



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

# Alcohol & family violence in the East Kimberley

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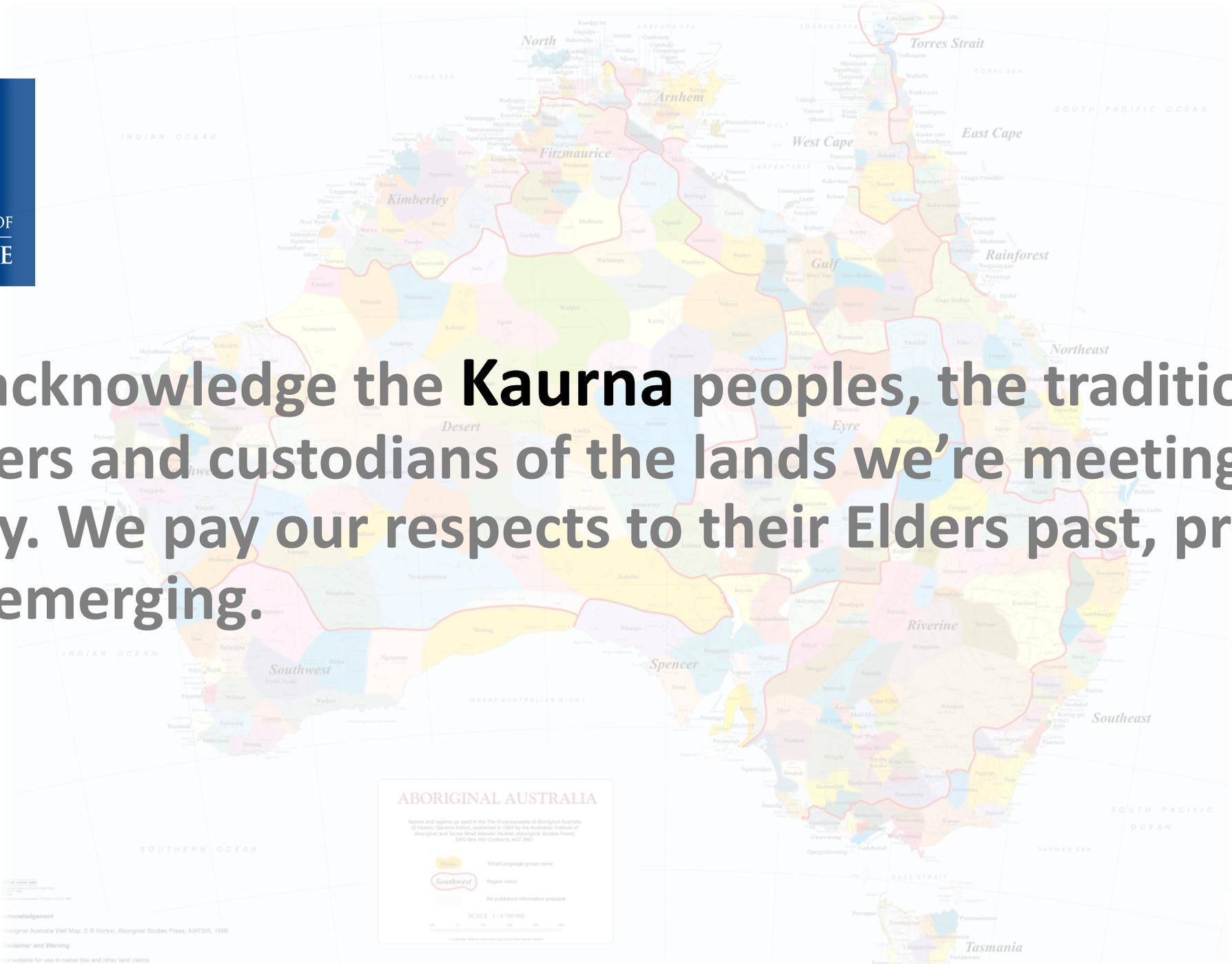
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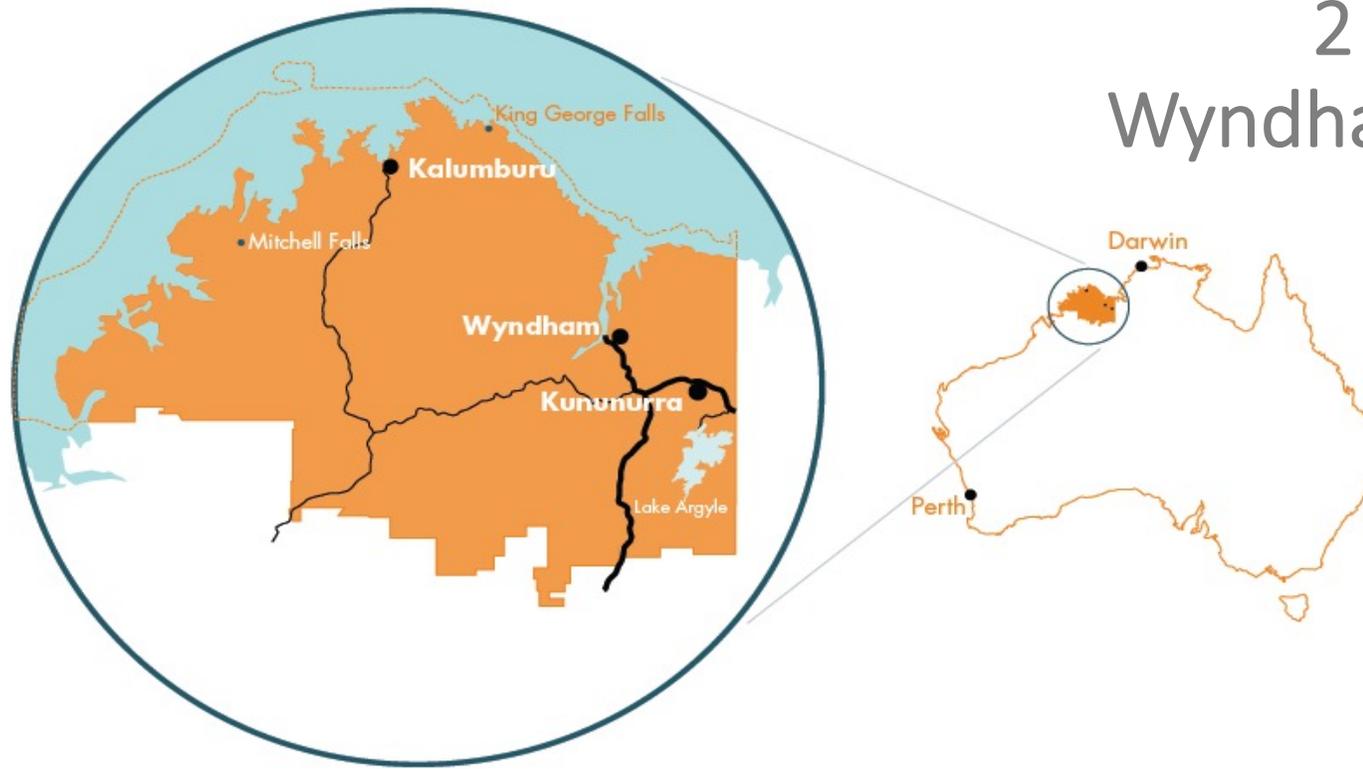


We acknowledge the **Kaurna** peoples, the traditional owners and custodians of the lands we're meeting on today. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



**Acknowledgement**  
Aboriginal Australia Vind Map, D R Horton, Aboriginal Studies Press, AHATSIS, 1986  
**Disclaimer and Warning**  
Not suitable for use in native title and other land claims  
This map indicates only the general location of large groupings of people which may

## 2 research projects: Wyndham-East Kimberley region



**Alcohol management in northern Australian Indigenous communities:  
policies and responses (ARC DP160103192: 2016-2021)**

**Improving Indigenous family violence policies, legislation and  
services for women (UoM ECR: 2018-2019)**



**1 in 4**  
**Australians**  
drink alcohol at  
risky levels

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**1 in 2 women**  
who are pregnant  
drink alcohol  
during their  
pregnancy

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**10-15%**  
of emergency  
department  
presentations are  
alcohol-related



**25%**  
of frontline  
officers' time is  
taken by alcohol-  
related crime

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**1 in 4**  
road fatalities are  
attributed to drink  
driving

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Alcohol was involved  
in **34%** of intimate  
partner violence &  
**29%** of family  
violence incidents.

# Alcohol in Australia



**35%**  
of all specialist  
treatment episodes  
were alcohol-related  
in 2017-18

# Alcohol: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples



Are **less likely to drink alcohol** than other Australians

Proportion drinking alcohol at levels that exceed lifetime risk **↑** from **14.7%** (2014) to **18.4%** (2018-19)



Proportion who drank >4 standard drinks in one sitting **↑** from **35%** (2002) to **50%** (2018-19)

Proportion who drank >11 drinks at least once a month **↓** from **18.8%** (2016) to **10.6%** (2019)



# Family Violence in Australia



**1 in 6 women**

have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner since age 15



**4,600 women & 1,700 men**

were hospitalised in 2016-17 due to family violence.



**63%** of partner assaults leading to hospital assaults required head or neck injuries (inc. brain injuries).



**1 woman is murdered every 9 days**

by a current or former partner



**Approx. 10 women/day**

Are hospitalised for assault by a partner



Intimate partner violence is the **3rd greatest health risk** factor for women aged 25-44.



Family violence is the **leading cause of homelessness** for women



**Mental health conditions** are the largest contributor to the disease burden from partner violence,



**1 in 4 women** have experience emotional violence by a partner since age 15

# Family Violence: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

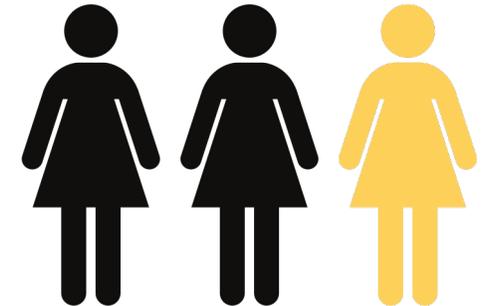
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 32x more likely to be hospitalised for family violence than non-Indigenous Australians.

32x



2 in 3 physical assaults on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are perpetrated by a family member.

63%

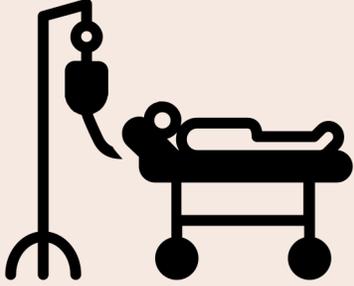


Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people are five times more likely to experience intimate partner violence than non-Indigenous Australians

5x



## Other associated factors



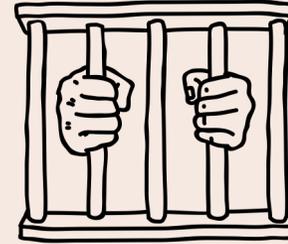
### **BURDEN OF DISEASE**

Intimate partner violence is the leading cause of lost years of life for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women aged 25-35 years



### **HOMELESSNESS**

More than 1/5 of all clients seeking homelessness services are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.



### **INCARCERATION**

In Victoria, nearly 90% Aboriginal women in prison have experienced sexual, physical or emotional abuse.



### **CHILD PROTECTION & REMOVAL**

Between 1999 - 2018 the rate of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care increased from 18.3 to 59.4 per 1,000.

# Timeline of alcohol restrictions and responses in the WEK region

**2009**

Kimberley wide restrictions  
Banning sale of cask wine and long-neck beer bottles

**MAR 2012**

Minor adjustment to Local Liquor Accord

**DEC 2015**

TAMS trial to ensure compliance with earlier restrictions

**4 DEC 2017**

Director of Liquor Licensing halved the takeaway alcohol limits

**7 FEB 2011**

Director of Liquor Licensing restricted quantity and timing for takeaway liquor in WEK under Section 64(2a) of the WA Liquor Act

**NOV 2012**

Further minor adjustments to Local Liquor Accord

**26 APRIL 2016**

Introduction of the Cashless Debit Card trial



Australian  
guidelines to  
reduce lifetime risk

No more than 2  
standard drinks  
per day



Australian  
guidelines to  
reduce risk of injury

No more than 4  
standard drinks  
per day



Wyndham-East  
Kimberley alcohol  
supply restrictions

Up to **56** standard  
drinks per person  
per day



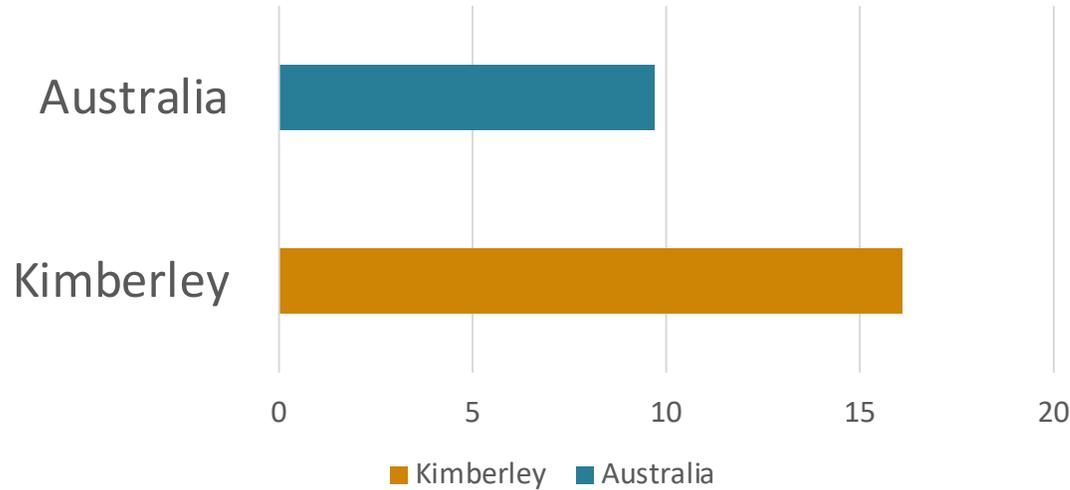
## Alcohol-related violence in the WEK

**“I think family violence and alcohol are the biggest community destroyers going on at the moment...it’s directly linked to sexual assaults, domestic violence, poverty, hospitalisations for different injuries other than assault as well. So, you’re talking about physical, liver and kidneys, dialysis, diabetes, FASD. It’s historically linked to suicides, it’s directly linked to suicides, the alcohol and the alcohol abuse .”**

**(Gary, ACCO, August 2019)**

# High levels of risky and chronic drinking patterns

Annual alcohol consumption per capita  
(litres pure alcohol)



“80 percent of the local people are binge drinkers. They’re not, they don’t monitor and have one beer, they drink, like my clients would come in unassisted but you know they’ll share a box of 30 a family and then another box of 30.” (Peter, mental health, November 2018)

Because my brother he is an alcoholic. He gets his [Centrelink] money at midnight ...And what he does is, he go buy grog. Sly grogging, because he’s got friends. You know one week or this day he’ll get paid. He’s got his other little gang there. ‘Oh your turn today, righto’ they’ll go hang with him when he get his money he’ll go and get the grog. By six o’clock he’s drunk. In the morning. He never even do shopping for feed. (Deborah, community member, February 2019)

She’s also living in domestic violence. She put a restraining order. She was staying at the women’s refuge. It made no difference even, she gave up. She just gave up, and that’s what people do, they give up and they do, they just turn to alcohol because it’s one way to help them not worry about what’s actually really going on in their lives and whatnot....That’s why they drink. Some people drink to hide their pain. (Tanya, community member, February 2019).

## Underage drinking

Many community members identified that children who consume alcohol regularly do not attend school and are more likely to be engaged with the criminal justice system.

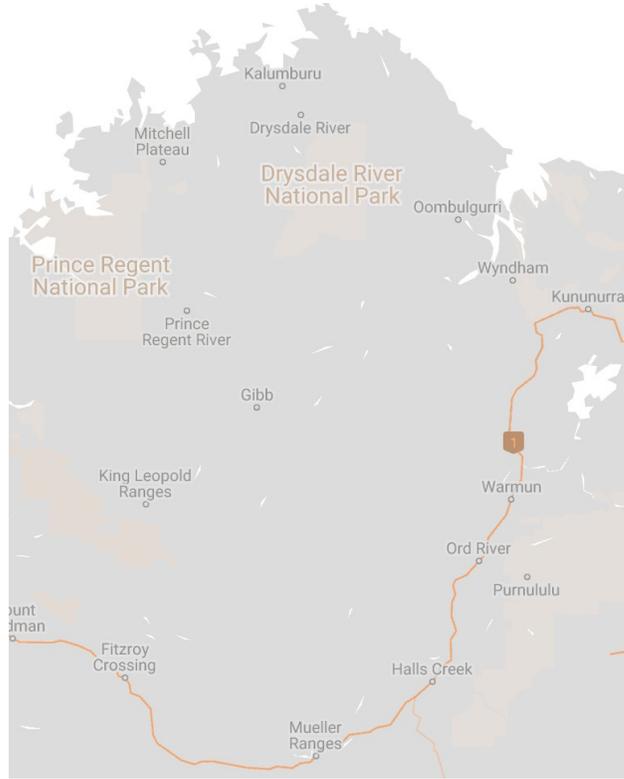
**“You get kids from 10 to 12. They get bored, there's no money around so when they see parents drink and if their parents help them or they left town and things like that, the children start to drink. So you've got a generation of kids start to drink pretty young.”**

(Megan, community member, February 2019)

**“They don't go to school. They just all get their education there for alcohol and drugs and whatnot.”**

(Mary, community member, February 2019)

# The distribution of alcohol: Regional sales hubs



**“...Broome ..., Fitzroy. And like Halls Creek and Fitzroy they’re, that’s the main like when they it’s only light beer there in Halls Creek and Fitzroy and the people got to travel from there to here they’ll get grog, take it back there. Or Fitzroy to Derby, buy grog take it back and they have accident along the road.”**

**(Glen, community member, February 2019)**

**“[Warmun] is a dry community but they throw more parties than Kununurra do...people come to Kununurra and pick up their alcohol and take it back. Some people are sly grogging, too. But it's more that people actually make the effort to travel here. They'll catch the Greyhound bus into Kununurra and buy their alcohol. Sometimes some of them take the Greyhound bus back because it's only \$28 to catch the bus both ways.”**

**(Tania, community member, February 2019)**

**“Also you find people coming from outside the area ...because they can’t get, their communities are dry, so they'll cause overcrowding, but they'll also go out drinking and that's their main aim for coming in to Kununurra or Halls Creek. At Halls Creek, they've got stricter alcohol restrictions than Warmun and Fitzroy.”**

**(Noah, ACCO, December 2018)**

# Family violence in the WEK

KEY  
ISSUE

## Instability of accommodation & homelessness

“Particularly with tenancy because we have a lot of people with large tenancy debts who are in court and the court wants to see some arrangement in place. And that’s where often family violence will come in, and it will either be family violence because the partner is refusing to contribute to household bills because he feels that his money is his, or it’ll be because there’s been significant damage to the house which is either being reported or not reported to the police.” **(Jennifer, legal service, November 2018)**

## Severity of violence

“Well, we can start with breach of a police order, all the way up to grievous bodily harm. I’m finding that the allegations up here are far more serious than in Perth, the injuries are more severe and it’s a more prolonged assault than it would be in Perth.” **(Maria, legal service, December 2018)**

## Women left without protection from violence

“So here they have to serve [the AVO], so the court will make it and then they’ll have to go and serve it and that can take time...so we always suggest that she goes to the refuge, or, you know, we come up with a safety plan...often police won't have attended the incident.” **(Amanda, legal service, November 2018)**

## Supporting the violence of perpetrators

“You’re up against his family. It doesn’t matter what he does, they do not tell that person it’s wrong, you can’t do that, it’s not okay. So they’re fighting with, that’s who they’re up against. It’s a whole family thing and then you’ve got two big families fighting **(Lisa, social service, December 2018)**

PARTICIPANT  
QUOTE

# Gaps in family violence and alcohol-related services in the WEK region



Homelessness and accommodation

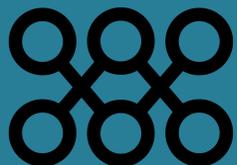
Post-rehabilitation & incarceration services



Mental health



FASD diagnoses & support

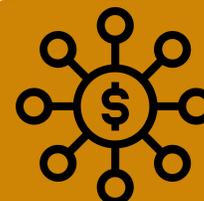


Healing programs

Qualified, long-term staffing



Wider, updated communication



Sustainable funding mechanisms

# Key recommendations



**Further restrictions on takeaway alcohol** limits that align more closely with the Australian health guidelines.

**Alignment** of alcohol supply restrictions across the entire Kimberley.



An economic evaluation of the cost of alcohol & family violence to the communities of the WEK region.



More secure, evidence-driven and effective wrap-around services and interventions.





# Thank you



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