Ms PANOPOULOS—It has failed dismally.

Mr CADMAN—They keep at it too long.

Mr Brian Clancy—As Gawin said, the real problem is that they start English too late.

CHAIR—I learnt French in my first year of high school, which was hopeless; it was too late. I sent my daughter to Alliance Francaise at the age of four. She can speak French fluently; I cannot. I can read it and struggle through a bit but it is awful, whereas she is quite fluent. That is the same problem, isn't it?

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes, but you are not really getting the full picture. You should also be getting the bilingual picture. There is reasoning behind it, although I am not in favour of it. When I was first here in the mid- to late eighties, I would generally have grades 6 and 7, when the kids had just come from doing bilingual. There was no ABC. The kids would be trying to spell the word 'cat'. They would get the 'c' out and then they would ask you how to spell 'a'. I was pulling my hair out. It is not fair on the kids; they are better than that. We are not just using this Soundwave program; we want to change the whole culture of Indigenous education. We think we can make a big difference in the next six months.

Dr WASHER—What you are talking about goes to the future of these people. Why are 28 to 30 per cent not rolling up at school? To have a certain standard of civilisation in any community, there must be some level of discipline.

Mr Brian Clancy—Attendance is an issue everywhere but especially in remote areas. One problem is that the kids here run the households. They do what they want to do. Obviously some parents put pressure on their kids to come to school, but I would say that a lot of them do not. So you do not get family support. We have approached this problem by trying to set up the school so that there is so much fun and so much happening there that the kids do not want to be anywhere else. We were previously discussing ganja. We have that down as one of our competitors; we really have to compete against it. Grog is not an issue with our kids. They have to live with drunks and associated behaviour but they do not drink because they cannot get it here. Ganja they can get, and we have to compete with it. We have to offer them something more than the bucket.

Mr MURPHY—How do you think all this can be turned around in six months?

Mr Brian Clancy—I have it written down here. I will give you a copy. A lot of it we make up as we go, because that is what we do best. We are trialling certain things. We finally have some money to tackle the attendance problem. That money came from the federal government through Work for the Dole. We have what we call the Working for Education program. This funding is very flexible. With it we are getting an additional 30 people. At the start of next term we will have more staff than students at the school. In his report Bob Collins talks about community involvement. I cannot see a better way of getting the community involved than by employing people. With this Work for the Dole funding, the projects they are letting us do are fantastic. For the last couple of years we have run a room which is set up like Time Zone or Einstein's—arcade games with a pool table and guns. There is really nothing educational in it; it is all play stations.

CHAIR—Except that it is automation.

Mr Brian Clancy—That is right. We have bought 10 play stations. We were hiring machines from Darwin but they were pretty old and we could never get them serviced and so on. We are sending them back. We are setting up play stations and a pool table in one room. Then there is a smaller room where we have what is like a DVD cinema. It is all in one complex. The idea for the cinema came from having been around to a few community schools and seeing what happens there. People watch videos with their kids, especially in the afternoon when it is just too hard to do work. Rather than say, ‘Don’t do it,’ because we know it is going to happen anyway we are trying to turn it into a positive thing. With DVD, through great modern technology we get subtitles. We get the kids to read along. It does not matter what the movie is. It could be John Wayne with the kids reading, ‘Stick your hands up.’ It does not matter. The idea is that eventually you turn the volume down and a kid can pretend he is Arnold Schwarzenegger as he reads the subtitles. They cannot do Eddie Murphy because he talks too fast. They can do Arnold because he talks slowly. We are setting up the next room as an Internet cafe and community library which will be open during the day.

The Tiwi Islands are famous for football. Football is the No. 1 religion. We are trying to set the whole school up as a football club. The way we are selling it to the kids is that we want to be the Essendon, Collingwood and Brisbane Lions of Indigenous education. Every year we want to win the premiership for being the best. There is no competition because it is only us, but we want to be the best. We can certainly be better than we are. We have split the day up into four quarters. We could never do four quarters before because the first session might have to go for 2½ to three hours and I have had blokes in my class run amok smashing windows. Half the reason is that there is nowhere else in their life where they have to sit for 2½ hours. When they go to ceremony, they can do their dance and go and have a drink and then come back. Yet we expect them to sit down at school for two to 3½ hours and get into it. You just have no hope; you cannot win. We could never do before what we are doing now because every recess the kids would go to the shop—they would look for their parents and look for money. I really have not had a major problem with that because, if the kids are hungry and the school is no longer feeding them, they have to find something to eat. If you are a kid, you have to eat. We do have a nutrition program which I can talk about.

Dr WASHER—We have heard that to encourage kids to go to school the government in some way finances the schools to feed kids lunch.

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes, I will get to that in a moment. Now we have five hours and 20 minutes a day divided up into four quarters. Each session is about an hour and a quarter. The teachers are just stoked—there is no fighting. When I was first here, if we did not have chairs going through the window at least once or twice a week, something was wrong. But the teachers are now rapt because there is no fighting. The kids are only in class for a short time and they are getting the job done. We tell them, ‘This is first quarter. Right, last week Essendon kicked 10 goals in the first quarter. Now in this quarter you have to do what Essendon did: go and kick 10 goals—that is, work really hard.’ If Essendon had a bad week I would say, ‘Don’t act like Essendon did; act like the winning team.’ The kids now do not go home. They literally bolt straight from the classroom to this entertainment area. So now, if we start the day with 50 kids, we end the day with 50 kids. In the past we could start the day with 50 but sometimes we would have electives in the afternoon at two o’clock and there would be eight staff and literally one, two or even no kids. Now if we start with 50 we generally finish with 50. We tell them, ‘Look, we’re trying to make life here at the school good for you mob. All you have to do is work hard in

the quarters and then everything is here—games, Internet, music blaring, a disco type thing, basketball. Who is in charge of the Work for the Dole funding?

Dr WASHER—Mal Brough.

CHAIR—It was brought in originally by David Kemp.

Mr Brian Clancy—I love them both. Work for the Dole has allowed us to employ 30 people in the project.

Mr CADMAN—In the school?

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes, 30 people in the school. We are employing four or five to run this complex. The first name of the professor here is Pukumani, which is a name we use for people who have recently died and for those who share that dead person's name. If in the community Brian dies, you cannot say the name 'Brian'. Pukamani's son died in a car accident a couple of years ago when he was a schoolboy at the school. We are naming this complex after him. His nickname was Mini Boy, so we are calling it Mini Boy's.

Mr CADMAN—When someone dies you do not say their name; you give them a nickname.

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes, you give them a nickname. That is why people might change their names to those of footballers. Anyway, that is what we are calling the complex and five people will have the job of running it. They can run it during the day and then open it up in the evenings. If all we can offer is the old nine to three school, we might as well not be here because it is pointless.

Mr CADMAN—Are you offering school from seven to seven?

Mr Brian Clancy—Now community organisations are really starting to come together and help each other. My wife and I first set it up and we were running it ourselves every night, even in the Christmas holidays and so on. Now we open on Thursdays and Fridays. There are great sport and rec things happening up here on other days. With the club being shut on a Wednesday now, it is huge; it is the best thing for us. We have a bingo night every Wednesday night with 500-plus people attending. There is a \$1,000 jackpot going next Wednesday for bush holiday. We have only just started it; we share it with the primary school. They do it one week and we do it the next. It is great for fundraising and we can see certain other positive things coming out of it. When we held parent-teacher days and so on, we would only get a few parents. If we have 500 people coming to bingo there is no reason why at half-time—going along with the footy team idea—we cannot say, 'The teachers are here; go and get the kids' reports.' It is a great time for us to put out any news about what we are doing. It has been really positive.

Mr John Cleary—This guy is far too modest. I think a lot of them are. They are at school up to 12 hours a day a lot of the time and they are often there at night. Recently I had a group of friends here on a weekend. We went to the school on the Saturday night and there he was, running it. The school is called Brianstein's.

Mr Brian Clancy—I did not name it. I will tell you how we got the name. It is a democratic thing. Every year the electoral mob come over and we have elections. At the assembly I said, ‘We want to set this room up for you mob like Einsteins’—because it is Einstein’s in Darwin—‘but we need to think of a name.’ Then one kid came out with ‘Briansteins’. About 10 names came up, a vote was held and Briansteins got 99 per cent. Until two Christmases ago, 80 per cent of teachers’ houses would get broken into during the holidays. The school would get broken into every second day. The Christian Brothers’ house right next to the school was broken into and not one piece of glass was left whole. Everything was trashed, including some big TVs. The year we started this thing there was a big change. It is not hard work. You just open it and sit there and people come—adults come and the older kids help lead; there is all this leadership stuff we are trying to do. It is just giving them something to do. A couple of years ago 30 little kids broke into the primary school’s toilet and trashed it. They had nothing to do. It is just boredom. This is so easy. You just have to provide a venture and they will look after themselves—put some music on and away they go.

CHAIR—Through doing this, are they learning computer skills too?

Mr Brian Clancy—Not at the moment, but that is where we want to take it. Because they cannot read, they cannot pick up computer skills properly. We need to go back to basics.

CHAIR—And this Soundwaves program, or an equivalent, which is really a concertinaed, concentrated learning program will give them comprehension and reading skills.

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes. The bloke who has written it is coming to visit here. Gawin talked about a leadership camp. We are starting next term with a leadership camp. We are getting role models and we want motivational speakers and so on. It is possible that *60 Minutes* or *A Current Affair* will come up and, as with the other one, follow our Soundwave program through to see whether it works. We will probably have to fight to be allowed to use them. We are really keen to publicise what we are trying to do.

I will go back to nutrition. Through the Work for the Dole funding we are employing five people whose job it is to go hunting. There are buffalo on Melville Island. In fact a flying buffalo is being dropped onto our school oval even as we speak. The CSIRO or some equivalent are shooting buffalo over on Melville Island, checking for liver disease and so on. A buffalo that has been found to be clear of disease will be transported by helicopter and dropped onto our oval. The Collingwood team is coming next Tuesday and we are going to have a big feed. With Work for the Dole—this is why I love it so much—they go out, get the buffalo and bring it back. Four more people through Work for the Dole then prepare the meals and we feed the kids every day.

On Mondays and Tuesdays, kids are literally starving. There is no food in the house. They are starving when they come to school. You cannot learn if you are hungry and you cannot teach if you are hungry. This is also about what they are paid on unemployment. It is generally okay on Wednesdays, Thursday and Fridays, but by Monday there is no food. And there is so much food on this island it makes me cry because we are not accessing it. People cannot go out bush. We have spoken of bush holiday. If people here are lucky enough to have a car, they have to pay \$1.65 a litre for fuel. There is a joke—and a bit of a nasty one—that we do not have any petrol sniffing here because people cannot afford to buy the petrol. Having to pay \$1.65 a litre for fuel,

people cannot get out to the bush to get the food. You need to have money to be able to do that. All the people want to go bush but they cannot get out there.

Mr Kevin Doolan—Through the diversionary program, people are going out bush. We are taking families out on Sundays. We are going to try and take the community truck out during the week to take people out bush. It is exercise, it is food, it is culture and it is a great activity.

Mr CADMAN—Property damage does not appear to be the biggest problem. The diversionary program, as I understand it, only applies to property damage. Shouldn't there be an extension to diversionary programs to include drug and alcohol abuse?

Mr Kevin Doolan—Absolutely. A focus of the program is diversion of course, but another focus is the change of name. The name of the unit is the Tiwi Islands Youth Development Unit, and the ages of our clients range from five to 35. It is putting in place programs and services in the area of social development. It is about culture, sport and recreation, and behaviour programs in the school—that is also a focus. But it is sad because the kids are hungry and they cannot learn when they are hungry.

Mr CADMAN—That occurs not through a shortage of money but through the way the money is used.

Mr Kevin Doolan—It is where the money is going. This is what we are saying. This is a hard one, but there is a lot of money in the club and the people who are selling ganja are rich.

Mr Brian Clancy—It is worth tens of thousands of dollars.

Mr Kevin Doolan—So where is the money going? You must look at the substance misuse issue. Of course it is there. Let us deal with it. Let us open it up and talk about it. What Gawin is saying is absolutely right. Education is vital—it is the way out. The school is doing wonderful things. Let us go back and look at the primary school, because you cannot learn English at year 7. My boy goes to school here. I have brought him here from Darwin. I understand that there are major behavioural issues. It is totally out of control. We are trying to make it workable. We have a good behaviour program in this school. At the end of a two-week period we take the ones who have behaved well out bush; we reward them for their good behaviour by taking them out night shooting. The alcohol and drug issues are real. Let us open them up and look at them. But at the same time let us look at all the social development issues and get people involved in decision making processes. That is vital.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—Brian mentioned earlier the price of fuel being \$1.65. The supermarket is also very expensive. There is not much income for people, not much employment, and that is where the problem is. We formed a government to look at these issues but it is pretty difficult at the moment. That is where problems are.

Mr CADMAN—My kids will not do the stuff I used to do. They say, 'That's hard work, Dad; we don't want to do that.' How much of this is about changes in lifestyle and expectation? You used to go and hunt but I bet you do not now.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—I do.

Mr CADMAN—But many of your generation would not hunt because it is easier to stay at home and go to the shop.

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—In the past everybody, especially young people, used to hunt; today young people do not.

Mr CADMAN—What about fish? Is it easier to fish?

Mr Brian Clancy—A lot of people fish down in the strait. But for bush tucker you have to go out; there is no wallaby around here.

Mr CADMAN—You would get a pushbike if you really wanted to get out there.

Mr Kevin Doolan—If you are hungry and you want to eat, you need to go out there.

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—Back in mission days, our people worked very hard to earn only a little bit of money; in the days of shillings they worked so hard.

Mr CADMAN—Is sit-down money part of the problem?

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—I think that is the main problem.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—Is sit-down money unemployment?

Mr CADMAN—Yes.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—That is where you want to focus on education. People try and get an agent to fill the form out for them and he is not allowed to do it. If he does he will get in trouble. That is one of the areas where, like I said, education is really bad. If people do not get their pay, they go and break the phones and take it out on council buildings.

Mr CADMAN—What would happen if everybody who did not have a job was on Work for the Dole?

Mr John Cleary—We have a huge CDEP program here. We have almost 500 people, across all the communities, on CDEP. There is quite a bit of money in the community. The issue is where it is spent. People get paid weekly here. We cannot pay people on longer terms than that because it is often spent in the first couple of days. That is why, as Brian has said, the kids are hungry on Monday and Tuesday. It comes back to the problem with the club and people's priorities. Often a lot of the money people get on Thursday or Friday payday at the end of the week goes straight to the club. They are buying their drink, and drink seems to be more important to some people than food. Also, we have not mentioned the card schools. One of the greatest activities in the community is card playing. This is not specific to this community; it occurs in many Aboriginal communities. Again, it is a way of filling in their day.

Mr Kevin Doolan—There is the casino in Darwin. Gambling is big in places like Darwin. It is difficult to look at where the money is going, as there is shame involved. No-one wants to talk

about it. You have marijuana and alcohol out of control and there is gambling. Someone mentioned responsibility. We need to take responsibility for our kids.

Mr CADMAN—What is the difference between the CDEP program and Work for the Dole?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—CDEP is for four hours a day.

Mr John Cleary—It is basically a Work for the Dole program that has been set up for the communities. They get an extra \$20. There is an hourly rate for people working so many hours which varies between communities. CDEP pays \$20 more than the dole and they work 15 hours a week for that. Most of them we top up; we pay CDEP and top that up. We extended their work time out to 30 to 35 hours a week, and the council or whoever they work for pays the difference. We are supposed to equate that to some award.

Mr Brian Clancy—Most people are on unemployment; they are on Newstart and have to do this Work for the Dole activity.

Mr CADMAN—How many are on Newstart?

Mr Brian Clancy—Thirty.

Mr John Cleary—In this community there are probably 80 or 90 who are eligible for Newstart, whether they are on it or not.

Mr Brian Clancy—I do not think there are that many, but they have to be on Newstart before they can get on to this.

Mr CADMAN—So CDEP is not a real job. Is that right?

Mr John Cleary—That is how it seems. It is a bit of an issue with ATSIC and the council. The council has run the CDEP program and ATSIC has some control of the program.

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—CDEP mainly provide training.

Mr John Cleary—People in the community do not see it as a real job. The council has 460 CDEP employees across all communities which are CDEP participants. They do not see it as a real job.

CHAIR—But with the ones you are providing under Work for the Dole there is more flexibility and they are real jobs.

Mr Brian Clancy—Work for the Dole has the same connotation. They do not like it so we have changed it. We call it the Working for Education project.

Mr John Cleary—The difficulty we have with all of this is that, without these sorts of programs, as a council we could not run anything because we do not have income; we do not have rates like other communities. Basically most of your Aboriginal community councils are

running their services with the help of the CDEP. CDEP money that is provided is subsidising wages to run our garbage services, our parks and gardens and all our services.

CHAIR—So if you can utilise the cash and rename the programs to create what are seen to be real jobs you are using the money far more effectively.

Mr John Cleary—Yes.

Mr CADMAN—Do you want that sort of change?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—I do not understand what John has just said. That is why I am stressing that education here needs to be changed. I will try and figure out what he has just said. As I go along working, I will find out these things and get the answer. I am training to get all the knowledge I possibly can so that I can explain to my people how things work. This is where education is really important.

Mr CADMAN—What about adult education?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—You can put someone on CDEP, but they do not understand that you have to develop yourself to get a job. That is what I am doing now. I have had to develop myself on CDEP. I have had to do local government training to get the job of community services officer.

CHAIR—You are saying that you want your people to understand that CDEP is a tool for them to use to get up.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—Yes. Without education they are not going to get anywhere.

CHAIR—What do you think of Brian's program?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—This is what makes me feel good. Brian and Peter are trying, and that is really good, but they need more help. I could talk about it, but I do not know who to go to.

Mr Kevin Doolan—The diversionary program has a budget and we are working with the school.

Mr CADMAN—Clearly there is money but the issue is where it is being spent. That is what you said earlier. Have you changed your mind?

Mr Brian Clancy—No, I would not say that.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—We have the Tiwi Islands Training and Employment Board. They are saying that there are no pathways for Tiwi people. What does that mean? Once I was at a meeting of the Tiwi Islands Training and Employment board and they said that Tiwi people have not got any pathways to do training because of a lack of education.

Mr CADMAN—Can anybody explain what that means?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—What I am saying is that they do not have the education to do it. They cannot deliver training if they do not have education.

Mr Kevin Doolan—They are falling off the train before they get on. It really starts in the primary school. Kids are not learning.

CHAIR—When we got off the plane this morning we met some kids playing in the park. They were bright eyed kids. Not only do they need to be exposed to reading and writing but also they need to get access to IT technology now, while their egos and brains are still developing.

Mr Brian Clancy—That is why we want an Internet cafe. No-one has computers at home. Unless adults are working somewhere where they can use them, the only way they can access them is—

CHAIR—To be at school.

Mr Brian Clancy—Or to come when we are open at night-time. People are coming. We really encourage it. Our home page is www.afl.com, because that is what the kids love. Even if they cannot read, at least they can get in there.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—What has frustrated me the most is that, if you want to do something, you have to have education. If you do not have education, you are not going to go anywhere except to the club and smoking ganja.

Mr Brian Clancy—CDEP money is pretty lousy. They get something like \$150 if they are on the basic CDEP. Our workers at school get \$150 after their rent and service fees have been taken out.

Mr CADMAN—Is that \$150 in their pocket?

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes, but often they put \$50 of that into the social club which they get back at the end of the year. It is an enforced saving and they choose to do it. If out of that \$150 they put \$50 in the social club, they have \$100 a week to survive on. After buying a loaf of bread and a dozen eggs at the shop, you have to get a loan to pay for the newspaper.

Mr CADMAN—Does your bread come from Darwin or do you bake it here?

Mr Kevin Doolan—It comes from Darwin.

Mr CADMAN—Why is that? That is crazy.

Mr Kevin Doolan—There is a bakery in the other community, I think, at Garden Point.

Mr Brian Clancy—Our bakery is at Garden Point.

Mr MURPHY—How much do you pay for a loaf of bread here?

Mr Brian Clancy—About \$3.50.

Mr MURPHY—Is there any fresh milk here?

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes.

Mr MURPHY—How much do you pay for a litre of fresh milk?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—It is \$4 a litre.

Mr CADMAN—Do you use powdered milk too?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Yes.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—Soap powder can be anything from \$9 to \$11.

Mr Brian Clancy—So \$100 has to go a long way.

Mr CADMAN—Where does your meat come from?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—A butcher in Darwin.

Mr CADMAN—There is a great business waiting to start there.

Mr Brian Clancy—You would have heard about the fish farm. Peter and I went out there yesterday.

Dr WASHER—Yes—10,000 tonnes of barramundi a year.

Mr Brian Clancy—That is going to be huge.

Dr WASHER—It sounds as though everyone thinks similarly here. Education for the kids, genuine job opportunities with reasonable pay and good nutrition will be the way to beat crime in this community. Tell me about nutrition. What is the plan for the young kids in the future?

Mr Brian Clancy—Today our nutrition program is breakfast, which is Weetbix.

CHAIR—You feed them that?

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes. It is done through ASFA. The school gets money through ASFA. They get a piece of fruit at quarter time, a piece of fruit at half-time and then a sandwich at three-quarter time, lunchtime. We do not think that is enough. The Work for the Dole mob are going to be bringing us back the buffalo and the other mob will be cooking it into stews. We would love to get into trouble through our kids being obese. We would just love to be feeding them too well. The kids will come to school if they know that there is going to be food there. It will help attendance. If they have food and games to play, they will come because they want to come.

CHAIR—Can you freeze food?

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes. We have a walk-in freezer.

CHAIR—One buffalo is going to provide a lot of casseroles.

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes.

CHAIR—And you can freeze those in meal sizes.

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes. We also intend to give a lot to the local creche. We use whatever we need of whatever we get and send the rest on for old age care—

CHAIR—You need a Meals on Wheels service for kids.

Mr John Cleary—Brian is talking about what happens at school, but we also have a childcare centre here. The person who runs the childcare centre has been working very hard over the last few years on a nutrition program. We feed all the kids who go to that creche.

CHAIR—Whose kids go to the creche?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—My kid goes to it.

Mr CADMAN—Does your little bloke go?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—Not yet, but he will go there when he gets bigger.

Mr John Cleary—There are about 50 places there.

CHAIR—Who are the kids who are lucky enough to go there?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—Any of the kids. My kid goes there and has a good time all day.

CHAIR—How many kids of that age are there here on the island?

Mr John Cleary—I am not sure what percentage of kids actually go to child care, but the childcare centre takes about 50 a day and it is busy.

CHAIR—Are they the same kids every day?

Mr John Cleary—I think they are different.

Mr Brian Clancy—It is the best creche. We have a little foster girl there, and this has to be the best creche in Australia with the feed they have and the games they play.

Mr John Cleary—One of the major activities of the creche is the feeding of kids.

Mr Brian Clancy—It is the best food. We want to copy what the creche is doing.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—I take my little one to creche. As soon as I stop the car, she is out and running into the place. She really loves it. It is really good. The sad thing is that we heard that the kids had lost weight after the holidays. Like I say, the kids' nutrition is really bad.

Mr John Cleary—The creche closed for two or three weeks over Christmas and, during that period, the kids who generally go to the creche lost weight.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—The reason I stress education so much is so that our kids do not do in the future what their aunties and uncles are doing now with their money. Let us educate our kids to be able to take responsibility.

Mr Brian Clancy—So that they can make informed choices.

Mr CADMAN—If there was no childcare centre where the kids were being fed and if the school was not feeding kids, what would happen? Would the kids be fed at home?

Mr Brian Clancy—They would go from house to house, I guess, looking for relations.

Mr CADMAN—How many of the kids in the community go to child care? Does everybody get a go?

Mr Brian Clancy—Yes, I think so.

Mr CADMAN—Do you have to pay for it?

Mr Kevin Doolan—Yes.

Mr Brian Clancy—Money for it is taken straight out of child endowment. It is something like \$5 or \$10 a week. They get more than their money's worth.

Mr CADMAN—But if you could drink that money, you would, wouldn't you?

Mr Brian Clancy—I would not.

Mr CADMAN—What would the community attitude be? I suppose it would be the same as it is everywhere else. The ones who do not look after their kids all that well will be the ones who will not send them to the creche.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—Mainly on special occasions, the child-care centre gives donations of things like fruits and that sort of thing to the rest of the community.

Mr CADMAN—Where do the community's vegetables come from?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—They come from Darwin, the mainland.

Mr Brian Clancy—It all comes from Darwin.

CHAIR—Why don't you grow them here?

Mr Brian Clancy—That is where we want to take our nutrition program. We want to have a horticultural course and make our own vegetable garden. We can have our own buffalo and our own vegetables. That is where we want to go. We will get the kids to read first.

Mr CADMAN—Gerry Wood was telling me yesterday that he was here as a horticulturalist 10 years ago growing vegetables and fruit in this place.

Mr Brian Clancy—There is a farm about 10 kilometres away and I have no idea of what happens to the food grown there. It has watermelons and bananas.

Mr Kevin Doolan—I am not sure what happens to it.

Mr Maralampuwī Kurrupuwū—We have a couple of people out there, but I am not sure who they are.

CHAIR—It seems that there is a role here for middle management, someone who does the wholesaling.

Mr Kevin Doolan—Yes; middle management and supervision.

CHAIR—Before we adjourn for lunch, I want to tell you about Sophie Panopoulos. Sophie is a really good friend of mine. She is now a member of parliament. Her background is Greek. While we were discussing education, she told me that if her parents had not hired a tutor for her when she was very small she would not be a member of parliament today, because that is how she learned her English.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—So were you speaking mainly Greek?

Ms PANOPOULOS—That is right.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—That is what I am going to do. I am going to look for a tutor for my kids. I am not going to have my kids going down. I want my kids to get a better education and get a better job and have a good life.

Mr Kevin Doolan—I have a tutor for my boy approved through ATS, Aboriginal Tutoring Service. So that service is available.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—I am going to ask Kevin later who he saw and how to go about it.

Mr Brian Clancy—We have tutors at school. Every kid in our school—this is part of our getting them to read—reads to a tutor for 15 minutes every day. Through that combined with the Soundwave program and our getting the attendance thing happening we hope that we are going to be the best.

Dr WASHER—What I do not comprehend is why you cannot change the education now in the kindergarten? Is it a Territory law that there be bilingual education? What stops kids from day one in the education system learning English? Everyone seems to agree that it should be changed so why isn't it?

Mr Brian Clancy—It probably dates from mission times. Bearing in mind the history of MCS and Xavier, one could be here and one could be in Melbourne. That is, they have nothing to do with each other. We are trying everything now to get them together. I think it is probably a mission thing—the nuns versus the Christian Brothers.

CHAIR—Could we start to bring tutors into the preschool?

Mr Brian Clancy—The primary school have tutors.

CHAIR—But what about bringing tutors into the preschool? That would be a good place to start.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—I would give an example. Maralampuwu has told me that back in the mission days when he was younger they could only speak English; they could only not speak English when they went home. But look where Maralampuwu is today. He is president of the local government. He used to drink, but he is strong enough to have given it away.

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—For 21 years.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—There are problems in the community but, if there was more and stronger education, the kids could say no to anything.

CHAIR—And there would be people who are successful like you.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—I used to smoke ganja. I have been through hard times. My first child was born when I was 16. I had a bit of a problem with the law and I had to keep away. I had a restraining order for 12 months and a good behaviour bond for another six. I used my head and kept away. I did not cause any trouble because I did not want to get in trouble. My dad was a member of the Northern Territory Assembly. My dad maybe was a big man but I had problems at home. I will make sure that my kids do not go through the same sort of thing. My kids are really important to me and I want to see them get somewhere. I used to smoke ganja but, when my little one came back to me, I said, 'I have got a responsibility; I have to be there for my baby while she grows up.' I am looking for my kids and our kids in the future to be more responsible.

CHAIR—Does your wife share this attitude with you?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—Yes. When my kids grow up, they are going to go away to a residential school—maybe Mona Vale College in Victoria, which is where my dad went.

Mr Brian Clancy—No. They will be coming to Xavier.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—As Brian says, perhaps they can stay home and be educated here.

Proceedings suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

CHAIR—Inspector Fry, perhaps you would care to make some comments.

Supt Don Fry—Thank you for this opportunity to talk about crime and safety on Tiwi Island and particularly Nguuu. I will address a couple of comments that were made earlier in our meeting today and touch briefly on the relevant crime and safety issues, the causes of crime and our strategy and enforcement procedures.

Health, employment and education are far more significant to this community than we are. By saying that I am not trying to denigrate the role of the police, but the problems of the Tiwi Islands lie absolutely with health, employment and education. It is important to recognise that what Mr Cleary and Maralampuwu are doing at the moment is a significant improvement. I have been here for 12 months. Most of my time before that was spent in CIB, so I did not have any prior history with the Tiwi Islands; but I have looked at the figures and the records.

When I came here 12 months ago, it was a tough time. Tough times call not so much for tough measures as for immediate action. We have spoken about drugs being a significant problem. I agree with that, but I stress that we needed to address a disastrous situation here about 12 months ago. On average during 2002 we went to three incidents a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. I am based in Darwin, so my officers here performed these duties. They all related to crime and safety issues such as assault, domestic violence, mental illness and attempted suicide. Up to six times a week there would be more than 400 people leaving the Nguuu club in various stages of intoxication. My members tell me off the record that they have noticed a significant change between the 400 angry people leaving the club last year and the less angry people who are there this year.

For part of that we must give credit to John Cleary and Maralampuwu for giving this community an opportunity to get focused, coordinated and developed in a way that had not been done before. Before that, the three communities were operating quite independently. We now have the Tiwi Islands Local Government being responsible for the whole of the Tiwi Islands—not just Nguuu but the rest of them as well. That is a significant development and achievement. That is not to take away from the independence of the other three areas, but it is quite an important factor. Likewise, as part of our strategy for dealing with the club, which was an immediate problem, we brought in sanctions to deal with alcohol related issues. Now we have a not so angry community. But that is not to say that we do not have problems.

CHAIR—Why were they angry?

Supt Don Fry—That is a good question. Perhaps Maralampuwu or Mr Cleary might be able to say more about that. All I can say is that this year we do not see the same level of serious violence. It still exists and it is still significant, but it is not at the same levels as it was last year. Maralampuwu, can you help us here?

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—It is pretty difficult to say, because people do not give me information as to what is happening. I do not live in the community; I am way out in the bush and I do not get to know of what has been happening.

Supt Don Fry—The anger comes from a combination of things. It is to do with frustration. To some degree the community had ground to a halt and was not progressing as it should have been. Much of that rubs off on the community members and contributes to the amount of time they spend at the club and what they consume there. There has been an improved level of supervision at the club, which sends a clear message to them not to come out as drunk as they used to before. The anger is to do with opportunities that are not created for the future. That concerns the things John and Maralampuwí are doing at the moment.

I stress that point: the creation of opportunities. When we asked for, and were successful in getting, a closure on Wednesdays, it was not about prohibition. I look at it more as an opportunity for the nondrinkers of the community to regain a little control and make some decisions for themselves about what is important to them. If you listen to what the principals of Xavier College have to say, you will hear that they have been able to do that. I am not about prohibition. From a police perspective, the alcohol issues over here are really issues for the community. It is for them to determine whether an area will be dry. Even the Liquor Act cannot determine that. We cannot force that. In other words, neither the police nor the Liquor Commission can nominate an area and say, ‘You are banned from having alcohol in that area altogether.’ That decision must be made by the community themselves—and that is according to the Northern Territory Liquor Act.

That is the combination of things we have been looking at. At the moment we have the Tiwi Islands liquor management plan in draft form. Again, to address the issue you talked about earlier of uniformity and consistency, I think the plan will recognise that there will be significant differences between areas. In an ideal world, one might say that all clubs would be closed on Wednesdays, all outlets would not have takeaways and you would only be able to drink at the club. But it is not about that at all; it is about trying to achieve some consistency and uniformity that will work well—or better than it has in the past.

You might be interested in the types of crime committed here. Assaults are significant. Domestic violence is significant. Unlawful entry, stealing and criminal damage are not so significant, surprisingly enough, in this community. I believe that a lot of those things occur from time to time but are perhaps dealt with in-house. Sexual assaults were raised earlier. Clearly they occur but it is always difficult to judge to what extent, because we all know that a lot of sexual assaults are unreported, particularly when they are crimes against young people. It would probably be fair to say that there is not a lot of serious crime. We do not have CIB coming over on a regular basis to deal with rapes or serious sexual adults, but that is not to say that they do not occur from time to time.

We have experienced a lot of suicides and attempted suicides since before 1998. In 1998 there was a coronial inquiry into the suicides of four young Tiwi Islanders around the same time. Following the coronial inquest the numbers dropped, but from 2001 through to 2002 they rose again. My figures, which vary a bit from those of the health department, show that there were five suicides at Nguíu last year and we averaged four attempted suicides per week. To temper that a little, some of those attempted suicides were attention seeking to some degree. It is not all about climbing trees and jumping out with ropes around your neck and being saved at the last minute. There are cries for help amongst those attempted suicides.

CHAIR—Is that the chosen method of suicide?

Supt Don Fry—It is one method. Another is climbing up and jumping off power poles. There is a range of things. Hanging is significant. It can be in the back shed with a garden hose around your neck. Hangings do not necessarily take place with feet off the ground. A lot of hangings are done by putting a rope around your neck and leaning into it. It has the same effect, but you black out first and then cannot recover. There is always conjecture about whether a person meant to kill themselves or was seeking attention, but it really does not matter.

CHAIR—The Michael Hutchence example.

Supt Don Fry—That is a good example. In my experience the majority of them are done by leaning into things rather than jumping out of trees.

CHAIR—There is certainly some conjecture about Michael Hutchence.

Supt Don Fry—I will not buy into that one. I do not have a clear report on suicides in 2003. I do not believe that there has been one, and Mr Cleary is touching wood at this stage. We also have to be careful about promoting these things. Attempted suicides or significant cries for help are probably down to two a week at the moment. Fluctuations in these figures can always occur, though, so we do not like to hang our hat on anything in particular. We currently have funding for significant mental health programs that were not here 12 months ago, and that is important. I think that is having significant benefits. The closure of the club on Wednesdays is certainly another factor. When you have 500 people turning up for a parent-teacher night, that represents significant recognition of young people—and quite often attempted suicides are a cry for help because no-one is showing any interest in someone. Those are the types of crime we deal with here. We also regularly go to disturbances, and I would consider that a safety issue. Often a disturbance may not be reported as a crime, but being humbugged and hassled is a major part of what we deal with.

CHAIR—Over lunch we were saying that, when there is crime of this sort, the young and the old both suffer. When I was running aged care there were a number of older people in communities who would have their pension and the food from their fridge taken and would be left with nothing. It was quite significant.

Supt Don Fry—Yes. I think that does occur here. We do not necessarily get reports of all that. There is also a culture of sharing in Aboriginal communities.

CHAIR—This is not sharing; it is standover.

Supt Don Fry—There are various forms.

CHAIR—Isn't that what they call humbugging?

Const. Galati—Basically, humbugging can be a young bloke asking people at the shops for money so that he can buy a can of drink—I see that every day—right through to what you are suggesting. It is a continuing verbal barrage.

CHAIR—That is why the respite centre is important.

Const. Galati—Yes.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—Right from when they are young, they are given in to. My family gave me a lot. I would ask my family for some money and they would give it to me. My mum called me a \$50 baby because, when I was growing up, that is what I would always get from my family—\$50. My dad told me, ‘I spent too much on you.’ I would go to my dad or my mum for food money. It is just the way they have been brought up. They have been given too much. They see something, they take it and they just keep taking and taking with no understanding. That is why education is such a high priority with me. That is why I talk about being taught at school to do the right things so that hopefully these things will change.

CHAIR—Are you saying that there is no appreciation of the money taken and no consequence associated with taking it?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—It is just the way they have been brought up. I say to my kids, ‘Enough is enough.’ I tell them that the most important thing for them right now is food, not money. I say, ‘You cannot eat money.’ I have taught them the value of money. In mucking around, I give them \$20 and say, ‘Cut it up and see what you can get from it.’ It is just the way the others have been brought up. With humbugging some parents ask, ‘Why are they doing this to us?’ I say to my families, ‘You have to stop giving them everything.’

CHAIR—You tell them that, when the children ask for everything, you have to say no.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—Yes. That is what this humbugging is about. All my life I have been given what I want—‘give me, give me, give me’. My uncle suicided; he hung himself. His friends then said, ‘We’re going to do what he did.’ It was an ongoing thing. Most of his friends wanted to copy him—‘Okay, if you’re not going to give me the car keys, I’m going to go and hang myself.’ It is an ongoing thing. They see something and grab it. They think, ‘If I’m not going to be given that, maybe I’ll go and hang myself and then I’ll be given it.’

CHAIR—Don’t they realise that if they hang themselves they will die?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—They do not think about it. When I think and talk about my uncle it still hurts me. It hurts me to talk about hanging and suicide; I am hurting right now. Always when you are sitting at home you are wondering whether somebody is killing themselves. I saw my brother after he attempted to take his own life. I saw him on a life support machine and watched for two hours while he died. He did not make it after they had turned the machine off. We are talking about learning how to save lives, and education is part of it. None of my family knew first aid. If we had known first aid, he would probably still be alive. But he did not have any oxygen in his brain and it was too late. Constable Chris Galati was talking about humbugging. Humbugging is the way we have been brought up. I am looking out for the future of my kids. If our kids can be educated properly, maybe things will be good for us. That is what I want for my kids in the future. If my son asks me what I want for him, I will tell him that I want him to have a good education. That is my view for my kids and my people in the future.

Supt Don Fry—Closure of the club on Wednesdays is about giving the community a break in the cycle and an opportunity to do something positive. Not all people here are drinkers. I am

willing to stand corrected, but until recent times the drinkers probably held sway. I think that is decreasing somewhat at the moment, which is allowing other opportunities to develop.

Mr Maralampuwī Kurrupuwu—You have mentioned that the club is closed on Wednesdays. The club is also closed today for the funeral that is taking place. On every funeral day the club is closed. Whenever there is a traditional ceremony the club is closed.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—A lot of things can happen when the club is open. I will give you an example. Remember that I have family who passed away. Suppose someone in Chris's family has passed away and I go up to him and say 'Sorry about that, Chris.' It might have been a couple of weeks ago and so today he is grieving and it is sorry day for him. What will he do? He will pick a fight. It is as simple as that. My uncle did that to me. I said, 'Don't do that to me.' I said, 'We should have respect.' Then he just said, 'Ah.' There are a lot of things in the community that happen like that, like humbugging. They see something and think, 'I could use that,' and they want it. There is no education. I am hopeful that education will change these things some day.

Supt Don Fry—This morning before we started talking I compiled a list of causes of crime in the community: health, employment, education and, further down the list, alcohol and illicit drugs. I do not think I can add much more to that. We have probably covered it pretty well. Unfortunately the police have a bit of a bandaid role. We do have strategies. We talked this morning about the importance of the drug dog. The drug dog would be based in Darwin. It is important but it is not the total answer to problems in the Tiwi Islands. Health, education and employment opportunities are probably higher on the list of priorities. I said before that tough times call for immediate action. The drug dog could be immediate action and we would certainly like to have that.

Giving you a bit of a government spiel, as I think I am obliged under the circumstances, the current NT government are committed to doubling the size of the drug squad within the first term after their election. They are working hard at that. It will not happen overnight; it will take some time. That would be of significant benefit to us, because our fellas here have to deal with the blood and guts through the door. It is as simple as that. We do have time to deal with drugs but we are limited in that. We do not have immediate answers to sending extra police over here to deal with the drug problem. The cost of building two houses over here is about half a million dollars and would take about 12 months. That is just to get two permanent police officers here. To get three permanent police officers here would be a major undertaking.

CHAIR—I thought you said you have four permanent police officers here.

Supt Don Fry—We have two Aboriginal community police officers. They normally have housing within the community. They are not in the same structure as mainstream policing. These things are not going to happen overnight. Drugs will be around for some time. As for partnerships, the police and the health department jointly attend all mental health cases when it comes to suicide or attempted suicide. We have a good working relationship and a good understanding of what is needed in that regard. I would like to push the barrow for night patrol. We have a night patrol service here which the local government run. They provide employees, some through CDEP and some through volunteers, to go around and intercede in a lot of disturbances. The ones they cannot handle they refer back to us. Night patrol has been found to

be very successful. It should continue and should be promoted. That is probably all I can tell you off the top of my head. I will not go too much into enforcement. I am happy to answer questions.

CHAIR—I will go back one more time to the drug question. You heard Brian say earlier today that, in getting the students to school, he does not compete with alcohol; they cannot get that. He competes with marijuana, because they can and do get that. That destroys them at that stage in their life. They do not get another chance. They do not get to grow up first and then think, 'I'll try alcohol.' They do not even get that far. His words struck me very much—that in getting kids into school he is in competition with ganja.

Supt Don Fry—I do not disagree with that at all, but another competing interest in getting kids to school is drunken disturbances that continue till three o'clock in the morning on a regular basis. I spoke of this before, and I do not mean to do so unkindly, but the general impression is that there is a bit of community apathy about, or perhaps sympathy towards, drugs which clearly needs to be overcome.

CHAIR—But it is in mainstream Australia too. It is there because soft words were spoken about it. It was okay, it was not going to get you; but now it does. We are now seeing a change in attitude. We know what it does to people and we are starting to work together. It will grow. That is what happened. It peaked in 1998.

Ms PANOPOULOS—In the short term, is it perceived to be the lesser of two evils in that at least people are more docile smoking marijuana than drinking alcohol? I have not studied the effects in great detail, so I do not know.

Supt Don Fry—That is certainly the information I have.

Ms PANOPOULOS—So people say, 'Let's keep it simple for ourselves and have relative peace in the short term,' even if in the long term people get brain damage and it changes them. But in the short term it is easier than alcohol to deal with on a day-to-day basis.

Supt Don Fry—That view is certainly held in this community.

CHAIR—That view must be stamped out, because of the damage that is done.

Mr CADMAN—Are you in charge of the health board?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Yes. I am Chairman of the Tiwi Islands Health Board. We have full-time workers based in Darwin who work in mental health. We have two female and two male local Tiwis who have been trained as mental health workers. They handle any problems related to people smoking and so on. We have a few problems with petrol sniffing too. Sometimes we get young fellows going a bit funny in the head and doing strange things. They climb on power poles and attempt to harm themselves. We look after them. We get a mental health worker to talk to them. Doctors check to make sure that they are properly looked after. They take medication too. We get maybe four or five and, if they are seriously sick in the head, we send them to Northern Territory Mental Health Services in Darwin, to Cowdy Ward. But sometimes that does not work. Sometimes they admit a patient to Cowdy Ward and just send

them out again the next day. We are trying to work more closely with Cowdy Ward staff to let them know that a patient has been taken there to be well looked after.

CHAIR—Do people know that, if they smoke cannabis, they will end up like that?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Yes.

CHAIR—Do they know that cannabis does that to them?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Yes. The doctors know it and so do the local people.

CHAIR—But do the people themselves, the young kids, know?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Yes, the people themselves know.

Mr CADMAN—Do drinkers tend to be older and cannabis users younger?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Young people around the age of 10 smoke.

Mr CADMAN—Is it mainly the older people who drink, or is it the young ones too?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Older people and younger people drink.

CHAIR—But the smokers are as young as 10?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Most of them smoke at the age of 10, or 14. I do not want to hide anything around this table.

Ms PANOPOULOS—What percentage of children between 10 and 14, say, would smoke?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Groups of minors introduce it to their friends who are younger and those who are the same age.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Would most of the teenage kids smoke?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Yes.

Mr CADMAN—How do the kids get enough money to buy ganja?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—I cannot tell you. All my kids grew to be adults without it. My grandchildren are four or five. So I do not know.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—As Chris Galati was saying, they get money through humbugging. They humbug their parents, their grandmothers. As we said before, if they do not get it they say they are going to commit suicide. We have not had a suicide lately, which is good, but the humbugging still continues. Growing up they have been given a lot of things, so they just take it.

The young kids see the older ones smoking around the club and they are copycats; they want to smoke too.

CHAIR—They are not satisfied with tobacco; they want ganja?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Maybe to buy ganja kids use money given by their parents so that they can buy chips and stuff like that at the shop.

CHAIR—All the time you have talked about them smoking, you have meant smoking ganja and not tobacco?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Not tobacco, no. But some of them do smoke cigarettes and some of them smoke ganja.

CHAIR—But there is a big distinction between those two. One does not addle the brain.

Ms PANOPOULOS—How much does one cigarette of ganja cost?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—I think one stick sells for \$30.

CHAIR—Somebody has to bring ganja into the community and then distribute it. Somebody is making money.

Supt Don Fry—It is not somebody. It is a range of individuals on the Tiwi Islands. The vast majority of them are well known on the Tiwi Islands, but family members will choose not to say anything about it.

CHAIR—Is that because of payback?

Supt Don Fry—It is part of it, I think.

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—It is part of it.

CHAIR—Sharing in the illicit gains would be another part?

Const. Galati—Yes.

Mr CADMAN—And another part would be because it involves family?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Yes.

Mr CADMAN—There is division about the management of alcohol on the island. It seems to me that the club is not controlled by the same people who are involved with John and the council. Is that right?

Supt Don Fry—I think it is a mixture.

Mr John Cleary—No; it is a different group.

Mr CADMAN—So the drinkers run the club and the people who have responsibility for the community run the rest of the place. That would create a bit of conflict. It is hard to settle those sorts of problems.

Dr WASHER—Do the Riolis still own the pub?

Mr John Cleary—Nobody really owns the pub. There is some doubt as to who owns the licence of the club here—whether or not it is an accounting firm in Darwin that holds the licence for it. Clubs are held under different licences. One has a tavern licence and some clubs have public licences. The recommendation from the alcohol management plan is that they all become nonprofit clubs with membership so that people have to sign in and there is tighter control, and so that the profits made from the clubs go back into the communities. I do not think any Rioli is involved in any of the clubs at this stage. Some of them from time to time have managed or been involved in managing. The manager or licensee here is a non-Tiwi person. In the other three communities Tiwi people have been managing the clubs. That has created some problems through having to say no. Family issues—family pressures through custom and those sorts of things—have created some problems. But at the moment it would be fair to say that a Tiwi person who is running the club at Milikapiti is very strong in doing a good job. In Garden there are still problems but that club seems to be running better. Here we have a non-Tiwi person running the club and, as one of the conditions of the licence, there must be security people. They are bringing in non-Tiwi security people.

CHAIR—Is this club run for profit?

Mr John Cleary—I have great difficulty in answering that, because we have no involvement in it.

CHAIR—Is it privately owned?

Mr John Cleary—An executive make decisions on who they will assist and who they will not assist in the community. As for the profits of the club, we do not see a lot of evidence of that sort of money going back into the community but I am not really in a position to answer. There has been a lot of talk about it and I know that is something the Licensing Commission is thinking about.

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—In relation to the club we have a lot of debate about leaders. Barry and I do not drink. A lot of our leaders who are supposed to be here are addicted to alcohol. They are not here because, with the funeral today, the club is closed and they have gone to another place. That is the dilemma we have. Barry, Wayne, a few others and I have been through that process.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Who is making the money today?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—The other community is making the money tonight. Normally we would make it but, because the funeral is on today, the club here is closed.

Ms PANOPOULOS—When will it open?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Tomorrow.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Who makes the money when your club is open?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—We do; the club does.

Mr John Cleary—The club is run by a committee. That committee is an elected group, although I think only about 40 people in this community voted in the last elections held for the executive of the club. The elected committee is made up of representatives of each of the skin groups—correct me if I am wrong.

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—Yes.

Mr John Cleary—Theoretically the profit made from that club goes to where people want things. I think they put \$60,000 into the football league. They give money to the school. If groups in the community want assistance with something, they take their case to the executive of the club and the executive decide whether or not to give support.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—The dilemma we have is that the company is now operating the club.

CHAIR—One local RSL in my electorate—I will not specify which one—is required by law to give a certain amount of money to charitable organisations each year. It does that and it also makes a profit on top of that. Because it is a nonprofit organisation, that money goes back into developing facilities for club members or subsidising food—all sorts of things like that. But there is still a profit made, even though a lot of money has been given away. Is that what you are describing to me here, except that you do not know who the beneficiary of the profit is?

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—The club makes profits that go back to the community, like \$120,000 which went to the local swimming pool a couple of years ago. You would have gone past the swimming pool on your way into the community. That was done with money from the club and the community alone. There is no Northern Territory government funding involved in that. It has been done by the community—by the club and the store.

Supt Don Fry—The difficulty is with the record keeping. I do not know whether they have submitted any returns that demonstrate how much money they have made and how much money has been given away. It would be nice to see that.

CHAIR—That is the point I am making.

Mr CADMAN—Shouldn't the Licensing Commission be in charge of that? Shouldn't that be a condition of the licence?

Supt Don Fry—They are looking at it with the liquor plan and the like, but they may be limited in what they can do there as well. They might try to force them to abide by the agreements they have. I do not know; that is a matter for them.

Mr John Cleary—The management board have had some discussion recently about setting up a community benefit fund and asking the store and the club, the two profit-making organisations in this community, to perhaps contribute some of that money into a fund that can be used to benefit the community. We have not yet had a meeting about it, but there has been some talk about setting up something like that. At this stage, from what we are being told, if the club or the store makes a profit that money is put back into the community. But it is difficult to see where a lot of it goes.

Supt Don Fry—Isn't there another stakeholder in this process? Aren't the Northern Land Council also involved? Don't they also have a fairly significant role in what takes place on the Tiwi Islands?

Mr John Cleary—The Northern Land Council does not have a role at all. But with the Tiwi Land Council, the land managers—and I am sorry they are not here today—

Supt Don Fry—They could probably determine what takes place with the club, if need be.

Mr John Cleary—I do not know whether the land council has a role in running the club. I do not believe it does.

Mr Luke Puruntatameri—No, they do not look after the club; they just look after the land and the sea.

Dr WASHER—There seems to be a lack of accountability back to the community, and they are the ones who are going to miss out. If the books are not being kept straight, with business accountability back to the community, it is unfair. It seems that the Liquor Commission should be asking a few questions. At the end of the day, a licence can be revoked. I do not know what happens in the Territory, but in WA there is a hell of a lot of power held in the act. There is a hell of a fine for serving someone who is drunk. The act in WA is very stringent. If there is no transparency in your business or if there is graft, corruption or whatever, you will be closed down. It is tough to get a licence and it is tough to keep it if you mess around.

Mr John Cleary—It is difficult, because some of these licences are basically private. The tavern licence is the same sort of licence that anybody operating a hotel has. So they submit their tax returns in the usual manner and there is no public accountability. They do not have to submit a return to anyone about where the profit goes. I think that is the type of licence we have in this town.

CHAIR—That is why I asked that question. Somebody owns it. The committee determines how a certain percentage of surplus funds is distributed to the community, and the committee that has been established does that work. But there is still somebody over here who owns it and who is probably taking profits out of this community. Can nobody tell me who the licensee is? Did you say it was held by an accountancy firm in Darwin?

Mr John Cleary—Some people have expressed the belief that it is held by an accounting firm in Darwin.

CHAIR—Accounting firms cannot hold a licence themselves, so they would be holding it on behalf of someone.

Mr John Cleary—Basically they are managing the club on behalf of an elected committee.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—Our biggest argument is that all administration servicing Tiwi Island should be based in the community. That is our dilemma. We do not see the profit records.

Ms PANOPOULOS—I can understand what are you saying but, from what other people have said, that will not solve the problem. If leaders in the community make decisions and some community leaders give out marijuana and some have an interest in getting alcohol in and readily available, who is going to control those community leaders? How do you solve that problem? Do you have any ideas?

Mr CADMAN—I think you said that the council has a different membership from that of the club's board. If the management of the club came under the control of the council, you would start to set some of the rules. You cannot set any rules for the club at present.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—At the moment we do not have the power to. We cannot say anything.

Mr Barry Puruntatameri—There are too many chiefs and not enough Indians in this community.

Mr John Cleary—They are not the same groups. The president of the club is not a member of council. I am not sure who the other four members of the executive are.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—A lot of us wear lots of hats.

Mr John Cleary—So some of the others may well be members of the board.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—Yes.

Mr John Cleary—But I think the key group that run or are involved in the club are not involved in council.

Mr Maralampuwi Kurrupuwu—That is right.

Ms PANOPOULOS—What do you see as the Police Force's main role or objective here on the island?

Supt Don Fry—Our overall mission is to serve and protect, but I know what you are getting at.

Ms PANOPOULOS—What about the practical stuff?

Supt Don Fry—I see us as being more than just police here, although we have to be careful about how far we go. We are a constant factor in the community which they can pretty well rely upon for advice, to get a reasonable and fair go and to provide a bit of a buffer in issues and conflicts that occur. Our primary role is enforcement but we also try to engage the community in being self-regulating as best they can and, as I said, give them opportunities to progress so that we could not be here.

Ms PANOPOULOS—What are the areas of priority in your enforcement role?

Supt Don Fry—We have five particular aims, I suppose, depending on where you are and what you are doing. Community safety is probably the key one. As I indicated before, at this stage that is a priority because of the number of serious domestic violence incidents and assaults that take place. I am not quite sure where you are coming from with that question.

Ms PANOPOULOS—I am trying to work out what the priorities are and where you would be proactive. You also act as a sounding board.

Supt Don Fry—Our objective is to try to make this a safer community.

Ms PANOPOULOS—With domestic violence, once you know there is a problem, do you step in to try to prevent more serious harm occurring, or do you try to be proactive in investigating and identifying problem areas?

Supt Don Fry—We do all of those things. If we know or believe that domestic violence is occurring, initially we try to intercede without taking enforcement action. That may be engaging other community members, members of the night patrol or whatever other services are available to do some business with that particular group or those individuals. We have some pretty strict, onerous obligations in our domestic violence policy, which talks about a no-drop policy and us taking action. So we have to be a little guarded because of the risks associated with a domestic violence incident if we do not take action.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Earlier you mentioned sexual assaults and said that it was difficult to judge the extent of them because people would not talk. What sort of role does the force have on the islands with regard to sexual assault in identifying and trying to do something about it?

Supt Don Fry—Our policy is to be fairly well known. We make ourselves available to the community. We will adopt a process of giving advice. We do have sexual assault counsellors. If we suspect something is not quite right, we refer people to the counselling services. We refer them back to the health department and any other service provider we can get them referred to. If need be, we will get our CIB or a female police officer or somebody from the sexual assault unit to come over and get involved. We do not publicly campaign for those types of things.

Mr CADMAN—How does the diversion program work? In your opinion, is it a good program? Is there enough content to make it effective? What is your experience with it?

Supt Don Fry—The diversionary program is a valuable to essential option we have at the moment. It is an extension of what we have traditionally done, in the Northern Territory and remote areas anyway, in trying to divert people away from the criminal system. At the moment

Kevin Doolan is the Youth Community Development Worker, a position which comes from the juvenile diversionary funding. That is a really critical role.

As for statistics on how useful it is, in the two years it has been up and running the figures have not been high and are certainly not comparable to those at Port Keats. But, considering the number of young people in this community, the education and employment opportunities and the problems that do or did exist, it is playing an able role. I think there have been 10 programs out of 22 referrals since it has been up and running. I have a bit of a background in this. In 1995-96 I was the CIB officer in charge at Alice Springs, and I ran a trial of that sort of program some years ago as part of my officer development course. I saw a lot of benefits from diversion programs and diversion in general.

That leads to the question of whether the police or somebody else should be the primary agency there. At this point in time the police are probably the best people in the Northern Territory to deal with juvenile diversion simply because we are at all these locations, we have expertise in this area and we are well known in the communities. It is often difficult, as John will tell you, to get the right people to come over and help with these services in remote localities. But that is not to say that some other agency should not be the primary agency dealing with juvenile diversion while we adopt more of a support role.

Mr CADMAN—Where somebody else runs the diversion program, as they do here, how do you relate to that person? Do you get to keep an eye on the young people involved? Is that the way it works?

Supt Don Fry—Both Chris and Jimmy, who are APOs, are part of that committee—certainly Jimmy is. They interact with the youth diversion people about which programs are appropriate and which are not.

Mr John Cleary—When there was an offer to establish a diversionary program here, there was some to-ing and fro-ing about who would run it. Like many things in communities, particularly in this community, the council ended up running it. We run virtually everything—the airport, Centrelink, the bank and the post office. We are the group that is equipped to wear the administration that operates here. The health board looked at the diversionary program and in the end did not get involved in it. So we have taken it on board and we run it under the umbrella of our community services. In many ways we feel that that is really a good place for it to fit, because we think youth and community services need to be brought together a bit better than they have been in the past. Its structure it does include a committee that involves the police and the school, which meets almost monthly. My community service manager is the person who runs the committee; it had a meeting this week. I occasionally put my nose in but I do not go to all the meetings. Most of the decisions on how the program operates come back to the main committee.

Mr CADMAN—A criticism of the program that I have heard is that there are not sufficiently well planned or significant activities in place for young kids to get involved in.

Mr John Cleary—Our whole problem with diversionary programs or whatever else is getting the operating resources, finding the right people and having enough people on the ground. With any program that is run here, I find that we need a driver—we need somebody with the enthusiasm to do it. We are lucky here in that we have Kevin, who is doing a really good job.

But we all get fairly drained, because there is a lot of pressure on whoever is driving things. Often we need administrative support for those people and often we do not have that. The administrative support to run programs is very thin on the ground, because we do not have big budgets. Tiwi Islands Local Government administer services to 2,500 people. That is a really small group, but we provide more functions than places like Darwin. Counting CDEP, we have a work force of over 500 people.

CHAIR—Do you administer that too?

Mr John Cleary—We administer that. Our administrative staff is a fraction of the size of the Darwin City Council. Roughly 30 people make up my key administrative staff that runs all the communities. We run airports, post offices, offices, normal council functions and diversionary programs. The total administrative staff of the Darwin City Council is about 200 to 300, and probably two-thirds of that number are on administrative support. The problem in all of these Aboriginal communities is that the only administrative structure on the ground is the council. Every function has been given to council. In many ways I think that is probably the most efficient way of operating, but it is a bit difficult to have the resources to be able to administer things.

CHAIR—Even if you did have more support, would you have the personnel with the training?

Mr John Cleary—I do want to speak about jobs and training. We spoke earlier this morning about education. A big problem is that people have to see long-term sustainable returns at the end of what they do. It is a bit hard for the kids going through school to get enthusiastic if they do not see any place to go. A lot of the jobs we have in communities are supported by government—Work for the Dole and those sorts of things. Because we do not have a big revenue base or revenue stream coming in, we are unable to say, ‘This is a job that is not dependent on some sort of government funding.’

CHAIR—You cannot be too precious about that. The whole of the Northern Territory is dependent on Commonwealth government funding. Everybody cannot go around feeling guilty because they are on the end of a bit of government funding. In fact, one in every six people in this entire country receives some form of government handout. Do not get too concerned that you are getting a bit of a government handout.

Mr John Cleary—There are probably too many individual handouts. That is probably the reason we have many of the problems we have today. But we have a local government structure here that does not have a rate base. The income we receive to run the services we need to run for the community has to come from somewhere; we do charge some service fees in the community, but they are limited.

Ms PANOPOULOS—I find that attitude to Work for the Dole quite interesting. I was involved in it well before being elected to parliament. In every single program I have visited there were young people who were dysfunctional from an employment and social perspective but the program gave them a structure. It helped them to understand what was required within the basic day-to-day limits of a job; they experienced interaction and a feeling of usefulness

because they were contributing to the community in which they lived and which supported them. So I find that attitude interesting. It is the first time I have come across it.

Mr John Cleary—I am not quite sure where you are coming from. I am talking about us as a council delivering services to the community. The way in which we deliver many of our services to the community is through various programs, and we do not have sufficient revenue coming in to go out and recruit 20 or 30 parks and gardens people. We are dependent on the CDEP program.

CHAIR—What is the matter with that? That is a proper job.

Mr John Cleary—It is not seen by many in the community as a proper job.

CHAIR—Maybe you have to have a campaign to make people understand that it is a proper job.

Mr John Cleary—It may well be that we change names and do what was being talked about with the school this morning. There have been huge problems—and I do not think they are specific to these communities—until recently, I hope, with the way a lot of these programs were run. People were getting payment for CDEP whether or not they turned up to work. The way some of these programs were administered was not all that flash. So trying to break the barrier of saying to people, ‘You have to turn up to work to get paid,’ has been difficult because they have been paid whether or not they turned up to work. In some communities that has been happening and it should not have been. It is against the rules, but it has been happening.

Dr WASHER—You said that you have 2,500 people.

Mr John Cleary—Yes.

Dr WASHER—If we say we are going to give gainful employment to a reasonable percentage of people on this island, the level of services currently required is not going to equate to those jobs. So you need new industry here or you need a means of employing people in something productive that they can see is bringing benefit to the community, whether it be from aquaculture, horticulture, poultry or whatever. There needs to be some industry which can be seen as creating growth and employment opportunities for their children in the future beyond just service based industries.

Mr John Cleary—That is what I was starting to say. I probably got too focused on the council. The point I was starting to make before I got sidetracked is that there has to be some meaningful and sustainable employment at the end of the day. We have been having strategic planning sessions to talk about where we are going as a council or as a community. We have identified a whole lot of areas where we ought to be looking at starting new businesses and getting jobs happening. If we look at the retail area, we only have one store here. As you heard this morning, there is no butcher. There are opportunities for butchers and probably for chicken farms and market gardening. Many years ago most of the vegetables on the island were grown here. Now they all come in. We have identified about 20 areas. But, again, who is driving it? In the past it has been the land council and TITEB. At the moment the land council’s main focus in future employment is forestry and aquaculture. The reality is that in forestry there are six or

seven jobs at the moment and in aquaculture there is one. We are negotiating at the moment on forest harvest. There has been talk on the island about getting hundreds of jobs out of the forestry project, but the increasing reality for those who are involved in discussions is that we are not going to see many jobs. For a lot of the work in this forestry project contractors will come in.

CHAIR—So you are saying that jobs will go to contractors and people outside the community?

Mr John Cleary—Yes. That is a real fight I am having at the moment. We had a session the other day. This council is fighting with the contractors just to do the road maintenance. I am having difficulty with the forest company telling me how much money they are budgeting to do road maintenance. They do not want to spend any money. If we are going to create jobs at the end of the day for people on road construction and maintenance, money must be made available to do it.

The areas that have been picked out today and are talked about a lot are forestry and aquaculture. I come from a state where there is a lot of forestry. The reality is that there are not many jobs in forest harvest here. The jobs in the forestry area are in processing. There are no plans to do any downstream forestry processing here; it is all harvesting and shipping logs out. I am concerned because I do not believe that when this happens there will be a lot of employment for Tiwi people. There is potential in aquaculture. But there have been difficulties because in remote communities—and it is happening at Port Herd—the companies have difficulty holding people in jobs. We have to start looking at what is real and what can work. Service jobs in the community, like hairdressing, are a start but they are not the total answer. We have a community here of 2,500 people. Most other towns of that size would have shops and other things to service them.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Who do you see as the driving force behind retail development?

Mr John Cleary—At the moment I do not think there is anyone, and that is the dilemma. With the overall structure and the direction council is trying to head in, we have talked about a long-term vision for how the council functions and how we operate health and training functions within that. But we are also talking about how we can run an enterprise function. At the moment the enterprise function is claimed by the land council and the training board, but I do not see that working at this stage.

Mr Barry Puruntatameri—I agree.

Mr CADMAN—That is very interesting. You say that you are running so many programs for half a dozen people here and half a dozen there. If you added up all the administration, you would probably have 20 times more administrators than people you are delivering to—is that right? They are doing real jobs in that administration; I am not denigrating the process.

Mr John Cleary—We do not have many administrators; we are pretty thin. You asked me who is taking on this enterprise role. This morning I sent an email to the state manager of DEET. I had a discussion with her last week and she suggested that DEET could probably give us some

assistance in the form of an enterprise person. The dilemma I have all the time is that I am trying to do so many things that it makes it very difficult to do one thing properly.

Dr WASHER—I guess you would assess that person for some thoughts about development and some assessment of what you could do. Let us take a hypothetical case. If you were going to develop horticulture because you had underground groundwater, reasonable soils and a marketplace in Darwin, would they be able to look at that as a possibility and put together projects and feasibility studies?

Mr John Cleary—There is heaps of money available through ATSIIC to develop business plans et cetera.

Dr WASHER—That is what you need. You need feasibility studies with genuine job opportunities.

Mr John Cleary—Yes, but you need someone to drive it.

Dr WASHER—And you need someone with the time to drive it.

Mr John Cleary—Yes. I am not trying to make it sound any worse than it is, but you have a dilemma with those who are currently administering things here. This morning you heard the story about the teachers at the school; they are doing so many things. I normally arrive at work at half past seven in the morning and I plan to do certain things. I am lucky if I do anything I have planned before four o'clock when everybody goes, because every day is taken up with issues that arise.

CHAIR—You have spoken of about 30 people servicing 2,500. I think that a third of Australians are employed in some area of the public service.

Mr MURPHY—Including us. In your opinion, which programs work the best and which programs do not work at all?

Mr John Cleary—Diversionary programs are of the most benefit. People are best kept busy, active and working.

Mr MURPHY—Are there any programs that should be abandoned?

Mr John Cleary—I would need time to think about that.

Mr MURPHY—Would anybody else like to make a contribution on this?

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—There are difficulties in trying to set up leadership on Melville Island. Not only this community but also the other communities will participate. We are trying to get leadership support in these communities.

Mr MURPHY—Do you see that as a good thing?

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—Yes. I met with Brian Clancy last week. He is having difficulty with the CEO of education in Darwin. Darwin education are saying no. Our two co-principals can see what is going on in the community and at school, which the education department in Darwin cannot see.

Mr John Cleary—I have had time to think about your question. My biggest bugbear here would probably be the reporting we have to do to ATSIC. We have to do endless reports in administering the small amounts of money we get. If there were to be any wholesale change—and I know we have discussed this—it should be to have the funding that normally comes to this community coming to us directly. We can be audited and everything else; we are more than happy for there to be oversight of our expenditure. But so much funding that comes through to communities like ours goes through so many groups. There is a whole ATSIC bureaucracy in Darwin continually demanding reports from us for a variety of reasons.

Mr MURPHY—I am sure Superintendent Fry would tell us that that is one of the worst elements of policing—the endless amount of paperwork you have to generate.

Supt Don Fry—The administrative things. Accountability for investigations is another matter altogether, but we are fairly accountable.

Mr John Cleary—We have no problem with being accountable for what we do.

CHAIR—You would like the money not to come through ATSIC.

Mr John Cleary—Yes. We would like to get the money direct. We would like per capita funding. We would like our share in the same way we get financial assistance grants that come to local government. We would welcome that. Then you are putting the decision making about what happens in the community back into the community, whereas a lot of the programs we have are designed outside, well away from here and sometimes by people who do not understand what really happens here.

Mr MURPHY—How do indigenous members of the Tiwi Islands community feel? Would you want to abolish ATSIC?

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—In some cases, yes. We have difficulties with ATSIC.

Mr MURPHY—What difficulties do you have?

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—It is hard to get funding.

Mr MURPHY—Do you think that without ATSIC you would have a better opportunity to get funding?

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—We want to go direct and meet with Ruddock.

Mr Barry Puruntatameri—This is a good question about ATSIC. I would like to see ATSIC abolished. We could then work on the federal government in Canberra for direct funding. Every time we ask for funding through ATSIC they say, ‘You have to go to the other door.’ At the next

door they say, 'No, you have to go to the other door.' It creates headaches for us. ATSIC has become a second Canberra.

Mr MURPHY—What do you think, Gawin? You are a young leader.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—I do not know what ATSIC do, but I will work on that. I do not know anything about them and I do not like to step on anyone's toes.

Mr Barry Puruntatameri—Yesterday I was in Darwin at a big meeting with remote communities from all over. We had this meeting over two days and there was a workshop on the issue of ATSIC. They are sick and tired of ATSIC and they reckon they are sick and tired of CDEP. CDEP do not pay much in wages.

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—We had permission from ATSIC to combine in Katherine last year. Northern Land Council leader Galarrwuy Yunipingu said, 'You are not all ATSIC representatives; you are traditional owners. Let's get rid of ATSIC. You are wearing two hats and you should wear one hat as a traditional owner. Get rid of ATSIC.' That is what one of our leaders said.

Mr MURPHY—Do representatives of ATSIC come here regularly or irregularly to look at how your community is functioning?

Mr Maralampuwu Kurrupuwu—Did we have a visit last year?

Mr John Cleary—The regional council met us last year. Field officers are allocated to particular areas. It is common for a field officer to come to our council meetings, although we have not seen one for a few months now.

Mr Barry Puruntatameri—Sometimes they are here for five minutes and then they are off.

Mr John Cleary—Perhaps the biggest frustration I have had with them is that things went wrong here in some of the communities three or four years ago. There was not proper accounting; the finances got into a mess. I am still arguing with ATSIC for the grants given to this community before the formation of this council back in 1999. Trying to resolve these things is taking up a lot of my time. Because our financial records were not kept as well as they should have been, there has now been a final audit done on the old council here. Payments were made and a lot of the money could not be traced. In the accounts there is almost \$200,000 worth of sundry expenditure which shows that the money was spent but was not tracked to particular accounts. ATSIC have simply looked at our audited statement and said, 'You did not spend money here, here and here and therefore we want money back.' They will not accept that we have not been able to match it. The only way I can match it is to get the actual cheque details from the bank, and I have been advised that that will probably cost us more money than it would be worth. This is an argument that I am still having with them. They are taking a very bureaucratic view and saying, 'Because you have signed off on this audited statement'—which we had to do—'and you cannot prove that you have spent the money, we want it back.' So I have just had to pay back \$171,000.

CHAIR—Why didn't you just say, 'Sue us'?

Mr John Cleary—I refused and then they froze our grants. At the end of the day they have the whip hand.

Mr Barry Puruntatameri—ATSIC provides CDEP funding.

Mr John Cleary—Yes. We get funding from ATSIC from two sources. The whole CDEP program comes to us via ATSIC. That is the payment of wages and an on-cost payment we get as well for running the CDEP program. ATSIC also provide a number of other funding programs to us. There are various projects within the community for which they provide money. They provide money for the black radio communication programs and a whole lot of other projects—recreation projects and others. The \$170,000 I talked about was for a mixture of those sorts of programs. I am certain that the money was spent but at the end of the day I could not prove it. They fairly big heartedly said, ‘If you pay us the money, we will give it back to you.’ They have given it back to us for particular projects, which means that we have to acquit it—we have to spend the same money twice. That is just some of the frustration we have.

Mr MURPHY—Would you abolish ATSIC?

Mr John Cleary—I would do it differently. I am hearing rumblings at the moment.

Mr MURPHY—It is an issue that is on the agenda at the moment.

Mr John Cleary—I believe that the direction the Territory government have chosen recently of moving away from small councils to regional management is the way to go. The reality is that the communities are just too small. They are not big enough to be viable and they have all been struggling up here. With all the talk about council amalgamations all over Australia, the smaller councils have disappeared into bigger, technically more efficient structures.

CHAIR—It is horses for courses.

Mr John Cleary—Yes, it is horses for courses. You can argue that you can go too big. But the reality up here in the Territory is that a lot of these councils have a population of 300 or 400 people. The ability to attract decent professional or properly qualified staff is almost nonexistent, so each small council struggles. What is being proposed is the coming together of these communities and councils to form regional structures, and that is starting to happen all over the place. I believe that that is the right direction to go in. The funding, whether from ATSIC, the Commonwealth or the Territory, should go to that regional structure and encourage the people within that structure to start making decisions on their priority issues. It should be funding their priorities, not priorities set by somebody who lives remotely and is not aware of the reality.

I have been doing too much talking. I was trying to sit back this morning and let other people do it. I come from a place a long way from here. I have not worked in Aboriginal communities before, and this has been a fairly large cultural change for me. But I do not believe there are many people in Australia outside these communities who really understand the dynamics and the issues that have to be dealt with here. What makes it hard is that a lot of policy development is happening remote from here. A lot of the people who are making decisions about the programs and what should or should not happen would not have a clue.

CHAIR—Would people like to summarise? Is there anything anybody else would like to contribute that you think we ought to be made aware of?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—Clancy wants to make a change to primary school education, but the CEO in town has disagreed with him. Where do we go from here? People like Barry and me will be here for the rest of our lives. We want to make a positive change for this community and we have someone in town telling us, ‘Sorry, you can’t do it.’ Where do we go from here?

Mr CADMAN—Can the council take the matter up on behalf of the school?

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—I think it comes under Catholic education. What I saw yesterday at the school really concerned me.

CHAIR—The rules in other parts of Australia are that the government of the day says what kids shall learn. Religious bodies can be providers of that but they have to give the same basics that the government school system gives. They can add things if they want but they cannot leave things out. If it were government policy that English be taught right at the beginning of school, that would have nothing to do with what the Catholic education board might want to do; it would have to be done. Maybe the council can be influential in this area.

Mr John Cleary—We could speak to Catholic education, but my understanding is that the Territory government mandates the curriculum. There are parameters to what the schools have to do, whether they are Catholic or otherwise. Within that curriculum there is a certain degree of flexibility. I know that the previous principal here held different views from the hierarchy in Catholic education. It appears that Clancy has a similar difference in view from the current management of the school.

CHAIR—My understanding is that, before the change of government in the Northern Territory when the CLP lost, the CLP abandoned the policy of teaching English as a second language. Is that right?

Mr John Cleary—I am not sure, but I understand that the decision to run Tiwi with English as the second language has been the philosophy of the school.

CHAIR—But I think the law changed; correct me if I am wrong.

Mr John Cleary—I am not sure.

Dr WASHER—With respect though, private education has much higher federal funding than state schools. So federally we would have some say in it.

CHAIR—That is a very good point.

Dr WASHER—They get about seven per cent of their funding from the states and about 30 per cent from us. The power the dollar has is amazing. Perhaps we could say, ‘We might not pay you unless you cooperate.’ We should talk to Brendan Nelson about this.

Ms PANOPOULOS—The comment was made earlier that the policy changed when Whitlam came in.

CHAIR—We might follow that up.

Dr WASHER—Perhaps John could document what people express so that we have a written reference to the problems, and we will stick it in front of Brendan and see what can be done.

Mr John Cleary—There are two sides to the story, as Clancy said.

Mr CADMAN—There would be in this community as well. Traditional people here would want to negotiate the process so that it provides continuity of culture and language but also ensures that people are equipped for modern living.

CHAIR—I did not hear Clancy say that there were two sides to the story.

Mr CADMAN—I did not hear him say that either, but I will guarantee that there are.

Mr John Cleary—I thought he said that the junior school may have a different view.

CHAIR—He did, but he did not say there are two sides to the story.

Mr John Cleary—I was assuming that that was another side to the story.

CHAIR—He just said that that is the way they do it.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—They rang me up and told me to go and have a look at what was happening at the school. They only teach English in year 7, and that is way too late. I want a good education for my kids as they are growing up and for my people; we want them to be able to take up good jobs. On the boards and committees here today—the health board and the land council—there are always the same people. Why? Because our kids do not have enough education. Barry is getting old, and he is the one who encouraged me. I used to hear Barry all the time saying, ‘Where are you young fellas? Get up here.’ I did not have the guts to come up here and work until Barry said that. I watched my brother die for two hours and that gave me more strength. I said to myself, ‘I have to do something about this.’ My brother was heavily into ganja and drinking and had problems. I just want to get those things clear. From what I saw yesterday at the school, I hope it is not too late. We want our own people working here. We do not want people in town working for us; we want our own people working here in the community. We want to see our own people working here, having a better understanding and taking responsibility.

CHAIR—You make that point very strongly.

Mr Gawin Tipiloura—We cannot just hand these things over to the police. They have enough to do as it is. They can only do so much. We cannot hand it over to the health board because they can only do so much too. People come to us at times and tell us their problems, and we cannot do anything. Where do we go from here?

CHAIR—That is a good note to end on. On behalf of the committee, I thank you all very much for taking part in this round table. We have learned a lot and I think it has been very beneficial for the committee's work. We just hope that in some way we will be able to assist you. Thank you for the good work you are doing.

Committee adjourned at 3.35 p.m.