

Lajamanu Workforce Plan 2026-2027



Acknowledgements

This Community Workforce Plan has been shaped by the voices, knowledge and aspirations of Lajamanu people. It recognises the strength of Warlpiri families, Elders, workers, job seekers, young people and community organisations who continue to contribute to Lajamanu's future.

Employment is about dignity, contribution, cultural authority, role-modelling for young people, caring for family and community, and building local capability so more services and decisions can be led by Lajamanu people.

These are central to how workforce development should be understood in Lajamanu.

Thank you to the Elders, community members, local workers, employers, service providers, training providers and government partners who contributed their time, knowledge and ideas through meetings, interviews and discussions.

This plan has been developed as a practical community resource to support local employment, training, workforce coordination and future leadership. It should continue to be reviewed with community organisations, Elders, employers and government partners so that it remains current, useful and connected to Lajamanu's priorities.

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by Charles Darwin University from the voices of the Lajamanu Community.

This report is provided for general information purposes only and is intended to support workforce planning discussions and decision-making. Although care has been taken to ensure the information was accurate at the time of publication there could be errors or omissions, and subsequent changes may occur.

The information in this report should not be relied on as specific professional, legal, or business advice. Organisations should consider their own circumstances and seek appropriate advice where needed before making workforce or operational decisions based on this report.

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the funding bodies, the Commonwealth, Northern Territory Government or Charles Darwin University, including their officers, employees or agents.

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Executive Summary

The Lajamanu Workforce Plan 2026–2027 outlines a community-led strategy to strengthen local employment, skills development, and long-term self-determination in Lajamanu, a remote Walpiri community. Employment is positioned not only as income generation but as central to dignity, cultural authority, and community wellbeing, with a strong focus on living and working on Country.



Workforce data highlights significant structural challenges. At the 2021 Census, only 117 people were employed from a working-age population of approximately 423, equating to 0.36 jobs per person. As of December 2023, there were 242 registered job seekers, including a high proportion of young people. Employment opportunities have declined over time, particularly in labouring roles.

Without coordinated workforce investment, Lajamanu risks ongoing reliance on external labour, increasing service delivery costs and continued loss of local economic opportunity. This Plan presents an opportunity to redirect workforce investment toward community-led employment pathways and long-term local capability.

Despite the challenges, there are clear opportunities for workforce growth. Priority initiatives identified in this Plan could create opportunities for up to fifty people engaging in part-time work including filling ten vacancies identified December 2025, in education and health support roles if job sharing is possible. Community consultation indicates strong demand for flexible employment, with near half of respondents to an in-community survey (39 total respondents) preferring part-time roles of up to 20 hours per week.

Key barriers to employment include difficulties for individuals accessing identification and administrative requirements, restricted access to training due to remoteness, limited accommodation for trainers, and cultural obligations that influence availability. Training delivery is further constrained by small participant numbers, coordination challenges, and workforce shortages among trainers.

The Plan proposes practical, coordinated responses, such as the development of a community-wide training calendar, increased access to on-the-job and practical learning, stronger employment pathway support, and improved cultural induction for organisations to operate effectively within the community context.

Three major job creation initiatives are identified:

- Establishing a local civil construction and maintenance service to create jobs, reduce reliance on external contractors, and build trade pathways.
- Investigating a community-owned and operated bus service to improve transport access, reduce costs, and create employment opportunities.
- Supporting succession planning and leadership development through targeted education and governance training.

The Plan emphasises the importance of collaboration across community organisations, training providers, and government agencies. Having an in-Community central co-ordination role, beyond jobs and training, is essential to collaboration, effective communication and meaningful Community progress. Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation has seen this need and is working towards it.

The future workforce of Lajamanu will be strongest when local people are supported to lead, work and build skills on Country. This Plan provides a practical starting point for that work.

Lajamanu story and community aspirations

Lajamanu is a strong Walpiri community on the edge of the Tanami Desert.

Our population was 767 at the 2021 Census.

Lajamanu is located in the Big Rivers Region, approximately 560 km south-west of Katherine via the Victoria and Buntine Highways with the final 100 km a dirt road. We are around 870 km north-west of Alice Springs via an alternative dirt road route that can take up to 15 hours due to road conditions and severe corrugations in some places.

Our closest communities, towards Katherine are Kalkarindji, Daguragu, and Pigeon Hole.



Source: NTG

Lajamanu is home to four colour skin groups represented by Goanna which is green, red is Kangaroo, blue which is Emu and Eagle is yellow. Those colours represent our 16 skin groups. We maintain deep connections to Country, kinship, culture, language, ceremony and shared responsibility for community family wellbeing.



The ability to live and work on Country are central to what matters most to our Community.

The community wants a future where local people can see real pathways into work, training and leadership without having to leave Country. Training should lead somewhere. Jobs should fit community life. Employers and providers should understand Lajamanu, and local organisations should be supported to lead more of the work that happens in community. Two way learning and Kardiya and Yappa working together.

This plan should be used as a practical working document. It can guide training investment, workforce funding, employer recruitment, community projects, local decision making priorities, and service provider planning. It should not replace community consultation or local decision-making.

Respect, honesty and trust for us to work as a team and make Lajamanu a safer and better place to be.

Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation representatives

Agnes Donnelly, Andrew Johnson, Cyril Tasman, Dalveon Donnelly, Dion Kelly, Geoffrey Barnes, Gerald Watson, Joyce Herbert, Patricia Patterson, Raylene Jigili, Ross Rockman, Steven Wanta Patrick.



Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation Directors. Above from left to right: Lynette Tasman, Joyce Herbert, Laura Doolan, Valerie Patterson, Ross Rockman, Roger Jurrah, Cyril Tasman, Shaun Johnson.

On the right: Dione Kelly





Above: the Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation team at their Strategic Planning Day, June 2026.

Below: Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation staff

 Patricia Patterson Deputy Community Engagement Officer	 Agnes Donnelly Senior Cultural Officer	 Wanta Patrick Senior Executive Cultural Advisor	 Andrew Johnson Senior Cultural Officer
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Geoffrey Barnes
Senior Cultural Officer

Workforce Plan Consultation and References

The following are the organisations who have contributed to the development of the Lajamanu Workforce Plan. Attachment A provides community contact details. Attachment B lists individual consultation.

- Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation
- Purple House (Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation)
- Lajamanu School
- Lajamanu Store
- Lajamanu Clinic
- Wulaign Homelands Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Nyirrunggulung-Rise
- Central Land Council
- Central Desert Regional Council
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
- Charles Darwin University
- Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations
- Skills NT

Lajamanu Jobs Survey

The Lajamanu Jobs Survey (Attachment C) was developed with Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation staff to contextualise question content and wording. The surveys were completed by nearly a third of the current Lajamanu workforce ensuring a good representation of residents engaged in work. It provides detailed insight into workforce behaviour, employment preferences, and structural barriers.

The analysis demonstrates that the primary workforce issue is not a lack of willingness to work, but a mismatch between existing job structures and community preferences. Key findings include strong demand for part-time and flexible work, a preference for local employment, and a workforce motivated by purpose, community contribution, and skill development.

Key Findings

- Strong preference for part-time and flexible work arrangements
- High proportion of respondents want to reduce hours
- Strong preference to work locally within Lajamanu
- Work motivated by community contribution, learning, and stability

Details survey analysis and tables are in Attachment D.

Existing community development references

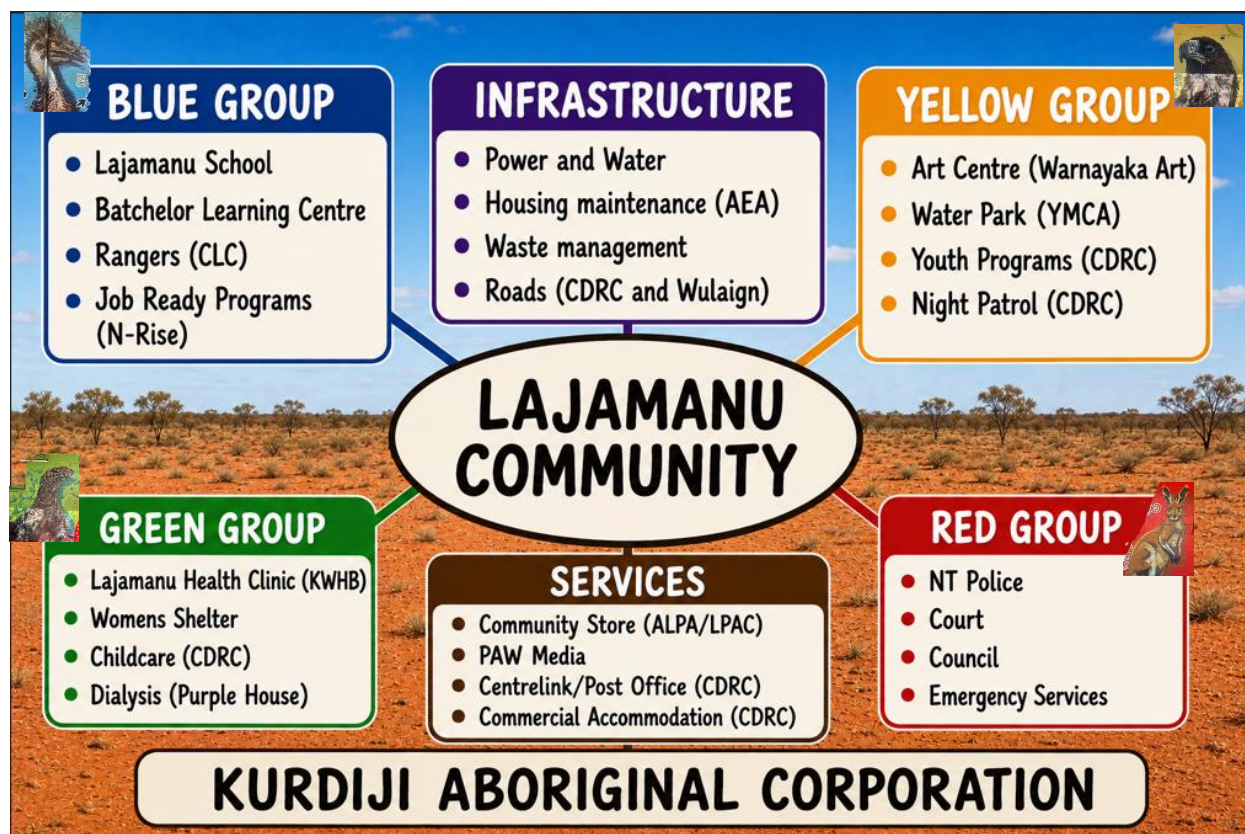
The below lists the recent past and current community development documents, all are available on the internet, that provided a basis of either workforce planning and/or community information from which discussions commenced and the development of this Workforce Plan.

- 2023 Lajamanu Remote Towns Jobs Profile (DTBAR)
- 2017 Lajamanu Remote Towns Jobs Profile (DTBAR)
- Community Workforce Plan – Planning Guide and Tools (DTBAR)
- Kurra Aboriginal Corporation Strategic Plan 2025 – 2029
- GMAAAC Strategic Plan 2025-2029
- 2025-26 Lajamanu Community Plan (CDRC)
- 2021-22 Community Development Monitoring Report (CLC)

Local Decision Making and Community Control

Using our existing community resources and organisations and along with sharing knowledge of all the existing and possible programs and grants, which are identified further below, can be the start of working on Community collaboration, identifying funding opportunities where there are gaps in resourcing, and progressing actions which would enable maximum results for Lajamanu.

Community Organisations



Current Workforce related programs and grants

A number of current workforce-related programs and grants are already active in Lajamanu, including projects connected to dialysis care training, Aboriginal health career pathways, aged care infrastructure, community Wi-Fi, Stronger Communities for Children, addressing climate threats to natural and cultural values and food security wet season storage.

Community development programs

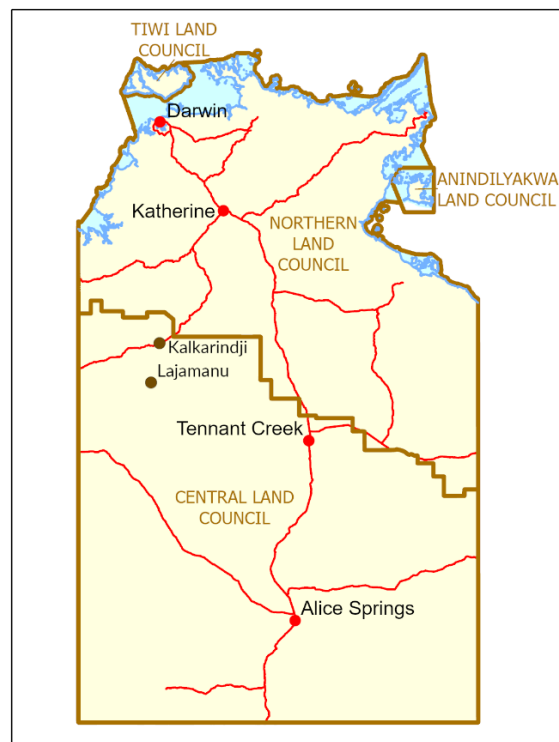
Further to the above lists there are also many additional community development programs across many organisations either currently in progress within Lajamanu or could, via funding grant submissions, have the potential to support Lajamanu's workforce planning. Some examples are:

- **CLC** – GMAAAC funded programs
- **CDRC** – Annual Community Planning activities
- **Nyirunggulung RISE** – NIAA funded Remote Australia Employment Service (RAES)
- **NIAA** – Remote Jobs & Economic Development Program (RJED); new jobs aligned with community needs
- **Regional Development Australia NT:**
 - role in coordination and convening workforce & skill development
 - grants for the Regional Investment Readiness and Impact Fund (RIRIF)
- **NT DET and Commonwealth DEWR** – First Nations RTO subcommittee and Closing the Gap initiatives
- **NT Dept Education & Training** – Skills NT plan; supporting growth/access to VET in remote communities

One of the challenges being faced in remote communities are the different agency boundaries across the NT. This results in Lajamanu Community liaising with many different service providers. Below are maps that display the multiple boundaries for Lajamanu.



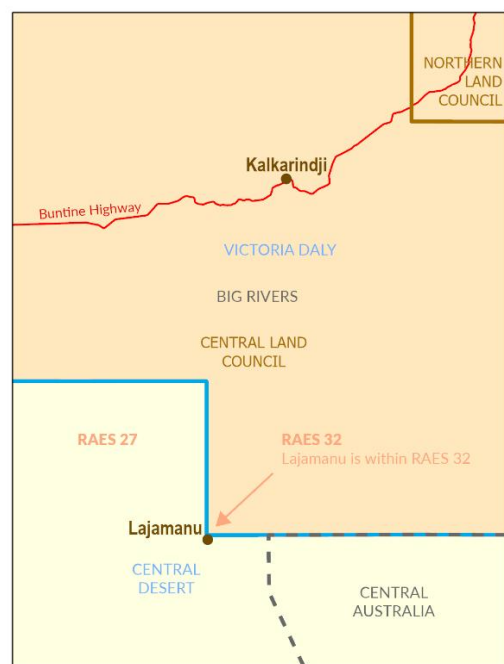
NTG Administrative Boundaries
Source: NTG



NT Land Council Boundaries
Source: NTG



NT Regional Council Boundaries
Source: NTG



NT Boundaries plus NIAA RAES program
Source: NTG and Commonwealth Government

Economic and Workforce Overview

Lajamanu's local economy is shaped by remoteness, community organisations, government-funded services, visiting service providers, infrastructure needs and cultural responsibilities. Many jobs that keep Lajamanu running are connected to education, health, care, local government, housing, maintenance, retail, transport, administration and cultural knowledge work.

One workforce challenge is that not all of this work is currently done by local people. Some services rely on visiting workers, external contractors or staff travelling from outside community. This creates delays, higher costs and missed opportunities for local employment and skills development.

At the 2021 Census, 117 people in Lajamanu had a job from an estimated working-age population of 423 people aged 15 years and over. This equates to approximately 0.36 jobs for each working-age person.

Summary of total jobs by Occupation groups per the 2023 Lajamanu Remote Town Jobs Profile.

Occupation (ANZSCO major group)	2023
Clerical and Administrative Workers	12
Community and Personal Service Workers	27
Labourers	2
Machinery Operators and Drivers	0
Managers	5
Professionals	35
Sales Workers	18
Technicians and Trades Workers	1
Other Occupations	0
TOTAL	100

The 2023 Lajamanu Remote Town Jobs Profile shows a decrease of 26 part-time jobs and 9 full-time jobs since the 2014 survey, with the greatest decline in labouring roles. The 2023 occupation profile recorded only 2 labourer jobs, 1 technician/trades worker job and no machinery operator or driver jobs. As of 31 December 2023, there were 242 registered job seekers: 150 men and 92 women. Of these, 98 were aged 15-24 years, 107 were aged 25-44 years old and 37 were aged 45 or older.

Summary

Evidence	Meaning for the plan
Low number of local jobs compared with working-age population	Training must be linked to job creation, not only job readiness.
High number of registered job seekers	People need practical support to move into work and training.
98 young job seekers	Youth pathways need to be visible.
Decline in part-time and full-time jobs	The plan should rebuild local employment opportunities.
Very low labouring, trade and driver roles	Civil works, maintenance, driver licensing and contractor pathways are priority opportunities.
20+ vacancies in education and health support	Immediate pathways should focus on health, care and education support roles.
Preference for part-time work	Employers should explore flexible roles, job-sharing and staged entry.

Employment opportunities

New employment opportunities identified by Elders during workforce interviews in December 2025 include developing local building repairs and maintenance crews and also investigating the feasibility of commencing a local bus service.

Employer interviews in December 2025 identified more than ten full-time unfilled vacancies across education and health support roles. Understanding why these jobs are vacant and what would need to be done to support the filling of those jobs is key to matching job seekers with these jobs.

The Lajamanu Jobs Survey conducted in early 2026 found that 51 per cent of respondents working four or more days per week preferred part-time work of up to 20 hours per week.

Future Community leaders must be supported now with the right training and experiences to be ready when it's their time.

With the above being addressed, along with considering job sharing opportunities, these opportunities have the potential to support up to fifty people to move into part-time work.

Without coordinated workforce investment, Lajamanu risks ongoing reliance on external labour, increasing service delivery costs and continued loss of local economic opportunity. This Plan presents an opportunity to redirect workforce investment toward community-led employment pathways and long-term local capability.

Implementation of the below listed Workforce Priorities and Action Plans can significantly contribute to Lajamanu's future success.

Barriers and Enablers

There are people in Lajamanu who want to work, and there are employers who need workers. The challenge is that the pathway between the two is not always simple.

Key Barrier

Quite a few businesses highlighted a critical barrier is the struggle for potential employees to obtain identification and other pre-work documentation. This includes ID, TFNs, MyGov access, bank accounts and security checks. Vacancies were unable to be filled in a timely manner when this happens. In one instance a Purple House employee drove an applicant to Katherine specifically to resolve identification issues so that employment could commence.

Other Barriers

Barrier	Response
Limited local jobs	Link training to vacancies, local services, maintenance, transport and enterprise opportunities.
Preference for part-time work	Job-sharing, part-time roles and staged entry.
Small training cohorts	Shared community training calendar and combined participant lists.
Trainer accommodation and road access	Earlier planning and seasonal scheduling.
Ceremony and cultural obligations	Training calendar shaped with local input.
Trainer shortages	Early provider engagement and realistic delivery planning.
External contractors	Local work crews, contractor placements and pre-trade pathways.

Enablers

The main enabler is coordination. A shared approach to job-readiness, employer demand, training calendars and practical pathways into local work is key.

Nyirrunggulung-Rise, has recently become the RAES provider in Lajamanu and will be informing and supporting jobseekers to be job ready through training and job placements. The Nyirrunggulung-Rise Lajamanu team leader has recently started with recruitment underway for the Lajamanu based staff. Supports are being provided from temporary offices while the permanent offices undergo necessary repairs and maintenance.

Over the time developing this Workforce Plan it has become apparent that across the Community there is a high level of enthusiasm and drive to collaborate and change the status quo. The recent filling of positions in Lajamanu for adult education coordination and for the federally funded RAES program is a promising opportunity to continue this momentum.

Katherine West Health Board, who operate the Lajamanu Clinic, the Department of Education, NT Police and the Lajamanu Store operated by ALPA and Purple House have strong inhouse training programs providing support and training to new employees. For them the approach is to focus on encouraging potential employees through the front door.

Workforce Priorities and Action Plan

The workforce priorities focus on practical actions that can help more Lajamanu people move into local jobs, build confidence, develop skills and take up future leadership roles. The aim is not training for training's sake. The aim is to connect people to real work, support employers, and build local capability over time.

Priority	Why it matters	Key actions	Lead / partners	Timeframe
1. Employment front door and job-readiness support	People are being delayed from work because of ID, TFN, MyGov, Medicare, bank accounts, police checks and WWC card.	Establish regular job-readiness support; create employer referral pathway; support ID, checks, licences and job applications;	Nyirrunggulung-Rise (RAES) with local organisations and government services.	Immediate
2. Communicate Community jobs and training opportunities in Lajamanu. The theme is <i>"Your community needs help"</i>	Gives community residents a forum to ask questions and obtain information. Explains what a job means. Benefits to individuals and community	Hold a jobs and training expo Maintain a jobs board and training calendar in Lajamanu for everyone to access.	BIITE and Nyirrunggulung-Rise with local organisations and government services.	Qtr 1, 2026/27
3. Flexible jobs and job-sharing	Survey feedback shows strong preference for part-time work up to 20 hours.	Identify roles suitable for part-time work, job-sharing or staged entry; redesign entry-level tasks; clear role descriptions.	Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation and Nyirrunggulung-Rise with local organisations, NTG.	Qtr 2 and 3, 2026/27
4. Health, care and education support roles	More than 10 vacancies were identified in education and health support roles. These could be up to 20 vacancies if job sharing.	Map current vacancies; support candidates with checks and job readiness; link to employer in-house training and mentoring.	Lajamanu School and Lajamanu Clinic with Nyirrunggulung-Rise, Purple House and care providers,	Qtr 1, 2026/27
5. Civil construction and maintenance crew	No qualified tradespeople live in community, and repairs rely on visiting contractors. Labouring/trade roles limited.	Identify priority tasks; confirm works pipeline; negotiate contractor placements; deliver pre-trade training; establish small local crews.	Nyirrunggulung-Rise with BIITE and CDRC, CLC, NTG and contractors	Qtr 1 – 3, 2026/27
6. Community transport and drivers	Transport is limited and costly; Elders identified a community bus service as an opportunity.	Complete feasibility study; assess demand; identify driver candidates; review licensing, insurance, vehicle, maintenance and operating model.	Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation with CDRC, CLC, GMAAAC, transport partners.	Qtr 1 – 3, 2026/27
7. Working Lajamanu Way and cultural knowledge program	Visiting workers, trainers and contractors understand Lajamanu protocols and expectations.	Develop Lajamanu cultural induction; identify cultural governance; train local facilitators.	Elders, Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation with consultant support.	Qtr 2 and 3, 2026/27
8. Youth, governance and succession pathways	98 registered job seekers were aged 15-24, and succession planning is identified as a priority.	Build school-to-work links; work experience; develop governance, business and leadership pathways.	Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation, Lajamanu School, Nyirrunggulung-Rise and Skills NT	Qtr 2 - 4, 2026/27

Workforce Priorities Summary

1. Employment front door and job readiness support

With reference to the above noted barriers section, Nyirrunggulung-Rise as the new RAES provider in Lajamanu, has confirmed their role to lead in this space and support individuals getting job ready with such requirements as identification documents, tax file number applications, obtaining pre-employment checks such as WWC and police checks. They are also central to clearly identifying and communicating pathways for employers and prospective employees.

Project Lead:

Nyirrunggulung-Rise with local business participation.

2. Lajamanu Training and jobs expo

Employer interviews in December 2025 highlighted both job vacancies and the ongoing challenges to fill jobs.

Holding a Lajamanu training and jobs expo is an opportunity to bring together job seekers and employers and kick off building excitement for helping community fill essential jobs and train in readiness for planned future jobs.

Project Leads:

Batchelor Learning Centre and Nyirrunggulung-Rise with local business participation.

3. Flexible Jobs and Job Sharing

The workforce jobs survey conducted in early 2026 highlighting 51% of the 35 interviewees who worked either 4 or 5 days per week would prefer to work part-time up to 20 hours per week.

Furthermore, splitting full-time jobs into several part-time jobs could then share the 0.36 available jobs per the actual working age population as identified from the 2021 Census.

Purple House staff identified there are non-clinical tasks undertaken by qualified nurses that could in the future, with training, be undertaken by support staff in Community as their program grows and expands operations.

Next Steps:

From the work on other actions in this Plan there will be a good base from which to progress conversations and actions to identify what flexible jobs and job sharing could look like in Lajamanu.

Liaise with employers and their HR teams to identify jobs that could be job shared and also jobs that, with training, could be restructured to create local employment opportunities.

Liaise with visiting contractors, eg Aboriginal Enterprises Australia for housing maintenance and Wulain Homelands Council Aboriginal Corporation for roads maintenance on identifying work that can, with training, create local employment opportunities.

Project Leads

Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation and Nyirrunggulung-Rise.

4. Health, care and education support roles

In conjunction with Priorities 1 and 2 identify what the specific barriers to these roles are to then be able to address them.

Project Leads

Lajamanu School and Lajamanu Clinic with support from Nyirrunggulung-Rise and the RAES program.

5. Create a local civil construction and maintenance service

Train community residents in pre-trade skills such Certificate I in Workplace Skills and II in Construction with the aim to provide on-the-job support to visiting licensed trades, undertake routine repairs and maintenance works between contractor visits, and assist contractors with construction projects.

Background

Lajamanu currently has no qualified tradespeople living in community. All repairs and maintenance require visiting contractors, typically travelling from Katherine, resulting in delays, high costs, and limited responsiveness. Community leaders, Elders, and local businesses have raised concerns about response times and the significant cost of contractor travel and accommodation. At the same time, local employment opportunities in civil and labouring roles have declined significantly over the past decade.

Initial discussions are already underway with Aboriginal Enterprises Australia to plan and implement training and work placements with the end aim of a locally based housing maintenance team.

Benefits

- Reduced reliance on external contractors and associated costs
- Faster response times for repairs and maintenance
- Increased community ownership and workforce participation
- Development of long-term skills and pathways into trades skills

Project Leads

Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation, with Nyirrunggulung-Rise and Batchelor Learning Centre are ideal project leads.

6. Commence a Community Owned and Operated Bus Service

This was identified by Elders as an opportunity to create local jobs and counter the significant price gouging occurring at times. Some Community members have been charged upwards of \$2,000 for transport by private providers one way to Katherine when Royalties were known to have been paid.

Project Lead

Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation

Benefits

- Creation of up to 4 local part-time jobs
- Increased community control and workforce participation
- Fills a need as individual incomes limit transport ownership opportunities

7. Support Business to work Lajamanu Way

Development of a Cultural Induction/Knowledge Program was identified by Elders as an important opportunity to build better relationships between Kardia and Yappa. This includes building understanding of how business can work in Lajamanu to assist employees meet both home and work obligations.

Visitors to Lajamanu can benefit from this program to bring cultural knowledge to their workspaces and to share in the deep history of the Lajamanu families.

Project Lead

Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation

8. Youth, Governance and Succession Pathways

There is a desire to skill up the next generation in readiness for all leadership positions, including as community elders and as organisation leaders. There is also an identified need for governance training across all Lajamanu organisations.

Leadership and governance training, from either the Certificate III in Business and/or the Certificate III in Small Business Entrepreneurship, are ideal as a starting point for employees across the Community who want to be ready for job promotion and for the next generation of Elders to be ready to step up.

Project Lead

Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation with Lajamanu School and Nyirrunggulung-Rise.

Training Pathways Linked to Local Jobs

All the below Job Pathways require workplace literacy skills. Crucial to successful training is ongoing access to the SEE program (Skills for Education and Employment) and/or other literacy programs and also entry level skills training such as the Certificate I and II in Workplace Skills.

Job pathway	First steps	Training required	Employer/work link	Jobs outcomes	Succession opportunities
Health and care	ID, checks, digital skills, confidence	First aid, infection control, health/care pathway	Clinic, Purple House, aged care, disability support	Aboriginal Health Worker, care worker, administration support	Nurse, Doctor, Team Leader, Clinic Manager
Education support	Ochre Card, school engagement	Education support pathway, first aid, workplace communication	Lajamanu School	Teacher aide, classroom support, attendance support	Teacher, Principal
Civil and maintenance	White Card, licence readiness	Construction/civil training, tools, safety, machinery tickets	CDRC, contractors, housing/infrastructure works	Labourer, trades assistant, maintenance worker, civil crew member	Team Leader, Qualified Tradesperson
Transport	Learner/licence support	Driver authority, first aid, customer service, vehicle safety	Community bus or service vehicle	Driver, transport support worker	Team Leader, Manager
Governance and administration	Digital skills, meeting skills, confidence	Business, administration, governance, leadership	Local boards and organisations	Administration worker, board member, coordinator	Community Engagement Officer, Manager
Culture and induction	Cultural authority and facilitation	Presentation, facilitation, training skills, business support	Visiting worker induction	Cultural mentor, induction facilitator	Elder, mentor
Ranger	Drivers licence,	Chemical handling, fire management,	CLC Ranger team	Ranger	Senior Ranger, Team Leader
Retail	Drivers licence, digital skills, confidence	Customer service, food safety, Forklift operations, workplace safety	Lajamanu Store, ALPA	Retail Assistant, Warehouse operator	Team Leader, Store Manager

Training in Lajamanu to be linked to real jobs, work experience, employer demand and future community needs.

Training Infrastructure – in Community

Lajamanu has a training facility, with a local co-ordinator, managed by BIITE and funded by the Walpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT). This funding originates from the Granites Mine Area Authority Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC). BIITE aims to coordinate a Training Reference Group held in Lajamanu up to three times a year.

Facilities include three training rooms which are available for hire by local and visiting training providers, along with a library and study area, computers, projectors and TVs.

Lajamanu has two civil machinery workshops attached to the school, which may be suitable for training.

Training Infrastructure – out of Community

BIITE's Batchelor Campus has extensive facilities and attached accommodation to support individual and group training.

Juno Centre in Tennant Creek is currently for School groups to attend from across the NT. The future aim is to extend and open the facilities and accommodation to other RTOs and adult groups.

CDU's Katherine Rural Campus and town Campus have extensive training facilities. Accommodation is not currently available. Commercial accommodation and transport in Katherine would need to be arranged separately.

Training preferences

The workforce interviews in December 2025 identified there is a preference for practical training over classroom training and the individual trainer's ability to engage with students was critical to the success of past training. It was also highlighted in one interview that past training has been successful because it was regularly held away from Community ensuring focused study and learning. CDU Katherine Rural Campus was specifically mentioned as a great offsite facility. It is also important to consider the Lajamanu Jobs Survey results highlighted a preference for in-community training.

Training Challenges

Training challenges were identified as:

- the small cohort size for training puts scheduling of training at risk
- training being coordinated separately by each organisation results in a greater cost of time and likely to require travel to urban centres to undertake training
- availability of accommodation for trainers. Commercial accommodation is often fully booked out.
- Accessibility to community such as has happened twice this financial year, once in November when Cyclone Fina struck the Top End and then again in February, when rivers flooded and roads were impassable or under restrictions. Of note was the commercial bus to and from Katherine was only able to resume services in early April.
- The importance of ceremony results in necessary constraints on travel to, from and within Lajamanu and the deferral of other non-essential community activities.

- Availability of trainers. There is a shortage of qualified trainers in the NT. Both CDU and Batchelor Institute have vacancies for trainers in courses requested for Lajamanu. On Seek.com in April 2026 there were 18 Trainer Assessor roles advertised.
- Limited out of community training facilities away from distractions. Accommodation facilities at the CDU Katherine Rural Campus now unavailable and recent short-term reduced accommodation availability at Batchelor Institute due to necessary assistance for flood affected communities.
- Creating visibility of upcoming training. Much needed training has been missed due to being unaware of scheduling and also a time when scheduling of training with two different RTOs occurred in the same month.
- The SEE Program is only accessible in most remote NT Communities through grants issued to eligible organisations who can co-design and deliver the training. The two NT General SEE providers are limited to urban centres and the Top End remote communities.

Addressing Training Challenges

A coordinated community-wide approach is required to improve the effectiveness of training delivery in Lajamanu. The priorities noted below focus on improved planning, shared information, and aligning training with real workforce demand.

Priority	Why it matters	Key actions	Lead / partners	Timeframe
1. Annual training calendar	Collaboration on and visibility of community-wide training.	Identify exclusion dates, Process to submit training needs, Develop register of training providers.	BIITE with local organisations responsible for specific technical training requirements.	Immediate
2. Identify NT training providers	Knowing who to contact for training.	Create a register of contact details of trainers and their accredited and non-accredited course offerings.	BIITE	Immediate
3. Literacy Skills Development	Literacy skills are essential to successful training outcomes.	Identify and schedule ongoing literacy training in community and Certificate I & II in Workplace Skills. The SEE program is only available via grants to Lajamanu.	BIITE/CDU	Qtr 1, 2026/27
4. Short courses developed	Rapid pathway to industry relevant skills, minimises risk of financial viability. Trades Apprenticeships require a minimum of 5 years away from community.	Identify relevant training providers. Work with Registered Training Organisations to create 'VTP's (which are certified short courses. Identify funding sources for any preferred providers not registered with NTG for funding.	BIITE/CDU	Qtr 2, 2026/27

Implementation and Monitoring

The effectiveness of this Workforce Plan will be supported through structured monitoring and evaluation.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Progress will be measured against a set of practical indicators that reflect both workforce participation and capability development, including:

- Number of job placements and sustained employment outcomes (Nyirrunggulung-Rise)
- Training participation and completion rates (BIITE)
- Progress against Action Plans (Project Leads)

Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback

Regular meetings will be coordinated by Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation to review progress of the Action Plans and to support actions that require increased focus and community support.

Half yearly community forums co-ordinated by Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation, Nyirrunggulung-Rise and BIITE will be held with local organisations, employers, training providers, and community members to understand what is working, where barriers remain, and how pathways can be improved.

A twelve month meeting will be held to review the progress of this 2026-27 Plan and determine priorities of the next Plan, the 2027-28 Plan.

Continuous Improvement Approach

Through this process, the Workforce Plan will remain practical, evidence-based, community-informed, and responsive to change, supporting ongoing improvement in workforce outcomes.

Attachment A - Lajamanu Community Contacts

Organisation	First name	Surname	Role	Services	Contact Email	Other details
Purple House - Lajamanu	Abbey	Quonoey	Program Coordinator	Dialysis in Community	abbey.quonoey@purplehouse.org.au	(08) 8953 6444
Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation	Jessica	Morice	Community Engagement Manager	Central Community Support	jessica@kurdiji.org.au admin@kurdiji.org.au https://www.facebook.com/kurdiji/	0448 087 417
Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation	Patricia	Patterson	Community Engagement Officer	Central Community Support	patricia@kurdiji.org.au	
Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation	Cyril	Tasman	Kurdiji AC Board Chairperson	Central Community Support	cyril@kurdiji.org.au	
Lajamanu School	David	Panjer	Principal	School Education	David.panjer@education.nt.gov.au	08 8975 0946
Lajamanu Health Clinic			Lajamanu Clinic Manager	Primary Health Care. Visiting specialist co-ordination	LAJ@kwhb.com.au Katherine West Health Board	
Lajamanu Store			Manager	Community store and fuel	lajamanu@alpa.asn.au Mechanical workshop not currently in operation	0482980842
Central Land Council	Steve	Morice	Ranger Group Facilitator	Ranger program	stephen.morice@clc.org.au . For permits go to the CLC website: www.clc.org.au/permits	08 8951 0564
Batchelor Learning Centre	Lily	Kauler	Lajamanu Learning Centre Co-ordinator	Adult education	lily.kauler@batchelor.edu.au	0411 627 976 /08 8975 1132
Batchelor Institute	Amy	Spears	SNR Project Manager WETT	Adult education	Amy.spears@batchelor.edu.au Warlpiri Education and Training Trust	08 8951 8324
Wulain Homeland Council Aboriginal Corporation	John	Schepis	General Manager	Maintenance of Lajamanu Road and Buntine Highway from Lajamanu Road to the WA Border.	admin@whcac.com.au Negotiations in progress for Homelands maintenance contracts	0417 472 143
Central Desert Regional Council – Lajamanu Office				Childcare, aged care, roads within Lajamanu, commercial accommodation, Centrelink/post office, waste management	Lajamanu Council Office: lajamanu@centraldesert.nt.gov.au accommodation@centraldesert.nt.gov.au	08 8974 5500
Warnayaka Art				Art Centre	art@warnayaka.com - https://warnayaka.com	08 8975 0808
Aboriginal Enterprises Australia (contractor)				Housing maintenance	Housing maintenance & repairs hotline: 1800 104 076. Local Housing Office 08 8973 8513	
Lajamanu Police Station						08 8975 0622

Attachment B - Consultation List

The following stakeholders were involved in the development of the Community Workforce Plan:

First name	Surname	Organisation	Role
Cyril	Tasman	Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation	Kurdiji AC Board Chairman, Lajamanu Progress AC Director and CDRG Northern Tanami Ward Councillor
Andrew	Johnson	Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation	Kurdiji AC Board member and CDRG Northern Tanami Ward Councillor
Geoffrey	Barnes	Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation	Kurdiji AC Board member
Agnes	Donnelly	Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation	Kurdiji AC Board member
Patricia	Patterson	Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation	Community Engagement Officer
Raylene	Jingili	Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation	Community Engagement Officer
Jessica	Morice	Kurdiji Aboriginal Corporation	Community Engagement Manager
Abbey	Quonoey	Purple House - Lajamanu	Program Coordinator
David	Panjer	Lajamanu School	Principal
Darleen	Richardson	Lajamanu Store	Manager
Grant	Richardson	Lajamanu Store	Manager
Steve	Morice	CLC	Ranger Group Facilitator
Michaela	Naare	NIAA	Engagement Assistant Director
Lily	Kauler	Batchelor Institute	Lajamanu Learning Centre Co-ordinator
Mark	Roscoe	Batchelor Institute	Former Lajamanu Co-ordinator
Amy	Spears	Batchelor Institute	SNR Project Manager WETT and Lajamanu Learning Centre Manager
Rashida	Khan	Batchelor Institute	Senior Business Lecturer
Liam	Fraser	Batchelor Institute	Construction Lecturer
Andrew	Irwin	Aboriginal Enterprises Australia	Regional and Remote Training Coordinator
Scott	Cahalan	CDU	Deputy Chief Executive Trades & Primary Industries
Grant	Burton	CDU	Construction Lecturer
Mel	Grant	CDU	Executive Officer
Ryan	Buckley	CDU	Manager VET Strategic Programs
Tracey	Beesley	Nyirunggulung-Rise	General Manager Operations (RAES program provider)
Bronwyn	Henman	Nyirunggulung-Rise	Regional Manager
Alison	Brook	CDU	Associate Vice Chancellor Big Rivers Region
Lisa	Dodds	DTBAR	Regional Manager, Big Rivers
Joanne	Mowat	Juno Centre	Training Coordinator
Shelley	Worthington	CDU	Lecturer, Academic Foundations
Jane	Austin	CDU	Lecturer, Language Literacy and Learning, First Nations Pathways
Jen	Telfer	CDU	Lajamanu Workforce Plan Co-ordinator

Attachment C – Lajamanu Jobs Survey



This survey is to find out what work Lajamanu Community members want.
The information will help with creating the Lajamanu Workforce Plan.

1. Do you work?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. How many days a week do you work? (Tick one)

☐ 0 ☐ 3
☐ 1 ☐ 4
☐ 2 ☐ 5

3. How often do you want to work? (Tick any)

☐ Full-time – 38 hours ☐ Tick here if you only want to work sometimes, not every week
☐ Part-time – up to 20 hours
☐ Casual ☐ Tick here if you have Community/Family commitments that can require long times off work

4. When are you able to work? (Tick any)

☐ Anytime ☐ Nights
☐ Mornings ☐ Other: _____
☐ Afternoons _____

5. Where do you enjoy working? (Tick any)

☐ Indoors
☐ Outdoors
☐ Both indoors & outdoors

6. What do you enjoy doing? (Tick any)

☐ Helping people/community	☐ Using computers	☐ Physical activity
☐ Solving problems	☐ Organising things	☐ Other: _____
☐ Working with hands	☐ Learning new things	_____
☐ Being creative (art/music)	☐ Sport	_____

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7. Which of the following do you like? (Tick any)

- ☐ Working on the land and the local environment
☐ Share local culture and knowledge
☐ Caring for and teaching community members
☐ Develop and maintain roads, buildings and essential services
☐ Roles in retail, office, or training
☐ Other: _____

8. What is important to you in a job? (Tick any)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Helping others | ☐ Full-time work | ☐ Independence |
| ☐ Good pay | ☐ Casual/part-time | ☐ Meaning/Purpose |
| ☐ Learning | ☐ Fun | ☐ Other: _____ |
| ☐ Stability (good employer) | ☐ Creativity | _____ |

9. What things would you like your job to help pay for? (Tick any)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Car | ☐ Learn new skills | ☐ Support community |
| ☐ Support family | ☐ Household furniture | ☐ Other: _____ |
| ☐ Travel / holidays | ☐ (fridge/washing machine) | _____ |

10. If the job you wanted needs study, when are you available? (Tick any)

- ☐ Mornings
☐ Afternoons
☐ Flexible, anytime

11. Which locations could you study in? (Tick any)

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ My Community | ☐ Darwin/Katherine/Alice Springs | ☐ Other: _____ |
| ☐ Nearby Communities | ☐ Online | _____ |

Optional (Tick one in each column):

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | <u>Age Group</u> | |
| ☐ Male | ☐ 0-14 | ☐ 45-64 |
| ☐ Female | ☐ 15-24 | ☐ 65+ |
| | ☐ 25-44 | |

Comments:

Attachment D – Lajamanu Workforce Survey - Analysis

Feb-Mar 2026

Key Findings at a Glance

- Majority of respondents currently working 4–5 days per week
- Strong preference for part-time and flexible work arrangements
- High proportion of respondents want to reduce hours
- Strong preference to work locally within Lajamanu
- Work motivated by community contribution, learning, and stability

1. Workforce Participation and Patterns

The dataset shows that most respondents (35 of the total 39 respondents) are already engaged in employment working between four and five days per week. Despite this, there is a clear divergence between current and preferred work patterns. Many respondents expressed a desire to transition away from full-time arrangements toward part-time or casual work. This highlights a structural inefficiency in workforce design, where employment availability does not align with workforce preferences.

Implications

Restructuring existing jobs into part-time or shared roles is likely to increase workforce participation without requiring equivalent job creation.

2. Workforce Flexibility and Availability

Respondents demonstrated high day-to-day flexibility, with many indicating availability across all times of day. However, this is combined with the need for extended absences linked to cultural and family obligations. This dual pattern requires workforce models that are both flexible and resilient, capable of accommodating temporary workforce withdrawal without disrupting service delivery.

Implications

- Need for relief workforce pools
- Job-sharing and overlapping roles
- Flexible leave systems aligned to cultural obligations

3. Work Preferences and Employment Drivers

The survey highlights strong alignment toward three primary types of work: community-focused roles, practical hands-on work, and roles that provide learning opportunities. These preferences indicate that employment is valued not only for income, but for its contribution to community, identity, and personal development.

4. Job Values and Motivations

Analysis shows that respondents prioritise helping others, learning, stability, and purpose over financial gain. While income remains important, it is secondary to meaning and job quality. This reflects a workforce that seeks culturally aligned and socially valuable employment rather than purely economic opportunities.

5. Financial Drivers and Outcomes

Income from employment is primarily directed toward supporting family, purchasing essential household goods, and improving living conditions. This indicates that employment plays a critical role in overall community wellbeing and household stability.

6. Training and Skills Development

There is a strong preference for locally delivered training supported by flexible and practical delivery models. Traditional classroom-based approaches are less effective, with respondents favouring hands-on learning and on-the-job training. This presents a clear opportunity to redesign training systems to better align with workforce preferences.

Preferred Training Model

- Delivered within community
- Practical and hands-on
- Flexible scheduling
- Linked directly to employment outcomes

7. Location Preferences

The survey demonstrates a strong preference for local employment. While some openness exists for regional work or training, the dominant preference is to live and work within Lajamanu. This reinforces the need for local job creation strategies.

8. Workforce Segmentation

Three distinct workforce groups emerge from the data:

- Flexible Workforce: Currently employed individuals seeking reduced hours
- Community-Oriented Workforce: Motivated by service and cultural roles
- Practical Workforce: Interested in hands-on, trade, and maintenance work

9. Strategic Insights

The dominant finding is that workforce participation is constrained by systemic factors rather than individual motivation. The current system emphasises full-time, inflexible roles, while the workforce prefers adaptable and locally relevant employment. Addressing this represents the most significant opportunity for workforce improvement.

10. Recommendations

Short-Term

- Introduce job-sharing models
- Run job matching and recruitment activities
- Support onboarding and documentation processes

Medium-Term

- Coordinate training delivery across organisations
- Develop structured part-time employment pathways
- Align training with current job vacancies

Long-Term

- Invest in local job creation (construction, services, transport)
- Develop community-led enterprises
- Build leadership and governance capacity

11. Key Results Tables

Current Work Patterns (Days per Week)

Category	Responses	%
5 days/week	22	56.4

4 days/week	10	25.6
2–3 days/week	5	12.8
Not working/other	2	5.1

The majority of respondents are currently working 4–5 days per week, indicating high workforce engagement but also potential over-reliance on full-time structures.

Preferred Work Patterns (Hours / Employment Type)

Category	Responses	%
Full-time	12	30.8
Part-time	11	28.2
Casual	11	28.2
Other/None	5	12.8

Preferred work patterns show a shift toward flexible employment, with over half of respondents indicating a preference for part-time or casual roles.

Location Preferences for Work

Category	Responses	%
My Community	34	87.2
Regional Centres	18	46.2
Nearby Communities	14	35.9
Online	5	12.8

The dominant preference for working within the community demonstrates a strong localisation effect in workforce behaviour.

Preferred Training Locations

Category	Responses	%
Community	30	76.9
Regional Centres	20	51.3
Online	8	20.5

Training demand is significantly concentrated within community delivery, with secondary interest in regional locations.

Top Job Motivations

Category	Responses	%
Helping Others	32	82.1
Learning	28	71.8
Stability	25	64.1
Good Pay	20	51.3

Motivations reinforce that employment decisions are driven more by purpose and learning than purely financial incentives.