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NGADBERRE REGIONAL AUTHORITY

WUGULARR COMMUNITY

5th FEBRUARY 2004
REFERENCES COMMITTEE
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir /Madam,

Please find answers to your questions regarding lawyers and satisfaction of legal advice in the community.

1. The Community Council is not at all satisfied with the availability of lawyers in our Community. The primary reason is that there are none available here. This could be improved by providing a traveling lawyer to visit all communities.
2. The Community is not at all satisfied with the quality of legal advice and representation. There is no service what so ever offered to the Community. It appears that legal advice is only available to an offender when he/she is removed from the community.
3. If general legal advice is available by telephone the Council has not been given this information. The only time the telephone is used is for Correctional Service calls. This creates a huge problem with engaging the Office phones for long periods, of which we only have two, and one only is an STD line. There needs to be a direct link to legal information to help the community out in the direction. Country- men do not know what questions to ask, and therefore assistance is required for Office staff and Managers, and more visits from legal representatives.
4. There are no lawyers attending our Community at the moment, and have not since September 2003. When they did attend it was not evident that they showed relevant cultural awareness. Training would certainly assist in local cultural awareness. An example of one situation was that a young man was away for four months for

cultural ceremony. From my understanding he was to attend correctional service, but due to the ceremony he did not report. The President thought that it was a sufficient deterrent. However the man in question was then imprisoned for a further six months. The cultural significance of this was extremely important, as ceremony had not been held for four years.

- 5. No, they do not visit our Community at the moment. When Court was last held in September the people had access only on that day. They did not have access to the magistrate or judge before court commenced. More information and visits are needed.
- 6. Information that has come to hand, is that a person can be held anything up to 3 months, before a court appearance.
- 7. Interpreters are definitely needed for court appearances to assist the Country Men and Women. More training is urgently required and more interpreters. I am unable to answer a, and b.
- 8. There are no lawyers available to assist in the community. There is no legal advice or legal representation available in the community for any matters. There is an urgent need for legal advice in non-criminal matters.
- 9. It appears that legal advice is only provided for the person who is charged with the offence. There is very little, if any legal service available for the person that has been assaulted. The Police offer some legal information if called to attend the incident. There is a safe house in the community but no funds to transport the victim into Katherine 110 kms away, if required.

The Council trusts that this information assists you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if further information is required.

Yours faithfully

Colin Bailey



Community Manager

Richard Kennedy



President of the Community