

- *The availability of food is important in a well run club:*
 - *The availability of hot food such as a casserole is important in creating an atmosphere where people are there to have a good time – not only to drink and get drunk.*
 - *When good food is available people will buy it, but the habit of eating as well as drinking is a learned one, and takes time to acquire.*
- *Entertainment such as games, bands, competitions and music are important in creating a happy lively atmosphere where the drinking is not the sole focus.*

8 Conclusion

This study examines the operation and impacts of clubs in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. The findings indicate that the clubs have had a mixed history. Prior to 2007 some of the clubs experienced periods of very high consumption, associated with high levels of alcohol related harm for the community members. This period was characterised by license conditions that allowed extensive opening hours and take away sales. In 2007 opening hours and alcohol sold were brought under centralised control, and all but one club were limited to opening for three hours a day on four days each week. Sales were limited to mid-strength and light beer.

Since 2007 two measures of alcohol related harms (alcohol related assaults and alcohol related hospital separations) in communities with clubs have been declining, and are now comparable to the rest of the NT. This suggests that *when license conditions are tightly controlled*, communities with clubs do not suffer from uniformly higher alcohol related harms than those without clubs.

Over their history clubs in Aboriginal communities in the NT have developed an array of successful measures that manage patrons' alcohol consumption and behaviour. All the clubs are now pleasant places to spend an evening, and offer community members a convivial place to socialise. When alcohol related trouble occurs as a result of drinking at the club, all the clubs have very effective systems of managing the behaviour through rules, security staff and a system of banning people who have broken the rules. This system is also used to control a range of other behaviours (such as not turning up to work) in every community. We note that all of the clubs have developed these systems over time and trial, and they may not be easily replicated.

However the dilemma facing policy makers is not a dichotomy between a dry community where residents don't drink alcohol, and a community with a club where people do drink alcohol. Residents of remote communities access alcohol from a number of outlets – whether they have a club or not. The dilemma is therefore creating policy settings that maximise drinkers' access to environments in which their alcohol consumption is managed.

