Binjari people want control

By Tegan Ford

Residents from Binjari want more control over what happens in their community to help stem the tide of violence and alcohol-fueled crime.

The community of around 300 has experienced high levels of violence in the past several months, including three deaths.

Several residents told the Katherine Times they would like to see some of the power the community had under the old Binjari Council returned to the Binjari Community Aboriginal Corporation.

The Binjari Council had strong community support and had established a health centre, patrol, a store and a bus service.

When the administration failed four years ago, members lost employment opportunities, assets were sold and services were stopped except for the Binjari Health Service.

The introduction of alcohol restrictions in Katherine and the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) have added to alcohol-related problems and a lack of control by community members.

Community elder Jessie Brown said when the council was active they had a Binjari-run community patrol and a three-warning system which meant people causing trouble would be told to stop otherwise they would be banned from the community for a lengthy period.

"That was really good, it worked alright," she said. She said these measures helped the community keep control of what was happening and also assisted with monitoring who was coming into Binjari.

"The council was really good...they had everything going here and then the money ran out and then when it stopped council went down the drain and everything stopped," she said.

"I want it the way it was...the first time when there was no drink. It used to be a safe and healthy place. It was a place where lots of people stayed here to get away from the alcohol." - The Katherine Interagency Tackling and Coordination Group (ITTC) identified Binjari as a community in crisis and developed a Problem Solving Plan (PSP) in October which was implemented in December.

Police are the leading agency in the ITTC which also includes representatives from Kalumburu, Katherine, the Northern Territory Department of Families and Children (NTFC), Mission Australia, the Indigenous Coordinating Committee (ICCC) and Departments of Health, Education and Justice.

The PSP was developed in response to the increase in violent crime, child abuse and anti-social behaviour in the community.

Katherine Police Commander Jeanette Kerr said the ITTC was working on several areas: law and order; child protection; coordination and leadership; alcohol management; transport and road safety; youth, health and wellbeing and community safety.

Progress from the PSP is ongoing but some outcomes include Neighbourhood Watch conducting a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audit of the community.

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Tapp turns heads with his rides

LOCAL man Cody Tapp's outstanding rodeo riding triumphs have given him a serious shot at winning a title in this year's NT Sports Awards.

Cody, 25, was nominated by girlfriend Adele Mudge in the Quanta NT Sportsman of the Year and the Local Performance of the Year categories for open bull riding/rodeo.

He is currently overseas following the American Professional Bull Riding (APBR) circuit and won't make the presentation night in Darwin next Friday, but Adele said his father may attend.

She said Cody's pretty happy with the recognition, being a previous run-up in awards acknowledging his talents.

Cody made history last year with back-to-back open bull ride wins at the Cloncurry Merry Muster and Xstrata Mt Isa Rodeo.

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Art exhibition all in the family

Police intelligence analysts have identified a number of potential offenders and have targeted people in the area for surveillance.

Community members have expressed concern about the recent rise in crime and have asked for increased police presence.

Last month, a local news outlet reported that the community was on high alert due to an increase in break-ins and thefts.

Police have urged residents to be vigilant and to report any suspicious activity immediately.

Man caught across the WA border

KATHERINE detectives have been investigating a series of burglaries in the town over the past week.

The latest incident occurred last night when a group of people entered a local business and stole a significant amount of cash and goods.

Detectives believe the same group is responsible for several other incidents in the area.

Anyone with information about the burglaries or the suspects is urged to contact the police immediately.

Guess who?

This week's mystery person is a local artist known for their unique style and vibrant colors.

They have been spotted throughout the town, painting on various surfaces and engaging with the community.

Who do you think the mystery artist might be?

Have we missed something?

If you have any information or would like to share your thoughts on this story, please feel free to contact us.

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