

Attachment A-Consultations with Alice Springs Organisations

Consultation with Northern Territory Police

- a) Alice Springs Police have voiced support for a continuation of the “Dry Town” status and the current alcohol sales restrictions.
- b) At the time of the Declaration of the “Dry Town” on 1 August 2007 it was feared that Town Camps would become a “safe haven” for drinkers as at the time there was no prohibition of taking and consuming alcohol into these camps. Since the Northern Territory intervention which was subsequent to the “Dry Town” decision these twenty-one (21) Town Camps have been declared “Dry”, legally lessening the ability to purchase takeaway alcohol and consume it in the Town Camps.
- c) Police report that a Social Order Task Force has been created dedicated to the policing of anti social issues including surveillance of Town Camps. Although the Federal Intervention may have placed more pressure on Town Camps, Police expressed the view that the safety and drinking problems at the Town Camps is no worse than before the “Dry Town” Declaration.
- d) Police also voice strong support to the Commission for the Declaration of Private Restricted Premises, enabling residents, particularly in public housing, to have their home declared alcohol free. Police also noted and supported the recent declarations of common property in housing units as “Dry”.

Consultation with PAAC

- e) PAAC was not supportive of the “Dry Town” Declaration and during consultation stated it would not be disappointed if the Public Restricted status was removed. It noted that a number of the “complementary measures” to be introduced or phased in by Government in support of the “Dry Town” Declaration have not been implemented. The absence of progress on Town Camp infrastructure requirements and the provision of transit accommodation was considered regrettable.
- f) In reference to the related issue of Private Restricted Premises, PAAC noted that over one hundred (100) residencies had so far been subject to declaration. However PAAC did note that the greater the number of such declarations, the harder it was to police.
- g) On this matter the Commission was advised that people still come back to these declared residencies in an intoxicated state and even when moved on, enter other premises, whether restricted or not. To some degree therefore this has resulted in the geographic relocation of alcohol fuelled problems.
- h) PAAC totally supports alcohol sales restrictions and would seek greater supply controls. In this context an alcohol free day would be supported. In a measure to remove cheap alcohol products from sale, PAAC expressed strong support for having a price floor on products such as a minimum price per standard drink.

Consultation with Tangentyere Council

- i) Tangentyere Council raised the issue of takeaway sales resulting in unsafe drinking practices, including drinking at rocky and dangerous terrains without water supply.
- j) Funding for Day Patrols, largely through Territory Government, appears adequate and reasonably secure. However the continuation of Night Patrol funding through Federal Government sources was still under negotiation.

- k) In relation to a question on reduced Night and Day patrol drop offs to the sobering up shelter, the Commission was advised that in the absence of cohesive powers the patrols were unable to force intoxicants to attend the sobering up shelter.
- l) There is a long term homeless population of around 100 to 150 in Alice Springs who habitually sleep rough and continually cause social problems.
- m) Short term accommodation for visitors from communities is needed. At least two such accommodation outlets are required to lessen the co-location of feuding or non compatible groups.
- n) The “Dry Town” has not significantly lessened unlawful drinking around the township, but there are indicators that it may have driven some of this drinking away from public attention. There needs to be clubs, or well equipped and managed areas to enable socialised drinking, particularly as Town Camps and all public spaces are now restricted.

Consultation with Lhere Artepe

- o) Lhere Artepe expressed the view that the “Dry Town” measure has achieved a degree of success. Lhere Artepe would also support the removal of cask wine sales altogether. As a representative of Traditional Owners, Lhere Artepe is concerned of the mentality of visitors who come to Alice Springs, in some instances, solely for binge drinking.
- p) The Commission was informed that the convergence of drinkers on Alice Springs resulted in drinking outside family and skin group which caused added friction and violence. Lhere Artepe expressed a strong view that well managed wet canteens or clubs should be evaluated, with the aim to eventually establish such canteens in major communities.

Consultation with DASA

- q) DASA reports an increase in admissions to the Sobering Up Shelter, largely as a result of the extra efforts (and possibly resourcing) of Police. It is shortly to open twenty-eight (28) beds for short term rehabilitation and treatment at the Arunda House, of assistance in dealing with recidivist and hard core problem drinkers.

Consultation with Alice Springs Town Council

- r) The principal problem identified by the Mayor was the lack of logic in having a large number of takeaway outlets serving a major cohort of the population who had nowhere legally to consume their purchases. The “Dry Town” Declaration and the Declaration of the Town Camps has therefore resulted in criminalising drinking or making drinking unlawful, for a large number of the population.
- s) The Commission was advised that greater effort needed to be placed on providing legal avenues for people to drink responsibly in a controlled environment through the provision of well managed licensed areas.
- t) The expectation of the Commission when declaring the Township “Dry” that more people would drink inside hotels and clubs has not been realised with most Indigenous people preferring outdoor venues which are not available to this group in Alice Springs.
- u) The absence of progress on the provision of transit accommodation for people from communities to stay in when visiting Alice Springs has also lessened the impact of the “Dry Town” and alcohol supply restrictions, ie people with no where to base themselves are more likely to fall in with other itinerants and transients who are engaged in binge drinking activities.