

## Strong support for Aurukun and Qld Government on grog plan

# Strong support for Aurukun and Qld Government on grog plan



The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) has enthusiastically welcomed the development of community based action plan on alcohol, such as has occurred in the Aurukun community in Queensland.

The changes announced today, which have been instigated by the Indigenous community, include:

- A ban on the sale of cask wine and spirits;
- A ban on the sale of alcohol to pregnant women and their partners;
- Canteen drinking only (no 'take-aways') and restricted opening hours; and
- A no-serving rule for those on probation, child neglect or domestic violence orders.

Major Watters stated "this is an extremely encouraging and welcome development in the struggle to reduce alcohol related violence, illness, injury and death in the Cape. Some of my colleagues and I on the ANCD have seen first hand the devastation that alcohol is causing in these remote communities. Indeed these experiences contributed to the ANCD delivering a formal submission to the Fitzgerald 'Cape York Justice Study' earlier this year."

Major Watters added "on behalf of the ANCD I would like to congratulate the Aurukun community, as well as the Beattie Government in their legislative support for these changes. The ANCD believes that partnerships between the government and the community are an essential ingredient for any effective strategy to address drug and alcohol problems. This is a prime example of partnerships in action."

Major Watters reinforced the importance of these changes being instigated by the Indigenous community, saying that they have a better chance of success than plans imposed from outside the community.

Professor Margaret Hamilton, an Executive member of the ANCD and Deputy-Chair of NEACA, stated "These plans recognise that children have a right to grow up in a safe, supportive and healthy environment. It is pleasing to see that other vulnerable groups such as pregnant women are also recognised in this plan. Some situations warrant trying what may seem to be extreme or difficult measures however these must also be viewed in the context of responding to an extreme situation."

Scott Wilson, an Executive member of the ANCD and Chair of the National Indigenous Substance Misuse Council said, "Whilst not all individuals in the community contribute to alcohol problems such as violence, injury and family breakdown, it is vital that everybody in the community play a part attempting to resolve the situation. I would hope that professional groups working in Aurukun and in the Cape will therefore support the Indigenous community in their efforts."

In welcoming the Aurukun plan, the ANCD recognises that this plan ought to be complimented by a broader focus on structural issues such as greater opportunities for employment and education and will hopefully

encourage other communities to develop their own specific and appropriate responses, which involves the cooperation of all groups within the community.

*27 November 2002*

---

*The ANCD is the principal advisory body to Government on drug and alcohol issues.*

For further information, please contact:

Major Brian Watters (Chairman)

0400 780 509

Prof Margaret Hamilton (Executive Member)

03 8413 8400 (Turning Point – Victoria)

Scott Wilson (Executive Member)

0410 419 915 (ADAC – South Australia)

Mr Gino Vumbaca (Executive Officer)

0408 244 552 or 02 6279 1650