

**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 NOONKANBAH
FRIDAY, 30 JULY 2010**

Members

**Dr J.M. Woollard (Chairman)
Mr P. Abetz (Deputy Chairman)
Ms L.L. Baker
Mr P.B. Watson
Mr I.C. Blayney**

Hearing commenced at 1.17 pm**BOKE, MR DENIS, examined:****COX, MR DICKEY****Community Elder, Noonkanbah Community, examined:****COX, MS FRANCINE, examined:****SKINNER, MR MALCOLM, examined:****SMITH, MR JOHN B, examined:**

The CHAIRMAN: Good morning. Ian and I are on this committee. We had a flat tyre—I apologise—and that is why we are starting a bit late. David is our principal research officer and Grant, from the Drug and Alcohol Office—he is outside at the moment—is also assisting us. Keith is from Hansard, at Parliament, and will type up the record of today's meeting.

Today is a public hearing and everything you say will be typed up so that when we go back to Perth we can look at it, and the other members can also look at what you have had to say.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: The typed document will be sent to you before it becomes a public document, and you can check that it is correct. If there are any changes, you can send them back and the changes will be made. Okay?

The CHAIRMAN: We will send the typed document of what you said back and you will have four weeks to look at it to see if it is correct. You cannot change the typed record, but if a word is wrong, you can change the word. If, when you read it, you think, "That is not what I meant to say", you can put on another piece of paper what you said and then you can put what it was you meant to say. You cannot change the transcript, but you can write on a separate piece of paper and that will become your submission. You can write additional comments. You can write to tell us that things have changed; this is how it happens now. Or, when you read through, you can point out something that you did not mention.

Do you then each understand your role and that this is a public hearing? Once you have checked the document, we put it on the internet. You can go on the internet now and you can see and read the hearing documents for this committee for the past twelve months. You can read what other people have had to say. People throughout WA will be able to read what you have said to us here.

John, are you happy with that?

Mr Smith: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: So you understand that. Denis, are you happy with that?

Mr Boke: I do not really understand.

Mr Smith: He does not really understand it.

The CHAIRMAN: You are okay?

Mr Boke: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you okay, Malcolm? Do you understand?

Mr Skinner: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: And Francine?

Ms Cox: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: If Denis does not understand, is that because I have not explained it very well?

Ms Cox: Yes, you did not explain it properly.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you explain for me, Francine?

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: All you really need to know is that this is not a court. It is a record of the questions we ask you and the answers you give us so that everybody knows what was said here. This is not a court. It is nothing like a court. It is just part of Parliament. It is like sitting at Parliament and listening to people talk.

Mr Boke: Yes.

Ms Cox: So if you do not want to say anything, you do not have to say anything.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Yes.

Ms Cox: You just listen, if you want to just listen.

Mr Boke: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. You can just listen.

Ms Cox: You do not have to say anything.

The CHAIRMAN: If you do want to say something, you can speak and Keith will then type it up. Then, if you do say something, we will send you a copy to check.

Mr Boke: What are you really talking about?

Ms Cox: They will type up your name and then you say what you want to say.

Mr Boke: Whatever I want to say.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Ms Cox: You listen to what he says and if you do not think the same, you can talk.

Mr Boke: You do not have to talk.

Ms Cox: Yes. If you do not want to, you do not have to.

The CHAIRMAN: Right. Francine, we might ask you to start first and then we will move to Malcolm and Denis and John and Mr Cox when he comes back. Are you able to go through again the things we were discussing earlier, so that we will have them on the record? I do not want to put words into your mouth, but can you tell us a bit about the restrictions that you have in town? Can you describe—for the sake of Dave who has just arrived because he has missed out completely—the problems here? Can you describe to David the problems that you were telling us about earlier?

Ms Cox: Do you mean the problems that we have in the community?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Ms Cox: We have people coming in from the other communities outside of Noonkanbah. They are bringing in grog and getting people here drunk—the local people at Noonkanbah—and going back to their own community.

Research Officer: Can you explain how many people live here?

Ms Cox: About 130 to 150 people.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Does that include the kids or is that the adults only?

Ms Cox: That is just adults—I think, about 130.

Mr Smith: Yes, it would be close to that.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Cox said that there were some other communities that really belong with this town. What are the names of those communities?

Ms Cox: Bidijul, Mingalkala, but not Parko. Parko is finished. We had another community.

Mr Smith: No. Was it Ngalingkadj down here?

Ms Cox: Ngalingkadj.

The CHAIRMAN: That, I think, adds up to about another 100 people from those communities—or how many do you think from those communities?

Ms Cox: Maybe more.

Mr Smith: Yes, probably another 200 or 250.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you tell Dave about the signage and driving through the town. Do you remember when Mr Cox was talking about signs.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: He wants a sign up at the highway.

Ms Cox: There is a sign up at the highway as you are coming in to the community.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Yes; I saw that.

Mr Smith: I think it is in the boundary, isn't it?

Ms Cox: Yes; it is the boundary fence—not the one up on the main road. There is a boundary fence as you drive into Noonkanbah and there is a sign that says alcohol restriction.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it okay with that sign being there or would you like more signs before that for the people coming from Derby? Maybe John heard what Mr Cox said.

Mr Smith: Mr Cox wants a bigger sign at the highway where you turn to come over the cattle grid, because you see that first. And then when you come onto the property boundary, you will also see the second sign. You know the big signs that are on the highway—one of those there and what it states about driving into this community.

Ms Cox: If it is out on the highway —

Mr Smith: Near the boundary fence.

Ms Cox: Yes. A lot of people are behind that boundary drinking up on the main road. They are not taking any notice of the signs on the highway. They can pull up near those signs and drink all night. They leave all their rubbish and it is always Uncle Dickie and the boys who have to go back to pick up all the rubbish.

Mr Smith: It is because there are two boundaries when you come off the highway. The first one is—what is the name of the station?

Ms Cox: Kalinyarra.

Mr Smith: Kalinyarra station and then you go to the Noonkanbah station. That is known as no-man's land; they can do what they want there.

The CHAIRMAN: But the sign could maybe say that for this area there is no drinking. Maybe that is what Mr Cox wants; so that people know if they come this far.

Mr Smith: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: He also —

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Could I just ask: if people come here and are drinking, have you got any powers? You have to ring up the police, have you?

Ms Cox: Yes.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: So you cannot do anything; you have to get the police. Is that right?

Ms Cox: If you try to do something, there is trouble.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Yes; so you just have to ring the police.

The CHAIRMAN: Malcolm, I believe you are a mentor in the town. Could you tell us about your role as a mentor? Mr Cox was saying how people come through the town with alcohol to get other places. Could you also tell us about that? What do you do as a mentor here in town?

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: It is when you are building things, I think. Is that right?

Mr Skinner: It is planning and operating machinery and things like that. Helping them get up for early work. Some of them do not want to turn to work early. I will talk to them and tell them to go. I will ask them what is wrong with their job or ask them if they have a problem.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Is that like a full-time job for you? Are you always doing that job?

Mr Skinner: Yes.

Mr Smith: Yes; it is a full-time job.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: And I think there are four mentors—is that right?

Mr Smith: Yes; there are four mentors.

Ms Cox: Yes.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Are you both mentors?

Mr Smith: Yes; Francine and Malcolm are both mentors—yes.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: You have a clinic here, don't you?

Mr Skinner: Yes.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: So what days are that open?

Mr Smith: Every Monday to Friday. Do you want to carry on, Malcolm.

Mr Skinner: Monday to Friday. It opens five days. We do not have a nurse living out here. She comes a long way from Fitzroy.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Yes. She comes out from Fitzroy. And your school? Can you tell us about your school?

The CHAIRMAN: How many people —

Ms Cox: Our school is an independent school. We have got about 70 or 80 students. I do not know how many workers we have there, but there is a lot.

The CHAIRMAN: Ian was just saying that if there is trouble, you have to call the police. When you call the police, how long does it take for the police to respond when there is trouble?

Mr Skinner: Four hours.

Mr Smith: About four hours.

The CHAIRMAN: Four hours.

Mr Smith: Four hours, yes. And if they are busy, as Francine stated before, they might come a week later.

The CHAIRMAN: A week later.

Mr Smith: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: So anything from four hours to a week. I believe you said something about the magistrate having asked for some additional things.

Mr Smith: Mr Cox was referring to that.

The CHAIRMAN: Maybe we might move around the table. Did you want to say something, Denis? Would you like to say something about the problems with alcohol and other drugs? Is gunja a problem in the town?

Mr Boke: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you like to tell us about the problems with gunja in the town?

Mr Boke: People come from other communities—from Junjuwa or Millijiddie. That is why you are doing it.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry; I do not know if it is the air conditioner, but I cannot hear you very well. Could we put a microphone near Mr Boke, please?

Mr Boke: Most people come from Junjuwa, here—riding through here. Some of the boys give them key cards.

The CHAIRMAN: Some of the boys give them key cards.

Mr Boke: Yes; to go to town. Sometimes they do that. Sometimes they are bringing back gunja.

The CHAIRMAN: When you say they give them the key card to go to town—which town do they go to?

Mr Boke: Derby or Broome.

The CHAIRMAN: So they go to Derby or Broome, use the key card and then buy the gunja in Derby or Broome?

Mr Boke: Yes; and the grog

Ms Cox: And alcohol.

The CHAIRMAN: So they buy gunja and the grog.

Mr Boke: Yes. When they come back, sometimes we cannot get to sleep—it continues.

The CHAIRMAN: You cannot sleep?

[1.30 PM]

Mr Boke: Sometimes we cannot sleep, you know.

The CHAIRMAN: You cannot sleep?

Mr Boke: Yes.

Ms Cox: He is in the single-men's quarters and some of the young fellas are living over there. When they get paid, they go to town, spend all their money and then they come back and expect him to feed them and they make noise and stuff. Old people want to be in.

Mr Boke: I am not working any more; I am a pensioner.

Ms Cox: All the young ones go to town and come back and have a blue.

The CHAIRMAN: Can one of you tell us about this list that Mr Cox gave us.

Ms Cox: This is just a petition to say that these people do not want grog in the community, like in Yunggora community.

The CHAIRMAN: That petition was prepared for liquor licensing? Thank you. I will accept that as a supplementary submission to this inquiry.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: You have a nice football oval. Who organises the football? Do you play basketball too?

Ms Cox: At the school, yes.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: That is for the school.

Ms Cox: Those guys go out every weekend to Fitzroy.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Do they train here?

Ms Cox: Yes. They train here.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: But they play in Fitzroy.

Ms Cox: Yes.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: How many teams are in the competition?

Mr Boke: Seven.

Ms Cox: Eight, I think.

The CHAIRMAN: Dr Chapman was saying how sport in the town and the games are very popular and that everyone goes at the weekend to watch the games. Do people go from here as well to town to watch? Is it the people in town who watch or do some people from here go and watch?

Mr Skinner: Some people would go from here.

Ms Cox: Some with vehicles go in and watch the games because most of them have not got vehicles; they use the community bus and the boys call in with the bus—just the players.

The CHAIRMAN: Denis, shall I move around to John or would you like to tell us a bit about the alcohol problems?

Mr Boke: Sometimes they drink at the Crossing Inn.

The CHAIRMAN: They drink at Fitzroy Crossing?

Mr Boke: At the river there.

Mr P. ABETZ: At the river here?

Mr Skinner: There is a river running behind our community.

Mr Skinner: Not this creek here, the big river behind that.

Mr Boke: They drink and drink; they do not clean up; they leave a mess right there.

Ms Cox: There is another place they go drinking called Igyu—the yard there. They all leave bottles.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Mr Boke: A bad thing.

The CHAIRMAN: What effect does that have on the town?

Mr Boke: They can have a drink in the town, not drink here.

The CHAIRMAN: Because they cannot drink here they go and drink out there?

Mr Boke: Yes.

Mr Skinner: Even do it at Christmastime or any time.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: The Crossing Inn at Fitzroy bans people for some reasons. Do you know if anyone from here has been banned from there?

Mr Skinner: I do not know. We are not the drinkers here.

Ms Cox: I do not know. We have not been in the pub for a long time; we are not drinkers.

Mr Boke: We have not had a drink in a long time—since the 50s, when I was younger

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: They told us they have a white board and it has all the names on it—70 people on it or something.

Mr Skinner: I have been in and out of jail.

The CHAIRMAN: In and out of jail?

Mr Skinner: Drunken driving and driving like an idiot.

The CHAIRMAN: Because of drunken driving?

Ms Cox: Yes.

Mr Skinner: Finally, I lost my licence and everything.

The CHAIRMAN: So you made a decision not to drink?

Mr Skinner: Finally I have a good job and everything.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Do some of the people from here end up in jail?

Ms Cox: Many from drink driving.

Mr Boke: From fighting.

Ms Cox: Domestic violence. When the blokes are drunk they come back and bash their wives.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: How many people do you think a year would spend a bit of time in jail?

Mr Skinner: [Inaudible] was a record.

Ms Cox: We have a couple who have been in three times already.

Mr Skinner: Yes, when they were drunk and driving.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Where do they do that—at Derby?

Ms Cox: They go to Broome and end up in Derby.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: In the work camp?

Ms Cox: Yes.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Do they prefer the work camp to being in prison?

Ms Cox: I think so.

Mr Skinner: Yes Derby was [inaudible].

The CHAIRMAN: I was going to ask John if he wanted to describe his role. I notice on the wall a new Unity of First People of Australia program with Ernie Bridge. Maybe now that Mr Cox is back, can you tell us about the program of the unity of first people. Is that working in this town?

Mr Cox: It is a program for Ernie Bridge. Sometimes he checks all the blood and things like that. He is at One Arm Point today. He comes once a month or whatever. There is a clinic here taking blood. They are all good now here. The doctor is working really hard. We have medicine to help with high blood pressure.

Ms Cox: Most of them with diabetes are watching what they eat and doing more exercise, such as walking.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that because of what they have been taught through the program?

Ms Cox: Yes, I think so.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Cox now that you are back, the car Dave was in had a flat tyre, which is why he was late. Can you describe to Dave what you were telling us about the problems with alcohol in the town and what you think should happen about alcohol in the Kimberley?

Mr Cox: Those people there write a letter for your mob to come in and have a look at it. Those people make up their minds to stop the grog. In Noonkanbah or Broome—no takeaway. That is what it is about. I have been waiting on you people. We wanted to get together. What is the government doing today? It is doing nothing. It is saying all right you can drink a bottle of wine and

whatever. People drive from Derby to Noonkanbah. If anything is wrong along the road, they get an accident. That is not our problem. That is what the police were telling me because we want to deal with that sort of thing so we can stop the grog and not drink in town. Even the town should not have takeaway grog. All the other people make it very tense. We want to help our own people.

The CHAIRMAN: So all those people have signed because they do not want any takeaway alcohol throughout the Kimberley?

[1.40 pm]

Mr Cox: That is right because down the road I have section 175, and I told them, “If you pass through that with the grog in the hand, you’ve got to pay for it.” I told them, and I put their name, and I sent them the paper to the police station and the magistrate was saying, “You’ve got to take a photo.” They have gone the opposite way, all right. I worked with the magistrate for a long, long time—25 years. I know what is going on. Because the grog is not good. We have got two governments. We have got the federal government and the state government—a government in each world—taking the people away from the God. It is all Satan and evil spirits. That is what he is doing. He is trying to win a lot of people and then kill them. It is too late that. He is going to end up in hell. All right?

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Cox, what were you saying about the other communities? While you have not got alcohol here, were you saying that sometimes people have come through?

Mr Cox: That is what I am saying—not only here. We want to make it very clear for Noonkanbah. Other people have got the same thing what they are doing and they do not worry about it. They come from Yakanarra, Djugerari or whatever. They drive down to Derby and buy grog. Sometimes they get their key card and the money and buy grog in Derby and then bring them up here, and they are sleeping here and then they drive out. They are going to get trouble here, you know. That is not right.

The CHAIRMAN: So what was it you were requesting in relation to the police?

Mr Cox: We had trouble all the other day. He was saying that they want quarters there. We like to have the police here. That means that if they take home grog, and we have got to have a police here and the police can see him himself what is going on. Every money day, a pay week, and they go off with that money and come back and start more problems. If it is good, we can stop that and the police can see him himself. We want to try and fix him up, so if we stop the main things—the pub and things like this—we might. It is like Fitzroy, Derby—they are doing the same things—Kununurra, Wyndham. The police are running around and pulling the people up and taking the grog away or whatever. It is the same thing.

The CHAIRMAN: So where will they be able to drink then?

Mr Cox: Just stop the grog, please.

The CHAIRMAN: Stop the grog.

Mr Cox: Grog is not right for drinking. Your body and the spirit is from the God. Why do people start reclaiming death and putting grog in their stomach and head and brains—that is already gone. That is not on. We should be having the land clean and the body clean. All right?

The CHAIRMAN: So you do not think they should be drinking in the hotels?

Mr Cox: No. If they want the grog they can drink in a hotel but not take away.

The CHAIRMAN: Not take away.

Mr Cox: Yes, even in town. When they come from here and if they take away in town that grog, if people want to sell them to friends, “You buy the grog and I will bring them up, but I will take them to Noonkanbah.” It is the same thing. It is more bother for us. We have got to keep together and tell that gentleman to take something. All right? Tell him because there is no more take away, not even

around town that they are drinking in a pub or whatever. Yes. I talked to pub people in Derby, and they reckon they will try very hard to concentrate on this. “It is not hard to you. You can make up your mind in 10 minutes.”

Mr Boke: They only want the money.

Mr Cox: Yes, they want the money. They are collecting a lot of dough, I tell you, even with tax. And the liquor licensing mob, I have got a paper here, and they have even talked to some of you people anyway, that he is telling us. All right?

The CHAIRMAN: Could we let John speak, because John has not had an opportunity to speak it. John, could you tell us about your role and, also, can you join in on the problems in the area in relation to alcohol, gunja and any other drugs as well? We might come back then if Ian has some questions. But you have mentioned the drugs before, Francine. So, John, would you like to tell us what your role is here?

Mr Smith: Yes, thanks very much. My name is John Smith. I am newly the appointed community development manager. I was appointed some five weeks ago. I have been here five weeks with my partner. I come from the Nganganyatjara lands area, which is the Wongai country, which is west of Warburton. I was there for three years. We had the same concerns there as what Mr Cox is talking about here. There is a very heavy frequency of alcohol brought into the town here. I am very supportive of what the people around the table are saying today in regards to having it stopped. They can come into the town here. They can go across the river. I noticed that Ian mentioned about the river. They can go over the river, camp over there and drink and go to the other communities, which are reasonably remote from here, and do the same. We have had cases, which Mr Cox and Malcolm and Francine have mentioned to me, of domestic violence. I am against that. You only have to go out to the highway here and you will see where they stop before the sign, and you will see alcohol tins and bottles with wine in them, beer and stuff like that. I think the process will be hard, but if we do not tackle it now it will get worse. What we do not want to see here—this is a very, very good community compared to where I come from. You asked before, Janet, about alcohol and drugs. We used to have gunja come there and cocaine come there—grog from over the border, from South Australia and over the border from the Northern Territory, though Docker River. I think the process here, which is very pleasing to see—you people come up here and attend to this—is that we have to put in place a process to stop what is going on at the moment. Mr Cox has spoken about the sales: you can drink in the hotels, if you want, but no takeaway. I believe that if we do not get onto it quickly enough, there will be a bad accident here. It will either be on the highway or in town here. It will be primarily caused through alcohol. I also understand, too, and Mr Cox and other people here do, too, that it is very hard to get police here. They have a highly respected duty to do within the communities. They have a large area to cover. It is four hours to come to a place. It used to be two hours from Warburton to come to Blackstone. Mr Cox mentioned also the facility here. Nextdoor we have a bungalow-type house that I believe could be used for accommodating police on a role to come to the community and stay for a couple of days and have a look around. I think that would pick up people’s eyes to the horizons and say, “Oh, well, the police are here, which is good.” It would show also to the community that there is a caring effect from the police department particularly. We just have to do some maintenance on the building and get it up. I think what we are doing here is the correct thing.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I was just wondering if in the last year you have lost any people to alcohol.

Mr Cox: Here?

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Yes.

Mr Cox: A lot, but not here.

The CHAIRMAN: How many deaths, do you think, over the last year?

Mr Cox: It is a big mob. I cannot tell you, but a big mob. One of my family of the Coxes went from Yiyili community to Louisa Downs. A young fellow was driving through and he hit the tree and broke his neck, that young fella. Everybody cried and cried.

[1.50 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: Would you say, maybe because of alcohol, 10 deaths a year?

Mr Cox: It is like alcohol is the citizen's right to the free citizen. Everybody can drink, even the kids. Who is making the rules? If the state government is making the rules or the federal government, you do not worry about it.

The CHAIRMAN: When you talked about no takeaway liquor, the problem that happens then is that some people say, "But we're responsible drinkers." Non-Indigenous people would say, and some Indigenous people would say, "We drink responsibly." What is your response to that?

Mr Cox: I think it is a question there for non-drink. If we say we will stop the grog, we have some drinkers saying, "Why did you stop the grog?" But the thing that the people have got to understand is that the spirit does not belong to that man; it does not belong to us; it belongs to God. While it belongs to God, we have got to look after that, even the land [inaudible]. That grog is all work of the evil, and they are all evil things. They are taking people away from God, people away from the company of brothers or sisters. They are dead and gone. You cannot bring them back again.

The CHAIRMAN: Since the section 175 liquor bans were agreed for this community, have things got better or worse for the community?

Mr Cox: No, but they told me a couple of months back, "We want to stop the grog in Derby", and that is still going on—what is happening.

The CHAIRMAN: You have a ban in this area.

Mr Cox: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the ban and since the ban, has there been a big change?

Mr Cox: No, but it is a lot of trouble—all right—because when there was no ban, everybody was drinking, even at camps, even at home. But it is like a house, and people are drinking in this house and in a room. The house is our temple of the living God—your heart, my heart—and we should protect that; we have got to have it so clean. One day the Lord is going to get every one of us, whether there is a government or not. We have got to work, do the work, somewhere along the line, and we have a good name on the last day.

The CHAIRMAN: Francine, would you like to add to that comment? What do you think? In relation to when alcohol could be drunk in this community and since alcohol has not been allowed in this community, have things improved for members of the community?

Ms Cox: No, I think it has got worse. Before, people were not drunk that much. They used to drink, but not much, you know. I reckon since that ban came in, it is mainly all the outsiders who are not coming in.

Mr Cox: Yes, but that is not all. We have got to stop it, whether it is outside people or not. It is not only about here; outside people are telling me the same thing. All right?

The CHAIRMAN: I know you have to leave soon. In the town, we know that the nurse comes from Fitzroy Crossing, and we know that you can call the police if you have problems. Do any other government departments come to the town to see how they can help?

Mr Cox: Well, I never see any government people who are coming here. The government people, when they [inaudible] from the citizen's right to the free citizen, and I never see any governments. People come along and they have got a piece of paper. What we started before when I was in Fitzroy Crossing, I worked for community health—all right—and the same thing. Sometimes, since

they take blood, you find that sometimes the woman with the baby, when it drinks milk, that comes out through its presence in the milk, and they kill their kids. We have got a lot of things to do about it, because we have got to stop that.

The CHAIRMAN: What about—Francine may know this because it is women's business—Child Protection? Do the Child Protection officers come out here when children are physically or sexually abused? Do you ever see people from the Department for Child Protection come to offer help to the families?

Ms Cox: I do not know. I know they do come out here and see some families.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you know how often they would come?

Mr Cox: I think there is one sister there. He comes here —

Ms Cox: No, he does not come from the welfare mob.

Mr Cox: What welfare is doing today, if he sees the mother drinking grog, he takes the kid.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that because of the section 175 in this town? Is it because of the section 175 in this area that, if the mother is drinking, the child will be taken away, or is that throughout the Kimberley?

Ms Cox: That is throughout the Kimberley, I think.

Mr Cox: Yes. You know, it is all over the Kimberley, but we are doing it in Noonkanbah with the section 175. I saw one lady, my granddaughter, because it has taken away the kids from him and taken them somewhere else, and he was drunk.

The CHAIRMAN: I know that you have to leave, so I would like to thank each of you for meeting with us today and telling us your stories of what the problems are here. As I said before, we will send you the transcript—what you have said—so that you can read through that. You can send it back to us if you have any problems. Also, if there is anything else that you want to tell us, please write to us and let us know what the problems are.

Mr Cox: Yes, but I think for you people here today, I will ask one question: can you tell liquor licensing to stop the grog from coming in, please?

The CHAIRMAN: We can tell liquor licensing that you have asked us.

Mr Cox: Yes. There was a bloke here—John or whatever—and he told me that he had already talked to the other mob, because he is not happy about it. But we have to move further than that.

The CHAIRMAN: We can pass your message on.

Mr P. ABETZ: We have to leave, because they are going to take somebody, I think —

Mr Cox: That girl, yes. He is like that girl now. He is running around and he has a damaged brain. He has been drinking grog. That is the problem.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We will close this hearing.

Hearing concluded at 1.58 pm