

- Alcohol—physiological effect

Alcohol issues need a different approach

Broome Advertiser · 20 May 2021 · 2 · TALLULAH BIEUNDURRY Tallulah Bieundurry is a community outreach and education officer with Kimberley Community Legal Services

Large amounts of money and time have gone into research about the correlation between alcohol consumption and mental health issues.

One thing we can all agree on is that alcohol consumption exacerbates the symptoms of serious mental health issues like depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

We can also agree on the fact people often drink alcohol to soften or quell these symptoms.

Alcohol consumption largely affects Aboriginal people all over the nation and is one of the highest causes of

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chronic illnesses in our communities.

But one of the questions we don't often ask is why.

Why do our people drink themselves into serious health complications? Things like displacement, intergenerational trauma, the Stolen Generation and discrimination and racism are all factors that should be considered when asking why.

Understanding this is more effective in looking at resolving the issue.

We tend to think the answers to these problems are short-term responses that instead create much larger problems.

The newly introduced concept of the banned drinkers' register in Broome is like putting a bandaid on a festering wound and expecting it to heal itself.

The register excludes certain people from buying alcohol and therefore creates a higher demand for things like a black market.

Instead, we should be looking for ways to answer the why.

We should be spending our money on rehabilitation facilities, adequate counselling and mental health services, and other wrap-around services that can help our people to work through substance abuse in positive, long-term ways.

Just saying . . .