# The Alcohol Management Plan at Pormpuraaw, Queensland, Australia: An Ethnographic Community-Based Study

## Researchers

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## Summary

This report outlines the findings of an ethnographic research project which gathered and analysed the Alcohol Management Plan (AMP) in the remote Indigenous community of Pormpuraaw on the western coast of Cape York Peninsula in far north Queensland.

This report contributes to the developing body of knowledge and evidence about AMPs in Indigenous Australian contexts. It offers nuanced understandings of how AMPs are understood, investigates their effectiveness in responding to alcohol-related harms and examines community engagement in their design, implementation and evaluation.

## Key findings

The qualitative and quantitative evidence examined in this project shows a significant reduction in

alcohol-related harms following the introduction of the AMP.

* Data on hospital admissions supports the views of the majority of the Pormpuraaw community members, who observed that violence and community disharmony reduced with the reductions in alcohol supply.
* The Queensland Health Department data showed a reduction in average annual hospital admissions rates for assault from 34.22 per 1,000 people to 5.7 per 1,000 people, which corresponded with a tightening of supply restrictions during the three phases of the AMP from 2002/3 to 2013/14.

These impacts have been due to the lower levels of takeaway alcohol being available and the careful management of the alcohol consumed at the sole liquor licensed venue. This has led to a more cohesive community and better community functioning.

The qualitative research also identified several issues that impact on the performance of the AMP across the community, including ‘problem deflation’, insufficient funding and resourcing, redirection of funding, and social consequences such as sly-grogging, gambling and criminalisation.

## Implications for Alcohol Policy

* Critical to success for communities and governments wishing to reduce alcohol harms are a clear set of evidence based indicators and targets on which alcohol strategies can be based, alongside guidelines by which communities can prepare, implement and evaluate their plans over time.
* Communities, in partnership with government agencies, have an important role in identifying, selecting and prioritising the indicators required for their AMP evaluations. Most importantly, this should create no further resource strain on limited community services and programs in place, as many services are already operating on underfunded budgets for the programs they run.
* AMPs should be *realistically* costed and financed appropriately to address all measures and programs, inclusive of demand and harm reduction elements. Without adequate resources, AMPs become little more than aspirational instruments.
* Supply issues need to be addressed regionally rather than focused on a single community/town/outlet because of the links between the geographical placement of takeaway liquor outlets, variable restrictions (opening hours/volume/type) and proximity to different communities. The political influence held by the liquor industry must also be addressed. One mechanism that could be used for this purpose would be to place more stringent restrictions on political donations.

[view the report](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/The-Alcohol-Management-Plan-at-Pormpuraaw.pdf)