

ALCOHOL BANS IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

4065. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Health

I refer to the Aboriginal communities operating under an alcohol ban under section 175 of the *Liquor Control Act 1988*, and I ask:

- (a) what mechanisms are in place to monitor how community members deal with the retraction of alcohol from their lifestyle;
- (b) if a problem is identified, what support services will be implemented to deal with it; and
- (c) if a problem is identified as affecting family members, what support services have been put in place to assist these family members?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

- (a) Before a section 175 regulation is implemented or renewed, relevant agencies and other stakeholders are consulted in relation to the wider implication of an alcohol ban.

Outside these processes, key service agencies in the relevant region monitor the alcohol, other drug and mental health needs of the section 175 communities and communicate regularly to ensure that changes in the requirements of the community are noted and appropriate responses developed.

- (b) If a problem is identified, the support services implemented will depend on the nature and volume of the problem. For example, if a person requires detoxification support, many of the hospitals are already equipped to manage such a circumstance. However, if there was an unexpected, significant increase in demand for this service, the relevant agencies (local contracted treatment and support agencies, the Drug and Alcohol Office, WA Health) would collaborate to determine what other support can be provided.
- (c) The nature of the response would be determined by the specific problem affecting families and the community in question. As per the answer to item (b), an appropriate service or mix of services would be considered.