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GOORI
men's recovery centre

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**ALCOHOL-RELATED
VIOLENCE
IN QUEENSLAND**

A Submission

to

Law Justice and Safety Committee

from

GOORI HOUSE/LIFEWAYS TRAINING

*Sober up the Man: the Man Wins.
Sober up the Wife: the Child Wins.
When the Family Wins: the Family Wins.
When the Community Wins: the Community Wins.*



Chairperson
Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

**RE: Submission to Law Justice and Safety Committee
Inquiry into Alcohol Related Violence in Queensland**

Dear Chair

I congratulate your committee on addressing this urgent community crisis.
I enclose our copy of our submission to your inquiry.

The progression of Alcohol Related Violence into the streets and neighbourhoods of all areas of Queensland needs to become a high priority for government at all levels.

A combination of existing resources with a coordinated approach marks a pathway to a solution.


I am pleased therefore to present this submission to your committee and look forward to positive outcomes.

Yours sincerely

John Close
Chief Executive Officer
14 / 10 / 2009

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ALCOHOL-RELATED VIOLENCE IN QUEENSLAND

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Preamble

"Believing for one minute that a footballer who punches a girlfriend, a young man who glasses a person in a bar, a girl that attacks a person with a knife is just drunk and out of control is more than just wrong - it's dumb. They have a problem. It's a cultural problem that won't be fixed until they are."

John Close – October 2007

It is now a problem that is on our streets and is a daily occurrence.

Alcohol and drug violence has always been with us without any significant change despite the billions of dollars spent on the different approaches over 40 years, it will continue to escalate if these proposed intervention processes are not accepted.

This alcohol related violence is and has been at the very founding core of Goori House/ Lifeways formation.

Goori House was founded in 1997 by leading drug and alcohol specialist John Close, who as a child lived the nightmare in an alcohol fuelled family system, he became himself an angry young man.

After successive years of that life pattern, John came to understand it was destructive, John decided the time had come to provide the community with the options never afforded to him - to break the cycle that locks in a life pattern and entrenches a culture of acceptability of bad behaviour that says there is no hope.

His decades of work with Alcohol and Drug affected individuals and families led him to establish Goori House and develop the Galangoor program and Lifeways College.

Initially targeted at Indigenous communities, the service now provides intervention, treatment and rehabilitation to the wider community and across cultures.

This has been an expansion of services based on two factors:

- The ever-creeping rise of alcohol and substance abuse issues in all layers of the community
- The new, emerging and growing practice of life and family destruction because of poly-drug use.

For John and his specialist team, the alcohol and drug related problems, including violence, which are now being witnessed across all layers of the community in Queensland are shocking... **but not new.**

For decades Close and his team has lived it, worked with it, and watched it develop into an accepted life style and for young people, almost a right of passage in the youth culture.

It is this culture, this belief that alcohol abuse and violence is part of the norm that is at the core of issues.

It is not being addressed adequately or in a coordinated way.

Currently, as individual offenders are identified and, incarcerated they are back on the streets doing it all again.

They return and encourage a life style within others and their peers of accepting the same behaviour and consequences.

It is a revolving door and the Goori Program aims to break that cycle.

Close and his team have developed a tough, practical intervention approach that achieves 60% recovery rates.

It is an approach that is now being seen as a way forward for the community at large.

The issues, according to Close, of alcohol-related violence, for main stream society is now becoming alcohol and drug use as a accepted culture. It is now part of the every-day fabric in all areas of the State. Some we hear about, some we don't. However it is there and it is growing.

For John Close, alcohol related violence has not 'emerged' in recent years. It has progressed, escalated and moved.

It is the emergence of alcohol related violence in the public domain that is drawing necessary attention.

John was talking about this issue within Indigenous communities over ten years ago is now a reality for all of Queensland.

"This abuse and dependency has worsened in a progressive manner. It has now extended to our children abusing petrol, glue and solvents and their trading in illicit drugs. The progressive, generational nature of this epidemic has broken down our family structure which our nations were so dependent on for social structure and survival."

John Close - May 1998

The reality is that this is now the future.

Goori/Lifeways offers a combined and layered approach to recovery which has been achieving 60% recovery rates.

It begins with intervention,

It extends to detoxification,

It case manages over a nine month time frame

It works with them, to best enhance the clients' achievement of long-term abstinence,

It develops personal and workforce skills and abilities to enhance their day-to-day life.

It's a no nonsense complete approach that educates and creates a new start.

"There is not a family left in this State that isn't in some way affected by alcohol or drug misuse and its violence. It needs to be a major priority for governments"

John Close - March 2009



HISTORY

GROWTH NEEDED - NOT WANTED.

In the past 20 years alcohol fuelled violence and related social problems have spilled out of closeted Indigenous communities.... Out from behind the closed doors of domestic homes and have poured onto our streets in towns and cities across Queensland.

The problems' become more complex, as people are not just abusing alcohol, they are mixing it with other drugs.

What we are now seeing on the streets and almost daily has been with us, but hidden away. It has been in the homes of Indigenous communities for decades and is now a major concern for the wider community. And this is prevalent as it becomes public through the media.

It is the basis of the Goori/Lifeways approach which achieves outcomes unprecedented globally.

At a time when targeted programs to deal with alcohol related violence in Indigenous communities was becoming a public issue, Goori House went to work...across all of Queensland.

Time and the creeping insidious nature of alcohol and drug abuse has seen Goori /Lifeways now dealing with alcohol and drug related violence across cultures.

As such the Goori service has grown to include mobile field workers, via a Referral Service program working in hot spots such as Brisbane's Fortitude Valley.

It extends to training for Alcohol and Drug workers and most importantly, provides a program for front line workers, Police Ambulance, Nurses and other workers who face alcohol and drug affected individuals daily.

Its expansion of its field programs, although much requested by Police and Local authorities across Queensland, are being constrained by an inability of government to provide funding. Despite the appraisal of all in the field, that this approach works and that training on offer is needed and works, nil support from Government has come.



THE IMMEDIATE ISSUES - VIOLENCE

"We must adopt a more strategic AND COORDINATED approach to beat this. We must harness all the resources now being poured into the area and train those who have to confront this on a daily basis."

John Close - June 2009

Goori House is now advocating a State wide roll out of its training and referral approach.

The first issue the government needs to address is the sheer increase in numbers of people who need help to tackle their substance misuse.

The second is an inadequate understanding and skills base for people most likely to deal with users at the precise moment intervention is needed.

The Valley Pilot program over the past 12 months has the results and they are obvious. The program now needs to be taken State wide and coupled with adequate training for all people who may find themselves confronted with potentially violent alcohol or drug users.

What occurs now is a confrontation. People are out of control, or off their faces, and the Police are rightly called. They do not have the expertise necessary to deal with someone who is violently intoxicated, and how to defuse trouble when it flairs. Law enforcement is called in after the trouble escalates and these issues could be diverted from police attention if the suggested intervention strategies are adopted.

Goori House has been seeking funding of \$375,000 for the roll out of the program. This training is vital for front line services and existing services in hot spots across the State since Premier Peter Beattie first asked them to investigate methods to bring services together.

It seeks on-going recurrent funding for the program of \$350,000 over 3 years.

Despite praise from all areas of Government, including the Premiers Department in February this year, funding has not been forthcoming and in fact Goori House has been told despite the success of the program in its pilot in the Valley funding cannot be found.

This, despite requests from Queensland Police to extend the program into Brisbane's CBD, despite a commitment from Rockhampton City Council to partially fund the program for its troubled CBD, despite dialogue and interest from Ipswich City Council, Redcliffe and others.



The program believes that there can be no success with addicts unless proper intervention occurs, at time when it is most needed.

It believes there can be no culture change without creating a new breed or culture.

The program serves as a model that can be the starting point for harnessing existing services. It then aims to pull, together the funding now being spent in communities and begin to make it work, achieving outcomes for these people, their families their communities and most importantly begin influencing peers and emerging generations.

By intervening and eradicating some of the problems it clears the way for an educative approach to workers and communities to collectively deal with alcohol and drug related violence.

- It showcases the reality of law enforcement and sits in harmony with other definitive moves such as trading hour regulations.
- It works on an area by area, tailored approach.
- It re-focuses and re-trains existing resources and workers and coordinates the localised approach necessary.
- At the same time it aims to clean up areas, reduce crime and free up police to attend to other crime related instances.

It is a clever use of resources which provides a solution to what is now not working.

It ensures that trained alcohol and drug specialists are on hand to defuse situations for Emergency service workers such as Ambulance workers and hospital staff and it ensures that the individual is then case managed into a recovery based treatment program.

The program focuses on a combination of training and support for front line workers. The Police who, on a daily basis, face the torment of dealing with alcohol and drug affected individuals and crime offenders.

The program ensures trained specialists complement Police in working to defuse potentially violent situations from happening. It's also a program designed to identify potential problems and move to cut them off before violence happens.



Our Program

-How It works and Why

1. It begins with an understanding that alcohol and drug fuelled violence will not end until the cycle is broken, first individuals and then communities.
2. If anti- alcohol and drug education is to work, community as a whole needs to understand the two week window approach.
3. It begins with ensuring front line workers get the support needed to know how to deal with issues and individuals.
4. It then moves onto recovery and showcasing the positives and as a community we are aware through local media coverage.

GOORI HOUSE REFERRAL PROGRAM

Established in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley this program has been so successful in removing threats and crime that Police and local authorities in Brisbane's CBD, Ipswich, and Rockhampton are now requesting its implementation.

It is an on the ground service, bringing professional Alcohol and Drug workers from the treatment floor to the streets, working side by side with emergency service workers, Freeing Police up to carry out law enforcement and providing training in how to intervene with an alcohol and drug affected individual.

The program focuses on a combination of training and support for front line workers such as Police who, on a daily basis, face the torment of dealing with alcohol and drug affected individuals and crime offenders.

The program ensures Goori workers are side by side with Police, not just about preventing situations escalating to violence, but intervening to stop escalation.

It begins individual case management there, on the street, and then streams these people into treatment.

It works with the very real engagement of the law in place to ensure there is a deterrent.

Early Valley trials, in 2008, known as **Operation Bronswing** this program has proved extremely successful in decreasing violence and crime in the area. It has provided vital treatment pathways for alcohol and drug affected individuals and addicts, many of whom are first time users, also many who have tried to give up in the past and failed.

One Police Officer who participated in the program Sergeant Mark Simon says the program has worked well.



"There has been really good results. Its educated people and it's helping on the streets. It is not just taking them off the streets but is giving them hope. We still police and enforce the law but we are learning how to have a more holistic approach rather than straight down the line law enforcement. The way we address issues now is effective and fantastic."

It's not just about preventing situations escalating to violence. It's about intervening to stop escalation, and about streaming these people into treatment and also having the law in place to ensure there is a deterrent.

The decades old approach of waiting for trouble has failed.

"Many people in Government are now reluctant to think outside of the box. They have become comfortable with their approach of 'dry them out' and the return them back into the same situation they were in before. The past 30 years and billions of dollars spent have shown us that approach is a recipe for failure. It simply does not work."

John Close - April 2009

DANGERS OF ALCOHOL



STEP TWO

GOORI HOUSE

GALANGOOR PROGRAM

"The focus needs to move beyond grabbing people once they offend only to have them back on the streets within days, or next time they're having a big night out."

John Close - November 2008

As a result of investigating and researching Indigenous communities Goori House professionals have been able to develop an approach which is now proving successful across cultures.

It is an approach that removes the "Boxes" from the aspects of Detox and Rehab and places the focus back onto the individual and their specific needs. One service, an overview and co-ordinated approach all the way to full recovery.

"Solve the problem and rehabilitate the individual. You create a role model and smash the culture."

John Close - March 2007

The "2-Week Window"

Intervention before more serious trouble.

"The approach begins at the first sign of an issue. A temper tantrum, repeated lapses of memory, verbal or physical outbursts.

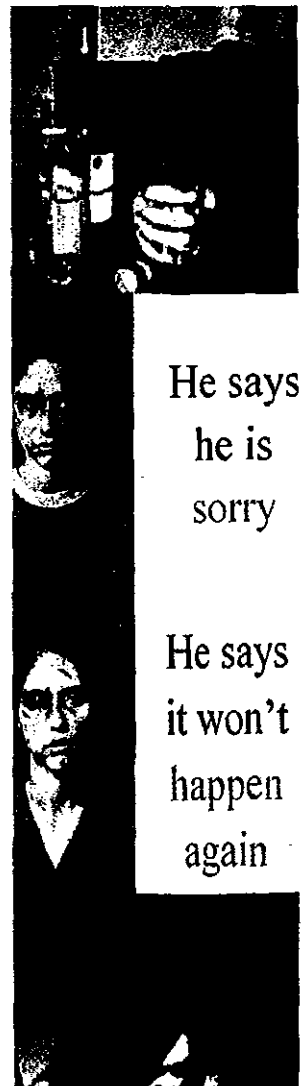
It is at this stage that the individual is able to be made aware of a problem.

It's time to move, to prevent, to intervene. To showcase to them, their peers, their family that this is a problem. A significant issue.

Trained workers, hand in hand if necessary with front line law enforcement or medial staff, move in and begin liaison and encouragement. They monitor and pick moments of lucidness or sobriety to foster clear discussion and outline options. Most of which are not pretty, but explained as necessary.

It's a 'No Option' approach that begins to work because of the individual's vulnerability. We foster and encourage a need for help and assistance-for treatment."

John Close - June 2001



He says
he is
sorry

He says
it won't
happen
again

Goori House looks at the addict/alcoholic as a whole person. When the addict or alcoholic decides to seek treatment, Goori House introduces the person to the Goori House Program and to an environment where that person will be treated. Armed with knowledge of the "2 week window", Goori House staff understands the issues facing the new Client and work systematically through those issues, prioritising Medical and General Health issues, Financial and Legal issues.

When the Client has attended an appropriate medical environment to ensure that no withdrawal issues exist, the client is encouraged to eat rest and ask questions about the Program. The Client is fully supported during this period, and other issues personal issues are addressed, if required (e.g. concerns about family members, Post-Traumatic Stress, etc.). If the Client remains during this initial period the likelihood of completion of the entire Goori House Program increases.

Goori House Clients and Staff are fully supported by a professional Management (Administrative) structure, Staff Professional Development and the Galangoor Therapy Program. This produces a 60% Program completion rate by the Goori House Client Base. Goori House Ltd believes that these same results can be achieved throughout Queensland through the adoption of their Systems.

In the course of addiction, the family members and/or associates of the alcoholic or addict have heard many broken promises from that person, to either change behaviour or stop alcohol and drug use altogether, commonly at times of crisis. This time of crisis is usually when the addict/alcoholic is more receptive to treatment options and is considered by experts to be a brief window of opportunity, or the "2-week window", in which meaningful outcomes may be achieved.

Family members and friends may play a vital role in creating an intervention that may lead to positive outcomes. It must be understood that these outcomes may not immediately include abstinence, but may include:

- Attendance at a Detoxification Unit;
- Tentative approaches to Treatment Centres such as Goori House;
- Participation in counselling;
- Modification of substance abuse habits;
- Medical interventions such as Methadone, Naltrexone or Campral;
- Casual attendance at Twelve-Step Fellowship meetings; and
- Expressions of willingness to maintain change.

Goori House recognises and utilises the "2-week window" to begin to address the myriad issues usually facing an alcoholic/addict and provides:



- A safe environment
- Boundaries
- Clear messages and information
- Honest feedback
- Emotional and mental support

During the “2-week window”, each Client attends the Introduction Program, which is conducted in groups and which introduces the major areas that the Client needs to examine during the rehabilitation period at Goori House. It is during this period that the Client usually finds it very difficult to remain focused and attentive.

Generally, there are peripheral issues concerning the Client, which need to be addressed before the Client is able to fully concentrate on his/her addiction. Goori House assists the Client in addressing these other issues, as this greatly increases the likelihood of the Client remaining within the Program.

Goori House, during the 2-week window, initiates certain procedures and addresses the various issues for each Client, so as to provide as much support as possible to ensure Client retention in the Program. These procedures are inclusive of:

A full Medical evaluation – this generally provides a base line in which to operate and may result in dealing with a current physical illness or may prevent future health problems;

- Dental issues – many alcoholics/addicts have either minor or significant dental problems requiring urgent attention and an examination is arranged;
- Family issues – a significant number of alcoholics/addicts have families that are unsettled. In these circumstances Goori House has found that to ignore these issues will distract the Client who in many cases will leave the Program if not adequately dealt with at the same time.
- Mental health issues – Clients with addiction or alcoholism problems are often diagnosed with a mental health problem requiring medication. Goori House seeks to review these diagnosis under the spotlight of addiction treatment and subject to approval from a medical officer. Goori House monitors the Client through an alcohol, drug-free and medication-free period. After that period the Client’s mental health status can be reassessed before reinstating medication.
- Financial difficulties – many Clients have made financial commitments that they cannot maintain during addiction or during treatment. Goori House staff, assists in the process of writing to creditors to explain the individual Client’s circumstances as the first step to resolving payment options satisfactorily.
- Welfare issues - referral and assistance through the Centrelink process



STEP THREE

THE GALANGOOR PROGRAM

"The age-old current approach is one of the most ineffective systems anyone could ever invent. It promotes failure and encourages reoffending. It promotes completion - not recovery, it fails to identify issues. It does not heal, it does not mend and the community continues to pay."

John Close - 2005

After the completion of the two week window Goori House commences its specifically designed Galangoor Program.

It is individualised to meet the social and cultural demands of the individual's tailored case management approach that stays with the client to ensure outcomes.

It is no nonsense. It is realistic. It is necessary.

The Galangoor Therapy Program introduces strategies for the successful treatment of substance abuse and/or addiction problems. After the initial "2-week period", there is an intense period where the Client is engaged in a comprehensive review of his or her life with the Goori House professional staff. The Client, with the assistance of the staff, establishes realistic goals for his or her future. The Galangoor Therapy Program includes the following:

- Introduction Program
- Big Book Study
- Living sober
- Living skills
- Cross-cultural awareness
- Anger management

Clients are then referred to a Half-way House and enjoy the long-term support of the Goori House team. The Galangoor Therapy Program has been so successful that its use will continue when Goori House establishes new Services as part of its intended expansion achieved through implementing and assisting other Non-Government Community-based Services, to ensure the continuation of successful outcomes.

"We know better than anyone the time to act has passed. We have moved beyond 'just needed', to be overtaken by 'urgent'.

'We have to be realistic. This now billion dollar cost to the community needs to be addressed. It's a financial burden, social nightmare and down right heartbreaking. It's a problem we as a community are sick of and want fixed."

John Close - August 2009



Appendix

In September 2008 a decision was made by the Management of Goori Men's Recovery Centre to conduct an assessment with in the Fortitude Valley area.

The assessment consisted of the following:

- (1) Ascertain the boundaries of concern within the Fortitude Valley area, where violent behaviour will possibly happen by people intoxicated with alcohol or drugs.
- (2) Obtain the names of all organisations with in the Valley area that deal with this issue.
- (3) Conduct meetings with the above organisations to inform them of our plans to implement our intervention strategies and how to complement there services.

PLAN:

Establish a Goori Referral Centre with in the Fortitude Valley area to conduct random foot and vehicle patrols in association with police and other related services.

MISSION:

Goori Referral Centre was established in October 2008 to conduct random vehicle and foot patrols within and around the streets of the Fortitude Valley

- a. To work with Police and other services to defuse alcohol and drug related incidents.

To continually converse with the individuals with in those boundaries regarding the following issues;

- (1) Alcohol usage/Abuse
- (2) Drug usage/Abuse
- (3) Living on the street
- (4) Party Drug Use
- (5) Physical and Mental Abuse
- (6) Detoxification Programs
- (7) Rehabilitation Programs

ACTION:

In November 2008 we conducted the first of many joint Police, Police Liaison Officers and Goori Referral night patrols in and around the Fortitude Valley area.

This activity consisted of the following; ('ELDER PATROLS')

- (1) Two Police Officers
- (2) Four Police Liaison Officers
- (3) Two Goori Referral Staff members.
- (4) Two Elders

This activity was/is conducted once a month, at random days and hours. During this activity the Police played/plays a very minor role. They are there to provide protection/advice to the other staff.

The Police Liaison Officers commenced the conversation and advised the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People of our role and what we can do for them. The Goori Referral staff conducted "Initial Contact" procedures and advised them of how they can assist them to enter Detox and then Rehab.

GOORI REFERRAL:

Goori Referral staff conduct three foot patrols and three vehicle patrols each day. During these foot patrols of the Valley mall and surrounding areas the GRC staff visit the Fortitude Valley Police Beat. They advise them that they are in the area and obtain any information about the previous night. With this information Goori staff ascertain the intervention process needed. Will it be individual approach or a coordinated community approach to intervene on the individual or crowd.

These patrols are conducted on a random basis or as requested by the Police, the hours of work vary according to the day of the week and any major activities planned by the Council.

DRUG USE:

During the past three (3) months we have found the drug use with in the Valley among the persons spoken to be prioritised as;

- (1) Alcohol
- (2) Cannabis
- (3) Speed
- (4) Heroin
- (5) Pharmacotherapies
- (6) Morphine
- (7) Ice
- (8) Inhalants and Methadone
- (9) Ecstasy and Cocaine

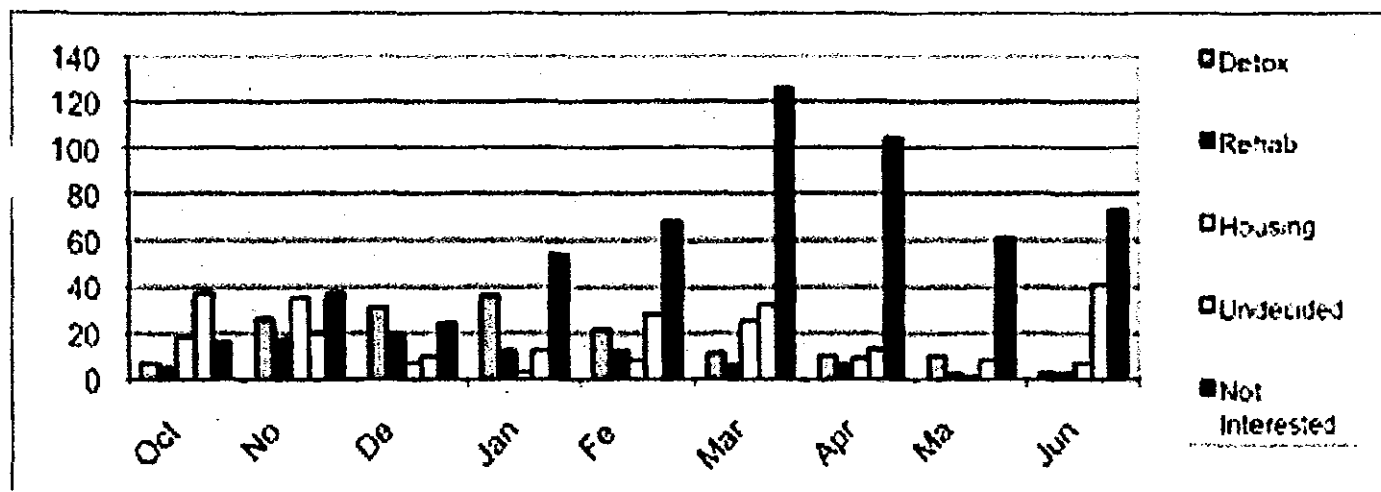


STATISTICS:

PERSONS SPOKEN TO IN THE FORTITUDE VALLEY STREETS AND PARKS

1 OCTOBER 2008 - 31 JUNE 2009

TITLE	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	June 09	Total
Detox	7	26	31	36	21	11	10	10	3	155
Rehab	5	17	19	12	12	6	6	2	2	81
Housing	18	35	7	3	8	25	9	1	7	113
Undecided	37	20	10	12	28	32	13	8	41	201
Not Interested	16	37	24	54	68	126	104	61	73	563
Persons spoken to	83	135	91	117	137	200	142	82	126	1113



PERSONS IN PROGRAMS

1 OCTOBER 2008 - 31 JUNE 2009

TITLE	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	June 09	Total
Detox	1	2	2	2	7	8	8	3	4	37
Rehab	2	3	2	3	6	4	4	3	1	28
Housing	5	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	11
										76

The Services priority is to work closely with police to;

- 1) Identify and eradicate "Nuisance" crime and prevention escalation
- 2) Spare police time from such issues to enable police resources to be devoted to more serious crime
- 3) Provide "On the Street" Alcohol and Drug training for frontline service workers in the area
- 4) Act as a back up for police to defuse violent situations

As a result of the Valley program, nuisance crime has decreased, allowing police resources to concentrate on serious offences and not be tied up with nuisance crime.

"Situations" have been defused, preventing an escalation to violence.



QUICK STATS:

1st October 2008 to 31st June 2009

GOORI REFERRAL CENTRE STAFF SPOKE TO 1,113 PEOPLE:

- 155 Required Detoxification
- 81 Required Rehabilitation
- 113 Required Housing
- 201 Are thinking about getting Help
- 563 Were not interested in getting Help (On Going Follow Up)

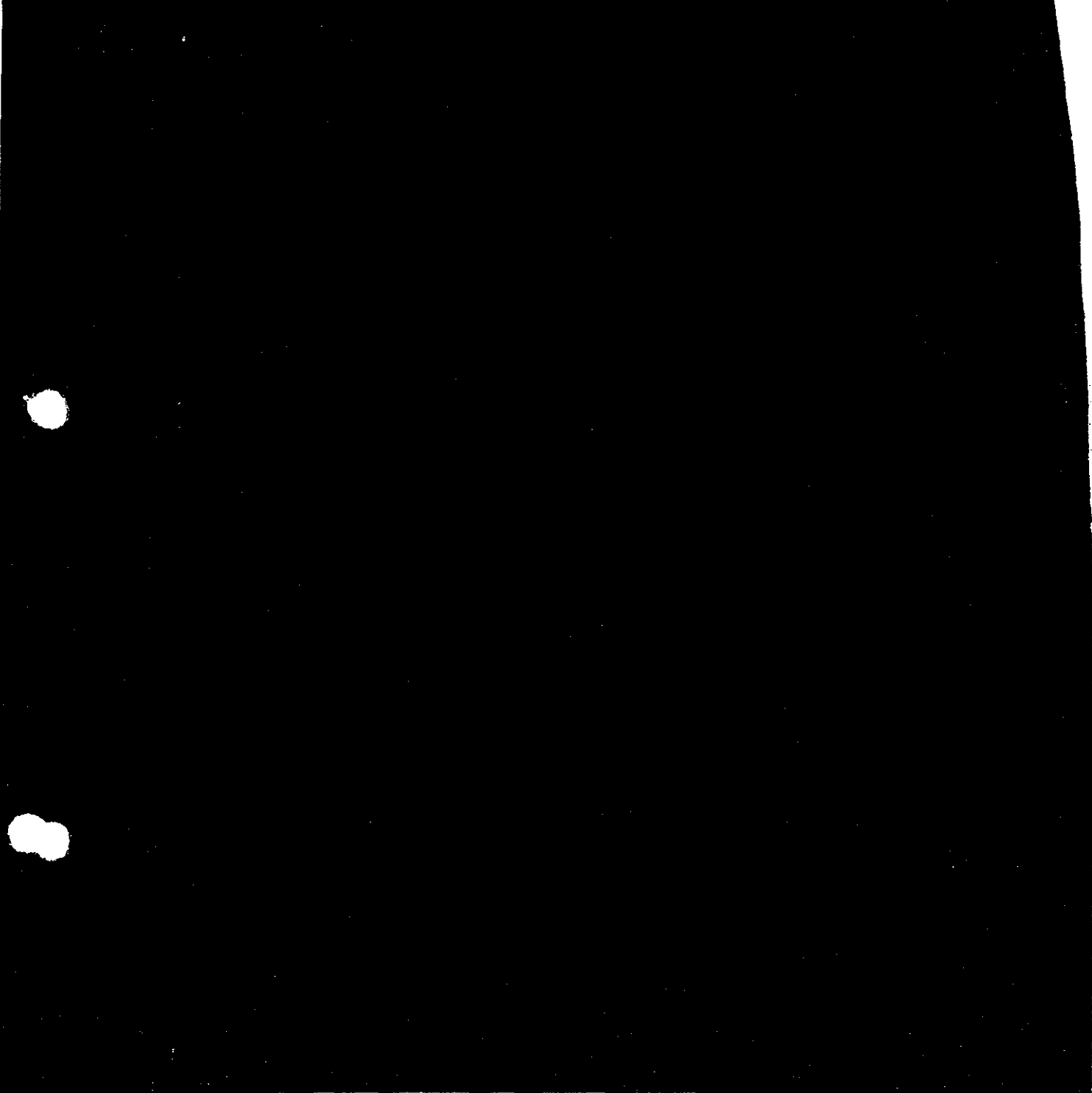
GOORI REFERRAL CENTRE STAFF SUCCESSFULLY PLACED THE FOLLOWING INTO PROGRAMS:

- 37 / 155 entered Detoxification
- 28 / 81 entered Rehabilitation
- 11 / 133 entered into Short or Long term Accommodation.

GOORI REFERRAL STAFF AVERAGE 140 TO 160 INTERVIEWS EVERY MONTH

Recommendations:

- 1. Fund the \$375,000 set up of Training Programs and \$350,000 recurrent to train our front line workers.**
- 2. Expansion of Valley Referral Programs into Ipswich, Rockhampton, City, West End and Redcliffe regions, then State wide roll out to all hot spots.**
- 3. Immediate action to be taken to implement these programs.**



Goori

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Goori Original Limited

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