



The Hon Tony Abbott MP
Minister for Health
and Ageing

The Hon Mal Brough MP
Minister for Families Community
Services and Indigenous Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

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Petrol-sniffing campaign expanded

Minister for Health and Ageing Tony Abbott and Minister for Indigenous Affairs Mal Brough have announced the Commonwealth Government's expanded efforts to help Indigenous communities address petrol sniffing and other substance abuse problems.

Mr Brough said the Government's Central Australian anti-petrol sniffing strategy would be expanded north of Alice Springs above Ti Tree as well as into Indigenous communities in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia.

"These new areas will now have access to substantial funding under the \$55.2 million anti-petrol sniffing measure in last year's Budget."

"This funding is for support services to tackle substance abuse, and covers alternative activities for young people, education, rehabilitation, restorative justice and the provision of unsmiffable *Opal* fuel," Mr Brough said.

The announcement comes on top of the \$12 million the Government has provided to support the rollout of *Opal* fuel in Alice Springs.

"The Government is conducting a public information campaign to accompany the full replacement of all regular unleaded fuel with *Opal* in Alice Springs by the end of February. The full rollout of *Opal* fuel in Alice Springs is being done in cooperation with all service stations, the Alice Springs Town Council and other local community leaders."

"*Opal* has already reduced the incidence of petrol sniffing and expanding the regions covered by the anti-petrol sniffing strategy will build on this and help to ensure that this change lasts," Mr Abbott said.

A recent Nganampa Health Council survey shows that the prevalence of petrol sniffing across Anangu Pitjantjatjarra Yunkatjatjarra (APY) lands has fallen by more than 80 per cent since 2004.

Specific initiatives under the anti-petrol sniffing strategy are based on an *8 Point Plan* which includes strengthening and supporting communities, better policing, establishing treatment and respite facilities, providing alternative activities for young people and supporting the roll-out of unleaded *Opal* fuel.

Cont. 2/.....

The Government spent more than \$1.5 million in 2006 and 2007 to support the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk in Alice Springs, which has reduced drug trafficking in the cross-border region. The recent establishment of an Alice Springs-based sniffer dog unit will further enhance anti-trafficking operations.

Other initiatives under way include:

- Continued rollout of non-sniffable unleaded *Opal* fuel across the Central Desert region and other parts of Australia
- \$7.7 million for four pools at Mimli, Amata, Watarru and Pipalyatjara in APY Lands
- \$1.1 million to build housing associated with a new rehabilitation centre at Amata, in addition to the \$2.2 million capital funding provided for the unit in June 2004.

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