



WIRRINGA BAIYA ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE

ABN: 60 382 206 441

NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee
On Social Issues
Inquiry into the Inebriates Act 1912

24 November 2003

Dear Sir or Madam:

I refer to the Inquiry into the Inebriates Act 1912 submission submitted by the Redfern Community Legal Centre 12 November 2003.

Wurringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre fully supports this submission and would like to make the following additional points to be taken into consideration at the Inquiry.

It is well known that Aboriginal people in some communities are seriously effected by alcohol and are arrested because of 'Drunk and Disorderly'. Yet there has been (in most cases) no crime has been committed.

Surely then it needs to be recognised that alcoholism within certain Aboriginal communities/families is in fact an illness and should be treated as such.

Within the prison system more and more Aboriginal women, youth and men are being incarcerated because of minor issues such as eg non payment of fines which can be linked back to being drunk and disorder, drinking in a public space etc.

This is a health issue and a social issue.

There are no gender specific rehabilitation centers.

Women with their children need their own drug and rehabilitation centres that are culturally appropriate.

One point I would like to make clear is that some people and government organisations think that alcohol and substance abuse caused domestic violence, sexual assault and child sexual assault.

This is not true.

Domestic violence, sexual assault and child sexual assault are premeditated and deliberate and the victims are most often women and children.

This is distressing for services such as ours as we all know that alcohol is not the cause of the violence.

Making communities 'dry' does not solve the problem it might make the violence not so violent or noticeable.

Yours sincerely
Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trisha Frail-Gibbs', written in a cursive style.

Trisha Frail-Gibbs
Coordinator