

The Living With Alcohol Program - Alcohol and Crime Project

The Living With Alcohol program is currently examining ways in which to reduce alcohol-related harm across the criminal justice system. No doubt you are all aware of the enormous impact alcohol has on criminal justice system. You probably know that in the Northern Territory alcohol is a factor in:

- Around three-quarters of homicides
- More than half of all adult Community Service Orders
- Two-thirds of prison receptions
- 62% of arrests and summons
- Two-thirds of family violence incidents

70% of Aboriginal detentions in police cells

The Living With Alcohol program is an interdepartmental program established in 1991 to address these and other unacceptably high costs of alcohol misuse. The program is funded by a levy placed on beverages with an alcohol content greater than 3%. Around \$8 million per year is directed towards alcohol training, treatment, education, prevention, research, family and domestic violence initiatives, and community education and development across the NT.

Since the introduction of the program, we have seen a reduction in per capita consumption of alcohol and alcohol-related road accidents and deaths.

Clearly there is still a long way to go. A concerted effort is required to address all areas of alcohol-related harm, including alcohol-related crime and offending.

The alcohol and crime project will initially examine ways in which to strengthen alcohol interventions for those already 'in' the system.

A review of prison alcohol programs and policies is well underway, with the assistance and input from numerous government and non-government agencies. With a recidivism rate of around 50% added to the high proportion of alcohol-related offences, we clearly have a responsibility to ensure that those with alcohol-related problems receive appropriate and effective services whilst they are incarcerated.

Post-release support is also being considered. The Living With Alcohol program is working with Batchelor College to develop 'after-care' guidelines for communities.

Magistrates, Police, Correctional Services, alcohol agencies and a range of other stakeholders are being surveyed regarding current alcohol initiatives and gaps in alcohol interventions and policies.

The alcohol and crime project will also examine preventative and diver-

sionary initiatives, and the more longer term measures to reduce the impact that alcohol has on the criminal justice system.

An Advisory Group, represented by a range of individuals and organisations from across the Territory is established to oversee the project.

We would like to provide you with regular activity updates and information through *Balance* not only about the alcohol and crime project but about alcohol and drug issues in general. In future issues, we might provide, for example, information about alcohol and drug programs for prisoners, methadone, kava, tobacco legislation, current research findings, alcohol and drug services in general - whatever you may be interested in.

Please fill in the attached form and let us know what would be of interest to you. Alternatively, you can call me on 8999 5490 with your requests.

I look forward to hearing from you and sharing with you in future editions information about alcohol and other drug use in the Territory.

Wendy Hunter
Living With Alcohol Program
Criminal Justice Planning and
Development Section

I would like to see information about the following items in future editions of *Balance*:

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|--|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol and drug programs for prisoners | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco | <input type="checkbox"/> Petrol Sniffing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research findings | <input type="checkbox"/> Kava | <input type="checkbox"/> Methadone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol and drug services | | |

Other information (please specify) _____

Name & contact number: _____

Organisation: _____

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