



An evaluation of the Gove Peninsula Alcohol Management System

Peter d'Abbs
Gillian Shaw
Hope Rigby
Teresa Cunningham
Joseph Fitz

A report prepared for the Northern Territory Department of Justice

Menzies School of Health Research, PO Box 41096, Casuarina NT, Australia 0811

March 2011

Comments to:

Peter.d'abbs@menzies.edu.au

Contents

1	Executive summary	6
1.1	Implementation of the permit system	6
1.2	Outcomes of the alcohol management system.....	7
1.2.1	Trends in total wholesale supplies of alcohol	8
1.2.2	Trends in alcohol-related hospital presentations	8
1.2.3	Trends in assaults.....	9
1.2.4	Trends in disturbances and anti-social behaviour	9
1.2.5	Conclusions	10
1.3	Community views regarding the permit system	10
1.4	Conclusions and recommendations	11
1.4.1	Conclusions	11
1.4.2	Recommendations.....	13
2	Introduction	14
3	Evaluation methodology.....	16
3.1	Implementation analysis	16
3.2	Outcome indicators.....	16
3.2.1	Analysing trends in alcohol sales.....	16
3.2.2	Emergency Department presentations for alcohol-related disorders.....	17
3.2.3	Hospital separations for injuries and alcohol-related mental and behavioural disorders	17
3.2.4	Alcohol-related and other assaults	18
3.2.5	Anti-social behaviour, disturbances and apprehensions for public drunkenness.....	18
4	Evolution of the Gove Peninsula permit system and associated measures.....	20
4.1	Description of permit system	25
5	Implementation of the permit system	27
5.1	Introduction of the permit system	27
5.2	The permit committees	28
5.2.1	Obtaining a permit in Nhulunbuy	30
5.2.2	Obtaining a permit in Yirrkala or Gunyangara	31
5.2.3	Revoking and varying permit conditions	32
5.2.4	Issues relating to the IT system	37
6	Establishment and operations of the Special Care Centre, Sobering-up Shelter and Night Patrol.....	39
6.1	Special Care Centre	39
6.2	Sobering-up Shelter.....	40

6.3	Night patrol	40
7	Outcomes of the alcohol management system	42
7.1	Trends in total wholesale supplies of alcohol	42
7.1.1	Trends in supplies of beverage categories	43
7.1.2	Trends in market share	44
7.2	Alcohol-related Emergency Department presentations	44
7.3	Alcohol-related hospital separations	45
7.4	Hospital separations for injury	46
7.5	Trends in assaults	47
7.6	Trends in disturbances and anti-social behaviour	48
7.7	Trends in apprehensions for public drunkenness	50
7.8	Conclusions	50
8	Community views regarding the permit system	51
8.1	Extent of support for specific measures	53
8.2	Respondents' comments on the permit system	53
8.3	Respondents' comments on the ban on drinking in public through most of the region	54
8.4	Respondents' comments on current conditions governing drinking inside licensed premises	55
8.5	What next? Respondents' views on the future of the permit system	56
8.6	Feedback from Yolngu communities on the permit system	56
8.7	Feedback from stakeholder agencies	57
8.8	Conclusion	58
9	Conclusions and recommendations	60
9.1	Conclusions	60
9.2	Recommendations	61
10	Appendix A: Forms associated with the permit system	63
11	Appendix B: Community survey questionnaire	67
	Gove Peninsula Alcohol Management System: community survey	67
12	Appendix C: List of people interviewed	70
13	Appendix D: Guided interview tool	71
14	References	74

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for their generous input to this report:

Sharyn Quigley has been unfailingly helpful, providing numerous documents and frank discussion of the issues involved in running the current permit system.

Verity Cobb has been helpful in obtaining data from a less than helpful database, and we appreciate her efforts.

John Cook and Harvey Creswell have been most informative on the history of the permit system and alcohol management in the region. Harvey has also been very helpful in suggesting Yolgnu research assistants and arranging and escorting us to interviews.

Leon White has been generous with his time in putting alcohol management in the East Arnhem region into a personal perspective, and we thank him for his time.

Fiona Djerrkura has also been generous with her time, and with organizing our researchers to spend a day with the Raypirri Rom team.

Finally Shane Flanigan has been generous with his time and expertise, giving us excellent directions on people to whom we should speak, and the fruits of his considerable experience.

Abbreviations

DoJ	Northern Territory Department of Justice
GRA	General Restricted Area
LPC	Liquor Permit Committee
NAAJA	North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
NTLC	Northern Territory Licensing Commission
PRA	Public Restricted Area

1 Executive summary

On 17 December 2007 the Northern Territory Licensing Commission, in response to a joint application by East Arnhem Harmony Mäyawa Mala Inc – a group made up of Yolngu and non-Yolngu, government and non-government agencies – and NT Police, introduced a number of measures designed primarily to control the purchase and consumption of takeaway liquor throughout the Gove Peninsula area. The measures were as follows:

- An area encompassing the whole of the Gove Peninsula, including the township of Nhulunbuy, the communities of Yirrkala and Gunyangara, the Laynhapuy Homelands and Gumatj Homelands, and Wigram Island, were designated a General Restricted Area (GRA) under the NT Liquor Act.
- Possession and consumption of takeaway liquor anywhere in the GRA would be permissible only for those people who had been granted permits to purchase takeaway liquor.
- Areas occupied by existing licensed premises would be excised from the GRA. Consumption of liquor on licensed premises was not subject to special conditions.
- In addition, specific areas would be designated as Public Restricted Areas (PRAs), enabling the Licensing Commission to authorize consumption of liquor in these areas subject to special conditions.

Under the proposal endorsed by the NTLC, separate permit committees were to be established for Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala and Gunyangara respectively with powers to grant, refuse or revoke applications for permits, and to place additional conditions on the amounts and kinds of liquor that could be purchased.

Operation of the permit system was to be facilitated through an 'Alcohol Management System' designed and supplied by ID Tect Pty Ltd., a software development company. Each takeaway outlet was to be given a computer node linked via wireless telephone internet connection to a central server in Darwin, where all permit information was to be stored.

The new system was to take effect from 1 March 2008.

1.1 Implementation of the permit system

Three Liquor Permit Committees have been established, serving Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala and Gunyangara respectively. When initially established in 2008, the committees were chaired by the relevant community CEO and received administrative support from the local community

government council. With the abolition of these councils following the NT Local Government reforms in July 2008, this function was transferred to the Department of Justice in Nhulunbuy. The primary functions of each LPC are to make recommendations to the NT Licensing Commission with regard to granting, varying or revoking permits. However, the procedures involved differ between Nhulunbuy LPC on the one hand, and Yirrkala and Gunyangara on the other.

Permits to Nhulunbuy residents are granted on the principle that all adult residents are entitled to a permit, which can however be revoked. In both Yirrkala and Gunyangara, community representatives on the respective LPC reserve a right to recommend who may or may not have a permit, subject to conditions they can also recommend.

Under the coordination of DoJ staff in Nhulunbuy, all of the LPCs have developed a procedure for dealing with individuals whose permits are revoked, and who seek reinstatement of their permits. The procedure involves a graduated series of purchasing entitlements. For example, an applicant whose permit has been revoked will first be entitled to purchase a maximum of 6 cans of light beer or one bottle of wine on any one day. Should he or she wish to purchase more than this, the applicant must re-apply to the LPC, which will consider the application at its next meeting. The applicant is liable then to be entitled to purchase up to 6 cans of mid strength or 12 cans of light beer, and so on through another four steps until the applicant might regain a right to purchase unlimited quantities.

While this graduated system might well reflect – in codified form – the wishes of LPC members in Yirrkala and/or Gunyangara, we question its appropriateness to the Nhulunbuy LPC. In particular, the system as it has evolved appears to be administratively cumbersome, and to go beyond any mandate embodied in either the Harmony Group's application to the NT Licensing Commission or the Commission's decision.

1.2 Outcomes of the alcohol management system

Evidence relating to outcomes following commencement of the permit system in March 2008 was gathered for four type of indicator, namely:

- trends in alcohol sales in Nhulunbuy as indicated by wholesale supply of alcohol to outlets in Nhulunbuy;
- presentations at the Emergency Department of Nhulunbuy Hospital for alcohol-related disorders, and alcohol-related hospital separations at Nhulunbuy Hospital;

- trends in incidence of alcohol-related assaults in Nhulunbuy , as recorded by NT Police, and
- trends in public order incidents and apprehensions for public drunkenness in Nhulunbuy as reported by NT Police.

1.2.1 Trends in total wholesale supplies of alcohol

In the 12 months following commencement of the permit system (i.e. 1 April 2008-31 March 2009), the total volume of alcohol supplied to outlets in Nhulunbuy was equivalent to 81,430 litres of pure alcohol – 22.3% lower than the 104,862 litres supplied over the preceding 12 months. This trend continued over the following 12 month period – from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 – when total supplies were equivalent to 71,413 litres of pure alcohol, some 12.3% lower than in the preceding 12 month period. While this suggests that the permit system had a significant and sustained impact on liquor sales in the region, it should also be noted that the downward trend in alcohol supplies began *before* introduction of the permit system, at the end of 2006, largely as a result of a decline in supplies of cask wine.

1.2.2 Trends in alcohol-related hospital presentations

Three kinds of data were used to assess the impact of the permit system: emergency department presentations for mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol (Indigenous patients); hospital separations for the same diagnostic categories (Indigenous patients), and hospital separations for injury (Indigenous and non-Indigenous patients). Trends in all three indicators pointed to a decline in alcohol-related problems following introduction of the permit system.

In the 12 months prior to the permit system commencing (i.e. April 2007-March 2008) there were 50 Indigenous presentations at the Gove Hospital Emergency Department for conditions coded as 'mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol'. In the 12 months following commencement of the system, the number fell by 22% to 39 presentations. In the subsequent 12 month period – April 2009 to March 2010 - the total fell by more than 50% again to 18 presentations.

Trends in Indigenous hospital separations for mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol tell a similar story. Over the 12 months prior to commencement of the permit system –April 2007 to March 2008 – there were 109 separations. Over the next 12 months the number fell to 70 – a decline of 35.8% - and in the subsequent 12 month period (April 2009 to March 2010) it declined slightly again, to 65 separations (a fall of 7.1%).

In the 12 months prior to introduction of the permit system in March 2008 there were 205 Indigenous hospital separations at Gove hospital for injuries and 102 non-Indigenous separations. In the 12 months following commencement of the permit system, the number of Indigenous separations declined by 9.3% to 186 and the number of non-Indigenous separations declined by 13.7% to 88. In the case of Indigenous separations, the number remained at the same level in the following 12 month period (April 2009-Mar 2010), while the number of non-Indigenous separations fell even further, to 56.

1.2.3 Trends in assaults

Two categories of recorded assaults were used for the evaluation: those recorded as 'alcohol involved', and 'total assaults'. Commencement of the permit system did not lead to a change in either category. In the 12 months prior to commencement (April 2007 – March 2008) 98 assaults involving alcohol were recorded; in the 12 months following commencement, 99 were recorded. Similarly, in the 12 months prior to commencement of the permit system, the total number of assaults recorded was 140. In the following year it fell slightly, to 133 assaults. A significant decline assaults took place in the March quarter of 2009 – but by then the permit system had been in place for more than 12 months, so the decline cannot be attributed to it.

1.2.4 Trends in disturbances and anti-social behaviour

Incidents recorded by police as various forms of disturbance or anti-social behaviour were grouped into four categories:

- Anti-social behaviour;
- Disturbance
- Drunk person, and
- Liquor in prescribed area, restricted area, etc.

In the first category – anti-social behaviour – only 27 incidents were recorded between July 2005 and June 2009. This was too few to interpret trends. The number of disturbances in the 12 months following commencement of the permit system (513 disturbances) was 32.2% lower than in the 12 months prior to commencement, although the decline commenced before introduction of the permit system, suggesting the presence of other causal factors.

In the 12 months prior to commencement of the permit system a total of 2840 apprehensions for public drunkenness were recorded. In the 12 months following introduction of the permit system the number fell to 889 episodes – a decline of 68.7%. Once again, the decline had begun before introduction of the permit system.

1.2.5 Conclusions

On almost all of the indicators considered, introduction of the permit system in March 2008 was followed by a decline both in apparent liquor sales and in alcohol-related harm – specifically in Indigenous alcohol-related emergency department presentations and hospital separations, injuries (non-Indigenous as well as Indigenous), disturbances and apprehensions for public drunkenness. These declines have been sustained. In several of these instances, however, the decline commenced between one and two years prior to introduction of the permit system, suggesting that other causal factors, such as the voluntary cessation of sales of cask wine greater than 2 litres by some outlets, may also have contributed to the outcomes.

1.3 Community views regarding the permit system

Evidence about people's views regarding the permit system from two main sources: stakeholder interviews, and from a street survey conducted in February 2011.

The interview schedule covered six topics, as well as some questions on the respondent's socio-demographic background. Topics covered attitudes regarding the requirement to have a permit to purchase takeaway alcohol; the ban on drinking in public throughout much of the region; current arrangements applying to on-premises consumption; perceived beneficial/adverse effects of the permit system; whether in future the permit system should be retained in its present form, retained with modifications, or abandoned.

Nhulunbuy Corporation Limited issued a permit for a street stall for the purposes of conducting the survey in the town centre on the dates 10-11 February and 24 – 25 February 2011. A total of 112 completed surveys were collected over the two data collection periods.

A little over half of respondents (54.4%) supported the permit system, while 43.8% did not support it. A majority of respondents (59.6%) believed that the permit system had had beneficial effects in the community, but almost as many (50.8%) believed that it had had harmful/negative effects in the community. (Some respondents perceived both beneficial and harmful effects.) Over two-thirds of respondents (69.4%) supported the current ban on drinking in public throughout much of the region, while 30.6% did not support it. Support was less high among Indigenous respondents: almost half (48.5%) were in favour and 51.5% not in favour. Two-thirds of respondents (65.3%) were in favour of the current system under

which no special restrictions are imposed on drinking inside licensed premises, with this pattern consistent among both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous respondents.

Around two-thirds of respondents (65.4%) either favoured retention of the permit system in its present form (29.5%), or with modifications (35.9%). Those advocating modifications proposed a variety of measures. These included a suggestion that the permit system should apply to on-premise as well as takeaway sales, and a call for greater community consultation in relation to re-issuing revoked permits. Some non-Indigenous respondents suggested that the permit system should not be imposed on everyone, but only on those with past histories of alcohol misuse or alcohol related violence. Some Indigenous respondents, on the other hand, argued that obtaining a permit should be made easier for everyone.

Because the sample used in this evaluation was not a true random sample, we cannot infer with accuracy the degree of support for the current system across the whole community. However, these findings suggest that the system enjoys majority support among the non-Yolngu population, while among Yolngu it remains a matter of contention.

Semi-structured interviews with Yolngu people at Yirrkala and Gunyangara pointed to the presence of divided opinions about the permit system, with many people believing that it had contributed to a reduction in harmful drinking in the communities, but some also asserting that the system had led to a migration of drinkers to Katherine and Darwin. Agencies such as social and health services tended to be strongly supportive of the system. Several agencies also drew attention to a dearth of services for non Indigenous people in need of help for alcohol-related issues. There is no access to outpatient counselling (the Employment Assistance Services Association stopped visiting Nhulunbuy, and there is no service to fill the gap.) There is also no home detoxification service which might be expected to be patronised by non Indigenous residents.

1.4 Conclusions and recommendations

Our conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

1.4.1 Conclusions

1. The permit system appears to have contributed to a significant and sustained decline in alcohol consumption in the Gove Peninsula.
2. This appears to be associated with a decline in several aspects of alcohol-related harm, in particular harms to health arising from acute episodes of alcohol misuse, such as injuries; assaults, and alcohol-related public order offences.

3. These beneficial changes cannot be attributed solely to the permit system, as some of the trends commenced before introduction of the system, suggesting that other factors have also been at work. These are likely to include a voluntary ban imposed on sales of cask wine by Woolworths, the Walkabout Hotel and the Arnhem Club, and demographic changes associated with expansion at the mine site.
4. Quantitative evidence of the changes referred to above is supported by qualitative evidence gathered from service providers such as Miwatj Health.
5. In terms of outcomes, therefore, the permit system can be considered a success.
6. In Nhulunbuy, while some individuals regard the permit system as an intrusion on their 'right' to drink, or as an unwarranted inconvenience, the system appears to enjoy enough support or acceptance to give local legitimacy and to make it sustainable – subject to qualifications we outline below.
7. Among Yolngu, opinions appear to be sharply divided. Some – especially older women – support the system. Many young men oppose it, and claim that it has led drinkers to move to Darwin and Katherine, where they are more likely to experience harms.
8. On the negative side, the permit system appears to have had five main unintended consequences: firstly, it has probably contributed to a drift of drinkers to Darwin and Katherine, although it would be extremely difficult to disentangle these effects from possible impact of the NT Emergency Response ('the intervention') that took effect in late 2007. Secondly, anecdotal evidence indicates that increases in on-premise sales that followed from the permit system and the limitations it imposed on takeaway sales have been accompanied significant increases in security costs for the outlets concerned. Thirdly, the same factors also appear to have been accompanied in some outlets by poor quality service, including service to intoxicated patrons, and unnecessary aggression on the part of some bouncers. (This evidence is contentious, disputed by some licensees, and difficult to verify. However, we are satisfied on the basis of the number of allegations made to us that the allegations should be given credence and taken seriously.) Fourthly, introduction of the permit system has meant that Yirrkala, which was formerly a 'dry' community under the NT Liquor Act – at least in principle – no longer enjoys that status, since those with permits to purchase takeaway liquor can now bring it back to the community. This is a source of concern to some residents. Finally, in the communities of Ganyunygara and Yirrkala the permit system appears to have generated an increase in social tensions between those who do, and do not, have permits.

1.4.2 Recommendations

1. In light of the findings above, we believe that the permit system *in some form* should be retained. However, two questions immediately arise.
2. Firstly, given that the NT Government has now moved to introduce a Territory-wide permit system based on identifying those who are *not* permitted to purchase takeaway alcohol (in other words, an exclusionary system, in contrast to the Gove Peninsula system which is inclusionary), a question arises as to whether or not the Gove Peninsula should retain its own distinctive system. We recommend that, if the communities of Yirrkala and Gunyangara wish to retain the capacity to regulate alcohol purchasing entitlements on an individual-by-individual basis – as the present system allows – then they should be entitled to do so, and the respective Liquor Permit Committees should be regarded as expressions of community intent.
3. We do not believe that any such description fits the Nhulunbuy LPC. The original intention under the alcohol management system was that Nhulunbuy residents would enjoy an automatic entitlement to a permit, which however could be revoked should the holder commit an alcohol-related offence or misdemeanour. Logically, this is more suited to the kind of exclusionary permit system being rolled out across the rest of the NT. However, on the grounds of equity and fairness, it would probably not be acceptable for Yolngu access to takeaway alcohol to be governed by one sort of permit system and Balanda access by a different system. Therefore, should the Yirrkala and Gunyangara communities wish to retain the present system, it should be retained in Nhulunbuy also.
4. However, in the event of this occurring, we recommend that the Nhulunbuy LPC abandon its present approach of imposing a graduated series of purchasing entitlements on those whose permits are revoked and who seek reinstatement. This approach, apart from being administratively burdensome, has no basis for justification either in the Licensing Commission's 2007 decision or in principles of public health or policing. The task of the Nhulunbuy LPC should simply be to determine who does and who does not have a permit to purchase takeaway liquor.
5. Should the present permit system be retained, and assuming that the technology permits, we recommend that consideration be given to defining the permits as authorising a *weekly* purchasing entitlement, rather than a daily entitlement. This would help to align limits on the quantity of alcohol that it is possible for an individual to purchase on a takeaway basis with what are regarded as safe levels of alcohol consumption.

2 Introduction

This report presents the findings of an independent evaluation of a set of measures introduced in March 2008 in north-eastern Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, with the prime purpose of reducing a heavy burden of alcohol-related harm among local Indigenous people, known as Yolngu. The main measures involved were, firstly, declaration of the area covered by the evaluation as a General Restricted Area (GRA) under the NT Liquor Act, making it illegal for anyone to possess or consume liquor throughout the area, except under conditions specified by the NT Licensing Commission. Secondly, possession or consumption of takeaway liquor throughout the GRA was open only to those individuals who had a permit to purchase takeaway liquor. These permits would be issued by the Licensing Commission on the recommendation of local Liquor Permit Committees. All permits issued would be subject to revocation in the event of the holder committing an alcohol-related offence or misdemeanour.

Thirdly, under the measures, purchase and consumption of on premises liquor at any of the existing outlets would not be affected. To this end, the areas occupied by the six liquor outlets in the area were excised from the GRA. Fourthly, in order to allow the Licensing Commission to permit consumption of takeaway liquor under particular conditions and on particular occasions, a number of additional areas located within the GRA were designated as Public Restricted Areas under the NT Liquor Act.

The area covered by these measures includes the mining township of Nhulunbuy, with a predominantly non-Indigenous population of a little over 4,000, the Yolngu communities of Yirrkala (population 687) and Gunyangara (population 275), and the homelands and outstations associated with these communities. The total resident population of the area in 2006 was estimated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as 5,826, of whom 1,707 (29.3%) were Indigenous (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007).

The measures themselves were the product of a long period of consideration and consultation among local Yolngu groups, with input also from other agencies such as local NT police and non-government organizations. These consultations resulted in a report being presented to the NT Licensing Commission in 2006, recommending the creation of a General Restricted Area and a permit system for purchases of takeaway liquor (Wearne, Greatorex et al. 2006). This was followed by a formal application to the Commission in the same year by

the East Arnhem Harmony Mäwaya Mala Inc., an organization made up of Yolngu and non-Yolngu representatives, government and non-government agencies. In other words, the measures under review embody a high level of 'bottom up' local community input, at least among Yolngu residents of the area.

The evaluation itself was conducted between July 2010 and February 2011, and describes both the implementation of the measures and their outcomes. The methodology used is outlined in Section 3 of this report. This is followed by an account of events leading to the NT Licensing Commission agreeing in December 2007 to requests from the East Arnhem Harmony Mäwaya Mala Inc and NT Police to impose the conditions outlined above. Section 5 of the evaluation examines processes and issues involved in implementing the permit system. Section 6 describes implementation issues associated with several complementary services: a Special Care Centre, Sobering-up Shelter and a Night Patrol. In Section 7 we report on a largely quantitative analysis of outcomes of the permit system. Section 8 describes community views regarding the permit system, on the basis both of a street survey and of stakeholder interviews. In a final section we outline our conclusions and recommendations.

3 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation comprises an implementation analysis documenting implementation of the permit system and other components of the Gove Peninsula Alcohol Management System, and an outcome evaluation of the system. The outcome evaluation follows a pre-test, post-test design.

3.1 Implementation analysis

Fieldwork visits were undertaken by Professor Peter d’Abbs and Gillian Shaw on June 21 – 22, August 16 – 19 and November 19, 2010. During this fieldwork 54 people from 20 stakeholder organisations and residents of both Yirrkala and Gunyangara were interviewed. A complete list is at Appendix C. During the fieldwork researchers observed Liquor Permit Committee (LPC) meetings at Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala and Gunyangara. Interviews were guided by an interview guide which is attached at Appendix D.

3.2 Outcome indicators

Data was collected and analysed for four groups of outcome indicators, covering:

- trends in alcohol sales in Nhulunbuy as indicated by wholesale supply of alcohol to outlets in Nhulunbuy;
- presentations at the Emergency Department of Nhulunbuy Hospital for alcohol-related disorders, and alcohol-related hospital separations at Nhulunbuy Hospital;
- trends in incidence of alcohol-related assaults in Nhulunbuy , as recorded by NT Police, and
- trends in public order incidents and apprehensions for public drunkenness in Nhulunbuy as reported by NT Police.

3.2.1 Analysing trends in alcohol sales

The total amount of alcohol supplied to retail liquor outlets in Nhulunbuy by wholesalers in the NT between 2005-06 and 2009-10 was made available to the evaluators by the NT Department of Justice. The figures were collated in litres of absolute alcohol, derived by the Department of Justice by using conversion factors listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3-1: Conversion factors used to convert litres of alcoholic beverages to corresponding amount of absolute alcohol

Beverage category	Conversion factor
Wine (cask)	.119

Wine (bottle)	.119
Fortified wine	.185
Cider	.06
Standard spirits	.385
Pre-mixed spirits	.057
Beer Full Strength	.048
Beer Mid Strength	.035
Beer Low	.03

3.2.2 Emergency Department presentations for alcohol-related disorders

Presentations to Gove Hospital Emergency Department for conditions described under the International Classification of Diseases as 'Mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol use' (codes F10.0 – F10.9) ¹ were collated for the years 2005-06 to 2009-10. The specific codes are shown in the table below.

Table 3-2: ICD-10 codes used to examine trends in Emergency Department presentations

F10.0	Mental & behavioural disorder due to alcohol use acute intoxication
F10.1	Mental & behavioural disorder due to harmful alcohol use
F10.2	Mental & behavioural disorder due to alcohol – dependence syndrome
F10.3	Mental & behavioural disorder due to alcohol withdrawal state
F10.4	Mental & behavioural disorder due to alcohol use - withdrawal state with delirium
F10.5	Mental & behavioural disorder due to alcohol use - psychotic disorder
F10.6	Mental & behavioural disorder due to alcohol use - amnesic syndrome
F10.7	Mental & behavioural disorder due to alcohol - residual & late onset psychotic disorder
F10.8	Mental & behavioural disorder due to alcohol – other mental & behavioural disorders
F10.9	Mental & behavioural disorder due to alcohol – unspecified mental & behavioural disorders

3.2.3 Hospital separations for injuries and alcohol-related mental and behavioural disorders

Hospital separations at Gove Hospital for the same codes (F10.0 – F10.9) were also examined for the years 2005-06 to 2009-10. However, because a high proportion of alcohol-related harm is reflected in inter-personal violence, we also examined trends for injury separations, using the ICD10- codes S00 to T14, which are listed below.

¹ World Health Organization (2007). International Statistical Classification of Diseases and related Health Problems, 10th Revision (ICD 10), Version for 2007. Geneva, World Health Organization.

Table 3-3: Injury codes used in examination of hospital separations (ICD10)

S00-S09	Injuries to the head
S10-S19	Injuries to the neck
S20-S29	Injuries to the thorax
S30-S39	Injuries to the abdomen, lower back, lumbar spine and pelvis
S40-S49	Injuries to the shoulder and upper arm
S50-S59	Injuries to the elbow and forearm
S60-S69	Injuries to the wrist and hand
S70-S79	Injuries to the hip and thigh
S80-S89	Injuries to the knee and lower leg
S90-S99	Injuries to the ankle and foot
T00-T07	Injuries involving multiple body regions
T08-T14	Injuries to unspecified part of trunk, limb or body region

Source: World Health Organization 2007

3.2.4 Alcohol-related and other assaults

Assaults in Nhulunbuy as recorded by NT Police for the years 2005-06 to 2008-09 inclusive were categorised by Police as involving alcohol, not involving alcohol, and degree of alcohol involvement unknown. For purposes of this evaluation, the two categories used are 'alcohol involved' and 'all assaults'.

3.2.5 Anti-social behaviour, disturbances and apprehensions for public drunkenness

'Incidents' are episodes that come to the attention of police – whether from their own observation or someone else's information – that may or may not lead to an offence being recorded and processed. For the purposes of this evaluation, alcohol-related incidents categorized as shown in the right hand column in the table below were grouped into four sub-groups, as shown in the left hand column: anti-social behaviour; disturbance; drunk person, and liquor, prescribed areas etc.

Table 3-4: Police incident categories used in analysis

Analytical category	Police incident category
Anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anti-social behaviour• Behaviour – disorderly – streets
Disturbance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disturbance – general• Disturbance – licensed premises• Disturbance – neighbours or other• Disturbance – noise complaint• Disturbance – rock throwing• Disturbance – youth
Drunk person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drunk person• Drunk driver
Liquor, prescribed area etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liquor, prescribed area• Liquor, public place• Liquor restricted area

Trends in apprehensions for public drunkenness – covering cases where persons were discharged to the sobering-up shelter or detained in police cells – were also examined.

4 Evolution of the Gove Peninsula permit system and associated measures

Ever since the commencement of mining on the Gove Peninsula in the 1960s – without the consent of Yolngu people – Yolngu leaders have resisted the accompanying introduction of alcohol into the region. In 1970 they unsuccessfully challenged the application for a liquor licence by the Walkabout Hotel. Twenty years later they protested against the opening of a liquor store in Woolworths in Nhulunbuy (Wearne, Greatorex et al. 2006). Today six liquor outlets serve on premises and/or takeaway liquor, as shown in the table below. Two of these outlets in the region sell alcoholic beverages to the general public, while a further four licensed clubs are authorised to sell alcohol to club members and members' guests.

Table 4-1: Retail outlets in the Gove Peninsula

Outlet	Licence number & type	Licence conditions
Mac's Liquor Nhulunbuy (Woolworths)	80904537: Store	Takeaway sales to general public.
Walkabout Tavern & Lodge	80316140: Tavern 80216150: Private hotel	Tavern licence: on premise and takeaway sales to general public. Private hotel licence: on premise sales to guests.
The Arnhem Club	81401120: Club	On premise sales to club members and visitors; takeaway sales to club members only.
Gove Yacht Club	81401564: Club	On premise sales to club members and visitors; takeaway sales to club members only.
Gove Country Golf Club	81401770: Club	On premise sales to club members and visitors; takeaway sales to club members only.
Gove Peninsula Surf Life Saving Club	81404655: Club	On premise sales to club members and visitors.

In recent years, faced by the devastating impact of alcohol abuse on Yolngu individuals, families and communities, community leaders have attempted to develop a number of strategies to reduce the burden. Between 1999 and 2002, for example, variations were imposed on takeaway trading hours (Wearne, Greatorex et al. 2006).

In 2005 the NT Licensing Commission engaged Wearne Advisors and the School of Australian Indigenous Knowledge Systems at Charles Darwin University, Darwin, to consult with Yolngu groups and communities on options for addressing alcohol problems in the

region. In its final report, the consultants stated that the 'vast majority of Yolngu interviewed were of the opinion that significant and broad sweeping change is required to the way that takeaway alcohol is sold in order to reduce alcohol related harm' (Wearne, Greatorex et al. 2006, p.9). On the basis of an analysis of the popularity, likely effectiveness and feasibility of the various options canvassed, the consultants recommended an integrated suite of measures for consideration by the Licensing Commission:

- Declare Nhulunbuy and surrounding homelands dry under Northern Territory law (exemptions for existing licensed premises). Under this declaration determine suitable areas that will be exempt but communities themselves should not be exempt. The input of Yolngu organizations and clan and community leaders in the planning and development of exempt areas should be sought.
- Establish a permit system (based on an electronic photo ID swipe card) such that any persons would require a liquor permit to be able to purchase takeaway liquor from any licensed premises within Nhulunbuy. Under this permit system:
 - Offer residents of Nhulunbuy automatic access to a permit with a special condition that takeaway alcohol can be consumed in their place of residence, that of another permit holder or any exempt areas.
 - Form a committee made up of appropriate people to make recommendations to the Licensing Commission regarding applications for permits and special conditions by people outside Nhulunbuy. The committee could include individuals from organizations such as Police and Miwatj Health and appropriate Yolngu. The input of Yolngu clan and community leaders in the planning and development of this committee should be sought and the criteria for issuing and revoking permits needs to be both strict and clear.
 - Allow provisions for visitors to be able to acquire a temporary permit to purchase takeaway alcohol.
- Introduce a limit on takeaway alcohol with flexibility so that larger purchases can be made where appropriate. Takeaway outlets should be linked by a system so that people cannot 'bottle shop hop'.
- Provide a mechanism where Yolngu leaders can temporarily ban the sale of takeaway alcohol to Yolngu.
- Ban the sale of wine casks in containers greater than 2 litres.
- Introduce mechanisms to enforce the ban the sale of takeaway alcohol to intoxicated people.
- Ban the sale of takeaway full strength beer in glass containers (Wearne, Greatorex et al. 2006, pp.51-52).

On 10 April 2006, East Arnhem Harmony Mäyawa Mala Inc – a group made up of Yolngu and non-Yolngu, government and non-government agencies - made a formal application to

the NTLC that gave effect to many of these proposals. The application sought to have an area that included the whole of the Gove Peninsula, including the towns of Nhulunbuy, Gunyangara (Ski Beach), Yirrkala and various recreational sites, declared a General Restricted Area (GRA) under Part VIII of the NT Liquor Act (Northern Territory Licensing Commission 2006). Under the Harmony Group's proposal, possession or consumption of takeaway liquor anywhere in the GRA would be permissible only for those people - residents and visitors alike - who had obtained permits to purchase liquor. Details of all permits issued were to be stored on a central computer database, to which all takeaway liquor outlets in the area would be networked. Permits for Nhulunbuy residents were to be issued by local police, while permits for residents of Yirrkala and Gunyangara would be issued by a Gove Peninsula Liquor Committee on the advice of the community or homeland in question. Under the proposal, no changes were envisaged to conditions governing on premise sales from any existing outlets in the area (although the applicant recognized that, since licensed outlets could not operate in GRA's, it would be necessary to excise the respective sites from the GRA).

Under the Harmony proposal, issuing of permits would involve scanning into the database some form of personal ID, such as a driver's licence or passport. To purchase takeaway liquor, permit holders on each occasion would be required to present the same ID at the outlet, which would then be checked against the ID on the database, together with advice as to the purchaser's entitlements to buy alcohol.

In response to the submission, the NTLC conducted a hearing in Nhulunbuy on 29- 30 August 2006. Several Yolngu and non-Yolngu individuals, as well as the local police, spoke in support of the proposal. Representatives of Woolworths, the major takeaway outlet, and the licensee of the Walkabout Tavern, while not directly opposing the proposal, nonetheless raised concerns regarding what they saw as implementation difficulties and privacy issues.

The NTLC announced its decision a few weeks later, on 6 October 2006 (Northern Territory Licensing Commission 2006). The Commission acknowledged that the application was a culmination of many years of consideration about the best ways to deal with alcohol problems in the Gove Peninsula, and that it also drew on a recently-prepared report - the so-called Wearne Report - which in turn was built on extensive consultation. While lending 'in principle' support to both the GRA and the proposed permit system, the NTLC indicated that it required further clarification of a number of issues before it could make a final decision. Firstly, it sought confirmation of the boundaries of the proposed Restricted Area, and call for further consideration regarding proposals to allow drinking in public places on specified

locations within the area, on special occasions. Secondly, it wanted to be satisfied that adequate consultation had taken place with licensed clubs and community organizations. Thirdly, the NTLC asked for further details regarding the permit system and for evidence that the system was 'reasonable, functional and sustainable'. Fourthly, it sought evidence that residents of outlying communities in the area had been consulted and informed regarding the proposal. Fifthly, it asked for assurance that the funding implications of the proposal had been addressed, and finally, it sought confirmation that 'appropriate community education and communication strategies' would be put in place prior to commencement of the scheme. In addition, the NTLC indicated that it would need to be satisfied that the proposal had adequately addressed issues relating to privacy, discrimination and competition.

On 8-9 August 2007, following receipt of a revised proposal, the NTLC conducted a second hearing in Nhulunbuy (Northern Territory Licensing Commission 2007). This time the application was split into two: an application by the Harmony Group for a GRA and a permit system, and one submitted by the police for certain areas within the GRA to be designated as 'Public Restricted Areas' (PRAs). The reason for the split was essentially legalistic: designation of specified places as PRAs provided a mechanism for the Licensing Commission to permit drinking in these places on specified occasions, something that could not be done under the provisions governing GRA's. However, under the NT Liquor Act, application for a PRA could be made only by local councils, the police or the Director of Licensing. The Harmony Group was therefore not eligible to apply for a PRA. Because the two applications complemented each other, the Commission considered them together.

At the hearing, a number of written submissions were received, from police, Walkabout Lodge, Woolworths Ltd, and a Mr James Segedin. Oral evidence in support of the proposals was heard from several Yolngu people; Senior Sergeant Fuller, NT Police, the Town Administrator for Nhulunbuy Corporation (Mr Hocking), and a local resident (Ms Justine Webber). A representative for Woolworths raised concerns about the possibility of the communications system failing, while Mr Tourish from the Walkabout Tavern expressed a preference for an exclusionary permit system (that is, one that would identify those *not* entitled to purchase alcohol)².

On 17 December 2007, the NTLC handed down its decision on the applications. The Commission declared itself to be satisfied that all of the issues raised for further clarification

² Exclusionary permit systems are in force in Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek. Groote Eylandt, like the Gove Peninsula, has an inclusionary system that specifies who has a permit.

in its earlier decision had all been satisfactorily attended to. In regard to defining boundaries of the GRA, the NTLC noted that the GRA would encompass:

- Laynhapuy Homelands and its outstations;
- Gumatj Homelands and outstations;
- Yirrkala Dhanbul Community;
- Land occupied by ALCAN Mining Corporation, including the township of Nhulunbuy to Wallaby Beach;
- Galaru;
- Marngarr Community Government Council communities of Gunyangara (Ski Beach) and Galupa, and
- Wigram Island.

Excisions were to be made from the GRA to cater for existing licensed premises, namely: Walkabout Tavern and Lodge, Arnhem Club, Woolworths, Nhulunbuy Surf Life Saving Club, Gove Country Golf Club, Gove Yacht Club (on and takeaway licence), Police Club and Norforce.

The Commission also noted that, following further consultations with Homelands and other organizations, the Harmony Group's application reported the following decisions regarding permits:

- Laynhapuy Homelands - no permits to be issued;
- Gumatj Homelands and outstations - no permits to be issued;
- Yirrkala - (already a GRA with provision for permits); community wishes to retain option of issuing permits, but with a 6 month 'beer only' restriction on any new permits; issuing of permits to be facilitated by Yirrkala Liquor Permit Committee;
- Galaru - no permits to be issued;
- Marngarr CGC communities (Gunyangara and Galupa): community wishes permits to be issued, with a process facilitated through a Marngarr-Gumatj Alcohol Permit Committee;
- Wigram Island - no permits generally, but provision to be made for guests of existing tourist fishing safari camp to take t/a liquor to campsite where it may be consumed;
- Nhulunbuy and Wallaby Beach: permits to be allowed, with applications to be made directly to the Commission or its delegated representative (Northern Territory Licensing Commission 2007).

The Commission supported the Harmony Group's application for a GRA and for the introduction of a permit system, noting at the same time the need for complementary alcohol

treatment and rehabilitation facilities. It designated 1 March 2008 as the commencement date for the new system. It also supported the application by police for a number of areas to be designated as Public Restricted Areas, thereby enabling the Commission in future to authorize consumption of liquor at these sites on specified occasions.

4.1 Description of permit system

In its revised application, the Harmony Group gave a detailed description of the proposed permit system. The issuing of permits was to be facilitated through an 'Alcohol Management System' designed and supplied by ID Tect Pty Ltd, a software development company specializing in the use of identification technology for behaviour management. Each takeaway outlet would be given a computer node linked via wireless telephone internet connection to a central server in Darwin, where all permit information would be stored.

The application also envisaged that a unique permit application process would be developed for each area under a local permit committee. Members of permit committees would be drawn from community members, Harmony Group representatives, NT Police and NT Department of Health and Community Services (as it was called at the time). As well as having the power to grant or refuse an application, permit committees were to have the power to place restrictions on the amounts and kinds of alcohol an applicant could purchase on any one occasion. Permits would normally be issued for three years to permanent residents, six months to temporary residents, with provision also for issuing interim permits for 28 days to short-term visitors.

Under the process set out in the application, applicants for a permit would lodge an initial application with the respective Community Government Council³, which would pass the application on to the local permit committee. Having made a recommendation, the committee would in turn pass the application to the OIC Nhulunbuy Police, who could endorse the recommendation or decline to do so. The application would then be returned to the applicant who would then be required to lodge the application with either the Nhulunbuy Court House or with the NT Licensing Commission in Darwin. Nhulunbuy residents would be required to provide proof of residence – eg a rental agreement or power bill, while those from outside Nhulunbuy would have to produce a letter from the local council or homelands centre showing details of residency. The applicant would also be required to produce up to three forms of identification, including a driver's licence, passport, proof of age card, Medicare

³ Following local government reforms in the NT that took effect on 1 July 2008, Community Government Councils ceased to exist, and were absorbed into larger Shires.

Card or health card and/or Arnhem Club membership card. The ID information would then be scanned onto the Alcohol Management System and stored for recognition purposes in future. A digital photograph of the applicant would also be taken and stored on the Alcohol Management System.

On purchasing alcohol, a customer holding a permit would be required to provide ID, which would be scanned onto the system and checked against the central database. If the customer did indeed hold a permit, a photographic image of him or her would appear on the computer screen, together with information regarding any restrictions applicable. If restrictions applied, the teller would be required to enter the volume of sale into the system.

5 Implementation of the permit system

As an innovative system for regulating the purchase of takeaway alcohol on the Gove Peninsula by Yolngu and non-Yolngu, residents and visitors, the permit system has a number of core components, namely: the *drinker* who must obtain a *permit* from a *permit committee* (which authorises the issuance of a permit) and *Department of Justice officers* (who actually process and issue the approved permit), using an *IT system* which links the permit-database with the *takeaway liquor outlets* where liquor is purchased. The way the permit system operates is a function of the interactions of all of these components. In this section we discuss these interactions, beginning with the introduction of the system in March 2008.

5.1 Introduction of the permit system

As so often happens when innovative programs are launched, introduction of the permit system generated a number of challenges. These are graphically described by one of the participants, Chris O'Brien:

On 15 March, 2008 the East Arnhem System went 'live'. The implementation date was at the direction of the Licensing Commission with some allowance for complications. Unfortunately, both the Department of Justice (DOJ) employees that had been intimately involved in the consultation, brief preparation and the development of the permit system were unavailable from the middle of February 2008. As a result Licensing Inspectors were tasked with the implementation of the system.

I was appointed to the position of Acting Regional Coordinator for Nhulunbuy in the first week of April to cover one of the positions. I was to reside in Nhulunbuy for a period of 6 months and take on the role of the implementation of the Permit System. I also had no prior knowledge of the system preceding my appointment.

There had been provisions put in place for the staggered processing of the Permit Applications. The Application form had been distributed throughout the community some weeks prior to the commencement date and applicants were invited to commence obtaining their permits prior to the introduction date to defuse the quantity

of applicants on the commencement date. Licensing Inspectors from Darwin were sent to Nhulunbuy to process the applications and apply them to the IT system.

By the end of March 2008, 2,700 permits had been processed and the opening hours for the processing of the applications were from 9.00 am to 9.00 pm 7 days a week. At one stage, 8 Licensing Inspectors were engaged in the processing of the applications. Three separate laptop computers were used to record the information. Prior to the implementation it was envisaged that only 5,000 permits would be issued in total (to date there have been some 6,750 permits issued). Through extremely trying circumstances the Licensing Inspectors managed to get the system up and running. However, there were many technical and logistical problems they had to deal with (Northern Territory Department of Justice 2009).

These problems, according to O'Brien, included teething difficulties with the IT system, technical difficulties in implementing the procedures for issuing permits, lack of clear contractual agreements between DoJ and the IT service provider, and an inadequate community communications strategy (Northern Territory Department of Justice 2009).

5.2 The permit committees

Three community permit committees have been established on the Gove Peninsula, serving Yirrkala, Gunyangara and Nhulunbuy respectively. The committees at Yirrkala and Gunyangara were established in January 2008, at Nhulunbuy in June 2008. The difference in times of establishment is a reflection of differences in the nature of the committees. At Gunyangara and Yirrkala, each application for a permit was to be individually assessed by the relevant permit committee before a recommendation to grant a permit could be given; each application also required agreement from traditional owners. In Nhulunbuy, by contrast, each eligible resident was granted a permit automatically by the Licensing Commission, without input from a permit committee. Only if and when a resident had his or her permit revoked as a result of breaching the conditions of the permit, and subsequently sought reinstatement of their permit, would the case come before the Nhulunbuy Permit Committee.

Permit committees were initially chaired by the relevant community CEO and received administrative support from the local community government council (Northern Territory Department of Justice 2009). With the abolition of these councils following the NT local government reforms in July 2008, and their absorption into the East Arnhem Shire Council, this function was transferred to the Department of Justice in Nhulunbuy. Even before this occurred, the administrative burden of the system had begun to exceed the capacity of the

two people allocated to handle it – a Licensing Inspector and a Project Manager. Approval was given to appoint an additional staff member, who commenced duties in August 2008 (Northern Territory Department of Justice 2009).

Each permit committee has a similar composition. For example, the Terms of Reference of the Nhulunbuy Liquor Permit Committee (LPC) stipulate that the LPC will consist of a representative of the following agencies:

- Nhulunbuy Corporation Ltd
- Northern Land Council
- Northern Territory Police Force who is of or above the rank of Senior Sergeant or OIC of a Police Station
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- NT Department of Family and Children's Services (FACS)
- Licensee from a nominated liquor outlet in Nhulunbuy
- North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)⁴.

NT Police have discretionary powers to revoke a liquor permit.

In the case of the Gunyangara and Yirrkala, the LPCs have from the outset included local residents. A Department of Justice officer who helped to establish the committees considers that this was their most important feature:

Prominent elders and strong women were encouraged to participate and take ownership and control of the decisions relating to their community members. I believe this was a critical factor in ensuring the success of the system that it belonged to the Yolngu people of East Arnhem Land (Northern Territory Department of Justice 2009).

LPCs normally meet monthly. However, despite the efforts made to engage local community representatives, it has not always been possible to ensure local attendance. Because the DoJ Project Officer will only hold LPC meetings when local community members are present, meetings have sometimes had to be postponed.

Today, the permit system is managed by officers of DoJ, operating from premises in the town centre of Nhulunbuy. Their principal roles involve providing administrative support to the

⁴ Terms of Reference, Nhulunbuy Liquor Permit Committee.

three permit committees, operating the technical procedures involved in applying for a permit (such as recording and faxing applicants' ID details to Darwin, and taking photographs of applicants), and storing correspondence etc. relating to the granting, modifying and/or revoking of permits.

The primary functions of the LPCs are to make recommendations to the NT Licensing Commission with regard to granting, varying or revoking permits. Procedures for granting permits for residents of Nhulunbuy differ from those applicable to residents of Yirrkala and Gunyangara.

5.2.1 Obtaining a permit in Nhulunbuy

A resident of Nhulunbuy, or a visitor to Nhulunbuy, wishing to obtain a permit to purchase takeaway liquor must fill out an application form obtainable from DoJ in Nhulunbuy. This form must be filled out and signed not only by the applicant, but also by the 'primary tenant' or owner of the residence where the applicant is living, who is required to confirm that the applicant is either a permanent resident of or visitor to the residence concerned, and whether or not he or she (i.e. the primary tenant or owner) supports the application⁵. The applicant is then required to produce a driver's licence or other ID at the DoJ office, where a photograph is also taken of the applicant. These details are then faxed to the DoJ head office in Darwin where, unless there are reasons to withhold approval, an authorized delegate of the Department issues a permit, normally within one working day of the application being lodged.

The permit authorizes the holder to purchase takeaway alcohol for consumption at the holder's own home or that of another permit holder, and at designated recreational areas (*ref NT DoJ 2008 Factsheet: Alcohol in East Arnhem.*). It does not authorize the holder to consume alcohol at the home of someone who does not hold a permit.

In the case of Nhulunbuy residents and visitors – in contrast to that of residents of Yirrkala or Gunyangara – the Liquor Permit Committee is not required to consider applications before a permit is granted. This decision is taken by the NT Licensing Commission. The Nhulunbuy LPC only becomes involved in a particular case if and when a permit holder is liable to have her or his permit revoked or amended for breaching the permit conditions.

⁵ A copy of this and other forms associated with the permit system is included in Appendix

5.2.2 Obtaining a permit in Yirrkala or Gunyangara

Residents of Yirrkala or Gaynyangara must apply to their local LPC for a permit. In considering an application, the LPC is required to ensure that the applicant is a permanent resident of the community or, if a visitor, that he or she has been residing in the community for at least 3 months. The Committee must also take account of the applicant's employment status, whether or not the applicant has the support of his or her family, evidence of a history of anti-social behaviour, and whether or not there are grounds to believe that alcohol consumption may have a deleterious effect on the applicant's physical or mental health. This last criterion normally requires referral to the local community health centre.

If it is satisfied with the evidence on all of these criteria, the LPC may recommend that the applicant be granted a permit, subject to any limitations on amounts and types of liquor that the LPC may attach to the recommendation. Once the LPC makes its recommendations, the procedures for obtaining a permit are the same as those applicable to residents of Nhulunbuy.

Liquor Permits are subject to several conditions, summarized in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5-1: Terms and conditions governing Liquor Permits

EAST ARNHEM GENERAL RESTRICTED AREA

Terms and Conditions required as a holder of a liquor permit-

1. Applicants must *have* attained the age of 18 years and be a resident of East Arnhem restricted areas.
2. All liquor purchased in accordance with the permit is to be obtained at licensed premises by the permit holder **ONLY** and by no other person.
3. The Permit holder may only possess or consume liquor at their home residence or residence of other permit holders within the East Arnhem General Restricted area or exempt areas as defined in East Arnhem exempt areas.

4. A permit may be revoked by the Licensing Commission in its discretion. A permit may also be revoked upon application to the Commission signed by the permit assessment committee or a member of the NT Police if the permit holder:

- a) causes an alcohol related criminal act or substantial annoyance or disruption of community order and peace; or
- b) assaults any person or is *involved* in alcohol-related domestic or family violence; or
- c) unlawfully brings liquor into, or possesses or consumes liquor in a restricted area; or
- d) unlawfully supplies liquor to any person under the age of 18 years; or
- e) supplies liquor to another person who is not a permit holder or who is not an invited guest of the permit holder; or
- f) supplies a dangerous drug to another person; or possess a trafficable quantity of a dangerous drug;
- g) litters the restricted area with refuse from the liquor obtained in accordance with a permit; or
- h) unlawfully possesses, supplies or brings *kava* into the Liquor Restricted Area; or
- i) is disqualified from driving through any drink driving offence that results in an immediate suspension or
- j) breaches any of the conditions of their permit.

5. A person whose permit has been revoked may reapply for a new liquor permit by completing application forms or appealing to the Licensing Commission.

.

Source: NT Department of Justice, Licensing Regulation & Alcohol Strategy

As of 14 February 2011, the total number of permits issued was 9,103. This includes unrestricted (8,793 permits), restricted (169 permits), revoked and refused permits⁶. Unfortunately, the data system does not allow one to see how many permits have been issued to each locality, or to examine any special conditions.

5.2.3 Revoking and varying permit conditions

Whereas the steps and procedures involved in applying for and issuing a liquor permit more or less correspond with those envisaged in the 2007 application to the NT Licensing

⁶ Pers. Comm.. Department of Justice, Nhulunbuy.

Commission by the Harmony Group, in devising rules and criteria for varying permit conditions, the LPCs appear to have entered into domains not covered in either the Harmony Group's application or the NT Licensing Commission's December 2007 decision. In doing so, they appear to have taken two key steps.

Firstly, DoJ officers, in their role as facilitators of the LPCs, have formulated guidelines for recommending revocation or variation of permit conditions by distinguishing between 'minor', 'moderate' and 'major' breaches of the permit conditions. These, as set out in the Terms of Reference for the Nhulunbuy LPC, are shown below:

Minor breach

These shall include but are not be restricted to:

- a) *causes substantial annoyance or disrupts community order and peace.
This may include: consuming liquor within the General Restricted Area, noisy parties, public drunkenness, minor alcohol related disturbances, humbugging or begging; or*
- b) *serious health conditions directly related to excessive alcohol consumption - i.e.: renal problems
The Liquor Permit Committee must consult with Health/Clinic staff before making this determination*
- c) *spending children's money on liquor; or
The Liquor Permit Committee must have proof that this is occurring*
- d) *supplies liquor to another person who is not a permit holder or who is not an invited guest of the permit holder; or*
- e) *is banned from any of the licensed premises within the East Arnhem District; or*
- f) *it is believed that the safety of the person, their family or any member of the community is being jeopardized by their drinking habits.*

A minor breach should result in the recommendation of some restrictions as to amount or type of alcohol that can be purchased or a one (1) month revocation.

Moderate Breach

Any repeat or continuous behavior of the above or;

- a) *assaults any person or is involved in alcohol-related domestic or family violence; or*
- b) *illegally brings liquor into, or possesses liquor within a restricted area; or*
- c) *brings a dangerous drug (defined in the Misuse of Drugs Act) into a restricted area; or*
- d) *possesses a dangerous drug within a restricted area; or*
- e) *supplies a dangerous drug to another person; or*
- f) *commits a drink driving traffic offence that results in an immediate suspension of their drivers licence.*

A moderate breach should result in the recommendation of some restrictions as to amount or type of alcohol that can be purchased or a three (3) month revocation. The Permit Committee could also consider a recommendation that the person undergo some alcohol awareness education before they are allowed to re apply.

Major Breach

A third breach of any repeat or continuous behavior of the above or a breach of the following:

- a) The supplying of alcohol to any non permit holder less than 18 years of age, where alcohol is consumed not under the effective control or supervision of a parent or guardian.*
- b) Restraining Order*
- c) Police order due to serious offences such as assault, burglary*
- d) At the discretion of the Court*

A third breach within the minor category, a second breach within the moderate category or a first breach in the major category should result in the recommendation of a one (1) year revocation.

It should also be recommended that upon re-applying for a permit, the applicant may demonstrate the following:

- That no further alcohol related offences have been committed;*
- Rehabilitation through Alcohol Awareness Education has occurred;*
- Genuine remorse*

The second component of the system for revoking or varying permit conditions consists of a set of graduated purchasing entitlements, through each step of which an applicant seeking reinstatement of his or her permit is expected to progress by applying to the LPC at each stage. The most recent version of this 'permit reinstatement matrix' is shown below in Figure 5.2.

What this means in practice is that an individual applying for reinstatement of his or her takeaway drinking permit after having had the permit revoked – for some breach of the permit conditions – can expect in the first instance to be authorized to purchase a maximum of six cans of light beer or one 750 ml bottle of wine per day. If the individual wants to be permitted to purchase larger quantities, he or she must make a new application, which will be heard at the next monthly meeting of the LPC, and which will – if successful – entitle the individual henceforth to purchase *twelve* cans of light beer or six cans of mid strength beer (but still no full strength beer; the amount of wine permissible is not specified on the matrix) per day. And so the process continues, by another four month-by-month steps (as the matrix shows) before the individual can expect to regain a permit to purchase unrestricted amounts of takeaway liquor. (In the case of residents of Yirrkala or Gunyangara, it is likely that no-one will attain entitlement to purchase an unrestricted amount.) Any decision made by the LPC can be the subject of an appeal to the NT Licensing Commission within 28 days.

Figure 5-2: 'Suggested' Liquor Permit Reinstatement Matrix

<p>APPLY FOR UNRESTRICTED LIQUOR PERMIT</p> <p>↑</p>						
<p>What is the suggested 'cap' on purchasing capacity per day on a restricted permit?</p> <p>↑</p>						
<p>12 Heavy (Full Strength) Beer</p> <p>↑</p>						
<p>6 Heavy (Full Strength) Beer OR 12 Mid Strength Beer</p> <p>↑</p>						
<p>6 Mid Strength Beer OR 12 Light Beer</p> <p>↑</p>						
<p>6 Light Beer OR 1 Bottle of Wine</p> <p>↑</p>						

APPLY FOR REINSTATEMENT ISSUE RESTRICTED LIQUOR PERMIT						
MONTH	1	2	3	4	5	6

In our view, this system raises a number of issues that require consideration and perhaps review. Firstly, as already indicated, nowhere in either the 2007 Harmony Group application to the NTLC or in the NTLC's decision is there reference to a graduated system of this nature. It may well be the case that the Yirrkala LPC wishes to limit the purchasing entitlements of those who for whatever reason lose their permits, and that the 'reinstatement matrix' can be seen as a reflection of these wishes. Even so, this rationale cannot be automatically extended to cover Nhulunbuy.

It is worth remembering that, despite their apparent similarities, between the LPC's in Yirrkala and Gunyangara, on the one hand, and the Nhulunbuy LPC on the other there are some important differences. In principle, the two Yolngu LPCs are intended to be expressions of *community wishes* with regard to alcohol consumption by their residents. The extent to which they fulfill this function is a matter for examination, but the principle is fundamental to their establishment. No corresponding claim can be advanced on behalf of the Nhulunbuy LPC; there is no collective or representative entity in Nhulunbuy that has expressed a desire to regulate alcohol purchases by local residents. Rather, the Nhulunbuy LPC is a by-product of the Yolngu LPCs – a mechanism to enable Nhulunbuy to be incorporated into a regional alcohol management system in a manner that is transparent and non-discriminatory. In principle, all Nhulunbuy residents are, under the system, entitled to purchase unlimited amounts of takeaway alcohol so long as they have a permit to do so. Also under the system, breaches of the permit conditions can lead to permits being revoked, suspended or modified. However, there is no provision in the system as documented for the six-tiered 'reinstatement matrix' that has evolved.

This leads to our second consideration: that in imposing these conditions on individuals' purchasing entitlements, the LPCs – at least in the case of Nhulunbuy – would appear to have gone beyond any powers or authority available to them. A third issue in our view is the

considerable administrative burden placed on all participants in the graduated reinstatement system. Finally, and most importantly, we believe that the system as it has evolved raises serious questions about the role and functions of the LPCs and the individuals responsible for its decisions. Again, our concerns are mostly applicable to Nhulunbuy. If the intention of the 'reinstatement matrix' is to regulate individuals' *consumption* of liquor, the system is anomalous in that, firstly, its purview is purchasing rather than consumption, and in any case it places no limitations on on-premise purchasing or drinking liquor. Further, we are not aware of any evidence to show that a tiered set of entitlements of this nature leads to a reduction in harmful drinking. Finally, the system as it has evolved places health sector representatives on the LPCs in a particularly invidious position, since no responsible health professional can in good conscience condone the consumption (via purchase) of, say, 12 cans of full strength beer per day, since such levels are harmful to both short-term and long-term health of the drinker. Yet that, in effect, is what they are being asked to do. We encountered some evidence of disquiet on the part of health representatives on LPCs on this account.

We recognize that the intentions of those involved in managing the permit system are entirely worthy: they wish to ensure that the system serves to minimize alcohol-related harm in the community. However, in light of the concerns we have raised, we recommend that the Department of Justice reconsider the role of the Nhulunbuy LPC: is it to continue down its present path of seeking to regulate individuals' purchasing entitlements by means of a multi-tiered 'reinstatement matrix', or should it revert to a role more in keeping with the original application and decision, and simply determine who is and who is not entitled to a permit to purchase takeaway liquor? In our view, the latter is the more appropriate course.

We should add that in our discussions with residents of Nhulunbuy we heard some criticism to the effect that the LPC had become something of a 'kangaroo court' with no right or representation and unclear options of appeal.

5.2.4 Issues relating to the IT system

Once a permit is issued it is registered on the DoJ database. The operation of this database is somewhat problematic. It has no fail safe system which provides feedback when incorrect data is entered. It is also severely limited in the information that can be derived from it. As indicated above, although the database can report how many permits are currently issued, it cannot report on where the permits are held, or what consumption limits they stipulate for the permit holder. Purchases of over \$100 in one day in any permit are registered. However once again there is a significant limitation on the functionality of the database, in that it does

not record the actual size of the purchase – merely that it is over \$100. This severely limits its usefulness to monitor individuals who may be buying large amounts of alcohol and selling them on to other people.

6 Establishment and operations of the Special Care Centre, Sobering-up Shelter and Night Patrol

6.1 Special Care Centre

The Special Care Centre is situated approximately one kilometre from the centre of Nhulunbuy. Two buildings are on the premises – the Sobering Up Shelter and the Rehabilitation Centre. Staff quarters are currently under construction. The site of the Centre at this site caused some controversy, with local agencies saying that the Centre was too close to Nhulunbuy, and its location would mean that clients would be too close to all the activities of town, and unable to concentrate on themselves and the direction of their lives. Some services advocated the development of a site that was further from town, and more in harmony with the Yolgnu concept of being healed by living close to their country and culture.

The Centre was designed to offer all of the residential aspects of alcohol related services for the region, and facilitate pathways for clients from the Sobering Up Shelter to the rehabilitation centre through having both services run by one organisation. This plan succeeded for two years. However Mission Australia experienced severe staffing issues which compromised their ability to offer both services, and did not continue the service beyond 2009. The Sobering Up Shelter is now run by the Shire, and the Rehabilitation Centre is run by the Alcohol and Other Drug Program within the NT DHF.

The rehabilitation program at the Special Care Centre offers a mixed model of care with day programs and a 12 week residential program. At the time of interview they were also piloting a service through which they re-admit relapsed former clients for a short program – this is known as ‘pressure cooking’ clients. The total capacity of the Centre is 20 clients, however at the time of interview some of the accommodation was taken as staff quarters.

The Centre receives referrals from the Sobering Up Shelter, the Alcohol Court, Community Corrections, the Royal Darwin and Gove Hospitals, visiting specialists and the local community controlled health care service, Miwatj. An outreach service is provided by the Raypirri Rom team at Miwatj Health Service. This team visits the program every day to talk with clients. They then monitor and support clients who are residents of Gunyangara and Yirrkala on their release. A large majority of clients are Indigenous, however some local non Indigenous clients have used the service.

Feedback from community stakeholders was supportive of the Special Care Centre. It was generally held that the program did as well as could be expected. However several residents of Gunyangara and Yirrkala noted that most residents of their communities who had been through the program had returned to drinking. (However we note that low success rates are the norm for residential treatment programs.)

6.2 Sobering-up Shelter

There is a Sobering Up Shelter with a capacity of 10 beds operating from the same premise as the Special Care Centre. It is currently open from Wednesday to Friday nights, as this period coincides with payday, and is when the greatest demand is present. It is run by East Arnhem Shire, who took over its management from Mission Australia.

The chief source of referrals to the Sobering Up Shelter is the Night Patrols, which are also managed by East Arnhem Shire. Management of the Sobering Up Shelter reports that there is no clear referral process between the Shelter and the Special Care Centre, and at the time of interview, there were no clients moving from the Shelter and in to the Special Care Centre.

The Sobering Up Shelter has struggled to find staff, and has had periods during which it hasn't operated. The East Arnhem Shire is currently raising the wages (and correspondingly shortening opening hours) to see if this will ease recruitment difficulties.

Evaluators received very little feedback about the Sobering Up Shelter, and despite several visits, failed to interview any staff.

6.3 Night patrol

Night Patrol is the final component of the alcohol management strategy in the Gove Peninsula region. The patrols play a harm reduction role, both by protecting drinkers from harmful situations by taking them to the Sobering Up Shelter, and, through the removal of intoxicated people from public places, decreasing the likelihood of alcohol related assaults occurring.

There are three Night Patrols in the region. Nhulunbuy has a Patrol funded by the Northern Territory Department of Health and Families, and both Yirrkala and Gunyangara have patrols which receive funding from the Australian Government Department of the Attorney General.

Night Patrols too have struggled with recruitment, and find it very difficult to employ appropriate staff. The original concept of Night Patrols was to have local people work as patrollers. Such patrollers are well placed to assist their own extended family in sorting out arguments and fights within the community. However very few residents of either Yirrkala or Gunyangara currently work in the Night Patrols, so this aspect of their role is not well met.

Feedback from a number of stakeholders suggests that the Night Patrol's primary role at present is to bring intoxicated people home to their communities. There is some concern at this, because some family members do not wish to have to deal with intoxicated (and possibly violent) family members. They feel that intoxicated people should be taken to the Sobering Up Shelter so that they are sober by the time they return home. (This is an option on some nights each week, but not all.) There was also comment that the community based Night Patrols spend most of their time in Nhulunbuy, and not working in the community addressing more community based issues, and also that they no longer patrol 'the limit' – that is, boundaries of prescribed or restricted areas, where a considerable amount of drinking occurs.

Despite repeated attempts we were unfortunately unable to interview the Coordinator of the Night Patrol service.

7 Outcomes of the alcohol management system

In this section we report on evidence relating to outcomes following commencement of the permit system in March 2008. Four groups of outcome indicators are examined, covering:

- trends in alcohol sales in Nhulunbuy as indicated by wholesale supply of alcohol to outlets in Nhulunbuy;
- presentations at the Emergency Department of Nhulunbuy Hospital for alcohol-related disorders, and alcohol-related hospital separations at Nhulunbuy Hospital;
- trends in incidence of alcohol-related assaults in Nhulunbuy, as recorded by NT Police, and
- trends in public order incidents and apprehensions for public drunkenness in Nhulunbuy as reported by NT Police.

In interpreting these indicators, it should be remembered that the presence of a trend subsequent to commencement of the AMP does not, in itself, signify that the AMP *caused* that trend to occur. It is not possible, especially in the absence of any comparable 'control' towns, to say what would have occurred in the absence of the AMP.

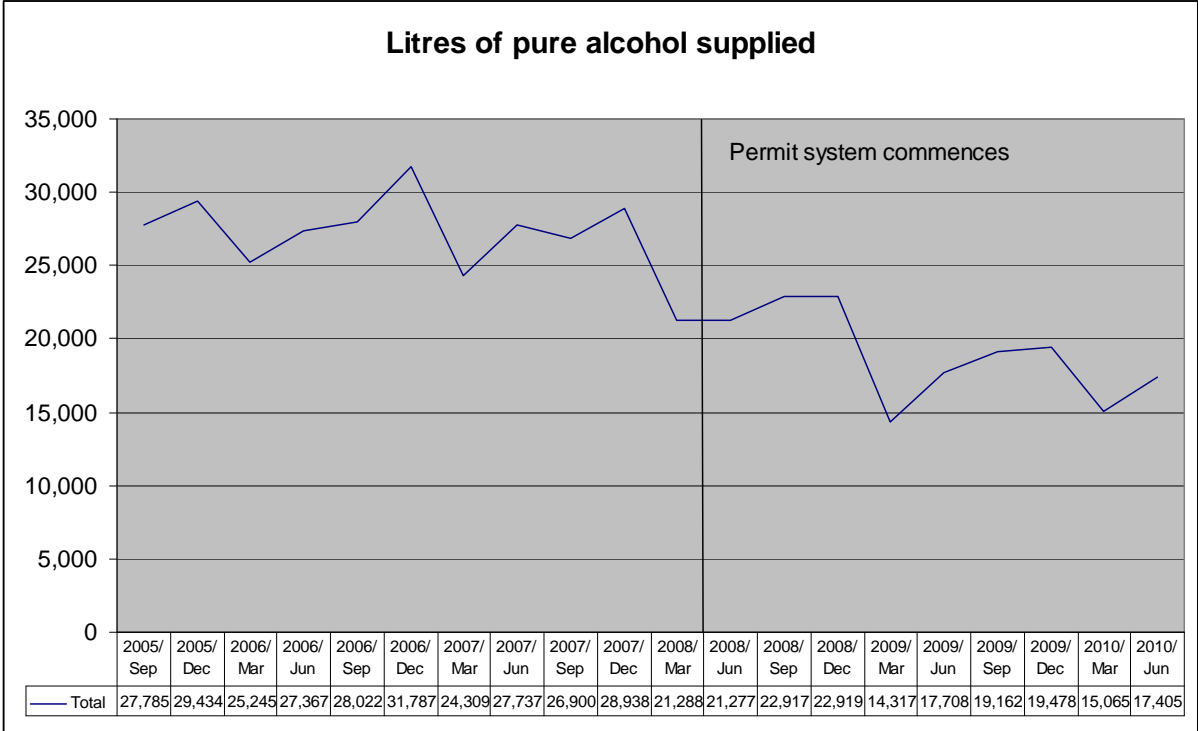
7.1 Trends in total wholesale supplies of alcohol

In the 12 months following commencement of the permit system (i.e. 1 April 2008-31 March 2009)⁷, the total volume of alcohol supplied to outlets in Nhulunbuy was equivalent to 81,430 litres of pure alcohol – 22.3% lower than the 104,862 litres supplied over the preceding 12 months. As Figure 8.1 shows, the trend continued over the following 12 month period – from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 – when total supplies were equivalent to 71,413 litres of pure alcohol, some 12.3% lower than in the preceding 12 month period.

While this suggests that the permit system had a significant and sustained impact on liquor sales in the region, it is also apparent from Figure 7.1 that the downward trend in alcohol supplies began *before* introduction of the permit system, at the end of 2006, largely as a result of a decline in supplies of cask wine.

⁷ The permit system commenced on 15 March 2008. Wholesale liquor supply figures are collated on a quarterly basis, with 1 April 2008 marking commencement of the first quarter following introduction of the permit system.

Figure 7-1: Supply of alcohol to outlets in Gove Peninsula (pure alcohol)



7.1.1 Trends in supplies of beverage categories

Examination of supplies of particular beverage categories indicates that a number of shifts, both prior to and in concert with the introduction of the permit system, have contributed to these trends.

In the financial year 2005-06, almost a third of all the alcohol supplied to Gove Peninsula outlets (30.9%) – in terms of pure alcohol content- took the form of full strength beer, but a further 15% of all alcohol supplied (16,504 litres of pure alcohol) was accounted for by supplies of cask wine, most of it supplied to either Mac’s Liquor (Woolworths) or to the Walkabout Lodge and Tavern. In 2006-07, the total amount of cask wine supplied fell to 2,665 litres of pure alcohol, and accounted for just 2.4% of all alcohol supplied in that year. The decline in supplies of cask wine, however, was offset by increases in supplies of fortified wines (up from 750 litres of pure alcohol in 2005-06 to 4,315 litres in 2006-07) and of full strength beer (up from 33,979 litres of pure alcohol in 2005-06 to 40,235 litres in 2006-07). Total supplies in 2006-07 were in fact slightly higher than in the preceding year (111,854 litres of pure alcohol, compared with 109,830, an increase of 1.8%).

In 2007-08 supplies of cask wine declined still more, to 1,014 litres of pure alcohol and, despite a further increase in supplies of fortified wines (to 6,701 litres of pure alcohol), total supplies of alcohol declined to 98,403 litres of pure alcohol, a fall of 12.0% from the previous

financial year. The main contributors to a further fall in total supplies in financial year 2008-09 were a sharp fall in supplies of fortified wines (down from 6,701 litres of pure alcohol to 533 litres) and a similar decline in supplies of premixed spirit drinks, which fell from 12,183 litres of pure alcohol in 2007-08 to 5,563 litres in 2008-09.

This is likely to have been partially the result of Woolworths, the Arnhem Club and the Walkabout Hotel voluntarily deciding to stop selling cheap, high alcohol content drinks. In March 2007 they stopped selling casks of wine, bottles of port and 'Longneck' bottles of beer.

Another impact on the volume of alcohol consumed is likely to have been the 'G3' project associated with the Rio Alcan mine. The main phase of this took place between 2003 and 2007, and, at its peak saw 1500 additional workers quartered in Nhulunbuy. There has been a gradual decline in the number of 'G3 workers' over the period of the data collection, with 400 workers still remaining in 2010.

7.1.2 Trends in market share

In financial year 2007-08 – most of which covers the period immediately prior to the introduction of the permit system, supplies of liquor to Macs Liquor (Woolworths) accounted for 28.5% of all alcohol supplied to Gove Peninsula outlets, as measured in terms of pure alcohol content. Supplies to Walkabout Lodge and Tavern accounted for a further 41.7% of alcohol supplied, and supplies to The Arnhem Club accounted for 19.9%. The remaining 9.8% of alcohol supplied was divided among the three remaining clubs. In 2008-09, although supplies to Macs Liquor fell in absolute terms, the outlet increased its share of supplies to 33.6% while the Walkabout's share fell to 34.7%. The shares of both The Arnhem Club and the remaining clubs increased slightly (to 21.6% in the case of The Arnhem Club and to 10.0% among the remaining three clubs).

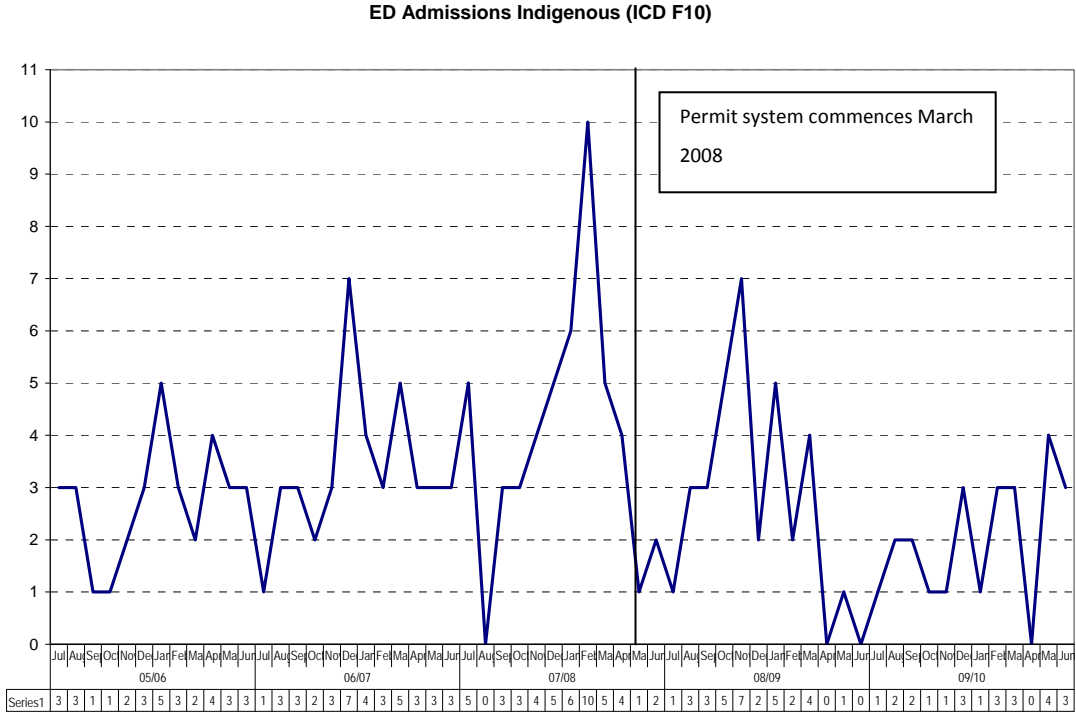
It is likely that there has been a re-distribution of alcohol sales within the clubs, with the Walkabout reporting a 38% decrease in takeaway sales between 2008 and 2010. This decrease has been complemented by an initial increase of 12% on sales at the bar, followed by a 30% decrease (probably due to declining numbers of contract workers at the mine).

7.2 Alcohol-related Emergency Department presentations

In the 12 months prior to the permit system commencing (i.e. April 2007-March 2008) there were 50 Indigenous presentations at the Gove Hospital Emergency Department for conditions coded as 'mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol'. In the 12 months following commencement of the system, the number fell by 22% to 39 presentations. In the

subsequent 12 month period – April 2009 – March 2010) the total fell by more than 50% again to 18 presentations. Figure 7.2 charts the monthly trend.

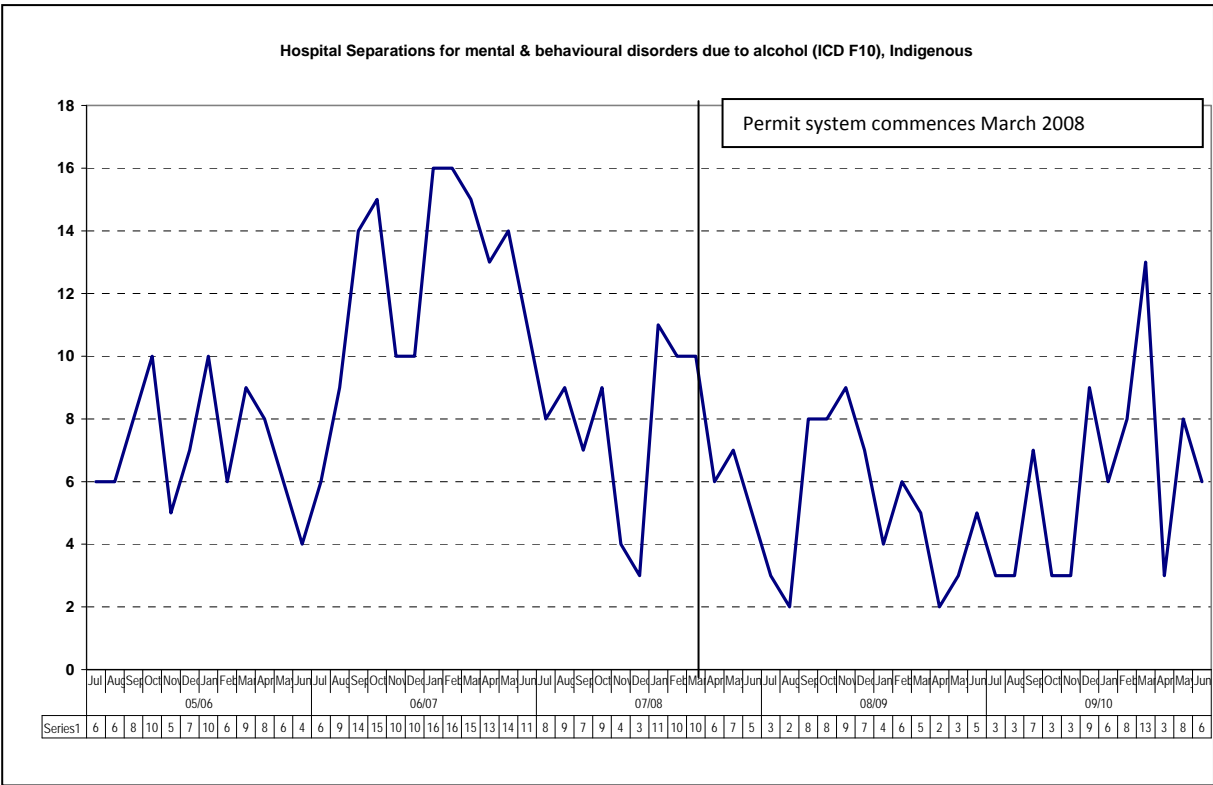
Figure 7-2: Indigenous Emergency Department presentations, Gove Hospital, for mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol



7.3 Alcohol-related hospital separations

Trends in Indigenous hospital separations for mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol tell a similar story (see Figure 7.3). Over the 12 months prior to commencement of the permit system –April 2007 to March 2008 – there were 109 separations. Over the next 12 months the number fell to 70 – a decline of 35.8% - and in the subsequent 12 month period (April 2009 to March 2010) it declined slightly again, to 65 separations (a fall of 7.1%).

Figure 7-3: Indigenous hospital separations, Gove Hospital, for mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol



7.4 Hospital separations for injury

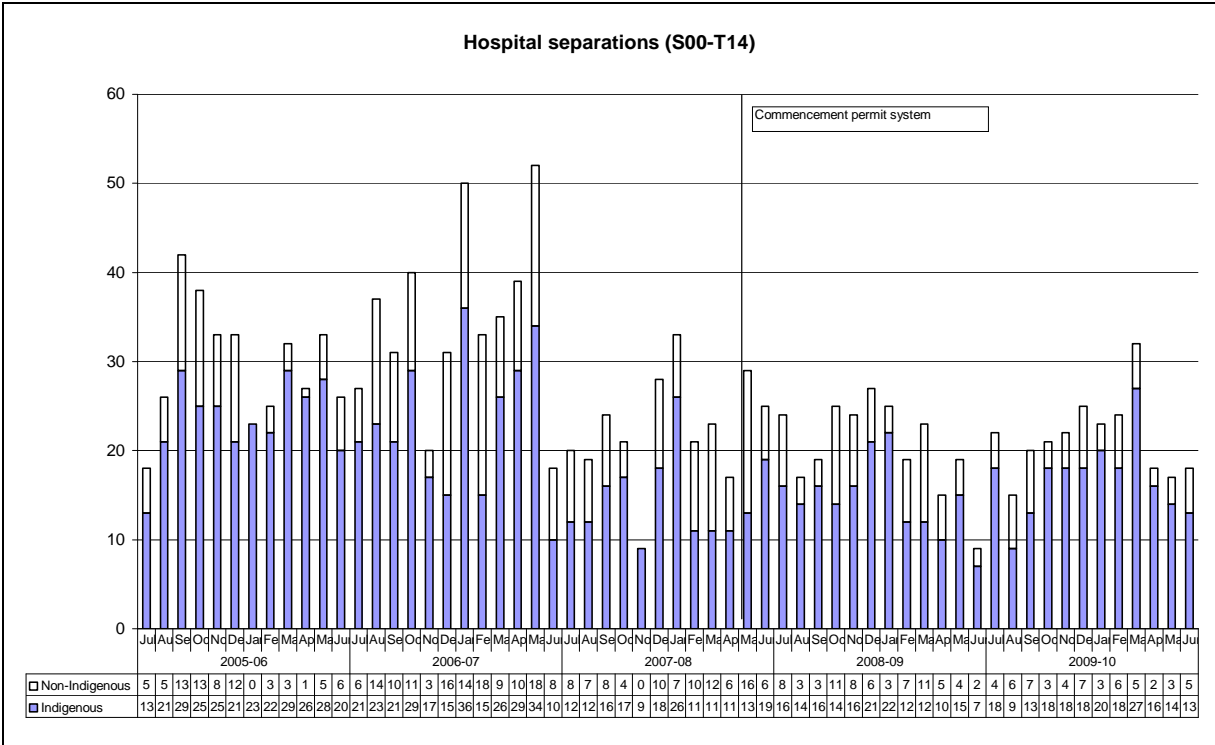
In the 12 months prior to introduction of the permit system in March 2008 there were 205 Indigenous hospital separations at Gove hospital for injuries and 102 non-Indigenous separations. In the 12 months following commencement of the Permit System, the number of Indigenous separations declined by 9.3% to 186 and the number of non-Indigenous separations declined by 13.7% to 88 (see Table 7.1). In the case of Indigenous separations, the number remained at the same level in the following 12 month period (April 2009-Mar 2010), while the number of non-Indigenous separations fell even further, to 56.

Table 7-1: Injury separations (ICD Codes S00-T14), Gove Hospital

Period/injury separations	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total
Apr 06-Mar 07	277	113	390
Apr 07-Mar 08	205	102	307
Apr 08-Mar 09	186	88	274
Apr 09-Mar 10	191	56	247

While these figures suggest that the Permit System has had a positive effect on injuries among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents, it is also noteworthy that, among Indigenous people, an even more marked reduction occurred in the 12 months prior to the Permit System, from 277 in April 2006-March 2007 to 205 between April 2007 and March 2008 – a fall of 26% (See Figure 7.4).

Figure 7-4: Hospital separations, Gove Hospital, for injuries



Feedback from medical practitioners at the Miwatj Health Service reported that the introduction of the permit system had had an immediate and sustained impact on their workloads. Prior to the permit system medical practitioners at the Miwatj clinic in Nhulunbuy would routinely spend at least an hour working with the alcohol related traumas of clients who were sitting on the verandah waiting for them. They reported to us that this pattern of presentations has now disappeared, and that overall they see far fewer clients with alcohol related trauma. Similar feedback was given by staff from the community health clinics at Yirrkala and Gnyangara. One long time staff member commented: ‘The permit system is great – it has definitely saved lives, and I’m very grateful for it’.

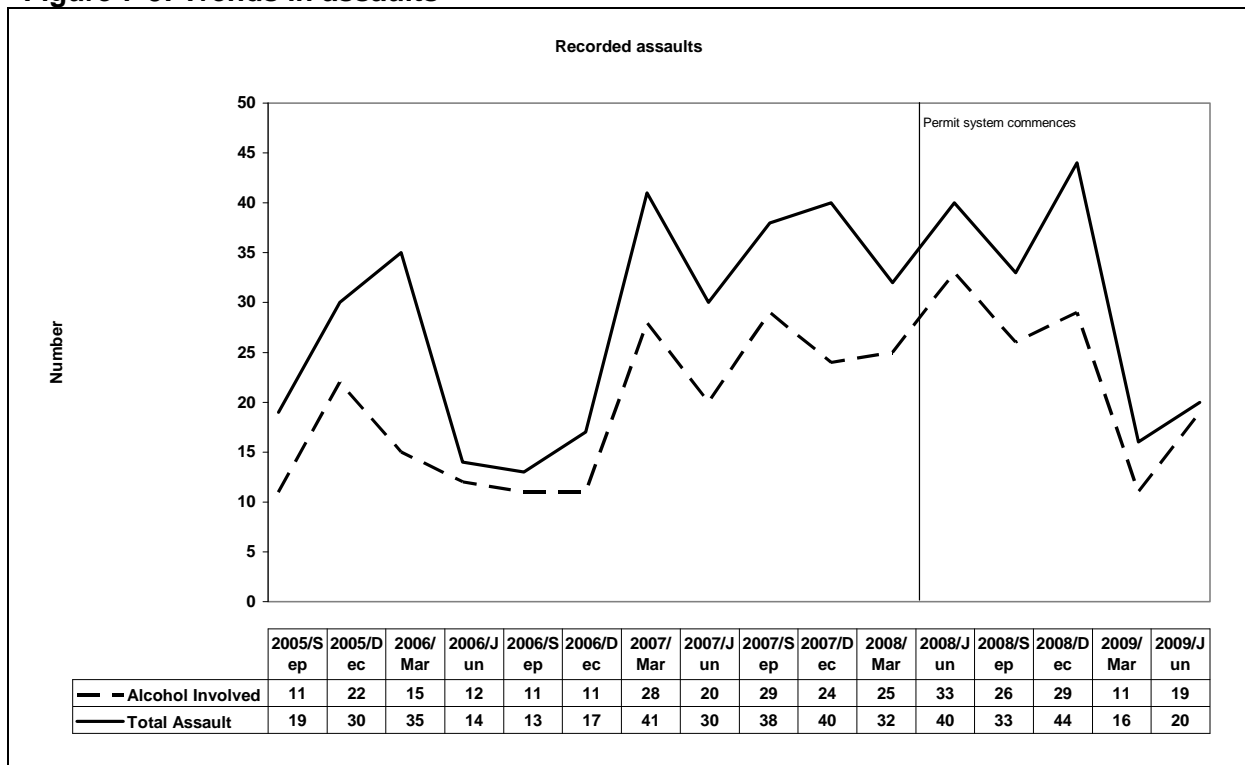
7.5 Trends in assaults

Two categories of recorded assaults were used for this evaluation: those recorded as ‘alcohol involved’, and ‘total assaults’. Trends in both in Nhulunbuy are presented below in

Figure 7.5. Commencement of the permit system did not lead to a change in either category. In the 12 months prior to commencement (April 2007 – March 2008) 98 assaults involving alcohol were recorded; in the 12 months following commencement, 99 were recorded. Similarly, in the 12 months prior to commencement of the permit system, the total number of assaults recorded was 140. In the following year it fell slightly, to 133 assaults.

As Figure 7.5 also shows, a significant decline in assaults took place in the March quarter of 2009 – but by then the permit system had been in place for more than 12 months, so the decline cannot be attributed to it. There may, however, be a decline in the severity of some assaults, with police commenting that they do not deal with as many ‘nasty ones’ as they did prior to the permit system. Another factor to be taken into consideration in the analysis of this data is that reporting rates may have changed over the period. Police also commented that the work done to encourage women to lay charges has had an impact, and that a greater proportion of domestic violence incidents were now reported.

Figure 7-5: Trends in assaults



7.6 Trends in disturbances and anti-social behaviour

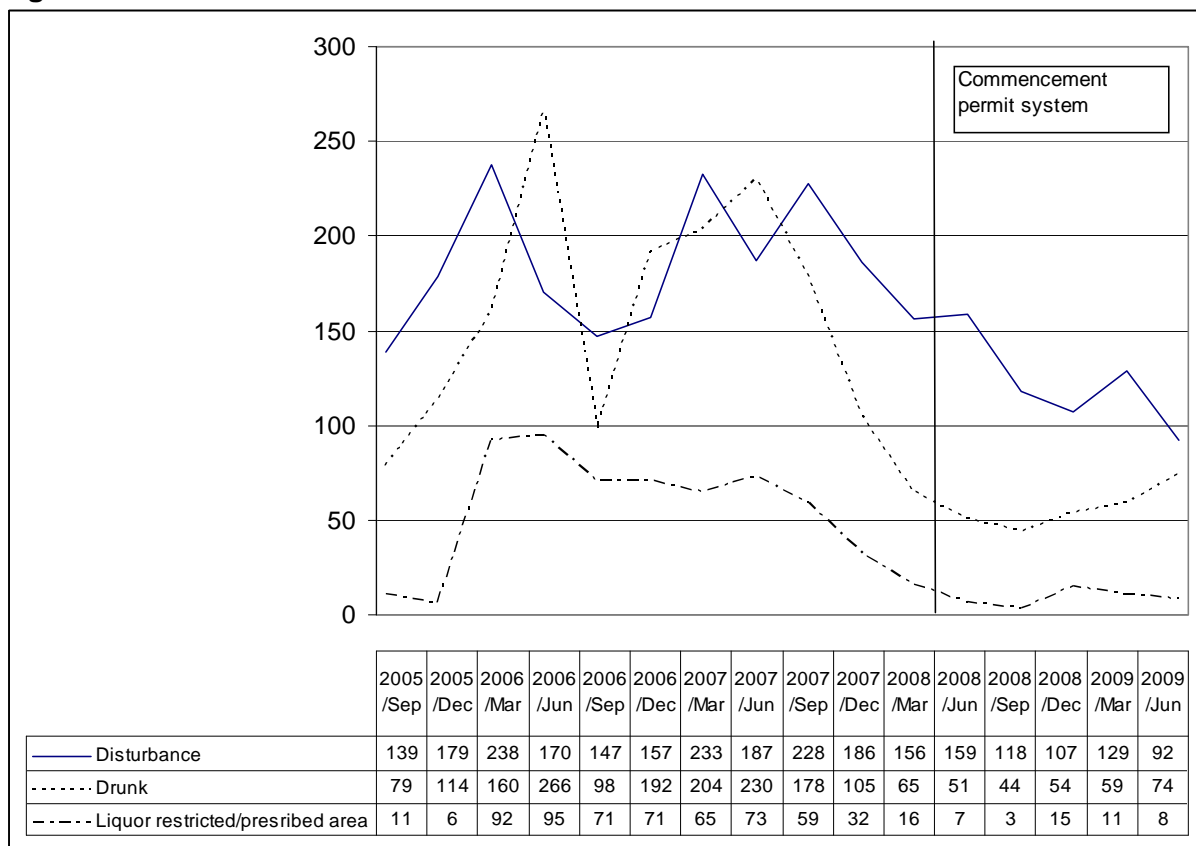
As indicated earlier, incidents recorded by police as various forms of disturbance or anti-social behaviour were grouped into four categories:

- Anti-social behaviour;

- Disturbance
- Drunk person, and
- Liquor in prescribed area, restricted area, etc.

In the first category – anti-social behaviour – only 27 incidents were recorded between July 2005 and June 2009. This category has therefore been excluded from the table below, which records trends in the remaining three categories.

Figure 7-6: Trends in disturbances and anti-social behaviour



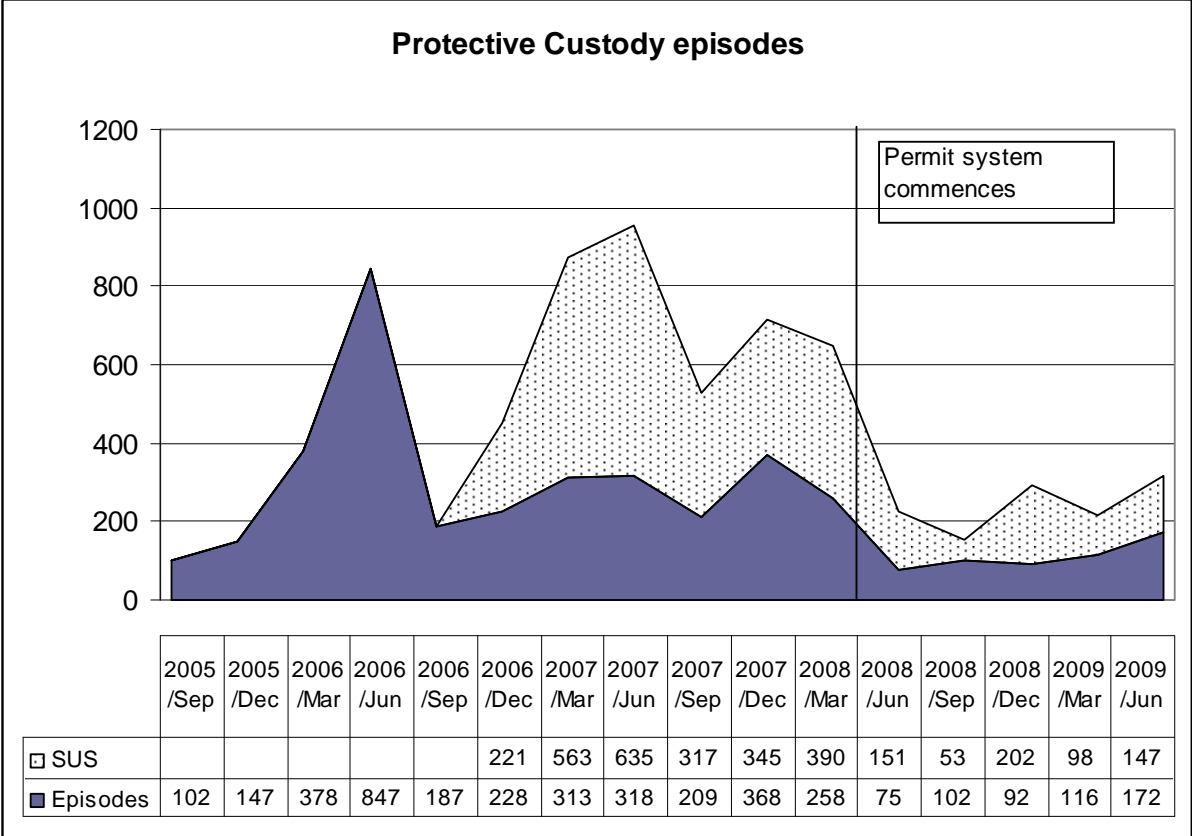
As in the case of several other outcome indicators, commencement of the permit system was followed by a sustained decline in disturbances, suggesting that the permit system had a positive impact. The number of disturbances in the 12 months following commencement of the permit system (513 disturbances) was 32.2% lower than in the 12 months prior to commencement. However, as Figure 8.6 also shows, the downward trend commenced prior to the permit system coming into effect, suggesting that other factors were also at work.

Trends in incidents involving a ‘drunk person’ do not show the same post-permit system decline.

7.7 Trends in apprehensions for public drunkenness

In the 12 months prior to commencement of the permit system a total of 2840 apprehensions for public drunkenness were recorded. In the 12 months following introduction of the permit system the number fell to 889 episodes – a decline of 68.7%. Once again, however, as figure 7.7 shows, the decline had begun before introduction of the permit system.

Figure 7-7: Apprehensions for public drunkenness (protective custody)



7.8 Conclusions

On almost all of the indicators considered above, introduction of the permit system in March 2008 was followed by a decline both in apparent liquor sales and in alcohol-related harm – specifically in Indigenous alcohol-related emergency department presentations and hospital separations, injuries (non-Indigenous as well as Indigenous), disturbances and apprehensions for public drunkenness. These declines have been sustained. In several of these instances, however, the decline commenced between one and two years prior to introduction of the permit system, suggesting that other causal factors, such as the voluntary cessation of sales of cask wine greater than 2 litres by some outlets, may also have contributed to the outcomes.

8 Community views regarding the permit system

We gathered evidence about people's views regarding the permit system from two main sources: stakeholder interviews, and from a street survey conducted in February 2011. In this section, we present findings from the street survey first, followed by findings from stakeholder interviews.

The interview schedule used in the survey covered six topics, as well as some questions on the respondent's socio-demographic background. (The full text of the schedule is included in this report as Appendix B.) The six topics were:

1. As you probably know, to purchase takeaway alcohol in Nhulunbuy you must have a permit. Do you support this requirement?
2. Do you support the current system of banning drinking in public throughout much of the region?
3. At present, there are no special restrictions under the local Alcohol Management System on drinking inside licensed premises, such as bars. Do you support this arrangement?
4. In your opinion, has the permit system had beneficial effects in the community? (If respondent answered 'yes' s/he was invited to describe the benefits.)
5. What about harmful effects: has the permit system had any negative effects? (If respondent answered 'yes' s/he was invited to describe the negative effects.)
6. In future, do you think that the permit system should be:
 - Retained in its present form
 - Retained, but with modifications.
 - Abandoned(Respondents who advocated modifications were asked to describe the changes they wished to see.)

The socio-demographic questions were:

7. How many years have you lived in East Arnhem?
8. Do you currently have a permit to purchase takeaway alcohol in Nhulunbuy?
9. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?
10. Do you mind telling me if your age is below 45 years, or 45 or older?

Nhulunbuy Corporation Limited issued a permit for a street stall for the purposes of conducting the survey in the town centre on the dates 10-11 February and 24 – 25 February 2011. One research team member (JF) collected interviews on 10-11 February and another member (HR) did so on 24-25 February. On both occasions, participants were recruited from people who stopped at the stall, were advised about the nature of the survey, and gave informed consent to participate.

A total of 112 completed surveys were collected over the two data collection periods. Table 8.1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 8-1: Socio-demographic characteristics of sample (unweighted)

Indigenous respondents	51
Non-Indigenous respondents	61
Males	69
Females	43
Below the age of 45 years	63
Over the age of 45 years	49
Holding current takeaway permit	57
Not holding takeaway permit	55
Length of residency – average	21.4 years
Length of residency – range	1 year through to 60 years
<hr/>	
Total number of respondents	112

According to the 2006 ABS Census of Population and Housing, the total ‘usual resident’ population of the area under review was 5,826, of whom 1,707 people, or 29.3%, were Indigenous, distributed as shown in Table 8.2 below.

Table 8-2: Distribution of Indigenous and non-Indigenous population, 2006

Locality	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total pop
Yirrkala	576	111	687
Laynhapuy Homelands	655	97	752
Marngarr	242	33	275
Nhulunbuy	234	3878	4112
Total	1707	4119	5826

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007) and Sanders (2010)

The community sample therefore over-represented Indigenous respondents (who constituted 45.5% of the sample, compared with 29.3% of the population). To correct for this, the sample

was weighted in the analysis below. In the account that follows, we first summarize quantitative findings with regard to support for specific measures, then describe report respondents' reasons and comments.

8.1 Extent of support for specific measures

Support for the requirement to have a permit to purchase takeaway alcohol in Nhulunbuy was indicated by over half of the respondents (54.4%), with 43.8% indicating they were against the permit system, and 1.7% saying that they did not know. Support for the permit system was consistent across genders among non-Indigenous respondents, however, Indigenous females were more likely to support the system (42.9%) than Indigenous males (14.8%).

A majority of respondents (59.6%) stated that they felt the permit system had had beneficial effects in the community, but almost as many (50.8%) believed that it had had harmful/negative effects in the community. (It was of course possible to perceive both beneficial and harmful effects, as some did.)

There was also majority support across all categories of respondents for the current system of banning drinking throughout much of the region. Over two thirds (69.4%) of respondents were in favour of the current system, with less than one third (30.6%) stating they were not in favour. Amongst Indigenous respondents, almost half (48.5%) were in favour and 51.5% not in favour.

Two-thirds of respondents (65.3%) were in favour of the current system under which no special restrictions are imposed on drinking inside licensed premises, with this pattern consistent among both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous respondents.

8.2 Respondents' comments on the permit system

The majority of respondents who supported the requirement to have a permit saw it as a means of providing controls on alcohol consumption at a community level. We also heard evidence of a belief that the permit system has reduced availability of alcohol to minors, and reduced the total amount of alcohol purchased. Some also saw the permit system as encouraging people have to think about their actions, and as imposing a measure of accountability on people who were seen as abusing alcohol. The limits placed by the permit system on how much liquor some people could purchase was said by some to have encouraged better management of their finances.

The permit system was said by some to have reduced the visible public consumption of alcohol, fighting, humbugging, and the associated legacy of broken bottles, broken glass, and other trash. An Indigenous male noted that the permit system had “got the long-grassers out of town”. Some female respondents also stated that levels of domestic violence in the community had declined following introduction of the permit system. For some, the benefits of the permit system, though real, were small, and leave remaining problems at too high a level to be acceptable to the community.

Among those who did not support the permit system, or considered it to have had adverse consequences, some argued that a majority of people were being punished for the actions of an irresponsible minority. Some respondents viewed drinking as a basic right that was being infringed upon. Individual rights and responsibilities were also seen by some as deserving to take precedence over the needs of the community; as one respondent put it: “everyone should be responsible for their own wellbeing”. Some of the Indigenous male respondents who were against the permit system had themselves been denied a permit, while others claimed that the system had contributed to an increase in crime by encouraging people to steal alcohol, which “gives us Yolngu a bad name”. Some respondents linked the permit system to ‘fridging’ - a recently developed local term describing the act of stealing alcohol from a fridge usually located on the back veranda of private premises.

Reduced availability of takeaway alcohol was also alleged by some respondents to have led to illegal on-selling of liquor to people without permits, at inflated prices, and to individuals being harassed to purchase alcohol for non-permit holders. Some claimed that some young women without permits were swapping sexual favours to obtain alcohol. It was also alleged that the permit system had led to increased consumption of cannabis and kava.

Some (mainly non-Indigenous) respondents believed that the increased demand for on-premise alcohol generated by the permit system had in turn led to a deterioration in standards at licensed venues. Finally, for some the permit system was ‘a hassle’ and a source of confusion, especially to newcomers.

8.3 Respondents’ comments on the ban on drinking in public through most of the region

Although, as already indicated, the Public Restricted Area and its associated exempt areas enjoyed majority support among respondents, a number of criticisms were made by some

respondents. In particular, critics claimed that the current system had simply relocated the problem to areas outside of the public view where, as a result of the absence of people to monitor activities, risks of adverse consequences were higher than they would otherwise have been. Some Yolngu respondents also complained that family members who were drinkers, usually males, would now go to places where they could drink and stay for extended periods, including Darwin and Katherine. This was summed up by one respondent who stated “my people walk as a family and they get separated”.

8.4 Respondents’ comments on current conditions governing drinking inside licensed premises

As already indicated, the alcohol management system does not place any restrictions on consumption on licensed premises, above those already applicable to any licensed premises, or those imposed by licensees themselves.

Respondents who were in favour of the current system noted that there was already legislation which restricted the sale of alcohol to people who were intoxicated and governed the actions of security guards in licensed premises. In this vein, issues of individual rights were also noted, as well as a view that enough restrictions were already in place under current licensing legislation. One Indigenous female suggested that further restrictions inside licensed premises may encourage people to drink outside of these premises, when they were in fact safer drinking inside controlled premises than outside.

Most of those who were not satisfied with the present system governing on-premise consumption either favoured additional restrictions or more rigorous enforcement of existing laws and regulations. Suggestions for more stringent conditions included further reductions in trading hours, in particular earlier closing times; enforcement of stricter dress and footwear codes; creation of a system under which bans imposed by one outlet automatically apply to all premises, and a provision under which loss of a permit to purchase takeaway liquor would also entail loss of entitlement to purchase on-premise liquor.

Several respondents stated that adherence to the Responsible Serving of Alcohol (RSA) code was often not maintained. Some licensees were perceived as being negligent in the area of the serving of alcohol to people who were intoxicated, with no limits appearing to be enforced on the quantity of alcohol served to intoxicated individuals. A number of Yolngu respondents also claimed that bouncers – especially at the Walkabout Hotel – used

unnecessary violence in evicting customers. (This was a view we also heard expressed by other people interviewed in the course of the evaluation.)

8.5 What next? Respondents’ views on the future of the permit system

Respondents’ responses regarding what should happen to the permit system in future are summarised in Table 8.3.

Table 8-3: Respondents' views regarding future of permit system

In future, the permit system should be:	No	%
Retained in its present form	33	29.5
Retained, with modifications	40	35.9
Abandoned	39	34.6
Total	112	100.0

As Table 9.3 shows, a total of around two-thirds of respondents (65.4%) either favoured retention of the permit system in its present form, or with modifications. Those advocating modifications proposed a variety of measures. These included a suggestion that the permit system should apply to on-premise as well as takeaway sales, and a call for greater community consultation in relation to re-issuing revoked permits. Some non-Indigenous respondents suggested that the permit system should not be imposed on everyone, but only on those with past histories of alcohol misuse or alcohol related violence. Some Indigenous respondents, on the other hand, argued that obtaining a permit should be made easier for everyone, and that even those without a permit should be able to purchase small quantities of takeaway alcohol.

8.6 Feedback from Yolngu communities on the permit system

In addition to the Yolngu people interviewed as part of the survey, semi structured interviews were conducted with 21 residents of Yirrkala and Gunyangara. Opinions on the impacts of the permit system were divided. Many senior women were mildly supportive of it, saying that they believed that in general people were drinking less than they had been prior to its introduction. However they still felt extremely anxious about alcohol and its impact on their community, and the permit system had not fundamentally changed these worries.

Many younger people, particularly young men were vehemently opposed to permits. Their perception was that it had created a lot of social tension when people who had lost their

permits pressured people who did have a permit to buy alcohol for them. One older man interviewed had given up his permit because he did not want the 'humbug' associated with it. They also commented that the permit system was 'pushing people out of town' to drink in Darwin – which is a much higher risk environment than East Arnhem. Finally they disliked the practice of Yolgnu befriending Balanda (non Aboriginal) people so that they would buy alcohol for them. They felt that this practice was demeaning, and makes them 'feel no good'.

Concern was also raised by some interviewees, who pointed out that the permit system, by giving permit holders the right to bring alcohol into the communities, changed a long held stance of having 'dry' communities. However these same people acknowledged that there was less drinking within their communities since the introduction of the permit system. Further concern was expressed on the drinking environment provided by the Walkabout Bar. Several people echoed views already reported by referring to the security staff that have been employed at the bar, saying that they were sometimes extremely rough with Yolgnu drinkers. (As we recount below, licensees have their own perspective on this issue.)

8.7 Feedback from stakeholder agencies

In contrast to the tenor of feedback received from residents of both Yirrkala and Gunyangara, the overwhelming majority of agencies interviewed were extremely supportive of the permit system, and believed that it had significantly reduced the workload of health and welfare organizations. As described above, staff from the Miwatj Health Service identified a clear drop in the number of alcohol related trauma presentations seen at the clinics since the introduction of the permit system. In the words of one practitioner:

There has been a huge health impact from the permit system – essentially in the areas of the number of people presenting who are intoxicated, and the number of family violence presentations.

This was reinforced staff at the St John's Ambulance Service, who commented that their call outs had dropped from 4 – 5 per day, to 3 – 4 per day since the introduction of the permit system. A member of the Family and Children's Services team which manages cases of neglected and/or abused children commented that staff in the team describe their workload in terms of 'pre and post' permit system. The impact has been very noticeable, and they now have more gambling and marijuana related cases than those involving alcohol abuse.

Both of these health services commented that the 'long grassers', or people who live on the fringes of Nhulunbuy, had left town to drink in Darwin or Katherine. Several people commented that for the individuals who had left Nhulunbuy to drink elsewhere, this was not a good thing. Drinking away from their home community meant that they did not have access

to family to look after them, and were likely to be in a more risky environment than that of Nhulunbuy.

Several stakeholders said they believed that the alcohol outlets still served alcohol to people who were intoxicated, and that the Responsible Service of Alcohol was not sufficiently observed. This was hotly contested by staff of the alcohol outlets interviewed.

Not all alcohol outlets were interviewed, however one that was commented that the permit system presented them with a number of difficulties. These lay in the conduct of sales from the bar. The number of patrons drinking at the bar had increased substantially, and with this came the need for increased security staff. The cost of providing the premises with security staff had increased threefold since the beginning of the permit system. Part of the need for increased security staff was the expansion of the number of patrons who were banned from the premises. There had always been a 'banned list' at this outlet, but prior to the permit system there were generally 15 – 20 people who would be refused admission. At the time of interview no fewer than 173 people had been placed on the banned list. According to the licensee at this outlet, another difficulty was dealing with patrons who were becoming intoxicated. The licensee reported that his staff check on patrons approximately every two hours, and ask those that are becoming intoxicated to leave. This can become difficult, and stressful for security staff to implement.

Some agencies put forward suggestions for improvements of the current permit system. The key suggestion made was to shift from daily to weekly permits, which would entitle the permit holder to buy a quantity of alcohol per week.. It was felt that this would both reduce the amount of alcohol consumed, and manage the amount of 'humbag' to which permit holders are subject.

8.8 Conclusion

Because the sample used in this evaluation was not a true random sample, we cannot infer with accuracy the degree of support for the current system across the whole community. However, these findings suggest that the system enjoys majority support among the non-Yolngu population, while among Yolngu it remains a matter of contention. There appears to be strong support for retention of the permit system, but in many cases this is qualified with a desire to see modifications made.

Semi-structured interviews with Yolngu people at Yirrkala and Gunyangara pointed to the presence of divided opinions about the permit system, with many people believing that it had

contributed to a reduction in harmful drinking in the communities, but some also asserting that the system had led to a migration of drinkers to Katherine and Darwin. Agencies such as social and health services tended to be strongly supportive of the system.

One point not discussed above, but mentioned by several agencies, was a perceived dearth of services for non Indigenous people in need of help for alcohol-related issues. There is no access to outpatient counselling (the Employment Assistance Services Association stopped visiting Nhulunbuy, and there is no service to fill the gap.) There is also no home detoxification service which might be expected to be patronised by non Indigenous residents.

9 Conclusions and recommendations

Our conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

9.1 Conclusions

9. The permit system appears to have contributed to a significant and sustained decline in alcohol consumption in the Gove Peninsula.
10. This appears to be associated with a decline in several aspects of alcohol-related harm, in particular harms to health arising from acute episodes of alcohol misuse, such as injuries; assaults, and alcohol-related public order offences.
11. These beneficial changes cannot be attributed solely to the permit system, as some of the trends commenced before introduction of the system, suggesting that other factors have also been at work. These are likely to include a voluntary ban imposed on sales of cask wine by Woolworths, the Walkabout Hotel and the Arnhem Club, and demographic changes associated with expansion at the mine site.
12. Quantitative evidence of the changes referred to above is supported by qualitative evidence gathered from service providers such as Miwatj Health.
13. In terms of outcomes, therefore, the permit system can be considered a success.
14. We also attempted to gauge the extent of public support for the permit system. In Nhulunbuy, while some individuals regard it as an intrusion on their 'right' to drink, or as an unwarranted inconvenience, the system appears to enjoy enough support or acceptance to give local legitimacy and to make it sustainable – subject to qualifications we outline below.
15. Among Yolngu, as so often occurs in connection with alcohol-related issues, opinions appear to be sharply divided. Some – especially older women – support the system. Many young men oppose it, and claim that it has led drinkers to move to Darwin and Katherine, where they are more likely to experience harms.
16. On the negative side, the permit system appears to have had five main unintended consequences: firstly, it has probably contributed to a drift of drinkers to Darwin and Katherine, although it would be extremely difficult to disentangle these effects from possible impact of the NT Emergency Response ('the intervention') that took effect in late 2007. Secondly, anecdotal evidence indicates that increases in on-premise sales that followed from the permit system and the limitations it imposed on takeaway sales have been accompanied significant increases in security costs for the outlets concerned. Thirdly, the same factors also appear to have been accompanied in some

outlets by poor quality service, including service to intoxicated patrons, and unnecessary aggression on the part of some bouncers. (We recognize that this evidence is contentious, disputed by some licensees, and difficult to verify. However, we are satisfied on the basis of the number of allegations made to us that the allegations should be given credence and taken seriously.) Fourthly, introduction of the permit system has meant that Yirrkala, which was formerly a 'dry' community under the NT Liquor Act – at least in principle – no longer enjoys that status, since those with permits to purchase takeaway liquor can now bring it back to the community. This is a source of concern to some residents. Finally, in the communities of Ganyungara and Yirrkala the permit system appears to have generated an increase in social tensions between those who do, and do not, have permits.

9.2 Recommendations

6. In light of the findings above, we believe that the permit system *in some form* should be retained. However, two questions immediately arise.
7. Firstly, given that the NT Government has now moved to introduce a Territory-wide permit system based on identifying those who are *not* permitted to purchase takeaway alcohol (in other words, an exclusionary system, in contrast to the Gove Peninsula system which is inclusionary), a question arises as to whether or not the Gove Peninsula should retain its own distinctive system. Our response is that, if the communities of Yirrkala and Ganyungara wish to retain the capacity to regulate alcohol purchasing entitlements on an individual-by-individual basis – as the present system allows – then they should be entitled to do so, and the respective Liquor Permit Committees should be regarded as expressions of community intent.
8. We do not believe that any such description fits the Nhulunbuy LPC. The original intention under the alcohol management system was that Nhulunbuy residents would enjoy an automatic entitlement to a permit, which however could be revoked should the holder commit an alcohol-related offence or misdemeanour. Logically, this is more suited to the kind of exclusionary permit system being rolled out across the rest of the NT. However, on the grounds of equity and fairness, it would probably not be acceptable for Yolngu access to takeaway alcohol to be governed by one sort of permit system and Balanda access by a different system. Therefore, should the Yirrkala and Ganyungara communities wish to retain the present system, it should be retained in Nhulunbuy also.
9. However, in the event of this occurring, we recommend that the Nhulunbuy LPC abandon its present approach of imposing a graduated series of purchasing entitlements on those whose permits are revoked and who seek reinstatement. As we

argue in the evaluation, this approach, apart from being administratively burdensome, has no basis for justification either in the Licensing Commission's 2007 decision or in principles of public health or policing. The task of the Nhulunbuy LPC should be to determine who does and who does not have a permit to purchase takeaway liquor.

10. Should the present permit system be retained, and assuming that the technology permits, we recommend that consideration be given to defining the permits as authorising a *weekly* purchasing entitlement, rather than a daily entitlement. This would help to align limits on the quantity of alcohol that it is possible for an individual to purchase on a takeaway basis with what are regarded as safe levels of alcohol consumption.

10 Appendix A: Forms associated with the permit system

Northern Territory Department of Justice

Licensing, Regulation and Alcohol Strategy

Department of Justice

Shop 6

Endeavour Square

NHULUNBUY NT 0881

Tel 08 8939 2800

Fax 08 8939 2888

Mobile 0457 553 892

Email sharyn.quigley@nt.gov.au

LETTER OF RESIDENCY AND SUPPORT FOR LIQUOR PERMIT APPLICATION

Gunyangara Liquor Permit Committee Nhulunbuy Liquor Permit Committee

Yirrkala Liquor Permit Committee Wallaby Beach Liquor Permit Committee

Date of Application:

Referred To: Primary Tenant / Owner of Premises

Referred By: Yirrkala Liquor Permit Committee

Applicant's Name:

Date of Birth (or approximate age):

Gender: Male Female

Address provided in application:

Contact Number:

Name of Primary Tenant or Owner of Residence:

(As provided by applicant)

Contact Number: _____

On **28 May 2010, Mr...** applied for the following:

An East Arnhem Liquor Permit

An increase on his/her current East Arnhem Liquor Permit from eg 6 Light to 6 Heavy.

As the primary tenant or owner of the residence can you please confirm that (please tick):

This person lives permanently at your residence; or

This person is a visitor staying at your residence.

If a visitor, how long *has this person been staying* at your house? _____

How long do you think they *will be staying* at your house? _____

As the primary tenant or owner of the residence do you (please tick):

Support this application?

Do NOT support this application?

If you do not support this application could you please provide reasons why you do not support it.

(Eg. The applicant does not always live here, the applicant stays here only sometimes and lives in town, I do not want alcohol brought to the house, the applicant becomes angry or argumentative when drinking alcohol etc).

_____/_____/2010

Name and Signature of Primary Tenant or Home Owner

Date

_____/_____/2010

Name and Signature of Person Assisting in Completion of Form

Date

I thank you for your assistance in this matter.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Sharyn Quigley

Chairperson

Yirrkala Liquor Permits Committee

11 Appendix B: Community survey questionnaire

Gove Peninsula Alcohol Management System: community survey

Good morning/afternoon. My name is [_first name_]. We're conducting a survey on behalf of the Northern Territory Government, to obtain people's opinions of current measures being taken to manage alcohol problems in East Arnhem. It's part of an official evaluation being carried by the Menzies School of Health Research for the Government. Would you be able to spare about 5 minutes to answer a few questions about your views? Neither your name, nor any other details will be made available to anyone and all your comments are anonymous and confidential.

5. As you probably know, to purchase takeaway alcohol in Nhulunbuy you must have a permit. Do you support this requirement?

Yes 1

No 2

Comments/reasons.....
.....
.....
.....

6. Do you support the current system of banning drinking in public throughout much of the region?

Yes 1

No 2

Comments/reasons.....
.....
.....
.....

7. At present, there are no special restrictions under the local Alcohol Management System on drinking inside licensed premises, such as bars.. Do you support this arrangement?

Yes 1

No 2

Comments/reasons.....
.....
.....
.....

8. In your opinion, has the permit system had beneficial effects in the community?

Yes 1

No 2

4(a (If yes), could you tell me briefly what you consider the main benefits to be?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. What about harmful effects: has the permit system had any negative effects?

Yes 1

No 2

5.(a) (If yes), could you tell me briefly what you consider the main negative effects to be?

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. In future, do you think that the permit system should be:

Retained in its present form 1

Retained, but with modifications. 2

Abandoned 3

6(a) If you think the system should be retained with modifications, what changes would you like to see?

.....
.....

.....
.....

Finally, just a few questions about you:

7. How many years have you lived in East Arnhem _____ years

8. Do you currently have a permit to purchase takeaway alcohol in Nhulunbuy? Yes 1 No 2

9. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? Yes 1 No 2

10. Finally, do you mind telling me if your age is below 45 years, or 45 or older?

Below 45 1

45 years or older 2

11. These are all my questions. Are there any other brief comments you would like to add?

.....
...
.....
...
.....

12 Note gender: Male 1 Female 2

Thank you for your time. Have a good morning/day/ evening.

12 Appendix C: List of people interviewed

- Ms Sharyn Quigley, Department of Justice Project Officer
- Mark McKenzie – Department of Justice Permits Officer
- John Cook – Indigenous Coordination Centre
- Phil Sampson – Harmony Group
- Mark Ferguson – St John’s Ambulance
- Government Business Managers for Mission Beach and Yirrkala
- Senior Sergeant Martin McCallum – Nhulunbuy Police
- Chris Adepyibi – Regional Justice Project Officer, Department of Justice
- Shane Flanigan – Alcohol and other drugs project officer, NT Department of Health and Families
- John Tonnish and Michael O’Rourke – Walkabout Hotel
- Assistant Manager, Golf Club
- Ali McLeay – Special Care Centre
- Dale Keenhe – Social Services Manager East Arnhem Shire
- Richard Humphries – Shire Services Manager at Gunyangara
- Eddie Mulholland – CEO Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Bill McMillan – Project officer for Alcohol, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Harvey Creswell – Project Officer, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Fiona Djerkurra – Raypirri Rom team leader, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Rosalie Howard – Social Health Coordinator, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Dr Wendy Page – Medical Officer for Gunyangara
- Nurse – Yirrkala Clinic
- Dr Nic – Medical Officer, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Ric Browne – Tobacco Project Officer and long time resident of Yirrkala, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Erin Cislowski - Anglicare
- 12 residents of Gunyangara
- 9 residents of Yirrkala
- Chairman, Laynhupuy Homelands Health Service
- Pru Walker – Manager of Family and Children’s Services for East Arnhem region
- Coordinator – Nhulunbuy Women’s Shelter
- Dr Peter Chilcott Chief Medical Officer at Gove District Hospital
- Diann Black – Nurse Manager at Gove District Hospital
- Mary Clare Arkoll – Gove District Hospital
- Leon White – ex Principal of Yirrkala School and long time resident of Yirrkala
- Julie Bryce – Nhulunbuy Corporation
- Graeme Dewar – Community Relations Manager for Rio Alcan

13 Appendix D: Guided interview tool

General questions

Do you think alcohol is a serious problem for your community?

Has it changed since

Permit System

1. What was here before the permit system – could anyone buy as much as they wanted?
2. What can you tell me about the events that led to the introduction of the permit system?
3. Do you have a permit? Was it hard to get?
4. Have you ever lost it? Was it hard to get it back?
5. Has the permit system caused any conflict in the community? How?
6. Do you think the permit system has changed the way people drink, or the amount that they drink? How?
7. Has the amount of alcohol related trouble in the community changed since the permit system was introduced?
8. Do you think it is OK that some people have to have a health or a mental health check up before they get their permit?
9. What do you think are the strengths of the permit system?
10. What do you think are the weaknesses of the permit system?
11. Do you think it could be improved? How? Are you in favour of retaining it?

Harmony Group

12. What has happened to the Harmony Group?
13. Do you think it would be good to have to back working again? Why

Inter agency Task Coordination Group

14. Are you aware of it?

15. What does it do?

16. Is it effective

Services

Special Care Centre

17. What help is there for people who are struggling with alcohol?

Treatment service

18. Do you know anyone who has been to the treatment service?

19. Do you think it has helped them?

20. What used to happen to people before the Centre was there?

21. Do you think this is better?

22. Do you think it could be improved? How?

23. Do you think that having the treatment centre has had an impact on the amount of alcohol related trouble in the town/community?

Sobering up shelter – harmony group initiative

24. Do you know anyone who has been to the centre?

25. Do you think it has helped them?

26. What used to happen to people before the Centre was there?

27. Do you think this is better?

28. Do you think it could be improved? How?

29. Do you think that having the treatment centre has had an impact on the amount of alcohol related trouble in the town/community?

Night Patrol

30. Do you know anyone who has been to the centre

31. Do you think it has helped them

32. What used to happen to people before the Centre was there?
33. Do you think this is better
34. Do you think it could be improved? How?
35. Do you think that having the treatment centre has had an impact on the amount of alcohol related trouble in the town/community?

14 References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007). 4705.0 - Population Distribution, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006 Canberra, Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007). Population Distribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Cat. 4705.0. Canberra, Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Northern Territory Department of Justice (2009). Memorandum from Senior Project Officer Chris O'Brien to Executive Director, 27 January 2009. Darwin, NT Department of Justice.
- Northern Territory Licensing Commission (2006). Reasons for decision: application for declaration of a Restricted Area and Permit System. Darwin, Northern Territory Licensing Commission.
- Northern Territory Licensing Commission (2007). Reasons for decision: Application by the East Arnhem Harmony Mayawa Mala Inc ('The Harmony' Group') Seeking A Declaration that an Area of East Arnhem Land be Declared a General Restricted Area Pursuant To Part VIII Of The *Liquor Act* and Application by Assistant Commissioner Graham Kelly for the Declaration of Certain Areas in the East Arnhem Region to be Declared Public Restricted Areas Darwin, Northern Territory Licensing Commission.
- Sanders, W. (2010). Working Futures: A Critique of Policy by Numbers. CAEPR Working Paper No. 72/2010. Canberra, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), Australian National University.
- Wearne, B., J. Greatorex, et al. (2006). Liquor Licensing - issues and options pertaining to the Gove Peninsula. Report prepared for the Northern Territory Treasury (Racing, Gaming and Licensing Division). Darwin, Wearne Advisors in collaboration with the School of Australian Indigenous Knowledge Systems (Charles Darwin University).
- World Health Organization (2007). International Statistical Classification of Diseases and related Health Problems, 10th Revision (ICD 10), Version for 2007. Geneva, World Health Organization.