

Review of Petrol Sniffing prevention programs in the Northern territory

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I. Executive summary

The Central Australian Youth Link Up Service (CAYLUS) was awarded funding in September 2001. The intention was to provide a service addressing petrol sniffing and young people's needs to twelve target communities in the Central Australian region. The program was auspiced by Tangentyere Council, however there was a great deal of difficulty in negotiating a governance and management structure that was acceptable to all stakeholders. These difficulties caused significant delays, and a Coordinator for the program was appointed in November 2002.

Since that time CAYLUS has developed into a program that has undertaken a regional approach to addressing petrol sniffing and youth related issues. It offers a range of community development, advocacy and direct service provision to individuals, communities and small treatment services in the Central Australian region. The emphasis within this work has been on community development through operating a brokerage fund which disperses funds to target communities. Considerable funds have also been raised via submissions to other funding sources.

The CAYLUS program received strong endorsement from the stakeholder interviews conducted for this evaluation. The CAYLUS program has also demonstrated evidence of achievement against their objectives through documentation of the number of programs they had facilitated in target communities, the total funds accessed for target communities, the number of individuals they had assisted through casework, and the diversity of petrol sniffing and youth related issues in which they have become involved as advocates for the region..

Issues

In conducting this evaluation across three sites it has become clear that there are several issues that are of relevance to more than just the individual program. The first of these is the efficacy of a regional approach to addressing petrol sniffing. Two of the three programs had a regional approach. The CAYLUS program developed an approach characterised by an emphasis on community development and advocacy. They distributed over 50% of their resources to projects under community control. They have also developed a diagnosis of the weaknesses of the regional system, and have addressed their advocacy work to ameliorate these. The DSDS program used an alternative approach through which they used their resources in employing youth workers to work in target communities. This approach has not been associated with the same level of achievement of outcomes. However both approaches demonstrate that a regional approach to petrol sniffing can deliver benefits to target communities.

A regional approach must address the issue of competing needs for direct service provision, community development and advocacy. The experiences of the DSDS and CAYLUS programs suggest that most benefit is gained from an emphasis on community

development and advocacy functions. However both programs experienced difficulty in containing the pressure from stakeholders to engage in extensive direct service provision to communities (for example casework or the provision of school holiday programs).

Petrol sniffing in Central Australian communities.

Central Australia is characterised by a large number of small remote communities that surround Alice Springs most of which have experienced episodic petrol sniffing since the mid 1970's. Since approximately 1997 there has been a marked increase in sniffing, and it would appear to have become endemic in many communities. The Central Australian region has experienced 16 deaths due to petrol sniffing from the years 1998 – 2003 . This is the highest mortality rate of any region in Australia (Biven et al, 2004).

Current estimates of the number of young people sniffing petrol in this region are between 200 – 300 individuals. This estimate was formulated by CAYLUS staff. The methodology used to formulate this estimate was to ring each community Council and ask how many people were sniffing petrol in the community at that time. There is no other source of evidence from which to triangulate these assessments, these numbers represent the most accurate count currently available. ,

Relevant infrastructure in Central Australian communities

Most communities in this region are administered by a local Council who have responsibility for housing, essential services and a variety of other programs. The Council Clerks vary widely in capacity to attract and acquit funds with which to expand the basic functions of the Council to address needs such as Sport and Recreation and Youth Services. Furthermore the rate of turnover in these jobs tends to be high, which means services in communities are often in a state of flux.

Within this environment many communities have tried a variety of strategies designed to reduce their number of petrol sniffers. These local programs tend to be short lived. It is very difficult for them to access recurrent funding, and they therefore finish at the end of the funding period. Alternatively they experience problems with recruiting staff who are able to do the job required.

The other community context in which CAYLUS operates is Alice Springs. Alice Springs functions as a gathering point for young people from the Central Australian region. There are sporadic outbreaks of sniffing – though this is generally not petrol sniffing, but other volatile substances such as paint. CAYLUS is the only organisation specifically set up to deal with sniffing related issues. It therefore receives a lot of pressure from other youth service organisations to address the sniffing issues of Alice Springs. Staff report that these calls for help can take a lot of time, making the demands of remote communities and Alice Springs hard to balance.

Prior history of interventions into petrol sniffing in the Central Australian region.

The Central Australian region has a history of regionally based interventions into petrol sniffing. The Healthy Alternative Lifestyle Team developed a methodology through which they offered casework to families in remote areas. Petrol Link Up developed an approach of offering to support communities implement their chosen petrol sniffing strategy.

The model through which CAYLUS has operated could be seen to be a development and combination of both these approaches. They offer casework – albeit not through the same model as HALT, and they offer community development and capacity building in a similar way to that used by Petrol Link Up

This evaluation.

The fieldwork for this evaluation was conducted over a week in late March. The evaluator visited five communities in which CAYLUS has been active- Papunya, Mt Liebig, Areyonga, Hermannsberg and Alice Springs. Over thirty interviews were conducted with stakeholders from schools, clinics, Councils, related youth programs, community members and individuals with expertise (Anne Mosey, Bob Durnan and Nick Gill).

Implementation

Establishment Phase

The establishment phase of this program was long and difficult. It is covered in some detail here so that the challenges of establishing a program with such a broad group of stakeholders can be appreciated.

The proposal to run the CAYLUS program was of interest to many organisations in Alice Springs. A Consortium of stakeholders was developed to be the body to have oversight of the program. DOHAFile Note 14.9.2001 details membership. This Consortium was responsible for the design of a program that would achieve the objectives set out in the Funding Agreement. It was also intended that the Consortium decide on the management of the program. This was a cause of considerable tension between stakeholders. DOHA Filenote 2001.11.28 documents the concerns of some stakeholders that the auspice arrangement with Tangentyere Council should not include line management of the program; whereas Tangentyere Council insisted that because they had responsibility for accountability for the program, they could not reasonably undertake this without also having responsibility for line management (DOHA filenote 2001.11.28)

The initial design set out in the Funding Agreement between DOHA and Tangentyere Council was to create five regions from the five distinct cultural and language groups in the area (DOHA 2002.02.18 (Agreement Final).doc). Each of these regions was to create a Youth Committee with representation from each community. Each region would then employ a part-time Project Officer. These Project Officers would be supported by a Coordinator who would be based in Alice Springs. To achieve this program design the budget was divided to allow approximately half of the funds to go to the host communities (\$20,000 per community in the region), and half for wages and other expenses associated with the Coordinator and operational costs for the organisation.

The Consortium then designed a recruitment process to recruit someone for the position of Coordinator. Stakeholder interviews suggested that this recruitment process proved lengthy, and further strained relationships among the Consortium group. One section within the Consortium wanted to recruit an individual with a high level of skill and pay them accordingly; the other wanted to pay the position a lower wage and recruit two individuals – one with skills for implementing the program, and the other for management (2002.06.02 (filenote).doc). This division reached an impasse and the

program was re-designed. The new design was for one Coordinator position at the lower rate of pay, and an increase in allocation to each community. Each community was now to receive \$36,000. The position was re-advertised along these lines. The delay caused by this process was approximately 9 months and placed great pressure on all concerned.

The current Coordinator applied for and won the re-advertised position and began to implement the program design. The Coordinator started work in November 2002. He began visiting communities to set up the regional committees outlined in the program design. This process was hindered by the fact that he did not have a vehicle (the program re-design had taken the funds intended for a vehicle in the original budget and added them to the allocation to communities). He therefore went to communities in tandem with other agencies who were going. His initial strategy was to “get some runs on the board” in order to gain some credibility for the CAYLUS program. He helped communities to do access funds for whatever strategies they had in mind. During this phase he accessed funds for a motorbike program at Mt Liebig, music programs at Willowra, Papunya, mt Liebig and Titjikala, a youth worker program at Willowra, support for NAIDOC and a youth worker conference.

The negotiations regarding the regional committees also took place on these trips. They found that the target communities did not want to be part of regional committees. The communities made it clear that they wanted direct access to the amount of money that had been allocated to them, as oppose to any pooling of these funds. From this position the brokerage fund was developed whereby communities put a proposal to CAYLUS regarding how they wanted to spend the money. If this was approved by the CAYLUS Board of Management the community received the funds. An accountability system was developed through which the organisation demonstrated that the funds had been correctly spent. This proved problematic, and some communities were only allowed to access their allocated funds through Purchase Order given out by Tangentyere Council – a system that created an administrative burden for Tangentyere Council.

At this point there was a final re-negotiation of the budget. The Coordinator proposed that the communities return to the \$20,000 allocation and put the unallocated money into leasing a vehicle for the use of CAYLUS staff and extending the life of the project to June 2004 (that is from twelve to nineteen months). This proposal was agreed to, and the current budget was then in place. At this point (February, 2003) a Variation to the Funding Agreement was negotiated with DOHA . The new Agreement retained the original statement of Goals and Objectives, but stipulated new strategies and performance measures and a the new budget (DOHA 2003.02.17 letter of offer agreement variation.doc).

The establishment phase of the CAYLUS program took 17 months from the initial awarding of the funds to this final variation. This lengthy process was due to the difficulty of developing a structure that could successfully accommodate the diversity of organisations involved. However this process was ultimately successful in that it established a program that has been able to function in such a way as to deliver the services expected of it.

Service Delivery Phase

As outlined above, some service delivery took place during what has been termed the 'establishment phase'. However most service delivery has taken place since that time - February 2003 – March 2004 (the time of this evaluation).

A regular pattern of office work, case work and community visits now evolved. This has been dictated by requests from communities for assistance over particular issues such as the implementation of Avgas; by the issues involved with disbursing the community funds (termed the 'brokerage funds') across the twelve sites of the program, individual casework arising from contact with Tangentyere's Night Patrol program and contact with various communities, advocacy on regional issues that arose from the contact with communities and agencies involved.

The following range of services have been delivered by CAYLUS staff:

- Education about the consequences of inhalant substance abuse;
- Develop of community plans to address the issues of petrol sniffing;
- Assistance in locating funding to support community actions designed to reduce the number of petrol sniffers;
- Provision of funding and personnel to run holiday programs in remote communities;
- Facilitation of intra-community efforts to reduce petrol sniffing;
- Coordination and training for youth workers and community members;
- Mentoring of existing community youth workers;
- Networking communities with existing service providers;
- Coordination of the CAYPIN network, which links youth services across the region;
- Monitoring of number of petrol sniffers across the region;
- Information for remote communities about the installation and impact of Avgas;
- Mapping services and programs of the region;
- Casework to assist individual petrol sniffers;
- Advice on petrol sniffing related cases to the Courts and other associated organisations;
- Support services to the treatment outstations in the Central Australian area;
- Advocacy of petrol sniffing issues on a regional level;
- Responsible sale of solvents education and awareness campaign in Alice Springs;
- A media strategy to complement other activity.

Outcomes of activities

CAYLUS has been active in the following communities and services: Docker River, Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Amoonguna, Alice Springs, Areyonga, Hermannsberg, Papunya, Mt Liebig, Kintore, Yuendumu, Nyirripi, Willowra, Larapinta Camp, Titjikala and Ipolera, Injartnama, Ilpurla and Reconnect.

CAYLUS Activities have had the following outcomes for host communities:

1. Accessing \$506,000 from other funding bodies for communities to use in youth related activities in the region. (\$134,000 of this is recurrent funds for an after school and vacation care program). Dispersal of \$260,000 of funds spent on community controlled programs through the brokerage fund.. There is a further \$260,000 for a youth worker program for Willowra pending taking the possible total of funds

accessed for host communities to \$1.026million. CAYLUS has also accessed \$291,000 to expand the services it is able to offer the region. They have received funding to employ a caseworker, run a media strategy (the responsible sale of solvents), and to provide holiday programs to the region. This brings the total funding CAYLUS has contributed to the region to \$1.3million.

2. CAYLUS has been instrumental in initiating 22 youth related programs into the Central Australian region. These activities encompass conferences, music programs, salaries for youth workers, purchase of capital equipment, Night Patrols, school holiday programs, training and motorbike programs. This has been done through a combination of the CAYLUS brokerage fund and funds accessed through other sources.
3. Approximately forty (40) individuals have been assisted through counselling, relocation to home communities, support while undergoing rehabilitation, and access to outstation placements.
4. Twelve (12) communities have been assisted to run school holiday programs over 3 holiday periods (that is thirty six (36) holiday programs in total). The CAYLUS Newsletter (undated) reports that one of these programs run in Alice Springs (where Avgas is not an option) resulted in the town camp avoiding severe substance misuse problems among its young people over the holiday period ;
5. Two communities have been able to utilise funds that they had received from various jurisdictions, but had been unable to use. This was either due to lack of competent supervision for workers, or because the funds were inadequate for the purpose. In these cases CAYLUS has provided supervision for youth workers at Papunya, and have negotiated a merging of funds from two different sources at Mt Liebig so that one program can be undertaken;
6. CAYLUS has been active in lobbying the NT Police, the Coroner's Office, the Chief Magistrate's Office, the NT Parliamentary Select Committee on Substance Abuse in the Community, the NT Office for Central Australia, Community Corrections and the NT Department for Sport and Recreation on a variety of youth and petrol sniffing related matters.
6. Four communities in the region have commenced the use of Avgas. Three of these have been as a direct result of meetings initiated and conducted by CAYLUS staff, and one as a result of the cumulative effect of the other three communities using Avgas. Three of these communities visited for this evaluation reported a marked drop in the number of people sniffing petrol on their community. The fourth community is only 80 kilometers away from a source of petrol, and is actually reporting an increase in petrol sniffing as young people move there from other communities that now only sell Avgas.
7. Eight communities have held meetings to discuss strategies to reduce the impact of petrol sniffing in their community. One of these communities has a formal strategy

that has been written up and approved by Council, the others are underway in implementing the informal strategies agreed at these meetings;

8. Central Australia's three outstations which offer treatment to petrol sniffers have been supported by CAYLUS staff. They have received assistance in meeting their accountability requirements to funding bodies, support for the purchase of capital equipment, referrals, payment for acceptance of referrals and peer training through visiting other treatment outstations. This has meant that the treatment system available for sniffers in Central Australia is more robust than would otherwise have been the case.
9. CAYLUS has addressed the issue of supply of solvents in Alice Springs through running a 'Responsible Sale of Solvents' campaign. This has offered education on customer management and the impact of volatile substance misuse to retail outlets supplying solvents in forms that are easily 'sniffable' by young people. As a result of this campaign "Mad Harry's" no longer sells small tins of paint. This has been reported by staff to coincide with a marked decrease in volatile substance misuse in Alice Springs – however there is no quantitative evidence to support this claim.
10. A number of individual communities report changes in the number of young people sniffing on their community. Mt Liebig reports a change from "20 – 30 twelve months ago to 4 – 6 now." (Council Clerk). Hermannsberg reports a change from "40 – 50 at the beginning of the year to about 20 now" (School Principal); Areyonga reports a change from "12 – 13 at the beginning of the year, to 4 – 5 now" (Clinic Sister). Balancing these decreases two key communities report increases. These are Papunya, which had mixed reports for this evaluation - one person estimated a "marginal decrease" (School Principal) while others reported a large increase; and Alice Springs, which unanimously reported a large increase in sniffing since the introduction of Avgas to remote communities. These reports reinforce the accuracy of attempts by CAYLUS staff to track the number of young people sniffing in the region. Their estimates over the period of the program have remained stable at between 200 – 300, although the numbers are differently distributed over the communities at varying times. It is therefore not accurate to attribute any overall decrease in the number of people sniffing in the region to the CAYLUS interventions. However it would appear that it has had an impact on where people sniff. Over time this may translate into a decrease in the overall number of people sniffing as successive interventions reduce the number of places in the region in which it is easy to sniff.

Governance arrangements

CAYLUS has two layers of governance – a Consortium which meets annually and considers policy and the model through which the program runs; and a Board of Management which meets every six weeks and is responsible for overseeing the management of the program. Both bodies have representation from a wide range of stakeholders.

Interviews with stakeholders indicate that this system is ineffective on two levels. Firstly it is ineffective in giving CAYLUS clear direction. Most meetings of both levels of governance have failed to gain a quorum. Staff comment that this is partly because some members are from remote areas and find it hard to attend meetings in Alice Springs. However staff commented that once the brokerage monies were allocated to each community, the level of interest in being involved in the Consortium and the Board waned considerably, leaving both bodies much less effective.

The second level at which this system is ineffective is that it is burdensome for staff members. Blair McFarland (the Coordinator) estimates that approximately one tenth of his time is spent on governance issues – getting signatures for expenditure of the brokerage fund, organising meetings and providing secretariat to them. This is a significant proportion of his time, and represents time lost to service delivery to target communities.

Income, expenditure and acquittals

The program has arrived at a balance of just over half of the grant monies being delivered directly to communities through the brokerage fund, and the remainder of the money being allocated to the operation of the CAYLUS program.

Of the CAYLUS program monies the income and expenditure statement of March 2004 indicates that the program is overspent in the Motor Vehicle Fuel and Oil, and Meetings and Coordinator wage lines; and underspent in Travel Allowance and the Brokerage Fund lines. Overall the program is within budget.

The ratio of administration cost to service delivery costs has remained static. However the onerous nature of administering the brokerage funds has meant that the Tangentyere Council has not be adequately compensated for the administration resources it has used on the program.

Obstacles to implementation

Organisation Environment

Many of the non-government organisations in Alice Springs have a long history of tension between them. The aim to give the CAYLUS program legitimacy among a range of these organisations by establishing it as a cooperative venture resulted in the difficult establishment phase described above, and flowed through to an impractical initial program design.

Program Design

The compromises necessary to reach a final agreement amongst the Consortium members left CAYLUS with no vehicle and only a 12 month period of operation. With only these resources program would have achieved very little. It was enormous good fortune the the Coordinator recruited to the position had a long history and was very well regarded in the host communities, and able to re-negotiate the program design and the budget.

Governance

As described above the system of governance has proved difficult for CAYLUS staff. The lack of a quorum has compromised the validity of the direction it has given the program.

Low Capacity of staff in host organisations

The description of the context in which CAYLUS operates refers to the issue of a lack of capacity among staff at the community level. This can result in unrealistic expectations of the program. These unrealistic expectations can lead to disappointment and a souring of the relationship between CAYLUS and the host community. Interviews conducted for this evaluation indicated that this was the case in two communities – one where disappointment was expressed that CAYLUS has failed to get a house for the youth worker, and another where an inappropriate project was refused access to brokerage funds.

Brokerage

The documentary evidence indicates that the brokerage funds have been a difficult issue for the CAYLUS project. The initial budget agreed with by the Commonwealth had the total brokerage budget at \$120,000. However negotiations with stakeholders increased this amount to \$260,000, and specified the amount each community would receive.

The effect of this pre-allocation was to limit CAYLUS's impact on how the brokerage fund was spent. The purpose to which the funds were put had to be approved by the CAYLUS Board, however at the end of the day the community would still get the funds. CAYLUS staff report that it has been extremely difficult to agree on any accountability structure with the communities receiving the brokerage money, and that they believe that reporting from most communities has been insufficient to demonstrate that the money has been spent on the purpose for which it was intended. A File note (DOHA 22.5.03) indicates that DOHA Project Officers shared this opinion.

The way in which the brokerage fund has operated for this phase of the CAYLUS program is clearly problematic. The CAYLUS and DOHA staff, and the individual experts interviewed for this evaluation all concurred that the brokerage fund should not be structured this way in future.

Solutions adopted to obstacles

The obstacle of the organisational environment in which CAYLUS operates has been nullified by the achievements of the CAYLUS program. Interviews done for this evaluation indicate that CAYLUS now receives support from its Consortium members. Similarly organisations that are represented on the Board are keen for the program to continue because they recognise its achievements.

The problems with program design were responded to through the Variation to the Funding Agreement (February, 2003). It should be noted however, that the program design still has significant problems, and the next phase of the program needs to remedy some of these.

Low capacity in host organisations.

The solution to low capacity at the community level leading to misunderstandings of, and high expectations of the program has not been adequately answered by the program. There is an urgent need for CAYLUS to develop a pamphlet outlining the service they offer, and the limitations to that service.

Governance.

The primary disadvantage of the current arrangement with Tangentyere Council is that the CAYLUS staff are paid through the Tangentyere Award. This has occurred at Tangentyere's insistence that they maintain the integrity of their Award for all workers paid through their organisation.

This has resulted in the CAYLUS staff being paid approximately \$50,000pa.. It is our opinion that this creates a situation whereby CAYLUS will not be able to attract and keep staff with the skills that the success of this program relies upon. This program is dependent of staff being able to offer oral communication, negotiation and written skills of a high order. A person possessed of these skills is likely to be able to command a salary at least the equivalent of a Level 6 in the Department of Health and Ageing. That being so, the inferior wage offered by the CAYLUS program is likely to lead to a situation of difficulty in attracting sufficiently skilled staff, staff turnover and program instability.

This issue was discussed with Tangentyere management. They have requested that this evaluation recommend that Tangentyere examine their Award structure and capacity to see if it would be possible to pay CAYLUS staff a salary in the range of \$60,000 – \$65,000.

Assessment of program in current form: an overview

The most recent variation to the Funding Agreement between DOHA and Tangentyere Council (DOHA 2003.02.17 letter of offer agreement variation.doc) lists the objectives of the programs as follows:

- 1.To reduce the incidence of petrol sniffing in Central Australian communities;
- 2.To improve the social and emotional well being of young people in Central Australian communities;
- 3.To increase the capacity of Central Australian Aboriginal communities to address petrol sniffing problems at a local level;
- 4.To increase the level of positive activities for young people on Aboriginal communities in Central Australia where petrol sniffing is an issue;
- 5.To facilitate collaboration between service providers and to work collaboratively with communities to implement community determined strategies to address petrol sniffing problems;
- 6.To support existing services and programs to develop plans , seek funding and implement programs;
- 7.To facilitate the development of a coordinated regional approach to youth services in Central Australia;
- 8.To assist in the development of an infrastructure that will enable communities to continue to provide youth programs beyond the life of this program.

The outcomes of program activities listed under the section 'Implementation' in this report indicate that the CAYLUS program has implemented activities that have had some success in meeting all of these objectives.

- -Objective 1 : success in contributing to a reduction of numbers of petrol sniffers in some of the host communities ;
- Objective 2 : the implementation of 22 youth related activities and provision of case work to 40 individuals;
- Objective 3 : Holding community meetings in 8 communities to determine strategies for reducing petrol sniffing and accessing funds to achieve these strategies;
- Objective 4 : This Objective is achieved through the activities cited under Objective 2.
- Objective 5 : Work done by CAYLUS to utilise funds already held by communities, and advocacy work done to achieve a better referral outcomes between the Justice system and local treatment centres;
- Objective 6 : Support given to local treatment programs and activity through the CAYPIN network;
- Objective 7 and 8 : Through its contacts with individuals, services and communities in the region CAYLUS has been able to diagnose gaps and weaknesses in the regional infrastructure and systems. Its work in advocating the solutions to some of these issues with regional bodies achieves these Objectives.

This assessment suggests that while CAYLUS faced significant obstacles, they have achieved a notable level of success in achieving the Objectives of the program. It is our opinion that this success is due to the competence of the individual recruited for the Coordinator position. Fortunately this person has long experience and high standing in the region, and a flair for community development and accessing funds. He also understands the model through which CAYLUS operates. Without these attributes in the Coordinator, it is our opinion that this program could easily have foundered at the obstacles inherent in the organisation environment in which it must operate, and its initial program design.

The Next Phase – the development of the CAYLUS program.

The evidence gathered through the analysis of documentary evidence and stakeholder interviews indicate a number of issues which need to be addressed in the consideration of how the program should be conducted during its next phase.

The issues are as follows:

- Role of CAYLUS
- Placement of the program and governance,
- Brokerage Fund

Role of CAYLUS

Current Perceptions of CAYLUS

The majority of interviews done for this evaluation were very supportive of CAYLUS's work. It is clear that CAYLUS is providing a service to its stakeholders which is appreciated. However the stakeholder interviews also gave a perception that some people were confused about exactly what CAYLUS is offering. Stakeholder interviews showed

some people thought that CAYLUS has access to large amounts of money, others wanted CAYLUS staff to come and take their young people out for bush trips – that is the direct provision of youth worker style activities. Still others had the impression that CAYLUS ran a treatment program and had 'clients'. Others again wanted CAYLUS to provide a counselling service to their families who are struggling with how to deal with their sniffing offspring; and yet another different demand was to work with Police to close down a particular individual who is supplying paint to sniffers in Alice Springs.

This range of expectations and demands reflect the diversity of needs associated with petrol sniffing and youth issues in Central Australia. As a service offering a regional approach to petrol sniffing CAYLUS could indeed be legitimately involved in all of these activities.

At present it seems that staff are trying to meet all the needs expressed by their clients – organisations, communities and individuals. It is possibly this versatility that has led to the degree of confusion among recipients of their services about exactly what it is they offer.

Definition of what CAYLUS offers.

This diversity in expectations and need means that CAYLUS needs to be clear about what it is offering. As the organisation consolidates active consideration needs to be given to the organisation's priorities, and their areas of expertise. The objectives and strategies for the program are very broad. They encompass both community development approaches (Objectives 3,5,6,7 and 8) and direct service provision (Objective 4). In putting these objectives and strategies into action CAYLUS has delivered both elements of community development and direct service provision.

This evaluation presents the opportunity to examine the balance between these two approaches. CAYLUS has become involved in two major areas of direct service provision – casework and the delivery of school holiday programs. Both of these are activities which will achieve the goals of the program – Objectives 1 and 2. In this they are unquestionably legitimate activities for CAYLUS. However both of these undertakings are potentially very demanding in terms of staff time. It is possible that activities related to the direct provision of services to communities could grow to consume the majority of staff time. The need after all is enormous, and the activities done through this work would meet CAYLUS objectives.

CAYLUS staff have made the point that providing a level of casework is essential to give the organisation credibility among their stakeholders, and is an effective diagnostic tool for identifying problems within the policing, justice and treatment systems. There is no question that CAYLUS should undertake some casework. Similarly school holiday programs are far more effectively provided on a regional basis, than having every single community chasing the same funding sources to organise a program for their own community.

The question here is to what extent CAYLUS should involve itself in direct service provision; and to what extent should community development and advocacy be their priority. The Objectives and Strategies set out in the variation to the Funding Agreement

emphasise community development approaches (DOHA 2003.02.17 letter of offer agreement variation.doc). And indeed this approach would seem to be more appropriate for such a small staff team who offer skills in advocacy and community development. These skills are more effectively used in addressing Objectives 3,5,6,7 and 8.

A 'seeding' function.

It is possible that CAYLUS could view some of the direct service provision initiatives (for example school holiday programs) as having a seeding function. CAYLUS can demonstrate that it is an effective strategy to decrease sniffing over holiday periods, and then try to find an organisation that is positioned to deliver the service on an ongoing basis. In this way CAYLUS can act as an exploratory or seeding body, but can maintain its prime focus on community development approaches.

Once this prioritising has been done it will be possible to create material informing clients of what CAYLUS offers. There is a pressing need for a pamphlet with information about what services CAYLUS offers, and profiles of their staff to be widely circulated to all youth, justice, law enforcement, educational and family services agencies in Central Australia.

Governance

The current structure was designed for the situation of Tangentyere Council auspicing the program. The governance was intended to ensure that all stakeholders had a say in the conduct of the program. Much of the tension that led to the need for such stringent oversight structures has eased now that the program is seen to be delivering a quality outcome. One Board member was reported as saying that it was now really important to make sure the program kept going - never mind whether or not everybody got their share.

This easing of tension allows for a consideration of a governance structure which gives the program informed and influential guidance and is efficient in terms of the energy it takes to maintain. However before an appropriate governance structure can be considered the issue of the ongoing organisational location of the CAYLUS program needs to be addressed.

The placing of the CAYLUS program.

The program is currently auspiced by Tangentyere Council. There is a discussion above of the problem this creates in paying CAYLUS staff a competitive wage. If this problem can be addressed, then it would seem most advantageous for CAYLUS to remain with Tangentyere, as they have provided them with a stable home.

However if this issue cannot be addressed, we believe that in order to create a viable structure in which CAYLUS can achieve its aims there is a need for CAYLUS to become a separately incorporated.

Governance Structure if CAYLUS become separately incorporated.

The legislation under which CAYLUS incorporates will dictate some of the elements of the structure of the organisation. The issue to address here is the composition of the Board of a separately incorporated organisation.

This matter was discussed during several of the stakeholder interviews. Three clear and complementary views emerged on the issue. One was that remote communities are the primary stakeholders in CAYLUS, and they should be on the Board. The other was that the CAYLUS model is a development of earlier work done in Central Australia, and there are a body of people who understand the aims, challenges and opportunities inherent in this model. These people should therefore be on the Board. Other interviewees suggested that it would be good to get representation from the Police and other stakeholders on the Board in order to increase the power of any advocacy that CAYLUS undertakes.

All these positions have merit, and can co-exist. There should be representation of all these sectors. Given that remote communities are to have a place on the Board, provisions need to be made to ensure that their participation is successful. This means that some meetings need to be held in remote locations, and arrangements need to be made for Board members to travel to meetings. These expenses need to be included in any budget for the program.

Governance structure if CAYLUS remains with Tangentyere Council.

The standard governance arrangements for Tangentyere projects are that each project has a reference group of people with relevant expertise, but the responsibility for decision making about the program lies with the Tangentyere Board of Management.

Should CAYLUS remain with Tangentyere, their Reference Group could have a similar composition to the arrangements described above for a separate Board.

Governance Structure if Tangentyere Council remains the auspice body.

If Consortium and Board members agree to re-structure the current governance structure, but want the program to remain an auspice of Tangentyere with its own governance structure, then alternative governance structures can be addressed.

The proposed composition of the Board of an independent body put forward above - with representation from remote communities, knowledgeable individuals and associated entities such as the Police – could be used for the auspice body.

Brokerage

It has been acknowledged that the brokerage fund has been a difficult issue for the CAYLUS program. It has given the advantage of an immediate profile for the program, and funded some worthwhile projects. However it has also been burdensome, and created a strain on relationships with some host communities. The issue to be resolved is twofold – should the brokerage fund be continued in any form, and if so, how.

Efficiency of CAYLUS administering the brokerage fund.

The administration of the brokerage fund has been a major focus of the program to date. As such it has placed a high demands on program staff time. The issue that needs addressing is whether this is the best use of staff time.

In total CAYLUS has channelled \$1.057 million dollars into youth related activity in Central Australia (with a further \$260,000 pending). Of this total \$260,000 has been

through the CAYLUS brokerage and \$506,000 has been through a diversity of other funding agencies. With these totals in mind it is interesting to note that staff estimate that the dispersal of the brokerage funds (\$260,000) has taken three times as long as the funds gathered through submissions to other funding bodies (\$506,000). This time differential is caused by the need for CAYLUS staff to negotiate, approve and acquit the brokerage funds; whereas the approval and acquittal responsibilities for funds accessed via submissions rest with the funding body. Staff comment that most of the work that led to \$506,000 being accessed through submissions was done before the system of brokerage funding was agreed upon. After the brokerage fund commenced there was much less time to write submissions.

This breakdown suggests that in terms of funds dispersed, it is more efficient for CAYLUS to access funds through other agencies than to place great weight on its own role as funder.

Duplication

Furthermore the CAYLUS brokerage fund is duplicating two other brokerage funds offered in the region. These are the Remote Area Aboriginal Alcohol Strategy which is administered by the NT Department of Health, and the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Fund which has an funding round for projects requesting less than \$20,000. If approved both these sources of funds can be given to the community within six weeks of their request.

It is the recommendation of this report that CAYLUS maintain a brokerage fund of \$100,000. This fund should not be pre-allocated amongst communities. An accountability structure that is realistic for the quantity of money and the capacity of the recipient to report needs to be designed and used.

This system will minimise the opportunity cost inherent in a large brokerage fund. It will also make available additional funding to enable CAYLUS to recruit in order to expand their own skills base and thus the services they can offer communities.

Recommendations for the next phase of the CAYLUS program.

Recommendation for the continuance of the CAYLUS program.

The summary of impacts and outcomes recorded in this report give strong evidence that the CAYLUS program is operating effectively, and providing a service that is needed in the Central Australian region. It is therefore a recommendation of this evaluation that the program be continued.

This raises issues of what form the program should take as it enters its next phase. The evidence gathered through the analysis of documentary evidence and stakeholder interviews indicate a number of issues which need to be addressed in the consideration of how the program should be conducted during its next phase.

- The CAYLUS maintain a balance whereby the bulk of their work focuses on a community development approach to achieving their goals;

- That CAYLUS staff publish and widely distribute a brochure describing what services they offer and introducing their staff;
- That CAYLUS explore the possibility of passing the school holiday program initiative to another organisation;
- That the governance of CAYLUS be re-negotiated for the next phase of the project;
- That a Board or reference group be comprised of representation from remote communities, knowledgeable individuals and associated entities such as the Police;
- That Tangentyere Council examine their Award structure and capacity to see if it is possible to pay CAYLUS staff a salary in the range of \$60,000 – \$65,000. This needs to be done during any period of bridging funding, and should not take longer than three months.
- Should Tangentyere be unable to accommodate this pay level, then CAYLUS should become a separately incorporated body governed by its own Board of Management. However CAYLUS should continue to co-locate at Tangentyere Council.
- That CAYLUS maintain a brokerage fund of \$100,000. This fund should not be pre-allocated amongst communities, but should be allocation according to need. An accountability structure that is realistic for the quantity of money and the capacity of the recipient to report needs to be designed and implemented. This shrinking of the brokerage fund needs to be balanced by an increase in resources allocated to accessing other funds for use in communities.

Issues and challenges

Toward a regional approach

These programs have added to the growing perception that substance misuse is best tackled through a regional approach. The data collected by CAYLUS program suggests that sniffers move around depending on where petrol is easily available. This means that efforts by individual communities may change that single environment, however it only has a marginal impact on levels of sniffing across the region. The result of single focus projects can be that harms associated with petrol sniffing have been re-distributed, rather than reduced.

Two of the three programs worked through a regional approach to achieving the goals and objectives of the program. The two regional programs employed differing models in implementing this approach. The DSDS employed youth workers to work in individual

communities, while the CAYLUS program facilitated communities to design and implement their own strategies.

Although we don't have sufficient empirical data to argue the point strongly, we believe on the evidence available that the CAYLUS model has led to more significant gains across their target communities. This is backed up community support demonstrated in stakeholder interviews; the number of projects that have been initiated in target communities; the number of relevant issues on which CAYLUS is involved in advocating for the sector on a regional basis, the reduction in levels of sniffing in individual communities, the level of resources accessed for youth related projects in the region and that more than 50% of CAYLUS resources were placed in community control – thus facilitating community development.

The CAYLUS approach develops a model that has had marked success in the Central Australian region, and could be transferred to other locations. The hallmarks of this model are as follows:

- Staff who are effective in casework, community development strategies, accessing funding and advocacy as well as being knowledgeable about remote Aboriginal communities;
- A limited amount of casework is used to establish credibility among stakeholders;
- Community work and casework function as diagnostic tools to establish the barriers and opportunities of the regional infrastructure and system;
- Staff take up an advocacy role to address identified regional barriers with relevant bodies;
- Community development is achieved through work on developing and implementing each communities' preferred strategy to reduce sniffing in their community;
- Staff take an entrepreneurial approach to accessing funds on behalf of other organisations, and so increasing the resource base for youth related activity in the region;
- Stakeholder relations are articulated through Memorandums of Understanding between complementary groups.

To achieve good outcomes with this model the following conditions appear to be needed:

- Very high quality staff able to function in all the roles referred to above, preferably with a pre-existing knowledge of the region;
- The organisation situated in a non-government context so that it is placed to negotiate between different government entities;
- A small project team who can be highly mobile in function and geographic location.

These hallmarks are not difficult to reproduce in other regions. Two issues arise from the experience of CAYLUS to date.

Firstly the interviews conducted for this evaluation indicated that many stakeholders felt that the success of CAYLUS depended on the prior experience and profile of its staff. They felt that the CAYLUS positions were quite specialised, and the present incumbents could not easily be replaced. This suggests that if this model was to be replicated in another location, close attention would have to be paid to the qualities of the staff recruited.

The second issue is the early history of attempts to set up CAYLUS within the context of various Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs. The File Notes provided to this evaluation by DOHA and the stakeholder interviews both confirm that this was a difficult process due to old tensions between the various organisations in Alice Springs. In transferring this model to other locations it is likely that a similar situation would exist. This would necessitate a careful strategy that could achieve the aim of different stakeholders cooperating to achieve an organisational structure that allows for effective and efficient governance, and constructive linkages with the wide variety of stakeholders involved.

Program dilemmas: community development vs service provision vs advocacy

In establishing a regional approach to the reduction of petrol sniffing and related harms several dilemmas arise. Any region will have a myriad of demands that could be filled by a substance use program. These are likely to include the following:

- Individual casework;
- Provision of school holiday programs;
- Transport services to relocate individuals away from sources of substance use and home to their own community;
- Provision of youth worker services in communities;
- Support of treatment facilities;
- Liaison with Police;
- Support of individual communities to design and implement petrol sniffing reduction plans;
- Advocacy for individuals and regional issues;

These needs can be broadly divided into the roles of community development, direct service provision and advocacy. It is unlikely that any single program will be able to completely fill all of these needs for any region. There is therefore a need to prioritise which functions a regional approach will prioritise.

The CAYLUS program has found that it is necessary for its credibility and effective diagnosis of regional systems that it undertake a level of casework. It is therefore reasonable to prioritise a casework function. The CAYLUS experience has shown that

this needs to be carefully limited so that it does not consume the entire program's resources.

Beyond this priority there is a dilemma between direct service provision, and a community development approach. The DSIDS program opted for direct service provision in employing a network of youth workers to deliver youth work services in target communities. This consumed up to 86% of the program's resources, leaving very little for a community development approach. CAYLUS too has become involved in direct service provision to its target communities. However the CAYLUS program has expended the bulk of its resources (over 50% of budget) on activities such as developing community plans and supporting community driven strategies that are likely to result in community development. (The bulk of its direct service provision activity has been funded by grants from other sources.)

Community development and advocacy activities function to advance the regional system as a whole; whereas service provision, while meeting a specific need (such as that for school holiday programs) does not further develop the region. It is therefore the opinion of this evaluation that regional programs need to prioritise their community development and advocacy functions.