

6 How the clubs operate

This chapter presents detailed descriptions of the variety of ways in which the clubs manage their patrons and negotiate their place in the life of the communities in which they operate. Material from this analysis will go towards the creation of a ‘best practice’ document that will provide guidance for the operation of licensed clubs in remote Indigenous communities.

All the clubs in this study operate in an unusual environment. They are (to varying degrees) controlled by, and answerable to the communities in which they operate. In addition they trade in small communities in which a large proportion of their patrons are ‘regulars’, staff members could be expected to be related to a large proportion of the patrons, and there are often high levels of tension between different groups within the community. All of this creates very particular sets of obligations and tensions that need to be carefully managed if the clubs are to be convivial and pleasant places.

There are several elements to how the clubs function that are important for the quality of their service and their role in the community. This section covers the following areas:

- Governance
- Physical amenities
- Practices around how alcohol is served
- Security arrangements
- Club rules
- The role of the club in the community

6.1 Legal and Governance Structures

The legal structures vary between the clubs. Four are incorporated through the NT Associations Act (2008)²⁵. The NT Associations Act is overseen by the Licensing Commission, and is not resourced to have the range of governance support that are part of alternative vehicles for incorporation.

This Act stipulates a range of rules and rights for members. It specifically allows rules to be based on the customs and traditions of different communities. It stipulates that:

- there must be a Committee, and the powers of that Committee
- correct keeping of accounts,

²⁵ This Act has recently been amended (June 2014), however the relevant sections continue to apply

- requirement for annual audits
- Annual General Meeting at which the audited reports are presented.

Two of the four clubs incorporated through this Act are 'Trading Associations'²⁶ – which allows them to distribute funds among their members. Interestingly, one of the provisions of the NT Associations Act (2008) is that organisations are that not incorporated as 'Trading Associations' are precluded from disbursing profits to their members (Section 13A Division 2: *'An incorporated association must not distribute profits, or dispose of assets of the Association to its members'*²⁷). (However we understand that they are allowed to distribute profits in the form of gifts that benefit the whole community as oppose to individuals.) Given that one of the reasons given for having Licensed Social clubs in Indigenous communities is that profits can be used to benefit the community members, this provision is surprising. It seems likely the two clubs that are not 'Trading Associations' are operating illegally if they disburse profits to individual members.

Two more clubs are incorporated through the Corporations Act, which is managed by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission. This too requires a reporting regime and specifies the roles and responsibilities of Officers of Corporations. Incorporation through this Act means that the organisations distribute profits to their Directors and Shareholders. There is no provision for aiming to operate for the benefit of members. Like the NT Associations Act, this Act does not have a easily accessible support structure for organisations that are incorporated through it.

Two are incorporated through the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act), which is administered through the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC). This legislation has a regime of regulations around the constitution and high requirements for regular reporting. It also has developed and run a comprehensive governance training system.

The legal structure through which the clubs are incorporated is important. Given that the clubs operate in such a contentious space in which people hold strong opinions, and policy decisions of their organisations impact on their members' health and safety, it is important that the clubs are soundly managed by people who understand their roles and responsibilities. Six of the clubs are incorporated through legal avenues that offer very limited or no support for improving standards of governance, or offer guidance on developing robust Committees.

²⁶Definition: 'An Association, society, institution or body formed or carrying on for the purpose of trading or securing pecuniary profits to its members.' NT Associations Act, June 2014, Part1 Preliminary, p6

²⁷ NT Associations Act, June 2014, Part 3, Division2, 13A, p13

Given that there is a legal vehicle which does offer these things – the CATSI Act and ORIC – it makes sense for clubs to consider moving to becoming incorporated through this Act.

6.1.1 Club committees

The quality, commitment and competence of the eight club committees vary considerably. On one end of the spectrum one club committee meets very rarely, and only when the manager calls a meeting. He doesn't call them often because he is of the opinion that members don't really have anything to say – they just want the sitting fees. Another manager believed that the committee was 'just advisory'. Other organisations have committees that meet once every three months. However most appear to meet monthly. One committee is made up entirely of the extended members of one family. However most are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. The roles taken on by the committees varied slightly between clubs, but were generally as follows:

- Decisions on how long people were to be banned for;
- Financial oversight of the club,
- Discussion of entertainment to be provided – like a talent night
- Negotiations with the Licensing Commission

There was some feedback that having a 'strong' committee was considered an important aspect of running a good club. (This is discussed in more detail on Chapter 7). By 'strong' survey respondents meant people who would be able to devise and implement rules that would keep patrons behaviour in check.

Committee members were interviewed in each community. Most were satisfied with the way in which the committee was conducted. They felt that the committee provided a forum in which they were informed by the manager of relevant issues, and could make decisions. Several communities reported that they make an effort to get drinkers and non-drinkers on their committees, and a balance of men and women. There was one accusation raised that the manager in question hand-picked committee members, and rigged the Annual General Meeting to make sure they were elected. The researchers had no way of validating this accusation.

In three communities there was considerable tension between committees and managers, with accusations that the managers did not give the community good information, or implement their decisions. This tended to accompany managers with authoritarian styles, which left many in the community disgruntled.

The issue of governance and the skills of committee members is a difficult one in most Indigenous communities. The extent to which members fully understand the financial and legal operation of their club, and the consequences of their decisions is hard to discern. At points in their history the club committees have made decisions that have

allowed reportedly harmful levels of alcohol consumption, which suggests that harm minimisation is not necessarily their priority.

It is important that committee members are aware of the impact of their club on their community. A system through which committees receive reports from the clinic, police and other service delivery organisations on alcohol related issues in the community would function to strengthen the clubs' response to any such incidents, and to educate committee members on the impact of their club.

It is interesting to note that many community controlled organisations now have constitutions that allow people with particular expertise, such as accountants, lawyers or health professional, to be Board or committee members. This is an option that could be considered as a way for club committees to have access to relevant expertise. Club committees are also discussed in the chapter 'What makes a club run well'.

6.1.2 The Role of Club Managers

Club managers are in positions of considerable power. As described above the committee membership tends to have low literacy and numeracy skills. If the manager so chooses they can present heavily biased information to committee meetings in order to get them to make a decision that accords with the managers' perceptions of how things should be run. For managers with the communities' interest as their priority this will be in the interests of the club; however over the years some clubs have had experience of dishonest managers who have arranged financial matters for their own benefit. Given that the clubs can generate considerable income, the integrity and competence of managers is an important consideration. The role of club managers is discussed in more detail in the chapter 'What makes a club run well'.

6.1.3 Club Licenses

Club licences are also varied. The type of license granted is determined by the NT Licensing Commission when the organisation first applies for a liquor licence, depending on the purpose and operating conditions described in the application. Two of the clubs operate under 'tavern licenses' – which are essentially the same license that most hotels operate under, and pre-suppose that profits will accrue to owners and directors of the organisation. The remainder have 'club' licenses – which mean that they can function in the interests of their members.

All licenses are required to have a licensee and a nominee. In some cases the manager fills both roles and they must be physically present to open the club. This requirement gives them enormous power over the running of the club, as they can threaten to close up if anyone challenges their authority. This is a major dis-incentive for any would-be challengers, as they would be blamed by other community members for the closure.

In one club the Arnhem Lands Progress Association (ALPA) Community Manager is the licensee, and ALPA employs a club manager, who is the nominee. This system provides another layer of scrutiny for the operation of the club, and some back up for the nominee. This club has closed circuit security cameras that are linked to the licensee's house so he can monitor activities.

In another arrangement the local Shire is the Licensee and the manager is the nominee. There was considerable feedback that this system was not satisfactory because neither the club committee nor the nominee received timely information from the Shire regarding the financial status of the club. This meant that community based decisions regarding club matters had to be made in a vacuum.

6.1.4 Legal and Governance Structures – key points

- *Legal and governance structures are important in providing a framework for a well run and accountable club. There is enormous variation on the legal structure of the clubs, and the liquor licenses they hold;*
- *Two clubs are incorporated in a way which prohibits the distribution of profits to members (there is some doubt over whether the distribution of profit for community benefit is also illegal), which runs counter to their purpose as an organisation holding a clubs liquor license which is meant to act for the benefit of its members;*
- *The various legislative frameworks provide varying levels of governance and financial scrutiny. Only two of the clubs are incorporated under the Corporations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Act (2006), which both promotes high standards of regulation, and assists organisations to meet their responsibilities.*
- *Two of the clubs are in effect, privately owned and under no legal obligation to operate for the benefit of the community*
- *Club managers are in situations of considerable power. Some communities consider that their club managers are not sufficiently scrutinised and there are allegations of nepotism in employment, and lack of financial transparency*
- *Two communities outsource the management of their clubs to ALPA, which provides oversight of the club manager position and governance training to committee members.*

6.2 Physical amenities and general atmosphere

Our researchers visited six of the seven clubs on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings of the week of the fieldwork²⁸. They had a few drinks, purchased food if it was available, and had a low key, social time. As described in the methodology, they recorded their observations after their visits. They were struck by how unusual it was to see a large gathering of residents of a remote Indigenous community socialising happily in pleasant surrounds and obviously feeling relaxed and at home. All the clubs had a

²⁸ The other club were closed at the time of the fieldwork.

convivial atmosphere. One of the researchers described it as: *'High level sociality, bonhomie, geniality. Overall everyone was very friendly, interested, engaging and sociable.'*

The physical environs of the clubs were mostly pleasant, with both covered and uncovered areas for patrons to sit, fans, pictures on the walls, easy access to the bar and amenities, and well kept gardens. In general the bar areas were well designed, with plenty of space for patrons. All clubs had entertainment for patrons: music – either live or piped, juke boxes, occasional DJ's, pool tables, TV's and dart boards. Several had areas set aside for the women to play pool.

6.3 Practices around how alcohol is served

It is important to remember that all of the clubs now only sell mid-strength and light beer, which means that people are less likely to become as heavily intoxicated, as they once did on full strength beer. Staff report that this has made the task of managing patrons much easier.

Within the bounds of responsible service of alcohol practices, most mainstream alcohol outlets do not have rules around how alcohol is served – a patron is at liberty to buy several drinks at one time, and to purchase as many drinks as they choose during their stay at the venue (providing they do not get too intoxicated). The 'responsible service of alcohol' is normally achieved through individual bar staff monitoring the level of intoxication of patrons, and refusing service if it is warranted.

However the clubs in this study have developed rules around the way in which they serve alcohol that aim to limit both the amount consumed and the rate of consumption by an individual. The license conditions for the clubs stipulate some of the practices used, and others have developed through experience of what works in a given community.

6.3.1 No drinking prior to going to the club

All the clubs have a rule that patrons have to arrive sober. Survey respondents reported that most instances of patrons becoming drunk and disorderly occur when people have been drinking *before* they go to the club. In this context it makes sense for club staff to closely monitor people's state of intoxication when they arrive.

Three clubs routinely breathalyse people before they enter. Some clubs send home people who register having consumed any alcohol at all; while one allows people to have 0.01 or 0.02 readings, depending on their demeanour. One patron noted that this was not done in mainstream: *'In Darwin people get pissed in one place then go to another place, no worries.'* When asked why their club was so strict on this the manager replied *'We are trying to act responsibly.'* However there was some feedback that people don't like the way the breathalyser is used in their club: *'That breathalyser*

makes people angry. Why do we get tested and not the balanda[non Indigenous patrons]. It is racist.'

6.3.2 Six can limit

The license conditions for two clubs determine that they cannot sell any individual more than six cans in any one night. The Licensing Commission created these conditions after a long history of complaints about excessive consumption and its consequences²⁹. In addition one other club has created its own limits of six drinks an evening for men and four for women. Such rules clearly impact on the ways of serving alcohol.

The two clubs that are limited to selling patrons six cans use a ticket system through which patrons purchase their six tickets at the entrance to the club at the beginning of the evening, and exchange the tickets for cans of beer at the bar. There are also rules forbidding patrons to give their tickets to anyone else, as this patron reported: *'Limit of 6 tickets. If you give them to some to someone else [you are] banned.'*

Our researchers visited one of these clubs, and noted that the manager paid strict attention to who was purchasing tickets and then buying alcohol. On the other hand, several survey respondents observed that the ticket system was open to abuse through strategies such as a non-drinking relative buying six tickets and giving them to the person wishing to drink. Staff try to mitigate this risk by seeing ID before tickets are bought, and writing down the name of each patron and how many tickets they buy. However they report that it is difficult to administer the system rigorously.

The club that voluntarily limits consumption by patrons use a system on which patrons names are written down each evening, and the number of beers they purchase is ticked off against their name by a security guard at the bar.

6.3.3 One can at a time

All but one club have a rule that for most of the opening hours patrons can only buy one drink at a time, and all beer is sold as opened cans. The one exception has a limit of four cans per person per trip to the bar.

Some clubs have an additional rule that the empty can has to be bought back before a new one can be bought. This is to make it more difficult for any individual to drink really quickly, and to limit buying rounds of drinks for a group (which makes it harder to monitor individual consumption). As one manager commented: *'That rule means you have to get up and walk to buy another beer. Bar staff can see if you're drunk.'*

29

For a more detailed exploration of the interactions between the clubs and the NT Licensing Commission, please see the 'Broad Review into Licensed clubs Literature Review' which accompanies this report.

Three of the clubs vary this rule and allow ‘stacking’ for limited periods. During these periods patrons are allowed to buy either two or three cans at a time. One club allows this for the last half hour, and the others allow it for the first hour. The extent of the ‘stacking’ is monitored by security staff noting how many cans are at any one table. During visits our researchers noted that the vigilance of this checking varied between clubs. It was the researchers’ observation that allowing stacking for the first hour was a better experience for patrons because the alternative meant that people bought a lot of alcohol towards the end of opening hours that they then had to drink quickly before closing time. Many patrons reported that in this situation they drank too quickly and became ill, or argued with staff when their newly purchased beer was tipped out because they hadn’t finished it by closing time. It is also likely to mean that patrons leave in a more intoxicated state, and have potential to cause trouble in the community.

The one club that does not have a ‘one can at a time’ rule reported that it monitors the level of intoxication of clients by watching their behaviour: *‘There is no limit, people can get a 6 pack for the table, we don't concentrate on the number of cans that people are having, we watch the behaviour of the drinkers. If someone has had enough grog we give them a warning or send them out.’*

One club has beer cards through which patrons purchase 10 cards through their credit card, and then have ten ‘credits’ at the bar. Some patrons commented that this sped up the service of alcohol, and sometimes meant that people spent more than they realised.

6.3.4 Early leaving

One club has an arrangement through which some people leave at 7pm. These are people with health issues, or people who have demonstrated (through bad behaviour) that they cannot handle drinking for a more extended period. Several individuals on this regime were ex-petrol sniffers with associated brain damage, while others tend to be younger people. One patron described it as follows: *‘Some young boys who are silly have to leave at 7pm.’*

6.3.5 The impact of these practices

The rules described above aim to prevent patrons from getting too intoxicated. Club managers reflect that managing levels of intoxication means there is less likelihood of misbehaviour, making clubs both easier to manage, and less likely to come under the scrutiny of the Licensing Commission. It also makes it less likely that bar staff will have to refuse service to intoxicated patrons. All the clubs reported that they don’t often ask people to leave, and for most of them that ‘scenes’ created by patrons are not common.

Managing the level of intoxication of patrons is particularly important in these remote clubs. The fact that staff are likely to be related to patrons makes it extremely awkward for them to manage intoxicated patrons in a professional manner. It therefore makes very good sense to prevent patrons from becoming intoxicated, rather than to manage them once they are. It is to all the clubs' and their committees' credit that they have evolved a set of practices that work fairly effectively to prevent patrons from becoming very intoxicated and unruly.

6.3.6 Refusal to serve intoxicated patrons

As described above, most patrons do not become intoxicated to the extent that they become unruly and need to be told to leave. However all the clubs reported that it happens sometimes. Research on the responsible service of alcohol found that bar staff are far more likely to refuse service if they know that the manager will support them (NDLERF, 2011)³⁰. With this in mind researchers asked bar staff and managers: *'Is it easy or difficult for staff to refuse to serve people who seem drunk? Have they done this? How does it go?'*

The vast majority of bar staff who were interviewed reported that the manager or security staff had the role of asking any patron to leave. One manager commented: *'It's very easy because there is complete backup'*. Another security person reported: *'Yes it's easy, if they don't listen you ban them for some time.'*

There were very few reports of intoxicated patrons being physically forced to leave. All the clubs used people who were respected – either the manager or senior security staff – to ask the patron to leave. If that failed, the most common strategy was for the manager to close the bar until that individual left. When this happens other patrons combine to get the offender to leave. It is also clear that the family atmosphere of the clubs means that family members also join in to get their members to follow the rules: *'Last Friday one drunken fellow had been drinking barge beer and came to the club. He wouldn't leave. His sons were trying to get him to leave. They had to shut the bar before he would go. The security talk to the manager, and they move him along.'*

6.3.7 Other responsible service of alcohol practices

Staff of the clubs mentioned a number of other responsible service of alcohol practices that they have developed:

- *'If people have been broken down on the way from Palumpa or Wadeye they might be dehydrated. We make them have a meal so they don't get too drunk. We encourage the bar being a social place. We bring old people together there.'*

³⁰ For details of this please see the Literature Review associated with this report.

- *‘They supply water in a machine next to the bar. Some family have requested that someone only drink light beer – for medical reasons or may be very old. The club back the family up.’*
- *‘Sell food. And there are cold bottles of water available at the door for when you come in and leave.’*

6.3.8 Key points - responsible service of alcohol

- *Most of the clubs have pleasant physical surrounds, entertainment, and a relaxed, happy feel;*
- *All the clubs have a rule that patrons cannot be even mildly intoxicated when they arrive, and several breathalyse incoming patrons to enforce this rule;*
- *In all but one of the clubs there are a range of strategies used to slow down the rate of consumption of alcohol;*
- *All Managers support their staff in refusal to serve intoxicated patrons, however this is not often needed.*

6.4 Club Rules

Holding a Liquor License entails meeting a number of conditions relating to such things as opening hours, the condition of the premises, the qualifications of staff, and who is entitled to sell alcohol. Naturally these conditions also apply to the entities that hold the licenses of the clubs in this study. However most mainstream liquor licensees do not create an extensive list of rules relating to the behaviour of patrons. In the mainstream it is generally understood as a condition of entry that the licensee has the power to evict any patrons that become unruly.

The situation in these clubs is different, and over time all the clubs in this study have developed a set of rules which create expectations of how patrons will behave. Our researchers found that in most communities these rules are quite stable, despite changes in managers. Rules relate to patron behaviour whilst they are in the club, behaviour in the wider community, and health and safety.

6.4.1 Rules about behaviour in the club

Like the practices around the service of alcohol, a number of rules regarding behaviour are aimed at preventing trouble starting. As one patron put it: *‘Just enjoy yourself, no dramas’*

No humbug

All clubs have rules which forbid patrons asking each other for money or to buy them drinks³¹. This aims to prevent tensions rising over the sharing of money; and to ensure that patrons who do have money can enjoy the club in peace. One club has an associated rule that all patrons have to show that they have \$20 before they enter the club.

³¹ This asking for money is known as ‘humbug’.

Our researchers found that many people approve of this rule, as this woman commented: *'Previously there was bad humbug, no humbug a rule now and it is way better.'* There was also feedback that this rule is offensive to them because it denies their culture. These people felt that it is part of their culture to share, and there were people in the club whom they could legitimately (in cultural terms) ask for money. In this context they felt that the club had no right to outlaw the practice.

No arguing/fighting/violence

All clubs have rules outlawing any kind of arguing or physical violence. Many survey respondents outlined the particular rules developed by the club. No patrons could threaten staff – either verbally or physically. In addition no patron could become violent either in or immediately outside the club. As one young man said: *'Can't throw things around - tables and chairs or you get banned.'*

Three clubs also have associated rules that forbid people from making too much noise. This is particularly associated with people barracking for their football teams whilst matches are being broadcast on the television. This rule is recent, and was not well received by many patrons who were surveyed, as this comment indicates: *'No barracking for your team, you can't scream. A strict manager – even a pub in Darwin you can sing out for your club. People get pissed in one place then go to another place no worries. Here got to be quiet like a mouse'.*

No spitting, rubbish in bins, butts in ashtrays

All the clubs have rules about patrons behaving in a way that keeps the club clean and tidy. These rules were about spitting, and where to put rubbish. These rules were some of the most frequently cited by survey respondents, which suggests that people are aware of them, and take them seriously.

Dress regulations

Most clubs have dress regulations which stipulate that patrons must have some sort of foot wear, and their clothes should not be in bad disrepair. One club also stipulates no steel cap boots or studded belts. This club explained that both of these had been used as weapons in the past.

No drugs

Finally, two clubs have specific rules that stipulate that no drugs are to be brought or sold on the club premises. Presumably this rule arose from situations in which patrons were using the club as a venue to sell drugs.

6.4.2 Rules for the health and safety of patrons

Health rules

A number of clubs have rules against serving people with health conditions which make drinking inappropriate. Two clubs have rules that pregnant women are not served. One of these extends to not serving either parent for the first six months of a child's life. These arrangements are usually made through the community health

clinic. However one nurse said that she did not participate directly in any process of arranging that an individual would not be served at the club, because she didn't want to jeopardise her relationship with her clients. Instead she approached family members and explained that a particular person should not be drinking, and left it to their discretion to approach the club.

Sober Bob

One club which has a large number of patrons from neighbouring communities has a 'Sober Bob' rule. This stipulates that people from other communities have to come with a 'Sober Bob' – a driver who has a valid driver's license, and stays away from the club for the evening – and consumes no alcohol. This club does not let patrons from other communities into the club until they can demonstrate that they have a 'Sober Bob'. The security staff member describes their arrangements as follows: *'We have a nominated driver system for people who have driven from other communities to come to the pub. We take down the car rego, a description of the car and the driver's name, the nominated driver has to stay outside. If the driver ends up getting drunk, I take the keys. People have to camp with family for the night and I look after the car. They can get the car back and head home in the morning. Last time this happened was 2 years ago. If I see people trying to come to the club already drunk I check the driver, because they must have been drinking elsewhere.'*

The club management takes this policy very seriously: *'One person got banned after they took off to their home community with no sober bob. People there worked it out and rang the club to let them know.'*

6.4.3 Rules responding to behaviour in the wider community

All the clubs also have rules relating to patrons' behaviour in the broader community. For example, one young man was banned for being drunk and breaking a bus window. He has been banned until he pays to have the window repaired.

No work; No club

One club has a very strong 'No work, no club' rule. If people in this community do not turn up for work, they are kept out of the club for that evening, as this patron describes: *'I didn't know. A couple of days after I arrived [several months previously from another community] the security asked me if I was working and when I said no she told me to go home. Then I started working [laughs].'*

Another community used to have the same rule, however it has fallen out of use because of the decline in employment in the community.

No domestic violence

Several clubs also have rules that ban any individual with a charge for domestic violence. It is unclear whether this rule relates to all domestic violence, or only to instances that were alcohol related, and the alcohol concerned was drunk at the club. Different clubs have slightly different versions of this rule.

6.4.4 How do people know the rules?

Survey respondents were asked how they knew the club rules. The results reflect the way in which the clubs tend to be enmeshed in community life. The most common response was that rules were communicated through word of mouth, as this person described: *'We tell them. We talk to people and explain that you can't get silly at the club.'* It is clear too that families talk about the rules, and make sure that young people know them before they turn eighteen: *'Family will let them know.'*

It was also common to refer to the signs that were posted around the club, and at other places in the community such as the store. It was interesting to note that in some cases patrons confidently referred to signs that were at various locations around the club – however the researchers did not see the signs. We concluded that in several places signs must have been in place some time ago, but no one had noticed that they were no longer there.

The other major way of learning the rules is through being reminded by security staff and managers. As one person wryly noted: *'If they make a mistake they learn quickly!'*

6.4.5 Do people follow the rules?

The general consensus is that most people do follow the rules most of the time. The times when they don't is when they are drunk – which is often when they have been drinking before they arrive at the club, and then consume more at the club.

It was also clear that the reason many people follow the rules is because they want to continue to go to the club, and if they are banned they can't. So people do not necessarily like the rules, but feel that they have little choice: *'Yes we follow the rules, but hate them.'*

Feedback on the rules varied to some extent between the different communities. In communities with highly authoritarian club managers there was a bitter tone to many of the responses. For example: *'I don't think some people don't follow general rules. Club manager make his own rules, some people think they can speak up for themselves, they don't want to take notice of club rules. When they have a few drinks they complain 'This is my country, I'm a TO, my family works there, my family works behind the bar', people bring that up when intoxicated.'*

However in communities with a stronger sense of community ownership of the club the tenor of the feedback was more positive: *'Yes, the rules have been here ever since they started the community.'*

6.4.6 Who makes the rules?

Given that in some communities the rules have a status that is almost akin to folklore, it is interesting to consider perceptions on who makes the rules. Survey respondents and club staff were asked '*Who makes the rules for the club?*' The responses varied widely, both within each community and across the whole sample. It is evident that the key players in the formation of the rules are similar in each community. They are (in no particular order):

- The club committee
- The manager
- The licensee
- Members
- The police
- Traditional Owners
- Skin groups
- Old people
- The community

In most communities there was a lot of different opinion on which of these players make the rules, and how. The majority (56%) of respondents thought that it was the committee – with some people specifying that it was the club committee. This was followed by 20% who thought that the manager makes the rules.

Among those who think that one of the other players noted above makes the rules, opinion was fairly evenly divided as to which it is. This suggests that there is a fair degree of confusion over the process through which rules are made. It is not possible to say whether the level of confusion over the making of club rules is more or less than over other processes in the administrative life of communities, so we cannot infer further meaning from this lack of knowledge.

In one community, in which the club has a very long and stable history, the majority of respondents agreed that the committee makes the rules, and there appeared to be a high degree of knowledge of the process through which the committee is elected by the community and reports back to the community. In a further three communities feedback suggests that there is tension between the manager and the committee over who should, and who actually does make the rules, as this comment attests: '*The committee tries to make the rules but the manager changed the rules himself.*'

In two communities there was a lot of feedback on the significance of the club in how people perceive the strength of their community. People were proud of their clubs, and recalled the work of 'the old people' deciding that their community needed its own club. In this context the rules take on additional meaning about being a part of the community. One respondent recalled how their community visited a number of other communities before they established their club: '*We went to Oenpelli and*

Bathurst Island (to look at their clubs) before ours opened, to see what made them better. We learned from our mistakes, our own rules.' Another respondent from the same community recalled how they made the rules: *'We made all those rules, elders made the rules. We wanted to see the community run it real good.'*

6.4.7 Do the rules help make the club a safe place?

Survey respondents were asked *'Do you think that the rules help to make your club a safe place?'* The response to this question was overwhelmingly positive in all communities. Overall only 5% of respondents answered 'no', and there are no significant differences when this response is analysed by gender or drinking status.

Interestingly one community recorded a significantly higher 'no' response, with 15.7% of respondents stating that the rules did not make their club a safe place. This club was undergoing some upheaval at the time of the research, and a number of respondents were not happy with the way it was being run.

6.4.8 Key points– rules

- *clubs have developed a comprehensive set of rules that govern behaviour within the club;*
- *They also have rules relating to patrons behaviour once they have left the club*
- *Survey respondents knew the rules, and most had learned them through word of mouth, although some mentioned signs on the walls reminding patrons of the rules;*
- *Most people follow the rules, although some resent them;*
- *The reason many people follow the rules is because they don't want to get banned*
- *Many survey respondents were confused over the process through which the rules were made*
- *89% of survey respondents believe that the rules help to make their club a safe place*

6.4.9 Mechanisms for enforcing rules

Clubs use several mechanisms to enforce the rules: security staff, gates and fences, security cameras and banning.

6.4.9.1 Security staff

All but one of the clubs have security guards (the one that does not is the smallest, and only has one member of staff). One club has license conditions that stipulate both the numbers of security staff that must be present each night, and that they must not all be local people. One police officer interviewed was very clear that security guards are much more effective if they are not local people.

In addition the *NT Private Security Act (1995)* stipulates that all security staff working in licensed premises are required to have their 'Crowd Controller's License'³², which is issued by the NT Licensing Commission. A person applying for it must have a criminal history check, and people with offences at the more severe end of the spectrum will not be granted a license. Before a Crowd Controller's license is given, the applicant must have a PRS 20103 Certificate II in Security Operations. This nationally accredited course is delivered by a number of registered training providers in the Northern Territory. Security officers and crowd controllers are also required to have a current senior first aid certificate.

Clearly employing correctly trained and certified security staff for the clubs is quite an onerous undertaking. Many of the club managers reported that it is extremely difficult and expensive for them to comply with these conditions, as many local residents did not meet the pre-conditions for the Crowd Controller's License, and completing the Certificate II course is difficult for them. However most of the clubs do manage it. The larger communities tend to have approximately six to seven staff available, with two to three staff at any one time – frequently one of these is the manager. At the time of the research one community had just hosted a training course at which a number of local people had got their license. Several survey respondents were very pleased that local people now had the training to be able to do the security job properly.

Feedback given by survey respondents and managers was that the roles of security guards are as follows:

- man the gate to make sure no banned people came in
- assess patrons' intoxication on arrival at the club –either by breathalysers, or judgement
- assess patrons' intoxication as the night goes on
- ask people who've had too much to drink to ease up or go home
- break up any loud arguments or fights
- police the 'no humbug' rule

Sometimes these tasks would be very routine, but if patrons become intoxicated and/or fights begin the job becomes extremely challenging. It can be particularly

³² A crowd controller is a person who in respect of a licensed premises, a place of entertainment, a place to which the public has access or a private or public event performs the duties of:

- controlling or monitoring the behaviour of persons
- screening persons seeking entry
- removing persons because of their behaviour, or
- any other prescribed function.

difficult for local people, as one person observed: *'If fighting or arguing the security guard kicks them out. Sometimes that's hard for the security if they're family.'* Managers report that in these circumstances, as with the responsible service of alcohol, their staff have their complete support. One security trainer who was conducting training while the researchers were in the community confirmed how important it was for managers and the wider community to support their staff: *'The manager stood by the security trainee, when his brother threatened him. Trainees need to know that the social club committee members are behind them – that's the message I've been giving because there's a lot of flak that comes with the job.'*

Researchers observed quite a range in the way the security people operated. In some clubs they had a very low profile: they checked people as they came into the club to see if they were banned, but appeared to do very little else. In other clubs they were very much in evidence – sometimes keeping their distance from patrons, but obviously observing the mood of the crowd and individuals closely. As one manager put it: *'As soon as the pitch changes we diffuse it straight off. You hear something happening and you go over straight away'*. Other staff have a different style, circulating and sitting down with patrons. One person with this style described their work as follows: *'If people raise their voices security staff have to be there, they need to use gentle voices and help calm things down.'* Our researchers also observed that quite a lot of the local security staff tended to be older men who appeared to be well respected in the community.

6.4.9.2 Gates and fences

The design of the fencing and the gate area is also an important factor in being able to enforce the rules – particularly those that forbid takeaway (and thus people walking out with alcohol), and people arriving drunk. One club has, in the past, been ordered by the Licensing Commission to improve its fences. Another club is looking to upgrade the gate/fence area so that people can come in to a holding area to be breathalysed, so that if they fail it will be easier to persuade them to leave.

6.4.9.3 Security Cameras

Two clubs have security cameras set up at several points around their clubs. They do this so that when patrons argue over what did and did not happen (prior to any response by the club to rule breaking), there is some evidence. One of the key rules that is policed by the cameras is taking beers out of the club. The club manager checks the footage to see if anyone has smuggled beer out of the club. Patrons know about the cameras, and it appears to have resulted in some changing their behaviour: *'Last year we didn't have cameras. They were telling us to drink up and I took a can out. Can't do that anymore.'*

6.4.9.4 Banning

Banning people is the most powerful sanction available to the club and, as described above, it makes people take the rules seriously. Probably because of this, it is a contentious issue. Survey respondents were asked if they knew anyone who had been banned, and only one in ten replied that they did *not*. Several respondents reported that it was often the young male drinkers who were banned, and it was because they hadn't learned how to behave themselves yet. The longest banned list had 113 people, and the shortest had three. Most of the communities had around 50 people on their lists.

Survey respondents were also asked whether they thought that what people had been banned for was fair. Almost two thirds (64.9%) thought that the ban was fair, with the following comment being typical: *'I did run amok so I should be banned. I've settled down now.'* On the other hand, a significant number reported that banning was not fair because the law was there for punishing bad behaviour, and the club shouldn't be able to do it as well: *'Not fair for us, we go to court get punishment and get banned as well.'*

6.4.9.5 Who decides on bans?

It is difficult to identify the mechanisms through which people are banned, and the typical length of bans, as feedback on this issue was very diverse. The police in one region report that they are the only ones that ban people: *'We maintain the banned list here, and we decide on the banning. No one else can. We send it to each club.'* They request that the Licensing Commission issue the bans. Despite this statement most clubs report more than one banning mechanism, and survey respondents identified several pathways to being banned.

Survey respondents reported that bans can be issued by the club management, club Committees, or by the police. Some survey respondents reported that groups of traditional owners and heads of family groups can also ban people, however this was not corroborated by the police, club managers or members of club Committees.

Bans by the club

The club manager and or the club committee tend to ban people for behaviour that occurs inside the club and violates the club rules – such as spitting, humbug or arguing. Offenders tend to get banned for relatively short periods, and the ban is given out the same day. Survey respondents recalled some instances of this sort of banning that certainly did not relate to any broader laws being breached: *'My brother was banned for screaming for his team, Hawthorn and Sydney game, last month, screamed, talked back then was asked to leave.'* On other occasions the ban is not for a set period, but until the offender has made recompense: *'My cousin smashed the TV at the club. Got banned till he paid it off.'*

The manager and committee are sometimes approached by community members who want an individual banned. These requests are considered at the monthly club committee meetings. Several committee members from each community were interviewed about this: most commented that it was quite difficult to decide on the length of the ban, but community members generally support their decisions.

Sometimes the requests for bans come from family: *'If my son run amok I go and see the manager and ask him to ban him.'* and *'I was banned for one month - arguing with my sister about a tape, at home, and my sister rang the club and reported me.'* On other occasions other community members request the ban. Sometimes the motivation may be purely personal: *'I had a fight after I had been drinking at the club. The person I fought with reported me to the club to get me.'* Clearly some of these bans are a response to relatively petty issues, and can be somewhat open to a lack of balance. One police officer corroborated the lack of balance, saying: *'Bans can be used for family politics – for example if someone didn't share something they try to get them banned.'*

There was also feedback that the banning process was open to manipulation, and could be influenced by your place in the community: *'It depends on who you know, your relations, rules vary for committee members as they have a big say about who gets banned and whether someone gets let back in.'*

Bans by the police

The police also issue bans without referring to the club. It seems to be general practice that if police are called to an incident that involves people who have been drinking at the club, that those involved are banned. One club reports that community members from another community are banned from their club for behaviour in their home community. In these cases the police inform the club of who is banned, and for how long:

There was recently a blanket ban that prevented anyone from one community from drinking at the club, it was instituted following riots that erupted after the murder of one of the gang leaders there. The ban stopped and started over 4 months (as police lifted it and then reinstated it), it was confusing. People would arrive here thinking the ban was lifted and we would have to stop them coming in. This has happened a lot over the years, maybe twice a year.

On the Tiwi Islands the police circulate the banned list to all clubs, and if an individual is banned in one club they are automatically banned from all four clubs.

6.4.9.6 Who should have the power to ban people?

Because of the confusion around the banning process respondents were asked who should have the power to ban people. The responses to this question were as mixed

as the feedback on who decides who is banned. The majority of respondents acknowledged that the police and the club Committee should have the power to ban people. Many also thought that family leaders should also have that power.

6.4.9.7 What behaviour can lead to a ban?

Bans for behaviour at the club

As noted above, the club manager and or the club committee can ban people for behaviour that occurs inside the club and violates the club rules – such as spitting, humbug or arguing.

Bans for behaviour not directly related to the club

People are also banned for behaviour that is not directly related to the club. The club management can be approached by agencies in the community to request that an individual be banned: *'My brother smashed the meter box at his house after drinking at the pub. The family reported him to the police and the Shire, who asked for the ban until the damage was paid for.'*

It is difficult to tell if all the behaviour involved with these bans is alcohol related. Almost three quarters of survey respondents (70.5%) reported that you *could* be banned for non-alcohol related issues; however many people were uncertain, and responses differed between the different communities. One school of thought says that it isn't fair because the police should handle those issues: *'It is a hard one but generally I believe that banning should only relate to incidents that are directly related to the club or alcohol consumption at the club - if you get a DUI offence in the mainstream you don't get banned from drinking, you get banned from driving.'* The other point of view is that people shouldn't do the wrong thing, so it was fair enough to ban them: *'Stealing or something – it's good to get banned. Why should you do something that you shouldn't do, then go to the club and enjoy yourself.'*

An example of banning (or threatened banning) for non-alcohol related reasons is provided by the photo below.



The sign was put there by the plumber, with no authorisation from the club – and he reported that it worked. No one went near the building site.

This is a vexed issue. Several club managers found the banning systems extremely frustrating. They reported that being banned from the club becomes the de facto social control system for the whole community – and makes their businesses much less profitable. Some survey respondents agreed: *'It's too cheeky to do that. Not fair. What has it got to do with the club. Club should only be involved if its grog.'*

However other stakeholders, both service providers and community members, reported that banning is one of the few effective forms of social control, and it is a good option to have available. This person summarised this point of view well: *'Kids stealing out of houses - parents get banned, that's good, no-one steals.'* Another survey respondent characterised it as 'instant justice'. The banning happened quickly, and was an effective punishment. In their opinion this was better than the justice provided by the police because *'You don't have to wait.'*

Bans relating to children's behaviour

It seems that several communities have, or used to have, systems through which parents are banned if their children didn't go to school or were anti-social around the community. Again opinion was divided about whether this is a good thing. Some respondents said things like: *'I think it's good getting parents banned if kids muck up or smash anything. It's parents' responsibility to look after them but they're in the club.'* Other people who have been banned for this reason aren't so sure: *'I don't think it's a good idea. I was banned for 3 days because my little boy didn't go to school because he was at outstation. So we went to pick him up [laughs].'*

In one community the principal used to go to the club and ask that the parents be banned. However this appears to have stopped when that particular principal left the school. One community wants to re-negotiate the alcohol agreement with the police

to include school attendance as a basis for banning. However feedback from other schools was that they do not want to be part of linking school with alcohol – it does not feel right. This comment gives a flavour of what teachers object to (although the speaker supported linking bans to school attendance): *'They've got to make their kids go to school now. Their kids are going to school because they want to drink their beer.'* It is difficult to disentangle the messages that children could receive from this arrangement.

Bans relating to neglect of children

Parents who are seen to neglect their children are sometimes banned. This ban seems to relate more directly to the club. One survey respondent described what happens in their community: *'Some people don't look after their kids. Parents go to the club. If a kid gets hurt the blame goes back to the mother and father, they get banned from the club.'*

Bans relating to domestic violence

Most communities have systems through which perpetrators of domestic violence are banned. However it is unclear whether this is only the case when alcohol is involved.

Banning for minor domestic issues

Several respondents reported people being banned for: *'Breaking things in the house like a fridge, or a stove, family tell on them'*. This raises the issue of the potential for banning being used as a threat in a whole range of small scale domestic situations.

6.4.9.8 How long are people banned for?

There is a large range in how long people are banned for. Most bans seem to be for less than six months. Some are for a matter of days. One police officer commented: *'The ban is a bit negotiable. If they don't race off and get more grog, or try to bring it in, we lift it early. We also don't police the requirement that you lose your permit when you're banned. It isn't in anyone's interest to have someone have no alcohol and go off the island.'*

All communities have some people who are banned for life. This is generally for repeated and serious offences. In one quite small community there were 43 people on the banned list, and 28 of these (65%) were life bans. However these things are obviously a factor of how the clubs are administrated - another community had a banned list of 113 people, 19 (17%) of whom were banned for life. Interestingly, the club with the high 'banned for life' proportion has a reputation as a peaceful and well run club, whereas the other is less so.

There was some debate about whether life bans are a constructive strategy. Several survey respondents felt that a really long ban simply sends people away from the community to drink elsewhere. As one survey respondent who has been banned for

life declared *'This community is trying to kill me. They want me to drink somewhere else and get myself killed!'*

6.4.9.9 Does banning improve behaviour?

Most survey respondents felt that banning was a constructive strategy, as long as the ban is not for too long. They felt that being banned teaches people a lesson in respect, and how to drink in moderation: *'They have to take punishment. Banning teaches them a lesson - teaches them not to run amok, that they should drink like normal people, be sensible and drink in moderation. Some people drink too much.'* It was not only people who observed the impact of banning on other people that were positive about it. Several people also spoke positively about the fact that the threat of being banned kept their own behaviour in check: *'I don't get banned because I love my beer.'*

One person also referred to banning as the tool to achieve the original idea behind the clubs – which was to teach people moderate drinking: *'The club is made for people to socialise in. It shouldn't be really intoxicated. It's like a learning thing, that's why it was opened in the first place.'*

One survey respondent felt that banning should not be used as a form of social control, because it doesn't have the same power over people who don't drink: *'It would be too hard to ban drinkers who don't look after their kids, because there are non- drinkers too who don't look after their kids, what will you ban them from? The shop?'*

6.4.9.10 Does banning make the community safer?

Banning people is clearly a nuanced and complex issue. The bans have become to some extent a de facto system of social control for all of the communities that have clubs. It is therefore interesting to consider if the overall impact of banning is seen to be positive for the safety of community residents. Survey respondents were asked *'Does banning make your community safer?'* Table 6.1 presents the results for this question.

Table 6-1: Responses to 'Does banning make your community safer?'

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	44	12.2%
Yes	274	75.7%
Don't know	25	6.9%
No response	19	5.2%
Total	362	100.0

When this is analysed by gender and drinking status there are no significant differences. This is a very positive result which suggests that banning is a form of social control that is effective in improving community safety.

However we stress that it is not possible to draw any overall conclusion about the impact of the clubs on community safety from these responses, because we have no comparison with community safety measures in communities *without* clubs (other than the assault data presented in Chapter 5).

In two communities a considerably higher proportion of respondents do not think that banning makes their community safer (56.9% and 66.7% respectively). These clubs are both characterised by highly authoritarian managers, resulting in community members not feeling engaged in the process of running the club. This lack of input and transparency may be the reason that residents feel that the bans do not improve community safety.

In two communities people who are banned have had to do some training before they return to the club. In one they have to attend the alcohol and other drug counsellor, and in another they had to do an anger management course. These arrangements drew community support. However it appears that they are difficult to maintain, as people who have been banned find it difficult to arrange a course to attend. In one community this arrangement has lapsed because the anger management courses are no longer running. However it is worth noting as an arrangement that seeks to address the causes of the behaviour which has resulted in the individual being banned.

6.4.9.11 Does banning result in people leaving their community to drink in more risky environments elsewhere?

A major dilemma regarding the impact of banning people is the extent to which they then leave the community to drink in other places. One person summarised the issue well: *'People get banned for life and then go to Darwin to drink. Get in trouble and accident, and coffin coming back.'* There is consistent feedback that some people who are banned do go to other places to drink. In one community the son of a local research assistant was banned while the research team were there. The mother was very worried and went to the club and police to ask that he not be banned. Meanwhile the son was vowing to go to the nearest town to drink, and starting to walk along the road out of town. The whole family was genuinely concerned that the young man would come to harm when he went drinking somewhere else.

Further investigation of the impact of being banned was done by accessing the list of people who had been banned in one community. Researchers then sat down with local research assistants to ask who had left the community, and who had stayed. Of 30 people on the list, 20 (66.7%) were said to have subsequently left the community,

although some people who left were also said to have returned. Young people were particularly likely to have left the community, with 13 of the 20 being aged less than 30 years.

6.4.9.12 Key points - banning

- *Banning becomes a system of social control for the whole community*
- *Most people think the bans are fair*
- *Banning systems sometimes get used for more petty family politics*
- *Community controlled system of response to bad behaviour (in some places)*
- *The issue arises the extent to which it is fair to use access to the club as a major carrot for a whole range of behaviour*
- *Banning is seen as a tool to teach more moderate drinking*
- *Many (particularly the young) that are banned leave the community to drink in other places*

6.5 The role of the club within the community

In addition to learning about the way each club operates, we were also asked to investigate the role of each club within its community. We therefore asked survey respondents: *'Does your club ever run events for the whole community – drinkers, non-drinkers and families?'* Almost two thirds (59.9%) responded that their club did run such events. Responses between communities varied markedly, with the proportion saying yes varying between 29% and 87%.

It is clear that the clubs vary significantly, both in the extent to which community members are aware of additional activities and, if respondents are correct, in the extent to which such activities occur. Communities that run fewer activities tend to have managers who have not been there long (however one of the highest responses is for a club with a very new manager). Another possible interpretation is that researchers noted that relationships between the manager and the community are somewhat strained at the two clubs with the lowest 'Yes' response, and this may cause fewer activities to be run.

Feedback reports that the type and number of events are mostly determined by the manager, rather than the committee. This generated a long list of the sorts of events that are held including: Christmas day, New Year's day, Australia Day, International Women's Day, Mother's and Father's Day, staff farewells, Melbourne Cup, NAIDOC day, weddings and wakes.

Those that are held for the whole community tend to occur two to three times a year. Some are initiated by the club, and others are when a group hires the facility. It is clear that prior to the NTNER and the contraction of trading hours the clubs ran more lavish

activities that occurred more frequently. Our researchers were given wistful reminiscences of big parties with long tables of lovely food. However several managers reported that the clubs are not currently generating profits to allow lavish events to continue.

There is quite a clear division of opinion on how desirable it is to have whole-of-community functions at the club. Most people welcome it, and would like to see more. They like the children to have a good time there and enjoy the facilities. However there is significant opinion from community residents that children should not be encouraged to go to the club because it can be seen as a positive endorsement of alcohol: *'The disco used to run but not now. Maybe BBQs. We don't want kids at the club, we don't think kids should go there.'*

The third type of event that some clubs hold is when it is used for additional events at which alcohol is available. For these functions the club management has to apply for a special license from the Licensing Commission. One manager reported his experience when he applied to run the staff Christmas Party in 2012: *'The application went to Licensing Commission. FaHCSIA management were a part of the process. They put the following condition: 'Nobody is allowed to drive a vehicle to the club; they have to provide a bus to take them home, and they could only provide what is sold in the club; there could only be 6 beers in total. We didn't bother with the party – those conditions are offensive. It was for a staff Christmas Party. Where in Australia do they put conditions like that!'*

It is clear that these events are popular. Three quarters (75.4%) of survey respondents would like them to be held more often. There were no significant differences in responses between drinkers and non-drinkers, or men and women.

6.5.1 Role of the club within the community - Key points:

- *All the clubs hold events for the whole community, but generally not more than two or three times a year.*
- *The events that are held are very popular, and include a wide range of celebrations.*
- *Some people feel that children should not be involved in events at the club because of its association with alcohol.*
- *Club facilities in many communities are also hired out for use to host meetings.*
- *Applying for a license variation for the club to be able to sell alcohol outside of its normal license is an onerous process that some feel is too tightly controlled, and does not occur at mainstream clubs.*

6.5.2 Financial contributions from the club to the community

One of the arguments used to support the existence of clubs is that they keep money in the community, as opposed to people buying alcohol elsewhere. The logic is that

the profit goes to the club, which then supports community initiatives. With this in mind we asked respondents 'Does the club spend any of the money it makes on buying things for the community?' We then asked for comment. Table 6.2 presents data on whether or not respondents thought that the club spent money in the community.

Table 6-2: Responses to 'Does the club spend any of the money it makes on buying things for the community?'

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	85	23.5%
Yes	139	38.4%
Don't know	110	30.4%
No response	28	7.7%
Total	362	100.0

The responses show how mixed people's opinions and knowledge were about what happens to profits made by their clubs. When this is analysed on a club by club basis, it is clear that some communities know more about the financial operations of their clubs than others. In one community only 10% of respondents thought that their club gave money or donations to the community. The highest positive response was still quite low – 59%. This highlights the fact that what happens to any profit made by the clubs is not common knowledge. This may be exacerbated by the decrease in donations from the clubs to the community as their profits have fallen.

When survey respondents were asked to elaborate on what sort of support was given by the club, a list of relatively minor donations and sponsorship were given: sponsoring football teams and jumpers, attendance prizes for schools (bicycles, laptops) and sporting trips and excursions for primary school students.

There were some more major purchases – two clubs had bought buses for community use, however both these buses remained the property of the club (and neither were roadworthy at the time of fieldwork). Several respondents also commented that their clubs give donations to families for funerals, and supply the food for wakes that are held in the club. In at least one club this sort of support is only available to paid up members.

There was also feedback that the process through which the community could access donations was difficult, and changed according to the manager. At least one club required a written request. Similarly the process through which requests were approved was not transparent. Some respondents were clear that the committee made the decision, while others assumed it was the manager. Committee members

were interviewed in every community, and their feedback confirmed that some requests are dealt with by the Committee, and some go straight through the manager.

One club was clearly putting their profit into the community by working with the store to renovate the store building to include a bakery and takeaway shop. They were planning training programs so that local people could operate the enterprises: *'The club paid for the renovations, and it is helping pay for the extension to the store. It is about making jobs for our people - we will have a takeaway and a bakery.'* (The manager pointed out that a loan was paying the major part of the renovations.) The profits from this club are also routinely used to subsidise the store and keep the prices of fresh fruit and vegetables as low as possible (this club was one that was managed by ALPA in conjunction with the store, so that they operate as one economic unit).

At least two clubs have used earnings to build commercial accommodation facilities that they run as small motels for visitors to the community. Such enterprises raise an ethical dilemma – the facilities are built with club profits, and are expected to generate profit. However it seems that community knowledge of what happens to the earnings generated is very poor, and that returns to the community have fallen substantially since 2007 despite the new enterprises. One manager explained that they operate very conservatively, and keep substantial capital in the bank in case of a rainy day.

There was considerable disquiet among survey respondents about financial management at several of the clubs. One is managed by a third party, and people felt that they haven't been told the financial status of the club. They heard that it was making a loss – but this had not been confirmed. (Later enquiries by our researchers indicated that the club was in profit, and plans were afoot to reinvest some of this into the club.)

Some community residents and service providers commented that they didn't know the salary level of staff, but were concerned and suspicious that it might be very high: *'The first licensee supported the school, now the club is knocking everyone back. This licensee went on holidays at the end of last year to Las Vegas, with wife to Hawaii for their holiday.'*

Respondents from another community reported that their club (which operates on a tavern license) pays very high rent and wages, and all the profit goes to private individuals. Researchers do not have evidence to either support or deny this claim.

6.5.3 Financial contributions from the club to the community - Key points:

- *There are generally low levels of knowledge in the community about what happens to any profits made by the clubs.*

- *The level of profit returned to the community has declined with the decreased profitability following the decrease in opening hours and the move away from full strength beer.*
- *All clubs make minor sponsorships for things such as football guernseys.*
- *Several clubs assist community members with funeral costs – in some communities this is limited to club members.*
- *Several clubs support the breakfast programs at their schools through monthly donations of a few hundred dollars.*
- *One club is involved in funding major renovations within the community.*
- *Some clubs have built additional enterprises such as accommodation facilities. In some cases the additional profit that could be expected to flow from these enterprises is not evident in increased support for community projects.*
- *In some communities there is disquiet and suspicion over financial management practices and the level of salaries paid.*