

ALI CURUNG - THE BARKLY

COMMUNITY WORKFORCE PLAN – EVIDENCE BASE AND WORKFORCE PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES



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Executive Summary

Key Findings

The 2021 Census recorded 394 people living in Ali Curung, of whom 347 (88%) were Aboriginal. The community has a school, health clinic, childcare and aged-care services, employment services, police, night patrol, community organisations, and arts and cultural facilities, as well as links to economic activity across the Barkly region.

Of the 259 residents aged 15 years and over recorded in the 2021 Census, 221 were Aboriginal. Aboriginal labour force participation was 39%, compared with 88% among non-Aboriginal residents.

Education and training data identified ongoing challenges. According to 2021 Census data, Aboriginal school enrolment was 91% among children aged 5 –14 years, falling to 14% among people aged 15 –24 years, with no enrolments recorded among those aged 25 years and over. Alekarenge School had an attendance rate of 37% and 3% of students attended school at least 90% of the time.

Qualification attainment was low. Twenty-three Aboriginal residents aged 15 years and over were recorded as holding a non-school qualification, and no Aboriginal residents were recorded as holding diploma-level, university or postgraduate qualifications. Funded VET delivery data recorded 149 enrolments and 11 program completions between 2023 and 2025. Apprenticeship and traineeship activity was limited, with five commencements and two completions recorded over the same period.

Employment was concentrated in a small number of industries. Aboriginal employment was strongest in public administration and safety, education and training, retail trade, and arts and recreation services. The report found no Aboriginal employment recorded in agriculture, forestry and fishing, despite the industry's contribution to the local economy. Limited Aboriginal participation was also identified in industries associated with regional growth, including mining, construction, transport and energy.

Consultation undertaken by SpeakWrite Consulting between February and July 2025 identified a disconnect between available employment opportunities and workforce participation. The consultation reported 21 vacancies and 44 filled jobs alongside 171 working-age residents who were unemployed or disengaged from the workforce. Stakeholders identified barriers including intergenerational unemployment, youth disengagement, literacy and numeracy challenges, transport and licensing issues, difficulties obtaining identification and employment clearances, limited confidence and work readiness, and concerns regarding cultural safety in some workplaces.

Consultation findings and regional analysis identified opportunities associated with the proposed Purple House renal unit, the Singleton Horticulture Project, Barkly Regional Deal initiatives, the 2028 solar eclipse and the broader Barkly project pipeline, including mining, energy, natural gas, agribusiness and infrastructure projects.

The report identified approximately \$9.4 million in Ali Curung-specific investment and noted that multi-community programs potentially benefiting Ali Curung had a combined value of approximately \$104.7 million, although the amount attributable to the community could not be determined.

Community Strengths

The analysis identified the following existing strengths, assets and opportunities:

- Community leadership and governance structures, including the Ali Curung Local Authority.
- Existing Aboriginal employment in public administration, education, retail and arts-related activities.



- Local service organisations providing education, health, childcare, aged care, employment and community services.
- Existing training activity delivered through Charles Darwin University, Batchelor Institute and other registered training organisations.
- Existing horticulture and work experience initiatives.
- Arts and cultural assets, including Arlpwe Art and Culture Centre.
- Alignment with the Barkly Regional Deal, Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030, Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030 and Barkly Regional Council Regional Plan.
- Emerging employment opportunities identified through regional investments, industry projects and community priorities.

Community consultation identified aspirations for local jobs, youth development, local involvement in workforce decisions, culturally appropriate workplaces, employment pathways in local services and stronger participation in future economic development opportunities.

Priority Actions

The report identifies seven workforce development priorities:

1. [Establish workforce governance and coordination arrangements](#) through an Ali Curung Workforce Working Group to support community-led planning, coordination and accountability.
2. [Increase workforce participation and employment retention](#) through work-readiness support, mentoring, administrative assistance, cultural safety initiatives and post-placement support.
3. [Expand local employment and enterprise opportunities](#) in health, education, childcare, aged care, community services, arts, tourism and community-controlled enterprises.
4. [Strengthen pathways into agriculture, horticulture, pastoral and land-based industries](#) by building on existing work experience and horticulture initiatives and connecting residents to future industry opportunities.
5. [Embed foundational skills, literacy, numeracy and digital capability development](#) within practical employment and training pathways.
6. [Strengthen youth engagement and school-to-work transitions](#) through mentoring, VET pathways, workplace exposure and supported employment opportunities.
7. [Improve access to regional industry pathways](#) by developing partnerships with regional employers and aligning workforce preparation with future labour demand.

Implementation Requirements

The report identifies the establishment of coordinated workforce governance as the first implementation action. Recommended first steps include confirming a lead organisation, establishing an Ali Curung Workforce Working Group, agreeing implementation responsibilities, mapping current workforce activities, and developing a shared implementation schedule and training calendar.

Following establishment of governance arrangements, the report identifies three immediate implementation priorities:

- Increase workforce participation, readiness and employment retention.
- Broaden local employment, service-sector and enterprise opportunities.

- Strengthen pathways into agriculture, horticulture, pastoral and land-based work.

The report also recommends progressing foundational skills development, youth school-to-work transition activities and regional industry pathways alongside these priority actions. Implementation is intended to involve collaboration between community organisations, employers, training providers, government agencies and workforce programs. A detailed Ali Curung Workforce Action and Implementation Plan, including actions, suggested lead organisations, partners, indicative timeframes, measures and risks, is provided in Appendix 6.

Introduction

Purpose of the Report

Commissioned by the Northern Territory Department of Trade, Business, and Asian Relations (DTBAR), this report is one of three that seek to support workforce development in the Barkly region.

Focusing on the Ali Curung community, this report identifies opportunities to support community-led Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathway projects and VET-related initiatives that contribute to achieving employment outcomes utilising existing training infrastructure and resources.

Through desktop research and analysis, sourcing public data and existing relevant information such as surveys, consultations, plans, the *Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030*, and the *Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030*, it provides an analysis of the current demographic and economic landscape, and supports the development of an Ali Curung Workforce Plan. The consolidated data contained in this report will enable both community stakeholders and government agencies to pursue the following objectives:

- Enhance community awareness and understanding of the current and future industry, business, and workforce opportunities within both the community and the broader regional cluster.
- Accelerate progress of already identified key initiatives through the *Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030* aimed at creating employment opportunities and pathways through targeted training and industry development.
- Strengthen coordination and alignment across existing initiatives to achieve improved training and employment outcomes.
- Facilitate increased engagement in apprenticeships, traineeships, and school-to-work pathways, particularly focusing on youth.
- Optimise the use of existing training facilities and identify future training needs.
- Identify soft and foundational skills requirements, as well as literacy and numeracy, and pre-employment training gaps and needs.

This report acknowledges the substantial work of the Barkly Backbone Team in progressing the Barkly Regional Deal's 28 initiatives, the *Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030*, and the *Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030*, and is intended to align the Ali Curung Workforce Plan with these established priorities and community-led directions.

Report Format

The structure of this report follows the framework developed by Informed Solutions (Informed Solutions (NT) Pty Ltd, 2014), mapping the key steps identified in the planning method flowchart outlined below.

Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA) undertook Steps 1 and 2 of the framework. This report is primarily the desktop evidence component of the workforce planning process. It establishes an evidence base by examining the community context and workforce landscape, including community demographics, existing infrastructure and services, education and training opportunities and outcomes, key industries and employers, workforce demand and relevant economic indicators.

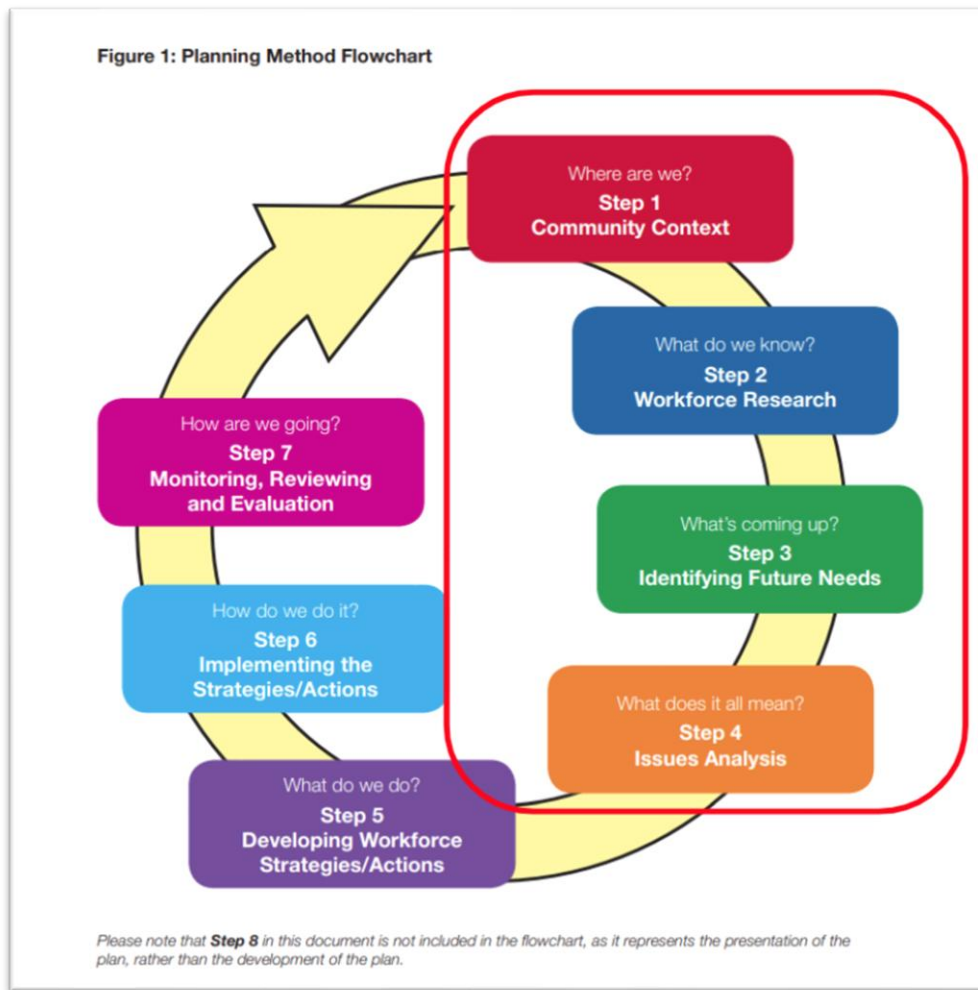


Figure 1: Planning Method Flowchart

Source: Informed Solutions (NT) Pty Ltd, 2014

SpeakWrite Consulting was engaged separately before DKA commenced this work and undertook community consultation in Ali Curung relevant to Steps 3 and 4 of the framework. DKA was not involved in conducting or overseeing that consultation. The available findings from SpeakWrite Consulting's consultations have been incorporated into this report as a source of community and stakeholder information. The consultation explored community needs and aspirations, key issues, barriers, opportunities and limitations, as well as the leadership and coordination required to progress recommendations arising from community input.

The evidence developed by DKA through Steps 1 and 2 has been considered alongside the available consultation findings from Steps 3 and 4. This brings together the demographic, economic and workforce evidence with the community needs, aspirations, issues, barriers and opportunities identified through the earlier consultation.

Drawing on this combined evidence, the report identifies broad workforce development opportunities and refines them into a smaller number of proposed actions that can form the basis for stakeholder leadership, community endorsement and measurable implementation. The proposed actions, responsibilities, timeframes and measures are indicative and require validation and agreement by the community and relevant stakeholders before implementation.

Future engagement is essential to validate the identified community issues and barriers, prioritise community aspirations and confirm the proposed actions.

Steps 5 and 6 involve validating and prioritising the proposed actions with the community and confirming the implementation strategies, responsibilities and accountabilities required for stakeholders to collaborate effectively in delivering the community workforce plan. This stage requires the establishment of a coordinated governance approach to workforce planning and implementation, led by a Stakeholder Working Group to guide decision-making and oversee delivery. This should be supported by a dedicated Regional Coordinator responsible for driving implementation, ensuring actions are delivered on time, and maintaining accountability.

Step 7 establishes the mechanism and timeframe to review the data and issues identified in Steps 1 to 4, and to monitor the strategies and actions from Step 5. This process ensures that the Workforce Plan remains responsive to changing conditions, allowing for necessary adaptations. It involves both quantitative and qualitative analysis such as workforce participation data, stakeholder feedback, evaluations and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) measures, and should be guided by the nature of the strategies developed. Existing targets, including the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* and Northern Territory Government (NTG) employment goals, should be incorporated and reviewed in collaboration with governance groups, Local Decision Makers (LDMs), and other key stakeholders. This process should be ongoing, with plans to be reviewed annually or biannually, as scheduled by the relevant governance group.

While this report proposes actions based on the combined evidence from Steps 1 to 4, further work is required to complete Steps 5 to 7, including community validation, confirmation of the implementation plan and governance arrangements, monitoring and review.

Data Collection Framework

This report utilises the framework as a guide, focusing on collating data for Steps 1 to 2.

The data has been organised into the following categories:

1. Community Demographics and Skills

- a. Population statistics and trends - Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
- b. Workforce participation rates
- c. Educational attainment levels
- d. Existing skill sets and qualifications
- e. Training program completion rates
- f. Skills gaps analysis

2. Organisational Mapping

- a. Employers and service providers
- b. Employment capacity
- c. Service delivery frameworks
- d. Organisational growth potential

3. Economic Analysis

- a. Gross Regional Product data
- b. Employment statistics
- c. Major industry presence

- d. Economic drivers and barriers
- e. Market opportunities
- 4. **Infrastructure and Development**
 - a. Planned infrastructure projects
 - b. Funded Project timelines and phases
 - c. Required workforce capabilities
 - d. Employment pathways
 - e. Skills development requirements

Data Collection and Review

Data has been collected from the following avenues:

1. Publicly available data (e.g. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) demographics, Department of Social Services (DSS) data, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), BushTel).
2. Requests for not publicly available data (e.g. Community Development Program (CDP) and Remote Australia Employment Service (RAES) stats from National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), VET data from Department of Education, Gross Regional Product (GRP) data from Informed Decisions Consulting).
3. Review of internal NTG documents and workshop outputs (e.g. Rebuilding the Tennant Creek and Barkly Region Economy Strategic Initiatives Workshop, Barkly Training Needs workshop).
4. Review of Barkly Regional Deal documents (e.g. Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030, Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030, Barkly Regional Deal, Action mapping).
5. Review of available secondary records and findings from stakeholder consultations involving community members, employers, training organisations, and relevant government departments.

Methodological Limitations

To ensure appropriate interpretation of findings, several methodological and data limitations are acknowledged:

1. Data Currency and Geographic Limitations

Census data provides an important baseline; however, it may not fully reflect local conditions. In remote contexts, data accuracy can be affected by undercounting, incomplete responses, and misclassification, including where individuals do not disclose information or are recorded in incorrect categories. Additionally, 2021 Census data does not fully reflect current demographic and employment conditions in 2026.

2. Data Perturbation

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) applies data perturbation to census data to protect individual privacy, particularly in small communities. This involves small random adjustments, which can cause totals from disaggregated data to differ slightly from published totals. While these adjustments do not significantly impact broader analyses, minor inconsistencies may arise in smaller datasets. These discrepancies are a deliberate feature of the data and have been considered in this report.

3. Consultation Limitations

Community consultation in Ali Curung was undertaken separately by SpeakWrite Consulting before DKA commenced its work. DKA was not involved in conducting or overseeing the consultation and has relied on the consultation findings made available for inclusion in this report.

As this report primarily presents the desktop evidence component of the workforce planning process, DKA has not independently verified the consultation findings or undertaken further community engagement to confirm the issues, aspirations and priorities identified. The proposed workforce opportunities and actions draw on both the desktop research and the available consultation findings but require validation by the Ali Curung community and relevant stakeholders before implementation.

4. Data Gaps

Several important data points are unavailable, including:

- Qualification levels of current job holders
- Industry-specific employment data that aligns with VET training categories
- Positions held within industry categories, including the types of positions filled by Aboriginal workers in industries employing the highest numbers of Aboriginal people in the region.
- Where data refers to jobs filled by Aboriginal people, it would be valuable to distinguish between local Kaytetye residents and Aboriginal employees from outside the region. This distinction is important for developing targeted workforce strategies that build capacity within the local community.

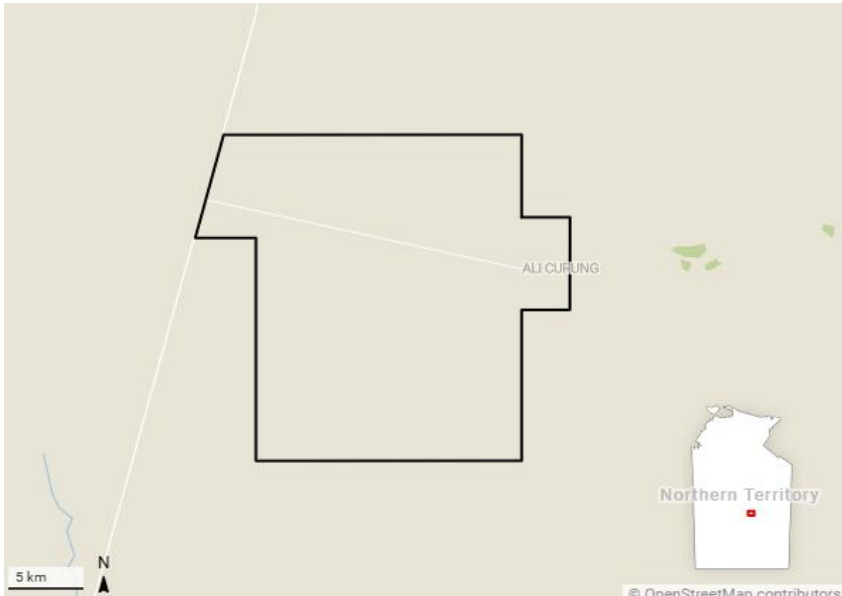
These gaps constrain the ability to precisely match training needs with employment opportunities in the community.

5. Implementation Planning Limitations

While the report identifies strategic opportunities for workforce planning, it does not include detailed implementation planning elements such as cost estimates, prioritisation frameworks, or assessment of past workforce initiative effectiveness in the community. As such, it is important to view this report as a foundation for further community engagement and validation of the findings, and for collaboratively confirming implementation strategies that are responsive to local priorities and capabilities.

Step 1: Community Context

Ali Curung Community Profile and Demographics

Languages spoken in the community/region	The primary language spoken in Ali Curung is English. The main Aboriginal languages spoken are Warlpiri, Alyawarr, Kaytetye and Warumungu. Other languages spoken in the Barkly region include Kriol, Warlmanpa, Jingili, Garawa, Mudburra, Anmatyerre, Wambaya, Arrente, Pitjantjatjara, and Luritja.																																																																																								
Traditional Owners	The Traditional Owners of Ali Curung are the Kaytetye people.																																																																																								
Population	Table 1: Population of Ali Curung <table><tr><th rowspan="2">Age</th><th colspan="2">Aboriginal</th><th colspan="2">Non-Aboriginal</th><th colspan="2">Aboriginal status not stated</th><th colspan="2">Total Population by Sex</th><th rowspan="2">Total Population by Age Bracket</th></tr><tr><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th></tr><tr><td>0-14</td><td>64</td><td>58</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>67</td><td>63</td><td>131*</td></tr><tr><td>15-24</td><td>42</td><td>26</td><td>5</td><td>8</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>46</td><td>32</td><td>77*</td></tr><tr><td>25-44</td><td>48</td><td>52</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>0</td><td>53</td><td>59</td><td>116*</td></tr><tr><td>45-64</td><td>16</td><td>23</td><td>8</td><td>6</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>19</td><td>31</td><td>50*</td></tr><tr><td>65+</td><td>3</td><td>11</td><td>3</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>9</td><td>12</td><td>14*</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>171*</td><td>176*</td><td>22*</td><td>18*</td><td>5*</td><td>0*</td><td>190*</td><td>197*</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Total Population</td><td colspan="2">347* (88%)</td><td colspan="2">44* (11%)</td><td colspan="2">5* (1%)</td><td></td><td></td><td>394*</td></tr></table> Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung, Table I01. Note: Due to confidentiality-related data perturbation applied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, published totals may differ from the sum of individual figures. All figures and totals are drawn directly from the 2021 Census and have not been adjusted to reconcile these differences. Percentages are calculated using the Census published total population of 394 and may not sum to 100% due to rounding and data perturbation.	Age	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal status not stated		Total Population by Sex		Total Population by Age Bracket	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	0-14	64	58	3	5	0	0	67	63	131*	15-24	42	26	5	8	0	0	46	32	77*	25-44	48	52	3	3	5	0	53	59	116*	45-64	16	23	8	6	0	0	19	31	50*	65+	3	11	3	0	0	0	9	12	14*	Total	171*	176*	22*	18*	5*	0*	190*	197*		Total Population	347* (88%)		44* (11%)		5* (1%)				394*
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Location	 Figure 2: Map of Ali Curung Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)																																																																																								

Ali Curung is located 173 km south of Tennant Creek, and 378 km north of Alice Springs on the Stuart Highway (A87).

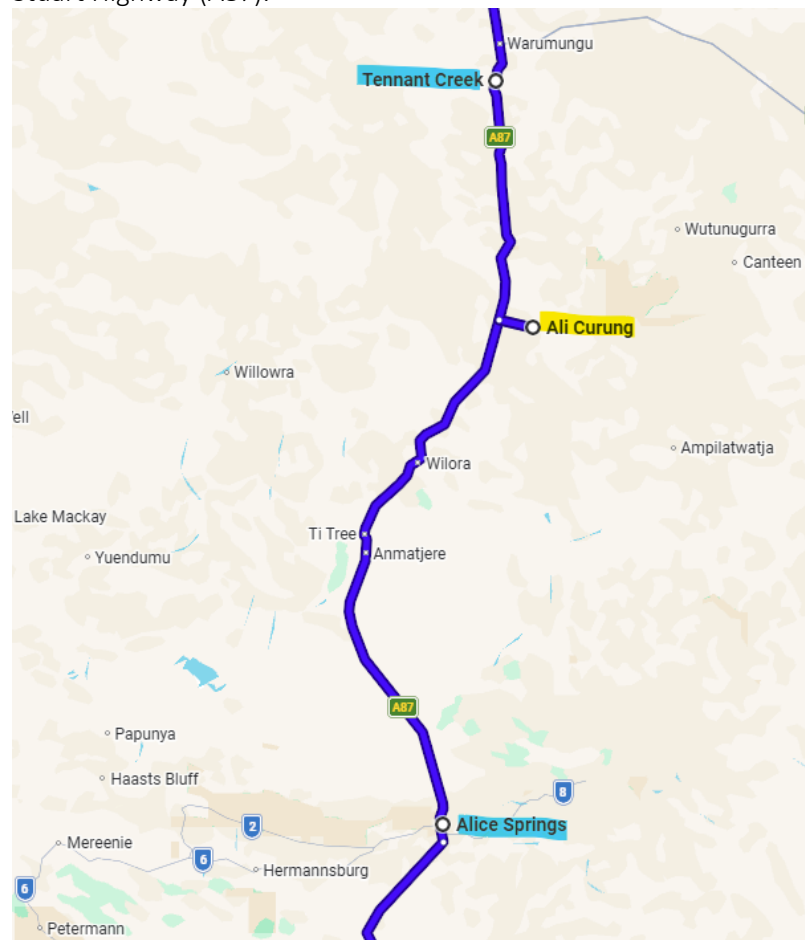


Figure 3: Location of Ali Curung relative to Alice Springs and Tennant Creek

Source: Google (n.d.).

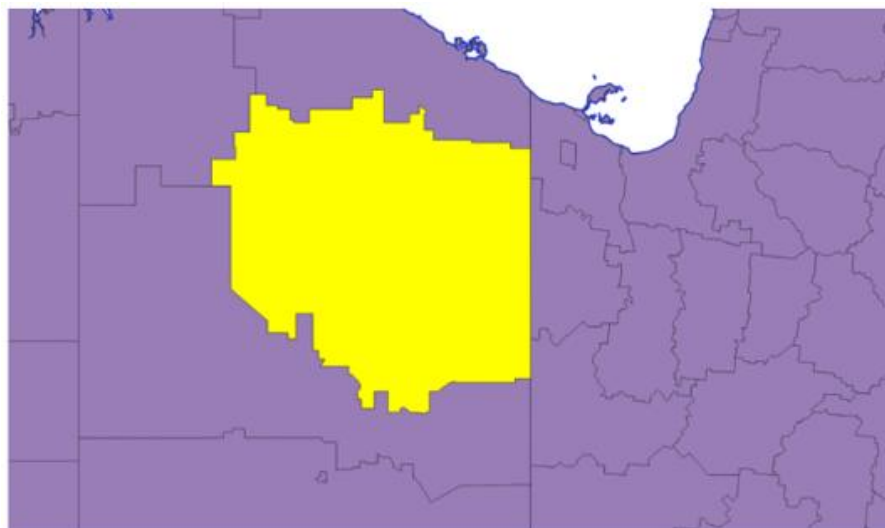


Figure 4: Map of Barkly LGA

Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

Access	The road from Tennant Creek to Ali Curung is approximately 173km. It is sealed and is roughly a 2-hour drive.
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Infrastructure, Services and Events

Internet Access	Ali Curung was included in the Northern Territory Government–Telstra Remote Telecommunications Co-investment Program (2015–18), which supported the provision of fixed broadband ADSL services in remote communities¹. The community has mobile phone coverage extending approximately 10 kilometres around Ali Curung and access to landline, mobile and satellite telecommunications services². WiFi is available in the vicinity of the Rec Hall from 12.30 pm-9.30 pm Monday - Friday.
Freight Services	Stanes Transport has a fortnightly schedule that operates through Ali Curung on Mondays. Centre Bush Bus travels to Ali Curung on Wednesday and Saturday from Alice Springs, and Thursday and Sunday from Ali Curung to Alice Springs. Greyhound freight offers regular connections from Darwin to Adelaide. The bus travels past Ali Curung every day of the week.
Health Services	• Ali Curung Clinic (NT Health)
Children's and Youth Services	Children's Services • Alekarenge Family Centre is operated by Catholic Care NT and provides education and care service for non-school aged children from the community. Youth • Ali Curung Youth Centre (Barkly Regional Council)
Education and Training	Education • Alekarenge School
Local Businesses	• Mirnirri Store • Andrew Tsavaris trading as Warrabri Bakery • Arlpwe Art and Culture Centre • Lhurna Therrk Training Farm

¹ Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory. (n.d.)

² Northern Territory Emergency Service. (2026)

Regional Businesses and Projects	Mineral Resources • Tennant Mining (Nobles Nob, Juno, Mauretania, and Chariot) – 130 km northwest of Ali Curung • Avenir Ltd (Wonarah) – northeast of Ali Curung • Castile Resources (Rover 1) – 150 km northwest of Ali Curung • Verdant Minerals Pty Ltd (Ammaroo Phosphate) – 150 km southeast of Ali Curung • Northern Iron (Warrego) - 210 km northwest of Ali Curung Renewable Energy • SunCable (Australia-Asia Power Link) - near Elliott Renewable Hydrogen • Sanguine Impact Investment - Aqua Aerem (Desert Bloom Hydrogen) - Tennant Creek/ Darwin Horticulture • Centrefarm Aboriginal Horticulture Limited, and Aboriginal Land Economic Development Agency (ALEDA) (Work Experience Pilot Project) - Ali Curung • Desert Springs (PMG Agriculture) - Ali Curung • Singleton Horticulture – approximately 35 km southeast of Ali Curung (Project currently on hold pending further environmental assessments and legal challenges regarding the water licence) Cattle Stations (Barkly) • Murray Downs Station – 35 km east of Ali Curung • Neutral Junction Station – 100 km west/ southwest of Ali Curung • Elkendra Station – 180 km east of Ali Curung • Banka Banka Station – 274 km north of Ali Curung • Helen Springs Station – 320 km north of Ali Curung • Rockhampton Downs Station – 336 km northeast of Ali Curung • Brunette Downs Station – 440 km northeast of Ali Curung												
Community Services, Facilities and Amenities	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>☒ Aged care service</td><td>☒ Church services</td></tr> <tr> <td>☒ Childcare service</td><td>☒ School</td></tr> <tr> <td>☒ Employment services</td><td>☒ Night Patrol</td></tr> <tr> <td>☒ Safe house</td><td>☒ Morgue facilities</td></tr> <tr> <td>☒ Basketball court</td><td>☒ Police station</td></tr> <tr> <td>☒ Football oval</td><td></td></tr> </table>	☒ Aged care service	☒ Church services	☒ Childcare service	☒ School	☒ Employment services	☒ Night Patrol	☒ Safe house	☒ Morgue facilities	☒ Basketball court	☒ Police station	☒ Football oval	
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Aboriginal Organisations	• Arlpwe Aboriginal Corporation • Arlpwe Residents Aboriginal Corporation • Barkly Region Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Group (BRADAAG) Aboriginal Corporation (visiting outreach service) • Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation (visiting outreach service) • CAAFLU Aboriginal Corporation (visiting outreach service) • Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation (visiting outreach service)												

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)	CatholicCareNT
Other Community Service Organisations	RN Employment Services
Government Agencies	Local Government - Barkly Regional Council Northern Territory (NT) Government - NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services - NT Department of Education - NT Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development - NT Department of Children and Families - NT Department of Logistics and Infrastructure - NT Health Australian Federal Government - Centrelink (Services Australia) - National Indigenous Australians Agency - Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) Commonwealth Statutory Authority - Central Land Council
Visitor Accommodation	- Alekarenge Horticulture Pty Ltd (AHPL) - Training Centre offers self-contained dormitory style accommodation, located 1 km from the community. - Barkly Regional Council offers visitor accommodation in the community for \$220 per person per day - Devil's Marbles Hotel, Wauchope is approximately 57 km away from Ali Curung
Power/Water	Electricity at Ali Curung is supplied to all customers at the Northern Territory standard tariff and standard connection charges apply. Ali Curung is connected to the Tennant Creek electricity grid. Ali Curung has a plentiful groundwater source but with marginal quality water. The water supply is disinfected with sodium hypochlorite and monitored monthly for microbes. The water supply is supported by an advanced treatment plant that removes naturally occurring minerals from drinking water where they exceed Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. Ali Curung operates a septic tank effluent pumping (STEP) system that transfers wastewater from household and building septic tanks to sewer ponds for further treatment.

Community Events	Ali Curung events • Football season is from May-September with games most weekends. • NAIDOC Week Celebrations (held in July) • Artali Festival (held in August) is an annual event celebrating the traditional culture of the four language groups living in Ali Curung: Kaytetye, Alyawarr, Warumungu, Warlpiri. • Ali Curung Community Sports and Culture Festival (held in September) Barkly events • Tennant Creek Cup (held in May) • Barkly May Day Muster (held in May) • Barkly Races (held in June) • Tennant Creek Show (held in August) • Desert Harmony Festival (held in August) • Barkly Rodeo (Tennant Creek) (held in October) • Bridgestone World Solar Challenge (held every two years from Darwin to Adelaide and runs through Tennant Creek)
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Step 2: Workforce Research

This section presents workforce data for Ali Curung, examining both workforce supply and workforce demand. Workforce supply includes workforce demographics (employed, unemployed and not in the labour force), skills in the community, education characteristics, and labour force participation rates. Workforce demand considers the economic context, the jobs available in the community, and the skills required to take up the roles.

Focus Cohort

For the purposes of this report, the focus cohort includes unemployed people actively seeking work, participants in the Remote Australia Employment Service (RAES) (formerly the Community Development Program (CDP)), and people of working age who are not currently participating in the labour force but may have the potential to engage in employment with appropriate support. This includes RAES participants who are either unemployed and actively seeking work, or eligible to work but not actively looking for work. The cohort does not assume that all people who are not in the labour force are available for or seeking employment.

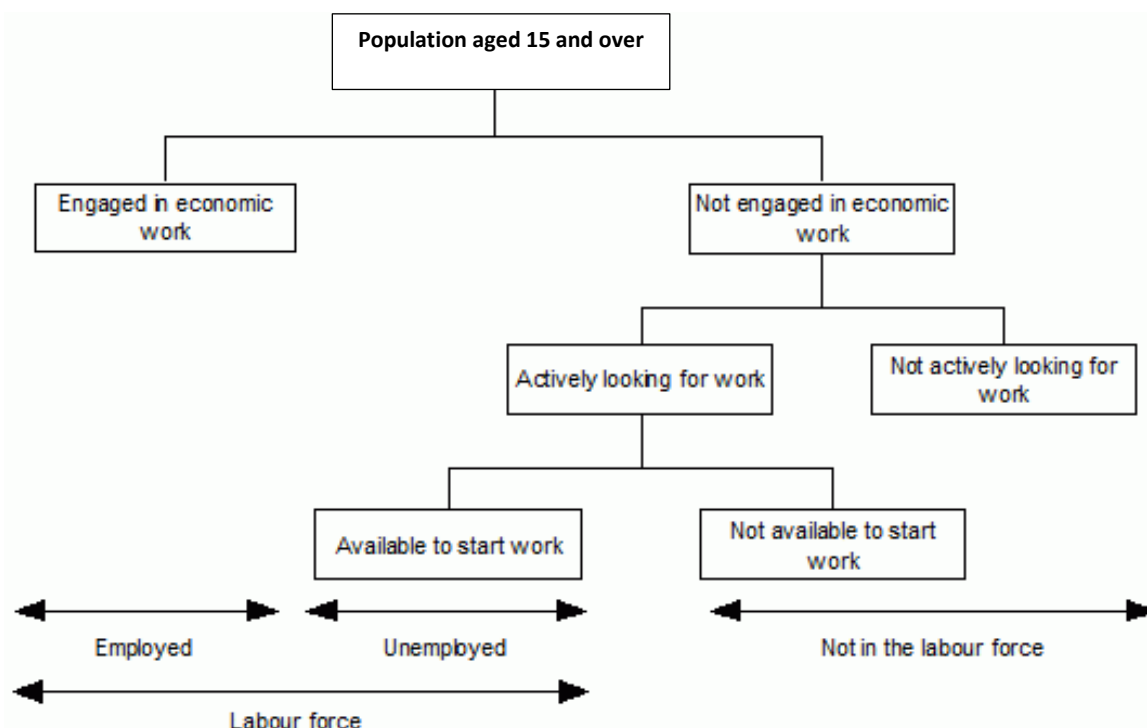


Figure 5: The Labour Force Framework

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022).

This includes individuals who are currently registered under the Remote Australia Employment Service (RAES) (formerly Community Development Program (CDP)) caseload and are either unemployed and actively looking for work, or eligible to work but not actively looking for work.

RAES is the Australian Government's remote employment service which commenced in November 2025, replacing the CDP. The service supports job seekers in remote Australia to build work ready skills, address employment barriers and contribute to their communities through a range of flexible activities.

Under the Remote Australia Employment Service (RAES), participants are expected to meet mutual obligation requirements to maintain eligibility for income support payments. These are activities that participants agree to undertake, such as engaging with their employment service provider, maintaining a job plan, searching for work where appropriate, and accepting suitable employment, to support their pathway into work³.

At the time of this report, mutual obligation requirements were suspended nationally until 31 August 2026 to support the transition from the CDP to RAES. Mutual obligations are scheduled to recommence from 1 September 2026.

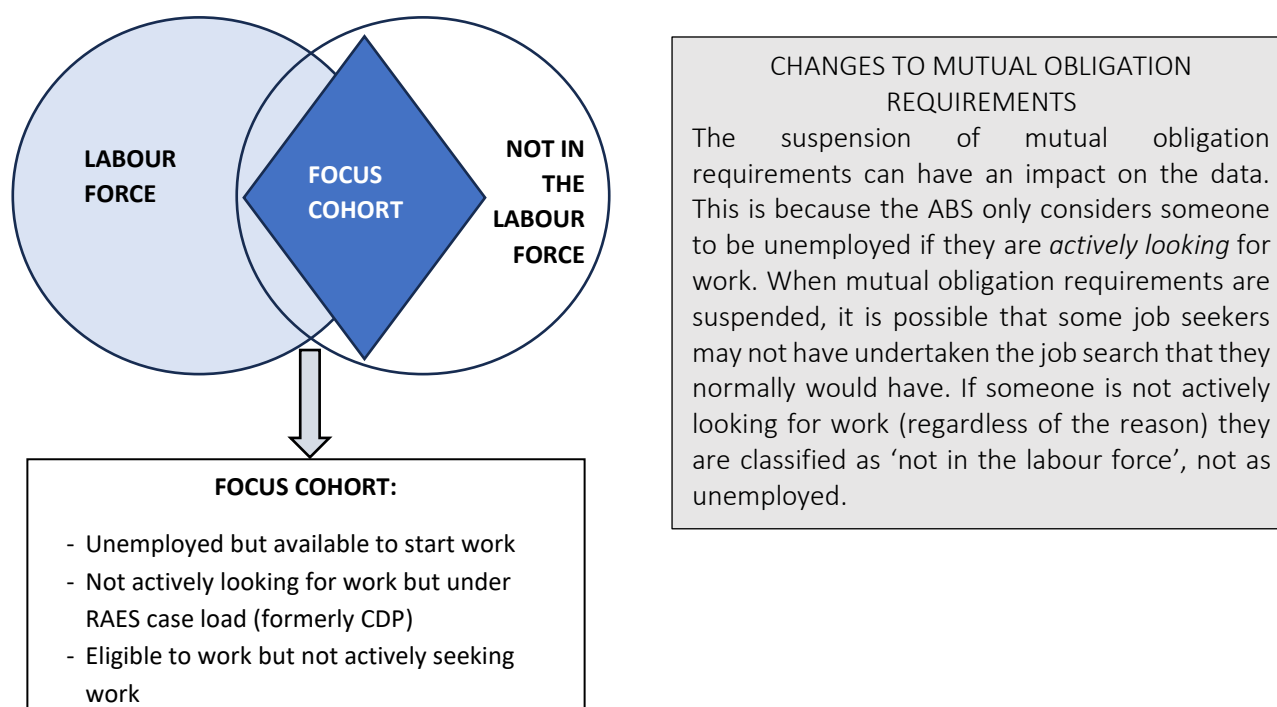


Figure 6: Focus Cohort

Source: Prepared by Author

Labour Force

The labour force comprises people aged 15 years and over who are either employed or unemployed. Unemployed persons are those who are not employed but are actively seeking and available to start work.

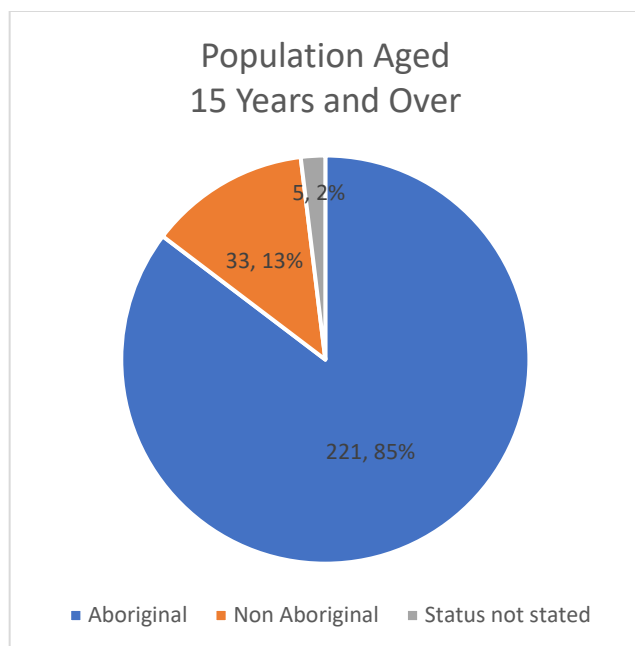
Not in the Labour Force

People who are not in the labour force are those who are 15 years and over that are neither employed nor unemployed. This includes people who are not working and are not actively seeking and available for work, such as those who are retired, studying, undertaking caring responsibilities, living with disability or illness, or voluntarily economically inactive. (ABS, 2022)

³ National Indigenous Australians Agency. (2023, November 15).

2.1 Workforce Demographics

Population Aged 15 Years and Over



This report explores the factors and conditions shaping workforce participation among Aboriginal residents aged 15 years and over of Ali Curung

In ABS labour force statistics, all persons aged 15 years and over are classified according to their labour force status. Individuals are categorised as employed, unemployed, or not in the labour force. These classifications apply to all persons aged 15 years and over, with no upper age limit (ABS, 2022)

Figure 7: Population Aged 15 Years and Over

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung. Table I19.

Of the 259 total residents aged 15 years and over in Ali Curung, 221 people (85%) are Aboriginal while 33 (13%) are non-Aboriginal.

Table 2: Aboriginal Labour Force Status (Employed and Unemployed Seeking Work) by Age and Gender

Age	Employed			Unemployed (Seeking Work)			Total in Labour Force*		
	Male	Female	Total*	Male	Female	Total*	Male	Female	Total*
15-24	0	4	6*	16	5	19*	17	8	23*
25-34	4	7	11*	7	0	8*	13	8	18*
35-44	8	6	18*	8	5	14*	13	16	28*
45-54	0	7	10*	0	0	0*	0	11	8*
55-64	7	0	3*	0	0	0*	7	0	8*
65+	0	0	0*	0	0	0*	0	0	0*
Total*	18*	30*	46*	30*	9*	48*	49*	37*	87*

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a), 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung, Table I21.

*Note: Due to confidentiality-related data perturbation applied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, published totals may differ from the sum of individual figures. All figures (individual and total) are drawn directly from the 2021 Census and have not been adjusted to reconcile these differences.

Table 3: Aboriginal Persons Not in the Labour Force by Age and Gender

Age	Not Seeking Work		Total Not in Labour Force*
	Male	Female	
15-24	20	20	42*
25-34	9	15	26*
35-44	6	7	14*
45-54	3	6	11*
55-64	4	8	13*
65+	3	11	14*
Total*	51*	75*	123*

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a), 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung, Table I21

**Note: Due to confidentiality-related data perturbation applied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, published totals may differ from the sum of individual figures. All figures are drawn directly from the 2021 Census and have not been adjusted to reconcile these differences.*

Of the 221 Aboriginal people aged 15 and over, 87 were reported as being in the labour force according to the 2021 census data.

Labour force participation among Aboriginal residents in Ali Curung is relatively low, with more people not participating in the labour force than participating. Among those who are active in the labour market, unemployment remains high, particularly among young people aged 15–24 years. This suggests that workforce challenges are driven by both limited employment opportunities and barriers to labour force participation. Participation was higher among some older working-age cohorts than among young adults; longitudinal data would be required to determine whether this reflects delayed workforce entry.

Labour Force Participation

Labour force participation is the percentage of people aged 15 years and over who are either employed or unemployed but actively seeking work within a given population.

The participation rates are 39% ($87/221 \times 100$) for the Aboriginal labour force and 88% ($29/33 \times 100$) for the non-Aboriginal labour force.

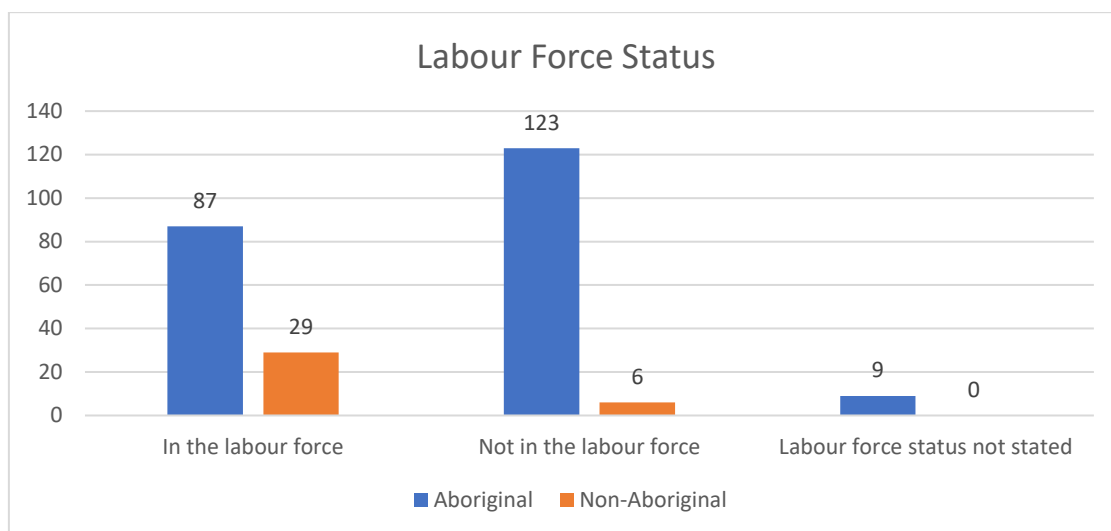


Figure 8: Labour Force Numbers

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung. Table 119.

Labour force participation figures are drawn from the 2021 Census and include respondents recorded as either 'in the labour force' or 'not in the labour force'. Participation rates are calculated as a percentage of the published 2021 Census total population aged 15 years and over.

Figure 9 below shows that 87 Aboriginal residents aged 15 years and over were participating in the labour force, while 123 were not participating. Among those participating in the labour force, 47% (43) were employed (full-time or part-time) and 53% (48) were unemployed and seeking work.

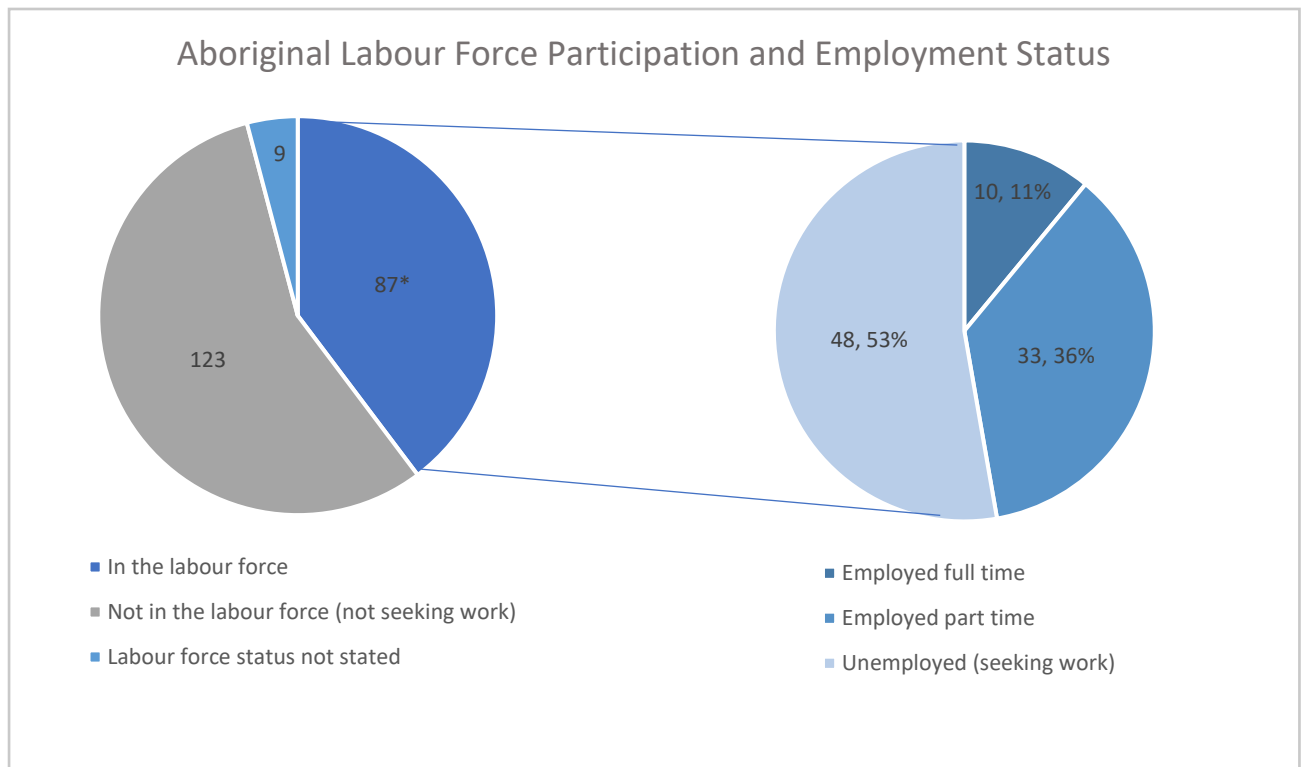


Figure 9: Aboriginal Labour Force Participation and Employment Status

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung. Table I19 and I21.

**Note: Due to confidentiality-related data perturbation applied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, published totals may differ from the sum of individual figures. All figures and totals are drawn directly from the 2021 Census and have not been adjusted to reconcile these differences. Percentages are calculated using the sum of the individual employment status categories (48 + 10 + 33 = 91), rather than the published total of 87.*



Figure 10: Aboriginal Employment Status

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung. Table I21.

Community Development Program (CDP) / Remote Australia Employment Services (RAES) Participants

CDP ended in October 2025, and RAES commenced on 1 November 2025.

Table 4 CDP and RAES Flow Caseload

Flow Caseload*							
Community Cluster	CDP						RAES
	2024-2025				2025-2026		
	Jul-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Jan-Mar 2025	Apr-Jun 2025	Jul-Sep 2025	1 - 31 Oct 2025	Nov-Jan 2026
Southeast Barkly Region, including Ali Curung ⁴	223	230	244	233	233	188	208
Barkly LGA ⁵	1,924	1,954	1,904	1,917	1,950	1,760	1,859

*Flow caseload – a unique count of participants during each quarter (i.e. those who entered and/or exited the program were counted once within the quarter)

Table 5 CDP Participants Placed in Employment[^]

Participants Placed in Employment**						
Community Cluster	2024-2025				2025-2026	
	Jul-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Jan-Mar 2025	Apr-Jun 2025	Jul-Sep 2025	1 - 31 Oct 2025
Southeast Barkly Region, including Ali Curung	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	0
Barkly LGA	67	79	64	57	44	<20

**This is a distinct count of participants placed into a job based on the community where they were residing at the time.

Table 6: CDP Participants Achieving Outcomes[^]

Participants Achieving Outcomes***						
Community Cluster	2024-2025				2025-2026	
	Jul-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Jan-Mar 2025	Apr-Jun 2025	Jul-Sep 2025	1 - 31 Oct 2025
Southeast Barkly Region, including Ali Curung	<20	<20	0	<20	<20	<20
Barkly LGA	28	23	35	28	74	<20

[^] Employment placement and employment outcomes data is not available yet for RAES.

***Data in this table includes participants achieving 13- and 26-week outcomes. As the number of participants achieving 13- and 26-week outcomes was too low to release individually, results were aggregated to report a combined total of <20.

To protect individual privacy, cells with a value between 1 and 19 are suppressed and reported as '<20'. Any other data that may enable derivation of these small counts is withheld and marked as 'n.p'.

Data Source for Tables 4, 5 and 6: National Indigenous Australians Agency (2026) Community Development Program (CDP) data request, prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia and Charles Darwin University on behalf of DTBAR, NTG, April 2026

⁴ Ali Curung data is captured within CDP Region 26 – Southeast Barkly (NT).

⁵ The 'Barkly LGA' includes the following communities: Ali Curung, Canteen Creek, Wutunugurra, Imangara, Mungkarta, Tara, Davenport, Kurntapurra, 10 Mile, Wakurlpu, Barrow Creek, Jemelke, Nguyarramini, Kurundi, Tennant Creek, Elliott, Elliott North Camp, Ngapla Ngapla, Wuppa, Kargaru, Village Camp, Tinkarli, Marlinja, Marla Marla, Elliott South Camp, Wogyala, Likkaparta, Munglawurru, Corella Creek, Hingstons Place, Newcastle Waters, Helen Springs, Kalumpurlpa, Munji-marla, Nicholson, Pakulki, Warumungu, Arlparra, Ampilatwatja, Alpurrurulam.

Mutual obligations were suspended for all participants from 1 October 2025 to 31 August 2026 while the system transitions. During the pause:

- There are no payment suspensions or penalties for non-compliance
- Activities (like appointments or training) are effectively voluntary

Mutual obligations are expected to resume on 1 September 2026.

The transition from the CDP to the RAES represents a shift in the design of remote employment services, from a compliance-driven model to one intended to prioritise engagement and progression toward employment. Under CDP, participation was largely structured around mandatory activities and mutual obligation requirements, with a strong emphasis on attendance and compliance. In contrast, RAES is designed around a case management approach, where participants are supported through more individualised pathways that consider personal circumstances, local labour market conditions, and readiness for work.

While mutual obligations remain a feature under RAES, they are intended to be applied with greater flexibility, supported by a stronger focus on addressing barriers and connecting participants to employment and training opportunities.

The effectiveness of this shift will depend on how it is implemented in practice, the capability and quality of service delivery by providers moving from a program manager / compliance officer role to a case manager / employment broker role, the availability of local employment opportunities, and whether engagement can be sustained without reverting to compliance-led participation.

The data reflects CDP Region 26 – Southeast Barkly Region (NT), which includes Ali Curung, and as such represents a broader regional service area.

CDP and RAES data indicate that a substantial number of CDP Region 26 residents engaged with employment services, with the flow caseload remaining above 220 participants across most reporting periods. Despite this level of engagement, employment placements and outcomes remained low, with <20 participants achieving either measure in most quarters and one period recording no employment placements.

While these figures indicate relatively low numbers of recorded placements and outcomes compared with the overall caseload, publicly available data are insufficient to calculate a reliable employment or retention rate.

JobSeeker Recipients

In Table 7 below the Barkly Statistical Area 2 (SA2) includes Elliott, Ali Curung and other surrounding communities within the region. Recipient counts for the Tennant Creek SA2 are not included in the Barkly SA2, as Tennant Creek and Barkly are classified as separate and mutually exclusive SA2 regions by the Department of Social Services.

Table 7: Total JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance (other) Recipients April 2025 - April 2026

SA2 Number: 702021055 SA2 Name: Barkly			
Year	Month	JobSeeker Payment	Youth Allowance (other)*
2025	April	560	125
	May	575	115
	June	595	170
	July	590	120
	August	570	115
	September	560	120
	October	570	120
	November	575	125
	December	590	125
	January	590	130
	February	585	125
	March	590	115
	April	585	115

Source: Australian Government Department of Social Services (2026).

*Other – refers to recipients other than students and apprentices

Table 8: JobSeeker and Youth Allowance Recipients in the Barkly

JobSeeker					
export reset					
Current month	April 2026		March 2020		
Region - LGA/SA2	JobSeeker and youth allowance recipients	% of 15-64 age population	JobSeeker and Youth allowance recipients	% of 15-64 age population	Change
Northern Territory	25,245	15.5	19,925	12.2	+5,320
Alice Springs	2,120	11.8	2,378	13.2	-258
Barkly	1,558	36.2	1,162	27.0	+396
Belyuen	24	22.6	18	17.0	+6
Central Desert	1,298	53.9	908	37.7	+390

Source: Australian Government Department of Social Services data, compiled and presented by .id (Profile.id, 2024).

JobSeeker and Youth Allowance recipients in the Barkly Local Government Area (LGA) increased from 1,162 (27% of population aged 15-64) in March 2020 to 1,558 (36.2%) in April 2026.

Individual Incomes

2021 Census data of Aboriginal residents weekly personal income shows that residents are concentrated in lower weekly income bands, with the highest numbers recorded between \$150 and \$499 per week. The largest single income bracket was \$300–\$399 per week, reported by 60 residents. Very few residents reported weekly personal incomes above \$650, and no residents were recorded in income brackets above \$1,000. This suggests relatively low personal income levels among residents, which may reflect limited access to higher-paid employment, part-time or casual work, income support reliance, or broader local labour market constraints.

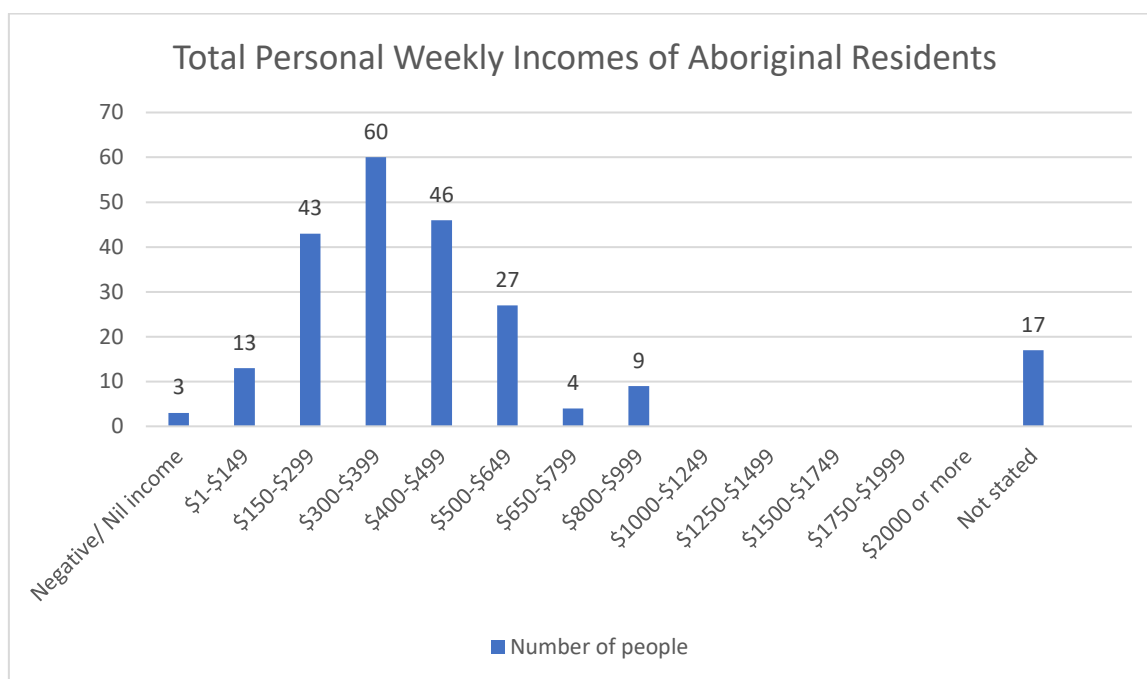


Figure 11: Total Personal Weekly Incomes of Residents in Ali Curung

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a), 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung. Table I08

2.2 Skills in the Community

This section analyses education and training levels across Ali Curung and the Barkly which directly impacts workforce capacity and employment opportunities.

Education

The data below in Table 8 indicates a substantial drop-off in educational participation following compulsory school-age years. While enrolment among children aged 5–14 years is very high at 91%, participation decreases sharply among young adults aged 15–24 years to 14% and is absent among those aged 25 years and over.

This may reflect limited access to post-school education and training pathways, early disengagement from education, or barriers to adult learning participation.

It is important to note that enrolment in an educational institute does not necessarily indicate meaningful engagement with learning.

Table 8: People Enrolled in an Education Institute in Ali Curung

Population	Age groups:	Total people in age bracket	Total no. enrolled in an educational institution	% of age group enrolled
Aboriginal	0-4 years	38	8	21%
	5-14 years	85	78	91%
	15-24 years	71	10	14%
	25 and over	157	0	0%

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a), 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung, Table I01.

Table 9: School Profile Data 2025

Metric	Alekarenge School
Year Range	T-11
Total Enrolment Numbers	79
Aboriginal Students	100%
Total males enrolled	39 (49%)
Total females enrolled	40 (51%)
Non-English Language Background	97%
Teaching staff	4
Non-Teaching staff	6
Student-to-Teacher Ratio	19.75:1
Student attendance rate (Semester 1, 2025)	37%
Students attending 90% or more of the time	3%
ICSEA Value (National Average)	637 (1000)
School ICSEA Percentile	0

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2025). © ACARA 2009 to present. Material downloaded from My School on 23 March 2026 and used under CC BY 4.0.

The **student-to-teacher ratio** is the number of students divided by the number of teachers. It is a measure of how many students there are for each teacher in a school or education system. In calculating the ratio only teaching staff were included.

ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage) is a scale of socio educational advantage that is calculated for each school. It is based on student background information, including parental occupation and education, together with school remoteness and the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments. ICSEA enables comparisons between a selected school and students with similar backgrounds, supporting fair and meaningful comparisons of NAPLAN literacy and numeracy results. It does not measure parents' wealth, school resources, teaching quality or the school's overall performance. ICSEA values are calculated on a scale with a median of 1,000 and a standard deviation of 100. (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2025).

Alekarenge School's ICSEA value of 637 is below the national median of 1,000, indicating that its student population has a comparatively low level of socio-educational advantage. ICSEA is a contextual measure and is not a rating of the school, its staff, teaching programs or student performance. It also does not establish the circumstances of individual students. As Alekarenge School has a small student population, its school level ICSEA value should be interpreted cautiously.

Literacy and Numeracy

National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) performance data indicates that scores at the community school are below the national average. National averages are provided in brackets alongside the NAPLAN scores in Table 10.

Table 10: NAPLAN Scores for 2025

Subject	Year Level	Alekarenge School
Reading	3	149 (402)
	5	256 (492)
	7	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
	9	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
Writing	3	133 (414)
	5	173 (480)
	7	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
	9	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
Spelling	3	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
	5	256 (487)
	7	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
	9	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
Grammar	3	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
	5	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
	7	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
	9	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
Numeracy	3	126 (405)
	5	220 (492)
	7	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
	9	<i>No Scores Provided</i>
Participation Rate		51% (95%)

NAPLAN data may be incomplete due to student absences, exemptions, small cohort sizes, or data suppression for privacy. *No scores provided* indicates unavailable data for that specific subject and year level. *N/A* indicates that the school does not cater to those year levels.

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2025). © ACARA 2009 to present. Material downloaded from My School on 23 March 2026 and used under CC BY 4.0.

The NAPLAN data indicates that Alekarenge School students recorded substantially lower results than the comparison scores across all assessed areas where data was available.

No scores were provided for Year 7 or Year 9, and Grammar results were not available for any year level. This limits the ability to assess learning outcomes across all NAPLAN domains and across older year levels.

The low participation rate of 51%, compared with 95%, should also be noted, as it limits the reliability and representativeness of the results.

Overall, the data indicates ongoing challenges in achieving literacy and numeracy outcomes aligned with broader benchmarks. These results should be interpreted within the broader context of remote schooling, where factors such as attendance, language background (97% come from a language background other than English), housing conditions, and access to learning resources can affect educational outcomes.

Given the school's small student cohort, the results should be interpreted cautiously.

Engagement in Tertiary Education

According to the 2021 Census, no Aboriginal residents in Ali Curung were recorded as attending a vocational education provider, university, or other higher education institutions in 2021.

Table 11: Tertiary Educational Institute Attendance

Educational Institution Type	Aboriginal
Vocational education (including TAFE and private training providers)	0
University or other higher education	0
Other types of educational institutions	0
Total	0
Type of educational institution not stated	14

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a), 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung, Table I06.

Qualifications

23 (10%) Aboriginal residents over the age of 15 in Ali Curung were recorded as having non-school qualifications at the 2021 Census.

Table 12: Highest Qualification (Non-School)

Non-School Qualification	Aboriginal
Postgraduate Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate	0
Bachelor's degree	0
Advanced Diploma or Diploma	0
Certificate III & IV	17
Certificate I & II	3
Certificate Level, nfd	3
Total	23
Level of education not stated	17

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a), 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung, Table I20c.

The data indicates that recorded non-school qualification attainment among Aboriginal residents aged 15 years and over is relatively low and concentrated at the certificate level. No Aboriginal residents are recorded as holding a Bachelor's degree, postgraduate qualification, Advanced Diploma or Diploma. The highest recorded qualification level is Certificate III and IV, held by 17 people, indicating that existing post-school qualifications are primarily vocational rather than higher education pathways.

The data points to a system where entry into education occurs (see Table 8), but retention, progression, and higher-level attainment remain challenges.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Table 13: Apprenticeship and Traineeship (A/T) Commencements and Completions of Qualifications in Ali Curung (2023-25)

Program Name	2023		2024		2025	
	Count of A/T	A/T Completion	Count of A/T	A/T Completion	Count of A/T	A/T Completion
Certificate II in Retail Services			1	0	3	0
Certificate III in Retail	0	1			1	1

Source: Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (2026), unpublished raw data provided to Charles Darwin University.

Table 14: Funded VET Program Delivery Enrolments and Completions in Ali Curung (2023-2025)

Program Name	2023		2024		2025	
	Program Enrolments	Program Completions	Program Enrolments	Program Completions	Program Enrolments	Program Completions
4WD Operations on Unsealed Roads			7	0		
Certificate I in Automotive Vocational Preparation			6	0	8	0
Certificate II in Retail Services	2	1	2	0	4	1
Certificate II in Sport and Recreation	5	1				
Certificate III in Civil Construction					1	0
Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations	4	2	3	0	17	1
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care					1	0
Certificate III in Individual Support	6	0	1	0	1	0
Certificate III in Retail					1	0
Certificate III in Sport and Recreation	14	3		1	0	
Certificate III in Sport, Aquatics and Recreation					7	0
Certificate IV in Retail Management	1	0	1	0	1	0
Certificate IV in Sport and Recreation	1	1				
Diploma of Leadership and	2	0	2	0		

Management						
Learner Support	2	0	1	0		
Licence to Operate a Forklift Truck	6	0				
NT White Card			16	0		
Unit Only	2	0	24	0		

Source: Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (2026), unpublished raw data provided to Charles Darwin University.

**Programs that had completions have been highlighted in yellow to make them easier to identify within the dataset.*

The data shows:

- There were 149 funded VET enrolments recorded in Ali Curung across 2023–2025, and 11 completions.
- The highest enrolment areas were generally practical or employment-related courses, including:
 - Unit Only training, with 24 enrolments in 2024
 - Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations, increasing to 17 enrolments in 2025
 - NT White Card, with 16 enrolments in 2024
 - Certificate III in Sport and Recreation, with 14 enrolments in 2023
 - Certificate I in Automotive Vocational Preparation, with enrolments in both 2024 and 2025
- Retail training appears consistently across the data, but at small scale. Certificate II in Retail Services had enrolments in all three years, while Certificate III and Certificate IV Retail-related programs recorded very small numbers.
- Apprenticeship and traineeship activity was limited, with 5 commencements and 2 completions recorded in retail-related qualifications across 2023-2025.

Overall, the funded VET activity in Ali Curung was relatively diverse. Training was mainly concentrated in entry-level, industry-specific and practical programs, rather than higher-level qualifications.

While the data indicates that residents are engaging in VET, the low completion numbers suggest ongoing barriers to sustained participation and/ or course completion.

Apprenticeship and traineeship activity was limited, indicating that employment-based training pathways remain underdeveloped.

Caution should be exercised when comparing the NT Department of Education and Training funded VET dataset with the Charles Darwin University enrolment dataset. The datasets are drawn from different administrative systems and were compiled for different reporting purposes. They may differ in scope, counting methodology, funding coverage, reporting periods and treatment of enrolments, units, qualifications and individual participants. As a result, apparent differences between the datasets do not necessarily indicate inconsistencies in reporting. The datasets should therefore be interpreted independently and should not be aggregated or used to calculate comparative completion rates or overall training outcomes across providers.

Table 15: Charles Darwin University VET Program Enrolments in Ali Curung (2023-2025)

	2023		2024		2025	
Total enrolments	29		26		22	
Program Name	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
4WD Operations on Unsealed Roads			6	2		
Certificate II in Sport and Recreation	4					
Certificate III in Civil Construction					1	
Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations	1	2			13	1
Certificate III in Sport and Recreation	11	2				
Certificate III in Sport, Aquatics and Recreation					5	2
Certificate IV in Sport and Recreation		1				
License to Operate a Forklift Truck	1	7				
NT White Card			17	1		

Source: Charles Darwin University (2026), unpublished raw data.

The data above reflects enrolments only and does not show participant completion outcomes.

The data shows a small decline in total enrolments between 2023 and 2025, from 29 to 22. Training activity shifted over this period from sport and recreation and forklift licensing in 2023, to White Card and 4WD training in 2024, and then more strongly toward civil construction plant operations in 2025. Aboriginal students made up the majority of enrolments across the period, particularly in 2024 and 2025, suggesting that practical, job-linked training continues to be an important pathway for local workforce development.

Appendix 1 presents remote training organisation (RTO) delivery in the remote Barkly region including Ali Curung during 2024, categorised by provider, qualification or program type, and funding source. The data relates to training activity in the remote Barkly only and does not include Barkly regional data from centres such as Tennant Creek.

The data shows how reported training activity was distributed across government, not-for-profit and private providers and identifies the funding sources supporting each type of delivery. The totals represent the sum of reported distinct student counts and should not be interpreted as the number of unique students, as a student may be counted in more than one qualification/ program type or funding-source category.

The data indicates:

- Training delivery across remote Barkly was heavily concentrated among a small number of providers. BIITE (152 student counts) and CDU (225 student counts) together accounted for 377 of the 538 total student counts in 2024, 70% of all reported training participation. This highlights the region's strong reliance on a small number of public and Aboriginal-focused training providers.
- Government-funded training overwhelmingly drives participation across remote Barkly, with General Recurrent funding (277 student counts) and User Choice (141 student counts) accounting for most activity. This indicates participation is largely occurring through publicly funded VET systems and apprenticeship / traineeship pathways. Notably, no participation was recorded under either the Territory Workforce Program or the Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grant in the remote Barkly, suggesting targeted Aboriginal skilling programs were either not active, had limited reach, or were not captured in the dataset during the reporting period.
- The training system is heavily dominated by lower level and foundational training activity, with Unit Only delivery (140 student counts), Certificate III (132), and Certificate II (114) representing the largest participation categories. The strong concentration in the above categories, and short-course delivery suggests the training system is operating at a foundational engagement level, focused on modular, compliance, ticketing, employability, LLN support, re-engagement, and early-stage workforce readiness rather than full qualification pathways. This indicates significant effort is being directed toward helping participants become 'training ready' before progressing into sustained employment or higher-level vocational outcomes, while also highlighting limited progression into advanced qualifications and long-term workforce pathways.
- Participation in higher level qualifications is low, with only 36 student counts enrolled in Certificate IV qualifications and 4 in Diploma-level training. This suggests a significant thinning of the training pipeline at advanced skill levels, potentially reflecting limited local access to higher-level training, barriers to progression such as limited LLND skills, or workforce demand concentrated in entry-level roles.
- Training delivery also appears fragmented across many small providers, with several RTOs servicing a handful of participants in the remote Barkly. This suggests some remote training activity may be opportunistic, contract-based, or linked to isolated short-term delivery, rather than forming part of a structured and connected training pathway. People can enter training but not necessarily progress through it.

Overall, the data suggests a training system that prioritises accessibility and short-term skill acquisition, but with limited integration into sustained qualification pathways or broader workforce development outcomes. These findings relate to training activity in the remote Barkly region only including Ali Curung and does not include Barkly regional data such as Tennant Creek. As a result, the findings should not be assumed to directly represent participation patterns in Ali Curung.

2.3 Employment

This section examines current employment patterns, key industries, and job vacancies.

Understanding where jobs currently exist and where demand is growing provides context for aligning training opportunities with employment pathways.

Key Employment Industries



Figure 12: Residents Employed by Industry and Aboriginal status in Ali Curung (Modelled from ABS Census 2021 and NIEIR 2024 data)

Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

Note: Industries with no recorded employed residents have been omitted from the chart to improve readability. The industries with no recorded employment were as follows:

- Mining
- Manufacturing
- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
- Construction
- Wholesale Trade
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- Information Media and Telecommunications
- Financial and Insurance Services
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- Other Services

The data shows a small employment base, with employment clustered in a handful of industries

The data indicates:

- Aboriginal employment is strongly concentrated in Public Administration and Safety, with 30 Aboriginal workers compared with 3 non-Aboriginal workers. This indicates a strong Aboriginal role in local government, community administration, safety, municipal services or related publicly funded functions.
- Retail Trade also employs both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers, with 7 Aboriginal and 5 non-Aboriginal

workers. This is notable because retail can provide entry-level employment pathways and may be one of the few private-sector employment areas represented in the data.

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing employment is entirely non-Aboriginal, with 11 workers and no Aboriginal employees recorded. This may indicate that local Aboriginal residents are not yet accessing employment opportunities in this sector, despite agriculture/pastoral activity being relevant to the broader regional economy.
- There is no recorded employment in many industries, including Mining, Manufacturing, Construction, Transport, Professional Services, Financial Services and Other Services. This indicates a narrow local economic base and limited industry diversity.

Table 16: Employed Residents by Industry in Ali Curung (Modelled from ABS Census 2021 and NIEIR 2024 data)

Industry	Aboriginal	%	Non-Aboriginal	%	Total
Public Administration and Safety	30	91%	3	9%	33
Education and Training	10	59%	7	31%	17
Retail Trade	7	58%	5	32%	12
Arts and Recreation Services	5	100%	0	0%	5
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	0	0%	11	100%	11
Administrative and Support Services	0	0%	5	100%	5
Health Care and Social Assistance	0	0%	5	100%	5
Mining	-		-		-
Manufacturing	-		-		-
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	-		-		-
Construction	-		-		-
Wholesale Trade	-		-		-
Accommodation and Food Services	0	0%	5	100%	5
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	-		-		-
Information Media and Telecommunications	-		-		-
Financial and Insurance Services	-		-		-
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	-		-		-
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-		-		-
Other Services ⁶	-		-		-
Totals	52	56%	41	44%	93

Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

⁶ Other Services as defined by the ABS (2006) includes a broad range of personal services; religious, civic, professional and other interest group services; selected repair and maintenance activities; and private households employing staff. Units in this division are mainly engaged in providing a range of personal care services, such as hair, beauty, diet and weight management services; providing death care services; promoting or administering religious events or activities; or promoting and defending the interests of their members. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006), ANZSIC 2006 (Revision 2.0): Detailed classification.

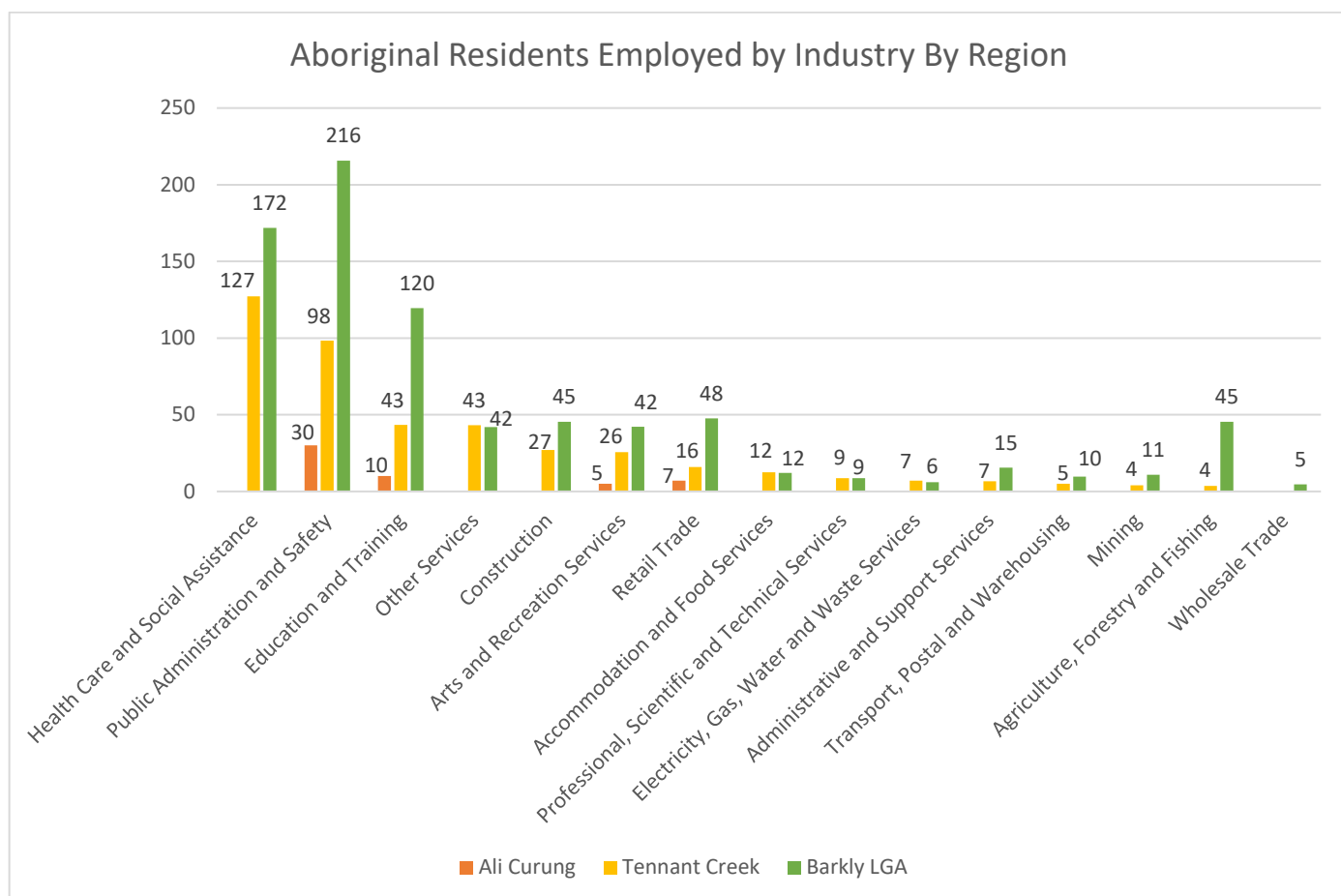


Figure 13: Aboriginal Residents Employed by Industry in Ali Curung, Tennant Creek and Barkly LGA (Modelled from ABS Census 2021 and NIEIR 2024 data)

Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

Note: Industries with no recorded Aboriginal employed residents have been omitted from the chart to improve readability. The industries with no recorded Aboriginal employment were as follows:

- Manufacturing
- Information Media and Telecommunications
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- Financial and Insurance Services

Table 17: Employed Residents by Industry by Region (Modelled from ABS Census 2021 and NIEIR 2024 data)

	Ali Curung			Tennant Creek			Barkly LGA		
	Total	Aboriginal	%	Total	Aboriginal	%	Total	Aboriginal	%
Public Administration and Safety	33	30	91%	344	98	28%	503	216	43%
Health Care and Social Assistance	5	0	0%	453	127	28%	503	172	34%
Education and Training	17	10	59%	153	43	28%	290	120	41%
Construction	-			172	27	16%	193	45	23%
Arts and Recreation Services	5	5	100%	49	26	53%	69	42	61%
Administrative and Support Services	5	0	0%	22	7	32%	43	15	35%
Retail Trade	12	7	58%	116	16	14%	179	48	27%
Accommodation and Food Services	5	0	0%	68	12	18%	101	12	12%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-			36	9	25%	36	9	25%
Other Services	-			75	43	57%	82	42	51%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	-			25	5	20%	30	10	33%
Manufacturing	-			-			3	0	0%
Mining	-			9	4	44%	49	11	22%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	11	0	0%	11	4	36%	417	45	11%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	-			22	7	32%	22	6	27%
Wholesale Trade	-			5	0	0%	12	5	42%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	-			5	0	0%	5	0	0%
Information Media and Telecommunications	-			1	0	0%	1	0	0%
Financial and Insurance Services	-			9	0	0%	9	0	0%
Totals	93	52	56%	1575	428	27%	2547	798	31%

Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

	Industry with the highest number of total employed residents in the region
	Industry with the highest number of Aboriginal employed residents in the region
	Industry with highest Aboriginal employee representation in the region

Data limitations: The employment data reflects filled jobs only and does not capture total labour demand or job vacancies within each industry.

The data shows that:

- Ali Curung has a higher Aboriginal share of employed residents than both Tennant Creek and the Barkly LGA overall, with Aboriginal residents representing 56% of employed residents, compared with 27% in Tennant Creek and 31% across Barkly LGA. However, Ali Curung's employment base is small, with only 93 employed residents, and is concentrated in a limited number of industries.
- Public Administration and Safety is the strongest local employer in Ali Curung, employing 33 residents, including 30 Aboriginal residents. Education and Training and Retail Trade also provide important Aboriginal employment pathways.
- Several industries with local or regional employment potential, including Health Care and Social Assistance, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Accommodation and Food Services, and Administrative and Support Services, record little or no Aboriginal employment in Ali Curung.

Workforce Demand

A vacancy scan undertaken between February and May 2026 identified a small number of employment opportunities. This should be regarded as a point in time vacancy snapshot rather than a measure of overall workforce demand, as vacancy numbers in small remote communities can fluctuate significantly over time.

Vacancies were identified through a review of online job platforms including SEEK, LinkedIn, Jora and Ethical Jobs, supplemented by searches of local employers and organisations operating within Ali Curung and the surrounding area (approximately 30 km radius). Search terms included 'Ali Curung', 'Alekenge' and the names of relevant local employers and organisations. A total of two vacancies were identified in February, four in April and one in May 2026.

Table 18: Employment Opportunities and VET Pathways

Role	No. of Roles	Key Requirements	VET Pathway	Employment Type	Organisation
Community Development					
Safe House Officers	Several	Cert IV AOD (or willing), an understanding of domestic and family violence (DFV) and mandatory reporting legislation, Criminal History Check (CHC), Ochre Card,	Community services	Casual (up to 38 hours)	Barkly Regional Council
Night Patrol Officers	Several	CHCCS021 Respond to suspected abuse, CHC, Ochre Card, DL	Community services	Casual (up to 25 hours)	Barkly Regional Council
Safe House Team Leader	1	Formal qualifications in Social Work, Psychology or Community Development, CHC, Ochre Card, Driving License (DL), an understanding of domestic and family violence (DFV) and mandatory reporting legislation	Community services	Full Time (FT)	Barkly Regional Council
Art Centre Manager	1	Financial and Operational Management/ Sales and Marketing, DL	Business and clerical	FT	Arlpwe Art and Culture Centre
Health					
Remote Area Nurses	Several	AHPRA RN, Bachelor Nursing, Criminal History Check (CHC), Ochre Card	N/A (university pathway)	FT	HealthcareLink
Education and Child Care					
T-Y12 Physical Education / Art Teacher	1	Teaching qualification, TRB NT registration CHC, Ochre Card	N/A (university pathway)	FT	Alekenge School
Civil Works					
Works Supervisor	1	Knowledge plant and equipment operations and maintenance, and infrastructure works. White Card, CHC, Ochre card, DL	Building and construction	FT	Barkly Regional Council

Source: Vacancy listings identified through SEEK, LinkedIn, Jora and Ethical Jobs, and local employer and organisation websites, accessed February–May 2026.

 Entry level role/ Trainable pathway (2)

Appendix 2 presents the qualifications required and relevant VET pathways associated with the above role vacancies identified in Ali Curung during the February-May 2026 vacancy scan. The appendix provides a point-in-time overview of the skills, qualifications and training pathways linked to occupations identified during the vacancy scan.

2.4 Economic Context

Economic factors significantly shape workforce participation. This section examines cost of living pressures, income levels, and investment opportunities that influence employment. Understanding this economic context provides key insights for developing strategies that address barriers while leveraging available resources.

Dataset disclaimer - Data Sources

1. Demographic data is sourced from ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021, and ABS Regional Population Growth.
2. Economic data is sourced from NIEIR, 2024; and .id modelling of NIEIR and ABS Census data.
3. N.B. Estimates of employment in small areas is highly challenging due to inabilities to access timely and accurate employment information in Australia. NIEIR make attempts to model annual employment estimates. These will differ from publicly available Census counts due to a number of reasons including:

- the Census is a snapshot at a point in time (August) and does not highlight if someone was employed throughout the year at another time.
- the Census contains an undercount of the population due to people being absent or not filling out the form on Census Day. See more at <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/2021-census-overcount-and-undercount/latest-release>;
- the Census estimate of 'employed' is based on people correctly filling in the form. This is not always the case as people often fill in their employment status, industry of employment, and/or place of work wrong.

These reasons lead to varying employment estimates. For example, the ABS Labour Force original estimate of employment in the Northern Territory in August 2021 is 131,000, however, the 2021 census estimate of employed residents is only 107,000.

Gross Regional Product (GRP)

The economic profile of Ali Curung provides important context for understanding local economic activity and workforce opportunities.

The region's economic output can be measured in two complementary ways:

- Total **Place of Work (POW) Gross Regional Product (GRP)**: \$13.68 million⁷ - which represents all economic value generated within a region, produced by workers who are employed in the region, regardless of where those workers reside.
- **Employed Resident GRP**: \$12.78 million⁸ – measures the economic value generated by residents of a particular region through their employment, regardless of where they work (even if it is outside the region).

The 6.6% difference between these figures, with Employed Resident GRP representing 93.4% of Place of Work GRP, indicates a relatively small difference between economic output generated within Ali Curung and economic output associated with its employed residents. As Employed Resident GRP includes economic activity generated by residents working outside the community, these measures cannot be used to determine the contribution of non-resident workers or quantify economic value flowing out of the community.

Economic activity associated with Ali Curung employed residents is concentrated in agriculture, forestry and fishing, public administration and safety, and education and training.

⁷ ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

⁸ ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

Table 19: Total Regional versus Aboriginal GRP Data for Ali Curung

Category	POW Workforce Size	Workforce Size (Employed Residents)	POW GRP (\$)	Employed Resident GRP (\$)	POW GRP Per Worker (\$)	Employed Resident GRP Per Worker (\$)
All Workers	78	93	13,689,803	12,788,534	175,510	137,511
Aboriginal Workers	44	52	4,405,397	4,894,799	100,122	94,130

Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

The data shows:

- Aboriginal workers make up the majority of both workforce measures in Ali Curung, representing 44 of 78 Place of Work workers and 52 of 93 employed residents.
- Total Place of Work GRP is higher than Employed Resident GRP, despite the Place of Work workforce being smaller. This suggests that jobs located in Ali Curung generate a higher level of economic output per worker than the jobs held by Ali Curung residents overall.
- Aboriginal workers contribute significantly to both workforce measures, generating approximately \$4.4 million in Place of Work GRP and \$4.9 million in Employed Resident GRP.
- However, Aboriginal workers account for a lower share of GRP than their share of the workforce. Aboriginal workers represent around 56% of the Place of Work workforce but generate around 32% of Place of Work GRP.
- A similar pattern is evident for employed residents: Aboriginal residents make up around 56% of employed residents but generate around 38% of Employed Resident GRP.
- Per worker GRP is lower for Aboriginal workers than the total workforce average. Aboriginal Place of Work GRP per worker is \$100,122, compared with \$175,510 for the total workforce.
- For employed residents, Aboriginal GRP per worker is \$94,130, compared with \$137,511 for all employed residents.
- This suggests that Aboriginal workers are strongly represented among employed workers but are associated with lower average value added per worker, which may reflect differences in the industries and types of employment in which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers are employed.
- Among people who are employed, Aboriginal representation is comparatively strong; however, overall Aboriginal labour force participation remains low.

Table 20: Total Regional versus Aboriginal GRP Data for Barkly Regional Council LGA

Category	POW Workforce Size	Workforce Size (Employed Residents)	POW GRP (\$)	Employed Resident GRP (\$)	POW GRP Per Worker (\$)	Employed Resident GRP Per Worker (\$)
All workers	2672	2547	517,000,000	468,248,094	193,488	183,842
Aboriginal Workers	767	797	97,865,434	105,425,691	127,595	132,278

Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

Comparing the two data sets shows:

- Ali Curung has a substantially higher Aboriginal workforce share than the broader Barkly LGA. Aboriginal workers account for around 56% of Ali Curung's Place of Work workforce, compared with 29% across Barkly LGA. Similarly, Aboriginal employed residents represent around 56% of Ali Curung's employed resident workforce, compared with 31% across Barkly LGA.
- Ali Curung records lower GRP per worker than the Barkly LGA across both total and Aboriginal workforce measures.
- The difference is more pronounced for employed residents. Aboriginal Employed Resident GRP per worker is approximately \$94,130 in Ali Curung, compared with \$132,278 across Barkly LGA, suggesting Ali Curung residents may have less access to the higher-value employment opportunities available elsewhere in the regional economy.
- Overall, the comparison suggests that Aboriginal representation among employed workers is stronger in Ali Curung than across the Barkly LGA, but economic output per worker is lower. This reinforces the need to focus not only on participation, but also on pathways into higher skilled, higher value and better paid roles.

Table 21: GRP and Employed Residents for Ali Curung

GRP Value added – Employed Residents						
Industry	Total Employed Residents Value Added (\$)	Aboriginal Employed Residents Value Added (\$)	Aboriginal Employed Residents % of Total Value Added	Total Employed Residents	Aboriginal Employed Residents	Aboriginal % of Total Employed Residents (in industry)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	5,026,837	0	0%	11	0	0%
Public Administration and Safety	2,734,652	2,506,764	92%	33	30	91%
Education and Training	1,785,187	1,020,107	57%	17	10	59%
Retail Trade	897,662	498,701	56%	12	7	58%
Health Care and Social Assistance	406,049	0	0%	5	0	0%
Arts and Recreation Services	356,532	356,532	100%	5	5	100%
Administrative and Support Services	242,105	0	0%	5	0	0%
Accommodation and Food Services	0	0		5	0	0%

Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

This data shows:

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is the largest contributor to Ali Curung employed resident GRP value added, generating approximately \$5.0 million from 11 employed residents. However, no Aboriginal employed residents are recorded in this industry. This indicates that the highest-value industry linked to Ali Curung employed residents is not currently contributing to Aboriginal employment outcomes in the dataset.
- Public Administration and Safety is the strongest Aboriginal employment and value-added industry among Ali Curung employed residents. Aboriginal employed residents account for 30 of 33 workers in the industry and generate approximately \$2.5 million, representing 92% of the industry's employed resident GRP value added.
- Education and Training also makes a significant Aboriginal contribution, with Aboriginal employed residents representing 10 of 17 workers and generating approximately \$1.0 million, or 57% of the industry's employed resident value added.
- Retail Trade provides a smaller but still important Aboriginal employment base, with Aboriginal residents accounting for 7 of 12 workers and approximately 56% of the industry's employed resident value added.
- Arts and Recreation Services is small in scale but entirely Aboriginal in this dataset, with all 5 recorded employed residents identified as Aboriginal and generating the full \$356,532 in value added for the industry.
- Health Care and Social Assistance and Administrative and Support Services record no Aboriginal employed residents, despite contributing to total employed resident GRP value added. These may represent potential areas for future workforce pathway development.
- Overall, Aboriginal employed resident economic contribution is concentrated in Public Administration and Safety, Education and Training, Retail Trade, and Arts and Recreation Services. The main gap is Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, which generates the largest employed resident value added but records no Aboriginal employed residents.

Table 22: Employed Residents GRP compared for Ali Curung and the Barkly Regional Council LGA

Industry	Ali Curung		Barkly Regional Council LGA	
	Total Employed Residents Value Added (\$)	Aboriginal Employed Residents Value Added (\$)	Total Employed Residents Value Added (\$)	Aboriginal Employed Residents Value Added (\$)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	5,026,837	0	195,418,293	21,295,583
Health Care and Social Assistance	406,049	0	44,665,394	15,251,598
Public Administration and Safety	2,734,652	2,506,764	42,045,267	18,036,131
Education and Training	1,785,187	1,020,107	30,730,720	12,668,583
Mining	-	-	30,463,300	6,769,622
Construction	-	-	23,382,143	5,501,681
Retail Trade	897,662	498,701	12,966,223	3,450,688
Accommodation and Food Services	-	-	9,262,811	1,116,001
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	-	-	4,823,544	1,339,873
Arts and Recreation Services	356,532	356,532	4,753,755	2,910,462
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	-	-	4,646,130	1,486,762
Other Services	-	-	4,105,166	2,100,317
Financial and Insurance Services	-	-	3,570,714	-
Wholesale Trade	-	-	3,148,572	1,210,989
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-	-	2,133,504	514,984
Administrative and Support Services	242,105	0	2,033,685	730,041
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	-	-	1,053,105	-
Manufacturing	-	-	-	-
Information Media and Telecommunications	-	-	-	-
GST Registered Businesses (June 2025)	6	0	178	14

Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

- The Barkly LGA employed resident industry profile is more diverse than that of Ali Curung employed residents. The regional data records employed resident value added across mining, construction, accommodation and food services, utilities, transport, wholesale trade, professional services and other services, while these industries are not recorded among Ali Curung employed residents. This suggests Ali Curung residents have limited participation in several industries that contribute to the broader regional economy.
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is a major contributor to employed resident GRP for both Ali Curung and the Barkly LGA, but the Aboriginal employment outcome differs significantly. At the Barkly LGA level, Aboriginal employed residents generate approximately \$21.3 million (11%) in value added in this industry. For Ali Curung employed residents, the industry generates approximately \$5.0 million in value added, but no Aboriginal employed resident value added is recorded.
- Ali Curung has no recorded employed resident value added in Mining or Construction, despite these being significant industries across the Barkly LGA. Both industries record Aboriginal value added at the regional level, indicating potential regional pathway opportunities not currently reflected in Ali Curung's employed resident workforce.
- Health Care and Social Assistance appear to be an under-developed pathway for Ali Curung Aboriginal employed residents compared with the broader Barkly LGA. Across the Barkly LGA, Aboriginal employed residents generate approximately \$15.3 million (15%) in value added in the industry, while Ali Curung records no Aboriginal employed resident value added.

Implications for workforce planning:

- ✓ **Participation and engagement remain key challenges:** While there is an existing Aboriginal employment base in Ali Curung, a larger number of Aboriginal residents are recorded as not in the labour force. Workforce planning therefore needs to focus not only on job pathways for those already seeking work, but also on re-engagement, work readiness and removing barriers to participation.
- ✓ **Employment is concentrated in a narrow set of industries:** Aboriginal employed residents are mainly represented in Public Administration and Safety, Education and Training, Retail Trade, and Arts and Recreation Services, indicating limited representation across other industries.
- ✓ **Industry access, not just training, is the key issue:** Some higher-value industries associated with Ali Curung employed residents or the broader Barkly economy, particularly Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Mining, Construction and Transport, have limited or no recorded Aboriginal employed resident value added for Ali Curung. Workforce planning should therefore focus on practical access to these industries, including employer partnerships, licensing, transport and supported regional work pathways.
- ✓ **Agriculture represents a significant missed opportunity:** Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is the largest contributor to Ali Curung employed resident value added, yet no Aboriginal employed residents are recorded in this industry. This indicates a need to explore pathways into pastoral work, station operations, fencing, bore work, machinery operation and related land-based roles.
- ✓ **Foundational barriers need to be addressed before higher-value pathways can be realised:** Lower levels of language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills, along with licensing, mobility, confidence and work readiness barriers, may limit access to training and employment in higher-value sectors. These supports should be built into workforce planning rather than treated as separate issues.

- ✓ **Local enterprise development is needed to expand the job base:** The dataset records a small number of GST-registered businesses in Ali Curung and did not record an Aboriginal GST-registered business. Supporting Aboriginal business development, procurement opportunities and community-controlled service delivery will be important to creating more local employment options.

Cost of Living in Remote Communities

Remote towns in the Northern Territory face substantial cost-of-living pressures that directly impact workforce participation and economic wellbeing. The data presented in this section draws on a mix of Ali Curung-specific, Barkly regional, and Northern Territory-wide sources. Where community level data is unavailable, regional and Territory data is provided as contextual information and should not be interpreted as a direct measure of living costs in Ali Curung.

Food Security and Affordability

The most recent Market Basket Survey data is from 2023. The survey includes price, availability, variety and quality of foods in remote NT stores, including costs in NT urban supermarkets and corner stores for comparison. The data presented below is based on remote Northern Territory store pricing and is provided as an indicator of food affordability in remote communities. Unless otherwise stated, the results should not be interpreted as representing food prices in Ali Curung specifically.

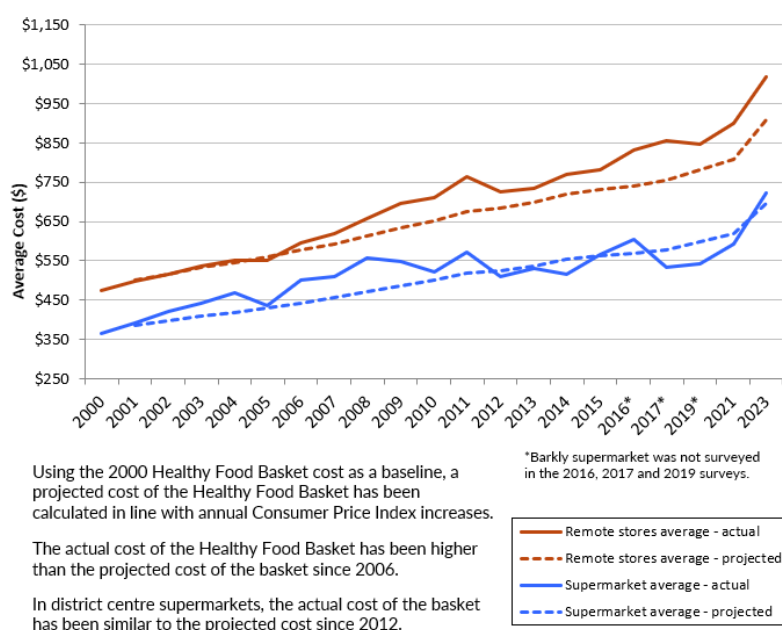


Figure 14: Market Basket Survey - Cost of a Food Basket from 2000-2023

Source: NT Health (2023).

The 2023 data shows:

- The "Healthy Food Basket" (represents the cost of a diet that aligns with national dietary guidelines designed to feed a family of six for two weeks) costs an average of \$909 across surveyed remote NT stores, 30% more expensive than the \$698 cost in Alice Springs supermarkets⁹.

⁹ NT Health (2023b).

- The "Current Diet Basket" sometimes called the 'unhealthy' diet basket reflects the actual purchasing and consumption patterns of the population, based on national dietary intake surveys. It costs \$1083 across surveyed remote NT stores compared to \$880 in the Tennant Creek Supermarket and \$890 in Alice Springs¹⁰.
- From 2021 to 2023, the cost of the Healthy Food Basket rose by 13% in remote stores and was 40% higher than the average district centre supermarket¹¹.

These figures are provided as an indication of food affordability pressures across remote Northern Territory communities and should not be interpreted as representing food costs in Ali Curung specifically.

In 2025 the government announced the introduction of a Low-Cost Essentials Subsidy Scheme which would reduce the prices on 30 essential grocery items along with everyday necessities such as nappies, soap and toilet paper across 113¹² remote stores nationwide by lifting the subsidy cap. The Ali Curung Store is one of the stores to benefit from this scheme.

Transportation Costs

Transportation costs are another significant cost-of-living factor that affects household budgets and workforce participation. The information presented below is specific to Ali Curung and reflects local fuel prices and transport connections available at the time of data collection in June 2026.

Ali Curung is located 1,161 km from Darwin and 377 km from Alice Springs.

As at 27 June 2026, the price of Unleaded 91 at the Ali Curung Store was 307 cents per litre, while diesel was priced at 322 cents per litre¹³.

Centre Bush Bus Australia offers Wednesday and Saturday bus services connecting Alice Springs to Ali Curung. A one-way fare per adult is \$172.50 and \$125 per child.

Utilities

Energy costs make up a significant portion of a household budget.

Community level utility cost data for Ali Curung was not available. The following information uses Northern Territory-wide Consumer Price Index and utility cost data to provide broader context regarding utility cost pressures.

As of June 2025, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for electricity decreased by 4.6% in the Northern Territory, compared to a 6.2% decrease nationally¹⁴. This indicates that while electricity prices declined across Australia, NT households experienced a more limited reduction.

At the same time, CPI for water and sewerage costs increased by 4.3% which was more than the national increase of 2.7%¹⁵.

¹⁰ NT Health (2023b).

¹¹ NT Health (2023a).

¹² As at March 2026 it was 113 stores, but the program is expected to expand to an estimated 225 remote stores nationwide. Source: National Indigenous Times. (2026)

¹³ Petrol Spy (2026). Prices retrieved June 27, 2026

¹⁴ NTCOSS (2025b).

¹⁵ NTCOSS (2025b).

CPI for gas and other household fuels decreased by 1.9% compared to a national increase of 5.7%¹⁶. Although gas and other household fuel prices decreased in the Northern Territory while increasing nationally, overall utility costs continued to place pressure on NT households.

Territorians have some of the highest electricity bills in the country due to the extreme temperatures, poor quality housing and the effect of climate change.¹⁷

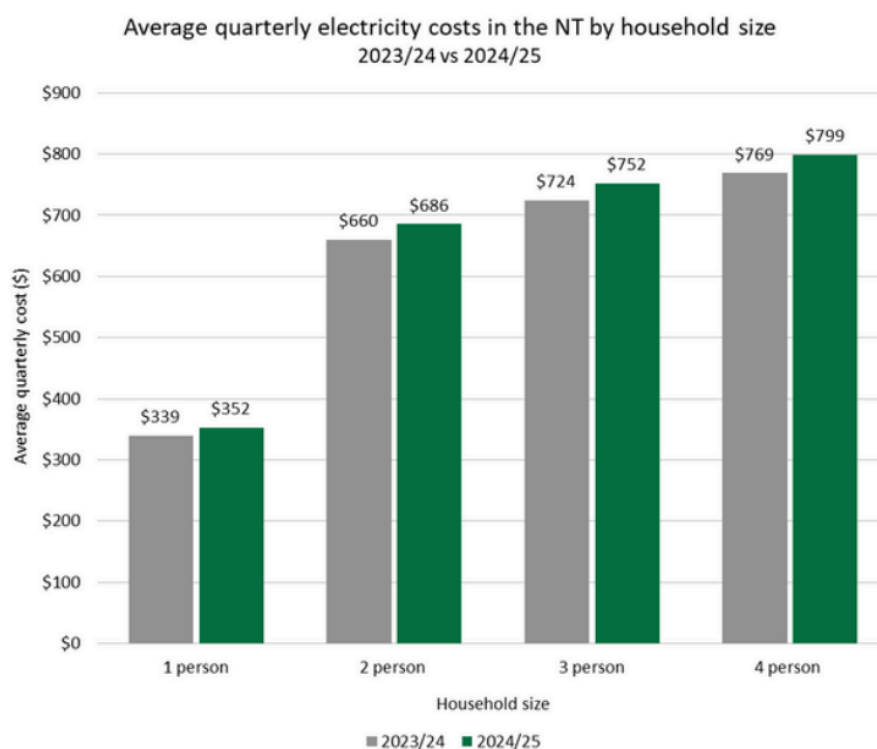


Figure 15: Average quarterly electricity costs in the NT by household size (2023/24, 2024/25)

Source: NTCOSS (2025b).

The average quarterly electricity costs in the NT increased between \$14-\$30 between 2023-24 and 2024-25 depending on the size of the household.¹⁸ These figures are Territory-wide averages and may not reflect actual household electricity costs in Ali Curung.

In Ali Curung, prepayment meters are widely used in many public houses. When prepayment meters are not sufficiently topped up, electricity supply is disconnected.

Between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025 there was 1 recorded electricity disconnection for community members on credit meters in Ali Curung¹⁹.

¹⁶ NTCOSS (2025b).

¹⁷ NTCOSS (2025a).

¹⁸ NTCOSS (2025b).

¹⁹ Northern Territory Government. (2025).

Housing

The housing information presented below relates specifically to public housing arrangements operating in Ali Curung.

The public housing remote rent framework applies to tenants living in the Ali Curung Community and is calculated at \$70 per bedroom per week. Houses with more than 4 bedrooms are capped at \$280 per week²⁰.

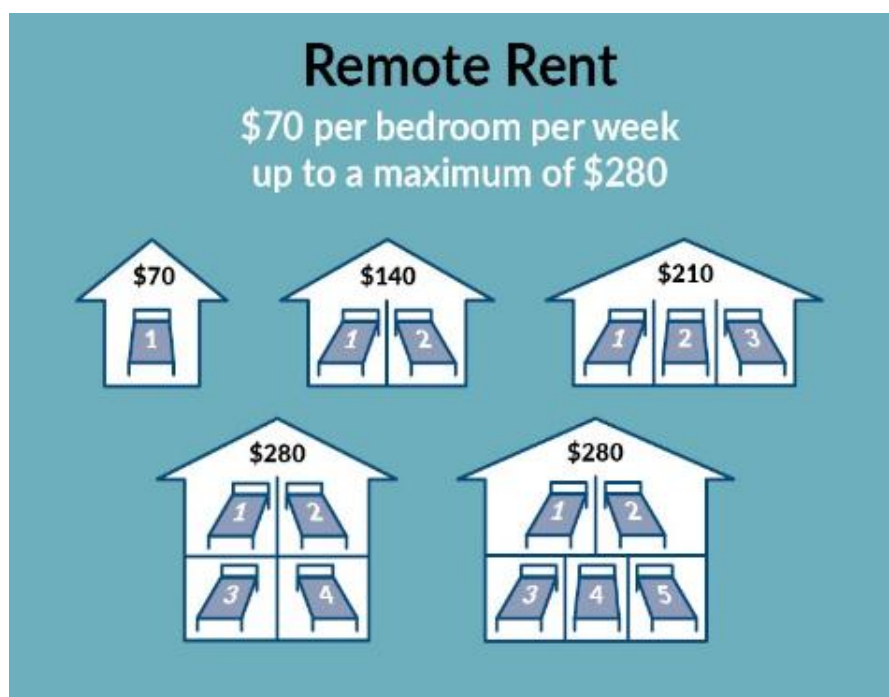


Figure 16: Remote Rent Model

Source: Northern Territory Government (2026).

The current maximum fortnightly JobSeeker payment for a sole parent with a dependent child or children is \$866²¹. Before any rental safety net adjustment, a sole parent renting a three-bedroom house would pay \$420 per fortnight, equivalent to approximately 48% of that payment, leaving \$446 for other essential needs such as food, utilities and transport. Renting a two-bedroom house would cost \$280 per fortnight, equivalent to approximately 32% of the same payment.

These comparisons are based on the JobSeeker payment alone and do not account for other household income or rental safety net adjustments. Under the Northern Territory's remote public housing arrangements, households may be eligible for a rental safety net where rent exceeds 25%²² of total assessable household income. This 25% threshold is a policy-specific assessable-income measure and differs from the broader housing-stress benchmark, which commonly refers to lower-income households spending more than 30% of gross household income on housing costs.

²⁰ Northern Territory Government (2026).

²¹ Services Australia (2026).

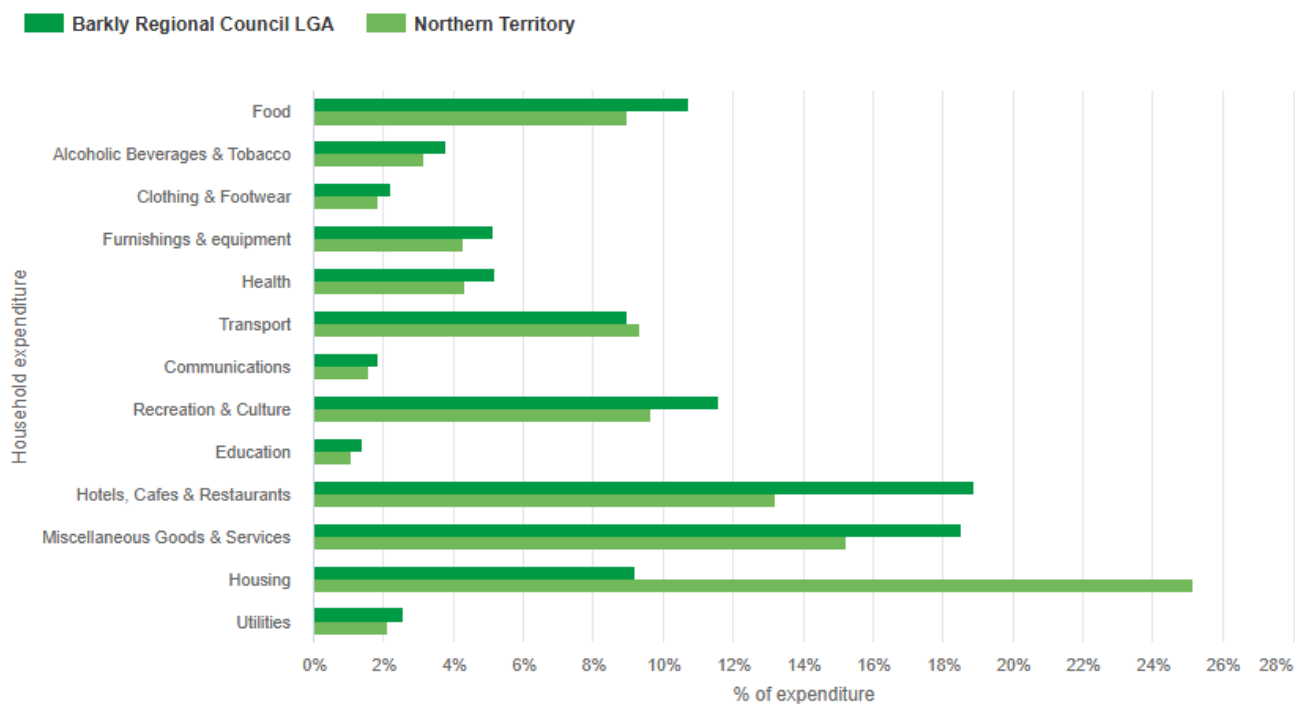
²² Northern Territory Government (2026).

Regional Household Expenditure

Community-specific household expenditure data is not available for Ali Curung. The following analysis uses expenditure data for the broader Barkly Regional Council LGA and should be interpreted as regional context rather than an Ali Curung household expenditure profile.

Household expenditure 2023/24

export



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2025. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions).

Figure 17: Household Expenditure 2023-24 Barkly Regional Council LGA and Northern Territory

Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (2025), compiled and presented by .id.

- Households in this region allocate significantly more of their budget to hotels, cafes and restaurants (18.9%) compared to the Northern Territory average (13.2%), which is likely to reflect travel costs required for accessing essential services outside the Barkly region.
- Household spending on food in Barkly is higher (10.7%) than the NT average (9%), suggesting higher costs in remote areas and/or limited access to affordable alternatives.
- Health expenditure is higher at 5.2% versus the Territory spending of 4.3%, suggesting increased healthcare costs or increased healthcare needs in these remote areas.
- Spending patterns across clothing and footwear, furnishing and equipment and even education suggest elevated costs and limited access to alternatives in a remote context.
- Household expenditure in Barkly is higher across 11 of the 13 household expenditures, particularly across food, recreation, and discretionary categories.

These expenditure patterns indicate that residents in the Barkly region face additional financial pressures related to their geographic location, which directly impacts household economic stability. As this data is reported at the Barkly LGA level, it should not be assumed to directly represent expenditure patterns for Ali Curung households.

Household Income

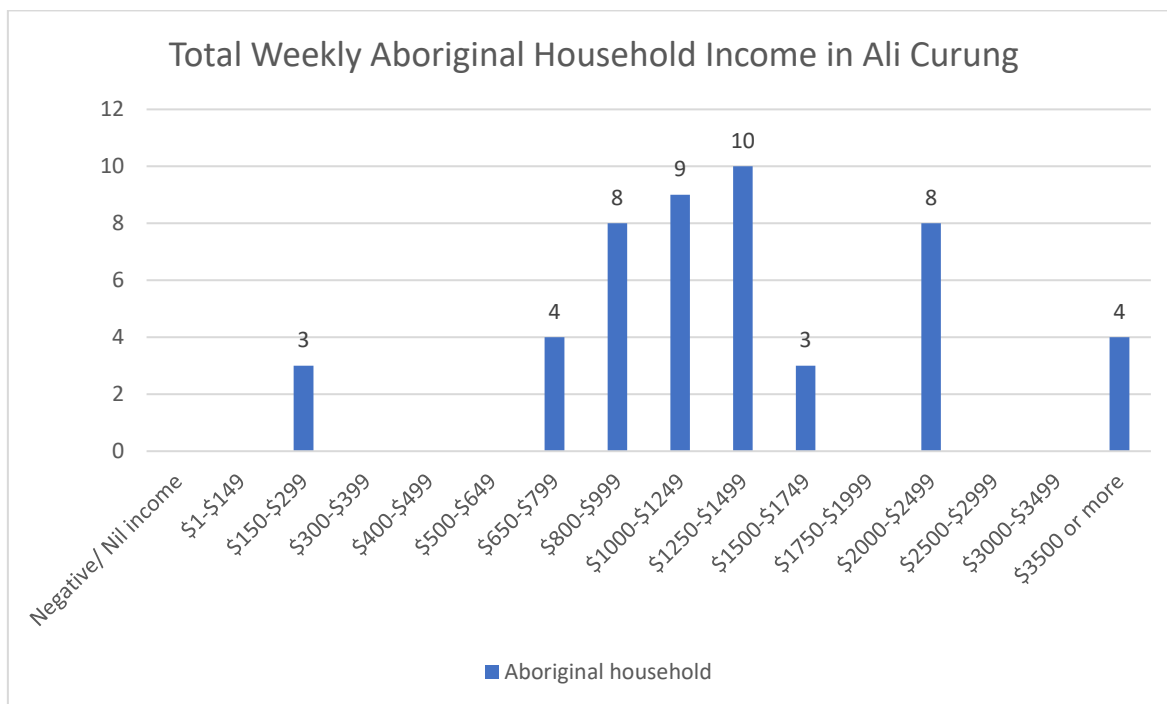


Figure 18: Weekly Reported Aboriginal Household Income in Ali Curung

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021a), 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Ali Curung, Table I17.

The income data presented in Figure 18 relates specifically to Ali Curung and is derived from 2021 Census data.

The data indicates that most stated income households are concentrated in low to moderate income bands. The largest cluster sits between \$800 and \$1,499 per week, with the most common bands being \$1,250–\$1,499 and \$1,000–\$1,249. Relatively few households are recorded in higher income bands, with 12 households reporting weekly income of \$2,000 or more.

Overall, the income profile suggests limited household income capacity and reinforces the importance of workforce pathways that support stable employment, progression into higher skilled roles and improved earning potential.

The median weekly household income in Ali Curung is \$1,166²³. The average size per household as at the 2021 census was 5.2 persons per home²⁴.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) ranks locations according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage using 2021 Census data. The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) presented below relate to the Barkly Regional Council LGA rather than Ali Curung specifically and are included to provide regional socio-economic context.

²³ ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026)

²⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021a).

Barkly is ranked 10th²⁵ out of 19 LGAs in the Northern Territory on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage. Lower SEIFA ranks indicate greater relative disadvantage, placing Barkly approximately in the middle of the Northern Territory ranking²⁶. However, this position should be interpreted alongside its national ranking.

Nationally, Barkly is ranked in the 6th²⁷ percentile among local government areas, placing it among the most disadvantaged areas in Australia and within the bottom 10% across key measures of disadvantage, overall advantage and disadvantage, and economic resources. Education and occupation outcomes are comparatively higher; they remain within the lowest 20% nationally²⁸.

These results reflect disadvantage across income, employment, education and access to economic resources, including²⁹:

- Low household incomes
- Limited access to stable employment
- Lower educational attainment
- Reduced financial resilience

These factors influence quality of life, access to services, and long-term opportunities for people living in the region.

Table 23: SEIFA Indexes for the Barkly LGA

Index	Score	Ranking within Australia	
		Decile	Percentile
Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD)	670	1	6
Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD)	790	1	6
Index of Economic Resources (IER)	698	1	6
Index of Education and Occupation (IEO)	887	2	13

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021b) Socio-Economic Indexes for Australia (SEIFA), 2021. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/2021>

Note: The SEIFA 2021 data presented here is aggregated for the Barkly LGA which includes Tennant Creek. This means that the scores reflect the combined socio-economic conditions across the entire Barkly LGA. While this data provides valuable insights into the overall socio-economic landscape, it is important to interpret it with an understanding that variations may exist between the individual communities within the region.

²⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021b).

²⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021b).

²⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021b).

²⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021b).

²⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021b).

Investment and Opportunity: Current Funding Allocations

Government investments present opportunities for workforce planning and economic participation in Ali Curung. An analysis of unfinished projects and grants listed on the BushTel Ali Curung community profile as at 14 May 2026 identified approximately \$9.4 million³⁰ in community-specific grant funding. Separately, the total face value of programs listing Ali Curung as a potentially benefiting location is approximately \$104.7 million³¹; however, the amount attributable to Ali Curung cannot be determined.

Multi-Community Programs Potentially Benefiting Ali Curung (\$104.7 million)

The total face value of programs that list Ali Curung as a potentially benefiting location is approximately \$104.7 million³². These programs operate across multiple communities and, in some cases, nationally. One program lists as many as 162 communities. Funding is reported at the program level rather than allocated to individual communities, meaning the amount attributable to Ali Curung cannot be determined.

Table 24: Multi-Community Programs Potentially Benefiting Ali Curung by Program Category

Program Category	Amount* (\$)	No: of communities shared across	% of Total Multi-Community Program Face Value	Primary Initiatives	Timeframes*
Indigenous Communities	\$19,000,000	36	18%	Strategic investment that supports the provision of infrastructure, housing, telecommunications and home ownership in remote Indigenous communities, as well as the development of local and regional place-based approaches.	2025-2029
Indigenous Employment and Business	\$18,374,664	12	18%	Strategic activities that focus on getting Indigenous Australians into work, fostering Indigenous business and assisting Indigenous people to generate economic and social benefits from effective use of their land, particularly in remote areas.	2024-2028
Local Government	\$740,259	15	1%	The intended outcomes of the program are to deliver benefits to communities, such as improved road safety, accessibility and visual amenity, and create local short-term employment opportunities through funding construction projects.	2021-2026
Public Health Services	\$66,650,830	162	63%	To establish and operate 1800MEDICARE, providing nationally consistent, free health information and advice via a 24/7 nurse triage helpline, after-hours GP helpline and digital services.	03-06/2026
TOTAL	\$104,765,753				

Source: Compiled from Northern Territory Government (n.d.). BushTel community profile: Ali Curung (retrieved May 14, 2026).

³⁰ Northern Territory Government (n.d.). BushTel community profile: Ali Curung

³¹ Northern Territory Government (n.d.). BushTel community profile: Ali Curung

³² Northern Territory Government (n.d.). BushTel community profile: Ali Curung

*Each program category includes multiple grants awarded to different organisations. These have been aggregated, with the total value reported above. The timeframes shown reflect the earliest start date and latest end date across all active grants within each category.

This analysis is based on funding data published through BushTel and recognises that other funding sources may exist that are not captured within the scope of this research. The regional nature of BushTel's reporting also limits the ability to identify, quantify, and attribute funding investment at the individual community level.

Ali Curung Community-Specific Investments (\$9.4 million³³)

The largest funding category specifically targeting Ali Curung is Indigenous Employment and Business, valued at approximately \$4.6 million.

Table 25: Ali Curung Community Specific Investment

Program Category	Project Funding (\$)	No. of Grants	Organisation	Key Investment Areas	Timeframe*
Humanities	\$1,034,000	2	Arlpwe Artists Aboriginal Corporation Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support	To support Arlpwe Art and Culture Centre's ceramics program through employment of an onsite ceramicist to engage with artists and arts workers.	2025-2028
Indigenous Communities	\$1,461,427	1	Alekarenge Horticulture Pty Ltd	Strategic investment that supports the provision of infrastructure, housing, telecommunications and home ownership in remote Indigenous communities, as well as the development of local and regional place-based approaches. (Work Experience Pathway Project Foreperson)	2021-2027
Indigenous Education	\$740,210	1	Mirniirri Aboriginal Corporation	Strategic activities that focus on getting children to school, improving education outcomes and improving access to further education, as well as supporting families to give children a good start in life. (School Nutrition Project)	2023-2026
Indigenous Employment and Business	\$4,684,893	2	Alekarenge Horticulture Pty Ltd	Strategic activities that focus on getting Indigenous Australians into work, fostering Indigenous business and assisting Indigenous people to generate economic and social benefits from effective use of their land, particularly in remote areas. (Work Experience Pathway Project Job Creation)	2025-2028
Rural Development	\$1,500,000	1	Northern Territory of Australia	Grant funding will improve Ali Curung Aerodrome by sealing surfaces to enhance safety, resilience and accessibility during wet seasons. This will ensure vital services like medical aid and freight	2025-2027

³³ Northern Territory Government (n.d.). BushTel community profile: Ali Curung

				continue uninterrupted. This meets the objectives of the program by supporting remote communities through improved aviation infrastructure and essential service delivery. (Aerodrome Upgrade to Seal Standard)	
TOTAL	\$9,420,530	10			

Source: Compiled from Northern Territory Government (n.d.). BushTel community profile: Ali Curung (retrieved May 14, 2026).

* The timeframes shown reflect the earliest start date and latest end date across all active grants within each category.

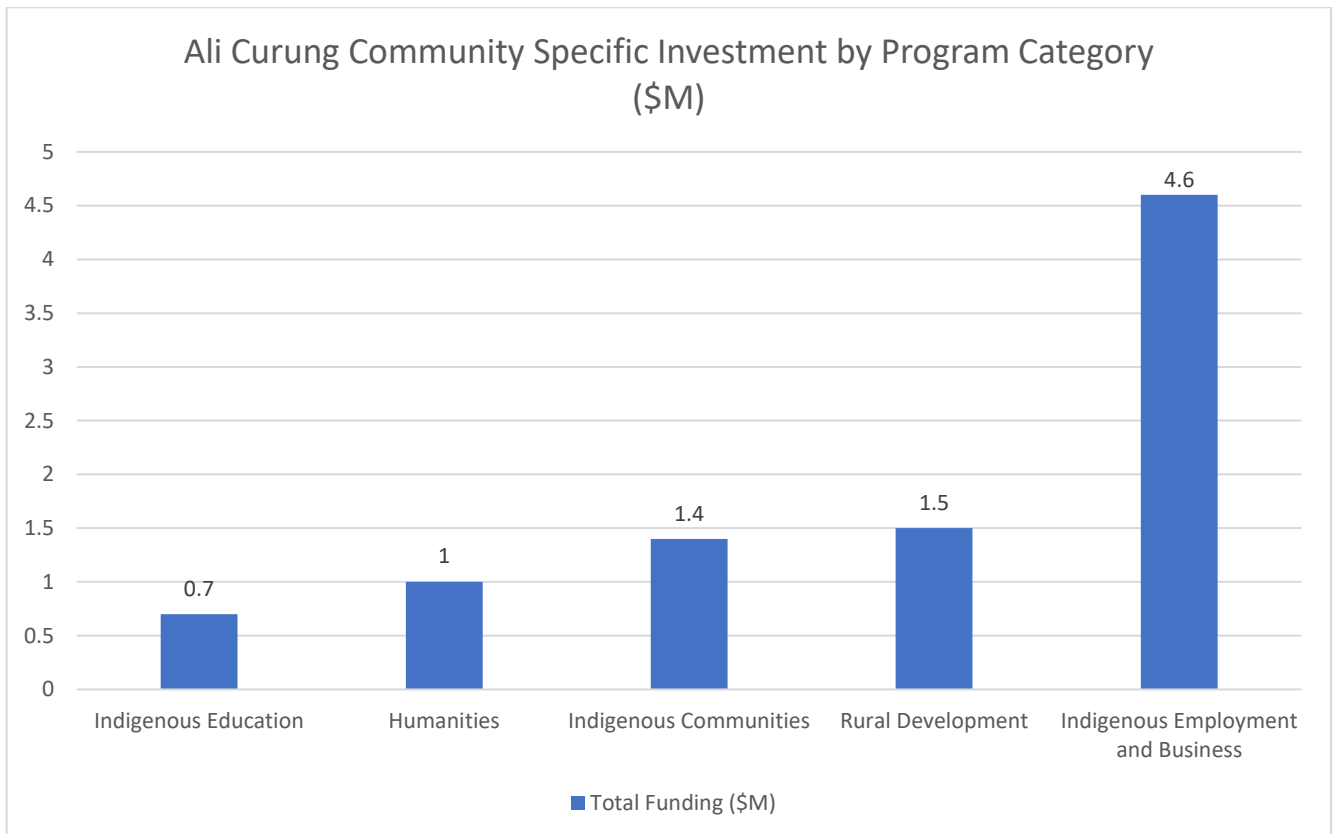


Figure 19: Ali Curung Community Specific Investment by Program Category (\$M)

Source: Compiled from Northern Territory Government (n.d.). BushTel community profile: Ali Curung (retrieved May 14, 2026).

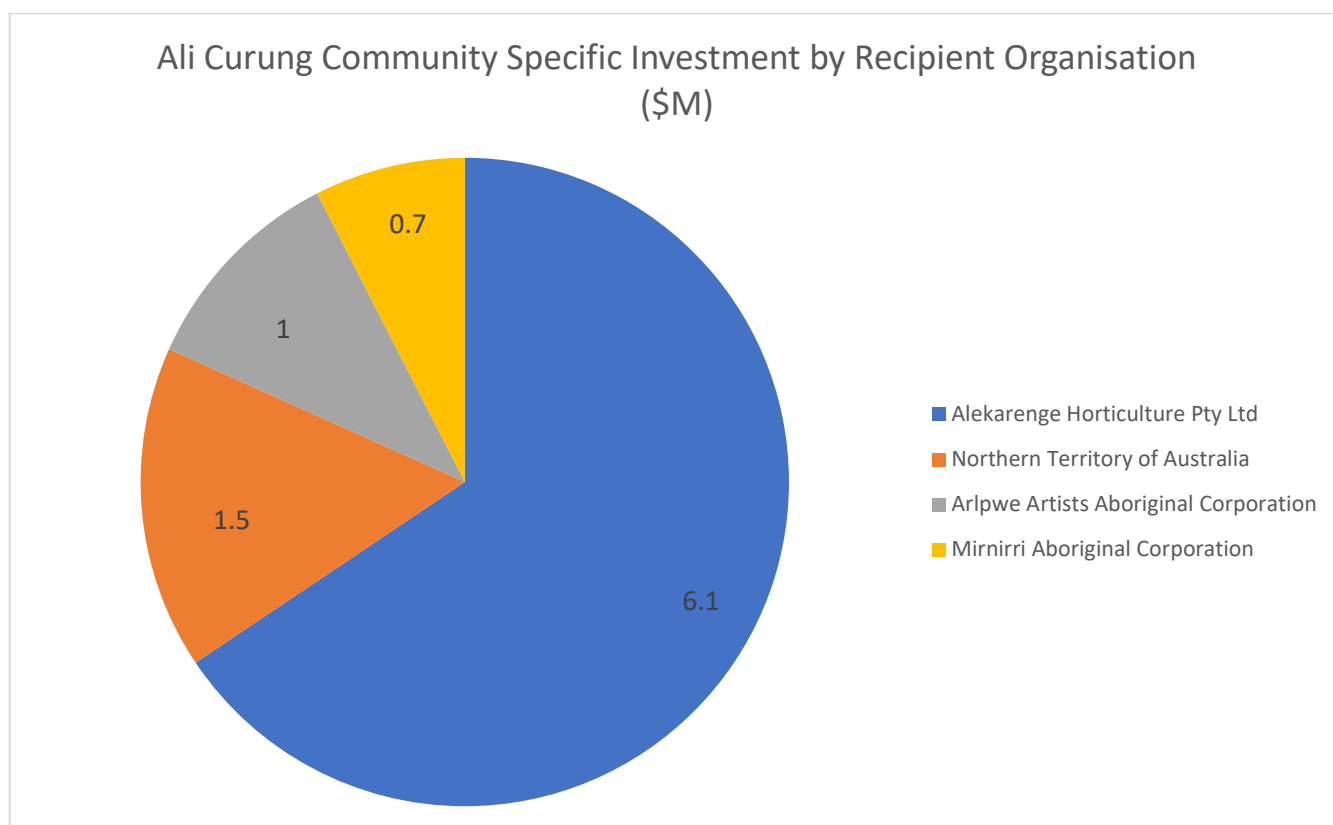


Figure 20: Ali Curung Community Specific Investment by Recipient Organisation (\$M)

Source: Compiled from Northern Territory Government (n.d.). BushTel community profile: Ali Curung (retrieved May 14, 2026).

The data suggests that government investment associated with Ali Curung is delivered through a mix of multi-community programs and community-specific grants. While the total face value of multi-community programs listing Ali Curung as a potentially benefiting location is approximately \$104.7 million, the amount attributable to Ali Curung cannot be determined. Identifiable Ali Curung-specific investment totals approximately \$9.4 million and is concentrated in employment and business initiatives, horticulture and work experience pathways, arts and culture, education support, remote community infrastructure, and aviation access.

The community-specific funding profile indicates that public investment is strongly focused on enabling participation, improving community conditions and supporting place-based service delivery. This includes investment in school nutrition, arts and culture, the aerodrome upgrade, remote community infrastructure, and work experience pathway projects. These investments provide important foundations for engagement, access, workforce readiness and community wellbeing.

Workforce development in Ali Curung cannot be considered separately from local and regional economic development. A dual focus is required: supporting residents to become work-ready and progress through training and employment pathways, while also strengthening connections to industries that can provide stable jobs, higher earnings and long-term career progression. This includes building on existing funded programs as employment pipelines, improving coordination across providers, and creating stronger links between community-based activities, regional employers and future industry opportunities.

Step 3: Stakeholder Identified Needs and Priorities

The workforce planning landscape is strengthened when aligned with the needs and priorities of the community.

Ali Curung Stakeholder Consultations

Community consultation for the Ali Curung Community Workforce Plan was undertaken separately by SpeakWrite Consulting on behalf of Charles Darwin University in February-March 2025. The consultation involved local employers, service providers, community governance representatives, government agencies and other regional stakeholders.

Table 26: Stakeholders Consulted by SpeakWrite Consulting

Date	Organisation or stakeholder	Sector	Consultation format
February 2025	Centrefarm Aboriginal Horticulture Limited (Centrefarm) and Alekarenge Horticulture Pty Ltd (AHPL) — Vin Lange, Chief Executive Officer; Joe Clarke, General Manager	Agriculture and horticulture	Stakeholder meeting
February 2025	Barkly Regional Council — Noel Hayes, Deputy Mayor and Chair of the Ali Curung Local Authority	Government and public administration	Stakeholder meeting
February 2025	Ali Curung Local Authority	Community governance	Group meeting
March 2025	Barkly Regional Council, Ali Curung Aged Care Service — Qin, Team Leader	Community services	Stakeholder meeting
March 2025	Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service (CAYLUS) and Barkly Region Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Group (BRADAAG) — Craig, Project Officer	Community services and youth	Stakeholder meeting
March 2025	Arlpwe Art Centre and Gallery — Rose Rice, Board Director	Arts and culture	Stakeholder meeting
March 2025	Ali Curung Health Centre — Nelly, Manager	Community services and health	Stakeholder meeting
March 2025	Alekarenge Family Centre — Leonnie, Manager	Community services and early childhood	Stakeholder meeting
March 2025	RN Employment Services	Employment services	Stakeholder meeting
March 2025	NDIS Barkly — Zara Hollis	Community services and disability	Stakeholder meeting
March 2025	National Indigenous Australians Agency, Tennant Creek Office — Fran Spehr and Harry Abrahams	Government and public administration	Stakeholder meeting
March 2025	CatholicCare NT — Regional Manager	Community services	Stakeholder meeting

Date	Organisation or stakeholder	Sector	Consultation format
2025	Barkly Workforce Roundtable, Tennant Creek — Representatives from the National Indigenous Australians Agency; Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations; housing services; Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education; Charles Darwin University; employment services; and the Ali Curung Local Authority	Multiple sectors	Regional roundtable
2025	Ali Curung Local Authority meeting — Attended by the SpeakWrite Consulting project team	Community governance	Community meeting

Source: SpeakWrite Consulting (2026).

The findings presented in this section are drawn from the *Ali Curung Community Workforce Pathways Plan: Handover Report to Charles Darwin University* prepared by SpeakWrite Consulting in April 2026. They should be considered alongside the demographic, workforce, industry, education and training evidence presented elsewhere in this report.

SpeakWrite Consulting identified eight principal findings from the consultation.

➤ Low Workforce Participation and Structural Barriers

The consultation report identified a substantial disconnect between the availability of work and residents' access to employment. It reported that Ali Curung had 21 job vacancies and 44 filled jobs, while 171 residents aged 17 to 64 were unemployed or disengaged from the workforce.

SpeakWrite Consulting concluded that this reflected structural barriers rather than an absence of willingness to work. Existing employment systems were described as not being designed to meet the circumstances and support needs of local residents.

➤ Intergenerational Unemployment and Youth Disengagement

Disengagement among young people was a leading theme raised across consultations. Contributing factors identified by stakeholders included:

- Intergenerational patterns of unemployment, with some young people having had limited exposure to adults in employment as role models
- Low confidence and limited understanding of workplace expectations, particularly in cross-cultural workplaces
- Language and communication barriers when engaging with non-Aboriginal managers and colleagues
- Limited visible or tangible improvement in quality of life arising from employment, reducing the motivation to seek and maintain work

➤ The “Humbug” Barrier

The consultation identified family and community financial obligations, described in the consultation report as the “humbug” dynamic, as an underacknowledged barrier affecting the perceived benefits of employment.

Young people had informed stakeholders at the Barkly Workforce Roundtable and through Batchelor Institute that earning an income did not necessarily result in a better quality of life. When a community member gained employment, they could experience increased social and financial demands from family and broader community networks. Consequently, employment could bring additional obligations without producing a corresponding improvement in the employee's own living conditions.

The consultation report did not present this as a reason to abandon employment objectives. Instead, it identified a need to consider workforce approaches that generate collective as well as individual benefits, including community enterprises models, cooperative employment structures and employment incentive frameworks through which economic benefits could be shared more broadly.

➤ Lack of Cultural Safety in Workplaces

The consultation consistently identified a lack of cultural safety in local workplaces as a factor contributing to Aboriginal employee turnover and disengagement. Concerns raised through the consultation included:

- Limited awareness among some managers and team leaders of Aboriginal cultural norms, historical inequalities and intergenerational trauma
- Differences in communication styles that could leave Aboriginal employees feeling misunderstood or unwelcome, including difficulties arising in communication with some managers who are from a language background other than English.
- Reports that Aboriginal employees had left the Ali Curung Childcare Centre because they experienced the manager's communication approach as expecting immediate compliance with unfamiliar procedures without sufficient patience during the learning process
- The potential for negative workplace experiences to create lasting disincentives to re-enter local employment

SpeakWrite Consulting concluded that employer cultural safety training was a prerequisite for sustainable local employment outcomes. It cautioned that investment in job-readiness training would not produce lasting outcomes if employees subsequently entered workplaces they experienced as culturally unsafe.

➤ Foundational Support Needs Before Formal Training

Consultation findings from community visits and the Barkly Workforce Roundtable indicated that many disengaged young people required foundational support before commencing formal vocational education and training or employment programs.

The needs identified included:

- Basic literacy and numeracy support
- Confidence building, including confidence in themselves, their value and their ability to participate in cross-cultural environments
- Support to establish daily structure, including sleep routines, time management and regular engagement
- Access to role models who demonstrate that employment is achievable and worthwhile
- A meaningful purpose or reason to pursue employment

The consultation report concluded that vocational education, training and employment programs were unlikely to succeed unless these foundational needs were addressed.

➤ Training Not Aligned with Local Employment Opportunities

The consultation identified a disconnect between training delivered in Ali Curung and the jobs available in the community. SpeakWrite Consulting reported that vocational education and training completion rates in construction, business, primary industries and mining had been near zero over the preceding seven years, while arts and recreation accounted for most completions.

Centrefarm/AHPL reportedly expressed concern about Charles Darwin University's limited presence in the community and the rigid and inflexible nature of existing training packages. One example raised was an agriculture course containing a unit on artificial insemination of livestock, which was not relevant to AHPL's horticultural operations.

The consultation findings indicated that training should be tailored, practical and directly connected to genuine employment opportunities.

➤ Poor Information Flow and Community Exclusion from Decision-Making

Community members reported receiving insufficient information about available training programs. The Ali Curung Local Authority identified the absence of a streamlined process for coordinating and communicating information about workforce programs.

The consultation also found that decisions about training content, funding allocation and program design were being made outside Ali Curung, including in Darwin and Tennant Creek, without meaningful community input. Community members expressed a clear preference for greater local control over decisions about how workforce and training programs are designed, delivered and funded.

➤ Administrative Barriers to Entering Employment

Stakeholders identified several administrative requirements that created barriers to entering employment, particularly for young people. These included:

- Obtaining an Ochre Card/ Working with Children Clearance, which were described as time-consuming, expensive and procedurally complex
- Obtaining police checks, particularly for residents with minor historical contact with the justice system
- Meeting 100-point identity requirements when residents did not possess the necessary documentation or experienced difficulty obtaining it
- Opening bank accounts, with some young people not having the accounts required to receive wages through formal employment

Community Aspirations and Future Direction

SpeakWrite Consulting reported that community members expressed a consistent vision for Ali Curung's future. The consultation found that the community did not lack aspiration but required structural support, culturally safe workplaces and relevant opportunities to translate its aspirations into employment and economic participation.

The aspirations identified through consultation were:

- **Local jobs:** Real, permanent and well-supported employment for local people in the services and industries already operating within the community.
- **Generational development:** Long-term development through which young people progressively build skills, and elders and working adults serve as role models and mentors. The consultation identified Centrefarm/AHPL's Workforce and Employment Pathways Program model and its long-term investment in local capability as an example of this approach.
- **Local control:** Community involvement in decisions about the training delivered, the programs provided and the allocation of workforce and training funding, rather than programs being designed and imposed externally.
- **Culturally appropriate workplaces:** Workplaces in which Aboriginal employees are valued, understood and supported and are not managed through culturally inappropriate or unsafe practices.
- **Services built around the community:** Employment and career pathways for local people within aged care, dialysis, childcare and health services, including opportunities to progress beyond entry-level positions
- **Youth engagement:** Practical and motivating programs that give young people a reason to participate, provide clear pathways and offer the support needed to succeed.
- **Community economic development:** Opportunities for Ali Curung residents to benefit from developments such as Singleton Station and the Barkly Regional Deal rather than being excluded from their economic and employment benefits.

Emerging Developments and the Need for Workforce Preparation

The consultation report identified several investments and developments that could create employment or economic opportunities for Ali Curung:

- Singleton Station, with potential horticulture and agriculture employment opportunities on Kaytetye Country.
- The Purple House renal unit, creating opportunities for sustainable local employment in health service delivery.
- The youth sport and recreation complex, identified as a longstanding community priority under development.
- Barkly Regional Deal initiatives involving continued investment in employment, economic development and community governance.
- The 2028 solar eclipse, which may create tourism, hospitality and service opportunities in the Barkly region.

SpeakWrite Consulting concluded that, without deliberate, adequately resourced and culturally grounded workforce development, Ali Curung residents risked being observers rather than participants in these developments. The consultation report therefore identified workforce preparation as a current priority.

The consultation findings through SpeakWrite Consulting provide community and stakeholder perspectives on the barriers, aspirations and opportunities affecting workforce participation in Ali Curung. The evidence base developed for this report provides complementary demographic, workforce, industry, economic, education and training information.

Regional Strategic Context:

Barkly Regional Deal (2019-2029 and beyond)

The Barkly Regional Deal is a place-based partnership between the Australian Government, Northern Territory Government, and Barkly Regional Council, launched in 2019 to improve economic and social outcomes across the region. The Deal includes over \$100 million in investment delivered through 28 initiatives spanning economic development, social development, and culture and place-making, with implementation extending through to 2029.

The Barkly Regional Deal, Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030 and Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030 provide broader regional context for workforce planning in Ali Curung. The priorities identified in these strategies apply across the Barkly region and should not be interpreted as Ali Curung-specific consultation findings, initiatives or funding commitments unless the community is explicitly identified. Relevant regional workforce priorities are summarised below.

Table 27: Regional Workforce Development Priorities in Key Barkly Regional Strategies

Strategy	Directly Relevant Priorities
Barkly Regional Deal	• Implement the Regional Workforce Strategy. • Maximise Aboriginal employment. • Improve employment-service delivery. • Develop youth infrastructure and student boarding accommodation. • Support childcare, housing and trauma-informed services. • Strengthen local business development and mining and energy service capability. • Strengthen local community governance.
Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030	• Increase local employment, skills and workforce capability in human services. • Grow service industries and support local business development. • Develop culturally safe and responsive workplaces. • Create employment and enterprise opportunities arising from land management, renewable energy, agriculture, mining and major projects. • Improve coordination between employers, training providers, Aboriginal organisations and government.
Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030	• Coordinate foundation skills, language, literacy and numeracy, and work-readiness support. • Improve education, training and school-to-work pathways. • Align accredited, non-accredited and work-based training with regional needs. • Provide coordinated mentoring and support for students, job seekers, employees and employers. • Strengthening culturally safe workplaces and appropriate workforce flexibility. • Expand business development and Aboriginal enterprise opportunities.

Data Source: Barkly Regional Deal (2023), *Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030*; Barkly Regional Deal (2025), *Barkly Regional Deal Implementation Snapshot* (Version July 2025); Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (2022), *Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030* (pp. 58–63).

Barkly Regional Council Regional Plan: Regional Context

The Barkly Regional Council (BRC) 2025–26 Draft Regional Plan outlines the Council’s strategic priorities for the year across the Barkly region. They are summarised below:

1. Our Communities: Deliver sustainable services that meet the needs of the community
2. Our Employees: Become an employer of choice within the Barkly region
3. Strong Relationships: Sustain high levels of stakeholder engagement
4. Regional Growth: Create opportunities for Economic Development and Growth
5. Good Governance: Provide effective leadership & good governance
6. Our Assets: Maintain quality facilities, infrastructure and fleet

Strategic Priorities 2 (Our Employees) and 4 (Regional Growth), are outlined below as they are most relevant to workforce development outcomes.

Our Employees		
GOAL	OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
Become an employer of choice within the Barkly region	2.1 Create an innovative work culture that listens to all employees and provides a platform for feedback	Conduct annual staff survey and identify areas for improvement and implement initiatives
	2.2 Create a training continuum that supports the needs of the business and provides professional development opportunities for all staff	Create a training framework including training needs analysis and an annual training performance management plan
	2.3 Review organisational structures and position descriptions to ensure Council has a fit for purpose work force	Annual classification review against Enterprise Agreement in conjunction with budgets
	2.4 Improve attraction, retention, and motivation of staff	Create a rewards and recognition program that promotes personnel achievements and milestones.
	2.5 Develop a detailed employee induction package that offers a holistic view of all operations	Create Cultural Awareness training, and corporate training video modules

Figure 21: Barkly Regional Council Draft Plan: Strategic Priority 2

Source: Barkly Regional Council (2025).

Regional Growth		
GOAL	OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
Create opportunities for Economic Development and growth	4.1 Advocate for natural resources and agriculture de-velopment	Create a Barkly prospectus
	4.2 Council to continually promote Barkly's significant cultural and geographical uniqueness to support tourism campaigns	Collaborate with tourism partners to promote and sup-port Barkly events
	4.3 Council to investigate initiatives to promote economic advancement and growth of the region	Creating an environment for stakeholders to connect and collaborate on opportunities within the Barkly region
	4.4 Council to explore opportunities to develop properties in conjunction with key stakeholders	Identify BRC properties for further development
	4.5 Identify opportunities to hold/develop a major events for the region	Work with stakeholders to bring major events to the Barkly region

Figure 22: Barkly Regional Council Draft Plan: Strategic Priority 4

Source: Barkly Regional Council (2025).

Strategic Priorities 2 (Our Employees) and 4 (Regional Growth) address workforce capability and the economic conditions that support job creation across the Barkly region. They reinforce the need for a coordinated approach to workforce development that supports both the supply of a skilled local workforce and the demand generated through regional growth.

Future Projects Pipeline and Workforce Demand

The identified pipeline of future projects in the Barkly region provides a view of industry demand, investment timing, and potential job creation. The projects span key sectors including mining, energy, onshore natural gas, and agribusiness, and collectively indicate the scale and type of workforce required over the life of the projects, including roles in construction, operations, and supporting services.

Table 28a: Project Information in Barkly as at 30 July 2026

Project	Sector and proponent	Reported project value/CAPEX or financing	Location	Status as at 30 July 2026	Timing/ Project life
Operational Phase					
Nobles Gold Project, including Juno, Mauretania and Chariot	Gold and copper — Tennant Mines, a subsidiary of Pan African Resources	Not available	Tennant Creek mineral field	The initial Nobles operation commenced in May 2025. Other deposits, including Juno, Chariot and Mauretania, remain at feasibility or future-development stages.	Continued ramp-up and assessment of additional deposits. Project life unavailable
Construction Phase					
Carpentaria Pilot Project	Onshore natural gas — Empire Energy	Not available	Eastern Beetaloo Sub-basin	Pilot project committed: Final Investment Decision (FID) reached in December 2025. Construction of the Carpentaria Gas Plant and associated infrastructure is underway.	Commissioning and first appraisal gas are targeted for 2026
Integrated Beetaloo Development	Onshore natural gas — Tamboran Resources and joint-venture partners	Total pilot-project CAPEX not available. Financing of up to A\$179.8 million was secured for the Sturt Plateau Compression Facility and associated costs.	Beetaloo Basin	Pilot project committed: FID reached in September 2025. Well completion and compression-facility construction are progressing.	First gas sales targeted for the third quarter of 2026.
Planning Phase					

Project	Sector and proponent	Reported project value/CAPEX or financing	Location	Status as at 30 July 2026	Timing/ Project life
Warrego Rehabilitation Project	Magnetite recovery — Northern Iron Ltd	Previously reported project value: \$300m. Current estimate not verified	Approximately 50 km north-west of Tennant Creek	Operator entered administration in April 2025; project in care and maintenance since July 2025. NT Government states it has been purchased, with plans to return to production in 2026.	Return to production planned for 2026; no precise date or current mine life stated
Wonarah Phosphate Project	Phosphate — Avenira Ltd	Initial direct-shipping ore (DSO) development CAPEX: \$11.5m	Approximately 245 km east of Tennant Creek	Approvals are in place. Avenira is progressing procurement, logistics and other preparatory activities. Pre-stripping is proposed to commence by the end of 2026	Construction proposed for Q4 2026; production proposed for 2027; reported mine life of 30+ years.
Australia–Asia PowerLink	Renewable energy — SunCable	Previously estimated whole-project capital cost: A\$35 billion in 2022	Powell Creek/Elliott region to Darwin	Environmental approval announced in 2024; and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement with Powell Creek TOs was signed in 2025. Pre-FID development stage	FID expected in 2027; electricity supply expected in the early 2030s.
Ammaroo Phosphate Project	Phosphate — Verdant Minerals Pty Ltd	\$900m estimated CAPEX for full capacity	Approximately 100 km southeast of Ali Curung	Approvals in place	Construction 2027/28; production 2028/29; mine life 25+ years
Rover 1	Copper, gold and critical minerals — Castile Resources Pty Ltd	2022 Pre-production estimated CAPEX \$279.5m	Approximately 80 km south-west of Tennant Creek	Environmental approvals process; updated Environmental Impact Study accepted in December 2024. Bankable feasibility study (BFS) work continues	Construction and production: TBA, awaiting updated studies and BFS
Singleton Horticulture Project	Agribusiness — Fortune Agribusiness Funds Management Pty Ltd	A\$250 million proposed investment over nine years	Western Davenport Region, near Ali Curung	Environmental assessment remains in progress; open for investment. The granted water extraction licence remains subject to legal proceedings.	Four-stage, nine-year development. 30-year term granted for water extraction license. Current delivery dates are not verified. Draft Environmental Impact Statement due October 2028.
Orlando and Gecko	Copper, gold, silver and bismuth - CuFe Ltd (55%, operator) and Gecko Mining Pty Ltd (45%)	No current project CAPEX available	Approximately 30 km north-west of Tennant Creek	Advanced feasibility stage. CuFe expanded the Orlando scoping study in 2026 to examine underground mining and additional bismuth and silver revenue. A feasibility study for shared processing infrastructure is also progressing.	No verified construction, production or mine-life dates

Project	Sector and proponent	Reported project value/CAPEX or financing	Location	Status as at 30 July 2026	Timing/ Project life
White Devil	Gold - Tennant Mines, a subsidiary of Pan African Resources (formerly the Tennant-Emmerson Joint Venture)	\$11.8 million pre-production CAPEX; \$32.8 million peak funding requirement	Approximately 37 km north-west of Tennant Creek	Approvals are in place. The Mining Management Plan was authorised in July 2026. A feasibility study was underway, with completion expected in 2026. Pan African Resources completed its acquisition of Emmerson Resources in July 2026, consolidating ownership of the project through Tennant Mines.	Construction scheduled for Q3 2026 and production for Q4 2026. Reported mine life: seven years
Concept or Exploration Phase					
Barkly and Babbler projects	Copper and Gold - Tennant Minerals Ltd	Not available	Barkly Project near Tennant Creek; Babbler target within the project area	Exploration. Drilling planned for 2026 at Bluebird and nearby targets.	Further drilling during 2026; no construction, production or investment-decision date available
Desert Bloom Hydrogen	Renewable hydrogen — Aqua Aerem/Axcentium; previously associated with Sanguine Impact Investment	Potential full-scale value of \$15bn stated in 2021	Proposed Central Australian production, linked to Darwin/export markets	Status unclear.	No current Final Investment Decision (FID) or construction date confirmed.
Work Experience Pathway Project	Agribusiness/workforce development — Aboriginal Land Economic Development Agency (ALEDA)	Not available	Ali Curung	2023 information describes this as part of an ALEDA horticulture and work-experience pilot. No information available to confirm present status.	No current decision or delivery date
Explorer 108	Lead, zinc and silver - Castile Resources Ltd	Not available	Rover mineral field, approximately 95 km west-south-west of Tennant Creek	Mineral-resource-stage deposit within Castile's wider Rover Project. No separate development study, approval application or committed mining project was publicly available for Explorer 108.	No construction, production or mine-life dates available

Source: Northern Territory Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2026); Alekareng Horticulture Pty Ltd (2023); Australian Mining (2025); Beetaloo Energy Australia Limited (2026); CuFe Ltd (2025); Emmerson Resources Ltd (n.d.); Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (2024); Northern Territory Geological Survey (2026); SunCable (n.d.); Tamboran Resources Corporation (2025); Tennant Minerals Ltd (n.d.); and Verdant Minerals (n.d.).

Table 28b: Project Workforce Implications and Local Relevance as at 30 July 2026

Project	Construction employment	Operational employment	Likely occupations (indicative only)	Employment status as at 30 July 2026	Relevance to Ali Curung
Operation Phase					
Nobles Gold Project, including Juno, Mauretania and Chariot	Approximately 80 jobs during construction. Construction completed April 2025	Approximately 160 current jobs for the Nobles Gold Operation	Mining and processing operators; mechanical and electrical trades; geology; maintenance; transport; administration; environmental and safety roles.	Nobles has operated since May 2025. The approximate 160 jobs are reported against the operating Nobles Gold Operation.	The operation is located near Tennant Creek. The number of employees who are locals is not available.
Construction Phase					
Carpentaria Pilot Project	Not available	Not available	Drilling and completions; gas-plant construction and operation; mechanical and electrical trades; heavy vehicles; maintenance; environment and safety	FID was reached in December 2025 and construction is underway. No project-specific construction or operational employment total available.	The project is located at Exploration Permit 187 (EP187), approximately 135 km south-west of Borroloola in the eastern Beetaloo Sub-basin. No specific employment numbers or workforce commitments were identified.
Integrated Beetaloo Development	300	300	Drilling; well servicing; construction; mechanical and electrical trades; gas-plant operation; heavy vehicles; maintenance; logistics; environment and safety	The pilot project committed. FID reached, and construction is progressing.	The proposed development is located within the Beetaloo Sub-basin. Proponent states an intention to create NT jobs. The number of employees who are locals is not available.
Planning Phase					
Warrego Rehabilitation Project	Approximately 70	Not available	Plant and heavy-equipment operators; maintenance trades; laboratory and quality control; transport; site support	Existing jobs became uncertain after external administration; the 70-job figure was a forecast	The project is located near Tennant Creek. No information on allocated positions for residents.
Wonarah Phosphate Project	Approximately 50	Approximately 100	Open-cut mining; mobile-plant operation; road transport; maintenance; geology; environmental monitoring; administration and site services.	Not current employment or guaranteed positions. Construction and production remain proposed.	Within the wider Barkly region. No allocation specifically for Ali Curung or Barkly residents available.

Project	Construction employment	Operational employment	Likely occupations (indicative only)	Employment status as at 30 July 2026	Relevance to Ali Curung
Australia–Asia PowerLink	1750 direct and indirect jobs for each year of the construction phase	Approximately 350 long-term direct jobs	Civil and electrical construction; transmission crews; solar and battery technicians; engineers; environment and heritage; logistics; maintenance	Announced potential employment; not current or committed until FID	The project footprint passes through the Barkly region near Elliott. Employment figures apply across the Northern Territory and are not community specific.
Ammaroo Phosphate Project	400	250	Civil construction; mining and processing operations; drill and blast; mechanical and electrical trades; maintenance; transport; administration; environmental and safety roles.	Approvals are in place, but construction has not commenced; these are not current or committed jobs.	The project is located approximately 100 km southeast of Ali Curung in the Barkly region. There is no information on how many jobs will be filled by locals.
Rover 1	200	140	Underground mining; plant operation; process engineering; electrical and mechanical trades; geology; heavy equipment; transport; environment and safety	Project estimates reported while Rover 1 remains in development and approvals. They are not committed or current jobs.	The project is located in the Tennant Creek mineral field. No information on allocated positions for local residents.
Singleton Horticulture Project	117	122	Farm work; irrigation; machinery operation; horticultural supervision; packing and logistics; maintenance; administration	Potential employment only; project has not reached construction or operation.	The project is near Ali Curung. No available information on allocated positions for locals.
Orlando and Gecko	Not available	Not available	Geology and resource definition; drilling; mining engineering; metallurgy; environmental assessment; project management. If developed: mining, processing, trades, maintenance and logistics.	Potential future employment only.	The projects are located near Tennant Creek. No positions have been specifically allocated to residents.
White Devil	Up to 25	Up to 50	Open-pit and potentially underground mining; mobile-plant operation; geology; grade control; drilling and blasting; haulage; trades; maintenance; environmental management and safety.	Announced future employment associated with an approved project. The 'up to' figures are project forecasts, not confirmed current workforce numbers.	The project is approximately 37 km from Tennant Creek, with proposed processing at the Nobles facility approximately 48 km from White Devil. No information on how many positions will be filled by residents.
Concept or Exploration Phase					

Project	Construction employment	Operational employment	Likely occupations (indicative only)	Employment status as at 30 July 2026	Relevance to Ali Curung
Barkly and Babbler projects	Not available	Not available	Geologists; field technicians; drilling crews; surveyors; environmental personnel; machinery operators; camp-support roles.	Exploration employment only. No construction or operational employment figure published	The projects are located near Tennant Creek. No specific local employment numbers available.
Desert Bloom Hydrogen	Up to 1,000 previously announced	More than 120 previously announced	Renewable-energy construction; electrical trades; engineering; plant operation; water systems; maintenance; logistics	Historical projections only; not committed and not current employment	The 2021 announcement states construction would occur in Darwin and at multiple on-site locations
Work Experience Pathway Project	Not applicable	Not available	Horticultural work experience; farm operations; irrigation; machinery use; work-readiness roles	Training and work-experience participation only, not committed project employment. Training and work-experience initiative rather than a construction project.	The initiative relates to Ali Curung.
Explorer 108	Not available	Not available	Geologists; drilling and field technicians; resource-modelling specialists; metallurgists and environmental personnel.	No committed construction or operational employment available for Explorer 108 as a standalone project.	The project is located in the Rover Mineral Field, approximately 95 km west southwest of Tennant Creek and an estimated 270 km from Elliott. No local employment allocation available.

Source: Northern Territory Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2026); Alekarenge Horticulture Pty Ltd (2023); Australian Mining (2025); Beetaloo Energy Australia Limited (2026); CuFe Ltd (2025); Emmerson Resources Ltd (n.d.); Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (2024); Northern Territory Geological Survey (2026); SunCable (n.d.); Tamboran Resources Corporation (2025); Tennant Minerals Ltd (n.d.); and Verdant Minerals (n.d.).

 Projects most relevant to Ali Curung due to their proximity to the community

Understanding the project pipeline enables workforce planning to support the development of targeted training pathways, align skills with industry demand, and plan for workforce attraction, retention, and accommodation. It ensures training and employment pathways are aligned to major project opportunities across the region.

Step 4: Workforce Planning Opportunities

The analysis of community demographics, education and training, the local employment landscape, and economic context in Ali Curung presents the following opportunities for workforce planning:

Table 29: Workforce Planning Opportunities

1. Increase Labour Force Participation and Reduce Unemployment	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	• Aboriginal labour force participation in Ali Curung is relatively low, with more Aboriginal residents recorded as not in the labour force than participating in the labour force. • Unemployment remains high among those who are active in the labour market. • Young people, particularly those aged 15–24, face barriers to early workforce entry. • Some residents may require staged support before they are ready to enter training or employment. • Some employers may require additional support to provide culturally appropriate onboarding, supervision and workplace practices that support Aboriginal employment and retention.
Opportunity:	Increase workforce participation by strengthening engagement, work readiness, case management, employer capability and supported pathways into training, work experience and employment.
Action:	• Develop staged participation pathways that move people from engagement activities into work readiness, training and employment. • Deliver work readiness programs focused on routine, attendance, communication, confidence and workplace expectations. • Provide individual mentoring, regular workplace check-ins and post-placement support to help participants adjust to employment and remain in work. • Align RAES activities with real employment and work experience opportunities. • Establish a consistent local process for communicating upcoming training, work experience and employment opportunities to Ali Curung residents. • Provide coordinated assistance to obtain identification documents, bank accounts, Ochre Cards/Working with Children Clearances, police checks and other employment-entry requirements • Strengthen the capability of local employers and service providers to provide culturally safe workplaces through cultural safety training for managers, supervisors and team leaders. • Support local employers to use culturally appropriate communication, induction, supervision and feedback practices. • Establish clear mentoring arrangements and early workplace support to address communication, cultural or adjustment difficulties before they

	result in employees leaving. • Work with employers to identify practical workplace adjustments that support attendance, retention, family responsibilities and cultural obligations.
2. Broaden the Local Employment Base and Reduce Industry Concentration	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	• Ali Curung has a small employment base, with local employment concentrated in a limited number of industries. • Several industries with regional employment potential, record limited or no Aboriginal employed resident value added in Ali Curung. • The small local business base limits the number and diversity of local jobs available within the community.
Opportunity:	Broaden local employment opportunities by strengthening existing service-sector pathways while also developing new local enterprise, community-based employment and access to regional industries.
Action:	• Build progression pathways within existing employment sectors, including public administration, education, retail, arts and community services. • Support local job creation through community-controlled service delivery, arts and cultural enterprise, youth programs and local maintenance activities. • Explore local procurement and employment targets where appropriate. • Support Aboriginal enterprise development and small business capability. • Link community-based employment programs to longer term jobs, not only short-term participation activities. • Assess potential tourism, hospitality, cultural enterprise, visitor-service and temporary employment opportunities associated with the 2028 solar eclipse.
3. Strengthen Local Employment Pathways in Health, Education and Early Childhood	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	• Local health, education, childcare and community services provide potential employment opportunities, but available positions do not always translate into accessible pathways for local Aboriginal residents. • No Aboriginal employed residents are recorded in the health care industry in the available employment data. • Entry requirements, qualifications, clearances, limited workplace experience and insufficient mentoring or supervision can restrict access to service-sector employment. • Employers may require support to develop entry-level roles, structured onboarding, culturally safe supervision and supported progression pathways
Opportunity:	Develop supported local employment and career-progression pathways in health, education and early childhood services that respond to identified vacancies and strengthen Aboriginal participation in essential community services.
Action:	• Work with local health, education, childcare, aged care and community-service employers to identify current vacancies, entry-level roles and potential employment pathways for Ali Curung residents.

	• Develop entry-level and career-progression pathways into health care, renal care, aged care, education support and early-childhood services, including workforce preparation for the proposed Purple House renal unit. • Identify the qualifications, foundation skills, workplace experience, driver licensing, Ochre Cards or Working with Children Clearances, police checks and other requirements associated with each pathway. • Explore work experience, supported employment, traineeships, school-based pathways and locally delivered training that prepare residents for identified service-sector roles. • Work with employers and training providers to align training content and delivery with actual local jobs, workplace requirements and relevant qualification requirements. • Establish structured employer onboarding, workplace supervision, mentoring and post-placement support to improve participation and retention. • Promote culturally safe workplaces and employment arrangements that accommodate family responsibilities and cultural obligations where practicable.
4. Strengthen Pathways into Agriculture, Horticulture and Land-Based Work	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	• Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is the largest contributor to Ali Curung employed resident value added, but no Aboriginal employed residents are recorded in this industry • Existing horticulture and work experience investments provide a platform but need to translate into sustained jobs. • Regional pastoral, horticulture and land-based opportunities may not be fully connected to local training and employment pathways.
Opportunity:	Develop structured pathways into agriculture, horticulture, pastoral work, land management and related practical roles.
Action:	• Strengthen links between the Work Experience Pathway Project, horticulture activity and real employment outcomes. • Explore pathways into pastoral work, station operations, fencing, bore work, machinery operation and land-based maintenance. • Align training with practical job requirements, including machinery tickets, chemical handling, 4WD, fencing, workplace safety and driver licensing. • Support progression from entry-level work experience into paid employment, traineeships or seasonal work. • Work with employers, local organisations and training providers to align training content and delivery approaches with actual local jobs, workplace requirements and relevant qualification requirements. • Explore community enterprise, cooperative employment and other locally determined models through which employment and economic benefits can be shared more broadly within the community. • Engage with the Singleton Horticulture Project proponent to identify potential jobs, skills, licences, training, recruitment arrangements and

	pathways for Ali Curung residents if the project proceeds. • Identify and address transport, accommodation, roster arrangements, family responsibilities and cultural obligations that may affect participation in agricultural, horticultural, pastoral and land-based employment outside Ali Curung. • Explore locally based work experience and preparatory employment that enable residents to develop relevant skills before considering regional placements.
5. Build Foundational Skills, LLND Capability	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	• Literacy, numeracy and broader foundational skills remain barriers to training participation, qualification completion and workforce readiness. • Digital capability and access to learning resources are important for participation in modern training and employment systems.
Opportunity:	Embed LLND skills into all workforce pathways so foundational skills are developed in practical, job-linked contexts.
Action:	• Integrate LLND support into vocational training rather than delivering it as a standalone program. • Deliver contextualised LLND support linked to specific employment pathways, including health, education, childcare, aged care, retail, administration, horticulture, construction, transport and community services. • Use practical, hands-on and culturally appropriate delivery models. • Include digital skills, online forms, email, job applications and workplace technology in pre-employment programs. • Break training into smaller, achievable units that build confidence and momentum.
6. Strengthen Youth Engagement and School-to-Work Transitions	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	• Young people face barriers moving from school into training, work experience and employment.
Opportunity:	Strengthen youth pathways through practical school-to-work models that connect education, work experience, mentoring and employment.
Action:	• Develop structured school-to-work pathways linked to local and regional employers • Expand VET in schools, school-based traineeships, paid work experience and workplace exposure. • Provide mentoring, role models and transition support for young people. • Use sport, arts, culture and recreation activities as engagement pathways into training and work readiness. • Provide supported transitions into local service-sector employment through employer engagement, mentoring and culturally appropriate workplace induction.
7. Improve Access to Regional Industry Pathways	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	• Ali Curung's local economy is narrow, while the broader Barkly region has future project demand across mining, energy, natural gas, agribusiness,

	construction, operations and support services. • Residents may face barriers accessing regional opportunities, including transport, licensing, mobility, work readiness and employer connections. • The feasibility of regional employment pathways depends on employment arrangements and support options being discussed with residents, families, community representatives and employers.
Opportunity:	Connect Ali Curung residents to suitable regional employment pathways while identifying and addressing transport, accommodation, training delivery, family responsibilities, roster arrangements and cultural obligations through community and employer consultation.
Action:	• Map upcoming regional projects and likely workforce needs. • Build partnerships with regional employers in mining, construction, transport, agriculture and energy-related projects. • Identify entry-level roles and the licences, tickets and skills required to access them. • Support driver licensing, white card, machinery tickets, first aid, 4WD and other job-entry requirements. • Explore supported transport, block work, work camps or regional placement models where appropriate.
1. Strengthen Coordination Across Programs, Providers and Employers	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	• Workforce activity is spread across multiple grants, programs, providers and organisations. • Without coordination, funded programs may operate as separate activities rather than a clear pathway from engagement to training, employment and progression.
Opportunity:	Create a coordinated workforce pathway model for Ali Curung that aligns funding, training, employers, community organisations and regional opportunities.
Action:	• Establish a local or regional workforce coordination mechanism for Ali Curung. • Map current programs, grants, training providers, employers and upcoming workforce demand. • Develop a shared training calendar and participant pipeline. • Coordinate RTO delivery to reduce duplication and improve viability for small cohorts. • Use existing funded programs as employment pipelines, with clear outcomes for training completion, job placement, retention and progression.

While there are existing strengths to build on, including local service delivery, arts and culture, education, horticulture and funded work experience initiatives, the data also shows ongoing barriers related to labour force participation, foundational skills, limited local employment diversity and access to higher-value regional industries.

Improving foundational skills, including LLND, will be critical to supporting residents to participate in training, complete qualifications, meet workplace expectations and progress into stable employment.

Future workforce planning should therefore focus on strengthening local pathways while improving connections to broader Barkly opportunities in agriculture, construction, transport, mining, energy and community services.

Achieving this will require continued collaboration between community members, Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, training providers and employers, with a focus on practical actions that lead to measurable employment, retention and progression outcomes for Ali Curung residents.

Ali Curung Workforce Action and Implementation Plan

The Ali Curung Workforce Action and Implementation Plan consolidates the identified workforce opportunities and consultation findings into 7 implementation strategies. Each strategy and its actions are classified as either a:

- Direct workforce action or
- Workforce-enabling action.

The plan identifies the strategy and actions, suggested lead organisation, potential partners, potential first steps, indicative timeframe, measures and key risks.

Coordinated workforce governance is identified as the first strategic action, followed by immediate attention to:

- Increasing workforce participation, readiness and employment retention.
- Broadening local employment, service-sector and enterprise opportunities
- Strengthening pathways into agriculture, horticulture, pastoral and land-based work.

Improving access to regional industry pathways, embedding foundational skills, LLND capability in job-linked training and strengthening supported youth school-to-work transition activities are recommended alongside the top three priorities.

The complete implementation plan is provided in Appendix 6: Ali Curung Workforce Action and Implementation Plan.

Table 30 below presents the foundational first action and three immediate implementation priorities. The first action required is establishing the Ali Curung Workforce Working Group and confirming the lead, responsibilities, implementation schedule and participation arrangements, which will provide the coordinated approach needed to progress the plan.

Once these arrangements are in place, Strategic Actions 2, 3 and 4 are the next three immediate priorities. The following two rows are complementary implementation recommendations for consideration by the Working Group.

Table 30: Top Implementation Priorities (See Appendix 6 for the Complete Workforce Action and Implementation Plan)

Priority	Related implementation strategic action	Purpose	Immediate first steps
First Action	Action 1 – Establish coordinated workforce governance and implementation arrangements	Establish the coordination, accountability, community participation and shared planning required to implement and monitor the remaining workforce actions.	a. Confirm the lead agency and coordinating officer. b. Establish the Ali Curung Workforce Working Group. c. Confirm community, employer and provider representation. d. Map existing programs, services and workforce activities. e. Prepare an implementation schedule and shared training calendar.
Then 1	Action 2 – Increase workforce participation, readiness and employment retention	Address the practical, administrative and workplace barriers preventing residents from entering and remaining in local employment.	a. Identify residents requiring work-readiness, mentoring or administrative support. b. Assist with identification documents, bank accounts, Ochre Cards and police checks. c. Communicate available training, work experience and employment opportunities. d. Engage local employers to strengthen cultural safety, onboarding, supervision and workplace support. e. Connect participants to existing vacancies and supported work experience.
Then 2	Action 3 – Broaden local employment, service-sector and enterprise opportunities	Identify accessible local jobs and establish employment and progression pathways within existing services, community organisations and emerging enterprises.	a. Identify current vacancies and workforce needs across local services and businesses. b. Meet health, aged care, childcare, education, retail and other local employers. c. Confirm potential workforce requirements for the proposed Purple House renal unit. d. Identify suitable entry-level roles and progression pathways. e. Connect opportunities to training, work experience and recruitment support.
Then 3	Action 4 – Strengthen pathways into agriculture, horticulture, pastoral and land-based work	Progress the Work Experience Pathway Project and existing horticulture activities into paid employment and prepare residents for agricultural and land-based opportunities.	a. Confirm the Work Experience Pathway Project's delivery arrangements, participant targets, intended jobs and employment outcomes. b. Identify horticulture, pastoral and land-based employers and available roles. c. Confirm required skills, licences, tickets and training.

			d. Engage the Singleton Horticulture Project proponent, subject to project progress. e. Develop an initial training, work experience and employment pathway.
Recommended alongside	Action 7 – Improve access to regional industry pathways	Commence targeted regional employer engagement while prioritising opportunities supported by verified workforce demand and suitable access arrangements.	a. Identify relevant regional employers, contractors and project proponents. b. Confirm actual roles, anticipated timing and entry requirements. c. Assess transport, accommodation, roster arrangements, family responsibilities, cultural obligations and placement-support requirements through community consultation. d. Pursue pathways only where workforce demand, participant interest and practical access arrangements can be confirmed.
Recommended supporting	Action 5 – Embed foundational skills, LLND capability in job-linked training Action 6 – Strengthen supported youth school-to-work transitions	Support participation and employment outcomes by embedding foundational and digital skills in practical pathways and connecting young people to education, work experience and employment.	a. Identify language, literacy, numeracy and digital support required for the priority pathways. b. Embed foundational skills in local service-sector, horticulture and work-readiness activities. c. Identify students and recent school leavers requiring transition support. d. Connect young people to mentors, local employers, the Work Experience Pathway Project and supported work experience.

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Appendix 1: RTO Qualification/Program Type by Funding Source

Barkly remote delivery region | Collection year 2024

Note: Data relates to the Barkly remote region (including Ali Curung). Regional data (i.e. Tennant Creek) is not included.

RTO	Qualification/program type	Fee for Service	Fee Free TAFE	General Recurrent	NTG-DoE Funding	Territory Workforce Program	Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grant	Other Government Funded	User Choice	Build Skills	JobTrainer	TOTAL distinct student count by RTO qualification/program type
Government/Public Providers												
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Certificate I	–	–	31	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	31
	Certificate II	–	–	30	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	30
	Certificate III	–	–	26	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	26
	Unit Only	17	–	48	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	65
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Total		17	–	135	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	152
Charles Darwin University	Certificate II	–	–	24	–	–	–	–	43	–	–	67
	Certificate III	–	–	21	–	–	–	–	32	–	–	53
	Certificate IV	–	–	10	–	–	–	–	8	–	–	18
	Diploma	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
	Unit Only	–	–	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6
	Short Course and Skill Set	–	–	59	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	59
	Learner Support	–	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4
	Ticket/Licence/Compliance	–	–	16	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	16
Charles Darwin University Total		–	–	142	–	–	–	–	83	–	–	225
Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services	Unit Only	–	–	–	–	–	–	8	–	–	–	8
Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services Total		–	–	–	–	–	–	8	–	–	–	8
Not-for-Profit Providers												

RTO	Qualification/program type	Fee for Service	Fee Free TAFE	General Recurrent	NTG-DoE Funding	Territory Workforce Program	Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grant	Other Government Funded	User Choice	Build Skills	JobTrainer	TOTAL distinct student count by RTO qualification/program type
Royal Life Saving Society Australia NT Branch Inc	Unit Only	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	9
Royal Life Saving Society Australia NT Branch Inc Total		9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	9
SJT Training Aboriginal Corporation	Certificate III	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
	Unit Only	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6
SJT Training Aboriginal Corporation Total		6	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	7
The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation	Certificate I	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
	Certificate II	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	5
	Certificate III	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	2
	Unit Only	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation Total		2	2	–	2	–	–	–	5	–	–	11
Private-for-Profit Providers												
Coastal & Rural Training Pty Ltd	Certificate III	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	27	–	–	27
	Certificate IV	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	15	–	–	15
Coastal & Rural Training Pty Ltd Total		–	–	–	–	–	–	–	42	–	–	42
Eagle Training Services NT Pty Ltd	Unit Only	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5
Eagle Training Services NT Pty Ltd Total		5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5
Gisborne Services Pty Ltd	Unit Only	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7
Gisborne Services Pty Ltd Total		7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7
Jenagar Pty Ltd	Unit Only	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8
Jenagar Pty Ltd Total		8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8
Learning Knowing Achieving Pty Ltd	Certificate II	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	5

RTO	Qualification/program type	Fee for Service	Fee Free TAFE	General Recurrent	NTG-DoE Funding	Territory Workforce Program	Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grant	Other Government Funded	User Choice	Build Skills	JobTrainer	TOTAL distinct student count by RTO qualification/program type
	Certificate III	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	3
	Diploma	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
Learning Knowing Achieving Pty Ltd Total		1	4	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	3	10
Outback Stores Pty Ltd	Certificate II	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	–	–	7
	Certificate III	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
	Certificate IV	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	2
Outback Stores Pty Ltd Total		2	–	–	–	–	–	–	8	–	–	10
Response Services Employment & Training Pty Ltd	Certificate III	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4
	Certificate IV	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Response Services Employment & Training Pty Ltd Total		5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5
Star College Australia Pty Ltd	Certificate III	–	15	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	15
	Unit Only	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	17	–	17
Star College Australia Pty Ltd Total		–	15	–	–	–	–	–	–	17	–	32
Train Safe NT Pty Ltd	Unit Only	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7
Train Safe NT Pty Ltd Total		7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7
TOTAL distinct student count by funding source		69	21	277	2	–	–	8	141	17	3	538

Source: Northern Territory Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2026). Unpublished raw data provided to Desert Knowledge Australia.

Notes:

- 1.The total distinct student count is the sum of the reported distinct student count for each qualification/ program and funding source type. A student may be counted more than once if they participated in multiple programs or received training through different funding sources.
- 2.Qualifications/programs funded through International-Other Revenue are excluded.

Appendix 2: Qualifications Required and Relevant VET Pathways for Role Vacancies - February-May 2026

Occupation	No. of Roles	Qualification	Details	Education/ Training Provider	Cultural Framework
Safe House Officer	Several	CHC43215 Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs	Duration: 1-year full-time (FT) Course fee: NTG supported for eligible NT residents: Student contribution: \$4246.55.	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 
Night Patrol Officer	Several	Does not require a formal qualification. Candidate could be trained in: CHC32015 Certificate III in Community Services	Duration: 6 months FT Course fee: Fee Free TAFE for eligible domestic students who are NT residents.	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 
Safe House Team Leader	1	Bachelor of Social Work	Duration: 4 years FT Course fee: Commonwealth supported places for eligible students	Charles Darwin University (Casuarina, online)	Caring for Family and Community 
Art Centre Manager	1	BSB50420 Diploma of Leadership and Management	Duration: 1 to 2 years depending on delivery and study arrangement Course fee: NTG supported for eligible NT residents: Student contribution: \$2772	Charles Darwin University (Danala Precinct, Online)	Servicing the Community 
T-Y12 Physical Education / Art Teacher	1	Bachelor of Education Secondary	Duration: 4 years FT Course fee: Commonwealth supported places for eligible students	Charles Darwin University (Danala - Education and Community Precinct, Online)	Building the Community 
Remote Area Nurse	1	Bachelor of Nursing	Duration: 3 years FT Course fee: Commonwealth supported places for eligible students	Charles Darwin University (Casuarina, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 

Occupation	No. of Roles	Qualification	Details	Education/ Training Provider	Cultural Framework
Works Supervisor	1	VTP442 White card RII30820 Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations Or CPC40120 Certificate IV in Building and Construction	Duration: 1 day training Course fee: NTG supported for eligible regional and remote NT residents. Student contribution: \$23.10 for eligible regional and remote candidates; \$120 full fee Duration: 2 years Course fee: NTG supported for eligible NT residents: Student contribution: \$3734.50 Duration: 1 year Course fee: NTG supported for eligible NT residents: Student contribution: \$3511.20	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and remote delivery) Charles Darwin University (Remote delivery only) Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, remote delivery and online)	Servicing the Community 

Source: Desert Knowledge Australia analysis of job advertisements and qualification requirements from EthicalJobs.com.au, Jora, LinkedIn and SEEK; national training package information from training.gov.au; and course information from Batchelor Institute and Charles Darwin University (Charles Darwin University, n.d.-a-n.d.-i; Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, n.d.; accessed February–March 2026).

Note: Qualification pathways are indicative and based on nationally recognised training packages listed on training.gov.au and typical industry requirements. The courses listed are provided as examples only. Other RTOs may offer additional relevant qualifications and training pathways. Course information, fees, delivery locations and availability are current as at August 2026 and must be confirmed directly with the relevant education or training provider. Fees and funding eligibility are subject to change.

Appendix 3: Barkly Regional Deal Implementation Snapshot as of July 2025 (Total Funding \$100.5 Million Investment)

Economic Development		
Initiative	Total Funding/ Expended	Status
1 Regional Workforce Strategy	\$1m/\$1.22m	Ongoing
2 Youth infrastructure	\$7.62m/\$4.56m	Ongoing
3 Barkly Business Hub	\$3.6m/\$2.7m	Ongoing
4 Youth Justice Facility	\$9.38m/\$7.38m	Completed
5 New housing builds	Ongoing	Ongoing
6 Justice infrastructure investments	\$11.5m/\$0.0002m	Ongoing
7 Upgrade Alpururulam airstrip	Ongoing	Completed
8 Economic growth strategy	\$0.3m/\$0.1m	Ongoing
9 Maximising Aboriginal employment	Ongoing	Ongoing
10 Barkly Mining and Energy Services Hub	Ongoing	Ongoing
11 Weather radar	\$17.9m/\$5.9m	Ongoing
12 Improvements to CDP delivery	Ongoing	Ongoing
Social Development		
13 Elliott Visitor Park	\$15.3m/\$0.39m	Ongoing
14 Government investment services reform	\$0.6m/\$0.6m	Ongoing
15 Crisis youth support	\$3m	Ongoing
16 Trauma informed care	\$3m/\$2.89m	Ongoing
17 Multi-purpose accommodation facility	\$0.25m/\$0.25m	Completed
18 Student boarding accommodation	\$19.3m/\$0.74m	Ongoing
19 Social & affordable housing private public partnership	\$2.4m/\$2.4m	Completed
20 Community sports	\$0.8m/\$0.8m	Completed
21 Aged care services	Ongoing	Completed
22 Childcare places	Ongoing	Completed
Culture and Place-Making		
23 Barkly local community projects fund	\$6m/\$4.46m	Ongoing
24 Local community governance	\$2.95m/\$2.35m	Ongoing
25 Community mediation	\$1.65m/\$1.07m	Ongoing
26 Arts Centre in Elliott (Feasibility Study)	Ongoing	Completed
27 Council website update (Aboriginal history)	Ongoing	Ongoing

28 Marketing and promotion	Ongoing	Ongoing
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Source: *Barkly Regional Deal (2025)*

Appendix 4: Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030: Targets

Target	Objectives	Industries	Major Projects and Investments	Key Stakeholders for Engagement
T1 Attract people into local jobs in human services and support them to perform and excel in service delivery	• Increase job participation and opportunities to develop businesses in human services • Train and upskill the regional labour market to meet current and future demand • Attract skilled workers to the Barkly Region to meet current demand • Improve coordination and performance in the human services sector	• Disability services • Health • Family and community services • Aged Care	• Regional Workforce Strategy (the Deal) • Flexible Workforce Initiative Fund (NT Government) • Skilled Migration Strategy (NT Government) • Trauma Informed Care Training (NT Government) • Youth Justice Centre operations • National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)	• National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) • National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) • NT Government • NGOs and Service Providers • Aboriginal Corporations • Aboriginal Health Organisations • Employment Services Providers • Barkly Regional Council • Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund (NAIF)
T2 Grow and expand service industries to meet increasing demand and improve liveability for everyone	• Meet the demands of economic, population and industry growth • A thriving creative industries sector • Support new and existing businesses and organisations to grow	• Creative Industries • Tourism • Hospitality • Local business development • Professional services	• Barkly Business Hub • Upgrade Nyinkka Nyunyu Cultural Centre • Battery Hill Mining Centre and Visitor Information Centre • Elliott - quality accommodation options for both tourists and business travellers • Elliott visitor experiences - gold rush and ore mining interpretive displays • Newcastle Waters - off-highway camping facilities including cultural tourism offer • Elliott – Lake Mary Ann visitor amenities • Karlu Karlu – enhance overnight visitor amenities	• Barkly Regional Deal (NT Government) • Barkly Business Hub • NTIBN Business Hub • Industry Capability Network (ICN) • Creative Ecology (as identified in the Create Barkly report) • NT Department of Education • Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) • Hospitality NT • Tourism NT • Tourism Central Australia (TCA) • Emerging Leaders Program (ELP)

T3 Increase the performance of all employers to create high performing, culturally safe and responsive work environments	• Culturally safe workplaces across the Barkly • High performing workplaces across the Barkly	• Workforce Development • Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) • Aboriginal Corporations • Not-for-profits • All Industry and Private Investment	• Regional Development Strategy (the Deal) • Vocational Education and Training (VET) • Territory Workforce Program (TWP) • Flexible Workforce Initiative Fund • Education Digitisation Celebration and sharing of Barkly Language - Warumungu, Mudburra and Jingili Languages • The Community Development Program (CDP) • Indigenous Skills and Employment Program (ISEP)	• Barkly Regional Deal (All) • Patta Warumungu Aboriginal Corporation • Aboriginal Corporations Leadership Group • Chamber of Commerce NT • Business Enterprise Centre • Central Land Council (CLC) /Northern Land Council (NLC) • Aboriginal Alliance • RTOs • Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network (NTIBN) • Industry Capability Network (ICN) • Many Rivers • ELP
T4 Attract and create opportunities for all through renewable energy technology and environmental management	• Develop a renewable energy industry in the region • Land management opportunities are realised • Environmental sustainability	• Solar • Land Management • Indigenous Rangers • Renewable Hydrogen • Carbon farming	• Elliott Ranger Hub (CLC) • New weather radar • Sun Cable • Desert Bloom Hydrogen • Karlantijpa North Savanna Burning Project (example of a carbon abatement project) • Indigenous Ranger Program • Indigenous Protected Areas	• NT Government • NDIA • NIAA • CLC / NLC • Ranger Groups • Land Trusts • NAIF • Barkly Regional Council • Major project owners • Aboriginal Carbon Foundation • Land Care (NT Natural Resources Management Board)
T5 Increase the productivity of food production and the management of supply chains to drive economic outcomes	• Diversify and grow the regional pastoral and plant-based industries, including horticultural and agricultural sectors • Environmental sustainability • Improved enabling infrastructure	• Agribusiness • Pastoralism • Native Bushfoods Industry and Protocols • Transport • Processing • Manufacturing	• Singleton Horticultural Project • Elliott Multi-Modal Facility • Kulainda Farm Trust Horticulture and Forestry Project • Centrefarm	• NIAA • NT Government • Agribusiness owners • Pastoralists • ANFAB • NAIF • Barkly Regional Council • Commonwealth Government • Chamber of Commerce • NT Cattleman's Association • NT Farmers Association • First Nations Bushfoods

				and Botanicals Alliance Australia
T6 Make the most of every opportunity arising from the critical minerals and mining sector	• Targeted regional industry engagement framework to maximise long-term outcomes • Increased community benefit from existing and new mining operations. • Supporting improvements to regulatory processes	• Research projects • Exploration • Mining	• Wonarah Phosphate Mine – Stage 1 • Beetaloo basin to Darwin projects and infrastructure corridor • Rover Project – Castile Resources Ltd • Mount Peake Vanadium Project • Elmore Resource Ltd (Peko Mine) • Ammaroo Phosphate Mine • Emmerson Resources • Empire Energy • Tennant Mining • Nolans – Arafura resources • Northern Iron • Newcrest Mining	• NT Government • Barkly Regional Council • CLC / NLC • Minerals Council Australia (NT) • Mining Companies • Traditional Owners • Business operators • ICN • Energy Club • NAIF

Source: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (2022), Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030, pp. 58–63.

Appendix 5: Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030: Targets

Target	What we want to see:
T1 Pre-work activities, foundation skills and LLN frameworks are coordinated and tailored to meet the needs of the Barkly region	A regional foundation skills LLN and work readiness framework is in place
	Families and individuals are supported to develop social skills, cognitive, physical and language skills
T2 Education, vocational training and skills development programs are well coordinated and recognise and meet the diverse needs of young people and adults in the Barkly region	Improved education outcomes for children and young people in the Barkly
	Education pathways programs are supporting students into work opportunities in the region
	Accredited work-based training, apprenticeships, and VET-in-school programs support students and adults into skills-based employment
	Tertiary education programs support retention of local workforce and increase the regional skills-base.
	A regional skills and training development plan guides the delivery of all accredited, non-accredited and work-based training
T3 Accessible and coordinated mentoring and support programs are in place to provide meaningful assistance to students, job seekers, employees and employers in the Barkly region	Mentoring supports and professional development programs are in place for students, job seekers, employees and newcomers to the region.
	Leadership development and succession planning
	Coordinated social and emotional wellbeing services supporting employees in need
T4 Employers in the Barkly region offer culturally safe and responsive work environments to increase Aboriginal employment outcomes and retention rates	Culturally safe and responsive workplaces that support Aboriginal people toward long-term careers in the region
	Flexible employment models and approaches are developed by employers to support more Aboriginal people into employment.
T5 Targeted and accessible business startup, growth and development support across all key industries in the Barkly region	Business development and industry growth opportunities are realised in the region
	Existing businesses and employers across all industries can access support to develop across key areas that will support improved workforce development outcomes
	An increase in and strengthening of Indigenous enterprise development and Growth across the Barkly Region

Source: Data extracted from Barkly Regional Deal (2023), pp 32-40

Appendix 6: Ali Curung Workforce Action and Implementation Plan

This plan consolidates the identified workforce opportunities and consultation findings into implementation actions.

Suggested lead organisations, partners, first steps, timeframes, measures and risks are indicative and subject to stakeholder validation.

Strategy and consolidated actions	Action classification	Suggested lead organisation	Potential partners	First steps	Potential timeframe	Measures	Key risks
1. Establish coordinated workforce governance and implementation arrangements to support shared planning, accountability and community-led workforce development a. Establish an Ali Curung Workforce Working Group. b. Identify a lead coordinating agency or officer. c. Agree responsibilities, timelines, meetings and reporting. d. Align implementation with regional initiatives. e. Strengthen mechanisms for community participation in workforce planning, service delivery and decisions affecting local priorities. f. Map current programs, grants, providers, employers and workforce demand. g. Develop a shared training calendar and participant pipeline. h. Coordinate RTO delivery and align funded programs with training, placement, retention and progression outcomes.	Workforce-enabling action	NT Government – DTBAR	Barkly Regional Council (BRC); Alekenge School; Skills NT; Employment Service; Registered training organisations (RTO)s;	a. Confirm the lead agency and officer b. Develop terms of reference c. Identify community and industry representatives d. Map current programs, grants and delivery schedules. e. Convene the first meeting. f. Prepare an implementation schedule and shared training calendar g. Align implementation with regional initiatives.	Immediate: 0–3 months; Quarterly thereafter	a. Lead and officer appointed b. Working Group established c. Representation confirmed d. Schedule endorsed e. Meetings held f. Progress reported.	a. Unclear accountability. b. Limited community representation. c. Stakeholder fatigue. d. Duplication between programs. e. Insufficient coordination capacity. f. Weak follow-through.
2. Increase workforce participation, readiness and employment retention a. Develop staged pathways from engagement activities into work readiness, training, work experience and employment. b. Deliver work-readiness support covering routine, attendance, communication, confidence and workplace expectations. c. Align RAES activities with real work experience and employment opportunities. d. Provide mentoring, case management and post-placement support. e. Communicate upcoming training, work experience and local employment opportunities consistently to residents. f. Assist residents to obtain identification, bank accounts, Ochre Cards, police checks and other employment-entry requirements. g. Strengthen culturally safe practices in local workplaces through employer training, and culturally appropriate onboarding, induction, communication, supervision, feedback and early workplace support.	Direct workforce action	NT Government – DTBAR	RAES provider; Local employers and service providers; BRC; Skills NT; RTOs; Alekenge School; Ali Curung Local Authority; Community organisations	a. Map existing participation, work-readiness, mentoring and referral supports. b. Identify residents requiring staged or administrative support. c. Agree referral, case-management and post-placement arrangements. d. Establish a local communication process for opportunities. e. Identify local employers requiring support with cultural safety, onboarding, supervision and employee retention. f. Pilot a supported pathway linked to identified vacancies or work experience.	Immediate: 0–6 months; Update six-monthly	a. Residents engaged and referred. b. Employment-entry requirements completed. c. Work-readiness activities completed. d. Work experience and job placements achieved. e. Local employers participating in cultural safety, onboarding, supervision and retention support. f. Retention at 3, 6 and 12 months. g. Participant and employer feedback recorded.	a. Programs are not linked to jobs. b. Support ends when employment begins. c. Delays obtaining documents and clearances. d. Irregular participation. e. Local employers do not participate. f. Culturally unsafe or poorly supported placements. g. Poor consent or confidentiality practices.

Strategy and consolidated actions	Action classification	Suggested lead organisation	Potential partners	First steps	Potential timeframe	Measures	Key risks
3. Broaden local employment, service-sector and enterprise opportunities a. Build entry-level and progression pathways in public administration, education, retail, arts, health, renal care, aged care, childcare and community services. b. Identify local workforce requirements and prepare employment pathways for the proposed Purple House renal unit. c. Work with local health, education, childcare and community service providers to identify vacancies, required qualifications, workplace support and suitable training or employment pathways. d. Support local job creation through community-controlled service delivery, arts and cultural enterprise, youth programs and maintenance activities. e. Explore local procurement and employment targets where appropriate. f. Support Aboriginal enterprise and small business capability. g. Link community-based employment programs to longer-term jobs. h. Explore community enterprise, cooperative employment and other locally determined benefit-sharing models. i. Assess tourism, hospitality, cultural enterprise, visitor-service and temporary employment opportunities associated with the 2028 solar eclipse.	Direct workforce action	NT Government – DTBAR	BRC; Ali Curung Local Authority; Purple House; Local health, aged care and childcare services; Arlpwe Art and Culture Centre; Alekarenge School; Local employers; Aboriginal organisations; Employment Service; Skills NT; Business and tourism support providers	a. Identify current and forecast local vacancies, service needs and procurement opportunities. b. Meet local health, education, childcare and community service providers and employers to identify vacancies, entry-level and progression roles, required qualifications and supported employment pathways. c. Confirm anticipated workforce needs for the proposed renal unit. d. Identify viable maintenance, arts, cultural, tourism and community-enterprise opportunities. e. Map business development and procurement support. f. Select priority employment or enterprise pathways for development.	Assessment: 0–6 months; Pathway development: 6–18 months; Enterprise development: 1–3 years	a. Local vacancies and progression roles documented. b. Employment pathways established in local service sectors, including health, education and childcare. c. Residents trained, placed and retained in local jobs. d. Enterprise concepts assessed and supported. e. Local contracts and procurement opportunities secured. f. Community-based programs progressing participants into paid work. g. Eclipse-related opportunities assessed.	a. Limited number of local vacancies. b. Limited service-provider capacity, workplace supervision or career progression. c. Short-term or grant-dependent jobs. d. Procurement requirements exceed local capability. e. Enterprise models lack viable demand or governance. f. Proposed services or events are delayed or do not proceed. g. Cultural authority or benefit-sharing arrangements are unresolved.
4. Strengthen pathways into agriculture, horticulture, pastoral and land-based work a. Progress the Work Experience Pathway Project as an immediate implementation initiative and link project participation and existing horticulture activity to paid employment, traineeships and seasonal work. b. Develop pathways into pastoral work, station operations, fencing, bore work, machinery operation, land management and maintenance. c. Align training with practical requirements, including machinery tickets, chemical handling, 4WD, fencing, workplace safety and driver licensing. d. Engage the Singleton Horticulture Project proponent to identify potential roles, skills, licences, training, recruitment arrangements and pathways for Ali Curung residents if the project proceeds. e. Identify and address transport, accommodation, roster arrangements, family responsibilities and cultural obligations that may affect participation in agricultural, horticultural, pastoral and land-based employment outside Ali Curung.	Direct workforce action	NT Government – DTBAR	Centrefarm; Aboriginal Land Economic Development Agency (ALEDA); Alekarenge Horticulture Pty Ltd (AHPL); Singleton Horticulture Project proponent; Regional pastoral and horticultural employers; Central Land Council; Skills NT; RTOs; Employment Service; Alekarenge School	a. Confirm the Work Experience Pathway Project’s funding, delivery period, participant targets, employment model, intended jobs, delivery partners, performance measures and current participation outcomes. b. Identify horticulture, pastoral and land-based employers and upcoming roles. c. Confirm practical entry requirements and training gaps. d. Engage the Singleton proponent, subject to project progress. e. Develop an initial training and placement schedule. f. Pilot paid, seasonal, traineeship or supported-placement pathways.	Work Experience Pathway Project coordination: immediate–3 months; Employer engagement and mapping: 0–6 months; Pilots: 6–18 months; ongoing subject to employer and project demand.	a. Employers and project proponents engaged. b. Roles and entry requirements documented. c. Relevant licences, tickets and training completed. d. Paid placements, seasonal work or traineeships commenced. e. Work Experience Pathway Project participants progressing into employment. f. Ali Curung residents recruited and retained.	a. Seasonal or irregular work. b. Singleton is delayed or does not proceed. c. Training is not matched to available roles. d. Transport, licensing, accommodation, roster arrangements, family responsibilities or cultural obligations restrict participation. e. Limited workplace supervision or support. f. Work experience does not progress to paid employment.

Strategy and consolidated actions	Action classification	Suggested lead organisation	Potential partners	First steps	Potential timeframe	Measures	Key risks
5. Embed foundational skills, LLND capability in job-linked training a. Integrate language, literacy, numeracy and digital support into vocational training and employment pathways rather than relying on standalone delivery. b. Contextualise foundational skills to actual local and regional roles. c. Use practical, hands-on and culturally appropriate delivery. d. Include online forms, email, job applications and workplace technology in pre-employment programs. e. Break training into smaller achievable units. f. Work with employers, local organisations and training providers to align training content and delivery approaches with actual local jobs, workplace requirements and relevant qualification requirement. g. Coordinate RTO delivery to reduce duplication and improve viability for small cohorts.	Workforce-enabling action	Skills NT	RTOs; LLND providers; Employment Service; Alekenge School; AHPL; Local employers and service providers; BRC	a. Review current LLND, digital and vocational delivery. b. Assess participant needs and identify delivery gaps. c. Consult employers and local organisations about actual job tasks and entry requirements. d. Identify priority job-linked modules and small-cohort delivery options. e. Agree provider, referral and learner-support arrangements. f. Schedule initial contextualised delivery.	Planning: 0–6 months; Delivery: 6–12 months; Ongoing	a. Participants assessed and supported. b. LLND support embedded in vocational pathways. c. Employer-informed training delivered. d. Enrolment, attendance and unit completion recorded. e. Participants progressing to work experience, further training or employment. f. Reduced duplication in local delivery.	a. Practitioner and trainer shortages. b. Irregular attendance. c. Training remains insufficiently job-linked. d. Delivery is not adapted to language and cultural context. e. Small cohorts affect viability. f. Digital connectivity or equipment limitations.
6. Strengthen supported youth school-to-work transitions a. Develop structured school-to-work pathways linked to local and regional employers. b. Expand VET in Schools, school-based traineeships, paid work experience and workplace exposure. c. Introduce career planning. d. Provide mentoring, Aboriginal role models and transition support. e. Use sport, arts, culture and recreation activities as engagement pathways into training and work readiness where they build relevant skills or connections. f. Establish partnerships between Alekenge School, employers, industry, training providers and employment services. g. Investigate grants for exposure trips to capital cities and suitable interstate work placements where participant interest, family agreement, transport, accommodation and supervision requirements can be met.	Direct workforce action	NT Government – DTBAR	Department of Education and Training; Alekenge School; Boarding schools; Skills NT; RTOs; Employment Service; Local and regional employers; BRC; Youth, arts, sport and cultural organisations	a. Identify current students, boarding students and recent school leavers. b. Establish transition contacts and document pathway interests. c. Identify employers, mentors and workplace-exposure opportunities. d. Map suitable VET, traineeship and paid work-experience options. e. Develop individual transition plans. f. Pilot supported workplace exposure and placements.	Commence: 0–6 months; Pilots: 6–12 months; Annual thereafter	a. Students and school leavers identified. b. Transition plans completed. c. Employers and mentors participating. d. Workplace visits, VET, paid work experience and traineeships completed. e. Participants commencing jobs, further education or training. f. Participation sustained at 6 and 12 months.	a. Low school attendance or loss of contact after school. b. Insufficient suitable placements. c. Transport, accommodation, family responsibilities or cultural obligations restrict participation in placements outside Ali Curung. d. Poor quality or unsupported placements. e. Child safety or supervision gaps. f. Activities do not connect to education, training or employment.

Strategy and consolidated actions	Action classification	Suggested lead organisation	Potential partners	First steps	Potential timeframe	Measures	Key risks
7. Improve access to regional industry pathways a. Map upcoming regional projects and workforce needs in mining, construction, transport, agriculture, energy, natural gas, operations and support services. b. Build partnerships with regional employers, contractors and project proponents. c. Identify entry-level roles and required skills, licences, tickets, qualifications and experience. d. Support driver licensing, White Cards, machinery tickets, first aid, 4WD and other job-entry requirements. e. Explore supported transport, block training arrangements, locally based preparatory employment and suitable regional placement models. f. Establish work experience, traineeship and supported-employment pathways linked to verified employer demand.	Direct workforce action	NT Government – DTBAR	Skills NT; Regional employers, contractors and project proponents; Employment Service; RTOs; BRC; Ali Curung Local Authority; Transport and accommodation providers	a. Identify priority projects, employers and contractors. b. Prepare a standard employer-demand template. c. Confirm roles, timing and entry requirements. d. Assess transport, roster arrangements, accommodation and placement-support requirements through community and employer consultation. e. Map requirements against current training and participant readiness. f. Select one or two pathway pilots and establish employer agreements.	Employer engagement: 0–6 months; Pathway pilots: 6–18 months; Update six-monthly	a. Employers and proponents consulted. b. Verified roles and entry requirements documented. c. Transport, accommodation, roster arrangements and placement options assessed. d. Participants completing required licences, tickets and training. e. Work experience, traineeships and supported placements established. f. Ali Curung residents recruited and retained. g. Demand and training schedule updated.	a. Projects are delayed or do not proceed. b. Workforce forecasts change. c. Roles are inaccessible because of transport, roster or accommodation requirements. d. Training occurs without jobs. e. Employer participation is limited. f. Employment is temporary. g. Training is tied too narrowly to one project.