Review of Certain FaHCSIA
Funded Youth Services

FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

This review addressed certain projects conducted through the Central Australian Integrated Youth Services Project (IYSP) and under the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure (YADM).

These two programs were seen as critically important measures to (respectively) divert young people away from destructive behaviour, such as substance abuse, and toward education or employment activities; and to provide projects and infrastructure to expand the capacity of providers and the range of alternative activities for young people at risk of drinking and substance abuse.

They responded to two particular components of FaHCSIA's Eight Point Plan for the Petrol Sniffing Strategy, being:

- *Component* 4: Alternative activities for young people - recognizing that supply of Opal in itself may not reduce petrol-sniffing, and that concurrent strategies of educational, recreational, training and employment interventions would offer an alternative; and

- *Component* 7: Strengthening and supporting communities - providing support to build community capacity within Aboriginal communities to take responsibility for the management of substance abuse issues over time.

The review has highlighted the complexities and difficulties of implementing youth programs in remote communities, including the consequences of a lack of clarity around program objectives, guidelines and directions, resulting in 'open' interpretation of these, inadequate infrastructure, delayed infrastructure provision and a lack of availability of suitably trained staff.

However, it also identifies the commitment and dedication of many people living and working within remote communities and project staff to delivering an extraordinary range of activities, sometimes under trying circumstances, including lack of staffing or essential infrastructure; diminishing resources and a perceived mismatch between program objectives and delivery.

There are some key limitations underlining this review which are identified to assist in interpreting findings. They include data sources which were limited and patchy both in terms of quality and quantity. Various attempts were made to overcome this during the review process, which are documented in the report. Additionally, the rapid implementation of the programs gave rise to a series of challenges affecting program outcomes. These were principally underscored by a lack of program logic and poor program documentation or data collection mechanisms. Similarly, the changing context for the operation of the programs affected the way in which the programs were regarded by key stakeholders, and hence their levels of engagement with the program. Both programs were introduced in the highly charged political environment of the NTER and amid specific community concerns around the manner in which health and substance abuse issues were being addressed in Aboriginal communities. This contributed to high program expectations, mistrust and suspicion. Ultimately, many stakeholders queried the appropriateness of the (IYSP) program in the light of the introduction of Opal fuel, which many regarded as sufficient to address a key intent of diversion of young people from petrol-sniffing.

The review has found a number of inadequacies in program planning and preparation, governance, target group definition, case management and unmet objectives.

It has also identified measures taken by various parties to address some of these inadequacies in the course of the programs, as well as positives outcomes for young people and communities.

These key findings are outlined below, along with suggestions for areas of improvement in any future program delivery of this type[1].

The findings in relation to the IYSP are:

Program planning and preparation

- Widespread dissatisfaction was observed in relation to the original tendering process, which resulted in Mission Australia being awarded the contract. This centred around the selection of a non-local organization without experience in the region; and the view that local experience was insufficiently weighted as a selection criterion, resulting in the overlooking of organizations with direct local experience in communities, in taking the decision. However, some stakeholders felt that Mission Australia was well-placed to deliver the IYSP because of its national resources to enable more geographically diverse staff recruitment and its experience in youth services delivery.

- Respondents reported that insufficient planning time was devoted to the manner in which proposed IYSP youth activities would link into the development of skill-based or educational or employment programs for young people. Some stakeholders considered that greater pre-planning and negotiation around program outcomes, a strategic widening of the pool of key players to inform the process and better consultation with the communities involved would have assisted this key element.

- There was a lack of communication between FaHCSIA and the non-government organizations with previous experience in the selected IYSP communities which might have informed the development and implementation of program activities or identification of activities for engagement with the target group. This was a missed opportunity for program development.

- The contractual obligations on Mission Australia were regarded by some as unrealistic and not satisfactorily resolved at an early stage, leading to compounding of issues which had ongoing ramifications for achievement of program objectives (including whether these were adequately defined and agreed). However, a change occurred in focus and management by Mission Australia, negotiated with FaHCSIA, at the halfway point in the program, whereby significant improvements in management, administration and service delivery were observed. This was regarded as a genuine attempt to address earlier inadequacies.

- Several stakeholders, both in the government and non-government sector, observed the lack of a program logic framework to guide the implementation and delivery of the IYSP. This resulted in a disconnect between the needs which were supposed to be addressed and the activities undertaken by the IYSP and its objectives, particularly in relation to longer-term outcomes, such as the generation of employment, training or educational pathways.

Governance

- The immediate effects of the mid-term program changes noted above were identified as the restriction of projects to weekly budgets and encouragement to utilize fund-raising to augment activities (later identified by some as a constraint and others as an opportunity); and, the provision of weekly reports to include a record of participation in daily activities, volatile substance abuse issues, instances of engagement, case management outcomes and the transfer of responsibility to Anangu staff.

- The completion of weekly reports was generally regarded by project managers as onerous but important as a record of their activities. At the conclusion of the program, in only one IYSP

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[1] Mission Australia, Email response to Review of Certain FaHCSIA- funded youth services 'The review findings should be read in context. Delivering alternative youth activity in remote Australia presents significant challenges, and three years is a short time to entrench sustainable gains in the context of the service constraints, particularly in complex circumstances such as occurred during the Northern Territory Emergency Response. Similarly, reduced sniffing incidence as an outcome is highly contingent on a wide range of related inputs, and this review grappled with the difficulty of attributing any particular outcome to a specific input or inputs as well as the pragmatic need to rely on qualitative data and anecdotal input'.

community were there preparations under way for Anangu staff to take on the project reporting role along with the management of project activities.

- There was a perception that Mission Australia had responded to the difficulty of recruiting full-time Anangu employees and potential conflict in communities where this may result in the unintentional exclusion of some families from participation in activities by transferring Anangu employees to casual employment. The initiative was also understood to be a response by Mission Australia to severe budgetary constraints. However, the intent does not appear to have been clearly communicated and the workforce casualisation process resulted in some Anangu staff feeling that their role and contributions were devalued.

- Stakeholders indicated that insufficient support for IYSP managers in their local management role included a lack of cultural awareness training for incoming non-Aboriginal staff, a lack of handover briefings at staff changeover points and insufficient capacity at a senior management level to value the input of local Anangu staff.

- The vital importance of the youth worker model implemented in local communities (specifically the engagement of both male and female youth workers) was identified by many stakeholders, although, toward the end of the project at least, this was not occurring in practice in most communities.

- The role of strong family support (including in the Anangu staff profile) was also seen critically important in community development terms and for project sustainability.

Whole of government and interagency cooperation

- The whole of government cooperation between the three Commonwealth Government agencies, FaHCSIA, DEEWR and AGD exhibited in the approach to the IYSP was recognized by stakeholders as making a positive and cooperative contribution. It was also regarded as creating a highly complex stakeholder environment for the delivery and operation of the program. This included reporting and information sharing arrangements between FaHCSIA (including the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit - CAPSSU) and other agencies, further hampered by staff turnover in contract management positions.

- Engagement between IYSP providers and Northern Territory Government agencies was seen by many stakeholders as overlain with difficulties, including from the withdrawal of funding for pre-existing programs. Limited contact between some agencies and IYSP service providers and some instances of conflict were reported regarding particular case management issues.

- The NPY (Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) Women's Council was regarded by several stakeholders as previously having provided a range of youth services and leaving an effective legacy within communities through its project provision however there was very little interaction between NPY Women's Council and IYSP providers.

Target group appropriateness

- While the originally contracted target group was 10-25 years, this was expanded by Mission Australia to 5-25 years, with the approval of FaHCSIA. Mission Australia indicated that, as young children would accompany their older siblings, they did not feel they could turn them away. They also indicated that, by taking a 'longer-term view' and allowing the very young to participate, this strengthened the preventative focus of the program.

- The review has found that more than a third of IYSP contacts were with children under the age of 9 years, and two-thirds under the age of 14 years. As a result, the IYSP delivered predominantly recreation-based and afterschool activities for primary school aged children. Attendance records at activities primarily recorded 'contact' information, rather than outcomes of activities. It should be noted that, while the evidence available does record instances of children as young as 5-6 years engaging in petrol-sniffing, there were no reported instances of children in this age group involved in any of the four IYSP communities.

- The broadening of the target group has been one of the unintended negative consequences of the IYSP in that it diverted resources away from the primary target group, and became no longer a 'youth program' focused on petrol sniffing or systematically addressing youth diversionary activities.

Further, the ongoing presence of children created a barrier to youth involvement among those who viewed activities as 'childish', including initiated young men.

- The constant use of the Recreation Halls (as the only available venue) for children's activities also apparently acted against the introduction of youth-oriented project options proposed by older young people.

- It was felt that the gravitation toward activities for very young children rather than youth programs, compounded by successive staff turnover which cemented this approach, was illustrative of the lack of program logic to guide the implementation of the program or FaHCSIA's monitoring of the situation as the program funder.

- In one community, community members expressed their concern about the lack of structure for activities and the long hours children were spending in the Recreation Hall on school nights, which they also indicated to be outside of their control.

- Similarly, it was felt that the inclusion of a much younger target group may have contributed to difficulties identified by Mission Australia in relation to the management and maintenance of equipment.

Case management

- There were conflicting views between stakeholders about the case management responsibilities of some providers, pointing to the need for clarity and ongoing communication between stakeholders about responsibilities under the funding agreement in respect of case management.

- While some local health workers regarded interventions by IYSP youth workers to be inappropriate, there were other instances of successful case management reported involving the NPY Women's Council and NT Department of Health and Families.

- While there was reportedly disappointment for some NTER YADM participants who could not complete certificate level courses due to the cessation of the funded project, the adaptation of facilities to accommodate both young women and young men to participate in an IYSP Songroom Music project was seen as positive, and the development of a traineeship for one young person in one community was similarly regarded as effective negotiation of the system in support of young people.

Outcomes – incidence of petrol-sniffing

- Communities reported virtually no incidents of petrol-sniffing, although most indicated their belief this was due to the introduction of Opal fuel rather than as a direct result of project activities (it should also be noted that the literature identifies diversionary activity as effective in communities where supply has been addressed). General community awareness and mandatory reporting of petrol-sniffing incidents were also regarded as contributing to the reduction in incidence. Therefore it is virtually impossible to assess the evidence of the impact of the IYSP in this regard.

- Where isolated incidents of petrol-sniffing occurred, these were reportedly dealt with swiftly by communities and authorities. Some isolated, past incidents of glue-sniffing or marijuana smoking were identified, but not regarded generally as problematic. However, alcohol abuse by adults remained a concern for all communities. Some suggested that an unintended consequence of after-school activities was that these offered parents an opportunity to opt out of caring for their children in order to go drinking.

Outcomes – pathways to employment, education and skills development

- The probability that the IYSP had resulted in increased school attendance was indicated by some stakeholders, although whether this was due to the practice, in some communities, of driving young people to school, to incentive programs or to other more qualitative aspects of service delivery could not be ascertained. There was less program influence associated with attendance at Secondary Schools where 'patchy' attendance by students was generally reported.

- In one location, a successful link had been made with a National Parks Program engaging young trainee Rangers, and one young trainee was receiving support and assistance through the project and the local College. While indicative of what could be achieved through pathways, consultations

indicated that this process was not systematic for young people within communities, and with only a couple of exceptions, activities initiated by Mission Australia to re-engage young people and provide pathways had been discontinued. It would also appear that many such activities were spasmodic and not always targeted to teen or older young people (and hence pathways to education, employment or training).

- Activities provided in particular communities with the potential to (with appropriate support) develop further into employment or enterprise pathways include craft, music, computer, pottery and photography. These activities included related skills development such as protocols of management of equipment, setting up sound and lighting systems, photographic composition, digital photography and photo production, sales and marketing. However, some of these activities (for example, pottery at Docker River) were offered very late in the program, and their continuity or linkage to other pathway development is uncertain.

- Bush Camps were similarly identified as offering opportunities for educational development, through subsequent painting and writing of stories about the Trips.

- Potential future skills programs were identified as fitness programs and nutrition programs (for young people, including young mothers).

Community involvement/intergenerational activity

- Strong community ownership of the problem of substance abuse was evident in every community, with zero tolerance and swift action taken in response to incidents. The potential for the project to take a greater role in relation to volatile substance abuse was identified, including bringing Drug and Alcohol educators onto communities. It was unclear whether this had occurred during the program's operation.

- Strong community awareness of the IYSP projects was evident in all communities, although this did not universally extend to engagement in projects. There was also general support for activities as an antidote for boredom, although some stakeholders identified the need for different spaces and activities for younger children versus older young people, and the need for skill development for older young people was again highlighted by community members in this regard.

- Some community members indicated that they had experienced difficulties achieving a satisfactory service provider response to the community-identified need for more flexible hours for activities to ensure that younger children were not remaining at the Recreation Hall late on school nights when they should be at home having dinner and sleeping. They had been informed that program timing was inflexible due to commitments the service provider had made to the funding agency, although the veracity of these commitments could not be ascertained, and may have merely been suggested to community members as a means of maintaining a convenient *status quo*.

- Community support for the youth work model requiring male and female youth workers was evident.

- Among non-Aboriginal youth workers, a strong and detailed knowledge of families and community issues was also evident, and some reciprocal relationships had developed.

- Apart from the engagement of youth workers, little evidence was available of intergenerational activity between young people and children.

Workforce issues

- There was appreciation for the long hours worked by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff to deliver project activities. Many stakeholders indicated that staff had not been sufficiently supported by Mission Australia to meet local challenges and further indicated that the role of Anangu staff was insufficiently valued. Among the most successful activities, it was noted, were those jointly managed by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff. Further, it was suggested that the individual strengths and talents of project managers contributed to IYSP's successes, and that these were affected when employees left their positions. More systematic planning and structures to support the IYSP would enable consistent delivery, including during periods of staffing instability.

- With the exception of one community, the transfer of project management/administration skills and responsibilities to Anangu staff had not occurred. Mission Australia regarded the level of Anangu

contribution to the program to be 'unrealistic' due to their perceived lack of experience and thought the expectations placed on Anangu staff to be too high. This attitude may have translated into a passivity on the part of some project managers and Anangu staff regarding management skills transfer. Mission Australia did not deliver structured training and education as required in the contract. It is suggested that there should be a structured training program designed in the first place to engage Anangu staff in appropriate roles and expectations, and that this be implemented in situ, including mentoring.

- Many respondents also identified a lack of cultural awareness training or briefing by Mission Australia regarding specific community issues for non-Aboriginal staff as a particular oversight, and noted that this situation had continued until relatively recently.

- High levels of staff turnover were evident throughout the program. Some stakeholders suggested that these were in excess of levels that might be 'normally' expected in undertaking remote area programs.

- A major concern among some stakeholders related to the circumstances for projects and for Anangu staff (many of whom were seen as dependant on income from their project employment) on completion of the projects.   Uncertainty around project and program handover was identified.

Overall findings

- The success of the IYSP is in the high volume of activities it delivered to the four remote communities of Finke, Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Docker River. However, the data available are not sufficient to assess the contribution to overall program outcomes as these showed only activities.

- The review findings do not support the assertion that extending the program to children under the age of 10 is an important part of a youth diversionary program. Evidence and good practice indicates that resources in such a program need to be directed toward assisting young people, particularly in the development of employment, education and training pathways.

- The review indicates that it is likely community capacity was strengthened in the short-term, although there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that communities have been strengthened or supported in the longer term or that these communities can address the complexity of these issues without external support.

NTER YADM

Several of the findings in relation to the NTER YADM echo those of the IYSP. These include: lack of project pre-planning, lack of program logic linking activities to objectives, lack of consultation with communities and other stakeholders and poor intergovernmental and inter-agency coordination. As with the IYSP, the effects of these shortcomings reached throughout the program's operations and outcomes.

Other key findings are outlined below. They include:

Positive impacts

- The projects for which information was available appear to have been conducted successfully and largely implemented as intended, and were enjoyed by participants. Positive impacts were noted in relation to increased school and school holiday program attendance, reductions in vandalism and anti-social behaviour; 'Try a Trade' and Open Education courses through some schools, specific infrastructure projects with benefits beyond the life of the program, improvement in the relationship between FaHCSIA and the NT DET (with further room for improvement also identified) and the provision of experience for a national agency in delivering remote community programs.

- Specific projects were also regarded as successful. These included the Learning Support Program (with a particular success story for one individual), the Gap Young Men's Support Project, the East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders Visit to Mt Theo, the West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project, Titjikala Youth Program and Warlpiri Regional Youth Development Complex. Bushmob was well-regarded for its involvement of local people, collaboration with other service providers and provision of a diversion experience in a suite of more intensive services.

Limited long-term impacts

▪ There were concerns that project design, planning and short-term funding would lead to limited long-term impacts for many of the projects. Concerns related to a lack of content about the central issues of the program, namely substance abuse and anti-social behaviour, perceived poor targeting of communities, lack of consultation in the planning phase, lack of planning for ongoing maintenance of infrastructure (now in disrepair), and lack of coordination with local service providers resulting in limited project handover at the conclusion of funding.

Achievement of program objectives

▪ There is evidence among all the projects reviewed of some progress toward the objective to enhance the capacity of Indigenous youth services in the Northern Territory.

▪ Funding of youth-focused recreation, equipment and infrastructure occurred through the program, as did the provision of diversion activities. There are some questions over the ongoing use of certain infrastructure which has reportedly fallen into disrepair or (in the case of BMX tracks) which cannot be used without the bikes to ride. However, other items of infrastructure are reported as being well-used.

▪ Diversion of young people from at risk behaviours occurred in the School Holiday Activities Program, Bushmob Cultural Horse Work Camp, The Gap Youth Centre Young Men's Support Projects. The Hip Hop Workshops also potentially contributed to this aim through its reportedly effective engagement of older young people aged 14-18 years.

▪ No explicit information was available to indicate achievement of an impact on substance abuse for individuals and communities.

▪ No evidence was available to demonstrate achievement of encouragement and support for transition from school to further education and/or work. School-based programs had mixed success engaging schools. While some programs were popular with students, some schools found the program disruptive to their teaching and indicated a lack of respect for the 'school culture'. Education representatives consulted as part of this review saw short-term programs as irrelevant or disruptive to their core business.

Program design factors

▪ In addition to the expressed concern about a lack of program logic, concern about the limited impact of short-term projects was indicated, and the view formed that programs funded continuously over a three year period are more likely to generate lasting benefits for individuals and communities.

▪ Many stakeholders considered that YADM activities were limited to a 'fun way to pass the time' rather than a 'youth activity' focus that might lead to positive outcomes for individual young people. Bushmob was an exception in that it adopted a case management role in relation to young participants. Several stakeholders felt that a focus on prevention rather than diversion would have been more effective in engaging young people prior to active experimentation, through positive lifestyle messages, confidence building and a sense of direction. It was suggested a prevention focus would need to be systematically combined with case management, access to treatments and counselling and would be more appropriate for the over 14 year olds considered at risk of substance abuse whom the YADM had difficulty targeting. This view is borne out by the many respondents who thought that the YADM activities were not appropriately targeted for age groups

▪ There was also criticism of the ratio of 'activity' projects' to 'infrastructure' projects, with some suggesting that the latter had greater potential to provide benefit beyond the funding period. Similarly, there was criticism that infrastructure and activity projects were not planned to complement each other, underscoring the importance of securing community and stakeholder support prior to and at an early stage in program development.

▪ Similarly, the selection of communities for program funding was widely criticised as it was felt these included a large number of communities where Opal fuel had been rolled out and which, as a consequence, did not exhibit a petrol-sniffing problem (this has also been addressed, above, in relation to the IYSP).

Governance

- The need for a more focused 'youth work' rather than recreation-based approach has suggested the importance of a more rigorous application of Indigenous youth diversion best practice principles in program planning and governance.

- Similar to the IYSP, there was some criticism of the selection of service providers with little familiarity with the region or communities, with consequent negative effects upon capacity-building.

- There was a lack of clarity regarding the intended process for infrastructure maintenance at the conclusion of the funding period and whether there were expectations of Local Governments in this regard. It was understood that ongoing discussions are occurring with Local Government about its willingness and capacity to assume a role in this regard.

- It was reported that FaHCSIA delayed the release of funding to several projects and that this compounded already short time frames for delivery, potentially leading to a shortened scope of delivery or short-cuts in the quality of provision. A lack of appropriate monitoring mechanisms by CAPPSU and FaHCSIA staff was also identified by some stakeholders. A perceived lack of accessible points of contact points for FaHCSIA staff, including a lack of complaints mechanisms about projects was also indicated.

Overall findings

- Of the projects for which data was available, most appear to have been implemented successfully in communities, the provision of infrastructure was generally welcomed and the activities were well-attended and enjoyed by participants. There is also evidence, for these projects, that the YADM at least partially achieved its aims, with the exception of encouraging and supporting transition from school to further education or work.

Future directions for both programs

The review findings highlight a number of areas of improvement for future programs. These include:

- A renewed focus upon embedding program logic structures to enable a stronger strategic framework for program operations and direction, and a clear 'line of sight' from the program's intent to the activity delivered and on to the impacts it has.

- Prevention strategies combined with intensive elements of case management and identification of additional resources for at risk young people and access to treatment or counselling are considered appropriate for older young people (i.e. 14 years and over).

- A greater and more systematic focus on pathways for young people to skills development, education and employment as a centrepiece of youth diversionary activity. This needs to extend to specifications for staff selection and mentoring, with a vital role for Aboriginal staff, ensuring that they have realistic job expectations and that a model is considered that enables Anangu engagement. The identification of opportunities for partnerships with training agencies and employers or economic development opportunities is also important.

- Better definition of the objectives, extent and expectations of cross-agency support and resourcing in relation to the provision of case management and referral as part of programs.

- Provision of a defined asset management and maintenance strategy where infrastructure or assets are included as part of the program delivery.

- For the IYSP only, investment of resources as appropriate in staff training and development (including accredited training where possible).

- Provision of resources and development of processes for sharing good practice across communities.

- Further development of community ownership, through partnership approaches with service providers who are prepared to listen and respond to the needs of communities and to enhance community capacity through program management and delivery.

A number of recommendations to this effect have been included in the report.

1 Introduction

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) has commissioned Urbis to conduct a review of the Central Australian Integrated Youth Services Project (IYSP) and a range of projects funded under the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure (YADM).

This is the report for the review.

1.1 Overview of the purpose of the review

The purpose of the review is to examine what has been successfully implemented, what has worked, what has not worked, and what could be improved in relation to:

- activities delivered under the IYSP as part of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy (PSS) between the 2006/07- 2009/10 financial years; and

- activities delivered under the NTER YADM in the 2008/09 financial year.

The findings of the review are intended to inform the future direction of the PSS, and measure the progress of various youth services and programs against the objectives of the PSS, with a particular focus on how these initiatives provided alternative activities for young people and strengthened and supported communities. The review is also carried out as part of FaHCSIA's evaluation role under the PSS Eight Point Plan, which consists of the following components:

- A consistent legal framework

- Appropriate levels of policing

- Further roll out of Opal Fuel

- Alternative activities for young people

- Treatment and respite facilities

- Communication and education strategies

- Strengthening and supporting communities

Two components of the Eight Point Plan are directly relevant to this review:

- Component 4: Alternative activities for people in the area: Supplying Opal, of itself, may not reduce petrol sniffing. A range of concurrent strategies including educational, recreational, training and employment interventions offer an alternative to petrol sniffing. The focus is on providing activities for all people in the area – both those already sniffing and those at risk of sniffing.

- Component 7: Strengthening and supporting communities: Many Aboriginal communities are not sufficiently cohesive to address substance misuse issues without support. Over time, support will be provided by interventions designed to build community capacity to take responsibility for managing these issues. Examples of interventions might include community development initiatives and recruiting local people into leadership programs.

1.2 The Integrated Youth Services Project (IYSP)

The IYSP was delivered by Mission Australia and jointly funded by FaHCSIA, the Attorney General's Department (AGD) and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The IYSP provides youth diversion services in the four Northern Territory (NT) communities of Imanpa, Mutitjulu, Finke (Apatula) and Docker River (Kaltukatjara).

The IYSP contract with Mission Australia commenced in April 2007 and concluded on March 2010. Projects funded under this contract have been transitioned to a new provider through funding under the

Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory, Youth in Communities Measure that was finalised in May 2010.

The total funding for the IYSP was approximately $12 million. FaHCSIA's contribution was approximately $9 million total over three years.

Approximately $7.5 million of the overall budget was awarded to Mission Australia to employ two full-time permanent youth workers (male and female) and up to two full-time equivalent locally engaged Anangu youth workers on each of the four communities. DEEWR funded the appointment of a full-time outreach education coordinator to re-engage Aboriginal youth with full-time education or post school vocational training and employment. AGD provided funds for the youth worker vehicles, office accommodation and sporting and other equipment to support the delivery of diversionary programs on communities.

The remaining budget (approximately $4 million) was administered separately by FaHCSIA and AGD to provide infrastructure enhancements on the four communities, such as recreation hall upgrades and youth worker accommodation.[2]

The IYSP contract commenced in April 2007 and concluded on March 2010. The services and activities delivered through the project include:

- sport, cultural, recreational, and other diversionary activities

- linking to more specialised case management services to provide support for at risk individuals at the local level (including assistance to remain connected to family)

- assistance to remain connected to or engage with education, training and employment

- links to community health and education initiatives.

1.2.1   The activity goals/objectives of the Integrated Youth Services Project

The IYSP aims to divert at risk youth away from destructive behaviour such as substance abuse and toward education or employment opportunities. The original contract stated that the IYSP was targeted at youth aged 10-25 years. This age group has extended to include youth aged 5-25 years over the course of the IYSP.

As set out in the contract between Mission Australia and FaHCSIA and the Department of Education, Science and Training (now the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations - DEEWR), the activity goals/objectives of the IYSP are to:[3]

- Build the confidence, self reliance, leadership skills and life skills of young people in the four Central Desert communities of Finke (Apatula), Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Docker River (Kaltukatjara) by intensively engaging with them so that they take responsibility for their own care and development and move away from welfare dependency.

- Counteract negative influences, including those related to substance abuse, by engaging young people in a range of culturally, age and gender appropriate educational, social, cultural and recreational activities.

- Help young people to build on, and in some cases re-build, their learning pathways to literacy and numeracy and other forms of accredited training by engaging with them in a partnership over time.

- Help communities to address the effects of substance abuse in young people and build community resilience by engaging with communities in a partnership over time.

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[2]   Statement of Requirement, Review of Certain FaHCSIA Funded Youth Activities, Attachment A, at 2.

[3]   The Attorney Generals Department (AGD) was not a party to the contract. Instead an Memorandum of Understanding was signed formalising AGD's commitments in relation to the IYSP.

- Assist young people to achieve the education, life skills and employability skills they need for them to participate autonomously and fully in learning, work and community life.

It is acknowledged that diversion programs work best in communities where there has also been supply reduction (ie distribution of OPAL fuel). However there was still concern expressed during the consultation process about how communities were selected. A snapshot of expenditure by region indicates that for (Southern Northern Territory /Central Australia):

- Barkly Region received less than 2% of available funding. These were all short term programs, provided in 2 communities only;

- Central Desert Region received approximately 18% of funding. With the exception of Mt Theo, all were short term programs provided in 6 communities;

- MacDonnell Region received 80% of funding allocated across 4 potential longer-term programs/projects in several communities.

While petrol sniffing was seen as a bigger concern in the MacDonnell Region historically, at the time of allocating the funding there were several remote communities in these regions that received no funding at all. For example, Lake Nash being 650kms from Alice Springs received no funding at a time when its neighbour, Ampilatwatja (370kms from Alice Springs) received 3 short-term projects. This was in spite of Lake Nash having more frequent incidences of petrol sniffing. The review heard concerns that rationale for the funding allocation was not explained.

1.2.2   Integrated Youth Services Program community profiles

Mission Australia prepared community profiles on each of the four communities where the IYSP was delivered. This section is an abridged version of the profiles provided by Mission Australia in their *End of Project Report*.[4] A map of the Central Australian cross-border region (also known as the Central Australian tri-state region), which depicts the geographical location of the four Northern Territory IYSP communities is included below.[5]

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[4]   Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, End of Project Report and Recommendations, 31 March 2010, at 1-8.

[5]   Urbis wishes to thank the NPY Women's Council for permission to reproduce this map.

NGAANYATJARRA PITJANTJATJARA YANKUNYTJATJARA WOMEN'S COUNCIL

Source: NPY Women's Council

Finke (Apatula)

Apatula is 417 km south east of Alice Springs by road. Main access is via Kulgera (273 km from Alice Springs on the Stuart Highway) then 144 km of unsealed road east to the community.

Apatula - originally named Finke, was established in the 1920s and 1930s. Finke was a railway town surrounded by pastoral properties until the railhead moved west to Kulgera in 1980. Aboriginal people who lived on the sand hill to the east remained to form Apatula after the railhead moved. Following the Finke land claim in 1990, about 100 square kilometres surrounding Apatula became Aboriginal land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act* 1976. The community has an estimated population of 192 residents.

The principal languages spoken in Finke are Yankunyjatjara, Arrente and Pitjantjatjara. The traditional owners are lower southern Arrente, with community members also having connections to the Yankunyjatjara, Pitjantjatjara and Luritja language groups. There are a number of outstations in this region - Beer St Bore, Bloodwood Bore, Halfway Camp, Charlotte Waters, Annacoora Bore, Antere, Dakota Bore, Flinders Hill, Ulbulla and Wirrmalyanna. A number of outstations over the border in South

Australia have connections with Apatula. Only Beer St Bore and Charlotte Waters are currently inhabited.

Prior to 1 July 2008, community governance was the responsibility of the Apatula Housing Association Incorporated. On 1 July 2008, the MacDonnell Shire formally took responsibility for the community with four elected Shire members representing the Rodinga Ward.

Central administration is now delivered from the MacDonnell Shire office based in Alice Springs. Local administration for the community is overseen by the Shire Services Manager.

The community continues to have a 'voice' by way of a Community Local Board who assist the elected representatives and Shire Administration regarding community based matters.

The community is within a declared 'Restricted Area' under the *NT Liquor Act* 1978. Alcohol is banned in Finke. Severe penalties apply to residents and visitors who breach this law.

Finke has good essential infrastructure, with power, water and sewerage services supplied.

Services/facilities in the community include: school; health clinic; Centrelink agency, mechanical workshop, sporting oval, store – with fuel facilities, women's centre, garage, public phones, uniting church, sporting facilities – outdoor basketball court, softball field and a partial BMX track.

A new recreation hall opened in June 2009. This building was funded by AGD at a cost of over $1million. It is large enough to have a full-size indoor basketball court, kitchen area and secure areas used to store sporting, music and computer education equipment. The facility is operated by the Mission Australia Youth Workers and local Anangu staff. Apart from a range of sports activities the space is used to conduct a wide range of youth activities such as cooking, music, photography and art. It is also the venue for all major community activities such as band and bingo nights. An extensive series of internal murals have recently been completed. In consultation with the broad community the local artists in collaboration with some of the younger program participants have created a variety of designs which symbolise the stories of importance to the community and family groups, bush tucker and sports.

Imanpa

The Imanpa community is located 260 km south-west of Alice Springs. Imanpa was originally established on a 1,628 hectare excision from Mt Ebenezer Station in 1978. The purpose was to relocate a drinker's camp from the Mt Ebenezer Roadhouse and establish a centre for displaced stockmen from several pastoral properties in that region.

The population base, drawn from families in Areyonga, Apatula, Kaltukatjara, Mutitjulu and Alice Springs, varies between 150 – 200 residents with people moving between the communities for cultural reasons and family visits. The community has acquired the pastoral lease for Angus Downs station and owns the Mt Ebenezer roadhouse.

Although the community is comprised predominantly of the Pitjantjatjara language group, a mix of Arrente, Luritja, Warlpiri and Yankunyjatjara dialects are also spoken. The settlement is not located on Pitjantjatjara land, and traditional owners for the land at Imanpa are unable to be determined. Imanpa is an open community and permits to visit are not required.

However, the community has requested that intending visitors phone and advise of their intentions in advance. Associated communities, outstations and homelands are Mt Ebenezer, Welmala, Wirrmalyanga and Angus Downs.

Since 1 July 2008, the community has been administered by the MacDonnell Shire. Two elected Shire members represent the South West (IYARRKA) Ward, with the central administration being delivered from the MacDonnell Shire office based in Alice Springs.

Local administration for the community is undertaken by the Shire Services Manager. The community will continue to have a 'voice' by way of a Community Local Board who will assist the elected representatives and the Shire Services Manager regarding community matters.

Imanpa is also a restricted area for the purposes of the Liquor Act 1978 (NT)

The essential infrastructure is good, with power, water and sewerage supplied. Other facilities/services include a small store, community health centre, primary and secondary school, mechanical workshop, women's community centre, shire building, outstation and Mt Ebenezer roadhouse. The community also has a Recreation Hall operated by Mission Australia youth workers.

Mutitjulu

Mutitjulu community, located approximately 455km by road south-west of Alice Springs, is 25 km from Yulara Resort. The community is located adjacent to Uluru, within the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, with the land being leased from the Director of Parks for 99 years (commencing in 1985). In 2005, Mutitjulu had an estimated population of around 330 residents. In 2008, the population had declined to 150-180.

The main language spoken is Pitjantjatjara; however Luritja and Yankunytjatjara are also spoken. A number of residents of Mutitjulu receive royalty income from entry fees to the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park. Unlike other communities in the NT, Mutitjulu was unaffected by the shire amalgamations that occurred on 1 July 2008. Because the community is within the boundaries of a National Park, the NT Department of Local Government did not provide municipal service funding.

Instead, the community received assistance from Parks Australia North, and municipal services funding from FaHCSIA. Governance was the responsibility of the Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation (MCAC). Recently, the MacDonnell Shire appointed a new Shire Services Manager to the Mutitjulu community.

Mutitjulu is situated on Aboriginal land. Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Ac,t* 1976 *(NT)* a written permit is required for visitors to the community. Mutitjulu is also a Restricted Area under the NT *Liquor Act* 1978.

The essential infrastructure is reasonable and includes power, water and sewerage etc supplied, although the bore water supply is limited. However, Parks Australia north has indicated that its capacity to supply these services is becoming strained.

Other facilities include a large range of services associated with the international standard resort, Ininti general store, Maruku Arts and Crafts warehouse, Walkatjarra Arts (local art and craft co-operative), church, police station, Nyangatjatjara College (a post-primary education facility), cultural centre (near Ranger Station), office of the NPY Women's Council, office of the Central Land Council, office of Parks Australia North, community-controlled health clinic, primary school plus, and both Aged Care and Child Care facilities.

The associated communities, outstations and homelands around Mutitjulu include Alpara, Mulga Park Mulga Park Station, Rocket Bore, Wanarkula, Uluru, Mutitjula and Mutitjulu.

Docker River (Kaltukatjara)

Docker River (Kaltukatjara) is situated in the Petermann Ranges in the far south western corner of the Northern Territory. Kaltukatjara was established as the Docker River settlement in 1968 to relieve population pressure on other remote Aboriginal communities in the region. Once established, Anangu moved to Docker River from Areyonga as well as from communities in Western Australia and South Australia to be closer to their traditional lands. It became Aboriginal land when the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act,* 1976*(NT)* was enacted. According to the 2006 Census, the 'permanent' resident population is in the vicinity of 310 people.

The main languages spoken are Pitjantjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra. From 1 July 2008, the community became part of the MacDonnell Shire, falling within the South West (IYARRKA) Ward.

Kaltukatjara is a Restricted Community under the NT *Liquor Act* 1978. A volatile substance management plan is also in place to regulate the use/storage of volatile substances in the community.

The essential infrastructure is good, and includes power,water and sewerage services. Other facilities include a general store with fuel supply, oval, Women's Centre, recreation hall, and an Aged Care

Centre and Heath Clinic. The community contains a campus of Nyangatjatjara College, which is a secondary education college.

Docker River is an important ceremonial centre with ceremonies usually held between December and April. The community's population can increase dramatically during these periods, placing considerable pressure on community facilities.

The community services include: Women's Centre (which runs a breakfast cooking program, and provides lunch for children); Recreation Hall, for concerts and youth activities etc; Tjilpi Pampaku Ngura, Aged Care Centre; Health and Community Care (HACC) program for aged and disabled care in homes; Laundry (attached to Aged Care Centre), School, Store, Guest house, two public telephones, Lutheran Church, Community Health Clinic, NYP Women's Council – Outreach Service, and a Centrelink agency.

1.3 Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure (YADM)

The Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), now known as Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory, was launched in mid-2007 by the previous Commonwealth Government in response to reports of abuse and neglect of children in Aboriginal communities.

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

Within this funding, CAPSSU was allocated funds for the implementation of the NTER Youth Alcohol Diversion. It should be acknowledged that the demands and stresses of the NTER had a huge impact on the formative stages of the youth programs.

There are seven broad measures designed to protect children, make communities safe and build a better future for peoples living in Indigenous communities and town camps in the Northern Territory.'[6]

They are:

- improving child and family health

- enhancing education

- supporting families

- promoting law and order

- housing and land reform

- welfare reform and employment

- coordination.

The Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure (YADM) falls under the broader NTER measure "supporting families", and complements the PSS.

The NTER Youth Alcohol Diversion (YADM) measure is aimed at young people, primarily 12-18 years old, who engage in or are at risk of alcohol and other substance abuse. Programs and infrastructure is funded and designed to offer a range of alternative activities to drinking and substance abuse.

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[6]   Northern Territory Emergency Response, FaHCSIA website:
      http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/progserv/ntresponse/Pages/default.aspx.

The measure has been implemented by the FaHCSIA National Office, its NT State Office (NTSO), and CAPSSU.

The aims of the measure are to achieve the:

- expansion of the capacity of Aboriginal youth services in the Northern Territory

- funding of youth focussed recreation and equipment and infrastructure

- provision of recreation and diversion activities across the Northern Territory

- support and encouragement of attendance at school (including reengagement)

- diversion of young people from at risk behaviours (including substance use)

- reduction of the impact of substance abuse on individuals and communities

- encouragement and support for transition from school to further education and/or work.

- In 2008-09 a total of $8.8 million was spent on one youth diversion program, comprising two streams: *Northern Territory Youth Development Networks* (46 projects): aimed at establishing a range of regional and community specific youth diversionary activities, increasing regional coordination and activity networks (e.g. by developing regional competitions and events), increasing the use of available resources such as pools, school resources, recreations centres, and ovals, drawing on existing relationships and activities with bodies such as the ADF Cadets, and increasing pathways and linkages for training and employment.

- *Central Australian Youth Alcohol Abuse Diversion Measures* (15 projects): aimed at providing infrastructure and youth diversion programs in central Australia. Infrastructure included the construction or refurbishment of structures such as recreation halls, youth worker houses, recreational infrastructure, and offices or training rooms. Youth programs included school holiday programs, after hours school care programs, capital equipment (such as vehicles) or the provision of youth workers in selected communities to run programs.

Some of the NTER YADM projects were managed by the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU), and some were managed by the Northern Territory FaHCSIA office. A list of the NTER YADM projects, and which were managed by CAPSSU/the Northern Territory FaHCSIA office is provided at Appendix A.

The review has looked at a selection of 26 projects across both streams of the youth diversion programs offered under the Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure.

1.4 Terms of Reference for this review

The Terms of Reference for this review required three stages of research:

- *Stage 1* involved a literature review. The Terms of Reference for this component of the research are set out in Chapter 2 which includes a summary of the literature review is included.

- *Stage 2* involved a review of activities funded under the NTER YADM, to assess the impact of these projects and the different approaches used to fund and manage the projects.

- *Stage 3* (which ran concurrently with Stage 2) involved a comprehensive review of the IYSP funded under the PSS. The aim of this review was to determine the impact and success of the IYSP against the objectives of the PSS Eight Point Plan, other source documents and from a stakeholder perspective. The review also aimed to assess the effectiveness of the governance arrangements put in place to manage these projects.

1.5 Reference Group

FaHCSIA established a Reference Group for the review. A list of the members of this Group is provided at Appendix B. The Group met at several key points of the review to provide input on draft documents and other advice to the consultants.

1.6 Structure of this report

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 sets out the methodology.

- Chapter 3 provides a summary of the literature review conducted for the project.

- Chapter 4 sets out what was delivered under the IYSP

- Chapter 5 discusses the key findings of the review in relation to the IYSP.

- Chapter 6 sets out what was delivered under the NTER YADM

- Chapter 7 sets out the key findings of the review in relation to the NTER YADM.

- Chapter 8 sets out the conclusions and suggestions for future directions.

Appendix A provides a list of NTER YADM projects and communities.

Appendix B provides a list of Reference Group members.

Appendix C sets out a list of stakeholders consulted on the fieldwork and in telephone interviews.

Appendix D provides a classification of additional IYSP activities.

Appendix E provides a list of possible research questions suggested by FaHCSIA.

Appendix F provides a table summarising the key information about the sample of 26 projects under the NTER YADM.

Appendix G provides the full literature review

2 Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology used for the project, which included three components:

- literature review;
- consultations with stakeholders; and
- Review of program documentation.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the review.

2.1 Literature review

A literature review was prepared in the early stages of the project, and its findings used to inform the subsequent stages of the project. The review examined the Australian and international literature concerning petrol sniffing and other volatile substance use/misuse in order to identify:

- definitions of petrol sniffing, its prevalence and manifestations, particularly for remote Aboriginal communities
- potential alignment of the PSS with other Aboriginal policy initiatives, in particular the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage National Partnership Agreements
- the links between petrol sniffing and other forms of substance abuse
- the immediate and long term effects of petrol sniffing on the individual, family and community
- interventions that have been successful in dealing with petrol sniffing and other substance abuse issues affecting Aboriginal youth
- models and approaches to Aboriginal youth work, particularly for communities in remote and geographically isolated regions.

A brief version of this review is provided in Chapter 3, which highlights key findings against the above Terms of Reference, and findings of greatest relevance to this review. The full version of the literature review is provided in Appendix G.

2.2 Consultations with stakeholders

Stakeholders were consulted via one of five methods: fieldwork, telephone interviews, a focus group with pre-IYSP/NTER YADM providers, an online survey, and a *proforma* for IYSP/NTER YADM providers. Some stakeholders participated in multiple forms of consultation.

The list of stakeholders to consult was provided to the consultants by FaHCSIA. This list was compiled by FaHCSIA on the basis of input from various FaHCSIA staff members and the Reference Group for the project.

All stakeholders included in the list provided to Urbis by FaHCSIA were contacted in relation to the review, and given an opportunity to participate (often via multiple consultation methods).

2.2.1 Fieldwork to Alice Springs and three remote communities

Fieldwork was conducted to Alice Springs and three remote communities in which the IYSP was operating (Mutitjulu, Imanpa and Docker River) in late February/early March 2010. This fieldwork was conducted by a team which included an Aboriginal and a non-Aboriginal consultant from Urbis, and a translator provided by the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service.

During the fieldwork the team consulted with a range of government and non-government stakeholders, funded service providers, young people who had participated in the IYSP, parents of young people who had participated, and community members.

It had been proposed to visit Finke (Apatula) as well as the other three IYSP communities noted above, but this part of the visit was cancelled due to flooding and road closures.

In the field, approximately 20% of the stakeholders consulted were young people and approximately 20% were parents or carers. While the reviewers were asked to comment on whether any of these were parents or carers of substance abusers, this proved to be difficult to ascertain, as most respondents were only willing to discuss the issue in the abstract (ie referring to the issue confronting the whole community) or with anonymity.

A list of stakeholders consulted via the fieldwork and telephone interviews is provided in Appendix C. Additional face-to-face interviews and phone interviews were conducted with officials from Attorney Generals Department and the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

2.2.2 Focus group with pre-IYSP/NTER YADM providers

A focus group was held in February 2010 in Alice Springs with five stakeholders from four pre-IYSP/NTER agencies ie those who had previously provided services in the IYSP/NTER YADM communities before these two programs commenced operation. This group involved discussion of the activities being conducted before the IYSP/NTER YADM, and the connections (if any) made between that prior work and the IYSP/NTER YADM.

2.2.3 Stakeholder telephone interviews

Approximately 23 stakeholder telephone interviews were conducted during February-April 2010. These included stakeholders who were based in locations:

▪ which were not visited on the fieldwork (including some from Finke)

▪ which were visited on the fieldwork but were unavailable to participate in the consultations.

2.2.4 Online survey

An online survey was circulated to both the IYSP and the NTER YADM stakeholders. Of the 26 responses received, one response was from a funded service provider and the rest were from other stakeholders. In total six respondents stated they were familiar with the IYSP, three respondents stated they were familiar with the NTER YADM activities, and seven respondents stated they were familiar with both. Ten respondents were not familiar with either program.

2.2.5 Funded service provider pro forma

A funded service provider *proforma* template was developed and distributed to all funded service providers to collect information on the more basic factual issues about service delivery required to be addressed by the research (e.g. the number of participants, duration of activity, number of communities assisted etc). This *proforma* document was completed by the IYSP provider (Mission Australia) and two of the NTER YADM providers.

2.3 Review of program documentation

A final component of the methodology involved analysis of program documentation provided by FaHCSIA.

In relation to the IYSP, this primarily consisted of the regular progress reports submitted by Mission Australia to FaHCSIA over the course of the project and some basic financial data provided by Mission Australia. These reports provide an overview of the activities undertaken in the communities, as well as

documentation relating to the IYSP program activities and outcomes. There are a number of qualifications relating to the data available, explained below in the limitations section and in Chapter 4.

Cognisant of these limitations, the program documentation has been drawn on to describe the following:

- the program funding provided to Mission Australia to deliver the IYSP

- the target group for the IYSP identified by Mission Australia

- a broad summary of the reported activities offered under the IYSP, by category and skills focus

- the overall proportion of client contacts by category of activity and by community

- the most frequently occurring individual activities across all communities

- the total number of client contacts or incidences of participation by age, gender and community, but not the actual number of clients assisted by the IYSP.

- the number of reported incidents of petrol sniffing since October 2009.

In relation to the NTER YADM, program documentation was available for nine of the 26 funded projects. This program documentation was variable in nature but included, for example, funding acquittal forms, and in some instances progress reports to FaHCSIA.

Project summaries (briefly setting out the intended aims and intended activities) were also provided by FaHCSIA for the IYSP and NTER YADM projects.

2.3.1   Limitations of the review

There are some limitations to the review which will assist in interpreting the findings presented in this report.

Changing context for operation of programs

The IYSP programs were introduced in the context of the NTER, in a highly charged political environment and amid specific community concerns about the manner in which health and substance abuse issues in Aboriginal communities were being addressed by sectors of Government and the media. One month after the IYSP was signed; the Federal Government launched the NTER, so that it was introduced in an environment of heightened community expectations about the extent of program provision. There was also a level of community mistrust and suspicion about the intentions of the project. Delays in or inadequate consultation with communities also fuelled disillusionment in some communities regarding the introduction of the IYSP. Toward the conclusion of the third year of the IYSP, many stakeholders queried the intent of the program (to divert young people from petrol-sniffing) as they felt that this had, in their experience, been addressed by the introduction of Opal fuel. Hence, for them, the rationale for the IYSP and the fervour and pace of its introduction seemed out of step with actual events, however it is now recognised that reduction of supply does not equate to reduction in demand.

Rapid implementation

A key finding of this evaluation explained in Chapter 5 is that the IYSP and NTER YADM projects were implemented rapidly, leading to a range of challenges in the first year of their delivery. As stated above, the introduction of the IYSP at the same time as the NTER created an environment in which there was pressure to expedite the establishment phase of the IYSP.[7] It appears that, data collection mechanisms were not fully considered and agreed before the program was rolled out in each community. There is also minimal documentation operationalising the intended outcomes of the program, (for example a program logic), which would aid a review of this nature. There is a similar paucity of program documentation relating to the NTER YADM projects.

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[7]   Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, *End of Project Report and Recommendations*, 31 March 2010 at 19.

Limitations in the data sources

Overall, there was a low response rate by stakeholders to participate in all data collection exercises conducted for the evaluation. This included very low response rates to the online survey (26 responses) and funded service provider (two providers out of 26), and a low response rate to the invitation to participate in telephone interviews (approximately 23 stakeholders in total).

Overall, the fieldwork provided the best source of data for the evaluation (although this primarily focused on the IYSP rather than the NTER YADM).

The data available from the various consultation exercises on the NTER YADM is patchy. There was a low response rate by the funded service providers to all aspects of the data collection activities. Program documentation was also available for around one third of the NTER YADM projects (nine out of 26).

In relation to the IYSP, while some program data was available, there were also some limitations in its quality. The data available provide an adequate snapshot of the volume of activity occurring in each community and the broad patterns of client services offered by the IYSP. However, the real numbers of *individual young people* involved in the activities are difficult to quantify. It is reportedly common for the same clients to attend multiple activities in any given time period and be recorded multiple times. The analysis also revealed some unanticipated extremes in the data. To prevent these anomalous events from unduly influencing the overall summary of program activity and client characteristics, the largest 5% and smallest 5% of events were excluded in terms of recorded attendance. Accordingly, an adjusted aggregate figure has been used in the analysis. The process for arriving at the adjusted aggregate is explained more fully in Chapter 4.

In summary, there are quite limited and patchy data sources available for the review. This has somewhat impacted on the findings which can be reported, and the conclusions which can be drawn from the data.

Factors which may possibly have contributed to the low response rate include:

- The funding provided to NTER YADM providers was generally fairly small amounts of funding, and in a number of instances was only one of multiple sources of funding for the project, In some cases the funding had been expended some time before (e.g. up to a year before or so). These issues may have contributed to providers not regarding it as a priority to participate in the review or being unaware that YADM was in fact a funding source for the program.

- As discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, the consultations indicate that the NTER YADM was not understood or perceived by stakeholders as a cohesive program, and there was a considerable amount of confusion about which youth projects were included within it. This may have reduced interest by stakeholders in participating in the review.

- Although the list of stakeholders provided to Urbis was very large, the consultations suggested that for at least some – and possibly many – they were nominated on the basis that due to their position/agency, it was assumed that they *should* be aware of the projects, rather than it being known that they *actually knew* much about the projects (particularly the NTER YADM).

- There may have been some element of 'evaluation fatigue', since there have been at least several other evaluations or reviews conducted by FaHCSIA in the last few years in these communities, including at least some of the same stakeholders (e.g. the Review of CAPSSU conducted in 2009). A few stakeholders indicated that since they had participated in a previous evaluation for FaHCSIA (e.g. the review of CAPSSU a year ago), they were reluctant to participate in the current review. It is also likely that other agencies (e.g. other funding organisations) have conducted evaluations over this period which involved at least some of the same stakeholders.

Nonetheless, it is also important to note that there was a considerable amount of consistency between the findings of the various data sources in relation to both the IYSP and the NTER YADM. This triangulation of data sources therefore provides further support for the findings provided in this report.

3   Key lessons from the literature

A comprehensive literature review was undertaken during the first phase of the project. The full review (including all reference sources) is included at Appendix G. The following summary outlines the key findings of the literature review that are most relevant to the project, against the Terms of Reference for the literature review. The topics covered include:

- definitions

- manifestations and patterns of use

- alignment of the PSS and other policy initiatives

- effectiveness of petrol sniffing interventions

- models of and approaches to Indigenous youth work. [8]

3.1   Definitions

Volatile substance use (VSU) is the deliberate inhalation of a volatile substance in order to achieve a change in mental state. Volatile substances, also known as *inhalants*, are usually classified into the following groups: solvents (including glues and petrol), gases, aerosols and nitrites (National Institute on Drug Abuse 2005).

People who sniff petrol are commonly defined by frequency of use, and sniffers may be described as being experimental (has sniffed but no evidence in the past six months), regular (has sniffed regularly in the past six months but is not a heavy user) or heavy (has used at least weekly over the past six months) sniffers, or non-sniffers (has not sniffed in the past six months; D'Abbs and Shaw 2007).

3.2   Manifestations and patterns of use

3.2.1   Worldwide patterns of use

Inhalant abuse occurs throughout the world, in both developed and developing countries, among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Inhalant use has been identified as a problem amongst many Indigenous peoples around the world, including Canadian, First Nations, Inuit, American Indians, Central and South American Indigenous, Indians and Pakistanis, black South Africans, Indigenous Australians, Maori, Pacific Islanders and Roma in Eastern Europe (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008). However, the highest rates of 'lifetime' inhalant use (i.e. use at any time during a person's life) are recorded in the developed world, e.g. the USA, Ireland, United Kingdom and Australia (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008).

Across the world, volatile substance misuse most commonly occurs among young people from poor minority groups. Poverty and marginalisation, rather than cultural attributes of particular groups, appear to be the critical determinants (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; Midford et al 2006).

3.2.2   Australian patterns of use

The prevalence of petrol sniffing in Australia is difficult to gauge accurately because the data are not very reliable, due primarily to a lack of consistent and reliable data collection mechanisms (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; Gray et al 2006).

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[8]   Note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people are referred to in this section only as Indigenous peoples to maintain consistency with the literature. The remainder of the report refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people unless referring to a direct quote.

In population terms, petrol sniffing and use of other inhalants by Indigenous people is relatively uncommon, however the practice has become endemic in particular communities and over a wider area over time (Australian Senate 2006). Frequency of use is associated with location, with remote locations having a significantly higher proportion of chronic users than urban locations (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008). Petrol sniffing is a variable, fluctuating phenomenon and clear patterns have not been established, although some trends toward increased use appear in some communities, e.g. during wet season, ceremonial events and community events such as football matches and school holidays (D'Abbs and MacLean 2000). Rates of use vary greatly between communities and are dependent on a number of factors, including access to aromatic petrol supplies (either at petrol stations or stored petrol), direct and indirect interventions that are present, and movement of users (Midford et al 2010). Prevalence estimates vary considerably, due to the difficulties collecting the data, however it is generally agreed that overall petrol sniffing incidence in Australian Indigenous communities has declined in the past few years, in some communities by up to 80% (D'Abbs and Shaw 2007).

Indigenous people sniffing petrol tend to be aged between eight and 30 years of age, with a concentration in the 12–19 years range, however a recent trend suggests that people sniffing petrol are getting older, with users in their 30s being reported. There have also been some reports of petrol sniffing occurring among children as young as 5-6 years of age (Australian Senate 2006).

3.2.3 Links between VSU and other substance abuse

People who use inhalants often use other drugs as well. Poly drug use is relatively common amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008). There is some evidence for a correlation between abuse of petrol and other licit substances (e.g. alcohol, tobacco and solvents) and illicit substances (e.g. marijuana; National Inhalant Abuse Taskforce 2006). A reduction in the availability of sniffable fuel has in some instances been accompanied by an increase in other substance use. There are concerns that interventions targeting petrol (or alcohol) supply can result in shifting users to other forms of substance misuse such as aerosols, paint, cannabis and kava (Australian Senate 2006).

3.3 Alignment of the PSS with other Indigenous policy initiatives

The PSS does not sit alone in engaging with the problem of petrol sniffing. The key intersecting initiatives at a national level are:

- *National Drug Strategy 2004-2009* (NDS). The PSS aligns closely with the public health model and the objectives of the NDS with its multi-pronged, prevention, intervention and treatment design.

- *The National Drug Strategy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Complementary Action Plan 2003-2009* is a supplementary framework that sits under the NDS and addresses drug issues facing Indigenous peoples. The Plan's key result areas overlap significantly with the action areas of the Central Desert Eight Point Plan and the PSS.

- *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* (OID) reports. The PSS directly addresses five of the OID indicators - life expectancy, disability, suicide and self-harm, family and community violence, and imprisonment and juvenile justice detention.

- *Closing the Gap.* Whilst the package does not include any direct reference to tackling petrol sniffing, the investment in health infrastructure in regional and remote communities, and the healthy living and workforce initiatives are likely to have an indirect impact on the strategies for tackling petrol sniffing in those communities.

- *NTER.* Comprises a range of health, welfare, education, housing and land reforms and particular strategies addressing drug and alcohol abuse including night patrols, coordination initiatives, youth alcohol diversion services and youth diversionary initiatives.

- *Petrol Sniffing Prevention Program* (PSPP). DoHA's follow-up to the Comgas Scheme provides subsidised Opal fuel to petrol retailers and supplementary activities such as monitoring of treatment and rehabilitation services, communication activities and data collection. The PSPP overlaps with

the PSS in that Opal fuel, and the supporting communication and data activities, are provided to the communities within the designated region of the PSS. DoHA is also a key partner in the PSS. The PSPP not only aligns with the objectives and activities of the PSS, it is critical to its operation.

3.4 Effectiveness of petrol sniffing interventions

It is important to preface any discussion of the effectiveness of petrol sniffing interventions by noting that there is very little quality evidence available to rate the effectiveness of interventions in this area.

3.4.1 Range of interventions

Petrol sniffing interventions are typically classified according to the broader drug strategy model, under *supply, demand* and *harm reduction*, and *law enforcement*.

Supply reduction

- *Fuel replacement.* The Comgas Scheme (using Avgas as a replacement for petrol) showed that the strategy of replacing sniffable fuel with non-sniffable fuel was a successful method of reducing levels of petrol sniffing in a range of situations (Shaw et al 2004). However, the effectiveness of the strategy depended on three key factors: the distance to the nearest outlet for unleaded petrol; the length of time Avgas had been used; and the types of other interventions being implemented for reducing petrol sniffing (Shaw et al 2004). The Comgas evaluation strongly recommended a regional approach because availability of petrol from nearby communities not participating in the scheme significantly impacted on the effectiveness of the strategy (Shaw et al 2004).

- Opal unleaded fuel was developed in 2004. It was a fuel designed specifically as a petrol sniffing intervention which contains low levels of the aromatics which provide users with the 'high' they seek (Australian Senate 2009; D'Abbs and Shaw 2008). Opal has been seen as an improvement on Avgas because it does not contain lead and has been shown through scientific tests to have no negative impacts on car and truck engines, although Opal may present difficulties for low idling engines such as outboard motors (Australian Senate 2009). The introduction of Opal has had a significant impact on the number of people sniffing petrol and the frequency of sniffing activity (Australian Senate 2009; D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; D'Abbs and Shaw 2008). However the evaluation of Opal found that the greatest, lasting improvements have been made where supply reduction strategies were accompanied by a range of demand reduction strategies such as good quality youth programs and other primary and secondary interventions (D'Abbs and Shaw 2008).

- *Locking up supplies* - using fences, floodlights, locking petrol caps and guard dogs. Such strategies have not been successful.

- *Addition of ethyl mercapatan* to petrol, which induces nausea and vomiting when inhaled. The strategy was dropped as it made other residents nauseous and sniffers quickly learned how to evaporate the ethyl mercapatan (D'Abbs and Shaw 2008).

Demand reduction

Demand reduction strategies aim to reduce petrol sniffing by working with potential or actual users to keep them away from the substance.

- *Educational interventions* have targeted users and at risk youth, parents, professionals such as youth and health workers, and the general population (e.g. in relation to Opal fuel; D'Abbs and MacLean 2008). There is little evidence of the effectiveness of such programs with users and at risk youth - people sniffing petrol are generally aware of the dangers but are indifferent to them and 'scare tactics' are often counter-productive (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008). There does appear to be value in education and information for health workers, parents and members of councils, but their implementation has been inconsistent and short-lived (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008).

- *Recreational (or diversionary) interventions,* which provide alternative activities that prevent youth becoming bored, can be an effective *complementary* strategy in preventing volatile substance misuse in remote communities, if designed and implemented well (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008).

However the limitations of recreational programs as a VSU intervention must be understood. Recreational programs are most effective at preventing petrol sniffing and other VSU among non-sniffers and occasional sniffers, but their capacity to engage chronic sniffers is limited (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008). Therefore recreational programs should not be seen as the primary component of a petrol sniffing strategy for a community, and supply reduction interventions should be well established before introducing youth workers or recreational programs. Recreational programs should not replace, but should rather operate alongside treatment and rehabilitation programs, because of the difficulties of at the same time engaging chronic sniffers and retaining non-sniffers (who may be intimidated by chronic users) in the program.

▪ Sustainability is a major problem for recreational and youth worker programs, with programs folding due to funding cycles ending, difficulties in attracting or sustaining staff, lack of infrastructure to support staff and, in some instances, lack of community support or conflict (Select Committee on Substance Abuse in the Community 2004). The patchy availability and variable quality of youth programs across the Central Australian region, and a lack of coordination between Opal provision and the provision of youth programs are also key obstacles (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008).

▪ *Counselling and family support.* There is little evidence to support the effectiveness of counselling interventions for Indigenous (or non-Indigenous) inhalant misuse. However, some research from remote Indigenous communities indicate that counselling and family support approaches helped individuals to break their dependence on petrol sniffing and heal within their families and communities and the importance of involving families in the healing process is widely acknowledged (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; Mosey 2000; Shaw 2002).

▪ *Treatment and rehabilitation.* There have been few VSU-specific treatment interventions in Australia and there is little evidence regarding the efficacy of treatment and rehabilitation programs for petrol sniffing (Select Committee on Substance Abuse in the Community 2007). To date, VSU treatment and rehabilitation programs have tended to be modelled on alcohol or other drug treatment programs (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008). It has also been suggested that alcohol and other drugs services are reluctant to engage with people sniffing petrol or foster the expertise for working with people sniffing petrol due to petrol sniffing being viewed as a youth problem or health problem, rather than a drug problem (D'Abbs 2006).

▪ Some researchers argue for culturally appropriate brief interventions by health professionals, development of therapeutic relationships with young inhalant users and 'resiliency and holistic' models such as those used among Canadian indigenous youth (Australian Senate 2006, 2009; Dell, Dell and Hopkins 2005) . The evidence for the effectiveness of group therapy approaches and court-mandated treatment is particularly poor (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; Jones et al 2006; Pritchard, Mugavin and Swan 2007).

▪ The NT and SA Governments are developing inhalant specific residential rehabilitation facilities with an Indigenous focus to be located in Alice Springs, Darwin and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands (National Inhalant Abuse Taskforce, 2006). However, there is very little empirical evidence to support the use of residential rehabilitation for Indigenous people sniffing petrol, in part because very few culturally appropriate substance misuse residential programs exist, and partly because of a lack of evidence about the long term efficacy of residential rehabilitation for people sniffing petrol (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008). Another critical avenue for treatment in Australia is the use of outstation or Homeland Centres for rehabilitation, which allow people sniffing petrol to get away from the petrol and their sniffing peers for a while, become engaged with other meaningful activities (recreational and work) and reconnect with culture and the social hierarchy (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; Midford et al 2010). Three critical success factors have been identified for homeland programs – securing funding, infrastructure and resources; development of a suitable and sustainable model; and the importance of community involvement both in the outstation program and in follow-up (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008).

▪ *Community based interventions.* Some interventions directly target petrol sniffing as an activity, while others target the social antecedents of petrol sniffing such as youth boredom, low self esteem, family violence, mental illness, language literacy and numeracy, family breakdown, social isolation, and disadvantage. The most successful programs adopted a regional approach, complementing

service provision with brokerage and advocacy activities aimed at promoting local community capacity; had available town-based staff to support and reduce isolation of community based workers; and had support from a wide range of mainstream and community based organisations (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; Parliament of Victoria Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee 2002).

Harm reduction

There have been very few harm minimisation approaches as most communities tend to aim for abstinence (Midford et al 2010). Strategies have included education initiatives which provide advice about how to sniff less dangerously, and in Victoria, the controversial 'supervised sniffing room (Parliament of Victoria Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee 2002)..

Law enforcement

▪ *Legislation.* Use of petrol or other solvents as inhalants is not illegal in any Australian jurisdiction. Nevertheless, some States/Territories have sought to enable police to respond in a more targeted way to VSU. These powers include, for example, the ability of police to detain an intoxicated person in a public place, search for and confiscate volatile substances; prohibition on the sale of spray paints to people under 18 years old; the direction by a magistrate of an inhalant abuser to treatment; and (in NT) the creation of 'management areas' which gives legal recognition to locally-specific laws relating to the possession, supply and use of volatile substances (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; Gray et al 2006).

▪ *Community by-laws.* A number of Aboriginal communities have enacted by-laws that forbid petrol sniffing/inhalant use, such as those under the *Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act* 1981. This strategy has met with mixed success, in some places being undermined by the lack of adequate and safe facilities to take apprehended inhalant users, the lack of services to which to refer users, or the absence of police to enforce the by-laws (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; National Inhalant Abuse Task Force 2006).

▪ *Community policing.* Other strategies have included engagement of Aboriginal community based police officers or liaison officers, community or night patrols which provide safe transport/transit to young people, and proactive policing operations that conduct preventive activities (such as Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk [SAID] in Alice Springs) and include referral to health and welfare agencies (Australian Senate 2006, 2009; D'Abbs and MacLean 2008).

In terms of effectiveness, legal sanctions appear to be more effective in reducing supply than in reducing demand (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008).

3.4.2 Success factors for interventions

The following success factors have been identified from the literature:

▪ *A range of primary, secondary and tertiary strategies.* Interventions are most effective when they comprise a range of simultaneous and permanent primary, secondary and tertiary strategies and least effective when they address only one aspect of the problem in isolation (Australian Senate 2006; National Inhalent Abuse Task Force 2006).

▪ *Prevention and early intervention.* The people that are hardest to help stop sniffing are chronic sniffers: they are difficult to engage and far less likely to stop. The research therefore supports a focus on prevention and early intervention (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; Shaw et al 2004).

▪ *Effective and coordinated interventions.* The key success factors for effective programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are known, and include cooperative approaches between Indigenous people, government and the non-profit and private sector; community involvement in program design and decision-making; good governance; and ongoing government support. Whole of government approaches to addressing petrol sniffing have for many years been identified as being critical to effecting change (Australian Senate 2006, 2009; D'Abbs and MacLean, 2008; Lubman 2006).

- *Community ownership and participation*. Community control, support and participation are critical factors to the implementation of a successful intervention (Dawe et al 2006; MacLean 2008).

- *Regional approach*. Numerous evaluation and inquiry reports and research studies have identified the need for regional approaches in tackling petrol sniffing, due to the high mobility of users, the interaction between communities and the limited resources available to remote communities. The gains made in a community through supply and demand reduction strategies can easily be undone if access to petrol supplies is re-established elsewhere in the region (D'Abbs and MacLean 2008; DoHA and DIMA 2005; DoHA and FaHCSIA, 2008).

- *Understanding and responding to peer group influences*, which are believed to help maintain petrol sniffing in communities (Lubman 2006).

3.5   Models and approaches to Indigenous youth work

3.5.1   Models of youth work

A number of youth work models have developed over the past century or more, each with its own ideological focus. These models define the reasons for youth disadvantage and, consequently the ideal ways for assisting youth, in quite different ways – from the treatment and reform models through to advocacy and empowerment models. In practice, many youth services and agencies tend to incorporate aspects of more than one model.

A major issue in the area of youth work, particularly in relation to Indigenous communities, has been the 'youth worker versus recreation officer' debate. A *sport and recreation officer* provides specific diversionary activities on a regular basis that are aimed at ensuring that the participants enjoy an active and healthy lifestyle through participation in a planned activity. They are typically trained in fields such as physical education or diversion therapy. A *youth worker* has a broader skill set that allows him/her to identify issues a young person may be experiencing and offer them appropriate assistance or referral to other services. A trained youth worker can also provide case management to individuals and families who may be experiencing problems. They are typically trained in social work/youth work with a significant component of psychology. Many in the sector claim that recreation officers do not have the skill set to adequately engage with many young people's complex psychological and social issues. The literature is clear that complex substance abuse and antisocial behaviour problems with youth require more than just sport and recreation programs to effectively impact on young peoples' behaviour.

There is a considerable range of youth programs provided in Indigenous communities. Whilst many seek to target at risk youth, those following good practice principles target services more broadly. Some of the main types of youth programs include:

- sport and recreation programs, e.g. football, basketball and table tennis competitions, adventure activities such as kayaking, rock climbing, canyoning, BMX, school holiday programs, discos

- arts and cultural activities, traditional dance groups

- recreational camps, work camps

- homeland/outstation retreats and rehabilitation

- youth centres, drop in centres, referral services

- educational programs, e.g. homework centres, tutoring

- mentoring and leadership programs

- group counselling, casework, family relationships support

- life skills programs

- substance abuse programs

- accommodation services

- youth diversion programs.

3.5.2 Good practice principles for youth work in an Aboriginal community

The following principles have been identified as good practice in the context of carrying out youth work in Indigenous communities;

- Broadly targeting the program to include youth who are non-sniffers, occasional and chronic sniffers, inclusion of measures to avoid stigmatising drug users (including avoiding giving sniffers preferential treatment), and measures for managing chronic users' erratic behaviour to avoid pushing away non-users.

- Focus on skill and capacity development and community development.

- Offering a range of purposeful, interesting, exciting, culturally appropriate and educational activities, including opportunities for 'safe' risk-taking that are a real alternative to sniffing (e.g. adventure activities, horse-breaking, rock climbing); also activities for males and females that go beyond sport and are age-appropriate.

- Employment of suitably experienced and knowledgeable staff who are sensitive to community needs, have with the requisite skills (e.g. four wheel drive vehicles, hunting, painting, crisis support, sporting activities, applying for grants); and inclusion of both male and female staff.

- Provision of the program on a flexible basis, after school hours, evenings, weekends and holidays; consistency and regularity of activities.

- Use of local resources and infrastructure.

- Inclusion of sustainability provisions, e.g. in relation to ongoing funding, preventing staff burnout, community support.

- Promotion of self-esteem and coherence for young people in their lives with their families.

- Involvement of role models and promotion of strong intergenerational relationships.

- Local knowledge and knowledge of families (FaHCSIA 2008).

There are a number of documented challenges to providing youth services in remote areas of Australia, including a 'patchwork of programs and providers', difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified and experienced workers, lack of infrastructure, high levels of need, risks associated with youth work where substance abuse is an issue, and short term funding arrangements (D'Abbs and Shaw 2008). As a result, there continues to be substantial levels of unmet need in many remote areas, across the spectrum of youth services.

3.5.3 Indigenous youth drug diversion

Diversion programs involve the use of the criminal justice system to provide alternatives to custodial sentences, including referral to education and treatment (Hughes and Ritter 2008). Diversion can mean two things: diversion out of the system without further conditions, such as cautioning or fines ('true' diversion), which accounts for around one-quarter of diversion instances; and diversion into treatment/education ('new' diversion), which has become the most common form. The main purpose of 'new' diversion is to be able to address the causes of drug use and crime (Hughes and Ritter 2008).

In all jurisdictions, Indigenous people are less likely to be referred and accepted into diversion programs. There is also little evidence for the effectiveness of drug diversion programs for Indigenous offenders. It has been suggested that the cultural appropriateness of programs needs to be reviewed. The efficacy of court-mandated treatment, as available in the NT, remains unclear (Hughes and Ritter 2008; Polk 2003).

Another development in diversion that has shown promise has been the introduction of Indigenous courts and restorative justice programs in many jurisdictions (Polk 2003).

3.6 Conclusion

Prevalence data appears to confirm that far fewer people are sniffing petrol in Australian Indigenous communities now than five years ago, before the introduction of Opal fuel and the targeted and coordinated campaigns that were introduced to eliminate the practice (D'Abbs and Shaw, 2008; Nganampa Health Council 2008). The research available supports the following approaches to minimising petrol sniffing in Indigenous communities:

- Use of a range of simultaneous and permanent primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies.

- Implementation of demand and harm reduction strategies in order to maximise the effectiveness of supply reduction initiatives. Strategies such as provision of alternative activities for youth, community development and capacity building, community education and treatment and rehabilitation should accompany Opal fuel replacement and legal sanctions on inhalant supply if the problem of petrol sniffing is to be effectively tackled.

- Regional implementation approaches.

- Consistency and persistence in the implementation of strategies – better results are observed where strategies have been maintained over time, which includes provision of sustainable funding.

- Coordination across the government and non-government sectors.

- Community-driven approaches and the local 'embeddedness' of programs.

- A focus on prevention and early intervention in order to prevent uptake and reduce escalation of petrol sniffing.

- Programs which include good practice principles of youth work such as addressing the causes and contexts of youth substance abuse, broadening the focus of the target group, broadening the focus and range of activities to include culturally appropriate educational activities using local resources and build upon family and community relationships and which are sustainable.

- Continued development of data collection systems and evaluation processes to help build the evidence base for interventions.

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4 Reported activities and outputs of the IYSP

This chapter provides a descriptive overview of the reported activities and outputs of the IYSP, based on Mission Australia's records and its biannual status reports prepared over the course of the program. This includes the range and type of activities conducted, and the profile of community participation in activities. It also includes a summary of the number of reported petrol sniffing incidents in the four communities based on Mission Australia's records and CAPSSU data since October 2009, when CAPSSU began recording these incidents.

4.1 Overview of data sources

Mission Australia was required to report to FaHCSIA biannually on its achievements against the IYSP terms of reference. As part of this reporting process, Mission Australia kept records of the activities undertaken in each of the four communities, including the nature of the activity, when it was run, who ran it and how many clients attended (disaggregated or 'sorted' by age and gender).

There are some subtle but important qualifications with how this data can be analysed. The records are adequate for providing a snapshot of the volume of activity occurring in each community and the broad patterns of client services offered by the IYSP. However, the real numbers of *individual young people* involved in the activities are somewhat obscured, as it is reportedly common for the same clients to attend multiple activities in any given time period. For example, if an individual male client attends a basketball session five times in a week, he will be counted five times in that week, rather than as a single participant. As a consequence, the data does not enable an accurate picture of individual client numbers and attendance.

The analysis has also revealed some unanticipated extremes in the data, with a small number of events showing attendance in excess of 150 people (up to 400). According to Mission Australia, when certain activities coincide with major events, such as sports carnivals, the populations of these small communities may swell substantially. However, to prevent these anomalous events from unduly influencing the overall summary of program activity and client characteristics, we have excluded the largest 5% and smallest 5% of events in terms of recorded attendance.

The analysis in this section is therefore based on an *adjusted* aggregate figure. This adjustment also excludes events outside the valid range of Jan 2008 – March 2010 and events with no recorded participants.

Mindful of these qualifications, this section draws on the available data sources to describe the following:

- the program funding provided to Mission Australia to deliver the IYSP

- the target group for the IYSP identified by Mission Australia

- a broad summary of the reported activities offered under the IYSP, by category and skills focus

- the overall proportion of client contacts by category of activity and by community

- the most frequently occurring individual activities across all communities

- the total number of client contacts or incidences of participation by age, gender and community

- the number of reported incidents of petrol sniffing since October 2009.

4.2 Program funding

The program funding provided to Mission Australia to deliver the IYSP was granted jointly by three Government agencies, AGD, DEEWR and FaHCSIA. The total funding received by Mission Australia from all agencies over the course of the program was $7,545,574.00. This included:

- $5,720,707.00 from FaHCSIA

- $443,811.00 from DEEWR (then DEST)

- $1,381,056.00 from AGD.

Table 1 below, presented in Mission Australia's *End of Project Report,* provides a breakdown of the funded received from each agency.

Table 1 – Program funding – Mission Australia

Payment Type	FaHCSIA ($)	DEST ($)	AGD ($)	TOTAL $ (excluding GST)
Establishment Payment — made on signing of this funding agreement	449,939	51,168	157,548	658,655
One-off Sport and Recreation payment (30 April 2007)	0	0	168,000	168,000
First Periodic Payment (1st PP) —made on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory First Status/Achievement Report showing acceptable progress against the required Activities (on 8 June 2007)	703,371	64,541	139,917	907,829
2nd PP — made on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory Second Status/Achievement Report and 6 Month Review showing acceptable progress against the required Activities (30 September 2007)	652,386	64,541	139,917	856,844
3rd PP —made on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory Third Status/Achievement Report showing acceptable progress against the required Activities (8 December 2007)	652,387	64,542	139,917	856,846
4th PP —made on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory Fourth Status/Achievement Report showing acceptable progress against the required Activities (8 June 2008)	1,001,053	99,509	214,851	1,315,413
5th PP —made on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory Fifth Status/Achievement Report showing acceptable progress against the required Activities (8 December 2008)	1,001,053	99,510	214,851	1,315,413
6th PP —made on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory sixth Status/Achievement Report showing acceptable progress against the required Activities (8 June 2009)*	522,319 **438,501**	0	110,007 **68,685**	632,326
7th PP — made on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory seventh Status/Achievement Report showing acceptable progress against the required Activities (8 December 2009).*	522,319 **438,501**	0	110,007 **68,685**	632,326
Final Payment —made on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory End of Project Report showing acceptable progress against the required Activities (31 March 2010) *	522,319 **438,501**	0	110,007 **15,000**	632,326
TOTAL (ORIGINAL CONTRACT)	6,027,146	443,812	1,505,021	7,975,978
TOTAL (AS VARIED)	5,720,707	443,811	1,327,371	7,545,574

*These payments were varied in October 2009. New amounts are identified in bold type.

Source: Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, *End of Project Report and Recommendations*, 31 March 2010 at 16.

*In addition, Mission Australia received from the Northern Territory Department of Health and Families a total of $58,482 in 2008/09 and $24,250 in 2009/10 for School Holiday and other recreation programs

4.3   Program expenditure

There was some basic data available relating to program expenditure for this review. On the basis of the information provided it is possible to describe, in general terms, the main components of program expenditure. Financial acquittal statements for the years 2006-07 and 2008-09 years were made available in the later stages of the review. A basic analysis of these statements will be provided in the final report.

The consultations provided some more detail about how funding was spent over the course of the IYSP. Mission Australia provided no fixed building infrastructure to any community. Temporary infrastructure was provided in the form of two types of Shipping Containers (standard 20 foot container and insulated / air-conditioned model) supplied to each of Apatula, Imanpa and Docker River in the beginning of the project. Their cost came out of the Mission Australia IYSP budget and they were utilised as storage and office space at the early stage. The containers were used for other aspects of the project once the Main Compound Building (provided by FaHCSIA) was delivered from the Woomera Detention Centre stockpile.

Separate funding was provided by AGD, to the value of over $1,846,735 to build the Finke Recreational Hall which opened in 2009. The Attorney-General's Department also funded $181865 and $133,380 for the refurbishment of the recreation halls in Imanpa and Docker River, respectively.

DEEWR funding provided for the Education Co-ordinator salary and motor vehicle cost. The remaining DEEWR funding provided to the IYSP was contractually confined to the after-school educational aspects of the activities for community members and local staff training as potential future Youth Workers. There were also educational resources purchased for use in the broad range of educational activities on each community.

The Youth Worker housing, as specified in the original contract, became available on the three communities in the latter part of 2008. This housing was funded as part of the total IYSP, but it was never part of the Mission Australia budget.

4.4   Target group

Mission Australia describe their target client group for service delivery as young people aged between 5-25 years in the four communities of Apatula, Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Docker River. However, these targets are at variance with the youth target group originally identified by FaHCSIA for the program, of 10-25 years. This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

At any one time, the population of the four communities fluctuate. In Table 2, Mission Australia has presented its 'best guesstimate' of the number of people, by age and sex, within the target group on each community.

Table 2 – Target group

Community	Females numbers in age range				Males numbers in age range				Total
	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-25	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-25	
Apatula	4	2	9	10	13	12	8	15	73
Docker River	24	21	22	20	15	14	22	20	158
Imanpa	12	7	8	12	6	9	12	17	83
Mutitjulu	11	12	12	8	19	17	12	8	99

Source: Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, *End of Project Report and Recommendations*, 31 March 2010 at 1.

4.5   Range and type of activities

The IYSP program documentation suggests that the program has involved a very high volume of general activity across each of the four communities. These activities comprise a diverse range of recreational, social, educational and cultural activities. The following table sets out the matrix used by Mission Australia, indicating how these activities are categorised and their respective skills focus.

Table 3 – Matrix of activities and skills focus used by Mission Australia

Activity	Activity Type	Skill Focus 1	Skill Focus 2
attend sports carnival	Recreational	Life Skills	Leadership
Auskick	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
band practice	Educational	Life Skills	Employability
basketball	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
BBQ & disco	Social	Life Skills	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY
beauty workshop	Educational	Employability	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY
BMX	Recreational	Life Skills	Leadership
bush trip	Cultural	Leadership	Life Skills
CD & DVD burning	Recreational	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY	Leadership
CD & DVD watching	Recreational	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY	Life Skills
ceramics	Educational	Employability	Life Skills
Clean-up	Social	Leadership	Life Skills
climbing	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
computer room	Social	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY	Leadership

Activity	Activity Type	Skill Focus 1	Skill Focus 2
cooking or cook-up	Cultural	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY	Leadership
cultural excursion	Cultural	Leadership	Life Skills
dancing	Recreational	Life Skills	Leadership
drug & alcohol workshop	Educational	Leadership	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY
educational activities	Educational	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY	Leadership
face painting	Cultural	Life Skills	Leadership
football game	Recreational	Life Skills	Leadership
football training	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
gymnasium	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
hair care	Educational	Employability	Life Skills
haircuts	Educational	Employability	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY
homework session	Educational	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY	Leadership
hungry night	Social	Leadership	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY
hygiene	Educational	Life Skills	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY
lunch session	Social	Employability	Life Skills
mechanical workshop	Educational	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY	Employability
movie night	Social	Leadership	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY
music	Social	Leadership	Life Skills
nutrition workshop	Educational	Life Skills	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY
painting	Cultural	Life Skills	Employability
pizza night	Social	Employability	Leadership
poster design	Educational	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY	Life Skills
pottery	Cultural	Life Skills	Employability
reading	Educational	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY	Leadership
road safety workshop	Educational	Leadership	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Activity	Activity Type	Skill Focus 1	Skill Focus 2
rollerblading	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
safe families workshop	Social	Leadership	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY
Sandhills	Social	Life Skills	Leadership
school drop off	Educational	Leadership	Life Skills
school pick up	Social	Leadership	Life Skills
second hand clothing	Educational	Life Skills	Leadership
sewing	Educational	LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY	Employability
snooker or pool	Recreational	Life Skills	Leadership
soccer	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
softball game	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
softball training	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
swimming	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
tjala hunt	Cultural	Leadership	Life Skills
totem tennis	Recreational	Life Skills	Leadership
town excursion	Social	Leadership	Life Skills
volleyball	Recreational	Leadership	Life Skills
welding	Educational	Leadership	Employability

Source: Mission Australia, *Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, Status – Achievement Report # 7*, May-November 2009.

4.6   Profile of community participation in activities

Mission Australia's attendance records reveal a picture of the overall volume of participation as measured by the number of incidences of participation, referred to in this section as the number of 'client contacts'.

4.6.1   Profile of activities

Over the course of the program (July 2007- March 2010)[9], there were 101,806 client contacts overall across all four communities based on the adjusted aggregate base (ie excluding the largest 5% and smallest 5% of events – see the discussion earlier for detail).

These figures indicate that, on average, over the course of the program, there were around 712 client contacts occurring each week across all four communities. The numbers of client contacts vary according to each community with an average of 240 client contacts each week in Mutitjulu, 179 client

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[9]   The contract with Mission Australia was signed on 7 April 2007. For the purposes of calculating weekly activity, the program dates are taken to begin in the following financial year, July 2007 through to the end of the program in March 2010. This is 143 weeks in total.

contacts each week in Docker, 152 client contacts each week in Apatula (Finke) and 141 client contacts each week in Imanpa. Certain events have reportedly attracted participants from outside the local areas, who would also be included in the attendance records.

As part of our analysis, each of the individual activities was classified by Urbis according to whether they were broadly recreational, educational, cultural or social, based on the matrix compiled by Mission Australia.[10] Figure 1 below shows that over three quarters of activities occurring across all communities were either recreational (54%) or educational (23%). Educational activities include reading, cooking lessons, bushtrips and computer sessions.

Figure 1 – Overall proportion of client contacts by category of activity (n=101,806)
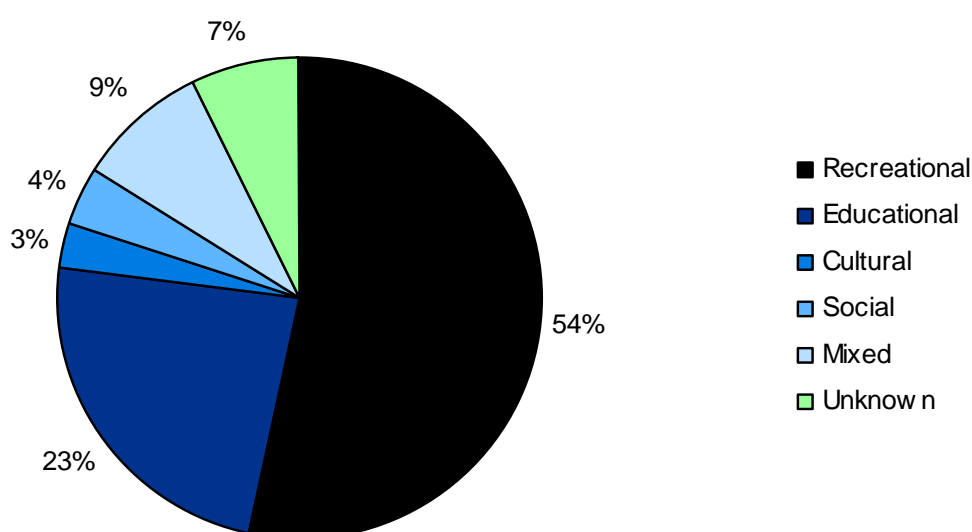
The most popular activities undertaken across all communities are depicted below in Figure 2. Sports, including basketball, football, cricket swimming and softball were the most popular type of activity across the communities, comprising 27% of all client contacts. The table in Appendix C lists the complete set of the activities undertaken and the frequency in which they occurred in the communities.

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[10] Some activities fell outside this matrix. A table indicating how these additional activities were grouped is included in Appendix C.

urbis

Figure 2 – Top 10 individual activities across all communities (adjusted n=101,806)

Activity	Percentage
Sports	27%
CD & DVD watching	6%
Art & craft	6%
Cooking	6%
Snooker/pool	5%
Computer/electronic games	3%
Lunch rewards/session	3%
Music - Band/lessons	2%
Bush trip / camping	2%
Education (general)	1%

Percentage of total activities attended
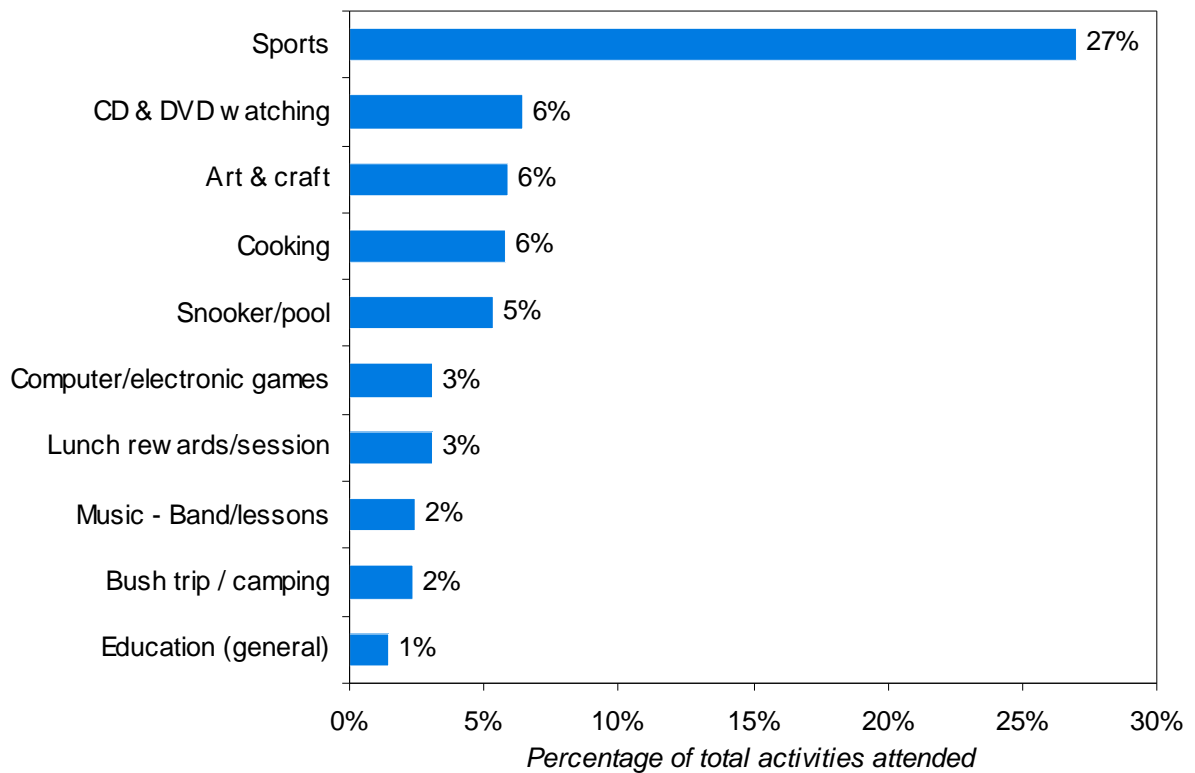
The broad emphasis on recreation and education is replicated in each community (see Figures 3 to 6 below).

Figure 3 – Proportion of clients by category of activity (Docker River) (n=25, 522)

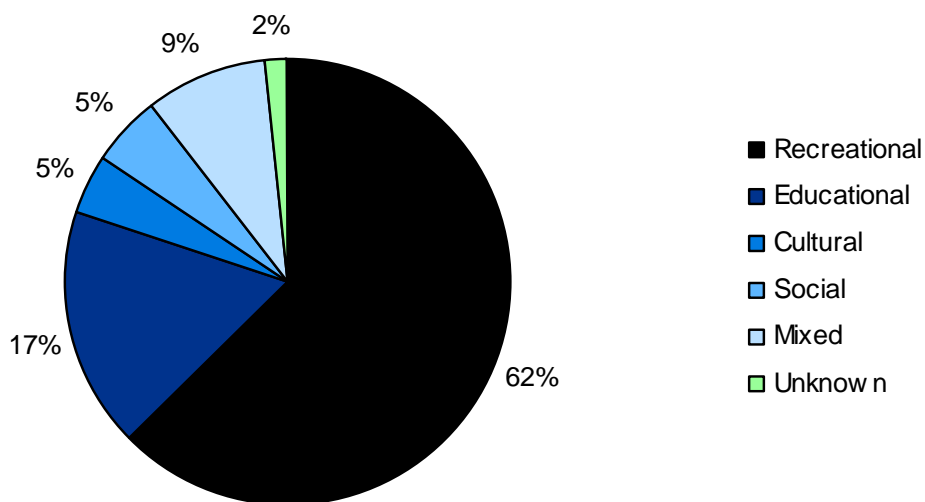| Category	Percentage
Recreational	62%
Educational	17%
Cultural	5%
Social	5%
Mixed	9%
Unknown	2%

Figure 4 – Proportion of clients by category of activity (Imanpa) (n=20,272)
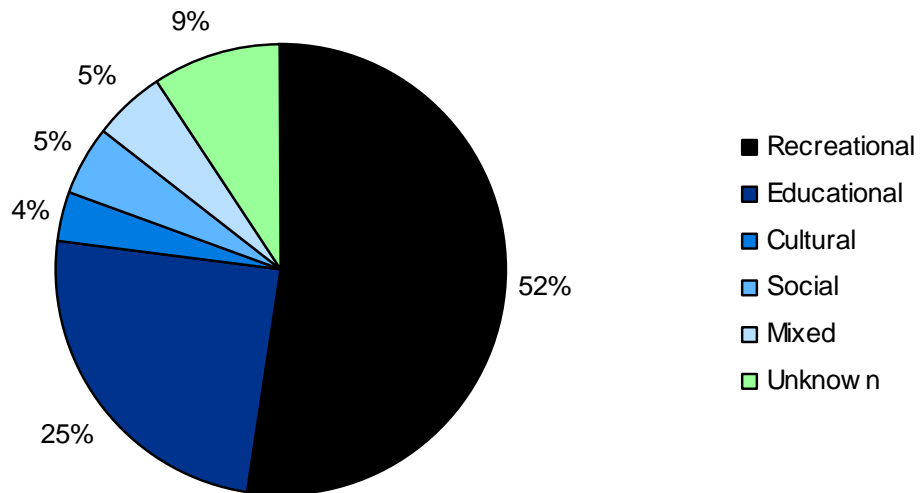
Figure 5 – Proportion of clients by category of activity (Mutitjulu) (n=34,313)
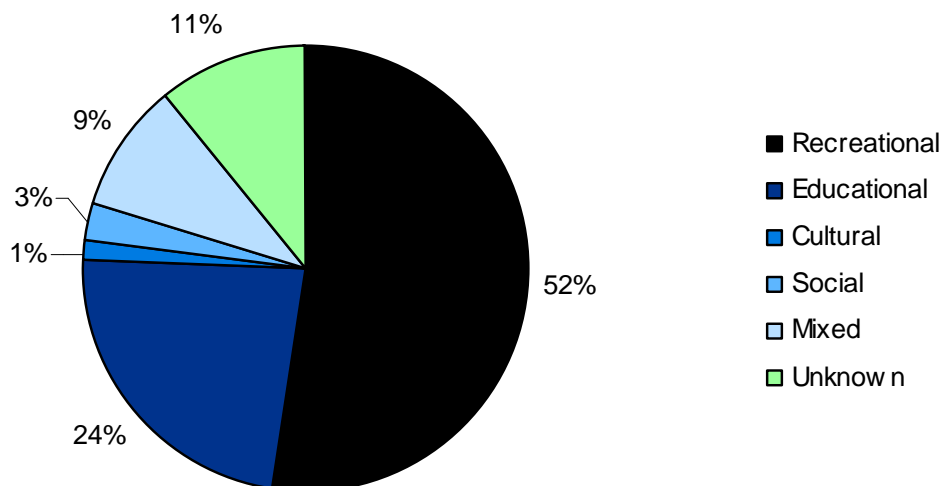
Figure 6 – Proportion of clients by category of activity (Apatula/Finke) (n=21,692)
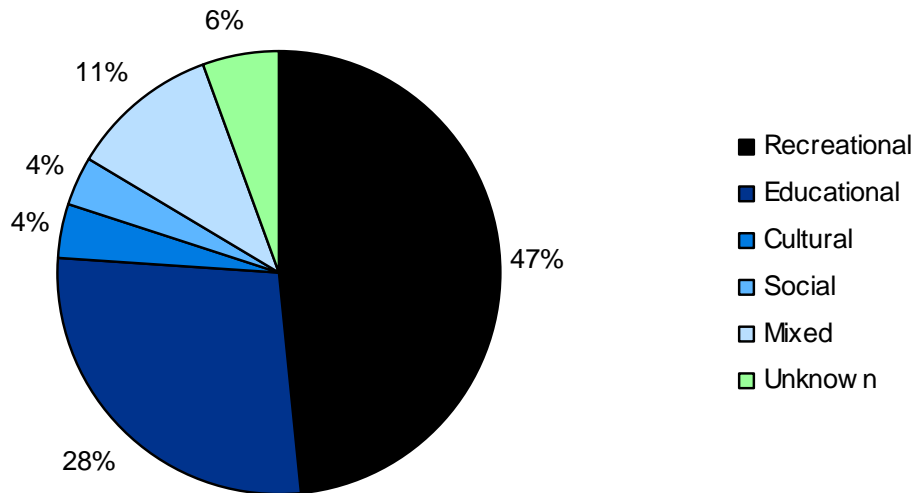
4.6.2 Profile of participants

Figure 7 below shows the age and gender profile of client contacts across all four communities over the course of the program. More than one-third (38%) of all client contacts occurred with clients under the age of 9 years, and around two-thirds (67%) occurred with clients under the age of 14 years. There were also more male client contacts (59%) than female (41%). This gender difference was seen in all age groups apart from 0-4 year olds, and was most pronounced among 10-14 year olds.

Figure 7 – Total client contacts across all communities by gender and age group (n=101,806)
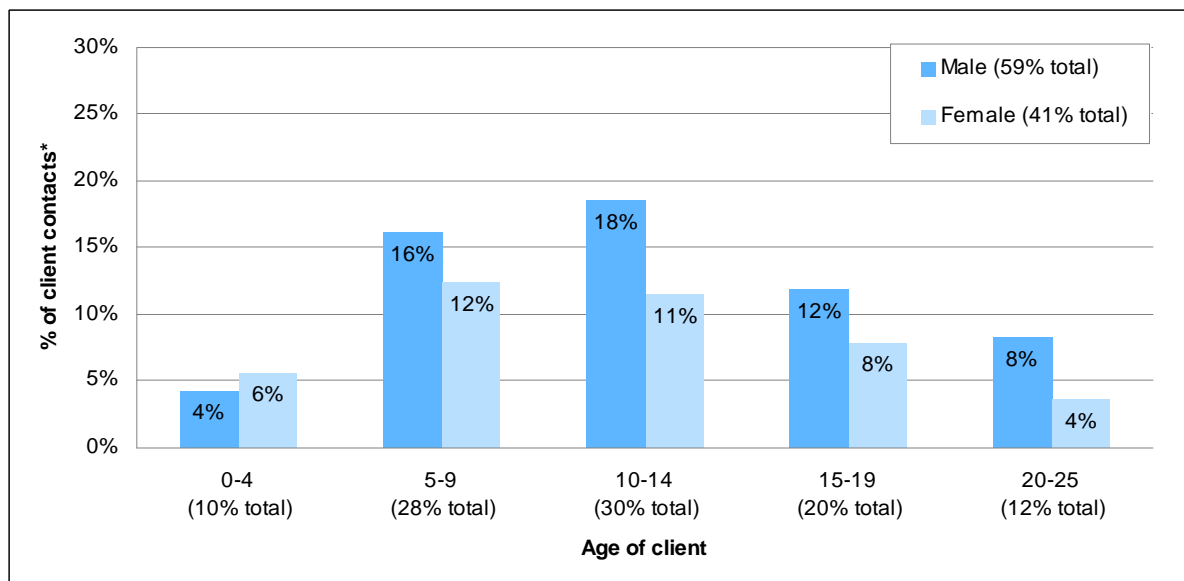
These trends are consistent across the four communities, although the profile varied slightly in each community.

In Apatula/Finke (Figure 8), client contacts were somewhat older (39% aged 15+, compared to an average of 33% across all sites) and the gender imbalance was more pronounced (63% male). Similar to the overall results, the gender imbalance was also more pronounced in the age group of 10-14 years. Male clients in this age group accounted for 18% of client contacts, females for 8% of client contacts.

Figure 8 – Total client contacts in Apatula/Finke by gender and age group (n=21,692)
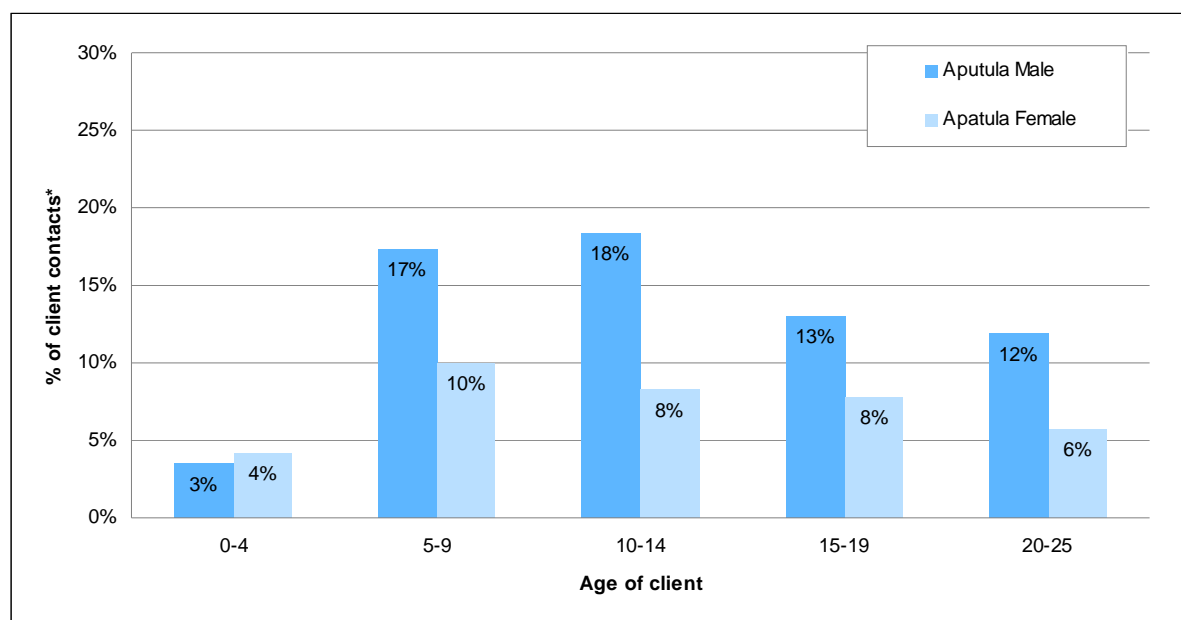
In Docker River (Figure 9), gender was more balanced (54% male), with the largest difference occurring in clients between 20-25 years (male clients in this age range accounted for 9% of client contacts, females 4%).

Figure 9 – Total client contacts in Docker River by gender and age group (n=25,522)
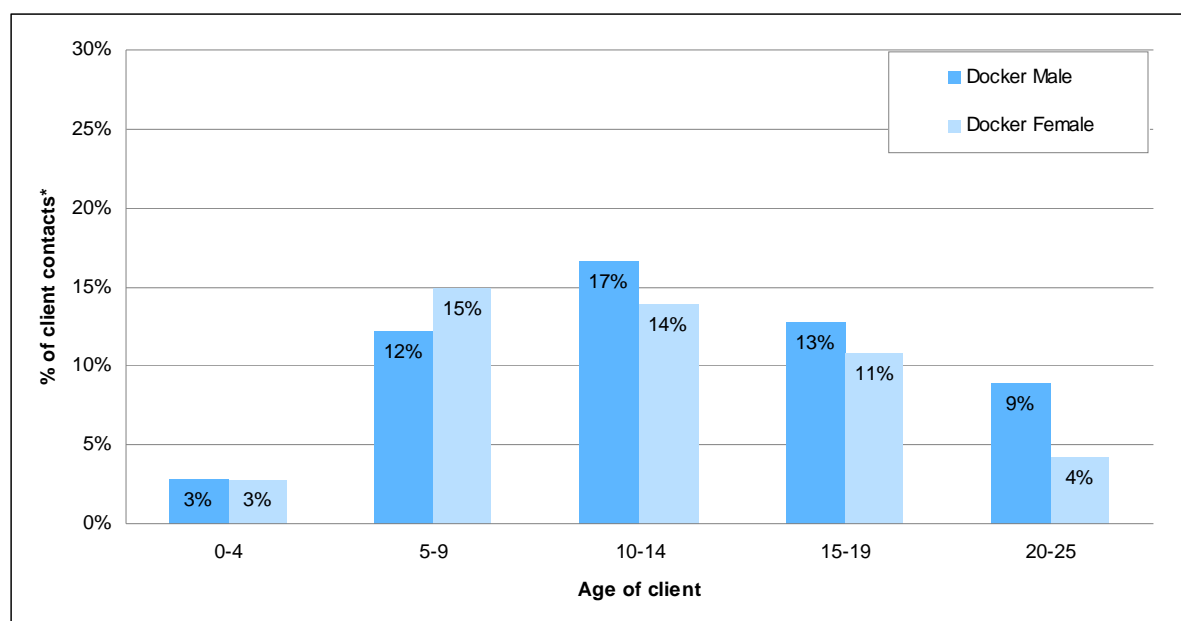
Imanpa (Figure 10) had an unusual profile, with large numbers of 0-4 year old girls taking part (13% of total client contacts, compared with 6% across all four sites).

Figure 10 – Total client contacts in Imanpa by gender and age group (n=20,272)
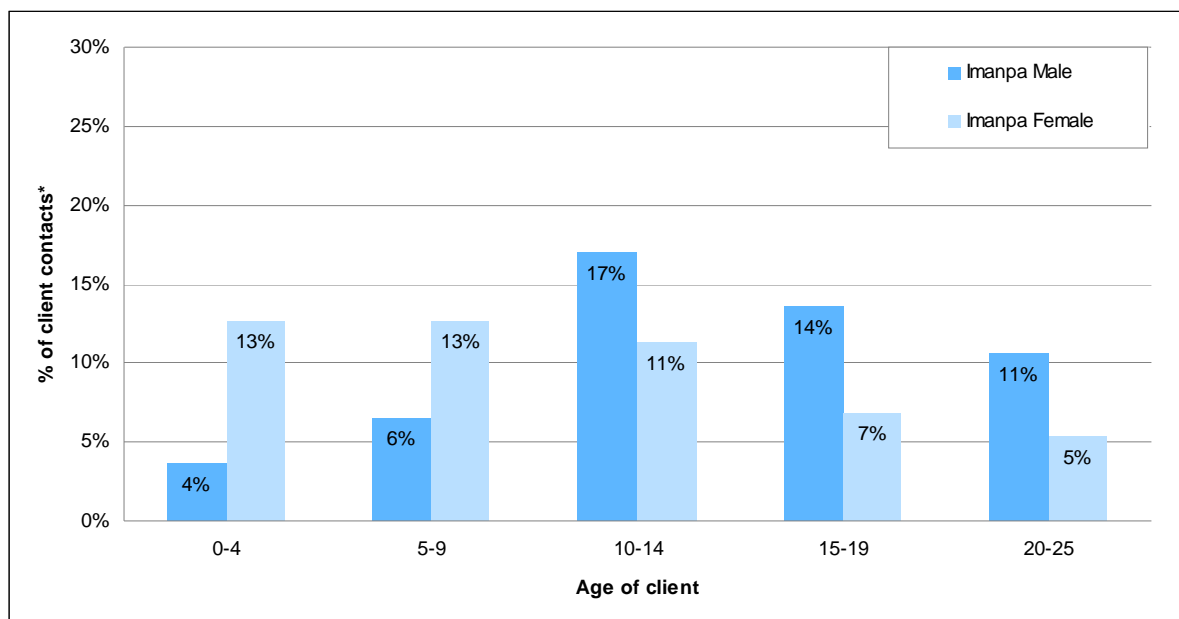
In Mutitjulu (Figure 11), the activities drew a younger age group than they did across the communities more generally. Almost half of Mutitjulu client contacts (47%) were under the age of 9 years, compared with 38% of clients overall. Male clients were also strongly represented in this site – 45% of all client contacts were with 5-14 year old boys.

Figure 11 – Total client contacts in Mutitjulu by gender and age group (n=34,313)
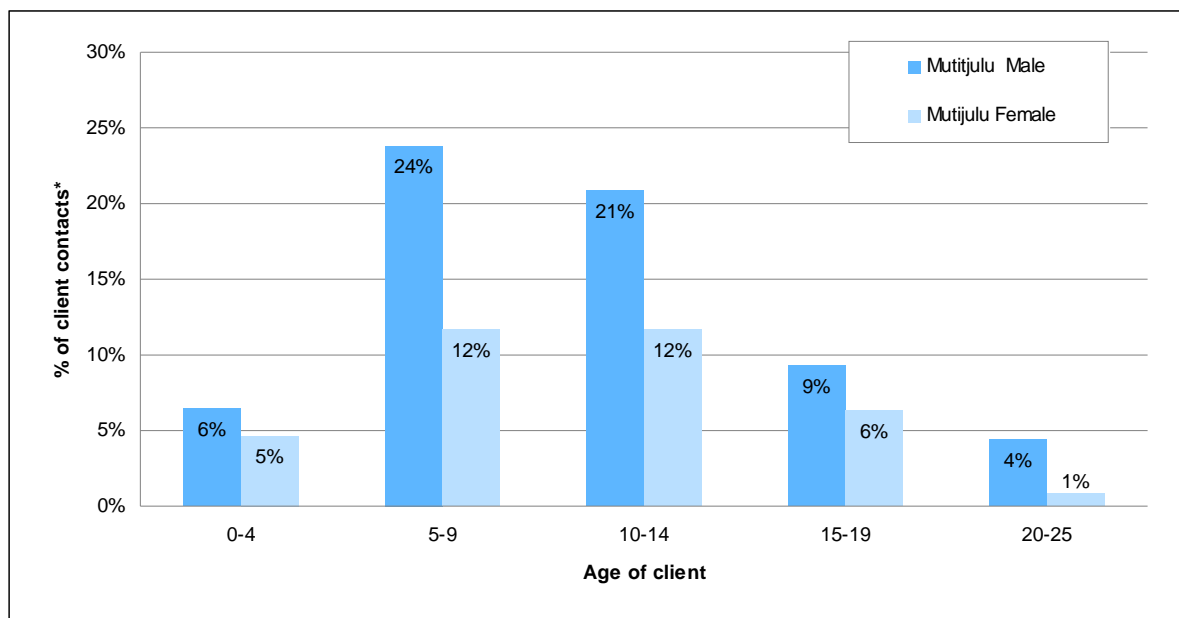
4.7 Reported incidents of petrol sniffing

In consultations the roll-out of Opal Fuel was widely regarded to be the single most important contribution to the elimination of petrol sniffing on communities. This is discussed in the next chapter and throughout Mission Australia's reports. Mission Australia reported that prior to the Eight Point Plan,

petrol sniffing was endemic in Mutitjulu and Docker River with up to 38 known 'sniffers' in Docker River.[11] Subsequently, reported incidences of petrol sniffing are very low, although there have been some opportunistic episodes.

Mission Australia, and recently CAPSSU, have recorded incidents of petrol sniffing and other volatile substance abuse (VSA) in each community. The table below presents the combined records of Mission Australia and CAPSSU for the period May 09-March10, noting that different methods were possibly employed to record these numbers.[12] The table illustrates that the numbers of recorded petrol sniffing/VSA incidents remain very low across all of the four communities.

Figure 12 – Reported petrol incidents

Month	Apatula	Imanpa	Mutitjulu	Docker River
May 09	0	0	0	VSA (1)#
June 09	VSA (2) *	0	VSA (3) *	0
July 09	0	0	0	0
August 09	0	0	D/A (≥5) #	VSA (2) #
September 09	0	0	0	0
October 09	0	0	0	VSA (2) * D/A (2) # & (1)*
December 09	0	0	0	VSA (3) *
January 10	VSA (6) *	D/A (?)*	0	D/A (?)*
February 10	0	0	0	0
March 10	VSA (2) #	0	0	0

VSA = volatile substance abuse, including petrol sniffing

D/A = drug or alcohol abuse

(-) = number of young people involved

= confirmed episode

* = suspected or hearsay

Source: Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service Report, End of Project Report and Recommendations at 63, and CAPSSU petrol sniffing data October 09-March 10.

4.8   Conclusion and key findings

Mission Australia was required in the contract to deliver a wide range of youth activities. The information available reveals that this aspect of the requirements has been achieved, to the extent that the IYSP has involved a high volume of activity in each of the four communities.

There are clear patterns emerging in terms of the most popular activities undertaken in the four communities and the typical cohort of clients who accessed the services. More than half of all activities offered by the IYSP were broadly recreational activities, mainly sporting activities. Educational activities,

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[11]   Mission Australia, *Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, Status – Achievement Report # 7*, May-November 2009 at 14.

[12]   This table was compiled using records presented in Mission Australia, *Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, Status – Achievement Report # 7*, May-November 2009 and petrol sniffing data provided by CAPSSU.

including reading, cooking classes and bush camps, were the next most frequently offered activity. Educational activities were most frequently offered in Finke.

Overall, the IYSP was accessed by very young clients. The IYSP has engaged clients across the target group of 5-25 years. There is also evidence that clients under the age of 5 are regularly involved in the activities. Around one-third of all client contacts were made by clients under the age of 9 years, and around two-thirds of contacts were with clients under the age of 14 years. This focus on younger clients is clearest in Mutitjulu.

The data available records very low incidences of petrol sniffing and VSA across the communities, however, this is widely recognised as being primarily as a result of the roll-out of Opal Fuel.

The literature review indicated that the most effective programs are ones that offer a range of activities as the IYSP clearly does, but that also provides opportunities for counselling and referral as required. The case management and referral components of the IYSP have not been explored in this chapter, as no program wide/collated data was available for the review. The next chapter explores these components of the program in more detail, in the context of reviewing the overall effectiveness and key outcomes of the IYSP.

5 Key findings on the IYSP

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the key themes identified from the data collected from the consultations for the evaluation to complement the discussion presented in Chapter 4. These themes include:

- program planning and preparation

- governance

- appropriateness of the target group

- case management

- key outcomes for the four IYSP communities

- planning for program handover

- unintended impacts of the IYSP.

Each of these is discussed in further detail below.

While there are a number of negative findings presented in this section in relation to the governance and management of the IYSP, on balance, the communities consulted viewed the IYSP activities as valuable in engaging children and young people, albeit that there were many suggestions made about how the IYSP could be improved in the future.

5.2 Overview of data sources

The main source of data for this chapter is the qualitative consultations conducted for the review (fieldwork, focus group with pre-IYSP/NTER YADM stakeholders, and telephone interviews). As noted in Chapter 2, the informants consulted in relation to the IYSP included the program provider (Mission Australia), the program funders (FaHCSIA, DEEWR and AGD), the program managers (CAPSSU), other government and non-government stakeholders (including some non-government stakeholders who had implemented youth programs prior to the IYSP in those communities), young people who participated in the program, parents of young people who participated in the program, and community members.

The findings from the consultations have also been augmented with an analysis of the other key sources of evidence, including program documentation, the online survey, CAPSSU petrol sniffing data and the response provided by Mission Australia to the service provider pro forma.

5.3 Program planning and preparation

5.3.1 Tendering process

A consistent theme in the field work consultations with local community members and non-government organisations was dissatisfaction with the original tendering process which resulted in Mission Australia being awarded the IYSP contract. This dissatisfaction has had a negative effect on the implementation of the IYSP, especially the community acceptance of the provider in the four communities.

Some stakeholders felt that the appointment of Mission Australia to undertake the IYSP had directly overlooked those with previous experience in working in those communities. A number of service providers had previously worked in the IYSP communities, delivering various kinds of youth-related programs – for example, the Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service (CAYLUS) and the NPY Women's Council.

These organisations and other members of the community felt that the problems experienced by Mission Australia in delivering the IYSP, especially in the early phases when they were establishing relationships with local communities, were the result of Mission Australia not being a local organisation.

These concerns were well-canvassed in the earlier CAPSSU Report prepared by Urbis[13] and the 2009 Senate Inquiry, which noted with concern the selection of a non–local organisation with no previous experience in the geographical region. The Inquiry also noted that there were no local people involved in the decision making process for the successful tender, with the decision based on compliance with tender requirements, the services proposed to be delivered and value for money.[14]

Not all stakeholders agreed with these concerns, as some thought that Mission Australia was well placed to deliver the IYSP because it had national resources and was able to recruit staff from other states and territories. The vast experience of Mission Australia in youth services delivery was also seen by some stakeholders as a key factor in support of its appointment.

5.3.2   Insufficient program planning

Several key stakeholders (both government and non-government) reported that they believed the IYSP was conceived and implemented rapidly, without sufficient time to plan out how the proposed youth activities would link into the creation of skill-based or educational or employment pathways for young people. They noted that the program might have benefitted from greater pre-planning and negotiation around program outcomes, a strategic widening of the pool of people who could have informed that process, and greater consultation with the communities involved.

In the End of Project Report, prepared by Mission Australia, it was noted that the launch of the NTER contemporaneously with the launch of the IYSP had the effect of accelerating the establishment phase of the IYSP. The reasons for this accelerated action were proposed by Mission Australia in its report:

> 'The Federal Government raised the stakes with the NTER. For its trenchant criticism of the Northern Territory Government for their lack of real action on Indigenous matters to be credible, it had to be accompanied by quick and decisive action on the part of all Federal departments and funded programs.'[15]

A number of stakeholders commented that, in retrospect, the accelerated establishment phase had a negative impact on service planning of the IYSP. Mission Australia have published their response to criticisms that the initial phases of the IYSP were rushed and insufficiently planned:

> 'Unfortunately, MA didn't resist the pressure to fast-track the establishment phase nor was there an appreciation on MA's or FaHCSIA's part of the management implications. It became apparent that some important decisions and actions were rushed – for example: some poor staff selections were made; staff were deployed to communities without adequate induction on their roles and responsibilities in the context of the contracted goals and objectives….These matters were addressed approximately one year into the contract. Undoing the harm already done was a significant task.'

Both government and non-government respondents noted that there was effectively no communication between FaHCSIA and the non-government organisations previously working in the communities which might have informed the development and implementation of program activities or identification of effective strategies for engaging with the target group. They therefore felt that the program had not built

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[13]   Grealy, C, Wilczynski, A, Lopata, T, Nolan, F, *Review of the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU)*, Urbis for the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 20 November 2009, at 20.

[14]   Standing Committee on Community Affairs, *Grasping the opportunity of Opal: Assessing the impact of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy*, March 2009, at 85.

[15]   Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service*, End of Project Report and Recommendations*, 31 March 2010 at 19.

on the experiences of previous service providers and further, that there were no channels created to share information and learnings that might be useful on an ongoing basis.

The types of information which stakeholders felt would have been useful to share included, for example, briefings in relation to in-depth knowledge of local communities, case work options, local conditions and what strategies might work best. They also indicated that this situation had continued until relatively recently (ie the last six months), but that there was now a constructive consultation process in place. Consultation directly between Mission Australia and agencies with previous experience in working in communities was also negligible for at least most of the period of implementation. As identified in the literature review, community 'buy-in' and consultation are considered good practice principles in engaging and delivering community/youth programs, especially in Aboriginal communities.

Some stakeholders considered that the initial contract with Mission Australia contained a range of unrealistic contractual obligations and matters which were not successfully resolved at an early stage with Government. These issues included, for example, the lack of sufficient time for consultation with communities, and the responsibility for and monitoring of case management. The lack of time to engage appropriately skilled staff was also noted. Some stakeholders also felt that the complexity of the contract caused an additional set of challenges for Mission Australia as the IYSP service provider during the period of program implementation. For example some felt that Mission Australia had been asked to do too much in a short period of time, and that FaHCSIA had unrealistically high expectations.

It was felt that time pressures and the urgency of particular NTER measures had produced a 'mixed' response in relation to engagement by Mission Australia with communities prior to program implementation. This had resulted in initial difficulties in responding to locally identified priorities for the program and specific projects. There were also reported instances of confusion arising through the consultation processes that occurred, and their intent.

A subsequent focus by Mission Australia on building trust and relationships within the four communities in the first year of the IYSP did occur, but contributed to the delay in project implementation in some instances.

Several stakeholders noted that, as a result of changes in management and focus by Mission Australia (renegotiated with FaHCSIA), halfway through the program significant improvements were observed in management, administration and service delivery. Nonetheless, these stakeholders expressed concern at the loss of momentum and lost opportunity to make changes that had occurred in the first half of program implementation.

Lack of program logic

Several stakeholders commented on the lack of a substantive program logic framework to guide the implementation and delivery of the IYSP. One stakeholder commented: 'the program logic is questionable'. Some stakeholders commented that a clear and accessible framework may have assisted stakeholders, including program staff, to conceptualise the links between youth activities and the broader outcomes of the IYSP, relating to petrol sniffing, substance abuse, the creation of educational and employment pathways, and investment in the training of Anangu workers.

It would appear that the absence of this clarity may have contributed to a situation in which there has not always been a close or demonstrable connection between the *needs* which were supposed to be addressed, and the *activities* undertaken by the IYSP and its objectives, particularly for longer-term outcomes. Several stakeholders expressed concern that the program had produced activities which were 'low hanging fruit', 'soft options', or of 'entertainment value only, and not focussed on assisting a future for Aboriginal young people, which is quite condescending.' Others commented that the program had not adequately addressed community capacity building.

The lack of program logic may also have contributed to FaHCSIA not challenging this situation as the IYSP program funder.

The absence of program logic for the projects managed by CAPSSU, including the IYSP, was also a concern raised in the review of CAPSSU previously conducted by Urbis 2009.[16] It is noted in that report that a substantial program logic and evaluation framework was prepared for the PSS by external consultants, *Courage Partners*, in 2008.

Concerns were also raised about the perceived lack of planning for program handover, discussed later in this chapter.

5.3.3   Governance

The consultations in relation to the governance aspects of the IYSP primarily related to three key areas of the IYSP:

▪   governance and project management at a program level by Mission Australia

▪   the whole of government and interagency approach

▪   engagement with NT and Local Government agencies.

Program level governance

As noted above, Mission Australia instituted significant changes in program management (in consultation with FaHCSIA) at approximately half way through the program. These changes were required in order to improve program management, administration, reporting and accountability. At a project level, the immediate effects of this were reported as including:

▪   There had been ongoing concern about Mission Australia's capacity to manage the project

▪   a greater focus on budgeting (projects would now be restricted to a weekly budget, with encouragement to undertake fundraising to support desired activities)

▪   provision of weekly reports which include a record of participation in daily activities and details of volatile substance issues; instances of engagement; case management outcomes and transfer of responsibility to Anangu staff.

Stakeholders reported that the emphasis on fundraising was both a constraint and an opportunity. On the one hand, it proved difficult to manage on the small weekly project budget of between $100 and $170 (depending on location), particularly given the high costs of goods in remote locations. This led to some project managers feeling obliged to deliver ancillary projects as fundraisers or as a community service. Fundraising through sales of snack foods or cooking nights could also be regarded as a burden or a community development and capacity building process, depending upon the degree of Anangu staff and community support. There was evidence of both in consultations with the communities visited. The development of craft products as a fundraising activity appeared dependant both upon skills in marketing and art-making as well as access to suitable markets.

Project managers regarded the completion of weekly reports as onerous but necessary: 'I work six days and on the seventh, do reports'. In only one IYSP community were there preparations under way for Anangu staff to take on the project reporting role along with management of project activities. In this community it was reported that preparations had been made for the transfer of responsibility to Anangu staff:

> *'I have got it to the point where local youth workers can step up to the next level'.*

Stakeholders indicated that there had been insufficient support for IYSP project managers in their local management role. This reportedly included a lack of cultural awareness training for incoming non-Aboriginal staff, a lack of 'handover' briefings at staff changeover points and insufficient capacity at a senior management level to value the input of local Anangu staff.

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[16]   Grealy, C, Wilczynski, A, Lopata, T, Nolan, F, *Review of the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU)*, Urbis for the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 20 November 2009, at 29.

One further matter that affected project governance was the transfer, with the approval of funding partners some months ago, of most Anangu staff from the status of full-time employees to casual staff. Stakeholders reported that the process was unfair and one result has been disillusionment and a lack of commitment by some Anangu staff to the support of project activities.

Mission Australia discussed the reasons for the shift in their final report as stemming from difficulties in recruiting full-time staff and the creation of conflict in the community when people were excluded:

> 'Apart from the near impossibility of finding two people in each community prepared to commit to full-time employment, limiting the work to just two people would have the unintentional effect of excluding some families from participation in the program.'[17]

Mission Australia also describe how, in hindsight, the 'pooled hours approach' which allowed the positions to be shared by a number of Anangu staff meant had resulted in too much discretion in the hours undertaken by Anangu staff and too many difficulties in monitoring and training staff. It was indicated that many staff resented the casualisation of the workforce, regarding this as a devaluation of their role and capacity to deliver the project. Despite these issues, Mission Australia still made recommendations in their final report supporting the position that the Anangu staff should continue to be engaged on a casual basis.

Many stakeholders indicated the vital importance of the youth work model implemented in local communities (specifically the engagement of both male and female youth workers), as well as the critical importance of strong family support and engagement (including in the Anangu staffing profile) to the project's sustainability.

The whole of government approach and interagency cooperation

The whole of government approach to delivering the IYSP was seen by stakeholders as a landmark contract that was necessary and well intended. As Mission Australia described, the IYSP signalled the Federal Government's intention to:

- Involve itself in the funding of youth services, previously the primary responsibility of the State and Territory Governments.

- Adequately fund preventative services, including diversion and case management (also seen as the role of State and Territory governments).

- Adopt a whole of government (whole of Federal Government) approach to funding.[18]

This governance structure involved at least three spheres of government, including three national agencies (FaHCSIA, DEEWR and AGD), CAPSSU, and DEEWR state office representatives. The IYSP contract was managed in Canberra, but the IYSP was project managed by CAPSSU in Alice Springs.

While Mission Australia had a program office in Alice Springs, its head office was based in Sydney which is where the finances and human resource components of the IYSP were managed. One implication of these arrangements is that it may have proved difficult to bring key players together to work through any program management or governance issues as they arose.

While the whole of government approach was widely recognised by the stakeholders consulted as marking a positive and cooperative approach between the three Federal Government agencies, FaHCSIA, DEEWR and AGD, it reportedly created a highly complex stakeholder environment for the delivery and operation of the IYSP.

Some stakeholders believed the whole of government nature of the contract was not effective, and that the governance of the IYSP could have benefitted from a much more collaborative approach based in

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[17] Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, *End of Project Report and Recommendations*, 31 March 2010 at 24.

[18] Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, *End of Project Report and Recommendations*, 31 March 2010 at 10.

consultation and partnership. Some stakeholders reported that at times there has been insufficient communication between the three IYSP partner agencies (FaHCSIA, AGD and DEEWR) They noted that, while the presence of CAPSSU in Alice Springs had been helpful in managing the IYSP, there has been a lack of clarity about the processes for sharing information/progress reports between CAPSSU, FaHCSIA and other agencies which had probably hindered effective program governance. It is worth noting that over the course of the IYSP, (July 2007-March 2010), it is reported that there were 5 different people move through the contract manager position at FaHCSIA, which may account for some of the difficulties experienced in developing inter-agency collaborative relationships and effective communication mechanisms.[19]

Engagement with NT and Local Government agencies

Many regarded the engagement of the IYSP with the Northern Territory Government as overlaid with difficulties. It was reported that with the NTER, many NT Departments (such as NT Police and NT Department of Education and Training - DET) withdrew funding and involvement from pre-existing programs in communities once the IYSP came into operation. As a result of this, many stakeholders felt that there was a service vacuum and that integration around human services programs had fallen below the desired levels.

A flow-on impact of this was that there was minimal or limited contact between the IYSP and these NT Government agencies. For example, in relation to:

▪ NT Police, while IYSP staff indicated they had received ongoing support from Police after the Northern Territory Police programs ceased, at the time of the consultations the police representatives interviewed had had little or no contact with the IYSP (but most had only been in the communities for a few weeks).

▪ The Department of Health and Families, there were mixed findings about their involvement, with some stakeholders reporting that conflict between the medical model and youth work model may have affected capacity for successful case management locally.

▪ NT DET – there was no involvement by the Department overall, and contact with the IYSP was left to individual schools.

5.3.4 Appropriateness of the target group

The target group for the IYSP identified in the original contract was 10-25 years.[20] This is broadly consistent with the standard international definition for 'youth', of 12-25 years. However, Mission Australia reported that in practice it expanded the IYSP target group to 5-25 years, and that this was approved by FaHCSIA. The reasons given by Mission Australia to justify this included that young children would accompany their older siblings, and they felt could they not turn away younger children.

Although it is not possible to determine from the program data what proportion of children were aged 5-10 years (see Chapter 4), Mission Australia estimates that they comprised approximately 25% of the total.

Consistent with this, the consultations strongly indicate that in most communities the IYSP has been delivering predominantly recreation-based and after school activities for primary school aged children. Activities offered in the Recreation Halls were apparently largely unstructured and unscheduled (ie in a 'drop in' style, children and young people could elect the activities they wanted to participate in). In some circumstances, the IYSP activities appear to have continued on from an after school program provided by a previous provider.

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[19] Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, *End of Project Report and Recommendations*, 31 March 2010 at 21.

[20] Urbis was not privy to the iterations made to the original contract.

While it was observed that Mission Australia had kept detailed attendance records for these activities, it was also noted that these primarily recorded 'contact' information, rather than recording the outcomes of this activities.

On the positive side, activities such as provision of after school activities for primary school children by the IYSP were regarded by many community members as welcome strategies against boredom, keeping children occupied and out of mischief. The evidence available on petrol sniffing does record children as young as 5-6 years of age engaging in petrol sniffing, however there have been no reported incidents of children in this age group involved in petrol sniffing in the any of the four communities where the IYSP is delivered. Whether these incidents may have occurred had the IYSP not been in operating is an unknown factor in this review.

Mission Australia also argued in its final report that extending the IYSP program to young people under the age of 10 is an important part of a youth diversionary program. Mission Australia's view is that by taking a 'longer-term view', and allowing very young people to participate, this strengthened the preventative focus of the program. Mission Australia argues that:

> 'From a very early age these children were able to observe and engage with others in fun and meaningful activity. Much better, we suggest, than being observers of and participants in the boredom and distractions (such as gambling and drinking) of community that some engage in.'

However, the findings of this review do not entirely support this view. The review indicates that there have been some quite negative impacts of this broadening of the target group. This was the main unintended negative consequence of the IYSP.

Firstly, with this broader target group the program cannot be regarded as a 'youth program', having a focus on addressing petrol sniffing, or systematically involving youth diversion activities. This then weakened the overall program intent, diverting resources away from the primary target group of young people (who are at greatest risk of petrol sniffing), and created a barrier to their involvement.

For example, many stakeholders reported that young people did not want to attend the IYSP Recreation Halls since small children were also attending it and they saw it as childish. This was particularly true of initiated young men.

In reality, the Recreation Hall provided one of the few venues for young people, so the situation was somewhat inevitable once young children were admitted. While the premises such as Recreation Halls used by the IYSP included activities and equipment that might act as attractors for young people's involvement (such as computers, musical instruments or photography equipment), the barriers to attendance noted above and the lack of appropriate tutorship and supervision presented a barrier to them being used in practice by young people. Indeed, in the communities visited, while operational computers were scarce, they were reportedly used only by small children. Some young people indicated that while they had had an idea about developing an internet café in the community, the only possible venue for this was the Recreation Hall, and this was constantly used by children, so they felt this would not be possible.

Stakeholders felt that the expansion of the target group to very young children illustrated the problem (discussed above) that the IYSP responded too readily to the 'low hanging fruit' by providing activities targeting young children rather than youth programs, and that as each successive staff turnover occurred in the field it became harder to turn this situation around. (It would also appear that this approach was supported rather than queried by Mission Australia program managers). This illustrates the problems caused by a lack of program logic to guide implementation of the program, and FaHCSIA's monitoring of this as the funder.

A further reported difficulty related to the expanded target group concerned the IYSP operating hours, which might have been more appropriate for young people rather than children. In one community, many community members expressed concern regarding the lack of structure for activities and the long hours children were spending in the Recreation Hall on school nights. These members regarded the provision of project activities between 3-7pm on a weeknight as unwelcome because it prevented young children going home and having dinner and proper rest to enable them to be fresh at school the following day. It was reported that although this view and a suggested alternative timeframe for

activities had been communicated to Mission Australia, the community had been told there was no flexibility with project hours. However, there were current plans for a meeting between Mission Australia representatives and the community to address the issue once again.[21]

The inclusion of a much younger target group may also have contributed to the difficulty identified by Mission Australia in relation to management and maintenance of equipment. Mission Australia noted that there were issues around equipment replacement earlier in the program and that they had responded to these through developing community responsibility for fund-raising and decisions around equipment replacement.

5.3.5   Case management

Case management was understood to involve program and project managers taking a role in referring participants and providing guidance for them to negotiate health and related services.

There were conflicting views between Mission Australia and FaHCSIA and some other agencies about the role Mission Australia was supposed to play in case management. Mission Australia contended that they had been not engaged to play this role, but it was clearly the understanding of FaHCSIA and other stakeholders that they would do so.

While improved case management was considered to be one desired outcome of the whole of government approach under the IYSP, there were mixed responses from stakeholders regarding its effectiveness. Several stakeholders noted that treatment options for young people at risk were now widely available and considered to be effective, and also that mandatory reporting of petrol sniffing incidents had also been effective irrespective of the IYSP.

The implementation of case management throughout the program also appears to have been patchy in practice, possibly due to the disputed role of Mission Australia in this activity. The case management approach employed by Mission Australia was supposed to involve the IYSP working jointly with health workers to make appropriate referrals. However, it was reported that some local health workers regarded the interventions by the IYSP youth workers as inappropriate (or felt the workers were unqualified), and therefore did not always act on those referrals.

However, specific instances of successful case management by the IYSP were also noted, including referrals for some young women to the NPY Women's Council and the Northern Territory Department of Health and Families

5.4   Key outcomes of the IYSP for the four communities

5.4.1   Incidence of petrol sniffing

Communities reported virtually no instances of petrol-sniffing, although almost everyone indicated their belief that this was due to the introduction of Opal fuel, rather than as a direct result of the project activities provided.

Where isolated instances of petrol-sniffing had occurred, it was reported by stakeholders in communities that these were dealt with swiftly by the community and authorities. There were some quite isolated, past instances of glue-sniffing and marijuana smoking identified by community members. However, alcohol abuse by adults remained a concern for every community. Indeed, some individuals felt that an unintended consequence of the after school project activities was that these offered some parents an opportunity to 'opt out' of caring for their children to go drinking instead.

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[21] Mission Australia notes that "…the operating hours of each were determined after extensive consultation with each community. These were regularly varied during the course of the program (school days v weekends/summer v winter/school term v holiday) and in consultation with local community members. Staff were generally very responsive with opening hours and other requests that were typically made at very short notice – they often involved overnight trips."

It was noted that Mission Australia and several other agencies (including FaHCSIA via its Government Business Managers - GBMs) kept records of instances of the instances of substance abuse (see Chapter 4). However, the introduction of Opal fuel, general community awareness and mandatory reporting of petrol sniffing incidents through new legislation were also widely regarded by stakeholders as having contributed to the reduction in the incidence of petrol sniffing. Therefore it is virtually impossible to assess the evidence as to the impact of the IYSP in this regard.

5.4.2 Provision of pathways (employment and education) and skills development

In the communities, there was some evidence of contact and engagement between Mission Australia and other agencies, predominantly liaison with schools, including project assistance with school attendance, incentive based activity (ie 'no school, no pool'), and operation of a breakfast program at one location. It was indicated by some stakeholders that the IYSP had probably resulted in an increase in school attendance, although whether this was due to the practice in some communities of IYSP staff driving young people to school, incentive programs or other, more qualitative aspects of service delivery is unclear.

However, similar to the issue of substance abuse, other contributory factors such as general community awareness and exhortation for children to attend school were evident, and the effects were generally welcomed. One stakeholder noted: 'The School and the College have to work more closely with the project. It has started, but needs to keep going'. The issue of attendance at College was less clear, with reports from stakeholders of ongoing patchy attendance by students.

One stakeholder also indicated concern that the incentive-based activity referred to above had resulted in some children being taken on excursions without parental consent, causing fears for the children concerned.

In one location, a successful link was made with a National Parks program engaging young trainee Rangers, and one project had engaged a young trainee who was receiving support and assistance both through the project and the local College. However, this process did not appear to have been systematic, and contact with other agencies appears to have been mixed in terms of the extent of outcomes for young people, including in relation to case management. However, it should be noted that, in one community in particular, the program was successful in addressing issues of domestic violence with groups of young women in an atmosphere of trust and safety.

Overall, the consultations suggest that skills-based, educational and employment pathways had not been systematically established for young people within communities. Several Anangu staff and community members commented on the lack of such pathways over the duration of the IYSP for the young people in their communities, specifically those involving skills development around computer use or related technologies; or leading to employment or education opportunities. The clear desire for these to occur was stated repeatedly by staff and many stakeholders. One key stakeholder indicated that, in one community the program was 'not meeting even basic diversionary needs, toward the second half of last year.'

As provision of pathways was supposedly a goal for the re-engagement of disengaged young people, Mission Australia indicated that activities to re-engage young people with a view to providing pathways to employment and training were as follows:

- A music activity using *garage band software* for approximately 15 boys aged 13-17 years at Docker River (this had not continued).

- Approximately 10 girls aged 12-18 years at Docker River in the artwork and pottery activity (the program has concluded).

- 4-6 boys aged 14-17 and 4 men aged 20-25 involved in music recording using *garage band software* at Mutitjulu and the 'I See, I Learn' program (this activity is ongoing).

- Involvement of 40 young people aged 5-25 years in the Mara Tjuta Batik activity using 'I See, I Learn' at Mutitjulu (while this holds great promise, the target age range is very broad, hence the extent of skills development for *young people* in the target group is unknown).

- 12 girls aged 13-19 participated in the Kungka's Guitar activity at Nyangatjatjara College at Mutitjulu, using 'I See, I Learn'. Due to accommodation difficulties, it was not possible to include a parallel activity for disengaged young men.

- 12 young men aged 16 – 25 years and an unspecified number of young people at Apatula regularly use the computer room and the young men delivered learning activities for wider community use.

- Up to 6 disengaged young women and 5 young men access the education room at Imanpa after school hours. While there had been plans to combine this with the 'I See, I Learn' program, this did not occur.

It was observed during the field visit that there was only one computer in operation in the education room at Imanpa, and this was accessible to all, including children, which may have the effect of restricting access for young people. At Docker River, only one of two computers was operational at the time.

These activities have undoubtedly been beneficial for participants, but in the main have been spasmodic. It would also appear that they have not always systematically targeted teen or older young people in activities which may lead to the generation of pathways to education, employment and training – in some communities they have fallen well short (ie by 40-50%) of the estimated target group for those in the older age ranges.

One effect of the broad age target range of 5-25 years, about which several stakeholders commented, is that, while children's activities appeared to have flourished, these have reportedly acted as a deterrent to participation by older young people who had stayed away from activities which *they* considered to be 'childish' or child-focused.

Some exceptions to this were some of the music activities, pottery and photography activities referred to above, which appealed to older young people and have potential for skill development and creation of educational or enterprise pathways. There was evidence of engagement between skilled practitioners and young people in relation to these activities. One stakeholder noted: 'In the music program young people have learned the protocols of management of equipment, setting up the PA system, lights, recording equipment, computer and projector, as well as running the concert…' Similarly, it was reported the conduct of photography classes had resulted in young people applying exceptional skill in photographic composition, digital technology and photo production.

However, several of these projects (for example, the pottery project at Docker River) were offered very late in the program cycle, and their continuity or linkage to any other pathway development is uncertain at this point. Bush Camps also held strong appeal, although it was unclear as to whether these activities were age-specific (ie they seem to have included a wide range of age groups). One stakeholder noted: 'When we were employed by NPY, we used to take the kids on Bush Trips, sometimes swimming or activities at the Rec Hall. These were fun, but educational – they were painting or writing stories about the Bush Trips.'

In two of the communities visited, there were fairly recent processes of engaging young people in pottery and craft development, with actual market sales occurring in one location and the intent in the other to sell products at market in Alice Springs. In the former location, the market sales were preceded by hands-on teaching activity about customer relations, handling transactions, providing correct change, etc. There is potential for these activities to develop into modest enterprises, although ongoing guidance and support around art-making/product presentation and business development are likely to be required. In one community, hopes were high for an outcome regarding a separately developed business case for a Community Arts Centre.

Skills programs around fitness programs and nutrition (for example, supporting young people to grow or supporting young mothers to provide healthy meals) were also identified by stakeholders as opportunities with potential for future programs.

While not a pathway, in one community, organised sport (football for boys, softball for girls) was both an identified engagement priority of the community and a key activity of the project, with Anangu workers arranging fundraisers to assist with the travel costs to the competitions.

5.4.3   Community involvement/intergenerational activity

Stakeholders reported that in all communities, there was a strong degree of ownership in relation to the problem of volatile substance abuse, with zero tolerance and swift action to identify and respond to any incidences. One Anangu staff member considered that there was potential for the project to take a far greater role in addressing VSA: 'I would like the project to bring the Drug and Alcohol guys out to do demonstrations of what substance abuse does to your brain.'

In all communities, there was strong community awareness of the IYSP projects, and general support for (but not necessarily engagement in) activities. One community member commented:

> *The kids are happy with the program. It keeps them busy. This didn't happen before when they had other stuff.*

Another observed: *The kids are more settled because of the programs the youth workers run. They don't get bored.* However, others identified the need for different activities and spaces for young children and older people:

> *I would like to see separate programs for young kids and older boys and girls – the older ones need to learn some skills.*

After school and recreational activities were seen by many stakeholders as vitally important in communities to keep children healthy, active and occupied. However, some people stated that their expressed concerns about the operating times for activities had gone unheeded, and that as a result, children were staying out late on school nights, not going home at a reasonable hour for dinner and were thus too tired and lacking in energy to attend school the following day.

In one community, Night Patrol operators and some parents indicated their desire for After School and recreation activities for children to only be provided from Thursday to Sunday evenings until 6.30pm and closed for the remainder of the week. They indicated that they had previously made this known to the local project manager, but had received the impression that program timing was inflexible due to the commitments the service provider had made to the funding agency. The project manager in this community indicated that they intended to meet with community members to address their concerns.

Some members of one community indicated that the availability of the Recreation Hall for family functions was a welcome feature. Its convenience for older people to drop in for a cool drink of water and to watch television was also noted (although again, this was not part of the primary aim of the program.)

Anangu workers in all communities continually noted that, for them, an important part of the youth work model related to family knowledge, 'keeping an eye out for young people', the provision of strong role models (noting, particularly, that young men 'liked fit and active youth workers who are sports-oriented' as their role models) and gender-and-age appropriate activities. Most stakeholders therefore agreed, that the youth work model which was implemented, requiring male and female youth workers in each community was vital to address issues which might arise, locally, across a strict gender divide. One stakeholder noted:

> *It is important to have both male and female youth workers so that female youth workers don't have to feel shame if they have an issue where they have to go to the men.*

However, during the field work, it was observed that no non-Aboriginal male youth workers were currently employed in the communities visited. A key finding of the literature review conducted for this project was the importance of having both female and male workers present in youth work. However, it is acknowledged that recruitment and retention of appropriate workers was a difficulty that has existed since the inception of the IYSP.

A strong and detailed knowledge of families and community issues was also evident among some non-Aboriginal youth workers, where reciprocal relationships had flourished.

There was some evidence of intergenerational activity through the involvement of Elders in Bush Camps, and where this had occurred, this was regarded by community members as successful.

Apart from the engagement of youth workers, there was little evidence of intergenerational activity between older young people and children (such as might occur through cross-age tutoring).

5.4.4 Workforce (including Anangu staff employment and development)

The IYSP contract required Mission Australia to employ and train Anangu staff as required to assist with service delivery.

Overall, stakeholders spoke appreciatively about the quality of non-Aboriginal project staff, particularly those who had some longevity in communities. The significant role of Anangu staff, some of whom had been engaged in delivering youth programs well prior to the IYSP, was also acknowledged by stakeholders. A high degree of dependence on the individual strengths and talents of individual program and project managers for program success was also noted. Many stakeholders singled out individual staff members for mention, describing them as 'stand-out performers' or remarking on their specific skill-sets, diligence or dedication.

It was clear from consultations and reports that many of the staff, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal , had worked hard, long hours, beyond the call of duty, thinking outside the square and acting to develop better activities and outcomes with few resources. Many stakeholders felt that staff had not been sufficiently supported by Mission Australia to meet local challenges and that the role of local staff was insufficiently valued. One stakeholder commented:

> *The activities that have worked are those that are jointly managed* [ie by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff].

Another noted:

> *If another organisation gets the tender, we would like them to work alongside the community. We want to include young people on the Committee too, so they can push for their ideas.*

Employment of Anangu staff and at least one trainee had been a feature in all communities. However, as noted above, with the exception of one community, the transfer of project management/administration skills and responsibilities from non-Anangu to Anangu staff appeared to have been limited.

Mission Australia perceived the level of Anangu contribution to the program that was expected in the IYSP contract, to be 'unrealistic', due to the lack of experience of many of the Anangu staff. Accordingly, they thought that the expectations placed on Anangu staff were too high.

As noted above, many respondents indicated that they believed a significant oversight in program management has been a lack of cultural awareness training or briefing by Mission Australia regarding specific community issues for non-Anangu staff, and that this situation had continued until relatively recently. Non- Aboriginal staff who had previously worked in Indigenous communities were able to draw upon skills they had acquired to sustain them through this process. One stakeholder commented (presumably referring to non-Anangu organisations): 'Whoever takes on the tender should send their staff on cultural awareness training, in town and in the community'.

Several stakeholders commented on issues of apparently poor staff selection and difficulties in staff retention within the IYSP. While noting this is often a feature of staffing in remote communities, they felt that there were far more instances of poor selection and staff turnover in the IYSP (particularly among non- Aboriginal staff) than should have been anticipated (or is found with other programs operating in remote areas). This was felt to raise concerns for program continuity and the occupational health and safety of remaining staff who may be ill-equipped to deal with isolation and community expectations of the program.

In a recent effort to increase the training available to Anangu staff, Mission Australia has approached Charles Darwin University (CDU) to undertake training in youth work, communications and facilitation with Anangu staff. At the time of this review, some success had been achieved in this area, however Mission Australia argued in their final report that future training should still be delivered in-house rather than through an external provider. The rationale for in-house training related to the difficulty of being

able to being able to control the consistency of the training and the need to structure training around community events and obligations, such as 'Men's Business'.

5.4.5   Planning for program handover

A number of community members, and a range of other stakeholders, were disappointed by what they perceived as a lack of sufficient planning by government agencies about what would happen at the completion of the IYSP contract. Both Anangu and non-Anangu staff and program participants indicated that, for many months they had not known whether the IYSP would be funded past March 2010.[22] Rightly or wrongly, this led to anxiety in the community about how to plan for the future. They felt that the length of time that it took to reach a decision has had the following negative impacts:

- A perception that there would be no opportunity for a formal handover between service providers, which would enable a sharing of information, procedures, insight, and experience (unless planning for this process is yet to take place).

- Anangu and non-Anangu staff were unclear about whether they will have an income during this period of time, or whether their employment will continue past March 2010.

- The impact on the management of assets.

- Program managers in the communities report that a gap in activities may have negative impacts on the intended outcomes of the IYSP, for example, it may present an opportunity for young people to re-engage in substance abuse and be disruptive to the running of popular activities.

They noted that there were implications both for Government and the successful tenderer in the management of community expectations, particularly in relation to continuity of program activities regarded as priorities for local communities and reconciliation with any new priorities. One stakeholder commented that one positive outcome from the program is that 'young people living in communities now have higher expectations which will now set the bar higher for Governments to meet'.

At a project level, staff almost universally indicated that they were not aware of what would be likely to occur in relation to their jobs or the continuity of the program at program handover, although continuity of existing staff was also an issue for several community stakeholders. .

5.4.6   Overall findings

The outcomes show evidence of a high level of activity across all four communities over the course of the IYSP, strong awareness of the IYSP and varying degrees of community involvement, largely led by the Anangu workers where this occurs.

The projects in each of the communities were regarded by most community members as having an intrinsic value in engaging children in activities. However, there was little evidence that these activities had addressed broader program outcomes, especially in establishing systematic structures and pathways for young people (in terms of employment, education and skills development). The view taken by Mission Australia in its End of Project Report is that, overall, these expectations are not realistic in the given timeframes, and that it is reasonable to conclude that:

- the level of infrastructure on some communities is inadequate to meet the goals of IYSP

- attendance and enrolment falls far below what would be acceptable in non- Aboriginal communities

- post-primary students have very few real options open to them.[23]

The communities where the IYSP appeared to have been most successful were those where:

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[22]   Since the time of the fieldwork, the IYSP contract has been awarded to another provider, the NPY Women's Council.

[23]   Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, End of Project Report and Recommendations, 31 March 2010 at 39.

- there was continuity/longevity of individual Mission Australia staff in the community for many months, enabling them to invest in building relationships with the local community

- these relationships led to partnership, with local schools, such as in Finke (Apatula).

There was general agreement that the context in which Mission Australia was required to deliver the IYSP was both complex and challenging, including the high level of demand for infrastructure resources at the time of the Intervention (which contributed, for example to difficulties in conducting consultations with local communities and delays in provision of youth worker housing); the remoteness of the communities involved; a lack of pre-existing service capacity in the communities, and the extensive range of deliverables included in the original service provider contract.

A high level of staff turn over in each of the four communities made it more difficult to achieve the outcomes of the IYSP. At least some stakeholders regarded this as a symptom of the management and other difficulties experienced by the program, particularly in the earlier stages of implementation.

There was a strong view that the IYSP was dependent on the individual strengths and talents of the various project managers working in each community. This contributed to problems with continuity when these employees left their positions. The need for more systematic planning and structures to support the IYSP was emphasised, so that it can be consistently delivered over time.

The training, education and development of Anangu staff was not as successful as originally intended. The need for a structured training and educational component to be introduced to the IYSP has been suggested, especially one delivered by an independent tertiary or other accredited institution.

In some communities, it appears that if the IYSP was not operating, there would be few alternative activities, if any, provided for the age group.

6 Summary of activities funded under NTER Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure

This chapter summarises the activities funded under the NTER Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure.

6.1 Aims of the NTER Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure

As set out in Chapter 2, the aims of the NTER YADM were:

- expansion of the capacity of Aboriginal youth services in the NT

- funding of youth focussed recreation and equipment and infrastructure

- provision of recreation and diversion activities across the NT

- support and encouragement of attendance at school (including reengagement)

- diversion of young people from at risk behaviours (including substance use)

- reduction of the impact of substance abuse on individuals and communities

- encouragement and support for transition from school to further education and/or work.

6.2 Data sources

This chapter draws on summaries of 26 NTER YADM projects delivered under the NTER YADM in the 2008/09 financial year (out of the total of 56 NTER YADMM projects overall). These summaries were provided by FaHCSIA.

6.3 Key features of the sample projects

The table provided in Appendix F summarises key information about the 26 NTER YADM projects in the sample. Drawing on this sample, the key features of the NTER YADM projects are as follows.

- Fifteen projects were managed by CAPSSU and 11 by the FaHCSIA NT state office. (It is known that all 30 of the other NTER YADM projects outside of the sample were managed by the Northern Territory FaHCSIA office.)

- Auspicing bodies included Shires, NT Government and a range of non-government organisations, including large (Red Cross, Anglicare) and small organisations.

- The 26 projects vary greatly in scope. Funding for individual projects ranged from $2.4 million (West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project) to $5,000 (Work Placement Experience at Nitmiluk Gorge). The $2.1 million Youth Development Network, auspiced by Red Cross Australia NT division comprised multiple smaller projects which were brokered to various local service providers.

- Most projects in the sample focussed on either infrastructure or a short term program of activity for young people. The mix of projects included:

  - Seven that funded infrastructure to facilitate youth recreation and diversion activities

  - Fourteen that funded the planning and implementation of programs of activity

  - One that involved both (Red Centre BMX was funded to collaborate with the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (DET) to plan school based activity utilising the BMX tracks it was funded to roll out).

- The remaining four projects were either scoping projects or did not focus on youth diversion activity.

- Four of the projects had a scoping or planning focus rather than providing diversion activity or related infrastructure. These were: East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders Visit to Mt Theo, Scoping Project and Residency Workshop, Scoping Project for Future Development of Community Events for 2009-10 and Youth Housing Forums.

- Two projects, in practice, appear to have had a rehabilitation rather than diversion focus (ie Elders Visit to Mt. Theo, Petrol Sniffing Rehabilitation and Diversion Program – Gunbalanya).

- The Youth Housing forums project, while clearly relating to youth, does not appear to have related directly to diversionary activity or substance abuse, but may relate to the objective 'expansion of the capacity of Indigenous youth services in the NT'.

- Information received on targeting of the 26 projects is incomplete. However, ten appeared to target school aged youth generally, three related specifically to substance users, one to offenders, and two activities were specifically aimed at males.

- Four projects were school holiday programs, meaning that they operated only in 1 or more school holidays during the funding period. All of the activity based projects were funded to operate as one-off initiatives over a period of five days to approximately six months.

- Of the activity based projects:

  - 4 focussed on sport

  - 4 focussed on traditional culture

  - 3 focussed on modern music and performance

  - 2 provided a variety of activities including, but not limited to these areas.

- Based on the information available, 4 of the 14 activity-based projects in the sample included discussion with participants on issues such as substance abuse, health, offending, anti-social behaviour, racism, sexual abuse, school attendance, self respect, leadership and empowerment, and cultural awareness.

- A large proportion of projects were not discrete initiatives. Some projects were enhancements of other initiatives funded externally to the YADM. These include most of the infrastructure projects (except Red Centre BMX), as well as Gap Youth Centre – Program and Equipment Funding, the Regional Youth Development Network and the Bagot Youth Festival 2008 – Injection of Funds. Some others were intended to build the capacity of other projects or activities within the YADM; these include the Regional Education Coordinator program and East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders Visit to Mt Theo.

- A number of projects involved multiple streams, or 'projects within projects'. These included: Pilot Youth Diversion Gove Peninsula, and the Scoping Project and Residency Workshops, Gap Youth Centre Young Men's Support Project (which also funded blue light discos for younger people) and The Regional Youth Development Network.

The mix of funded activity within the 26 projects is discussed further in Chapter 7.

7 Key findings on the NTER Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure

This chapter sets out the key findings from the data collected relating to the NTER YADM. This includes: data sources; key outcomes; achievement of the aims of the NTER YADM; program design; the range of activities funded; governance; implementation; and implications for future evaluations of similar programs.

7.1 Data sources

This chapter draws on a number of data sources. However, as noted in Chapter 2, these data sources were generally incomplete in relation to the NTER YADM. As noted in Chapter 2 and 6 only a sample of 26 of the 56 NTER YADM were included in the review. In relation to the 26 projects in the sample, the data sources included:

- fieldwork consultations with some stakeholders and a small number of NTER YADM providers in Alice Springs

- telephone interviews with some stakeholders

- two provider *proformas*

- online survey responses from 10 stakeholders familiar with the NTER YADM

- program documentation provided by FaHCSIA on nine projects

- project summaries provided by FaHCSIA for all the 26 projects.

7.2 Key outcomes of the NTER YADM

7.2.1 Positive impacts and achievements

The limited number of projects about which information was available appeared to have been conducted successfully, and largely implemented as intended.

The positive impacts attributed to the YADM were as follows:

- Some short term impacts were reported over project periods e.g. increases in school attendance, reductions in vandalism or anti social behaviour.

- It was acknowledged that giving young people something to keep them occupied after school and during the holidays was in itself a positive outcome.

- There is evidence that some individual schools engaged successfully with certain YADM projects, and that some results in attendance at 'Try a Trade' programs and enrolment in Open Education courses were also achieved.

- Infrastructure projects in some cases are reported to have provided benefits beyond the funding period. The main example is the worker housing funded under West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project, which stakeholders believe will assist with the ongoing issues of attracting and retaining qualified youth workers, and the provision of vehicles under this project which have enabled various excursions with young people.

- Implementation of the Learning Support Program in a strong partnership between FaHCSIA and the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training. NT DET contributed $100m, matched by FaHCSIA, to roll out projects to successfully engage at risk students in 13 communities. The program was undertaken over several weeks, however long term impacts on school attendance are unknown.

- Improvement over the life of the YADM in FaHCSIA's working relationship with Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (although FaHCSIA acknowledges there remains room for improvement).

Examples of achievements of individual projects include:

- The Gap Youth Centre Young Men's Support Project was considered to have been highly successful, particularly in forging strong relationships between the Gap Youth Centre and Police. It was also considered to have helped improve relationships between young male participants and some police.

- The East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders Visit to Mt. Theo was considered to have achieved its goal of building support among elders for the Mt Theo model.

- Infrastructure projects including the West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project, Additional Equipment – Titjikala Youth Program and Warlpiri Regional Youth Development Complex were considered by some stakeholders to represent excellent value for money, as they enhanced the capacity of existing, ongoing services.

7.2.2   Limited long-term impacts

Due largely to the factors of project design and planning and the short term nature of funding (both discussed further below), YADM projects collectively seem to have had limited *long term* impact. The barriers to long term impacts of the YADM include:

- A lack of capacity building in communities, as service providers were brought in from outside and not given a mandate to engage with or mentor locals to provide services.

- The short term nature of programs, lack of content relating to issues such as substance abuse, anti social behaviour and contributing factors, poor targeting of communities, lack of consultation in the planning phase, and lack of program logic to link activities to objectives.

- Lack of planning for ongoing maintenance, causing some infrastructure to have gradually fallen into disrepair.

- Lack of coordination with local service providers (following initial lack of consultation or consideration of these providers to run programs) has resulted in a lack of hand over of activity programs at the conclusion of the funding period.

7.3   Overall effectiveness of YADM

Limited information was available about the overall effectiveness of YADM, as few stakeholders were able to make informed comment on this topic. The survey responses indicated a degree of ambivalence about the overall impact of YADM. The overall effectiveness of projects in meeting the objectives was given fair or favourable ratings by a small number of respondents familiar with the NTER YADM. A minority of these survey respondents familiar with the YADM agreed that 'The projects funded under the measure have a consistent level of effectiveness'.

However, the program seems to have made some progress towards most of its objectives, as shown below.

- *Expansion of the capacity of Indigenous youth services in the Northern Territory-* all of the infrastructure projects funded under YADM included in the review sample have contributed to this aim, as the previously poor quality of infrastructure for youth activities in the target communities has limited the scope for such activities. The Regional Education Coordinator role may have also assisted in facilitating the implementation of school based projects such as the BMX program, and the Learning Support Program. A limitation of the program in this regard is that projects did not build the skills of local communities or service providers to implement diversion activities.

- *Funding of youth focussed recreation and equipment and infrastructure* – all infrastructure projects within the selection of 26 projects have contributed to this aim.

- *Provision of recreation and diversion activities across the NT*- all of the activity related projects funded under YADM have contributed to this aim

- *Support and encouragement of attendance at school (including reengagement* -- there appear to have been short term gains in this area in relation to the Learning Support Program. A limitation of the YADM in this area is a lack of longer term impacts (as discussed above in this chapter).

- *Diversion of young people from at risk behaviours (including substance use)*- there is evidence that a number of projects (i.e. School Holiday Activities Program, Bushmob Cultural Horse Work Camp for Volatile Substance Users , Gap Youth Centre Young Men's Support Project) contributed to this aim. It is possible, but not conclusive, that other activity based projects such as the Hip Hop Workshops may have also contributed to this aim.

- *Reduction of the impact of substance abuse on individuals and communities*- there is no explicit evidence that this was achieved, but it is possible that the Bushmob Camp for Volatile Users and the Warlpiri Regional Youth Development Complex which targeted substance users and were viewed as successful projects contributed to this aim.

- *Encouragement and support for transition from school to further education and/or work*- there is no available evidence that this was achieved.

7.4   Program design

A number of stakeholders were critical of the design of the YADM program overall, which they saw as having no apparent logic or strategic underpinning. Stakeholders specifically mentioned a lack of program logic for the YADM - that is, a lack of clarity about how the funded projects were expected to contribute to objectives relating to alcohol or drug use by young people.

This criticism needs to be understood in the context of the program's implementation. At the time program funding was to commence, the Northern Territory Emergency Response occurred and the majority of funding and resources were diverted into efforts in that area. Community councils were in the process of being dismantled, resulting in uncertain status around agreements in process.

There was also confusion among stakeholders as to the aims and objectives of the YADM. No-one interviewed outside FaHCSIA could recall seeing program guidelines or any other documentation that included a statement of the objectives of YADM. The implication of this is that the YADM was not viewed as a whole by stakeholders. (This is clearly reflected in the difficulties engaging stakeholders in the review – see Chapter 2).

As noted earlier in this chapter, from the sample of 26 projects it appears that the projects do correspond with the objectives of the YADM. However, it is also noteworthy that the YADM objectives themselves cover a very broad range of areas, and that two objectives ('funding of youth focussed recreation' and 'equipment and infrastructure and provision of recreation and diversion activities across the NT') are worded in a manner more closely resembling outputs than objectives. It could therefore be argued that the objectives may have been too broadly worded to provide specificity to the program.

Another feature of the program design subject to criticism was the provision of one-off funding over a one year period. This was seen to limit the activity that could feasibly be funded to short term programs, such as school holiday programs, week long camps (eg Bushmob) or courses of activity for a few months (eg Learning Support Program). The short term nature of these programs was felt to greatly limit their long term impact on young people and communities (as discussed above). Generally it is considered that programs funded continuously over a three year period are more likely to have a significant or lasting impact on communities. Other infrastructure based projects were praised as having a potentially longer term impact, however the lack of recurrent funding available through the YADM also excluded provision for ongoing management and maintenance of these assets (this is also discussed further below).

However, it is also widely agreed that, in spite of problems with program design, the MacDonnell Shire achieved significant outcomes with $2.4m of funding in the last six months of the program, with enduring results.

7.4.1 Problems associated with diversion per se

A number of stakeholders found the concept of *diversion* problematic, or questioned whether the provision of diversionary activity was an appropriate priority in the communities where the YADM funded projects.

A number of issues arose around the most appropriate definition and operationalisation of the term 'diversion'. 'Diversion' (and to an extent 'youth activities') is subject to varying interpretations and ideas about target groups, objectives and role in the broader context of other social programs (see also Chapter 3). For example, diversion can refer to:

- programs for offenders to divert them from the corrections system (law and order perspective)

- programs for current substance users (particularly sniffers) to occupy them when they might otherwise be sniffing or engaging in anti-social behaviour

- activity for young people who may be at risk of - but are not currently - engaging in substance abuse or antisocial behaviour

- activity for all young people to give them something to do.

Similarly, programs can have varying degrees of content relating to drug abuse, anti-social behaviour or their contributing causes, and some will be simply a fun way to pass the time. Many stakeholders believed that in practice, YADM activities were limited to the latter function. It was suggested that many activities were more closely aligned with 'sport and recreation' than 'youth activities', as workers who ran the activities in most cases (with exceptions such as Bushmob) did not take on a mentoring or case management function, but simply facilitated activities which young people attended. Urbis' review of documentation on the sample of projects supports this view, since only a small minority of activity based projects included education or discussion with young people about the issues the YADM was intended to address.

Perhaps because of the perceived tendency for the diversion strategies to simply result in organised past-times, several stakeholders believed that it would be more effective to focus on *prevention* than diversion. Prevention was defined as engaging young people before they try alcohol or sniffing, and actively preventing experimentation through education, positive lifestyle messages, building confidence and a sense of direction. Stakeholders also suggested that if diversion activity was to be part of an effective strategy for addressing substance use and anti-social behaviour, it needed to be combined with more intensive elements including case management of at risk young people, and access to treatment and/or counselling. A prevention focus was also considered more appropriate given that projects such as those funded under the YADM typically had difficulty engaging older young people (14 or over) who are considered at greater risk of engaging in substance abuse. This raises the question of who is skilled and best placed to engage with older young people.

Some stakeholders therefore questioned the appropriateness of funding diversion activity (which they saw as merely something to occupy young people) in communities where they observed that:

- basic needs, such as adequate housing, were not being met (eg Ampilatwatja)

- more direct approaches to substance abuse or its root causes did not exist, such as initiatives to address family violence or mental iLanguage Literacy and Numeracyess, or offering counselling or treatment (eg Yuendumu).

Others suggested that while activities to keep young people occupied and happy were a legitimate need, they seemed to bear little relationship to the terms of the YADM.

7.5   Range of activities funded

The broad characteristics of the mix of sample projects are set out in Chapter 7. The following discussion of the project mix is based on the review outlined in that chapter, consultations with stakeholders, and responses to the online survey.

The mix of funded projects was criticised by stakeholders, who perceived the project selection process to be ad hoc rather than guided by a coherent strategy.

Urbis' review of the sample of 26 projects indicated that they included 14 projects that related to diversion activity, and seven that related to infrastructure support of diversion activity. These projects therefore in principle appear to be diversion-related projects. Other projects (eg Regional Education Coordinators) were enhancements of either existing or YADM funded projects, and seem to fit well in the mix of funded activity. Three projects, although corresponding to the objectives of the YADM, do not appear to fit what is primarily a diversion program (Elders Visit to Mt. Theo, Petrol Sniffing Rehabilitation and Diversion Program – Gunbalanya, and The Youth Housing Forums Project). There were also four scoping projects, which would have the potential to contribute to the value of other projects once they were implemented - but the scoping did not appear to relate to the planning of other YADM projects.

The mix of projects was also rated poorly by survey respondents. The majority of respondents who were familiar with the NTER rated as insufficient the level of emphasis on *prevention and early education, traditional culture, acquiring life skills, funding for equipment and infrastructure*, and *health and hygiene*. Half said that the level of emphasis on *substance abuse* was appropriate (this slightly more favourable score may reflect the apparent lack of substance abuse issues in many of the communities where activities were funded). A minority of respondents agreed with the statement, *'The mix of projects/activities funded under the measure is appropriate to the objectives of the measure'*, and only half the respondents who were familiar with NTER YADM agreed that *'The projects are suited to the target range of ages'*.

A number of stakeholders were critical of the ratio of activity projects to infrastructure projects, suggesting that the latter had greater potential to provide a legacy beyond the funding period and should have received a greater proportion of YADM funding. However, the effectiveness and meaningfulness of some infrastructure projects (such as, in some communities, Red Centre BMX), was said to have been compromised by the lack of a program of activity or resourcing (in the form of youth workers) to facilitate the use of the infrastructure. It appears that in most cases, the infrastructure and the activity funded under the YADM were not planned to complement each other. Works at Mt Theo were given as an example of sustainable impact, as the infrastructure was developed specifically to increase the capacity of existing service providers in the substance abuse treatment area. However, the opposite view is held, that money had been wasted on large scale assets such as the Mt Theo facility that had *'delivered no changes in community behaviour'*. Such feedback highlights the importance of community and stakeholder support and understanding to be secured prior to making large investments, particularly in remote communities.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the lack of planning for ongoing maintenance of the infrastructure has also limited its longer-term impact.

7.6   Governance

This section discusses the role of FaHCSIA CAPSSU and NT Office in planning and administering the YADM.

7.6.1   Program design and delivery

While identification of desired outcomes and the processes used to select projects for the YADM have been discussed in section 7.6, above, this section discusses the adequacy of:

- Processes used in selecting targeted communities, projects and service providers,
- Consideration given to good practice principles for youth work and the sustainability of projects, and

- Consultation with stakeholders by FaHCSIA in planning the YADM

The selection of communities receiving program funding under the YADM was widely criticised as it included many communities where Opal fuel had been rolled out, and which as a consequence did not have a significant petrol sniffing problem. However, it is important to note that the literature recommends that diversionary activity is most effective in communities where supply has been addressed. Only two stakeholders mentioned alcohol problems in the communities they were familiar with; both said that the issue affected the adult population rather than the young people targeted by the YADM projects.

Some attempts at implementing elements of youth work good practice principles can be identified across projects, although the degree to which these were systematic is questionable. Bushmob, however, targeted the project appropriately; focused on skill, capacity and community development; employed experienced and knowledgeable staff; engaged local resources, knowledge and infrastructure and utilised intensive intervention methods in a holistic response. This approach represents a valuable model for future program development.

As discussed above, stakeholders felt that the selection of projects had no guiding theme or logic, but was instead a random process. It was also suggested that the process for selecting tenderers lacked transparency. Stakeholders expressed concern about the selection of service providers, as in many cases providers were based away from the region, and had little or no familiarity with the targeted communities (e.g. Red Sun Solutions based in regional NSW, which was funded to deliver school holiday programs). The alternative view is that employment from outside the region increased the workforce in the Northern Territory.

The Bushmob project was praised as a locally managed initiative which drew on local people in its implementation. A common view in relation to activity-based projects was that 'outsiders' were randomly chosen to 'fly in and out' and provide short term entertainment on a one-off basis (or at most over three school holiday periods in one year). Once the projects had concluded, there was no residual gain in the form of capacity building of local people or sustained impacts on the behaviour of young participants.

A key issue mentioned by a range of stakeholders was that they were not consulted during the planning phase for the YADM. It was suggested that consultation with communities and key relevant stakeholders working in communities (e.g. GBMs) should have played a key role in identifying communities most in need, and what the needs of individual communities were. A lack of consultation, particularly with local and Territory governments, was said to have led to a lack of coordination in project implementation as well as a poorly informed planning phase. Apparently as a result of the lack of consultation, a number of stakeholders contacted for the review had little knowledge of the YADM. A stakeholder from the Northern Territory government commented for example,

> There are projects in this list that have never been discussed with the Programs in the Northern Territory Government that recurrently fund the services in receipt of these grants.

There were conflicting views on the appropriate role and capacity of local government in relation to youth activities that were not addressed in planning the YADM. Some Shire stakeholders appeared to be somewhat overwhelmed by the expectation that they could effectively engage in activities with at risk young people, seeing their role as limited to sport and recreation for the general population. One Shire had recently expanded its area via amalgamations in 2008, and it was observed that the Shire was having difficulties fulfilling its existing program responsibilities, such as Meals on Wheels, let alone taking on youth work. Other stakeholders were critical of the amount of funding directed at Shires through the YADM and other programs, believing that Shires lacked the skill base to work with at risk young people in remote communities. It was also suggested that an assumption was made by FaHCSIA that Shires such as Barkly Shire would step in at the conclusion of the funding period and undertake responsibility for maintaining infrastructure funded through YADM, and that Shires had not been consulted about this in the planning stages of the YADM (see comments in 7.4, above).

From previous work conducted by Urbis it should be noted that this is a common challenge for shires in remote communities – which are often expected to conduct a wide range of activities (well beyond that expected in a metropolitan location) in the absence of other services on the ground in those locations.

There were also apparent difficulties engaging the education sector, although it is clear that efforts were made - particularly in the funding of the Regional Education Coordinator role, which was dedicated to facilitating the uptake and smooth implementation of school based YADM projects. The outcomes of this project are discussed below.

CAPSSU staff consulted for the review acknowledged that in the context of the Northern Territory Emergency Response and with delays in the receipt of program guidelines, there was a lack of community consultation in the planning stages of the YADM and a lack of local control. This was regarded as a serious flaw in project governance

7.6.2   Contract Management

The day-to-day administration of projects was more positively viewed than the planning and preparation processes, as reflected in the survey results. Half the respondents who were familiar with the YADM rated the management of the program by both CAPSSU and FaHCSIA NT state office as fair or above (3-5 out of 5).

However, a number of issues were identified by stakeholders.

Firstly, it was reported that FaHCSIA delayed the release of funding to several projects, compounding the pressures of an already short timeframe for delivery, and problems with accessing necessary equipment due to demand created by the NTER (discussed further below in relation to implementation). This resulted in project implementation being rushed, and some projects suffered as a result. CAPSSU acknowledged an initial over-estimation of what could be achieved by some projects within the available timeframes - although CAPSSU maintains that all projects were delivered.

Secondly, it was suggested that during project implementation, there was a lack of monitoring of some projects by both CAPSSU and the Northern Territory FaHCSIA office. There is evidence of field visits to some project locations taking place, but it is unclear whether such steps were taken for all YADM projects. A broader issue was a perceived lack of visibility or accessibility of FaHCSIA contact points for the projects. In one instance, this manifested as the absence of a mechanism for complaints handling about some of the activities provided by one of the funded services. This resulted in no observable action being taken, and parents feeling that they had no recourse to complain about matters affecting their children.

Finally, it was reported that project termination was handled abruptly in some instances, with FaHCSIA failing to clarify whether ongoing funding would be made available, or in a few cases, leading service providers to believe that it would be. This led in some cases to investment in equipment and contracting of staff based on the understanding that more funds would be forthcoming. When this did not occur, it placed some service providers in a difficult financial position, and was described as a blow to community morale, risking renewed scepticism.

7.7   Implementation

This section discusses general feedback received about the delivery of the YADM projects, and available data on individual projects.

A number of projects were reported to have been implemented successfully and many were also implemented on schedule. Overall, in most cases, it appears that the activity was carried out as planned and that young people enjoyed taking part. This achievement should be acknowledged in the context of delayed release of funding and, particularly for infrastructure projects, the impact of universal diversion of resources such as four wheel drive vehicles and heavy machinery to other aspects of the NTER. Equipment shortages were reported to have caused delays, but infrastructure was eventually delivered.

Among the most successfully implemented projects were Warlpiri Regional Youth Development Complex, West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project, Additional Equipment – Titjikala Youth Program, East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders Visit to Mt. Theo, Bushmob Cultural Horse Work Camp for Volatile Substance Users, Gap Youth Centre Young Men's Support Project, Hip Hop Workshop and Multicultural School Holiday Program for male primary and

secondary aged children. Particular praise was given to the Bushmob project, for involving local people, attempting to work collaboratively with other local service providers, and providing a diversion experience embedded in a suite of more intensive intervention services.

A commonly reported shortcoming was that activities had limited success attracting older young people (over 14). Most participants were aged 10-12 years. These younger groups were considered less at risk of substance abuse than older young people. However it was suggested by a couple of stakeholders that some young people engaged in vandalism and other anti-social behaviour, and well planned diversion activity could help address this. The Hip Hop Workshop project was the only project that was reported to effectively engaged older young people (14-18 years).

For certain projects, implementation was more successful in some communities than others. The BMX project is a key example. The project was intended to consist of construction of tracks and development of a program of activity for integrating the tracks into the school curriculum, to encourage attendance. According to a report by the Regional Education Coordinator, copies of curriculum materials were delivered to each school and lessons given by the Coordinator herself, and the project was anticipated to have solid and sustainable impacts. However, in Hermannsburg, another stakeholder reported that there was no evidence of an accompanying program of activity and that the track was barely used. This stakeholder and others mentioned that a container had been delivered which was presumed to contain bikes and other equipment, but that the key to the container had been lost. Another stakeholder suggested that a barrier to use by the school was that the track could not handle the traffic of an entire class of students, but the staffing resources to split the class and take turns going to the track were unavailable. The track in Apatula was described as incomplete at the time of this review.

It appears that school based projects such as the BMX program and the Learning Support Program had mixed success engaging schools, despite the presence of the Regional Education Coordinator. The Learning Support Program, although it was popular with students, appears to have antagonised some staff (eg in Ampilatwatja). Some schools found the program disruptive to their teaching, suggesting that the service provider (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association - CAAMA) lacked an understanding or respect for the 'school culture'. Commenting more generally, stakeholders from the education sector suggested that service providers often expected greater involvement from schools than was feasible. On the other hand, service providers working with schools suggested that NT DET, and the independent schools sector, only wished to participate in activity 'on their own terms'. It was also reported that CAAMA experienced a lack of cooperation from some schools in the use of school resources. The education representatives consulted for the review seemed generally sceptical about the perceived litany of short term programs that come and go in their communities and saw them as irrelevant, or even a disruption to their core business.

Stakeholders expressed conflicting views regarding the success with which the School Holiday Activities Program was implemented. It was noted that the program did not offer the same range of activities in all communities, as necessary equipment was not made available. Stakeholders observing some areas praised the range of activity offered, which included skills-based content (e.g. bike maintenance and technology related courses) as well as arts and crafts and sport. The skills of workers running the project were also regarded highly. However, in one area, grave concerns were raised about one activity which involved taking young people to the local tip, without their families' permission. Stakeholders felt that the staff in this area lacked appropriate qualifications or experience.

Little information was available about the Regional Youth Development Network, a large project auspiced by Red Cross Australia's NT Division. However anecdotal reports suggested that:

- implementation of the project was rushed due to the pressure to spend the large amount of funds in an unfeasibly short timeframe

- Red Cross-sponsored projects would benefit from an increased focus on community engagement, cultural awareness training for its youth workers and engagement of Indigenous staff wherever possible.

Little information was available about the Petrol Sniffing Rehabilitation and Diversion Program in Gunbalanya, but one stakeholder expressed reservations anecdotally about the program on the basis that it did not support local efforts to build relationships and referral pathways to another facility (the

Council of Aboriginal Alcohol Programs Services (CAAAPS) program in Darwin), and that it could have done more to facilitate the entry of sniffers into the Abbotts Outstation facility.

Finally, there were mixed reports about the level of use of some infrastructure purchased under the YADM, including the BMX tracks and Hermannsburg Trailer mentioned above. However, other infrastructure items such as worker housing and vehicles funded under West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project and Warlpiri Regional Youth Development Complex have been well used.

7.8   Findings in relation to future evaluation of similar programs

This review of the NTER YADM has encountered a number of significant challenges, some of which are discussed in the Methodology section as limitations of available data. There are also inherent characteristics of the YADM which make it problematic for evaluation. These should be taken into account in future planning of reviews or evaluations of similar initiatives in the future, and planning of initiatives themselves, to ensure they can be monitored and evaluated successfully.

These characteristics have been mentioned elsewhere in this report, but are listed here as key factors limiting the success of the review in relation to the YADM:

- A lack of program logic tying the program objectives together, which has made it difficult to determine how the projects are expected to contribute to various levels of objectives under the YADM.

- The YADM lacks coherence as a program, partly due to the variation in project scope and scale. For instance it is difficult to comment collectively on a range of projects that includes, at one extreme, multi-million dollar initiatives, some consisting of their own sub-projects, and at the other extreme small one-off events (e.g. East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders Visit to Mt Theo).

- Evaluation of a measure that includes both infrastructure and activity projects, which are mostly unrelated, is problematic as the scope for internal comparisons is limited.

- The fact that a number of projects were enhancements of activity that is external to the YADM creates difficulties in drawing boundaries around the scope of the evaluation, and attributing causation of impacts.

- It is impossible to measure the impact of some small projects in contributing to higher level outcomes, particularly minor items such as the purchase of furniture and air conditioners (Additional Equipment – Titjikala Youth Program).

- Difficulty was encountered engaging stakeholders in the review, and those who participated were often unfamiliar with many of the projects, or unsure what was and was not funded under the YADM. A number noted that multiple funding streams from FaHCSIA and other sources (e.g. NT government) not only led to such confusion, but also to increased administrative workload in meeting multiple reporting requirements and participating in evaluations and reviews. Resulting 'evaluation fatigue', along with lack of resources, is likely to be one of the main reasons the review received a poor response from stakeholders.

- The significant lapse of time since the funding period that was subject of the review is likely to have compounded difficulties engaging stakeholders and made it difficult for those who did participate to comment in detail on projects.

8   Conclusion and future directions

The purpose of this review is to examine what has been successfully implemented, what has worked, what has not worked, and what could be improved in relation to the youth activities provided by the IYSP and the activities and infrastructure delivered under the NTER YADM.

The findings of the review are intended to inform the future direction of youth diversionary programs, including those delivered under the governments Petrol Sniffing Strategy, and measure the progress of various youth services and programs against the objectives of the PSS, with a particular focus on how these initiatives provided alternative activities for young people and strengthened and supported communities. The review also responds to FaHCSIA's evaluation role under the PSS Eight Point Plan.

The conclusions of the review relating to the IYSP and the NTER YADMM activities are discussed separately below. The final section of this Chapter provides a series of suggestions for future youth work initiatives in remote Aboriginal communities, in relation to programs such as the IYSP and the NTER YADM.

8.1   Conclusions for the Integrated Youth Services Program

The goals and objectives of the IYSP are ambitious, especially given the remoteness of the communities in which it was operating and the relatively short (three year) duration of the contract (April 2007-March 2010). The goals and objectives of the IYSP were to:

▪ Build the confidence, self reliance, leadership skills and life skills of young people in the four communities by intensively engaging with them so that they take responsibility for their own care and development and move away from welfare dependency.

▪ Counteract negative influences, including those related to substance abuse, by engaging young people in a range of culturally, age and gender appropriate educational, social, cultural and recreational activities.

▪ Help young people to build on, and in some cases re-build, their learning pathways to literacy and numeracy and other forms of accredited training by engaging with them in a partnership over time.

▪ Help communities to address the effects of substance abuse in young people and build community resilience by engaging with communities in a partnership over time.

▪ Assist young people to achieve the education, life skills and employability skills they need for them to participate autonomously and fully in learning, work and community life.

Mission Australia's final report outlines a number of practical and detailed recommendations that would improve the delivery of the IYSP for the next provider. Some of the more practical recommendations relate to issues such as the management of vehicles and equipment. The higher-level recommendations made by Mission Australia have informed some of the key suggestions made in this Chapter.

This review has found that the IYSP has delivered a high volume of activities to the four Central Desert communities of Finke, Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Docker River. These activities were predominantly recreational and educational in nature. While the IYSP has been successful in that it has delivered these activities, the data available are not sufficient to draw many conclusions about whether the IYSP has contributed to overall program outcomes, such as assisting communities to address the effects of substance misuse.

Notwithstanding these considerations, the consultations have provided a valuable source of qualitative information regarding the effectiveness of the IYSP.

The review findings do not support Mission Australia's assertion that extending the IYSP program to young people under the age of 10 is an important part of a youth diversionary program.[24] Evidence and good practice would indicate that this action directly counters the focus on *youth* diversionary activities and the resources that should be employed to address that focus within a program. There may be a need to improve the services and activities available to children under the age of 10 years in these communities, but the findings of this review indicate that these activities would be more effective when offered separately from the IYSP.

8.1.1   Addressing the PSS

One aspect of the Terms of Reference required a determination of the impact and success of the IYSP against the objectives of the PSS Eight Point Plan. The two key components of the Eight Point Plan of relevance here are:

- Component 4: Alternative activities for people in the area, which refers to the need to provide a range of concurrent strategies including educational, recreational, training and employment interventions that would offer an alternative to petrol sniffing to those who are already sniffing and those who are at risk of sniffing.

- Component 7: Strengthening and supporting communities: which identifies that many Aboriginal communities are not sufficiently cohesive to address substance misuse issues without support. Over time, this support will be provided by interventions designed to build community capacity.

The IYSP involved provision of a range of alternative activities for young people, although these have focused primarily on recreational rather than educational, training or employment interventions. However it is not known whether these involved young people who were sniffing or at risk of sniffing (other than the fact that many young people in the IYSP communities could be regarded as being generally at risk because of the history of substance abuse and level of disadvantage in these communities). As some commentators observe, it may be that the introduction of Opal fuel in some ways diminished the necessity for the program. Alternatively, it could have provided an opportunity to orient the IYSP differently in response to supply strategies. Reducing supply, although successful in the short term may not reduce the actual demand for substances to abuse. The findings of the review indicate that it is likely that the IYSP strengthened community capacity in the short term. However, there is no conclusive evidence that these communities have been strengthened and supported in the longer term, or that these communities could address those issues in the future without external support.

8.2   Conclusions for the NTER Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure

Based on the information available about the sample of 26 of the 56 YADM projects, most appear to have been implemented successfully, which is significant given the well documented difficulties of program implementation in remote communities and difficulties procuring resources at the time of the NTER.

There are indications that that the infrastructure funded has in most cases been welcomed, and where it has been targeted at enhancing existing or already planned activity, it has succeeded in doing so.

The evidence available indicates that the program has provided activities that have been well attended and enjoyed by young people, particularly those aged under 14, and as a result these young people have been kept occupied and remained on community during school holiday periods and other project times.

There is also evidence (based on what is known of the 26 projects) that the YADM has at least partially achieved its aims, with the exception of *encouragement and support for transition from school to further education and/or work.*

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[24]   Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, *End of Project Report and Recommendations*, 31 March 2010 at 25.

The program also achieved a number of specific outcomes:

- The program was anecdotally reported to have contributed to reductions in vandalism and anti social behaviour over project periods.

- It was acknowledged that giving young people something to keep them occupied after school and during the holidays was in itself a positive outcome.

- There is evidence that some individual schools engaged successfully with certain YADM projects, and that some results in attendance at 'Try a Trade' programs and enrolment in Open Education courses were also achieved.

- Infrastructure projects in some cases are reported to have provided benefits beyond the funding period. The main example is the worker housing which was funded under West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project, which stakeholders believe will assist with the ongoing issues of attracting and retaining qualified youth workers, and the provision of vehicles under this project which have enabled excursions with young people.

- Giving national agencies experience in delivering programs to remote communities.

- Improvement over the life of YADM in FaHCSIA's working relationship with NT DET (although FaHCSIA acknowledges there remains room to improve).

Examples of achievements of individual projects include:

- The Learning Support Program successfully engaged potentially at risk students – for example a pregnant Year 10 student. The project also received strong attendance. A report by the Regional Education Coordinator noted increases in school attendance during the program.

- The Gap Youth Centre Young Men's Support Project – was considered to have been highly successful, particularly in forging strong relationships between the Gap Youth Centre and Police. It was also considered to have helped improve relationships between young male participants and some police.

- The East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders Visit to Mt. Theo – was considered to have achieved its goal of building support among elders for the Mt Theo model.

- Infrastructure projects including the West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project, Additional Equipment – Titjikala Youth Program and Warlpiri Regional Youth Development Complex were considered by some stakeholders to represent excellent value for money, as they enhanced the capacity of existing, ongoing, services.

However, the YADM was negatively impacted by an apparent lack of planning, which ultimately affected the capacity of the program, particularly the activity projects, to bring about long term change. The planning process did not include the development of well-defined objectives, creating difficulties in monitoring and measuring impacts. It was also apparent that there was a lack of thorough consultation with communities or key informants, which not only affected the appropriateness of program design and targeting, but also resulted in scepticism and lack of support for the program. The program design did not provide mechanisms for local capacity building to enable communities to develop and run their own youth activities. The potential for some infrastructure projects to produce long term benefits may also be jeopardised by a lack of planning for integration into existing programs of activity, or for ongoing maintenance (especially by Shires).

An overall shortcoming of the design of YADM was what the funding was spent on in the short term. This was compounded by delays in implementation due to delayed release of funds, and in the case of some infrastructure projects, lack of available equipment (as mentioned above). Although infrastructure projects built during this timeframe have the potential to create an ongoing legacy for communities, it is unlikely that activity based projects funded in this manner would have the potential to bring about sustained positive change in young people's behaviour. Given that the program funding for the 26 projects in the sample alone amounted to over $12 million, a greater extent of sustainable impact would

have been expected. It is suggested that all future projects should take a long term view in terms of proposed objectives and outcomes.

A particular obstacle faced by the YADM, which appears to have arisen in relation to other youth projects in the past, is the difficulty in securing the active support of NT DET or the independent schools sector. This issue has prevailed despite the funding of the Regional Education Coordinator role. This affected the implementation of the Learning Support Program in particular and is likely to limit the future potential of school based projects to produce sustainable impacts.

While the comments received from stakeholders who participated in the evaluation were often negative, it is possible that the lack of consultation with stakeholders may have negatively predisposed stakeholders towards the YADM. In addition, considering the various factors that may have limited stakeholder participation (described below) this evaluation may have largely attracted commentators with 'an axe to grind,' rather than representing the full spectrum of views. However, the lack of stakeholder participation itself may have been caused by lack of engagement in the program, due to lack of consultation by FaHCSIA in its planning stages. Other factors which are likely to have limited stakeholder participation include confusion between this review and earlier reviews and evaluations in this area (e.g. the 2009 CAPSSU evaluation), confusion about what activities fell under the YADM and which activity is funded from other initiatives, and lack of on the ground resources and evaluation fatigue, given the current reporting burden on services arising from dependence on multiple funding sources.

The nature of the program design (in particular the lack of tightly focussed objectives, lack of program logic, and breadth of project scope and scale) has proved problematic for the evaluation of the YADM. These difficulties have been compounded by a lack of stakeholder participation, as described above, and lack of available documentation on the funded projects, as discussed in the Methodology section of this report.

8.3 Future directions for initiatives similar to the IYSP and the YADM

8.3.1 Future directions arising from the review of the IYSP

The review findings relating to the IYSP suggests a number of areas for improvement in any future program delivery of this type. These are set out below:

1.   *Greater collaboration and stakeholder engagement*

There is an identified need for key and strategic stakeholder involvement at the program design stage, to ensure there are clear program objectives responding to need and that they are aligned with a clear definition of the service type and function to be provided by the program. Stakeholder involvement at this stage should also include consultation with affected communities to reflect their concerns and priorities in program design. Any expectations of or opportunities for linkages between agencies should also be identified and operationalised at this stage, along with intended outcomes and agreed processes for communication between Australian Government departments.

2.   *Re-visit the PSS Program logic*

Any program rollout needs to be supported through the development of a program logic framework and measurable indicators. These will provide clarity for program operators around expectations, deliverables and timelines, and transparency to other stakeholders. This process may be assisted by re-visiting the program logic for the PSS prepared by external consultants, *Courage Partners*, in 2008, which resulted in development of a program logic and a substantial evaluation framework. The review conducted by Urbis of CAPSSU (2009) noted that that there had been no embedding of these program logic structures (or requirement by FaHCSIA that it inform activities conducted under the PSS), and also that the PSS implementation would benefit from a stronger strategic framework and direction within which to operate. As stated in that report, one of the significant advantages associated with using such frameworks is the clear line of sight provided, starting with the intent of a program or strategy through to

the activity delivered and on to the impacts, ensuring that there is a close and consistent connection between the two.[25]

3.   *Provide greater focus on the provision of pathways for young people*

The provision of pathways for young people to skills development, education and employment is a centrepiece to any youth diversionary programs within remote communities. These elements need to be systematically entrenched in any new program, including through the specifications for staff selection and mentoring. The roles of Anangu staff are also vital in this process.

The identification of opportunities for partnerships and linkages with training agencies and employers (or economic development opportunities) to extend pathways should also be specified at the program development stage. We note that a partnership has been made with Charles Darwin University to this end. Greater focus on strengthening this partnership and tailoring the training provided to the circumstances of people in remote communities would enhance the effectiveness of the pathways created and the educational initiatives provided.

Mechanisms for providing skills development and accredited training for participants also needs to be outlined at the program development stage, so that young people may be aware of opportunities and choices available to them.

4.   *Case management and referral*

If case management is to be part of any future program, the objectives, extent and intended outcomes of cross-agency support and resourcing should be clearly identified at the program development stage.

5.   *Management of infrastructure*

Closer monitoring of financial expenditure would assist all parties involved in the IYSP. An estimate of resources required for program assets and materials should be determined at the program development stage for each community site, and a process for ongoing management and maintenance of assets agreed. This could then be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

6.   *Staff training and development*

A process for the investment of resources into staff training and development (including accredited training where possible) needs to be identified at the program development stage and supported throughout the life of the program.

7.   *Information sharing*

Resources need to be identified for sharing information and skills across communities (both for staff and participants), to share good practice and promote stronger support networks for communities.

8.   *Community ownership*

While some community respondents indicated a desire for the IYSP projects to be run wholly by the communities themselves, others indicated their desire for the services to be delivered by a provider with experience in working in Aboriginal communities, and with a capacity to listen and respond to the needs of communities. They suggested that this approach would need to include relevant training, partnership development and the development of skills pathways for young people.

8.3.2   Future directions arising from the review of the NTER YADM

The review findings indicate that youth diversionary programs of a similar nature to the NTER YADM generally need to be provided in a context in which the health; well-being; educational and life chance issues of Aboriginal people in remote communities is addressed. While communities reported few

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[25]   Grealy, C, Wilczynski, A, Lopata, T, Nolan, F, *Review of the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU)*, Urbis for the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 20 November 2009, at 29.

instances of volatile substance abuse since the introduction of Opal fuel, the contributory key factors to this phenomenon of poverty and marginalisation remain prevalent in remote communities. This suggests that an ongoing policy and program response aimed at prevention, intervention and diversion from substance abuse generally is desirable.

▪ The findings suggest a strong need for key and strategic stakeholder involvement (including consultation with affected communities to reflect their concerns and priorities) at the program design stage.

▪ Program implementation needs to be supported centrally (from Canberra) through the development of a program logic framework and indicators, to provide clarity for program operators and transparency to other stakeholders.

▪ Stakeholders identified the importance of youth diversionary programs within their communities, providing pathways for young people to skills development, education and employment. These elements need to be systematically entrenched in any new program, including through:

  – the specifications for staff selection and mentoring (including Anangu staff)

  – identification of opportunities for partnerships and linkages with training agencies and employers (or economic development opportunities)

  – mechanisms for providing skills development and accredited training for participants

  – cross-agency support and resourcing of case management

  – resources for equipment and materials and resources for sharing information and skills across communities (the latter is critical both for staff and participants).

▪ Staff development and training is also critical to the success of any new program, and needs to be strongly supported and accredited where possible.

▪ For youth activities to succeed locally, particularly if there are limited venues for activities, there may need to be some strict decisions made about curtailing some activities (such as children's services) in favour of others, or imposing time restrictions on venue use by respective groups.

▪ Where external service providers are engaged, familiarity and experience in working with target communities should be a major criterion in evaluation of tenders.

For future programs such as the NTER YADM, the following elements should be considered:

1. *Program content*

Priority should be given to funding good youth programs focussed on healthy lifestyles and maximising community participation and involvement. These should be tempered in terms of high expectations or emphasis on 'therapeutic' content. It would be the role of youth workers in these programs to refer young people on, rather than seek to deliver therapeutic service. Such programs should be complemented by counselling and case management services, particularly for young people at risk (i.e. over 14 years of age

2. *Community consultation*

Decisions about infrastructure provision should be primarily influenced by well-informed community deliberation processes and community stakeholder involvement, and there should be complete transparency around infrastructure funding decisions. Establishing unmet need for the infrastructure, and ensuring it will complement what is already there in terms of service provision, and other infrastructure will also be critical.

3. *Funding base decisions*

Where recurrent funding is not available, initiatives should emphasise youth services infrastructure rather than activity, but include recurrent funding for ongoing management by Shires or suitably qualified local organisations.

4.   *Service provider charter*

It is recommended that, where external service providers are engaged to run programs of activity, they are required to detail in their tenders how their program will contribute to the aims of the overall program, and how they will determine and measure whether this has been achieved.

5.   *Complaints handling*

Protocols for complaints handling need to be established for such projects. It is recommended that GBMs are nominated contacts for community members, but that their role in this regard would be limited to relaying complaints to FaHCSIA for follow up.

6.   *Project evaluation*

It is recommended that where measures include funding of a wide range of projects, projects over the value of $2 million are evaluated individually.

Reference List

Grealy, C, Wilczynski, A, Lopata, T, Nolan, F, *Review of the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU)*, Urbis for the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 20 November 2009, at 29.

Mission Australia, Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service*, End of Project Report and Recommendations*, 31 March 2010.

Mission Australia, *Northern Territory Integrated Youth Service, Status – Achievement Reports # 1-7*.

Note: A full reference list for the literature review is included in Appendix G.

Appendix A   List of NTER YADM Projects

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NTER Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure (2008-09) – projects managed by CAPSSU	
1. School Holiday Activities Program – Red Sun Solutions	Atitjere
	Titjikala
	Yuelamu
	Santa Teresa
	Ampilatwatja
	Engawala
	Utopia
2. Red Centre BMX	Ampilatwatja
	Apatula
	Yuelamu
	Santa Teresa
	Engawala
	Ntaria
	Laramba
3. Learning Support Program	Atitjere (Harts Range)
	Apatula (Finke)
	Ampilatwatja
	Areyonga
	Engawala
	Bonya
	Laramba
	Willowra
4. Warlpiri Regional Youth Development Complex	Yuendumu
	Nyirripi
	Willowra
	Lajamanu
5. West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project	West MacDonnell communities
6. Additional Equipment - Titjikala youth program	Titjikala
7. Ntaria Trailer	Ntaria (Hermannsburg)
8. Pilot Youth Diversion Gove Peninsula	Yirrkala
	Nhulunbuy
	Gunyangara (Ski Beach)

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9. NT Department of Education and Training –Regional Education Coordinator	See communities for School Holidays Activities Program; Learning Support Program; and BMX Program
10. Petrol Sniffing Rehabilitation and Diversion Program - Gunbalanya	Gunbalanya (Oenpelli)
11. Bushmob Cultural Horse Work Camp for Volatile Substance Users	TBC
12. Gap Youth Centre Young Men's Support Project	Alice Springs
13. Gap Youth Centre – Program and Equipment Funding	Alice Springs
14. Canteen Creek – Alternatives for Youth: Sport and Recreation	Owairtilla (Canteen Creek)
15. East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders Visit to Mt. Theo	Yirrkala
	Nhulunbuy
	Gunyungara (Ski Beach)
NTER Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure (2008-09) – projects managed by NTSO	
1. Regional Youth Development Network	Daly River
	Palumpa
	Peppimenarti
	Dagaragu
	Timber Creek
	Yarralin
	Pine Creek
	Maningrida
	Jabiru
	Gunbalanya
	Minjilang
	Warruwi
	Nguiu
	Wadeye
2. Scoping project and residency workshop	Tennant Creek
3. Multicultural school holiday program for male primary and secondary aged children	Katherine
4. Increase in funds to hold the Bagot Youth Festival 2008	Darwin
5. Purchase Kia Carnival 8 seater vehicle	Darwin
6. Repairs and maintenance to Sport & Rec Shed and provide funds to feed youth to encourage participation	Yirrkala
7. Traditional dance workshop for youth	Timber Creek

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8. Scoping project for future development of community events for 2009-10	Timber Creek
9. Work placement experience and Nitmiluk Gorge of Indigenous students from St Joseph's College	Katherine
10. Youth Housing forums with a range of services to identify issues affecting young people	Darwin
11. Hip Hop workshop	Yirrkala
	Gunyangara (Ski Beach)

Appendix B   Reference Group

Reference Group

Mr Tony Mayell
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Northern Territory Department of the Chief
Minister

Ms Joanne Townsend
Director
Alcohol and Other Drugs,
Northern Territory Department of Health and
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Ms Jennie Renfree
PFES Youth Diversion Section
Northern Territory Police Fire & Emergency
Services

Dr Anna Flouris and Mr Blair McFarland
Joint Coordinators
Central Australian Link Up Service

Superintendent Michael White
Northern Territory Police Fire & Emergency
Services

Ms Cath O'Leary
Manager, Agency Services
MacDonnell Shire

Ms Andrea Mason
A/g Coordinator
Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
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Dr Thelma Perso
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Appendix C   Consultation List

Consultation List

Alice Springs

Meetings were held in Alice Springs on Monday, 22 February and Thursday 25, February 2010 with key stakeholders, included in the table below. A list of stakeholders for whom follow up telephone interviews was arranged is provided in the right hand column.

Table 4 – Alice Springs consultations

Meeting date	Stakeholders	Follow-up telephone interviews
Meeting 1 CAPPSU staff 22 February 2010	▪ 3 CAPSSU staff based in Alice Springs	
Meeting 2 Mission Australia 22 February 2010	▪ 2 representatives from Mission Australia	▪ a third representative of Mission Australia ▪ 1 representative of Youth Challenge Australia
Meeting 3 Funded Service Providers 22 February 2010	▪ 1 representative of Bushmob ▪ 1 representative of CAAMA	▪ 1 representative from GAPS Youth Services
Meeting 1 25 February 2010 FaHCSIA representatives	▪ Alice Springs Indigenous Coordination Centre ▪ GBE for Alice Springs and Outstations	▪ GBM for Yuelamu and Laramba
Meeting 2 25 February 2010 Government organisations	▪ 1 representative from the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training ▪ 1 representative from the McDonnell Shire Manager of Agency Services ▪ 1 representative from Alcohol and Other Drug Services Central ▪ 1 Project Officer, Regional Education and the Director of Business Development, Regional Education.	▪ 1 representative from NT Police ▪ 1 representative from Fire and Emergency Services ▪ representatives from Alice Springs Town Council.
Meeting 3 25 February 2010 Non funded services	▪ representatives from Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yanjunytijatjara (NPY) Women's Council ▪ representatives from Central Australia Youth Link Up.	

Field trips to communities

The fieldwork was conducted by a joint team including an Aboriginal and a non-Aboriginal consultant.

A series of interviews was undertaken with program administrators; service provider managers; program reference group members and Government agency partners in Alice Springs on 22, 25 and 26 April. In total, 15 individuals were interviewed.

The proposed field trip to Finke (Apatula) was cancelled due to flooding and road closures, with Police advice that it was inadvisable to attempt to travel on these even if they did re-open, as further predicted rain might render them quickly impassable.

The consultants proceeded to Mutitjulu, where they met on 1 and 2 March with a total of 18 individuals, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth workers and trainee; elders; Council staff; Police; store

operators; Government Business Manager; Health workers; teachers; three College students (participants in project activities) and community members.

At Imanpa, on 3 and 4 March, the consultants met with 25 individuals, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth workers; elders; Council staff; Police; store operators; Health Workers and teachers. Some 80 community members attended a concert and barbeque, where we spoke informally with several attendees about the project, its activities and their levels of engagement or satisfaction with it.

At Docker River, on 5 April, the consultants met with 7 Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and held a community meeting attended by approximately 42 adults. We also met with Council staff.

Table 5 – Field trips to communities

Meeting date	Stakeholder organisation	Follow-up telephone interviews
Mutitjulu 1-2 March 2010	▪ GBM for Mutitjulu ▪ Mission Australia IYSP project manager and other Mission Australia staff ▪ Mutitjulu Health Services (CAAC); ▪ Mutitjulu Primary School ▪ Nyangatjatjara College ▪ Mutitjulu Police; Shire Services Delivery ▪ Aged Care ▪ Child Care ▪ Local Advisory Board ▪ community members, young people and their carers.	
Imanpa 3-4 March 2010	▪ GBM for Imanpa ▪ Mission Australia IYSP project manager and other Mission Australia staff; ▪ representatives from Imanpa Health Service ▪ Impanpa School ▪ Shire Services Delivery ▪ community members, young people and their carers.	
Docker River March 4 2010	▪ GBM for Docker River ▪ Mission Australia IYSP project manager and other Mission Australia staff ▪ Docker River Community Health ▪ Docker River School ▪ Shire Service Delivery Centre ▪ community members, young people and their carers	
February 26 visit to Aputula	▪ Field trip was scheduled, but did not able to proceed due to flooding	▪ Project manager for Finke ▪ Mission Australia outreach worker for Imanpa, Mutitjulu, Finke (Aputula) and Docker River ▪ GBE for Finke ▪ Community members

Table 6 – Additional telephone Interviews

Project	Location	Stakeholder Organisation
NTER	Hermannsburg (Ntaria)	GBM for Hermannsburg
NTER	Yuendumu and Nyirripi	GBM for Yuendumu and Nyirripi
NTER	Engawala and Atitjere (Harts Range) and Bonya	GBM Engawala and Atitjere (Harts Range) and Bonya
NTER	Ampilatwatja	GBM for Ampilatwatja
NTER	Wadeye	GBM for Wadaye
NTER	Papunya, Haasts Bluff (Ikuntji) and Mt Liebig (Watiyawanu)	GBM for Papunya, Haasts Bluff (Ikuntji) and Mt Liebig (Watiyawanu)
NTER	Nguiu	GBM for Nguiu
NTER	Hermannsburg	Manager WAHAC Health Clinic (Hermannsburg)
NTER		Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi. (Waltja RentConnect Program)
NTER	Wageye, Nguiu	Catholic Education
NTER	Nuhulunbuy	Anglicare East Arnhem
NTER	Nuhulunbuy	Anglicare East Arnhem
NTER	Nguiu	Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services
NTER	Barkley Shire	Director of Corporate and Community Services Barkley Shire
IYSP		Mission Australia
IYSP	Aputula	GBM Manager for Finke (Aputula)
IYSP	Aputula	Principal Aputula (Finke) School
IYSP	Aputula	Four community members
NTER and IYSP	Alice Springs	Youth Coordinator
NTER and IYSP	Alice Springs	Superintendent

Appendix D   Classification of IYSP Activities

Activity Type	Activity	Aputula	Docker	Imanpa	Mutitjulu	Total
Cultural	Cultural excursion	15	37	14	21	87
	Face painting	11	9	3		23
	Fishing	3				3
	Hunting	18	2	8		28
	Cultural session				3	3
	Cultural - BBQ / Cook up / Pizza	14	15	17	1	47
Cultural Total		61	63	42	25	191
Educational	Adult Ed Centre				37	37
	Computers	25	25	37	29	116
	Cooking	86	60	45	143	334
	Documentaries	10				10
	Domestic Violence Workshop	1				1
	E-Learning		34			34
	Homework session	3		1		4
	Mechanical workshop			3	1	4
	Reading	72		5		77
	Recording & IT program				10	10
	Safe families workshop	1				1
	School Literacy Program	12				12

Activity Type	Activity	Aputula	Docker	Imanpa	Mutitjulu	Total
	School session on rules	1				1
	Sewing	8		5	7	20
	Welding			7		7
	Youthwork training	2				2
	Bike skills (riding and repair)	7	13	4	40	64
	Bush trip / camping	69	30	119	7	225
	Education room/session/activities (general)	52	30	36		118
	Educational - Hair & beauty	24	15	14	4	57
	Educational - other	9	1	1	5	16
	Health & hygiene	10	7	3	2	22
	Music - Band/lessons	25	20	10	184	239
	Photography (incl media & filming)	8		4	21	33
Educational Total		425	235	294	490	1444
Mixed	Art & craft	143	118	43	184	488
	Excursion	22	1	19	13	55
Mixed Total		165	119	62	197	543
Recreational	CD & DVD burning	1	29	5	35	70
	CD & DVD watching	54	3	12	200	269
	Circus	3	2		4	9
	Board games/puzzles	10			3	13

Activity Type	Activity	Aputula	Docker	Imanpa	Mutitjulu	Total
	Computer/electronic games	2		1	171	174
	Recreational - other	14	8	54	10	86
	Recreational Hall	90	108	344	134	676
	Snooker/pool	83	2	71	158	314
	Music (entertainment)	16	32	8	1	57
	Sports	470	660	120	369	1619
Recreational Total		743	844	615	1085	3287
Social	Cleaning	8	21	3	4	36
	Hungry night		2	1	4	7
	Playgroup	1		46		47
	Dancing / disco	20	16	6	5	47
	School Assist (drop off /pick up etc)	21	25	2	43	91
	Social - other	7	4	2	1	14
Social Total		57	68	60	57	242
Unknown	Junior Rangers				3	3

Activity Type	Activity	Aputula	Docker	Imanpa	Mutitjulu	Total
	Middle Years Support Program	16				16
	Other	22	22	49	6	99
	Project Coordination CLC	1				1
	Breakfast program/session	32		51		83
	Lunch rewards/session	13		7	217	237
	Not entered	1			1	2
Unknown Total		85	22	107	227	441
Total		1536	1351	1180	2081	6148

Appendix E   Research Questions

FaHCSIA specified a number of possible research questions to be addressed by the review. These are set out below.

Deliverables/Outputs – 'How much was done?'

- What infrastructure has been funded?

- How many people participated in activities? (including a breakdown by demographics where possible – particularly by age) and where did young people come from (distance) to participate?

- What were the levels of demand for services and why did young people participate at all?

- How many communities were assisted?

- How long did the service provider spend in each community?

- What was the duration of each activity offered?

- What type and range of activities were offered?

- What was the duration of young people's involvement? Did they participate on a short-term or long-term basis?

- How often did young people participate? Did they participate regularly or sporadically?

Quality – 'How well was it done?'

- How much did the activities/infrastructure projects cost per community?

- What proportion of activity participants were from priority target groups? (e.g. youth, particularly high risk youth)

- What proportion of the target population were engaged in activities in each community?

- What proportion of communities involved in the activities were in priority/high need locations?

- What proportion of priority/high need communities were assisted?

- Did the service providers deliver what was specified in the funding agreements?

- What were the main challenges faced by the providers in delivering the funded projects (e.g. dealing with staff turnover, delivering services in geographically isolated communities, managing community expectations)? How were these challenges managed and what were the lessons learnt?

- Were communities aware of the activities/infrastructure?

- What proportion of the cost was spent on administration and why?

- Were the activities/infrastructure delivered within appropriate timeframes?

- Did the service provider receive any complaints and if so how did they act on them?

Outcomes – 'Did it make a difference?'

- How satisfied were the communities with the activities/infrastructure? To what extent were their needs and expectations met?

- How satisfied were the parents with the performance of the service provider? To what extent were their needs and expectations met?

- How satisfied were service providers (management and employees, including Anangu workers in particular) with their own performance? With the performance of the service provider as a whole? With the project overall?

- How satisfied were other stakeholders? (e.g. police, government representatives at the local, state and Commonwealth level, other service providers working with the same community)

- What are the impacts on activity participants and communities more broadly with respect to the following:

    – substance abuse (licit and illicit substances)

- incidences of self harm
- priority placed on health and physical well being
- participation in education, training and further education
- school performance e.g. literacy and numeracy
- participation in employment (paid or unpaid) where appropriate
- social and community participation
- family relationships
- family and community violence
- criminal activity, anti-social behaviour and other contact with the police or criminal justice system
- confidence, self esteem, optimism, reduced boredom and isolation
- skills and knowledge (e.g. music, art, sports, bike maintenance etc.)
- capacity to respond to at risk behaviours including substance abuse
- aspirations of participants
- other positive impacts.

Other discussion questions

- How realistic were the expectations of service providers, communities and the Department, and how were these expectations determined?

- What did service providers learn from their experiences? Did they change their strategy over time? If so, how? Why? What impact did this have?

- What impediments were there to achieving project goals and improving outcomes for young people?

- What factors (other than the project activities) may have contributed to achieving project goals and improving outcomes for young people?

- How have experiences and outcomes differed across communities? What are some possible reasons for these differences?

- What impacts did the youth work model have on the project? How suitable was this model?

- What impacts did the funding model have on the project? How suitable was this model?

- What role has infrastructure played in supporting youth activities? How could this be improved?

- In what ways did the service providers engage the wider community in activities? What impact did this have (on the activity and on the community)?

- If there have been positive impacts on young people, what factors have contributed to these improvements?

- What have communities done to:
  - improve youth participation in youth activities
  - increase protective factors and reduce risk factors for young people at risk of petrol sniffing and alcohol misuse
  - give practical and moral support for reduced access to petrol by young people at risk
  - introduce/reinforce a community culture that opposes drug use and abuse.

Appendix F   Description of NTER YADM Projects

Project name	Auspicing body	Location/s	Description of (planned) activity	Aims and expected outcomes	Project type (infrastructure vs activity)	Funding (GST exclusive).
Managed by FaHCSIA CAPSSU						
School Holiday Activities Program	Red Sun Solutions	Atitjere, Titjikala, Yuelamu, Santa Teresa, Ampilatwatja, Engawala, Utopia	Program of school holiday activities eg lyric writing/music production and recording to CD; multi–media; circus skills; bicycle repairs and maintenance; sewing; art and craft; puppets; ball sports, and activities such as barbeques, movie nights and discos. Targeted school–aged youth aged 12–18 years.	▪ Encourage return to school following the holiday periods by maintaining youth participation in organised, structured and properly supervised activities.	Activity	$620,183
Red Centre BMX program	Red Centre BMX	Ampilatwatja, Apatula, Yuelamu, Santa Teresa, Engawala, Ntaria, Laramba	Construction of BMX tracks in communities. Collaboration with NT DET to incorporate related activity into school curriculum Targeted 12-18 year olds.	▪ Improved mental health, self esteem and confidence of participants ▪ Increased youth participation at school ▪ Increased youth school retention rates.	Both	$358,000
Learning Support Program	Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA)	Atitjere (Harts Range), Apatula (Finke, Ampilatwatja, Areyonga, Engawala, Bonya, Laramba, Willowra	Targeted school aged youth. 3 streams- 1st to assist re-engagement of middle school aged youth with school; 2nd to encourage musically talented youth to continue school and pursue music industry opportunities; 3rd to engage 15-18 year olds in music certificate courses at tertiary level.	▪ Range (immediate, short and long term), including school engagement and retention, improved mental health and confidence, prevention of uptake of substance abuse and anti social activity, linkages with recreation, education and social sectors and improved capacity of parents and local workers to engage youth.	Activity	$457,979
Warlpiri Regional Youth Development Complex	Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA)	Yuendumu, Nyirripi, Willowra and Lajamanu.	Refurbishment of existing building into a regional management office and the construction of a roof over an existing outdoor basketball court	▪ Build capacity of the Mt Theo Substance Misuse Program	Infrastructure	$2 million

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Project name	Auspicing body	Location/s	Description of (planned) activity	Aims and expected outcomes	Project type (infrastructure vs activity)	Funding (GST exclusive).
West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project	MacDonnell Shire Council	West MacDonnell communities	Construction of accommodation units and the provision of 4 wheel drive vehicles to support employment of youth workers.	▪ Keep youth on community by engaging them in structured activities, enable community to address effects of substance abuse, assist individuals and families with substance abuse issues	Infrastructure	$2.4 million
Additional Equipment – Titjikala youth program	MacDonnell Shire Council	Titjikala	Supply reverse cycle airconditioners and tables and chairs in the demountable buildings used for sport and recreation programs.	▪ Complement other projects in the West MacDonnell Shire and assisted capital improvement	Infrastructure	$9,372
Ntaria Trailer	MacDonnell Shire Council	Ntaria (Hermannsburg)	Purchase a trailer equipped to cater for eleven people to assist with taking youth out to homelands for camping trips on weekends and school holidays	▪ Assist youth gain self–confidence and self esteem, decrease drug and alcohol use.	Infrastructure	$22,000
Pilot Youth Diversion Gove Peninsula	Yirrkala Community Education Centre	Yirrkala, Nhulunbuy and Gunyangara (Ski Beach)	6–month project targeting young people up to 18 years, expected to deliver: a Youth Diversion Program; Cultural Camps; a Referral Service; a Community Patrol; a Communication Strategy.	▪ Increased support for and ideally implementation of a Mt Theo treatment model (outstation treatment centre) for the East Arnhem Region	Activity	$194,000
East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders Visit to Mt. Theo	TBC	Yirrkala, Nhulunbuy, Gunyungara (Ski Beach)	Visit to Mt Theo Rehabilitation facility enabling East Arnhem Traditional Owners and Elders to see first hand the outstation model.	▪ Increased support for and ideally implementation of a Mt Theo treatment model (outstation treatment centre) for the East Arnhem Region	Not diversion related	$30,260
NT Department of Education and Training – Regional Education Coordinator	NT DET	See communities for School Holidays Activities Program; Learning Support Program; and BMX Program	Installation of Regional Education Coordinators to work with designated schools	▪ Encourage and support involvement of the schools in the following 2008–09 Youth Alcohol Diversion (YAD) programs: School Holidays Activities Program, Learning Support Program, BMX Program	Support diversion projects	$200,000

Project name	Auspicing body	Location/s	Description of (planned) activity	Aims and expected outcomes	Project type (infrastructure vs activity)	Funding (GST exclusive).
Petrol Sniffing Rehabilitation and Diversion Program – Gunbalanya	West Arnhem Shire Council	Gunbalanya (Oenpelli)	Removal of petrol sniffers and ensuring their attendance at the Abbott's Station to participate in rehabilitation activities.	▪ client attendance at camp and participation in activities ▪ development of meaningful partnerships between stakeholders.	Not diversion related	$47,500
Bushmob Cultural Horse Work Camp for Volatile Substance Users	West Arnhem Shire Council	TBC	5 day bush camp for volatile /other substance users involving role models and mentors selected for their cultural knowledge, strength and skills.	▪ Diversionary activity for substance users. ▪ develop self–confidence and esteem in a safe environment; ▪ discuss strong drug and alcohol messaging together with family violence messaging; ▪ participate in Indigenous mentor leadership groups.	Activity	$33,850
Gap Youth Centre Young Men's Support Project	Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services	Alice Springs	From the Gap Youth Centre-Running of blue light discos for youth by the Alice Springs Police during school holidays Funding to support the trial Police Young Men's Program involving travelling 'out to bush' areas where police and young people discuss offending, reasons behind offending, recognition of rights and wrongs and family issues.	▪ Reduction in crime, anti social activity and drug use; ▪ Increased participation by young people in social activities with their peers; ▪ Increased numbers of young people accessing services from the Gap Youth Centre.	Activity	$26,000 Blue Light Discos $89,000 Young Men's Program (GST exclusive).
Gap Youth Centre – Program and Equipment Funding	Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services	Alice Springs	Funding for: sporting activities over the mid–year school holiday period; extension of the Gap Youth Centre Blue Light discos into the holiday period; an open cinema day at the Alice Springs cinema; an open day/evening with local youth bands on Anzac Oval as a finale to the school holidays; purchase of equipment to support the Young Men's Program.	▪ Diversionary activity during the school holiday period	Infrastructure	$59,950

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Project name	Auspicing body	Location/s	Description of (planned) activity	Aims and expected outcomes	Project type (infrastructure vs activity)	Funding (GST exclusive).
Canteen Creek – Alternatives for Youth: Sport and Recreation	Canteen Creek Owairtilla Association Incorporated	Owairtilla	Purchase of sports equipment and improvements to oval; purchase gas barbecue	▪ increased availability diversionary/alternative activities; ▪ education of young people about the dangers of substance misuse; ▪ reduction in petrol sniffing; ▪ improved school retention rates and attendance levels.	Infrastructure	$41,545
Managed by FaHCSIA NT Office						
Hip Hop workshop	Anglicare NT	Yirrkala , Ski Beach	Workshops facilitated by Indigenous Hip Hop Projects on dance, positive lifestyle messages and promotion of leadership, resilience and well being.	▪ provide performance skills, strengthen community and provide improved community mental health outcomes	Activity	$15,690
Regional Youth Development Network	Australian Red Cross Society – NT Division	Daly River, Palumpa, Peppimenarti, Wadeye, Dagaragu, Timber Creek, Yarralin, Pine Creek, Maningrida, Jabiru, Gunbalanya, Minjilang, Warruwi	The Youth Network is to continue with a sustainable regional network of youth oriented services and youth leaders that will commit to work together to develop, secure broad endorsement for, and implement an integrated youth diversion plan across the region.	▪ Bring about an increase in the quality, quantity and coherence of diversionary activities for young people aged between 12-18 years across two targeted regions, Victoria/ Daly and West Arnhem.	Activity	$2.1 million
Scoping project and residency workshop	Australian Theatre for Young People	Tennant Creek.	Two activities- residency workshops with youth in Tennant Creek, and a research and scoping project to investigate the relationships and roles of relevant youth arts organisations in the NT	▪ Residency workshops aimed to re-engage youth in education and employment. ▪ Scoping project aimed to identify potential partnerships with youth arts organisations in the NT	Activity (as well as scoping)	$46,000

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Project name	Auspicing body	Location/s	Description of (planned) activity	Aims and expected outcomes	Project type (infrastructure vs activity)	Funding (GST exclusive).
Multicultural school holiday program for male primary and secondary aged children	Barlib Aboriginal Arts and Craft	Katherine	multicultural school holiday program for male primary and secondary school aged students, addressing issues such as racism, sexual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, school attendance, self respect, leadership and empowerment, and raising cultural awareness.	▪ Forge friendships between primary and secondary aged boys in an attempt to initiate future school relationships and mentoring possibilities.	Activity	$10,000
Bagot Youth Festival 2008 – Injection of funds	Darwin Community Arts Inc	Darwin	Increase the amount in funds provided to Darwin Community Arts for the 2008 Bagot Youth Festival to cover unforseen costs in organising the festival	▪ Ensure the success of the festival in meeting its aims (ie cultural awareness and pride, community cohesion, diversion from substance abuse and anti social activity#)	Activity	$24,630
Purchase Kia Carnival 8 seater vehicle	NT DET	Darwin	Purchase Kia Carnival.	▪ Transport for students participating in the Positive Learning Centre located at Sanderson Middle School and increased access to other programs and services.	Infrastructure	$33,500
Repairs and maintenance to Sport & Rec Shed and provide funds to feed youth to encourage participation	East Arnhem Shire Council	Yirrkala	Funding to conduct minor repairs to the Sport and Rec Shed in Yirrkala and to provide meals for young people on nights that are known to have a high incidence of petrol sniffing and break-ins	▪ Enhance capacity to provide youth programs and encourage (with food) youth participation	Infrastructure	$9,600
Traditional dance workshop for youth	Intercultural Services	Timber Creek	Conduct traditional dance workshops at Timber Creek	▪ Revive cultural traditions amongst youth.	Activity	$17,000

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Project name	Auspicing body	Location/s	Description of (planned) activity	Aims and expected outcomes	Project type (infrastructure vs activity)	Funding (GST exclusive).
Scoping project for future development of community events for 2009-10	Intercultural Services	Timber Creek	Scoping project, involving community and youth consultation on the construction of a performance space and development of a program of youth activities	▪ Produce a report identifying funding sources and equipment required to construct a purpose built stage in Timber Creek and a program of youth activities to be delivered in 2009-2010.	Neither (scoping for infrastructure)	$20,000
Work placement experience at Nitmiluk Gorge of Indigenous students from St Joseph's College	Nitmiluk Tours Pty Ltd	Katherine.	Students will landscape the area around the new cabins in the campsite at the Nitmiluk Centre. The Nitmiluk Tours Indigenous staff will be available to interact with students in a work situation.	▪ Work experience and access to work related mentoring from Indigenous role models.	Activity	$5,000
Youth Housing forums with a range of services to identify issues affecting young people	NT Shelter Inc	Darwin	Hold Youth Housing forums in Darwin and Alice Springs that will bring together government representatives, agents from housing industry, a range of non-government housing and support services as well as disadvantaged young people.	▪ Identifying: gaps in housing service for young people; the needs of young people; statistical data in regard to young people per region; future policy considerations in youth housing and support services and housing opportunities and options for a way forward. ▪	Neither (scoping project apparently unrelated to diversion)	$20,100

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Appendix G   Literature Review

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FIGURES:

Introduction

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) has commissioned Urbis to conduct a review of the Integrated Youth Services Project (IYSP) and a range of projects funded under the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) Youth Alcohol Diversion Measure (YADM).

This is the report on Stage 1 of the project.

Chapter 1 provides the literature review conducted for the project.

1 Literature review

1.1 Introduction

This literature review examines the Australian and international literature concerning petrol sniffing and other volatile substance use/misuse in order to identify:

- definitions of petrol sniffing, its prevalence and manifestations, particularly for remote Indigenous communities

- potential alignment of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy (PSS) with other Indigenous policy initiatives, in particular the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage National Partnership Agreements

- the links between petrol sniffing and other forms of substance abuse

- the immediate and long term effects of petrol sniffing on the individual, family and community

- interventions that have been successful in dealing with petrol sniffing and other substance abuse issues affecting Indigenous youth

- models and approaches to Indigenous youth work, particularly for communities in remote and geographically isolated regions.

The objective of the review is to set FaHCSIA's contributions to the PSS in context and to determine the extent to which these activities are consistent with current knowledge about preventing petrol sniffing and related harms. The review comprises the following sections:

- Definitions

- Prevalence and manifestations

- Impacts of petrol sniffing

- Alignment of the PSS with other Indigenous policy initiatives

- Effectiveness of petrol sniffing interventions

- Models and approaches to Indigenous youth work

- Conclusions.

1.2 Definitions

Volatile substance use (VSU) is defined as the 'deliberate inhalation of a volatile substance in order to achieve a change in mental state' (Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, 1995, p.14).

Volatile substances, also known as *inhalants*, are usually classified into the following groups:

- solvents — liquids or semi-liquids that vaporise at room temperature, such as glues and petrol

- gases — medical anaesthetics and fuel gases, such as lighter fuels

- aerosols — sprays containing propellants and solvents, such as aerosol paints

- nitrites — amyl nitrite or cyclohexyl nitrite found in room deodorizers (d'Abbs & Mclean 2008, p.7).

Petrol sniffing is a form of VSU. Petrol is a volatile solvent that contains aromatic hydrocarbons such as benzene, xylene, n-hexane and toluene. Prior to 2002, petrol also contained tetraethyl lead. These chemicals are rapidly absorbed into the fatty tissues of the brain and depress the central nervous system resulting in intoxication similar to that produced by alcohol.

Data collection is a critical issue in relation to understanding the extent of petrol sniffing activity in Australia (this is discussed further in 1.2 below). One of the issues concerns defining the type of user and frequency of use, and the fact that different data collection instruments use different definitions. One of the first comprehensive attempts to collect data on petrol sniffing has been the Department of Health and Ageing's (DoHA) Petrol Sniffing Prevention Program (PSPP), which uses the following definitions to identify frequency of use.

Non-sniffer		Not known to have sniffed petrol or any other inhalant in past 6 months.
Current sniffer	▪ Experimental	Believed to have sniffed petrol or other inhalant in past 6 months, but no evidence of regular use.
	▪ Regular	Believed to have sniffed petrol or other inhalant regularly over past 6 months, but does not meet criterion of heavy use (ie at least once a week).
.	▪ Heavy	Has sniffed petrol or other inhalants at least weekly (whenever inhalants are available), over past 6 months

(Department of Health and Ageing 2008)

1.3 Prevalence and manifestations

1.3.1 Worldwide patterns of use

Inhalant abuse occurs throughout the world, in both developed and developing countries, among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. However estimations of prevalence are fraught as they tend to rely on sources such as school-based surveys (such as the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs in Europe) which are known to underestimate figures, as inhalant users are less likely to attend school regularly or at all (Ives 2006).

Inhalant use has been identified as a problem amongst many Indigenous peoples around the world, including North and South American First Nation peoples, Inuits, Indians and Pakistanis, black South Africans, Indigenous Australians, Maoris, Pacific Islanders and gypsy children in Eastern Europe (d'Abbs & Mclean 2008; Moosa & Loening 1981; Brady, 1988; Beauvais & Oetting 1988; Flanagan & Ives 1994). It is estimated that nearly 20 million people in Central and South America, mostly street children, use inhalants (d'Abbs & Mclean 2008).

However, the highest rates of 'lifetime' inhalant use (ie use at any time during a person's life) are recorded in the developed world, in countries such as the USA, Ireland, United Kingdom and Australia (Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 1999). In the USA, inhalant use has increased while most illegal drug use has declined (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2006).

Across the world, volatile substance misuse most commonly occurs among young people from poor minority groups. Poverty and marginalisation, rather than cultural attributes of particular groups, appear to be the critical determinants (d'Abbs & Mclean, 2008).

Nevertheless, prevalence does vary between ethnic groups. In both the UK and USA, Caucasians record higher rates of use than Asians, Afro-Caribbeans or African-Americans (Kurtzman, Otsuka, & Wahl 2001; McGarvey et al 1999). In the USA, Native American youth are more likely than members of other ethnic groups to use inhalants (Mosher, Rotolo, Phillips, Krupski & Stark, 2004). American Indian youth living on reservations have higher rates of inhalant abuse than do their counterparts living off reservations (Williams et al 2007). However, recent drug use data shows that inhalant use by Native Americans is decreasing alongside other drug use (Williams et al 2007).

Both males and females use volatile substances, though there is a tendency towards higher prevalence amongst males in most countries. In Ireland, VSU is more prevalent amongst girls than boys, while in the UK prevalence rates are approximately equal (Ives 2006). Across Indigenous groups in America,

Canada and Australia, prevalence tends to be higher amongst males (Coleman, Charles & Collins 2001).

1.3.2 Australian patterns of use

It is difficult to accurately gauge the prevalence of petrol sniffing and other VSU in Australia because the data are not very reliable. There are several reasons for this:

- VSU is not a criminal offence, and is therefore not routinely recorded in police data

- health service data underestimate prevalence because users tend to present only when trauma has occurred

- it is an activity that is often conducted clandestinely, at night and away from other people

- most drug use surveys tend to miss volatile substance users for a range of methodological reasons eg they are either too young (eg under 14 years of age), do not regularly attend school, or do not have a phone (d'Abbs & Mclean 2008).

In terms of overall numbers and in population terms, petrol sniffing and use of other inhalants by Indigenous people is relatively uncommon. However the practice has become endemic in particular communities and over a wider area over time (Gray et al 2004). And while there are more non-Indigenous than Indigenous users of inhalants in Australia, Indigenous people are nearly twice as likely as non-Indigenous people to use these substances (National Inhalant Abuse Taskforce, 2006).

In remote Indigenous communities in Australia, petrol sniffing is the most common form of VSU, whereas in urban and regional centres, sniffing aerosol paints ('chroming') is more common among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youths (d'Abbs & Mclean 2008).

There is usually a distinction made between 'occasional' or 'experimental' and 'chronic' use of volatile substances. Frequency of use is associated with location, with remote locations having a significantly higher proportion of chronic users than urban locations (d'Abbs & Mclean 2008).

Petrol sniffing is a variable, fluctuating phenomenon which adds to the complexity of accurate data collection. Sniffers are highly mobile and move from one community to the next, resulting in fluctuating overall numbers. Sniffers may stop and start sniffing at different times. Clear patterns to the fluctuations have not been established, although some trends to increased use appear in some communities eg wet season, ceremonial events and community events such as football matches, and school holidays. However these patterns are by no means consistent or uniform across communities and regions (d'Abbs & Maclean 2000). Rates of use vary greatly between communities and are dependent on a number of factors, including access to petrol supplies (either at petrol stations or stored petrol), direct and indirect interventions that are present, and movement of users.

A number of attempts to quantify petrol sniffing prevalence in Australia have been made. However the estimates vary considerably, which may be explained by the problematic nature of collecting the data outlined above, inconsistency in collection methods, surveying of different communities, and changes in the number of people petrol sniffing over time.

In its 2004 submission to the Northern Territory Select Committee on Substance Abuse in the Community, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) indicated that approximately 2,000 (10%) of Aboriginal children in the central reserves area of the Northern Territory were sniffing petrol (Senate Select Committee on Volatile Substance Abuse 2004). Other estimates have suggested the number was closer to 6000 at one time (DoHA 2007).

Baseline data collected for the PSPP in 2006-07 in 74 Central Australian communities found the percentage of users (by region) ranged between .05% and 16.4% and that the number overall across the Northern Territory, Western Australian and South Australian communities in the study, was just over 1000 (representing 4.8% of the total population aged 5–40 years) (DoHA 2008; d'Abbs and Mclean 2008).

Whilst caution is required when comparing different data sets, it is generally agreed that overall petrol sniffing numbers have declined in the past few years. The 2006 Senate Inquiry report stated that an estimated 600 people in the central desert region of the Northern Territory were sniffing petrol regularly

(Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee 2006). PSPP baseline data obtained later indicated that the number in the central desert region of the Northern Territory was 244 (DoHA 2008, FaHCSIA 2008). Similar reductions have been reported in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands in South Australia, where the number of petrol sniffers fell 80% between 2004 and 2007, from 224 in 2004, to 70 people in 2006, and 38 people in 2007 (Nganampa Health Council 2007).

Indigenous petrol sniffers tend to be aged between eight and 30 years of age, with a concentration in the 12–19 years range (Brady & Torzillo 1994; Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee 2006). A recent trend suggests that petrol sniffers are getting older, with users in their 30s being reported (Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee 2006)

1.3.3 Links between petrol sniffing/inhalant abuse and other forms of substance abuse

People who use inhalants often use other drugs as well (Premier's Drug Prevention Council, 2004). The 2004 National Drug Household Survey found that of those who had used inhalants within the last 12 months, 56% had combined this use with alcohol, 41 % with cannabis, 31% with ecstasy/designer drugs and 24% with amphetamines (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2005).

Poly drug use is relatively common amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In 2004–05, approximately 20% of Indigenous males and 17% of Indigenous females aged 15 years and over had used one substance in the previous 12 months. 12% of Indigenous males and 7% of Indigenous females had used two or more substances in the previous 12 months (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2005).

There is some evidence for a correlation between abuse of petrol and other licit substances (eg alcohol, tobacco, solvents) and illicit substances (eg marijuana). In Maningrida, for example, petrol sniffers were found more likely to be heavy drinkers, tobacco smokers and kava users than were non-sniffers (Burns, d'Abbs & Currie 1995).

Many petrol sniffers are poly drug users who use drugs that are available and affordable. Volatile substances are drugs of last resort and tend to be used when other psycho active substances are unavailable or are too expensive (Shaw et al 2004; Henry 2001). A reduction in the availability of sniffable fuel has in some instances been accompanied by an increase in other substance use (d'Abbs and Shaw 2008, Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee 2006). There are concerns that interventions targeting petrol (or alcohol) supply can result in shifting users to other forms of substance misuse such as aerosols, paint, cannabis and kava (d'Abbs and Maclean 2000, 2008; de Carvalho 2007). Although there are few empirical studies on this issue, Senior & Chenhall (2008) found that restrictions on the supply of alcohol and petrol to an Arnhem Land community had led to an increase in cannabis use. It is also interesting to note that cannabis use amongst Indigenous people has increased and the proportion of Indigenous users is reported to be about twice that in the non-Indigenous population (Gray et al 2004).

Another critical aspect of the link between inhalant and other drug use relates to the contribution of inhalant use to other licit and illicit drug use. Several US studies have found that inhalant users were more likely to become involved in using heroin and other illicit drug use than those who do not use inhalants (Johnson et al 1995; Wu & Howard 2007, Bennett et al 2001). The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration research found that 35% of people aged 18-49 who began using inhalants at or before the age of 13 were later classified with dependence on or abuse of alcohol or an illicit drug, compared with 10% of people who had never used inhalants (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2005).

1.4   Impacts of petrol sniffing

The 1985 Senate Select Committee on Volatile Substance Abuse identified three broad reasons for concern about petrol sniffing in remote Aboriginal communities:

▪ the severe physical and psychological effects on those involved

- the combined consequential social effects threaten, in some communities, to destroy an already fragile social system

- the extent of the problem.

Deaths linked to petrol sniffing have galvanised public attention through media reporting and the publicity over a series of coronial inquests. Between 1981 and 1991, 60 Aboriginal men and three women died from petrol sniffing. Since 1991, the Coroners in South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory have reported on deaths from VSU. However the number of deaths attributable to petrol sniffing is likely to be an underestimate due to the difficulties associated with data collection (de Carvalho 2007) (see section 3.2.2). While the number of deaths from petrol sniffing is relatively small, in some cases it has equated to a significant proportion of local populations, one estimate being around 8% (DoHA & DIMIA 2005).

Petrol sniffing is also associated with a range of health harms. These include long term brain damage, impairment of heart, kidney and liver function, brain hemorrhage, high or low blood pressure, seizures, depression, respiratory stress, sleep disorders, fatigue, nausea, headache, memory loss, learning impairment, and skin irritation. However, recent research has found that the neurological impairments caused by petrol sniffing can be reversed if a person stops sniffing completely, and may even make a full recovery (Cairney et al 2005).

In addition petrol sniffing results in loss of appetite and many petrol sniffers are malnourished. Sniffing petrol whilst pregnant can cause birth defects, miscarriage, low birth weight, and increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Presentation to health clinics is usually due to trauma occurring whilst intoxicated, such as injury from motor vehicles when a petrol sniffer has walked onto a busy road, falls, dog bites, and injuries from fights (Northern Territory Department of Health and Families 2000; Cairney et al 2005).

A range of social harms are also implicated by petrol sniffing, including increased violence, property damage, theft, vandalism, social disruption, child abuse and neglect, inter-family conflict dispossession of elders and reduced morale (DoHA & DIMIA 2005; d'Abbs & Maclean 2000; Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy 2006). A few studies link petrol sniffing with suicide, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts (Rose 2001). A high proportion of crime committed in Indigenous communities where petrol sniffing is present has been attributed to petrol sniffers. D'Abbs & Maclean (2000) summarise case studies that demonstrate that between 39% and 58% of offences in one year were described as involving petrol sniffing. In its *Opal Cost Benefit Analysis*, Access Economics (2006) used the figure of 49% of offences to estimate criminal costs.

The Australian experience of petrol sniffing and its related harms is broadly comparable to the overseas experience in a number of ways. In the US, inhalant use is often associated with impoverished living conditions, delinquency, criminal behaviour, incarceration, depression, suicidal behavior, greater antisocial attitudes, family disorganisation and conflict, or a history of abuse, violence, or other substance abuse, including injection drug use (Williams et al 2007).

1.5   Alignment of the PSS with other Indigenous policy initiatives

The PSS was developed as a response to a range of pressures, including evidence of endemic and expanding petrol sniffing activity in the communities of the Central Desert region, successive coronial inquests following petrol sniffing related deaths, high level inquiries, sporadic but intense media coverage, and research evidence that a regional, multi-faceted approach that addressed supply, demand and harm minimisation was critical.

Some key features that distinguish the PSS include its regional focus on the communities in a defined Central Desert region; the region's coverage over a tri-state area including parts of the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia; cooperation of three State/Territory governments and the Commonwealth; and its comprehensive and coordinated design that seeks to tackle petrol sniffing from the perspectives of both supply and demand, and across the prevention/intervention spectrum. In its early assessment of the PSS, Urbis (2008) found that the program is well conceived in design as a response to petrol sniffing due to its multifaceted and regional approach.

The PSS developed from the Central Desert Eight Point Plan, which was endorsed by the federal and three State/Territory governments in 2005. The plan was recognised by the 2006 Senate Inquiry as an important and promising step in addressing petrol sniffing in a holistic way (Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee 2006). The eight points in the plan are:

- consistent legislation

- appropriate levels of policing

- further rollout of Opal fuel

- alternative activities for young people

- treatment and respite facilities

- communication and education strategies

- strengthening and supporting communities

- evaluation.

The PSS represents a strategic framework for the Eight Point Plan and identifies the roles and responsibilities of each of the cross-jurisdictional partners in the strategy. The goals of the PSS are to:

- reduce the incidence and impact of petrol sniffing in a defined area of central Australia by addressing the complex mix of interrelated causes and contextual factors contributing to this activity

- evaluate the effectiveness of a regional and comprehensive response to petrol sniffing to determine whether and how it might usefully be expanded to other regions with similar issues.

However, the PSS does not sit alone in engaging with the problem of petrol sniffing. A range of national and State/Territory policy initiatives intersect with the PSS, either directly or indirectly. An examination of the goals, objectives and key strategies of these initiatives reveals a high level of consistency with the objectives and strategies of the PSS. The key intersecting initiatives, and the areas in which they overlap with the PSS, are summarised in this section.

1.5.1 National Drug Strategy 2004-2009

The National Drug Strategy (NDS) aims to improve health, social and economic outcomes for Australians by preventing the uptake of harmful drug use and reducing the harmful effects of licit and illicit drugs. The National Drug Strategic Framework sets out the priorities for action to guide decision making and resource allocation concerning licit and illicit drug misuse in Australia. Several substance-specific strategies have been developed under the NDS, such as the National Tobacco Strategy, National Alcohol Strategy, National Cannabis Strategy, and the National Drug Strategy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Complementary Action Plan.

The NDS recognises that while preventing uptake of harmful drug use is important, it is also crucial to provide treatment services for people with drug-related problems or who are drug dependent The NDS adopts the public health model of prevention ie primary prevention (preventing drug uptake), secondary prevention (limiting harm at the early stages of use and limiting recreational use) and tertiary prevention (treatment/reducing harm amongst dependent users and helping them to reduce or discontinue use) (Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy 2004). The PSS aligns well with the public health model and the objectives of the NDS with its multi-pronged, prevention, intervention and treatment design.

The National Drug Strategy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Complementary Action Plan 2003-2009 is a supplementary framework that sits under the NDS and addresses drug issues facing Indigenous peoples. The Action Plan was intentionally non-prescriptive in that it did not set down specific implementation targets. Rather it outlined six Key Result Areas and broad objectives around its identified priorities: capacity building, whole of government collaboration, improving access to services, provision of holistic approaches, workforce initiatives and monitoring and evaluation. These result areas overlap significantly with the action areas of the Central Desert Eight Point Plan and the PSS.

1.5.2 Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) reports were commissioned by COAG and are produced every two years by the Productivity Commission. OID reports present data that look at the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians according to a range of key indicators of health and wellbeing. The aim of the report is to help government and non-government agencies know which programs are working and where to target their efforts.

In 2009 the terms of reference and indicators for the OID framework were altered to align with COAG's six high level targets for the Closing the Gap initiative (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2009). The fourth OID report was released in July 2009. According to Urbis' review of the PSS (Urbis 2008) the PSS directly addresses five of the OID indicators, namely:

- life expectancy

- disability

- suicide and self-harm

- family and community violence

- imprisonment and juvenile justice detention.

1.5.3 Closing the Gap

In December 2007, COAG agreed to a partnership between all levels of government to work with Indigenous communities to achieve the objective of Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage. The *Closing the Gap* strategy comprises six key targets:

- close the life expectancy gap within a generation

- halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade

- ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four years olds in remote communities within five years

- halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade

- halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020

- halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade (FaHCSIA 2009).

The National Indigenous Reform Agreement was signed by all State/Territory governments in 2008 and constitutes the strategic framework for Closing the Gap. It sets out the objectives, outcomes, outputs, performance indicators and performance benchmarks agreed by COAG.

A $1.6 billion National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes was agreed by COAG. The Commonwealth's contribution to the NPA is the Chronic Disease Package, which aims to reduce key risk factors for chronic disease in the Indigenous community, improve chronic disease management and follow up, and increase the capacity of the primary care workforce to care for Indigenous Australians with chronic diseases (DoHA 2009). Whilst the package does not include any direct reference to tackling petrol sniffing, the investment in health infrastructure in regional and remote communities, and the healthy living and workforce initiatives are likely to have an indirect impact on the strategies for tackling petrol sniffing in those communities.

A noteworthy feature of the Closing the Gap initiative is the articulation of a specific *Remote Service Delivery Strategy*, which aims to:

- improve the access of Indigenous families to suitable and culturally inclusive services

- raise the standard and range of services delivered to Indigenous families to be broadly consistent with those provided to other Australians in similar sized and located communities

- improve the level of governance and leadership within Indigenous communities and Indigenous community organisations

- provide simpler access and better coordinated government services for Indigenous people in identified communities

- increase economic and social participation wherever possible, and promote personal responsibility, engagement and behaviours consistent with positive social norms.

Of particular relevance to planning for petrol sniffing initiatives in the future, the Remote Service Delivery Strategy articulates a set of national principles for investment in remote areas which will be applied to program funding and service delivery decisions relating to Indigenous outcomes in remote Australia (COAG 2008, p.A-26). These principles are:

- Remote Indigenous communities and remote communities with significant Indigenous populations are entitled to standards of services and infrastructure broadly comparable with that in non-Indigenous communities of similar size, location and need elsewhere in Australia.

- Investment decisions should aim to: improve participation in education/training and the market economy on a sustainable basis; and reduce dependence on welfare where possible; and promote personal responsibility, engagement and behaviours consistent with positive social norms.

- Priority for enhanced infrastructure support and service provision should be to larger and more economically sustainable communities where secure land tenure exists, allowing for services outreach to access by smaller surrounding communities, including:

  - recognising Indigenous peoples' cultural connections to homelands (whether on a visiting or permanent basis) but avoiding expectations of major investment in service provision where there are few economic or educational opportunities
  - facilitating voluntary mobility by individuals and families to areas where better education and job opportunities exist, with higher standards of service.

The implication for remote Central Australian communities are that any investment from Closing the Gap measures will adopt an outreach model for remote areas including homelands.

1.5.4 Northern Territory Emergency Response

The Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) was announced on 21 June 2007 by former Prime Minister John Howard in response to the *Little Children are Sacred* report. The immediate aims of the NTER were to protect children and make communities safe. The longer term aim was to create a better future for Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory (FaHCSIA 2008b).

The NTER applied to more than 600,000 square kilometres of 'prescribed areas', including all land held under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) 1976*, all Aboriginal community living areas and all Aboriginal town camps. The area includes more than 500 Aboriginal communities and 73 of the larger settlements which were targeted for intense application of NTER measures. NTER measures directly affect approximately 45,500 Aboriginal men, women and children, approximately 70% of the Northern Territory Aboriginal population (FaHCSIA 2008b).

The NTER comprised the following measures:

- welfare reform and employment

- law and order

- enhancing education

- supporting families

- improving child and family health

- housing and land reform

- coordination.

Particular strategies were aimed at addressing drug and alcohol abuse, including the following:

- modification of NT legislation relating to alcohol restrictions and police powers regarding the apprehension of intoxicated people.

- additional police officers and temporary police stations for remote areas

- police community engagement activities

- expansion of night patrols to all 73 prescribed communities

- establishment of a mobile child protection team

- establishment of Youth Alcohol Diversion (YAD) services

- additional Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) outreach personnel

- additional coordination personnel and structures

- establishment of two Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks (SAID), one in Alice Springs and one in Katherine.http://www.nterreview.gov.au/docs/report_nter_review/ch2.htm - 2

In addition, the Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU), the multi-agency unit that was formed to implement the PSS at the local level, was required to take on a range of support responsibilities in relation to the NTER such as planning, surveys and advice (Urbis 2008).

1.5.5 Petrol Sniffing Prevention Program

The Petrol Sniffing Prevention Program (PSPP) is managed by DoHA. It built on the successes of the earlier Comgas Scheme, which demonstrated the potential of using fuel replacement as a petrol sniffing reduction strategy (Shaw et al 2004). The central pillar of the PSPP is replacement of regular unleaded petrol with unsniffable Opal fuel, and this is supported by supplementary activities. The PSPP comprises:

- the provision of subsidised Opal fuel to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, roadhouses, petrol stations and other relevant fuel outlets

- communication activities, including specific products identified to support the promotion and implementation of the Program and the whole of government approach to petrol sniffing

- information resources related to petrol sniffing and Opal fuel

- monitoring treatment and respite in conjunction with the relevant States and Territories

- a data collection system (baseline data collection was completed in 2007)

- evaluation of the PSPP (DoHA 2008).

The PSPP overlaps with the PSS in that Opal fuel, and the supporting communication and data activities, are provided to the communities within the designated region of the PSS. DoHA is also a key partner in the PSS. The PSPP not only aligns with the objectives and activities of the PSS, it is critical to its operation.

1.5.6 Prevention, Diversion, Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice Program

The Prevention, Diversion, Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice Program (PDRRP) is administered by the Indigenous Law and Justice Branch (ILJB) of the Attorney–General's Department (AGD).

The PDRRP's objective is to divert Indigenous Australians away from adverse contact with the legal system and rehabilitate and support Indigenous Australians who have been incarcerated or are in custody. The program has four components: night patrols, youth activities, prisoner support and rehabilitation projects and restorative justice projects.

This Australia wide PDRRP projects receive earmarked funding from AGD, FaHCSIA and State/Territory governments. In 2006 an additional $3.4 million was provided to PDRRP for PSS projects (Office of Evaluation and Audit 2008).

1.5.7 Western Australian Volatile Substance Use Plan 2005-2009

The Western Australian Volatile Substance Use Plan 2005 - 2009 provides a framework for a coordinated, integrated response to reducing VSU-related harm in Western Australia. The Plan identifies responsibilities in relation to law enforcement, criminal justice, social welfare, health and education for State government agencies. The roles of the community-based sector, business and industry, the media, research institutions, local communities and individuals affected by VSU area also identified.

The Plan was developed prior to the development of the national strategies including the PSS, but mirrors the multi-strategy, whole of government approach of the PSS. For instance, its activity areas include:

- parent/family education and support
- school drug education
- school organisation and behaviour management
- harm reduction
- media response to VSU
- working with retailers and Industry
- legislation
- improving service responses
- treatment and support
- coordination.

The Plan notes the imminent development of national and regional approaches to combating VSU and indicates the potential for the Plan to work in synergy with these (p3).

1.5.8 Northern Territory Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention (VSAP) Act

The Northern Territory Government introduced new legislation to tackle VSU, which took effect in 2006. The legislation included the following provisions:

- *Assessment and treatment* - the Minister for Family and Community Services can be asked by a police officer, authorised person, family member or some other responsible adult, or doctor to make an application to the court for a treatment order for a person who is 'at risk of severe harm'. The court-ordered treatment order lasts for two months and can be extended. If the person fails to go to the medical assessment, an Authorised Officer is able to get a court order (warrant) to force the person to go.

- *Community management of volatile substances* - Communities can make an area management plan, that must be approved by the Minister, that deals with the possession, supply and use of volatile substances. The plans are similar to the 'dry areas' for alcohol restrictions and are legally enforceable by police. It is a criminal offence for a person to contravene an approved community management plan.

- *Unlawful supply of volatile substances and informer's confidentiality* - The legislation includes an offence of supplying volatile substances to another person if it will be used for inhalation.

The Government committed $10 million over five years to provide recurrent and one-off funding to support the legislation. The funding was earmarked for training and operational support to community

organisations that have experienced additional workload and for the development of rehabilitation services in Darwin and Alice Springs for VSU abusers.

1.6 Effectiveness of petrol sniffing interventions

1.6.1 Quality of evidence

As with many areas of Indigenous health, a critical issue concerning the identification of effective prevention and intervention strategies targeting Indigenous VSU and other substance abuse is the less than optimal quality of the evidence. In the introduction to their 2008 review of VSU interventions, d'Abbs & Maclean stated:

> *Almost all of the published evidence relating to VSM interventions belongs in the lower orders of evidence. We are not aware of a single relevant randomised controlled trial, and few studies use 'controls' of any sort. Many reports of interventions contain little more than a program description and some quantitative or qualitative post-intervention data; a few include pre- and post-intervention data, quantitative and/or qualitative. In many cases, although the scientific quality of the evidence is poor, the reports still contain insights or observations that we believe are relevant…* (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008, p.2)

1.6.2 Range of interventions

D'Abbs & Maclean (2008, 2000) have undertaken the most comprehensive stock take of petrol sniffing and other VSU interventions to date. Their review includes evidence from both Australian and overseas research, as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous evidence, and follows the broad substance abuse method of classification:

- Supply reduction - actions taken to limit the availability by restricting their accessibility (ie through retailer products with a less toxic alternative.

- Demand reduction - measures aiming at encouraging not to misuse volatile substances.

- Harm reduction - measures which reduce the risk reducing its prevalence.

- Law enforcement - statutory and community-based by-laws or other sanctions.

Supply reduction

Replacement of sniffable fuel with non-sniffable fuel was demonstrated to be a successful strategy for reducing levels of petrol sniffing in a range of situations by the 2004 Evaluation of the Comgas Scheme (Shaw et al 2004). It is important to acknowledge, however, that the degree of effectiveness of the strategy depended on three key factors: the distance to the nearest outlet for unleaded petrol; the length of time Avgas had been used; and the types of other interventions being implemented for reducing petrol sniffing. The Comgas evaluation strongly recommended a regional approach because availability of petrol from nearby communities not participating in the scheme significantly impacted on the effectiveness of the strategy (Shaw et al 2004).

A number of communities have sought to address the problem of petrol sniffing by locking up petrol supplies, using fences, floodlights, locking petrol caps and guard dogs (Shaw et al 2004, d'Abbs & Maclean 2000). Some have added ethyl mercapatan to petrol, which induces nausea and vomiting when inhaled, however the strategy was dropped as it made other residents nauseous and sniffers quickly learned how to evaporate the ethyl mercapatan (Gray et al 2002). The evidence of such interventions suggest they are 'almost invariably unsuccessful' (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008, p.xiv).

In 2004 BP Australia developed Opal Unleaded, a fuel designed specifically as a petrol sniffing intervention which contains low levels of the aromatics which provide users with the 'high' they seek. The fuel was developed to be used in a range of applications including cars, 4WDs and two-stroke engines such as lawn mowers and chainsaws. Opal has been seen as an improvement on Avgas because it does not contain lead and has been shown through scientific tests to not have a negative impact on engines. The Commonwealth Government has subsidised the supply of Opal since 2005,

bringing the retail cost alongside regular unleaded petrol. There is no legislative requirement for petrol retailers to supply Opal or for motorists to use Opal, rather participation is entirely voluntary (Urbis 2008). Rollout of Opal fuel to central Australian communities has been a key strategy of both the PSS and PSPP. By November 2007, Opal was available in 104 communities/pastoral properties/service stations and roadhouses (Urbis 2008).

An evaluation of the impact of Opal fuel in 20 communities (d'Abbs and Shaw 2008) found that the introduction of Opal had had a significant impact on the number of petrol sniffers and the frequency of sniffing activity. However the evaluation found that the greatest, lasting improvements were made where supply reduction strategies were accompanied by a range of demand reduction strategies such as good quality youth programs and other primary and secondary interventions. Again, the direct correlation between access to petrol (eg from nearby roadhouses, static supplies) and minimal improvement in the petrol sniffing rate was highlighted (in fact sniffing increased in three such communities).

However, there has also been some negative press for Opal, including the death of a boy in 2007 after sniffing Opal (which led to the 2009 Senate Inquiry to direct that Opal should not be marketed as a non-sniffable fuel), the creation of a black market in regular fuel with petrol selling for up to $100 a litre, and a marked increase in the sale of premium unleaded fuel in Alice Springs where sales were reported to increase five-fold (Senate Community Affairs Committee 2009).

Despite these reservations, the Senate Inquiry concluded that the 'supply of Opal fuel has been a resounding success in helping to reduce petrol sniffing' (Senate Community Affairs Committee 2009).It recommended that steps be taken by the Commonwealth (or failing that, by the States and Territories) to mandate the supply of Opal in Central Australia in order to address the issue of regional inconsistency (Senate Community Affairs Committee 2009).

Demand reduction

Demand reduction strategies aim to reduce petrol sniffing by working with potential or actual users to keep them away from the substance. Programs may adopt primary, secondary or tertiary interventionist approaches, and may be community-based, non-government organisation (NGO)- or government-led. The range of programs that fall into this category is vast as it encompasses targeted petrol sniffing programs, through to youth programs, education initiatives and community capacity building strategies.

Educational interventions have targeted users and at risk youth, parents, professionals such as youth and health workers, and the general population (eg in relation to Opal fuel). Research has found that petrol sniffers are generally aware of the dangers but are indifferent to them and 'scare tactics' are often counter-productive (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008, Brady 1997, Burns et al 1995). School-based drug abuse education programs are largely ineffective at preventing substance abuse (Ennet et al 1994). There appears to be value in education and information for health workers, parents and members of councils, but their implementation have been inconsistent and short-lived due to funding constraints (d'Abbs & Maclean 2000, Brady 1992). The efficacy of information campaigns for the general population is still unclear, though an early stage evaluation of the rollout of Opal fuel found that implementation of the Opal program has been held back by community misinformation about the effect of the fuel on car engines, despite attempts at community education (Urbis 2008; Senate Community Affairs Committee 2009).

Recreational (or diversionary) interventions, which provide alternative activities that prevent youth becoming bored, can be an effective *complementary* strategy in preventing volatile substance misuse in remote communities, if designed and implemented well. The following success factors have been identified for such programs.

- Broadly targeting the program to include youth who are non-sniffers, occasional and chronic sniffers, inclusion of measures to avoid stigmatising drug users, including avoiding giving sniffers preferential treatment, and measures for managing chronic users' erratic behaviour to avoid pushing away non-users.

- Focus on skill and capacity development.

- Offer a range of purposeful, interesting, exciting and educational activities, including opportunities for 'safe' risk-taking that are a real alternative to sniffing (eg adventure activities, horse–breaking, rock climbing); also activities for males and females that go beyond sport.

- Employment of suitable staff:

    – who understand the issues and who are sensitive to community needs

    – with the requisite diverse range of skills (eg four wheel drive vehicles, hunting, painting, crisis support, sporting activities, applying for grants)

    – where appropriate, male and female staff.

- Provision of the program on a flexible basis, after school hours, evenings, weekends and holidays.

- Use of local resources.

- Include sustainability provisions eg in relation to ongoing funding, preventing staff burnout, community support.

(D'Abbs & Maclean 2008; Senate Select Committee on Volatile Substance Fumes 1985, Fietz 2008, Shaw 2002, Morris et al 2003, Batley 2009).

However the limitations of recreational programs as a VSU intervention must be understood. Recreational programs are most effective at preventing petrol sniffing and other VSU among non-sniffers and occasional sniffers, but their capacity to engage chronic sniffers is limited (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008, Shaw 2002). Shaw (2002) concluded that it is very difficult to implement a successful recreational program in communities that have large numbers of chronic petrol sniffers, many of whom are brain damaged. In such communities it is difficult to establish a core group of participants and workers are exposed to considerable risk. For this reason, recreational programs should not be seen as the primary component of a petrol sniffing strategy for a community, and in communities with large numbers of chronic sniffers, supply reduction interventions should be well established before introducing youth workers or recreational programs (Shaw 2002).

Furthermore, recreational programs should not replace, but should rather operate alongside treatment and rehabilitation programs, because of the difficulties of at the same time engaging chronic sniffers and retaining non-sniffers (who may be intimidated by chronic users) in the program. A number of practitioners argue for 'integrated' services that offer both recreational diversion as well as counseling and case management (Northern Territory Youth Affairs Network; Fietz 2008).

The evidence for recreational programs reducing petrol sniffing and other VSU in regional and urban areas is far less clear, with only a handful of evaluated programs in locations such as Melbourne, Brisbane and Townsville. There is some anecdotal evidence supporting programs such as the community-led and managed 'bush retreat' model used by Alice Springs based Bushmob Inc.

Sustainability is a major problem for recreational and youth worker programs, with programs folding due to funding cycles ending, difficulties in attracting or sustaining staff and, in some instances, lack of community support or conflict (Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee 2006; d'Abbs and Shaw 2008; Senate Community Affairs Committee 2009; Morgan Disney & Associates 2006). An issue related to program sustainability is the community's capacity to accommodate and support a youth worker. Documented difficulties that have undermined programs include lack of infrastructure for worker housing and/or youth activity facilities, lack of professional support, and the community's tendency for shifting the entire responsibility of petrol sniffing youth to the appointed youth worker, leading to worker isolation and burnout (Shaw 2002).

Another major obstacle is the patchy availability and variable quality of youth programs across the Central Australian region, and a lack of coordination between Opal provision and the provision of youth programs (d'Abbs & Shaw 2008; Urbis 2008; Senate Community Affairs Committee 2009). In other words, a recreation/youth work intervention only has the prospect of being effective where it actually exists, is sustainable and is supported by supply reduction and other demand reduction strategies.

Counselling and family support. There is little evidence to support the effectiveness of counseling interventions for Indigenous (or non-Indigenous) inhalant misuse (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008). However, some research from remote Indigenous communities indicate that counseling and family support approaches helped individuals to break their dependence on petrol sniffing and heal within their families and communities (Burns et al 1995; Shaw 2002; San Roque nd; Franks 1989). The importance of including families in counseling approaches has been identified by some researchers (Shaw 2002; Mosey 2000). Another critical issue is the need for after-care, in the form of personal support, and working with families and communities, to help clients avoid relapsing (Shaw et al 2006; Butt 2004).

Treatment and rehabilitation. There have been few VSU-specific treatment interventions in Australia and there is little evidence regarding the efficacy of treatment and rehabilitation programs for petrol sniffing (d'Abbs, Maclean & Brady 2008). To date, VSU treatment and rehabilitation programs have tended to be modeled on alcohol or other drug treatment programs. They tend to focus on addiction and dependency, however it is not clear whether these concepts are helpful for understanding or treating petrol sniffing (d'Abbs & Brady 2003). Research evidence from US treatment programs for VSU has found that solvent users 'defy conventional treatment and prevention efforts' and that treatment programs are likely to be longer in duration and more expensive than other drug treatment programs (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008; Beauvais & Trimble 1997). It has also been suggested that alcohol and other drugs services are reluctant to engage with petrol sniffers or foster the expertise for working with petrol sniffers due to petrol sniffing being viewed as a youth problem or health problem, rather than a drug problem (d'Abbs 2006).

Despite the scarcity of evidence of the effectiveness of particular interventions, some important factors have emerged from the research. They include the following.

- Comprehensive client assessment is important, including assessment of family function, poly drug use, dual diagnosis, neurological impairment, co-occurring health problems, cultural identity, social situation (Department of Human Services 2003; Jumper-Thurman et al 1995; d'Abbs & Maclean 2008).

- Inhalant users have a higher incidence of mental illness than the general population, and so mental health services need to be available and involved (Butt 2004). They also have a higher incidence of past sexual abuse and poly drug use, therefore these issues need to be considered in developing a treatment plan (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008).

- Inhalant users often lead quite chaotic lives and keeping appointments often proves a challenge, so an outreach approach can be more effective (Department of Human Services 2003).

- Providing living support alongside therapy appears to be important, as many inhalant users have poor living skills (eg cooking, hygiene, nutrition, social skills) (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2003).

In the absence of specific good practice guidelines for treatment of inhalant abuse, the recognised elements of effective drug treatment programs that have been identified by research serve as a guide (National Inhalant Abuse Taskforce 2006). According to these, a good drug treatment program:

- offers various approaches and interventions: there is no single treatment approach that will suit all individuals

- caters for characteristics such as age, culture and ethnicity: in particular, programs must be tailored for young people and Indigenous people

- recognises the role of the family and the person's place in their family

- acknowledges that treatment suited to occasional users may not be appropriate for chronic users

- provides continuity of care

- recognises and responds to multiple needs, for example, medical, psychological, social, vocational and legal

- recognises that recovery from dependence can be a lengthy process and frequently requires multiple and/or prolonged treatment episodes

- is available and accessible promptly as, typically, clients only present interest in treatment periodically

- is planned and reviewed regularly to meet clients' needs

- uses counselling and behavioural therapies

- recognises that different approaches may be effective at different stages as part of the change process.

Strempel et al (2004) have further identified elements of best practice for Indigenous drug and alcohol programs that may be applicable to VSU programs. They are as follows.

- Indigenous community control

- leadership by key individuals

- appropriate staff conditions, training and development

- clearly defined management structures and procedures

- trained staff and effective staff development programs

- multi-strategy and collaborative approaches

- cross-sectorial collaboration, particularly at the local level

- social accountability to the broader Indigenous community

- multi-service operation

- sustainability of services and programs

- adequate funding

- clearly defined realistic objectives aimed at the provision of appropriate services that address community needs

- services directed by Indigenous perspectives.

Research from the US and Canada places an emphasis on community participation. Interventions among Native American and Canadian communities have emphasised the need for community involvement in planning, implementing and evaluating VSU and other substance misuse programs (Beauvais & Trimble 1997, Seale, Shellenberger & Spence 2006).

However, the efficacy of particular approaches to treatment remains unclear. Some researchers argue for culturally appropriate brief interventions by health professionals (Brady 2004; Brady 1995; Nagel et al 2008), development of therapeutic relationships with young inhalant users (Butt 2004) and 'resiliency and holistic' models such as those used among Canadian indigenous youth (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008, Butt 2004). A Canadian study which found that three-quarters of the Indigenous youth in treatment for VSU relapsed after discharge, identified three risk factors for relapse: inhalant abuse just prior to admission, lack of motivation in treatment, and hospitalisation (Coleman, Charles & Collins 2001). The evidence for the effectiveness of group therapy approaches and court-mandated treatment is particularly poor (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008).

The Northern Territory and South Australian Governments are developing inhalant specific residential rehabilitation facilities with an Indigenous focus to be located in Alice Springs, Darwin and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yunkunytjatjara lands (National Inhalant Abuse Taskforce 2006). The rationale for developing these facilities cites similar facilities for Indigenous youth in Canada that provide culturally appropriate treatment to young solvent abusers and their families. There is very little empirical evidence to support the use of residential rehabilitation for Indigenous petrol sniffers, in part because very few

culturally appropriate substance misuse residential programs exist, and partly because of a lack of evidence about the long term efficacy of residential rehabilitation for petrol sniffers. Nevertheless, the development of residential rehabilitation facilities has considerable impetus from successive inquiries and highly publicised coronial inquests (Senate Select Committee on Volatile Substance Abuse 1985; National Inhalant Abuse Taskforce 2006).

Another critical avenue for treatment in Australia is the use of outstation or Homeland Centres for rehabilitation, which allow petrol sniffers to get away from the petrol and their sniffing peers for a while, become engaged with other meaningful activities (recreational and work) and reconnect with culture and the social hierarchy (Shaw et al 1994). However, d'Abbs & Maclean (2008) identify three critical issues that need to be addressed for the successful provision of homeland programs – securing funding, infrastructure and resources; each community identifying a sustainable model that suits their needs and the multiple demands placed upon elders and other participants; and the importance of community involvement both in the outstation program and in follow-up. Concerns over the capacity of outstation programs to attend to some clients' medical and psychological needs have also been raised and were highlighted after the death of a 14 year old boy at one outstation in 1998.

A much praised program has been the outstation at Mt Theo. The success of this program has been attributed to the fact that it addresses a number of critical success factors such as taking a multifaceted approach, community owned and led, partnership between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers, and shifting from a crisis focus to addressing the underlying reasons for substance abuse (Preuss & Brown 2006; Stojanovski 1999; Campbell & Stojanovski 2001).

Clinical guidelines for treatment and rehabilitation of petrol and other inhalant use are in the developmental stage in Australia. Management response guidelines to inhalant use have been developed by the Victorian Government for frontline workers (Victorian Department of Human Services 2008). The NHMRC has been commissioned by the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health to develop clinical guidelines for VSU treatment, and these are expected to be completed by early 2011 (NHMRC 2009).

Community based interventions. A host of community based interventions have developed over the past few decades in Indigenous communities. Some of these directly target petrol sniffing as an activity, while others target the social antecedents of petrol sniffing such youth boredom, low self esteem, family violence, mental illness, family breakdown, social isolation, and disadvantage. In their review of these interventions, d'Abbs & Maclean (2008) found few programs that had a negative impact. They also found that the most successful programs adopted a regional approach, complementing service provision with brokerage and advocacy activities aimed at promoting local community capacity; had available town-based staff to support and reduce isolation of community based workers; and had support from a wide range of mainstream and community based organisations.

Harm reduction

D'Abbs & Maclean (2008) explain the limited number of harm minimisation approaches as the result of communities' aversion to a strategy that aims at anything less than abstinence. Nevertheless they identify a range of harm reduction strategies relating to the setting and individuals' practice. These include education strategies providing advice about how to sniff less dangerously eg by avoiding sniffing in enclosed spaces, avoiding sniffing in hazardous places (eg near roads), avoiding suffocation by the container used for sniffing or other covering, avoiding accidental ignition of petrol whilst sniffing, and using smaller containers with less surface area. A number of harm reduction approaches have proved to be controversial (such as the much publicised 'supervised sniffing room' trialed in Victoria in 2002) and have not been employed in Indigenous communities. Some researchers have recently called for harm minimization approaches to be revisited and for a more rational discussion of alternatives to take place (d'Abbs, Maclean & Brady 2008).

Law enforcement

Use of petrol or other solvents as inhalants is not illegal in any Australian jurisdiction. In some Aboriginal communities, councils have enacted by-laws that prohibit inhalant use. Nevertheless, some States/Territories have sought to amend legislative powers to enable police to respond in a more targeted way to VSU. Examples (summarised from d'Abbs & Maclean 2008) include:

- Classification of petrol as a drug under the South Australian *Public Intoxication Act 1984,* allowing police to detain an intoxicated person in a public place.

- The South Australian *Graffiti Control Act 2001* prohibits the sale of cans of spray paints to anyone under 18 years and retailers are required to lock up supplies securely.

- The Western Australian *Protective Custody Act 2000* empowers police to intervene by seizing and destroying intoxicants, and by apprehending and detaining intoxicated persons in order to protect the latter's health and safety or prevent them from damaging property.

- In Northern Territory, Queensland and Victoria, new laws have been enacted that allow police to search for and confiscate volatile substances which the officer believes are being used for intoxication; and apprehend and detain persons intoxicated by inhalants.

- The Northern Territory *Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act 2005* also allows the direction of mandatory treatment for inhalant abusers at risk severe harm; provision for 'management areas' which gives legal recognition to locally-specific laws relating to the possession, supply and use of volatile substances; and makes it an offence to supply a volatile substance to someone if they 'know or ought to know' that the person intends to inhale the substance or provide the substance to a third party who intends to inhale it.

A number of Aboriginal communities have enacted by-laws that forbid petrol sniffing/inhalant use, such as those under the *Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act 1981*. This strategy has met with mixed success, in some places being undermined by the lack of adequate and safe facilities to take apprehended inhalant users, the lack of services to which to refer users, or the absence of police to enforce the by-laws (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008).

Legal sanctions appear to be more effective in reducing supply than in reducing demand. The likelihood that Indigenous youth view detention as neither a deterrent nor a punishment (Royal Commission in to Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991, Weatherburn et al 2009), or as has been suggested, a compelling alternative to the boredom and limitations of community life or even a 'right of passage' (Ogilvie and Van Zyl 2001, ABC News 2009).

Other strategies have included engagement of Aboriginal community based police officers or liaison officers, community or night patrols which provide safe transport/transit to young people, and proactive policing operations that conduct preventive activities (such as SAID in Alice Springs) and include referral to health and welfare agencies (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008).

1.6.3 Success factors for interventions

A range of primary, secondary and tertiary strategies

A clear message from the research is that interventions are most effective when they comprise a range of simultaneous and permanent primary, secondary and tertiary strategies, and least effective when they address only one aspect of the problem in isolation. Zinberg's (1984) substance abuse intervention framework, which sees interventions aimed at the drug (the pharmacological-toxicological properties of the substance), the set (the attributes of the person using the substance) and the setting (the physical and social environment in which the substance is being used), has gained widespread acceptance. It is supported by empirical studies (eg Nganampa Health Council 2007, Roper 1998, Stojanovski 1994, Burns et al 1995) which found that the factors contributing to petrol sniffing reduction were multiple and varied within each community. The Select Committee on Substance Abuse in the Community in the Northern Territory (2004) concluded in its inquiry into petrol sniffing that:

> *any strategies to address petrol sniffing need to be introduced in tandem with measures for addressing the socio-economic issues underpinning the practice, as well as with strategies which address availability and accessibility* (p23).

Shaw et al (2004) found that the effectiveness of fuel replacement as a reduction strategy was enhanced where other strategies were being employed. Indications that displacement effects may occur, such as the shift from petrol to another substance such as paint or marijuana, underscore the importance of addressing the context of and underlying causes of drug abuse in a community (Senior &

Chenhall 2008). These findings lend support the multi-pronged approach of the PSS, which aims to approach the problem of petrol sniffing from toxicological, social, legislative and enforcement perspectives.

Prevention and early intervention

The people that are hardest to help stop sniffing are chronic sniffers (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008; d'Abbs & Mclean 2000, Shaw et al 2004). Chronic sniffers are difficult to engage and far less likely to stop (Shaw 2002).

> *This is a critical point for those planning interventions: it is much easier to help people to stop VSM if the practice has not yet become entrenched. By the time someone has become a chronic sniffer, the likelihood of their stopping is substantially reduced* (d'Abbs & Mclean 2008, p.8).

The research findings therefore support a focus on prevention and early intervention.

Effective and coordinated interventions

The key success factors for effective programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are known. The 2009 OID report identifies the following success factors that appear to be common to programs that work:

- cooperative approaches between Indigenous people and government — often with the non-profit and private sectors as well

- community involvement in program design and decision-making — a 'bottom-up' rather than 'top-down' approach

- good governance — at organisation, community and government levels

- ongoing government support — including human, financial and physical resources (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2009, p8).

One of the problems identified in the approach to combating petrol sniffing to date has been an unclear definition of roles for police, health and welfare agencies (d'Abbs, Maclean & Brady 2008). Whole of government approaches to addressing petrol sniffing have for many years been identified as being critical to effecting change. The Inquiry into Petrol Sniffing in Remote Northern Territory Communities (Select Committee on Substance Abuse in the Community 2004) concluded that:

> *…if Government is to effect any change it is imperative that it address the issues with a whole of government approach, ensuring that all service delivery is networked to ensure it is co-ordinated, the services comply with the program parameters and that those delivering it are accountable for its outcomes* (p23).

Such evidence underscores the importance of a coordinated and collaborative approach such as the PSS is endeavoring to do. However, the level of coordination between and the strength of the commitment between the PSS partners have been questioned (Urbis 2008; Courage Partners 2008).

Community ownership and participation

It is widely agreed that community control, support and participation are critical factors to the implementation of a successful intervention. The 2009 Senate Inquiry report emphasised the critical role of communities in driving the initiatives:

> *The significant reduction must be commended and is testament to the strength and resilience of Indigenous communities that have unrelentingly pressed for action and taken a strong stand against petrol sniffing* (p.9).

However, balancing the power relationships is far from a simple matter due to internal community/family politics, involvement of non-Aboriginal staff and office holders within community organisations, balancing empowerment/self determination with the need for ongoing support by government and other non-Aboriginal organisations. Senior and Chenhall (2007) found in an evaluation of a community-based program targeting at risk youth, that community support and involvement are not, on their own,

sufficient for a successful program. It is also critical to have the support and involvement of staff and funding bodies. As d'Abbs & Maclean (2008) conclude:

> *Successful community-based interventions in remote communities require support from non-Aboriginal agencies such as police, clinics and schools, as well as Aboriginal agencies and groups* (p.56).

Regional approach

Numerous evaluation and inquiry reports and research studies have identified to need for regional approaches in tackling petrol sniffing, due to the high mobility of users, the interaction between communities and the limited resources available to remote communities. The gains made in a community through supply and demand reduction strategies can easily be undone if access to petrol supplies is re-established elsewhere in the region. Even if a community has replaced unleaded fuel with Opal, if a nearby roadhouse still supplies unleaded petrol, stocks of petrol are kept (even if locked up), or cars return from a regional centre refueled with petrol, the impact of fuel replacement is significantly lowered.

Recognising peer group influences

It is thought that peer group influences help to maintain petrol sniffing behaviour (d'Abbs & Maclean 2000) and Brady (1992) suggests that the role of peer groups is under-investigated. Consideration could be given to incorporating a focus on peer groups in monitoring petrol sniffing activity in communities. Information about peer group structure and changes could be used to try to predict fluctuating petrol sniffing behaviour. d'Abbs & Maclean (2000) found that 'waves of petrol sniffing usually coincide with periods of limited opportunity for other recreation for young people in communities'. This is consistent with broader substance misuse research which finds that the promotion of an environment in which meaningful activities are available enhances protective factors within communities.

1.7   Models and approaches to Indigenous youth work

1.7.1 Models of youth work

Youth work has a long and complex history, with varying experiences internationally. Cooper and White (1994) describe six models of youth work:

- *Treatment model* - defines young people as deviant, mad or deficient and present a social threat to the community. Young people must be treated or made to conform to societal norms to become productive members of society and if this is unsuccessful, action should be taken to protect society. Examples of this type of program include most young offender/juvenile justice programs, conventional drop in centres, most employment/training programs, and most school programs.

- *Reform model* - defines young people as being socially disadvantaged by their environment and upbringing which in turn makes them social outcasts and cause them to inflict violent behaviour on themselves or others. Youth workers aim to develop motivation, build rapport, and help young people identify their own needs. Adherents to this model believe that socio-environmental conditions affect people differently, individual coping skills vary, and society will help those who attempt to help themselves. Examples include group work and counselling, church youth groups, neighbourhood/community groups, and youth health programs.

- *Advocacy model (radical)* - defines young people as being marginalised by society through inadequate basic rights or social protection. Young people are ill informed as to their rights and how to access them. The role of the youth worker is to expose inequality and get rid of bureaucratic and legal biases which disempower the young. Examples include group campaigns to reform institutional inequality, and some youth advocacy bodies.

- *Advocacy model (non-radical)* – where the young person is defined as having problems because they are ignorant of their rights and bureaucratic barriers prevent their access to knowledge and information. Society is viewed in this model as complex and bureaucratic in nature. The youth

worker's role is to assist the young person in acquiring whatever they deserve or are legally entitled to. Examples include welfare rights groups, legal aid, and youth peak bodies.

- *Empowerment model (radical)* – in which institutions protect the privileged or powerful, and systematically disempower young people. Youth workers are there to help young people to address power imbalances in society without disempowering other disadvantaged groups. Youth workers should not act as advocates for young people but rather help them to obtain the skills to act on their own. Examples include some youth action groups/networks.

- *Empowerment model (non-radical)* – where young people don't have enough control or power over their lives. Empowerment can be achieved if the young person is assisted to become more powerful within whatever framework of values they individually choose. Youth workers should be supportive and motivational without interfering in the process and should be seen in the role of a friend. Examples include youth roundtables and community arts groups.

In practice, many youth services and agencies tend to incorporate aspects of more than one model. However, most youth worker training programs and funded positions incorporate a significant element of the reform model.

A major issue in the area of youth work, particularly in relation to Indigenous communities, has been the 'youth worker versus recreation officer' debate. A *sport and recreation officer* provides specific diversionary activities on a regular basis that are aimed at ensuring that the participants enjoy an active and healthy lifestyle through participation in a planned activity. They are typically trained in fields such as physical education or diversional therapy. A *youth worker* has a broader skill set that allows him/her to identify issues a young person may be experiencing and offer them appropriate assistance or referral to other services. A trained youth worker can also provide case management to individuals and families who may be experiencing problems. They are typically trained in social work/youth work with a significant component of psychology. Many in the sector claim that recreation officers do not have the skill set to adequately engage with many young people's complex psychological and social issues.

However, in terms of the activities and programs undertaken, there is good evidence to suggest that the very fact that a diversionary activity exists where it previously did not exist, is more important than the type of activity provided (Morris et al 2003; Catalano et al 1998). Nevertheless, the literature is also clear that complex substance abuse and antisocial behaviour problems with youth require more than just sport and recreation programs to effectively impact on young peoples' behaviour, and that sport and recreation program should be integrated within a broader multi-agency model (Morris et al 2003).

A paper published by the Northern Territory Youth Affairs Network (2009), referring to an integrated youth work model (see Figure 1), discusses the complexity of undertaking youth work in remote Indigenous communities, where a youth worker must constantly consider two sets of laws – those of the State and traditional law:

> *For example, the work of 'having fun' – youth shed activities, camps or bush activities – must consider both traditional and Territory law and local cultural protocols; 'Keeping an eye out' may result in the youth worker discussing a client's needs with the clinic, school or family, or may result in the youth worker lodging a formal notification of abuse* (p.6).

There is a considerable range of youth programs provided in Indigenous communities. Whilst many seek to target at risk youth, those following good practice principles target services more broadly. Some of the main types of youth programs include:

- sport and recreation programs, eg football, basketball and table tennis competitions, adventure activities such as kayaking, rock climbing, canyoning, BMX, school holiday programs, discos

- arts and cultural activities, traditional dance groups

- recreational camps, work camps

- homeland/outstation retreats and rehabilitation

- youth centres, drop in centres, referral services

- educational programs eg homework centres, tutoring

- mentoring and leadership programs

- group counselling, casework, family relationships support

- life skills programs

- substance abuse programs

- accommodation services

- youth diversion programs (FaHCSIA 2008a, p 26).

Some programs, such as the NT Integrated Youth Services Project (Urbis 2009), the Mount Theo program (Preuss & Brown 2006; Stojanovski 1999; Campbell & Stojanovski 2001) the Kintore Youth Program (Fietz 2008b) and the youth service at Docker River (Fietz 2008a) have sought to provide multi-component services that provide recreational activities as well as have a wellbeing focus through provision of counselling, referrals and family casework.

Figure 13 – Youth work in a remote Aboriginal community (from Northern Territory Youth Affairs Network 2009)
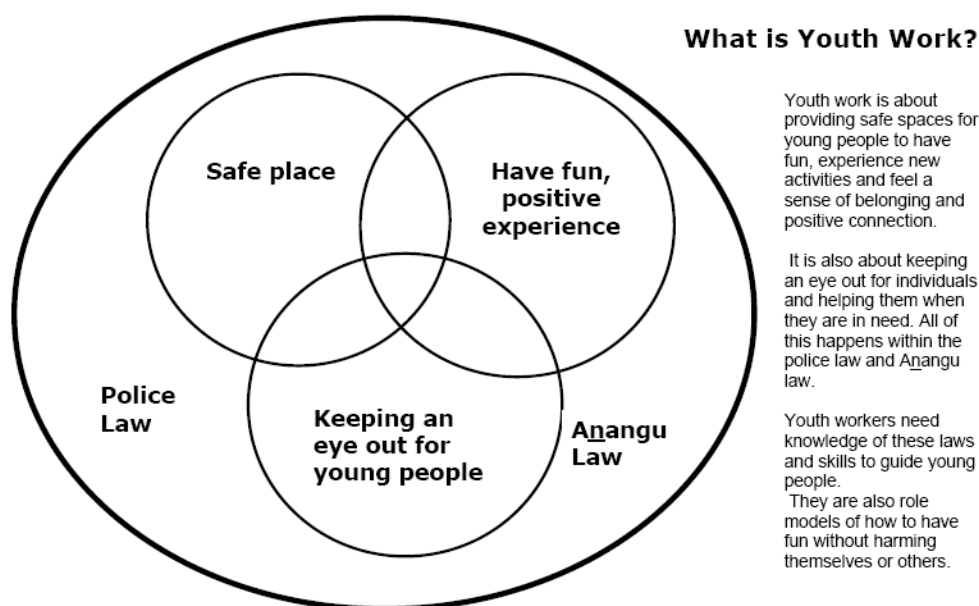
Copyright Relationships Australia SA Certificate III Youth Work.. 2005

The 2006 Senate Inquiry report (Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee (2006) includes a case study of the Docker River youth service as an illustration of good practice. The author (Fietz 2008) identified the following good practice principles for youth work in an Aboriginal community:

- adequate resources and infrastructure

- external coordinating youth services management body

- skilled and committed youth workers

- regularity and consistency of activities

- gender and age status appropriate activities

- activities which are meaningful, stimulating, and culturally relevant

- promotion of self-esteem and coherence for young people in their lives with their families

- involvement of role models

- promotion of strong intergenerational relationships

- knowledge of families

- community development and participation.

Other elements of good practice youth diversionary programs have been identified earlier in this review (see section 3.4.1).

There are a number of documented challenges to providing youth services in remote areas of Australia, including the 'patchwork of programs and providers', difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified and experienced workers, lack of infrastructure and the high levels of need (FaHCSIA 2008a). Other documented difficulties include the real or perceived risks associated with youth work where substance abuse is an issue (Shaw et al 2004), and short term funding arrangements which result in programs not being sustained (Morgan Disney & Associates 2006; Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee 2006). As a result, there continues to be substantial levels of unmet need in many remote areas of Australia across the spectrum of youth services (FaHCSIA 2008a).

1.7.2 Indigenous youth drug diversion

Diversion programs involve the use of the criminal justice system to provide alternatives to custodial sentences, including referral to education and treatment. (Note that this section refers only to *diversion programs* as distinct from *diversionary programs* which provide young people with alternative activities; the latter are discussed elsewhere in this review including in sections 3.4.1 and 3.5.1 above)

Diversion can mean two things: diversion out of the system without further conditions, such as cautioning or fines ('true' diversion), which accounts for around one-quarter of diversion instances; and diversion into treatment/education ('new' diversion), which has become the most common form. The main purpose of 'new' diversion is to be able to address the causes of drug use and crime, and for occasional users, to educate about the risks of prolonged drug use (Hughes & Ritter 2008).

Diversion in Australia is available via police, courts and specialist courts (eg drug courts). Police drug diversion is generally only targeted at adults, and generally for illicit drugs only. Diversion is possible at various points of the justice system, including pre-arrest, pre-trial, pre-sentence and post-sentence. All States and Territories, with the exception of the ACT and Victoria where police officers use their discretionary power, have legislation providing for the diversion of juveniles from the criminal justice system via police cautioning (Juodo 2008).

Cautioning and diversion to education, assessment and/or treatment are options in the majority of jurisdictions, and extend to adults and juveniles. Most are offered pre-arrest and pre-trial. Diversion is offered pre-sentence to juveniles (except in NT) and to adults (except in SA and Tasmania). Diversion is offered post sentence to juveniles only in Victoria, SA, ACT and Tasmania, and to adults everywhere except NT (Juodo 2008).

There are generally set eligibility criteria for court diversion relating to criminal history, age and patterns of drug use. A review of diversion programs in Australia (Hughes & Ritter 2008) shows that most programs require that the drug problem be of an *illicit* nature. This technically means that petrol or inhalant users who come before the court may not have access to diversion programs, and this has been recognised as a significant barrier to access (Hughes & Ritter 2008). Two jurisdictions – SA and WA – have indicated that they would like to extend the program to people arrested with volatile substance misuse problems but that administrative impediments prevent it (Crime Research Centre 2007).

In the Northern Territory, the *Volatile Substance Abuse Act 2004* allows a magistrate to order an offender into a treatment program. The provision is somewhat controversial as the efficacy of mandatory treatment programs is unclear (d'Abbs & Maclean 2008).

In all jurisdictions, Indigenous people are less likely to be referred and accepted into diversion programs. There are a number of issues that may limit Indigenous access to diversion, including that they are less likely to make an admission of guilt to police; and more likely to have multiple charges, previous criminal convictions, drug misuse problems that are not covered by the drug diversion programs, and have a co-existing mental illness (Payne 2009). High mobility, absence of a parent/guardian and remoteness are also seen to be barriers to access.

The efficacy of drug diversion for Indigenous offenders is the subject of debate. The success of such programs is judged by their impact on reoffending, and for both juveniles and adults, the reoffending rate is consistently higher than for non-Indigenous offenders (Juodo 2008). Some studies have found, however, that drug use, and in some instances reoffending rates, have declined (Urbis Keys Young 2003). Payne (2009) suggests that the applicability and cultural appropriateness of existing diversion programs needs to be reconsidered in light of the higher reoffending rates.

In examining diversion schemes, two other developments are noteworthy: *Indigenous courts* and *restorative justice programs*. All States/Territories now operate a form of Indigenous court, which is intended to be a more culturally appropriate alternative to the traditional court system. The aim is to provide more appropriate sentencing options for Indigenous offenders and thereby reduce incarceration and reoffending rates. Importantly the courts frequently involve both Indigenous elders who sit beside the magistrate and advise them on cultural issues that are relevant to the offender, as well as a drug diversion worker (Juodo 2008).

Another initiative has been the growing interest in restorative justice models to address petrol sniffing related anti-social behaviour, which aim to reduce apprehension rates. In certain areas such as the APY Lands, Restorative Justice Officers have been employed to coordinate models for helping local people manage anti-social behaviour associated with petrol sniffing in culturally and community appropriate ways (Urbis 2008; FaHCSIA 2008a). The Prevention, Diversion, Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice Program (PDRRP) (see 1.5.6) is specifically designed to help communities to develop such programs.

1.8   Conclusions

Prevalence data appears to confirm that far fewer people are sniffing petrol now than five years ago, before the introduction of Opal fuel and the targeted and coordinated campaigns to eliminate the practice. The research has a number of implications for the approaches taken by FaHCSIA and other agencies in addressing petrol sniffing, VSU and other substance abuse in Indigenous communities. For instance, the research findings support the following approaches:

- Use of a range of simultaneous and permanent primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies.

- Implementation of demand and harm reduction strategies in order to maximise the effectiveness of supply reduction initiatives. Strategies such as provision of alternative activities for youth, community development and capacity building, community education and treatment and rehabilitation should accompany Opal fuel replacement and legal sanctions on inhalant supply if the problem of petrol sniffing is to be effectively tackled.

- Regional implementation approaches.

- Consistency and persistence in the implementation of strategies – better results are observed where strategies have been maintained over time.

- Coordination across the government and non-government sectors.

- Community-driven approaches.

- A focus on prevention and early intervention in order to prevent uptake and reduce escalation of petrol sniffing. More research is needed to identify the best ways to assist chronic petrol sniffers, who are difficult to engage in many interventions.

- Continued development of data collection systems and evaluation processes to help build the evidence base for interventions.

The approach taken by the PSS takes account of all these key issues, which lends considerable standing to the initiative's design. The critical question is whether all the elements of the strategy have been implemented as was intended.

In terms of FaHCSIA's contribution to the PSS, what does the literature say about the approach to developing youth programs? The activities funded by FaHCSIA under the PSS (with funding levels as reported in Urbis 2009) are summarised in Box 1 below, according to activity type. What can be seen is that the large allocations of funding have gone to comprehensive youth programs that include a range of strategies such as diversionary activities as well as support, counseling, referral and education. The development of such programs is supported by the literature which reinforces approaches that address the causes and contexts of youth substance abuse, rather than the more narrow focus of simply engaging them in diversionary activities. However, it should be noted that the objectives of most of the diversionary activities undertaken as part of FaHCSIA's contribution to the PSS also include an educational or support element, and therefore could be viewed as more than just sport and recreation programs.

Throughout the literature, under-resourcing and lack of infrastructure are identified as significant limiting factors for youth programs. The inclusion of projects that assist to build infrastructure and facilities in remote areas are therefore commendable.

However, the literature also identifies short term and uncertain funding as a limiting factor and the reason for the failure of many interventions. There are many examples of good programs that fall apart at the end of the funding period. The research emphasises the need for good permanent programs backed by secure funding, and this may be an issue for FaHCSIA to address in its approach to supporting youth programs in remote Indigenous communities in the future.

BOX 1 – FAHCSIA FUNDED YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER THE PSS

Diversionary activity programs

Red Centre BMX Program ($358,000)

Bushmob Cultural Horse Work Camp for Volatile Substance Users ($33,850)

Gap Youth Centre Young Men's Support Project ($26,000)

Canteen Creek – Alternatives for Youth: Sport and Recreation ($41,545)

School Holiday Activities Program – Red Sun Solutions ($620,183)

Comprehensive youth worker programs

West MacDonnell Regional Youth Services Enhancement Project ($2.4 million)

Pilot Youth Diversion Gove Peninsula ($194,000)

NT Integrated Youth Services Project ($12 million)

Facility enhancement

Warlpiri Regional Youth Development Complex ($2 million)

Titjikala youth program ($9,372)

Ntaria Trailer ($22,000)

Gap Youth Centre – Program and Equipment Funding ($59,950)

Education programs

Learning Support Program ($457,979)

NT Department of Education and Training Regional Education Coordinator ($200,000)

Treatment and rehabilitation

Gunbalanya Petrol Sniffing Rehabilitation and Diversion Program ($47,500)

Professional learning

East Arnhem Regional Traditional Owners and Elders visit to Mt Theo ($30,260)

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