

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON VIOLENCE IN THE  
COMMUNITY MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART,  
ON FRIDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2010.**

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**Professor ROB WHITE**, UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA, WAS CALLED, MADE THE  
STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wilkinson) - Thanks, Rob, for coming along. As you know, the terms of reference revolve around violence in the community. We thought you could be of great assistance in letting us know your views in accordance with the terms of reference.

**Prof. WHITE** - I am very pleased to have been invited to talk with you. I have been away a bit, which is why I have been delayed in having an opportunity to speak with you. I have included some background documents, which I would like to submit to the committee. I will briefly describe them and I will talk about what I think some of the key issues are.

The first page is a brief summary that provides a snapshot of how I feel about violence in the community. I will come back and describe a bit about that in a moment. Basically I did it as an editorial for a youth online discussion group relating to violence in the community.

The second item is a reproduction of an article on violence in the Mall that I penned called, 'Respect is a two-way street', that tries to put a context in terms of what kind of responses we should be having to questions of violence.

The third submission is much more substantial. It is called 'Alcohol and Interpersonal Violence: A Discussion Paper'. This was prepared by me as part of some work that was being undertaken last year by Vic Health. They are very concerned with questions of violence in the community and they wanted to do something specifically on alcohol. I took that, in terms of my brief, to look at two specific issues. One was to look at violence in general, which I have done in the first part of this paper, and the second was to look at alcohol and violence and some of the links between alcohol and violence. I will submit this to the committee as well. There is lots of stuff in there. I want to highlight a couple of things. One is that there have been a number of inquiries into community violence over the years in different jurisdictions. In recent times I have been involved in Vic Health and this background paper. Two years ago in Victoria there was a special forum organised by the then police commissioner about violence in the Victorian community. It brought together a range of stakeholders from not just Victoria but also from other parts of the country.

**CHAIR** - Were there any papers on that?

**Prof. WHITE** - Yes, there is a paper that is cited in here. I have a copy of all the stuff in here so if you need copies let me know. It was put together by Richard Eckerslie, who now works out of Canberra. His company was the facilitator for that paper. I thought the report was fairly general and I think we need to get down to brass tacks, which I will discuss in a second.

That was two years ago, but we can go back to the Victorian Council Against Violence which was in operation in the 1990s. They did comprehensive work on violence in the community and that still resonates today. I have alluded to some of that in this paper as well. There was also a very significant report done, I think in around 2006, on youth violence in the Canadian province of Ontario. This was a huge, multivolume piece of work by a criminologist at the University of Toronto, Scot Wortley. Each volume is more than 400 pages. I didn't read it so I don't expect you to, but I have provided a snapshot in reference to that as well. I would like to submit this to the committee as potential background material.

I don't really want to say a lot in terms of opening remarks, except a couple of things that get up my nose. I suppose the analysis that I start with and end up summarising in this paper is simply that violence in the Australian community is entirely normal. I think that is one of the key underpinning issues. A second related point is that excessive use of alcohol is likewise a normal part of Australian culture. I talk about a culture of excessive drinking and a culture of violence. They are separate cultures but they are interrelated. Unfortunately we end up joking about them rather than addressing them, but in my mind these are the underpinning causes of the violence in our community. Think of the opening scene where you first meet Hugh Jackman in that iconic movie, *Australia*. What is the opening scene?

**Dr GOODWIN** - I haven't seen it, sorry.

**Prof. WHITE** - You are so fortunate. The opening scene is archetypal, he is in a pub having a fight and the fight spills out into the main street and he bumps against Nicole Kidman, who is the English princess type. It is that image. I want to make a couple of things clear. I am not a wowser so I am not anti-alcohol and I am not against violence but violence has to be structured and bound by rules. Violence is an everyday phenomenon. We have necessary violence on the part of police, which is part of the legitimate functioning of policing; we have violence on the part of prison officers, which is a legitimate part of their job; we have violence on the Aussie Rules pitch; we have structured violence and rules of engagement in war. Violence is a part of our everyday life and it is legitimate and at times beneficial if it is rule-bound.

**Mr HALL** - Through you, Mr Chair - whilst we are on the subject, do you think violence and alcohol consumption is more endemic in Australia than other Western cultures, for example?

**Prof. WHITE** - No.

**Mr HALL** - It's on a par?

**Prof. WHITE** - Particularly if you follow what's been happening in the UK. There have been huge concerns about very similar issues.

**Mr HALL** - I meant Russia and other Eastern countries.

**Prof. WHITE** - Russia has had an endemic problem with alcoholism.

**Mr HALL** - So whilst you're saying it is normal, it is normal for a lot of other Western cultures?

**Prof. WHITE** - Not necessarily. If you cross national comparisons what you find is that some European countries have a reasonable alcohol intake in terms of numbers - that is, wine, beer and so on - but they don't have high degrees of violence.

**Mr HALL** - Are you citing France?

**Prof. WHITE** - France might be an example, but there are different cultures of drinking and also different cultures related to violence. In some of those cultures, if you get 'pissed' and have a punch-up, that is seen as a bad thing and goes against your reputation as being able to handle yourself. I think, from a cross-national perspective, there are significant differences and I put it down to the differences in the culture of violence and the culture of alcohol use.

I want to reiterate I am not necessarily against violence because there are difference kinds of violence and I am not necessarily against alcohol but when you start to do an analysis what you find is that at a cultural and media level we celebrate a whole range of relatively unstructured violence. I'm sure that this committee has heard many people talk about the cage fighting and the new blood sports. My critique of cage fighting, which is fairly strong, is that it presents itself and is represented as basically unstructured and not rule-bound. If you talk to the people engaged it, they say, 'Of course there are rules. It's multi-martial arts', but if you see the spectacle and how it's presented, it is very much a blood sport. I was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as criticising it and I got the most incredible e-mail from a cage fighter. Basically it was the most aggro e-mail and it was the epitome of everything I was trying to talk about in the problem of cage fighting. If we celebrate that kind of violence it is no wonder that we have particularly young men on the streets on the weekend looking for a punch-up.

Another part of the cultural side of violence is that for a number of particularly young men - I am using 'young' loosely here to mean between 14 and 35 - violence is fun. I did a national study of youth gangs in Australia and one of the interesting findings has been that getting stoned or drunk, hanging out with women and having a punch-up is a really top night. Basically it is bags, booze and brawls - that is how we culturally configure a 'top night'.

**Mr DEAN** - How often do we hear a young person coming home and saying, 'I had a great night - got drunk and had a punch-up'.

**Prof. WHITE** - Exactly right, so we have to take that on board and figure out a way to give people the adrenalin rush that can come with that kind of activity but not in such an antisocial or harmful way. One response has been a friend of a young man who was killed in Victoria. His friend was king-hit, one punch and he died, so he started up an organisation amongst young people - I think it's called 'Stop, Think'. Basically it is saying if you are going to get on the grog and you're thinking of punching somebody, just remember that somebody can die from that.

The second culture that we have to address is that of excessive alcohol use. That culture, again, is promoted in the media and we have this notion that alcohol has to be at the

centre of much of our social activities and so on. Again, I am not a wowser, I am not necessarily against alcohol consumption, but there is that image that you have to get off your face to have a good time. That image is re-presented through the media in the images of the ladettes and the teenage binge drinking and so on. However, we should not focus just on the young people because many of us here have indulged more than we should have occasionally -

**Dr GOODWIN** - Speak for yourself, Rob.

*Laughter.*

**Prof. WHITE** - so it is not just an age-related thing. The other side, though - and this is in the background paper which I have submitted to the committee - to some extent the excessive drinking is fostered by the way in which we license and distribute alcohol in the public domain so we really do need to get into questions of licensing regulation - hours, which is a big one, distribution of licensed outlets and the strength of the alcohol that is being served at different points in time. Interestingly, interstate research has shown there is a relationship as well between takeaway alcohol outlets and licensed premises so licensing laws obviously have a big part to play in the types of drinking. There are other points that I make in the paper about different types of risky drinking and so on.

**Mr DEAN** - Mr Chairman, are we taking questions as we go along?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr DEAN** - I am just going to take you up on the way we license and distribute alcohol. I think what you are saying is that there are too many licences out there, it is too easy to access alcohol and at all hours of the night - virtually till the wee hours of the morning?

**Prof. WHITE** - I have to confess that a year-and-a-half ago before I started to go through the considerable literature on this question I was a laissez-faire kind of person when it came to alcohol establishments and drinking - yeah, yeah, go for it - but the more I have looked at the evidence, the more crystal clear it has become that if you have more venues that are concentrated in a particular area that are open to late hours at night then you will for sure have violence and that comes up in a whole range of different kinds of data.

**Mr DEAN** - Going from there then, have you had a look at the Newcastle strategy and position there of closing up licensed premises much earlier?

**Prof. WHITE** - In the final report that I do not have with me but I have given you just the statements of what I have done, they have gone through those kinds of strategies. The key thing about violence and alcohol and violence in the community is that it has to be multi-pronged so the control of alcohol use is only one prong. I am convinced now that if you reduce the concentration of your outlets, certainly if you reduce the hours and you have different kinds of lockdown policies in terms of last drinks and that is it and so on, it does make a difference.

**Mr HALL** - I take on board what you say, Rob, but we have also had evidence to say that particularly young people in their own homes get well fuelled up to midnight before they

go out. They have gone to the discount liquor outlet, they have done all that and then when they go out after midnight they are full of grog and bad manners and away it all goes. So how do you stop that? That is another issue again, isn't it?

**Prof. WHITE** - It is covered in the paper as well and part of the reason is the cost and so people do not want to pay a premium price for their drinks. They will get a bottle or whatever at home and get tanked up before they go out but they are going out at about 10 and 11 at night so that is the starting point. To my mind, if you reduce the closing times then they will either have to start earlier, which is not necessarily likely depending on what they are doing, or they will have less time at home to do that kind of drinking. That also speaks to the importance of having really good safe drinking policies within your licensed establishments and very good front-door staff.

**Mr HALL** - What do you think would be an optimum closing time? I suppose it depends on the town or city and what the concentration of licensed establishments and clubs is. Mr Dean talked about the 3.30 a.m. experiment in Newcastle. Is that worth following through?

**Prof. WHITE** - What we have learned from the news last night in terms of the river systems and the response of people in Griffith -

**Mr HALL** - I missed that.

**Prof. WHITE** - Everybody is getting up in arms because of taking water away from the various parts of the Riverina and the Griffith area. What we have learned from that is that you have to tailor your responses to the local area and local needs and you have to work with industry closely, but you have to be definitive as well. We can consult with industry but in the end you have to come up with a defined policy.

To answer your question, you'd have to do a scoping analysis of a particular area. I know Hobart a little bit so in the case of Hobart, for example, we might do a proper mapping of all the different kinds of establishments, drinking hours, licence conditions, licence provisions, training of bar staff - there is a lot we can do in terms of scoping. You put it all into a mix - the questions of public transport, nature of policing, lighting - there is a whole range of things that you can map out. Vanessa's crime prevention expertise would be useful in that. Then you tailor your response according to the local conditions. One of the things that's very clear in alcohol regulation is that one size doesn't fit all; you have to have a tailored response.

**CHAIR** - Rob, it seems to me that from the statistics we have that violence occurs between approximately 11 o'clock and 3 o'clock in the majority of cases. Most people involved are between the ages of 17 and 24 or thereabouts. Does that fit with your studies?

**Prof. WHITE** - Pretty well. If we deal with just public violence - because of course violence in the community also takes place behind closed doors - do you deal with family violence as well, or is it mainly street violence?

**CHAIR** - Mainly street violence in relation to this, but it is such a big issue that it gets a bit broad if we link into family violence. That profile has been looked at, hasn't it?

**Prof. WHITE** - Yes.

**Dr GOODWIN** - We have touched on violence more broadly because some people have mentioned violence on the sporting field and then we have talked about the need for early intervention approaches. When you talk about the culture of violence I think you're not just talking about on the streets but also all those other things. We have also talked about bullying in schools, so we have touched on it but the main focus does seem to have been on violence and alcohol.

**Prof. WHITE** - It has to be multi-pronged. The problem with saying 'multi-pronged' too often is that you end up with nothing because it is too amorphous. There has to be something concrete and defined in whatever policy or legislation you're thinking of coming up with. Certainly the area of licensing laws is one area that we can look at. Another area that we talk about is education, but if you want education to work you have to work with the media. The media that's available at the local level has a huge impact in terms of our perceptions of violence, what is legitimate and okay and so on. Again, some of the images we've seen in our local newspapers have been appalling, but those images are glorified. Even though they are appalling to some of us, they are glorified and the text with some of that, particularly around cage fighting, is intended to appeal, and it has appealed because thousands of people showed up at the Derwent Entertainment Centre to see it. I am not anti-alcohol or anti-violence, but I think both have to be rule-bound and we need to give people that buzz in a positive social direction.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Rob, do you have any ideas on that alternative buzz, the sort of things we could be offering young people?

**Prof. WHITE** - I will answer that two ways. In other work that I've done I was trying to compare group, mob or gang activity with situations where you can have large numbers of people and there was no violence, and I came up with the example of raves. Rave parties are notorious for not being violent because it's not part of the norm of a rave. With the traditional old raves - we're talking 15 years ago - you'd get thousands of people at a rave party, anonymous, they didn't know each other but there was a culture of non-violence. It was uncool for there to be any violence at a rave party, so I think what we should be doing to some extent is looking at where we have succeeded in not having violence.

Another example which I allude to in the documents that I have submitted is to look at the really good ways in which we run schoolies week in various places around the country. If you look at Queensland and Western Australia, the police, teachers and other authorities have, through working with young people, come up with a whole bunch of safe partying strategies that make sense - people are having a good time, the young people are protected. We can learn from examples of large groups or where group activities are in fact non-violent. I am particularly intrigued at the idea of a culture of non-violence where in fact it is uncool to be violent.

A second more specific response has to do with a project that has been trialled here in Tasmania. It is a social norms project and it operates in the schools in some of our rural areas. Basically it is working with young people about their alcohol use. It is not a wowsers approach; it is just saying we are going to talk about alcohol in a very sensible way so that young people can connect and come to understand where they sit in terms of

the pressures to drink or not drink. I think that kind of defined program has got some legs as well.

**Dr GOODWIN** - That is quite an interesting project and I had not thought of it before in this context, but didn't it find that young people actually overestimate how much their peers are drinking?

**Prof. WHITE** - And also the sense of relief that there is a project where they could not feel pressured to drink. Both of those things, yes.

**Mr HALL** - Rob, are you going to talk about drugs as well and the interaction of drugs and alcohol? Do you see that as being a big issue in perhaps the last decade or so or is your main focus on alcohol with violence?

**Prof. WHITE** - If you are going to go that way then we have to extend it even further to the whole question of co-morbidity - mental illness and drug use and a whole range of other factors.

**Mr HALL** - I am talking about illicit drug use.

**Prof. WHITE** - Yes. The key to drug-related violence without a doubt in all the literature is alcohol. The second problematic drug, particularly from a policing perspective, is ice because ice does things to people. It makes them super strong, it makes them uncontrollable, it can very much damage people neurologically, physically and so on and it has been associated with violence. An illicit drug like cannabis tends to operate in the opposite direction, so people are a bit more laid back and there is less violence associated with cannabis use. The issue is not whether it is licit or illicit; the issue is the pharmacological effects of certain kinds of drugs. But in the larger picture what you will find is that the people who are doing ice are, when out and about, drinking and stuff as well. Again, underpinning all of that stuff we have to bear in mind that there is that culture of violence, which means that some people go out, whether they are drunk or not, looking for a fight.

In terms of public policy the key public policy issue is alcohol. Ice is obviously a public health issue but I do not see that necessarily as being a big problem in the Tasmanian context.

**CHAIR** - I have seen a couple of people, Rob, who have used speed. Speed sometimes gives them the belief, so they tell me, that people are saying things about them, looking at them, doing things when they are not. As a result they will dong somebody over the head with a bottle or something for no apparent reason at all other than what they believe is occurring - which is not actually occurring. As you say, it is these mind-altering states that can be entered into as a result of the drug that causes people at times to act in this violent way. It is fuelled with alcohol as well so it is a dangerous cocktail, isn't it?

**Prof. WHITE** - Absolutely.

**Mr DEAN** - I just want to go back to violence in sport. The committee has previously been given evidence in relation to the impact that has on youth in particular, that violence on the sporting field is seen as normal and acceptable. In Australian Rules, Barry Hall is a

cult figure because of his activities of violence and other players have a history of violence. One person gave evidence to say that if that was happening then there ought to be police involvement to demonstrate very clearly that violence was not an acceptable part of sport, not acceptable anywhere, and there should be positive action taken if that occurred. Do you have a view on that position at all?

**Prof. WHITE** - My view is that any sports administrators worth their salt will provide strong rule-guided bases for policing their own sports. I think the AFL, generally speaking, has been pretty good on that score. The Australian Rugby League has been a bit slow off the mark in some respects. In both codes they have dangerous tackle rules. Barry Hall might be a cult figure because it was such a dramatic incident, but in fact he lost his job and was in turmoil for 18 months or so, so there are penalties that people contract there as well. Again, it comes back to that question that violence has to be rule-bound in some way. Personally, when it comes to sports I think we should keep the law and the police out of that. What happens off the pitch is symptomatic of other problems. I think the AFL for a number of years has had very strong education on racism and anti-racist policy on the pitch, as well as outside. I think I allude in that report at the end that there's an anti-violence package that the AFL has developed to work with their players. It's not just violence on the field, but family violence and violence on the streets. If we turn your question slightly on its head, we really need sportspeople to stand up and be counted against violence, violence against women and excessive drinking.

**CHAIR** - The AFL has done pretty well with that, haven't they? It is a much cleaner game with much less violence now than back in the 1970s, no question about that.

**Prof. WHITE** - Yes, and the culture surrounding the AFL. They have put money into resources, research, and they have education packages, including a package on violence. I think that's fantastic. They're leading the way, but rugby league has been slow to get off the mark.

**Mr HALL** - Whilst we're talking about education and violence, we have had quite a bit of evidence concerning dysfunctional families and decades of violence within those families. How do we combat that? Is there room in the education system to start at a younger age trying to teach kids parenting skills or something like that?

**Prof. WHITE** - We need both generalist and specialist interventions. The generalist intervention is to try to change the culture of violence and excessive alcohol use. Those are general campaigns. 'If you drink and drive you're a bloody idiot' - that is one of my favourite campaigns because it had a message and was recognisable. In the people you've described where you have intergenerational violence, drug use and criminality, the intervention can't simply be general; you're not going to hit them with the general message. That's going to have to be a directed, targeted, specific intervention on those families. We know who the families are; whichever part of the State we're from we know there are particular families that are in difficulty and have been for a number of a number of years. A youth worker friend of mine at Glenorchy has said, 'Unfortunately we have to write off some of the older people in the family, but we have to try to target the young kids and get them out of that dysfunctional context', but that has to be a specific targeted intervention.



**Mr HALL** - And what about in the education system itself? If you got them early, perhaps in primary school and even their early high school years, is there anything you can do there?

**Prof. WHITE** - Again, it comes back to the images by which we represent ourselves. If we go to the movies and see our leading male international famous actor in his first scene in a pub fight, then that reinforces the culture of violence as being fun and something that we all do and aspire to. It reinforces the idea of excessive alcohol being okay because we know that when you have a few under your belt, you can have a punch-up and nobody gets hurt. You see, in the movies, nobody gets hurt.

We have to go right back to the primary years but I don't think we should just talk about education in that narrow sense of the teacher in the classroom or shift everything towards the schools. If we want proper education then it will have to be public campaigns. We need intervention in the media and that is always difficult because we have a free press and all that kind of stuff, but one of the key educators in our society is the media. A lot of the stuff that we are getting through the media, like I said, glorifies violence and it glorifies excessive drinking.

**CHAIR** - Rob, if I come to you as the Tasmanian Government and say that I want you to come forward with a number of recommendations which you believe would be of assistance, what would you do?

**Prof. WHITE** - I would do what we normally do. You have your direct and indirect, your interim and your long-term measures. Probably my first port of call, given your key focus group tends to be young people between 18 and 24 -

**CHAIR** - It is only a key focus group at the moment because of the evidence we have received as to where the majority of violence takes place.

**Prof. WHITE** - The task ahead is both small and big. The small bit is I think we can do some stuff on licensing laws and I think we can do that fairly quickly. That has to be done properly in the sense that we have to consult the industry and we should look at what has happened in Victoria and New South Wales and, indeed, Queensland. There is some very good work by Criminologist Ross Homel in Queensland on licensed premises, regulation and policing. I think the book is cited in the submission.

**Mr HALL** - Is it quite current, Rob?

**Prof. WHITE** - It came out last year and is the whole shebang in one book. It is called *Raising the bar* and in one book it consolidates all the evidence on drinking and violence around licensed establishments and so on. We have a lot of expertise already within the criminology field. The book is Graham & Homel 2008 - *Raising the bar: Preventing aggression in and around bars, clubs and pubs*. Ross and his colleague are based in Brisbane so it is an Australian study but they have looked overseas to do cross-national comparative work and so on. We have the expertise and we have the documentation.

If we are going to do something in Launceston, Devonport, Burnie or Geeveston then we have to map and scope what is happening in the local area and work with people in the local area to ensure we are going to have compliance and that it makes sense.

**CHAIR** - So it's not one size fits all; it depends the local area in relation to what's needed?

**Prof. WHITE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - And that's with the licensing laws?

**Prof. WHITE** - That is one area that at a practical level we can intervene in. Possibly we can talk about taxing and issues relating to the taxing of alcohol. In terms of street safety, again we can talk about a multi-pronged approach. We can have publicity campaigns. I mentioned this young bloke in Victoria whose friend died because he was king hit and he started up a campaign. There are several campaigns in Australia at the moment around the idea of 'Stop. Think', which means if you get drunk do not punch somebody because you could kill them, so that kind of campaign, particularly if it is driven by young people. What will not work is hectoring or a wowsler approach. People will not listen. We need stuff that is going to make sense to people from the ground up. That is why I keep stressing that I am not anti-alcohol and I am not necessarily anti-violence, but both have to be rule-bound.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Rob, you mentioned the *Ladette to Lady* program. I must admit I watched the first series but now I just find it too disturbing. It does celebrate female excessive drinking and violence and we have heard some evidence that this is becoming an increasing trend in Tasmania. I just wondered if you had any thoughts on why young women are becoming more involved in violence and whether it is linked to greater alcohol consumption or is there something else going on there?

**Prof. WHITE** - We have colleagues in Launceston who are looking at this directly. We have just applied for a grant actually to interview and work with young women who from a distance could be described as ladettes. If you want to find out about women and drinking and violence, talk to the women, so our first port of call is to do some research and talk to the young people involved directly. Secondly, the empirical evidence is mixed. The empirical evidence of whether women are getting more violent and whether there is more of a ladette phenomenon is mixed in terms of actual statistics, so we are still not entirely sure. It is very easy to get a media image of young women pissed off their faces, but how prevalent is that? Unless you have benchmark data then that may not in fact be an increase; it could just reflect an existing situation. We do not quite know and there is some dispute as to whether there is an increase or not. Whether it is a problem, that is a different question. How we intervene is a legitimate question but whether there is an increase, I am not sure.

**Dr GOODWIN** - This research is in its very early stages in Launceston?

**Prof. WHITE** - There are people engaging in it at the moment and they have applied for funding. If we do not get the funding I think people are going to be doing stuff anyway in Launceston. The research is spearheaded by NGO people working with academics, so it is people on the ground, practitioners, who are concerned about it. A general lesson is that we need to talk to the people who are engaging in violence as perpetrators, as victims and indeed as observers and bystanders. One of the things that has come through in some of the literature is the very important role of bystanders and observers in egging people on. When we think of violence we tend to think of the perpetrator only, but in fact often

the perpetrator and the victim are the same. The key victims of street violence are young men as both perpetrator and victim, but what is the role of the bystander? This goes back to the rules of engagement stuff. When I was young, if there as a punch-up it was one-on-one, mano-a-mano, fists only and it was seen as against rules of engagement to have a gang up. Today, what are the street rules of engagement?

**CHAIR** - There appear to be none.

**Prof. WHITE** - Exactly, and that has come through in the national youth gangs research I have done. People are not certain of any rules of engagement so they chuck out the rules because, if they are confronting somebody, they do not know if that person is abiding by any set of rules. So, in a sense, we need to reconfigure the rules of engagement for how people relate to each other on the street, not necessarily with violence but just in general because it is the uncertainty of how to relate that sometimes escalates the violence very quickly.

**CHAIR** - How do we do that?

**Prof. WHITE** - I keep going back to things like the two campaigns that at least amused me. One was 'If you drink and drive you're a bloody idiot' and the pinky campaign against hooning in New South Wales. They have an image of young women, usually, in a car and there'll be a guy revving up his car and starting to hoon and the women in the car indicate 'you must have a small one', and everybody laughed, but it makes the point. Then you see the young hoon on the street and people start doing the same to him. I think if we can use humour as part of the reconfiguration as well as a serious thing like the 'Stop, Think' type of campaign against king-hits.

**Mr HALL** - Rob, you talked about your studies into gang violence; is there an issue here in Tasmania with youth gangs?

**Prof. WHITE** - At the moment, no, I don't believe there is a major issue of youth gangs in Tasmania. I think periodically we have had groups of young people who have been brought together and engaged in activity that is antisocial and criminal in nature and it has been periodically of concern, but I think in general we don't really have a hard-core youth gang problem in Tasmania at the moment.

**Mr HALL** - But there has been a bit of organisational stuff, particularly in Launceston, as we know.

**Prof. WHITE** - If you talk about bikie gangs -

**Mr DEAN** - The Adidas gang in Launceston.

**Prof. WHITE** - I'm not aware of a concerted youth gang problem. If we get into the topic of youth gangs, I think we have to talk about slightly different strategies. Most of the strategies are based upon working with the leaders of the gangs and working on more positive ways to get a buzz and an income.

**CHAIR** - Rob, I hear what you say, that sometimes when focuses and inquiries become large you don't really solve much in the end because there's such a broad spectrum of evidence

given that you can put out broad recommendations that a lot of people don't take up. So focusing on recommendations, I hear the licensing laws are to be looked at. I hear what you're saying in relation to street safety. Does street safety take into account things such as lighting, more police presence on the streets when the statistics show the problems arise, responsible serving of alcohol?

**Prof. WHITE** - All of the above.

**CHAIR** - Anything else?

**Prof. WHITE** - One of the things that I'm more critical of is certain types of policing. It's the methodology of policing also that has an impact. My own view is that the more violent your policing the more violent will be the response. I have been dismayed over the last couple of years in places such as Sydney where they've introduced street patrols to go out on the weekend. In essence they have a proactive role to try to shut down violence before it occurs but they come up to people, who might be laughing or walking on the street after a couple of beers at the pub and stumble and they will be on them within two seconds and be fairly aggressive because they're trained street riot police. To me, that kind of aggressive interventionist policing is not very healthy. Community-oriented or relationship-based policing is more productive. I think we have targeted policing already. The police know the hot spots, they put people on patrols. We have to ask ourselves: how do we construct those hot spots? I have relatives who are police and I said to one of my cousins-in-law once, 'How can you handle it?'. We were having a beer in a pub one night and on the TV screen was cage fighting and I said, 'How do you feel as a police officer when you have to go and stand outside a place when it closes and you've got these people watching cage fighting all night and getting a bellyful of beer and then they come out and are all hyped up?'. Policing becomes really important because if they come in too heavy, which is where I am critical of some of the Sydney stuff, they create aggro. What we're trying to do is de-escalate the violence.

**Mr DEAN** - It is exactly the same thing as the Bathurst situation on Sunday and the hoons that jump in their cars, and that happened.

**Prof. WHITE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - We have spoken in relation to licensing matters that we have raised - policing, et cetera. You have spoken about early intervention as being very important. What do we do with early intervention - focus on the people we believe are at risk and then put resources into doing all we can to assist those people not becoming violent?

**Prof. WHITE** - We can approach it several different ways. You can talk about principles and programs, policies and practices and for me, if we can get the principles right then that can guide the rest. The principles, for me, relate to this idea of creating a culture of non-violence rather than violence. We have to start treating violence as being uncool because at the moment it ain't, it is glorified and we have to figure out a way to make it uncool or to be rule-bound. So violence has to be rule-bound if it is to make sense and if it is to be legitimate. Indeed, if people who are engaged in rule-bound violence like to be seen as heroes then what makes them heroes is the fact it is rule-bound. If an Aussie Rules footballer takes a high mark or bashes through the line or whatever, we can see that at one level as violent but it is rule-bound so it makes sense. I think we have to establish

strongly, as a principle, that rule-bound violence makes sense, likewise rule-bound drinking is fine. In Europe, as we said earlier, if you look across national comparisons they can drink without getting pissed to the eyeballs and having a punch-up so we can learn from that so that informal as well as formal rules are in place that allow that to happen.

From the point of view of principles, let us think through first principles and what we are trying to achieve and then we can move to the question of policies and programs and practices and let it cascade down from your principles basically.

**CHAIR** - One of the key big-ticket items, as you are saying, is getting media onside, getting a good slogan up for people to relate well to. That assists.

**Prof. WHITE** - The media of course is driven by money because they have to get their advertising and their readership or viewership. The catch 22 with the media is that on the one hand they glorify a lot of the violence because of the images that they portray. On the other hand they vilify a lot of the violence but it tends to be a vilification of particular sets of people, which can lead to inappropriate policy. The example I could give you, dare I say it, is the Mall rats, the so-called bogans upsetting people in the Mall, but what you end up with is an image that basically stigmatises the whole group and class of people - not simply a handful of young people who might be mucking up but a whole class of people who might be in the Mall. That is how the media works and I don't know how we negotiate that. I think it is probably a useful thing to have consultation with the media on a regular basis but I am not sure how to deal with that one.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Rob might remember the Colin Browne project. Do you remember that project years ago around fear of crime in public places? It was around the issues with perceptions of safety in the Elizabeth Street Mall, the Hobart Mall, Franklin Square and St David's Park and it was all about this idea of not judging young people by the way they look and trying to bridge the gap between young people and older people and the media were actually quite supportive of that. They used to run community service advertisements and they got on board but, like everything, it was funded for a certain period of time and then it stopped and we stopped thinking about it and then the problem raised its head again, often fanned by the media perhaps. Do you think something like that again is an option? Does it need to be something longer term?

**Prof. WHITE** - I think we need to stress our social connections. Who are the people we're talking about when we talk about violence? If it's our brothers and sisters, our daughters, our sons - these are people who are connected to us. I think whatever campaign we have relating to the violence in the community has to reaffirm that we're not 'mothering' people, that we're in fact bringing people back into the family fold. I think that whatever campaign, legislation or policy that's adopted has to have that sense of 'we need to respect everybody'. Let us not be hypocrites because some of us have got off our face, got into a punch-up, whether it's on or off the football field, or we've done inappropriate things. What we have to do is put that into context and make sure that we don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

**Mr DEAN** - I want to go back to licensing and so on, which is very clearly a problem. We didn't quite touch on bottleshops and the number of bottleshops that are mushrooming up around the State - in my view, in inappropriate areas - and the availability of cheaper

alcohol. You mentioned taxing as an issue that should be considered. Do you have a position in relation to the bottleshops and the activities surrounding bottleshops?

**Prof. WHITE** - What I've provided to you is part of the bigger submission for Vic Health, but there is evidence interstate that the number of bottleshops and the hours at which they are open do have an impact on local drinking patterns. They have done a postcode-type analysis of the amount of alcohol purchased. You can also do a postcode analysis of assaults and hospital treatments, so you can cross-correlate different kinds of data. What that data seems to be showing is that where you have a concentration of bottleshops that are open for long periods of time you will find a disproportionate amount of street violence et cetera associated with that. You have to do a specific scoping analysis of whatever particular area or region you're talking about.

**Mr HALL** - Some evidence we had given to us was that if there is a cover charge on a venue to go in then that makes patrons more committed to stay in that one venue. If they have to pay \$15 or \$20 or whatever to get in, then they feel committed to stay in that one venue. Do you have any comment on that?

**Prof. WHITE** - I don't know, but if I have to pay \$15 to get into a venue I'm going to drink like a fish before I get to that venue.

**Mr HALL** - Okay.

**Prof. WHITE** - So I'll drink my \$15 worth at home before I go into the venue.

**Mr HALL** - So it could be counterproductive?

**Prof. WHITE** - I'm saying that there's more than one way to look at it. Quite honestly, I don't really know.

**CHAIR** - Rob, it would seem to me there are two ways and I think so far as a culture is concerned Tasmania and Australia have done pretty well in relation to smoking and the culture surrounding smoking. Years ago it was called 'a smoke', now not so cool to smoke. Even though the statistics in relation to younger people say a lot are smoking, there is less smoking now than was previously the case. It would seem that we can change culture, we can change it with the medical side of things, the media and the slogans we speak about. That's a long-term change. What we'd be looking at is this long-term change of culture and also 'let's do something now so we can hopefully do what we can to stop it occurring' and let this cultural change take place over a period of time, which it's going to take. It won't be throw out one book and open the next straightaway. I am looking at these short-term fixes as well.

**Prof. WHITE** - What you're describing very nicely is in essence a public health model of intervention. That is distinct from a criminal justice model and a public health model of intervention is multilayered. It talks about individuals, communities and society as a whole. There are things you can do with all three of those different levels. I think it's very useful to pursue that. There is some modelling and, again, organisations such as Vic Health have a defined, distinctive model that they use that is quite useful that the committee might find useful.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Rob, for coming. You've given us valuable evidence. If you would not mind, we may give you a ring at some later stage to consolidate our thoughts after reading the documentation you have given us.

**CHAIR** - Yes, that's fine.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Mr ALAN CERNY** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wilkinson) - Thanks for coming along and giving us your time today. The evidence that you give is being recorded and there will be a transcript. If you do not want to say anything in open committee you can say it in camera, if there is anything you believe will cause a problem. When our inquiry is concluded you will get a copy of the report.

I was telling the committee that you were a more than successful hotelier for how many years.

**Mr CERNY** - I bought a hotel in 1980, against everyone's advice. The hotel was not turning over \$1 000 a week and I had never poured a beer in my life. Yet within 18 months I turned over \$36 000 in one day - so I had a really busy establishment.

**CHAIR** - That was Montgomery's Hotel?

**Mr CERNY** - It was called Maloney's at the time. The drinking age was 18 everywhere else and I had so many customers that I rang the Licensing Board and I said, 'Listen, I have a problem, I have too many customers'. They laughed and said, 'That must be a nice problem to have' and I said, 'Well, actually it is not. I have 700 people in my hotel every Friday and Saturday night and I have 700 people outside my hotel every Friday and Saturday night. The ones inside my hotel I can look after but the ones outside my hotel are your problem and, let me tell you, it is a powder keg. At one o'clock in the morning when you have 700 people outside your hotel trying to get in, they are half full of drink and it is like a powder keg waiting to go off'. They said, 'We've got no idea what you can do about this' and I said, 'I've got an idea, I'll up the drinking age at my hotel on Friday and Saturday nights'. They said, 'Go for it'. We have the right to refuse service to anyone so we refused service to all 18-year-olds, we did not let them in our hotel. It worked beautifully.

**CHAIR** - What happened to the line outside when you did that?

**Mr CERNY** - The line outside went down to about 100 people and 100 people is a whole lot better than 700 people. We also had really strong dress regulations - no jeans, no runners, no desert boots, no T-shirts, no caps, no hoods - and 30 people would come to the door and one person would have runners on and we would say, 'That person can't come in', and they would say, 'If he doesn't come in the rest of us aren't coming in' and I would say, 'Boo-hoo, off you go home'. I didn't care. In eight years we had one major drama, which we pursued through the courts and had the gentleman charged. He went to jail, but apart from that, if there was any trouble the people were barred. Let me expand on what I mean when I say 'trouble'. The staff were instructed thus: 'If you see anyone arguing I want to know about it' and I would go over and say, 'Here boys, we have fun in this place - no arguments. If you want to have an argument take it outside', and they would say, 'Who's going to make me?' and I would say, 'I know where you're coming from' and I would go and ring the police and when the police arrived I would say that I wanted the people removed and they are barred forever. These people that were barred would ring me on Monday and say, 'I did something wrong in your hotel and you've



barred me. All my friends go there every Friday and Saturday night and I can't go any more, can you let me back in?" So young people knew that when they came to my hotel they had to behave - they could have a lot of fun but they could not do anything antisocial.

**CHAIR** - Was there responsible serving of alcohol out and about then?

**Mr CERNY** - The course was not about, but I cared about what I did and I wanted to run a place that I enjoyed.

**CHAIR** - Are you saying that because there is a bit of laxness in the way these premises are run, that is part of the cause of the problems either in or outside the hotel?

**Mr CERNY** - I would say that is one of the problems. People are interested in making money and they do not care about anything else. I cared about my staff and my customers. You have to care and if you do not care you have a major drama.

**CHAIR** - The actual inquiries, as you know, are in relation to violence in the community and the good bit about your evidence is, firstly, you are giving evidence on the basis of what it was like to own a hotel and to run it - I am lucky I did not get barred as I went in there on a number of occasions, as you know, but it was the most popular pub in southern Tasmania and it may well have been in the whole of Tasmania. Also, after you left there, you saw a lot of violence in relation to your driving the cars. What we are after is what you believe are the appropriate ways of dealing with violence in the community?

**Mr CERNY** - I don't know whether anyone here has been out from one o'clock till five o'clock on a Saturday morning in this vicinity but it is frightening. It is absolutely frightening and I suggest you do it. Have a look and you will get a very good handle on what we are all about here - one o'clock till five o'clock on a Saturday morning - take a policeman with you. My son rang me at two o'clock one morning and said, 'You'd better come and pick me up.' I went and picked him up and he was covered in blood. I asked, 'What happened?' and he said, 'A person grabbed me from behind, threw me to the ground and started kicking me in the head.' I took him to the hospital. He got stitched up and while he was getting stitched up I went back to the waterfront, saw a few security guys around and said, 'Did you see a drama here tonight, boys?' and they said, 'Yes'. I said, 'What did you see?' 'Oh, we saw a guy getting kicked'. 'Anything else?' 'Yes, we know the guy who did it. We've got his name and address. His girlfriend stayed behind and she said, "He does this every Friday and Saturday night. He comes down here and I'm sick of it". I went back and picked my son up and said, 'Okay, we're off to the police station'. He said, 'Dad, don't worry about'. He was very lucky, he was split open and it could have been worse. I said, 'No, we're going to the police station. This is going to happen next week to someone and we've got to do our bit'. We went to the police station, the policeman looked at my son, he got the chap's name, he then went to the computer and said to us, 'Yes, he's got lots and lots of form'. I said, 'What happens now?' and he said, 'We'll pick him up and charge him. He'll go to court. If he pleads guilty, you won't hear any more of it. If he doesn't plead guilty, we'll call your son in as a witness'. We never heard any more of it, so I took it that he pleaded guilty, and he got a reprimand. Twelve months later there he is in the paper going to jail - and there is a guy with a fractured cheekbone, eye socket and jaw. It is disgusting.

I have worked as a taxi driver, which is a job from hell - but we're not here to talk about that. I picked up a guy from Singapore - an Australian. I said to him, 'Why are you living in Singapore?' and he said, 'I'm pretty happy that I'm living in Singapore and schooling my kids there'. I told him about my son and I said, 'What would happen to the chap who did that in Singapore?' and he said, 'He'd get six months jail and six stripes with the rattan; they pass out after three because it hurts so much. They stitch them up and then give them the next three stripes. They don't have a problem in Singapore but we have a problem here. Where don't they have a problem? They don't have much of a problem in New York because they brought in zero tolerance. They don't have a problem in Singapore because they punish them. Here they don't get punished, they get a reprimand.

I started drinking at 16 when the drinking age was 21. The drinking age came down to 20 and they started drinking at 15; the drinking age came down to 18 and they started drinking at 13. Closing time was at 10 o'clock and we'd go to the pub at six o'clock. Closing became 12 p.m. and we'd go to the pub at eight o'clock. Closing became three o'clock and we'd go to the pub at 10 o'clock. Closing became five o'clock and they go to the pub at midnight. These kids get home at five o'clock in the morning, they're full of booze and drugs and what-have-you and Sunday disappears. What are the kids going to be like? As for the drugs, in my day there was marijuana, which was grown in bush form, now it's grown hydroponically and it's called 'skunk'. My partner is a psychiatric nurse and 95 per cent of the people she sees she says are 'drug fucked'. You're not going to get rid of the marijuana problem but if you could make it so they smoked stuff that didn't completely obliterate them and wreck them mentally. I am here because I care.

**Mr HALL** - Do you have a view on the closing times?

**Mr CERNY** - Even when I was in my hotel, someone rang me up from the AHA and said, 'What do you think should happen in the liquor industry?'. I said that the drinking age should go back to 21 and closing times should go back to three o'clock, not five o'clock. They said, 'Oh, we don't want to do that. We don't want to hear that'. They didn't want to talk to me any more. We closed at three o'clock and then the casino got a licence to close at five o'clock. My customers were leaving my hotel at one o'clock to get into the casino. We had to compete so we closed at five o'clock and they never left my hotel after that. These are unpopular things that have to be done. If they're not done, we are going to end up with a community of nuff-nuffs. These kids go out from one o'clock until five o'clock on a Saturday - and have a look for yourself - it is disgusting.

I was driving a taxi one night - I drove a maxi-taxi, a wheelchair taxi that will carry eight or nine people. I picked up six people out at Glenorchy and I was driving along, and fortunately I had high head rests, and suddenly I was getting punched in the head as I was driving. These people were on, I would say, ice because that makes them bulletproof. One of them was totally out of control and was punching me. They grabbed him and held him down and I thought, 'If he gets free again, what are my options?' I thought, 'I have a seatbelt on, he hasn't got a seatbelt on. If I hit a telegraph pole at 60 kilometres an hour I'll probably survive it, but he's going to be in a bit of trouble'. What sort of position is that that I'm putting myself in, doing my job, that I have to think about running my taxi into a telegraph pole to survive. I cannot stop because if I stop I can get my head kicked in, I have to keep moving. The situation is terrible.

**Mr DEAN** - Clearly you ran a very disciplined hotel and looked after everybody's interests. From your experience and background now, do you believe that there is enough interest in relation to those on the premises and people who become inebriated and affected by alcohol, are they being continually supported in these premises with the service of alcohol to these people? Do you wish to comment on that position?

**Mr CERNY** - I think the primary concern of so many of those establishments is how much money they're making. They are not there, they own them and put in managers. I was there every day and I hardly ever missed a day in eight years. They're not there so what do they care? They come in, in the morning and say, 'How much did we make last night?', and that is the concern. The casino seems to run the show and whatever they want they get. They wanted five o'clock closing and they got five o'clock closing and they got a lot of business until I decided to do the same.

**Mr DEAN** - A person affected by alcohol, clearly drunk, on licensed premises; should that in itself be an offence?

**Mr CERNY** - I don't think so. No. Since the year dot people have got drunk. A lot of people do not get aggressive, but you have a core of people who come into town just to cause trouble. If anyone caused trouble in my hotel they were barred and then they would wake up and say, 'I can't be with my friends next week because I can't go into that pub and I know that's where they're going to go because they enjoy going there. They have fun there and I have a problem'. I was educating them, 'Don't muck up in my pub because you won't be allowed back in'. Now you have the waterfront down here and, 'If you come down to the waterfront and you muck up, you're not allowed back to the waterfront. We're barring you for two years'. 'Hey, but my friends go to the waterfront every Friday and Saturday night.' 'Well, sorry chum, you can't come because you've mucked up.'

**Mr HALL** - Alan, would you agree there has been a bit of cultural shift where a lot of young people stay home, go to a liquor outlet and then top themselves up well before they even come out to the hotel? Has that changed over time?

**Mr CERNY** - It is much more prevalent now. The taxis start picking people up at 11 o'clock and bringing them into town from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m., and then from 3 a.m. till 5 a.m. they are shuttling them home.

**Mr HALL** - How do we deal with that in terms of violence and everything else? Is there an answer to that?

**Mr CERNY** - You have to start off with three o'clock closing. In fact, I would advocate two o'clock. I am not going to be very popular around this town if anyone hears that.

**Mr DEAN** - Have you had a look at the Newcastle position where they have done exactly that? They have brought the closing time back to 3 a.m. Have you looked at that at all?

**Mr CERNY** - I read about it and the result is black and white. It has improved the situation in Newcastle, but is anyone going to have the balls to do it here? What has happened since the last election? Can anyone tell me if anything has happened in this State since

the result of the last election? Anything? I cannot find anything that has been achieved. I do not know why we are paying people. If I had a business and nothing happened in six months I would not be paying them.

**Mr HALL** - We had better not get into that argument here. This committee has its terms of reference and hopefully we will make some very sound recommendations. We send them to the Government and then it is up to the Government to do something.

**Mr CERNY** - Am I wasting my time?

**Mr HALL** - No, you have given us some very good information.

**Mr CERNY** - Certainly the closing times have to be reduced. If you were to reduce the closing time to three o'clock and have a lockdown time of one o'clock then that would improve it even more.

**Mr DEAN** - You mentioned bringing people into town up to one o'clock in the morning or midnight or 11 o'clock, then from 3 a.m. to 5 a.m. you are taking them home. There has been evidence given to the committee that during those early hours of the morning there is not sufficient public transport available, taxis or any other services, to get these people out of the city fairly quickly, and that could be considered a cause of some of the violence. Is there enough public transport available during the early hours to get these people back home?

**Mr CERNY** - It's a really complex issue. I drove those hours for a while and then I decided that it was too dangerous. There are a lot of drivers who only drive daylight hours. There is a period where you just drive in, pick up and go. The taxi industry is another area that is a quagmire. There are drivers who get behind the wheels of taxis on Friday night and they don't get out until Monday morning. I have had a meeting with the minister and his response to me was, 'I know there are problems in the taxi industry. I just don't know what to do about them' - and I have a witness to that. I said, 'You should vacate that seat and let someone in who does know what to do about it. I know what to do about it'. Taxi drivers earn on average about \$8 an hour; the minimum wage is \$15 an hour. It is illegal to pay less than the minimum wage, so who regulates the taxi industry? The Government, but they don't care.

**Mr DEAN** - Are you saying there is probably insufficient transport available to get these people out of the city?

**Mr CERNY** - There are times when there is not enough. There are long queues on the taxi rank and people can be waiting up to an hour or so, but that's just one period. You can't put more taxis on the road because -

**Mr DEAN** - Launceston in particular was identified for violence that was fairly obvious at times on the taxi queues because there wasn't sufficient control over people waiting fairly long times to get a taxi. It was suggested that the main taxi ranks and areas where some of that is occurring should be under video surveillance. Would you support that?

**Mr CERNY** - I would put those taxi ranks under video surveillance. What I saw on the taxi rank in Montpelier Retreat was frightening. I saw people brutalised.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Alan, I take your point that we should be out there looking at some of this stuff, and perhaps we should be.

**Mr CERNY** - Just once; it's every Saturday night so you won't miss it.

**Dr GOODWIN** - I wanted to specifically ask you about the situation with your son where it turned out that the offender had a fairly lengthy record, but effectively received what you think was just a reprimand and then went on to commit another offence.

**Mr CERNY** - It was only when he caused serious damage, as in broken bones, that something happened. I think he got three months and he's going to be out again. He's a bad egg and he's not going to stop.

**Dr GOODWIN** - So you're questioning the adequacy of sentencing and the response to violence in terms of the judicial system as well?

**Mr CERNY** - Absolutely, and they shouldn't be allowed back into town. Wherever you get rubbish, rubbish attracts rubbish. Rubbish gets around with rubbish. It's just the way life is. You will find bikies get around with bikies, prostitutes get around prostitutes, bad eggs get around with bad eggs.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Are you aware of any other hotels that are effectively banning people who are troublemakers or do you think that's not really occurring as much as it could be?

**Mr CERNY** - I couldn't really comment. I am out of that situation and have been for a while. I don't frequent hotels because I've grown out of it.

**Dr GOODWIN** - But it's something that worked well for you with Maloneys?

**Mr CERNY** - I wanted a clean environment to work in so if I did not like the look of you I did not let you in the door. If I thought your eyes indicated to me that you like to scrap you did not come in. Anyone who showed any aggressive tendencies was not allowed in. I do not know where they are going to go but other places want the money and they will let them in and they will deal with the problem. I do not know, but the major thing is reducing the drinking hours -

**DEPUTY CHAIR** (Mr Hall) - And perhaps lifting the drinking age.

**Mr CERNY** - and lifting the drinking age. It is not going to make anyone popular. In America the drinking age was mixed amongst the states and now it is 21 across the board.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - That is right.

**Mr CERNY** - And how did they do that? They said, 'Get your drinking age up to 21 and if you don't get it up to 21 we're not going to give you any money'. When Americans come into town they are the best-behaved people you will come across. I've never had problems. They loved my establishment, especially the military. They said, 'This is the only place we come to anywhere in the world, apart from America, where we don't have

to look over our shoulder. We can come here and have a drink and we don't have to look over our shoulder because everyone is having fun here and it's happy and there's no aggression'.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Alan, just because of the time factor, I would like to thank you very much for your frank evidence that you have given. Mr Dean just has another quick one.

**Mr DEAN** - Alan, do you have a position on 'happy hours'? Happy hours have been raised in this committee on a number of occasions and there are probably concerns about them. Some people are saying that 'happy hours' ought not to be allowed because they cause people to drink fairly quickly and heavily during that period. Did you have 'happy hours' and do you have a position on that?

**Mr CERNY** - I never had 'happy hours'. I think they are designed to attract patrons and the patrons will enjoy the 'happy hour' then leave unless the rest of the pub is run properly. I did have a period where at one of my bars on a Friday night I did not have any customers and I thought, 'What's happened here?' So I put an ad in the paper the following Friday, 'All regular Maloney's patrons from five o'clock to six o'clock, free drinks are on the house' - free drinks. We were packed.

*Laughter.*

**Mr CERNY** - And at six o'clock I did not turn the free drinks off, I let it run till 6.30, and I said to my staff - and I had five behind one bar and it is a corner pub, not a big bar - 'You know the regulars, make sure they have a drink and once you've served them, serve the other people - just serve.' I did that two weeks in a row and the third week my pub was packed and they were paying because we served people. We cared about them. It is a big word in this world - 'care'.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thanks very much, Alan, and thank you for your time.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Mr RODNEY CROOME AND Ms SUSAN DITTER, TASMANIAN GAY AND LESBIAN RIGHTS GROUP, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.**

**DEPUTY CHAIR** (Mr Hall) - Thank you both for appearing before the committee.

**Mr CROOME** - Before I begin I should thank Vanessa for alerting me to the committee's work. Thank you for inviting me along, and having Susan to speak as well. I am appearing today on behalf the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group. We have belatedly put in a submission, which I sent through this morning, which looks at a number of issues that we think are relevant to the committee. I will go through some of those briefly and then hand over to Susan to talk about the issue from Working It Out's point of view, what Working It Out is etcetera.

The submission that I sent in this morning includes our impressions on the nature of violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Tasmania. We focus mainly on violence that is prejudice- or hate-based - when there is an attack, say a violent assault, verbal abuse or whatever it might be - against a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex person that can be motivated by a number of different things, but our focus is violence motivated by hatred or prejudice.

I think the core of our submission is the list of statistics in appendix A which tried to give some kind of impression of the level of hate-motivated assault, violence and abuse against gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex Tasmanians. We present this list to the committee with several caveats. The first is that most of the studies that are cited here were self-selecting. They are conducted at community events or collated from surveys that are posted to people on mailing lists; they are not whole-of-population surveys. Generally with whole-of-population surveys there is such a small sample size of LGBTI people that it is not necessarily very useful. The different studies we are talking about have different demographic focuses. Some of them are young people, some are lesbians rather than gay men, some are transgender people rather than same-sex attracted people, some of them are State and some are national. So that presents a problem when comparing the results. Unfortunately, where the comparison might be most useful, and that is a national survey that has a Tasmanian component, again the Tasmanian component is often so small that it is not very useful. That is why we have gone through and listed as many different surveys and studies as we can to try to reach an overview, to get some kind of impression of what the levels of violence and abuse are. When we do that, as we have done here, a couple of patterns emerge. The first is that it is indisputable that LGBTI people report higher levels of hate-motivated assault than the general population and higher levels of assault in general, most of that assault being based on hate or prejudice. If we look at the surveys, we're talking about over a five-year or whatever period - between 20 per cent and 50 per cent of people surveyed will report that they've been assaulted. That percentage is much higher when we include verbal abuse.

The other pattern that we see here is that the level of abuse and violence reported by people in Tasmanian surveys is higher than in national surveys or surveys in other States - the other States generally being Victoria and New South Wales where more research has been done. This is unfortunate but it is possibly not a surprise, given that if we look

at national surveys of attitudes towards LGBTI people we find that attitudes tend to be more negative in Tasmania. At the top of the appendix, in section 1 - Attitudes, we have a snapshot of attitudes. If we look at the Tasmania Together community survey, which asked people whether they agree that there is acceptance of people of different sexualities in Tasmania, only 48.5 per cent of Tasmanians say that they think there is, compared to 65.6 per cent of Tasmanians who think that there is acceptance of different ethnic groups. In the Mapping Homophobia report done by the Australia Institute in 2005, Tasmania came up the most homophobic State, with 40 per cent of Tasmanians agreeing that homosexuality was immoral compared to, I think, the next State was Queensland and the other States were lower than that. The north-west coast returned a result of 50 per cent, which put it as one of the most homophobic regions in the nation. Now we know that there is a direct link between people's prejudices and their fears and ignorance of LGBTI people and the violence that we experience. Now, of course, not all the people we are talking about in these whole-of-population surveys will enact that violence but when that level of prejudice is so high there will be a corresponding high level of violence. So that is probably why we find in the Tasmanian surveys there is a higher level of abuse, violence and harassment against LGBTI people.

**Mr HALL** - Has incidence of violence increased against gay and lesbian people over the last, say, five years?

**Mr CROOME** - It is very difficult to say whether it has increased for certain from the statistics we have. What we can say is that it probably hasn't decreased, and nature of the violence may have changed. That brings me to the next section about what kind of attacks and violent assaults we are talking about, and that may answer your question.

**Mr DEAN** - It is always a concern for the committee on the number of assaults that are committed out there on anybody and that have not been reported. Is there evidence that people who fit into this group are reluctant to complain, reluctant to bring those matters forward?

**Mr CROOME** - Yes. You are right, Ivan, that people who experience a violent assault will often be reluctant to report that. That would be even more the case if you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or an intersex person who may not necessarily be open about that, may be fearful that the authorities would not necessarily take you seriously and that you might be blamed for bringing the violence upon yourself rather than the perpetrators being blamed. So there are all those concerns that lead to a much lower level of reporting to police than we find in these community surveys. If all of the people in these surveys who say that they have been assaulted were to report to the police then we would know we have a problem on our hands, except insofar as Tasmania Police does not record the motivation for violent assault if that is hatred.

I have tried to give an overview of the extent of the problem but when we look at what kind of violence we are talking about, that is a bit more difficult to pin down. My experience of this as someone who often fields complaints from people who have experienced violence and want to know what they can do about it is that surprise attacks on the streets occur - that is one type of violence. So people would be walking along and if they are perceived by others to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersexual, whatever it might be, then it is possible that they may be attacked. The level of those attacks does not seem to have changed much, in my experience, over the last few years,



despite the fact that there have been significant changes in Tasmania, particularly in the laws that deal with discrimination and same-sex relationships. Those assaults still occur.

The other big area of complaints that I receive is about bullying in schools. That is still an issue. Probably the biggest area that I face, by far, are complaints from LGBTI people who are being harassed, abused and even sometimes attacked by their neighbours. This has definitely changed. That is something which has increased exponentially in the last few years. Of course, again, there is no empirical research into this but my impression is that this is because there are more LGBTI people staying in or moving to communities where there are people who in the past have not had any interaction with openly LGBTI people. I am not saying that everyone in these communities is homophobic, not at all, but there will be people who react quite negatively to having gay/lesbian neighbours. It is reported to me again and again and again, so much so that I do not think we can see it as a coincidence. There does seem to be a pattern here.

My advice to those people is often to seek redress through the Anti-discrimination Act, if that is appropriate, because our Anti-discrimination Act prohibits discrimination in accommodation on the grounds of sexual orientation and that has been interpreted by the Anti-discrimination Tribunal to include harassment by neighbours. There have been a few LGBTI people who have found redress through the Anti-discrimination Act and of course I ask them to report it to the police as well. They do that but sometimes it is difficult for the police to do things if you have this constant low-level harassment, which sometimes grows into violence which the police can take action against but it can be difficult for the police to intervene in what to them looks like an interneighbour dispute.

**Ms DITTER** - Even when it is really constant.

**Mr CROOME** - Yes, and one of the features of this is that it is constant. While it is not as extreme, necessarily, as the street attacks, in terms of the violence involved it can be just as traumatising because it lasts over a long period.

In terms of the actions that the Tasmanian Government at least has taken about this, I have mentioned in the submission the fact that the Department of Education has established a good framework for dealing with bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools, and \$50 000 was allocated in 2007 to implementing programs in classrooms dealing with that, but of course \$50 000 does not go very far and no further funding has been provided. Tasmania Police has also responded over many years to the issues, particularly through the appointment and training of LGBTI community liaison officers. Ivan, I think you are familiar with that program?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, I am. In fact I was involved in the program and I am totally involved in the program in the north of the State now in my position as an alderman in supporting that and in working with you people, which is great.

**Mr CROOME** - Each of those departments plus the Department of Health and Human Services have or had, because they have gone into abeyance, reference groups on LGBTI issues. Often we have focused on this issue of harassment and violence and how to deal with it but, as I have indicated, there is still a long way to go before we, as a State, deal with this issue in a comprehensive way. Like I said, the programs that exist which could be implemented in classrooms at a small cost are not being implemented in the way they

should be to try to reduce levels of prejudice amongst students. Tasmania Police does not gather statistics on hate-motivated assault, even though some other Australian police services do. That makes it hard for us to know exactly when, where and against whom these assaults are occurring.

**Mr DEAN** - Rodney, so that would be a recommendation you would make to this committee, that the police do collect data that is necessary for these statistics to be known?

**Mr CROOME** - That is recommendation 1.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Do you know which other police jurisdictions do capture those statistics and in what format?

**Mr CROOME** - I know that New South Wales does but I cannot vouch for any other police service. I know of the New South Wales experience because there were some teething issues there. Police, for instance, were asking, 'How do we know if someone has been assaulted if the motivation for an assault is hate or prejudice? Do we ask them if they are gay?'. That meant that police needed to go through training about, 'No, you don't ask them that'. You look at the characteristics of the crime and there are certain characteristics of a hate-motivated assault. It will be extremely violent. There is no theft involved often. All those criteria are well established in police circles, so it involves training those police. It's not just about setting up a computer system to record the motivation. It is also about making sure officers know how to identify hate-motivated assault.

**Mr HALL** - We are in fact going to Sydney to take evidence for a day so we will take that into account.

**Mr CROOME** - We have talked about the police and the Education department. There is a prohibition on incitement to hatred in the Anti-discrimination Act. Currently the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute is doing an inquiry into whether that should be a criminal offence as well as a civil offence and whether we should have extra provisions that allow penalty enhancement if a violent assault is motivated by hatred. Unfortunately their terms of reference are limited to race and assaults based on racial hatred. That is a serious issue but we would hope that, when they make their recommendations and if the Parliament acts on those, those terms of reference can be extended to sexual orientation. Providing enhanced penalties or criminal penalties only for assault based on race hate sends out the message that other forms of hate-based assault are less serious and that is a message that Parliament shouldn't be sending.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Have you made a submission to that?

**Mr CROOME** - Yes, along just those lines. Given that their funding is only for the race-hate inquiry, I'm not sure that they'll be making much of that. They may recommend that there is a further inquiry, and I hope they do, but I don't think that they'll be recommending remedies for sexual orientation hate crime.

In the original Tasmania Together social, economic and environmental plan for the State there was a target of reducing levels of verbal harassment and physical assault against LGBTI people - I think it said 'gay and lesbian people' at the time. That was an

important benchmark but it has been 'parked', to use the term that Tasmania Together uses, which means shoved off to the side, because there have not been the resources to establish a base level in understanding what the level of assault is. We have these various statistics, as I said, but to establish a base level and then to establish whether we are effectively decreasing it would involve, according to the Bureau of Statistics, finding a sample of people whom we can survey regularly over the next 10 years or whatever, or at least a sample of people where, even if the individuals change the demographics are the same, but we don't have that at the moment. It wouldn't be hard to establish but it does require a bit of funding and that hasn't been available.

**Ms DITTER** - Rodney, would it be right to say that it's not clear who should provide those resources, or could?

**Mr CROOME** - In terms of the Tasmania Together processes, no, it's not clear whether it should be the community or government or the two working together.

The final recommendation that I haven't mentioned is again about funding. What this issue comes back to is education. People aren't born homophobic or violent; they learn prejudice and hate and they learn the enactment of that through attacking other people. Just as they learn that, they can unlearn it. It is absolutely essential if we are going to address this kind of violence that the first step is properly resourcing community education programs that are done strategically, programs that we know are effective. Those programs are there. We could implement them tomorrow but it is just a lack of resources. They do not require a great deal of resources but the resources so far have been absent.

In this regard, we welcome the fact that the Government in the last Budget in May allocated \$150 000 over three years for programs to meet the Tasmania Together benchmarks in relation to LGBTI people, including that one about verbal abuse and physical harassment. So there is \$50 000 a year that community groups can apply for to implement these programs that I am talking about. But, as you know, \$50 000 doesn't go very far when we are talking about a population of half a million, particularly when messages really need to go out to everyone in order to reach those people whom they need to reach, and particularly if they are also going to programs that are targeted on people in particular places and in schools. So that is a good start but it's not nearly enough.

**Mr DEAN** - I saw a documentary on a young student recently who was being vilified and bullied at school. He had to move into the right school because of his sexual preference and to get the right support and so on. It was a great program and it would be good viewing for this committee.

**Ms DITTER** - Working It Out is Tasmania's gender and sexuality support and education service. The service is for all ages and our target group is anyone negotiating their agenda or their sexuality or both. We have been operating for 12 years. The work of our organisation is to provide support and education programs which reduce fear and prevent violence in schools, at home, in public places and in the workplace. It is true that same-sex attracted and gender-diverse people experience less social stigmatisation and personal hatred than was once the case and that there is increased visibility of homosexuality in mainstream arenas. But, despite these changes, a person who is

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex cannot take their acceptance for granted, whether from their families, in the local shopping centre or at school.

Some of the issues we see at Working It Out are that teachers and service providers lack the skills to deal with homophobic bullying and other forms of abuse. Requests for training in this area are increasing. However, with 2.8 staff for the State, we are no longer able to meet that need.

Young people are experiencing abuse from their parents, both verbal and physical, or are thrown out of home because they are transgender, have come out, are too feminine or too masculine. They can report assault to the police, however parents have an exemption under Criminal Code section 50, so police are reluctant to act on this. Child Protection will cover children under the age of 18, however if they are over about 15 then children are unlikely to report and more likely to look for another adult and a place where they feel safer. They are not covered by the family violence legislation. A restraining order will only be relevant if they believe their parents will be after them, not if they have thrown them out, so they are incredibly vulnerable.

Young people are experiencing abuse at school. Due largely to a lack of resources, schools work with the identified young person rather than the whole school environment, which is what is needed. The abusive situations of many adults who seek our services should also be brought to the attention of this committee. Last year, you may be aware, two men in a high-risk situation due to their housing placement, sought our support for a public housing transfer application. The constant homophobic abuse and illegal discrimination experienced by both men caused major health issues for them. One man, while being increasingly depressed, was maintaining a strong front to support his partner who was constantly frightened, particularly after a brick was thrown through a closed glass window of their flat. I am pleased to say that those men were able to move to safer accommodation this year but it took more than 12 months.

In order to bring violence to the attention of the general public there are several significant, commemorative days and days of celebration. For example, 20 November is an internationally recognised Transgender Day of Remembrance to remember those who died by their own hand and those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. Working It Out will hold a sunset ceremony at Royal Park in Launceston this year. IDAHO is another day - International Day Against Homophobia - in May when Working It Out affirms the achievements of the last 12 months.

My final point, which is a really important one, is the fear of violence and its consequences. The fear experienced by some people is so great that many live a lie, which can result in broken relationships which affect many people. Working It Out is seeing increasing incidents of this. The good news is that more people are coming forward. Another outcome is that some people are considering or completing suicide because life is just too painful. People are living in fear of being outed and this can be as a result of wanting to get back at somebody.

We endorse the TGLRG recommendations and, further to that, we will be recommending to the Tasmania Together review that a benchmark is added - people feeling safe at school. There are pre-existing benchmarks covering feeling safe at home and in public places.

**Mr HALL** - Susan, you talked about the lack of resources. You're an NGO, I take it?

**Ms DITTER** - That's right.

**Mr HALL** - I think you said 2.8 people to cover the whole of the State?

**Ms DITTER** - Yes.

**Mr HALL** - Is there another option whereby there is something built into a school curriculum to address these issues?

**Ms DITTER** - We would welcome that. The feedback we get from schools is that it is really difficult for them to do it, and it is very good for someone to come in and do it. It is particularly valuable to have people who identify from the GLBTI community providing the training.

**Mr HALL** - Obviously the 2.8 people is not enough?

**Ms DITTER** - No.

**Mr HALL** - Rodney talked about learning and unlearning before. Is it better to start at an earlier age rather than trying to address the issues later on in high school?

**Ms DITTER** - More primary schools are requesting our support but we are mainly in high schools.

**Mr CROOME** - Regarding the idea about unlearning, if you like, hatred and manifesting violence, the programs that can be implemented in Tasmanian schools, and have been to a small extent, we know they work. They have been assessed independently and we know they help significantly to reduce levels of prejudice and hatred amongst the students involved in them, and students really value that. In Tasmania that has mainly been grade 8s and 9s, but the evidence is there that it works. It is possible for people who have prejudices to see that they are wrong and that they can be changed. It is not pie in the sky.

**Ms DITTER** - We can also increase staff confidence to challenge the abuse we are talking about. Teachers don't feel equipped to do it, so training for them is invaluable, from my perspective.

**Mr CROOME** - Often teachers will hear kids say, 'Oh, that's so gay', in a really negative way and, as Susan said, they don't know what to do. They feel ill-equipped and besieged, but there are things that they can do. With a small investment it is possible for them to go through that kind of training that equips them to deal with the prejudices which we know can grow into violent responses later in those kids' lives.

**Ms DITTER** - We provided some training for pre-service teachers last week and in the feedback they provided half of them said they were going to use the exercises in school.

**Mr DEAN** - What have you and the Education department done to try to bring this out, to identify where they should be going or what you would like to happen in the schools and at what age group should we start looking at this? It seems to me that teachers today are taught a lot in relation to how to handle bullying and assaults in schools but not the reasons behind the bullying and assaults.

**Ms DITTER** - Our program specifically looks at difference and sameness, addresses how people's comfort changes between the two and then looks at how society is all the better for difference. Then we introduce the subjects of LGBTI and the students also get an opportunity to talk to some young people their age who identify. By the end of the eight-week program, which is for only one hour a week, the students are ready to talk about how they can change their school, what things they can incorporate which will show that their school is welcoming.

**Mr DEAN** - The program I talked about was very good and it was about this. A young student had to change schools because of the problems and abuse he was experiencing in the school he was at. He finally got into a school where the training and educational things were in place; he was accepted and went on to great things. He was a very bright student as well.

**Ms DITTER** - Our frustration is that often the individual is provided support to cope with the homophobia rather than action happening in the school to get rid of the homophobia.

**Mr CROOME** - We know from the research that generic programs dealing with bullying or generic anti-violence programs may not necessarily have much of an impact on bullying or violence that is motivated by hatred of sexual gender difference. That is for a variety of reasons, including that the perpetrators may have heard this message that violence is bad against other people, but they may not even see LGBTI people as people - you are some lesser form of life - or they may justify the violence to themselves because they feel that they are doing society a favour. Whatever rationale there is, unless that message is targeted and says that violence and bullying against these people is wrong for these reasons then it has much less impact. That is not to say that generic anti-violence messages are wrong or bad - they have a really important role to play - but in terms of the people we are talking about they have to be targeted and they have to be specific.

**Dr GOODWIN** - The reference group you mentioned is in abeyance. Do you know why that is?

**Mr CROOME** - There was one in education, one health and one in police but there was also a whole-of-government reference group, and that is also not meeting.

**Dr GOODWIN** - None of them are meeting?

**Mr CROOME** - Not at the moment, no.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Do you know why that is? Is that an issue?

**Mr CROOME** - It is an issue and we have raised that with the ministers involved. We are continuing to meet with the ministers in those agencies and also with people in Community Development who are looking at whole-of-government responses on this

issue. There haven't been very good whole-of-government responses - well, there haven't been any really. The Community Services minister is quite keen to make sure that there is a whole-of-government response. We are working through that and the various issues about why they not meeting. I am hopeful that they will meet again soon. Their terms of reference and workload become a bit amorphous, so I think they need to refocus on the particular issues that are most urgent in those agencies. In police, for instance, there is the gathering of statistics, and in education the schoolroom programs we have been talking about. I'm hopeful they will meet again.

**Dr GOODWIN** - The work being done in schools is obviously really important to get at the attitudes of children and get them while they're young so that hopefully they don't develop homophobic attitudes, but I am wondering about the broader community. Obviously kids go to school and learn one thing and then they go home and are told something completely different, and families and what they're being told by their parents have a lot of influence on them. By having a specific criminal offence of vilification or penalty provisions that makes it an aggravating factor if it's a hate-motivated crime, do you think that sort of legislative change can help with community attitudes more broadly, or are there other things we need to do as well?

**Mr CROOME** - The legal changes that we talked about, I think the message they send is one of deterrence. People are not necessarily aware that harassing their neighbour because their neighbour is transgender is against the Anti-discrimination Act. If there were clear criminal penalties or provisions for penalty enhancement then that would send a stronger message and one of deterrence. But it is not just about deterrence; as you said it's about changing people's hearts and minds. That requires more positive and direct messages. Given there are large numbers of people affected by this, and it seems to be more of a problem in Tasmania than the other States, I cannot see why the State can't invest funding into those programs, an advertising program or whatever it might be, in the same way that it invests in programs about violence against women or programs about reducing racial violence. We know all these are problems in Tasmania and they have all been addressed in various ways by government, except this one.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Nothing at the national level?

**Mr CROOME** - Not in terms of the broad-based community campaigns that we are talking about, no.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Would there be any other examples in other States of the sort of broad-based community awareness campaign you are talking about?

**Mr CROOME** - There are examples of the State - and it's usually the State - funding community initiatives. For instance, in New South Wales - and it's been around for about 15 years now - there is a gay and lesbian anti-violence project which is funded mainly to develop programs for the gay and lesbian community, and now also by sexual and transgender intersex people, to encourage them to report to the police, be aware of where they are, their personal safety and that kind of thing. There have been some campaigns which have been funded with, for instance, footballers and other popular icons, sending out an anti-violence message, but the funding for that has been very limited and the impact is quite limited. The resources made available for that are nothing

like the resources made available to try to reduce levels of violence against racial minorities.

**Ms DITTER** - Our training includes drawing young people's or adults' attention to the Anti-discrimination Act to make people are aware that the motivation behind that is irrelevant, so if somebody calls somebody a derogatory word in fun, as we often hear, then that is irrelevant. If the person feels they are being abused by that, then that is breaching the act. People are surprised by that, especially young people. We follow up that part of the training with the community panel, where people hear the impact of what they think is not abuse on a person, and that has a big impact.

Working It Out is also promoting, through our newsletter, the online reporting that you can do to the Anti-discrimination Commission, which is new. I hope that we will get a response from that too as far as statistics are concerned and as far as people being able to do that and still be anonymous.

**CHAIR** - Are there any other recommendations, after having the conversation, that you believe should be appropriate recommendations?

**Ms DITTER** - We will go away and have a talk about this. There may be other recommendations and I can get back to you in the next week.

**CHAIR** - That would be helpful, thank you.

**Mr CROOME** - The recommendations in this submission are pretty broad and they are designed to be. When people talk about solutions to these problems, they talk about these things. I know these are the broad areas of solution, if you like, but I wasn't sure how specific to make the recommendations in terms of  $x$  requiring this amount of money or this particular department setting aside these resources.

**CHAIR** - There are probably two stages of approach, one being the cultural change approach, which takes a lot longer. Smoking is the ideal situation where you can see it occur, but over time. It is not like closing one book and opening another one, but there are things we can do pretty well straightaway which can assist that long-term cultural change and also the immediate problem surrounding violence.

**Mr CROOME** - We are happy to go away and discuss that and give more detail on these recommendations in terms of that short term and long term. As Susan made the point before, there were 2.8 people at Working It Out.

**Ms DITTER** - There are three offices - Launceston, Burnie, Hobart.

**Mr CROOME** - To put that in perspective for you in terms of the LGBTI community in Tasmania, they are the only people employed specifically to do the support and counselling education work for this community, and not just supporting counselling for LGBTI people, of which there are many thousands in Tasmania, but all the education work required for everyone in Tasmania to move things forward on these issues. That is completely ridiculous. Compare that to the issues faced by other minority communities and the resources they receive. This is not begrudge them, they need those resources, but



the resources here are just a pittance. So when we go away and look at this, we might make specific recommendations about that.

**Mr DEAN** - Getting someone like Dr Kerry Phelps involved would help. She is a great person to listen to on where we should be going and the changes we should be making. She is a great spokesperson.

**Ms DITTER** - We have a great spokesperson arriving in November. Shelley Argent is the Australian spokesperson for PFLAG Australia, which is Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. She comes from the perspective of, 'I have two sons; one has these rights and one has these rights'. It is a very good example to give to the general population, so we are excited to have her here in November.

**Mr DEAN** - I was at a presentation given by Dr Kerry Phelps when I was gay and lesbian liaison police officer. We went to Goulburn, I think, where she virtually ran the course. It was a wonderful course.

**Mr CROOME** - Yes, she is good. Another person who comes to mind is Lynne Hillier, who is a researcher at the La Trobe University and has spent her life looking at young people who are same-sex attracted. She has some really compelling evidence to give about the problems these kids face in schools. A lot of the research is there, a lot these people's views are given, so perhaps it is time for us to also act.

**Ms DITTER** - We have the programs ready and the schools are waiting for them.

**Mr CROOME** - Exactly, they just need resources and not a great deal of resources. It is time for the Government to bite the bullet.

**Ms DITTER** - Adding to Rodney's definition of violence, violence against oneself is a big issue in our community.

**Mr CROOME** - We know that young same-sex attracted people have much higher levels of suicide ideation and attempted suicide because of the prejudices and hate that we have been talking about. It is particularly high amongst young transgender people. Again, the resources to try to support these people and counsel them are very limited.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for coming along.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**