



**Shire of Derby /
West Kimberley**

AGENDA

Special Council Meeting Thursday, 22 February 2024

I hereby give notice that a Special Meeting of Council will be held on:

Date: Thursday, 22 February 2024

Time: 4:30 PM

**Location: Council Chambers
Clarendon Street
Derby**

Amanda Dexter

Chief Executive Officer



Our Guiding Values

We are **PROUD** of who we are and where we live.

We will create a **POSITIVE LEGACY** for our children and children's children.

We will go about our business with **INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY and AUTHENTICITY**.

We value and **RESPECT** what our community has to say and will strive to make things happen.

We are **PROUD** of and value the **KNOWLEDGE** of our diverse and strong people and cultures.

We value our **RELATIONSHIPS** and will work with others to achieve common goals and gain maximum impact.

We are **PROUD** of and **COMMITTED** to the responsible preservation of our unique natural environment and making sure our built environment reflects our current and future needs.

We are open for and encourage business, industry and all aspects of **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**, particularly our thriving arts and cultural scene.

Disclaimer

No responsibility whatsoever is implied or accepted by the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley (Shire) for any act, omission or statement or intimation occurring during Council or Committee meetings.

The Shire disclaims any liability for any loss whatsoever and howsoever caused arising out of reliance by any person or legal entity on any such act, omission or statement or intimation occurring during Council or Committee meetings. Any person or legal entity who acts or fails to act in reliance upon any statement, act or omission made in a Council or Committee meeting does so at that person's or legal entity's own risk.

In particular and without derogating in any way from the broad disclaimer above, in any discussion regarding any planning application or application for a licence, any statement or intimation of approval made by any Council Member or officer of the Shire during the course of any meeting is not intended to be and is not taken as notice of approval from the Shire.

The Shire warns that anyone who has any application lodged with the Shire must obtain and should only rely on written confirmation of the outcome of the application and any conditions attaching to the decision made by the Shire in respect of the application.

Notes for Members of the Public

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley extends a warm welcome to you in attending any Shire meeting. The Shire is committed to involving the public in its decision making processes whenever possible. The ability to ask questions during 'Public Question Time' is of critical importance in pursuing this public participation objective. The Shire sets aside a period of 'Public Question Time' to enable a member of the public to put questions. Questions should only relate to the business of the Shire and should not be a statement or personal opinion. Upon receipt of a question from a member of the public, the Presiding Member may either answer the question or direct it to an officer to answer, or it will be taken on notice.

Any comments made by a member of the public become a matter of public record as they are minuted by Council. Members of the public are advised that they are deemed to be held personally responsible and legally liable for any comments made by them that might be construed as defamatory or otherwise considered offensive by any other party.

MEETING FORMALITIES

Local government Council meetings are governed by legislation and regulations. During the meeting, no member of the public may interrupt the meetings proceedings or enter into conversation. Members of the public shall ensure that their mobile telephone or audible pager is not switched on or used during any Shire meeting.

Members of the public are hereby advised that the use of any electronic, visual or audio recording device or instrument to record proceedings of the meeting is not permitted without the permission of the Presiding Member.

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Notes for Council Members

NATURE OF COUNCIL'S ROLE IN DECISION MAKING

Advocacy:	When Council advocates on its own behalf or on behalf of its community to another level of government/body/agency.
Executive/Strategic:	The substantial direction setting and oversight role of the Council such as adopting plans and reports, accepting tenders, directing operations, grants, and setting and amending budgets.
Legislative:	Includes adopting local laws, town planning schemes and policies.
Administrative:	When Council administers legislation and applies the legislative regime to factual situations and circumstances that affect the rights of people. Examples include town planning applications, building licences and other decisions that may be appealable to the State Administrative Tribunal.
Review:	When Council reviews a decision made by Officers.
Information:	Includes items provided to Council for information purposed only that do not require a decision of Council (that is for 'noting').

ALTERNATIVE MOTIONS

Council Members wishing to make alternative motions to officer recommendations are requested to provide notice of such motions in written form to the Chief Executive Officer prior to the Council meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Council Members should fill in Disclosure of Interest forms for items in which they have a financial, proximity or impartiality interest and forward these to the Presiding Member before the meeting commences. Section 5.60A of the *Local Government Act 1995* states;

"a person has a financial interest in a matter if it is reasonable to expect that the matter will, if dealt with by the local government, or an employee or committee of the local government or member of the council of the local government, in a particular way, result in a financial gain, loss, benefit or detriment for the person."

Section 5.60B states;

"a person has a proximity interest in a matter if the matter concerns –

(a) a proposed change to a planning scheme affecting land that adjoins the person's land;
or

(b) a proposed change to the zoning or use of land that adjoins the person's land; or

(c) a proposed development (as defined in section 5.63(5)) of land that adjoins the person's land."

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In accordance with Section 2.25 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, an application for leave requires a Council resolution granting leave requested. Council may grant approval for Leave of Absence for a Council Member for ordinary Council meetings for up to but not more than six consecutive meetings. The approval of the Minister is required for leave of absence greater than six ordinary Council meetings.

This approval must be by Council resolution and differs from the situation where a Council Member records their apologies for the meeting. A failure to observe the requirements of the Act that relates to absence from meetings can lead to a Council Member being disqualified should they be absent without leave for three consecutive meetings.

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1 DECLARATION OF OPENING, ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS**2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout the Shire and their connection to land, sea and community.

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley would also like to pay respect to the past, present and future traditional custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

3 ATTENDANCE VIA TELEPHONE/INSTANTANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

A Council Member may attend council or committee meetings by electronic means if the member is authorised to do so by the President or the Council. Electronic means attendance can only be authorised for up to half of the Shire's in-person meetings they have attended in total, in any rolling 12 months prior period. Authorisation can only be provided if the location and the equipment to be used by the Councillor are suitable to enable effective, and where necessary confidential, engagement in the meeting's deliberations and communications.

4 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**4.1 Declaration of Financial Interests****4.2 Declaration of Proximity Interests****4.3 Declaration of Impartiality Interests****5 PUBLIC TIME**

Due to the nature of this meeting, being a Special Council Meeting, questions relating to matter relating to this agenda may be addressed.

5.1 Public Question Time**5.2 Public Statements****6 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY PRESIDING PERSON WITHOUT DISCUSSION**

7 COMMUNITY AND RECREATION SERVICES

7.1 SHIRE OF DERBY/WEST KIMBERLEY POSITION STATEMENT ON ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG HARM MINIMISATION

File Number: CR/095/2

Author: Jess Karlsson, Executive Director of Operations and Strategic Development

Responsible Officer: Amanda Dexter, Chief Executive Officer

Authority/Discretion: Advocacy

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to present a draft Shire of Derby/West Kimberley Position Statement on Alcohol and Other Drug Harm Minimisation, in a clear, concise, and considered format, for Council consideration and feedback.

This position statement would be used as a guide for any media statements, and responses to forums, regarding the Shire's position on Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Harm Minimisation, and related topics.

DISCLOSURE OF ANY INTEREST

Nil by Author; Nil by Responsible Officer.

BACKGROUND

As per Council Briefing held Thursday, 15th February 2024, the Elected Members requested the development of a Position Statement on Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Harm Minimisation. The Position Statement (**see Attachment 1**) has been summarised and updated based on feedback from Elected Members, and Executive Team, for Council endorsement.

Due to a series of events, including media and political attention relating to AOD issues in Derby/West Kimberley, the Shire has been requested to develop a position in relation to AOD harm minimisation; including Shire commitments and roles.

For further background, please [refer to the previously distributed](#) briefing paper 'Alcohol Related Harm Minimisation' 15 February 2024.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

The sale, supply and consumption of liquor in Western Australia is regulated under the *Liquor Control Act 1988 (the Act)*. The Act seeks to minimise harm caused to community members due to the use of liquor.

The legislation is administered by the Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries (the Department). WA Police manages the compliance and the enforcement of the Act.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Shire currently does not have a stated policy in relation to liquor. This paper will be used to inform public statements made by the President and Chief Executive Officer on behalf of the

Council as allowed for under Policy C8 – Public Statements by Councillors and Chief Executive Officer.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of initiatives aimed at reducing alcohol related harm have minimal financial impact for the Shire. Any expenses occurring are met within the operational budget.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

GOAL	OUR PRIORITIES	WE WILL
1. Leadership and Governance	1.2 Capable, inclusive and effective organisation	1.2.1 Provide strong civic leadership
2. Community	2.2 Healthy Communities	2.2.4 Conduct and/or promote healthy lifestyle initiatives and living standards

RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

RISK	LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCE	RISK ANALYSIS	MITIGATION
Business Interruption: Changes to regulatory and government policy which directly impact the community and local businesses.	Almost Certain	Moderate	High	Advocate on behalf of the community with relevant government departments. Keep community informed of the Shire's stated position and work being undertaken to advocate for the community.
Community: Risk of community/ stakeholders not supporting councils stated position	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Consultation with relevant stakeholders to ensure position is reflective of the community has occurred over the past three weeks. Keep community informed of the position and work being undertaken to advocate for the community. Aligning our statement with the KRG Position Statement, March 2023.

CONSULTATION

This position statement has been drafted following consultation over the past month with the following;

- Members of the Derby Liquor Accord;
- Kimberley Regional Group,
- Kimberley District Leadership Group,
- Derby Interagency Group,
- SDWK Elected Members,
- Ad hoc community feedback,
- Minister for Police and the Minister of Liquor Licensing (noting these portfolios have changed responsibilities several times in recent years),
- Evaluation documentation collated by UWA on the BDR trial,
- Documentation provided by the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor
- Shire of Derby/West Kimberley Executive
- Other relevant documentation identified during desktop research.

Briefing held with Elected Members 15th February 2024.

COMMENT







Although, the term 'consistent restrictions' was raised several times by Council. The Executive team have used the word considered in below position statements, to avoid the risk of this being seen as advocacy for stricter restrictions in line with other dry communities i.e. Fitzroy Crossing / Halls Creek.

Since this paper was shared with Elected Members on Friday, 16th February, for feedback. This feedback has been incorporated into the Statement and highlighted in dark orange font.

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple majority

ATTACHMENTS

1. **Position Statement - Alcohol and Other Drug Harm Minimisation in Derby/West Kimberley**  
2. **KRG Position Paper - Management of Alcohol and Other Drugs - March 2023**  
3. **Media Statement - Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS) - 15 February 2024**  

RECOMMENDATION

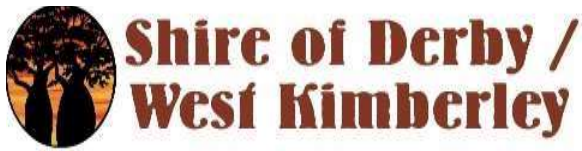
That Council:

1. Endorses the Position Statement on Alcohol and Other Drug Harm Minimisation in Derby/West Kimberley, as per Attachment 1;
2. Notes the Kimberley Regional Group Position Group Statement – March 2023 (Attachment 2); and
3. Notes the Media Statement from Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS) – 15 February 2024 (Attachment 3).

UPDATED OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Adopts** the Position Statement on Alcohol and Other Drug Harm Minimisation in Derby/West Kimberley, as per Attachment 1, **and directs the CEO to distribute as appropriate;**
2. **Notes the Kimberley Regional Group Position Group Statement (Attachment 2).**
3. **Notes the Media Statement from Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS) 15th February, 2024 (Attachment 3).**



29 February 2024

POSITION STATEMENT: MINIMISING HARM FROM ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS: POSITION STATEMENT

Shire of Derby/West Kimberley

About the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley:

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley as a local government, plays multiple roles within our region. Our roles include advocacy, influence, partnering, and facilitating positive community outcomes. Our vision is for Derby/West Kimberley to be 'a place where people want to live, invest, visit, and return to'.

This paper is designed to highlight the issues as known to Local Government at the time of writing and the potential pathways that are supported.

Context:

The abuse of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) is prevalent across the Kimberley, with an estimated consumption far higher than national average. This is well recognised as a major health problem, and one that has broader social and economic costs. Addressing the harms associated with AOD, requiring collaboration across all levels of government and a whole of community approach.

Alarming rates of AOD problems continue across the Kimberley, and within the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley, therefore a new, improved approach is required to create sustainable, effective, and localised supports.

Addressing both root causes and symptoms is critical and will require long-term investment into localised 'wrap around services', resourcing, and infrastructure.

Local governments, including the Shire must balance the part that alcohol plays in Australian society with the risks to health, safety, and wellbeing its misuse can pose for the community. Alcohol often accompanies socialising and celebrations, generates employment and revenue, activates streetscapes, and enhances local identity as an entertainment and tourism destination; however, alcohol misuse contributes significantly to health and social issues.

In line with the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley's Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031, the Shire has a role in helping minimise alcohol related harm through collaboration and partnerships, providing strong civic leadership, and encouraging community safety to be a whole-of-community responsibility.

As a Shire we are limited in what we alone can achieve, therefore, to successfully improve community safety, and minimise alcohol related harm we will collaborate with a wide range of partners, to implement effective strategies. We believe enforcement of strict purchasing restrictions, without the strengthening of localised, wrap-around supports and services, will not address the issues caused by AOD abuse, and could have further adverse effects on the Region.

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23 FEBRUARY 2024

Therefore, the Shire is calling for a sustainable, collaborative, and holistic approach to AOD harm minimisation.

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley is committed to:

- Working collaboratively with all relevant Local and Regional Health Service Providers, Indigenous Organisations, State and Federal Government Departments, Businesses and Community Organisations to minimise Alcohol and other Drugs harms within our Towns, Communities, and Region.
- Advocating for preventative, rehabilitation, recovery, and wellness services to be established and strengthened in our Region; and
- Acknowledging community led alcohol management initiatives and contributing when and where appropriate.

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley supports the following:

1. Improved localised preventative, rehabilitation and wellness services and infrastructure to build the regions' resilience, including increased housing; and
2. The implementation of considered measures (e.g. Purchasing Restrictions and the Banned Drinker Register) in conjunction with increased support services and infrastructure; and
3. Greater deterrents to address the issue of illegal supply of alcohol (also known as 'sly grogging') and other drugs, including greater resourcing to implement these initiatives.

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POSITION PAPER MANAGEMENT OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

MARCH 2023

ABOUT THE KIMBERLEY REGIONAL GROUP

The Kimberley Regional Group (KRG) is an alliance of the four Shires of the Kimberley, being the Shire of Broome, the Shire of Derby West Kimberley, the Shire of Halls Creek and the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley. Our Vision is to maintain and enhance the rich diversity and liveability of the Kimberley for its people and the world. Collaboratively the group seeks to drive positive impact across the region through improved social, economic and cultural outcomes. This paper is designed to highlight the issues as known to Local Government at the time of writing and the potential pathways that are supported.

CONTEXT

- The abuse of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) is prevalent across the Kimberley, with an estimated per capita annual consumption of pure alcohol far higher than the national annual average².
- Whilst amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), including methamphetamine, use is low relative to alcohol and tobacco, it is growing³.
- Key areas in which alcohol has an impact across the region include poor health, mortality rates⁴, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and social impacts such as increased poverty, crime rates, rates of family and domestic violence, child abuse and neglect and reduced labour market participation.
- Intergenerational disadvantage has seen some of the most vulnerable people in the region unable to break the cycle of substance abuse and violence.
- Alcohol restrictions, of various forms have been in place since voluntary restrictions were introduced in Halls Creek in 1992. Inconsistent approaches have intensified alcohol misuse by people travelling to different locations to drink. Also, alcohol restrictions impact on tourists and residents' access to alcohol use and enjoyment.
- AOD services are unevenly spread across the Kimberley, which is a disadvantage to residents of smaller towns and remote communities.



- Increasing the price of alcohol by imposing taxation and minimum pricing has been found to be directly associated with a reduction in consumption, acute and chronic health concerns, traffic accidents, crime and violent incidents⁵.

SNAPSHOT OF ALCOHOL MANAGEMENT IN THE KIMBERLEY

Liquor Control (Section 64) Restrictions

Limit or prohibit the sale of alcohol from licensed premises by imposing conditions on liquor licences in relation to trading hours and the purchasing, consuming or possessing alcohol. This includes limiting the number of items that can be purchased in a day or limit sales to light alcohol products only. Restrictions vary between towns⁶.

Liquor Control (Section 175) Restrictions

Many Aboriginal communities are subject to these restrictions which apply to a declared area and may prohibit the bringing in, possession and consumption of liquor and may provide for penalties to people who contravene the restrictions.

'Dry areas'

Community members are able to declare certain areas, ranging from individual houses up to entire communities, as a 'dry' area where possession or consumption of alcohol completely is completely prohibited.

Liquor Control (Section 31) Notice Under Western Australia's State of Emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic

This Notice restricted to selling packaged liquor in prescribed quantities. It expired in the Kimberley in November 2022 when Western Australia's State of Emergency for the COVID pandemic ended. The Director of Liquor Licensing has written to affected licensees in the Kimberley to notify them that it is the intent to impose conditions on their liquor licence consistent with those conditions prescribed in the Liquor Control (Section 31) (Kimberley) Notice 2021 and to afford them an opportunity to provide submissions. The Director of Liquor Licensing is expecting to make a final decision in late February 2023.

Banned Drinkers Register (BDR)

The Banned Drinkers Register identifies people who are banned from purchasing takeaway alcohol and stops their purchase. The Kimberley BDR is being evaluated with the evaluation report expected in early 2023.

Takeaway Alcohol Management System (TAMS)

The TAMS system is used in conjunction with the Banned Drinkers Register and supports liquor restrictions, by reducing opportunities for people to purchase quantities above what is mandated within any applicable restriction. TAMS records the amount and type of liquor purchased by any individual within a 24-hour period and automatically alerts retail staff, when any daily purchase limit has been reached.





Voluntary Liquor Accords

Liquor accords are a co-operative arrangement formed under section 64(1b) of the Act aimed at developing safe and well managed environments in and around licensed premises in the local context.

OBJECTIVE

- » **Substance abuse and associated harm is reduced.**
- » **Health outcomes are improved.**
- » **Poverty and crime are reduced.**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles should inform alcohol and drug management in the Kimberley.

- A focus on community awareness, education, prevention, and early intervention.
- Harm minimisation and reduction
- A whole of family approach which addresses the underlying causes of AOD use including co-occurring mental health conditions and complex trauma.
- Community led, co-designed solutions which are coordinated, integrated and includes engagement with local government.
- A data and evidence-based response
- A response that is culturally lead and centred in cultural strength
- Place based responses with access to local services

POLICY PRIORITIES

1. **A Kimberley Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Strategy is developed and resourced**
2. **A Kimberley Regional Alcohol Action Plan is developed and resourced**
3. **Expansion of location and community-based specialist drug and alcohol services with options for priority target groups, especially young people. This includes:**
 - 3.1 harm reduction and personal support
 - 3.2 safe places for intoxicated people
 - 3.3 residential rehabilitation post residential rehabilitation
 - 3.4 community day treatment programs
 - 3.5 low-medical withdrawal (home-based, outpatient and other)
 - 3.6 high/complex withdrawal (inpatient)
 - 3.7 consultation and liaison services
4. **Increased investment to build and retain a capable alcohol and other drug workforce in the region**
5. **A strengthened legislative framework to manage alcohol. This includes:**
 - 5.1 Strengthening of the Banned Drinkers Register (BDR) including:
 - a. establishment of a legislative framework within which the BDR with flexibility to declare any area a designated BDR area and clarify the definition of and criteria for Prohibition Orders as a protection order across the community



- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. permitting WA Police officers at or above Senior Sergeant rank to issue an immediate short-term Barring Notice for a period of 30 days c. enhancement of voluntary registration pathways, d. a formal, independent evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness e. creating an offence for knowingly supplying liquor to a person who is on the BDR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.2 Amendment of Section 119 of the Sentence Administration Act 2003 to enable data on current relevant Parole Orders to be uploaded to the BDR, to allow for approved operations to access information on individuals under barring notices. 5.3 Expansion of police search and seizure powers enacted under regulations pursuant to section 175(1a) of the Liquor Control Act 1988 (WA) 5.4 Retention of Section 31 Restrictions 5.5 Retention of Section 64 Restrictions 5.6 Retention of Section 175 Restrictions |
|---|---|

ENDNOTES

1. *Illicit drugs include cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy, meth/amphetamines etc as outlined in the National Drug Strategy Survey 2019* <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/77d8ea6e-f071-495c-b71e-3a632237269d/aihw-phe-270.pdf.aspx?inline=true>.
2. Smith, K. (2017). *The cashless debit card trial: A public health, rights-based approach to better health and social outcomes*. *Indigenous L. Bull.*, 8, 22
3. *Consultation summary report Alcohol and other drug services in the Kimberley 2018*, p 14
4. *The rate of alcohol related deaths in the Kimberley is one of the highest of any region in Western Australia, and significantly higher than the rate for Western Australia as a whole*
5. *Shanks Research Paper*, p 20.
6. *Research conducted by the National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) suggests that alcohol supply restrictions are effective in reducing alcohol consumption when paired with other forms of interventions, including changes in price and taxation, trading hours and minimum drinking and purchase age*. *National Drug Research Institute, Restrictions on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol: Evidence and Outcomes (Report, 2007)*.



Media Statement

CALL TO ACTION

Liquor restrictions alone are not the answer. Governments must invest in regional health planning, services, capital infrastructure and workforce.

15 February 2024

from the Kimberley Aboriginal community-controlled health service sector comprising: Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS), Beagle Bay Futures Indigenous Community Aboriginal Organisation, Bidyadanga Aboriginal Community La Grange, Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Services, Derby Aboriginal Health Service, Milliya Rumurra Aboriginal Corporation, Nirrumbuk Environmental Health and Services, Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service, and Yura Yungi Medical Service.

On behalf of the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS) Board, representing Aboriginal community-controlled health services across the Kimberley region of Western Australia, we stand against the push for more liquor restrictions without simultaneous investment in comprehensive alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services, planning and infrastructure.

Every day, we see the harmful effects caused by alcohol misuse on Kimberley people, families, and communities and acknowledge proposals for further restrictions in Broome and Derby, and changes implemented through the *Liquor Control Amendment (Banned Drinkers Register (BDR)) Bill 2023*. We recognise the devastating impact of alcohol but believe that simply increasing restrictions is not the answer. **We do not oppose restrictions**, but emphasise the need for a holistic approach, combining health, social, and diversionary strategies to support community-led responses to alcohol related harm within the region.

Reform requires collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, governments, and communities. Instead of more restrictions, governments must invest in our sector, specialist Aboriginal AOD services like Milliya Rumurra Aboriginal Corporation, and other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to enhance AOD services and develop comprehensive, effective approaches to alcohol problems, including alternatives to criminalisation.

Without adequate support, increased restrictions could unintentionally harm individuals and communities, potentially leading to punitive outcomes rather than health improvements. The lack of a regional plan for alcohol and drug misuse, combined with insufficient resources for tackling related issues like family and domestic violence, demands urgent government action. Furthermore, the sensationalist portrayal of alcohol use in the region by the media contributes to a negative and harmful stereotype of this being “an Aboriginal issue”, underlining the need for an informed and respectful public discourse.

The introduction of the BDR Bill 2023, allowing medical officers and social workers to recommend individuals to the BDR, has proceeded without proper consultation with our sector, and particularly our medical staff. Our senior medical officers uphold the *Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights* – they respect patient autonomy and the integrity of our comprehensive primary health care clinics as safe spaces, and our clinics will not be referring patients to the BDR. They may however support patients who choose to self-refer.

This statement underscores the necessity for a balanced, community-supported approach to alcohol misuse, emphasising collaboration, comprehensive planning, and respect for the autonomy and dignity of Kimberley communities. We urge the WA Government to listen to the voices of Kimberley people, who have been crying out for years for increased investment in health, social and diversionary approaches that will support Kimberley people and communities to respond to the harm caused by alcohol.

For further media information contact:

Sarah Tobias, Senior Policy Officer

communications@kamsc.org.au

Phone: (08) 9194 3233

8 NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE

9 CLOSURE

9.1 Date of Next Meeting

The next ordinary meeting of Council will be held Thursday, 29 February 2024 in the Council Chambers, Clarendon Street, Derby.

9.2 Closure of Meeting