

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

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

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

**SESSION THREE**

**Members**

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

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**Hearing commenced at 1.14 pm****YUE, MISS VERONICA****Ardyaloon Community, examined:****HUNTER, MR PETER****Councillor, Ardyaloon Inc, examined:****MOUDA, MS ROWENA****Chairperson, Ardyaloon Inc, One Arm Point, examined:****LEE, MR BRIAN****Chairperson, Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation, examined:****HOWARD, MR DANIEL DALE****Bus Driver, Djarajung Aboriginal Corporation, Cygnet Bay, examined:**

**The CHAIRMAN:** To begin with I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and pay our respects to the past and present elders of the communities.

By way of explanation, the reason we have asked for your contact details is once we have got the spellings of your names, you will receive a copy of the transcript. Keith is from Hansard. That means he records everything that we are saying. He will transcribe that. He will send the transcript to you so you can correct anything in case you got something wrong. We will send that to you. If, after 28 days, you do not return it, we will assume that it is correct as it was. If, after we leave here, you wish you had told us something, you cannot add it into the transcript but you can add an extra sheet of paper and jot down the things that you want us to know. We will also take that into consideration. If you are like me, sometimes you get the best ideas an hour after the event.

I have a couple of formal things. A committee hearing like this is officially like the proceedings of Parliament and therefore warrants the same respect as the proceedings of the house of Parliament itself. Even though you are not required to give evidence on oath, any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. I am sure you do not want to mislead us anyway, so that is not a problem. Unless otherwise directed by the committee, your evidence is what is called public evidence and will be published, including on the Parliament website, immediately after you have corrected the transcript. If there is anything you want to tell us that you do not want on the public record, simply indicate that and I will tell Keith that we are in closed session. When he does the transcribing, that will be noted as being in closed session and will not be made public. If there is anything that you feel is sensitive and do not want made public, we will still take that information in a general way for our report but we will not quote you directly so that nobody will be able to identify where we got the information from. We would not quote it in any way that would enable others to identify you.

**Mr Lee:** I have two questions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**Mr Lee:** What is the purpose of this?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am the vice chairman of the Education and Health Standing Committee of the Parliament. We are inquiring into the treatment and prevention services available for drug and alcohol issues for all of WA, not just Indigenous communities. We have done a lot of work in Perth already but we wanted to hear from people on the ground in the remote communities, also from

you, what the issues are. The government spends a certain amount of money on these things—are we wasting money, in your view; are there things we are doing that we should not be doing; are there things that if we were to invest a little more in treatment programs, how would you want that; what sort of prevention programs do you think would work well for your people and that kind of thing. We are basically here to learn from you what you think would be areas where this government could be doing better in terms of providing treatment services for people who have got alcohol and drug issues, and also what could we do better in terms of prevention so people do not even get into drinking too much or get into the illicit drug scene?

**Mr Lee:** I guess my second question is how is it going to benefit my community and my people?

**The CHAIRMAN:** That is a good question. Basically, we are familiar with the COAG consultations in Broome. Have you been much involved in that?

**Ms Mouda:** Yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We are familiar with that. That has obviously looked at a whole lot of areas, but we particularly, in a very narrow focus, want to find out what we could be doing better. What will happen is we will write a report to the government through the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health, because that is who the drug and alcohol issues come under. We will make recommendations. Some of the recommendations may be that we think in the Dampier Peninsula there needs to be an extra drug and alcohol worker, there needs to be a sobering-up shelter or whatever you and others say to us. We will try to get a picture and recommend to the government what could be done or what should be done. We cannot promise you that we will improve things for your communities—that is not up to us—but we will make recommendations. The Minister for Mental Health, if he wants to follow up on it, will then have to put that into the budget in the future to fund some of those things.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The shorter version is: What are you short of to stop people taking drugs and drinking alcohol? What do you think is needed in your community and where are the gaps? If there are programs working well, let us know; if there are programs not working well, let us know.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Rowena, would you like to give us an overview of what is happening in this community of One Arm Point in terms of drug and alcohol issues; paint a little picture for us.

**Ms Mouda:** The reality is that we are getting serviced out of town.

**The CHAIRMAN:** You are getting serviced?

**Ms Mouda:** We are getting serviced out of Broome. We do not have programs anywhere on the peninsula. People are coming in from Broome trying to provide a service to us. To ask us what services are working and what is not working, we do not have any services here. It is like we need the services but they are not here. They come on a three-weekly to six-weekly basis. They spend two hours with us, maybe an hour or two with you guys, and then onto the next community. Right now the services that are trying to touch the ground are not touching the ground because they are being serviced out of Broome. A lot of dollars have been put into the major towns trying to service major communities out here with over 1 800 people or more on the whole peninsula.

**Mr Lee:** I think the philosophy of government now is to give moneys to government officers, non-government organisations, to come and deliver programs in our community. What that does is the funding, instead of coming to the community direct so that we administer the programs to help our people—the programs are being administered by outside organisations other than the communities.

**Ms Yue:** They are telling us what we need.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Have you got the people to do it in your communities?

**Ms Yue:** That is where preventive stuff comes in—training up people, even providing basic counselling staff on the ground. Most of the time the police are not on the ground and the services are not on the ground when it is happening. It is usually at night or on the weekends and we are the

people who have to assist them—containing that family and making them safe, as well as getting the perpetrator away or the humbug person, but with no safe houses in each community that is almost impossible. As much as you bring the family away, that person will continue to be a nuisance because he is under the influence. Then we have to involve the police—so much for keeping people out of the state of the justice system—just to get them out of the community causes it to be come a justice thing then.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Perhaps we can go into the detail. Could you paint a picture for us of how big the illicit drug problem and alcohol problem is? How big a problem is it in your communities?

**Ms Mouda:** Speaking for the One Arm Point community, there are a number of young people or people who are smoking ganja, but we do not have any other drugs here. As far as we know we do not have any other drugs here.

**Ms Yue:** Any hard drugs.

**Ms Mouda:** But they mind their own business; they do their own thing. A few years ago it was a bigger problem. I think it is fair to say that it has gone down with education, with the police being here, with the council also playing a big part in saying, “You’re not going to be able to do this anymore.” The community has taken leadership in that. Drinking—from Monday to Thursday the same thing, Friday everyone is sober, come Friday they have the weekend drinks, Friday–Saturday. We very rarely have big problems —

**Ms Yue:** We do not have drunks walking around drunk every day of the week like some communities.

**The CHAIRMAN:** So it is more binge drinking?

**Ms Yue:** Yes, more binge drinking on the weekend or the pay week.

**Ms Mouda:** It has quietened right down. At the moment it is pretty quiet. It has been like that for a while.

**The CHAIRMAN:** What do you think has contributed to that?

**Ms Mouda:** The fact that one thing is that the police are here. Aboriginal people around this part of the country are proud people. They do not want to be in trouble with the law. They have got a lot of pride in themselves. They do not want to get involved with the police. I think that is one of the things.

**Mr Lee:** Their presence on that main road helps too.

**Ms Mouda:** Yes; and their presence on the main road.

**Ms Yue:** When they bring that alcohol in.

**Ms Mouda:** Since Neville, who is the sergeant here now, came on board, he has made it his business to come and talk to people. If he has had a call-out that night, he comes back the next day or the day after to do one-to-ones—just talking to them. We have found that has helped. He comes to the office and the public area of the community and just talks to people in general, so people are comfortable with him.

**Ms Yue:** Feel that community people care enough to come back.

**The CHAIRMAN:** So there is a trust relationship developing.

**Mr Lee:** Yes, I would agree with that. He will talk to a person at their level. They are comfortable.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Do the elders have a part in that, too, talking to the young people? Someone like yourself, do you talk to these young guys when they have problems?

**Mr Hunter:** I think they will just talk to their family members, that is all; like I do with my boys.

**Ms Mouda:** Most of the elders, you find they take leadership roles within their own families. The elders of the communities will talk to their own families when there are problems. It is dealt with in-house, too, you know.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Is the respect still there for the elders?

**Ms Mouda:** Yes.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Because in other parts of the state there is no respect for the elders.

**Ms Mouda:** Here, I think it would be fair to say that across the board in most of our communities the respect is still there.

**Ms Yue:** I think as you said that active presence of practising culture reinforces respect for our elders.

[1.30 pm]

**Mr Lee:** I think with the setting up of this place in the beginning, it was far off to address domestic violence and abuse. When they first opened, they had four officers here—two on during the day; two on at night. They have taken one away. There are three officers now. I think it cost \$16 million to set up holus-bolus with everything, and it is now understaffed. If you ring after hours, the call goes through to Broome and they decide whether it is important or not to warrant waking up these guys. For us, the Djarindjin community, what has happened is that the state government has taken a caveat over this area so it has taken away our land. It has extinguished native title. We have not been compensated for that. To top it all off, we are getting a service that is not equal to that to any other small town.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Neville indicated to us that the top priority for him would be to get that fourth officer back here again.

**Mr Lee:** Well, it would be for us, too, because when we ring here, we would at least get someone to respond to us instead of talking to a total stranger in Broome.

**Ms Yue:** They do not even know who you are talking about.

**Mr Lee:** They do not know who they are talking to or who you are talking about. If it is someone fighting, you know, just with their partner, you have to wait. These guys might have been up to Beagle Bay or One Arm Point that night, so you have to wait until the next morning, and by that time the whole situation has subsided or, you know, the people have been flown out to Perth or wherever, and it is after the fact.

**Ms Yue:** It is not an immediate response.

**Mr Howard:** Broome has all the officers. Why can they not do the run up and down the road instead of these guys, and let these guys handle this area?

**Ms Mouda:** They should do the patrol and let this mob do the proactive stuff.

**Mr Howard:** It would be a lot better for them.

**Ms Mouda:** That is why we need more proactive stuff happening.

**Mr Lee:** And I suppose as a community you want to have a little bit more of a personal interaction, but if these guys are dog-tired from the night before, then they cannot come out —

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The Broome officers say they are understaffed, too.

**Ms Mouda:** One thing I would like to say is that we funded the community wardens program for \$50 a week or something for somebody on CDP to be like a police officer in the community—not like this, but to go around and talk to people when they are fighting, drinking or running amok. That program has since been taken away because of insurance and all the political things that happened in the background and that we are not fully aware of.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Was that a helpful program?

**Ms Mouda:** It was a very helpful program. It should be funded properly and it should be a program that should be brought back into these communities. If you cannot give us more police officers, at least give us a program that the community can have full control of, with the support of the police and the DCP. You have a committee in the communities, whether it is the Bardi Jawa area or the whole peninsula area—people are sitting on that committee and supporting such a program.

**The CHAIRMAN:** And it is called the community warden program?

**Ms Mouda:** It was a community warden program initially. It was a community warden scheme that was funded by the state government and the WA Police.

**Ms Yue:** They normally had just one warden. There was no support for that warden. I think that program was set up to fail.

**Mr Lee:** I think if a system like that is going to be set up again, it has to come with powers.

**Ms Yue:** Exactly.

**Mr Lee:** These people need to have powers.

**Ms Yue:** And they need more than two or three people. They are putting their lives on the line and most of the time they get abused or blamed.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** So will that cut down the incidence of alcohol and drug abuse?

**Mr Lee:** They would be in the community. They are the first contact. They can go up there. We had up to five wardens at Djarindjin community here, but the funding was taken away.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Were they from within the local community? They were trained up in a certain way, I assume.

**Ms Mouda:** And respected by the community for who they were. Like Brian said, it needs to be a program that is fully supported and fully funded. It needs to be something that has the full backing of the community councils and the community.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** So could we hook that in to say that it would stop more people from drinking alcohol and taking drugs?

**Mr Hunter:** No, you will not stop it.

**Ms Mouda:** You are not going to stop it.

**Ms Yue:** It will stop the situation from exploding when there are incidents resulting from alcohol or drug abuse, I would say.

**Ms Mouda:** To answer your question, we need programs that are in the community, managed by the community or supported through the community. At the moment, you have NGOs—non-government organisations—and government organisations coming out from Broome and trying to deliver services on preventative measures about drugs and alcohol. We had a Drug and Alcohol Authority program running here for two years or something that was taken away, because they thought the funding was not worth putting out here.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** So how was that done? Was that done by the locals or was it done by the NGOs?

**Ms Mouda:** I am not quite sure about it. It was Healthway funding or something. It goes back to the fact that services are coming from Broome. They are trying to deliver programs to stop you from drinking or taking drugs, or if you are a chronic alcoholic or you have mental health disabilities, they are trying to help you with your disabilities, but they are not here on the ground; they are just coming and going, which is very frustrating.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Once a month—there is no continuity.

**Ms Yue:** People generalise. They say that Aboriginal people from town or wherever they come from, and they can relate to us. But obviously it is not happening because these people still need to get their planning and programs right. Hence the program was cut. It is not that the problem has gone away.

**Mr Lee:** We had set up here in Djarindjin a local drug action group that was funded. We had a person come out every two or three weeks. We have had meetings here. We have had alcohol-free events like band nights down at the beach at Beagle Bay. We bought a trailer with a barbecue set up that can be run over to functions and stuff like that. We have sourced funding to set up a portable stage, but funding for the all-day program up here was taken away, so now that program has sort of —

**Ms Yue:** Gone towards council.

**Mr Lee:** Well, yes—it has gone towards council. We do not have that same support that we did.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Where did you get the funding from in the first place?

**Mr Lee:** From the local drug and alcohol action group from town. It is like everything really—once it started up and started to become successful and doing what it was meant to be doing, funding was pulled away, and then these things fall in a heap.

**The CHAIRMAN:** One of the things we have heard repeatedly is the problem of short-term funding. Things are funded for two years and then people move on to a new thing and a lot of these things need long-term funding to be able to really achieve —

**Ms Yue:** After two years they are only just starting to scratch the surface.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes, sure. We have certainly heard that a number of times.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** You were saying that you want people to come to the community to do these things or that you want it on the ground all the time. Is there accommodation —

**Ms Yue:** No, we are saying that we want to do it with our own people.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I am just saying that if there was a situation where someone could come there for, say, six months or 12 months to train people in the community to do it, have you got the accommodation there?

**Ms Mouda:** No, unfortunately, we do not. We are overcrowded at the moment.

**Mr Hunter:** Let me say something. Milliya Rumurra is the alcohol centre in Broome. Guys go in there over the drinking limit. They come out of there and they are back to stage one—back drinking again. What are they doing in town? What are they telling them? What are they teaching them?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** “Come on; we’ll fix you up so you’re healthy enough to drink again.”

**Mr Hunter:** They are not listening. You cannot stop the drinkers. They are really addicted. It is a big battle for them if you are going to ban it.

**Ms Yue:** They just go to town.

**Mr Hunter:** They will go to town. On the news on the tellie awhile back I saw a guy from Fitzroy who was asked a question: why did he move from Fitzroy? He said because of the alcohol. He is up there on the hill still drinking. He came here because he heard we had good drink. You cannot stop anybody from drinking. I cannot even stop my son from drinking. I am not going to twist his arm to do it.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** But can you educate them?

**Ms Yue:** This is what he is saying, but you need to get personal.

**Mr Hunter:** We need them people, our locals over there, to do it.

**Ms Yue:** Or maybe a council. If you have a good council or whatever, or if they have not got a council, they have a steering committee, they could be the response group.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Have you got the capacity in your community to have the people there to train up?

**Mr Hunter:** We do not have to train them up. They know.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Yes, but —

**Mr Hunter:** I would be happy if I went back there and we get some of the elders there and we got together and talked strongly about what we are doing here and tried to slow things down.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** You are saying that you have got people there with the capacity to do it now. Why are they not doing it now?

**Ms Mouda:** Nobody is going to work for peppercorns.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** No, that is what I mean.

**Ms Mouda:** People are there, mate. We are funded to deliver services, okay? Municipal services is one. The other one is early childhood. The other services that are being delivered are our community clinic, which is funded by the Department of Health, and education, which is funded by the Department of Education.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Who funds you for that?

**Ms Mouda:** We do not get funded for that. That is funding for the school and the clinic. They are separate from the community's functions. So the community right now gets funded to deliver two programs. We also have to generate our own income to top-up and open the doors of an office—the administration building—and provide a service for people to get their mail and cash, because we do not have a bank or anything. The community does that.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Okay. So, in a perfect scenario, if you wanted to start this, what would you need?

**Ms Mouda:** We would need a building, we would need accommodation, initially, for people to come in and train the local people, and we would need dollars to be put in to run successful programs and proactive activities and preventative activities. But that is only speaking for one community. It is the same problem they have over there, and it is the same at Beagle Bay. So we have three big communities here. How is it that we are going to get it so it works?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Could you work together?

**Ms Mouda:** Yes.

**Ms Yue:** We would love to work together.

**Mr Hunter:** You asked a question earlier on. The elders are talking here. My question is: why isn't anybody talking to the young people over there? I am happy to go and get these other elders and work together. Let's not use brainwashing: you know, give them an earbashing.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Do you take them out into country?

**Ms Yue:** Yes, we do all of that, too.

**Mr Hunter:** No, I just want to talk to them, even if we have to sit in the hall to do it. Tell them and make them look at things.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I do not know; that is why I am asking.

**Ms Mouda:** Because of our environment, people rely heavily on the sea here. You do not have to forcefully take anyone out bush. They go bush anyway. They go out onto the sea. The boys go out hunting, they go out fishing. It is their second nature. That is what they do anyway, because we rely heavily on the resources of the sea. It is not an issue there.



**Ms Yue:** Maybe that is why we have not got an everyday alcohol problem. You do not see alcoholics walking around everywhere.

**Ms Mouda:** We do not have an everyday alcohol problem but, yes, we do have weekend drinking and, yes, there are drugs in the community, but it is not such a big problem as it was years ago.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** So what age group has the drug problems and the alcohol problems?

**Ms Yue:** I think all the teenagers.

**Ms Mouda:** They are all the adults.

**Ms Yue:** Adults, to tell you the truth. I thought that the last generation were all more drinkers than smokers, and I have noticed that.

**Ms Mouda:** It is the 18 to 30-year-olds.

**Ms Yue:** All our younger children seem to be more into alcohol than drug abuse, especially down this way. I do not know why. They all drink.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Peter, you would never have had these sorts of issues when you were younger, like with drugs.

**Mr Hunter:** I was there, mate. Not the drugs. The alcohol.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The alcohol has been there all the time?

**Mr Hunter:** Yes, but I did not have any professional guys come up and tell me to stop. I stopped myself.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Yes, but there was in the community?

[1.43 pm]

**Mr Hunter:** And cigarettes. I got off the cigarettes and the drinking.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Well done.

**Mr Hunter:** And here I am today, you know. You have got to have the police. For myself, I get to my nephew, my niece or my son, if they are having trouble there, if they break the law instead of peace, I will get more from them than what the police will get from them. If the police go over there, question them, ask them what has happened, what is the trouble, they will not get much. If I went there myself, I will get more information from them. That is why I am saying I am happy to go back there and get some of these elders and sit and talk to just with the councils.

**Ms Mouda:** What we did just recently, we had an issue in the community that would have been drug related, no so much alcohol related. But there was a feud in the community, which was about to escalate. What I did was the police were able to come over because they were at court that day. So I got myself, went to the two parties that were involved, went to Peter, being a counsellor and an elder in the community, and went to another female elder who is also a gay peer in the community. I got these two and the two parties involved and the mob that was actually arguing with each other—just the immediate people that were arguing, not all the families and not all their spokesmen, just immediate people—took them away from the environment, took them down to the beach.

**Mr Hunter:** Down to the beach.

**Ms Mouda:** We were there for about an hour. Everyone had a say, how they seemed what had happened. I had a say. Peter had a say. The female elder that was there, Maureen, had a say. We all walked away from there clear-minded, no more trouble. We dealt with it on the ground. What we had been thinking just after that and talking to Neville here, if we were to take that type of approach with a lot of our issues, I think we can come far; you know?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes; sure.

**Ms Mouda:** But it is something that would need a support in the way of reforming the governance and the way we do things so that it gives that responsibility back to the communities, to the elders in the community, to be able to be the people in charge and talk to the mob with these issues, whether it is drug related, alcohol related, or just for the sake of an argument somebody wants to kill each other.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** If, say, you got accommodation and you got someone out there, say, for 12 months and while you were training up these other people, would you be happy with that?

**Ms Mouda:** Someone there for 12 months to help?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Train.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Train, get there on the ground, like you were saying. You are saying that they are not on the ground. So, say you got maybe a house out there and there was a couple of people who could stay there who could train your people to do the jobs that these fly in, fly outs or drive in, drive outs are doing, would you be happy with something like that?

**Ms Mouda:** Something to start with, yes. We have nothing. Basically we got these services coming in. They come to the front desk at the office: "We would like to see the chairperson." I say, "Okay, here's the chairperson. What can I do for you? They say, "Oh, I'll get the service out here to deliver to you and one of my communities." I say, "All right; how are you going to do it?" They say, "Oh, we're going to come every three weeks. This is what we're going to do here." I say, "Well, who is going to do it for you? Who is going to facilitate? Who is going to organise it on the ground for you? Are you expecting me to do it when I've got a million other things to do?" We need to be more creative about this. I say, "Excuse me, take your service away and until we sort out what we're doing, then you can come back to us. But right now we've got nothing on the ground. You are expecting us to pull more money out of our low-income earners to pay somebody to come and spend their time here, plan these services, for you to come in and utilise the services to touch the people on the ground. Yes, we need your services but I'm sorry we can't have your services because it's not being monitored or coordinated properly on the ground." So, sadly, there are people running the services here, but they are not meaning on us.

**The CHAIRMAN:** So who should be coordinating, say, the drug and alcohol services, the mental health services. For certain things, obviously, because of the number of people, say, you cannot have a psychiatrist living in this area because we are so short of psychiatrists anyway. So, somebody will come in occasionally as a specialist. Whose job is that in your communities to coordinate that?

**Ms Mouda:** You know when people put in for funding, when government or one organisation has put in for funding to service remote communities, they need to factor into account that in these communities we are not just numbers; we are people that live there. They need to make sure that the people are being paid to deliver their service on the ground. I am trying to run a service from over there.

**Ms Yue:** At a water level; yes.

**Ms Mouda:** A coordinated approach, yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** All right; so, to put an administrative sort of time contribution, say, to your office to be able to provide that infrastructure or that coordination role for the services that are provided so that they can organise and make sure that when the specialist person is there that they actually, the people, turn up. You need somebody on the ground in the community to do that.

**Ms Mouda:** Yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** And you are saying, obviously, there needs to be some funding allocation for that to make that possible; yes?

**Ms Mouda:** Yes, because at the moment you have got the remote service delivery; okay? Then they fund engagement officers, and the engagement officers are your centre point to connecting the people there that you are going to see through the councils, but that is all they are doing. But when the next level of okay, we have done this part here, made the point of contact, now we want to run the service on the ground, nobody is here on the ground running round. Veronica has to leave her job, I have to leave my job or the CEO has to leave his job to go and make sure there is a DVD player there so they can watch a DVD program.

**Ms Yue:** We can set them up for family violence.

**Ms Mouda:** For family violence or stuff like that.

**Ms Yue:** And not only that, because they are not getting it out on the ground, they have got no plans. There are no participants. Last week was an example. I had family violence and legal services there, and they had to run a lot of ideas by them. They had nobody. We had one person, because it was Peter's wife, and she goes to every meeting and tries to support everything. She was the only person. She does not live in domestic violence, but was the only participant. But, unfortunately, it is not getting to the target group. And the reason that I think we need more education to get personal and graphical; they need it to slam in their face. This is a result of what I am driving. This is the result of hitting it at 80 kilometres and hour, this impact—hit. This is what you are going to look like. I am sorry to say it that way, but I have been affected personally by drunk-driving and that is why I am very strong on that one, as well as families need to be educated. When we jump in a car with overcrowding, it is a big factor here because we try to get everybody home from town or wherever we are going. So we will fit about 10, 20 people into our eight, nine-seater or whatever to get them home and safe. We think it will mean them safe, but we need to be educated on everybody actually risking their life as well as everybody else's life, because then you are going to become one big jam sandwich if you have an impact at 120 kilometres or whatever. We really need to get really personal with the graphic stuff; maybe an education mobile van for remote communities, schools, towns, everybody, and support groups on the ground for when it is happening. Like Rowena was saying, people who have got the professional skills and all the big pay packets, they are not here. We need another look, you know? If there is big community conflict, we can come down and help Brian or he can help us or whatever, but if there is this family stuff happening, we know who is responsible. If there is conflicting, okay, warden and council are just controlling the conflicting. The certain other allocated support group will be the people picking up the family mob that is taking them to a safe place, making sure they are right, making sure they are followed up and there are referrals to professionals if it is necessary the next day and whatever. The follow-up—there has never been any follow-up, not even with any suicidals, accidental deaths, no nothing. And people are affected today. We have lost people due to other things not being followed up.

**The CHAIRMAN:** So there is really no counselling service?

**Ms Yue:** There is no counselling service at all, and the people that try to come from the relevant support groups, people cannot relate to them. That is why we are sick of being generalised as, "Oh, you are all black; you guys all understand each other; you guys all look the same." That is not the fact. We are all different. And when it comes to dealing with people, I feel more comfortable sitting with Peter or Brian than sitting down with some professional that has got a big degree behind them, a PhD or whatever, because I feel that he will not understand me and does not know where I come from.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** We were at the prison yesterday and they were saying that they had young girls coming out of university, psychologists, talking to Aboriginal men and the men will not talk to them.

**Ms Yue:** That is the thing: there is no cultural awareness. That is another thing with the services, and there is no cultural orientation when they come.

**Mr Lee:** I think for us, for our community, a lot of capacity has been removed from the community to deliver services that the community used to do like before. At one stage we were getting \$2.5 million to administer and to look after the community. Now we get about \$200 000 to do the same thing. Funding for our CEOs, we pay for our own CEO out of our savings that the community has saved with them, like Woodman and the airport development. CDP has been removed. Now, everyone is staying on unemployment benefits, so there is work for the dole scheme. Housing has been taken away from the community and given to the Department of Housing and works to deliver services. So what we have now is a community full of unemployed people living in public housing.

**Ms Yue:** And dilapidated housing.

**Mr Lee:** And where we, the community, looked after our own housing stock now have state housing through the Department of Housing and works. To get anything done, you have to talk to somebody in Broome who, in turn, speaks to someone in Perth who then looks for funding in Canberra. If we need a tap fixed, you have to ring this mob up there so that they can get in touch with a plumber, whether it be APEA, and tell them to come out and do the inspection. So we had people here who were able to go and deliver that service and get paid for it. Now because funding has been removed from there, like I said, we do not have by-laws in our community because the by-laws were taken away. And I think when they first applied for by-laws in here in our community, every time it went to Parliament to get proclaimed; it has to be proclaimed in Parliament. Everything else supersedes that. So, every time it came up, it went to the bottom of the heap again. And for that reason our community do not have by-laws. So we cannot as a community make laws to look after our people and to look after our community. Legally the police are stifled really unless it is criminal damage that they can come in, but they cannot address anything in our community according to our by-laws because they are non-existent.

**The CHAIRMAN:** They do not exist.

**Mr Lee:** For us, we cannot regulate the speed limit in our community. So the people can fly around there at 110, 120 kilometres an hour—200 kilometres an hour, if they like. There is no law in our community to stop that. We, as a community council, are powerless. What we find that we can do now is to look after the corporation. We can no longer look after our people like we used to. Through the new ORIC constitution, we as a community used to allow people small loans—\$50, \$100—if they wanted to buy a fridge-freezer or tide them over. We can no longer do that because of these constitutional laws that ORIC has given us to say, “This is kind of your constitution.”

**The CHAIRMAN:** So, who has given you that?

**Mr Lee:** ORIC.

**The CHAIRMAN:** ORIC is?

**Mr Lee:** Is the registrar in Canberra. I think it is—what do they call it? The office of —

**Ms Mouda:** Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations.

**Mr Lee:** The Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations. So they have given us a constitution that really —

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does not suit your needs.

**Mr Lee:** Does not suit our community; and it is across the board. I think you have the same constitution as us. Lombadina may start up again with their council, and they will have the same thing. But the community, as I said, we cannot look after our people like once upon a time we were able to do that.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Rowena, you said before that these agencies rock up at the door and say, “We’re going to do this.” Do they come when it suits them or do they come when it suits you?

[1.58 pm]

**Ms Mouda:** They come and say they want to come out on the eighth of this month or whatever; I look and say, “Okay, I might be available.” If I am available, I will make myself available, talk to them and get as much information as I can. But that is what I have been telling everybody who has walked through the door since I became the chairperson of this community. I have said, “Look: as much as my community needs your services, I cannot allow you to come in, because at the end of the day, you’re not going to be touching on the people who require these services. You come to the office and speak to me; why is it for me to get all this information, rather than getting it to the people who need it?” Until we, as a community, with your support, plan out what these problems are that you are trying to resolve and how we are going to achieve that, we cannot go together, walk out there and service the mob. Right now, I cannot accept that you are coming here and telling me that you want to deliver a service, because I have nobody here to meet you halfway. What I am trying to say is that we are an organisation, and you are going to apply for the money. You four are going to be in town, so you are going to pay for all the administrative staff there, but then you are going to have to go and we are going to have to be the field officers, but I am sorry, I cannot pay you guys, because I need to be paid. You need to go out there and tell this mob that we have this service that we are going to deliver, because we have stacks to tick off here. It is the same old story that is happening.

**The CHAIRMAN:** So, in essence, for these services, it would really be helpful to have, say, one full-time employee in your office who actually is funded from these services to do the fieldwork in terms of getting the appointments organised and all that so that you are free to do what you need to do, and that person could then organise the —

**Ms Mouda:** They would organise the link-ups, the meetings, the posters to get information out—you know? Like I say, at the moment, we are funded to run two programs. Out of the administration we get part funding for our CEO. As chairperson, I do not get paid for my job; I am lucky to be paid by the government to run another job that I cannot even do successfully because I am too worried about the community. Our community money is paying for our cashier and office manager, and our book keeper. The book keeper just makes sure that the finances are getting done. Veronica gets paid by the government to run the housing program, and still has to run around and do community stuff to coordinate things. I have to run around and do this too, so everyone is running around, trying to please all these services that are coming in. We make them look good, they put their stats together, but the people are not getting a go, and that is the reality of what is happening.

**Mr Lee:** We do not get paid for the running around.

**Ms Mouda:** I get into trouble if I use the car to do the running around in.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Okay, so in terms of the drug and alcohol issues in your communities, if the government were to ask, “What can we do to improve things?” Say if there was a big pot of money somewhere, what would you like us to spend that pot of money on? What are the things?

**Mr Howard:** I would really like to know from the government why we cannot go into individual businesses—why we cannot have a family business, a family group business or a community business, because for 15 years, my family and I have been held back. Brick walls have been put in front of us. For instance, we had a mud crab licence. There was no feedback from fisheries or any other government department to tell us why that licence was taken away from us and why we could not continue with it. I put a lot of this down to idle hands doing the devil’s work. We would like a water bottling business, but they put a block on that. The only business that we are allowed to do, my wife and I and family, is making chilli in jars. That is about all we are allowed to do.

**The CHAIRMAN:** What is the background to you not being allowed? They just do not tell you?

**Mr Howard:** For instance, four years ago, the manager of the Broome fisheries office and his 2iC said to me, three weeks before Christmas, “Go get your boat, Danny, go get your pots and go and get your gear organised; you’ll have your licence two weeks before Christmas”. In that period of

time, between then and January, these two chaps, one went to Queensland and one went to Darwin, and they never said a word. There was nothing on paper and we had spent up to \$15 000 out of our own pocket to have someone come up here to do a business plan, only to be just left like that, with nothing. It has been going on for 15 years, and there are other families around that have been going on longer—20, 25 years or more. I believe that if we were given a fair go, we would not be sitting around here, worrying about this.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Because people would have jobs and the young people would —

**Mr Howard:** We would be busy and we would be happy doing that within the regulation of whatever department it was, whether it be CALM, Fisheries or whatever. Our business lady, a trainee, went over to Canberra two years ago and said that there was a moratorium on the area and that nothing will happen; Aboriginal people cannot do anything here until the oil and gas is sorted out, and that was it. We have basically been given the impression over the past two or three years that the government wants the whole peninsula—or the mining companies, the oil and gas companies. That has been detrimental to the way we go about things. You take away the CDP and the on-costs, and we are left with nothing, and then you threaten to take away our land from underneath our feet. I am not surprised that people are into drugs and alcohol because of the frustration. It has been a long time.

**Ms Mouda:** There are all these competing factors that need to be dealt with.

**Mr Howard:** My father has passed away, and for 23 years now we have been waiting for our lease papers.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That is a lease on your —

**Mr Howard:** For a block of land, yes, to give us the rights to go ahead and do something.

**The CHAIRMAN:** To establish a business, yes?

**Mr Howard:** You get people from any background, any class, any colour—white, black, brindle, yellow, orange—on a peninsula, and then take away what they are given, it is a way of life that we have lost. There is a lot of culture for us. If you take that all away so that we cannot go ahead and do anything for ourselves, what are we going to do?

**The CHAIRMAN:** It destroys initiative.

**Mr Howard:** They are going to sit there and drink, and do whatever, because there is nothing else they are allowed to do. I would like the opportunity to go ahead and do something.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If I understand you correctly, what you are saying is that part of the solution to the alcohol and drug issue is actually to empower people to —

**Ms Yue:** To gain employment, and self-employment as well.

**The CHAIRMAN:** To start your own businesses and not have unnecessary red tape, or roadblocks, put in the way of getting your businesses started.

**Mr Howard:** And for government departments to be honest, and not come out here and rip people off, like they have done to me and my family, personally, and lie to us. Where are the incentives? That would cut out the suicides and everything else. Our people can see Brian going ahead with his business; little kids can see him and say, “I want to be like Brian one day”.

**Ms Yue:** There are no role models.

**Mr Howard:** We have no role models; we have no-one who is there. We do not even have anyone in federal Parliament. We are lucky to have Ben Wyatt in the state Parliament—Cedric’s son.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** He is a good man, too.

**Mr Howard:** That is the guts of how I feel the government could really be helping in a big way. We will be part of the state, we will pay our taxes, and actually feel worth within ourselves, because

we are feeling a sense of hopelessness, especially the young ones, the teenagers. We lost 21 people in one month. Out the front of the courthouse there were little white crosses, last year, representing —

**The CHAIRMAN:** They were suicides, were they?

**Mr Howard:** They were suicides in one month.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** In Beagle Bay?

**Mr Howard:** No, they were put in front of the courthouse in Broome, representing the Kimberley. A few years back it was.

**Ms Mouda:** It was about four or five years ago, to do with the inquiry into suicides.

**Mr Howard:** It is my understanding from the suicide meeting we had here that we are only 2.4 per cent of the population, and I basically told those people the same thing: give us our licences. Keep the regulations; we have to work by the rules, like everybody else, but train us properly.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Give a helping hand, rather than put up roadblocks.

**Mr Howard:** Or just handing out money that is just being wasted. Let us have a go. If we stuff up or break the laws in business, then come down on us. We have lost a lot; 50 per cent, 70 per cent of us have gone because of suicides. If we have a go, we will get respect.

**Mr Lee:** Two years ago we had two people here in our community who were nearly killed. One was a young girl, 16 I think, she was lying in the road. She had drunk too much and had passed out, and one of our counsellors was going to work at the airport early in the morning and thought she was a piece of cardboard someone had left on the road. As he got closer to her—he had a full 1 000-gallon water tank on the back of his car—and he would have run over this girl if he had not realised it was a human being there. Another one was an old man who was lying down, passed out drunk, coming down the hill, on the sand hill there. He just fell asleep and someone late in the evening, coming back home from fishing, came down the hill and luckily his car had brakes; he saw the person in time and stopped and picked him up. We got together and had a meeting about drugs and alcohol in our community, and people had a vote on a by-law for the community, even though we do not have a council, but this is what we would put in our by-laws if we had them. Sixty per cent of the people said, “No, we want alcohol in our community.” So they said, “All right, how can we address these issues?” People then said, “Well, look, we’ll endeavour to drink in our own yards. We’ll turn the music down at 9.30 in the evening and we won’t walk around with cans in our hands and hassle people who don’t drink”. That did not work, so the council said, “We’ll have to write a letter to the Minister for Racing and Gaming and see if they can give us a section 175”. We did that; it took six months for the minister to come back to us—more than that, I think—to say, “Yeah, we’ll come up and talk to you”. He came up eventually, Terry Waldron. We sat down with him, drinkers and non-drinkers, and gave him the reasons why people should not drink. It affects not only their health but the health of their children.

**The CHAIRMAN:** And the whole community.

**Mr Lee:** The whole community. I do not drink, but every weekend I sit in my house and listen to the loud music going on until one o’clock in the morning. I should not have to listen to that, but we do not have the by-laws to say, “Hey!”; they will not give us the by-laws.

**The CHAIRMAN:** And the elders in your community cannot put enough pressure on those people to conduct themselves in an appropriate way?

[2.12 pm]

**Mr Lee:** They will just tell them to get lost, if old people want to fight with young people. But he sat there and said, “All right, well, I’ve heard all of the arguments for and against.” I think one of the suggestions was restrictions; we can restrict alcohol consumption, say, people can drink until

10 o'clock at night and then after that it becomes illegal and enforceable by law, whether it be through our by-law or through the police. They said, "Yes, yes, yes." They went away and I think another two or three months later they said, "Sorry, due to more people wanting liquor in the community, we cannot give you —

**The CHAIRMAN:** Section 175.

**Mr Lee:** So now we hear in our community that people—young kids, old people, the drinkers—are getting plastered on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and then they just want to go to town. The police could stop them on the road here but really they cannot —

**The CHAIRMAN:** But it is not illegal —

**Mr Lee:** It is not—I mean, if they have a whole boot full, then you have to ask, "Is this yours or not?" But people can say, "Look, this is for the next three months."

**The CHAIRMAN:** Just still trying to move on from that, that is obviously one issue, the 175-type thing, but in terms of actually helping those people who are struggling with alcohol or with drug addiction, what sort of services would you like to see on the ground, Rowena?

**Ms Mouda:** Just going back to One Arm Point, Ardyaloon, if the government was to give us anything in regards to that and tell us that old story that they are coming in from town and so on, I would like to see is if we could get some kind of financial support to work on getting the community together to work on a planning session to actually gather how people feel about drug abuse, alcohol abuse, how it affects us, and get it from the young people, the kids. We need to get into the school system because we do not want our kids to be telling the same old story, hopefully. Like Veronica said, you have your 18 and 19-year-olds who are binge drinking but they do not smoke drugs. There was a period that they did go through in relation to drugs, so what I would like to see is that if we can try to get the support—we will put that in our LIP—and also where we want support to get a proper plan in place, an action plan in place, for our community —

**Ms Yue:** Yes, so we get an action working group or something set up that could work as a united group from the whole peninsula.

**Ms Mouda:** To work on a structure of how programs can work on the ground to develop —

**Ms Yue:** What programs are out there for a start.

**Ms Mouda:** — programs and activities so that it can touch base, and activities around education; the preventative stuff, what are the effects of drugs, what are the impacts of alcohol, the consequences that comes with it—that sort of education. When we are planning, we need to look at the different age factors, so you have your chronic alcoholics, you have your young people who are just starting to develop into that, and then you have the younger people who are going to come up into the same routine if we do not deal with it now, so we need to cover from the little people to the older people who have to live with the effects of alcohol.

**Ms Yue:** I think it needs to be delivered from an earlier age. I think that at the moment it is only being delivered at high schools, which is insignificant because by the time that they are teenagers, they have already tasted alcohol. I think it needs to be brought up to upper primary, maybe grade 5 up, when they are starting to change.

**Mr Howard:** What about a mobile detox unit?

**Ms Mouda:** Sorry, I will just finish off on this. Then it goes down to the fact of government reform. If you look at your community government reform, we need the support in there as a community. Then from that, once you have all your planning and structural stuff together and worked out, you can then provide real employment positions to make on-the-ground right training in place so that these services can hit where it needs to hit, whether it is in the way of positive thinking for these young people or rehabilitative thinking for the people who need help who have been through the mill and who need to get out. That is sort of the thinking and a way of how—because we can sit



here all day and complain about the problems that we have and the issues that we are faced with, but we need to actually look at how can we come up with solution to help ourselves but with the right support from the service providers that are here and getting funded to deliver the services. We need them to come to the same table and say, “Okay, I’ve got this, I can do this, what can you do? Let’s sit down and we’ll talk about it.”

Going across to Danny’s thing, empowering Aboriginal people in business could be one avenue that we could take to help us, but not everyone is a businessman and not everyone has the ability to go and run a business, so you need to be able to cater —

**Mr Howard:** The idea is that if someone has a business going, they are going to need people to work there, so they are pulling in other family members and people from other families, groups and communities to do that. Especially, a community business. I have always wondered why Djarindjin, One Arm Point or Beagle Bay could not have aquaculture where we bring our kilos of seafood in and be paid for it and things like that and support the local community. Then you would build up the community. The outstations are building up the community. We are getting our pride; we are being proud about it because we are building up the community by doing just that kilo every couple of days a week or more.

**Ms Mouda:** There is room for movement from all of us, from the big communities to the small outstations right across the board, but it is coming to the table and actually putting our heads together and thinking forward but using all the issues that we live with, the day-to-day issues, to carry us to move forward because without these issues we cannot move forward.

**Mr Howard:** The only detox thing in town is the jail. It would be nice to have a mobile unit come out with those counsellors that you are talking about to educate the younger ones.

**Ms Mouda:** That is right, but we have also got outstations set up along the peninsula, strong communities and strong families that we could tap into. How can we support? Peter Hunter has a block. I want to look after these people who have this problem. I want to do this, that and the other with them to help them think positively. But how can we work together now to pool all the support to say to Peter, “Okay, we’ll support you to run a good alcohol–drug rehabilitation centre” and then look after our mob in a culturally appropriate environment.

**Mr Howard:** With the psychiatrists and all those involved.

**Ms Yue:** Like a boot camp, but closer to home and they live on country.

**Ms Mouda:** So it is about how we think positively too. But it is spending the time together, sitting down and doing it. We need to pull it together now, I think. That is what I think anyway.

**Ms Yue:** That is what I reckon, too.

**Mr Lee:** I think you need to put funding back into the community to give us the capacity to look after our own people, rather than give the money to someone else out there to deliver services back in to the community.

**Mr Howard:** We have to have a set plan; they build up to it —

**Mr Lee:** We can do that here, given the capacity to do it, but the capacity has been removed from the community.

**Ms Mouda:** There is enough of my people who can think and do it with action, but we are limited, too; we are sacrificing our own lives to make it better for everybody else.

**Mr Lee:** Like I say, we have turned into a community full of unemployed people living in public housing, fully trained.

**Ms Yue:** That is 20 years in a circle the government has run us!

**Mr Hunter:** As Rowena said, we have mining companies coming up, we have Rio Tinto coming up here with only a handful of boys going down there—fly in, fly out jobs—I would like to see more of those young kids coming in here and getting on to that.

**Ms Yue:** There are no job opportunities —

**Mr Hunter:** There is another option there by going through what Rowena has just said—by employment.

**Ms Yue:** — besides CDP or unemployment and then we are told to justify that.

**Ms Mouda:** At One Arm Point we have been thinking along these lines of, “Well, we’ve got these service providers and we have these issues. How do we marry the two together?”

**Mr Howard:** Sorry, but I have to take off.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Okay, thanks very much for coming; we really appreciate it. Thank you for your time.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** We are just winding up now.

**Ms Mouda:** One thing we have been talking about as women is that when you look at it you have the service providers, you have the issues and you have the people who have to be serviced. We have a community council but the community council is stretched trying to do everything. So we said, “Okay, at the end of the day, who actually worries about this stuff?” It is us women; the mothers, the grandmothers, it is the women in the community who carry the burden for these issues because we are the ones who are the backbones of the families. That is the truth. So we said, “Okay, how about we start a women’s group going? We get an endorsement from the council to become an incorporated body to run a women’s group that becomes a family-oriented centre that can be the matchmaker to the service providers coming to deliver the message back to the mob on the ground.” That is something that we are trying to do without any money. Right now we are just doing it; it is only just volunteers to cook. Monday evenings we meet together and we are moving slowly, but we are moving ahead. That is us in a nutshell.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Good, thank you very much.

**Mr Lee:** Djarindjin has the only licensed child care in any Aboriginal community in Australia or WA, I am pretty sure. Funding has been removed from that. The commonwealth government has taken the money out of there. We have to go to Save the Children Fund and talk to people there about propping up our child care to make it into an early childhood development centre so that we can attract funding from people like Save the Children Fund. Red Cross are coming in and they want to bring services into the community. I cannot stress enough that government has removed funding and is still removing funding from our community that allowed us to deliver services ourselves to our community and our people. Now the commonwealth has ceased funding for the child care in our community.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thanks so much for your time; it has been really helpful and given us a bit of an insight into what the issues are for you. What will happen now is that Keith has been busy recording everything for us and we will send the transcript out to you. If you have a read through that and if there are any corrections to be made, just make those corrections and send it back. Like I said, if after you leave from here you think, “I wish I had said this and I wish I had said that”, just add an extra sheet and put those things down and send it back to us.

**Ms Mouda:** Before we close off today, though, when you asked the question if the government were to give you one thing, yes, I want infrastructure but before I want that I want my planning done properly so that if you are going to give me a building, you give me a building that is going to be working and serviced properly; I do not want a building that is not going to be doing anything!

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes, sure. Thank you very much—much appreciated.

**Mr Lee:** I hope something comes out of this because too many times we have had bureaucracy, politicians, everything, come up here and ask: What can we do for you and your community? How can we help you? We have poured our hearts out to people like yourselves over many years and still got nothing.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** We will do our best.

**Mr Lee:** I hope that your best is something that we can look forward to.

**Hearing concluded at 2.25 pm**