

Review of the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks and Dog Operation Units

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Acronyms

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACC – Australian Crime Commissions
AFP – Australian Federal Police
APY – Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
ATS – Amphetamine-type stimulants
CAP – Complementary Action Plan
CBJP _ Cross-Border Justice Project
CMC – Crime and Misconduct Commission
CSSPS – Community Safety Service Provider Survey
CSWRS – Community Safety and Wellbeing Research Study
CtG – Closing the Gap
DDD - Drug Detector Dogs
DOJ – Department of Justice
DOU – Dog Operation Unit
DUMA – Drug Use Monitoring in Australia
FaHCSIA – Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
NATSISS – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NDLERF – National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund
NIITF – National Indigenous Intelligence Taskforce
NPA – National Partnership Agreement
NT – Northern Territory
NTER – Northern Territory Emergency Response
NTNER – Northern Territory National Emergency Response
OMCG – Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs
POI – Person of Influence
RSD – Remote Service Delivery
SA – South Australia
SAID – Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk
WA – Western Australia

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Note:

Restricted reports were consulted for this review. They cannot be directly cited or acknowledged using traditional referencing conventions. This report was checked to ensure the contents did not risk compromising any ongoing law enforcement operations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

First established in 2006 in Alice Springs, the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk (SAID) has expanded over the past five years to include Dog Operation Units (DOUs) and funding for additional operational capacity in Western Australia (WA) and personnel in South Australia (SA) and the Northern Territory (NT).

Funding from the Department Families, Communities, Housing and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), of just over \$2.5 million in 2010-2011, supports 10 staff positions and seven dogs in the NT, one staff position in SA, and remote area operations in WA.

The main purpose of the SAID/DOUs is to gather intelligence on suppliers and criminal networks involved in illicit substance trafficking, coordinate policing operations related to illicit substance trafficking in the tri-border region in central Australia and in the north NT, and conduct enforcement and disruption activities.

The aim of the review was to assess the contribution the SAID/DOUs make to address and reduce the supply of illicit substances into remote Aboriginal communities.

Primarily conducted from March through to June 2011, the review included the compilation and analysis of program and output information, statistical data, and semi-structured interviews with over 35 stakeholders.

Context

Important contextual factors considered as part of the review included:

- Trends and patterns of substance misuse in remote Australia are not well documented.
- Available data and survey results indicate that cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug by non-Indigenous and Indigenous people in remote regions. Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) and other drugs are more likely to be found in towns/regional centres than remote communities in these areas.
- Illicit drug markets vary by region with considerable differences across regions and jurisdictions in police data on drug seizures, arrests and offences. At a jurisdictional level, methamphetamine and cannabis is detected more often in SA and WA compared with the NT. In the NT, very few police detainees tested positive to any drug other than cannabis in Darwin and none in Alice Springs.

- From a local policing perspective alcohol takes up more of police time, and is seen by local Indigenous people and police as exacerbating wider social problems such as violence and anti-social behaviour. Jurisdictional and regional police data on offences show that drug offences only make up a small fraction of total offences dealt with by the police.
- In nearly all remote communities covered by the SAID/DOUs in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, WA, the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) communities¹ in the NT and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, alcohol is banned² along with the possessing or supplying volatile substances including petrol for the purposes of inhalation, which means they are illegal substances along with drugs such as cannabis. In remote Australia, the use of kava is largely confined to Arnhem Land communities and since the federal government banned the commercial importation of kava in 2007, all sales of legal kava ceased in the NT and the offence provisions under NT legislation remain in force.
- With an increased police presence in remote Aboriginal communities, in the tri-border region and in NTER communities, there is more uniform and increased enforcement of alcohol restrictions. The roll-out of Opal low aromatic fuel to multiple remote communities and increased policing has resulted in a significant decline in petrol sniffing, even in the tri-border region where the practice is most prevalent.
- With more local police stationed in Aboriginal communities and with the cross-border justice project and National Indigenous Intelligence Taskforce (NIITF), there are greater opportunities than ever before to develop regional partnerships and to make more strategic use of the local support and knowledge that result from good community policing.
- It is not surprising that more attention has been paid to substance misuse in remote Aboriginal communities in the NT, given the proportion of the jurisdiction's population that lives in remote/very areas and the proportion that self-identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Activities and outputs

SAID/DOU activities include community visits to build relationships with Indigenous people, during which they stress their focus on apprehending traffickers and the confidentiality of

¹ NTER communities are the 73 remote communities in the NT that fall within the areas prescribed by the NTNER legislation.

² Several communities in the NT do have premises that are licensed to sell alcohol. There were changes to the conditions of the license as a result of the NTNER but the licenses remained in place.

information and its source. They - along with local police in remote regions in the NT, WA and SA - are involved in road blocks and patrols, and targeted operations.

The units in the north and south of the NT have their own areas of priority affected by seasonal change, geographic and cultural differences, patterns of substance use and transport routes. In the cross-border context, there are established ties with the funded intelligence officer in SA, while the relationship with WA police is strongest with those posted in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

Intelligence gathering and analysis is integral to their work which involves compiling profiles of places, people and methodologies and sharing this other information with others. The SAID/DOUs have a good working relationship with policing organisations and with the Australian Crime Commission's NIITF, which means the product of their work is incorporated into national intelligence reports.

There have also been examples of successful operations against mid-level traffickers that are often the result of many months of accumulating intelligence and evidence.

The SAID/DOUs broadcast their successes through media releases and raise their public profile through visits to schools and presentations to relevant organisations. Although it is a stated component of their work, it is not clear how much involvement there is in community education.

Drug detection dogs play a key role in raising the public profile of their work and in searches of premises, vehicles, passenger buses, transport and post office/courier items. DOU statistics for January 2009 to June 2011 showed:

- A good success rate with searches: the proportion of positive searches varied by type of search but the total proportion of positive responses for each six month period increased each period from 18% in the first six months of 2009 to 28% in the first six months of 2011. An exceptionally high number of vehicle searches and positive responses were recorded in the first six months of 2010, and this affected the total of 62% positive responses for the period.
- A big increase in the volume of searches: in the first six months of 2009 there was a total of 560 searches recorded while in the second half of 2010 there were 1,551 and in the first six months of 2011, 1,150 searches. This may be partly the result of Darwin DOU and WA police statistics being added in from May 2010.
- The most common search was of vehicles over the 30 month period (47% of the total of 4,999 searches) with a high proportion of positive responses in the first half of 2010.

Searches of premises had the most consistently high proportion of positive responses (ranging from 29% in the first six months of 2009 to 68% in the first six months of 2011).

Statistics for airline and airport searches were added in from November 2010 and till June 2011 there were 216 searches (26% positive responses) at airports and 281 searches (23% positive responses) at airlines.

As a result of the SAID/DOU activities, the following trends were noticeable over five years (2006 -2010):

- With seizures, the annual quantity of cannabis climbed steadily, kava was only recorded in 2009 and 2010, and doubled in 2010. The annual amount of alcohol increased steadily from 2006 to 2008, jumped dramatically in 2009 and then declined by 44 per cent in 2010. Annual petrol seizures were not large except for an annual total of 535 litres in 2008.
- With seizures of other drugs, the biggest annual total for amphetamine was in 2010 (396 grams) and for ecstasy in 2009 (889 grams). These relatively small amounts are more likely to involve non-Indigenous offenders and the seizures to occur at transport stops (bus, air and roads).
- With actions taken against offenders, the number of vehicles seized increased each year from three in 2006 to 23 in 2010. Annual total of cash increased each year except for 2008, when it was under \$10,000. When annual totals of arrests and summons are combined, the highest annual number was in 2010 followed by 2007. The annual total of charges was also highest in 2010 (n=783) followed by 2007 and 2006.

Monthly data for a 30 month period shows a dramatic increase in most categories of actions against offenders after April 2010. As WA police and Darwin DOU statistics began to be included in May 2010, it is hard to know how much of the increase is due to changes in data collection. Monthly numbers were lower in the first half of 2011 than the previous six months.

Available data indicate some apprehended offenders are involved in dealing. Approximately one half of charges laid for cannabis and kava offences related to the possession or supply of trafficable or commercial quantities, for the first six months of 2010.

Stakeholders' perspectives on what was distinctive about the SAID/DOUs and contributed to positive outcomes, included:

- Drug detection dogs in terms of profile, good public relations and increased rates of efficient, non-intrusive detection

- A cross-jurisdictional dedicated unit that acts as a single point of contact
- Exclusive focus on the supply of illegal substances into remote communities, with no risk of being subsumed or diverted into other policing priorities or needs
- Small, mobile teams that can respond to regional issues and trends
- Compiles and analyses information that increases awareness of the extent and demand of illicit substances

Impact

Drawing on mostly police data and community safety surveys for the NTER communities, four key impact areas were examined – drug crime and drug-related crime, organised crime, public health and public amenity.

Overall, the impact indicators indicate that increased policing and enforcement by local police and others is affecting the availability of alcohol and other drugs in remote communities. Community safety research suggests alcohol-related harms have declined in some remote communities and people feel safer than three years ago but that cannabis is causing widespread disquiet.

In relation to the main illicit substances of concern, available data showed:

Alcohol

In the NTER communities alcohol is recorded as being involved in approximately 24 per cent of confirmed incidents and 36 per cent of offences, over a five and half year period. The number of alcohol-related offences climbed until 2009 before stabilising in 2010.

Alcohol harm indicators such as anti-social behaviour, restricted area infringements and apprehensions, driving under the influence infringements and apprehensions, and protective custody episodes followed a similar trend.

Trends in different categories of assault offences indicate it is less serious violence episodes that drove much of the upward trend and recent levelling in recorded assaults, with assault resulting in injury remaining relatively constant.

Based on a comparison of Themis³ communities with other communities³ and between pre-NTER restricted area communities and those without restrictions, it appears that additional

³ 'Themis' is the term commonly used to denote those communities where Operation Themis improved infrastructure and increased the police presence as part of the NTER/National Partnership Agreement measures in the NT (FaHCSIA 2011).

policing and enforcement caused much of the increase in recorded incidents and offences, including those recorded as related to alcohol.

A community safety survey, the Community Safety and Wellbeing Research Study (the CSWRS), conducted this year involving local Indigenous participants in 16 NTER communities found that the majority of respondents (57%) agreed there was less drinking in the community than three years ago. In a separate survey, the Community Safety Service Provider Survey (CSSPS), service providers who worked in remote communities in the NT were more likely to say there was no change, but in some communities (23% of participants) there are signs that drinking alcohol in homes has declined.

Alcohol is still regarded as a very big problem by 33 per cent of local Indigenous people, and by 23 per cent of service providers in places other than homes, with the former group indicating there were multiple family problems associated with such drinking.

Volatile substances and kava

Volatile substance related incidents in the NTER communities followed a similar pattern to alcohol-related incidents and offences until 2010 with increases each year, but unlike alcohol-related incidents continued to increase in 2010. They are recorded by police as a much smaller proportion of incidents than alcohol-related incidents (3.9% and 24.7% respectively of all confirmed incidents in 2010-11).

Confirming the earlier evaluations of the Opal low aromatic fuel roll-out and the findings of the 2007 survey of petrol sniffing in the APY Lands, the CSWRS found that the majority of participants across the 16 remote communities said there was less petrol sniffing than three years ago. Kava was not included as a separate substance in this survey or in the survey of service providers. As a result, future research needs to investigate its perceived impact on individuals' health and community well-being.

Illicit drugs

The annual number of drug-related incidents in the NTER communities rose steadily from 2006-07 to 2010-11 and in 2010-11 were recorded as constituting 2.4% of all confirmed incidents. Drug offences rose during July- December 2007, stayed at similar levels until 2010, when the number increased in the second half of the year.

The trend in drug seizures involving Indigenous offenders in all NT remote communities rose over a seven year period. There has been an increase in the number of detections and apprehensions but of smaller amounts and almost always cannabis is seized.

Data for two individual APY communities shows very small numbers of drug offences are recorded at a community level. To monitor impact involves looking at trends at a regional level, which are currently not readily accessible.

In the community safety survey (CSWRS) 44% of participants disagreed with the statement that 'gunja'⁴ smoking had decreased in the previous three years. The survey results suggest many Indigenous local residents in NT remote communities believe cannabis use has stayed the same or increased and is causing big social problems related especially to financial stress and disputes, and mental health consequences. The most common response of service providers in remote locations (based on the CSSPS - 43.1% of participants) was to say cannabis was unchanged but in some communities cannabis was seen as increasing, and that it was a big social problem.

There is no mental health data (specific to remote communities' residents) in the public domain to confirm the perception that there are more people presenting with cannabis exacerbated conditions. Police incident data show police are dealing with more mental health incidents in NTER communities than three years ago. The increase in these and other recorded incidents, however, could be an outcome of the increased police presence.

Crime networks

Traditional organised crime groups do not seem to be involved in direct drug distribution to remote Aboriginal communities. There is, however, evidence that there are links to established networks of cannabis supply and that local people's involvement in dealing does have social and economic harmful consequences, particularly related to corruption. The supply of kava was largely linked with a network of people of Pacific Islander origin who, although local community people were involved, were the main beneficiaries of the profits from the trade.

Conclusion

Patterns of substance misuse in remote Aboriginal communities in the key regions where SAID/DOU operates appear to be changing with significant reductions in petrol sniffing and reduced alcohol consumption within some communities. Supply reduction and enforcement have been significant factors most notably with the Opal low aromatic fuel roll out and more consistent and prevalent alcohol restrictions, coupled with more enforcement by additional local police in many communities.

⁴ 'Gunja' and 'grog' were the terms used in the community safety questionnaires to denote cannabis and alcohol, as during the piloting phase they were the most commonly recognised terms.

The SAID/DOUs assist with the policing outcomes related to petrol and alcohol, but their main achievements relate to cannabis and kava, both in terms of the number and volume of seizures and the apprehensions of mid-level traffickers involved in their distribution.

Intelligence generated by the SAIDs is valued and used by state-based and Commonwealth law enforcement agencies. The 'visibility' of their operations, especially as a result of the dogs, is valued by police and other stakeholders. The SAID/DOUs may not have stopped kava and cannabis supply but there was a common belief that the situation would be much worse without them. Most importantly, their work is valued for detecting and deterring criminal networks that are involved in more systematic trafficking of illicit substances.

They are also seen as ensuring there is early warning of changes in illicit drug supply to remote areas, both in current drug markets and in the uptake of amphetamine type stimulants and other drugs.

It is the coordinating role of SAID that law enforcement benefits from, especially in a cross-jurisdictional environment. Their exclusive focus on illicit substances in remote Aboriginal communities makes them unique and for a relatively small investment, they are adding considerable value and enhancing local policing efforts to reduce substance misuse.

The key to their success to date seems to be having small dedicated teams assisted by drug detection dogs, and their ability to focus on remote Indigenous communities.

On most measures of drug law enforcement and intelligence-led policing, the initiative can be viewed as very effective.

There was not the opportunity to investigate how much community support for SAID/DOUs there is though it was inferred in stakeholder comments. Many local people may not distinguish the units as a separate initiative, but instead regard their activities as an extension of mainstream policing. The lack of immediate action against dealers seemed to be the most common complaint.

Demand for cannabis remains high and there is growing recognition and concern about the individual and community harms associated with the use and trade in cannabis. It is not possible to know whether the SAID/DOUs have contributed to this increased awareness of cannabis as a problem. The level of effort dedicated to community education about family violence and substance misuse harms seems loosely defined and a potential secondary benefit of their activities rather than a key objective.

Future priorities

The importance of continuing to address the supply of cannabis and kava was stressed by stakeholders because of the often devastating impact of these substances' use on individual's health and of the trade on communities' economic and social well-being.

Areas for improvement to the SAID/DOUs identified by stakeholders related to increased capacity, improved communication and improved co-ordination. Based on these views and the review findings, priorities include:

- An assessment of whether more support is needed in remote South Australia, particularly in relation to access to or locally based drug detection dogs
- More strategic engagement from WA policing partners, with improved clarity about cross-border priorities, especially in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions
- More comprehensive and cross-sectoral regional alcohol and drug strategies
- Improving impact indicator data on drug markets, most noticeably regional and remote health data
- Future evaluations or reviews incorporating local community views and exploring the feasibility of comparing the SAID/DOUs with other initiatives.

PART 1: Introduction

Background

The establishment and evolution of the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk (SAID) is best understood within the context of developments in drug law enforcement and substance abuse prevention in cross-border settings and remote Indigenous communities. Over the past decade, there has been an increase in permanent police stationed in remote Indigenous communities and policy focus on cross-border criminal justice responses. Increasingly the federal government has taken a lead role through legislation and funding to prevent and address family violence, child abuse and substance abuse in cross-border and remote locations, most notably in the Northern Territory (NT) and central Australia.

SAID/DOUs

The SAIDs aim to facilitate cross-jurisdictional partnerships and community policing in remote Australia, with a large part of its initial and continuing effort focused on central Australia

Funding for the first SAID was provided by the National Petrol Sniffing Strategy. Following the 2006 Inter-governmental summit on violence and child abuse in Indigenous communities, further funding was provided for two additional drug detection dog teams. Another measure of the Council of Australian Government package in 2006 was the Improved Policing in Very Remote Areas initiative which provided funding over four years for police infrastructure in remote communities in NT, Western Australia (WA), South Australia (SA) and Queensland.

The first SAID was set up at Alice Springs in 2006 in support of the National Petrol Sniffing Strategy and to target drug and alcohol trafficking. Since then its function has grown and the size of the initiative expanded to include a SAID unit in Katherine (NT), an officer in Marla (SA) and Dog Operation Units (DOUs) in Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin. Further funding was also provided to WA Police in 2010 to enable coordinated operations in remote communities to target and disrupt traffickers of drugs and other contraband in the Goldfields, Esperance, Kimberley and Pilbara districts and to support cross-border SAID/DOU operations.

Since its inception funding totalling \$12.9 million has been provided by the Australian Government to fund SAIDs/DOUs under the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) in the NT and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) funded programs. Table 1 summarises the amounts allocated each year.

Table 1: Annual funding allocations to SAID/DOUs

Financial year	Amount \$	Detail
2005/06	500,000	340,000 – Initial set-up Southern SAID 80,000 – SA Police, operational costs 80,000 – WA Police, operational costs
2006/07	2,361,734	1,507,737 – Southern SAID 754,000 – Set up Darwin DOU 50,000 – SA Police, operational costs 50,000 – WA Police, operational Costs
2007/08	2,000,000	2,000,000 - Katherine - SAID/DOU
2008/09	262,000	212,000 – Southern SAID , operational costs 50,000 – WA Police, operational costs
2009/10	2,272,000	2,000,000 – NPA NT 172,000 – Intelligence position, Marla SA 100,000 – WA Police, operational costs
2010/11	3,056,000	150,000 - SA police for Marla SAID intelligence position 200,000 - WA police for remote area operations 2,080,000 – NPA NT 626,000 – Darwin DOU
2011/12	2,513,000	2,163,000 - NPA NT 150,000- SA police for Marla SAID intelligence position 200,000 – WA police for remote area operations
Total	12,964,734	

Source: internal FAHCSIA documentation

The core elements of the SAID are employee expenses, operating expenses, vehicle acquisition and capital costs. Table 2 shows that under the current funding a total of 11 staff positions are funded; five in Katherine, four in Alice Springs, one in Darwin and one in Marla, SA. Seven drug detection dogs are funded; two in Katherine, two in Alice Springs and three in Darwin.

Table 2: Staffing levels and the number of drug detection dogs, SAID/DOUs

Staffing levels for the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks

	Katherine (NT)	Alice Springs (NT)	Marla (SA)
Number of staff*	3	2	1

*There is also one administration officer based in Darwin

Staffing levels for the Dog Operation Unit

	Katherine (NT)	Alice Springs (NT)	Darwin (NT)
Number of staff	2	2	1

Dog Operation Unit – Drug Detector Dogs (DDD)

	Katherine (NT)	Alice Springs (NT)	Darwin (NT)
Number of DDD's	2	2	3

Source: FAHCSIA internal documentation

The SAIDs are described as coordinating a multi-jurisdictional partnership involving police in the NT, SA and WA to reduce the supply of licit and illicit substances. The role of the SAIDs is at present summarised as to:

- Gather intelligence on suppliers and criminal networks
- Coordinate policing operations in the tri-state region of NT, SA, WA and the Top End targeting traffickers of drugs, alcohol, petrol, kava and other illicit substances
- Conduct covert and overt enforcement and disruption activities
- Pursue traffickers under proceeds of crime legislation to strip them of their money and assets.
- Work with partner agencies including health, youth workers, women's councils, communities about the role of the SAID and dangers of alcohol and substance abuse
- Promote the Indigenous Family Safety Agenda and youth initiatives

Based on this description, the SAIDs are involved in two drug law enforcement functions – the gathering and dissemination of intelligence, and the conduct and coordination of policing activities and operations. There are also community policing functions which help support drug law enforcement – these include community engagement and inter-agency cooperation.

The activities of the SAIDs and DOUs are monitored through each desk producing monthly statistics on a number of output measures. These include the number of:

- drug and alcohol seizures
 - broken down by drug type/alcohol
 - number of arrests, charges and summons
 - number of search warrants, infringement notices and information reports
- searches
 - broken down by various types of vehicles, premises, and post office/courier items
 - including the number that are positive outcomes

The number of police media releases that refer to SAIDs is another indicator that is used to monitor the profile of the SAIDs. Visits to communities and involvement in is also routinely recorded by each SAID.

Aim of the review

The purpose of conducting a review at this stage was to inform policy deliberations about future funding and the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) evaluation undertaken in 2011.

The aim of the review, in a broad sense, is to assess whether the SAID/DOUs are contributing to the NPA/Closing the Gap (CtG) goals, are effective, and represent good value for money. However, it is important to be mindful of the size of the initiative especially when compared to mainstream funding for large intelligence taskforces such as the National Indigenous Intelligence Taskforce (NIITF)(\$5.5 million in 2009-2010) and for policing services in Australia.

Intelligence's contribution to various outcome measures, such as supply reduction, is difficult to quantify at the best of times and even more challenging when it plays a small but potentially crucial role in enabling police responses, including drug law enforcement, in three jurisdictions. It is also important to bear in mind that this is a review and lacks the resources and timeframe of a comprehensive evaluation.

The scope of the review had to therefore take into account these limitations and not set the objectives too high or wide. As a result, key questions for the review included:

- Have the SAIDs contributed to improved information sharing between police services and the coordination of policing activities across the three jurisdictions?
- What kind of contribution has the SAIDs/DOUs made to supply reduction efforts in remote communities and to the apprehension of traffickers?
- Have the SAIDs contributed to improvements in community awareness of drug and alcohol issues and community- police relations?
- Is there community and other stakeholder support for the SAIDs/DOUs?

The review provided an opportunity to document in more detail the activities of the SAID/DOUs and how various strategies have been implemented and amended over time. It seeks to capture the 'learnings' of those involved and affected by the initiative over the past five years.

Approach

Based on a review of relevant literature, the review of the SAID/DOUs was informed by research undertaken on:

- Performance measurement in drug law enforcement (Willis, Homel and Gray 2006, Willis, Homel and Anderson 2010)
- Evaluations of police intelligence management and intelligence-led policing (for example, Ratcliffe 2005)
- Assessments and reviews of community policing and community-based drug strategies

As Willis, Homel and Gray (2006) underline in their report, there is the need to develop further measures of drug law enforcement to complement seizure and arrest data in order to have impact as well as output measures. For instance, they found that police believed the

contribution to making communities feeling safer and more secure was an important outcome of their effort. As a result, their performance measurement framework is based on four-level outcomes:

- *Reducing drug crime and drug-related crime* – that is, measures directed at addressing specific drug crimes (for instance, the importation, supply and distribution of illicit drugs), measures for assessing drug market dynamics, as well as a measure of the crime most reliably associated with illicit drug use.
- *Reducing organised crime* – that is, measures specifically directed at addressing high-level drug crimes that are frequently associated with organised criminal groups that traffic illicit drugs (such as money laundering, extortion, corruption, and the like) and that have serious impacts on the community's safety and welfare.
- *Improving public health* – that is, a range of measures for gauging the impact of illicit drugs on the community's health.
- *Improving public amenity* – that is, measures of community safety and well-being.

The SAIDs may have contributed to police services' performance against these four outcome measures but given that the first desk was established as an intelligence unit the review has to consider the contribution of intelligence to meeting these broader objectives. Intelligence-led policing has become commonplace in Australia and many other countries, and Ratcliffe (2003, 2005) has undertaken research in Australia and New Zealand on how well it works. Having described 'intelligence' as a product, a process and a structure (Ratcliffe 2003), he adopts a '3is' approach to evaluation. This approach examines the ability of the intelligence system to interpret the criminal environment, influence decision making and impact on the criminal environment (Ratcliffe 2005). He argues that this ensures that the focus remains on the crime reduction and prevention outcomes of wider policing activities, whilst recognizing intelligence is only as good as its product and the use to which it is put.

Within the context of remote, small, Indigenous communities, it is vital that the way SAIDs operate is properly understood, especially given the expansion of the program both in terms of its geographical spread and in its functions. Over time it seems more weight has been given to community education and to building trust and engagement with local communities. Thus, of relevance to the review is recent research on rural and remote policing (Putt 2011), police involvement in local community crime prevention projects (Morgan 2011), remote policing in the NT (Allens Consulting 2010), and of remote communities' perceptions of social problems including drugs and of police (Pilkington 2009).

Finally, there is a body of literature that describes and assesses community-based approaches to substance abuse, only some of which is relevant to remote Indigenous communities. The role of police, through such initiatives as the SAIDs, needs to be understood and placed within

the context of the research and evaluation of community-oriented and based strategies and programs. An example is the UK Home Office's *Communities Against Drugs* toolkit which stresses the importance of looking beyond traditional measures of police performance (arrests and seizures) to design local indicators of success. It suggests that these indicators need to be related to the multiple sources of information that are available about drug markets and derived from the various agencies involved in partnership work to tackle drugs, including indicators for supply, demand and drug harms, as well as community perceptions (Willis, Homel and Anderson 2010).

Two important issues arise when considering regional and remote local drug markets – their size, composition and how rapidly they are changing within an area, and the interaction with wider market trends. These issues draw attention to the question of displacement, which is always raised as a potential side-effect of supply reduction efforts in a circumscribed location or targeted at a particular kind of drug or activity.

Method

The following methods were employed to undertake the review:

- Review of relevant literature, program and policy documentation, including a sample of SAID/DOU monthly reports
- Analysis of SAID/DOU output data and other statistical information connected to drug law enforcement and markets in the relevant regions
- Semi-structured interviews and consultations with police and other stakeholders. Face to face interviews were conducted in the NT during the week of 28th February to the 5th of March, and one was done in Canberra in April. Interviews were conducted by phone during March through to June and in total, over 35 stakeholders were interviewed. Appendix A contains a list of those consulted.

In terms of the internal and/or confidential information, the sample of recent monthly reports provided to FAHCSIA were from each funded area – Alice/DOU, Marla in SA, Katherine/DOU, Darwin DOU, Goldfields-Esperance region, and the Kimberley and Pilbara regions in WA. These monthly reports use a standard format which covers the number of media interviews and releases; remote community visits; and descriptions of strategies to address disruption and joint operations with SAID/DOU as well as comments.

A number of restricted reports produced by NIITF that related to relevant regions and/or substance misuse were also consulted.

In relation to impact indicator data, used primarily in Section 4, there were significant differences in the amount of data for the three jurisdictions of SA, WA and NT. Given the focus

in FAHCSIA on monitoring and evaluating the impact of NTER)/Closing the Gap (CtG) initiatives considerably more data was available on the NT. This includes police incident data at the local remote community level and two community safety surveys conducted in the NT in 2011.

A large part of the review was completed between mid-February through to June 2011, with additional data on the NTER remote communities becoming available in August and on SAID/DOU outputs in October.

The report of the review is divided into four main sections. The next section provides context and background by describing what is known about substance misuse and illicit drug use in remote regions of Australia, and on the supply reduction measures and policing initiatives that seek to address substance misuse. Section 3 summarises the key findings from the review under the headings of activities and outputs.

Section 4 endeavours to map out impact indicators of drug law enforcement in the relevant regional areas of Australia. This is only a partial picture, limited by the type of data that is available. It is also stressed that the SAID/DOUs are only part of the drug law enforcement effort in these remote regions, and the section's conclusion speculates on what impact indicators relate most to the SAID/DOUs work and activities.

In the conclusion, the original research questions are re-visited and future priorities identified, including those raised by stakeholders.

PART 2: Background and context

Different jurisdictional and regional contexts

There are major differences in the population distribution and the proportion that are Indigenous people across geographic areas in the three jurisdictions of interest (SA, NT and WA) that help explain variations in drug markets and demand, and the policy emphasis placed on policing remote communities and drug law enforcement in those communities. It also helps explain the paucity of data that can act as impact indicators for remote regions, most notably in SA and WA. There is much more available on the NT, because a sizeable component of the Territory's population lives outside of towns and because of the need to monitor the impact of federal funding and intervention, first under the NTER and more recently, through CtG/NPA.

According to the 2006 census, one third of Indigenous Australians live in major cities (32%), 21% in regional areas, 22% in outer regional areas, 9% in remote areas and 15% in very remote areas (ABS 2008). In the major cities, Indigenous Australians only make up 1% of the total population while in very remote areas 47% of local residents are Indigenous Australians (ABS 2008). This means that any policies or strategies that target very remote parts of Australia are more likely to involve Indigenous people.

Of the three states of WA, SA and NT, the latter stands out because it has a smaller total population, the highest proportion of its population living in remote and very remote areas (45%) compared with all other jurisdictions, and the highest proportion of Indigenous Australians (30%) of its total population (ABS 2008). It is therefore hardly surprising that remote area policing is a priority in this jurisdiction. It is also worth noting that there are multiple remote communities spread across the NT (73 were identified as NTER communities) while in SA and WA there are clusters of communities in certain regions, with often huge distances between these regional clusters, regional centres, and the capital city – for example the Ngaanyajarra communities in WA and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) communities in SA.

This poses considerable challenges from a service delivery perspective and because of the low population numbers in these regions, means the volume of matters or clients is small when compared with the metropolitan areas. This is not to say these regions are neglected; only that the size of output measures will be relatively insignificant in comparison to those generated for more populous areas.

From a national perspective even the evaluation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Complementary Action Plan (CAP) to the National Drug Strategy lacked reference to statistical data, and the absence of specific performance measures linked to the CAP did not foster the

systematic collection of data related to harm, demand or supply reduction (Urbis 2009). The lack of data on alcohol and drug use in remote Australia has been acknowledged and lamented upon for some time. There are small-scale and location specific studies (for example, Senior and Chenhall 2008, Lee et al 2009) and surveys of service providers (Delahunty and Putt 2006, Willis 2010) that indicate many people in remote communities are concerned about alcohol, drug and substance misuse. However, not much is available other than administrative national or state-wide data that enables us to monitor how demand and consumption may be varying over time. For example, in 2008-09 45 stand-alone Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander substance use services across Australia recorded over 23,000 individual clients. Although a summary of survey results refers to 43% of clients being in remote areas and a much smaller proportion in very remote areas, there is no cross-tabulation with treatment and assistance characteristics (AIHW 2011a).

Substance misuse in remote Australia

Based on the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) results just under one quarter (23%) of Indigenous Australians had recently used an illicit substance (defined as in the last 12 months), with marijuana the most common substance used, followed by amphetamines (or speed) and painkillers (AIHW 2011a). The NATSISS data indicate that the proportion of Indigenous Australian who used illicit substances was relatively stable between 2002 and 2008.

Illicit substance use increases the risk to individuals of ill-health, accident and injury, death by overdose, as well as having potentially severe social and economic impacts on communities (AIHW 2011a). Hospitalisation data for six jurisdictions indicate the most common principal diagnosis related to substance use for Indigenous Australians was mental and behavioural disorders due to the use of cannabis, with Indigenous Australians being hospitalised for this disorder at almost five times the rate of other Australians.

In response to growing concerns about the use and distribution of illicit drugs in remote communities, the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund (NDLERF) funded research on the policing implications of illicit drugs in rural and remote communities. This research found that although alcohol remained the most common problem associated with crime and violence, cannabis was increasingly a concern and that its abuse and supply had significant and adverse consequences for remote Indigenous communities (Delahunty and Putt 2006). The supply and misuse of kava and petrol inhalation are also found in remote locations but are confined to quite distinct geographic areas (Gray et al 2006).

Hospitalisation data for six jurisdictions for the period mid 2006 to mid 2008 showed that Indigenous Australians were hospitalised for mental and behavioural disorders from use of

volatile solvents at over 39 times the rate of other Australians (AIHW 2011a). 'Chroming' is more common in rural and urban Australia while petrol sniffing is more common in remote Indigenous communities but all forms occur predominantly among young people (Midford et al 2011). However, unlike urban volatile substance use which tends to be transitory use by younger adolescents, petrol sniffing in remote communities starts at a younger age and continues for a longer period. Most petrol sniffers are between eight and 30 years of age, with a concentration in the 12 to 19 years of age range (Midford et al 2011).

Central Australia, which includes parts of SA, NT and WA, has a history of Indigenous young people inhaling petrol with devastating consequences (Brady 1992). A 2007 survey involving 1,281 people in 55 communities that had introduced Opal low aromatic fuel indicated regional variations in the proportion of people using petrol with a higher proportion of users (amongst the five to 40 year old population) during 2006-07 in the South Central Australian sub-region (16.4%), the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (13.9%), and the APY Lands (11.1% of 10 to 40 year olds) (AIHW 2011a, Midford et al 2011).

Studies of mortality associated with petrol sniffing also showed that from 1981 to 1991 two-thirds of those who died were from the desert communities that straddled the border between WA and SA, and a later study, covering the period 1998 to 2003 found that 16 of the 37 deaths were in central NT, while only five were in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (cited in Midford et al 2011). In the latter study, the most common causes of death were respiratory failure (10) and suicide (9).

Nganampa Health Council completed annual surveys of petrol-sniffing in the APY Lands between 1984 and 2006 but none of these seemed to have been released publicly. The 2005 survey apparently found that alcohol and marijuana were the drugs of choice for most people, while the 2006 survey found that only 4.2% of the population aged 10 to 40 had sniffed petrol in the preceding year, and 31.8% had used marijuana (The Anangu Lands Paper Tracker 2011).

In 2009 the SA government informed the Senate inquiry into petrol sniffing and substance abuse that based, on anecdotal evidence and evidence from the police that cannabis use was on the rise in the APY communities, that where people could not get petrol they used cannabis instead (The Anangu Lands Paper Tracker 2011). The SA state government also informed the Paper Tracker that for the first 11 months of 2009, 45% of referrals to the APY Lands Substance Misuse Service identified cannabis as the principal drug of concern.

A recent review of statistical data on substance use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people nationally indicated that Indigenous Australian adults have rates of current smoking twice that of non-Indigenous Australians, while with alcohol, that a higher proportion abstain from drinking alcohol in the previous 12 months but were twice as likely to binge drink (AIHW

2011a). It has been estimated that the burden of disease associated with alcohol use by the Indigenous population is almost double that of the general population (Wilson et al 2010). Data on alcohol-related harms are available at a national level and show the strong association between alcohol and suicide, and alcohol and assault related injuries (Wilson et al 2010).

At a national level we know patterns of alcohol use vary by age, sex and Indigenous status. The National Drug Strategy Household Survey provides important information on self-reported patterns of alcohol use, the most commonly used psychoactive drug in Australia, amongst different sub-populations such as young adults and women. However, the size of the Indigenous sample is small and unsuited to analysis for regional and urban/rural variations. The results from the 2002 and 2008 NATSISS, and the 2004 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey indicate high rates of risky and high risk consumption of alcohol compared with the general population. However, such national surveys do not pick up different patterns of consumption across geographic regions.

A study of alcohol-attributable death amongst Indigenous Australians over a four year period showed the highest rate (14.6 per 10,000 Indigenous residents) was in the old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission zone of NT Central (i.e. southern half of NT), followed by Queensland Far North West (9.2), WA North (the Kimberley region 8.8), and WA South East (inland area of WA up to the Kimberley region 8.1) (Wilson et al 2010). There is also evidence of riskier drinking patterns by residents in regional mining towns in remote areas (see for example, Schineanu et al 2010, Chikritzhs et al 2007).

In remote areas, the distance between supply outlets and places of consumption also increases the risk of driving and operating a boat while under the influence and in the NT, the high level of the proportion of alcohol sales that are take-away has been linked to the evidence of alcohol-related harms, including violence and accidents (NT Legislative Assembly 2007).

In contrast to cannabis and alcohol which are widely used across remote Australia and petrol sniffing which has been primarily seen as prevalent in central Australia, kava consumption by Indigenous Australians is largely confined to Arnhem Land in the NT. The Bushbook on the NT Health website includes a chapter on kava, which explains what it is and the short-term and long-term effects of use (NT DoH 2011). The brief account of the history of use outlines how kava was first introduced in Arnhem Land in 1981, with the amount being drunk increasing during the 1980s. However most NT communities chose not to allow kava drinking and its use is confined to Arnhem Land.

Indigenous adults' feelings of safety and perceptions of social problems: remote and very remote areas

When the national results of the 2008 NATSISS are compared with the results for the remote/very remote parts of SA, WA and NT it is apparent that overall Indigenous adults feel safer in remote/very remote areas in certain situations at night. Table 3 shows that this is the case for 'being home alone at night ' and 'walking alone in local area after dark'. Compared with Indigenous people in remote and very remote areas of SA and WA, Indigenous people in the NT were more likely to feel unsafe after dark, especially when walking alone in the local area after dark.

Table 3: Feelings of safety, Indigenous population aged 15 years and over, Australia wide and WA, SA and NT, remote/very remote area (%), 2008

	Australia	WA remote/very remote areas	SA remote/very remote areas	NT remote/very remote areas
	%	%	%	%
Feelings of safety at home alone during day				
Feel very safe/safe	93.5	95.9	95.2	95.0
Feel neither safe nor unsafe	2.7	1.5*	2.1*	1.2*
Feel unsafe or very unsafe	2.6	1.7*	2.0**	1.5*
Never at home alone during day	1.2	0.9*	np	2.2*
Feelings of safety at home alone after dark				
Feel very safe/safe	79.9	86.0	84.6	81.1
Feel neither safe nor unsafe	6.1	3.7	4.0**	4.2
Feel unsafe or very unsafe	10.9	8.8	6.7*	9.6
Never at home alone after dark	3.0	1.5**	4.8**	5.2*
Feelings of safety walking alone in local area after dark				
Feel very safe/safe	52.6	66.1	66.9	61.0
Feel neither safe nor unsafe	11.7	9.6	6.3*	6.7
Feel unsafe or very unsafe	25.6	18.4	11.6*	23.9
Never alone walking in local area after dark	10.1	6.0	15.1*	8.5

*RSE between 25 and 50% and should be treated with caution

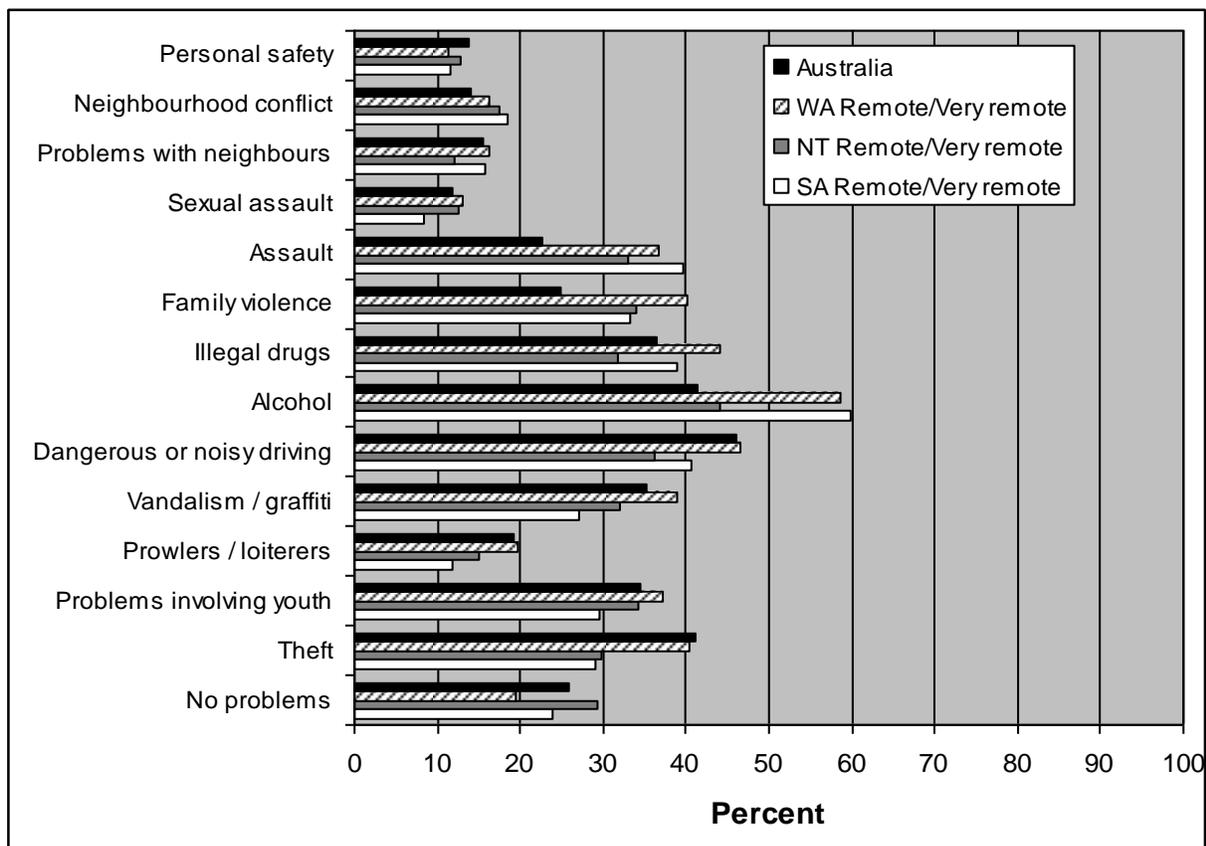
**RSE over 50% and considered too unreliable for general use

Source: 2008 NATSISS tables released Dec 2010

As Figure 1 shows, the results from the 2008 NATSISS indicated that more Indigenous people resident in the remote/very remote parts of the NT (29.3%) said there were no social problems compared with remote/very remote residents in SA (23.8%) and in WA (19.5%), and the proportion for Indigenous people as a whole in Australia (25.8%). A greater proportion of residents in remote/very remote areas of WA, NT and SA saw alcohol, neighbourhood conflict and assault as a problem in their local neighbourhood than that found for Indigenous people nationally:

- Alcohol was seen as a problem by 58.7% of remote/very remote residents in WA, 59.8% in SA, 44.1% in the NT and 41.3% by all Indigenous people surveyed in Australia.
- A greater proportion of remote /very remote residents in SA (38.8%) and WA (44.1%) saw illegal drugs as a local problem compared with the national Indigenous population (36.4%) and remote/very remote residents in the NT (31.8%).

Figure 1: Perceptions of neighbourhood problems, Indigenous population aged 15 years and over, Australia wide and SA, NT and WA remote/very remote areas, (%), 2008



Note: Totals do not sum to 100, as multiple answers. The proportion of responses that were not known was for Australia 3.1%, SA 3.1%, NT 4.2% and WA 2.7%. The RSEs were between 25% and 50% for the WA responses that were not known, and for the SA results for the problems of theft, sexual assault, neighbours and neighbourhood conflict. For the SA responses that were not known the RSE was over 50%

Source: 2008 NATSISS tables released Dec 2010

Regional illicit drug markets

At a jurisdictional level, drug markets vary considerably by type of drug, the size of supply and demand, the proportion of domestic cultivation/production and distribution outside of city centres. Police data on drug arrests, seizures and offences show variation across jurisdictions and regional areas in the type of drugs recorded.

The most recent data on cannabis provider arrests, for 2008-09, show variation in the proportion of all provider arrests that are for cannabis, for example in the NT it is 61%, in SA 68%, and WA 35% (ACC 2010). In WA there are more provider arrests for amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) (n=924) than cannabis (n=782) and heroin (n=50). In SA the number of cannabis provider arrests were nearly 2.5 times that of ATS, and in the NT the number of ATS arrests (n=34) is almost the same as that for cannabis (n=102), with no arrests for heroin (ACC 2010). Table 4 shows the annual number of cannabis provider arrests by the sex of the arrestee for WA, SA and NT, and the national figures, for 2007-08 and 2008-09. In both years, SA had at least 1.5 times more arrests as WA .and at least 11 times more than NT.

Table 4: Cannabis: number of provider arrests*, by sex, WA, SA, NT and Australia, 2007-08 and 2008-09

	2007-08				2008-09			
	male	female	not known	total	male	female	not known	total
SA	879	174	0	1053	1,189	214	0	1,403
WA	526	183	7	716	579	199	4	782
NT	59	32	0	91	83	19	0	102
Australia	6,006	1,437	17	7,460	6,253	1,457	12	7,722

*The arrest data for each state and territory include Australian Federal Police data

Source: ACC 2009, 2010

With seizures in 2008-09, in the NT, the overwhelming number was for cannabis (n=1,087 with a weight of 131, 459 grams) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) only recorded a total of three seizures for ATS and two for heroin. SA had slightly more seizures of cannabis (n=471) than ATS (n=437) and although the AFP recorded only 10 seizures the total recorded weight of these was 115,682 grams. Compared with both the NT and SA, WA had a much larger number

of seizures for ATS (n=3,565), cannabis (n=9,192) and heroin (n=182), although the weight of the cannabis seized in WA by state police and the AFP was much higher in SA (ACC 2010).

Data on purity levels of drugs seized are very patchy and were not available for the NT in 2008-09. The published data for methamphetamine purity levels indicate that WA and SA both have high levels compared to other states (ACC 2010). Available data on drug prices indicate that more is paid for a tablet or capsule of ecstasy and for a deal of hydroponic cannabis in the NT than other states (ACC 2010).

There are also jurisdictional differences in drug seizure trends as Table 5 shows. In 2008-09 an increase from the previous year in the number of cannabis seizures was reported in all jurisdictions, with the exception of the Australian Capital Territory. Queensland reported the highest number of cannabis seizures, while Victoria reported the highest seizure weight. The NT reported the highest percentage increase in seizure weight, but the number of seizures was comparatively low. The largest percentage decrease in seizure weight occurred in Queensland.

Table 5: Cannabis: number and weight of seizures*, by jurisdiction, 2006-07 to 2008-09

	Number			Weight (grams)		
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
NSW	10,348	11,878	12,491	1,064,913	1,496,477	1,430,342
Vic	3,036	2,977	3,272	1,572,051	1,472,036	1,653,744
Qld	16,660	14,052	17,082	653,688	4,398,119	628,319
SA	431	384	471	694,183	617,443	860,979
WA	8,987	8,496	9,572	348,528	302,696	450,005
Tas	2,897	2,120	2,302	188,780	238,387	223,242
NT	988	1,077	1,087	55,202	83,179	131,459
ACT	497	677	598	204,555	300,917	194,928
Total	43,844	41,660	46,875	4,781,900	8,909,254	5,573,018

* includes seizures by state/territory police and AFP for which valid seizure weight was recorded
Source: ACC 2009, 2010

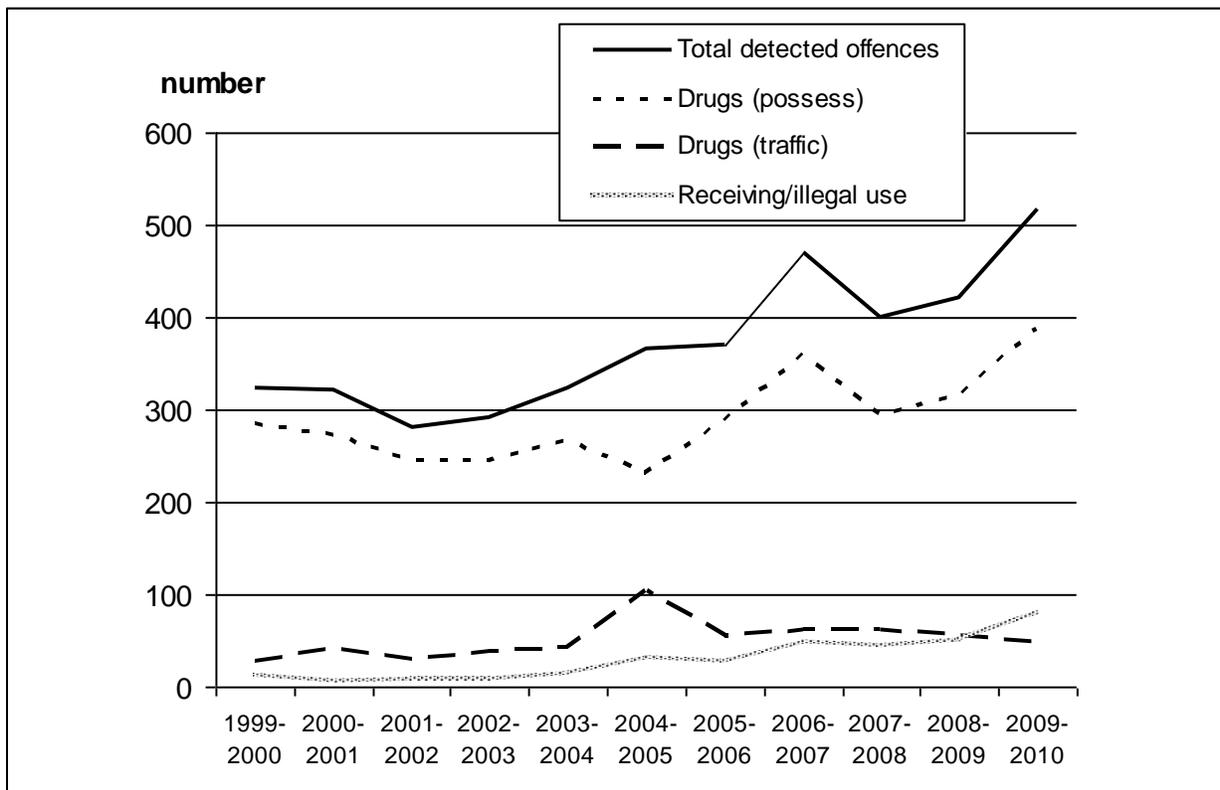
The results from the nine Drug Use Monitoring in Australia (DUMA) sites, where data were collected from police detainees, indicate differences in local drug consumption patterns and in the proportion of Indigenous detainees. Out of the total 4,107 detainees tested and interviewed in 2008, 23% self-identified themselves as Indigenous persons. However, the proportion varied by sites with 99% in Alice Springs, 68% in Darwin and 32% in the East Perth lock-up.

Drug testing of all police detainees in the urban centres of Perth, Adelaide, Darwin and Alice Springs show significant differences. The place with the highest proportion of detainees who tested positive to cannabis was in Darwin (males 65%, females 53%) followed by East Perth (males 58%, females 53%), Adelaide (males 50%, females 51%), and then Alice Springs (males 24%, females 6%). The reverse was true for self-reported heavy alcohol use in the previous 48 hours with Alice Springs having the highest proportion (males 81%, females 79%) followed by

Darwin (males 72%, females 76%), East Perth (males 54%, females 36%), and Adelaide (males 40%, females 33%). More detainees at the East Perth and Adelaide sites also tested positive to other illicit drugs with for example 25% males and 31% females in Adelaide and 30% of males and 48% of females at East Perth, testing positive to methamphetamine, while only 2% of males did in Darwin and no-one did in Alice Springs (Gaffney et al 2010). Out of the nine sites, the sites of Alice Springs and Darwin had the lowest proportion of detainees who reported recent illicit drug use (except for cannabis) and to attribute their crime to drug use (Gaffney et al 2010).

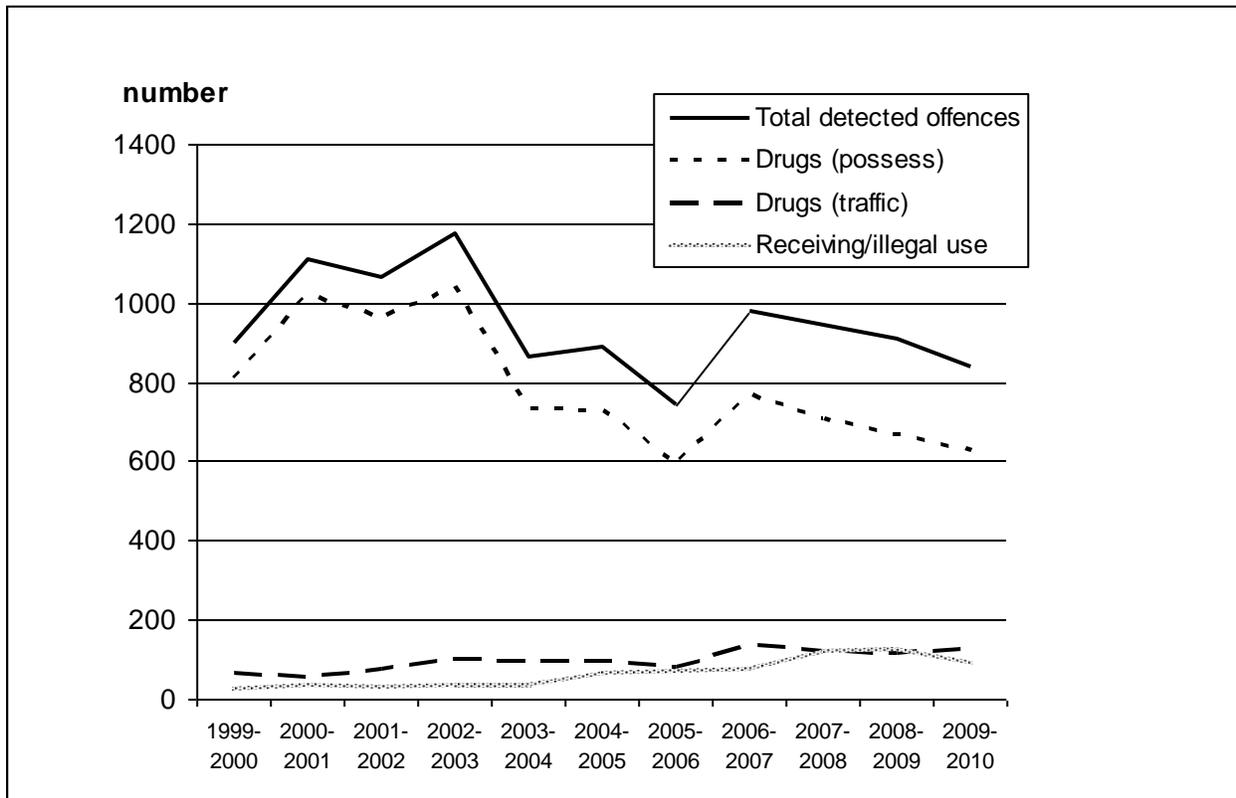
Regional police data on drug offences in WA show how the number of and trends in drug offences can be markedly different. Figure 2 shows that over the past decade in the Kimberley district drug offences rose fairly consistently since 2003-03, from just under an annual total of 300 offences to over 500 in 2009-10. A relatively small proportion relate to trafficking offences and the annual number peaked in 2004-05 and have remained reasonably constant since 2005-06.

Figure 2: Drug offences, Kimberly district, 1999-2000 to 2009-2010



Source: WA police crime statistics, updated June 2010

Figure 3: Drug offences, Goldfields-Esperance district, 1999-2000 to 2009-2010



Source: WA police crime statistics, updated June 2010

A different trend is apparent in the Goldfields-Esperance district with more drug offences recorded each year. As Figure 3 shows, the total annual number increased until a peak in 2002-03 of nearly 1,200 offences and declined each year until 2005-06 when there was an increase before declining again to an annual total of over 800 offences in 2009-10. Trafficking offences have increased gradually over the decade, but remain less than 10 percent of the total annual number of drug offences.

Priority given to drug law enforcement in rural and remote areas

The data presented in the previous section highlight that in the NT and SA as a whole and in regional areas cannabis supply and use is the dominant illicit drug. However, it is hard to know how much of the jurisdictional and regional differences in police statistics for seizures, drug offences and arrests are a result of policing priorities. The only non-police source of information about drug markets came from the DUMA collection, where police detainees are tested for recent drug use. Even these data are influenced by the sampling bias created through the probability of certain people and behaviours being more likely to result in police detention.

From a policing point of view, police services across Australia have highlighted how much police time is taken up with alcohol-related violence and social disorder. This seems to hold true for remote areas of Australia, and in relation to police contact with Indigenous Australians, both in cities (Putt et al 2005) and in the country.

Table 6 shows police statistics on selected offence categories for the towns of Hall's Creek and Fitzroy Crossing in WA over a five year period. A significant proportion of recorded offences are alcohol-related (44% in Hall's Creek and 37% in Fitzroy Crossing in 2008-09), and acts intended to cause injury (28% in Hall's Creek and 19% in Fitzroy Crossing in 2008-09). In the Remote Service Delivery (RSD) baseline reports, for the WA towns of Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing, hospital separation data for the period 2003-04 to 2007-08 shows that both towns have high crude rates per 1,000 compared with WA and national figures for assault as the principal diagnosis. For both towns, alcohol-related injury rates are lower than the WA rate but higher than the national rate.

The RSD baseline reports for Ardyaloon and Beagle Bay on the Dampier peninsula shows that the Indigenous crude rate per 1,000 population of hospital patient separation by the principal diagnosis of alcohol-related conditions and for assault is higher in the Broome SLA than that found for WA and nationally. The baseline reports only show offence categories for the entire five year period of 2004-05 to 2008-09 and for the Dampier Peninsula as a whole. Over this period 18 offences were in the illicit drug category, which is 6.4% of total offences. Of the 248 offences where the category of offence was known, 79 (32%) were identified as alcohol-related.

The police and hospitalisation data for these Kimberley towns and Aboriginal communities show that alcohol-related problems, including violence, dominate police and health services, in contrast to other drug-related problems. The number of drug offences recorded by police was a fraction of total offences in all four locations and the hospital data did not include information on substance abuse-related hospitalisations. Based on administrative data like this, it would seem that the social problems associated with alcohol should be the priority to address community safety in regional towns and local Aboriginal communities.

As Figure 1 showed, in remote/very remote areas of SA, NT and WA alcohol was more likely to be seen by Indigenous people as a social problem in the local neighbourhood than illicit drugs.

Table 6: Selected offences*, Hall's Creek and Fitzroy Crossing, 2004-05 to 2008-09

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
	Halls Creek				
<i>Police recorded offence categories**</i>					
- acts intended to cause injury	210	250	340	366	251
-sexual assault and related offences	17	16	19	44	12
- public order	22	21	78	127	45
- illicit drugs	8	24	37	28	29
Total offences	909	836	1,175	1,289	867
Police recorded alcohol-related offences	297	297	596	779	388
	Fitzroy Crossing				
<i>Police recorded offence categories**</i>					
- acts intended to cause injury	121	100	88	117	123
-sexual assault and related offences	15	13	13	34	22
- public order	0	5	6	21	38
- illicit drugs	7	18	26	19	22
Total offences	394	411	442	565	636
Police recorded alcohol-related offences	165	169	142	159	240

* The offences recorded in towns, in comparison to remote Aboriginal communities, are matters that are less likely to involve Indigenous people; however the proportion is not known.

**of the 16 offence categories used in the data analysis for Halls Creek only those that had a high proportion which were flagged by police as alcohol-related are included. Miscellaneous, fraud/deception and justice procedure offence categories are not included although they too had a high proportion marked as alcohol-related. Illicit drug offences were included in the table because of the interest in alcohol and illicit drugs. The same categories were used for Fitzroy Crossing although the main offence categories that a high proportion flagged as alcohol-related did differ somewhat.

Source: WA police service data used in the Remote Service Delivery Baseline Mapping Report Halls Creek 2010, Remote Service Delivery Baseline Mapping Report Fitzroy Crossing 2010. Further detail provided by AIC October 2011

Supply reduction measures in remote Australia

Depending on their legal status under federal and state legislation, the possession and supply of psychoactive substances ranges from being a criminal offence or regulated through being categorised as prescription medicine. The supply of alcohol is regulated through licensing provisions and there are various strict liability offences related to activities while under the influence of alcohol (such as drunk-driving). Cannabis, like drugs such as heroin and ATS, is illegal but possession of small quantities has been decriminalised across Australian jurisdictions.

Less commonly used substances such as kava, or volatile substances such as petrol, have been subject to mostly specific place-based supply control measures, with the NT the only jurisdiction with volatile substance abuse legislation. However, federal legislation in 2007 did impose limits on the quantities of kava that can be imported into Australia (Urquhart and Thomson 2009). In remote Australia, in recent years, policies have increasingly focused on place-based measures to manage alcohol-related supply and reduce alcohol-related harms.

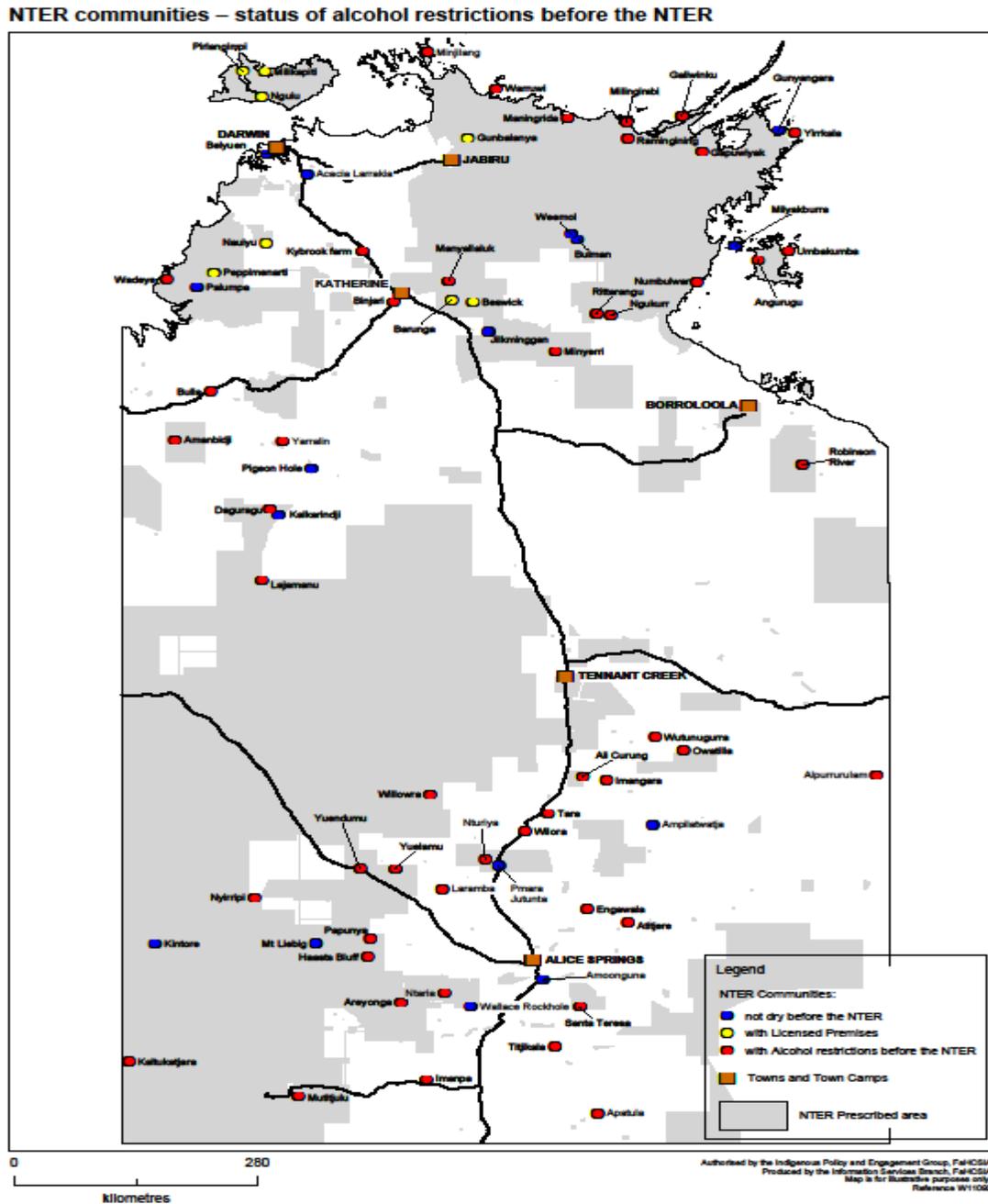
Citing the Stockwell et al report on prevention, Wilson et al (2010) claim that international evidence indicates restrictions on the supply of psychoactive substance are effective in reducing consumption and harms. In addition to various state and territory legal restrictions about the sale and consumption of alcohol, Wilson et al (2010) refer to local restrictions such as limits on the sale of specific types of alcohol, hours of trading and bans on places where alcohol can be drunk. Alcohol immediate harm reduction strategies caused by alcohol intoxication include night patrols and sobering up shelters.

In central Australia alcohol is prohibited by community by-laws and therefore constitutes an illicit drug in most areas within the region – for example in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in WA and the APY Lands in SA. Although alcohol was banned in many NT Indigenous remote communities, these discrete initiatives were supplanted by the NT National Emergency Response (NTNER) legislation in 2007 that prohibited alcohol and pornography in prescribed areas. Taken together the prescribed areas covers most of the non-urban areas in the NT and many remote Indigenous communities, including those in the southern part of NT and some town camps around Alice Springs. The areas covered by alcohol restrictions have become more widespread and now constitute a uniform prohibition on alcohol except for a few remote communities which continue to have licensed premises. Map 1 shows, in red lines, the areas that had some form of restrictions in place prior to the NTNER overlaid over the yellow areas that denote prescribed areas under the NTNER.

In WA, under s.64 of the *Liquor Control Act 1988*, the state licensing authority can impose conditions on a licence which it considers to be in the public good. By mid-2010 there were 11 areas where premises had such conditions – in the northern Goldfield towns of Laverton, Leonora, Leinster, Agnew, Menzies and Kookynie, and in the Kimberley south area, the towns of Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Hall's Creek, Meekatharra, Mt Magnet, Newman, Nullagine, Port Hedland and Wiluna. Under s175 of the same Act areas can be declared restricted and in mid-2010 seven Aboriginal communities were declared restricted areas, and 10 more communities had applications in progress (Belling 2010). Map 2 shows where these places are. Although there is not the uniform application of restrictions across remote communities as found in the NT and although licence conditions do vary by premises, the end-result is a more

comprehensive regime across remote WA that either prohibits alcohol or limits certain kinds of alcohol sales.

Map 1: Prescribed areas under clause 4 Northern Territory Emergency Response Bill 2007 and communities with alcohol restrictions prior to the NTER



Various strategies to address petrol sniffing in central Australia were tried over the years including a mix of community education and development, youth diversion and activities, and the enforcement of community by-laws that prohibited the possession and supply of petrol for the purposes of inhalation. It was a supply reduction strategy that has had the most marked impact. Replacement of petrol with initially Avgas and subsequently Opal low aromatic fuel in the region had a demonstrable effect on the prevalence and levels of petrol sniffing in the tri-state region (Gray et al 2006, d'Abbs and Shaw 2008). Complementary demand reduction measures included the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy, whereby \$12 million over three years was provided by the federal government for integrated youth services in four communities (Finke, Imanpa, Mutitjulu, and Docker River).

In July 2008 there were 117 sites supplying Opal low aromatic fuel, predominantly in Indigenous communities (72 in NT, 20 in WA, 18 in SA and 7 in Queensland). Prevalence surveys conducted by Nganampa health in the APY Lands show the decline in use, in 2004 8.4% of total population estimated to have sniffed in previous 12 months while in 2007, 1.3% was estimated to have sniffed petrol (cited in Midford et al 2011). An evaluation of the scheme also found a statistically significant relationship between the distance from each community to the nearest unleaded petrol outlet and the size of the decrease in the prevalence of sniffing at each community (d'Abbs and Shaw 2008, and cited in Midford et al 2011).

The legal status of kava has changed in the past 20 years, with the Commonwealth prohibiting importation for the purpose of selling it in 1994, which was amended in 1997 to enable applications for an import permit. In the NT the Kava Management Act 1998 made the selling of kava illegal except where communities successfully apply to the Liquor Commission for a license to sell and use kava. Communities have to show that there is community support for the selling of kava in the community. One of the stakeholders interviewed for this review, explained that though the Act and its regulations are still in force, in particular its offence provisions, federal legislation in 2007 prohibited the commercial importation and licensing of kava, which meant that all sales of legal kava ceased in 2007 (Interviewee X).

During what was described as a 'regulatory hiatus' from 1994 and 1998 a large informal trade in kava emerged and though it declined with the availability of licensed kava in four communities commencing in 2002 (Clough and Warin 2004). However, a black market did persist with some illegal sales in licensed communities and elsewhere. This was not surprising as it was estimated at the time that the four licensed areas represented around 30% of the population of consumers where kava had been used in the region (Clough and Warin 2004). From May 1998 when first became illegal, about 7.5 tonnes of illegal kava worth around \$1.9million were seized by NT Police and Licensing Inspectors (Clough and Warin 2004). The dilemma, as outlined by Clough and Warin (2004), whether kava should be licensed to reduce the illegal trade or should

there be tighter controls on supply to minimise use, after it was found that consumption per capita in licensed areas was at or above levels that cause adverse health and social effects.

Policing in remote communities

To address and prevent illicit drugs in rural and remote communities, the NDLERF research resulted in a good practice framework (Delahunty and Putt 2006a) and referred to promising policing strategies and initiatives apparent in 2004-2005 when the research was undertaken (Delahunty and Putt 2006). The latter included the NT remote drug strategy and WA's multi-functional police facilities. Both predated the establishment of the Alice Springs SAID and were earlier policing responses to family violence and substance misuse in remote Indigenous communities. The NT Remote Communities Drug Desk compiled information and intelligence from local-level policing initiatives and used it to contribute to a broader understanding of drug issues across remote areas. This intelligence complemented other measures, such as the introduction of drug-detection dogs and drug-house legislation (Nicholas 2007).

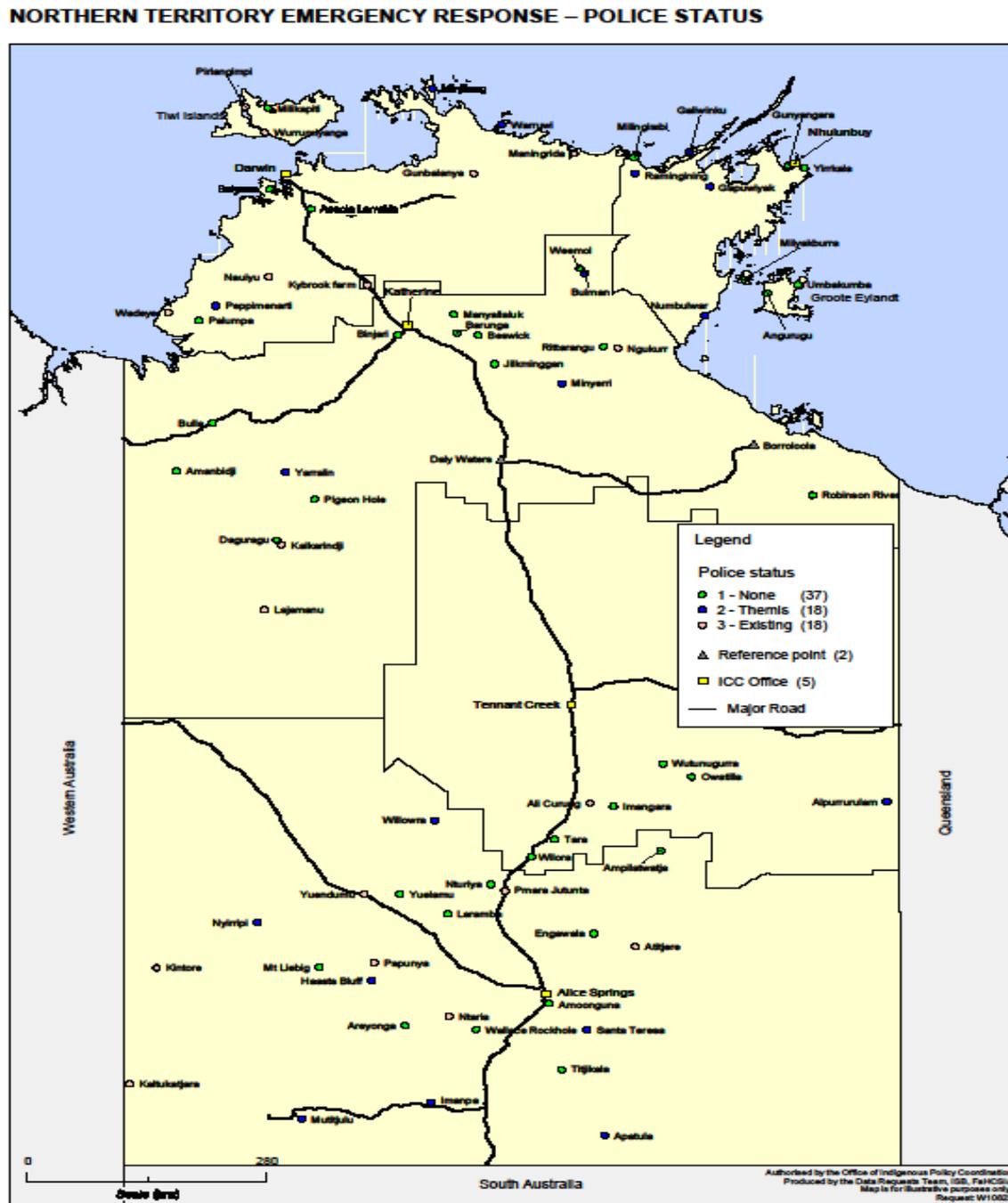
In response to the Gordon inquiry, WA increased its permanent police presence in a number of remote areas. These new police facilities were shared with staff from other agencies with the aim of fostering a more collaborative and coordinated response to child abuse and family violence (Delahunty and Putt 2006). Since then the WA police service has established a police presence in remote areas such as Balgo, Warburton, Bidyadanga, Kalumburu, Dampier Peninsula and Blackstone. As well, both WA police and NT police have built multi-functional police facilities in selected communities such as Kintore (NT) and Warburton (WA).

The NTER resulted in funding for more police and police stations in remote NT Indigenous communities, and since then further Closing the Gap funding, until 2012, has been provided for the NIITF. In the NT, in the 73 NTER communities there has been a significant investment in additional police and police stations. By the end of 2010 there were 62 additional police deployed in remote communities and in 18 communities there are new facilities commonly named 'Themis' stations. The Commonwealth has funded five permanent police station upgrades in Maningrida, Gunbulunya, Ali Curung, Hermannsburg and Yeundemu, and four overnight facilities have been installed at Titjikala, Milingimbi, Kaltukatjara and Umbakumba. Over the next two years five more new permanent stations are being built in Yarralin, Gapuwiyak, Ramingining, Arlparra and possibly, Imanpa (FAHCSIA 2011).

As at 30 June 2007 there were 894 sworn police officers in the NT (AIC 2008), with the 62 additional police since 2007 representing a seven percent increase in the NT total. Based on numbers in the report on the review of remote policing (Allens Consulting 2010), the increase in remote police officers is estimated to be 22%. The addition of 18 new police facilities

represents almost a doubling in the number of police stations in remote communities in the NT (Pilkington 2009) (see Map 3 for locations).

Map 3: Police stations, status as a result of NTER/NPA funding, 2011



Funded by the Australian federal government, police stations have also been built or upgraded in the APY Lands. Responding to recommendations in the Mullighan Inquiry into child abuse in the APY Lands, funds were provided to build a new station at Mimili and upgrade stations at Amata and Pukatja and they became operational in December 2009, January and March 2010 respectively (Macklin 2010). Four police are posted in each station, creating a permanent police presence on the Lands for the first time since the 1980s.

The central Australian region poses challenges for law enforcement and the administration of criminal justice because it encompasses three jurisdictions. A ground-breaking initiative that formalises and extends earlier forms of cooperative policing between the NT and WA is the Cross Border Justice Project (CBJP). The stated objectives is to deliver timely, efficient and meaningful justice responses to people in the region; to strengthen and improve community safety to address gaps in service delivery and to develop collaborative relationships across jurisdictions and other government agencies. Legislation was enacted in WA in 2008, the NT and SA in 2009, and by the Commonwealth in 2009 to enable successful implementation of the CBJP. The effect of this is to allow for persons who reside in, who are 'connected with', or who commit offences in the cross-border region to be dealt with by magistrates sitting in any of the three jurisdictions. Police and correctional officers from all jurisdictions can now exercise cross-border powers even where alleged offences have taken place outside of that jurisdiction (Fleming 2011).

Policing partnerships and collaboration

Policing partnerships including inter-jurisdictional collaboration, inter-agency collaboration, and community engagement, are common themes in both national policing (MCPEMP 2008) and drug strategies (MCDS 2003, 2011)⁵. For example, Australian governments through the Police Ministerial Council are committed to using innovative methods in law enforcement, to uphold community safety and well-being and 'to enhance coordination between Australasian and regional jurisdictions. To do this they are working towards 'enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in operating practices through developing common standards, improved information sharing, and better coordination in operations' (MCPEMP 2008:3). The *Directions in Australia and New Zealand Policing 2008-2011* document emphasises the importance of collaboration and stresses the importance of 'operat[ing] and cooperat[ing] across jurisdictional boundaries' (MCPEMP 2008:3).

⁵ The national framework for action on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, for 2010-2015, was signed off by the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy early in 2011, prior to the Council being disbanded in June 2011. Sitting under the framework of the National Drug Strategy, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Drug Strategy post-dates the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Complementary Action Plan.

At a practical level making these partnerships work in local communities very much depends on good community policing and cooperation between and with the police. Successful policing practices in rural and remote Indigenous communities differ markedly from those in regional centres or urban settings and depend on an ability to work with other agencies and to engage with communities (Nicholas 2007, Putt 2011). The NDLERF research on volatile substance misuse and illicit drugs highlighted the importance of positive relationships between police officers and communities (Gray et al 2006, Delahunty and Putt 2006). Importantly, drug supply-reduction strategies used in urban areas such as surveillance, infiltration and targeting distribution are less likely to work in rural and remote communities as police are highly visible (Delahunty and Putt 2006). Without community support, attempts to disrupt distribution networks are not likely to meet with much success.

Summary

The background section has highlighted a number of important contextual factors, including:

- From a policing perspective it is not surprising that more attention has been paid to substance misuse in remote Aboriginal communities in the NT, given the proportion of Indigenous people in that jurisdiction.
- Trends and patterns of substance misuse in remote Australia are not well documented.
- Available data and survey results indicate that cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug by non-Indigenous and Indigenous people in remote regions. ATS and other drugs are more likely to be found in towns than remote communities in these areas.
- Illicit drug markets vary by region with considerable differences across regions and jurisdictions in police data on drug seizures, arrests and offences. At a jurisdictional level, methamphetamine and cannabis is detected more often in SA and WA compared with the NT. In the NT, very few police detainees tested positive to any drug other than cannabis in Darwin and none in Alice Springs.
- From a local policing perspective alcohol takes up more of police time, and is seen by local Indigenous people and police as exacerbating wider social problems such as violence and anti-social behaviour.
- In remote/very remote areas of NT, WA and SA, national survey results show that Indigenous people are more likely to see alcohol as a local social problem over and above illicit drugs.
- Jurisdictional and regional police data on offences show that drug offences only make up a small fraction of total offences dealt with by the police.

- In nearly all remote communities covered by the SAID/DOUs in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, WA, the NTER communities in the NT and the APY Lands, alcohol is banned along with petrol sniffing, which means illegal substances include these as well as drugs such as cannabis. The sale of kava is effectively banned in all remote communities, and its use is primarily limited to Arnhem Land communities.
- With an increased police presence in remote Aboriginal communities, in the tri-border region and in NTER communities, there is more uniform and increased enforcement of alcohol restrictions. The roll-out of Opal low aromatic petrol to multiple remote communities and increased policing has resulted in a significant decline in petrol sniffing, even in the tri-border region where the practice is most prevalent.
- With more local police stationed in Aboriginal communities and with the cross-border project and NIITF, there are greater opportunities than ever before to develop regional partnerships and to make more strategic use of the local support and knowledge that result from good community policing.

PART 3: What they do – description and output measures

Activities

An indication of some strategies that may have been embraced by SAIDs since its inception are indicated by a group of police involved in a national workshop on policing substance misuse in remote communities, held soon after the first SAID was established at Alice Springs (Nicholas 2007). As part of a workshop exercise, the group, comprised mostly of NT police, agreed on the aim of establishing a project to disrupt the supply of substances by increasing the flow of law enforcement intelligence among all those with a role in this area. Having recognised the need to maintain the security of the intelligence (that is, maintaining security without secrecy), the group's list of possible strategies included:

- increasing the number of human sources and tasking the Aboriginal Community Police Liaison Officers to gather further information on trafficking and persons of interest
- becoming better connected with the community in order to better understand the issues of most concern to them and informing community members regarding drug use and the associated problems from a policing perspective
- enhancing education in schools regarding crime prevention, and working with the NPY Women's Council and encouraging them to educate Indigenous women about the extent, nature and problems associated with trafficking
- liaising with the Central Lands Council and health staff to gain more information on the severity of these problems
- developing media releases about the problems and the policing responses
- consulting with specialist areas and interstate police to ascertain the strategies that they find effective
- implementing road blocks in conjunction with other stations
- enhancing proactive policing using drug warrants, the Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act, and traffic offences, and making more effective use of drug-house notices and criminal asset forfeiture
- improving policing procedures regarding exhibit handling, and liaising more closely with prosecutors to secure convictions
- arguing for stronger bail conditions such as the requirement for urine drug testing;
- initiating a training workshop for remote community members; and
- amending the project plan in response to issues and learnings that arise as it progresses (Nicholas 2007).

Based on stakeholder interviews, it seems many of these strategies have been adopted over time by the SAIDs, in particular the ones that centre on building community connections. Certainly community visits are an integral part of SAID work, and in 2009-10 there were 146 community visits recorded ranging from two communities a month in March and December to 23 in May and 21 in August.

Right from its inception, it was recognised that the SAID needed to develop relationships with key brokers and people in communities, who could both pass on information and support their work. Service providers including local police play an important role as do several regional bodies, most notably in central Australia, the NPY Women's Council which has been a long-term advocate and ally for the SAID and their work. For example, a monthly report from one SAID unit in 2010 reported the following:

"SAID went to [named community] to discuss cannabis being brought into the community – met the GBM⁶, council manager, clinic nurse and elders. The latter were concerned about giving information on who has been bringing in cannabis as it would cause trouble with other members of the community. SAID gave options on how to pass on information through the GBM, clinic nurse and council manager. SAID emphasized how such information is treated in the strictest of confidence."

A key message always seems to have been that the focus of the SAID/DOUs was on supply and that they seek information about suppliers and the distribution of banned substances. Interviewee L described the process as being about "winning hearts and souls, by being there, talking to people, with a strong message that they did not want users, they wanted suppliers." Another stakeholder (Interviewee P) in central Australia commented that alcohol is more likely to be reported by local community people to local police while information about cannabis is provided to the SAID.

From the monthly reports, it is apparent the SAIDs often assist local police, including setting up road-blocks when there is a tip-off about a 'person of interest' or an expected delivery, and at events where there is likely to be alcohol and drugs brought into a particular community. The assistance provided to local police also occurs across state boundaries, with the monthly reports referring to examples of the SAID or DOU in Alice assisting local police in the APY Lands and across the border in WA. From the sample of monthly reports there were references such as:

"...DOU with local police did vehicle check points at [named communities]"

⁶ GBM stands for Government Business Managers. As a result of the NTER, GBMs were introduced in NT remote communities to facilitate and assist with the coordination of service delivery.

"... assisted in the execution of three search warrants."

"DOU went to [named communities for four days] to assist local police with disruption – local drug targets, grog runners and conducting roadblocks"

"DOU went to [named town] to do searches of post office and local freight yards."

"[SAID] went to APY community and DOU went to another to help SA police at sports weekends."

"persons of interest... [SAID] assisted [name of community] police to search truck driven from NSW.."

The monthly reports from WA and SA had more information about community visits rather than vehicle checks and/or roadblocks. For example, the SAID funded intelligence officer based in Marla routinely visits communities and attends events such as blue light discos. The monthly reports also indicated that liaising with other, non-SAID police is an important part of the job, with reference made to liaison with regional police responsible for intelligence and with the Australian Federal Police at Woomera. In WA the local police, who are funded to participate in SAID operations, recorded mostly community policing activities, for example, attending meetings, and routine patrols and road blocks related to football or other sporting events:

"[Community] police working with DCP⁷, Aboriginal medical service to address substance abuse such as petrol sniffing. Women's group started to conduct night patrol to ensure youth are not out sniffing".

"Regular patrols at [communities named] all vehicles stopped and decision made whether to search or not"

There are examples of more targeted activities related to drugs and/or alcohol, with for instance, patrols of a specific road "...because of information received about petrol and alcohol" and targeted vehicle stops to locate drugs. An example of high visibility patrols was when over 1,000 people were expected for two funerals and "intell had indicated payback may take place". It was noted that the manager of nearest hotel served a notice to ban takeaway alcohol for several days and volunteered to close the hotel on the day of the funeral. Another example was a joint operation with the regional drugs squad and other community local police to man road blocks. Often patrols and visits involve multiple activities, including license checks and routine inquiries. In one example of visits to remote communities [named community] police were involved in announcing new liquor restrictions and being involved in Operation Barn, a joint proactive response to child abuse.

⁷ DCP is the acronym for the WA Department of Child Protection

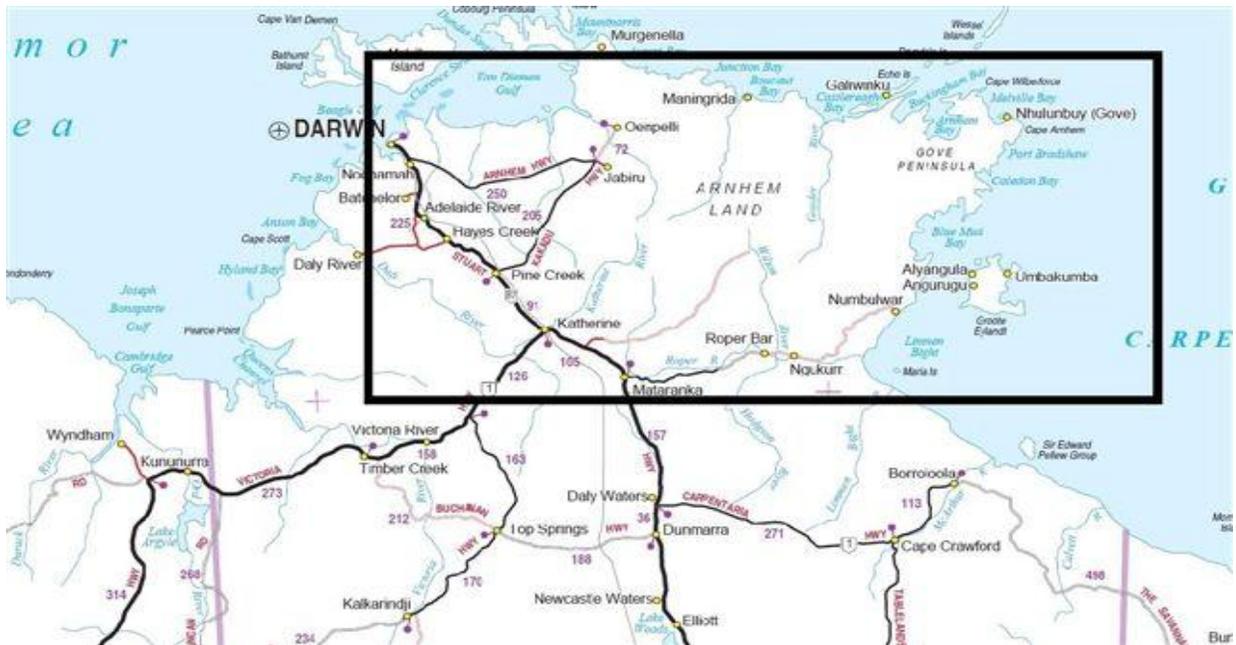
In the north of the NT, where there is the dedicated SAID unit in Katherine and DOUs in Katherine and Darwin, the monthly reports did focus on alcohol and drug-related activities. In particular there was an emphasis on transport routes, both land and air, with for example a focus on airports in the wet. At a major intersection for road transport to the Top End from other parts of Australia, the checking of vehicles can include main roads as well as roads into more remote communities. Interviewees B described vehicle check points on Stuart and main community highways as “high visibility... random, anywhere, anytime” and if acting on intelligence, with the capacity to be on the road within 25 minutes.

The SAID and DOU were according to Interviewees B “joined at the hip” as the dogs are critical to random seizures with their ability to find contraband in freight and on passengers⁸. They estimated that dogs increased the chance of finding illegal substances by “ten-fold”. The DOUs are an integral part of roadblocks and the screening of airport passengers and luggage, as monthly report excerpts indicate:

“..DOU concentrate on regional flights .. passengers and freight screened on a sporadic basis using up to date information on persons of interest and concealment methods.”

“DOU joint operations with SAID on [communities] road”.

Map 4: Focus of Katherine SAID work



Source: Katherine SAID unit

⁸ In the Top End, the DOU dogs are trained to detect kava as well as other illicit substances.

The Katherine SAID has less established links with WA police, compared with the Alice SAID, partly because there are fewer socio-cultural connections and movement between communities across the WA/NT border and scattered, fewer communities on the WA side of the border. There seems to be intelligence sharing with police in Queensland and NSW, but primarily stemming from an increasing interest in the past few years in kava supply and its distribution in Arnhem Land. Another reason for the weaker links with WA has been this focus on kava, which has taken up much of the northern SAID's time and effort. Map 4 shows the main area of the NT where the northern SAID say they have concentrated most of their energies in recent years.

There have been several visits by the Katherine SAID and DOU personnel to WA. This does not appear to have been a result of a cross-jurisdictional, more strategic agreement about a regional approach to tackle trafficking and distribution in the cross-border region. In the Pilbara region Interviewee T indicated that there have been several opportunities to build relationships between NT and WA police, but the drug priorities of WA police were in towns where cannabis and methamphetamine were more widespread.

From the interviews of stakeholders and the monthly descriptions of activities, it is clear that the degree to which targeted operations occur varies by region. It seems intelligence is shared regularly about 'people of interest' in the tri-border area, with the addition of a designated intelligence officer in Marla making a difference to the flow of information about sources, people, places and routes in the APY Lands being passed to the SAID unit in Alice Springs. Increasingly, it seems with more local police stationed in Aboriginal communities in the tri-border region there is also more local knowledge of what is going on. Although the SAID intelligence officer is directly involved in community visits and events throughout the Lands, the underlying purpose is to make it known that the SAID role is to build up relationships and information about the supply of substances.

In contrast, the WA police in the Ngaanyatjarra communities and further north in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions provide reports on community policing activities, only some of which directly relates to the interception of supply, typically as a result of a tip-off or more infrequently, as part of a joint patrol or operation with SAID colleagues from the NT.

As the SAID in Alice Springs has been around the longest and had the opportunity to establish contacts and develop knowledge of the tri-border region, it seems that it is more likely to conduct targeted operations in specific areas based on their intelligence gathering over a considerable period of time. More than one stakeholder mentioned the importance of having a 'central depository' which collates information from diverse sources and locations. This is not to say the Alice SAID/DOU do not do routine patrols or the DOUs are not involved in intercepting

all vehicles or buses on particular routes, but that their deployment is more often linked to specific information. This makes sense given the large region which they cover.

It is difficult to know how many times the DOUs have crossed the borders either into WA or SA, and one stakeholder commented that “[the dogs] are often tied up, haven’t been able to get them. Coordination is tricky – dogs are not always available when information comes in.” (Interviewee F). However, there is evidence of considerable collaboration in the tri-border region, including sharing intelligence and joint operations. Box 1 provides an example of an operation where SA, WA and NT police were involved, along with SAID and DOU.

Box 1: Operation Southern Lockdown

Conducted on the 29th and 30th of July 2010, this operation included: 4 Drug Intelligence Unit members, 6 Drug Enforcement Section members, 4 SAID members, 3 DOU members, 2 [named community] members, 5 Southern Traffic Operations members, 1 [named community] member, 1 Property Crime Reduction Unit member, 2 SA police members and 4 WA police members. It resulted in

- 386 vehicles apprehended (Random Breath Testing)
- 32 vehicles searched (Detection Dog Deployment)
- 63 persons searched
- 7 Traffic Infringement Notices issued
- 3 Drug Infringement Notices issued
- 3 defect notices issued
- 3 summons Issued
- 5 arrests
- 5 information reports submitted (to date)

As a result of the operation, 61.25 litres of alcohol was seized and destroyed, and 1.3 grams of MDMA and 6.4 grams of cannabis was found.

Source: SAID/DOU monthly reports, FAHCSIA

There was media coverage of a recent cross-border initiative, as part of Operation Midrealm when the Alice Springs DOU was involved with Goldfields/Esperance police and NT detectives in searching passengers on flights at the Warburton airport and other searches in the surrounding communities in the Ngaanyatjarra lands (Tomlin 2011). In the article, cooperation between WA, NT and SA police is stressed to disrupt the cross-border trafficking of cannabis from SA and outside Alice Springs to communities in the Goldfields, Pilbara and Kimberley.

Drug detection dogs

The importance of the drug detection dog units was recognised by all stakeholders. It is apparent from the monthly reports from the WA police that the vehicle stops and searches had not revealed or detected much in the way of illicit substances. Although it may be partly a result of less being transported through these regions, it is also likely to reflect the lower probability of finding illicit substances without drug detection dogs. The dogs can screen a large volume of luggage and people, and a less intrusive search of vehicles can be conducted via the dogs.

The positive comments about dogs related to the positive community profile they generated, especially through visits to schools, and how their high profile and success at detection acted as a deterrent. It was also stressed by several stakeholders that it reduced the risk of being seen as an informant, as the dogs were held responsible for a detection.

“ [The people] like the dogs. Dogs used at roadblocks and with buses, a really appropriate way of dealing with it. It externalizes the problem, dogs found it, rather than a result of dobbing in.’ Interviewee P

“Police dogs, big thing, very visible, increasing detection and acting as a deterrent. Heard plenty of stories, but hadn’t realized there was only two. It is a deterrent for honest people – money is so big so won’t stop some people from trying again.” Interviewee J

Monthly statistics are provided to FaHCSIA for the DOUs. Table 7 shows, for a 30 month period (from January 2009 to June 2011), that the proportion of positive searches varied by type of search but the total proportion of positive responses for each six month period increased each period from 18% in the first six months of 2009 to 28% in the first six months of 2011. An exceptionally high number of vehicle searches and positive responses were recorded in the first six months of 2010, and this affected the total of 62% positive responses for the period.

In the first six months of 2009 there was a total of 560 searches recorded while in the second half of 2010 there were 1,551 and in the first six months of 2011, 1,150 searches. The recorded increase may be partly the result of Darwin DOU and WA police statistics being added in from May 2010.

The most common search was of vehicles over the 30 month period (47% of the total of 4,999 searches) with a high proportion of positive responses in the first half of 2010. Searches of premises had the most consistent proportion of positive responses (ranging from 29% in the first six months of 2009 to 68% in the first six months of 2011). Figures 4 and 5 show monthly statistics for the same period and it is apparent that the post office/courier searches have increased from February 2010 onwards and that during 2009-10, the biggest number of vehicle searches was in September 2010. The number of searches each month dropped after

September 2010. Despite fluctuations since then, vehicle searches have remained at a relatively consistent level.

The recording of airline and airport searches in monthly statistics began in November 2010. From then to June 2011 there were 216 searches (26% positive responses) at airports and 281 searches (23% positive responses) at airlines.

Table 7: Number of searches and percentage of positive responses, six month total (%), DOU, January– June 2009 to January -June 2011

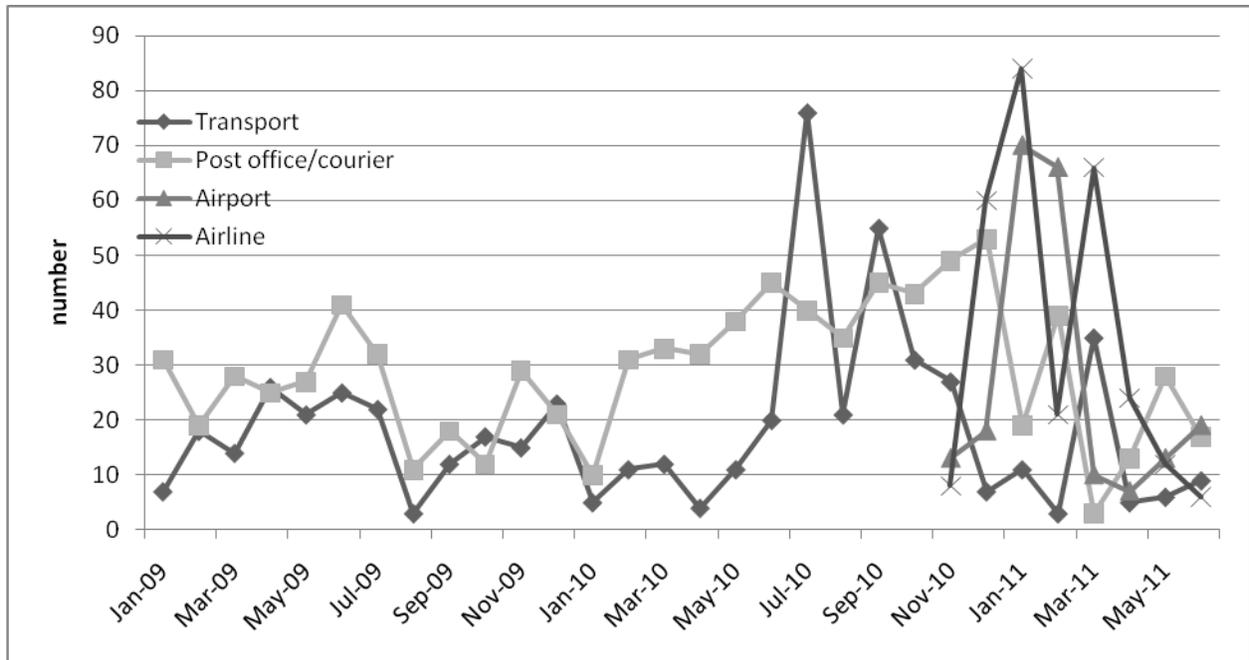
Type of searches	Jan-June 2009		July -Dec 2009		Jan – June 2010*		July – Dec 2010		Jan – June 2011	
	No.	% positive	No.	% positive	No.	% positive	No.	% positive	No.	% positive
Premises	60	48	143	27	108	60	198	49	141	68
Vehicle	130	33	401	26	382	110**	765	21	648	29
Passenger bus	88	19	149	10	88	12	156	19	173	14
Transport	111	8	92	5	63	7	167	19	69	7
Post office/courier	171	1	123	7	189	6	265	4	119	11
Total	560	18	908	19	830	62	1,551	21	1,150	28

* WA police and Darwin DOU monthly statistics added in from May 2010

**A very large number, 353, of positive responses recorded for the month of May 2010

Footnote: From November 2010 airline and airport monthly statistics were recorded. From November 2010 through to June 2011 there were 216 searches of airports with 26% positive responses and 281 searches of airlines with 23% positive responses

Figure 4: Number of searches each month by type of search (transport, post office, airport, airline)*, DOU, January 2009 to June 2011

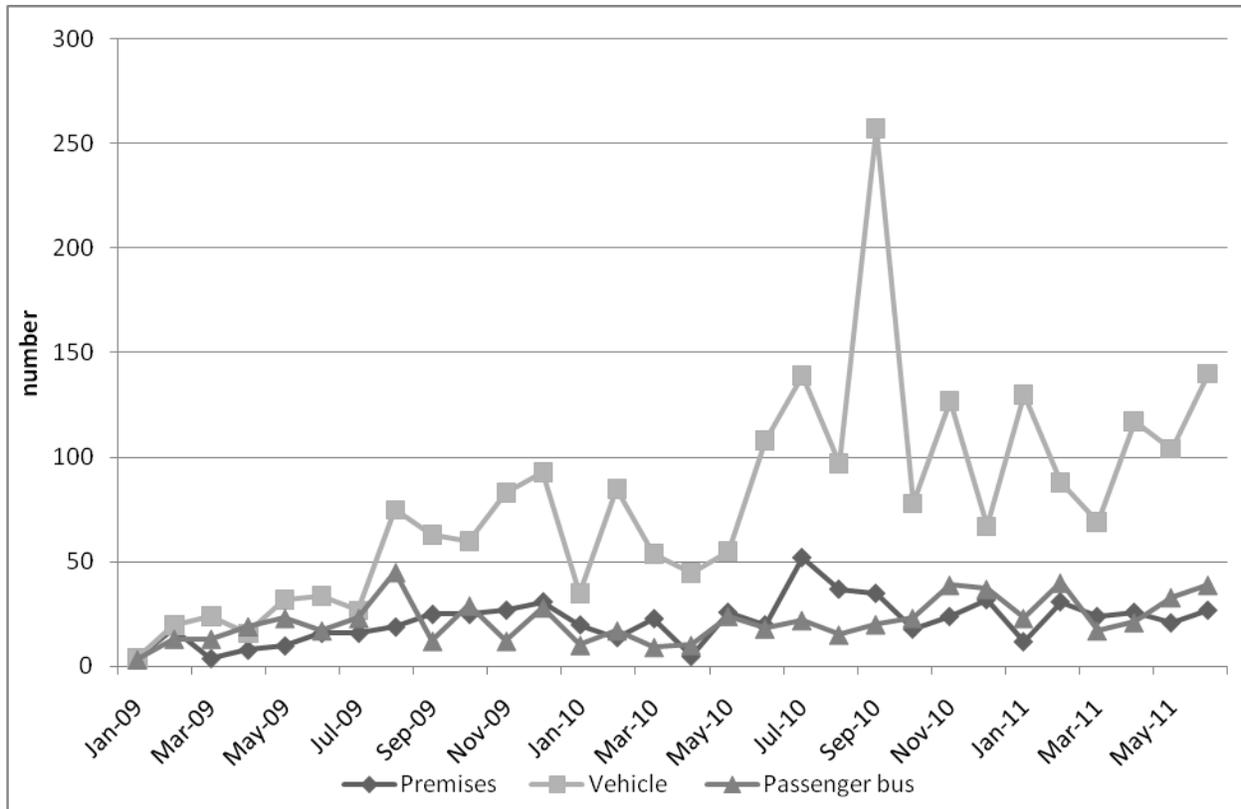


* WA police and Darwin DOU monthly statistics added in from May 2010

Footnote: From November 2010 airline and airport monthly statistics were recorded. From November 2010 through to June 2011 there were 216 searches of airports with 26% positive responses and 281 searches of airlines with 23% positive responses

Source: SAID/DOU monthly statistics, FAHCSIA

Figure 5: Number of searches each month by type of search (premises, vehicle and passenger bus)*, DOU, January 2009 to June 2011



* WA police and Darwin DOU monthly statistics added in from May 2010

Source: SAID/DOU monthly statistics, FAHCSIA

Intelligence gathering

It is much harder to provide statistics on intelligence compilation, not least because the information is confidential. The Australian Crime Commission’s NIITF produces regular intelligence reports, several of which have referred explicitly to drug and substance misuse in remote Indigenous communities. These reports, discuss among other issues, the distribution and use of illicit substances in Indigenous communities.

Both NIITF and SAID stakeholders referred to the good working relationship between them, especially in Alice Springs, with the sharing of information and intelligence. No doubt the strategic and operational intelligence reports produced by NIITF have been informed by intelligence and operational outcomes from SAID/DOU activities. This means that the work of

the SAID/DOUs is being incorporated into products that are distributed nationally to key police and policy stakeholders.

Other key outputs from the gathering of intelligence are the profile of trafficking and concealment methodologies, and the information that leads to major operations. Box 2 provides an example of cannabis concealment methodologies, whereby the DOU summarises examples of detected cannabis found in a range of household and other products.

With operations, it can take a considerable period of time before sufficient evidence is accumulated to act on multiple tip-offs and information reports. Several stakeholders did note that they had heard complaints from some community people that ‘nothing seemed to be done’ although information was given or it was commonly known that someone or place was involved in drug distribution. The SAIDs have attempted to counter this perception, noting in interviews that every bit of information helps and that it can take a while before action can occur.

“Build trust over time, explain the process is ongoing and why action is not taken straight away. Need to overcome hurdles to have overcome successful operation against [name of place], which took 18 months. Information may only be a small component, especially if it’s anonymous.” Interviewees X

‘Hot’ intelligence, as one stakeholder called it, can result in immediate action but often information is compiled and analysed to generate profiles of places, people, and methodologies of interest. NIITF stakeholders referred to how the SAIDs were working with them and others to build up intelligence on high risk offenders. An example of an operation where a ‘person of interest’ (POI) was monitored over time is provided in Box 3.

Public profile and community education

Promoting their successes, particularly with seizures and arrests, and community education is also part of the SAID/DOU work. The monthly statistics on SAID/DOU activities indicate that in 2009-10 they did two media interviews and issued 23 press releases. There is also the media coverage generated by successful joint operations, in WA, NT and SA media outlets (see Box 4 for an example of an operation that was the subject of a SA Police media release).

More targeted dissemination of their work has occurred through, for example, the NPY Women’s Council newsletter. With community education, SAID/DOU interviewees described visits to schools and presentations to key organisations. There are SAID branded goods, such as caps and water bottles, which can be handed out during community visits. The positive public relations generated by the dogs have already been mentioned.

Although the number of communities visited is recorded, it is impossible to know how effective the community education component of their work is without undertaking more in-depth research in communities. Stakeholders referred to the visible aspects of the SAID/DOUs activities (roadblocks, searches by dogs, media articles about arrests) as sending important messages about the likelihood of being caught. Whether there is much time for the SAID/DOUs to also impart messages about the harms of substance misuse and family violence (as stated as one of their roles) in local settings seems improbable and as noted, is not apparent in output information and stakeholder comments.

Box 2: Cannabis concealment methodologies

An undated powerpoint presentation by a DOU shows images of items in which cannabis was found. The presentation names the community for each item. The list of items included household goods such as washing power, breakfast cereal, coffee tin, chips, talcum powder, nappies, and petroleum jelly. Larger goods included a quilt, a toy, a speaker and a TV/CD player.

Box 3: Case study – compiling intelligence on a person of interest

POI is a registered Child Sex offender (ANCOR), who currently resides in a remote community on the APY lands (SA). He also has numerous links to several communities in the Northern Territory and South Australia. He has criminal history in both SA and NT in relation to sexual and drug supply related offences. He first came to notice in the NT in 1993 for drug supply related offences (2010 in SA) and in 2004 for child sexual related offences.

Due to his preference for living in remote communities and the appearance of running legitimate businesses within these communities it has been difficult to obtain credible information on an ongoing basis. During 2009 – 2010 a long term successful drug operation was run in this community targeting other known drug suppliers, as a result several known drug suppliers were arrested, charged and removed from the community. As a result of the success of this operation a void was created which the POI has sought to fill, not only in the drug supply market but other fraudulent activities.

An ongoing combined SA police and NT police effort targeting substance abuse within these communities was initiated. A target profile was developed and disseminated across the APY and NPY lands requesting that any information in relation to his movements / actions / associates of the POI be forwarded to the SAID. NTPOL hold in excess of 20 Information reports in relation to POI and his movements, with 9 being attributed directly to the release of the Intelligence profile. SAPOL hold 13 information reports in relation to the same individual.

During December 2010 (acting on current information) the POI was apprehended travelling to Adelaide with \$30,000.00 in cash secreted in his luggage, a search warrant was executed at his business location and as a result numerous documents which indicate offences against the Criminal Code, Taxation Act and Motor Vehicles Act (Matter is currently before the courts).

During January 2011 (acting on current information) members from the Alice Springs SAID and DOU travelled to South Australia and assisted in the execution of several search warrants with in the target community. As a result of the warrants approximately 200 grams of cannabis was located as well as several concealed hydroponics laboratories. A quantity of the cannabis and one of the hydroponics laboratories was located on the POI's business premises. The laboratory was not in use at the time, it was evident that it had been used to grow cannabis in the recent past.

During April 2011, (acting on current information) SAID and DOU members attended South Australia and assisted with the execution of a search warrant with a further \$30,000.00 and a quantity of cannabis being located from the POI's business premises.

(This investigation is ongoing and now involves several commonwealth and state law enforcement agencies).

Summary

Given the remote locality in which the POI resides and the distance from major centre's it was immediately evident that traditional police methods would not be effective with a greater requirement placed on the intelligence led multi agency investigation.

Prior to the SAID both jurisdictions held significant intelligence in relation to this POI but this intelligence was not shared. The SAID has allowed for a formal exchange of intelligence without the traditional cross jurisdictional barriers which have in the past applied.

The information received in relation to the POI came from several sources over an extended period of time and combined with intelligence from external government and non government agencies provided sufficient information for police to obtain search warrants for the POI's dwelling and business.

Source: Case summary provided by NT police

Box 4: Operation Madang

According to a media release issued in March 2010, Operation Madang resulted in eight people being arrested and charged with trafficking a commercial quantity of a prohibited drug, with four kilograms of cannabis and \$11,000 in cash seized during the investigation. Those charged lived in Mintabie, Andamooka, Callington and Adelaide.

From late 2008, Operation Madang involved gathering evidence of significant cannabis sales of Mintabie, on the edge of the APY Lands, to people in central Australia. Detectives from Port Augusta led the operation with the assistance of the SAID and intelligence support by both NT and WA police.

The media release states that the “The dismantling of this drug network has caused significant shortages of cannabis on the APY Lands and a distinct lack of traffic through Mintabie to source it.”

Source: SA Police media release, 2010

Output statistics

Seizures

The monthly statistics provided to FAHCSIA include a range of output measures. In addition to the statistics on DOU searches and positive responses (see Table 7 and Figure 4), the standard measures of drug law enforcement – seizures by drug type – are provided. Table 8 shows the trends in seizure quantities over five years. The annual quantity of cannabis has increased steadily from 2006 to 2010, while kava seizures are only recorded for the first time in 2009 and doubled in 2010. The annual quantity of alcohol seized increased steadily from 2006 to 2008, jumped dramatically in 2009 and then declined by 44% in 2010.⁹ The annual volume of petrol seized ranged from six litres in 2007 to 535 litres in 2008, whilst the annual amount of amphetamines seized was highest in 2010, with 396 grams, and ecstasy annual seizures ranged from nil in 2008 to 889 grams in 2009.

The large volume of alcohol, kava, and cannabis seized tallies with our knowledge of drug use in remote communities. It also suggests the SAID/DOUs make a significant contribution to the total amount of cannabis seized in remote areas. As Table 5 indicated, the total volume of cannabis seized in the NT in one financial year (2007-08 to 2008-09) was 1,315kg while the total

⁹ The most recent NTER monitoring report indicates that alcohol-related incidents recorded by police have declined in the previous year in the NTER communities (FaHCSIA 2011), which at least in these remote communities, might suggest less alcohol is available and/or being consumed in a harmful way.

SAID seizures (covering remote communities in SA, NT and WA) was 36kg in 2009 and 50kg in 2010.

The seizure of the amphetamines and ecstasy suggests other drugs are also being used in these locations. With seizures of other drugs, Table 8 shows that the biggest annual total for amphetamine was in 2010 (396 grams) and for ecstasy in 2009 (889 grams). These relatively small amounts are more likely to involve non-Indigenous offenders and the seizures to occur at transport stops (bus, air and roads).

Table 8: SAID/DOU actions and seizures, 2006 to 2010

SAID/DOU Actions and Seizures*	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Alcohol (litres)	211	732	883	4,399	2,524
Cannabis (kilograms)	6.854	23.28	15.02	35.74	50.4
Kava (kilograms)	0	0	0	702	1,667
Petrol (litres)	7.9	6	535	20	35
Amphetamines (grams)	56	261	58	135	396
MDMA (ecstasy) (grams)	6.5	75	0	889	128
Other Drugs (grams)	0	0	0	0	1,802**
Vehicles	3	7	5	17	23
Cash (\$)	38,635	44,805	9,803	66,850	175,992
Arrests	197	451	226	100	312
Charges	501	606	391	263	783
Summons	86	105	118	84	292
Infringement Notices	no data	no data	no data	94	364

*The 2009 and 2010 annual figures include statistics from the Darwin DOU and WA police which were added in from May 2010.

** It is not known what drugs these were, although one stakeholder did mention that precursor chemicals were seized during that year

Source: FAHCSIA internal documents

In the remote regions of Australia where the SAID/DOU operate, kava is only seized in the Top End of the NT. Table 9 shows annual totals of kava seizures for 2009 and 2010. It also shows the

weight range, common locations for seizures, the number of alleged offenders, whether charges were laid for trafficable quantities and the outcomes for each defendant. The number of seizures, charges and offenders increased in 2010 compared with 2009. In 2010, a large number of warrants were issued, which suggested many offenders had not had their matters dealt with in courts yet.

Table 9: Kava seizures NT, 2009 and 2010

	2009	2010
Number of seizures	16	61
Weight range	3kg to 294kg	<2kg to 200kg
Location	Darwin airport 2 Maningrida 4 Nhulunbuy 2 Other 8	Darwin 4 Maningrida 10 Galiwinku 5 Bulman 3 Oenpelli 3 Raminging 3 Other 33
Number of offenders	22	94
Charges*	Nil offence (<2kg) – 0 incidents Possess commercial/trafficable quantity – 16 incidents Supply – 10 incidents	Nil offence (<2kg) – 10 incidents Possess commercial/trafficable quantity – 34 incidents Supply – 30 incidents
Outcomes for each defendant**	Warrant 1 Charges withdrawn/dismissed 1 Fine 5 Imp susp GBB 8 Imprisonment 4	Warrant 38 Charges withdrawn/dismissed 3 Fine 6 Imp susp GBB 8 Imprisonment 2

*as some incidents involved more than one defendant, it is not clear how many charges were laid per incident. As a result the count is the number of incidents where at least one of these charges were laid

**only where known and where multiple sentences per defendant, most serious outcome recorded

Source: SAID/DOU monthly statistics

Actions against offenders

Various measures are recorded for action taken as a result of detecting drugs and other substances, including seizures of assets and cash under proceeds of crime. As Table 9 shows the number of vehicles seized has increased each year, as has the annual total of cash seized, with the exception of 2008 when it was under \$10,000. Actions taken against offenders have varied over time. Arrests peaked in 2007 with an annual total of 451, while summons peaked at 783 in 2010. The annual number of charges was also at their highest in 2010, when 292 are recorded.

As noted in relation to cannabis seizures, although the area covered is not directly comparable, NT statistics on cannabis arrests suggest the SAID/DOUs are making a significant contribution to cannabis arrests in remote regions. Table 4 indicated that in 2008-09 there were a total of 102

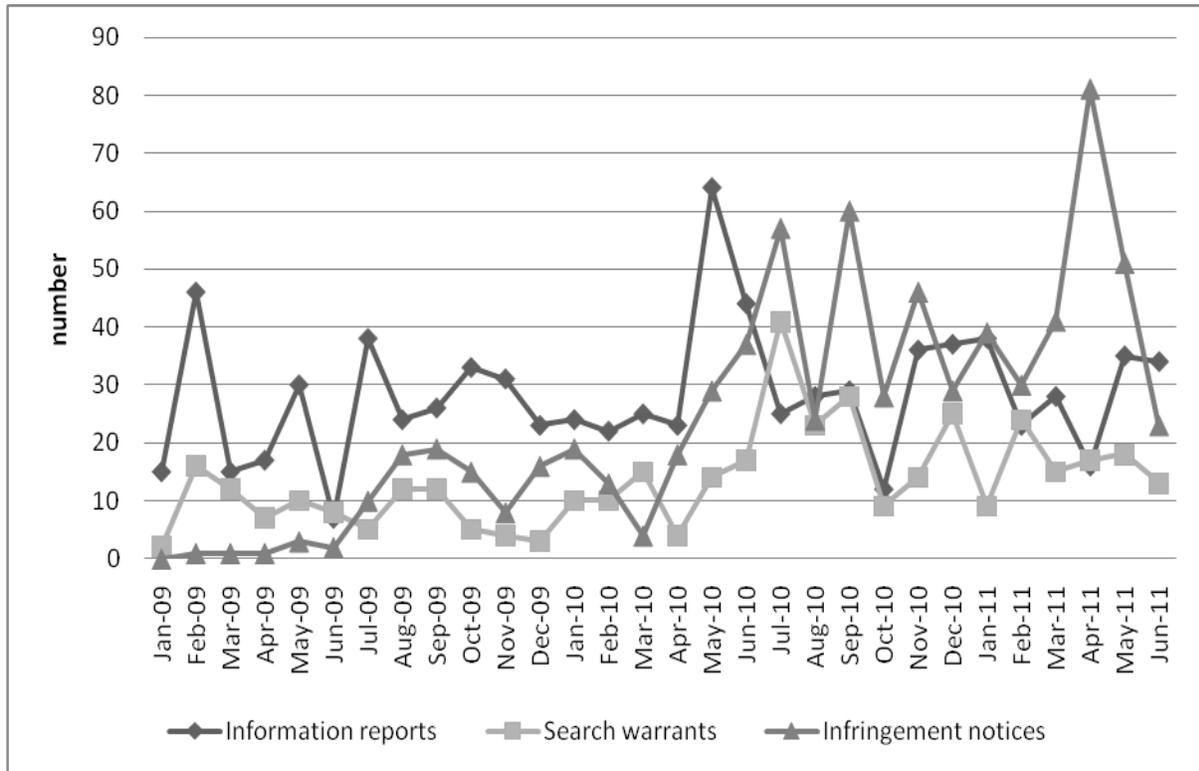
cannabis provider arrests in the NT while for the first half of 2010 approximately 70 of the offences recorded for the SAID/DOUS were related to cannabis supply.

The SAID/DOU statistics do not indicate whether offenders are Indigenous people. However, the drug seizure database maintained by the NT police (see Table 11), which records whether those apprehended are Indigenous persons and the location of the seizure, would suggest nearly every Indigenous person apprehended for drug offences in NT remote communities is done so for cannabis-related offences.

For the 30 month period of July 2009 to December 2010, Figures 6 and 7 show the monthly statistics for selected actions against offenders, with the majority increasing in number from April through to June 2010, during the dry season in the north and the winter months in the south. The majority of actions remained at these higher levels, with some monthly fluctuations, until November and December, when they dropped. In the first six months of 2011 the monthly numbers for most types of action started to increase but not to the levels of the previous six months. The exception was infringement notices which the highest monthly total for the 30 month period in April 2011 (see Figure 5).

Available data indicate some apprehended offenders are involved in dealing. Statistics on charges for the first six months of 2010 showed that 146 offences related to cannabis, 63 to kava, 48 to alcohol and three to amphetamines. Just under half of the cannabis offences related to the possession or supply of commercial or trafficable quantities. With kava, more than half (57%) of the offences related to the possession of trafficable or commercial quantities.

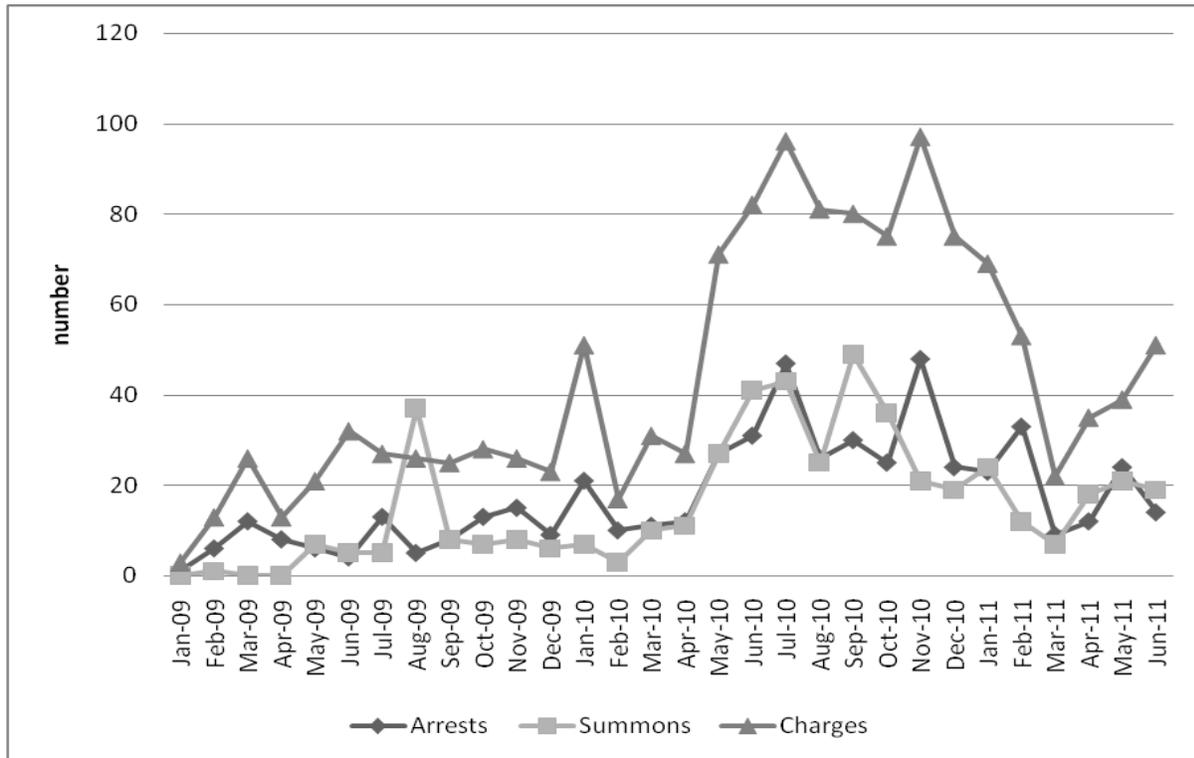
Figure 6: SAID selected actions against offenders (information reports, search warrants and infringement notices), monthly total, January 2009 to June 2011



*Note: WA police and Darwin DOU statistics added in for May and June 2010, and are included in the monthly statistics during 2011. During May and June 2010, WA police recorded 32 information reports.

Source: SAID/DOU monthly statistics

Figure 7: SAID selected actions against offenders (arrests, summons and charges), monthly total, January 2009 to June 2011



*Note: WA police and Darwin DOU statistics added in for May and June 2010, and are included in the monthly statistics during 2011. During May and June 2010, WA police recorded 18 arrests, 46 summons, and 75 charges. Source: SAID/DOU monthly statistics

What is distinctive about the SAID/DOUs?

According to internal FAHCSIA documents, the effectiveness of the SAIDs/DOUs is due to:

- A co-operative tri-state approach with a focus on building relationships in remote communities which has increased intelligence flow
- High visibility operations at airports, highways, business and port locations as well as media coverage of SAID operations which increases public awareness and deters unlawful activity

- Working in remote communities to discuss family violence ¹⁰ and educate young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol consumption

The first two characteristics of the SAID/DOUs were brought up in interviews with stakeholders and there were very few negative comments. As noted previously a few interviewees referred to complaints they had heard of inaction, and one stakeholder mentioned hearing of inappropriate searches made of personal luggage. This issue was also raised in the recent review of remote policing in the NT (Allens Consulting 2010) but it seems to be isolated examples rather than a common source of concern amongst remote community residents. From stakeholders positive comments, it is apparent that the SAID/DOUs are valued for a number of reasons.

The use of drug detection dogs and the benefits that accrue from them, in terms of profile, good public relations and increased rates of efficient, non-intrusive detection has already been mentioned. Another attribute raised by stakeholders was the importance of having a cross-jurisdictional, dedicated unit and single point of contact that was not at risk of being subsumed by other policing priorities or needs. From a policing perspective, several stakeholders stressed the coordinating role of the SAIDs:

“If SAID wasn’t around, wouldn’t have the focal point, coordination of operations. Interagency relationships and more broadly, especially GBMs...SAID another tool in crime prevention strategy...” Interviewees X

“[Without SAID] lose coordination of cross-jurisdictional information, cover a lot of areas, called upon to assist...No-one would have responsibility to go over the border and work conjointly....Lose cooperation of those jurisdictions. SAID single point of entry into the triborder region.” Interviewee H

Non-police stakeholders also emphasized the value in having a dedicated unit and having a unit that compiled and disseminated intelligence and conducted operations in cross-border regions:

“ Can’t only report to local police, specially about non-local people. A lot to do with cross-jurisdictional issues, people are very transient in the tri-state region. It would be a step backwards [to lose SAID]. A dedicated unit is needed for the issue alone, police in remote communities have enough to do. People not aware of drug squad people. With SAID gone you’d be leaving people in the lurch. People know they’re there and are aware

¹⁰ According to two program managers, SAID officers are often approached regarding violence in communities when in the communities and by phone. However, there is no measure routinely collected in the SAID/DOU monthly statistics that records the number or type of discussions related to family violence.

of them on buses. Haven't heard any negative feedback from any stakeholders."

Interviewee P

"Having a physical presence, a unit, is important. Can give information anonymously, as don't want to be seen approaching the police and the 1300 Crimestoppers number is not so attractive." Interviewee C

Police stakeholders also stressed how the SAID/DOUs enhanced policing capabilities more broadly and had over time increased awareness of the extent of demand and distribution of drugs and other illicit substances in remote communities:

"SAID utterly invaluable, provide an opportunity to develop a global picture of substances flowing into remote communities. Previously had no idea of the size of the problem and intelligence was often after the fact and reactive. There wasn't an appetite in law enforcement to tackle the issues until SAID lifted the lid. GBM + police + SAID leads to good governance and transparency, SAID is providing a capability for police on the ground who intercede. Dogs a crucial component." Interviewee R

"SAID as a central desert initiative keeps bringing consistency in approach to alcohol and illicit drugs. Just fantastic the injection of federal money for drug dogs and targeted operations, which has upped the amount of detection. Because of the amounts seized there are a lot less ramifications, not quite as much violence on the Lands, more peaceful. Seen a difference with fewer reports of dysfunction and violence. Drop in the major distribution of cannabis has made people safer. I've seen models of enforcement [in remote settings] over the years. SAID is a great complement and the resources that come with it. It may only be a small drop in a big bucket but it is an important drop....Good bang for the buck." Interviewee O

Other attributes of SAID/DOUs raised by stakeholders included having small, mobile teams with dogs, that focused exclusively on collecting intelligence and taking action against what one stakeholder described as 'mid-level' suppliers of alcohol, drugs and other substances in remote settings. It creates a node of expertise that responds to regional priorities such as kava in Arnhem Land. The end-result seems to a high-level of support from police and other stakeholders, including many local community residents. A common theme in many interviews was that the misuse of substances would be much worse without SAID/DOUs and that they represent good value for money:

"Stopped so much getting into communities. Would open a floodgate of cannabis – with mental health implications including suicide, high rates of violence and disturbances, exploitation." Interviewee K

“There would be more trafficking if the SAID didn’t exist. It is working very well given its resources” Interviewees F

“It has a deterrent effect on larger gangs, regular patrols very important, picking up grog, making people think. Make them take different routes. Huge hauls of kava up north. Good intell now... Dogs make a huge difference, especially up north where they, for example, screen the airport luggage. A major enhancement. Dogs do go to the communities but only in a targeted fashion. Very good public relations...A small investment for huge dividends” Interviewee L

Despite the many accolades for the SAID/DOUs, it was also apparent that stakeholders believed more could be done and/or could be done better. These issues are considered in a later section. The next section examines whether there is any evidence of the SAID/DOUs having an impact on illicit substance misuse and distribution. Clearly, most stakeholders believed they had made a difference, but it is an ongoing problem to obtain empirical evidence of changes to drug markets in remote Australia.

Summary

SAID/DOU activities include community visits, during which they stress their role to apprehend traffickers and the confidentiality of information and its source. They along with local police in remote regions in the NT, WA, and SA are involved in road blocks and patrols, and targeted operations. The units in the north and south of the NT have their own areas of priority affected by seasonal change, geographic and cultural differences, patterns of substance use and transport routes. In the cross-border context, there are established ties with the funded intelligence officer in SA, while the relationship with WA police is strongest with those posted in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and has its genesis in the Midrealm Operation established in 2005.

Intelligence gathering and analysis is integral to their work which involves compiling profiles of places, people and methodologies and sharing this other information with others. The SAID/DOUs have a good working relationship with policing organisations and with the ACC’s NITTF, which means the product of their work is incorporated into national intelligence reports. There have also been examples of successful operations against ‘mid-level’ traffickers, that are often the result of many months of accumulation of intelligence and evidence.

The SAID/DOUs endeavour to broadcast their successes through media releases and raise their public profile through visits to schools and presentations. Although it is a stated component of their work, it is not clear how much involvement there is in community education.

Drug detection dogs play a key role in raising the public profile of their work and in searches of premises, vehicles, passenger buses, transport and post office/courier items. DOU statistics for January 2009 to June 2011 showed:

- A good success rate with searches: the proportion of positive searches varied by type of search but the total proportion of positive responses for each six month period increased each period from 18% in the first six months of 2009 to 28% in the first six months of 2011. An exceptionally high number of vehicle searches and positive responses were recorded in the first six months of 2010, and this affected the total of 62% positive responses for the period.
- A big increase in the volume of searches: in the first six months of 2009 there was a total of 560 searches recorded while in the second half of 2010 there 1,551 and in the first six months of 2011, 1,150 searches. This may be partly the result of Darwin DOU and WA police statistics being added in from May 2010.
- The most common search was of vehicles over the 30 month period (47% of the total of 4,999 searches) with a high proportion of positive responses in the first half of 2010. Searches of premises had the most consistent proportion of positive responses (ranging from 29% in the first six months of 2009 to 68% in the first six months of 2011).

Statistics for airline and airport searches were added in from November 2010 and till June 2011 there were 216 searches (26% positive responses) at airports and 281 searches (23% positive responses) at airlines.

As a result of the SAID/DOU activities, the following trends were noticeable over five years (2006 -2010):

- With seizures, the annual quantity of cannabis climbed steadily, kava was only recorded in 2009 and 2010 and doubled in 2010. The annual amount of alcohol increased steadily from 2006 to 2008, jumped dramatically in 2009 and then declined by 44% in 2010. Annual petrol seizures were not large except for an annual total of 535 litres in 2008.
- With seizures of other drugs, the biggest annual total for amphetamine was in 2010 (396 grams) and for ecstasy in 2009 (889 grams). These relatively small amounts are more likely to involve non-Indigenous offenders and the seizures to occur at transport stops (bus, air and roads).
- With actions taken against offenders, the number of vehicles seized increased each year from three in 2006 to 23 in 2010. Annual total of cash increased each year except for 2008, when it was under \$10,000. When annual totals of arrests and summons are

combined, the highest annual number was in 2010 followed by 2007. The annual total of charges was also highest in 2010 (n=783) followed by 2007 and 2006.

Monthly data for a 30 month period shows a dramatic increase in most categories of actions against offenders after April 2010. As WA police and Darwin DOU statistics began to be included in May 2010, it is hard to know how much of the increase is due to changes in data collection. Monthly numbers were lower in the first half of 2011 than the previous six months.

Available data indicates some apprehended offenders are involved in dealing. Approximately one half of charges laid for cannabis and kava offences related to the possession or supply of trafficable or commercial quantities, for the first six months of 2010.

Stakeholders' perspectives on what was distinctive about the SAID/DOUs and contributed to positive outcomes, included:

- Drug detection dogs in terms of profile, good public relations and increased rates of efficient, non-intrusive detection
- A cross-jurisdictional dedicated unit that acts as a single point of contact
- Exclusive focus on the supply of illegal substances into remote communities, with no risk of being subsumed or diverted into other policing priorities or needs
- Small, mobile teams that can respond to regional issues and trends
- Compiles and analyses information that increases awareness of the extent and demand of illicit substances

PART 4: Impact indicators

Drug law enforcement and drug markets

As noted in the introductory section, the gathering and dissemination of intelligence is only one part of drug law enforcement. The SAID/DOUs have both an intelligence and detection role, but this does not mean that changes in broad indicators of drug markets can be directly attributable to their work. As one stakeholder put it, though their SAID/DOU has had significant seizures, they cannot be sure they have reduced supply and it is hard to tell what the demand is. Nevertheless, it is important to at least attempt to see what available information tells us about the drug market in key remote parts of Australia, and in the concluding section to the chapter, the implications of what is known about trends and patterns in the market is tied to SAID/DOU activities.

Our knowledge of drug markets is largely based on dense pockets of demand in urban settings and domestic/transnational flows of drugs from supply to demand nodes. Any drug law enforcement that translates into reduced availability and increased prices can result in less prevalent drug use. For the more serious drugs such as methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin, amongst the small high end user population which accounts for a large proportion of the demand, there continues to be use of the drug and a down-side is an increase in drug-crime related crime – for example, acquisitive crime for money to purchase drugs. Increasing the risks associated with drug dealing and supply can push up price but also increases the probability that there are violent and dangerous dimensions to the market. Price and availability also influences consumption patterns of the more common drugs such as alcohol and marijuana. However, the evidence mainly relates to population wide trends and with alcohol, reduced violence in or near certain, or high concentrations of, alcohol outlets.

The impact of drug law enforcement on making it harder to obtain drugs has been shown to inhibit drug use in new markets (Kleiman et al 2011). For street level markets arresting dealers seems to have little effect which others replacing those who have been taken out of the market. But there is some evidence to indicate that disrupting networks and arresting key players in large scale and/or difficult drug distribution does have major implications for supply and availability. Kleiman et al (2011) cite the heroin shortage in Australia in 2001 as an example.

We do not have detailed understanding of drug markets in remote Australia, even the usual measures such as price, purity and seizures is limited. Key characteristics appear to be the dominance of alcohol and marijuana as ‘prohibited’ substances that are widely consumed, very high but unstable prices, a relatively small user population, and often opportunistic, binge use

with profits from sales disbursed widely and not concentrated in the hands of a few. The exception to the latter point is the distribution of cannabis from sources in SA to remote areas in central Australia and further afield, and the distribution of kava in Arnhem Land. There is a degree of cautious optimism that policing efforts can impact on supply and demand in remote areas with research in Arnhem Land concluding that a reduction in cannabis use and availability between 2001 and 2004 was largely an outcome of policing efforts targeting supply (Clough et al 2006).

What are the ‘un/foreseen consequences’ of increased drug law enforcement?

When drug law enforcement is successful in reducing supply, there can be a range of foreseen and unforeseen consequences. In remote Aboriginal communities, the main issues raised in recent years in reports and by stakeholders in the review consultations were changes in patterns of substance misuse and displacement of alcohol use from remote communities to other areas and towns. The often unstated ‘drivers’ of these perceived changes were increased and wider enforcement of alcohol restrictions and the roll-out of Opal low aromatic fuel.

Sometimes referred to as ‘product switching’ or ‘substitution’, it is not uncommon for people to be multiple drug users and their preferred drug of choice may vary depending on its price, quality and availability. Based on research in one remote community, Senior and Chenhall (2008) argue the restrictions in the availability of alcohol and petrol led to an increase in marijuana use. Amongst stakeholders consulted for the review, there were differing views on whether this was the case. Several thought marijuana use had increased and attributed it to the reduction in petrol sniffing, while others argued that there was prevalent use, especially in Arnhem Land, for many years but that its use had become more ‘visible’ (partly as a result of the SAID/DOU efforts). With the take-up of other drugs, there seems to be isolated incidents of ATS use in remote areas but based on a 2008 analysis of illicit drug intelligence, it is primarily used by non-Indigenous people, such as contractors and hospitality workers.

Another issue is the ‘displacement’ of the social problem (drug use) involving the same social group but shifting the problematic practice/s to other places. In the NT this has been raised as a possible consequence of the NTER alcohol restrictions in prescribed areas. However, such concerns predated the NTER and are often brought up wherever alcohol restrictions are introduced. For example, ‘dry area’ arrangements were criticized by some witnesses for creating drinking in settings where greater potential for harm, with descriptions provided of ‘bush club’ drinking (NT Legislative Assembly 2007). According to reports from classified sources and analysed by the ACC in 2008, alcohol restrictions in some areas (not just the NT) results in displacing consumers to non-restricted areas such as roadside community entrances, towns and surrounding bushland.

From the point of view of the review of the SAID/DOUs, it is important to be aware of the potential volatility in drug and alcohol patterns of use and in markets and any evidence of displacement would suggest drug law enforcement has been effective in specific contexts.

A framework of impact indicators

Below is an attempt to pull together impact indicators for alcohol and other illegal substances in remote regions where the SAID/DOUs operate. It largely draws on data from the NT, primarily police administrative and survey data. A large gap is in health information for Indigenous people resident in remote communities other than those in the NTER communities. for remote areas .Even though some substance misuse related information NT remote areas was made available for the NTER evaluation, there is nothing else specifically published on regional trends in remote area alcohol and other drug service clients, hospitalisation data or recent survey data on self-reported alcohol and other drug use.

Based on the performance measurement framework developed by Willis et al (2010), Table 10 sets out the four key impact areas, the indicators used, and the sources of information. The rest of the section summarises the key findings for each impact area.

Table 10: Impact areas, key indicators and sources of information

Impact	Indicator	Source
1. Reducing drug crime and drug-related crime	Drug seizures	NT drug seizure data
	Drug offences	NT police data on the NTER communities SA police data on two communities
	Alcohol-related incidents	NT police data on the NTER communities
	Substance related incidents	NT police data on the NTER communities
2. Reducing organised crime	Stakeholder perceptions	Interviews conducted for the SAID review
	Intelligence assessments	Reports from classified sources
3. Improving public health	Alcohol-related violence	AIHW hospitalization data (NT) NT police data: alcohol-related violence resulting in injury
	Stakeholder perceptions	Interviews conducted for the SAID review
4. Improving public amenity	Alcohol harm indicators	NT Department of Justice unpublished data on driving under the influence (DUIs) incidents, restricted area infringements, protective custody episodes, anti-social incidents
	Service providers' perceptions	NT Community Safety Service Provider Survey
	Remote community resident perceptions	NT Community Safety and Wellbeing Research Study
	Stakeholder perceptions	Interviews conducted for the SAID review

1. Reducing drug crime and drug-related crime

1. Reducing drug crime and drug-related crime	Drug seizures	NT drug seizure data
	Drug offences	NT police data on the NTER communities SA police data on two communities
	Alcohol-related incidents	NT police data on the NTER communities
	Substance related incidents	NT police data on the NTER communities

Drug seizures

From the NT police drug seizure database, figures are available on the number, weight and volume of seizures from 2004 through to 2010. As Table 11 shows, almost all seizures involving Indigenous offenders related to cannabis. This was even more so in remote communities, with every seizure out of a total of 4,073 except for two being cannabis seizures (97%). Of all the cannabis seizures over the six years, 32 per cent were in remote communities. Although the number of seizures increased from 2006 to 2009, there were fluctuations in the annual total weight of cannabis seized from Indigenous offenders in remote communities. Such data indicate more frequent apprehensions for smaller quantities over this period. The data also support stakeholder perceptions that local Indigenous people's involvement in other kinds of drug dealing, such as ATS, remains rare in remote settings and that its supply and use is largely confined to urban locations.

These data also support earlier statements about the SAID/DOUs contribution to cannabis seizures in remote communities. Table 11 indicates that just over 73kg of cannabis was seized in remote communities involving Indigenous offenders, while Table 9 showed that in 2010 the SAID/DOUs (in remote communities in NT, SA and WA) recorded 50kg in cannabis seizures.

Table 11: Drug seizures involving Indigenous offenders, NT, 2004-2010

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Total number of seizures	478	506	658	500	579	705	647	4,073
Cannabis seizures	457	499	650	484	564	665	634	3,953
Remote community seizures (all cannabis unless specified)	159*	153*	180	145	195	230	203	1,265
Total weight remote cannabis seizures (g)	4,987.0	3,942.83	6,194.71	3,941.86	5,261.44	4,909.62	7,332.25	36,569.71

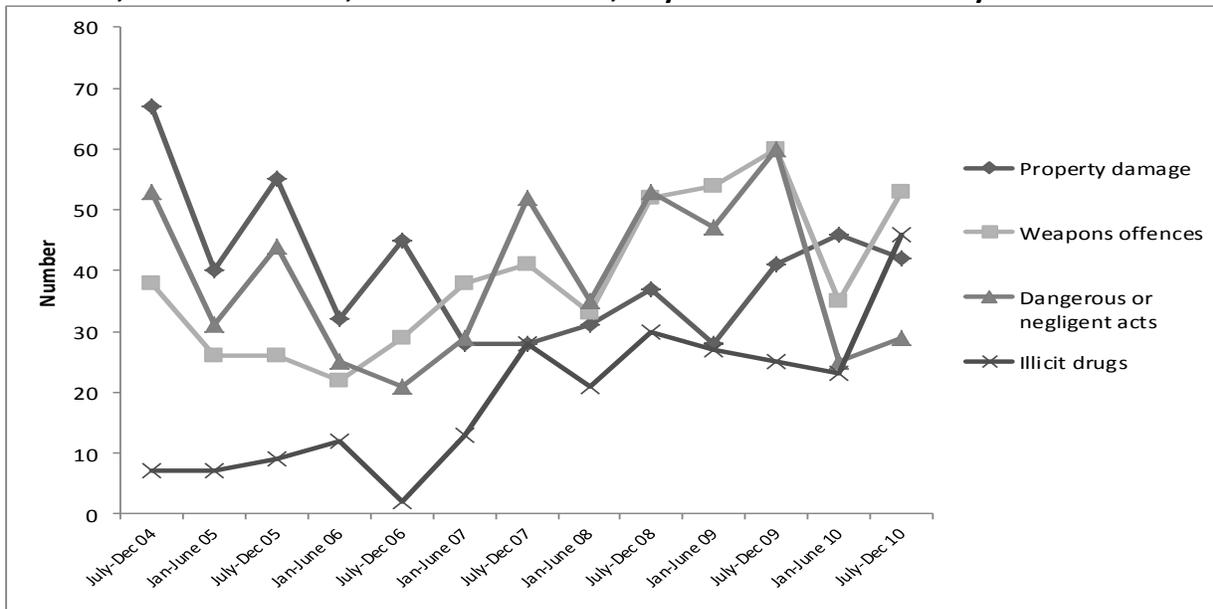
*1 seizure for amphetamine/methamphetamine

Source: NT police drug seizure database

Illicit drug offences

In the NTER communities, there were a total of 1,684 illicit drug incidents from July 2004 to December 2010. There was no significant change in the number of illicit drug incidents over the data period, but there was a gradual increase in the number of offences, with 37% more illicit drug offences during the period from 1 July 2007 than before this date (see Figure 8). Most (63%) offences were for illicit drugs and most of the remainder (31%) were for dealing in illicit drugs. As Figure 6 shows, in the NTER communities, the number of drug offences climbed most dramatically in the first half of 2007 and in the second half of 2010.

Figure 8: Temporal variation in the number of offences, by offence type, for selected offences, six month totals, NTER communities, July-December 2004 to July-December 2010



Source: NT Police offences dataset [AIC computer file]

At a community level there are typically a very small number of drug offences recorded each year, and as a result, do not indicate whether more is being detected or reported across a region. In Table 12, selected recorded offences for the two communities of Amata and Mimili in the APY Lands are presented for 2004 to 2010. In both communities there was less than seven drug offences recorded in any one year. In Amata there are a large number of breaches of by-laws Aboriginal Lands recorded for 2004 but this may have been the outcome of policing priorities or specific events in this year.

Table 12: Recorded offences, annual total number, Mimili and Amata, SA, 2004-2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	Mimili						
Offences against the person	25	19	15	26	32	41	35
Offences against property	30	25	16	22	18	32	47
Offences against public order	22	27	14	15	11	30	30
Drug offences	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Traffic management offences	3	2	-	-	2	1	2
*Breach of by-laws Aboriginal Lands	14	13	14	1	-	4	36
Total	98	86	59	64	63	108	150
	Amata						
Offences against the person	78	82	75	45	40	66	80
Offences against property	72	57	72	65	74	58	101
Offences against public order	118	77	82	71	29	51	80
Drug offences	1	6	6	-	-	4	3
Traffic management offences	5	10	6	4	-	3	3
*Breach of by-laws Aboriginal Lands	311	114	50	6	6	6	18
Total	585	346	291	191	149	188	285

* Breaches of by- laws Aboriginal Lands is normally counted in Offences Against Public Order
Sources: SA Police Business Information Section Unit, provided October 2011

Table 13: Confirmed police incidents recorded by police as alcohol, drug, or volatile substance related, annual total number, NTER communities, 2004-05 to 2010-11

	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010-2011
Alcohol-related incidents	2,124	2,098	2,371	3,239	4,208	4,156	3,968
Drug-related incidents	258	248	179	257	231	301	382
Volatile substances related incidents	435	423	318	457	585	672	625
Total confirmed incidents	9,758	10,179	12,793	13,003	14,942	16,095	16,080

Sources: 2004-2005 to 2006-07 numbers from NTER police data [FAHCSIA computer file], 2007-08 to 2010-11 numbers from the NTER monitoring report (FaHCSIA 2011)

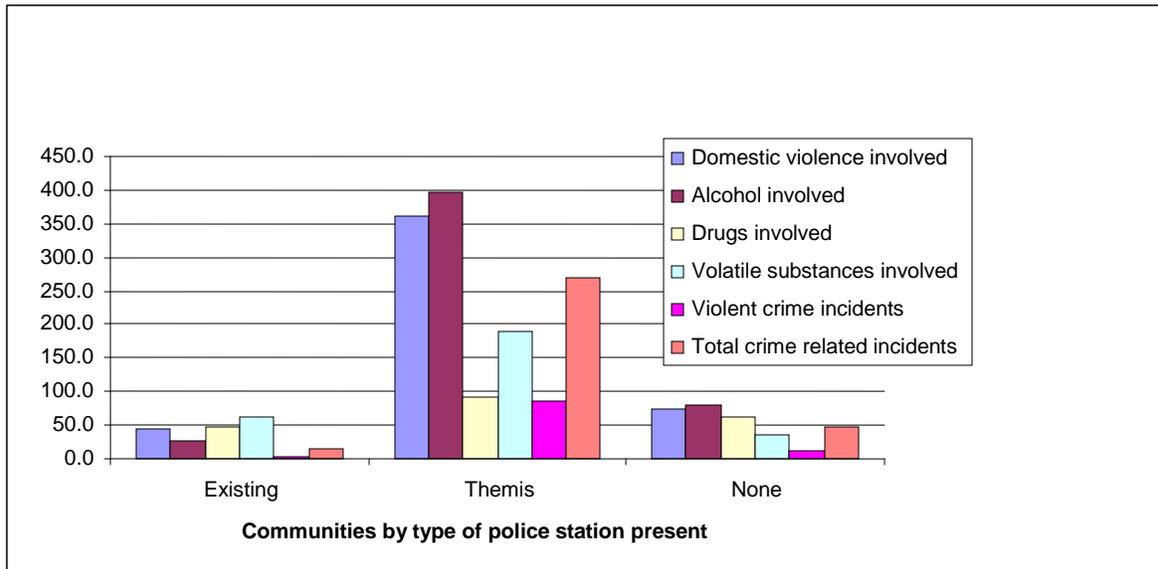
Over a seven year period, the annual number of confirmed incidents recorded by police in the NTER communities climbed steadily until 2009-2010. In 2010-2011 there was a stabilisation in incidents. Table 13 shows the annual number of confirmed incidents that were perceived by police as related to alcohol increased in 2007-08 and 2008-9 before declining in 2009-10 and in 2010-2011. The annual number of confirmed incidents perceived by police as related to volatile substances dipped in 2006-07 before steadily increasing over the next three years and then dropped in 2010-2011. With the annual number of drug-related incidents, after a decline in 2006-07, the annual total climbed in 2009-10 and 2010-11 with the number for 2010-11 48% higher than that recorded for 2004-05.

In 2010-2011 a total of 3,968 confirmed incidents were flagged by police as involving alcohol (24.7% of total incidents), drugs were involved in 382 (2.4%) and volatile substances were involved in 625(3.9%). It is apparent from Table 13 that the proportion of incidents that are seen as alcohol-related has consistently been at much higher levels than that linked to volatile substances or drugs. This is no doubt partially attributable to the more 'visible' nature of alcohol intoxication and police feeling more confident that alcohol was involved.

Analysis of the police incident data has shown that much of the increase in recorded confirmed incidents from 2006-07 to 2009-10 is because of increased number of police and police stations (Putt and Iolovska 2011). Confirmed incidents were divided into those that could be categorised as crime-related and those that were not. Figure 9 presents the percentage change in the annual number of crime-related incidents by type of police station status (existing, Themis and none). There is a marked increase in the selected categories for the communities with Themis stations. However, the impact of having new police stations seems to be less for crime-related incidents where drugs were believed to be involved. There is an increase in such incidents in

communities with an existing station, no station and a Themis station, but the increase was not as great for Themis stations as found for other categories such as domestic violence related or alcohol-related crime incidents.

Figure 9: Percentage change in the annual number of crime related incidents, by selected types of incidents and police station status, NTER communities, 2006-07 to 2009-10



Source: NT police data, NTER communities [FaHCSIA data file]

Alcohol-related offences

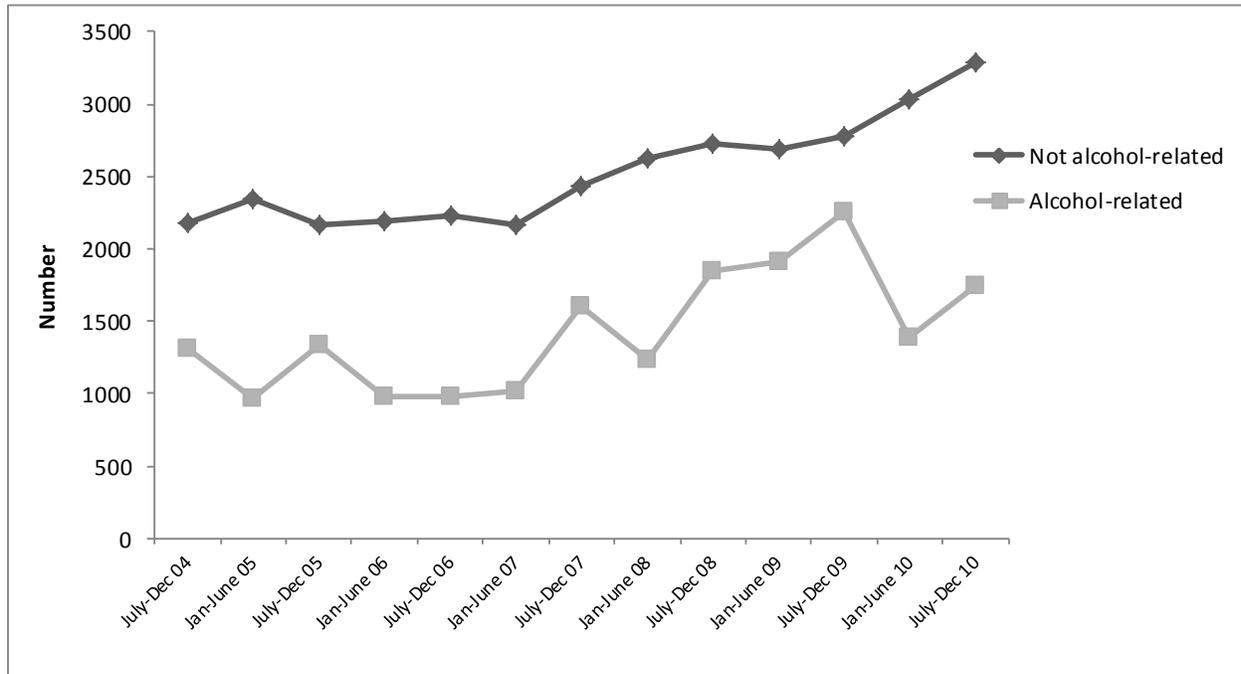
Over the period July 2004 to December 2010 almost one quarter (24%) of police recorded confirmed incidents in the NTER communities were flagged as alcohol-related (AIC 2011). Over one third (36%) of offences were flagged as alcohol-related. The most common offences that were alcohol-related were traffic and vehicle regulatory offences (33%), public order offences (31%) and assault (15%). Across offence categories the proportion of offences in each category that were alcohol-related varied – ranging from public order (70%), dangerous/negligent acts (49%) and assault (45%) to sexual assault and related offences (9%).

When the period pre-NTER is compared with post-NTER (July 2004 to June 2007 compared with July 2007 to December 2010), there was a 76% increase in the number of alcohol-related incidents, which is almost three times the size of the increase in non-alcohol-related incidents. Similarly with offences there is a 56% increase in alcohol-related offences compared with a 26% increase in non-alcohol-related offences. Post-NTER there was a 24% increase in alcohol-related assaults (AIC 2011).

Using six month increments from July 2004 to December 2010, Figure 10 shows the increase in alcohol-related offences after June 2007, which dropped in the six month period in the first half

of 2010. In the second half of 2010 there was an increase, but not to the levels observed in 2009.

Figure 10: Variation in the number of alcohol-related and non-alcohol-related offences, by six month increments, NTER communities, July– December 2004 to July- December 2010



Source: NT Police offences dataset [AIC computer file]

To summarise this section, from the point of view of reducing drug crime and drug-related crime, it seems available data (principally for the NTER communities) shows that both drug offences and alcohol-related offences, and drug and alcohol-related confirmed incidents, increased in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Alcohol is linked with far more incidents than drugs and volatile substances. However in 2010, there was drop in alcohol-related incidents and offences, unlike drug offences and drug-related incidents which continued to climb. Much of the rise in recorded incidents and offences is linked to an increased police presence in remote communities.

It is difficult to interpret the continued increase in drug-related incidents and offences. Increased police presence and increased reporting could be contributing to the rise, rather than an actual increase in drug crime. Some have argued that cannabis consumption has increased as volatile substance and alcohol use has declined. Nevertheless, available data on SAID/DOUs outputs such as seizures and actions against offenders suggest they play an important role in adding to the jurisdictional and regional aggregates of drug offences.

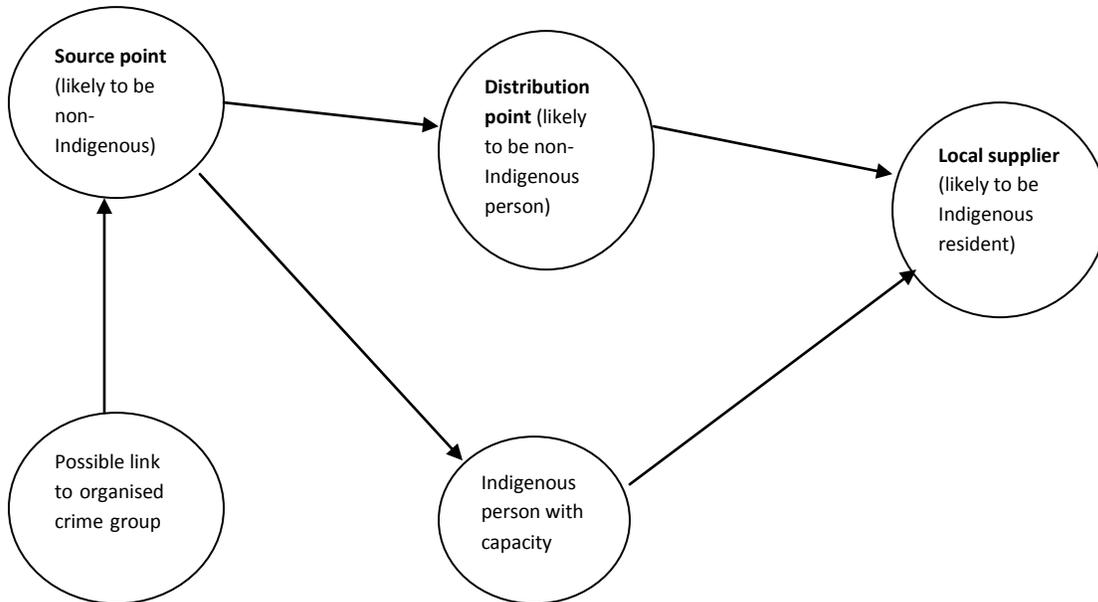
2. Reducing organised crime

2. Reducing organised crime	Stakeholder perceptions	Interviews conducted for the SAID review
	Intelligence assessments	Reports from classified sources

Not many stakeholders referred to organised crime groups during interviews. The key drug, methamphetamine, that generates profits for domestic organised crime groups such as the outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMCGs) does not seem to be supplied on a routine basis into remote areas, the exception being mining towns. One mentioned that a chapter of an outlaw motorcycle gang in Alice Springs had allegedly made threats when the drug dogs were first introduced (Interviewee L). However, some drug trafficking was described as reasonably well-organised with links to sources of cannabis that are part of more conventional drug distribution networks. In particular, the distribution of cannabis from southern SA and into the desert regions was depicted as facilitated by key brokers with contacts with larger, more entrenched and organised drug networks.

This is not to say local Indigenous people are not involved in distribution. Key Aboriginal leaders in some communities were depicted as complicit or directly involved in more organised criminal activity. For example, “Who is making the profit, dealing...Some are key people – use authority to keep it hush hush” (Interviewee Y). In response to the question about organised serious crime involvement, Interviewee AA responded that there are “Indirect links, connections to individuals, related to remote service delivery, for example the OMC`Gs. Organised crime is targeting government grants funding.” However, the illegal supply of alcohol to remote communities was characterized as opportunistic as was much of the cannabis supply, with relatively small quantities being purchased or obtained in town by local Indigenous people. One stakeholder said that “SAID desks are interested in the major dealers – Indigenous ‘mules’ are small-scale, a lot of them being paid to deliver.” (Interviewee L). A diagram of drug distribution into remote communities is in Figure 11 and is based on an analysis of illicit drug intelligence undertaken by the Australian Crime Commission in 2011.

Figure 11: Diagram of drug distribution to remote communities



The most organised networks referred to during the stakeholder consultations were the distribution of cannabis from SA into the central desert region, and the trafficking of kava into Arnhem Land communities by individuals of Pacific Island background, often connected by family ties. With the latter, the substance originates in the Pacific and much of that distributed in the NT seems to originate from contacts in eastern state cities. Brought in by road, air and mail, the key distributors contract community based people ('runners') to collect the kava in Darwin.. Extended kin of the non-Indigenous individuals employed in remote communities have facilitated its local distribution. Again local Indigenous people may be involved but it is primarily the 'outsider' non-Indigenous individuals who (according to information provided by the Katherine SAID) are viewed as making a disproportionate amount of the profit from the illegal sales of kava. The profits are considerable given that the estimated street value of 3.473 tonnes of kava seized between January 2009 and October 2010 was \$2.3 to \$3.4 million in a recent analysis of illicit drug intelligence undertaken by the Australian Crime Commission.

Local Indigenous community suppliers are believed to use cultural gatherings such as funerals and regional sporting events to access and develop the supply market, based an analysis of illicit drug intelligence undertaken by the Australian Crime Commission in 2008. According to stakeholders core offenders continue to be involved:

“ [Town] old guard and new suppliers. Still family groups, for example, two families at [community named] and [town]. Top 25 never changes and responsible for more than 30 percent of supply” (Interviewees X)

There were, nevertheless, references to arrests of dealers/traffickers that the SAID/DOUs have contributed to:

“Example of 2007 bust, mid level dealer from [island] who’d supply [named group]. An Aboriginal guy with connections through the region. Led them to Darwin and a SA guy with links.” (Interviewees B)

“A syndicate of [group with Pacific Islander background], put key ones in jail in past three years. Other family and associates come into play” (Interviewees B).

“Arrested 8 to 9 down south in [town], cut off distribution to the Lands....starting to hear people returning to [town], can be proactive by having [SAID officer at Marla]” (Interviewee F)

“SAID been working with NIITF, ACC used powers to being about successes, for example, [town], and South Australian heavy transport” (Interviewee AA)

The SAID/DOUs were portrayed during stakeholder consultations as playing a crucial role in providing “good intelligence on key people in key communities” as Interviewee A described it. Aside from monitoring ‘persons of interest’ and any new players in the market, the SAID/DOUs were also seen as having a “deterrent effect on larger gangs” (Interviewee L). The argument was made by several stakeholders that there would be an increased risk of systematic incursion by serious organised groups into drug supply networks into remote communities. It was also underlined that it was only the Katherine SAID/DOU that has taken a keen interest in kava distribution and developed expert knowledge of those involved.

From what stakeholders say and intelligence assessments, it appears the SAID/DOUs are playing a crucial role in ensuring remote communities remain an insufficiently mature drug market to attract serious organised crime networks. No doubt the relatively small user population and the only intermittent availability of large sums of money make it an unattractive market.

3. Improving public health

3. Improving public health	Alcohol-related assault	NT police data: Alcohol-related violence resulting in injury
	Stakeholder perceptions	Interviews conducted for the SAID review

Given that alcohol is shown, after tobacco, as causing a high degree of public health harm in the NT (AIHW 2011a), much of it related to injuries and death arising from alcohol intoxication, it is hardly surprising that there are more indicators on alcohol-related harms than other forms of substance use. Trends in wholesale alcohol sales over seven years suggests less harmful alcohol is being consumed in recent years in non-urban areas of the NT (NT DOJ 2011). However, as noted previously, although there are data for hospital separations for remote areas of various states (NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA, SA and NT) (SCRGSP 2011), there are no health data in the public domain for Indigenous people in remote communities over time to indicate whether this is translating into improved public health outcomes.

Hospitalisation data for the period 2006-07 to 2007-08 for Indigenous Australians is available on hospitalisations related to alcohol and illicit drugs in six jurisdictions, including WA, NT and SA (AIHW 2011a), but separate data is not published for each jurisdiction or by region. Nor are longer term trends published.

Age-standardised hospitalisation data for Indigenous Australians used for the evaluation of the NTER showed that between 2001-02 and 2009-10 the rates for alcohol-related problems increased significantly. There was a continuous increase in the rate of alcohol-related problems over the four years that data are published (2006-07 to 2009-10) in remote and very remote areas of the NT (AIHWc). There was, however, a change in the reasons for alcohol-related hospitalisations of Indigenous people in the NT with a decline in the proportion of alcoholic liver disease and increase in the proportion that were caused by acute alcohol intoxication (AIC 2011).

Indigenous people in remote areas in the NT are more likely than those in outer regional areas to be hospitalised for alcohol-related problems and for assaults. Between 2001-02 and 2007-8 hospitalisation rates for assault among Indigenous Territorians showed a non-significant increase while there was a significant increase among other Territorians (AIHWc).

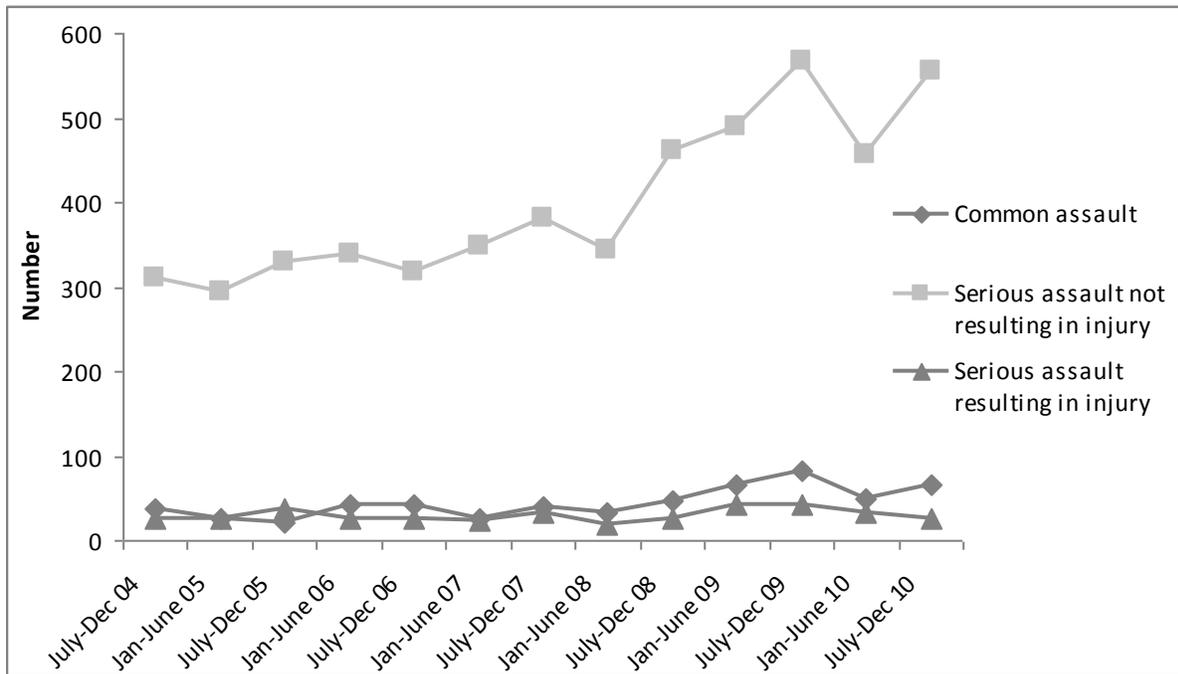
Unpublished data analysis for the same NTER evaluation report shows that serious assault causing injury was only a small fraction of total assaults recorded by police in the NTER

communities, and that these remained relatively stable from June 2004 to December 2010 (see Figure 12) (AIC 2011).

The NT statistics from the National Minimum Data Set on treatment services is the jurisdictional report of most use because the majority of recorded clients are Indigenous (61% compared with 12% nationally) (AIHW 2011b). Although some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander substance use specific services may not be included in the 2008-09 data, they do give an indication of the kind of treatment or service being provided to Indigenous people for substance use. Over the seven year period that national data has been collected the NT nearly always had double the proportion of clients who identify alcohol as their principal drug of concern compared with the national statistics. In 2008-09 treatment episodes involving clients identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were most likely to involve alcohol as the principal drug of concern (83%). The NTER evaluation report includes closed treatment episodes for Indigenous clients for 2006-07 to 2008-09, with the number almost doubling between 2006-07 and 2007-08 and then remained relatively stable in 2008-09 in outer regional, remote and very remote areas. The numbers for closed treatment episodes where the principal drug of concern was not alcohol were very small for very remote areas, being 45, 10 and 18 each year compared with 264, 477 and 478 for alcohol (AIHWc).

Using Royal Flying Doctor Service injury retrieval data, a study has employed health data to assess whether alcohol restrictions in four remote communities in Cape York reduced serious injuries (Margolis et al 2011). Although significant reductions in serious injuries were found, Gray and Wilkes (2011) raise questions about whether the data is a suitable indicator for trends in alcohol-related harm. Until agreed regional health indicators are available, there is nothing in the health domain that indicates whether supply reduction and other measures have had an impact in remote areas.

Figure 12: Variation in the number of different types of recorded assaults, by six month increments, NTER communities, July -December 2004 to July-December 2010



Source: NT Police offences dataset [AIC computer file]

Cannabis was the second most common drug of concern for which treatment was sought in the NT (11% of treatment episodes in 2008-09) and over one-third (38%) of episodes involved people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (AIHW 2011b). However, there is no detail about regions or trends over time to consider whether there is an increase in treatment clients because of their cannabis use.

Echoing what was found in earlier research (Delahunty and Putt 2006) where the distinct and disproportionate impact of cannabis abuse in remote communities was described, stakeholders raised a range of concerns, but mainly focusing on mental ill-health as a result of long-term or binge use.

“Binge use of cannabis ... harms include triggering psychotic episodes amongst those susceptible to mental illness... The biggest challenge is family violence, heavy duty assaults. Harm is caused by users and they threaten to kill themselves, as ‘no relax’ with no dope.”Interviewees F

“Cannabis can cause psychiatric episodes especially with binge consumption of alcohol and cannabis. Do it out of boredom. Precursor to all the issues police deal with in communities and towns” (Interviewees X).

“... mental health implications including suicide, high rates of violence and disturbances, exploitation, ... car accidents when off the face” (Interviewee K)

“Family conflict, suicide and attempted suicide. Some only become problems, psychotic when in town. Gunja¹¹ use triggers underlying mental illness, long term use of anti-psychotics.” (Interviewees J)

“Cannabis has an impact on an individual’s health, for example psychotic episodes...” Interviewees S

“Cannabis effects – short term psychotic episodes and depression. Longer term effects anti-social behaviour and borderline personality disorder..” Interviewee V

Again, there are no mental health statistics for Indigenous people in remote areas in the public domain that might support perceptions that such disorders and episodes are increasing. For all Indigenous people in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA, SA and public hospitals in the NT the hospital separation rate per 1,000 persons for mental/behavioural disorders from use of cannabinoids from 2004-05 to 2008-09 varied over the period (0.56, 0.71, 0.62, 0.69). Age standardised public hospital separations related to drug use for Indigenous Australian per 1,000 persons in the NT from 2004-05 to 2008-09 were 1.42, 1.34, 1.31, 1.53 (SCRGSP 2010). Analysis of confirmed incident police data in the NTER communities showed a steady increase in the number of incidents recorded as related to mental illness over a four year period (Putt and Iolovska 2011).

Under the next impact area, community safety survey results are cited that show many local Indigenous residents and service providers in NT remote communities believe ‘gunja’ has stayed the same or got worse in the past three years. It seems that there are greater and widespread concerns in Aboriginal remote communities, at least in the NT, about the mental health consequences of cannabis use. It is not possible to establish whether this is due to increased awareness of the issue and/or a greater visibility as problems associated with alcohol and petrol sniffing has decreased.

The main adverse health consequence of long-term and excessive use of kava mentioned by stakeholders was ‘crocodile skin’ (Interviewees B). It is not known whether there are any monitoring statistics on this condition kept in the Arnhem Land region. A recent review of the literature on the health and social consequences of kava misuse among Indigenous people underlines the limited evidence. It does refer to evidence of temporary neurological effects but no evidence of lasting deficits from long-term use. Listed possible social effects are akin to

¹¹ ‘Gunja’ is commonly used to refer to cannabis. This term, along with ‘grog’ for alcohol, were used in the two questionnaires as part of research instigated by FaHCSIA on community safety in the NT.

those mentioned in relation to cannabis and include neglect of family responsibilities, income being used for kava purchase and how these can foster conflict and tension within families (Urquhart and Thomson 2009). There is insufficient information to establish whether there have been changes over time in the incidence and prevalence in Arnhem Land of negative social effects associated with kava.

4. Improving public amenity

4. <i>Improving public amenity</i>	Alcohol harm indicators	NT Department of Justice unpublished data on driving under the influence (DUIs) incidents, restricted area infringements, protective custody episodes, anti-social incidents
	Service providers' perceptions	NT Community Safety Survey of Service Providers:
	Remote community resident perceptions	NT Community Safety and Wellbeing Research Study

'Public amenity' includes facets of civil society and community well-being. In small remote Aboriginal communities 'public amenity' has its own distinct character. Alcohol has been and continues to be a dominant social issue which is why most Aboriginal remote areas and communities have a history of prohibiting alcohol or limited licences for its sale within community settings. In the Northern Territory especially, much of the social and public harms have been attributed to alcohol abuse and various strategies tried over the years to curtail the forms of drinking that lead to alcohol-related offending and high risk behaviours.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) in the NT collates a range of alcohol harm indicators to monitor whether various policies and initiatives are having much traction and reducing alcohol-related harms in the main towns and in the non-urban area of the NT (referred to as the NT Balance in their statistical tables). Being DOJ the statistics are generated by the administration of the criminal justice system, with police data forming the basis of the collection, which means health data is at this stage not included. The indicators include anti-social behaviour incidents, driving under the influence infringements and apprehensions, restricted area infringements and apprehensions, and protective custody episodes. All four of the main indicators for the NT Balance show the same trend over a five year period, from 2006 to 2010, with large increases from 2006 to 2009 and a decrease in 2010.

It seems the NT Balance increase is primarily influenced by the effect of increased policing and enforcement, coupled with the wider and consistent introduction of alcohol restrictions, post - NTER in the remote communities. With the recent stabilisation in the indicators in 2010, it will be important to see whether they continue to stay at similar levels or decrease as this would

suggest, assuming the policing environment stays relative constant, less alcohol harm-related activity is occurring. The SAID/DOUs are a small but arguably important part of the increased policing and enforcement effort.

The research on policing illicit drugs in remote communities highlighted the significant economic and social harms to the community that can arise when many, but especially teenagers and young adults, are involved in substance use like cannabis (Delahunty and Putt 2006). Noting that it is hard to find people passionate about stopping kava and cannabis in remote communities, Interviewee K commented that they “haven’t seen the impact on remote communities”. According to information provided by the Katherine SAID, anecdotal evidence suggests it is the style of drinking kava (all night bingeing sessions) that affect people’s ability to engage in daily socio-cultural activities and employment. In the same information, concern was also raised about the effects on children of living in environments where cannabis and kava are often openly used and traded, and there is tacit social acceptance of the practice.

Inflated prices of alcohol and cannabis in remote communities were stressed by stakeholders – according to Interviewees X it is not uncommon to find alcohol costing \$50 six pack, \$100 bottle of wine in communities, while \$50 is paid for a 0.3 bag of cannabis while it is \$150 an ounce in Adelaide, \$600 in Alice”. Based on information provided by the Katherine SAID, kava is generally sold in remote communities in 20 gram bags or one to two kilo bags, with up to \$1,300 being paid for two kilos. As one kilo bags are purchased in NSW for \$50, the profits can be considerable with one defendant reputedly banking \$21,000 in one month in 2010.

‘Grog running’ was described by stakeholders as less of a profit driven exercise, but the money acquired through drug and kava sales can create new or reconfigure power bases and engender corruption. In remote communities, where many people are on low incomes and the cost of foodstuffs and other goods can be high, there is an obvious negative economic effect of money being used to purchase illicit substances and profits being made elsewhere.

Since 2009 NIITF has produced a series of restricted reports on information sharing, under-reporting and non-disclosure of child abuse and violence, and abuse of power in remote regions. In particular, the reports on abuse of power highlight how such practices facilitate crime including theft, misappropriation of funds and assets, and the distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol in Indigenous communities. In these reports, a specific community and individuals (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons) in remote communities in central Australia are named because they were abusing positions of power by being directly implicated in obtaining and accepting illicit substances from ‘persons of interest’ in exchange for inaction or the commission of crime. Although these restricted reports uncover examples of such practices it is not stated whether they have become less or more common and entrenched.

Perceptions of changes in community safety and social problems

Community safety in remote communities has been an enduring concern in the past decade, and a key issue in major government inquiries. Research undertaken and commissioned by FAHCSIA this year to examine community safety in the NT involved a survey being completed by over 1,300 Aboriginal residents in a sample of 16 remote communities (the Community Safety and Wellbeing Research Study – CSWRS) and a survey of 699 service providers across the NT (Community Safety Service Provider Survey – CSSPS). In both research projects questions were asked about perceived changes in the past three years – in community safety and in social items, including specific items relating to substance use.

Both surveys found that many participants believed the local community had become safer. In the CSWRS a large majority (73%) felt their community was safer than three years previously. In the CSSPS, 41 per cent of service providers in remote communities said the community had become safer, 28% said it was the same, and 17% said it had become worse. Based on the analysis of police data, the biggest changes are likely to be where Themis stations were introduced. Both studies found that the measures that were perceived to have made the most difference to community safety were night patrols, additional police, and where they were introduced, Themis stations and safe houses.

Earlier research in 14 of the Themis communities found that local Indigenous residents indicated that it was the publicly visible social problems that had improved the most: alcohol and community violence (Pilkington 2009). Both community safety surveys asked about changes in a range of social problems in the past three years. With the CSWRS survey of local Indigenous people, Table 14 presents the results for the three social problems related to substance misuse. It shows that with petrol sniffing of those who answered the question, the highest proportion of people said they did not know (22%) followed by those who answered that they strongly agreed with the statement that sniffing petrol was less (17%). With alcohol, the most common response was to ‘agree a bit’ with the statement that people are drinking less grog (33%). With the smoking of gunja, the most common response (24%) was to ‘strongly disagree’ that there was less.

Table 14: Indigenous residents' perceptions of changes in substance misuse in the local community in the past three years (%), NTER communities, 2011*

	Strongly agree	Agree a bit	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not answered
People are drinking less grog than 3 years ago	24	33	21	11	6	5
People are smoking less gunja than 3 years ago	19	20	20	24	14	2
People are sniffing petrol less than 3 years ago	17	16	13	12	22	21

*n=1,343

Source: CSWRS FaHCSIA datafile

Amongst service providers who worked in remote communities, Table 15 shows that the most common response was to say that for the three substance use items was to say that the problem was the same compared with three years ago. However, more people said there was less (23.3%) 'drinking too much grog in homes' than those that said there was more (12.4%) while a higher proportion said there was more 'drinking too much grog in other places' than those who said there was less (20.8% compared with 16%). An even higher proportion said there was more 'gunja' than there was less (22.3% compared with 9.2%).

Table 15: Service providers' perceptions of changes in alcohol and cannabis problems in the remote community, over the past three years, number (%), NTER communities, 2011

Less	Same	More	Not sure	Total n
<i>Drinking too much grog in homes</i>				
30 (23.3)	47 (36.4)	16 (12.4)	36 (27.9)	129
<i>Drinking too much grog in other places</i>				
21 (16.2)	51(39.2)	27 (20.8)	31 (23.8)	130
<i>Gunja</i>				
12 (9.2)	56 (43.1)	29 (22.3)	33 (25.4)	130

Source: CSSPS FaHCSIA datafile

Both surveys also had questions about current social problems. In the CSSPS there was a list of 18 social problems, and respondents were asked to indicate whether each one was not a problem or a small, big or very big problem in their local community/neighbourhood. Table 16 shows that in remote communities the proportion who thought alcohol and gunja were a big or

very problem was about the same for drinking in places other than homes (50%) and gunja (50.2%).

Table 16: Service providers’ perceptions of how much of a social problem alcohol and cannabis are in the remote community, number (%), NTER communities, 2011

Not a problem	A small problem	A big problem	A very big problem	Not sure	Total n
<i>Drinking too much grog in homes</i>					
31 (11.6)	140 (52.4)	39 (14.6)	34 (12.7)	23 (8.6)	267
<i>Drinking too much grog in other places</i>					
30 (11.1)	83 (30.7)	74 (27.4)	61 (22.6)	22 (8.1)	270
<i>Gunja</i>					
6 (2.2)	94 (34.9)	78 (29.0)	57 (21.2)	34 (12.6)	269

Source: CSSPS FaHCSIA datafile

In the CSWRS, with a list of 16 social problems, survey participants were asked to indicate how much of a problem each was currently. ‘Too much gunja’ was in the top five of ‘very big problems’ with 44% of respondents saying it was a very big problem (‘happens all the time’) while ‘drinking too much grog’ was viewed by 32% of respondents as a very big problem and ‘too much sniffing of petrol glue and paint’ by only 14%.

Separate questions asked how often grog and gunja cause problems for the participant’s family. With grog, 14% said most of the time, 40% said some of the time and 31% none of the time and 15% didn’t know/didn’t want to say. With gunja, 17% said most of time, 30% said some of the time and 36% said none of the time and 13% didn’t know/want to say. It seems a greater number of people see alcohol as a problem for their family although it is more likely to be only some of the time, compared with gunja. Despite the smaller numbers who said gunja was a problem for the family, a higher proportion said it was a problem most of the time than that found for alcohol. Where the participants had answered some or most of the time they were asked about different kinds of problems in the family associated with grog and with gunja.

Table 17 presents the results for these questions in relation to the extent of family problems associated with grog and gunja. The distribution of responses for gunja and grog are similar, with the problems most likely to be ‘very big problems’ (happens all the time) being ‘husband/wife; girlfriend/boyfriend troubles’, ‘money problem’, ‘family fighting or arguing’ and

'grog shakes/going mad (from gunja)'. The ones that were most likely to be perceived as not a problem were 'no one to look after the kids' and 'trouble in the house-partying, smashing things'. However, it was noticeable that gunja was more likely to be viewed as a very big problem for 'money problem', 47% compared with 34% for grog; and for 'going mad', 48% compared with 30% for 'grog shakes'. It is also interesting to note that with a question about attitudes to hitting partners, the reason that had the highest response of saying it was ok for a woman to hit her partner was 'if he wastes a lot of money on gambling/alcohol/drugs' (26%). Some families were no doubt dealing with both alcohol and marijuana-related issues with usage varying depending on availability and preference. More detail is provided on survey responses and qualitative results related to substance use issues in the consolidated report of the study (Shaw and d'Abbs 2011).

The results from both community safety surveys suggest alcohol-related social problems have declined in some communities in the previous three years. Many local Indigenous residents also indicated there was less petrol sniffing, but they and service providers in some communities believe gunja has become more of a problem. Alcohol and cannabis cause similar problems for families according to the CSWRS – jealousy, fighting and arguing, money and health problems. However, it seems there is considerably more concern now about cannabis use in some remote communities and the harms associated with them, especially in relation to the financial problems and mental health issues.

Table 17: Indigenous residents' perceptions of the extent of family problems associated with grog and gunja (%), NTER communities, 2011

	Very big problem		Big problem		Small problem		Not a problem		Don't know		Number who answered*	
	Grog	Gunja	Grog	Gunja	Grog	Gunja	Grog	Gunja	Grog	Gunja	Grog	Gunja
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Money problem	34	47	27	23	25	22	9	6	4	3	761	668
Trouble in the house – partying, smashing things	26	27	22	23	27	25	21	21	4	3	764	667
Husband/wife; boyfriend/girlfriend troubles	35	35	24	26	25	21	12	13	4	5	763	671
Family fighting or arguing	32	34	27	26	32	28	7	10	2	3	763	669
Not enough food in the house	25	30	23	25	31	27	2	14	3	4	764	666
No one to look after the kids	20	25	18	18	31	29	26	21	5	7	761	667
Make them sick	28	30	21	22	31	25	12	13	7	9	758	666
Grog 'shakes' or Going mad (from gunja)	30	48	19	19	23	15	18	12	10	7	758	659

*Those who were answered that grog or gunja was not a problem in their family were not asked about the range of family problems.

Source: CSWRS FAHCSIA datafile

Summary

Because of the absence of in-depth study of remote drug markets and limited indicator information, it is hard to assess the impact of drug law enforcement in remote communities. This section has drawn on mostly police data and community safety surveys for the NTER communities to see what available trend information tells us about changes in four key impact areas – drug crime and drug-related crime, organised crime, public health and public amenity.

In the NTER communities alcohol is recorded as being involved in approximately 24% of confirmed incidents and 36% of offences, over a five and half year period. The number of alcohol-related offences climbed until 2009 before stabilising in 2010. Alcohol harm indicators such as anti-social behaviour, restricted area infringements and apprehensions, driving under the influence infringements and apprehensions, and protective custody episodes followed a similar trend.

Trends in different categories of assault offences indicate it is less serious violence episodes that drove much of the upward trend and recent levelling in recorded assaults, with assault resulting in injury remaining relatively constant. Based on a comparison of Themis communities

with other communities and between pre-NTER restricted area communities and those without restrictions it appears that additional policing and enforcement underpinned the increases in recorded incidents and offences, including those recorded as related to alcohol.

A community safety survey conducted this year involving local Indigenous participants in 16 communities found that the majority of respondents believed there was less drinking in the community than three years ago. Service providers working across most of the NTER communities were more likely to say there was no change, but in some communities (23% of participants) there are signs that drinking alcohol in homes has declined. Alcohol is still regarded as a big problem by 20% of local Indigenous people (32% think it is a 'very big' problem and 20 % think it is a big problem) and by 23% of service providers, with the former group indicating there were multiple family problems associated with such drinking.

Volatile substance related incidents in the NTER communities followed a similar pattern to alcohol-related incidents and offences with increases each year to 2010. However, unlike alcohol, the number of incidents continued to increase in 2010. They are recorded as a much smaller proportion of incidents (3.6%). Confirming the earlier evaluations of the Opal low aromatic roll-out and the findings of the 2007 survey of petrol sniffing in the APY Lands, the CSWRS confirmed that the majority of participants said there was less petrol sniffing than three years ago. Kava was not included as a separate substance in this survey or in the service provider survey. As research on the impact of kava on individual health and community wellbeing was primarily done over a decade ago, it would be worthwhile to have a more current understanding of its impact over the longer term on relevant communities and their residents.

The annual number of drug-related incidents in the NTER communities rose steadily from 2006 to 2011 and constitute 2.4% of all confirmed incidents. Drug offences rose from the end of December 2006, stayed at similar levels from 2007 until 2010, when the number increased in the second half of the year. Drug seizures involving Indigenous offenders in all NT remote communities rose over a seven year period. The data indicate there is an increase in the number of detections and apprehensions but of smaller amounts and that almost always cannabis is seized. Data for two individual APY communities show that very small numbers of drug offences are recorded at a community level, and to monitor impact involves looking at trends at a regional level.

The community safety surveys suggest the majority of Indigenous local residents believe cannabis has increased and is causing big social problems related especially to financial stress and disputes, and mental health consequences. In the research in the 16 NTER communities, it is noted:

Qualitative feedback indicates that smoking marijuana is a major issue that impacts young people in remote communities, creating violence, mental health problems and disengagement from employment and culture (Shaw and d'Abbs 2011:11).

The majority of service providers thought cannabis was unchanged but in some communities cannabis was seen as increasing, and that it was a big social problem. There is no mental health data in the public health domain to confirm the perception that there are more people presenting with cannabis exacerbated conditions. Police incident data shows police are dealing with more mental health incidents in NTER communities. This, however, could be outcome of an increased police presence.

Traditional organised crime groups do not seem to be involved in direct drug distribution to remote Aboriginal communities. Nevertheless there is evidence that there are links to established networks of cannabis supply and that local people's involvement in dealing does have social and economic harmful consequences, particularly related to corruption. The supply of kava was seen as largely linked with people of Pacific Island background who, although local community people were involved, were the main beneficiaries of the profits from the trade.

Overall, these impact indicators indicate that increased policing and enforcement by local police and others is affecting the availability of alcohol and other drugs in the community. Community safety research suggests alcohol-related harms have declined in some remote communities and people feel safer than three years ago but that cannabis is causing widespread disquiet. The SAID/DOUs main contribution to the drug law enforcement effort in remote communities in the NT, northern SA and the Ngaantjatjarra Lands up to the Kimberley region in WA is hard to be precise about but stakeholders clearly value their role. This will be discussed further in the final section.

Compare SAID/DOUs with what?

Another way to consider how effective SAID/DOUs are is to compare them with similar initiatives elsewhere. This is impossible because of its unique character, working in a cross-border environment and having a dedicated unit focused on remote drug intelligence and operations. However, there is collaborative partnership between Queensland police and academics in the Cape York area that has a focus on remote policing of illicit drugs in a region area. Called the 'Weed it out' project, the partnership involves the drug squad in Cairns and James Cook University.

Aspects of the cannabis market appear comparable in Cape York. Cannabis use is widespread with the Director of Intelligence of Queensland's Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) quoted as saying the cannabis use in general population is 9.5% while the CMC have information that indicates it is double that in most Indigenous communities. He states that local

supply networks are organised and operate for profit though it is not likely that traditional organised criminal groups are involved (Torres News 28 March 2010).

From the little information that is publicly available, it seems the 'Weed it Out' project involved an initial phase of consultations in communities and with local police. Between October 2007 and February 2008 the team visited 16 Indigenous communities and attended regional forums to consult with community members. All communities were reported as expressing concerns about the increase in number of cannabis users, the young age of some users, addiction withdrawal psychosis, the power of dealers in the communities, and wanted to do something about the issue. The team has since worked on 'holistic community owned remedial strategies' and also work with the drug detection dog units (in Customs and Queensland police) as they are seen as an 'integral part' of supply reduction strategies. Customs are described as important partners in supply reduction, drawing upon their vessels, helicopters and intelligence analysts (Police Bulletin 2009).

Available information suggests a key outcome so far has been increased reporting to police and more accurate information being provided. An article refers to a doubling of Crime Stopper calls and intelligence reports in Torres Strait Islander communities and tripling in Cape York communities (Police Bulletin 2009). Between 2002 and 2006 there was a total of six Crimestoppers/intelligence submissions about drug-related activity in both regions. In contrast, there were 208 submissions in 2009 (Torres News 28 March 2010).

No other performance indicator information is available but should it become available it would be worth incorporating into any future review or evaluation of the SAID/DOUs.

Another approach is to assess whether the SAID/DOUs represent 'good value for money' by comparing the initiative to another that receives a similar level of funding. A total of \$2.6 million was provided by the Commonwealth to drug and alcohol services in the NT in 2010-11 (FaHCSIA 2011). The funding has increased the capacity of six treatment and rehabilitation services throughout Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs; and providing drug and alcohol workforce education and professional development. The NTER monitoring reports have not included any detail on outputs and outcomes although there is reference to the evaluation undertaken in 2008-09.

The review found that the alcohol and other drug measures were implemented in a culturally appropriate manner and that there is now greater workforce capacity (Origin Consulting and Bowchung Consulting 2010). It relied heavily on qualitative data as quantitative data was only available for a sub-set of activities and what was available was not reliable enough to "enable a clear picture of the extent of service delivery to individuals that has been achieved through the funding provided by the NTER"(Origin and Bowchung Consulting 2010:78).

Without even basic output indicator data, it is not possible to examine the question of whether the alcohol and drug services funded under the NTER are cost-effective, and there is no point in looking more broadly at the question of outcomes and their impact on demand. A recommendation of the report was to improve data collection for review and evaluation purposes. Stakeholders consulted during this review focused on the lack of discernible impact of demand measures:

“Money been invested in youth services and alcohol rehabilitation. Not much to show for demand reduction funding. An example is the [name] rehabilitation facility at [community named] which has had only a couple of people for a couple of nights...Petrol is an example of where supply reduction measures enabled demand reduction measures to work.” Interviewees P

PART 5: Conclusion

Four key questions underpinned the review:

- Have the SAIDs contributed to improved information sharing between police services and the coordination of policing activities across the three jurisdictions?
- What kind of contribution has the SAIDs/DOUs made to supply reduction efforts in remote communities and to the apprehension of traffickers?
- Have the SAIDs contributed to improvements in community awareness of drug and alcohol issues and community- police relations?
- Is there community and other stakeholder support for the SAIDs/DOUs?

The following section summarises the main conclusions under these headings, and then finishes with stakeholder views on future priorities.

Have the SAIDs contributed to improved information sharing between police services and the coordination of policing activities across the three jurisdictions?

All police interviewed as part of the review expressed support for the work of the SAID/DOUs and stressed how they had improved the quality of information about the supply of illicit substances in remote areas and Indigenous communities, and of ‘persons of interest’. Although there was evidence of pooling and analysis of information from diverse sources the frequency and form of information sharing beyond key stakeholders was not easy to gauge.

In terms of cross-jurisdictional information sharing the SAID/DOU in Alice Springs had the most established relationships with the Marla based SAID officer, the main NIITF office in Alice Springs, and to a lesser degree, with WA police in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. Information sharing between the SAID/DOUs in Katherine and Alice Springs seemed occasional rather than routine, and there was not the same degree of regular liaison between the Katherine unit and WA police over the border.

Coordinating and disseminating intelligence was part of core business but the units’ role in the co-ordination of operations and other activities seemed to vary by the size of the operation. Community visits and roadblocks often involved liaison with local police yet the larger long-term operations were headed by senior police stationed in regional centres. It is also likely that

the SAID's centralized role in compiling and analysing intelligence informs and gives strategic direction to much of the community policing that goes on in remote areas.

What kind of contribution has the SAIDs/DOUs made to supply reduction efforts in remote communities and to the apprehension of traffickers?

The scale of seizures and other output statistics, and the increase over the past five years in annual totals of these measures, is impressive when the actual number of people and dogs under the SAID/DOUs umbrella is considered. However, the initiative has expanded over the years, and some increase is no doubt due to the additional capacity of the initiative and what it counts as outputs.

As policing and supply reduction has produced changes in the availability of some illicit substances, it is pertinent to consider whether police themselves believe the SAID/DOUs have contributed to drug law enforcement successes. All police representatives interviewed for the review were fulsome in their praise and acknowledged the practical use of the units' intelligence and 'frontline' activities.

Based on the three 'i's of what intelligence-led policing can be assessed on (Ratcliffe 2005), the output statistics and stakeholders' comments suggest the SAID/DOUs are effectively providing intelligence as they - interpret the criminal environment, influence decision making and impact on the criminal environment.

Amongst the subset of interviewees who were familiar with organised and serious crime networks, the SAID/DOUs activities were seen as a significant deterrent that reduces the likelihood of more serious crime groups moving into the market and the uptake of other illicit drug use.

Have the SAIDs contributed to improvements in community awareness of drug and alcohol issues and community- police relations?

Local police are in a better position to improve community-police relations, and other services are funded to increase community awareness of drug and alcohol-related harms. The SAID/DOUs may have supported such efforts during community visits and by undertaking high profile activities such as roadblocks or airport checks with drug detection dogs. However, the message being communicated is of risk of detection and apprehension and the need to stop traffickers rather than awareness raising related to broader harm and demand reduction objectives.

Is there community and other stakeholder support for the SAIDs/DOUs?

The importance of continuing to address the supply of cannabis and kava was stressed by stakeholders consulted during the review because of the often devastating impact of these substances' use on individual's health and the trade on communities' economic and social well-being.

Almost all stakeholders interviewed were unequivocal in their support for the continuation of the SAID/DOUs. Citing the success of the Opal low aromatic fuel initiative, several stakeholders referred to how it was more widely recognized in remote areas and communities that supply reduction can assist in improving the environment to the extent that it enables demand reduction strategies for vulnerable groups and other health and socio-economic programs to have more traction in community settings.

Some communities and some community people were reported to be less than supportive of efforts to reduce the availability of illicit substances such as cannabis and kava. A more comprehensive and better resourced evaluation would have the opportunity to delve into the different levels of support for the different forms of SAID/DOU activities.

Future priorities

Stakeholders were supportive of the continuation of the SAID/DOUs. Their cessation was widely regarded as a backward step. Prevention was a common theme as stakeholders believed illicit drug use and distribution would become more serious without the work of the SAID/DOUs. As one stakeholder stated:

“Continued surveillance is crucial, as cannabis is the main economic prospect, with considerable short-term gain” (Interviewee F)

There were three key areas identified by stakeholders as areas for improvement: increased capacity, improved communication and improved coordination. Those within the SAID/DOUs or who work closely with them were the most likely to argue for an expansion of the initiative, with several advocating a bigger team in SA to target the bigger dealers. There were also several calls for more dogs and handlers, with one stakeholder acknowledging the upfront costs were significant but ongoing costs were reasonable. The view was expressed by one stakeholder that similar units should be established to cover the NT and Queensland borders, and the NT and NSW borders.

In terms of how the SAID/DOUs operate, there was emphasis placed on improving communication. Particular areas that were seen as requiring more investment were communication between the Katherine and Alice Springs units, and between these two units

and the WA police in the Pilbara and the Kimberley regions. Another area was disseminating information about the work of the SAID/DOUs, especially information releases about seizures and/or arrests, through networks of government agencies and non-government organisations. Raising their profile and being more 'proactive' with a wider constellation of stakeholders was seen as important, yet often not feasible within existing resources.

Stakeholders who were not involved in drug law enforcement raised the more general issue of coordination and the need for a more strategic approach to the supply and demand for alcohol and drugs in remote regions. There seemed to be a lack of formal, cross-sectoral coordination and communication around the issues, with limited, informal channels of communication currently working reasonably well in some places. One stakeholder expressed it as wanting to see a more comprehensive approach to remote communities. There was not necessarily distrust or hostility between sectors at a local level, only the absence of a forum or mechanism by which there could be sharing of information and agreement on priorities.

Conclusion

Patterns of substance misuse in remote Aboriginal communities in the key regions where SAID/DOU operates appear to be changing with significant reductions in petrol sniffing and reduced alcohol consumption within some communities. Supply reduction and enforcement have been significant factors most notably with the Opal low aromatic fuel roll out and more consistent and prevalent alcohol restrictions, coupled with more enforcement by additional local police in many communities.

The SAID/DOUs assist with the policing outcomes related to petrol and alcohol, but their main achievements relate to cannabis and kava, both in terms of the number and volume of seizures and the contribution made to apprehensions of mid-level traffickers involved in their distribution.

Intelligence generated by the SAIDs is valued and used by critical stakeholders and the 'visibility' of their operations, especially as a result of the dogs, is valued by police and other stakeholders. The SAID/DOUs may not have stopped kava and cannabis supply but there was a common belief that the situation would be much worse without them. Most importantly, their work is valued for detecting and deterring criminal networks that are involved in more systematic trafficking of illicit substances. They are also seen as ensuring there is 'early warning' of changes in illicit drug supply to remote areas, both in current drug markets and in the uptake of amphetamine type stimulants and other drugs.

It is the coordinating role of SAID that law enforcement benefits from, especially in a cross-jurisdictional environment. Their exclusive focus on illicit substances in remote Aboriginal

communities makes them unique and for a relatively small investment, they are adding considerable value and enhancing local policing efforts to reduce substance misuse.

The key to their success to date seems to be having small dedicated teams assisted by drug detection dogs that focus on remote Indigenous communities.

On most measures of drug law enforcement and intelligence-led policing the initiative can be viewed as very effective.

There was not the opportunity to investigate how much community support for SAID/DOUs there is though it was implicit in many of the comments by stakeholders. For many local people they may not be distinguishable as a separate initiative, but rather as an extension of mainstream policing. The lack of immediate action against dealers seemed to be the most common complaint.

Demand for cannabis remains high and there is growing recognition and concern about the individual and community harms associated with the use and trade in cannabis. It is not possible to know whether the SAID/DOUs have contributed to this increased awareness of cannabis as a problem. Expectations of how much effort should be dedicated to community education about family violence and substance misuse harms seems loosely defined and a potential secondary benefit of their activities rather than a key objective.

Areas for improvement identified by stakeholders related to increased capacity, improved communication and improved co-ordination. Based on these views and the review findings, priorities include:

- An assessment of whether more support is needed in remote South Australia, particularly in relation to access to or locally based drug detection dogs
- More strategic engagement from WA policing partners, with improved clarity about cross-border priorities, especially in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions
- More comprehensive and cross-sectoral regional alcohol and drug strategies
- Improving impact indicator data on drug markets, most noticeably regional health data
- Future evaluations or reviews incorporating local community views and exploring the feasibility of comparing the SAID/DOUs with other initiatives.

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Appendix A

List of interviewees

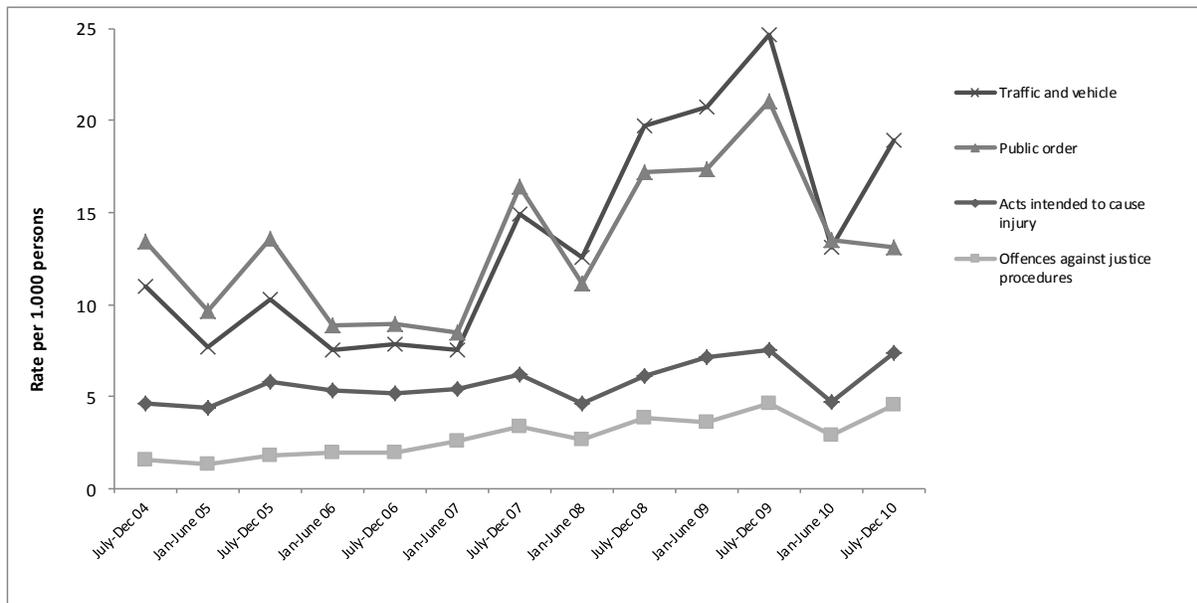
Name	Position, agency
Steve Vaughan	Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC) manager, FaHCSIA, Alice Springs,
Liza Balmer	Deputy coordinator, NPY Women's Council, Alice Springs
Sue Cragg	Youth program manager NPY Women's Council, Alice Springs
Vikki Gillick	Former coordinator, NPY Women's Council, Alice Springs
Bob Dunarn	Consultant
Dagmar Guasoine	Supply reduction officer, Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service (CAYLUS), Alice Springs
Blair McFarland	CAYLUS, Alice Springs
Michael White	Superintendent, NT police, Alice Springs
Adam Van-Oosten	SAID, NT police, Alice Springs
Terry Simpson	Australian Crime Commission (ACC), Alice Springs
John Gaynor	Director, Alcohol and Other Drugs Services Central Australia (ADSCA), Alice Springs
Tim Jacobs	Volatile Substance Abuse CN, ADSCA, Alice Springs
Ken Bradshaw	SAID, NT police, Katherine
George Hillen	SAID, NT police, Katherine
Peter Henwood	DOU, NT police, Katherine
Jane Hair	Mental health service, Katherine
Terry Radford	Mental health service, Katherine
Sharleen Mulherin	Mental health service, Katherine

Veronica Grottfors	Mental health service, Katherine
Jeanette Kerr	Commander, NT police, Darwin
Harry Abrahams	A/g Regional manager north, FAHCSIA, Darwin
Cameron McDougall	Assistant section manager, FAHCSIA, Darwin
Peter Kay	ICC manager, FAHCSIA, Darwin
Scotty Mitchell	Sgt, drug and alcohol coordinator, NT police, Darwin
Mark Payne	Assistant Commissioner, NT police, Darwin
Kevin Looby	Superintendent, WA police, Kalgoorlie
John Ballantyne	Superintendent, WA police, Karratha
Helen Forrest	SAID, SA police, Marla
Dale Davies	Inspector, WA police, Kalgoorlie
Paul Turner	Alcohol and Other Drug Services, Darwin
Gino Vumbuca	Executive director, Australian National Council on Drugs, Canberra
Brian Gleeson	Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services, Canberra
Prue Phillips-Brown	Senior policy officer, Office of the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services, Canberra
James Blandford	Superintendent, SA police, Port Augusta
Peter Nunn	Head of Determination, National Indigenous Intelligence Task Force, ACC, Canberra
Brett Cowling	Ngaanyatjarra Health, Alice Springs
Paul Torzillo	Medical Director, Nganampa Health, Alice Springs
John Wilson	Health Services Manager, Nganampa Health, Alice Springs

Appendix B: Additional figures

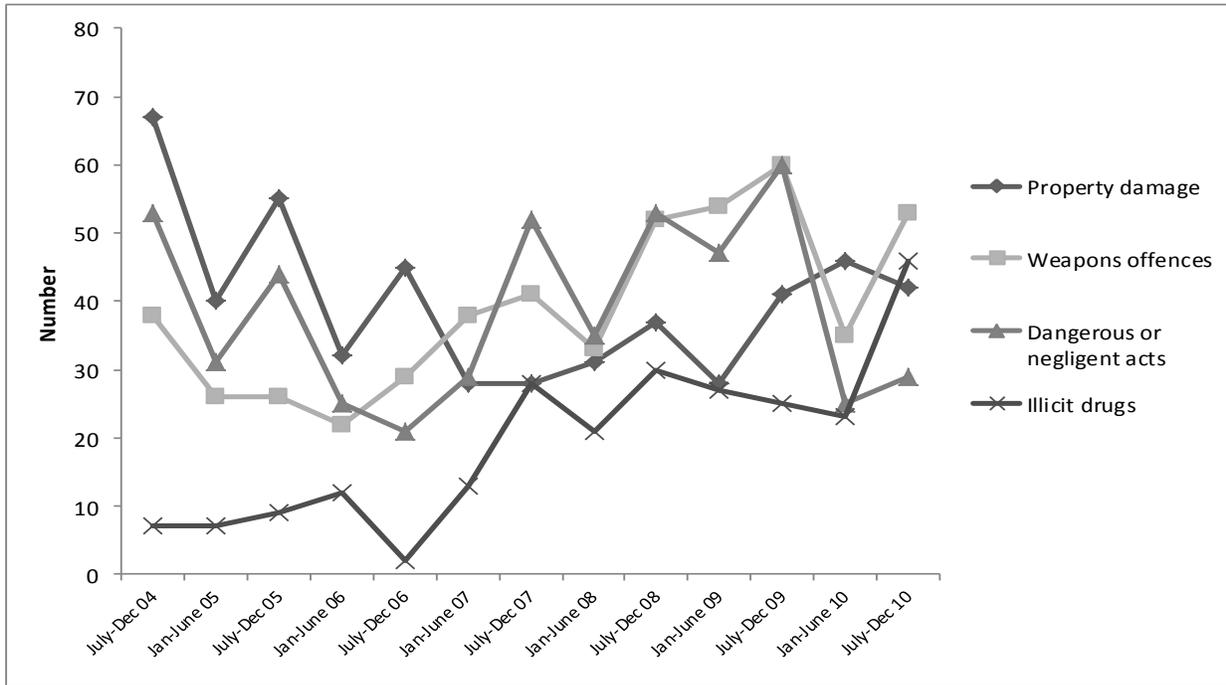
Trends in offences

Figure A1: Temporal variation in the number of offences, by offence type, for selected offences, NTER communities, July-December 2004 to July-December 2010



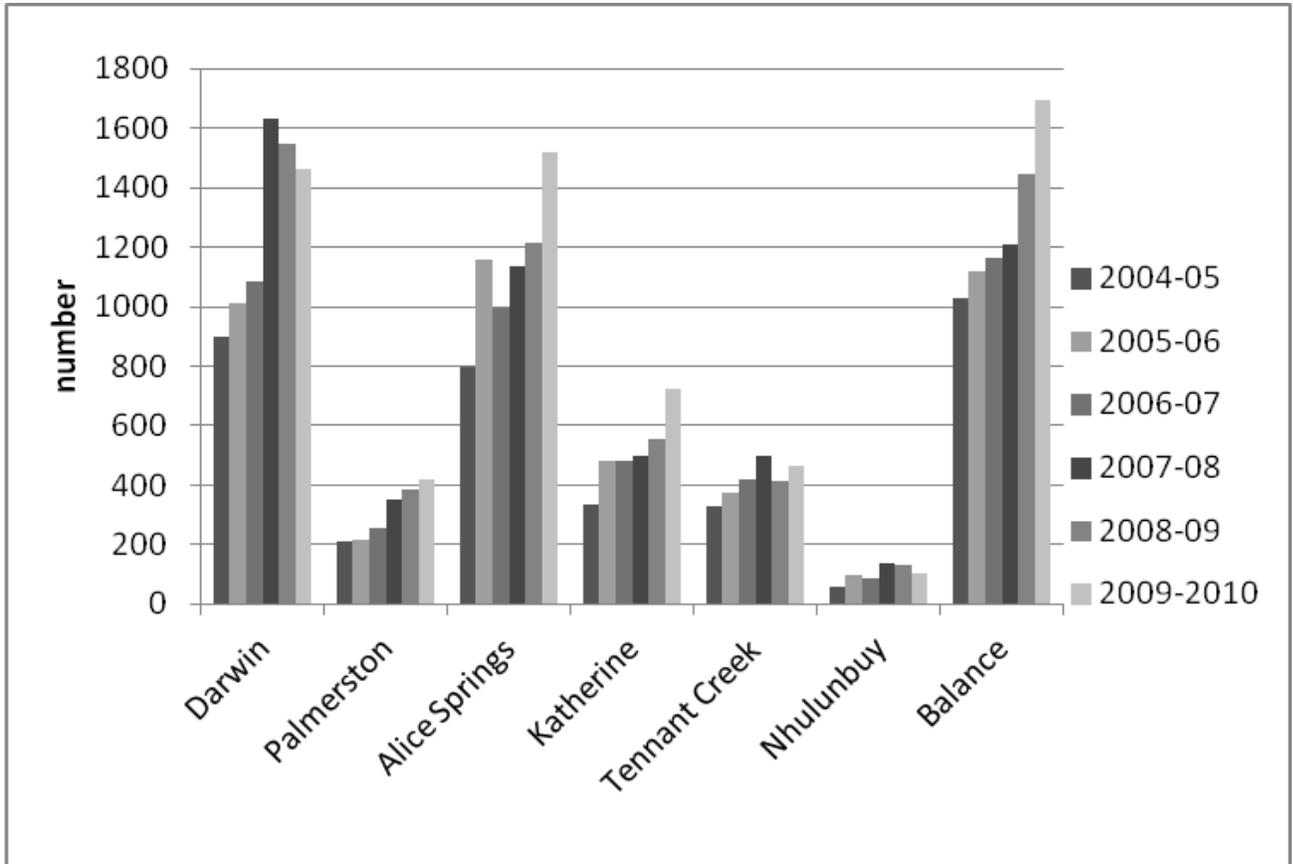
Source: NT Police offences dataset [AIC computer file]

Figure A2: Temporal variation in the number of offences, by offence type, for selected offences, NTER communities, July-December 2004 to July-December 2010



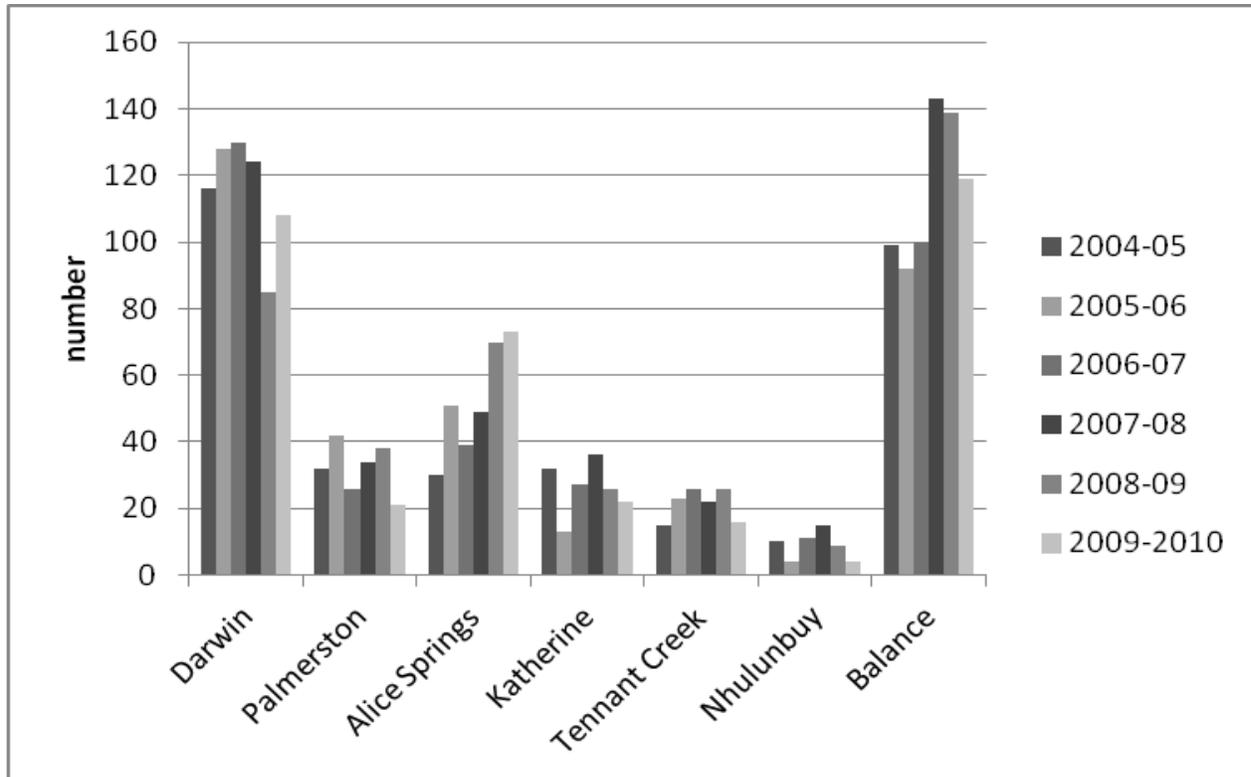
Source: NT Police offences dataset [AIC computer file]

Figure A3: Recorded assault offences, annual number by location, NT, April 2004 – March 2010



Source: NT DOJ 2010

Figure A4: Recorded sexual assault offences, annual number by location, NT, April 2004-March 2010



Source: NT DOJ 2010