

Review of the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU)

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urbis

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Acronyms

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Acronyms

AGD	Attorney-General's Department
CAPSSU	Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit
CAYLUS	Central Australia Youth Link Up Service
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DoHA	Department of Health and Ageing
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
GBM	Government Business Manager
ICC	Indigenous Coordination Centre
IYSP	Integrated Youth Services Project
NPY	Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
OIPC	Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination
NTSO	Northern Territory State Office
PSS	Petrol Sniffing Strategy
ROC	Regional Operations Centre

Executive Summary

The Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) within the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) has commissioned Urbis to conduct a review of the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU). This work was conducted between June and September 2009.

A consultation process was undertaken which included a range of stakeholders from the Commonwealth, WA, SA and NT governments, as well as stakeholders in the non-government sector in the NT and SA. In addition, an analysis of background documentation was undertaken.

Overall the review has found that the Unit has delivered significant activity in relation to aspects of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy (PSS), primarily concerned with diversionary activity for young people. The review has also identified a range of historic, governance and funding issues that have led to the Unit containing its focus to the NT, in place of the broader role within the whole of the tri-state PSS zone.

The review also considered the future role and focus of CAPSSU. This analysis has drawn on the Senate Inquiry report (2009) and the earlier review of the first phase of the PSS by Urbis, in 2007.

In considering the future of the Unit, the review has found there are many assets within Central Australia that could be better harnessed to achieve a more holistic implementation of the PSS. Several opportunities are identified which will better position the Unit to draw on the full range of resources targeting petrol and other volatile substance use in remote Indigenous communities. The barriers to cooperation and collaborative effort must be addressed as a priority, enabling the Unit to deliver in its role within the Territory, but also at the national level role to coordinate and oversee implementation of the PSS Eight Point Plan across Central Australia.

A major finding of the review is that the work of the Unit can be better aligned with parallel activity being delivered through a range of sectors, including the NT Government's Volatile Substance Strategy, the non-government sector working on the ground with communities, and other parts of government delivering activity under the strategy.

The Unit also requires expert assistance in adopting the range of contemporary program frameworks that provide transparency, logic and accountability to program design and delivery. These include FaHCSIA National Office finalising a program logic for the PSS, drawing on the extensive work done to date; a program evaluation framework, again drawing on the work done to date; a communications strategy; and finally, a system for collating meaningful data about the incidents and responses to communities that will continue to be an important part of the Unit's work.

It is important to note that support for the PSS remains strong. Much has been achieved in the areas of supply reduction and diversionary activity, and there is strong support for the view that petrol sniffing has substantially decreased in the area known as the 'expanded PSS zone'. By refreshing the focus of the Unit on the full scope of the Strategy, more can be achieved.

The future of CAPSSU lies in two domains: Firstly, reaffirming the role of the Unit as the body with oversight of the strategy across the affected areas, with the focus of the Unit expanded to volatile substances, and geographically to any community where volatile substance mis-use is prevalent. In this role the Unit will liaise across state and territory borders, ensuring incidents of sniffing are consistently assessed, coordinated by the relevant agencies, and documented. With this level of oversight, valuable advice will be available to the PSS Senior Executive Service Steering Committee. The Unit should also continue its current activity in relation to identifying and implementing projects relevant to the Strategy within the Northern Territory (NT) and tri-state region.

Recommendations

Role of CAPSSU

1. The role of CAPSSU should be to oversee the whole of government implementation of the Eight Point Plan, with authority to seek information regarding activity across all state and territory borders, as the conduit between implementation of the Plan and the PSS Senior Executive Service Steering Committee.
2. CAPSSU should continue to identify and implement strategic projects for, and ensure coordination of, the Eight Point Plan in the NT and the tri-state region.
3. A model be agreed between CAPSSU and stakeholders to enable CAPSSU's oversight of coordinated responses to incidents in communities.

Scope of activity

4. The scope of CAPSSU's role should be broadened to include other volatile substances in addition to petrol.
5. FaHCSIA National Office should address the implications for the PSS of the recommended expansion of CAPSSU's role to include other volatile substances.
6. CAPSSU work with NT and Australian Government officials to ensure an alternate and appropriately skilled response is available in response to suicide in remote Indigenous communities.

Location

7. CAPSSU remain co-located as an independent Unit within the ICC in Alice Springs.
8. Reporting lines be reviewed, led by FaHCSIA National Office to ensure governance of CAPSSU supports the Unit's role.

Transparency

9. In any future funding rounds an information session should be held which sets out the procurement process, the requirements of the particular round, and probity issues.
10. FaHCSIA National Office support the implementation of a simple and transparent program logic framework for CAPSSU's work under the PSS.
11. All recommendations for expenditure made by CAPSSU should be linked to the program logic.
12. FaHCSIA National Office ensure that the evaluation framework developed for the PSS is embedded into all aspects of the Eight Point Plan, and the funded activity in particular.

Communications

13. CAPSSU be assisted with communications expertise to develop a communications strategy in relation to the Eight Point Plan, and progress against the Plan and the Unit's role, with a detailed plan of what, when and how the strategy will be actioned.
14. CAPSSU map the critical relationships across all sectors that are required to deliver on the role recommended in this review. A formal mechanism for establishing, strengthening and maintaining each relationship should be identified.
15. The Eight Point Plan Forum purpose and agenda be reviewed in light of a communications strategy.

Funds and resources

16. CAPSSU should be resourced to deliver the recommended range of roles.

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17. A dedicated PSS budget should be allocated, to support flexible, timely and community-driven solutions to volatile substance use, across states and territories.
 18. Guidelines be developed to inform the types of expenditure that can be made under such a 'discretionary' budget, reflecting the timely and tailored responses to communities delivered in NT communities to date.

Data, reporting and monitoring

19. A common volatile substance incident recording protocol and tool should be agreed across jurisdictions for use in recording incidents, validation, and responses.
20. CAPSSU should be responsible for collating data gathered through the common reporting tool, and providing advice on trends to the PSS Senior Executive Service Steering Committee.
21. The detail of the data collection should be agreed in the context of parallel Indigenous data collection strategies.

1 Introduction

The Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) within the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) has commissioned Urbis to conduct a review of the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU).

1.1 Terms of reference

In conducting the review, Urbis was required to:

- Review CAPSSU's role and function to effectively manage a holistic regional approach to addressing problems of petrol sniffing in Indigenous communities across the NT. This review will inform:
 - the adequacy of current policies and procedures for ongoing monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the Unit's role
 - the ability of CAPSSU to effectively engage and consult with Indigenous people and communities
 - the adequacy of staffing levels and collaboration between CAPSSU and other departments to support a tri-state, whole of government approach to implementing the PSS
 - whether the Alice Springs Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC) is the most appropriate location for CAPSSU, to deal with petrol sniffing outbreaks both within and outside of the Central Australian PSS Zone.
- Advise on an appropriate methodology for CAPSSU to collect data on the prevalence and trends over time in petrol sniffing and substance abuse in Indigenous communities, which would be comparable across jurisdictions and could be linked with the data collection processes of other agencies.
- Identify opportunities and resource implications for expanding CAPSSU's role to support the establishment of youth services and workers in each of the communities of the Central Australian PSS zone (in partnership with State and Territory governments), and to respond to petrol sniffing incidences outside the zone.

The methodology developed for the review was required to use a systemic evaluation approach to:

- identify CAPSSU's achievements, limitations and gaps
- report on the efficiency of current arrangements for planning, implementing and monitoring the Unit's work
- assess the impacts of administrative and structural issues on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Unit
- develop evidence to inform future policy, program and strategic directions.

The tasks required to be conducted for the review were to include, but not be limited to:

- collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative data, reviewing program documentation and stakeholder consultations to:
 - map the Unit's outputs/activities achieved to date
 - inform how well the work of the Unit is being implemented and factors impeding success
 - provide stakeholder and participant feedback on the appropriateness and community satisfaction of the Unit's programs and services, engagement and consultation mechanisms

- describe the coordination and implementation of whole-of-government approaches within FaHCSIA, between Australian, state and territory governments and the community sector
- identify opportunities for enhancements and future program development
- developing a methodology for collecting data on incidences and changing patterns in petrol sniffing in Indigenous communities that is comparable across jurisdictions and compatible with the data systems of other agencies.

The following research questions were proposed by FaHCSIA to guide the design and implementation of the review:

- To what extent has the work of CAPSSU contributed to reducing incidences of petrol sniffing and other forms of substance abuse in Indigenous communities?
- How has CAPSSU contributed to these improvements?
- Have there been any intended or unintended impacts — positive or negative?
- To what extent have CAPSSU services and programs met with community expectations?
- What models and approaches could be applied to enable CAPSSU to collect data on incidences and patterns of petrol sniffing in Indigenous communities?
- How have planning and funding processes, administrative and reporting requirements improved or impeded CAPSSU's service efficiency and effectiveness?
- To what extent has rapport been built up between CAPSSU and outside organisations, individuals and stakeholders through partnership, collaboration and whole-of-government activities, to improve program activities and outputs?
- How has this rapport been achieved, and what are the factors that have contributed to or impeded this process?

In discussions with FaHCSIA after the project commenced, it was also agreed that:

- The key issue for the review is to examine where CAPSSU is now and what opportunities can be taken up in the future
- The project is a review, and not an evaluation of CAPSSU
- The focus is on the broad views and themes in the consultations, providing fair representation of the breadth and typical views of stakeholders, and any similarities/differences between different stakeholder groups. This includes both positive and negative views — and analysing where possible what factors underlie these views
- In relation to data collection, the aim is to provide advice to FaHCSIA on a methodology that will provide CAPSSU with a good regular, reliable picture of the incidence of petrol sniffing. This will include three key components:
 - a system for *'raising the red flag'* as to a potential (and sudden) petrol sniffing problem in particular communities
 - a process for *verifying* this data — to ensure it is a realistic perception
 - a mechanism for tracking the incidence as it changes

Advice is also to be provided about whether systems could be established to collect the above data.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology included the following key components.

A total of 52 stakeholders (Appendix A) were consulted through the following methods:

- Two field visits to Alice Springs in August 2009 to consult with CAPSSU (on both trips) and other stakeholders. Most of these consultations were conducted in discussion groups.
- Telephone interviews with other stakeholders who were unable to be consulted on the fieldwork (eg Alice Springs stakeholders unavailable on the visits or in other locations). These interviews were mainly conducted on a one-on-one basis and some (for stakeholders from the same agency) were conducted as teleconferences.
- Two written submissions, providing responses to the question guides.

The stakeholders to be consulted were identified by FaHCSIA. Some other stakeholders were also invited to participate in the consultations but did not do so for various reasons including not being available during the timeframe required, or declining to participate (eg due to insufficient knowledge of CAPSSU). All those who were unavailable to participate during the required timeframe were offered the opportunity to provide a written submission. The question guides used in the consultations are included in Appendix B.

A review of background documentation about CAPSSU was also conducted, based on documents provided by FaHCSIA. The key findings from this review are provided in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.3 Limitations to the review

There are two key limitations to the review which should be kept in mind by the reader.

Firstly, the time available to conduct the review was limited, and in combination with the complexity (and in some instances the conflicting nature) of information provided to the review by stakeholders, there has not been adequate time to validate each and every matter raised.

Secondly, the review did not consult with members of Indigenous communities. This review focused on CAPSSU itself, and has not reviewed the efficacy of activity delivered through external providers engaged to deliver services in communities. The efficacy of this investment, and community members' experience of it, will be considered by external evaluators in due course.

1.4 Structure of this report

Chapter 2 provides background to the PSS.

Chapter 3 sets out the findings of the review, in relation to:

- CAPSSU's role and scope of operation
- implementation of the PSS to date
- program rationale and transparency
- positioning and relationships/communication
- resources and budget
- monitoring and evaluation.

2 Background to the PSS

On 17 June 2008 the Australian Senate referred matters relating to petrol sniffing and substance abuse in Central Australia to the Community Affairs Committee for inquiry and report.

In March 2009 the Committee released its findings in the report *Grasping the opportunity of Opal: Assessing the impact of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy*. A key recommendation from the report was that:

The Commonwealth government immediately commission an independent review of the role and function of the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit, specifically:

- *its capacity to implement the PSS effectively*
- *whether its current location in the Alice Springs ICC as part of FaHCSIA delivers the requisite level of accountability and governance standards*
- *processes in place for the effective ongoing monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the Unit's role*
- *its ability to effectively engage and consult with Indigenous people and communities*
- *the effectiveness of the tri-state whole-of-government approach including the staffing and collaboration between departments.*

In making this recommendation, the Senate Inquiry notes that:

- not all points in the PSS have been implemented to the extent required to effectively address the causes of petrol sniffing and other substance abuse
- CAPSSU seems to have focused implementation of the PSS in the NT
- CAPSSU is under increased pressure due to staff shortages, limited funding and requirements to assist in the implementation of the NT Emergency Response (NTER) (Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Secretariat 2009, p43).

In response to this recommendation FaHCSIA engaged Urbis to conduct an independent review of the role and function of CAPSSU.

This chapter briefly describes the background and context for the role and activities of CAPSSU. It is based on key documents provided by FaHCSIA and CAPSSU.

2.1 Outline of previous Senate inquiries and research

Historically, a number of reports focused on petrol sniffing have been commissioned by the Commonwealth Government.

The 2006 Senate Inquiry report, *Beyond Petrol Sniffing: Renewing Hope for Indigenous Communities* noted that over the last three decades, petrol sniffing has been the subject of many reports, reviews, coronial inquiries and research projects. These have explored the reasons why young Indigenous people sniff petrol, its disruptive impact on Indigenous communities and its severe health implications. The Inquiry noted that while various solutions have been identified and remedial actions proposed, *'young Indigenous people are still sniffing and still dying'* (Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Secretariat 2006, p19).

The 2006 Senate Inquiry notes that previous research and inquiries of relevance to petrol sniffing have included:

- the 1985 Senate Select Committee on Volatile Substance Abuse
- the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
- the 2002 Inquiry into the Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (the Gordon Inquiry)

- the 2002 Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee of the Victorian Parliament report on the inhalation of volatile substances
- the 2003 Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee report on reconciliation, *Reconciliation: Off track*, which used petrol sniffing in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands in South Australia as a case study
- the 2004 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs report on capacity building in Indigenous communities
- the 2004 Legislative Assembly of the NT Select Committee report on its inquiry into petrol sniffing in remote NT communities.

Following that 2006 Senate Inquiry, the Commonwealth Government commissioned the 2009 Senate Inquiry report, as well as a *Review of the First Phase of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy* completed in June 2008 (Urbis 2008, referred to in this report as 'the Urbis Report').

2.2 Overview of government strategies to respond to petrol sniffing

As noted in the Urbis Report¹, since 1998 the Commonwealth Government has had in place measures of various kinds to address petrol sniffing in Indigenous communities. Starting that year, the *Comgas* Scheme administered by the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) provided a subsidised non-sniffable fuel (aviation fuel or Avgas) to registered Indigenous communities as a replacement for standard petrol.

In 2004 BP Australia, working in conjunction with DoHA and the Australian Institute of Petroleum, developed a new fuel designed for the specific needs of the scheme. Unleaded Opal fuel was launched in February 2005, replacing the supply of Avgas. As a vehicle fuel unleaded Opal performs similarly to regular unleaded petrol (ULP) in terms of economy and efficiency, but it is more expensive than ULP both to produce and to distribute. Accordingly the government subsidises production and distribution of Opal as a harm minimisation and supply reduction strategy; the subsidy ensures that consumers pay the same amount for Opal as they would for regular unleaded fuel.

The May 2005 Budget provided \$9.6 million, over four years, under the *Addressing Indigenous Needs — Combating Petrol Sniffing* budget measure, to expand the Comgas scheme (later renamed the Petrol Sniffing Prevention Program). Subsidised Opal fuel is now made available to Indigenous communities, roadhouses, petrol stations and other relevant fuel outlets.

In September 2005 the Government announced further funding (\$9.5 million over two years) in addition to that announced in May, including \$6 million over two years to supply Opal fuel in Central Australia, funding for the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk (SAID), and \$3 million from the Aboriginals Benefit Account to support diversionary and rehabilitation programs.

In May 2006 the Australian Government allocated a further \$55.1 million over four years under the *Reducing Substance Abuse (Petrol Sniffing)* budget measure, for the Eight Point Plan in the Central Desert Region, and also for a regional approach in certain other areas. One of these new regions involved an expansion of the original Central Desert Region to incorporate Alice Springs and an area of the NT extending north to just above Ti Tree and west of the Stuart Highway; the other new regions were the East Kimberley (added in early 2007); and Doomadgee and Mornington Island in Queensland (added in late 2007).

There were four Commonwealth Departments involved in the funding announced in the May 2006 Budget — FaHCSIA, DoHA, the Attorney General's Department (AGD) and the (now) Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)². As part of this funding, DoHA received \$20.1 million for the continuing roll out of Opal fuel and related activities.

¹ *Review of the First Phase of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy*, Urbis June 2008

² Formerly the Department of Education, Science and Training.

Further to that allocation, in July 2006, \$12 million over two years was allocated to supply Opal fuel in all petrol stations in Alice Springs as an additional measure to help reduce the incidence of petrol sniffing in Central Australia.

2.2.1 The Eight Point Plan for the Central Desert Region

A 2004 evaluation report on the Comgas scheme recognised the value of substituting an alternative, non-sniffable fuel such as Avgas, but also argued that a strategy based just on limiting supply was not sufficient.

The Eight Point Plan reflects the understanding that addressing petrol sniffing requires a multifaceted approach, considering both issues of supply and demand, which in turn requires participation by a range of government and other agencies.

The eight points were as follows:

- roll-out of unleaded Opal fuel to affected communities, roadhouses and pastoral properties across the region
- a uniform legal framework across the region dealing with petrol sniffing
- appropriate levels of policing
- alternative or diversionary activities for young people
- activities to strengthen and support communities
- rehabilitation and treatment facilities
- a communication strategy
- evaluation.

The Eight Point Plan aims to:

- reduce the incidence and impact of petrol sniffing in a defined area of Central Australia by addressing the mix of inter-related causes
- evaluate the effectiveness of a regional and comprehensive response to petrol sniffing, to help establish whether and how it might usefully be expanded to other regions.

At a Commonwealth level the Eight Point Plan has been led by FaHCSIA.

A Project Management Plan prepared by FaHCSIA in 2006 for the *2006/07 Reducing Substance Abuse (Petrol Sniffing)* budget measure elaborates on the scope of the Eight Point Plan. It identifies three areas as falling within State and Territory Government jurisdiction, namely:

- measures to improve policing in communities to reduce trafficking of illegal substances
- measures to make substance abuse legislation consistent across jurisdiction
- provision of treatment and respite services.

3 Findings of the review

This chapter presents and analyses the key findings from the review. It is presented thematically in relation to the main issues to emerge from the consultations.

3.1 CAPSSU's role and scope of operation

In considering the future role of CAPSSU a number of factors should be considered. These include:

- the prevalence of petrol sniffing
- self harm associated with misuse of other volatile substances
- effectiveness of the Unit's activity to date
- external factors including other agencies with a key role in relation to the misuse of volatile substances
- views of stakeholders within and outside of government
- opportunities afforded by the government's current Indigenous affairs agenda.

Each of these factors is considered through the following sections. The discussion begins, however, with the role, activity and location of CAPSSU.

3.1.1 The role of CAPSSU

In August 2006 CAPSSU was established to coordinate and oversee implementation of the Eight Point Plan across Central Australia. For a range of reasons this broad role to 'coordinate and oversee' the Eight Point Plan has not been realised. As documented in the Urbis Report, almost immediately on establishment, the focus of the Unit narrowed to two points of the Eight Point Plan — diversion and strengthening communities, and in practice narrowed geographically, to the NT rather than the tri-state region intended under the Strategy. There is a view by some government stakeholders that CAPSSU had been key to the roll out of Opal fuel in the original PSS zone, but this in fact preceded the establishment of the Unit. The ongoing role in Opal fuel is discussed later in this report.

Four factors have contributed to the narrowing of the Unit's role.

Firstly, the original intention under the PSS was that there would be staffing contributions to CAPSSU from the SA, WA and NT Governments, and that other Australian Government staff would be co-located in CAPSSU. However, as outlined in the Urbis Report this did not occur, and CAPSSU has to date been staffed by Australian Government personnel. Therefore the Unit comprised FaHCSIA personnel only, with the exception of the DoHA Opal fuel project officer. With the withdrawal of the DoHA officer in August 2009, the Unit is now a small group of FaHCSIA staff with the inevitable result that the focus is on FaHCSIA's key areas of responsibility under the PSS. At present, the staff team includes a manager at the Senior Executive Service level, a deputy manager, three project officers whose primary role relates to contract management and an administrative support officer.

Secondly, the immediate task of the Unit at the time of its establishment was the management of the Integrated Youth Services Project (IYSP). The IYSP budget of \$8 million over three years and \$4 million in capital funding represented the largest investment in service provision and infrastructure in the history of the region. As a result, all resources within CAPSSU were absorbed into activity focused on petrol and young people, linked to the diversionary activity component of the Eight Point Plan.

The third factor which has significantly shaped the Unit's focus over time was the NTER. From the time of the announcement of the NTER in 2007, staff within the Unit have at various times been effectively seconded to the NTER. This work has included CAPSSU staff playing lead roles in the response, and spending time in NTER positions, for example a period for one team member as a Government Business Manager (GBM). In addition, under the NTER \$6.4million in funding for youth alcohol diversion was administered through the Unit. The benefit of this to the work of the Unit is well

recognised and discussed elsewhere in this report. However, it was another factor driving the narrowing of the Unit's focus to the NT, and to youth diversion.

Finally, other parts of government seek to involve the Unit in issues that have little direct reference to the PSS. One example of this is coordinating responses to critical incidents in communities, but which do not appear to link to the Eight Point Plan. It is not an unexpected challenge for a small unit such as CAPSSU to have to manage demands driven by emerging issues, particularly in the complex environment of the NT. But it does require a discipline within the Unit, and amongst influential stakeholders, to not push the focus beyond the boundary of the PSS.

In combination these factors have resulted in the Unit as it stands today, which is essentially an NT focused unit, delivering on two levels.

At the higher level, CAPSSU plays a 'clearinghouse' and coordination role. CAPSSU receives intelligence from a range of sources (the GBM network in particular) about petrol sniffing and related self harm incidents that are occurring in communities. CAPSSU generally validates this intelligence by contacting other points in their network, such as police and community leaders, or by asking the GBM to make further inquiries. Depending on the scale of the incident CAPSSU may or may not escalate the response. For example, the advice may be that police have effectively intervened in what was an isolated incident. Alternatively, CAPSSU may take a significant role in coordinating a substantial response. This may include visiting a community, engaging in the issues, providing input to community deliberations, and at times resourcing communities to seek more information and options about responding to sniffing. Depending on the point in the budget cycle, CAPSSU may also recommend a particular response to a community, for which funds can be sought, eg in relation to youth diversion activity.

The CAPSSU manager and staff also respond to requests for advice from organisations and individuals outside of the NT concerned about petrol or other volatile substance misuse in a community. A recent visit by a CAPSSU staff member to Victoria is one example of this. This may involve general advice about responding to the concern, but CAPSSU does not currently provide direct assistance to issues outside of the NT; this includes non-NT areas of the tri-state region.

Also at the higher level, CAPSSU engages with government and non-government stakeholders through a multitude of formal and informal meetings, exchanging information and advising on activity of the Unit, in general terms. The Unit manager also participates in meetings of the PSS Senior Executive Service Steering Committee in Canberra. It is not clear whether CAPSSU utilises this forum for raising systemic barriers confronted in the implementation of the Eight Point Plan, but as the key conduit to implementation in the field, there is obvious potential for the Committee to provide lateral solutions to resolve administrative barriers

At the operational level, CAPSSU administers contracts with service providers, and as part of this role provides intensive oversight of the delivery of these contracts. The range of investments made by CAPSSU varies greatly, and is discussed in detail in section 3.2

On the whole, the high level focus and certainly the operational focus, reflects the elements of the Eight Point Plan which align closely with FaHCSIA's core business, ie diversion and community strengthening. The area of diversion is addressed primarily through the intensive management of service provider contracts; and community strengthening through the response to communities where incidents of petrol sniffing, volatile substance misuse and other forms of self harm arise. This is recognised formally in the Unit's 2008-09 business plan priorities, which are:

- to assist FaHCSIA National Office in its lead agency coordination role by providing leadership on PSS implementation and advice
- to identify and implement strategic projects for, and ensure coordination of the PSS Eight Point Plan in the NT region.

Finally, the Unit's current focus also reflects the activity for which there has been funding. This is consistent with activity undertaken under the PSS generally. The Urbis Report found that in the first phase of the PSS by far the greatest progress made had been on components of the Eight Point Plan

with earmarked funding attached. Conversely, least progress had been made on components which did not have this funding.

It is not uncommon for programs to evolve over time and for focus, scope, and activity to 'drift' from the original intention. The environment in Central Australia, the density of the Indigenous affairs environment in the NT in general and the nature of the work the Unit is conducting all lends itself to a program which will evolve over time. There is, however, a view from stakeholders that the external factors like the NTER, and the nature of the funding administered through CAPSSU, have taken the Unit too far from the original intention. There is a pragmatism amongst the majority of stakeholders that within the complex environment the Unit operates that "there's going to be push and pull". At the same time, many stakeholders believe CAPSSU's role is to drive the whole of government implementation of the PSS. The concern about the narrowing of the Unit's focus is captured by a non-government organisation (NGO) stakeholder in these terms:

"The integrity [of a program] sometimes changes for good reasons and other times for pressures that damage the integrity of what's intended in a policy program".

It is agreed by the vast majority of stakeholders that a dedicated Unit is required to continue to address the specific issues surrounding petrol sniffing. The question that is less easily answered by stakeholders and those within government in particular, is how broad the Unit's role should be. When considering this question stakeholders frequently make reference to the 'political' nature of the decision to establish the Unit, and refer decisions about the role of the Unit back to those concerned with the politics of where government policy and investment is made. To some extent the complexity of this question lies in the ambition of the Plan — both in the tri-state geography and the whole of government responsibility. The issues of authority and delegation across borders, departments and jurisdictions is always fraught; it may well be that in its current guise the Unit lacks the delegation, resources and Whole of Government leadership to surmount these barriers.

The recommendation of this review is to reaffirm the original purpose of CAPSSU, which was to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the Eight Point Plan.

The achievements and the lessons learnt to date within the Unit are critical to its future success, and the role must build on this history. To this end, it is recommended that the dual roles undertaken by CAPSSU to date be endorsed as the appropriate model for the future, with some additional or formalised elements. The two components of the role are:

- oversight of the whole of government implementation of the Eight Point Plan, with authority to seek information regarding activity across all state and territory borders. In addition, the Unit should become the conduit between implementation of the Plan and the PSS Senior Executive Service Steering Committee
- identify and implement strategic projects for, and ensure coordination of, the CAPSSU Eight Point Plan in NT region.

Coordination role

CAPSSU's role in coordinating responses to petrol sniffing incidents is generating new learning for the Unit about community engagement. This developing practice should be documented and used to inform the coordination model for each jurisdiction's role in responding to petrol sniffing incidents.

The series of steps proposed below is based on the detailed description provided to the review by CAPSSU of their work, with additional steps included to add clarity and greater accountability. This model of coordination is within the skill and expertise of the Unit, but is contingent on effective relationships with *all* stakeholders. It is unlikely that formal authority to undertake a role such as this will be enough to ensure it is accepted by stakeholders. It will be critical that stakeholders assign authority to CAPSSU to undertake the role within the NT. Similarly, wherever this role is taken up in other jurisdictions, a similar formal and informal authority will be critical to support the timely exchange of information, and the cooperation and creative solutions required in formulating responses to entrenched issues in isolated communities. The 12 steps proposed to fulfil the coordination role are as follows:

1. The Unit receives information about an incident
2. The information is verified through contact with third parties
3. The incident is ranked (indicatively at this stage), using a commonly agreed tool, for example a modified version of the East Kimberley Rapid Response Protocol which has been adapted for use in NT (See Appendix C)
4. CAPSSU alerts (via email or telephone) the relevant agencies (government and non-government) with a role in addressing the incident, ensuring the timely sharing of information (this may include police, health services, CAYLUS, Bushmob, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council etc.)
5. Based on further information gathered, CAPSSU scopes the environment in line with the critical factors in the community relevant to the response
6. The scoping is documented and shared with all relevant parties
7. Based on additional information, confirm extent of incident in line with the East Kimberley Rapid Response Protocol
8. Ensure a response is planned and delivered in line with good practice in engaging with communities
9. Where required, broker resources through bringing relevant agencies together to generate options and identify resources
10. Where required, escalate barriers, eg red tape, to Petrol Sniffing Senior Executive Steering Committee
11. Monitor implementation of the response over time and document progress against the plan.
12. Convene all parties involved in the response to formally debrief the process, drawing on lessons to improve the coordinated response model.

It is a recommendation of this review that:

- The role of CAPSSU should be to oversee the whole of government implementation of the Eight Point Plan, with authority to seek information regarding activity across all state and territory borders, as the conduit between implementation of the Plan and the PSS Senior Executive Service Steering Committee.
- CAPSSU should continue to identify and implement strategic projects for, and ensure coordination of, the Eight Point Plan in the NT and the tri-state region
- A model be agreed between CAPSSU and stakeholders to enable CAPSSU's oversight of coordinated responses to incidents in communities.

The next section considers the Unit's scope of operation, in terms of petrol and/or other substance misuse, as well as its geographic focus.

3.1.2 Scope of operation

The previous section set out the original intention and the current focus of the Unit. A case is also put forward for returning to the role of coordinating the implementation of the PSS. The next consideration is the scope of the Unit's operation.

Substances

Over time, with the effectiveness of supply reduction the Unit has broadened its focus beyond petrol sniffing to include other volatile substances, including glues, paints and aerosols, and to areas beyond the PSS zones. The expansion to other volatile substances reflects the addictive patterns of some people who previously used petrol, or are new users, to other inhalants, and is unanimously endorsed by almost all stakeholders.

In addition to other volatile substances, there has been consistent reference through the review to a marked increase in the use of cannabis, and ongoing problems with unsafe alcohol consumption in

some Central Australian communities. On this basis a small number of stakeholders have argued for CAPSSU's remit to include cannabis and alcohol, in order to better reflect the full continuum of legal and illegal harmful substances.

Hence there is a divide reported amongst stakeholders. One side argues for a specific focus on volatile substances as a particular form of substance misuse which can be effectively addressed through the supply reduction, diversion and rehabilitation remedy available through the Eight Point Plan. Others argue that all forms of substance abuse and indeed self harm, are symptomatic of the underlying social determinants impacting on Indigenous people's wellbeing, and should be tackled holistically. The risk, it is argued, is that by isolating one substance from another, any unintended consequence is rendered invisible, eg petrol supply effectively reduces sniffing, but sniffers move on to another substance for which there is no dedicated strategy. Hence, it is argued, CAPSSU's focus should be holistic.

There are primarily two factors put forward by stakeholders to inform the discussion about the breadth of focus in CAPSSU's role. Firstly, in prescribed communities both cannabis and alcohol are illegal and thereby enter the domain of law enforcement. One of the reasons some stakeholders applaud the work of CAPSSU is that it is based on a positive engagement in the problem of sniffing, and by virtue of sniffing itself not being an offence, is not aligned with legal sanctions. In the context of a number of sanction-based policies operating at present in the NT, this was put forward as being critical to CAPSSU's success.

While acknowledging there are penalties for supplying petrol for sniffing under the Volatile Substances Act (NT), broadening CAPSSU's focus to illegal substances is likely to impact on the model of engagement which the PSS requires. This sentiment is illustrated by a comment from an NT-based Australian Government stakeholder:

"CAPSSU is good because it is not another punitive measure on Indigenous people. This works with them; it's just there".

Secondly, one of the strengths of the Unit is the specialised focus on the issue of petrol, which is not the same specialisation required to respond to cannabis and alcohol. The sporadic nature of petrol sniffing, as opposed to the often chronic nature of cannabis and alcohol use, the supply issues, community attitudes and the need for targeted timely and flexible responses set petrol, and other volatile substances, apart from cannabis and alcohol.

It is acknowledged that an expansion of the Unit's focus to include other volatile substances does go beyond the current boundaries of the PSS. This inconsistency is one for consideration by the Indigenous Programs Branch within National Office of FaHCSIA.

In addition to other volatile substances CAPSSU has begun to consider a broader category of behaviours involving young people under the 'self harm' banner, including suicide, as part of its remit. The rationale for this is that petrol sniffing, volatile substance misuse and suicide are all self-harming behaviours, and the Unit has the expertise to bring to bear on the set of issues as a whole.

Responding to communities where there has been a suicide or a series of suicides is critical and highly specialised work. In part, CAPSSU's involvement in these situations has resulted from requests from other parts of government to assess a situation, with a view to providing advice on support to a community. Where there are clear links between petrol sniffing, other volatile substances and at risk behaviours such as suicide, it may be appropriate for CAPSSU to contribute advice and collaborate as part of a coordinated, multi-agency response. Primary responsibility, however, for dealing with such matters should continue to lie with the appropriate professionals with expertise in this area.

Geography

The region covered by the Eight Point Plan was originally the APY Lands in South Australia, the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in Western Australia and several communities in the south of the NT, including the four communities of Docker River, Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Apatula, where the IYSP investment has been made. Early in 2007 this original zone was extended to include another 18 or so remote communities together with the town camps of Alice Springs.

Over time, however, the diversionary focus of the Unit has moved substantially beyond the region of the NT covered in the expanded zone, to now being active across the south of the NT, and in four communities in the far northern reaches of the Territory. The map in Figure 1 below sets out the petrol sniffing regions, capturing the change over time.

With the progress made in the defined PSS zone, the Unit has taken the opportunity to work with communities affected by sniffing beyond the zone, but within the NT. The work has primarily been focused on diversion, reflecting the funds available under the NTER. Stakeholders on the whole recognise the barriers to the Unit working effectively across borders, but at the same time do support the need for this role, and want to see a return to this broader focus.

It is a recommendation of this review that:

- The scope of CAPSSU's role should be broadened to include other volatile substances in addition to petrol.
- FaHCSIA National Office should address the implications for the PSS of the recommended expansion of CAPSSU's role to include other volatile substances.
- CAPSSU work with NT and Australian Government officials to ensure an alternate and appropriately skilled response is available in response to suicide in remote Indigenous communities.

Figure 1 - PSS Zones



3.1.3 Location of the Unit

The terms of reference for this review include consideration of the location of CAPSSU. At present CAPSSU is located in the ICC in Alice Springs. This location reflected the initial design of the Unit, as discussed above, where staff from the government agencies responsible for the PSS would be co-located. Over time, the ICC model has also changed, and is now predominantly staffed by FaHCSIA personnel.

Before considering the placement of CAPSSU in terms of its physical location, the broader question is its geographical location. The rationale for the Unit being located in Alice Springs was to be in-situ to the PSS zone. Proximity to the communities affected by petrol sniffing was seen to be critical to the effective implementation of the Eight Point Plan. In practice proximity has proved essential to providing tailored and timely responses to communities, and is also critical to CAPSSU's role in providing advice to the Australian Government on petrol sniffing. The networks and partnerships required to see the Plan realised require local contact, local knowledge and local credibility, all of which require a team based in proximity to the on-the-ground work being done under the Plan.

The second consideration is the placement of CAPSSU in terms of the Australian Government department best placed to support CAPSSU's work. Some stakeholders argue that CAPSSU's focus on diversion was due in part to its placement in the ICC, which is generally considered to be part of FaHCSIA. While this may in part be the case, it is a far more complex set of factors that resulted in CAPSSU's narrow focus. The question now is whether the focus recommended as a result of this review is supported by remaining within the ICC, or whether the PSS would be better served by placement in another location.

An alternate option that was put forward by a small number of stakeholders from within and outside government was to locate the Unit within DoHA. The argument for this was to better align the Opal fuel roll out with the other components of the Plan. It was also argued that the rollout of Opal fuel has been the most successful element of the PSS, in its implementation and impact, and that this reflects on the capability of DoHA more broadly. Further, some stakeholders argued that the PSS overall was best aligned with health in terms of policy portfolios, and that this would prove beneficial to the full implementation of the Plan. Finally, for some stakeholders, again in and out of government, the push for a change in departmental location reflected the desire for change in personnel, arguing that fresh leadership would also better position the Unit to deliver on the plan.

Another option, suggested by one government stakeholder, was to locate CAPSSU in an independent location, separate to any other agencies, to highlight its independent, whole-of-government role. It was acknowledged, however, that this may have some disadvantages for a small unit in terms of resource efficiency.

Ultimately, FaHCSIA remains the lead agency on Indigenous Affairs, and much of the infrastructure which supports CAPSSU activity is also part of that Department. Access to networks of GBMs and other NTER resources, as well as the corporate support, and the procurement capability within FaHCSIA remain critical to the Unit's work. While there are risks of being caught up in any agency's internal priorities, the benefits of the extensive FaHCSIA networks, within the NT at least, provide direct benefit to the implementation of the Plan. Equally, it remains critical that CAPSSU staff are effectively quarantined from performing other roles within FaHCSIA.

For these reasons, the on-going co-location of the Unit within the FaHCSIA hub in Alice Springs, in the form of the ICC or the recently announced Regional Operations Centre is supportable. At the same time that the argument remains strong for maintaining the current location, there is much that needs to be done to move the focus of the Unit to the Plan as a whole, away from the specific areas of focus that best align with FaHCSIA's core business.

The location of the Unit within FaHCSIA has also led to a reporting relationship to the NT Office of the Department, in relation to approval of expenditure, in addition to the reporting relationship with Canberra. While it is clear that the expenditure of funds in the NT would involve the NT Office, there is a view that this arrangement is a further barrier to tri-state work, because it maintains the Unit's focus on the activity under the Plan for which there are funds, and limits the focus to the NT.

An alternate option that was put forward was to convene a tri-state governance structure, reflecting the region in the PSS. In addition, if CAPSSU's focus is expanded in line with the recommendation of this review, the Unit will be overseeing responses to communities beyond the tri-state region as it is currently understood.

A further option raised was that all reporting should be to OIPC in FaHCSIA National Office in Canberra. The argument was that this would promote a higher level perspective by the Unit, and would also provide better advice to National Office on the strategy as a whole. Considering the logistics of funds administration, the local and national policy issues, and the whole of government principles underpinning the PSS, a combination of these options is called for.

It is a recommendation of this review that:

- CAPSSU should remain co-located as an independent Unit within the ICC in Alice Springs
- Reporting lines be reviewed, led by FaHCSIA National Office to ensure governance of CAPSSU supports the Unit's role.

3.2 Implementation of the PSS

3.2.1 Achievements of the Unit

At the time of this review in 2009, the supply reduction strategy of replacing unleaded fuel with Opal fuel was unanimously held up as the major achievement in addressing petrol sniffing in Central Australia. Many examples were given where the supply of Opal had led to what some referred to as "overnight reduction" in the sniffing, as well as the anti-social behaviour and petty damage problems associated with petrol sniffing.

Diversionary activity is the other area of the Plan where progress has been made. This reflects the area where, like the Opal roll out, there has been significant financial investment by government.

Activity in relation to diversion is set out in detail below (see 3.2.3). It is important to note that this review has not considered the efficacy of this investment. It is understood that the activity will be independently evaluated later this year (2009). It is also noteworthy that a number of the programs will have exhausted funding in the next several months.

CAPSSU reported that the third area of the PSS it has focused on is that of community strengthening. This has been addressed by way of the model of community engagement CAPSSU utilises, which recognises that solutions to problems, whether volatile substance misuse or otherwise, are most effectively addressed through an alliance with community, which takes the following form:

- the problem is recognised by the community concerned
- action is desired by those in authority
- action reflects the preferences of those in authority and those directly affected
- action is tailored and timely
- where the initial response is to address a crisis, this translates into a long-term strategy.

The absence of the type of service system in place in an urban context is seen to place a particular obligation on government, reflected in this comment by a CAPSSU team member:

"When these communities are in crisis they look to the government. Government has to find a response. We have the expertise in terms of how to deal with this. You don't get service providers out there. [If you do] they don't sit down and work through community issues. I tie it back to the things out of the NTER report – it's about re-engaging with community – that's what we've tried to

do right through our programs – address petrol sniffing and substance abuse through community engagement. The intensive work is necessary – no one else can do it. It's this initial work we do – we have expertise other areas of FaHCSIA don't have”.

CAPSSU describes this as its model for working with communities, and as central to the activity surrounding the investment of resources. This model aligns well with the literature on community engagement and development. It is noteworthy, however, there is a perception within the Unit that it is a role that CAPSSU is uniquely positioned to undertake. While the service system is limited in many parts of Central Australia, there are services, in the health and NGO sectors particularly, where there is a wealth of expertise in Indigenous community engagement. At present, these services are not positioned by CAPSSU as assets to be drawn on in the implementation of the Plan, but rather as external stakeholders with limited or conflicting roles.

This review did not assess CAPSSU's direct engagement with community, and stakeholders were generally not able to directly comment on the skill or effectiveness of the Unit overall in community engagement from their own personal experience. Some stakeholders could comment from indirect experience that they understood the Unit interacted closely with communities where services were being provided under contract and that the project managers from within CAPSSU were generally thought to be reasonably well known and skilled.

It will be critical that community members are engaged in the evaluation of funded activity, particularly in regard to the extent to which the investment reflects community preference, and to evaluate the community strengthening delivered through CAPSSU processes and activity.

CAPSSU also invests significant time into service development and capacity building with service providers. CAPSSU staff described their contact with providers as weekly or even daily; commenting that “you can't let it all roll along without your finger on the pulse — just doesn't work up here”. CAPSSU is strongly of the view that this level of investment is necessary in developing capacity, particularly in a service system without established providers with demonstrated capability:

“In terms of remote service delivery government and NGOs are in the business of learning and the learning has some way to go. We've learnt a lot – there are various reports around about how we need to do things differently – be it stores, school attendance. It's taking a long time”.

In addition to the time invested in supporting and monitoring contracted providers, CAPSSU also invests time in engaging with communities about possible responses to petrol and other volatile substance issues. Indeed, as raised earlier, engagement has also been in relation to a community where petrol sniffing was believed to have featured in a number of suicides. The point was made that responding to a community with multiple issues is “not about taking something off the shelf and saying “here's the package”...considerable time is spent in negotiation and consultation – listening, and developing a service, designing it, which takes a lot of expertise, involvement, and time”.

The type of service referred to in this context is perhaps more accurately described as a response rather than a service per se. CAPSSU's work in engaging with communities can only be strengthened through improved relations with the broader service system, including the key NGOs. This is discussed in detail in section 3.4 below.

In addition to the achievements specifically related to supply reduction and implementation of diversionary programs, CAPSSU's success in getting and keeping petrol sniffing at the forefront of public discussion was widely recognised to be a key strength by both government and non-government stakeholders. The Unit is regarded as a strong advocate regarding petrol sniffing: “it had the ability to get people to recognise these are cross-disciplinary issues”. It was also applauded for “raising awareness of petrol sniffing with all the players across Central Australia: ‘ they helped people start talking about petrol sniffing, linking resources, funding gaps in the response – keeping everybody on their toes”.

Critical to these achievements has been the dedicated focus on this particular problem:

“They can focus specifically on an issue and bring specialist resources to bear...many other services are too generalist and broad which makes them 'watered down'...with resources less certain at the moment there is a chance the program will be diluted”.

Stakeholders from within FaHCSIA were the most likely to identify strengths along these lines, reflecting the strengths of the communication networks within FaHCSIA as a department. Indeed the high quality of the relationships between the Unit and the ICCs (across state lines) and the GBMs within the NT was also noted.

Caution is recommended, however, by many stakeholders in regard to complacency, or over-confidence in the achievements to date. This view is captured in a comment from one stakeholder:

“..whilst Opal unleaded fuel has been instrumental in reducing petrol sniffing in the short term, long term commitment is needed to sustain these outcomes”.

The Unit’s dedicated focus on petrol, the location within Central Australia, and the Unit’s autonomy were identified as assets that had enabled the Unit “to react quickly to the problem”. GBMs who participated in the review also valued the “enormous support and advice” provided, with one describing the Unit as “cooperative, collaborative and flexible”. This flexibility was also valued in relation to funding administered by CAPSSU, which was seen by some stakeholders to be reaching smaller programs to “get resources directly on the ground”.

Overall, the achievement has been the “drawing of attention to the multiple aspects of petrol sniffing — not just health or policing matters — but the multiplicity of action that is required”. This was regarded as particularly critical and valuable in relation to a complex and multi-faceted problem such as petrol sniffing, which requires coordination from a number of areas of government.

For stakeholders within the NT Government, the value of CAPSSU has been advocacy to Canberra. This was reported as critical to the quality of the response to petrol sniffing, *“...unlike other strategies where centralised policies come down with pre-determined service models which just can’t be applied in the Central Australia context. They’re (CAPSSU) never shy of telling bureaucrats that that’s a bad idea, and we’ve taken advantage of that”.*

Running parallel to the positive recognition of the achievements of CAPSSU is a critique of the Unit. At its most measured, this critique raises questions about the Unit’s focus in the NT to the exclusion of the tri-state region; the quality and transparency of the evidence drawn on to support funding decisions; the absence of documented data to support anecdotal reports of reduced rates of petrol sniffing; and concern that the Unit does not effectively leverage all the available resources — organisations, knowledge, good will, that could be brought to bear on implementing the Plan. More strident criticisms are also made, and to some extent these are on the public record through the Senate Inquiry reports and the Urbis Report (2008). Specific issues are addressed in the following section.

3.2.2 Progress in implementing the Eight Point Plan

Consistent with the Urbis Report, while acknowledging the achievements and progress in implementing the PSS, the 2009 Senate Inquiry noted that some points of the strategy *“have not been implemented to the extent required for the strategy to effectively and holistically address the causes and issues associated with petrol sniffing and substance abuse in the long term”* (Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Secretariat 2009, p42).

At present, it is CAPSSU’s understanding that responsibility for the elements of the Plan beyond diversion and community strengthening lies with other parts of government, as follows:

- unified legislation is the responsibility of the Attorney-General’s Department and FaHCSIA National Office
- policing has primarily been addressed in the NT under the NTER; CAPSSU maintains positive and productive relations with the NT Police, and has identified the NT Police as a significant asset in addressing petrol and other solvent misuse
- rehabilitation is currently understood by CAPSSU to be the responsibility of the NT Department of Health and Families and DoHA
- communication has to date been focused on Opal roll out; at present CAPSSU does not have a communication strategy

- evaluation is understood to be the responsibility of FaHCSIA National Office, and to pertain to the funded activity; evaluation of Opal fuel rests with DoHA. In regard to evaluation of the Unit itself, it was acknowledged that there is no formal nor informal data collection, nor reporting, which could inform stakeholders on the activity or effectiveness of the Unit.

This is in contrast to the general view of some external stakeholders who understand CAPSSU to be responsible for progressing activity under all points of the Plan, albeit it with varying levels of involvement.

The discrepancy in understanding of the Unit's role does in part explain the overt criticism made of CAPSSU by some stakeholders. Some NGOs' criticisms are on the record, particularly through the Senate Inquiry reports, and Urbis' 2008 report. But concern about the Unit's performance is not contained to non-government stakeholders. The key criticism from a minority of stakeholders in government is that the Unit has not established the networks and relationships that will best serve the Plan. Many government stakeholders spoke positively of the Unit's leadership, and the ability to advocate on some issues and progress some agendas. But within this positive reflection, the observation was sometimes made that the basis for the relationship was 'informal', with no mechanism to support it should the individuals involved move on, or, indeed, fall out.

A further criticism is the lack of alignment between the current supply reduction activity, other CAPSSU activity, and the efforts of NGOs and NT Government, particularly in relation to Volatile Substance Management plans. This was raised by NT Government and NGO stakeholders as an obvious area for improved planning and implementation. The view of these stakeholders is that the best outcomes for communities will be achieved through coordinating the effort across levels of government. To this end the view of many is that supply reduction, investment in diversion, and other elements of the Eight Point Plan should all be coordinated, as reflected in this comment by an NT Government stakeholder:

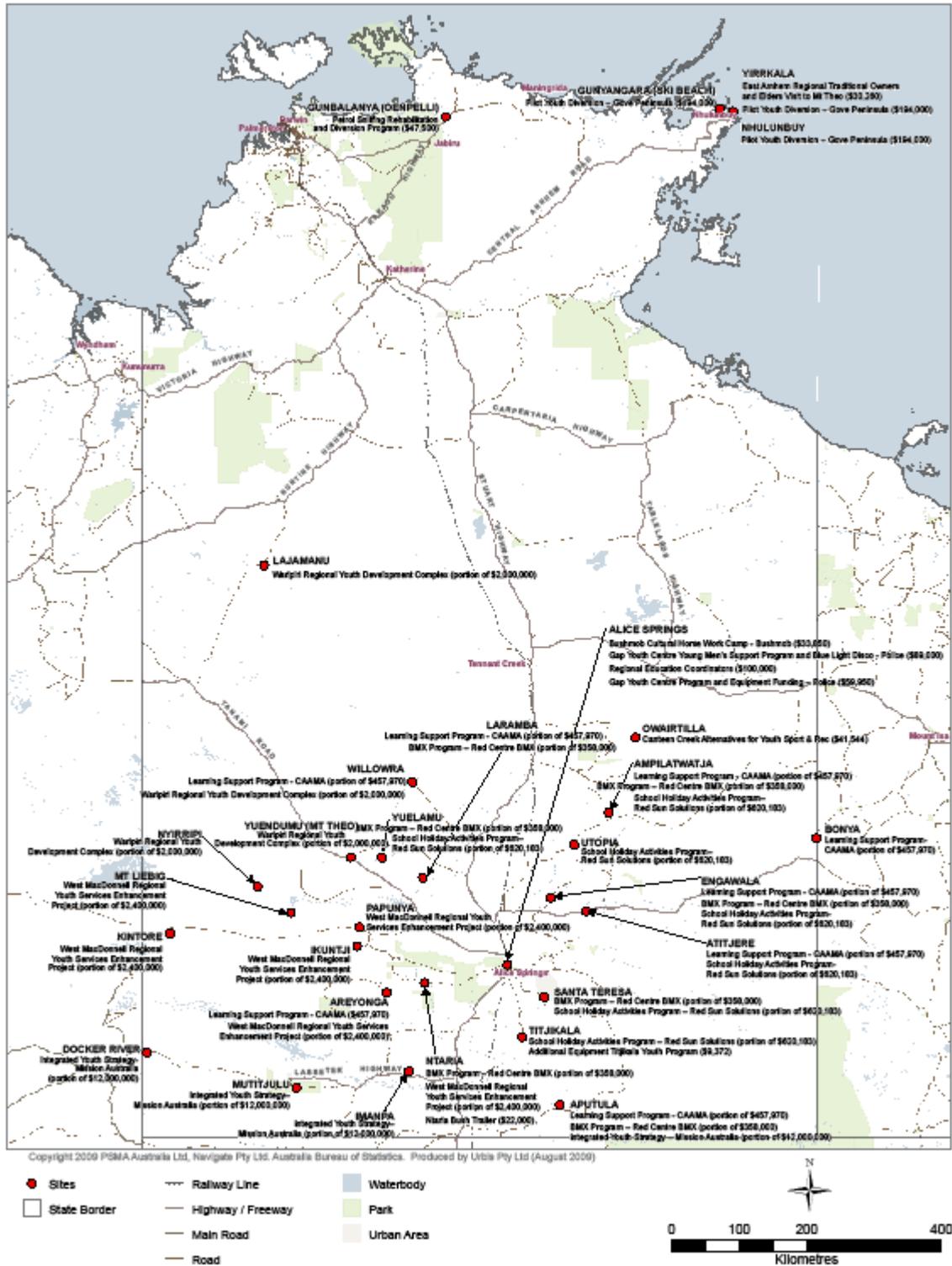
"I'd like to have seen a stronger link [between] the Unit and the Opal roll out, which seems to sit in another part of government, and the money invested for petrol sniffing treatment which sits in a completely different government agency".

The lack of attention to the issue of rehabilitation in particular is seen by NGO stakeholders as failing to deliver on the holistic response possible under the Plan. Whilst consultation with CAPSSU confirms that regular meetings are held with NT Government officials around treatment and rehabilitation services, the lack of rehabilitation and care available to individuals and the families of people affected by sniffing remains a grave concern to those working close to communities, including CAPSSU. From the Unit's point of view, responsibility for rehabilitation lies with the NT Government; however from advocates' and providers' point of view, this non-action reflects the Unit being burdened by the administration of funds associated with implementation of the Plan.

The diversionary activity that CAPSSU has focused on has also come in for criticism by stakeholders, particularly in terms of transparency in decision making about what to fund and in which communities, as well as the rationale for the significant variation in the amounts invested in communities, beyond obvious factors such as the size of the population. Another area of concern is the extent to which the activity reflects community solutions and preferences. The issues concerning transparency are addressed in more detail in the next section. The map over the page sets out the activity funded under the PSS to date. Projects are also detailed in section 3.2.3 below.

From the information mapped, the disparity in investment is significant, refer Figure 2 below. This is not in itself problematic, except that the rationale for the variation and the link between community preference and the activity funded is not always evident in program documentation. The background information, the 'story' behind each investment is held in the corporate memory of individuals, and can to some extent be accounted for verbally. At times the driver for investment has been as simple as a short timeframe for funds to be expended, and the most evident opportunities were taken. In these circumstances, not all factors are within the Unit's control. But it is the view of many stakeholders that with better networks, more effective communication and a clearer connection to an underlying program logic, better funding decisions could have been made.

Figure 2 - Northern Territory Sites



Documented criticism

Criticism of CAPSSU is documented in the Senate Inquiry report, which notes a recent disagreement between CAPSSU and the Central Australia Youth Link Up Service (CAYLUS) regarding the awarding of a contract (Senate Inquiry 2009, p84). The Inquiry notes that the provision of school holiday programs was centralised, and put out to a competitive tender which CAYLUS contends it was not consulted about. The running of these programs was then awarded to Red Sun Solutions, based in Lismore, NSW. CAPSSU has stated that CAYLUS did lodge a submission to the tender, and that the Unit had followed standard procurement policy in selecting the successful Tenderer.

The Urbis Report (2008, p26) notes that some Central Australian stakeholders originally expressed surprise when Mission Australia's appointment was announced. In particular the NPY Women's Council — which had itself tendered for conduct of the IYSP in light of its longstanding concern with petrol sniffing issues and its experience in conducting youth programs in these communities — criticised the appointment on the grounds of Mission Australia's lack of experience in Central Australia.

Despite the fact that the implementation of the IYSP is considered to have been successful by the Senate Inquiry (Senate Inquiry 2009, p23), the Inquiry noted with concern the selection of a non-local organisation with no previous experience in the geographical region. The Inquiry also noted that there were no local people involved in the decision making process for the successful tender, with the decision based on compliance with tender requirements, the services proposed to be delivered and value for money (Senate Inquiry 2009, p 85).

In response, the Inquiry's Recommendation 14 states:

"The committee considers the provision of successful programs in remote Indigenous communities to be a highly specialised area for which mainstream programs and 'one-size-fits-all' solutions are not necessarily appropriate. The committee recommends that in order to maximise local ownership and effectiveness of programs, the awarding of contracts in remote Indigenous communities must take into consideration a Tenderer's":

- on-the-ground presence, reputation and standing in the region
- existing relationships, networks within the region and support or endorsement from communities
- ability to provide tailored programs to individual communities or groups of communities in response to the diverse cultural expectations, kinship systems and protocols of the region.

In the consultations CAPSSU noted that the selection of the IYSP was handled by National office and complied with Commonwealth Government Procurement Guidelines. CAPSSU agrees that future procurement processes would be enhanced by the provision of local community information sessions prior to such processes being implemented.

It is a recommendation of this review that:

- In any future funding rounds an information session should be held which sets out the procurement process, the requirements of the particular round, and probity issues.

3.2.3 Summary of current projects funded and managed by CAPSSU

The information below is based on May 2009 project summaries provided by the client. Most of these projects have now been completed and are due to submit post implementation reports by 30 September 2009. Most projects are relatively short term (a few months), and have budgets from \$10,000 to significant sums, of up to \$12 million over three years. The focus varies from building self esteem and mentoring through sporting or recreational activities and camps. Much of the funding has also been used for equipment or infrastructure.

The following is a summary of current and recently completed projects managed by CAPSSU.

Red Centre BMX Program

The BMX Program is being delivered by *Red Centre BMX* to youth aged 12 to 18 years in school communities in Ampilatwatja, Apatula, Yuelamu, Santa Teresa, Engawala, Ntaria and Laramba.

The Program focuses on two key areas:

- completing the roll-out of BMX tracks across the seven target communities
- collaborating with the NT Department of Education and Training and target schools to incorporate use of the BMX facilities into the schools' curricula.

Red Centre BMX will explore a variety of options for using the BMX facilities to make school attendance more appealing for young people, for example:

- using the facilities in health and physical activity programs
- including special classroom activities for older youth about management and maintenance of the BMX facilities, and
- developing practical skills in first aid, OH&S, coaching, bike and track maintenance, and repair of bikes and other equipment.

The Program is expected to:

- improve participant's mental health, self esteem and confidence
- increase youth participation at school
- increase youth school retention rates.

The Program was estimated to be completed in July 2009, but an extension has been requested.

Total project funding was \$358,000 (GST exclusive).

Learning Support Program

The Learning Support Program targets school-aged young people and is being delivered by the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) in Atitjere, Apatula, Ampilatwatja, Areyonga, Engawala, Bonya, Laramba and Willowra.

The Program focuses on three key areas:

- Stream 1 targets Middle Years-aged youth who are currently disengaged from schooling, with a range of activities aimed at encouraging and supporting their return to school.
- Stream 2 targets school-aged youth who are attending school and who have a musical talent, to encourage them to continue their education by focusing on the opportunities for engagement in the music industry in the NT.
- Stream 3 targets 15- to 18-year-olds with an interest in and a talent for music by providing information about and opportunities to engage in certificate courses relevant to the music industry that can be delivered by Batchelor College and Charles Darwin University.

Expected Program outcomes include:

- Immediate
 - prevent the uptake of alcohol and other substance misuse, including petrol in a number of remote communities in Central Australia
 - achieve a reduction in the incidence of harmful and at risk behaviours of youth in communities
 - improve the mental health of youth in the communities of Atitjere, Ampilatwatja, Utopia, Engawala, Areyonga, Ntaria, Apatula, Watiyawanu and Willowra

- improve school attendance and retention rates of the target communities
- improve self esteem and confidence of participants and engagement in learning.
- Short Term
 - a return to education for those aged for enrolment in the Middle Years
 - increase social linkages in recreation, educational and social sectors
 - increase ability for youth to make informed life choices.
- Long Term
 - prevent an increase in the uptake of alcohol and other substance misuse, including petrol, in a number of the remote communities in Central Australia
 - achieve a reduction in the incidence of harmful behaviours
 - strengthen the capacity of parents and local workers to engage with their youth and schools to increase local involvement in educational activities and outcomes.

The program is to be completed by 31 August 2009.

Total project funding was \$457,979 (GST exclusive).

Warlpiri Regional Youth Development Complex

The development of the complex (including the refurbishment of an existing building into a regional management office and the construction of a roof over an existing outdoor basketball court) aimed at assisting the Mt Theo Substance Misuse Program to provide a comprehensive suite of youth services to the Warlpiri communities of Yuendumu, Nyirripi, Willowra and Lajamanu.

The Complex was due to be completed by June 2009.

Total project funding was \$2,000,000 (GST exclusive).

West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project

The Project aimed to provide an effective youth diversionary infrastructure in the West MacDonnell communities. The West MacDonnell Shire was appointed as the service provider for this project.

The expected project outcomes included:

- young people are engaged in structured activities, to keep them on community during term breaks and facilitate their return to school after the holiday period
- community is involved in addressing the effects of substance abuse
- families and individuals are assisted to deal with the problems of petrol sniffing
- construction of accommodation units and the provision of 4 wheel drive vehicles to support employment of youth workers.

The project was due to be completed by 30 June 2009.

Total project funding was \$2,400,000 (GST exclusive).

Additional Equipment – Titjikala youth program

Funding aims to complement other projects in the West MacDonnell Shire and is intended to assist capital improvements including in demountable buildings used for sport and recreation programs. These improvements include:

- supply and install four new reverse cycle air-conditioners

- supply four new metal–frame tables and 16 new metal–frame chairs

Total project funding was \$9,372 (GST exclusive).

Ntaria Trailer

Funding has been provided to purchase a trailer that is equipped to cater for eleven people to assist with taking youth out to homelands for camping trips on weekends and school holidays.

The project is designed to assist youth gain self–confidence and self esteem, and to decrease drug and alcohol use.

The NT Police has indicated that it will accompany a number of the trips to assist and work on developing positive relationships between the young people and police.

Both Ntaria Health Clinic and Western Aranda Health Aboriginal Corporation staff have expressed a desire to take groups of young men and women out bush for information sessions around sexual health, anger management and substance misuse.

Expected project outcomes include:

- improvement in physical health through participation in environmental and recreational activities
- youth exposure to positive childhood to adulthood experiences and influences
- youth diversionary activities leading towards employment opportunities.

Total project funding was \$22,000 (GST exclusive).

Pilot Youth Diversion Gove Peninsula

The Pilot aimed to enhance the capacity of Indigenous youth services in the Gove Peninsula, through a 6–month project to:

- establish innovative diversionary activities
- improve treatment options and infrastructure support for addressing emerging issues of petrol sniffing and other forms of substance abuse amongst young people.

This Project targeted young people up to 18 years of age who live in the following Gove Peninsula communities: Yirrkala, Nhulunbuy, Gunyangara (Ski Beach).

The Yirrkala Community Education Centre was the organisation funded to deliver the program.

The Project was expected to deliver the following services:

- Youth Diversion Program
- Cultural Camps
- Referral Service
- Community Patrol
- Communication Strategy.

Anticipated project outcomes included:

- increased support for and ideally implementation of a Mt Theo treatment model (outstation treatment centre) for the East Arnhem Region
- improved understanding by the Traditional Owners and Community Elders of practical and effective treatment options to enable them to make informed choices as to the model that best suits their communities

- build stronger and broader support networks and treatment options to combat petrol sniffing amongst Indigenous communities in the East Arnhem Region.

The project was due to be completed by 30 June 2009.

Total project funding was \$194,000 (GST exclusive).

NT Department of Education and Training – Regional Education Coordinator

The Regional Education Coordinators were expected to encourage and support involvement of the schools in the following 2008–09 Youth Alcohol Diversion (YAD) programs, to be implemented from December 2008 to July 2009:

- School Holidays Activities Program
- Learning Support Program
- BMX Program.

The Regional Education Coordinators were expected to work with the designated schools to:

- facilitate their active involvement in the CAPSSU YAD programs
- assist them to identify and engage eligible youth and their families who could participate in the YAD programs
- ensure ongoing sustainability of the outcomes of the YAD programs through the development of innovative education and training resources that could be integrated into the school's core curriculum during the second half of 2009.

The following outcomes were expected to be delivered through the project:

- schools are fully informed of the YAD programs and opportunities to be involved
- schools actively participate in the YAD programs, coordinated across the communities
- schools integrate the outcomes of the YAD programs into core curriculum, through the development of innovative education/training programs and assessment methods
- young people are actively supported and encouraged to participate in school education.

The project was due to be completed by 31 July 2009.

Total project funding was \$200,000 (GST exclusive).

Petrol Sniffing Rehabilitation and Diversion Program – Gunbalanya

The Program aimed to assist in the immediate removal of petrol sniffers and ensure their attendance at the Abbott's Station to participate in rehabilitation activities.

Project outputs were expected to include:

- client attendance at camp and participation in activities
- development of meaningful partnerships between stakeholders.

The West Arnhem Shire Council was the service provider for this program.

The project was due to be completed by 30 June 2009.

Total project funding was \$47,500 (GST exclusive).

Bushmob Cultural Horse Work Camp for Volatile Substance Users

The Camp aimed to provide a diversionary activity for users of volatile substances and other substances over a five day period as part of Bushmob's ongoing program to create a viable bush

adventure therapy service for young people at risk using cultural role models and mentors, skilled stockmen and horses and trek mentors (strong men and women).

The project was expected to provide a number of benefits to the Bushmob clients and also to other stakeholders including opportunities to:

- develop self-confidence and esteem in a safe environment
- discuss strong drug and alcohol messaging together with family violence messaging
- participate in Indigenous mentor leadership groups.

The project was due to be completed by 30 June 2009.

Total project funding was \$33,850 (GST exclusive).

Gap Youth Centre Young Men's Support Project

The Project consisted of two parts:

- the running of blue light discos for youth by the Alice Springs Police during the December 2008, April 2009 and June/July 2009 school holidays together with other regular blue light discos from the Gap Youth Centre Premises
- the provision of funding to support the trial Police Young Men's Program to operate from the Gap Youth Centre Premises. The Program was expected to involve travelling 'out to bush' areas where police and young people discuss offending, reasons behind offending, recognition of rights and wrongs and family issues. It was also expected to provide the opportunity to learn from others' mistakes and provide support and leadership to them with an aim of preventing further offending.

Anticipated project outcomes included:

- reduction in crime and other anti-social activities committed by young people in Alice Springs
- reduction in drug use by young people in Alice Springs
- increased participation by young people in social activities with their peers
- increased numbers of young people accessing services from the Gap Youth Centre.

NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services are the service providers for this program.

The project was due to be completed by 30 June 2009.

Total project funding was \$26,000 Blue Light Discos (GST exclusive) and \$89,000 Young Men's Program (GST exclusive).

Gap Youth Centre – Program and Equipment Funding

Program funding was expected to allow for:

- sporting activities to be conducted three times per week over the four-week mid-year school holiday period, and staffed by police and supported by youth workers from other Alice Springs organisations
- extension of the Gap Youth Centre Blue Light discos into and over the school holidays each fortnight
- an open cinema day to allow youth from the targeted groups free access to the Alice Springs cinema for selected moving screenings
- an open day/evening with local youth bands on Anzac Oval as a finale to the school holidays
- purchase of equipment to support the Young Men's Program.

NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services are the service providers for this program.

The project was due to be completed by 30 June 2009.

Total project funding was \$59,950 (GST exclusive).

Canteen Creek – Alternatives for Youth: Sport and Recreation

Program funding was expected to allow for:

- Purchase of outfit and equipment for football, softball, athletics and basketball teams
- supply and erection of a 1.3m high three-strand steel wire fence and backstops at school oval to keep out donkeys and horses
- supply of secure storage container adjacent to Owairtilla School to store sporting and recreational equipment
- supply of a gas barbecue and gas bottle.

Canteen Creek Owairtilla Association Incorporated is the organisation funded for this project.

Anticipated project outputs and outcomes include:

- provision of a range of safe and healthy activities as an alternative to substance misuse
- education of young people about the dangers of substance misuse
- reduction in petrol sniffing, together with improved school retention rates and attendance levels.

The project was due to be completed by 30 June 2009.

Total project funding was \$41,545 (GST exclusive).

East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders Visit to Mt. Theo

The visit was expected to provide an opportunity for the East Arnhem Traditional Owners and Elders to see first hand the outstation model in a working environment. The visit would also allow the East Arnhem Traditional Owners and Elders to ask questions of the Substance Misuse Workers and the substance users currently being treated to better understand the program.

The project was expected to provide the following benefits to the communities of the East Arnhem Region:

- increase support for and ideally implementation of a Mt Theo treatment model (outstation treatment centre) for the East Arnhem Region
- improve understanding of the Traditional Owners and Community Elders of practical and effective treatment options and enable them to make informed choices as to the model that best suits their communities
- build stronger and broader support networks and treatment options to combat petrol sniffing amongst Indigenous communities in the East Arnhem Region.

The project was due to be completed by May 2009.

Total project funding was \$30,260 (GST exclusive).

School Holiday Activities Program – Red Sun Solutions

Funding was provided for the delivery of a *School Holiday Activities Program* in Atitjere, Titjikala, Yuelamu, Santa Teresa, Ampilatwatja, Engawala and Utopia.

The project primarily targeted school-aged youth aged 12–18 years.

The range of activities to be delivered included lyric writing/music production and recording to CD; multi-media; circus skills; bicycle repairs and maintenance; sewing; art and craft; puppets; ball sports, and activities such as barbecues, movie nights and discos.

This project aimed to encourage the immediate return of school-aged youth to school following the holiday periods by maintaining their participation in organised, structured and properly supervised activities. Older youth aged 16 to 18 years were involved as mentors, leaders and supervisors, under the supervision of the project provider and local youth workers.

Total project funding was \$620,183 (GST exclusive).

The NT Integrated Youth Services Project

The NT Integrated Youth Services Project (IYSP) is the key youth program funded under the PSS. In April 2007 the Australian Government signed a three-year contract with Mission Australia for its delivery in the four NT communities of Docker River, Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Apatula.

The Program funding totals approximately \$12 million over the three-year contract period — \$4 million for infrastructure and \$8 million for operational costs. This contract is managed by CAPSSU on behalf of FaHCSIA, AGD and DEEWR.

The Senate Inquiry (2009, p22) notes that under the IYSP Mission Australia provides a range of initiatives including:

- working to re-engage young people with education
- sport and recreation activities such as football, basketball, softball, band practice and recording, rollerblading, BMX riding
- nutrition/cooking, pizza and camel stew nights
- hygiene and hair care
- cultural activities such as visiting sacred sites with community elders
- school pick-up services
- lunch time activities to help encourage school attendance.

3.2.4 Supporting the implementation of the NTER

As noted in the Urbis Report (2008, p17), the introduction of the NTER in mid-2007 by the previous Commonwealth Government required that CAPSSU take on a range of support responsibilities in Central Australia. The Urbis Report notes that CAPSSU and FaHCSIA representatives observed that carrying out these NTER responsibilities has inevitably reduced the CAPSSU staff time available for progressing the Eight Point Plan.

Given that there are no significant funds available under the PSS for activity in the expanded NT zone, one of CAPSSU's concerns has been to try to identify other possible funding sources for this purpose.

In its August 2008 Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Petrol Sniffing and Substance Abuse in Central Australia (p33), the Commonwealth Government noted that funding of \$11.4 million for 2007–08 was allocated for the drug and alcohol component of the NTER. The Measure provided for expanded drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation services across the NT to support individuals and communities affected by the new alcohol legislation. An additional \$2.6million was allocated under the *Closing the Gap – NT – Follow Up Care Measure (Drug and Alcohol Component)* to continue treatment and rehabilitation activities.

CAPSSU received funding under the NTER for implementing the Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure in central Australia. The Measure was aimed at young people aged between 12 and 18 who engage in, or are at risk of, alcohol and other substance abuse in NTER designated communities (FaHCSIA, 2008, p1). The programs and infrastructure have been funded and designed to offer a range of alternative activities to drinking and substance abuse (FaHCSIA, 2008, p1).

The Measure was to be implemented by the FaHCSIA National Office, its Northern Territory State Office (NTSO) and CAPSSU.

The aims of the Measure were:

- expansion of the capacity of Indigenous youth services in the NT
- funding of youth focused recreation and equipment and infrastructure
- provision of recreation and diversion activities across the NT
- support and encouragement of attendance at school (including re–engagement)
- diversion of young people from at risk behaviours (including substance abuse)
- reduction of the impact of substance abuse on individuals and communities
- encouragement and support for transition from school to further education and/or work (FaHCSIA, 2008, p2).

Funding was provided in two streams:

- **Regional Youth Development Networks:** aimed at establishing a range of regional and community specific youth diversionary activities, increasing regional coordination and activity networks (eg by developing regional competitions and events), increasing the use of available resources such as pools, school resources, recreations centres, and ovals, drawing on existing relationships and activities with bodies such as the Australian Defence Force Cadets, and increasing pathways and linkages for training and employment.
- **Central Australian Youth Alcohol Abuse Diversion Measures:** aimed at providing infrastructure and youth diversion programs in Central Australia. Infrastructure may include the construction or refurbishment of structures such as recreation halls, youth worker houses, recreational infrastructure, and offices or training rooms. Youth programs may include school holiday programs, after hours school care programs, capital equipment (such as vehicles) or the provision of youth workers in selected communities to run programs.

The NTSO and CAPSSU are accountable and/or responsible for program implementation and coordination including the following.

NTSO and CAPSSU jointly

- NT Government liaison, coordination with other Australian Government agencies and stakeholder management for the NTER
- providing advice and local intelligence on existing projects and service provision to reduce the possibility of duplicated projects
- identification of potential partners
- providing program expenditure and implementation reports to Network Management Branch (FaHCSIA, 2008, p5).

CAPSSU Only

- coordinating the development of funding proposals under the Central Australian Youth Alcohol Abuse Diversion Measures
- liaison with potential service providers
- ongoing management and monitoring of the projects (FaHCSIA, 2008, p6).

3.3 Program rationale and transparency

The 2008 Urbis review of the PSS identified the absence of a transparent structure to support the implementation of the Plan. A program logic was prepared as part of the review, and since then

FaHCSIA has commissioned a detailed piece of work by external consultants Courage Partners resulting in a program logic and a substantial evaluation framework.

There has, however, been no embedding of these structures, and the status of the commissioned work remains unclear in terms of it informing activity being conducted under the PSS. The PSS implementation would benefit from a stronger strategic framework and direction within which to operate. One of the significant advantages associated with using such frameworks is the clear line of sight provided, starting with the intent of a program or strategy through to the activity delivered and on to the impacts, ensuring that there is a close and consistent connection between the two. In the case of this review of CAPSSU, the absence of transparency was consistently raised as a criticism by detractors of the Unit overall, but also by those with a generally positive regard for the work of the Unit. In the words of one NT-based Australian Government stakeholder, the concern is that the information available to them is "...anecdotal, and pretty loose— and depends on my relationship with individuals — I can't say to someone else — yep, I know they are on track because of this and this".

The need for the activity and performance of the Unit to be accountable and transparent requires re-confirmation. This review did not consider the individual funding decisions and program rationales under IYSP and NTER funds. Nevertheless, a number of stakeholders, both within and outside of government, have raised questions about the need for greater transparency in funding decisions, including:

- why specific communities are funded and others not
- why types of activity are funded
- the extent to which activity reflects community preference
- the sustainability of investment
- the rationale for the significant variation in investment, beyond obvious considerations of the size of communities.

One government stakeholder provided this explanation for how investment is determined:

"... they rush like mad to get a project up — it's what can be scrambled together in the shortest time".

An NGO stakeholder offered this explanation:

"... a record \$8 million allocated to the NTIYS project, four communities over three years; [they] cannot give a rationale for why these four communities in the zone would be picked out — even though they really need it — they don't stand out head and shoulders above the others... the real reason is that CAPSSU couldn't negotiate with the other states so it was spent in the NT. What model is guiding their work? Political expedience".

It should be noted that at the time CAPSSU was being established, a decision had already been made in FaHCSIA on the selection of the four communities and the creation of the IYSP. CAPSSU's perspective is that the funding reflects a combination of need, the opportunity within communities in terms of existing facilities and community strengths, as well as what has been established as effective over time, eg the dual youth worker model. It is acknowledged that there can be significant time constraints to take advantage of funding opportunities, and it can be critical to move very quickly. In these circumstances projects that are already fairly well positioned are most likely to be funded.

A critical issue for the effectiveness of the PSS is the credibility of CAPSSU. For this reason, in addition to administrative requirements, action is required to increase the transparency of decision making under the Plan.

It is the recommendation of this review that:

- FaHCSIA National Office support the implementation of a simple and transparent program logic framework for CAPSSU's work under the PSS.
- All recommendations for expenditure made by CAPSSU be linked to the program logic.
- FaHCSIA National Office ensure that the evaluation framework developed for the PSS is embedded into all aspects of the Eight Point Plan, and the funded activity in particular.

3.4 Positioning and relationships/communication

Responding to petrol sniffing requires a highly tailored response, which draws on a number of factors, including local knowledge, local intelligence, local networks and local resources. Utilising each factor equally requires local relationships, based on trust, integrity and reputation. CAPSSU interacts with all levels of government and the non-government sectors across multiple jurisdictions. In order to progress the Eight Point Plan, some areas of this interaction require strengthening, formalisation, and in some areas, conciliation.

Positive relationships were reported by stakeholders within NT and NT based Australian Government roles. The relationship with the NT Police was reported by both Police stakeholders and CAPSSU to be highly functional. There is particular support from NT Police and many other government stakeholders at a state/territory and national level for the Eight Point Plan Forum, convened by CAPSSU. Various stakeholders also reported that the information exchange was useful, and the easy availability of people within the Unit to discuss issues or concerns about sniffing incidents or services was valued. Some stakeholders did suggest, however, that the positive communication they experienced was perhaps by good fortune rather than good design, in that not all stakeholders enjoy a formal mechanism to support communication with the Unit. For individuals for whom the relationship works this was offered as an observation, and something that should be attended to in case the individuals in roles change, or other factors affected the conviviality underpinning the relationship at present.

For stakeholders who reported that they do not enjoy convivial relations with the Unit, the lack of formal mechanisms for information exchange is a particular cause for concern. Some non-government organisations reported a complete breakdown in relations with some members of the Unit, but ongoing positive relations with other staff. One NGO in particular raised concerns that the lack of communication was compromising the effectiveness of the Unit:

"Currently CAPSSU is not utilising our experience, nor that of [other NGO]....as such their guidance is severely compromised, and the government is getting little return on their investment in creating local capacity to provide co-ordination around inhalant issues.

Where was the planning exercise with stakeholders? Those non government organisations should have been seen as integral to youth and solvents, but [CAPSSU] can only see threat [to their] position".

The 2007 review of the PSS found little had been done to engage with WA and SA. CAPSSU reports that since that time significant efforts have been made to re-engage these states in the work of the Unit. To this end, a meeting is convened of government stakeholders on the day preceding the bi-monthly Eight Point Plan Forum, which is attended by both government and non-government stakeholders. Most recently government stakeholders have included representatives of the Attorney-General's Department, DoHA, DEEWR and of course FaHCSIA, with representatives from the Kununurra and Kalgoorlie ICCs, South Australian State Office and National Office in Canberra.

Some stakeholders in the government and (particularly) non-government sectors reported that they would like to see a better quality of information being provided by CAPSSU. An example of this was the tabling of the SAID report at Eight Point Plan forums, which did not represent new information. The expectation of stakeholders is that they leave the forum with new information, having learnt something

useful to their own area of activity. Stakeholders are seeking an educative and consultative function from the Eight Point Plan Forum, moving beyond information exchange. In this sense, stakeholders are looking for CAPSSU to take a strong leadership role in information collation and exchange.

Frustrations with CAPSSU were expressed by NGOs and some government stakeholders, with the Unit's leadership the most common target. The range of comments included:

"They're the nucleus of the plan, but they're so insular — they don't know what's going on around them.

A fundamental part of CAPSSU's role is to build relationships with local stakeholders and facilitate their input into policy – rather than be the only point that gives an on the ground perspective. There is no real consideration of the competence that is within the region. What CAPSSU don't have is the practitioners, the strategists, to be able to work with what's happening".

The previous section included a discussion of the value of investing in program design. Equally, there is value in developing a communications strategy. At present, communication is driven primarily by issues arising, ie CAPSSU receives, shares and responds to information about incidences. The value of a communications strategy is that it raises awareness and understanding of, in this context, the PSS, through the life of the strategy. Once the strategy is developed, it is then delivered through a communication plan.

A good communications strategy includes a number of components, including:

- clear articulation of what is trying to be communicated
- well defined messages reflecting this purpose
- explicit target audience/s
- the appropriate media for conveying the message.

For a communications strategy to remain credible, it must also be reviewed over time.

It is a recommendation of this review that:

- CAPSSU be assisted with communications expertise to develop a communications strategy in relation to the Eight Point Plan, and progress against the Plan and the Unit's role, with a detailed plan of what, when and how the strategy will be actioned.
- CAPSSU map the critical relationships across all sectors that are required to deliver on the role recommended in this review. A formal mechanism for establishing, strengthening and maintaining each relationship should be identified.
- The Eight Point Plan Forum purpose and agenda be reviewed in light of a communications strategy.

3.5 Resources and budget

3.5.1 Resources and funding

There are several issues to consider in regard to CAPSSU's resources and funding.

Firstly, the adequacy of funding to enable the Plan to be implemented across the expanded PSS zone. The Urbis Report (2008, p16) noted that for financial, staffing and other reasons, CAPSSU had been able to do little work outside of the NT. Similarly, the Senate Inquiry (2009, p42) "*questions why CAPSSU has not received commensurate funds and staff to implement the full range of PSS programs in the extended zone*". The investments made by SA and WA governments under the Plan have not involved CAPSSU, but even in combination, the investment of funding and other resources across the

three jurisdictions has not yet seen all areas of the Plan attended to. Hence, there is an argument for an overall increase in investment by Commonwealth, state and territory governments across the jurisdictions, if the potential of the Plan is to be realised in each community affected by volatile substance use.

This review has recommended that CAPSSU continue to manage funding investment within the NT, maintaining the current arrangement whereby WA, SA and Queensland manage the investment made within those states. There are resource implications for CAPSSU should another significant NT allocation of funds be managed through the Unit, for example, the recently announced Youth In Communities funds under the Closing The Gap in the Northern Territory budget measure. The resources required within the Unit to manage another significant investment, and deliver the broader focus on the overall Plan as recommended in this report, will require review.

The administration and contract management of the current investment consumes the majority of the Unit's resources. It is, however, important to note the recommendation of the Senate Inquiry (2009) that the contracted services bring existing knowledge and readiness to deliver within the terms of the contract. Providers with specific remote area service delivery capability will enable a reduced contract management commitment from CAPSSU, which for the largest contract with Mission Australia continues, almost three years into the contract, to involve a weekly contract management meeting. While the particular challenges of working in remote locations properly involves a higher than usual level of involvement from a contract manager, the current levels are not sustainable.

The final consideration is the critical importance of flexible funds, for which the Unit has reasonable levels of discretion (within departmental guidelines) to support community-generated solutions. This type of investment has generally been under \$100,000, and been linked to a timely and tailored response to a specific community. Examples have included the funding of \$22,000 for a trailer to assist with taking youth involved in sniffing in Ntaria to homelands, supported by community leaders and police. Another example was funding of \$47,500 to enable young people sniffing petrol to leave Gunbalanya, and ensure their attendance at the Abbott's Station to participate in rehabilitation activities. Similarly, the funds (just over \$30,000) invested in East Arnhem regional traditional owners and elders visiting Mt. Theo to see first hand the outstation treatment model, and speak with community leaders and the workers involved.

While acknowledging the efficacy of this type of investment has yet to be evaluated, stakeholders are unanimous that this flexible, timely and tailored funding is critical to engaging with communities, demonstrating goodwill through resourcing community identified needs, and most significantly, providing a tangible response in a timely way following the identification of petrol sniffing issues. There is an argument for expanding the funding available for this type of response, separate to the funds allocated in a particular jurisdiction. This would require a dedicated budget allocation, and a range of decisions about the administration of such a budget. Guidelines to support discretionary allocation would be required.

It is a recommendation of this review that:

- CAPSSU should be resourced to deliver the recommended range of roles.
- A dedicated PSS budget should be allocated, to support flexible, timely and community-driven solutions to volatile substance use, across states and territories.
- Guidelines be developed to inform the types of expenditure that can be made under such a 'discretionary' budget, reflecting the timely and tailored responses to communities delivered in NT communities to date.

3.6 Data collection, reporting and monitoring

This section focuses on CAPSSU's role in relation to data collection, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. A significant finding of the review in regard to these areas is the variation in the understanding of CAPSSU's role in these regards, and CAPSSU's own view of their role.

A number of stakeholders reflected that they assumed CAPSSU has a data collation role, in relation to the prevalence of petrol sniffing in particular. This is not a role CAPSSU has undertaken to date. The monitoring of prevalence is complex and resource intensive, and requires significant expertise and resources. There is also an argument for such work to be done independently from a unit charged with reducing petrol sniffing.

3.6.1 Current data activity

A NT based Australian Government stakeholder reported that CAPSSU staff are “the red flag process, everyone knows that [they are] the first point of contact of an outbreak ... we also investigate suicides and refer them when sniffing is involved”, whereas NT police reported that there are no arrangements in place to directly report outbreaks to CAPSSU. The protocol for Police is to send information about drug dealing, supply of fuel or petrol and illegal alcohol to the intelligence area, which vets information before it is provided to SAID. But this does not necessarily mean CAPSSU is not responding operationally to alerts about incidents. A NT government stakeholder in the drug and alcohol field noted that to their knowledge, no information is shared between NT Health and CAPSSU on a location specific basis. Given the work being done in engaging communities in volatile substance management plans, it would seem likely that a formalised mechanism for data exchange would be of value to both groups, and to communities.

CAPSSU is well connected to an information network throughout the NT, via the GBMs. Through this network, and other sources including community members, government officers in other departments, and others, CAPSSU receives ‘alerts’ about petrol sniffing incidents. Until recently this information would be provided by telephone or email, but with the recent introduction of a data collection form, it is expected that consistent details will be collected as part of the ‘alert’ process. The form is provided at Appendix D. It is also important to note that GBMs have not had specific training in relation to volatile substance issues, and that the recognition and understanding of the issues have been found by the Unit to be highly variable.

The NT intelligence CAPSSU receives is currently adequately recorded, but not adequately collated. Since April 2009 the Unit has entered alerts about NT incidents into a spreadsheet. This is a step in the right direction as it at least provides a single point of reference, and could enable the identification of trends over time. At this stage CAPSSU does not record its response or other action taken to the information contained in the alert. In lieu of a more comprehensive system, the action taken should also be documented.

3.6.2 Complexities of data collection

In the context of Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID), NTER and the NT Government's own work under the Volatile Substances Abuse Prevention Act (2008), data about substance misuse issues, including monitoring, are particularly complex. In relation to petrol sniffing the added complexity is reflected in this comment from a NT Government stakeholder:

“It is important to remember that sniffing is not easy to capture; it is usually done out of communities. Police and hospitals are a good source of data, but Police don't always detect it, and most kids in this area don't or won't go to hospital”.

The evolution of the ICC into a Regional Operations Centre (ROC) provides additional opportunities to inform and upgrade all aspects of data management within CAPSSU. It is understood that the ROC will be expected to collect a complex set of data pertaining to remote communities and remote service delivery. The aim of the proposed data collection is to provide the evidence for progress being made in OID and Closing the Gap measures.

The communities identified as Remote Service Delivery sites will be captured by FaHCSIA's base line data collection survey.

The challenge, once again, will be to achieve a consistent approach in Queensland, WA, SA and NT, and for participants in the collection to understand the collection's purpose and value. The demands of existing reporting were reflected on by a NT based Australian Government stakeholder:

"... we need clarity about what is to be collected; when, how, and what priority is it? There are so many things to report on now, where do I place this on the priority list?"

A consistent data tool for use across states will be critical to CAPSSU undertaking the recommended role of oversight of the responses to communities across jurisdictions. The tool developed by CAPSSU has been used for some months in the NT, and could be usefully reviewed to determine whether it is the right tool for common usage across the states. Once agreed, the tool can be used to inform local responses in each jurisdiction, and be collated at regular intervals as a source of intelligence about trends over time, numbers of incidents, participant characteristics, and types of responses being provided in each area. CAPSSU will require resourcing that includes skills in data collation and analysis to fulfil this role.

It is a recommendation of this review that:

- A common volatile substance incident recording protocol and tool should be agreed across jurisdictions for use in recording incidents, validation of incidents, and responses.
- CAPSSU should be responsible for collating data gathered through the common reporting tool, and providing advice on trends to the PSS Senior Executive Service Steering Committee.
- The detail of the data collection be agreed in the context of parallel Indigenous data collection strategies.

References

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Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Secretariat (2006) *Beyond Petrol Sniffing: Renewing Hope for Indigenous Communities*, The Senate, Parliament House, Canberra.

Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Secretariat (2009) *Grasping the Opportunity of Opal; Assessing the Impact of the PSS*, The Senate, Parliament House, Canberra.

Urbis (2008) *Review of the First Phase of the PSS*, report to FaHCSIA, FaHCSIA, Canberra ('the Urbis Report').

Appendix A Stakeholders consulted

Table 1 – Stakeholders consulted

Australian Capital Territory	
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Mark Stoyles, Director, National Projects Section
	John Lee, Section Manager, Substance Abuse Operations Section, Program Performance Group
	Wendy Matthews, Director, Research and Evaluation, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	David Morgan, Assistant Director, Indigenous VET and Transitions Team
	Coral Gibson, Program Officer, Indigenous Pathways, Mobility and Choice, School and Student Support Branch
Attorney-General's Department	Mark Canning, Director, Indigenous Solutions and Service Delivery
	Anthony Heiser, Assistant Director, Indigenous Solutions and Service Delivery
National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee	Sue-Anne Morley, Executive Officer
Northern Territory	
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Brian Stacey, State Manager
	Barry Johnson, Deputy State Manager
– Finke (Apatula) and Imanpa	Richard Hughes, Government Business Manager
– Docker River (Kaltukatjara)	Janeen Bulsey, Government Business Manager
– Hermannsburg (Ntaria) and Wallace Rockhole	Bryan McKain, Government Business Manager
– ICC Alice Springs	Fiona Hogan, Deputy Manager
	Chris Davies, Deputy Manager
– ICC Nhulunbuy	Peter Ryan, Manager
– ICC Katherine	Mark Ridgeway, Manager
– ICC Tennant Creek	Louise Atherton (for Sylvia Mason, Manager)
– Northern Region	Agnese Rinaldi, Acting Section Manager, GBM Support
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Alice Springs	Kathleen Anderson, Regional Director
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts	Matt Salmon, Assistant Director (Environment)
	Chris Hicks, Assistant State Manager
Australian Sports Commission	Carrie Merret, Regional Coordinator, Central Australia
Department of Health and Families, NT	Joanne Townsend, Director, Alcohol and Other Drugs

Police, Fire and Emergency Services, NT	Michael White, Superintendent
MacDonnell Shire	Cath O'Leary, Manager Agency Services
Mission Australia	Scott Wassman, Service Manager
	Mark Swindells, Service Manager
Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA)	Bill Davis, Manager
Red Centre BMX	Kate Skinner, President
	+ another
NPY Women's Council	Andrea Mason, Acting Coordinator
	Vickie Gillick, Outgoing Coordinator
	Sue Cragg, Youth Manager
Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi Aboriginal Association (Waltja)	Liz Archer, Community Training Worker
Tangentyere Council/Central Australian Youth Link Up Service (CAYLUS)	Tristan Ray, Coordinator
	Blair McFarland, Coordinator
Bushmob Inc.	Louisa Fontanot, House Manager
Ngaanyatjarra Council	Gerard Coffey
CAPSSU	Steve Vaughan, Manager
	Peter Kay, Deputy Manager
	Lynette Ross, Project Manager
	Dianne Bramich, Project Manager
	Debra Mayell, Administration Officer
South Australia	
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	James Armitage, Section Manager, Regional Operations Centre, Remote Service Delivery
– ICC Port Augusta	Richard Trevena, Manager
– ICC Ceduna	Pia Richter, Manager
– ICC Kununurra	Kerrie Jocumsen, Youth Strategy Coordinator
Western Australia	
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Roger Barson, State Manager
	Richard Aspinall, Former Network Manager
– ICC Kununurra	Kerrie Jocumsen, Youth Strategy Coordinator
– ICC Kalgoorlie	Merle Ann Cochrane, Team Leader

Appendix B Question guides

Discussion guide for CAPSSU Review: CAPSSU staff

Introduction/background

22. Can we start with some brief questions about you, your role and how this relates to CAPSSU?
Prompts:
- *What is your role in the Unit?*
 - *How long have you been in that role?*
 - *What has been the focus of your position over the last 24 months? Has that changed, and if so, how? Prompt: The impact of the NTER*

Understanding the role and function of CAPSSU

23. What do you understand the current role of the Unit to be? Has that role changed, and if so, how?
Prompts:
- *Implementation and monitoring of PSS,*
 - *collection of key data re PSS,*
 - *management of funding programs,*
 - *NTER,*
 - *supporting the rollout of Opal fuel and providing advice to communities/organisations/ government agencies in relation to petrol sniffing and other substance abuse when requested).*
24. How do you think the Unit's work relates to the work of the government and non-government sector? *Prompts:*
- *National Government agencies (eg. FaHCSIA, DoHA, AGD, DEEWR)?*
 - *State government?*
 - *Local government?*
 - *Non-government or community sector?*
25. From your experience, how well do you feel the Unit is performing its key functions? *Prompts:*
- *Contributing to the successful implementation of the PSS?*
 - *Contributing to the successful implementation of other whole-of-government approaches (such as the NTER)?*
 - *Communicating with key stakeholders?*
 - *Collecting and sharing key data about PSS and other substance abuse?*
 - *Developing strategic partnerships and funding community-based prevention programs?*
26. How does the Unit determine its priorities and projects?

Overall achievements and obstacles

27. Overall, what do you think have been the Unit's main achievements to date?
28. What are the key factors that have contributed to these achievements?
29. Are there any aspects of the Unit's function that have worked *less well* than you would have hoped or expected? If so, what were they?

Tri–state strategic programs, partnerships & information sharing

30. The Unit has an important role in the implementation of the PSS in the tri–state region, as well as addressing outbreaks of petrol sniffing in other regions of the NT. Do you feel that the Unit is well placed to meet this role? *Prompts:*
- *In relation to the Unit’s resourcing (e.g. Number of staff)?*
 - *In relation to the Unit’s location (ie. the Alice Springs ICC)?*
 - *In relation to the Unit’s internal structure?*
31. The Unit is expected to develop strategic partnerships and liaise with government stakeholders to support these tri–state initiatives. How well do you think the Unit is performing this role? *Prompts:*
- *What has helped or hindered this work?*
 - *What factors could improve the Unit’s work in this regard?*
32. Do you feel that you have had sufficient input into the tri–state whole–of–government strategies that the Unit is required to implement?

Community strategic partnerships & information sharing

33. The Unit is also required to develop strategic partnerships and liaise with community stakeholders, particularly Indigenous service providers and/or communities, to implement its strategies successfully. How well do you think the Unit is performing this role? *Prompts:*
- *What has helped or hindered this work?*
 - *What factors could improve the Unit’s work in this regard?*

Activities and projects

34. In your view, do the activities/projects conducted by the Unit reflect the most efficient way to address substance abuse? *Prompts:*
- *Do they reflect local needs?*
 - *Do they reflect best practice in responding and preventing substance abuse and working with Indigenous/remote communities?*

Data collection

35. Another role of the Unit is to collect data on petrol sniffing outbreaks that can be compared across states and jurisdictions. How well do you think the Unit is performing this role? *Prompts:*
- *What data collection processes, if any, are in place?*
 - *What has helped or hindered this data collection and reporting function?*
 - *What factors could improve the Unit’s work in this regard?*
36. Can you give specific examples of how your agency/organisation has used (or could use) the data or reports provided by the Unit?
37. Can you give specific examples of how your agency/organisation has contributed to the data or reports provided by the Unit?
38. What data does your organisation currently collect that could complement the data collected by the Unit?
39. Are you aware of existing data sources collected by your or other agencies that could inform data collected by the Unit (*for example, data relating to the NTER, Police data, hospitalisation data*)?

40. What would be the best data collection system to provide CAPSSU with regular, reliable data on the incidence of petrol sniffing to:
- *'Raise a red flag' that there is a potential (and sudden) petrol sniffing in a particular community? (Prompts: GBMs provide data on petrol sniffing in their weekly reports; data provided by key government agencies eg Education (eg school attendance), Health, Police). What actual and accurate 'proxy' measures would be best to use for this? How regularly should this data be collected?*
 - *Verify that this data is reliable (eg through key local informants, service providers)?*
 - *Track the incidence of petrol sniffing as it changes?*
41. How feasible would it be to establish the above data collection system? What factors would need to be considered?

Final comments

42. Apart from what you have already described, are there any other important strengths or weaknesses of the Unit that need to be taken into account in planning for the future?
43. Are there any other comments that you would like to make that are relevant to the evaluation of the Unit?

Discussion guide for CAPSSU Review: Community organisations

Introduction/background

44. Can we start with some brief questions about you, the organisation you work for and how this relates to CAPSSU (the Unit)? *Prompts:*
- *What is your role in your organisation?*
 - *How long have you been in that role?*
 - *What has been your organisation's core relationship with the Unit? (E.g. Information sharing, government agency, program stakeholder, funding recipient). How long has your organisation had that relationship?*
 - *What has been the nature of your direct dealings with the Unit? Prompt – how often do you deal with the Unit, are you always dealing with the same person?*

Understanding the role and function of CAPSSU

45. *What part of CAPSSU's role are you best able to comment on? What's your understanding of other roles CAPSSU has?*
- *Implementation and monitoring of PSS,*
 - *collection of key data re PSS,*
 - *management of funding programs,*
 - *NTER,*
 - *supporting the rollout of Opal fuel and providing advice to communities/organisations/government agencies in relation to petrol sniffing and other substance abuse when requested/supporting the rollout of Opal fuel and providing advice to communities/organisations/government agencies in relation to petrol sniffing and other substance abuse when requested)*
46. How do you think the Unit's work relates to the work of the government and non-government sector? *Prompts:*
- *National Government agencies (eg. FaHCSIA, DoHA, AGD, DEEWR)?*
 - *State government?*
 - *Local government?*
 - *Non-government or community sector?*
47. From your experience, how well do you feel the Unit is performing its key functions?

Overall achievements and obstacles

48. Overall, what do you think have been the Unit's main achievements to date?
- *Contributing to the successful implementation of the PSS?*
 - *Contributing to the successful implementation of other whole-of-government approaches (such as the NTER)?*
 - *Communicating with key stakeholders?*
 - *Collecting and sharing key data about PSS and other substance abuse?*
- Developing strategic partnerships and funding community-based prevention programs?*

49. What are the key factors that have contributed to these achievements?

50. Are there any aspects of the Unit's function that have worked *less well* than you would have hoped or expected? If so, what were they?

Tri-state strategic programs, partnerships & information sharing

51. The Unit has an important role in the implementation of the PSS in the tri-state region, as well as addressing outbreaks of petrol sniffing in other regions of the NT. Do you feel that the Unit is well placed to meet this role? *Prompts:*
- *In relation to the Unit's resourcing (e.g. Number of staff)?*
 - *In relation to the Unit's location (ie. the Alice Springs ICC)?*
 - *In relation to the Unit's networks*
52. The Unit is expected to develop strategic partnerships and liaise with government stakeholders to support these tri-state initiatives. How well do you think the Unit is performing this role? *Prompts:*
- *What has helped or hindered this work?*
 - *What factors could improve the Unit's work in this regard?*

Community strategic partnerships & information sharing

53. The Unit is also required to develop strategic partnerships and liaise with community stakeholders, particularly Indigenous service providers and/or communities, to implement its strategies successfully. How well do you think the Unit is performing this role? *Prompts:*
- *What has helped or hindered this work?*
 - *What factors could improve the Unit's work in this regard?*

Activities and projects

54. In your view, do the activities/projects conducted by the Unit reflect the most efficient way to address substance abuse? *Prompts:*
- *Do they reflect local needs?*
 - *Do they reflect best practice in responding and preventing substance abuse and working with Indigenous/remote communities?*

Data collection

55. Another role of the Unit is to collect data on petrol sniffing outbreaks that can be compared across states and jurisdictions. How well do you think the Unit is performing this role? *Prompts:*
- *What data collection processes, if any, are in place?*
 - *What has helped or hindered this data collection and reporting function?*
 - *What factors could improve the Unit's work in this regard?*
56. Can you give specific examples of how your agency/organisation has used (or could use) the data or reports provided by the Unit?
57. Can you give specific examples of how your agency/organisation has contributed to the data or reports provided by the Unit?
58. What data does your organisation currently collect that could complement the data collected by the Unit?
59. Are you aware of existing data sources collected by your or other agencies that could inform data collected by the Unit (*for example, data relating to the NTER, Police data, hospitalisation data*)?

60. What would be the best data collection system to provide CAPSSU with regular, reliable data on the incidence of petrol sniffing to:
- *'Raise a red flag' that there is a potential (and sudden) petrol sniffing in a particular community? (Prompts: GBMs provide data on petrol sniffing in their weekly reports; data provided by key government agencies eg Education (eg school attendance), Health, Police). What actual and accurate 'proxy' measures would be best to use for this? How regularly should this data be collected?*
 - *Verify that this data is reliable (eg through key local informants, service providers)?*
 - *Track the incidence of petrol sniffing as it changes?*
61. How feasible would it be to establish the above data collection system? What factors would need to be considered?

Experience as a funded service

62. Could you comment on your level of satisfaction in working with CAPSSU?
63. Could you comment on the level of support you have received from CAPSSU? How did you find this support?
64. Do you have suggestions for where more support could be provided?

Final comments

65. What do you see as the future priorities for CAPSSU to focus on?

Final comments

66. Apart from what you have already described, are there any other important strengths or weaknesses of the Unit that need to be taken into account in planning for the future?
67. Are there any other comments that you would like to make that are relevant to the evaluation of the Unit?

Discussion guide for CAPSSU Review: Government stakeholders

68. Can we start with some brief questions about you, the organisation you work for and how this relates to CAPSSU (the Unit)? *Prompts:*
- *What is your role in your organisation?*
 - *How long have you been in that role?*
 - *What has been your organisation's core relationship with the Unit? (Eg Information sharing, government agency, program stakeholder, funding recipient). How long has your organisation had that relationship?*
 - *What has been the nature of your direct dealings with the Unit? Prompt – how often do you deal with the Unit, are you always dealing with the same person, over what period of time have you had contact?*

Understanding the role and function of CAPSSU

69. *What part of CAPSSU's role are you best able to comment on? What's your understanding of other roles CAPSSU has?*
- *Implementation and monitoring of PSS*
 - *collection of key data re PSS*
 - *management of funding programs*
 - *NTER*
 - *supporting the rollout of Opal fuel and providing advice to communities/organisations/government agencies in relation to petrol sniffing and other substance abuse when requested/supporting the rollout of Opal fuel and providing advice to communities/organisations/government agencies in relation to petrol sniffing and other substance abuse when requested)*
70. How do you think the Unit's work relates to the work of the government and non-government sector? *Prompts:*
- *National Government agencies (eg FaHCSIA, DoHA, AGD, DEEWR)?*
 - *State government?*
 - *Local government?*
 - *Non-government or community sector?*

Overall achievements and obstacles

71. Overall, what do you think have been the Unit's main achievements to date?
- *Contributing to the successful implementation of the PSS?*
 - *Contributing to the successful implementation of other whole-of-government approaches (such as the NTER)?*
 - *Communicating with key stakeholders?*
 - *Collecting and sharing key data about PSS and other substance abuse?*
 - *Developing strategic partnerships and funding community-based prevention programs?*
72. What are the key factors that have contributed to these achievements?
- *Contributing to the successful implementation of the PSS?*
 - *Contributing to the successful implementation of other whole-of-government approaches (such as the NTER)?*

- *Communicating with key stakeholders?*
 - *Collecting and sharing key data about PSS and other substance abuse?*
 - *Developing strategic partnerships and funding community-based prevention programs?*
73. Are there any aspects of the Unit's function that have worked *less well* than you would have hoped or expected? If so, what were they?

Tri-state strategic programs, partnerships & information sharing

74. The Unit has an important role in the implementation of the PSS in the tri-state region, as well as addressing outbreaks of petrol sniffing in other regions of the NT. Do you feel that the Unit is well placed to meet this role? *Prompts:*
- *In relation to the Unit's resourcing (eg Number of staff)?*
 - *In relation to the Unit's location (ie the Alice Springs ICC)?*
 - *in relation to Unit's networks*
75. The Unit is expected to develop strategic partnerships and liaise with government stakeholders to support these tri-state initiatives. How well do you think the Unit is performing this role? *Prompts:*
- *What has helped or hindered this work?*
 - *What factors could improve the Unit's work in this regard?*

Community strategic partnerships & information sharing

76. The Unit is also required to develop strategic partnerships and liaise with community stakeholders, particularly Indigenous service providers and/or communities, to implement its strategies successfully. How well do you think the Unit is performing this role? *Prompts:*
- *What has helped or hindered this work?*
 - *What factors could improve the Unit's work in this regard?*

Activities and projects

77. In your view, do the activities/projects conducted by the Unit reflect the most efficient way to address substance abuse? *Prompts:*
- *Do they reflect local needs?*
 - *Do they reflect best practice in responding and preventing substance abuse and working with Indigenous/remote communities?*

Data collection

78. Another role of the Unit is to collect data on petrol sniffing outbreaks that can be compared across states and jurisdictions. How well do you think the Unit is performing this role? *Prompts:*
- *What data collection processes, if any, are in place?*
 - *What has helped or hindered this data collection and reporting function?*
 - *What factors could improve the Unit's work in this regard?*
79. What data on substance abuse/petrol sniffing does your organisation collect? Are you aware of existing data sources collected by your or other agencies that could be relevant to the work of CAPSSU (for example data relating to the NTER, Police data, hospitalisation data)?
80. What would be the best data collection system to provide CAPSSU with regular, reliable data on the incidence of petrol sniffing to:

- *'Raise a red flag' that there is a potential (and sudden) petrol sniffing in a particular community? (Prompts: GBMs provide data on petrol sniffing in their weekly reports; data provided by key government agencies eg Education (eg school attendance), Health, Police). What actual and accurate 'proxy' measures would be best to use for this? How regularly should this data be collected?*
 - *Verify that this data is reliable (eg through key local informants, service providers)?*
 - *Track the incidence of petrol sniffing as it changes?*
81. How feasible would it be to establish the above data collection system? What factors would need to be considered?

Looking forward

82. What do you see as the future priorities for CAPSSU to focus on?

Final comments

83. Apart from what you have already described, are there any other important strengths or weaknesses of the Unit that need to be taken into account in planning for the future?
84. Are there any other comments that you would like to make that are relevant to the evaluation of the Unit?

Appendix C Rapid Response Protocol



Appendix D CAPSSU Reports of Substance Abuse and Self Harm form





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