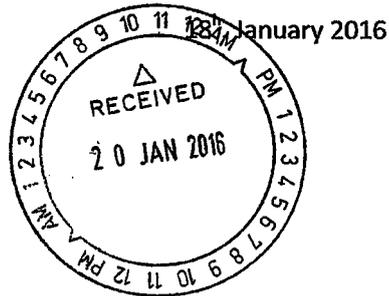


Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Attention Ms Margaret Liveris Legislative Council,  
Parliament House,  
GPO Box A11  
PERTH W.A. 6837  
Your Ref: Petition 105



Dear Standing Committee Members,

I have lived in Esperance since 1994, and have worked in the Health Dept. of Victoria, and W.A. since 1963, and am now retired. During my career as a registered nurse I have had 12 years of experience in Drug and Alcohol in a private clinic in Melbourne, I then worked in Bairnsdale as a Charge nurse for District nursing, before moving to Esperance where I worked in Extended care from Esperance hospital caring for people in their own homes, primarily for palliative care, I was then appointed as the ACAT(Aged Care Assesment Team) nurse for Esperance and the surrounding areas. I also worked part time in a small mental health facility within Esperance hospital during 1996-1998, whilst this unit was in operation. However this unit was ceased due to lack of ongoing funding.

I now have a daughter with an addiction to Chrystal Meth "ICE", and have encountered the many problems associated with my daughter trying to get help with this problem through mental health, and support services. For this reason I started a petition to The Legislative Assembly, this petition raised approx. 1700 signatures in a period of 6 weeks. This was presented to parliament by Dr. Graham Jacobs during the month of November 2015. I then did another petition for the legislative council in late November 2015. This is petition No. 105.

Esperance was a vibrant, beautiful town to reside in 2 years ago, since that time there has been an alarming increase in drug and alcohol problems within the town, there are an extremely large number of adults 25-45 hooked on "ICE", this is creating difficulties with children and families trying to cope with this problem. I have had one daughter and her daughter move to Perth, to get away from the drug problem. During the Christmas period my grand daughter (aged 18) and her partner returned to Esperance for a few days, they went to the one and only nightclub in Esperance and were approached 4 times in a period of 2 hours with patrons trying to sell them ICE.

Esperance currently has approximately 300-400 houses for sale, the price of real estate has dropped by \$112,500 in the past 12 months, there are many empty shops, and more closing down weekly. Too much money is going out of the town due to the amount spent on drugs.

Police have attempted to curb the drug problem in town, but this has not deterred the many dealers and suppliers of drugs to Esperance. Domestic violence call outs by the police from June 2014 until October 2014 increased by 90% for the same period during 2015, this was possibly due to the increase in drug abuse.

My reasons for stating a DETOX unit was needed in Esperance hospital on the petition, were that many people who wish to come off drugs or alcohol, have nowhere to go should they require help. In many cases people are taken to hospital by the police, who they consider are at risk, only to be sent home again. Esperance hospital states it does take residents for detox, the facilities are not suitable. People wishing to go through detox or seek help with mental health problems require constant supervision in a secure ward, as this often requires medicinal restraint. I have seen my daughter through detox 3 times in her home, this includes irritability, severe depression, the feeling of hopelessness, severe anxiety and suicidal tendencies. For "ice" a person requires a minimum of 2 weeks abstinence from the drug to make an informed rational decision. (however this is only my own experience). Alcohol detox can be very dangerous if not handled correctly, and is a very individual treatment process, depending on the amount of alcohol consumed. Follow up programs need to be in place for someone going through Detox. Currently most rehabilitation programs require a person to go through detox prior to admission into a facility.

Currently in Esperance we have 2 drug and alcohol community workers who cope with residents in Esperance, Norseman, Hopetoun, Condingup and surrounding areas. Due to the demand they only have time for counselling services every 2 weeks. They are restricted by protocols from head office in Perth. Centre Care provide family counselling and drug and alcohol support services, they are also extremely busy and have restricted time frames due to demand.

Mental health has a community facility in Esperance, however they do not provide a service after 4.30pm. on Friday until 8.00am Monday, residents with a mental health problem or family members caring for a person with a mental health problem have nowhere to go after hours. It seems the only people you can call in Esperance is the police. The hospital has one doctor on call at Esperance hospital for Accident and Emergency dept.

Esperance community has expressed their concerns by signing petitions, I have enclosed support letters for these initiatives, which include Crisis Accommodation, Shire of Esperance, Chamber of Commerce, BOICO, General practitioners, Dr. Graham Rowlands (Norseman), Dr. W.P. Speelman, Dr. Richard Clingen, Dr. A. Marangou, all other doctors signed the petition for the Legislative Assembly.

There has been an alarming increase in drug related and mental health deaths during 2015, with 2 deaths two weeks before Christmas, and others 2 or 3 since Christmas 2015, these numbers I cannot verify, as the coroner in Kalgoorlie can only release this information to the Mental Health Commission, and cannot be released to any member of the public due to confidentiality.

I sincerely hope you will consider these serious matters.

Regards,

Deleine Congreve