



Alice Springs Community Action Plan



Consultation report

(This research report is intended as the first stage in developing an Alice Springs Community Action Plan)

Prepared for the Department of the Chief Minister

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Table of contents

1. OVERVIEW	3
2. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION.....	5
2.1 What are the key points of agreement?.....	7
2.2 What people want	7
2.3 Summary of key issues raised	8
3. BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.....	9
3.1 Issues raised during consultation	9
4. YOUTH SERVICES	13
4.1 Youth services discussion paper	14
5. CRIME AND ALCOHOL.....	16
5.1 Overview.....	16
5.2 Presentation on policing issues	16
5.3 Presentation on alcohol reforms	17
5.4 Congress paper	18
5.5 Impact of crime and alcohol-related antisocial behaviour.....	18
6. EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT.....	19
6.1 Department of Education and Training presentation	19
7. Comments from workshops	21
7.1 What do people love about Alice Springs?.....	21
7.2 How have businesses been affected?.....	21
7.3 Key issues	21
7.4 Goals, what will a good future look like?	25
7.5 Barriers to achieving goals.....	27
7.6 Ideas for removing the barriers.....	29
7.7 Suggested actions	33
7.8 Public letters, emails and phone calls	35
APPENDIX 1 Police police background	38
APPENDIX 2 Previous reports, websites, relevant programs	40

1. OVERVIEW

Above all, consultation for this community action plan found that Alice Springs people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, want to feel safe and want their kids to have a future in the town.

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents see education and meaningful jobs as the escape route from welfare and poverty.

People acknowledge that the causes of the current problems are complex but they want urgent action, not more talk fests, to deal with the immediate issues.

Despite this, we heard of deep divisions in the town and a sense of despair at the violence, drunks and milling crowds of bush people that has spooked tourists at a time when industry is in the doldrums, driven a number of families out of the Territory and, anecdotally, caused some Aboriginal people to seek refuge in 'dry' towns in the Top End.

Underlying the visible symptoms of crime and anti-social behaviour people spoke of a need to rebuild trust between the community and government as well as the need to better understand the nature and implications of the urban drift that is bringing ill-equipped Aboriginal people to ill-prepared towns.

A common call, particularly from government and Indigenous agencies such as Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and Tangentyere Council, was the need for better data, comprehensive information on crime trends and alcohol sales, social research and an up-to-date mobility study to better understand the causes of urban drift, the demographics of population change and who is responsible for crime and why. This will better inform strategic planning for government services and potentially help with 'myth busting'

While the current crisis has created alliances of people looking for solutions, the combination of fear and passion has also brought to the surface divisions based on personality clashes, political and philosophical differences and, occasionally, turf protection. During our consultation, we encountered people being shouted down for expressing a view, organisations attacking each other's solutions and bitter personal attacks.

The NT Coordinator General for Remote Services, Bob Beadman, expressed concern at the growing divide between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', the need to remove the 'hammock of welfare' to encourage people into work and the unsustainable burden of welfare on the community.

While most people see alcohol as either the crux or a symptom of the current issues of crime and antisocial behaviour there is little agreement on how to solve the problem and views expressed were polarised between calls for total prohibition and the need for individual responsibility. There were calls for tougher restrictions on the sale and consumption of alcohol – such as a grog free day – but on the other hand many longer-term residents believe the alcohol reforms are over-regulated and this is inconveniencing the law-abiding residence and the focus should be on the '300 problem drinkers'. Some called for 'wet canteens' in communities as a way of curbing urban drift while others said this would just hide the problem without addressing its causes.

Non-Aboriginal residents expressed anger at the impacts on their lives, safety and use of public spaces. Longer-term Aboriginal residents talked of being swamped by visitors and feeling caught in the crossfire of debate, while young people and many bush visitors feel persecuted and unwelcome in the streets and shops of the town. Youth workers expressed concern at the growing marginalisation of young people,

previously described by Menzies School of Health Research as a 'culture of resistance' amongst an increasingly angry and disengaged group of Aboriginal peopleⁱ

It appears people want to unite behind a shared vision that will save their town but are casting around for the leadership to drive this vision and community-based approaches that will transcend some of the divisions.

While there were calls for tough action, many interviewees want a community action plan to focus on shared values and common ground as a starting point for community-owned solutions.

We have done our best to reflect the broad range of views that we heard and capture some common themes in a community action plan that helps various sectors of the community work in partnership.

For the plan to achieve anything beyond words on yet another sheet of paper, however, the community will need to find the leadership and a structure to implement the solutions the community has suggested.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION

The consultation for this community action plan was conducted over six weeks, from early March to mid-April 2011. It comprised individual meetings with dozens of Alice Springs businesses, public servants, Aboriginal organisations, non-government organisations, media, politicians and young people as well as a number of casual conversations with many friends and colleagues in Alice Springs.

We spoke to the Strong Women's Group started by Elaine Peckham, Girls at the Centre (a group of Year 9 Students at Centralian College) and members of the youth Harmony Group coordinated by InCite. We attended a public meeting called by the Mayor Damien Ryan and a lunch with a range of stakeholders hosted by the Chief Minister Paul Henderson and Minister for Central Australia Karl Hampton. We analysed media coverage of the issues, attended the opening of Parliament, received a number of well-considered written contributions and, where they were available, incorporated the minutes of meetings that had been held prior to our consultation.

The following is a summary of the consultation conducted. The 240 stakeholders recorded include 44 recorded comments at the Mayor's meeting, speeches from the Action for Alice demonstration, two meetings held with Indigenous leaders that the consultant did not attend (details were provided by the Office of the Chief Minister) and a meeting held by the Chief Minister and Minister Hampton at Desert Knowledge Australia on 11 March at which the consultant was an observer. A small number of meetings were not recorded at the request of participants who did not want their comments to be identifiable. The statistics below do not record casual conversations. This leaves 51 meetings arranged by the consultant as part of the formal consultative process and five workshops.

A number of people responded to advertisements placed in the Centralian Advocate by the Department of the Chief Minister and a letter delivered to homes by the Minister for Central Australia, Karl Hampton. Many of these submissions included detailed ideas and, in some cases, copies of reports.

Four public workshops were held as well as an informal workshop with a number of senior NT Government staff.

Event Types	Events	Stakeholders distinct total	
Meeting	55	136	185
email	30	31	31
workshop	5	103	126
Telephone call	2	2	2
demonstration	1	9	9
Total event search	93	240	353

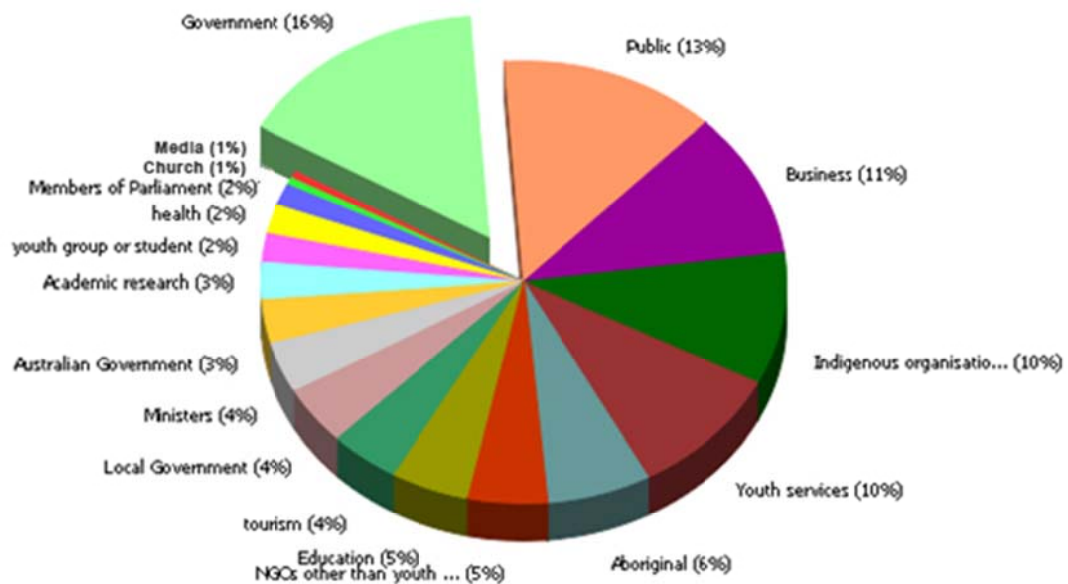
All contacts were recorded in Consultation Manager, stakeholder management software that includes reporting tools. The minutes of individual meetings and all stakeholders' contact details will be kept confidential for privacy reasons. Comments from the four public workshops are included in this report.

The intent of the project was to draw together the outcomes of the many meetings being held in town rather than starting a new research exercise. The consultants also spent considerable time researching reports, summits and workshops that had already been held in order to reflect earlier findings and good ideas, rather than reinventing the wheel. The results of this research are summarised at Appendix 1.

The following is an approximate breakdown of stakeholders spoken to or whose comments we recorded from public meetings. Where people's background is not known, they were recorded as members of the public. Congress staff have been recorded as "Indigenous organisation" although they could have also been recorded under "health". "Aboriginal" captures community leaders not otherwise categorised.

Stakeholder Groups	Events	Stakeholders distinct total	
Government	29	50	75
Public	25	43	46
Business	20	37	58
Youth services	18	17	35
Indigenous organisation	18	29	50
Aboriginal	12	23	33
Education	9	18	27
NGOs other than youth groups	9	17	25
tourism	8	5	11
Local Government	8	12	18
Ministers	7	4	13
Australian Government	6	3	6
Academic research	5	3	5
health	4	2	4
youth group or student	4	4	6
Members of Parliament	3	5	5
Media	1	1	1
Church	1	1	1
Total event search	93	240	353

Stakeholders Consulted - Total Events



It is acknowledged that the first workshop on Business and Economic Development did not attract a good

balance of business people compared with public service participants due to short notice. We therefore ensured that we sought out business people for individual meetings and several attended later workshops. Many people expressed an interest in being part of the process but were unable to attend the workshops. It is hoped to capture some of these people through proposed feedback sessions.

The participants in many workshops appreciated the chance to find out what others were doing and many expressed an interest in staying involved in the outcomes of this consultation.

The feedback in this report reflects the four themes of our workshops:

- Business and economic development
- Youth services
- Crime prevention and alcohol
- Education and early childhood

The report is in sections:

- why people love Alice Springs (from business section only)
- summary of the issues raised
- people's goals and aspirations (from all workshops except business)
- barriers to achieving those goals (from the workshops)
- good ideas (these are presented as they were given to us rather than being subjected to an analysis)
- a summary of the key actions, or solutions (including some from broader consultation).

We have attempted to then draw together the feedback in a draft community action plan that will be circulated for community feedback.

Dedicated webpages in the Safe Territory website will be further enhanced to contain reports provided to us from a range of agencies and links to existing strategies.

2.1 What are the key points of agreement?

- people are passionate about Alice Springs' future
- the future depends on all children getting a relevant education that leads to real jobs
- the time to start is before children are born, with the first three years being critical
- the current level of crime and antisocial behaviour is having a significant detrimental impact on the town and its lifestyle and must be addressed as a matter of urgency so people feel safe
- urban drift has always existed but the pattern and volume of people coming into town appears to be changing
- alcohol is a major issue which must be addressed (although the means of doing this were the subject of substantial debate and disagreement)
- solutions must be based on need however there is insufficient data and social research available to guide planning
- solutions must come from the community
- people feel the government has become disengaged from the Alice Springs community (although there was substantial disagreement about whether governments were the cause or the rescuer).

2.2 What people want

- an inclusive, intergenerational, community driven approach to finding solutions

- a safe community in which all residents can lead productive and happy lives
- business confidence in the future of the town's economy and image
- immediate action combined with longer-term solutions.

In addition, many people called for:

- a time of healing and mutual respect
- pride in Alice Springs
- a focus on youth, who are our future.

2.3 Summary of key issues raised

The following chart provides an analysis of the top 25 issues raised. The first column is the number of events where an issue was raised, the second column is the number of stakeholders at those meetings and the third column is the number of distinct stakeholders covered at these meetings (in other words some people attended more than one meeting at which a particular issue was raised). An 'event' covers meetings, workshops, emails and phone calls.

Issues	Events	Stakeholders	
		distinct	total
Youth Services: youth activities	21	143	183
Education: importance of education	20	170	214
Alcohol: supply	20	50	57
Urban drift: Urban drift	19	89	102
Education: role of parents	15	147	172
Youth Services: coordination	14	112	130
Alcohol: demand	14	79	92
Employment: Employment	14	107	131
Alcohol: antisocial behaviour	13	83	94
Alcohol: reforms	12	42	48
Government: lack of data	12	55	64
Education: early childhood	12	90	101
Business: vandalism, break-ins	11	84	99
Social: social cohesion	10	104	119
Alcohol: rehabilitation	10	31	32
Police: personal safety	10	93	104
Employment: jobs in the bush	10	76	86
Government: communication	9	45	52
Police: patrols	9	55	60
Business: people leaving town	9	63	68
Culture	8	91	99
Government: coordination of departments	8	47	50
Youth Services: sport	7	48	52
Business: confidence	7	36	38
Employment: motivation to work	7	12	12
Total event search	93	240	353

3. BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Some businesses in Alice Springs said they feel under siege, insecure about the future and drained by the trauma and cost of crime. Business people said they have made emotional and financial investments in Alice: they love the landscape and the easy lifestyle. However, they are frustrated by perceived bureaucracy and what many believe is the inertia of government on issues such as land release.

While they want a 'light hand' at the wheel when it comes to red tape and regulations, many business people also want zero tolerance and tough interventions by police to remove problem drunks and young offenders from the streets.

Many told us they feel government has become distant, neglectful and wasn't paying attention when the current problems started to emerge. They want to develop better relationship with ministers, more consultation on government change that impacts on them, less 'spin' in government advertising, tougher penalties for those committing crime and a focus on trouble-makers that removes them to jail, rehabilitation or back to their communities.

While many people expressed alarm at the Action for Alice advertisements, the frustration driving the advertising resonated with most business people who described them as "a genuine cry for help".

3.1 Issues raised during consultation

Because the Business and Economic Development workshop was held first, many interested participants did not receive sufficient notice. Some of those businesses who did attend felt there was an over-representation of public servants in the workshops so we made a particular effort to talk to businesses outside the workshop.

Business people told us that while some sections of the economy are doing well, tourism and retail is faring badly (a 2010 economic analysis by the NT Government found that the retail sector accounted for 126 of 411 businesses surveyed). Government figures presented at the Kilgariff forum show that the mining and construction sectors have declined and an apparent 'bubble' in economic activity from the Intervention that may provide only short-term relief.

Compounding uncertainty about their economic future, businesses said they also fed up with the impact of crime on their lifestyle, citing the cost of replacing smashed windows and tourists being intimidated by large numbers of Aboriginal people milling around the CBD.

There were concerns that the net migration from Alice Springs includes many skilled workers and that urgent action is needed to address the likely increase in the proportion of unemployed Aboriginal people if this remains proportionate to the projected population growth over the next 20 years, confirmed by government population data presented at the Kilgariff forum that we summarise hereⁱⁱ:

- Alice Springs is projected to grow from 27,877 people in 2009 to 30,578 in 2021
- Alice Springs typically experiences high population mobility (every five years, the equivalent of half the population moves into or out of Alice Springs)
- 2008 was the first year for a while in which net migration to Alice Springs was positive, largely because of Intervention and other government programs
- most of the population growth is from natural increases (children born in Alice Springs or people moving from remote communities)

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- newcomers from interstate are more likely to be single people aged between 15 and 29
 - the largest proportion of people leaving between 2001 and 2006 (37%) were mid-career age people aged 30 to 44 years
 - more than 18,000 people live within a 500 kilometre radius of Alice Springs, more than 75% of them Indigenous.

Many people told us they are worried about their children's future and felt unsafe coming into the CBD at night.

A large number of interviewees recounted personal anecdotes about an assault or a burglary on themselves or their children and many are edgy because they sense a growing anger behind many of the assaults and break-ins. There is a major increase in houses on the market, although high prices remain a deterrent to attracting key workers to the town, and real estate agents report that the town has become a "buyer's market".

Although security measures are a natural response to criminal activity, several people expressed concern that the town was starting to feel under siege, with barbed wire, ugly shutters and bollards. There were many anecdotes also about workers and tourists being deterred from coming to Alice Springs by coverage of crime and the image portrayed by the media although there were mixed views about whether this reflected or exaggerated the reality.

There are rumours (which we believe have been denied) that Pine Gap is going to withdraw its staff and resort to fly in fly out because of fears about the safety of its staff. This makes people nervous because Pine Gap staff and their families comprise a large proportion of the population.

Publicans are angry at being portrayed as the 'purveyors of misery' and at perceived lack of consultation by government before announcing alcohol reforms. They believe it is better for people to drink in licensed premises, where their behaviour can be monitored.

As the Menzies report found earlier, many residents believe the alcohol problem is all the fault of 300 or so problem drinkers and they are angry that everyone is being inconvenienced by the alcohol restrictions.

A common theme, particularly when speaking to business people, is that they don't like bureaucrats, they think government has been slow with its land release, they blame the police (but Darwin management) for being slow to react to the crime problems over the summer and are cynical that police resources were reduced after the March Parliamentary sittings. They are angry that the police call centre was taken back to Darwin and believe this has reduced the responsiveness and local knowledge of call takers. However, they support their local police.

There is cynicism at the lack of enforcement of the many measures already announced, eg town camps are meant to be dry but some are full of drunks and VB cans and there are still reports of kids running around in communities during school hours and at night.

The Chamber of Commerce provided us with the results of a survey conducted of its members in February 2011 that shows that most members who responded have been burgled. Of 83 respondents, 52 % reported being affected by vandalism since January 2011, 47 businesses collectively estimated that vandalism had cost their businesses \$340,204 and 23 businesses had lost merchandise worth \$49,197. There are grim comments that the only businesses thriving in the CBD are glaziers, with businesses facing increased costs from security measures and insurance. Just over half were satisfied with police response

times and only two out of 74 who answered the question thought the judicial system was effective in deterring repeat offenders. Asked if respondents thought the Australian and Territory Governments were 'responsible for the current environment in Alice Springs', 66 said yes and 10 said no.

The Department of Business recently surveyed mall and Yeperenye traders and reports that all but one said trade was substantially down, between 20 and 50%. Many have confronted shoplifters and been abused in return.

Tourism numbers are down and many tourists who do come are being advised by taxi drivers and hospitality staff to stay out of the CBD, which is further dampening retail trade and the viability of restaurants in town.

People are uncertain of what will happen after the Intervention, whether government spending will continue and whether the withdrawal of workers associated with Alice Springs Transformation Plan projects will cause a further economic slump. Some of the town's accommodation is virtually booked out by government staff and workers association with Intervention programs.

There are comments that the Top End gets all the government spending on major projects. Concerns were raised that the Alice CBD revitalisation project has been announced several times but there is no sign of any action. Many people are dubious that the Melanka project will proceed and opinions are divided about the proposed Kilgariff sub-division.

There was cynicism about the effectiveness of the government's economic development committees and a comment from one businessman that 'they were set up so government could say they had been set up'. We spoke to several current or former members of the committee who don't believe their input to committees such as this is valued or value adding.

A major concern raised is the lack of regional economies, which is seen as the cause of many people coming into town. Some people were scathing of the impact of the shires on remote areas, seeing local government reform and CDEP changes as more significant in their detrimental impacts on communities than the Intervention.

Centrefarm was concerned that the Australian Government's regional development focus did not extend to economic development and provision of infrastructure that could promote regional economic development and sustain long-term jobs, such as Centrefarm's fledgling horticultural developments.

The importance of education and Aboriginal people getting work was a key theme. Businesses agreed they had a key role to play in providing jobs for local Aboriginal people but said most are too small and too busy to have the capacity to manage this on their own. Many also felt that Aboriginal people weren't sufficiently work ready or motivated and were held back by family pressures and welfare.

When asked what the economic drivers of the town were, people believed it was retail, cattle and tourism. There was little mention of the government service economy.ⁱⁱⁱ

When asked what government's role was, people believed it was an enabling role, such as ensuring land release, but there was little awareness or, it seems, gratitude for what the government does do and perceptions of endless red tape and inertia in getting anything done.

Based on comments made during individual interviews and in workshops, the private sector does not appear to have a high regard for government's role in enabling economic development or fixing the town's social problems.

There were comments that government's role should shrink and that the private sector should drive the economy. This negativity was reflected in comments by public servants who feel the work they do is not well-known or understood and that communication with business has broken down.

4. YOUTH SERVICES

While this was the best attended workshop, comments were made that we needed to listen to the voice of young people to ensure the action plan reflected their views and aspirations.

Therefore we sought out some young people separate to the workshop and attended two events held at the Youth Hub as part of Youth Week. We were also given a copy of a 2010 report by former Youth Round Table member and project officer with InCite Elspeth Blunt called "Listen Up, Shout Out" that encapsulated the views of a broad range of Alice Springs Youth.

Young people told us they want to be heard. The negative publicity has angered them. They feel they are being unfairly portrayed in the media and all young people spoken to – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – were upset by the Action for Alice ads and newspaper coverage of crime.

Young people spoken to (a group of Year 9 Aboriginal students as part of the Girls at the Centre, a Harmony group who helped organise Harmony events for youth week and other individuals) are upset that young people are portrayed negatively and it is hard to get good news stories in the media.

They feel they are being persecuted by the police and security guards as a result of the police crackdown and gave many examples of being accused of shoplifting, harassed by police and security guards and being chased out of shopping centres and supermarkets. There is growing resentment towards the police.

They feel the negative publicity is causing racism and racist behaviours, with young Aboriginal people in particular caught in the middle. We heard many stories from both Aboriginal people and concerned non-Aboriginal people about rude treatment by shopkeepers, shopkeepers not giving people their change, people distressed at the way police and security guards spoke to older Aboriginal people sitting outside shops, takeaway staff refusing to serve a well-dressed and seemingly sober Aboriginal man, kids being ignored in favour of non-Aboriginal customers and Aboriginal people being moved on when they were causing no trouble. The young people think local police are OK because they are used to dealing with Aboriginal people but say the police from Darwin are young and rude. There are fears of vigilantes and people talked of a 'wedge being driven' between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

Some of our interviewees felt the burglaries and assaults are being committed by young men who are bored and in some cases showing off. They want more things to do and suggested activities like affordable sports and concerts, including suggestions for more Cops and Kids activities.

Other issues raised by the young people include growing tensions between Aboriginal and Sudanese youth (young women find them intimidating and see Sudanese arrivals as taking Indigenous jobs); they want safe buses to get to venues and like school buses because the people on them are trained to work with young people; they want more drug and alcohol education in school; more holiday activities and places for homeless young people to go if they didn't feel safe going home. None knew who they would call for help and suggested there be a number on every phone box that young people could call. They wanted more information about events on in town and said at the moment they rely on friends telling them what's on.

Inevitably, there were a range of views about how government was responding to youth issues.

One public servant felt that the focus on the Alice Springs Transformation Plan, while good, had meant youth issues had fallen between the cracks.

Several public servants felt that the Youth Action Plan doesn't have a lot of credibility because it is seen as not very rigorous and people are sick of hearing it announced. Most non-government participants in workshops, on the other hand, knew little about the plan.

Several youth services providers felt that while the Youth Hub has been slow to materialise, the Hub has recently hosted some good events that attracted equal numbers of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth, the triage services have started and there is potential to restore its credibility by ensuring it has the resources to deliver.

There is a widespread concern at the number of youth services in Alice Springs, perceptions that duplication is reducing their effectiveness, concerns from within the sector that youth work is not highly valued so does not attract appropriately qualified and experienced people and that the sector is so fragmented that real help is often not available when young people most need it. It was raised by many people that no one can really provide a holistic picture of what services do exist, how do they link up, what are the gaps and how can they be better coordinated.

A senior representative of Lhere Artepe suggested drawing a diagram that showed the available services as a net to help identify how well the strands of the net link up and where the holes are.

A regular comment from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were the disincentives to work created by welfare. A single mother who had planned to move from part-time to full-time work discovered the implications for her public housing and welfare payments and said this was a common issue faced by Aboriginal people surrounded by relatives on welfare.

4.1 Youth services discussion paper

The non-government agencies, funded by the Northern Territory Government and coordinated by NTCOSS, ran their own workshop on these issues in March 2011 and came up with a "Better Strategies to Respond to Youth Issues in Alice Springs" paper that outlined how the sector could work more effectively. Robyn Donnelly of Relationships Australia gave an overview of the paper at the Youth Services workshop, which led to considerable discussion on the issues raised.

This paper emphasised the importance of developing strategies that engage Aboriginal people to take part on youth committees, the importance of building trusting relationships with young people and their families and the challenges of working in a cross-cultural environment.

Its 12 key proposals were:

- 1. Intensive case management and family support for at risk young people and their families:** This outlines the importance of engaging with young people's families in order to find solutions, providing intense case management and voluntary early intervention services to reduce the number of young people entering the child protection and criminal justice systems. The paper supports Multisystemic Therapy as a multi-disciplinary, long-term intensive family and community based treatment program that focuses on the entire work of juvenile offenders, including family, schools, neighbourhoods and friends. Research shows that successful application of this approach can keep kids out of trouble and reduce rearrest rates by up to 70%.
- 2. Developing smarter ways of ensuring young people who offend take responsibility for their reoffending:** The paper outlines the benefits of restorative and therapeutic justice as reducing reoffending, helping to address the underlying causes of behaviour, giving victims a chance to talk about how crime has impacted on them and reducing the costs of young people entering the

criminal justice system. It recommends a victim offender conferencing program based on the Victorian Brosnan model to provide viable pre-sentencing options to the courts.

- 3. Build a culture of community service among young people in Alice Springs:** It is important to recognise the valuable contribution young people make to the community so they feel useful and competent. This includes opportunities for young people to volunteer their services, learn new skills and be recognised, such as the Mt Theo Jaru Pirrjirdi (Strong Voices) program that is a youth development and leadership program as well as an aftercare program for at risk youth.
- 4. A single, sustainable calendar of structured activities for young people in Alice Springs all year round:** The current calendar works only around school holidays and many organisations are stretched to deliver programs. More resources should be dedicated to providing programs that reach all young people all year round.
- 5. Strengthen youth camps by implementing the recommendations of a recent evaluation:** A recent evaluation found that youth camps have been an effective way of engaging with disadvantaged young people by providing a therapeutic environment that reduces the risk of future offending. It would be helpful to have a matrix of all youth camps and who funds them.
- 6. Improve bail support and accommodation:** It is important to break the cycle of reoffending by helping young people convicted of a crime to get their lives back on track through accommodation, support, jobs, education and behaviour change. Programs that do this make the community safer and reduce the costs of crime and detention. The paper supports the Queensland Youth Bail Accommodation and Support Service model.
- 7. Better strategies to engage young people in training and education:** A need to go beyond measures that reduce truancy and improve school attendance to finding ways to engage disengaged young people.
- 8. Better accommodation options for young people:** Having safe, appropriate housing is critical to young people's sense of security and wellbeing. Many are on the streets at all hours due to overcrowding, family violence, alcohol use and other challenges that make their homes unwelcome or unsafe places.
- 9. Increase youth-specific alcohol and drug treatment and long-term rehabilitation:** Many young people in the criminal justice system have never had access to appropriate alcohol and drug treatment programs. A recent review of Alcohol and Other Drug services recommended that BushMob (which provides residential and adventure therapy services) be supported and expanded. The Australian and NT Governments have provided funding for BushMob to provide more beds at the old CAT facility in Priest Street. All programs should have monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- 10. Improve youth specific health services and programs:** Provide services that have a focus on prevention and early intervention, with more outreach services.
- 11. Improve transport options for young people:** Young people often lack independent means of travel. They need public transport options, including at night and on weekends. This could include youth patrol and youth workers who can engage with young people experiencing difficulties;
- 12. Improve support for ageing carers of young people and support for young people with challenging behaviours:** Many grandparents and other carers look after young people with high support needs. Many are under significant pressure and have few options for respite care and assistance, a problem confirmed by a recent Alice Springs Transformation Plan Family Support Services Action Group survey. There are also calls to support a current pilot involving NT Aged and Disability, Adult Guardianship and BushMob with Individual Support Program support of clients with high behavioural needs (generally aged 16 to 25).

5. CRIME AND ALCOHOL

5.1 Overview

Of all the issues raised during consultation, it was the issue of crime, alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour that inflamed the most passion. Crime impacts on personal safety, the costs of running a business, the use of public spaces, quality of life, the impression tourists get of the CBD and satisfaction with police and government responses. People want immediate action, combined with longer-term solutions to prevent a recurrence of what happened over summer.

Not surprisingly, there was anger by many people at the courts and some sections of the community want to see young people jailed. On the other hand, the youth sector and most agencies are concerned that sending people to prison is the worst outcome. It is expensive, many Aboriginal people see prison as a 'cushy' alternative and it does little to break the cycle of offending. Also (as below) the importance of early intervention because it's hard and very expensive to try to reform people when they get older.

However, the prevalence of crime is also causing complacency: many people said they no longer reported minor crimes to police. One public servant talked of a colleague being broken into five times and no longer reporting the break-ins.

Many of these issues have been captured in the sections above.

There were many comments about the impact of urban drift on crime and antisocial behaviour in Alice Springs and many comments about how the many changes on remote communities might be contributing to the problem.

Tangentyere Council is concerned at the lack of any social or economic reason for people to be in communities, the dramatic loss of CDEP positions in remote areas and the lack of decision-making powers and autonomy by Aboriginal people.

5.2 Presentation on policing issues

Superintendent Michael Murphy of Alice Springs Police gave an overview of police activity and some analysis of who is responsible for the crimes and antisocial behaviour.

- An estimated 90% of antisocial behaviour is alcohol-related, usually by people who give their address as Alice Springs (however it's not known how long people may have been in Alice Springs);
- Yes, some police have just been released back to Darwin, police are now looking at adjusting rosters so resources are available when they are most needed. An additional four police remain in Alice Springs to continue the reduction efforts until the beginning of May. Resource allocation is constantly evaluated.
- A Patrol Coordinator position has been created to minimise fragmentation across a range of services within the community, create a streamlined and collegiate approach to problem solving and minimise the harm associated with substance abuse.
- Police operations have led to a large number of arrests with a substantial reduction in crime by March. Property related crime, due to targeted operations, decreased significantly from the February period to the April period (for both dwelling and buildings). An Operation in February saw over 50 arrests for about 35 offenders (with 20 remanded and 15 on strict bail compliance).

Operation Roland was dedicated to breaking the back of anti-social behaviour, targeting property offenders and maintaining bail compliance. Between 3 -28 March Operation Roland had the following results:

- 102 arrests
- 1243 people taken into protective custody
- 2372 litres of liquor tipped out
- 334 field intelligence reports
- 64 summary infringement notices.

There was discussion about the need for a local call centre so that call takers had local knowledge and were responsive to local needs. It was suggested police to do a cost benefit analysis on this. Supt Murphy said that having a call centre in Darwin allows for more police to be on the road in Alice Springs. Dispatch Operators are located in Alice Springs and have the local knowledge required to direct patrols.

Supt Murphy touched on new reforms for problem drinkers – considering alcohol is involved in so many crimes, road trauma and anti-social behaviours.

He was asked whether police had sufficient resources and said that compared to the rest of Australia, police in Alice Springs were well-resourced.

There was discussion about preparing for next summer to ensure the same problems are not experienced as this year.

(see more detail at Appendix 1)

5.3 Presentation on alcohol reforms

Senior Director, Alcohol Strategy, in the Department of Justice, Jane Alley provided an overview of the government's Enough is Enough Alcohol Reform Package. She said the reforms are targeted at individuals seen as having alcohol problems.

Key elements of the reforms are:

- banning problem drinkers: people will lose their privilege to drink for a limited time
- treatment notices and orders
- increase in treatment options
- enforcing bans through a Banned Drinkers Register that will operate in all Territory takeaway outlets
- targeting people who commit offences and those assessed as at risk.

There are three ways of getting alcohol bans: police bans, tribunal, SMART (Substance Misuse, Assessment and Referral for Treatment) court. All bans link to the banned drinkers' register.

The strategy also has a focus on community education and awareness: changing the amount and the way people drink.

For more information see the Government's website at www.safeterritory.nt.gov.au.

There was discussion about the impact of takeaway restrictions. Some participants felt the restrictions had been effective in reducing the availability of alcohol to problem drinkers while others felt the

restrictions had penalised the broader community, that drinkers would always find ways around any restrictions (including breaking into licensed premises to get alcohol) and that the restrictions had changed the behaviour of some drinkers (for example staying in town later once they had purchased takeaway). There were concerns at the cost of implementing the reforms and the level of government regulation of people's lives.

5.4 Congress paper

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress had prepared a discussion paper, "Rebuilding Family Life in Alice Springs and Central Australia: the social and community dimensions of change for our people" which was circulated to participants of the Crime Prevention and Alcohol and Education and Early Childhood Development workshops.

The paper argues that the current crisis has been gathering for many years, that the heart of the crisis is reflected in the enormous disparity in the 'social determinants of health', that the solutions must come from the community, be evidence-based and determined by need.

Congress suggests that if families are unwilling or unable to take responsibility for their children, a Central Australian Regional Family Responsibility Commission (FRC) should be established, along the lines of the model operating in Cape York, Queensland, to replace the proposed Alcohol and Other Drugs Tribunal.

The paper outlines the Congress emphasis on early childhood programs and quality childcare centres, youth services, Targetted Family Support Service and alcohol and other drugs treatment programs.

5.5 Impact of crime and alcohol-related antisocial behaviour

Much of this has been covered in the discussion above. Businesses said the current spate of crime and antisocial behaviour had driven tourists away, made it hard to recruit staff and caused expense to businesses suffering from vandalism and break-ins.

There was debate about whether the issues were cyclical or whether the problems of urban drift and disengaged youth had worsened. There was not agreement on this point although most participants felt the issues had been worse this year and there was an extra 'edge' of anger behind much of the violence.

Participants felt that the normal mobility patterns of Aboriginal people had been exacerbated by the Intervention, loss of CDEP and establishment of shires which had led to a 'loss of community'.

It was agreed that research was needed to provide an accurate picture of these issues in order to better inform responses. Perhaps this could be the responsibility of an independent, Federally funded agency.

6. EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Education was seen by all groups as a key to breaking the cycle of welfare dependency and leading Aboriginal youth to good jobs. However, participants said educational outcomes and school attendance rates remain poor in the Territory, with a range of factors working against good educational outcomes, including poor housing, nutrition, health, parents not valuing education and perceptions of little remedial action when children fail to go to school.

The Northern Territory Coordinator General for Remote Services, Bob Beadman, noted in his third report last November:

“Sadly, another contributor to poor attendance at school is the failure to take punitive action against adults declining jobs and training and therein lies a very important key. If kids progress into their teens in a family where neither parent has ever worked, and the government continues to provide them with all of their needs, it is not surprising that kids would not be able to see any value in an education.”

Mr Beadman also commented on the mixed messages governments send, with welfare payments acting as a disincentive to taking up jobs and the “stopping, restarting, sunseting, and the other revisions” to the Community Employment Development Projects (CDEP) scheme sending “all the wrong messages about the value governments say they place on work”.

These sentiments were reiterated by Mr Beadman during our consultation.

6.1 Department of Education and Training presentation

Eva Lawler, Executive Director, Central Australian Region, of the Department of Education and Training, provided an overview of current departmental approaches.

She said there were no ‘silver bullets or quick fixes’ to education. The three keys to good educational outcomes were good teachers, good principals and good engagement by involving parents in the classroom.

The department placed a high priority on the quality of its principals but it is hard to fill these positions (and it has got harder with the high rents and negative publicity about Alice Springs).

Quality teachers can make up to 30% of the difference to good educational outcomes but the turnover of teachers in the Territory traditionally has been abysmal. It is important to get teachers who will stay so the department has implemented a new remote services teaching strategy that includes psychometric testing to avoid getting the ‘mercenaries, the missionaries and the misfits’.

Other initiatives:

- Every Child Every Day – a strategy that outlines the importance of strong leadership, making schools safe and welcoming places, relevant and interesting learning pathways, real partnerships and shared beliefs and understandings
- site specific attendance plans, eg shutting a community store if kids don’t go to school
- penalties for non-attendance at school, with truancy officers working with families on individual plans to get kids to school

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- home liaison officers
 - encouraging Vocational Education and Training (VET) in middle years to create more interesting pathways to jobs
 - Strong Start Bright Future program that will provide an executive to manage groups of schools like a college and work with industry to find jobs for students graduating from VET courses. If students can finish Year 12 they will be given job guarantees.

Karen Modoo, Director of Early Childhood Education and Care with the Department of Education, gave an overview of the importance of early childhood education services if children are to do well in life. Among the points she made:

- children's neural architecture is 80% set by the age of three, so by the time children are sent to school most of their important development should be in place
- 38.5% of kids at our schools are developmentally vulnerable
- there needs to be a stronger partnership between health and education
- education and health starts when a family is expecting a baby
- 69% of Territory Indigenous students are below the national minimum standard
- chronic stress is a common challenge for children in learning how to learn and appropriate social relationships.

The presentations (which can be found on the website at www.det.nt.gov.au) generated a lot of discussion:

- how could children be given access to pre-school services when there aren't enough pre-schools and no one has accurate information on how many young children are even in Alice Springs?
- discussion about the effectiveness of truancy officers when there appear to be a lot of kids still not at school (DET explained the efforts they go to, including staff riding on buses to get children to school, recruitment of quality staff, transitional programs, trying to make school fun and relevant, working with families);
- universal comment that education is the key and the only way to break the cycle of welfare dependency, followed up by jobs;
- however, some professionals are concerned at the slow progress in meeting the goals of 'Closing the Gap', that programs are only 'scratching the surface', that the Aboriginal population is growing fast, that disadvantage and poverty are going to lead to another lost generation and that focussed, community-based, collaborative action is needed to break the cycle;
- there were concerns about the concept of issuing infringement notices for non-attendance at school and how families living in poverty could pay these. Eva said infringement notices were a last resort, the department prefers approaches such as working with night patrols and families to get kids to school.

7. Comments from workshops

7.1 What do people love about Alice Springs?

This question was explored only in the business workshop

- people, family and community
- the opportunities
- the scenery, the landscape, raw beauty
- the country town lifestyle
- language, culture and diversity
- generous and enlightened people
- the community spirit and friendly people
- its remoteness
- the challenges and rewards
- everything
- “passionate people in Alice Springs who rub along together better than anywhere in the world”
- “the most socially complex place in Australia”
- “it has offered lots of opportunities for my family”
- “love the place, the community spirit, never seen anything like it”

7.2 How have businesses been affected?

- impact on business confidence about future growth and tourism
- lack of land release has affected availability of affordable land for residents, Territory Housing stock is being reduced, the Intervention has booked out all the accommodation and there is a lack of places for people, young people can't afford to get into the housing market;
- people with young children are concerned about their families' safety, if they can get jobs interstate they will be gone;
- the remoteness and isolation make it hard to recruit people, with the cost of flights and accommodation.

7.3 Key issues

For business (ranked the top issues)

- antisocial behaviour
- violence
- accommodation
- government accountability
- two-way cultural understanding
- respect
- segregation vs separatism
- land release
- urban drift

Other issues raised in business workshop

- a lack of confidence in the future growth of Alice Springs
- a local police call centre and better response times
- a lack of service delivery
- the need for economic development and opportunities for people living in remote areas
- people moving away because of a lack of affordable housing
- lack of accommodation for people moving into Alice Springs
- the need for better coordinated youth services
- targeted education programs and better solutions to dealing with offenders
- the need for two-way cultural understanding and lack of true partnerships
- the impact on the health system
- the escalation of violence and impact on lifestyles
- difficulties getting Aboriginal people to stay in jobs
- the anger of starving people who are walking into shops
- the need for more police, but police shouldn't be seen as social workers
- need for normal hours at bottle shops
- many Aboriginal people have been trained and trained but they are not being given job opportunities
- the Economic Development Committee has been ignored by Government, it has done nothing for the past 18 months
- impact on business confidence about future growth and tourism
- lack of land release has affected availability of affordable land for residents, Territory Housing stock is being reduced, the Intervention has booked out all the accommodation and there is a lack of places for people, young people can't afford to get into the housing market;
- people with young children are concerned about their families' safety, if they can get jobs interstate they will be gone;
- the remoteness and isolation make it hard to recruit people, with the cost of flights and accommodation;
- when we moved here 20 years ago, we could sleep with the window open, you can't now;
- the impact is that our kids have left town, we don't see our grandkids.

Key issues identified in the youth services workshop were, in order of ranked priority:

- parenting programs (6 votes)
- continuity of funding (5 votes)
- culturally appropriate family support (4)
- 24/7 community parenting (4)
- engagement (4)
- substance abuse (4)
- housing affordability and availability (3)
- youth space, recreation, entertainment (3)
- education (3)
- affordable programs (3)
- listening and active citizenship by youth (3)
- youth enterprise development (3)

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- safe place for youth to have a voice (2)
 - communication, tools to communicate (2)
 - restorative justice (2)
 - homelessness (1)
 - transition to jobs (1)
 - keeping promises (1)
 - youth leadership
 - transport access and priority
 - public open spaces in the suburbs.

Crime and alcohol

- need for a local call centre to ensure local knowledge and responsiveness
- people need to take personal responsibility for their actions
- community needs to portray Alice Springs in a positive light, especially for the sake of the tourism industry
- the importance of immediate action, not in another five or six years
- the community is not convinced of the effectiveness of alcohol restrictions (very polarised views on this)
- importance of early childhood development
- lack of investment in research-based programs that deliver outcomes and lack of evaluation of programs
- concerns that the new alcohol ID card will undermine the effectiveness of the Tangentyere ID card and lead to people not being able to access money from banks.

There was considerable discussion about the concept of ‘wet canteens’ with strongly divided opinions as to whether this would help. Some participants felt it was up to communities to make their own decisions, others said they had lived on communities with social clubs and there had been substantial problems.

There was also discussion about the importance of rehabilitation services, but how effective would they be if people were forced to attend and what would happen when drinkers went back to the same family or community circumstances. It would be better to work with families and communities if real behaviour change is to occur.

Education and early childhood

- early childhood development, who plays the lead agency – education or health
- need to have adequate resources and support in schools for teachers and quality resources
- national curriculum
- intergenerational learning centre 0 -3 years old (e.g. Lutheran school)
- getting kids to school – disengagement
- growing our own indigenous teachers (tied to the bilingual debate)
- lack of available pre-school placements

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- need education/teachers to look after kids while their parents are in town for dialysis (mobile eds)
 - community schools only going through years 1 – 7 – 9. Barrier to completing year 12.
 - investment needs to be with the family and getting parents to understand their responsibility
 - a lot of parents in Alice are still children themselves.

A major focus in the education and early childhood workshop was the importance of:

- whole of family interventions (whether it's the building blocks for children's cognitive development or rehabilitation of alcoholics);
- early childhood development is critical, starting with pregnant mothers. Failure to thrive and foetal alcohol syndrome are consigning many young kids to a gloomy future. Once they are at school, it's too late to undo much of the damage. The best investment of money would be to work with families to address the 'failure to thrive' issues and create good pathways to education and jobs.

Other general comments made in this workshop:

- Attendees agreed that education starts with the family when the woman is pregnant and continues from when the child is born to adulthood. Education is ongoing for every person.
- There is a demand for early education centres. Ages 0 – 3 are the most important years of learning for children. Pre-schools are lacking qualified teachers and there aren't enough places for children to go to pre-school (and we don't have enough data to even know the extent of the need).
- The group discussed the kids who are falling through the gaps. Although there are some good services some parents still don't want to engage. Need to provide education and create consequences for these parents.
- Research and brain development – need to provide information to parents: community campaigns, social networking etc. Agencies need to work together. "This is absolutely essential."
- Common goals – many different agencies are working on similar things but not coordinating efforts.
- Media –lack of positive stories. One group focused on the impact of negative media on kids. Need some good stories, promote the 'good stuff'. eg NT News has Classmate.
- Need more youth leadership programs. Kids need more input. Programs to engage parents. Perhaps starting in the home and moving into schools. Look at other places/examples to grab ideas from. "I think we need to expect more from young people."
- WHO, UNICEF and WB (World Bank) all suggest that targeted early education programs are the most cost-effective methods that help people.
- "what parents do is more important than who they are."
- "child protection is the expensive end, family support is the cheap end."

7.4 Goals, what will a good future look like?

(This issue wasn't addressed in the business and economic development workshop)

Youth Services

- allied health models, eg health and education working together on family support services
- giving people choices
- allowing solutions to emerge from within Aboriginal communities and organisations
- safe environments and opportunities for growth
- improved self-esteem
- inclusive programs
- a future for everyone
- positive perceptions of youth
- a real investment in youth, infants and adolescents
- creative responses to providing education
- parents setting a good example
- secure home lives
- youth are involved in the solutions
- young people in Alice Springs are attending school, taking part in training, engaged in work and actively involved in the community
- a sense of community
- clarity of support
- everyone able to access activities
- smiles
- trust
- youth have a voice
- happy, well-adjusted youth living in harmony with the rest of the community
- shared feelings and stories
- shared laughter and stories
- social harmony
- high expectations
- creative and relevant responses to Indigenous education
- safe, supported families
- recognising the noble character of youth and helping them develop a sense of purpose, of bettering the world
- how do we know when the youth plan has been successful – when youth are no longer seen as an issue.

Crime and alcohol

- improved safety for everyone in the community and freedom to use public spaces
- reduced alcohol consumption in Alice Springs to the national average (according to the Menzies research, even without Aboriginal drinkers, Alice Springs' alcohol consumption is still about 50% above the rest of Australia)
- reduce alcohol-related harm in Alice Springs and surrounding communities
- education to bridge social disadvantage

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- reducing the culture of welfare dependence
 - to live in a safe community where children can grow up protected from abuse, substance misuse and the effects of crime
 - better integration of offenders back into the community
 - better lives for families who have suffered because of excessive alcohol use
 - meaningful jobs for all Aboriginal people
 - increased uptake of support services by people with alcohol issues
 - greater community responsibility for the problems, with a shift from blame to resolve
 - a safe, respectful township that engages all its members
 - poverty addressed
 - equality
 - self-respect
 - social harmony
 - quality interventions

Education and early childhood

- every Territory child achieving their full potential in their school years (attending school and achieving their goals)
- ensure disadvantaged families can access nurse home visit services from pregnancy to the age of 2 and educational day care for children from 1 to 3 to maximise brain development by the age of 3
- inclusion
- every child having access to quality pre-school and transition programs that serve individual needs and that support living in the work in this century
- all agencies working together strategically to support parents, children and schools to ensure better educational and life outcomes
- good linkages to reduce duplication and strengthen existing services
- a decrease in the ethno-centric approach to education in Central Australia;
- that many, many more Aboriginal people of all ages become engaged in education
- confident, informed, actively involved community members
- an investment in people that sees children trained and qualified in early childhood
- meaningful and engaging learning programs for all young people from conception
- continual collaboration between education and health service providers to identify and work towards meeting the complex needs of families in Alice Springs
- all children are attending and taking part in schools that are catering for their needs
- quality standards Australia wide for early childhood and education curriculum
- bilingual education program
- to build social capital by investing in home, family and community
- to have every Aboriginal child ready for preschool so they maximise their potential to lead a rewarding and fulfilling life that contributes to the wellbeing of the community in which they live
- to increase the power of families to build strong foundations for their children's development
- a quality education system that engages all young people
- an integrated approach to service deliver
- appropriate therapeutic support for children who are experiencing or who have experienced trauma and support for their families working through partnerships

7.5 Barriers to achieving goals

Business and economic development

- red tape and bureaucracy
- government doesn't listen to the people
- the consequences of past actions and policies
- too much rhetoric, not enough action, government slow to start projects
- not enough shared accountability
- institutionalised racism
- opportunity cost of sending people to jail
- welfare
- lack of affordable land and housing
- cost of building
- lack of a strong voice to influence outcomes
- problems attracting workers to Alice Springs (negative image and cost of housing)
- fears of a lost generation
- poor literacy and education, kids aren't work ready
- lack of willingness to work
- not enough partnerships
- lack of coordination of government services
- too much red tape, which is costly and time-consuming
- decline in industries that provide employment for Aboriginal people
- poor self-esteem
- separatism
- urban drift
- negative media
- disempowerment
- short-term government funding
- poor two-way cultural understanding
- growing gap between rich and poor
- lack of transport
- loss of authority by elders
- alcohol and antisocial behaviour.

Youth services

- history of broken promises
- lack of continuity of funding and stopping programs that work well
- communication
- lack of trust
- lack of community consultation and engagement
- thinking one size fits all
- making judgements about young people
- not enough housing and accommodation
- multi-generational trauma
- reinventing the wheel

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- staff turnover and lack of appropriately qualified staff (related to housing shortages)
 - disempowered families
 - centralised government
 - lack of grassroots engagement with elders
 - antisocial behaviour
 - fragmented funding
 - absence of an economic development strategy
 - lead times to implement programs
 - young people can't activate good ideas
 - early intervention strategies are difficult to measure
 - funding models
 - over-regulation makes it hard for businesses to employ young people
 - poor parenting
 - lack of creativity in progressing innovative solutions
 - attitudes
 - lack of professional development
 - cultural misunderstandings.

Crime and alcohol

- parental awareness of early childhood services, including health and nutrition, and confidence in accessing them
- transport to get to services
- trained qualified staff to provide quality programs
- lack of consistent funding and support for long-term programs
- need to evaluate local programs
- negative perceptions and attitudes
- political agitation
- the capacity of families
- not enough youth involved in making decisions
- negative media
- ethnocentric approach (need to listen to parents)
- agencies not working together
- lack of knowledge of what programs are being run in town
- lack of pre-schools, need more discussion about pre-school hours, age-accessible and free for kids aged 3 to 5
- legalities of running programs and cost of complying with regulations
- the debate between rights and needs
- not enough home visit programs and targeted family support
- lack of programs for kids aged 0 to 3
- lack of support professionals like speech therapists (who are needed to diagnose foetal alcohol syndrome)
- difficulty engaging parents in support programs
- myths, eg that alcohol is just an Aboriginal problem when it's a whole of community problem
- constantly changing itinerant population, need for accurate data

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- don't understand who is in town: people come for medical services, to visit relatives in jail, to avoid payback
 - an expectation by people coming to town that they don't have to pay for anything.

Education and early childhood

- attitudes and intolerance of other people's opinions
- lack of transparency of ideas and vision
- self-interest (personal, business, organisational, government)
- bureaucratic maze (government, business, NGOs, agencies)
- not enough layers of government working on the ground, together with NGOs, other agencies and business
- lack of good data
- lack of education (children and their parents)
- social disharmony
- marginalisation of youth and Indigenous groups
- wellbeing of people compromised by substance abuse (issues with fetal alcohol syndrome)
- culture of irresponsible drinking throughout the community
- issues controlling individuals eg visitors to town camps
- dependent lifestyles
- limited self-worth
- kids not being exposed to positive role models among the older generation
- inconsistent service delivery due to staff recruitment and retention issues
- attitudes of individuals and their families regarding the value of education
- low school attendance still an issue

7.6 Ideas for removing the barriers

Business and economic development

- create culturally appropriate workplaces
- shared accountability
- collective solutions
- create more realistic targets
- look at alternative models of intervention to jail, such as restorative justice
- use the skills and experience of community leaders to positive effect
- tourism partnerships
- industry training
- build business skills and knowledge
- create industries in communities, eg food, bakeries, piggery
- nurture communities
- self-governance
- people need to take personal responsibility
- make the Bush Bus a free service so people don't get stuck in town
- abolish baby bonus
- no welfare
- real schooling

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- tailored education so Indigenous people across all generations can join the workforce economy
 - work experience for Aboriginal students so they get a better idea of how business operates and potential job opportunities
 - more incentives for business
 - better use of regional economic development money
 - projects that open local growth and Indigenous employment
 - strategic regional infrastructure
 - mentoring
 - real employment paths
 - deregulation
 - adopt a school programs, such as the Alice Springs Desert Park
 - upgrade roads in Central Australia
 - better consultation with industry
 - realistic targets so they can be achieved
 - learn from successful models in other places like New York and New South Wales
 - working in forums such as this helps find solutions that break down barriers.

Youth services

- need better identification of needs
- then provide a longer-term focus on fewer but better programs with assured recurrent funding rather than new programs every couple of years
- funding for five years, aligned with evaluation of programs
- sustainable and long-term funding
- a 'wrap around' approach
- celebrate our strengths
- shift responsibility from government to the community
- more infrastructure in remote communities to keep people there
- more jobs
- more housing
- community events
- control of funding in Alice Springs (so it is tailored to needs, suggestion of a community panel to provide advice to government)
- community ownership of the challenges
- youth bus with services
- resources sharing (transport and spaces)
- functional activity areas in town that link with suburbs
- the proposed 'meeting place', as part of the revitalisation of the CBD that welcomes young people into public spaces
- more long-term planning
- turn tuck shops into cafeterias so kids can get breakfast
- coordination of government responses and private funding
- better paid youth workers, with appropriate qualifications
- regular meetings of the entire youth sector to share ideas, keep abreast of what is happening and provide professional development
- give young people the chance to have a say on spending decisions

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- bipartisan approach with a long-term commitment
 - youth representation on bodies such as the Chamber of Commerce, Alice Springs Town Council
 - incentives to employ young people
 - community lobby group
 - need to look after forgotten needs groups such as the disabled
 - small, achievable, community-based projects
 - parenting classes
 - education centres not detention centres
 - use of restorative justice principles
 - mentoring programs
 - cross-cultural programs to better equip families and young people to live in town
 - more translators from remote areas
 - youth citizenship programs
 - community volunteers
 - departmental collaboration
 - get kids to school, even if it means picking them up
 - take kids to work on stations so they can pick up skills for life, subsidise station owners for wages and accommodation
 - tailor income management to the needs of families, not everyone needs it
 - a whole-of-family approach
 - revitalise Todd Mall, make the town youth-friendly
 - need to move beyond stereotypes, including racial stereotypes
 - a place to advertise events, like a bulletin board.

Crime and alcohol

- get rid of 6 pm alcohol restrictions and replace them with an alcohol floor price at the price of full-strength beer (\$1.20 per standard drink)
- more cultural training for service providers
- offer a range of ways to get information on services, including mentoring, mobile playgroups, television promotion, fun in the park
- work with agencies to coordinate buses (eg designated swap area)
- invest in local people through more professional development and capacity building across a range of fields and developmental areas
- run information sessions for parents using a number of different agencies and support groups to get information out
- myth busting, provide the facts on many of the issues causing division
- promote the good things happening in Alice Springs
- increased networking
- involve more young people in programs, form a Positive Action for Alice group
- need long-term funding for well-run programs
- research and information on what has worked in other places, eg native American communities
- have a meeting with the Centralian Advocate to talk about a youth page, like 'Classmate' in the NT News
- media campaigns to let parents know what services are available for 0-4 year olds (use SMS and YouTube)

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- an interagency approach using social networks to link people
 - use Youth Hub as a place to promote programs and things happening in town
 - plans that involve community leaders (like Cape York)
 - re-establishing social norms
 - collective agreements between agencies to ensure collaborative approaches (what are we doing, are we transparent, how it is happening, who is doing it)
 - provide regular bulletins of crime figures so people have accurate information, this should show patterns as far back as 2006
 - fine recovery for damage by taking it from welfare money
 - open up facilities for accommodation when they are not being used, eg schools
 - use of CDEP or alternative funds for activities and cultural responsibilities, give responsibility back to the old people and give young people something to do
 - expand remote area night patrols to come into town on a rolling basis to deal with people from their communities
 - allow town camps to choose to drink or not drink, create some as gated communities where people can get away from drinkers
 - create therapeutic communities (where families and communities can address issues together).

Education and early childhood

- need to rebuild trust and relationships
- importance of early childhood education from pregnancy to birth
- preschools with professional staff
- programs to support parents
- create community ownership and reconnect the community
- government needs to accept responsibility for the past and ensure agencies and organisations are accountable for their actions and inactions
- ensure immediate safety and police services that match needs
- cross-border Central Australian social planning
- open dialogue
- need for social research and long term social (not political) planning
- intensive and immediate case management of young people and their families
- engage youth with pathways for their future
- improved social harmony
- find champions and leaders
- improve people's self-worth (strengthen internal resources and provide positive external feedback)
- more sustainable remote communities
- create appropriate environments in which to consume alcohol
- go to the places where people live to improve their environments
- improve service delivery, taking into account the difference levels of engagement needed
- better communication and community engagement
- recognition and celebration of achievements
- rationalise resources to get the best out of available funding
- provide alcohol and other drugs education in schools
- ensure education prepares young people to be work ready

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- bring back CDEP
 - change attitudes that allow welfare dependency
 - community clubs
 - set up an Early Childhood Council, with a team of people who look at integrated services and advocate for integrated systems.

7.7 Suggested actions

From workshops and broader consultation

Business

- Revamp the Alice Springs Economic Development Committee so it has a real voice and role in driving economic development in Alice Springs. This could involve a greater leadership role by the Chamber of Commerce, greater access to Ministers to raise issues and acting as a vehicle for consultation with the community on issues such as the proposed revitalisation of the CBD.
- A major project that restores business confidence and boosts the economy post-Intervention such as the Melanka development (role of the private sector) or CBD revitalisation project (which could be a partnership between business and government).
- Work with the Australian Government and Regional Development Australia (chaired by the Mayor Damien Ryan) to provide infrastructure that will drive regional economies and long-term jobs.
- Government could work with the Chamber of Commerce to broker relationships between business and youth, incorporating work experience, mentors who could work with clusters of small businesses to help them employ Aboriginal people, training sessions on employing Aboriginal people and reducing red tape in getting Government assistance.
- Government can play a key role in employing and training Aboriginal people to boost the skills of the local workforce. Alice Springs Town Council could also boost the participation rates of local Aboriginal people. Some work is particularly attractive to Aboriginal people, such as ranger programs, land management, community development, health and education, and small enterprises such as tourism.
- The Australian Government could play a key role in reducing welfare dependence, which businesses saw as a major disincentive to people taking up real jobs. This might translate to an action such as establishing a high level review of the impacts of welfare, with suggestions including greater quarantining and more enforcement by Centrelink when people don't take up jobs.

Youth services

- A calendar of events, available in various formats such as posters in the CBD and on school noticeboards, the website and Facebook (Gavin Henderson of the Youth Round Table has compiled an activities calendar and needs government, council and NGO support to ensure all information is available and people know where to find the calendar);
- Provide a complete picture of all youth services, review their effectiveness duplication, and gaps, priorities those that most meet identified needs and provide advice to both governments on rationalisation of funding to maximise its effectiveness;
- Social and mobility research to provide a factual database on urban drift, crime and antisocial behaviour so that resources can be dedicated to where they will make the biggest difference and government can plan for effective provision of services. Include interviews with shires and elders in remote communities;

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- School holiday activities: Develop a comprehensive program of school holiday activities that keeps kids out of trouble and gives young people a chance to make positive contact with police and youth service providers. This program could be extended to provide programs that cater for young people all year round. Requires a coordinator and upgraded facilities to ensure they are safe and suitable;
 - Give youth a voice: establish an effective youth advisory committee to give advice on events, communication and services. Draw on the services of the Harmony Group and Youth Round Table;
 - Youth forum: Arrange a youth forum to hear from young people about their aspirations for the town and how to solve the current problems with anti-social behaviour. Could include activities such as concerts, sport and art as a drawcard. Use credible youth leaders to run youth-friendly feedback sessions;
 - Audit of current facilities: Audit all current facilities available for youth activities, determine their best use, consider how they complement each other, the potential for a 'youth precinct' to incorporate the Youth Centre and Youth Hub;
 - Transport: Provide dedicated youth transport to ensure young people feel safe, can access facilities and get home safely;
 - MOU between governments: Provide a MOU between all three levels of government to ensure a coordinated approach to funding youth services, based on a comprehensive needs analysis and rationalisation of existing service providers. Provide secure, long-term funding for the programs that have demonstrated good results (eg BushMob's adventure therapy camps, Tangentyere Council's Circuit Breaker camps, Mt Theo and Barry Abbott's outstation programs and Graham Ross's work with young people). Evaluate all services as the basis of long-term funding;
 - Community centres: support efforts by Tangentyere to provide multi-generational community centres that can work with Aboriginal people living in town camps and public housing;
 - Support leadership programs: such as Desert Leadership course, Polly Farmer Foundation, Clontarf, Girls at the Centre, Youth Round Table;
 - Expand Family Support Services: based on an evaluation on demand and capacity of current services;
 - Establish bail support and accommodation, based on Youth Bail Accommodation and Support Services;
 - Maintain a list of promises and ensure they are honoured;
 - Community reference group to help government determine funding priorities;
 - Workforce study for the shires (being done by the Local Government Association of the NT);
 - Indigenous employment in Government: government has the resources to employ, train and mentor young Indigenous people in a way that is often beyond the means of business and could perform an important role in giving Indigenous people real jobs. Similarly Alice Springs Town Council could increase its Indigenous participation rates. The Desert Wildlife Park has provided a good model of how to do this and how to work with Aboriginal elders.

Crime prevention and alcohol

- create a database of services and organisations that can be maintained by one organisation and accessible to everyone (NTCOSS, Anglicare, Alice Springs Town Council and the Department of Health already maintain some sort of list);
- as with the previous workshop, some sort of community reference group or panel to guide a coordinated approach by government to allocating funds;

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- a resource to help NGOs write funding applications (maybe attached to the above);
 - publish bulletins with crime statistics to provide accurate information to the community;
 - bring night patrols in from remote communities on a rolling basis so they can work with people from their own communities, as this has proved effective at sporting events;
 - seek a review of the Police call centre to examine its effectiveness, the pros and cons of centralisation and a cost:benefit analysis. If the review finds a centralised model is preferred, communicate the rationale to the community;
 - develop a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design audit of the CBD and offer businesses the chance to have police review their security.

Education and early childhood

There was general support for a number of actions already being implemented by the Department of Education and Training.

Additional actions suggested:

- social and mobility research (outlined above) so government departments can plan for the provision of services;
- mobile school to provide services to children coming into town from bush communities for short periods (in progress by Department of Education).

7.8 Public letters, emails and phone calls

We also provide a summary of issues raised in emails and phone calls that were sent either to Minister Karl Hampton's office direct or to the community action email address, as well as two phone calls made direct to the consultant.

Key Issues:

- many stories of people being affected by violence, break-ins and drunken behaviour
- a whole generation of damaged kids
- shire reforms mean the voice of the community is gone, there is a void
- government has to govern for the whole of the NT even if there aren't as many people in Central Australia
- police rosters don't provide enough police at night
- anger at the slow response from the police call centre and residents reporting they are not getting a response from the Alice Springs police station
- government marketing and advertising is a waste of money
- lack of youth services
- lack of youth activities

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- need to get disengaged children to school
 - campers in the river – lack of accommodation
 - consequences for people committing offences
 - night patrols
 - people being dependent on welfare
 - need more jobs and services in the communities
 - parents have to take responsibility
 - lack of respect.

Actions/Ideas:

- using breathalysers in hotels for every person who purchases alcohol. e.g. being done at the Mataranka Hotel
- put out more information in alcohol outlets and motels about alcohol hours and regulations and why regulations exist
- subsidise food out in the communities for long-term health outcomes
- subsidise sport - all children need to be active for health and emotional wellbeing
- development of an interagency framework between health and education
- introduce initiatives to have displaced residents in the town camps return to their remote communities
- introduce controlled alcohol into those communities to teach the next generation responsible drinking
- establish Rehabilitation Farms to treat the current generation of alcoholics
- introduce wet canteens into dry camps
- using public entertainment to bring people together
- baby bonus payments be restricted to purchase of products related to caring for a baby
- get problem drinkers to turn up where they can be counselled
- promote responsible drinking
- set up a temporary day school in Alice for any child, any age, out of school in their home community for any period of time (e.g. In town with parents going to court, hospital etc.)
- let the whole town be part of the solution
- Aboriginal role models
- assist teens/at risk youth (or by working with families to educate/encourage their role in encouraging children) to attend sporting/arts clubs of their choice
- fixed floodlights could be attached to Power and Water Corporation street light poles and then they would be permanent
- 'restorative practice' to be implemented – circles that include the victim and perpetrator with their respective supports and a skilled facilitator
- asking alcohol buyers who live in 'dry' town camps where alcohol will be consumed
- hand out community work orders to offenders, eg to clean up rubbish in public places, help the elderly with gardens and remove graffiti.

APPENDIX 1

- More detail from Superintendent Michael Murphy's presentation:
- Analytical data for the period August 1st 2010 – February 2011 concerning Property Crime and Anti Social Behaviour in the Alice Springs Community indicate the following points:

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- Anti-Social Behaviour occurring in public places, daylight hours through to early evening were primarily committed by Indigenous Adults, alcohol related, permanent residents and "visitors".
- These incidents primarily occurred in the CBD and known "hotspots" including the RFDS Lawns, the Old Melanka site, Todd Mall and surrounding streets.
- Juveniles were primarily responsible for Anti-Social Behaviour occurring in public places, between the hours of 2100 – 0600hrs
- The majority of juveniles were local permanent residents residing in Territory Housing properties, and some residing in Town Camps.
- There were minimal juvenile offenders from outlying communities. The general patterns indicated once the "visiting" juvenile offenders were apprehended / interrupted or strategies put in place to return them to their relevant communities, their offending ceased.

PROPERTY OFFENCES

- Property offences committed in this period included residential and business premises, with the majority occurring at night between the hours of 2100hrs – 0600hrs.
- Juvenile offenders targeting residential premises primarily for the purpose of stealing keys to vehicles. The vehicles were then utilised as transport to commit further offences, engage NTPOL in pursuits, and for social interaction / transport with their peers.
- Licensed premises were targeted by "known" local juvenile property offenders. There were a small number of adult and juvenile offenders who primarily reside in remote localities. These premises were targeted to source alcohol.
- The majority of the juvenile offenders were local permanent residents residing in Territory Housing properties, and some residing in Town Camps.

CAUSES FOR OFFENDING AND INCREASE IN CRIME / ANTI SOCIAL OFFENDING

- Behaviour can be attributed to the following well documented reasons:

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- Excessive alcohol abuse
 - Systemic Family violence
 - Breakdown in family and Community structure
 - Isolation and environmental issues
 - Boredom
 - Limited opportunities in their respective communities
 - Lack of adequate supervision (juveniles)
 - Environmental factors
 - Education system was not “engaging” youth effectively
 - NTPOL resourcing impacted on the ability to manage/ investigate / prosecute and interrupt crime offending.
 - Justice system failure to impose stricter conditions on recidivist offenders following multiple offences.
 - The previous “winter” weather conditions were very mild and had minimal impact on offending patterns as has been noted in previous years.

APPENDIX 2

A summary of previous reports, websites and useful papers

Youth Services papers

There have been several previous reviews, forums and discussion papers on the topic of youth services. These include:

- **Youth Anti-Social Forum** facilitated by Raelene Beale in December 2008, that led to the idea of the Youth Hub to better engage with youth, provide better targeted services for youth at risk, provide a focal point for young people seeking services, better coordinate the work of NGOs and provide safe house and emergency beds.
- Report into the **Coordination of Youth Services in Alice Springs**, by David Murray and Tony Kelly, commissioned by the Northern Territory Government as part of the Youth Action Plan. This review identified as key issues the coordination of government policy and funding, coordination of service responses, after hours crisis responses, case management and casework follow up, engagement in school and alternative education programs and engagement of young people in structured recreational options after hours and during school holidays.
- Ivan Raymond and Sean Lappin (Connected Self) **review of youth camps**, which has been endorsed by the Youth Justice Advisory Committee and is due to be released shortly by the Department of Children and Families.
- The Non-Government Agencies attended a forum facilitated by Penny Drysale in March and prepared a paper that was circulated at the Youth Services Forum: **Better Strategies for Dealing with Youth Issues**.

Alcohol, mobility, anti-social behaviour

There has been considerable debate about the issues of urban drift, alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour over the years, including:

- **2007 workshops and summit:** A series of stakeholder workshops was held in June 2007 at the request of the former Chief Minister Clare Martin, facilitated by Socom. Some of the solutions suggested at a stakeholder forum for remote communities:
 - The need for some places for people to drink in the town area and better promotion of light beer;
 - Alcohol rehabilitation programs that work with families and recognise Aboriginal approaches to healing, to including support for in community or at home programs;
 - Police and night patrols do good work tackling alcohol abuse but the services may need more funding;
 - Participants suggested setting up a local help line for people having trouble with alcohol;
 - Suggestions of 'permits to drink' on Aboriginal land;
 - Interest in developing ID cards as an alcohol management initiative, could be used in place of a driver's licence;

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- There are too many outlets selling grog in Alice Springs. Supermarkets and other food stores were not seen as appropriate places to sell alcohol;
 - Support for an alcohol free day;
 - Education and awareness programs about changes to the alcohol laws;
 - Strong support to reduce grog-running.
 - There was a summit in August 2007 to discuss the outcomes of the six workshops that discussed issues such as the supply of alcohol (reducing the number of takeaway outlets and reducing takeaway hours), monitoring and enforcement, education and mentoring and the importance of early intervention with young people at risk, seeking trusted family support for young people at risk, finding pathways from school to work, issues with 'humbugging' and interpretation of whether noise and brawling always constitutes antisocial behaviour. The Chief Minister announced the following initiatives.
 - A commitment to keep police numbers at quota
 - Introduction of a new public safety model, police led
 - \$35,000 for a 'return to country' program and services for the homeless and itinerants
 - Introduction of a photographic ID for all takeaway alcohol available to the public
 - A youth camp for young offenders
 - A 'youth at risk' intervention centre, including supported accommodation and getting kids back into the school system
 - Close cooperation with council to identify and support short-term accommodation
 - A court-based intervention serviced aimed at perpetrators of domestic violence
 - Renewed consideration of buyback of takeaway alcohol licences
 - Increased funding for CCTV in Alice Springs
 - Consideration of a weekly 'grog free day'.

1999 Alice in 10 Discussion Paper (there is a copy in the Alice Springs Library):

- The strategy, designed to determine the 'face of Alice Springs in 10 years', outlined a vision of 'increased prosperity and an improved lifestyle for the people of Alice Springs and Central Australia, through innovative development'.
- Several goals were then outlined under the themes of:
 - A stronger economy
 - Safe, vibrant and caring community
 - Sustainable environment
- Initiatives outlined in the strategy included the completion of the Adelaide to Darwin Railway, building a convention centre in Alice Springs, sealing the Mereenie Loop Road, a cultural precinct redevelopment at Araluen, an urban enhancement program, airport land development, residential and commercial sub-division development, Alice as a mining service centre and an 'arid zone knowledge economy'.
- There was a strong focus on creating effective partnerships with Aboriginal and general communities to address social issues, substance abuse and the influx of problem drinkers into town;
- There were concerns expressed about crime and the fear of crime, with a 'quality of life' initiative "intended to simultaneously address a range of issues in a coordinated fashion to bring about a real and perceived sense of wellbeing across the community for both the present and the future".

Moving Alice Ahead (undated document)

The Moving Alice Ahead Strategy was implemented by Chief Minister Clare Martin to replace the Alice in 10 Strategy. It had 11 projects designed to build “a strong, safe and secure future for Alice Springs”.

1. Improving capacity at Alice Springs Airport to attract and retain more international air carriers;
2. Developing opportunities for economic growth and development along Central Australia’s Red Centre Way, including sealing of the Mereenie Loop Road; building a Red Centre Way Visitor Centre , developing Visitor Experience Plan and nominating the West MacDonnell National Park for World Heritage listing;
3. Developing Alice Springs as the preferred centre for sourcing and supplying goods and services to industries in the Central Australian region, including the Yulara Resort, Joint Defence Facility at Pine Gap and the mining, pastoral and agricultural industries;
4. Development strategies and partnerships to ensure the continued development of the Tanami Road to meet current and future needs;
5. Developing strategies to reduce the incidence of alcohol related harm in Alice Springs;
6. Redeveloping town camps to become part of suburban Alice Springs, improving living conditions and addressing visitor and resident accommodation work;
7. Developing and supporting strategies and projects that position Alice Springs as a centre for smart and sustainable desert living, including the creation of a Desert Knowledge Precinct and recognition of Alice Springs as Australia’s solar centre;
8. Develop and support strategies that will lead to a skilled local workforce with more young Central Australians employed in the public and private sectors, including an Alice Springs Youth Employment Strategy framework;
9. Initiating and supporting strategies that place Alice Springs at the forefront of developments in the Indigenous art and culture industry;
10. Developing strategies and infrastructure that make Alice Springs an even better place to live, work and invest. This included ensuring that Alice Springs Built Environment Design Guidelines are formally recognised as planning guidelines, continued rehabilitation and improve of the Todd and Charles River corridors, working with the Alice Springs Town Council and United Church to develop a plan to revitalise the Mall and CBD and working with the council to “ensure the timely development of an Alice Springs Aquatic Centre” (the new aquatic centre opened in March);
11. Ensuring land is available in Alice Springs to meet the future needs for residential, commercial and industrial development.

Alice Springs Transformation Plan (www.astp.nt.gov.au/overview)

The Alice Springs Transformation Plan, announced by the Northern Territory and Australian Governments in May 2009, replaced the Moving Alice Ahead Strategy.

Funding of \$25 million was committed to enhance social support services, boosted by \$100 million for housing and infrastructure in the Alice Springs Town Camps.

An Alice Springs Transformation Committee includes membership by the Australian and Northern Territory Governments, Alice Springs Town Council, Lhere Artepe and Tangentyere Council.

The three key strategies of the ASTP are:

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- **Enhance social support services**, including early childhood, family and family violence services, life skills support, tenancy management support, alcohol rehabilitation, intensive case management, safety and security and community connections;
 - **Improve housing opportunities and standards**: \$100 million was allocated through the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) for new and upgraded housing and infrastructure in the Alice Springs Town Camps. This will include 85 new houses. Housing Reference Groups were established in each of the 18 town camps;
 - **Reduce homelessness**: This is to be achieved through extra short-term accommodation for Aboriginal people visiting Alice Springs or who are homeless and transitional accommodation for people waiting for public housing.

Tangentyere mobility study: Prepared in 2006 by Tangentyere Council in conjunction with Curtin University of Technology, Australian National University and Desert Knowledge CRC (it is available on the Tangentyere Council website at <http://www.tangentyere.org.au/>).

- The report explores the history of the town camps and Tangentyere Council and attempts to accurately research the population of the town camps and the level of mobility. Most sites were first settled in the 1970s but the report says many town camps were traditional camping and ceremonial grounds.
- There was an influx of residents when equal wages led to many Aboriginal people being forced off pastoral stations. Tangentyere Council was established to provide services to the town camps, including night patrols and community centres.
- The report finds that visitors come to Alice Springs to visit family, for housing, shopping, sport and government services in town, but then often get stuck in town. It estimates a base population of about 1955 people in 2006, with a service population of between 2560 and 3300.
- Many people move around town camps as they have no houses, exacerbated by the long waiting list for public housing.
- Mobility is important for Aboriginal people to maintain social relationships.
- **Tangentyere social inclusion paper** (available on the Tangentyere website): argues for community centres on Alice Springs town camps to provide coordinated services to families.
- **Central Australian Aboriginal Congress “Rebuilding Families”** paper prepared in March 2011 and circulated to the youth services and alcohol and crime prevention forums. Covers a number of services delivered by Congress, including Safe and Sober, the Nurse Led Home Visitation Program and family support services. Congress also suggests a Central Australian Regional Family Responsibility Commission based on the Cape York Model. (<http://www.caac.org.au>)
- **Menzies School of Health Research’s 2009 evaluation of the Alice Springs Alcohol Management Plan “Moving Beyond the Restrictions”**, conducted in conjunction with Monash University, reviews previous reports going back to the 1970s. Some of the points made in this report:
 - there has always been disagreement about the underlying nature of the problem and there is a view that it is a small group of Aboriginal people who are the problem;
 - whereas non-Indigenous drinking in Alice Springs is 52% higher than the national average;
 - there is a high level of community resistance to change;
 - restrictions are causing racial divisions and anger;
 - there is a deep sense of resentment by many Alice Springs people at government intervention in their lives;
 - it will be important to engage the community in a process of change.

Menzies' website is at www.menzies.edu.au.

- NT Police are running an **NT Early Intervention Pilot Program**, funded by the National Binge Drinking Strategy. The aim of the program is to reduce the incidence and harm of under age youth binge drinking. The program's slogan is "Take Control and Limit the Alcohol". See media release of the program's launch:
www.nt.gov.au/pfes/index.cfm?fuseaction=viewMediaRelease&pID=11494&y=2010&mo=12
- **Enough is Enough** campaign and alcohol reforms (www.safeterritory.nt.gov.au)
- **Tell 'em It's Enough** campaign (young people's entries are posted on the web coordinated by the Drug and Alcohol Services, Alice Springs at <http://thatsenough.com.au/>)

Government strategies and reports (www.nt.gov.au)

- 2030 Strategic Plan at www.territory2030.nt.gov.au/
- Coordinator General for Remote Services, six-monthly reports at www.workingfuture.nt.gov.au/Overview/coordinator_general.html
- Australian Government's review of the NT Emergency Response http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/nter_reports/Pages/default.aspx
- A review of the Alice Springs Transformation Plan committees is in progress

Early childhood, Education

- **Learning Lessons** report by Bob Collins on Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory (1999) http://www.det.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/7475/learning_lessons_review.pdf;
- **Little Children are Sacred Report** (2006) by Rex Wild and Pat Anderson who co-chaired the Inquiry into the Sexual Abuse of Aboriginal Children in the Northern Territory (www.inquirysaac.nt.gov.au);
- **Growing Them Strong Together** (2010) report by Dr Howard Bath, Professor Muriel Bamblett and Dr Rob Roseby from the Inquiry Into Child Abuse in the Northern Territory at www.childprotectioninquiry.nt.gov.au/report_of_the_board_of_inquiry;
- There is an **Advocacy Collaboration and Training** group (ACT) that includes the Department of Education and Training, Congress, Department of Health, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, RPACSSU, Anglicare NT, Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations, Alice Springs Transformation Committee, Gap Youth Centre, Care and FAFT.
- There are a number of programs designed to build the confidence of young Aboriginal people including the Clontarf Foundation, Polly Farmer Foundation (supported by Centrecorp), Girls at the Centre (Centralian Middle School).
- Department of Education and Training, Indigenous education strategies: www.det.nt.gov.au/parents-community/students-learning/indigenous-education.

Economic Development

Some relevant points from the **2010 Alice Springs Economic Profile** published by the NT Government:

- Alice Springs contributes 10% of the Territory's economy
- Major projects at the time of the review were Alice Springs Hospital, Owen Springs Power Station, the Aquatic Centre and Lassetters Casino and Convention Centre
- In 2009, the population of Alice Springs was 27,877
- By 2030, the Indigenous population is expected to increase from 21% to 45%
- The key employment sectors were public administration (1980), health care/social (1638), retail (1367), education and training (1238), accommodation and food (1004);
- The Indigenous working age population will increase by 90% between 2010 and 2030, compared with an 18% growth by the non-Indigenous working age population
- At the time of the survey, 78% of businesses were extremely or fairly confident of their future business prospects;
- The weakest trading months are January to March
- Housing, accommodation and land release were seen as the main issues, as well as improved social behaviour and property protection (in 2007, the main issues were a population downturn, skills shortage, need for more tourists and more airlines);
- Sectors seen by businesses as offering economic opportunities of the greatest importance were mining (79%), tourism (72%), construction (71%), residential land release (65%);
- At the time the government estimated there were 1800 businesses in Alice Springs and surveyed 411 of them;
- Of these 411 businesses
 - 126 were retail,
 - 50 were accommodation and food services,
 - 36 were construction,
 - 34 were transport, warehousing and postal
 - 20 were wholesale trade
 - 19 were arts and recreational
 - 16 were health care and social assistance
 - 12 were finance and insurance.

For more detail see the government's website at:

www.dhlgrs.nt.gov.au/rd/regional_economic_development/alice_springs_region/economic_profile_-_alice_springs

Central Australian Indigenous tourism operators: www.tourismnt.com.au/industry-resources/indigenous-tourism/tourism-hubs/central-australia.aspx

Centrefarm: www.centrefarm.com

Northern Territory Government's Indigenous Economic Development Strategy 2009-2012:

www.dhlgrs.nt.gov.au/rd/indigenous_economic_development/indigenous_economic_development_strategy_20092012.

Council municipal plan

Alice Springs Town Council has released its 2011-2015 municipal plan for public comment. Go to the council website at <http://www.alicesprings.nt.gov.au>

Indigenous employment

The Alice Springs Desert Park has a successful Indigenous employment program that was outlined in the Business and Economic Development workshop. See details at the park's website at www.alicespringsdesertpark.com.au/about/employ.shtml

An Indigenous Education and Employment Taskforce is facilitated by Desert Knowledge Australia as an informal coalition aiming to improve education, training and employment outcomes for Indigenous youth living in the desert. Members include:

- Alice Springs Town Council
- Centrecorp
- Central Land Council
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Desert Knowledge Australia
- Newmont
- Tangentyere Council.

The IEET has three active initiatives:

- Improved linkages between schools and employers
- Increasing the employability of students
- Changes in Job Service Providers.

General

Northern Territory Council of Social Services (NTCOSS): www.ntcoss.org.au

BushMob: www.bushmob.com.au

Desert Knowledge Australia (for information on Desert Leadership Program)
www.desertknowledge.com.au/dka

InCite Youth Arts: <http://inciteya.org.au>

Media article of interest: Fred Chaney, writing in The Australian on 2 April 2011: "Reform must go beyond fringe".

If the present state of affairs continues, the exponents of emptying out the remote settlements will have their way. The problem is that the towns in which these refugees would settle are not equipped to handle thousands more fringe dwellers ill-prepared by education and life experience.

There is not the housing, the educational facilities or any of the requisite government services for such an influx.

Writing in this newspaper last year (Focus, December 18 2010) Noel Pearson explained the importance of sequencing the changes needed on Cape York. First, alcohol abuse and consequent dysfunction had to be tackled, then welfare reform, then high quality primary education with an emphasis on high school retention.

It is this kind of practical and intelligent sequencing that is required of governments across remote Australia in their dealings with Aboriginal people and communities.

The priority must be to stabilise the situation, to stop the drift of mostly unskilled and inadequately educated remote-living people to the misery and chaos of fringe-dwelling life.

Notes

1. Senior K, Chenhall R, Ivory B, Stevenson C, Menzies School of Health Research and Monash University, 2009, Moving Beyond the Restrictions: The Evaluation of the Alice Springs Alcohol Management Plan
2. Department of Lands and Planning, from presentation to Kilgariff Inquiry by Design Workshop, 3 April 2011
3. The Economic Profile of Alice Springs published by the Northern Territory Government last year found 1980 people were employed in public administration, 1638 in health and social care and 1238 in education and training,

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