

**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 WYNDHAM
MONDAY, 2 AUGUST 2010**

SESSION TWO

Members

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

Hearing commenced at 1.07 pm

WARBURTON, MR BRADLEY MARK

Sergeant, Wyndham Police, examined:

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Education and Health Standing Committee, a very warm welcome. Thank you for taking the time to be with us today. I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners past, present and future of the land upon which we are meeting today.

The purpose of our inquiry is to assist the committee in gathering evidence for its inquiry into the adequacy and appropriateness of prevention and treatment services for alcohol and illicit drug problems in WA. It is not just focusing on the Kimberley but drug and alcohol issues throughout all of WA. I would like to introduce myself, Peter Abetz, the vice chairman of the committee; Peter Watson, the member for Albany; Alice, the parliamentary officer who is here to assist us; and Judith from Hansard. The Education and Health Standing Committee is a committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of WA. This hearing is a formal procedure of the Parliament and therefore commands the same respect given to the proceedings in the house itself. This is a public hearing and Hansard will be making a transcript of it. If there is anything you want to convey to us that you do not want on the public record, indicate that and we will move into closed session, which means they turn off the recording. Once we finish dealing with the more sensitive stuff, we will press the button again and we will be back on public record. We appreciate that sometimes in a small community that it may be wise to not put something on the public record, but you might think it will be helpful for us to know. Before we proceed to the questions we have for you today, I need to ask you a series of questions. Have you completed the "Details of Witness" form?

Mr Warburton: Yes, I have.

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

Mr Warburton: Yes, I do.

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

Mr Warburton: Yes, I did.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have any questions at all about being a witness here today?

Mr Warburton: No, I do not.

The CHAIRMAN: For the record, would you be kind enough to please state your full name and the capacity in which you are appearing before us today?

Mr Warburton: Sergeant Bradley Mark Warburton; I am the officer in charge of Wyndham police station.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Basically what we are looking for is hearing from people what is working well in terms of treatment and prevention programs, what is not working, what are the gaps, what could we be doing better and so on. We are really here to learn from you as to how you see things and where you think we could be doing better, basically. If you want to kick off with perhaps a bit of an opening statement and paint a bit of a picture for us, we will then start asking you questions.

Mr Warburton: Okay. I have been a police officer for the past 17 years and I have had quite a broad range of experiences. I have been in Wyndham for the past five weeks as the officer in charge of Wyndham Police Station. Prior to this I was the officer in charge of Balgo multifunctional police

facility, and prior to that I was at the Carnarvon detectives office. I also have a background as a detective in the child abuse squad, and I have also worked previously in the Kimberley, about 10 years ago, at Halls Creek. I worked there for three years and frequently went out to Balgo and started up the outback patrols. Whilst being the officer in charge of both Balgo and Wyndham, the overt factor that influences our policing is definitely the influence of alcohol. From working in the metropolitan area to working in the Kimberley, there is definitely a vast difference between the impacts of alcohol within the Kimberley towns. Unfortunately it is predominantly with the Indigenous population, but not confined to that population. I have seen some good strategies put in place working in Halls Creek for three years from 1999, and having had the opportunity to go out to Balgo within those three years, and on many occasions spending many weeks out there, and returning some 10 years later as the officer in charge of Balgo, I could see that within those 10 years there had not been much of a difference; in fact, it had got worse in relation to alcohol and alcohol consumption. My first 12 months in Balgo was extremely difficult and I had to take a very strong alcohol stance, because they are subject to community by-laws. They are not subject to any legislation to prohibit the conveyance or consumption of alcohol. The changes that I am referring to would be the liquor restrictions within Halls Creek. Those restrictions played a major role in reducing the availability of full-strength alcohol to people in Halls Creek and also the outlying communities. The communities I am referring to are Balgo, Mulan and Billiluna, which I had charter across. The stance that we had in Balgo basically meant that people realised that if they brought it back to the Balgo community they would be arrested and charged, which ultimately meant that they were pushed into Halls Creek, which made the issues of policing and factors of policing increase their problems in Halls Creek. The liquor restrictions in Halls Creek meant that the community could be stabilised and—I know it is a figure of speech—a circuit-breaker in that it allowed families to really reassess what they are doing. What I found with that is that I know there is some popular belief that people went to Broome and Kununurra. I am not saying that that did not happen, but I also saw a lot of people return to Balgo. There were a lot of families, especially fathers, that I saw return to all three communities within Katjungka—Mulan, Balgo and Billiluna—and I had not seen them for some time. The problem that we suffered out there was that the liquor restrictions definitely assisted, but that meant that we had the Rabbit Flat roadhouse, which was a 500-kilometre round trip, located in the Northern Territory, and they still have alcohol available there. We did a lot of work by engaging with the proprietors of Rabbit Flat ourselves, and also through the liquor licensing areas of the Northern Territory. Successfully, they agreed, on their own submission, to have a standard of one carton per person per day. Effectively, without legislative requirements placed on them, they agreed; they could see that everyone was watching them because of the liquor restrictions in Halls Creek and surrounds. Effectively, that was the only area where anyone could get any full-strength liquor. Liquor restrictions definitely played a major role in stabilising those communities.

Since coming up here to Wyndham, on the first night I drove back here, it was like stepping back in time, in that I have experienced the Halls Creek and surrounds when you could buy or do pretty much whatever you like, to when the liquor restrictions came in, and the positive benefits on policing and social benefits that created. Coming here to Wyndham, the liquor restrictions are not up here. The amount of alcohol, the availability of alcohol and the type of alcohol that you can purchase is exactly the same as how it used to be in Halls Creek. The issues associated with the availability of alcohol and the amount and strength of alcohol presented themselves once again, and those factors that presented themselves were domestic violence; kids walking around the streets; people walking around the streets drinking alcohol, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous; truancy; anti-social behaviour; and the flow-on effects of alcohol on the family structure. The good things that I see in Wyndham and also the other Kimberley communities in which I have worked are that there are a lot of services, both government and non-government, provided to these communities. But I think one of the fundamental problems is that the communities themselves and the people who need to engage with these services are not engaging. It is not a case of the services not being

available; the services are available and the service delivery is there, but the people who need to engage with these services are not being met. The nexus is not there.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Should they be going out to the source?

Mr Warburton: They should be, and from my limited time here in Wyndham, I have actually seen that that is the case. In my written submission to the committee, one of the issues that I could see here in Wyndham, which is not confined just to Wyndham, is that a lot of the agencies are Indigenous-based and they like to employ local people. When you employ local people, you are not only employing that one person, you are also bringing into the organisation the family problems of feuding et cetera along with it. There have been some cases of domestic violence that I have been made aware of where you have victims of domestic violence or people who we would like to engage in services for either drugs or alcohol, and fail to engage in those services that are available for the sole reason that the people who are delivering those services—the counsellors or members of that organisation—are family of the offender who has caused this person to be the victim. I definitely have not seen any evidence that it is overt; it is just the belief of the victims themselves, and once they hold the belief that they cannot seek these services because their private business will then go around the entire community, they then will not engage with those services. It is more than likely that that would not be the case, because the services, in my experience, have very professional service delivery, but we need to break through that belief of the people who need to engage with these services, and how do we do that?

The level of accountability between government organisations and non-government organisations definitely differs. The accountability that government organisations and their reporting mechanisms and streams to the funding body, being the government, is definitely a lot more intensive than some of the non-government organisations. I have had experience with certain organisations, non-government organisations, where the funding streams are many. With the many funding streams and limited amount of funds, the people funding these non-government organisations do not put as much accountability onto it because it is only a small amount of money. But when we add these small amounts of money up for these non-government organisations, it results in a large amount of money. If the money was coming from one central body to these non-government organisations, then the level of accountability and transparency would definitely go up because the people funding would be asking questions.

The CHAIRMAN: One of the things we have heard is that one of the problems of the multi-funded groups is that they need to write annual reports to five different organisations, all in different formats, so it takes up a lot of administrative time to actually do that. It would be interesting to find out just to what extent these different funding groups actually require accountability. For government funding, there is usually pretty massive accountability required. It would be interesting to chase that one up.

[1.20 pm]

Mr Warburton: The other one, which is probably one of the most difficult one to overcome that I can see—I was having a discussion prior to coming here with one of my liaison officers—is: how do we get the community itself to be part of and have a collaborative and cooperative approach to what needs to be done? To put it in simple terms, juvenile crime, juvenile offending and antisocial behaviour in all Kimberley towns as well as Wyndham is on the increase. Some people say that there are not enough programs or services for the kids and the juveniles; whereas I tend to disagree in that when we look at Wyndham itself, we have a grassed football oval, two schools, one with a football oval, a rec centre, which the shire has and can provide staff for. We have Garnduwa, sport and rec, a swimming pool. There are a lot of facilities for the kids both government and non-government providing these services.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do they go year round?

Mr Warburton: Yes. People we have spoken to today say that football and basketball is what Garnduwa did and nothing else. So there is nothing really in the wet? There is only one person employed with Garnduwa, a lot of my background from the social sector is that I was heavily involved in state basketball. For anything to be successful, it needs to be a group approach. When comments are made about, say, Garnduwa, we have only one person employed for Garnduwa. That one person cannot deliver all the programs and all the services. It needs to be the families themselves becoming involved. We have a lot of kids ranging from five to 15 years old attending Auskick. We have limited family involvement with Auskick. One of the main fundamentals and successful strategies for Auskick is the involvement of the family. We have a swimming club that used to be the best in the Kimberley here at Wyndham, which is defunct because the lady who is running the pool at the moment cannot get the support of families. It is okay to drop off the kids but she cannot get the support of the families. There are a lot of services and availability of services, but they are based on their success to be a cohesive and collaborative joint approach by the family groups themselves and government and non-government organisations. They cannot run successful programs unless there is a joint approach to it.

How do we bridge that gap and how do we get family participation and family involvement?

The CHAIRMAN: Any ideas?

Mr Warburton: Quarantining of income was extremely successful in Balgo—providing what they call the basics card. Balgo was one of the communities that was a trial community as was Cannington. We had more than 80 people signed up on the basics card in Balgo, and approximately 97 per cent of those people volunteered for it. They put up their hand and volunteered to have 70 per cent of their funds managed by Centrelink. The reason for the success in that was that the police, ourselves, the Department for Child Protection and other agencies promoted the benefits of isolating some of their funds. A lot of mothers were worried about the money being spent on alcohol, cigarettes and especially gambling. They could not do anything about it. We had to empower them to stand up and say, “I would like to have my funds managed.” They agreed to do that. Effectively, that meant that 70 per cent of the funds of 80 families within the Balgo region itself, were going on what was limited to what the basics card allowed; that is, food, education. Only 30 per cent could then be spent on the cigarettes and gambling.

Mr P.B. WATSON: If a husband and wife are both on benefits, is it just the wife’s benefit or the husband’s or both?

Mr Warburton: If it is managed and it is a recommendation by either the police or the Department for Child Protection, the money of all the people in that household has to be managed. If it is voluntarily done, it is just the person who signs up to have it voluntarily done. Given the amount of money in some of these communities, it is not lack of money within these communities. In Balgo, not only the money that is colloquially known as, “Sit down” money was used but also ART money in Balgo and royalty money. Some of those moneys involved massive amounts. Those payments never affected the “Sit down” money or the welfare payments. I would quite often go to gambling games and see kids running around and not being cared for. At the biggest one I saw \$20 000 sitting in a pot.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Were white people there gambling or just Aboriginals?

Mr Warburton: No; just Indigenous now. One family group would walk away with that \$20 000, meaning that a lot of other people who had put money into that would then go hungry and not have any money and put added pressure onto the other agencies by asking for money. The quarantine and the basics card was definitely a very good strategy for educating families on how to better spend their money and ensure that families had the money available to feed the kids. The flow-on effects of that were that they were not spending so much money on alcohol; they were spending more money on food for the family. With the reduction of alcohol availability in the house, there is a reduction of domestic violence, reduction of antisocial behaviour and a reduction in gambling. Kids

are more willing to then go home because there is a reduction in all those antisocial behaviours I have just mentioned, plus an increased likelihood of food being put on the table and they then get a belly full of food, do not have to put up with everyone yelling and screaming and, hopefully, get a good night's sleep and because they had a good night's sleep, hopefully, they then go to school. It is a matter of breaking that cycle. The basics card is definitely a way. I do not have the figures here on the number of basics cards in Wyndham, but I can get it. It is not as embraced as it was in the community where I have just come from.

The CHAIRMAN: DCP can force people to go onto the basics card. What rate was voluntary?

Mr Warburton: When it was introduced there were just over 80 people. Those figures have obviously changed, but approximately 97 per cent would have been voluntary. I listened with interest to the reports on various media outlets with the allegations that it was racist and demeaning. I even did an interview at one stage and invited the people who were making those comments to come out to the community and sit down with the people who have experienced pre and post basics card and see whether they had the same belief when they left the community. I was getting experiences from the front line and not only dealing with the problems that alcohol and everything causes but also the social benefits of the basics card.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do you think the alcohol restrictions could be tightened or loosened; do you think they are going well at the moment the way they are?

Mr Warburton: In Halls Creek?

Mr P.B. WATSON: In Fitzroy or Halls Creek. We have heard various versions. Some people say it pushes people somewhere else or people get bulk beer from out of town and get smashed or people go to other communities. We were told this morning at Oombulgurri, there are only eight people in the community but there are generally 120. Are there ways to get around that with, say, a blanket ban on the whole Kimberley?

Mr Warburton: The alcohol restrictions have been extremely effective in Fitzroy and Halls Creek. When people have a negative view on it, I say, "It does not mean that you cannot drink alcohol." It is not like Balgo or the outlying communities where you cannot drink alcohol. If you want to have a beer or a glass of wine, you can still have that; you just have to plan for what you need to do. You can still go to a licensed premises and get full-strength alcohol. You cannot go down to the liquor shop in Halls Creek and buy full-strength alcohol but you can still buy light alcohol. Fortunately, the social benefits that have been created as a result of these liquor restrictions far outweigh the negativity of not being able to go down to the bottle shop and buy 10 cartons of full-strength alcohol. In answer to that question, yes. Putting it across the entire Kimberley would be difficult. Each Kimberley town has its own pros and cons but the benefits in Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing definitely far outweigh the inability to go down to the corner store and buy one carton. We are discussing the liquor restrictions here in Wyndham and Kununurra. That would be a major benefit for us in Wyndham and Kununurra.

The CHAIRMAN: That is having the bottle shops and pubs not open before 12 noon and limiting alcohol to not more than 2.5 per cent alcohol content.

Mr Warburton: And limiting that to one carton of full strength alcohol per person per day, one bottle of wine per person per day and one bottle of 750 millilitres of spirits per person per day. If anyone needs to drink more than one carton, more than one bottle of wine and more than one bottle of spirits, there is an issue. The restrictions that are being discussed locally are not as strong as they are in Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing but they will definitely have a benefit. If you need to drink any more than that —

Mr P.B. WATSON: You have a problem.

The CHAIRMAN: No-one could claim that that would affect the tourism industry either because tourists can still buy their bottle of wine or slab of beer, and if they are buying more than that they should not be driving around anyway.

Mr Warburton: A comment was made to me about tourists not being able to buy alcohol because of the restrictions. That comes down to education and to having an awareness of what needs to be done prior to getting it. I say to people, “During certain times, you may not be able to buy your bottle of wine or your full-strength alcohol, but if you plan”—coming down to that word “planning” again—“prior to coming to these areas, you will be able to get that level of alcohol, but you would much rather come to Wyndham and enjoy a more peaceful Wyndham than come to Wyndham and, as it stands now, buy however, much, whenever you like and then look at the negative.” It would increase tourism.

Mr P.B. WATSON: We noticed in Fitzroy the other day at the lodge in the mornings when we had the hearings, caravans were coming in one after the other.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the restrictions they used to bypass because nobody liked to even stop.

Mr Warburton: In the *Lonely Planet* it has been internationally renowned and written up that you do not stop in Halls Creek. Tourism in Halls Creek has gone through the roof. For the commercial industry, it is a matter of delivering a service in a different way; that is, to the tourists instead of delivering a service to the population when it is affected by alcohol. I believe that now, because people are not affected by alcohol they might ask questions about why certain services are delivered in that way. Using the historical value of that is how it has always been done is not really good enough. Times have to change.

[1.35 pm]

Mr P.B. WATSON: Brad, in Halls Creek, were there enough support services put in when the restrictions were put in?

Mr Warburton: I cannot really comment on Halls Creek. I can really only comment on Balgo and the surrounds there.

The CHAIRMAN: In terms of the street drinking in Wyndham, do you think that the current restrictions that we just spoke about would make a significant impact here?

Mr Warburton: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: In terms of the street drinking and the service that picks up people and takes them home or takes them to the shelter, do you interact significantly with that service as police officers or is that something that runs pretty much on its own?

Mr Warburton: It does run on its own. There is some interaction. I would like to improve that interaction. I have had discussions with Chris Casey who manages the pick-up service, and we need to improve it in some ways. It is sometimes not available when we need it, like if there is a big event on, then, unfortunately, some of the staff that are employed to provide that service want to go to the event, which means that the service is not there. But it is effective. I know from talking to the managers of the organisation that the numbers have definitely gone down, but the service is definitely effective, because it moves the problem. Wyndham is a unique Kimberley town in that we have two specific areas: we have the port area, which is about six kilometres away, where the local pub is and the police station, and then we have the main town site area. The main town site area during the week is predominantly where a lot of the alcohol issues are concentrated. On Sundays, when the licensed bottle shop in the main town site area is closed, everyone moves four or five kilometres out of town to where the pub is. The sober-up bus not only picks up people who are intoxicated or affected by alcohol; they also run quite a regular service in that on an hourly basis they will be at certain points, and people use it for that, which is good because it moves people

away from the area instead of having massive numbers of people there. So they definitely play a good role.

Mr P.B. WATSON: How effective are your APLOs?

Mr Warburton: Very effective.

Mr P.B. WATSON: They are being phased out, are they not?

Mr Warburton: They are being phased out. It is only Wyndham and Broome, I believe, and Fitzroy Crossing, that have liaison officers. My two liaison officers are senior police liaison officers. They have been here quite a while, and they are fantastic to engage with the community and run programs that are better delivered by Indigenous people. I look at the APLOs as a conduit to convey messages that sometimes are better delivered by Indigenous people to Indigenous people, and to also be out there and be some eyes and ears that will filter back to allow us to deliver our services better.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do you have any indigenous policemen?

Mr Warburton: No, not here in Wyndham.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Are there any in Balgo?

Mr Warburton: At Halls Creek there is one. One has just recently left to go to the mines, but we have Shane William, who is a senior constable. He has been at Halls Creek for many years and I have worked with him. I was there in 1999.

The CHAIRMAN: With the liaison officers, are they being phased out because some of them did not perform? Is that the reason? It would seem to me that those who have performed have done extremely well. Would that be a fair comment?

Mr Warburton: As a liaison officer?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr Warburton: Yes, definitely.

The CHAIRMAN: There was a fairly high drop-out rate, but given the effectiveness of those who were effective, one would have thought it would have been worth persevering with the program. What are your thoughts on that?

Mr Warburton: Well, it can be difficult at times. But my philosophy on managing the liaison officers is basically utilising liaison officers for what they are employed for. They are not police officers. I know that historically it can be very easy to put them within and work them within the roster as police officers, but there needs to be, and there is, a definite division to say what is a liaison officer's role and what is a police officer's role. I know from when I was working in other areas that liaison officers would kit up with firearms and all the bits and pieces. So then you would question: are they a police officer or are they are a liaison officer? Our two liaison officers here are trained in firearms, but they will not kit up in a sense, because we need to put out that perception and belief that their role is to engage with the community. Their effectiveness, it is individual based, yes, and it is management based. It depends on a raft of things—whether they have family within the area; how well perceived they are in the area. It is not as simple as getting an Aboriginal person from Perth and bringing them up here and saying, “Well, they are Aboriginal; we will put them in as a liaison officer, and they are going to effective.” No way at all, because the cultural differences between the Kimberley Aboriginal people and the metro and south Aboriginal people are vast. Also, if you get somebody who is local from the community and make them a liaison officer, the pressures and stresses that are put on that individual are massive. So you need to get somebody who has a strong enough fortitude to be able to stand up and resist those external pressures and family pressures.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The ones here are local, are they not?

Mr Warburton: One is from Darwin, in the Northern Territory.

Mr P.B. WATSON: We met one this morning.

Mr Warburton: Rex Macintosh?

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes. Is he a local?

Mr Warburton: Yes. But Percy Hunter, our senior liaison officer, is from the Northern Territory. I think from the Northern Territory to the Kimberley is a much easier gap to bridge, whereas from the Kimberley to the south of Western Australia is massive. So to say whether the program is effective, it is based on a lot of circumstances and a lot of things lining up. To say whether it need to be increased, that is a difficult question.

Mr P.B. WATSON: So would you employ more here if they were local?

Mr Warburton: No, because I think we have enough. Two is definitely enough in the sense of what we need to deliver and how we need to deliver it.

Mr P.B. WATSON: For the whole community?

Mr Warburton: Yes.

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

Mr Warburton: We have eight police officers and two liaison officers, and out of that eight we have one police officer who is sent over to Oombulgurri. That officer is over there for a two-week period, and then every two weeks on a Monday there is a rotation out to Oombulgurri. Looking at the statistics that I have done since 2004, someone mentioned before that there are eight people in Oombulgurri. The figure that is given as to how many people are over there goes up and down depending on who you are talking to. You can talk to some people and you will get a figure of 60, you can talk to some people and you will get a figure of eight, and you can talk to other people and you get a figure of 20. My personal belief is I think it depends on the benefit that that person is going to gain by saying how many people are over there. Since the coronial inquest and the movement of people from Oombulgurri to Wyndham, we have noticed a massive increase in workload in Wyndham. Essentially, family groups have relocated from Oombulgurri and have come to Wyndham, and they are treating Oombulgurri as a holiday camp in that if they want a couple of days off and a bit of a break, they will go to Oombulgurri and have that break, but then they will come back to Wyndham.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do they come here because of the alcohol?

Mr Warburton: Yes, because of the restrictions that were put in in Oombulgurri, and the allegations of sexual abuse over in Oombulgurri, the coronial inquest —

Mr P.B. WATSON: What was the coronial inquest? Sorry. I am not across that.

Mr Warburton: The coronial inquest was into the death of five young Aboriginal people in the Oombulgurri community. The coroner did an intensive inquest into Oombulgurri and was quite damning in the findings about the community. A recommendation from the coroner was that the community is non-viable and should be closed down. However, the community itself is still running and services are being delivered over there. Now the difficulty that we face is that when you have a figure of eight people, up to 20 people and even up to 60 people, and we have the amount of services that are being delivered over there, it does not equate to effective service delivery. At the moment there are two nurses over there, and on average they would see one patient per day. On a weekly basis, a doctor flies over there and sees limited patients. We have two police officers over there. We have a principal and four teachers. At one stage, prior to the school holidays, there were two students for one principal and four teachers. You have got Kimberley Remote Service Provider—KRSP—delivering services over there. You have got a CEO who is delivering services over there. You have got all these government organisations and money that is being put in there,

and services that are being put in there, when the people who need to be engaged with those services are living here in Wyndham.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Could you do with those services here?

Mr Warburton: Definitely. My partner is a doctor. She was on locum here last week, and she flew out to Oombulgurri, and her comment when she came back was it is the best clinic she has ever seen.

The CHAIRMAN: In terms of the facilities?

Mr Warburton: Yes, the facilities. I believe it is a \$3 million facility. There are items in there that probably will never be used. When you are averaging one patient per day, it is questionable.

Mr P.B. WATSON: They get a good deal with you, do they not—a doctor and a police sergeant!

Mr Warburton: Yes! But the issues associated with Oombulgurri, and the relocation, or the transitional movement of the community members over to Wyndham, definitely has an impact on us because of the antisocial behaviour, the increased consumption of alcohol, the domestic violence and the feuding.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Where do they house them?

Mr Warburton: That is the other issue, obviously, when they come to Wyndham. There is a historic feuding going on between Oombulgurri family groups and Wyndham family groups. When there was the division of the water—the rivers—it never really presented itself. It used to always raise its head around Christmastime when people would fly in and influx Wyndham to basically seek alcohol, and then the feuding would carry on; and that culminated in one of the officers here being seriously bashed on Christmas day last year. But now the families that are feuding and have historically lived in Oombulgurri and in Wyndham are now residing predominantly in Wyndham, so it is not a one-off occasion of feuding; it is a continual feuding. Getting back to your question of housing, the Aboriginal culture is wherever you go, whatever community, you will always have family somewhere, and the family is expected to house you. So we have families that pose us no problems at all, but all of a sudden they have an influx of 15 people coming in and going to their house, and they have no respect for that person's house, because it is not their house, their name is not on the lease, and then all of a sudden problems are created for the person who has the tenancy agreement. So a house that should have only five people sometimes has 15 or 20, and then comments are made that it is because of the overcrowding that we have issues, but when we dig down to the root issues, the family or the influx of people actually have a house over in Oombulgurri, but they are choosing to live here in Wyndham. So money is still being pushed into Oombulgurri when nobody is there, and money is being taken away from Wyndham when there is an actual increase and influx.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you think if the alcohol restrictions were brought into Wyndham—not a total ban as in Oombulgurri, but the sort of restrictions that we spoke about before—some of those Oombulgurri families would be inclined to move back to Oombulgurri?

Mr Warburton: As a personal observation, I would say no.

The CHAIRMAN: They like the facilities that a bigger town offers?

[1.50 pm]

Mr Warburton: Access to alcohol and the availability of alcohol is a drawing factor. The coronial inquest found that on some occasions up to 15 planes were chartered from Wyndham to Oombulgurri for the sole purpose of conveying alcohol. On some occasions some very young children were kicked off the plane because of weight restrictions so another one or two cartons could be put on. The importance of alcohol to some family groups is massive. If there is no alcohol in Oombulgurri and there will never be any alcohol in Oombulgurri, Wyndham is the closest and best place to be.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Will Oombulgurri eventually die?

Mr Warburton: It is a government decision.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The people are not going to go back, unless it is for a holiday home.

Mr Warburton: I sit down with a lot of people I know from Oombulgurri and ask them whether they will ever go back to Oombulgurri and what they think about Oombulgurri closing. I would say that 99 per cent of the people have accepted that Oombulgurri will close. A small group of very elderly people who were born in Oombulgurri will never come over to Wyndham. There is always that love for them; people say, "What about the old people?" We are talking about millions of dollars being put into a community. The analogy I always use is that we have only a limited amount of funds and those funds are very thinly spread to Wyndham and Oombulgurri. A majority of people are in Wyndham. If Oombulgurri no longer existed, those services and those funds would increase for Wyndham. Service delivery, availability and programs would be boosted.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Even if they close Oombulgurri, you might not necessarily get the staff from there.

Mr Warburton: The officer in charge from Wyndham was a full-time employee. We are providing an officer over there, so that is two staff members, which we believe would pretty much come back. It would increase our ability to police and our engagement with the community, both at the front line dealing with antisocial behaviour and domestic violence and also integrating within the community on social engagements, the programs that we discussed, the liaison officers and the young men's groups. That is an initiative between Ngnowar-Aerwah and the police. The police are supporting the program with the two liaison officers plus a fully operational police vehicle. Local police officers are involved in Auskick. We run the Blue Light discos. We engage through Ngnowar-Aerwah and Garnduwa and help out with some of the deliveries of some of the sporting programs. Having some extra staff over here means that we can do a little more. We always remember what our core functions are.

The CHAIRMAN: Domestic violence is a very big issue, largely alcohol fuelled. How big an issue is that here in Wyndham and what strategies are in place for dealing with it?

Mr Warburton: Easily, 80 per cent of domestic violence is centred around alcohol. The East Kimberley domestic violence hub, which is based in Kununurra, is a joint initiative and program between the police and the Department for Child Protection. We have regular meetings to discuss what we call recidivist domestic violence families. If a certain amount of domestic violence incidents occur within a certain family, they are identified as a recidivist domestic violence victim or offender. They are then brought to the group at the East Kimberley domestic violence hub. Within that hub we have other agencies such as the Department of Housing, the Department for Child Protection, the police, Ngnowar-Aerwah, Jungarni and other organisations, both government and non-government. We basically work out an action and a plan for how we can better manage the situation. The Department of Housing would identify that there are X amount of people within the house. That might heighten the reason why domestic violence is evident. They will see what they can do to assist. Ngnowar will engage with the program and service delivery that it has. The police will identify any incidents they have attended. DCP will identify the children and do anything it can to assist. It is definitely a coordinated and collaborative multiagency approach to try to reduce it.

We also have Stronger Families, which is based in Kununurra, which comes down here. The fundamental of that is the family itself has to agree to engage with that program. It has been found that all these services are delivering the services but no-one is really talking to each other. When a victim of domestic violence is bombarded with all these services, agencies can tick the book to say that they have delivered those services; however, nobody is really talking to each other and the person who is receiving those services may not fully understand what needs to be done. That is where Stronger Families is very good. It is coordinated and everybody comes together at one time

at a round table. Not only do the agencies talk about the person who is not even present but also the family is present so they can ask some questions as well.

The CHAIRMAN: Whose initiative was that—Stronger Families?

Mr Warburton: Yes, Stronger Families.

The CHAIRMAN: Who takes charge of that? Is it DCP?

Mr Warburton: It is not through DCP. I think it was a recommendation of the commonwealth. I am not sure.

The CHAIRMAN: We are just about out of time. Is there anything else you would like to draw to our attention that we have not asked about that you think is worth our while knowing about?

Mr Warburton: As I started saying when I was giving my opening statement, we need to empower and we need to put some responsibility onto the family itself. The government can throw money and deliver programs but until the family engage and want to receive those, we only have limited value. How do we change that? A lot of the programs are dependent on who is running them. If you get somebody who is inspirational and dedicated, that program will go full speed. If you do not have the right people or they leave, the continuity of a lot of programs is lacking because they are based on the person running those programs. The support by the growth of the community is limited not by government or non-government bodies but by the greater community itself.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Is accommodation a problem in getting the right people here?

Mr Warburton: Accommodation?

The CHAIRMAN: For government workers or police officers.

Mr Warburton: Yes. From the police perspective, housing is very basic and nothing new. It is 30 or 40 years old. That would be the same through all agencies. We need the community to stand up. We need to break the cycle with the kids. As I was saying, if somebody drinks to excess and passes out, the sober up bus will come and pick them up. They will be taken to the sober up shelter. They will get a feed, get washed and be kicked out the next day. They can choose to do that again. We have a 10-year-old child who is not at home because that child does not want to go home because of the alcohol and domestic violence and drugs. What do we do with that child? That child then grows up seeing mother, father, uncle or aunty getting picked up and clothed, which is quite appealing. At the moment they are focused on going in that direction. If we had some youth hostels for kids, which we do not have here locally, we could put in programs and deliver services and hopefully break the cycles. That is what needs to be done. Money is not the answer.

The CHAIRMAN: We have to get the kids into a healthy living pattern so that they can break the cycle.

Mr Warburton: We have kids walking around not going to school. Why are they not going to school? There are two very good schools that they can engage and go to. I was discussing this with the education minister when she was here last week. What I find strange here is that the priority of the kids out in Balgo, Mulan, Halls Creek or Billiluna would be going to sporting events or visiting the family and schooling would be fifth or sixth down the list. The kids would be dragged along to school. If we turned up in the community and knew they were from Balgo and they were in Mulan, we would pretty much push them into the school and they would be accepted at that school. When I go out to see the kids and talk to them about why they are not going to school, they say they are from Oombulgurri. When I ask them how long they have been there, they say months. They are very quick to say they are from Oombulgurri. When a lot of pressure is put on, the family will disappear and they will go back to Oombulgurri for a small amount of time. They are lured back here because of the alcohol. We need to break the cycle with the kids.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for that. The transcript of this hearing will be sent to you. You have 28 days from when you receive it to make any corrections and send that back to us. If you

do not send it back within 28 days, we will assume that it is correct. If after leaving you think of something you should have told us, just put those ideas, thoughts or whatever on an extra sheet and we will accept that as a supplementary submission. Thank you for the paper you prepared for us. Keep up the good work.

One thing I was going to ask you is whether you have a multifunction police centre here.

Mr Warburton: It is in Oombulgurri. Oombulgurri has a multifunctional police facility.

The CHAIRMAN: But there is nothing here?

Mr Warburton: No, it is only for remote communities. After the coronial inquest in Oombulgurri, Wyndham was supplying patrols to go out there and funding was sought. I believe it was only state funding because it is normally state and federal for multifunctional facilities. Is it actually a multifunctional facility? I say yes because that is the role that it is performing. Looking at the paper and the funding et cetera, they would probably say it is not but it is run as a multifunctional police facility. It is not here. We have two police officers sitting over there and a lot of agencies and when you have eight people, the agency is sometimes outnumbered.

The CHAIRMAN: You send your officers there for R&R, do you?

Mr Warburton: You said it, not me. I give them a list of expectations of what we cannot do here because they are flat strap and when they come back, hopefully they will finish with some bits and pieces.

Hearing concluded at 2.03 pm