



**Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
Women's Council (Aboriginal Corporation)**

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Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee,
Parliament of Australia

Inquiry into petrol sniffing in remote Aboriginal communities

Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council
(Aboriginal Corporation) ICN 2043 (NPYWC)

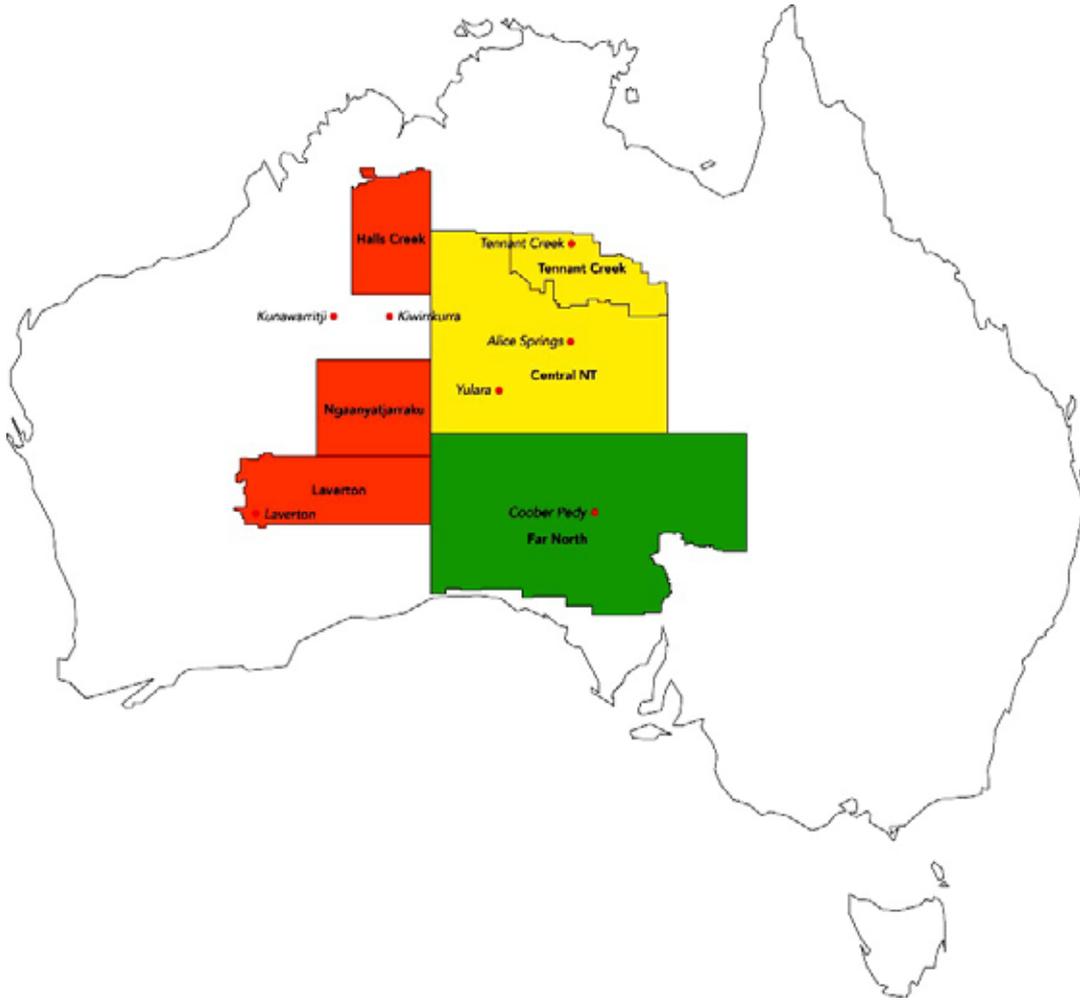
Dear Senator Moore and Community Affairs Committee members,

Please find following the NPY Women's Council response to your request for submissions to the Committee's Inquiry into Petrol Sniffing and Substance Abuse in Central Australia. We hope that this is of assistance to the Committee.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours faithfully,

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on behalf of
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Proposed Central Opal coverage area

1. Consistent legislation

i It is an offence to sell or supply either petrol or petrol and other volatile substances for the purpose of sniffing under different State and Territory legislation or by-laws in the Central region, including the NPY area¹ and with which Committee members will be familiar, for example the *VSAP Act* in the NT and the *APY Land Rights Act* by-laws. There have been very few convictions however, and to our knowledge only one ever on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in South Australia². It is our submission that this is not the only or the most effective way in which to deal with the issue. The act of supplying must be able to be proven to be for the specific purpose, which in practical terms means that the person supplying must be caught in the act. Despite increased police numbers in some parts of the region, we are still far from a position where all main communities have a permanent, sworn police presence in each substantial community. If this were the case it is likely that there would be increased charges and convictions, but our preference is for further control of supply.

The *VSAP Act* in our view is in the main an awkward tool that puts the control of the presence of fuel and other inhalants on to communities. Some are capable of making 'community management plans' whilst others simply are not. It would be far more uniform and effective to legislate or regulate the control of premium fuel. Also, to our knowledge, no community members have to date qualified as authorised persons who may deal with inhalant users and the convoluted assessment process in the *Act* means very few if any volatile substance users have been compelled to undergo treatment.

ii. The previous Federal Government agreed in July 2006 to subsidise Opal fuel in Alice Springs, extending the subsidy already available at that stage to numerous remote communities and to remote retailers (roadhouses and some pastoral stations stores.) At the time then Minister Abbott did not exclude the possibility of legislation³.

iii. NPYWC remains firm in its view that legislation is necessary in order to maximise the reduction of supply. This reduction is of course the main advantage of the implementation of Opal fuel and the main reason for its success in vastly lowering the incidence of sniffing in the region. Whilst all eligible Aboriginal communities and most eligible outlets in the subsidised Opal region now stock Opal, there are some exceptions:

¹ See NPY regional map, attached*.

² **ABC News Mon. Nov 7, 2005 Court Jails Man for Selling Petrol Sniffing Fuel**

A man from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara (AP) Lands in South Australia's far north has been convicted of selling petrol for sniffing and will spend six months in jail. Police say the 43-year-old man from Amata has admitted selling 500 millilitre containers of petrol for \$30 each to youths in his community. Inspector Ashley Gordon says police are happy with the sentence that has been imposed. "Well this conviction sends a clear message to anyone wanting to sell petrol on the AP Lands that this behaviour will not be tolerated," he said.

³ **ABC Friday, 29 September 2006: Abbott May Force Opal roll-out**

Legislation possible: Mr. Abbott says the fuel may be made compulsory.

Federal Health Minister Tony Abbott says the Government will consider legislation to make the roll-out of Opal fuel in central Australia compulsory if there are too many delays. Opal fuel has been developed by oil giant BP to help fight the scourge of petrol sniffing. But some competitors say supply issues have delayed its introduction at some outlets in central Australia until November. Mr. Abbott has told ABC TV's *Lateline* program that the Government wants all fuel outlets in central Australia to stock Opal. "If all else fails, well plainly we will talk to the states and territories about what might be necessary to make it compulsory," he said. "But I think we are a long way from that." Mr. Abbott also says he is worried corporate pride is being put ahead of a major health issue. "I think it would be a pity if the reluctance to use a competitor's product even though you're at no commercial disadvantage doing so were to stop this roll-out," he said.

Ti-Tree gazetted town NT, Tilmouth Well roadhouse NT, Rabbit Flat roadhouse NT, Laverton roadhouse WA. The Utopia community area and the Gem Tree retail outlet to the north-east of Alice Springs have not put in Opal to date, although Utopia is willing and there is in any event virtually no sniffing in this part of the region. Rabbit Flat and Tilmouth Well are known to be hostile to taking up Opal on a voluntary basis.

iv OATSIH was to follow up on Laverton following a stakeholders' (see reference to this group elsewhere) meeting in Alice Springs in October 2007, but Chairperson of the group Mr. Steve Vaughan advised at the last meeting in July 2008 that this had not been done. NPYWC members frequently complain that regular unleaded fuel gets to Warburton and other Ngaanyatjarra communities via this outlet.

v. Most outlets that sell Opal also stock premium unleaded. There is a successful voluntary scheme implemented by General Property Trust and Voyagers Hotels at the Ayers Rock and Kings Canyon Resorts, where the premium bowser is locked and customers must register and demonstrate that their vehicle requires premium, and where premium is not sold in containers. Other than this, there are no 'restrictions', although we believe that some retailers divert Aboriginal customers to Opal and avoid selling premium fuel in containers, or at least question purchasers about their intended destination. They are reluctant to publicise this, no doubt because of fear of accusations of discrimination, although there have been none at the two resorts mentioned.

vi Whilst the incidence of sniffing remains very low in comparison to what it was on the APY Lands⁴, it still occurs, and constant vigilance is needed. The NT MLA for McDonnell, Ms Alison Anderson, has advised NPYWC that on or around 11th July 2008, whilst attending the funeral of her late brother at Amata on the APY Lands, she observed four young people sniffing petrol at a house in the community. The main resident of the house informed her that the (premium unleaded) fuel had come from the Mintabie Opal Field and was selling for \$70 a soft drink bottle.

vii Mintabie residents, through their Progress Association, have been involved in protracted negotiations about a new lease over more than eight years, with the APY Land Council and the SA Government. The original lease expired in 2000. Mintabie is frequently and adamantly cited by NPYWC members as a source of cannabis, premium fuel and alcohol to the NPY region, including but not only to the APY Lands. There are ongoing issues with the retention of key cards and often excessive and questionable (in terms of authorisation) deductions from accounts held by Anangu. NPYWC's preference is for no new lease to be issued; alternatively, strict conditions must be imposed on the right to residence and retail activities. There is some hope that this will occur, but the traders at this shanty town have already done very well out of their illiterate, innumerate and sometimes addicted Anangu customers for many years, 'mining' them more successfully than some opal prospectors manage to do with the precious stone. Since the establishment of the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk in Alice Springs, there have been charges in relation to the sale of cannabis against some Mintabie residents.

⁴ Down from 224 in 2004 to 38 in 2007: Prevalence Survey of Petrol-Sniffing on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands: May 2007

viii Coober Pedy is undoubtedly another source of premium to sniffers, and is included in the Opal roll-out area originally proposed by NPYWC, CAYLUS and GPT: the Opal Alliance. Mintabie is part of the APY lands and in close proximity to the Indulkana community and other APY communities. Mr. Adrian Shackley, Senior Solicitor in the SA Crown Solicitor's office, has been involved in the lease negotiations for nearly a decade. On 29th July he responded via email to NPYWC's queries about the continuing allegations that premium fuel from Mintabie finds its way into the APY communities:

“Lease position. Negotiations are near finalised for new Mintabie lease.....All [three] outlets at Mintabie have Opal. However, Premium ULP is also sold but (I am told) not to Anangu. Standard ULP is not sold. Premium ULP did not occur for a few weeks but returned for sale apparently because of issues with generators where the seals were affected and leaks developed and with older models of cars. Sales for generators would be in containers. I understand the Commonwealth did not impose rules stopping Premium ULP being available. While I am assured by relevant people at Mintabie that sale to Anangu does not occur at fuel outlets, having the fuel available in containers increase the likelihood of illegal sale to Anangu. This is a matter which can be looked at via policy and licence conditions but that will also require input from other relevant State agencies...”

ix NPYWC is convinced that premium fuel from Mintabie finds its way to communities in the region, whether or not this is the intention of traders. In Alice Springs, the ration of sales of Opal to premium is said to be around 50:50 and up to 40:60 in some outlets⁵. The transport of premium is lawful in respect of many communities in the region, the exception being where there are by-laws or 'community management plans' under the NT VSAP Act. There is no consistency and no effective way at present to ensure that premium is not taken into communities. It is freely available in Alice Springs for tanks and portable containers, although some outlets no doubt voluntarily redirect requests and try to avoid container sales to those whom they suspect may intend to distribute for inhalation or inhale it themselves.

x This is *not* sufficient by a long shot. It is imperative that supply be reduced to the greatest extent possible to ensure the continued maximisation of the benefit provided by the use of Opal.

2. Appropriate levels of policing

i This is the second point of the strategic approach announced by then Ministers Abbott and Vanstone on 12th September 2005. A suitable level of policing, based in communities, is pivotal to the success of Opal in the battle to eradicate sniffing. This has been the position of NPYWC and the other Opal Alliance members from the outset, and the position of NPYWC for many years. In order to prevent the substitution of liquor and illicit drugs for sniffable fuel, there must be diligent and comprehensive policing. Note however that not all people who would have sniffed petrol can afford to switch to cannabis or alcohol, in particular very young people with little or no income.

⁵ Advice from FaHCSIA and DoHA at stakeholders' meetings Alice Springs, October 2007 and July 2008.

ii The Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk (SAID) has done an admirable job in collecting intelligence and working with police in the region to intercept traffickers of liquor and illicit drugs. As already noted, however, there are very few restrictions on the transport of premium fuel to communities and there are insufficient police to deal with individuals who supply for the purpose of sniffing.

iii No APY Lands communities have a permanent sworn police presence to date. Amata, mentioned above on relation to recent sniffing, remains without such a presence, despite increased numbers of police on the APY Lands following two coronial inquests (2002 and 2004) and a lot of lobbying by NPYWC and others. The other large APY community of Ernabella is also without a permanent presence, although funds, largely Commonwealth, have been allocated for a station and police housing at both places. An 'Executive Co-ordinator,' Ms Adrienne Gillam, has recently been appointed to get things moving following the report of the Mullighan Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse on the APY Lands. Commissioner Mullighan unsurprisingly recommended the permanent presence of police in communities. In the meantime, police are stationed and housed at Umuwa, the administrative centre near Ernabella and at Murputja, a very tiny settlement area with a school, which is located between the very small communities of Nyapari and Kanypi on the western side of the APY Lands. It has been argued many, many times that there is no substitute for a sworn police presence in communities, both for deterrence and apprehension, and this position is unchanged.

iv In the NT, two of NPYWC's four member communities still lack a police presence despite years of advocacy and the NT Emergency Response, as do others nearby such as Titjikala and Areyonga. Please see our letter to Chief Minister Henderson in March 2008, which should be self-explanatory⁶. We have not yet had the courtesy of a reply other than a brief acknowledgment of receipt.

v In WA, there is a police station at Warburton with several officers, and a WA-NT cross-border post at Warakurna. Officers from these stations must cover around eleven Ngaanyatjarra communities, and although there are plans to build a station at Blackstone. Again, this all falls short of a sworn presence in each community, resulting in delayed response and plenty of gaps for traffickers.

3. Further roll-out of Opal fuel.

i There is no doubt that the number of people who sniff petrol in the region has drastically declined, and this is clearly the best result of the introduction of subsidised Opal. The former Australian Government deserves credit for its willingness to listen to and respond positively, at Ministerial level, to arguments about the need to reduce supply through wide coverage. The current government appears willing to continue with the subsidy we hope that the entire proposed area will receive it in the near future.

ii NPYWC and the other members of the Alliance made their position clear in the Access Economics cost benefit Analysis⁷ in relation to the preferred roll-out region for the Centre, and with which Committee members should be familiar. The map appears above. This position has not changed, and should be reinforced by the comments above in relation to places such as Coober Pedy and Laverton. We also note that there are, from

⁶ Attached*

⁷ <http://www.accesseconomics.com.au/publicationsreports/s>

time to time, outbreaks of sniffing at Balgo, which would arguably be stopped or greatly reduced through the introduction of Opal to Rabbit Flat and Halls Creek, both included in the proposed region. It is absolutely vital that the widest possible coverage of Opal is achieved in the Central region so as to close off opportunities for sniffing.

4. Alternative activities for young people

i NPYWC supports the ‘Docker River’ model of youth work⁸, developed at that community by NPYWC management and staff, and the youth worker staff of the Docker River Council. The organisation has extensive experience in youth services in the region, including dealing within a case management framework with young people who abuse or have abused substances, or who are at risk of going down this path.

ii The main feature of the delivery of youth services under the 8-point Plan in affected areas has been the NT Integrated Youth Services Program with funding of \$8 million over three years, plus capital funds for housing and recreation halls, in the four NPYWC member communities: Mutitjulu, Finke (Aputula), Imanpa and Docker River, announced in April 2007. Mission Australia won the contract over local organisations. NPYWC had tendered as a consortium with the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE). BIITE and NPYWC were disappointed, especially given their experience in the region. In NPYWC’s case we had at that time twenty-seven years and considerable know-how in youth service delivery and a good record of youth work in the Central region.

iii We continue to employ one youth development staff member who covers the NT and does occasional cross-border work in our region, funded through the NT Government’s juvenile diversion stream. We do not duplicate the work of Mission Australia and nor do we seek to do so. Our comments in this section are made with a view to constructive criticism for the benefit of young people in the Central region. NPYWC’s members have a strong and ongoing interest in the improved well-being of their young people.

We note the following:

4.1 Mission Australia staffing

In the first year of service by Mission Australia there was a very high turnover of staff, and then a restructure in May 2008 during which more staff left. The departures included that of the Operations Manager who left the position after eight months. This high turnover has created some problems with the continuity of activities in the youth programs in the NT communities.

4.2 Service Delivery

On its own admission, and no doubt due to its lack of experience in remote youth work and limited knowledge of the region, Mission Australia has had difficulty delivering services during the first year of the contract, and our concern is that for twelve months young people in the southern NT communities have not received an optimum service,

⁸ See ‘A Good Practice Model for Youth Program Development’.doc attached

contrary to what was promised as a major part of the eight-point plan, and for which the Opal Alliance lobbied hard. We hope that with new management and a revised structure, there will be some improvement.

Having very recently met with Mission Australia, however, we are concerned that while it is making an admirable effort to improve services, the organisation is still providing very little in the way of individual case management to difficult, at-risk young clients. Mission Australia appears to believe that this work should be referred elsewhere. As already noted, a very substantial amount of money has been allocated to this contract over three years. In our experience individual work with youth clients is a very high priority, and the agency that holds this funding must treat it as such, even if at the expense of some recreational type activities.

Whilst no longer running youth activities in this part of its region, NPYWC needs to have an efficient cross-referral system with whomever is providing these services, given that we run a number of other programs such as Child Nutrition, Domestic Violence and Disability support, all of which frequently involve young clients. Our SA and WA youth client also move across borders from time to time. We continue to work co-operatively with Mission Australia to ensure that this happens,

4.3 Educational initiatives

The provision of innovative educational opportunities for disengaged youth was one of the major selection criteria for the NT Integrated Youth Services Program. No educational initiatives have been observed to date, although its staff now advise that they are working on strategies to get non-attending school-aged children to school (and, thankfully, not offering alternatives) and also attempting to make more use of the various job network providers who are contracted to assist those of workforce age to get work or obtain training.

4.4 Infrastructure: recreation halls and staff accommodation.

Essential physical infrastructure such as staff housing, recreation halls and vehicles are the foundational basics for a youth program and the funding of this infrastructure was announced in April 2007 when Mission Australia was awarded the contract. The only upgrade to a recreation hall to our knowledge has been at Imanpa and there have been no new buildings. Delays in the construction of proper staff accommodation has often meant staff sharing the temporary demountables that have also been shared with officers involved with the NT Intervention, i.e. Centrelink staff at Imanpa. No permanent private accommodation is available although we understand from recent discussions with CAPPSU staff that it is now, finally, not too far off.

5. A co-ordinated approach?

i There has not been anything approaching a co-ordinated tri-state approach to youth services under the eight-point plan. Information sharing and communication by CAPPSU with long-term stakeholders, especially Aboriginal organisations, has been almost non-existent. In mid-2007, the Central Land Council, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, CAYLUS and NPYWC requested that the NT Manager of FaHCSIA talk to stakeholders about the implementation of the strategy under CAPPSU.

Stakeholder meetings have been sporadically held since then. NPYWC has had no approach for any discussion with CAPSSU since early 2007 apart from a recent visit by the Deputy Director of the Unit as she was about to leave the position. This is despite NPYWC's long history of battling specifically petrol sniffing both at ground and policy level, and substance abuse generally, and working with clients affected by volatile substance misuse in the cross-border region. The Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU) has, for most of its existence, concentrated on the NT. This was recently re-confirmed by local CAPSSU Manager Mr. Steve Vaughan at a stakeholders' meeting on 24th July in Alice Springs. At this stage we query whether having such a Unit is useful. WA and SA do not attend stakeholders' meetings.

FaHCSIA appears to have little capacity for or understanding of the nature work in the area of substance misuse and it is difficult to justify the expense of the continuation of a dedicated Unit based in Alice Springs. We understand that an evaluation of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy by Urbis Pty. Ltd., undertaken this year and to which NPYWC contributed, is complete, but we are not aware of Urbis' findings or recommendations.

ii A Ngaanyatjarra Lands (WA) Youth Substance Abuse Strategy was prepared for CAPSSU by the Ngaanyatjarra Council and Shire and includes a consultation report, mapping exercise and implementation plans. NPYWC and many other agencies working in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands were involved in the preparation. This Strategy was submitted to Kalgoorlie ICC in June 06 and until very recently there had been no action on substance abuse prevention and intervention in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

iii In the WA sector of the NPY region, some funding has been allocated for duplex accommodation for youth workers and these are being built, which is a positive move. CAPSSU advised at the July stakeholders' meeting that funding been allocated for 'youth treatment camps' but that these are not yet underway. There are several sport and recreation workers employed by the Ngaanyatjarra Shire and at least some of this funding comes from the Attorney-General's Department. They focus, as their job title suggests, on physical activities and generally do not undertake individual case management and support. NPYWC employs one full-time youth development worker based at Warakurna, and engages casual or part-time Anangu staff when they are available and funds permit. This work is funded by DoHA through OATSIH.

iv Similarly, SA has not been included in what was to be a tri-state, 'whole of government' Commonwealth – State approach to the issue. There has been some increase in sporting activity, but there is nothing approaching the preferred 'Dockers River' model of a qualified and or skilled male and female youth worker in each community. NPYWC also employs one to 1.5 youth development workers dedicated to this part of its region, who support local workers who are mainly employed by individual community councils, with the SA Government employing co-ordinators to whom the workers, unfortunately, are not directly responsible. It is a model that NPYWC has criticised over a number of years notwithstanding our continued practical support to the program.

viii NPYWC also runs school holiday programs wherever and whenever it is able to do so, on the APY Lands and also at Warakurna and at Kiwirrkurra; not in the NT as that is now the role of Mission Australia. It does not under any circumstances run programs

that compete with regular schooling. Funding is intermittent and comes from various sources, such as the SA Department for Families and Communities, the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

ix We understand that the highly successful and remote Mt. Theo and Ilperle outstation treatment programs currently have no funds for brokerage; in other words, no money for food, blankets, swags and other essential items for clients. If correct, this is a dreadful situation that we hope will very soon be remedied.

x There are finally some five or so treatment places for juveniles aged twelve to eighteen years in Alice Springs, funded mainly by the NT Government, opened in Late 2007 or early 2008 following inordinate delays, and run by local organisation 'Bush Mob.' Adults are admitted to DASA – the drug and alcohol service. The juveniles' service is very poorly funded, and sadly this is the extent of such services in Alice Springs after many years of advocacy, coronial recommendations and the like. The voluntary nature of admission is also of concern to NPYWC, which would rather see young people compelled to undergo treatment. It is often argued, particularly by drug and alcohol workers employed in mainstream, government services, that this will not work. We note however that Mt. Theo, and to an extent Ilperle, have not been voluntary in the true sense of the word, but have had the greatest success. We also question the concept of the 'right' of young people to inflict extensive damage upon themselves with inhalants, drugs or alcohol without quick and determined intervention, as a matter of public health policy. Some young women, and young men with whom we deal are greatly damaged through substance misuse at a very young age, with little prospect of recovery, and none in the absence of intensive assistance. They have little if any ability to control their impulses and are very open to exploitation, including of a sexual kind. They need extensive help, including with life skills and community re-integration.

xi There is now a Commonwealth-SA funded 'substance misuse facility' at Amata on the APY Lands, but admission to this is also voluntary unless a person has offended and there is a court order compelling attendance. It is our understanding that to date there have been few if any residential clients admitted and the facility is yet to be fully staffed. The Commonwealth agreed in 2004 to provide the capital funding to SA for the building, but construction was only completed this year. NPYWC has expressed serious concern as to whether the SA Department for Families and Communities will be able to attract and keep suitable staff in this location. It is only available to SA residents.

6. Communication

i The communication strategies in relation to Opal have unfortunately fallen far short of the mark and continue to be a sore point between the Department of Health and Ageing and NGOs such as NPYWC and CAYLUS. Despite having commissioned a very good draft radio and print advertising campaign in early 2007, featuring well-known personalities, DoHA (OASTSIH) eventually decided to run local newspaper advertisements featuring the Australian coat of arms and Q. and As on Opal. This was intended to counter earlier, negative media stories that we believe had the effect of turning people off the new fuel. The ratio of Opal to premium fuel as noted is very high

in Alice Springs, especially considering the relatively small number of vehicles that need to use premium fuel.

ii OATSIH continues to insist that the change to the ‘message from Canberra’ from the excellent and we believe much more appealing ads that would have featured, for example, country singer Lee Kernaghan, among others, was based on market research. We have not been privy to this research, despite requests, but find it almost impossible to believe, with our fairly extensive local knowledge, that the average Central Australian resident would respond more positively to the dull format that triumphed and the concurrent letterbox drop with a message from the Minister, than to a popular and recognisable personality promoting Opal. Another reason given was that it is very difficult under departmental procedures to get permission to contract out advertising, but if this was the case, why commission drafts in the first place? We believe a little flexibility and imagination would have made a significant difference.

iii In June of this year, CAYLUS, NPYWC and other NGOs ran full-page colour ads in the local press, thanking the public for its support of Opal, and pointing out the great benefit to the community. The Opal Alliance then wrote to OATSIH Assistant Secretary Ms Lesley Podesta, seeking some of the funds set aside for the promotion of Opal, and offering to design and run suitable material ourselves. Unfortunately this request has been rejected. We remain very concerned that the adverse affects of the early bad publicity have not been overcome, and are considering designing and running our own campaign.

iv Whilst the regulation of the supply of premium fuel as discussed above would go a long way to balancing out the ratio of petrol sales, we believe that at least some lost ground can be recovered by effective publicity.

Recommendation 1:

Based on advice from Blake Dawson Lawyers (then Blake Dawson Waldron) in February 2007⁹, (‘BD advice’) additional conditions be placed on licences that are issued in relation to the transport of dangerous substances: BD advice p7 at 4.16 and on.

Recommendation 2:

Based on BD advice p5 at 4.5 and on: The sale of premium unleaded fuel needs to be subjected to a legislative regime whereby the sale or supply of petrol other than Opal fuel is unlawful within a designated area except where it (i.e. premium) is kept in a locked bowser accessible only to specific persons or their employees and it is supplied directly into the tank of a vehicle whose driver can demonstrate that their vehicle cannot operate without premium fuel.

⁹ Attached*

Recommendation 3:

a) That the SAID continue to be funded and that its capacity be increased at least threefold, including both officers and sniffer dogs, in order to allow it to collect more and improved intelligence in the region and work more effectively with State and Territory forces to work towards the eradication of liquor and illicit drug trafficking and enforce existing and any new laws relating to the supply of premium unleaded fuel;

b) That as a matter of urgency the SA, WA and NT governments and the Australian Governments ensure that all remote communities in the Central region, excepting small homelands and outstations, have a permanent, sworn police presence.

Recommendation 4:

In order to maintain and improve on the lower levels and ensure that all relevant communities get the benefit, the entire original proposed roll-out region needs to receive Opal, and the necessary regulatory and legislative changes must be made, as per Recommendations 1 and 2.

Recommendation 5:

That the service provision to youth in the southern NT by Mission Australia be closely monitored in order to ensure that young people are receiving a comprehensive service and that substance misuse is minimised through early intervention including individual case management and family support as well as diversionary activities.

Recommendation 6:

That the usefulness of CAPSSU be reviewed with a view to either disbanding the Unit or greatly reducing its size given that there clearly is no longer any serious commitment to a 'whole of government' tri-state cross-border approach to volatile substance misuse. It appears difficult to justify the expense of the continued existence of the Unit given the reduced size of the area now involved, even if additional youth activities are trialled at, for example, Hermannsburg. We submit Department of Health and Ageing has greater expertise in the area of substance misuse programs and funding and should be responsible rather than a mixture of departments.

Recommendation 7:

That governments introduce *practicable* legislative options to compel users of inhalants (and other substances), in particular juveniles, to attend detoxification, treatment and suitable rehabilitation, and provide facilities open to all residents of the Central region in a location in reasonable proximity to, but not in, the town of Alice Springs.