

ALCOHOL BANS IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

4066. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Mental 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 G.G. JACOBS replied:

While in the Kimberley last week, I took the opportunity to meet with a broad cross-section of people from the communities that have an alcohol restriction, under section 175 of the Liquor Control Act 1988, as well as the service providers (Government and non-Government) who all commented on how their towns and communities are much better places with these restrictions in place.

- (a) An annual review of each section 175 is undertaken by the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor, at which time various agencies and other stakeholders are asked for feedback.

Outside of the annual review process, 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 can be developed.

Mechanisms for the coordination and integration of activities already exist at a national, jurisdictional and local level and facilitate planning, implementation and reporting processes. This 3-tier approach uses existing infrastructure and networks wherever possible.

The Drug and Alcohol Office has developed a wide range of robust and practical linkages between the drug and alcohol sector and other key services. The Drug and Alcohol Office maintains such partnerships through Memoranda of Understandings, Service Level Agreements, participation in networking and coordination groups and consultation processes.

With regard to some of the section 175 communities in the Kimberley, it is noted that Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing and surrounding communities are identified as Remote Service Delivery sites under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery. The process of identifying appropriate gaps and service mix (including alcohol and drug and mental health) is underway for these sites. In the meantime alcohol and drug services will be provided to the non-township communities as needed by existing services on an outreach basis.

- (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 part (b), an appropriate service or mix of services would be considered.