

KAVA MANAGEMENT PLAN

for the

RAMINGINING KAVA LICENCE AREA

This document is the Kava Management Plan (KMP) for the Raminging Kava Licence Area.

The KMP has been developed by the Raminging community and its surrounding Homelands through a series of community meetings.

SECTION 1: Boundary of the area to be included as the kava licence area

All that parcel of land near Raminging in the Northern Territory of Australia bounded by lines described as follows:

Commencing at the intersection of parallel of South Latitude 13 degrees 15 minutes with the western bank of Guyuyu Creek; thence generally northerly by the western banks of Guyuyu Creek and Blyth River and Low Water Mark of that bank within its tidal reaches to Low Water Mark of the Arafura Sea; thence generally north-easterly and south-easterly by the coastline, being an imaginary line drawn along the Low Water Mark of the seacoast and across the mouths of all creeks and rivers contiguous to the adjacent coastline, to intersect meridian of East Longitude 135 degrees 6 minutes 40 seconds; thence south by the said meridian to intersect the eastern bank of Goyder River; thence generally south-westerly by the eastern banks of Goyder River and Annie Creek to intersect parallel of South Latitude 13 degrees 15 minutes; thence west by the said parallel to the point of commencement, but excluding from area the area contained within a circle 2 kilometres in radius centred on the primary water tank stand at the community of Nangalala, all geographical co-ordinates specified in this Schedule being on the Australian Geodetic Datum 1966 and the position of Low Water Mark described in this Schedule being as at Lowest Astronomical Tide.

SECTION 2: Place and Method of Kava Sales

- The place of sale of kava will be in the Raminging Bullocky Shop, which is underneath the BulaBula Centre on Lot 125. The Bullocky Shop is an existing retail outlet which sells hot, cooked beef from the community-owned Murwangi cattle station. The shop also sells cold drinks and other takeaway food as well as fuel and power cards. Because it is open every day and until after the main ALPA store is closed, the shop provides a service to the community. However, the actual kava sales area will be in a separate section of the Bullocky Shop, away from and separate from the main food and other products sales area.

- The kava will be delivered into Ramingining by air. The kava shop has its own vehicle, which will be used to transport the kava from the airstrip to the kava retail shop.

SECTION 3: Where Kava May Be Consumed

Kava may be consumed only if purchased within the Ramingining Kava Licence Area and only at such places within the declared licence area as the Council shall from time to time designate as consumption areas by both diagram and appropriate description lodged with the Licensing Commission. These areas are

- for the Ramingining township, the principal designated kava drinking area is in an abandoned house on Lot 168. Although not lived in, this house has a concrete slab and a sealed roof. There are outside walls, but the interior walls consist of structural framework only. Council has no immediate plans for renovation of this house, and as such, it would seem an ideal location for kava consumption. There is water available to the exterior of the house.
- for the Ramingining Tank Camp area, the disused house on Lot 83 has been designated as a kava consumption area. As with Lot 168, this house has a good roof and outside walls and has an exterior tap connected. The house was recently allocated for a major NAHS renovation, but after some limited renovation work was conducted, it was discovered that part of the steel framework of the house was beyond economic repair. As such, the Project Manager requested that this project be abandoned and that the funding allocated be transferred to another housing renovation in Ramingining. This was done and accordingly the house will not be used for accommodation in the future. The house is also some distance from any other housing at Tank Camp.
- for homeland centres, the nominated house as identified in the attached maps in the following homeland centres: Borogamarra, Bundatharri, Dhipirngurra, Galawdjapin, Galirri, Gamardi, Garrandjirr, Gatji, Gulpulul, Wulkabimirri and Yathalamarra.

SECTION 4: Days of Sale

- Kava will only be available for sale from the kava shop on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursday, Friday and Saturdays. It will be unavailable Wednesdays and Sundays.

SECTION 5: Hours of Sale

- Kava will be available between the hours of 12:00 midday and 6:00pm on the nominated sales days. However, with experience, it may become necessary to alter the sales times slightly in accordance with consumer demand. For example, the sales hours may need to be changed from 2pm to 10pm. It is the intention that the maximum time of being open for sales should not exceed 8 hours per nominated day, although it may prove necessary to split those hours.

SECTION 6: Limits on Daily Kava Purchases

- The maximum sale per person per day is 400g of kava. There will be a maximum of 600g of kava sold per person per “sales week”.

SECTION 7: Community Expectations or Rules

- This will be the first time in the community that the supply and price of kava has been controlled in any way. Thus it will be a new experience for our kava drinkers; their expectations and that of the community’s will require considerable adjustment in current attitude.

At the moment, illegal black-market kava is freely available in our community. The kava comes into the community in quite large quantities and this in itself lends itself to binge drinking, limited only by the price of the kava. Hence consumption is limited more by price and not so much by quantity. Nevertheless, because it is considerably cheaper than marijuana, kava remains popular.

It is important to note that the expectations of say, the police and others in relation to kava consumption appear to be based on the old system of unlimited quantities of kava being available at all hours to anyone.

- We would suggest that with a controlled supply and price, the consumption of kava in the community and the attitudes and expectations thereof will change. Yes, it will be cheaper, but the quantity will also be limited, and this is the important point. There has to be a balance between the availability of kava and the prevention of the continuation of the black-market. Obviously if the black-market continues in any major form, then all control is lost.
- Clearly both the retailer and the Council will need to work together to engender a community attitude for responsible kava use.

SECTION 8: Actions to Support Responsible Kava Use

- The community will require a major education program in demonstrating responsible kava use. This program should include non-kava drinkers as well as kava drinkers. We envisage the Council in conjunction with the kava retailer and the Health Clinic will run the education program, which initially at least will probably need to be funded by Council.

This is not a pie in the sky story. We have had considerable success in the past with other education programs, mostly involving men’s health and also community general health matters. For example, in one ATSIIC-funded health and smoking program, the entire community switched within a few days from purchasing Winfield Red cigarettes to Winfield lights (Blue). Winfield Reds are no longer stocked in Ramingining because the demand is not there. No one is pretending that anyone was going to give up smoking because of this program, but at least it demonstrates the effectiveness of a simple education process.

As to the practicalities of ensuring that the education program reaches all consumers, it is intended that all kava users will be registered and provided with a simple laminated card with an individual bar code on it. They will need this card to purchase kava, and of course the electronic reader at the retail point of sale will only allow the sale of up to 400 grams of kava in specially marked bags to any one person on any one day. And of course to obtain a card in the first place, the person will need to attend the responsible kava use education program.

SECTION 9: Actions if Irresponsible Kava Use Occurs

- As noted above, all prospective purchasers of kava will be required to obtain a laminated bar-coded card, which the card reader will only allow them to purchase up to 400g each per serving day, or up to 600g per person per week. As long as there is no black-market kava available, this system in itself will help control the amount of kava being consumed in the community and on the Outstations on any one day.

It is understood that as this will be the first time kava has been controlled since the missionary days, there will need to be considerable flexibility in both the method of selling kava and also the way it is consumed. We believe there will be a tendency to binge-drink at first, simply because in relation to food, for example, this has been the Yolngu traditional lifestyle for many thousands of years; even today when hunting and whenever food has been caught or made available, it is eaten immediately, no matter what time of the day or night it may be.

However, combined with an intensive responsible kava use education program and the knowledge and perception that kava will be available on most days, we are hoping to reduce the binge-drinking habit. This is as opposed to the current black-market supply, which of course encourages binge drinking in that - right or wrong - the supply of kava is usually perceived as being very limited.

- An advantage of having controlled sales is that it is relatively easy to pinpoint those individuals who are misusing kava. We see the principal method of controlling the misusers of kava as by going through Council and using the mala leaders and the families of the misusers. We have found from long experience that this is the most effective means of resolving disputes and actions which affect the community as a whole. To put it crudely, bringing shame upon the family is a very fast and effective way to bring individuals into line. But of course it can only be done by the Yolngu leaders themselves, and naturally would have a limited effect on visiting kava users (who however would be unable to purchase kava from our retail store, anyway).
- If chronic irresponsible use of kava such as binge drinking occurs, listings of the names of the main offenders will be circulated publicly (e.g. placed on the Council's, the Health Clinic's and the Retailer's noticeboards), and the electronic kava card reader can be programmed to reject the offender's cards when they try to purchase more kava. Again, this will be a matter of testing and gaining first hand practical experience whilst working within the Kava Management Plan. For example, not only could kava sales be withdrawn to the consistent offenders, in a worst case scenario it is conceivable that kava sales to the entire community

could be temporarily halted. In reality, this would be an extreme case only as all the indications creating such a situation would be readily noticeable well in advance and would be acted upon accordingly. Also, total withdrawal would only play into the hands of the black-marketeers.

SECTION 10: How the Impact of Kava will be Monitored

- In a controlled kava situation (i.e. in the absence of significant black-market kava sales), the impact of kava can be readily monitored.
- We would envisage that Council and the Health Clinic will quickly ascertain the effects of kava by doing monthly surveys of their workers and their health and relating this data back to the sales statistics. However, the main problem with interpreting this data is that the community is not coming off a zero base (in other words, kava is already in use in sometimes large quantities), and as such it will be difficult to identify individual cases that are having problems specifically from the use of controlled kava under the new regime.
- Nonetheless, on the positive side, we will be in a position to at least obtain raw data on kava sales/use and kava effects. This data can then be taken over a 12-month or longer period to identify trends, which in turn can be used for the development of a long term Kava Management Strategy.

The local ALPA (Arnhem Land Progress Association) store, too, can provide useful monitoring information. For example, for the first four months after kava was officially banned (the period approximately July through November 98), there was very little kava available in our community and the ALPA store reported record sales. It should be noted that although the sales included increased food purchases, it also included increases in cigarettes and other non-food items, thus indicating there was more *money* available in the community for expenditure rather than simply a substitution of food for kava. Also, it should be remembered that again this was coming off *extremely* high usage of kava within the community (the worst that it had been for many years, according to many of the elders), and so it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions from this data.

Further, the Health Clinic staff were actually suffering *more* during this period, mainly due to kava substitution problems. This included home-brew alcohol being consumed far too early after the distillation/brewing processes, with the resultant stomach problems and the violence flowing from too much alcohol of questionable purity and strength. In fact, at one stage during this period, the Health Clinic was closed and would only accept emergencies for medevacs. Under the controlled use of kava system, the ALPA store will be a good barometer of the community's spending habits; we will be able to ascertain, for example, if food sales increase and if so, which specific food group is selling more (e.g. hot food takeaways, fruit and vegetables, bread and flour, fruit drinks and soft drinks, etc).

Similarly, Council will monitor Yolngu employee attendances and performances.

The Health Clinic, too, can supply kava-related health data.

However, it should be stressed that as noted above, any information on kava usage collated by community agencies will of necessity not be of the highest quality, meaning that we are not starting from a zero base. Even though we will gather as much kava-related information as possible, there is simply too much kava currently available in the community (and there has been for some time now) to enable accurate data to be calculated.

SECTION 11: Other Information

- Rather like the Laynhapuy Homelands, the administration of the Ramingining kava area presents complex challenges. This is because we have one major community with a separate “suburb” and 11 Outstations to service all under the same rules, as opposed to a simple single community such as Yirrkala township.
- The Outstations in particular will have great difficulty in conforming to the “kava-equals- alcohol” regime that is currently being promoted by certain Government agencies. Even in the community itself there will need to be a massive re-education program for everyone, as kava has always been consumed in a social situation, with friends and family gathering in circles much in the same way as the original kava drinkers, the Fijians.

Nevertheless, our community has indicated on many separate occasions that it does want kava to be legally available in the community and that in principle it supports the NT Government’s legislation to control and regulate kava sales and availability.

What does concern us, however, is the danger of having yet another set of – in certain areas unrealistic - Balanda rules placed upon the community. The Yolngu people are basically very law-abiding and having unworkable kava laws imposed on our people will simply go to undermine the good work of the NT Police and to encourage the continuance of the existing kava black-market.
