

I have spent my entire life growing up around the North Western areas of Queensland, thus I have witnessed the harsh realities of the land. Growing up on the land, and even just working or living on it for a short amount of time you learn to live with these harsh truths that people would never normally be expected to live with. You grow up understanding from a very young age that nothing in life is permanent – you learn almost as soon as you open your eyes that anything that is able to take a breath in will eventually have its last breath. The children of this area don't get to relish the blissful ignorance that most would. They see nature destroying everything in its past for an unknown and often non-existent good. They learn that if one thing goes wrong that day and mum or dad might just not ever come home after that. They learn that the friends that they were laughing with a few days ago may be put into the ground the next day. When you grow up on the land you get the blessing and curse of seeing through the veil that is ignorance. While they get to understand to relish life and those around them much earlier than others how fair is it for children to grow up with these realities? But with all this in mind why would anyone choose to stay in such a place? Is it that they simply cannot leave? Is it that in their awareness they have become blind to other opportunities? No. While this land is a powerful beast that obliterates all those who are too weak to withstand it, it still brings with it countless blessings and beauties. One day you will see fires devouring the land and have to smell the burning carcasses of animals you loved more than friends and the next you will see an animal no one ever expected to live push through and reflect the shining light of life in its eyes. One day you will see floods break through every crack in the ground and everything you built up break down, and the next day you will see the peace that a full river brings. To live on this land is to ride its waves and live for the little golden hours it gives you.

This piece was inspired by this circle of never-ending building and breaking. This piece is the final photo from a collection which displayed the progression of this area through the tough times and drought into the weary times of great rains and finally into the long awaited refreshed land. The land spends the least amount of time in its cycle, but undeniably this is the most spectacular part of its cycle. This is also where the name of the photo was inspired by. Golden hour is mostly known as a hour of sunlight after the darkness which comes into the short period of time that the land is truly beautiful. However 'golden hour' is also known as the time after a traumatic injury where treatment is most effective and most likely to be successful. This is where the meaning of this picture lies the most. For me, someone who has seen many of the worst curses that this land brings with it as well as the blessings that it brings I have learnt that in life there will be many tough times and mountains to climb, but just as this land has taught me – it will always pass. Just as the land cycles through its devastating stages there will always be a golden hour somewhere and we will always be able to heal.