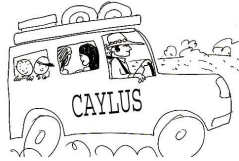


**Tangentyere Council
Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service
(CAYLUS)**



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**Submission to the Inquiry into Petrol Sniffing and Substance Abuse in
Central Australia
31 July 2008**

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5 August 2008

The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam

Please find attached herewith the Tangentyere Council submission to the Inquiry into Petrol Sniffing and Substance Abuse in Central Australia by the Senate Community Affairs Committee.

Tangentyere Council believes that the roll out of Opal in Central Australia has made a significant and important contribution to the reduction of petrol sniffing amongst young people. We believe that the Central Australian Youth Link Up Service (CAYLUS) has been an extremely important part of that achievement and Tangentyere Council is proud of that contribution.

Nevertheless, as CAYLUS has been saying for sometime, the roll out of Opal is only one, albeit vital, part of addressing inhalant and other substance abuse amongst young people in Central Australia. The quality of life for many young Indigenous people remains poor, not only in material terms, but in terms of the opportunities available to develop the talents and capacities that they have. It is important to address the underlying reasons for the extent of the petrol sniffing that did occur, in order to prevent it escalating again or being replaced by other forms of destructive behaviour.

Tangentyere Council believes that the current period in which sniffing has reduced dramatically presents a window of opportunity to provide youth services in Indigenous communities that will provide prevention and early intervention as well as the sort of opportunities that are taken for granted for young people elsewhere. These services are inadequate at present.

Tangentyere Council is pleased to provide the sort of infrastructure in terms of financial, human resource and overall management that enables it to have programs such as CAYLUS under its umbrella. We believe that this model is conducive to effective service delivery in Central Australia for both its economies of scale and the linkages it provides between various programs and with a wide range of communities that are closely interconnected.

Should you wish to follow up any matters raised in this submission, please contact my CAYLUS team, Mr Blair McFarland on landline 08 8951 4236, email: blair.mcfarland@tangentyere.org.au or Mr Tristan Ray on landline 08 8951 4279, email: Tristan.ray@tangentyere.org.au. Blair and Tristan can also be contacted on mobile 0427 181 727.

Thank you for providing Tangentyere Council with an opportunity to have input in to this imperative inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Tilmouth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William Tilmouth
Executive Director

5 August 2008

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This submission is from The Central Australian Youth Link Up Service, we are a youth substance misuse prevention project based at Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs. We have operated since 2002 when we were founded with a focus on addressing the escalating levels of petrol sniffing and associated damage in Central Australia (see attachment 1 for detail on CAYLUS). In the time that we have operated have been fortunate to be a part of remarkable work which has led to the near cessation of sniffing in our region.

Despite the success to date we are not content that the underlying issues leading to the previously pandemic levels of sniffing have been successfully addressed. In this submission we hope to emphasise that there is much work ahead for government, our communities and community groups if we are to meaningfully take up the opportunity offered by the current respite in sniffing and improve the lives and futures of families and young people in or region.

The ongoing effectiveness of the eight-point plan in combating petrol sniffing in central Australia;

It has to be stated at the outset that between Opal Roll out, The NTVSAP Act and improved services we have made enormous gains in dealing with Petrol Sniffing in Central Australia. In the CAYLUS service area we estimate that sniffing has slowed by as much as 90%.

The 8 Point Plan resulted from good intention by government, the plan has led to increased resources some of which have been well used and some of which arguably have been misdirected. The 8 Point Plan hinges on multiple Commonwealth Departments working closely together to implement programs, eliminate red tape and fill service gaps. The reality has been that this has not always happened and that this has undermined some initiatives.

It is worth noting that local stakeholders were not involved in designing the 8 point plan. We were told about it through media releases. Although elements of the plan are clearly based on ideas that we and others have promoted, had we been asked we would have recommended an approach that focused on cutting supply and rolling out youth services. We would also have recommended not limiting access to these services to a few select communities. Young people across the whole of our region deserve a better future.

It is also worth noting that when Tony Abbott announced the expansion of the 8 Point Plan Zone, that no new resources were allocated and youth program moneys had already been committed, meaning that only 4 communities in the zone could be said to have substantially benefited from actions under the plan to date.

From a CAYLUS point of view we note that initiatives managed by Commonwealth Health under the plan have been better managed, have been developed in conjunction with community stakeholders and have best built on local resources. The staff who have handled this have done so from Canberra and appear to have felt more of a compulsion to consult with local stakeholders than the Alice Springs based staff. This is perhaps the

result of a departmental culture where greater value is placed on local involvement and ownership of services. We suggest that the Commonwealth Government, in order to best maximise the use of current and future 8 Point Plan resources and ensure better coordination, consider locating remaining and future 8 Point Plan resources within one department. Based on experience of on the ground results we would suggest that Health would be the most appropriate.

The extent of the roll out of Opal fuel;

The Commonwealth Government should be applauded for it's work in the roll out of Opal in Central Australia. Whilst this work was in the context of a long community campaign and other community stakeholders such as ourselves, The Mt Theo Program and NPY Womens were also integrally involved this wouldn't have happened without dedication and good work by government staff. In Alice Springs the achievement is remarkable with all retailers voluntarily replacing standard unleaded fuel with Opal. Most Roadhouses and communities have taken up usage of Opal and the difference has been enormous.

There are however a number of sites that simply refuse, for no good reason, to stock the fuel. It is also not good enough to simply rely on the future good will of retailers in an environment like ours. The use of Opal in our region needs to be legislated in order to ensure that the gains of the Opal Rollout are more than temporary. If the NT Government is unwilling the Commonwealth Government should act.

Some sites who still refuse to stock Opal despite community and government requests to do so are Rabbit Flat Roadhouse. Ti Tree Roadhouse, Tilmouth Well Roadhouse and Laverton Roadhouse. Gem Tree Roadhouse is another non-Opal site though sniffing in its vicinity has been minimal to date.

Government information campaigns on Opal have been poor timed and targeted and there has been a growth in Premium unleaded usage in the region from 10% prior to Opal to 50% currently. CAYLUS as a part of the Opal Alliance wrote to the government highlighting the need for a renewed campaign and offering to run it if necessary (see attachment 3). The government hasn't accepted this offer stating instead they are moving forward based on market research work that they have conducted. We hope the campaign significantly improves, this strategy is crucial to keeping the community informed and committed to Opal, especially as it is a voluntary program that could be discontinued at any time by the retailers in Alice Springs

It is worth noting also that a recent coronial inquiry into the death of a young man in Hermannsburg, who died sniffing Opal, has also clouded the reputation of the fuel. Like Diesel, Premium or any vaporous substance Opal can definitely kill you if you inhale enough of it. The fact that it is less intoxicating means though that its use as led to the near cessation of sniffing. CAYLUS estimates based on previous death rates that the fuel has saved 12 lives since it was introduced in our region.

The delivery of youth services in affected areas;

There has been significant improvement in youth service delivery in the four NT communities that were a part of the original 8 Point Plan zone. In other NT Communities that are part of the expanded 8 Point Plan zone there has been limited improvement and this limited improvement could not be said to be substantially the result CAPSSU or the 8 Point Plan initiatives.

Major youth service and infrastructure gaps still exist in most communities in our region, the gaps vary from community to community but include youth worker accommodation, vehicles, funded positions, suitable buildings to run activities, worker supervision and support and regional coordination. These gaps exist in all communities outside of the 4 NTIYS sites including communities not within the extended 8 Point Plan zone. CAYLUS estimates the cost of bringing services up to a suitable standard at \$17million over 3 years. The Aboriginals Benefit Account have recently confirmed funding of \$3.1 million towards the most essential infrastructure. We would hope given that \$55 million has been allocated to the 8 Point Plan that the remaining deficit could be addressed if agencies work in a common direction.

In this financial year we understand that CAPSSU are considering putting the vast majority of their youth program funds into big projects at Yuendumu and Hermannsburg. The new Centre at Yuendumu would have flow on effects to four Warlpiri Communities but concentrating remaining funds into just Hermannsburg would be a mistaken approach. There is no doubt urgent need at Hermannsburg as there is in communities across the region but CAPSSU and the 8 Point Plan agencies risk again putting all of their eggs into a very shaky basket if they build up Hermannsburg but don't invest in the neighbouring communities. CAYLUS has met with CAPSSU staff and given them a costing (see attachment 2) of how we think limited funds could be best applied so as to significantly improve the youth services across the 8 Point Plan zone communities including Hermannsburg that have been most affected by sniffing.

The Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service (NTIYS)

The NTIYS is a \$12 million initiative to provide more comprehensive youth services to Imanpa, Mutitjulu, Aputula and Docker River. This project has been underway for over a year and finally appears to be getting onto its feet. The choice of Mission Australia to deliver the service was surprising to CAYLUS, community members and others as the organisation had no experience of delivering youth services in remote communities in Central Australia. CAYLUS has maintained good working relations with the organisation and has leant full effort to assisting them in getting services going and we will continue to help wherever we can. However we have some criticisms of the process that led to their selection and would hope that better and more appropriate decisions can be made in the future.

The choice of service provider for the NTIYS was made through a Tender Process. CAYLUS opted not to tender rather supporting NPY Womens councils tender. NPY Womens Council had far greater experience in delivery of such services. They also are

directed and governed by Women from the four affected communities, a relationship developed over many years which could not be quickly replicated by any other organisation. No doubt Mission Australia a much larger and better resourced organisation was able to write a much flashier tender than NPY and NPY's experience on the ground probably also meant that they were less likely to promise things they couldn't deliver. As mentioned CAYLUS was a referee for NPY and as a part of the process met with people who were assessing the tenders, none of the people that we dealt with had experience in running youth programs in Central Australia or had lived in Central Australia let alone a remote community. This experience or lack of it would be fundamental to making an informed decision about these important services.

Ultimately Mission Australia were successful and commenced operations without anyone with more than a few months direct experience of running remote community youth services on their team. They had difficulty in recruiting and retaining appropriate staff (nearly the entire staff have turned over at least once since the inception of the project with the frontline positions turning numerous times in some communities). There also appeared to be great confusion about how to undertake the work and unrealistic demands both from government and from Mission Australia management placed upon local workers.

These unrealistic expectations appear to be the result of several factors. One being that Mission Australia were inexperienced and over committed in their tender. They committed to doing things that had been achieved in places like Yuendumu and committed to doing these instantly not recognising that these achievements were the end result of a lengthy community development process. The core of their success was the fact that community members felt ownership and involvement in developing these ideas. This sort of ownership cannot be created overnight. Another factor appears to have been that the multiple government departments that funded the initiative didn't collate their expectations, so the workers were expected to be running youth activities by one dept whilst being truancy officers for another and research officers for yet another. Another ongoing pressure has been that CAPSSU did not deliver suitable staff accommodation. This has resulted in on the ground workers being required to live in poor quality temporary accommodation, share this accommodation with their work colleagues and visiting supervisors. This situation whilst common in remote community staff housing is untenable and has led to an exodus in staff along with their acquired skills and knowledge and community good will.

As stated this situation seems to be finally turning a corner, a new program manager has been appointed who has long term experience in Central Australia and Mark Swindells a well regarded youth worker who was integrally involved in developing the very successful youth program in Docker River has also joined the team. The new staff have reviewed program operations and dropped some of the most unreasonable requirements.

Given the considerable investment made in this project and the ongoing needs on the ground we are hopeful that the program is now gaining some ground and that reliable basic services delivered by capable and well supported youth workers will now be ongoing in the region.

It has to be asked though why communities needed to bear the cost of a new provider learning the ropes at a cost of \$4million per year when there were appropriate local agencies willing to take on the work. Better decisions need to be made and more appropriate processes conducted if the community is to gain maximum value from similar future projects.

School Holiday Programs

School holidays, particularly the long mid year and summer breaks are a time of increased risk for remote youth and their families. As such CAYLUS and other agencies have run school holiday programs for many years as a way of providing young people with access to some fun and hopefully developmental activity, during these long periods. Such programs have proven very useful in stemming the sniffing, substance misuse and crime outbreaks that have commonly been a feature of school holidays. These programs have been particularly necessary and useful in communities that don't otherwise have a functioning youth program, so that at least between school and school holiday programs some reasonable day to day activity options are available to children for most of the year.

For CAYLUS over five years the provision of these programs has been strategic in a number of ways

- they been a point of engagement with communities where we have been able to involve local people not just in planning holiday activities but in talking and taking action around future of their young people
- the programs have created a useful network of workers, in a region where recruitment is a major obstacle. They allowed CAYLUS to bring new workers to region try them out over a short period and retain the best workers to fill ongoing fulltime roles. (CAPSSU was able to access the full benefits of these networks when it contracted CAYLUS to run the first 6 months of the NTIYS whilst the service was put out to tender).

Under the 8 Point Plan CAPSSU has moved to tender the provision of school holiday programs across a large region including some non 8 Point Plan zone communities and excluding some 8 Point Plan communities to a Lismore based provider Red Sun Solutions . Although we welcome the recognition of the value of School Holiday programs and the allocation of resources to support them this process has been questionable in a number of ways.

The tendering has happened separately for several holiday periods to date, the first tender covering the Summer 2007/08 summer holiday period. CAYLUS as usual at this point had spent several months preparing for provision of holiday programs for this period. The Department of Health and Ageing funded CAYLUS to purchase a number of media kits specifically to use in provision of these programs. CAYLUS briefed CAPSSU staff on a number of occasions about the progress of plans for the holidays. We contracted workers

for a number of communities, sourced funds from the ABA, NT Government and requested funds from CAPSSU, DEST and Health and Ageing. In good faith we briefed CAPSSU staff about our preparations for the holidays and never once were told of the likelihood of a tender or an outside organisation being contracted. In early December only days before the commencement of our programs we found out through a third party of CAPSSU's plans. We were forced to withdraw programs from a number of communities, as much as possible we assisted Red Sun Solutions in engaging the staff that we had booked for these programs, many of whom had ongoing relationships with youth and families in the affected communities. Subsequently we have established that this tender was funded at nearly twice the cost of the programs that we had planned.

CAYLUS has been invited to tender for subsequent holidays but has been unable to do so due to the tender model. The model requires a Central provision across a large number of communities including a number that CAYLUS has not worked with. As outlined above we work in close partnership with communities and are not able or willing to take on blanket provision of programs in communities where we don't have an active partnership. A more appropriate tender model would allow for communities and agencies to tender to run services in individual or groups of communities thereby maximising the local appropriateness of projects.

CAYLUS has grown over the years with investment from multiple federal government departments including specific investment in our capacity to mobilise short-term school holiday programs. We are rigorously evaluated and recognised leaders in our field. CAYLUS does not expect that we or any agency has exclusive rights to deliver services in any community, we would expect though that government would coordinate in order to maximise the value of its investments and engage in dialogue if it had issues with our service. There was no dialogue from CAPSSU with CAYLUS prior to this decision.

For CAYLUS, being dislocated from school holiday program provision has meant we have lost a point of engagement with some communities. We have also increasingly lost touch with the pool of workers coming in to run these programs and therefore are less able to facilitate a flow of this potential workforce into longer-term roles in the region. When we recently approached a contractor who had been used by Red Sun Solutions telling them about a potential job opportunity with one of the councils we met with hostility from the Red Sun who stated that they saw CAYLUS as trying to poach their workers. Under this one size fits all model there is also less local ownership of the programs as local people are less involved in the design and implementation.

Further to this it is worth noting that one off programs run by visiting workers during school holidays would be less necessary if resources were directed instead to building the capacity of local youth programs. Workers who live year round in communities and thereby know and have good faith with local youth and families need to be the priority. Such workers if in place can better run and direct effective school holiday programs. See attachment 2 for a costing of how this could work, we propose that under this model the funds that are being used to run school holiday programs tenders could be directed to local youth programs as casual staff/contractors. Local stakeholders could then opt to

directly run youth programs and put on additional staff if necessary or engage contactors such as Red Sun Solutions. This maximises local ownership and appropriateness of these services and accountability both to funding bodies and to local stakeholders.

Though located outside of the extended 8 Point Plan zone it is worth noting that Balgo, Lake Nash, Kiwirrkurra Ampilatwatja, Harts Range, Utopia and Ali Curung have all had some sniffing with a worker in Balgo estimating that as many as 50 youth have sniffed opportunistically in the community in a recent 3 month period. Many of these communities are on the borders of the Opal Roll out zone, all have major gaps in terms of youth services and infrastructure. CAYLUS would be happy to provide further information on the gaps in service in these communities and suggestions as to how best meet these needs on request.

The effectiveness and adequacy of resources provided to address petrol sniffing and substance abuse in central Australia

In CAYLUS experience community based youth programs are the front line in terms of substance misuse prevention amongst young people, the progress towards improving these services is outlined above. There is also a need to better support treatment and Rehab initiatives.

To date through the 8 Point Plan there has been support for the Drug and Alcohol Services Association (DASA) with investment in a new facility in Alice Springs which can host adult clients. Over time the service has proven useful for voluntary clients. The service is however located centrally in Alice Springs, people can walk out at any point so it is geographically incapable of providing the rehab support required by some Inhalant clients. The service rarely has staff who can speak in first language with clients so communication with clients can also be limited.

Since the inception of the 8 Point Plan the NT Government have provided funding to a local agency called Bush Mob to set up a multi purpose facility also in Alice Springs called the Bush Mob House. The facility provides a safe place where young people can stay overnight, get counselling undertake drug and alcohol detox and treatment and access a range of other supports. The program has proven useful in a number of ways. They currently have double the number of clients attending the service than they have beds for. The funding they receive from the NT Government is significantly inadequate, similar facilities elsewhere operate on four times the budget. To date they have received only \$55,000 from the Commonwealth Government. There is concern about the services tenure on the building which they use with the lease expiring in 14 months.

Although they are unwieldy at times and don't necessarily fit comfortably with government funding criteria and programs, the remote Outstation rehab and diversion programs operated at Ilpurla and Mt Theo are absolutely invaluable in being able to help young Aboriginal people get off petrol or drugs or take time out to deal with other crisis. The services are able to deal with young people in a way no other programs in the region

can. The stories of both programs have been told adequately during the last inquiry, however significant gaps still exist in terms of resourcing these essential services.

A major gap is funds to pay for the food, clothing, transport and bedding of clients attending these services. Both programs receive Commonwealth funding for core infrastructure, facilities at both outstations have improved considerably with Commonwealth support, however these other essential costs are still not met. There is an underlying assumption that clients social security benefits should be diverted to these services to cover these however the reality is that this rarely happens despite the services best attempts.

Towards meeting this recognised gap as an initiative under the 8 Point Plan the Commonwealth Attorney Generals Department provided CAYLUS with one off funds to broker to the outstations to pay for clients to undertake programs. This led to a clear service improvement particularly at Ilpurla, which has very limited administrative capacity. The funds were however one off and were expended according to contract by June 30. At the time of writing the services are looking after a number of the most high needs clients from Central Australia and the top end with no guarantee of how their client costs will be covered. The outcome currently hinges on an eSub for the next round of funding which was submitted in May this year.

As outlined above these two services in particular are able to take the most high needs clients, they are also fragile and operate on immense good will from the Aboriginal Families and other staff involved. This funding insecurity places these programs and their clients in jeopardy.

CAYLUS has been working closely with the NT Government to implement the Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act. The original promise of the legislation proved hard to realize, with numerous bureaucratic obstacles to it's effectiveness. It is currently under review, and we hope it will become more streamlined in it's application. It is still the best hope for protecting the community from inhalant addicts, whilst not criminalizing these people for their addictions.

What more needs to be done to effectively address petrol sniffing?

Based on the information provided above and on the previous Senate Inquiries Recommendations whose implementation we have reviewed below we make the following recommendations

1. That the Commonwealth Government, in order to maximise the outcomes from current and future 8 Point Plan resources, consider locating remaining and future 8 Point Plan resources within one department. Based on experience of the on the ground results we would suggest that Health would be the most appropriate.
2. That compulsory usage of Opal fuel in replacement of standard unleaded needs to be legislated in our region in order to ensure that the gains of the Opal Rollout are more than temporary. If the NT Government are unwilling the Commonwealth Government should act.
3. That there needs to be a renewed and more effective Opal information campaign targeting motorists and tourists in Alice Springs and the region.
4. That youth program resources need to be directed to benefit communities across the zone, concentrating resources in order to build up services in only a few communities is the wrong approach.
5. There needs to be renewed a focus on ensuring that core, basic youth services are available year round in communities. Visiting programs can be a great add on to such services but are not adequate alone.
6. In developing youth services emphasis should be placed upon building on local skills, knowledge and resources
7. That the Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Social Justice Commissioner review the implementation of this and the last Senate Inquiry and Coroner's recommendations in 12 months, and every twelve months following.

Implementation of the recommendations of the 2006 Senate Inquiry

The Community Affairs Reference Committee's June 2006 report "Beyond petrol sniffing: renewing hope for Indigenous communities" made 23 Recommendations, many of which had been made in numerous previous reports. In the Executive Summary it stated "The lack of progress in implementing recommendations contained in these reports has created much frustration and despair in communities. Evidence from Indigenous community members indicates persistent unsafe conditions for adults and children." CAYLUS is in a position to report on the progress to date, and this progress has been slow in places, retrograde in places, and insufficient to address the underlying causes of inhalant abuse.

The following is commentary on aspects of the implementation of recommendations made in the 2006 Senate Report and suggestions on how to get it right.

Recommendation 3: that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner review the implementation of the Royal Commission and Coroner's recommendations in 12 months, and every twelve months following. This has not happened, if implemented this process could provide ongoing scrutiny and ensure better implementation.

Recommendation 6 : that ICCs be evaluated – this has not happened to our knowledge, and no-one has asked our input.

Recommendation 7 : calls for effective consultation with communities by CAPSSU before the 8 Point Plan is implemented. It also recommends that the plan be expanded to include other communities who have been affected by petrol sniffing. This has not happened to date. Whilst we have some issues with the way that the 8 Point Plan has operated in the region we welcome the intention and good will behind it and hope that the commonwealth government can similarly commit to work to improve the situation in all communities in our region not just a select few.

Recommendations 9 and 10: call for cross-border intergovernmental co-operation particularly in relation to harmonising relevant legislation and improving youth services. This has not happened. The withdrawal of WA and SA from negotiations meant the CAPSSU program could only operate in the NT, who could not withdraw.

Recommendation 14 and 15: support for community based programs. The preferential tendering of the NTIYS and the regionally tendered School Holiday Programs to new outside organisations goes against this recommendation. At the time of the Tender for the provision of these programs, insufficient weight was given to the obvious advantages that a local organisation brings to the project. NPY tendered, having run youth services in the region for many years, and having a Board made up of Indigenous stakeholders from the four communities. The Tender was awarded to an agency with no local profile or Board members. While the law relating to Tendering may have been adhered to, the strategic opportunity available to CAPSSU to build on existing local capacity was lost.

Recommendation 17: indicates the need to support rehab facilities. As outlined above there are still substantial opportunities being missed, particularly in not better supporting the Rehab outstations.

Recommendation 15: relates to the need to provide successful programs with reliable, secure funding. The federal government has still a lot to learn about managing money effectively, with it's boom and bust funding cycles, the insecurity of ongoing funding, gaps between funding periods and a general high level of insecurity. It is ironic that Indigenous people were felt to need Income Management when the federal government is itself incapable of managing money efficiently. In many cases the NTER has compounded this problem with many departments currently unable to issue funding contracts of more than 12 months. CAYLUS has recently received written confirmation from our core funding body that we will be funded for the next three years after 12 months of quarterly extensions.

Recommendation 18 : Opal fuel. There has been no progress dealing with the roadhouses in the region that have refused to stock Opal, it is clear from the NTER that almost any legislation can be implemented if there is a political will.

Also in this Recommendation is the need to promote Opal fuel. The advertising campaign implemented as a part of the Opal Roll out was too late. It was many months between the availability of Opal in Alice Springs and the government advertising campaign. The lack of consumer information caused a temporary withdrawal of petrol stations from the voluntary scheme in late 2006. This is when local newspapers were running front page stories like "Opal stuffed my van". The Opal Alliance (OA) resorted to paying for local media to try to counter this misinformation because the government agencies proved unable to effectively do so.

Recommendation 20: hinges on the need for legislative regulation, and there has been no progress on this recommendation either.

Attachment 1 About CAYLUS

The CAYLUS mission is to support community initiatives that improve quality of life and address substance misuse affecting young people.

CAYLUS started as a petrol sniffing prevention project in November 2002 from funding committed by the Howard government in response to a series of articles about petrol sniffing by the journalist Paul Toohey in *The Australian*. In its early years the program employed two community development workers and a caseworker. The staff initially worked across 12 communities, supporting the development of a wide range of regionally and locally targeted petrol sniffing interventions. Program workers had good access to government decision makers, as well as a pool of funds to directly resource interventions. The program workers also had the good will of families and decision makers in many of the communities, as they had lived and worked across these communities for extended periods in other roles.

CAYLUS supported interventions have included rehabilitation projects, youth programs, a responsible retail of solvents program, night patrols, policing initiatives, football carnivals, video and radio projects and more. Whilst many supply-reduction measures specifically targeted inhalants, the demand-reduction measures such as development of community-based recreation and youth programs have had a myriad of other health, substance misuse prevention and community safety outcomes.

Staff initially promoted use of aviation gas as a non-sniffable fuel, along with promoting the use of the Misuse of Drugs Act (NT) to prevent dealing. The workers offered a hotline service whereby community members were able to do in dealers of petrol, 12 dealers were reported to police in this way in the first few months of the service.

CAYLUS staff worked closely with families to facilitate access to rehabilitation programs and worked with these services to varying degrees to help develop their programs and services.

CAYLUS staff worked with other stakeholders to advocate to the NT government for a range of measures including better data collection, better policing around petrol sniffing and better rehabilitation options. This resulted in the introduction of the NT Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act 2005 and a complementary investment in support programs by the NT government. One of the most useful outcomes of this legislation is that it gives communities the ability to make possession of sniffable petrol illegal altogether within their bounds, thereby making petrol dealing far more difficult. With the advent of Opal fuel in 2005, it became feasible for the first time to implement a non-sniffable fuel across the region. CAYLUS staff worked with communities promoting the use of the fuel. They also advocated for a change in Commonwealth government policy, first to allow roadhouses to use the fuel and eventually to a region wide rollout in Central Australia. Although data collection has been patchy, staff estimate at the time of writing that numbers of people sniffing in the region have been reduced from 500 to less than 20 as a result. Staff continue to work toward rolling youth programs out to all

communities in order to engage youth who were previously sniffing in positive activities and programs. There is currently no Commonwealth Government commitment to the universal provision of these complementary services.

The project is overseen by a reference group of organisations. The Consortium includes:

- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
 - Papunya Community
 - Drug and Alcohol Services Association (DASA)
 - Mt Theo-Yuendumu Substance Misuse Aboriginal Corporation (MYSMAC)
 - Alice Springs Youth Accommodation Support Service (ASYASS)
 - Tangentyere Council
 - NPY Womens Council
 - Ilpurla outstation
 - Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi
 - Pintubi Homelands Health Service
 - Mt Leibig Community
-

Communities serviced

CAYLUS services the following communities, which are spread geographically over more than 600,000 square kilometres:

- Mutitjulu
- Yuendumu
- Hermannsburg
- Kintore
- Papunya,
- Areyonga
- Willowra
- Nyirripi
- Mt Liebig
- Alice Springs
- Ampilatwatja
- Docker River
- Aputula
- Harts Range
- Lake Nash
- Bonya
- Titjikala
- Mt Theo and Ilpurla and outstations

In addition CAYLUS has provided assistance to the communities of Ali Curung, and Amoongana.

Activities

For many years CAYLUS was the only service, that provided support in relation to inhalant abuse to remote communities in the Central Australia region. In recent years Commonwealth and NT Funded Services have started, partly as a result of CAYLUS work. CAYLUS employs two community development workers, who work with remote Indigenous communities to create education and treatment strategies that address substance abuse particularly by young people. A caseworker, a supply reduction worker and a youth program support worker.

CAYLUS support includes;

- development of community plans to address the substance abuse
 - assistance in locating funding to support community actions
 - coordination and funding of training for youth workers and community members
 - education about the consequences of inhalant substance abuse
 - networking communities with existing service providers
 - production of indigenous language resources
 - a media strategy to complement other activities
 - advocacy to promote useful strategies to address substance misuse affecting youth
 - casework to assist individual youth
-
-

School holidays

The school holidays are widely recognised as a time of increased substance abuse, violence, self harming behaviour and injury for young people in Central Australia. As a part of on-going activities CAYLUS has been coordinating resources, staff and money for Summer and mid year school holiday programs since its inception.

Media strategy Across the CAYLUS region there is strong community media through the Broadcasting to Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme (BRACS) system. The major agencies involved are Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media Association, The Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA), and Pitjatjantjara Yankunytjajara Media (PY Media).

An opportunity exists for public education campaigns through radio and TV. CAYLUS has used this opportunity to run information and media campaigns promoting practical ways that community members can take action around drugs eg: a successful campaign cantered around community members being able to report petrol runners and dealers, 12 people were dobbed in as a result.

Staff

Blair Mc Farland CAYLUS Coordinator

Blair has worked with remote communities in Central Australia in community justice issues for 20 years. He lived at Papunya for four years and has first-hand experience of life in traditional Aboriginal communities. He worked for eight years as a Probation and Parole Officer with the Western Desert as his field area. Following this, he worked for Tangentyere Council establishing the Remote Area Night Patrol Support Project, which assists remote communities establish and resource Night Patrols. Due to this long association with the communities, and his continuing commitment to social justice, he is well known in the region.

Tristan Ray CAYLUS joint Coordinator

Tristan joined CAYLUS in 2003 prior to this he worked with young people in Community Media Production for over 10 years. He lived in Yuendumu for 4 of these years working as a training coordinator at Warlpiri Media Association. In this time he worked to establish the Pintubi Anmatjerre Warlpiri (PAW) Radio Network, this service now spans 11 communities over 480,00 square kilometres, employs many local people and provides a powerful vehicle for communication across the Warlpiri, Pintubi and Anmatjerre lands..

Phil Hassall CAYLUS Caseworker

Phil moved to the NT in 1987. In that time he worked for 8 years for NT FACS in the remote team, he also worked establishing the Adult Guardianship and Good Beginnings programs in Alice Springs and worked as a probation and parole officer for NT correction. Phil has a law degree and Degree in social work. He joined CAYLUS in 2004.

Yarran Cavalier Juvenile Diversion Unit Youth Program Support Worker

Yarran has lived and worked in the NT for 15 years. In that time he and his wife have lived in remote NT Communities including Docker River, Maningrida, Mt Alan, Areyonga and Nyirripi where he has run old peoples services, a pre school and youth programs. Most recently Yarran worked on the Youth Diversionary Rangers project in Docker River, during this time the project came to be viewed as a best practise initiative. Yarran joined CAYLUS in 2006.

Emma Trenorden– Volatile Substance Supply Reduction Worker/ Caseworker

Emma has worked in Central Australia for over 5 years, including extensive work with NPY Womens Council in the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara Lands. Emmas role at CAYLUS includes supporting retailers in implementing point of sale supply reduction strategies in order to cut sniffing of solvents at its source. This work has been fundamental in stopping the transference of sniffing to commonly available solvents since the introduction of Opal.

Attachment 2 - Costing of how limited youth program funds could be best applied regionally in order to meet immediate need.

Kintore	year 1	
Youth Worker 1		
Youth Worker 2	\$	70,000.00
vehicle1		
Vehicle 2	\$	70,000.00
Op Budget inc pool	\$	150,000.00
Accommodation		
Casual staff/contractors	\$	100,000.00
Staff Development	\$	20,000.00
Total	\$	410,000.00

Papunya/ Ikuntji/ Liebig

Youth Worker womens regional	\$	70,000.00
vehicle1 Papunya		
Vehicle 2 Papunya	\$	70,000.00
Vehicle 3 Liebig	\$	70,000.00
Vehicle 4 (roaming)	\$	70,000.00
Op Budget Papunya	\$	150,000.00
Op Liebig	\$	80,000.00
Op Ikuntji	\$	50,000.00
Op Roaming		
Accommodation		
Casual staff/contractors	\$	250,000.00
Staff Development	\$	40,000.00
Ikuntji House		
Papunya 1		
Papunya 2	\$	350,000.00
Liebig Roaming worker	\$	350,000.00
Total	\$	1,270,000.00

Ntaria /Areyonga

Y2	\$	70,000.00
vehicle1 Ntaria		
Vehicle 2 Ntaria	\$	70,000.00
Vehicle 3 Areyonga	\$	70,000.00
Op Budget Ntaria	\$	150,000.00
Op Budget Areyonga	\$	50,000.00
Ntaria House		
Staff Development	\$	20,000.00
Contractors /Casual	\$	200,000.00
Total	\$	630,000.00

Mt Allan/Laramba

Y1	\$	70,000.00
Y2	\$	70,000.00
vehicle1	\$	70,000.00
Vehicle 2	\$	70,000.00
Op Budget Laramba	\$	70,000.00
Op Budget Mt Alan	\$	50,000.00
House	\$	350,000.00
House	\$	350,000.00
Staff Development	\$	20,000.00
Contractors /Casual	\$	200,000.00
Total	\$	1,320,000.00

Admin**Regional Coordination Unit**

fieldworkers 3	\$	210,000.00
2 coordinators	\$	80,000.00
Leasing office	\$	60,000.00

office setup	\$	50,000.00
recruitment	\$	100,000.00
t/a	\$	40,000.00
fuel car	\$	40,000.00
5vehicles	\$	310,000.00
remote progs	\$	3,630,000.00
admin/acc	\$	452,000.00
Total	\$	4,972,000.00

Attachment 3- Letter to the Department of Health and Ageing Regarding the Need for a Renewed Opal Media Campaign

Central Australian



PO Box 8070
Alice Springs NT 0871
Ph: 8951 4236 Fax: 8952 8521



The GPT Group

Level 52, MLC Centre, 19-29 Martin Place, Sydney 2000
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NGAANYATJARRA PITJANTJATJARA YANKUNYTJATJARA
WOMEN'S COUNCIL (ABORIGINAL CORPORATION)
3 Wilkinson Street, PO Box 8921 Alice Springs, NT, 0871
Tel: (08) 89 58 2345 Fax (08) 8952 3742
Email: enquiries@npwvc.org.au Website: www.npwvc.org.au

June 26, 2008

Ms Lesley Podesta
First Assistant Secretary,
Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health,
Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing
MDP 17,
GPO Box 9848
Canberra, ACT, 2601

Need for a renewed Opal promotions campaign in Central Australia.

Dear Lesley,

I am writing on behalf of the Opal Alliance to draw your attention to the need for a renewed education and publicity campaign to promote the use of Opal Fuel in Central Australia.

The introduction of Opal fuel has vastly reduced the prevalence of petrol sniffing in the region and consequently the levels of associated violence, injury and property damage. We want to maximise and extend these excellent results and critically ensure the continued support of retailers through a renewed publicity and information campaign and that targets the residents of Alice Springs and visitors to the town and the region.

As you may know the introduction of Opal fuel in Alice Springs has been hampered in part by misinformation about the effect of the fuel on vehicles. In particular a local newspaper ran a series of articles that contained erroneous claims that the fuel damaged cars and that drivers should not use it. The newspaper that did this seems to have changed its tune over time but the impact has lingered and has led to many drivers using Premium unleaded in preference to Opal for no good reason. The upshot is greater availability of intoxicating fuel in the region.

A minority of local fuel retailers also continue to encourage misinformation about Opal. We are concerned that without ongoing and cleverly targeted public information to counter this, retailers will in time withdraw from their voluntary use of Opal.

The last Opal information campaign in Alice Springs which was run by the Commonwealth Government in late 2006 for around 6 months was very basic with no further campaign to date. Given the poor take up of Opal in the town area we would suggest that this initial campaign could have been better targeted. We suggest that any new campaign needs to: target the 400,000 tourists who travel into our region every year; affirm the choice of the motorists in Alice who currently opt to use Opal; and remind those who don't that they are paying 7 cents more per litre for no good reason. We are now two years into the rollout of Opal and it has been a fantastic success. A well-designed campaign would promote the positive outcomes and the continued benefit to Central Australia of using Opal fuel.

We are aware that such campaigns can be difficult for government to produce quickly and flexibly and would further offer to co-ordinate the campaign if this would achieve a better and quicker result. Under this model the government could fund CAYLUS on behalf of the Opal Alliance and we would in consultation with government and other stakeholders commission the production of an on going campaign for the region.

The members of the Opal Alliance jointly have great expertise in the region working with the tourism, business and community sectors, and would be happy to assist however we can. Opal has worked as well as we could have hoped, so let's not allow misinformation to undermine such a great health and social initiative.

We would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this proposal, please contact Tristan Ray on 0427181727 or at tristan.ray@tangentyere.org.au to arrange this.

Yours Sincerely for the Opal Alliance,



Tristan Ray
Coordinator
CAYLUS

Cc: Stephen Castle Director Petrol Sniffing prevention Program

