

# New ways, old ways

Jane Ulrik, Denise Foster, Lorraine Pepperill, Vanessa Davis, Doreen Abbott,  
Tangentyere Council

FACILITATOR: Okay. And now I'm very happy to introduce Jane Ulrik, Denise Foster, Lorraine Pepperill, Vanessa Davis and Doreen Abbott, who will be speaking about New Ways and Old Ways.

DOREEN ABBOTT: Hello, ladies and gentlemen, I'm Doreen Abbott, and Vanessa is going to support me up here, and we're going to talk about the New Ways and Old Ways at Tangentyere Council. This is our logo at Tangentyere Council. The mosaic was made by some of the Aboriginal ladies from the town camps. We have a one-stop shop in Alice Springs where all the Aboriginal people just come and they've got everything there. We've got a financial counsellor, Centrelink Branch, Westpac Branch and we've got a job shop and food voucher program. And we have our CDEP services, which is good for the camps and good for their enterprises.

We've got a nursery, Landcare and land and learning services, everything. We've got a builder training program with some of our workers up there, send around the communities. And these are the other places here. And this is the area where we work at the Social Services Division. And we have all these – we have youth services, we have a day and night patrol and the wardens programs. And we work with the police. We have health programs too in the camps. We have old people's services, family well-being services. Even though there are high levels of death and sickness in our community, this is a community that is full of life, with the old ways and with new ways, and young people are vibrant and strong and looking for a better future. I'm just going to ask Vanessa if she can give me a hand.

VANESSA DAVIS: The Social Research Department at Tangentyere Council, its purpose to provide and develop Indigenous expertise in areas of research and social development. And we like to protect Indigenous people's rights in relation to the research, to promote research that is meaningful and results in practical change and development within the community, to give Indigenous people ownership and research and use evidence-based research to inform government policy makers and academic institutions. We have been able to achieve this by entering into a partnership with academic institutions like the Centre for Remote Health, Curtin University, and Edith Cowan University.

The Executive Research Subcommittee approves and oversees all research projects. For these institutions, the quality of information from Tangentyere researchers in the field is delivering a depth and quality that we couldn't do before.

Aboriginal people have been doing research for a long time. That is how we survive. Non Aboriginal people have been doing research on Aboriginal people for a long time. They have taken the information away. The biggest thing for our research is trust. We need to hold on to information about us. It belongs to our people. We need to be able to use that information.

The research we have done to date includes – Alcohol restriction survey. Grief and loss research, injury prevention research, evaluation of family well-being. One of the current projects we're on now is night patrol data analysis and the mobility study.

## LIQUOR RESTRICTION SURVEY

I would like to tell you a little bit about Tangentyere research, I want to tell you about a survey that Tangentyere Council conducted in the town camps of Alice Springs, with funding help from the Centre for Remote Health and the Central Australian Division of Primary Health Care. Associate Professor Dennis Gray from the National Drug Research Institute of Curtin University helped us to write up the proposal and design the research he has. He also helped in the analysis and – this is of the data.

## WHAT IS RESEARCH?

Research for us is, what is the right question to the right person, by the right person, when it is okay to ask, keeping information safe, using information properly, learning new skills, providing information, and whether comfortable. It is a process, for us, it was finding answers to questions we had about attitudes of town camp residents to the 12 month trial of liquor restrictions.

## WHY WE DO RESEARCH

For us, we are looking for answers. We know our social issues, we know our people, we know our culture, our language, have respect, and we are not just the interpreters, we have strong rules, consent is understood. It is also to help our people – how many of the research projects when completed have been used by Aboriginal people to turn situations around? A lot of money goes into these projects and the results are not being used.

Aboriginal people have other priorities like fixing immediate problems first. This is an example of our work by town campers for town campers. We are the ones who should do the research because we know about the issue and because we live with the issue. We are the experts and that is why we should do the research. We know about the problems. Curtin University have the knowledge and skills and resource to help us do good research that will stand up to those who think Aboriginal people can't do research. It's a two-way thing. We all have skills.

These are the restrictions that were put in place for the one-year trial in 2002 – from April 2002 to May 2003.

### Number of people picked from each town camp

Town camp	Houses	Surveyed
Ilperleyathe	7	8
Aper Alwerrkngge	6	9
Basso's Farm	2	1
Mount Nancy	11	18
Anthelke Ewlpaye	18	16
Nyewente	16	28
Akngwetnarra	9	12
Ewenper Atwatye	22	32
Yarrentyere Arltere	21	30
Anthepe	8	8
Inarlenge	13	25
Ilperenye	8	12
Ilparlpa	11	17
Mpwetyerre	5	6
Ilpeye Ilpeye	9	12
Karnte	12	17
Lhenpe Artnwe	11	14
Anhelke	5	14
Irrkerlantye	12	-

## HOW THE PROJECT WAS DEVELOPED

There have always been a lot of concerns from the community people and how the alcohol is affecting our people. This is why we are doing the research. It started off with a 12 month liquor trial from Liquor Licensing Commission. They wanted to do a phone survey as part of their evaluation, but town camps don't have phones. So there was a lot of talk amongst our people, and Tangentyere Council approached Associate Professor Dennis Grey from the Curtin University and the Centre for Remote Health. Then Tangentyere organised a team of people who are from the town camps who are executive members as well, from their own town camps, and also Tangentyere Council workers to become researchers.

The team of people was chosen and then they had to do a three-day workshop to be confident of doing it. Tangentyere have been worried about grog for a long time. People blame town campers for the high level of drinking. Not all town campers drink excessively. No one is going to ask town campers what they thought, so the research should be done in the town camps where people are comfortable to talk, and with people they trust, in the language of their choice. The workshop was good. We learnt about the restrictions and about the methods we could use. We planned it all together with the help of the research experts and the Aboriginal people who would be doing the survey work, analysing the data and taking the information back to our people.

## HOW WE DID IT

The method of the way we did it is, we did it on the best days when people are around, we let everyone know what was happening before and during, and we did a lot of other things when asked. We knew the house bosses, the executives, and they knew us as well. Notice that there were no surveys done at Irrkerlantye, right on the bottom. There was a good reason for that, because there was a sorry camp. Most whitefella researchers would stick to their ideas about the sample selection. We knew that those families, Eastern Arrernte people, were able to be imputed through their family relations on the other camps, and they worried that we might have the numbers mixed up.

They are geographical samples. We used social samples. Most town campers want to keep new grog rules and make them stronger. Most of the people who said to drop the new rules worried about what damage Tawny Port is doing to their families. That's the result of the town camp residents' idea on what should be done with the grog rules now that the trial has finished. This picture shows that both men and women have same ideas to keep and make the new grog rules stronger. People thought that only women would say to keep it or make the restrictions stronger. Not true. Aboriginal people are asked for the first time ever what they thought. People have lived with grog, they know how they want to deal with it, they have good ideas about what to do.

They have sensible and well thought out answers. The problem is that the Liquor Commission will not listen. The benefits of the research should go to those who provide the information, not those gathering the information. The information that we gathered, we took to the executive, our bosses and our leaders, when we finished the survey, and told them about it. We talked with them, showed them the graph and told them what people have said. Then they took a draft report to executive who had a big meeting and they made recommendation to include in the final report. We have had a lot of support from other Aboriginal community organisations. They helped us, we were on the right track.

We have borrowed from Ngunamba and Fred Hollows. Without service there would be no survey. These recommendations went to the Licensing Commission, the Tangentyere Council's

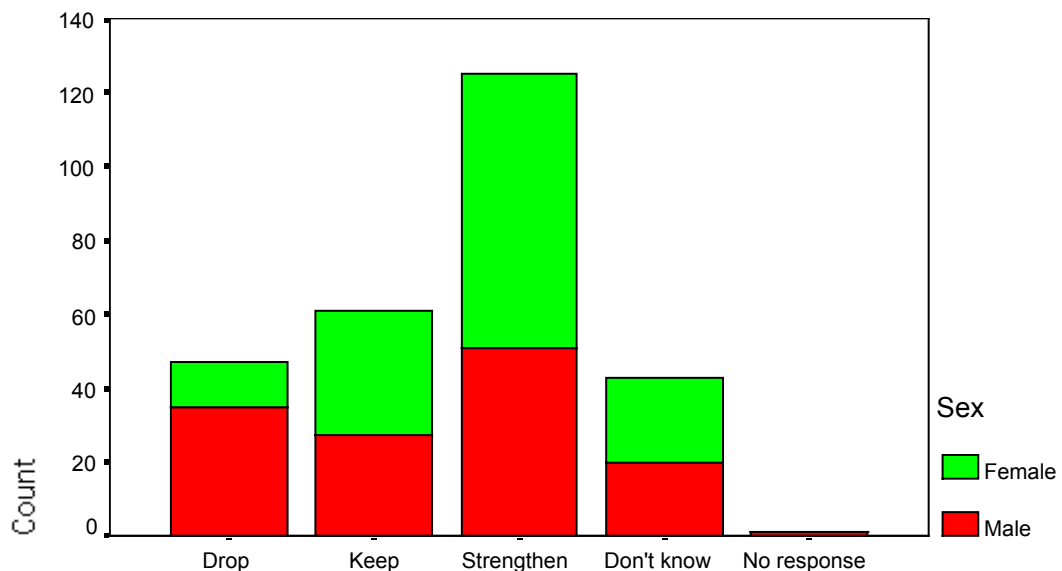
new grog rule idea. They did nothing and did not include it in alcohol framework. We are still looking at ways to support our communities. We will not stop. The important results. The important part of the survey was the town camp residents seeing Aboriginal people conducting the survey in their own environment. We made a book to take back to each town camp telling them what the results are, and feeding back the information that they gave us.

What it meant to us is that in the 10 days of conducting the survey we were worked as a team and fun researching. After receiving our certificate it was a proud moment to show and tell our younger generation that you don't have to that old to receive any kind of certificate. Employment is important. We have confidence in ourselves. Attitudes are changing. What it means to us is that the majority of us living in a town camp and dealing with the day to day issues on the camps, it was an honour and great experience to be chosen from Tangentyere Council to conduct our own research, and make research team and be the voice for our people.

We have our experts. We have our leaders and our teachers and our apprentices. We work with the strength of our community and combine both ways of knowledge to create a strong future for the children. This presentation has been about the way we conduct research. It is about our social understanding. It is not something others can learn. We, on the other hand, can learn research skills.

Thank you.

**This picture shows that both men and women have same ideas to keep, drop and make the new grog rules stronger**



**Table 1: Suggestions regarding other actions that could be taken to reduce alcohol problems in Alice Springs**

Suggested actions	Number of people	Percentage of sample
<b>Further restrictions</b>		
• Banning particular beverages but also spirits ('hot -stuff') — especially port,	30	
• Further reduction in trading hours — especially for takeaways	19	
• No trading on at least one day per week	14	
• Reductions in licenses or placing more restrictive conditions on them	12	
• Amount purchased by individuals	5	
• Other — no walk-through takeaways, maintain restrictions, prohibition, etc.	15	
	<b>74</b>	<b>26.7</b>
<b>Discourage public drinking</b> — establish drinking areas, ban grog in town camps, encourage drinking on licenses premises	43	15.5
<b>Control visitors to town camps</b>	40	14.4
<b>Health promotion</b>	35	12.6
<b>Provide alternative activities</b>	30	10.8
<b>Community development</b>	18	6.5
<b>Drop restrictions</b>	14	4.7
<b>Increased patrol activities</b>	13	4.7
<b>Treatment and support</b>	13	4.7
<b>Enforce existing laws</b>	10	3.6
<b>Other</b>	20	7.2

\* 74 people made 95 suggestions regarding additional restrictions

## PRESENTERS

**Doreen Abbott** is a Referral Officer at Tangentyere Council. She uses her languages in her daily work in assisting many people to return home to country and with social issues. She comes from Wallace Rockhole and lives in Alice Springs at Akngwertnarre (Morris Soak) camp.

**Vanessa Davis** is of Arrernte decent and lives at the Nyewente camp. She speaks Arrernte, Luritja and Walpiri languages. She has participated in several research projects and made a great presentation of the results of the survey of the attitudes to the liquor licensing restrictions to a CARPA conference (2002).