

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN KUNUNURRA

Photographer: Darren Clark

One morning whilst driving to Jodie Hall's house in Mirima I noticed an indigenous home that had been destroyed by a fire. I asked her about the home and what had happened there. What she told me shocked me to the core.

The two-bedroom house belonged to an indigenous lady by the name of Pearl Gordon who had lived on the same block of land since to late fifties. Pearl shared the house with her husband and her daughter Gilly who was living in one of the rooms with her white partner. One night after a drinking session Gilly and her partner had a huge fight which ended with Gilly's partner going to bed whilst Gilly kept on drinking. In the early hours of the morning Gilly crept into the bedroom and made a fire under the bed that her partner had fallen asleep in. Before she knew it the whole house was on fire and she fled with her parents who were in shock. Her partner managed to break a side window and climb outside just escaping the inferno. Gilly is now serving three years in the Broome lockup for arson and attempted murder.

There is a push in the East Kimberley to minimise the amount of take-away alcohol being sold, with community leaders saying action is needed urgently to stop the drunken violence that is traumatising children and filling up police cells. Police and hospital statistics reveal the extent of damage that occurs on a nightly basis in the towns of Kununurra and Wyndham. In 2014, alcohol was a factor in 80 per cent of domestic assaults, double the rate seen across WA In the four years to 2012, hospital admissions linked to alcohol were four times the state's average.

IMAGE No.	FORMAT	DATE	COMMENTS
BA2840/749	Digital	August 2018	I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw this home in Mirima. It has got such a sad feeling connected with it.
BA2840/750	Digital	August 2018	People are still using one of the burnt out beds in this burnt out house. Young teenagers come here with their friends to drink and stay off the police radar.
BA2840/751	Digital	August 2018	A scene of complete devastation after a domestic violence dispute. Sadly alcohol is still being consumed on these premises.
BA2840/752	Digital	August 2018	Imagine waking up to this? Unfortunately Pearly Gordon does, and no one is in a hurry to fix this problem.
BA2840/753	Digital	August 2018	Pearly is an interesting Indigenous Elder who has seen a lot of change around Kununurra over the past 20 years. She told me she is hoping to go back to her home once the Government has it rebuilt.
BA2840/754	Digital	August 2018	Pearl's house in Infrared, shows the devastation left behind after an out of control domestic dispute.
BA2840/755	Digital	August 2018	Pearl Gordon in Infrared.
BA2840/756	Digital	August 2018	Pearl Gordon in infrared.