

people's alcohol action coalition

PAAC

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11th December 2020

Mr. Jamie Chalker, APM,
Commissioner of Police,
Northern Territory

By email

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing on behalf of PAAC to urge you to allocate additional resources to try to stem the illegal distribution of alcohol in the Sandover, Plenty and southern Barkly regions, which we understand is mainly coming in from Mt. Isa.

We acknowledge the great work the police are already doing to stem the problem of secondary supply of alcohol throughout the NT and the apprehensions and convictions that have been made.

We are also aware of your acknowledgment of current problems in the area, and also the lack of a permanent police presence at Alpurrurulam (Lake Nash) since 2018 (ABC Alice Springs 29/9/20). Combined with the scarcity of patrols in the Queensland – Northern Territory cross-border region, and the small number of police stationed at Arlparra, who are expected to provide a service

to Ampilatwatja as well as to the many outstations in the area, this appears to be giving grog runners something of an open run.

In recent weeks, for example, we understand there was an incident in the Sandover region, in which a woman allegedly ran over her partner at Mosquito Bore, following a big grog run from Mt Isa.

As you have also acknowledged, grog running also appears to be connected to the increase in alcohol-related assaults in Tennant Creek, as well as presenting a significant problem in remote Aboriginal communities. We agree with your conclusion on this matter, given the restrictions on trading hours and limits on the volume of sales in Tennant and surrounds.

I am sure you are aware of the issues relating to illegal alcohol sales in the region, not only through your own channels, but as raised by Alywarre man Michael Liddle in the media. Michael has excellent knowledge of what is going on in the region, through his family and community contacts, and we support his call for better policing to try to address at least some of the alcohol-related damage that is occurring.

I also acknowledge the efforts of NT Police in the recruitment of Aboriginal Liaison officers.

PAAC nevertheless believes it is imperative that as much illicit alcohol as possible be intercepted, whether it is from Queensland, or, as we also understand is the case, from South Australia. In our submission this can only be achieved by the increased presence of sworn officers in the relevant regions.

The disruption to community life, including through domestic and other violence, that results from the influx of significant amounts of alcohol into small communities is unacceptable. Residents of these communities should have the protection and service that NT Police provide to those in more populated parts of the Territory.

I would be happy to discuss this with you. Please do not hesitate to contact either myself or PAAC's Policy Co-ordinator Vicki Gillick on 0401 077 483.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Boffa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.

Dr. John Boffa
on behalf of PAAC
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