

**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 BROOME
MONDAY, 26 JULY 2010**

SESSION THREE

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 11.34 am

DONOHUE, MR KENNETH

Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Broome, examined:

CAMPBELL, MR GRAEME THOMAS

Shire President, Shire of Broome, examined:

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Education and Health Standing Committee, I thank you for your interest and appearance before us today. I acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners, past and present and future, of the land on which we are meeting. The purpose of this hearing is to assist the committee in gathering evidence for its inquiry into the adequacy and appropriateness of prevention and treatment services of alcohol and user drug problems.

This committee is a committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia. This hearing is a formal procedure of Parliament and therefore commands the same respect given to proceedings in the house. This is a public hearing and Hansard will be making a transcript of the proceedings for the public record. If you refer to any document or documents during your evidence, it would assist Hansard if you could provide the full title for the record. Have you completed the “Details of Witness” form?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form about giving evidence to a parliamentary committee?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you receive and read the information for witnesses briefing sheet provided with the “Details of Witness” form today?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have any questions in relation to being a witness at today’s hearing?

The Witnesses: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Ken, please state the capacity in which you appear before the committee today.

Mr Donohoe: I am chief executive officer of the Shire of Broome.

Mr Campbell: I am shire president of the Shire of Broome.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You have both had an opportunity to read the terms of reference on why the committee has come here. We are specifically looking at problems in relation to alcohol and illicit drugs. We are looking at education, at schools, whether health professionals are in the community, what treatment services are needed in the community and what are the social costs of the problems of alcohol and illicit drugs.

Mr Campbell: I do not think the Shire of Broome will make too much contribution to parts 1(a) to 1(c) of the terms of reference because that is the responsibility of the health department et cetera. We are more qualified to talk about the second section of the terms of reference—that is the impact on community, social costs et cetera.

The CHAIRMAN: We are very happy to have you focus on that area.

Mr Campbell: Thank you. I think the focus of our address today will be in relation to the impact mainly of alcohol. I have glanced at the previous reports that you have indicated, and that does indicate that alcohol is a major drug in Western Australia. I also note with interest that illicit drugs in the Kimberley are a very high proportion compared to those in the rest of the state. Anecdotally, in the Indigenous communities themselves, it is not so much the grog that is causing the grief—it is the eccies and the cannabis use. Combined with alcohol, from our understanding, they cause a significant amount.

The CHAIRMAN: Eccie is ecstasy is it?

Mr Campbell: Yes. Sorry.

The CHAIRMAN: I have to get used to the jargon.

Mr Campbell: Sorry; I just listen to the young people who use the language. I certainly cannot speak with authority in that area.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Thank goodness for that!

Mr Campbell: When you read statistics on the rates of youth suicide and talk to people who are in our community and who come from other communities, there is no doubt in my mind that alcohol, combined with the use of illicit drugs, is causing some real issues. That is the first point I would make.

The second point is the alcohol restrictions that are placed across the Kimberley. I read with interest the report about the Fitzroy Crossing statistics and what has been achieved there. However, I note with interest that nowhere does it seem to show in the regional towns such as ours, Derby to a lesser degree and certainly Kununurra, the effects of people shifting because of alcohol restrictions or bans, and what it is doing to the health system per se. It appears to be somewhat of a secret service in terms of statistics that come out, or the lack of them. I sit on a reference group associated with the Killari Patrol, which is the Indigenous patrol that picks up people around town and takes them to a nonexistent hostel or to a nonexistent camp but takes them away from the town areas. There are some very interesting statistics that come out of that. On that particular reference group also sit the sobering-up shelter —

The CHAIRMAN: What do you mean by nonexistent? You have the facilities.

Mr Campbell: There is no hostel; there is no dry camp; there is nowhere for these people who come to town to go to.

The CHAIRMAN: So you are not picking people up; you would like to pick people up?

Mr Campbell: They are picking people up. They picked up 2 000 people last month and took them elsewhere. They took them to people's private homes, and they took them to a one-mile camp at which there are some six or seven families trying to live their life normally and they get inundated with people who have come from out of town. They have taken them up to the community at Kennedy Hill. That is an issue in itself. I can talk about that. Currently I am talking about the Killari Patrol reference group. On that reference group sit representatives of the sobering-up shelter, Millya Rumurra, which is the alcohol rehabilitation centre, the Department of Indigenous Affairs, the officer in charge of Broome police and others. It is a fairly high profile reference group established mainly because we are trying to get some handle on what is going on around town. The indications are that alcohol is contributing, among others, to the transfer or the people coming to this town for a variety of reasons. This is a regional city so there is regional justice, regional health, regional prison, regional Centrelink and regional dialysis. People come to town for a variety of reasons but grog is one of them and it is a significant one. I spoke to Centrecare, a Catholic Church organisation, which is involved significantly in social issues in the town. It is particularly involved in the return to country of people who are stuck here for one reason or another. We had a presentation at the shire recently at which the CEO said that they had taken home by April 125

people who returned to country, who had been stuck here for one reason or another, but not one drunk. These are the words used by Trish from Centrecare. Not one drunk had been taken home and not one drunk wants to go home. That is the issue. You can have alcohol bans or restrictions and you are just shifting the problem. The effect on this community on the people and on the health agencies is obviously just being transferred. It is not being addressed. Your Fitzroy Crossing statistics may well look good, but health was not represented on that reference group, and should be because it is a major player in what we are trying to achieve. But we do not see the figures.

I am not sure how good alcohol bans are. If you ask me to comment on the adequacy and appropriateness of the prevention and treatment services, is the problem just being transferred from Fitzroy to here and to Kununurra, and will that continue? The figures for sobering-up shelter admissions have dropped significantly in the past five years. I can give the Hansard representatives the documents, and I am empowered by the reference group to release these figures.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you; we will accept those by way of supplementary information.

Mr Campbell: We have been utilising, and not releasing these figures because as we battle and try to achieve such things as dry camps, hostels et cetera, when you release figures they can be selectively used. We are building up a big picture and making presentations to government. To give you an indicative, the total sobering-up shelter admissions in 2003 were nearly 5 000 admissions.

The CHAIRMAN: That is here in Broome?

Mr Campbell: That is here in the sober-up shelter. That is not individuals but the number of nights they have utilised the facilities.

The CHAIRMAN: Was that 5 000 nights?

Mr Campbell: Yes, 5 000 bed nights, to put it in tourism terms. In 2009, there were just over 3 000. In 2010 there were just under 2 000. It raises the question, does it not? You can compare that with the pick-ups that are being done by Killari Patrol, who pick up these people and shift them and take them home. For instance, in June there were 2 032 pick ups. They record who were intoxicated and who are not. I do not have those figures here. Ninety-five per cent of those people they pick up are intoxicated. They pick up children who are in the company of —

Mr P. ABETZ: If they are intoxicated, why were they not taken to the sobering-up shelter. I am puzzled by that.

Mr Campbell: You cannot. This is a democratic society. If people do not wish to go to a sobering-up shelter, then they cannot be taken there. It is a democracy. We are not forcing people to do anything that they do not want to do.

Mr P. ABETZ: But a person who is intoxicated is hardly in a position to make very informed choices. I would have thought that a person who picked them up would make the decision about what is the most appropriate place to drop them off. In the same way as an ambulance driver in, say, the City of Perth picks up a patient and makes the decision about which is the most appropriate hospital to go to. Surely that would be the case here as well.

Mr Campbell: I do not believe it is in the patrol's terms of reference that they operate under. Certainly they will not do it.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Is this just a pick-up and get them out of the town system?

Mr Campbell: To pick up and take them to somewhere supposedly safe. It is a pick-up where they may be causing social issues.

Mr P.B. WATSON: But you were saying that they are taking them to an area where there are eight families.

Mr Campbell: They go to families or they go to one of the communities. I might make the point, Peter, that currently in the last budget via royalties for region, \$12.5 million has been allocated for a

dry camp and hostel facilities. But this is very early days. I make the point that for 30 years we have been trying to achieve that. That is looking good but will it stop the number of people coming to town for alcohol? As I said, for a variety of reasons, a lot of these people who are in town are not homeless. They do have homes back at their communities; they just choose not to live there.

Going back to the terms of reference, the social costs on this community are significant. The costs on ambulance services would be significant. There are voluntary liquor accords in this town. They extend to the point where dress standards are required before you can buy alcohol. I, myself, have been refused service, not because I was intoxicated, but by the fact that I walked down to the bottle shop to buy alcohol. Under the voluntary accord at these particular hotels, you need to be in a vehicle to pick up alcohol. I had a significant argument, I might add, because I thought they might be contributing to my committing an offence by going home and getting in the car and driving down after—but anyway —

Mr P.B. WATSON: You would have to catch a taxi.

Mr Campbell: That leads to the issue of taxis. There is an accord among the taxidriviers that if someone is substantially affected by alcohol, they will not be taken to a place to purchase more alcohol. But every one of those things can be overcome.

The CHAIRMAN: You appear to be suggesting then that because of the liquor restrictions in some other areas more people are coming to Broome.

Mr Campbell: Absolutely. Your inquiry is about the impact on communities, and Broome is a community and it is a social cost to us.

The CHAIRMAN: In which case, one of the suggestions that has been put to the committee is that possibly the restrictions should be across the Kimberley. If the restrictions were across the Kimberley, you may not be having the problems that you are having now.

Mr Campbell: I respectfully ask: is the minority dictating to the majority. We live in a tourist town, where there are 15 000.

The CHAIRMAN: My next question was about the effect on tourism.

Mr Campbell: Well, let us forget tourism. What about the social impact on the people who live in Broome. There are 15 000 people in this town. Approximately 29 per cent of them are Indigenous people. The majority of those people are very responsible people who probably love a beer as much as I do. If you are starting to impact on the community per se, is that a wise thing to do or do you shift the problem? Where do we stop? I asked a question. There are significant alcohol problems in Perth but I do not see any liquor bans around the Weld Square area or in Northbridge. I walk around Perth and I see people down and out, struggling. I see alcoholic people but nobody seems to worry about it down there. This is a social community. I do not know whether we drink any more or less than is the case in any other community.

Mr P. ABETZ: Per capita, up here, you drink more than double the rest of Western Australia.

Mr Campbell: Is that statistically —

Mr P.B. WATSON: I hope you are not responsible for that, Graham!

Mr Campbell: Somebody has to keep the average up.

The CHAIRMAN: We might move onto Kevin for a while.

Mr Campbell: If I can, I suggest the CEO talk about the impact on communities and maybe health problems that are not directly related to alcohol and illicit drugs. This may be an opportunity for us just to alert this committee of some of the health issues that are in communities aside from the illicit drugs and alcohol.

Mr Donohoe: Within the Shire of Broome, there are 84 Indigenous communities. They range in various sizes. There are up to 800 people in Bidyadanga. One of the things the council is particularly concerned about is the health of those communities in relation to normal health services that are being provided and the construction of some of the infrastructure there that is being provided by the state or the commonwealth in those particular areas. Our evidence indicates that some of the infrastructure facilities that have been put in there are not meeting local government standards. That would be across the board.

The CHAIRMAN: So their planning applications do not go into council for approval then?

Mr Donohoe: Exactly. There are particular issues there in relation to whether local governments have the ability to be able to force some of the provisions of the various legislation they are involved with on Aboriginal communities because the Crown may not be bound to the land. That is not true in all cases because some of the legislation does bind the Crown to the land. It goes back to a court case at Halls Creek versus the ALT in 1997 and a Crown Law ruling in relation to that. Of particular concern is a development that has been constructed at one of the landfill sites by one of the agencies responsible for Indigenous services. It has sheer walls —

The CHAIRMAN: Is that a government agency?

Mr Donohoe: Yes; on ALT-controlled land. We are looking at Department of Indigenous Affairs and also the commonwealth's perspective, FaHCSIA, which has hit the water table. Medical waste is put into that landfill site. It is within a kilometre of a drinking source.

The CHAIRMAN: Which site is this?

Mr Donohoe: We are looking at Bidyadanga as one particular area. There is other evidence of effluent contamination, on which the shire gets a report in relation to other communities across the Peninsula. We are seeing large E. coli contamination to the point where my environmental health officer raised that particular concern with me and I rang the Department of Health on that matter, who advised that they had seen higher incidences of this. When I spoke about the issue, while the matter can be treated with lamps or various treatment systems, nobody is looking at some of the root causes in relation to how these things occur and seeking to correct them.

The CHAIRMAN: This is a problem with?

Mr Donohoe: This is where the water source for the community has faecal contamination in it. We are concerned about how those matters are being addressed—not that the matter is being treated, but what is the root cause and how is the infrastructure going to be provided to address those issues.

The CHAIRMAN: That community you are referring to is?

Mr Donohoe: There are a number of those. I do not have the exact number with me but I am prepared to provide that after today.

[11.55 am]

The CHAIRMAN: With these issues that you are addressing, although the committee is primarily here to look at the problems with alcohol and illicit drugs, it is the committee's responsibility to look at legislation and at what is happening in the community in relation to health and education. We would be pleased to receive a report from your environmental health officer and your public health officer. Obviously, we have to focus on this inquiry at the moment, but if you want to submit that to us, some of us may be able to look at that separately.

Mr Donohoe: Thank you, Madam Chair. I tried to address it under the health provisions.

The CHAIRMAN: With that report, can you provide as much background as you can on where those places are and what the problems are so that we are able to follow that up with the appropriate state and federal departments?

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Can I ask a question that flows on from that? What is your exact relationship with those communities? I assume you get very little income out of them. Would that be right?

Mr Donohoe: Yes; there is no income that comes from that. There are no rates, if that is the question that you are asking. We do receive funding in relation to the Cape Leveque road and some of the Indigenous road accesses.

Mr Campbell: We also receive funding under the federal assistance grant scheme under the extraordinary heading of “Aboriginal disability factor”. That is obnoxious to me but that is the factor that is involved. That equates to \$35 per Indigenous man, woman and child. If you expect the local government or anybody to provide services for \$35 per annum, you are not going to get much. That is the answer to your question.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I was just curious about whether you got a fee for service or anything at all—a bit of money from the federal government.

Mr Campbell: Not at this stage. I am sorry that we are hijacking and moving away from the terms of reference. That issue is not for here, but I make the comment that the delivery of municipal services into Indigenous communities under the previous federal–state government agreement, which was moved away and now stands under COAG, is a real issue for us in the expectation that we will deliver services while not fully resourced. Those services go to such areas as health and roads straightaway. Our connection with the communities per se is that we have two wards in the town—a town ward and a Dampier ward. Two of the councillors represent the Dampier ward. They represent the interests of those communities, which is a near-impossible task given the spread of these communities. Some of these communities are more effective than others; some are under administration—Beagle Bay is and has been for some years. Some have strong local councils of their local members; some are dysfunctional. It is a real issue in terms of how local government will deal with them. We deal with them and work with them. In terms of the health in those areas, the connection that the shire has is by way of the environmental officer. Previously, we directly employed somebody—an Indigenous environmental health officer. Currently, that officer is with Nirrumbuk, which is an Indigenous service provider, but reports through the shire under environmental health. That is our only service and connection to those communities.

The CHAIRMAN: We will take those by way of supplementary information and look into those for you. Are there other factors that you would like to add?

Mr Donohoe: No. I did speak with the OIC of Broome police, who is the chairman of the liquor accord, which is facilitated through the shire. I believe that he will be giving evidence later this afternoon. But I can provide you with the liquor accord minutes for June and March in relation to how the businesses are looking to manage issues in relation to alcohol within the town. Could that be accepted into the record, please?

The CHAIRMAN: We will accept that by way of supplementary information.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Where is the shelter? I noted it in the budget this year. The issue was brought up here in March when I was up here for the Durack thing. Where is that at now? Is that in the planning process?

Mr Campbell: The CEO and I met with the directors general of housing and works and DIA a couple of weeks ago with a view to ensuring that the funding was there should the people at Nillir Irbanjin, which is the community that currently has the lease with ALT, be prepared to move. There are works to be done there. There are land tenure issues. There is freehold title that needs to be either purchased or acquired. In summary, we are meeting in August to take this matter further. The most important thing, Ian, is that the funds are secured. Housing and works has appointed a project manager. Yawuru, the traditional owners, will be involved, together with us and the federal representatives through the ICC. It is a going-forward process. There are certainly issues to be addressed, but in the longer term the concept is that there will be a dry camp with limited times for

staying there. It is certainly not to be a facility where people will live long term. It will be provided for people who are currently sleeping rough. There will be an interactive centre as part of it. It is a three-stage project. There will be a hostel for people who are either visiting town for one reason or another or on release from the prison system and on their way home to get returned to country. You will have three aspects to it: firstly, people will be able to camp rough; secondly, agencies will have access to these people to provide services, including health, sobering up, alcohol rehabilitation and police; and, thirdly, there will be a hostel component for short-term visitors, whether they come to go to court or to a funeral or for the variety of other reasons that people come to the town. It is all looking very positive. It has been in the making for 30 years, so we are grateful that finally governments of both persuasions are supportive of the process.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I think that any of us would be prepared to help you in any way we can with any stumbling blocks.

Mr Campbell: We appreciate that. From the health perspective, it will give people access to health services and it will give people such as BRAMS and others the ability to liaise with us.

The CHAIRMAN: There were two areas that we touched on before, including the stress and costs of alcohol addiction in the Kimberley. What does it cost you? I am looking at not just one area. Are you able to identify stress and costs in different areas?

Mr Campbell: Janet, I will speak to that. We spend significant moneys on litter collection. That is one area. We have a project called Orange Bags whereby people are paid to collect rubbish. They go around with an orange bag with their name on it. That gives people around town, either Indigenous or non-Indigenous, an opportunity to earn some money. In fact, we have had people who were doing that project transition from the fly gang—that is the name that these people call it; it is not our name—and they have actually joined the shire staff. They are among the local people who come in. That is a cost. That Orange Bags project costs probably in the vicinity of \$100 000 to \$125 000 just in litter. From a shire perspective, there are social and tourism costs in trying to provide services to these people, whether they are illegally camped or are creating social issues, such as defecating on steps and living under buildings in the town et cetera. There is also an embarrassment cost to our local people. The Yawuru people do not like to see this. They have cultural issues, obviously, in dealing with visitors. It is different from the way that white folks would look at that. But there is certainly a social cost as well.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you again, maybe by way of supplementary information, try to look at where the costs are? We obviously need to build a picture of the costs and the additional resources that are needed.

Mr Donohoe: Madam Chairman, are you speaking with hoteliers at all in relation to some of their impacts? I do not recall seeing them on the list of people providing evidence today.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: This probably applies to both Broome and wider areas. Have the liquor restrictions affected the tourism industry?

Mr Campbell: One would suggest that there are increasing issues in this town. There is the incidence of bashings. We very unfortunately have had the murder of a young person not long ago, three or four rapes, and tourists being pulled off their bikes while riding home. I am not prepared to say whether they are related directly to alcohol and the influx of people into town or whether it is a social issue that appears to be happen not only here in terms of younger people and younger Indigenous people. I can say that tourists do feel intimidated to a greater degree. A lot of our visitors are not used to being near Indigenous people. They do not live with them, they do not work with them and they do not socialise with them. I think a lot of them are somewhat fearful. The majority of people who visit this town may humbug people for a drink or a smoke or something, but they do not really humbug them in the true sense of the term. They are non-threatening, but there is

a perception that they are dangerous. There is a perception that they should not walk around town at night. I am not sure whether it is caused by those people who are visiting town, but the perception is certainly there among some tourists.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to thank you both for your evidence before the committee today. The transcript of this hearing will be forwarded to you for the correction of minor errors. Any such corrections must be made and the transcript returned within 28 days from the date of the letter attached to it. If the transcript is not returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be added via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information—we have accepted the documents that you brought with you today, Graeme and, Ken, you are going to provide us with some others—or elaborate on some points that you would like to have given more evidence on, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript. Again, thank you both very much.

Hearing concluded at 12.08 pm