

**SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE EDUCATION AND
HEALTH STANDING COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO THE ADEQUACY AND APPROPRIATENESS OF
PREVENTION AND TREATMENT SERVICES FOR ALCOHOL AND
ILLCIT DRUG PROBLEMS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT BEAGLE BAY
TUESDAY, 27 JULY 2010**

SESSION TWO

Members

**Mr P. Abetz (Chairman)
Mr P.B. Watson**

Hearing commenced at 12.15 pm

RIPP, MR NEVILLE VERNON

Brevet Senior Sergeant OIC, Dampier Peninsula Police Station, examined:

HOWIE, MR NOEL ALAN

Sergeant, Dampier Peninsula Police Station, examined:

KORCULANIC, MS JANE

Sergeant, Dampier Peninsula Police Station, examined:

The CHAIRMAN: Committee hearings are a proceeding of Parliament and demand the same respect given to the proceedings in the house itself. Even though you are not required to give evidence on oath, any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. Unless otherwise directed by the committee, the evidence of witnesses is public and may be published, including on the parliamentary website, immediately after correction. If there is anything you want to say to us that you believe would be inappropriate on the public record, just indicate that and it will be noted by Hansard and not made public. The evidence will be available to us in a general way for writing our report and recommendations, but we will not actually quote you in any direct way. Nobody will be able to identify where the information came from.

Once the evidence is transcribed, it will be mailed to you. You have 28 days in which to make any corrections. If you do not send it back, we will assume it is correct. If, after we have been here, you think you should have told us something, you can add that as an extra statement to the transcript. You cannot add to the transcript, because that is a historic document, but you can add information which we will then take note of in our deliberations. Have you read the notes that we gave you and understood them?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners, past, present and future, on whose land we meet. In terms of the purpose of our inquiry, there are obviously lots of issues in Aboriginal communities but our focus as a committee is into drug and alcohol, both prevention services and treatment services across the state. We are not just focusing on Indigenous communities but right across the state. The purpose of coming up here is to hear from people who are on the ground at the grassroots level what are the issues in terms of drugs and alcohol, what could we be doing better as a government, what is working and what are the gaps. We are here to learn from you in terms of what is happening here and, as people who are on the ground, what could be done better if you had more resources. Are we wasting resources by doing certain things? We are here to hear from you and learn from you. Neville, if you want to kick-off and give us a bit of a thumbnail sketch of what is happening in this area. If the other officers want to chip in, you are very welcome to do that. We will then ask questions.

Mr Ripp: Sure. As I said, I am the officer in charge of the facility here. I have the other two officers here with me. We cover just under 100 000 square kilometres in our patch. That includes the four major communities—Lombadina, Djarindjin, Ardyaloon and Beagle Bay—as well as some 55 other outstations. Our work here is busy and challenging. At the moment things are running quite smoothly. I have been here 11 months. I feel we are making some sort of headway into some areas. In regards to alcohol and drugs, us as officers do patrols on the highway predominantly where the

alcohol comes from on the highway. I suppose you could call them spot checks. They can be conducted at 11 o'clock at night, one in the morning, two in the morning—times when people just are not expecting us. As I said, these are to target alcohol and drug traffickers into the peninsula where I find that most of the harm is coming from. My drug charges, up until 30 June, were up over 200 per cent. I put this down to us being more proactive on the highway and in the communities. I believe the communities understand that we now do target that more than other things, so they are a bit more aware. Those drug figures are now starting to decline. I believe that message has somewhat got through, even though I still believe there are drugs, predominantly cannabis, coming into the community.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Is it coming in via Broome or is it grown locally?

Mr Ripp: We had the police air wing attend here earlier this year, about three months ago. They spent approximately two days doing aerial searches for cannabis. I have done that type of work myself. We did not locate one plant on the peninsula, which said to me that it is coming in predominantly from Broome and Derby. As far as I know, that is the intelligence that I am getting. Whether it is coming from further abroad, I do not have that intelligence.

Yes, alcohol is a major factor up here. I would say without any doubt 98 per cent of our main work to do with domestic violence reported assaults are alcohol fuelled. This is a major concern to me. I do not have all the answers —

Mr P.B. WATSON: Ninety-eight per cent did you say?

Mr Ripp: I would say 98 per cent, yes.

Mr Howie: Conservatively!

Mr Ripp: Yes. Our letdown is possibly we do not have enough education for these people in regards to alcohol and drugs, even though I note that there are departments that do have people who come up here—mental health, and drug and alcohol groups. I do not believe we are getting to the real problem. It is too readily available. Obviously when the road comes through—I believe next year it will be bituminised fully—we will have even greater issues with alcohol on the peninsula.

Mr P.B. WATSON: So it is going to come from Broome right out, is it?

Mr Ripp: I believe so.

The CHAIRMAN: I should perhaps mention we have got a copy of the COAG consultation that was done recently in the area. If you want to add anything to that information, feel free to do so in case you are wondering about whether we are aware of that one.

Mr Ripp: One of our roles is not only being reactive but being proactive. Myself and the other two officers here are making headway. We have got some new disco equipment. The time frame is a little bit hard for us. As I said, our furthest major community is Beagle Bay, which, as you would well know, is 85 kilometres away. You only need two calls down there of a night-time and that is your whole next day gone, plus your sleep deprivation.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do you have two officers on at all times?

Mr Ripp: No. As the officer in charge, I am responsible for the phone. I will go with another officer, so, out of hours—or if I have been sleep deprived, I might call on the other two officers. It is very much a team thing.

The CHAIRMAN: How many officers in total do you have based here?

Mr Ripp: Three.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Covering 100 000 square kilometres?

Mr Ripp: Yes. We have a house for a fourth officer. I think three is an odd number. If we have a situation down at Beagle Bay where two officers go to, one of the complaints I am getting from the

community—I hear their cries—is that obviously under our EBA, officers cannot attend by themselves. Three is a very odd number. It is virtually, “You’re going to have to wait until the other two get back from Beagle Bay before we attend there.”

Mr P.B. WATSON: Does that cause much trouble? Does it happen very often?

Mr Ripp: No, it does not happen that often. It really only has to happen once.

The CHAIRMAN: A delayed arrival at a violent situation can mean the difference between life and death for somebody, I guess.

Mr Ripp: Sorry, when you say that, I will just correct myself there. It happened as early as this morning with Jane and Noel. I had them attend Beagle Bay for a domestic violence situation. I got a call 20 minutes later. I rang them to see how far they were. They were just about there. The report was that the lady’s daughter had been assaulted in Djarindjin over the weekend and the person of interest we had in mind could possibly have a knife. I will correct myself—that happened as early as this morning. You have to say to them, “It didn’t happen that way; I made other arrangements”, and still have the other two officers head to Beagle Bay, which could have also turned nasty. That happened as early as this morning.

Mr P.B. WATSON: You have one DCP officer here. Do they work at night? One of the issues we found when talking to police in Broome, they go along and take people off the streets. I know it is probably a little bit different here, but do you have kids wandering around at night?

Mr Ripp: No. As you have seen by the geography of where we are and whatnot, the people are very family oriented up here with their kids—I would say definitely more so than other communities I have worked in. In the communities, I think they are very safe communities up here whereas kids do tend to wander but there is always, if I can say, 50 eyes on them, from aunties, uncles, whatever. I think it is a good thing if they are wandering around the community going from aunty’s house and whatever as long as there is not alcohol involved.

The CHAIRMAN: To what extent is alcohol a problem in these communities? Would you say it is getting better, worse or constant?

Mr Ripp: I believe we are making a dent, if I can put it that way—the officers and myself this year. I waited until I was here a year, until I saw those figures. As I said to you, I have been here 11 months so there is only a month to go, but I believe we might be able to make a dent in those figures for next year. I would say that is out of the proactive activities that we are doing with them—talking to them, sitting with them, trying to educate them. Once again, as early as this morning we did a bit of that with one of our persons of interest I suppose.

The CHAIRMAN: What percentage of your callouts would be alcohol related?

Mr P.B. WATSON: Ninety-eight.

The CHAIRMAN: No; domestic violence was 98 per cent. What are the total callouts, or is that still 98 per cent?

Mr Ripp: It would be very close.

Mr Howie: It would be the same. I think you meant 98 per cent of all the work we do, not just domestic violence; is that right?

Mr Ripp: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I thought it was just for domestic violence. So 98 per cent of the work —

Mr Ripp: Yes.

[12.30 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: Would your job be a lot more manageable if the alcohol issue were minimised?

Mr Howie: Yes—10-fold.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Is it just beer or is it spirits as well?

Mr Ripp: It is spirits and beer.

Mr Howie: It used to be wine, but not so much now. The other thing with alcohol is that it is very cyclic with the welfare cycle. We have a busy time towards the end of the week—Thursday, Friday and Saturday—and then it dies off until the next week.

The CHAIRMAN: Because they run out of money?

Mr Howie: Yes.

Mr Ripp: In the past couple of weeks tax cheques have been sent out. I believe—I do not want to be quoted on this—that that is right throughout the Kimberley at this stage.

The CHAIRMAN: In essence there is no alcohol available here so they have to go to Broome to get it.

Mr Ripp: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any restrictions on the movement of alcohol in this area?

Mr Ripp: No.

The CHAIRMAN: So it is perfectly legal for someone to get in his car, go to Broome and fill his boot with grog, come back up here and either share it around or get some on behalf of other people and have a big booze-up. There is no legal impediment to that.

Mr Ripp: Nothing at all.

Mr Howie: And it happens a lot. I have just come back from leave but just before I went on leave we stopped a car that had 15 cartons of beer in it. There is nothing we can do. As long as we do not suspect that they are on-selling it or anything like that then there is no legal way we can do anything about it.

The CHAIRMAN: What percentage of the community is affected by alcohol in the sense of being consumers of alcohol in excessive amounts? Does 40 per cent of the community drink too much or does 60 per cent drink too much?

Mr Ripp: That would have to be broken down. When you say “the community”, do you mean the peninsula as a whole?

The CHAIRMAN: Is there much difference between the communities in terms of drinking patterns?

Mr P.B. WATSON: We have the comparisons here.

Mr Ripp: For sure. Can I say something off the —

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, we can go into a closed session.

[The committee took evidence in closed session]

[12.37 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: Broadly speaking, would you say that alcohol problems in this area have become worse during the past three, four or five years? Given that you have been here only 11 months, it may be a little difficult for you to judge that.

Mr Ripp: This facility opened in February 2007. As I said, I have been here for 11 months and Noel has been here coming up to three years.

Mr Howie: I do not think it has become any worse. There have been spikes here and there, I suppose. When the federal government payments were being made —

The CHAIRMAN: The \$900 payments?

Mr Howie: Yes, the stimulus package. We definitely noticed big spikes around those times, but in general I would say it has been quite steady. There have been no changes in the situation as far as restrictions or bylaws or anything like that. It has been the same during the time that I have been here.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Have you noticed a difference in the age group of those taking drugs? Are they getting younger or is it still the same age group?

Mr Howie: No, I have not noticed any difference. I would say that it is predominantly the younger people—young adults and even younger still. But I do not think there has been a lot of change. Before I was stationed here, I was in Broome, which was also before there was a police station here. Occasionally, we would do patrols up this way from Broome. I suppose if I were to compare it back with those days there is definitely a big difference, but it is more a case of it was not reported back then. The uptake of police services has been very good.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do you have to be culturally sensitive when you go into the communities? Do you get any training beforehand?

Mr Ripp: We do not. It is probably a very good example of officers who come up to relieve from Perth, the south of Perth and the north of Perth around the Gascoyne and Pilbara. We virtually have to tell them to forget whatever happens in their town because these are different people. They have different beliefs and cultures. We now have interagency meetings with the four communities, police and DCP. We have broached the subject and in the near future all police officers—it was going to be brought up in the last one, but we could not get those people here—will have cultural awareness training.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do the elders talk to you about drug and alcohol issues in the communities? Do you have to go through the elders first?

Mr Ripp: No. The elders come up to me; anyone will come up to me. Yesterday I had a call from Beagle Bay about alcohol getting run to Halls Creek. There is no stepping stone.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have situations in which kids go without food because mum and dad have blown all their money on alcohol? Is there that cycle in which after payday kids get food for a few days, but then money is spent on alcohol and then the week before they get paid again the kids go without breakfast and that sort of thing?

Mr Ripp: The best way to answer that is that it is very much family oriented up here. Every weekend the chairman of Djarindjin—if I can use him as an example—takes kids out fishing getting their traditional food et cetera. I do not know of any single instance in which kids are missing out on food. The kids up here look very healthy. Their staple diet is very good.

The CHAIRMAN: That is encouraging to hear.

Mr Ripp: That may be a question for child protection. Certainly as a police officer, I have not seen any situations like that.

Ms Korculanic: A breakfast program in the schools provides children with breakfast.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the attendance rate for schools?

Mr Howie: It is about 60 per cent on average, which is quite good.

Mr Ripp: That is for Djarindjin.

Mr Howie: I do not know the rate for the One Arm Point school.

Mr Ripp: I believe there are about 80 kids at the school. Would that be —

Mr Howie: There are about 120 enrolled and —

The CHAIRMAN: Do they get a bus from here to school? Is there a school here?

Mr Howie: Yes, there is.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that where the 80 kids go?

Mr Howie: Yes. There is a Catholic school here. One Arm Point is the government school. There is also a Catholic school in Beagle Bay.

Mr Ripp: I think the attendance rate is quite good.

The CHAIRMAN: All things considered.

Mr P.B. WATSON: What is the age of the youngest child who has been picked up for drunkenness?

Mr Ripp: I think it is 15 or 16.

Mr P.B. WATSON: That is probably the same as Perth, I suppose. So there are no young ones with a role model at home going out —

Mr Howie: There has been the occasional kid. I think he is 11. That is fairly unusual.

Mr P.B. WATSON: There is always one bad apple.

Mr Ripp: I think we are pretty lucky.

Ms Korculanic: As far as the food thing goes, it is family oriented. If they do not have food in their house, they will go to their nan's house and nan will give them all a feed. I have never seen children go without food. They have a lot of fresh fish as part of their diet.

The CHAIRMAN: I notice in the paper that you kindly provided us you mentioned under the heading "juvenile boredom" that no high school facilities are available. Where do the kids go to high school?

Mr Ripp: I only spoke about this issue this morning. I will stand corrected on that. I got that advice from someone else. I do not have my own kids. Noel might be able to clarify that.

Mr Howie: As far as I know kindy to year 10 is the norm for this area. After that students in years 11 and 12 generally go to boarding school in Broome.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do you have any sporting facilities here? Is there an oval or a hall that the kids can go to?

Mr Howie: There is a basketball court.

Mr P.B. WATSON: At the school?

Mr Howie: Yes. There is also a community one, but it is not very good.

Mr P.B. WATSON: So there is nothing for the kids to do?

Ms Korculanic: The community one usually has glass on it. There is no lighting. The one in One Arm Point is very good; it has lighting. It is used by the children in the evening. Often you see the children playing basketball at night.

Mr P.B. WATSON: What do the kids here do at night?

Mr Ripp: Myriad things. I have seen different kids sit down with grandma to listen to stories. That is fantastic to see, because it passes on. As I said before, we do not see any problem with the kids walking around the communities because there is always some —

Mr Howie: They tend to entertain themselves.

The CHAIRMAN: So is what they get up to fairly positive and constructive?

Mr Howie: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: That is encouraging to hear.

Mr Ripp: We have the odd ging, but they are hunting with those. It is totally different from Perth.

Mr P.B. WATSON: If we asked you to describe three things you need in the community to stop people using drugs and alcohol, what would they be?

[12.47 pm]

Mr Ripp: Education and more assistance with role models. Aboriginal role models, I think, are a good idea. When I say it is boredom I am not having a go at the communities—with what the parents do with them. It is facilities for them. As Jane said, one of the halls is pretty well wrecked.

Mr P.B. WATSON: If you had a proper facility here and you said to the kids, “You can’t use that unless you go to school” do you think that would be an advantage?

Mr Ripp: For sure. In Halls Creek it is no school, no pool.

Mr Howie: It is the same in Bidyadanga, and apparently it works very well.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The trouble is if you get a pool it costs a fortune. How far away is the beach from here? It is just down there is it not?

Ms Korculanic: When we bring things in here for them to do, such as a bouncy castle which we brought here, they love it and they talk about it for a really long time, so they like that kind of stuff. The community officer I have spoken to is a little bit frustrated because there is nowhere for her to set up her stuff. She wants to run more things with the children but there is nowhere for her to do it.

The CHAIRMAN: Is there no sort of grassed area where she can set up things?

Mr Ripp: Not in Djarindjin.

Ms Korculanic: She wanted a permanent structure where she could store stuff because she has some sporting equipment she can use. She has it at home now but before that she was keeping it all in the back of her car.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you refer to the person as the community officer?

Ms Korculanic: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Is she a youth worker, working among young people?

Ms Korculanic: Yes; she works for the Gunduwa.

The CHAIRMAN: Her role is to engage with the kids to try to get them on the straight and narrow type of thing?

Ms Korculanic: She runs activities for them.

The CHAIRMAN: One of the things you mentioned is not enough visitation by drug and alcohol workers, and there are no safe houses or refuges available here. Can you explain what you would like to see in the area?

Mr Ripp: It was not that long ago that I spoke to mental health—and I include that in those other two—and the lady was quite upset that she does not get to come up here more often. She said she could not get up here because she does not have transport. I think she was virtually saying that there was not enough talking with different organisations.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps she could scab a lift with someone else who was coming up here sort of thing?

Mr Ripp: I have had meetings with Milliya Rumurra so it would be good to see those people come up here. I understand the hardships of Broome. There is a lot happening in Broome and a lot of people who need that. I am not complaining about the services; it is probably more of a question of the lack of workers.

Mr P.B. WATSON: It is continuity too, is it not? Mental health will come up and then go back and might not come back for a few weeks so everything they have gained they lose.

Mr Howie: Adding to that is staff turnover. One person will come and build a bit of a rapport with a few people and then move on and then someone will start fresh again and not know anyone and not know where they are going.

Mr P.B. WATSON: With regard to overcrowding in the communities, what is the average number of people in a house?

Mr Ripp: Once again, it varies among communities. I know in Djarindjin there may be 10 people in a house.

Mr P.B. WATSON: How many bedrooms?

Mr Ripp: Three.

The CHAIRMAN: Do they tend to sleep outside or inside?

Mr Ripp: Not this time. This is our winter now, so they definitely will not sleep outside. They need better housing down there.

Ms Korculanic: That changes, does it not? One week there will be, say, two people in there and the next week all the family will come and stay with them for, say, three months and there will be 10 to 15 people in the house.

Mr Ripp: They adapt very well; they do not complain about a lot of stuff.

Mr P.B. WATSON: That would bring more money into the community if more people came because they would have their welfare and be spending at the shop or wherever.

Mr Ripp: For sure.

The CHAIRMAN: The fluctuation is the problem, is it not? They have housing wherever they are staying, but they are not utilising that while they are here so there are peaks of population in communities. It is hard to justify the cost of building enough housing to accommodate the peaks. Would that be fair to say?

Mr Howie: I guess they are transient, if that is what you are saying. But, given the opportunity there probably would be more permanent residents here if housing were available.

The CHAIRMAN: I see.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I want to get on the record the issue of drivers' licences that we spoke about before. There are a lot of young Aboriginal people in jail because of driving offences or not paying for their driver's licence. Do you think there should be an area licence or different ways that they can apply for their licence, especially on the Dampier Peninsula?

Mr Ripp: This has been a bugbear of mine since I have been here. They know that we are right onto them with driving on the roads, for their own safety as well as because it is against the law. We have done our bit in getting our Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers up here to do their theory part of things, but it is then falling off. The problem I see there is that they lose interest; they do not have any faith in the system. When you tell them they have to wait six months, they lose interest, they go away and it is all too hard for them. The same applies to the process of having a logbook where they have to show the hours. Some of these kids do not have their own bedroom. They might share with two or three other kids. A little sister might decide she wants to do some drawing one day or take the logbook to aunt's place one day. That log book is then lost, so ends the process of how far they will go. Regarding being able to drive in the communities, I do not have the answer for it, but it is not working at the moment with the system we work with.

Mr Howie: It is a cycle too. If we charge someone for no licence, they get a suspension and it compounds because they get suspension on suspension and they have no hope of ever getting a licence.

Mr P.B. WATSON: As you say, it stops them from doing their traditional things such as going out in the bush.

Mr Ripp: Yes.

Mr Howie: The other thing is that most of the people here probably start driving on the beach or in the bush as soon as they can reach the pedals, basically, so there is a bit of a perception that getting a licence is learning how to physically drive a car. Their attitude is, “Well, I’ve been driving since I was six years old; you can’t teach me anything.”

Mr Ripp: On the other hand how do you possibly mirror image the two together—someone holding a driver’s licence in Perth or Broome and going for their licence up here? There are no stop signs to put them through. There is only one roundabout, which is 25 kilometres up. There has to be something different in licences, otherwise they will all have to do their licences in Broome.

Mr P.B. WATSON: They are probably better drivers than most of us.

The CHAIRMAN: With regard to safe houses and refuges, what sort of need is there in the community for that type of facility?

Ms Korculanic: There is some. On most occasions we can put someone in with another family member but there are occasions when we cannot. If they are intoxicated, our choices are to take them to Broome and that means they have to get back here. To take someone to Broome and keep them in custody overnight just because they are intoxicated is a bit extreme for them because they cannot get back home. Otherwise they will have to stay the night here and we stay the night with them, which means that for the next day we cannot work. That can be a problem, but most of the time we are able to put them with family members. It would be nice for respite for some of the families when someone is seriously intoxicated.

The CHAIRMAN: Is something like a sobering-up shelter perhaps more what is needed rather than a safe house?

Mr Ripp: Can we have both?

Mr Howie: Both, for various reasons.

Mr Ripp: Last weekend we had a domestic violence situation with a young girl. I believe we went above and beyond the call of our duty. She was from Port Hedland way and did not have any family up here. We could have placed her in another area. We were not happy with that so we drove her to Broome to the safe house there. That was the only way we could probably go to sleep that night and think that girl was safe. There is that situation.

The CHAIRMAN: Is there no safe house at all in the peninsula here?

Mr Ripp: No.

Mr P.B. WATSON: In a situation like that does Broome come halfway to meet you?

Mr Ripp: Sometimes they do.

Mr Howie: We always ask, but it depends on whether they have the staffing availability.

Mr Ripp: Yes, Broome helps us a lot! We try to work in together but they have staff restraints there too.

Ms Korculanic: They have a lot more population to deal with.

The CHAIRMAN: If the government said it would give you money to put one somewhere, where would you put it?

Mr Ripp: Close to here, in the middle of the road, so to speak. The other point of that is that it is hard for some of these women in domestic situations. I will use Perth as an example: if they are from Thornlie they cannot stay with their sister-in-law in Joondalup because a lot of them are related and it causes problems.

Ms Korculanic: They will use next door as their safe house and obviously that is not safe enough. Within the community they live in their family groups.

The CHAIRMAN: Just to perhaps sum up, if extra funding was available for whatever you would want, what would be your priorities? If the government said it had an extra \$3 million or whatever, which we have not got, what would your priorities be—would safe houses be number one or employing an extra youth worker—cum drug and alcohol worker? Where would you like to see some more resourcing in the community?

Mr Ripp: I do not know whether I would put it at the top of the list but we have our fourth police officer's house here. I would like that fourth police officer back.

Mr P.B. WATSON: You said "back". Have you lost him?

Mr Ripp: Yes. He was taken from us due to the workload. As I said, I would prefer to do a lot more proactive stuff. We can do more stuff and maybe fill in a few of those gaps, which we are doing now and doing a great job with the kids and whatever else. We have myriad roles as police officers, I suppose, and we could throw a bit more time into that. For sure, a safe house. I suppose a men's shelter would be better than a sobering-up shelter because men are obviously victims of domestic violence as well. In situations at Halls Creek, they do not have anywhere to go. They are embarrassed; they have shame.

Ms Korculanic: They need a counsellor there too who they can speak to.

Mr Ripp: Of course, we have in the vicinity in any one day of up to 2 000 people here. It is not as though it is a small area.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you want to sum up with anything?

Mr Ripp: Personally I think we are very lucky here with regard to the type of people we deal with—the Bardi Jawi people. They are moving forward, if I can put it that way.

The CHAIRMAN: To borrow a phrase from Julia Gillard!

Mr Ripp: I think they have a huge future. I think they need some more support with the things we spoke about. Yes, I think we will get there.

The CHAIRMAN: Great. Thank you very much for your input. In due course we will send a transcript and you will have an opportunity to correct anything that was not quite correct. If after we leave you feel you could have said this or that, feel free to add an extra page for our information. We will be very grateful. Thank you.

Hearing concluded at 1.03 pm