

# Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

An alliance of the CLC, NLC, CAALAS, NAAJA and AMSANT

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **APO NT calls for joint Territory/Commonwealth Board of Inquiry into Alcohol**

**26 June 2013**

Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT (APO NT) today called for a joint Territory/Commonwealth government Board of Inquiry into Alcohol in the Northern Territory to provide a roadmap for action by communities, professionals, and Government to work together to solve the problems of alcohol related harm in our communities.

“Alcohol related harm is killing our people, and we urgently need an evidence-based approach on how to make real change,” said APO NT spokesperson John Paterson.

“The way forward must be based on alcohol policy evidence not politics.

“This is a chance for both governments to dump the politics and work together to solve a social crisis which is killing our people, destroying our families and damaging the wider community.

The proposed terms of reference for the Inquiry are framed to provide the data and evidence that is needed to develop a comprehensive, evidence-based blueprint for tackling alcohol harm. They will provide for the development of recommendations that include effective alcohol supply controls as well as strong preventative and early intervention measures that address harm minimisation and the need to reduce the demand for alcohol consumption.

Since the last election, the current NT Government has taken a radical approach to laws relating to alcohol. This has included the abolition of the Banned Drinkers’ Register and the SMART Court. The Government is also introducing mandatory rehabilitation for people who are put into protective custody for drunkenness, and proposing the introduction of Alcohol Protection Orders (APOs).

The Commonwealth meanwhile has been working on the kinds of Alcohol Management Plans that were subject of a High Court decision last week.

“In November 2012, APO NT Grog Summit participants called on Governments to involve Aboriginal peoples in all levels of decision-making regarding alcohol policy, program development and resourcing in the NT.

“Alcohol is harming our communities, and having a devastating effect on the future for our children,” said Mr. Paterson.

“Our peoples must be supported to develop our own solutions to tackle issues around alcohol related harm.

APO NT is publically calling for a Board of Inquiry into Alcohol in the Northern Territory to be held jointly by the NT and Commonwealth Governments. A proposed Terms of Reference for the Board of Inquiry has been developed and is attached.

For further information, contact Sarah Barr on 0487 341 117.