

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Chapter 2

### Recommendation 1

2.26 Given that the Department of Health and Ageing provides assistance with the supply of Opal fuel to any community that requests it, and that there was no evidence given to the committee to indicate that communities were aware of this, the committee recommends that the department actively promote this option in a way that is accessible and well understood by Indigenous people and their communities.

### Recommendation 2

2.39 That any future rollout of Opal fuel be accompanied by an appropriate communications strategy that is implemented well in advance of the rollout. As such, the committee urges the government as a matter of priority to finalise the revised communications strategy before the next phase of the rollout of Opal fuel. The committee does not consider that this should cause any delay to the further rollout of Opal fuel.

### Recommendation 3

2.57 That Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland provide similar mechanisms to those in place in the Northern Territory which empower individual communities to ban the importation, supply and sale of regular petrol and other volatile substances in a designated local council or shire area.

## Chapter 3

### Recommendation 4

3.26 While the committee recognises the importance of a local 'on the ground', coordinated presence for the effective implementation of the Eight Point Plan, it is concerned about the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit's ability to effectively implement the Petrol Sniffing Strategy. The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government immediately commission an independent review of the role and function of the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit, specifically:

- its capacity to implement the strategy effectively;
- whether its current location in the Alice Springs Indigenous Coordination Centre as part of FaHCSIA delivers the requisite level of accountability and governance standards;
- processes in place for the effective ongoing monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the Unit's role;

- its ability to effectively engage and consult with Indigenous people and communities; and
- the effectiveness of the tri-state whole-of-government approach including the staffing and collaboration between departments.

### **Recommendation 5**

3.50 Given the continuing resistance to Opal fuel by some retailers across all jurisdictions in central Australia, the committee recommends that the Commonwealth government complete, as a matter of priority, the necessary work to determine whether legislation is both possible and practicable.

3.51 If these retailers do not voluntarily agree to supply Opal within 6 months, and if it is established that there are no legal impediments to the implementation of Commonwealth legislation, the Commonwealth government should immediately commence the drafting of legislation to mandate the supply of Opal fuel within the petrol sniffing strategy zone.

### **Recommendation 6**

3.52 In the event that the introduction of Commonwealth legislation is not possible, the committee recommends that state and territory governments introduce legislation to mandate the supply of Opal within the petrol sniffing strategy zone.

### **Recommendation 7**

3.55 Given that the committee in its 2006 report recommended that all governments replicate the procedure used in Maningrida to prevent contractors bringing regular unleaded petrol into communities by making it a term of contract, the committee reaffirms this recommendation and recommends that contracts for service in areas where petrol sniffing is a problem contain terms which prevent regular unleaded fuel entering the community and require that all other volatile substances and inhalants be locked away when not in use.

### **Recommendation 8**

3.81 The committee reaffirms its previous recommendation that the Commonwealth, state and territory governments revise and agree upon priorities to consolidate and extend the rollout of Opal fuel to utilise the current production capacity of 40 million litres per annum. The immediate focus should be on:

- delivering a comprehensive exclusion zone in central Australia;
- the option of establishing a bulk storage facility in Darwin in order to provide a sustainable long-term distribution system in northern Australia; and
- actively expanding the rollout of Opal fuel to the far west coast region of South Australia and Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

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**Recommendation 9**

3.92 The committee considers that the 'guidelines for the responsible sale of premium unleaded petrol' are a necessary response to the availability of sniffable premium fuel and recommends the Commonwealth government finalise and distribute the guidelines without delay, making sure that adequate support is provided to ensure their implementation.

**Recommendation 10**

3.93 That twelve months after the distribution of the 'guidelines for the responsible sale of premium unleaded petrol', the Commonwealth government undertake an audit of both the uptake and effectiveness of the guidelines in reducing access to premium fuel for the purpose of sniffing.

3.94 Subsequently, if the audit finds that these guidelines are not proving effective, the committee recommends that, while conscious of the potential commercial costs, consideration is given to subsidising the development of an Opal equivalent substitute for premium fuel.

**Recommendation 11**

3.147 That the Commonwealth government, as a matter of priority, expand current efforts to improve data collection on the prevalence and trends over time in relation to petrol sniffing and substance abuse in Indigenous communities so as to collect comparable data across all jurisdictions.

**Chapter 4****Recommendation 12**

4.29 That the Commonwealth government, in partnership with state and territory governments, provide adequate resources to enable the extension of quality youth services and the employment of a male and a female youth worker for each community in the Petrol Sniffing Strategy Zone.

**Recommendation 13**

4.39 The committee reaffirms recommendation 17 from its 2006 report which called upon Commonwealth, state and territory governments to provide additional funding to new and existing rehabilitation facilities in order to provide a quality service while meeting current demand.

**Recommendation 14**

4.46 The committee considers the provision of successful programs in remote Indigenous communities to be a highly specialised area for which mainstream programs and 'one-size-fits-all' solutions are not necessarily appropriate. The committee recommends that in order to maximise local ownership and effectiveness of programs, the awarding of contracts in remote Indigenous communities must take into consideration a tenderer's:

- on-the-ground presence, reputation and standing in the region;
- existing relationships, networks within the region and support or endorsement from communities; and
- ability to provide tailored programs to individual communities or groups of communities in response to the diverse cultural expectations, kinship systems and protocols of the region.

### **Recommendation 15**

4.59 The committee reaffirms the recommendation of its 2006 report that the Commonwealth, state and territory governments immediately provide long term, flexible funding, especially for successful programs already operating in communities, to address the sporadic nature and short term focus of current funding models.

### **Recommendation 16**

4.60 That governments and departments within governments, work to design application and accountability processes which avoid duplication and reduce the number of contracts that service providers are required to enter into and aspire to a single contract where possible. This is to minimise the reporting and administrative burden on service providers. The committee notes that governments should aspire to providing a single contract where possible.

### **Recommendation 17**

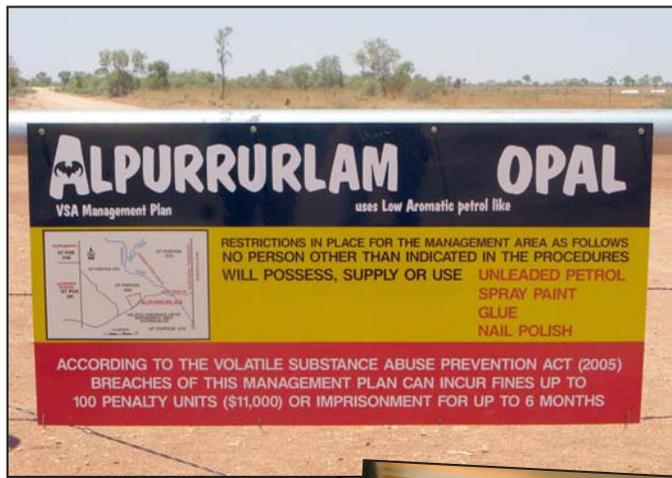
4.66 That additional resources be provided for adult education classes in communities where the reduction in petrol sniffing has created a need for these services, and that appropriate adult education engagement and training methodologies are used, delivered by qualified adult educators.

### **Recommendation 18**

4.77 The committee reaffirms recommendation 3 of its 2006 report that the Commonwealth government provide adequate additional resources to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner to monitor and report annually on the progress towards implementing the above mentioned recommendations until the Commissioner can report that all recommendations have been sufficiently addressed.

*Visits by the Committee to Yuendumu,  
Alpurrurlam, Mutitjulu and APY Lands*





THE SENATE COMMITTEES inquiring into Petrol Sniffing and Substance Abuse is visiting Mutitjulu Community. They would be very pleased to meet Mutitjulu community members and representatives if they are in the community.  
Sunday afternoon 1 March 2009  
Venue: Rec-Hall  
Time: 4:00pm