



2 March 2006

Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

RE: Inquiry into Petrol Sniffing in Remote Aboriginal Communities

I am writing to inform the Committee of the work of the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation Ltd, particularly in relation to the issue of inhalant misuse.

AER Foundation Ltd is an independent public company, established in October 2001, and funded by a grant of \$115 million from the Australian Government. The funding was the equivalent of an amount of excise on draught beer sales collected between 1 July 2000 and April 2001.

The objectives of AER are;

- to prevent alcohol and other licit substance misuse, including petrol sniffing, particularly among vulnerable population groups such as indigenous Australians and youth;
- to support evidence based alcohol and other licit substance misuse treatment, rehabilitation, research and prevention programs;
- to promote community education encouraging low risk consumption of alcohol and highlighting the dangers of licit substance misuse;
- to promote public awareness of the work of AER and raise funds for its ongoing work; and

- to provide funding grants to organizations with appropriate community linkages to deliver services which reduce the harms caused by alcohol and other licit substance misuse.

Since AER commenced operations in 2001, we have allocated over \$85 million to more than 600 projects around Australia, including some \$5.81 million to address the issue of inhalant misuse, such as petrol sniffing.

I have attached a summary list of those projects relating to inhalant misuse and draw your attention to those marked with a \* because they are specifically directed to the Committee's term of reference 2(b).

AER is the only non-government organisation with a specific focus on inhalant misuse. We are not, however, in a position to be a recurrent funder, but we allocate grants to enhance the work that all levels of government are funding. There is no doubt that regular on-going funding is essential to address the scourge on petrol sniffing in remote Aboriginal Communities.

For further information on the contents of this submission, please contact the undersigned on 02 6122 8600.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daryl P Smeaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daryl P Smeaton  
Chief Executive Officer