

TENNANT CREEK - THE BARKLY

COMMUNITY WORKFORCE PLAN –

EVIDENCE BASE AND WORKFORCE PLANNING

OPPORTUNITIES



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Executive Summary

Purpose

This report provides an evidence base to support workforce planning in Tennant Creek. It examines community demographics, workforce participation, education and training outcomes, employment patterns, economic conditions, stakeholder-identified issues, and workforce development opportunities.

Consistent with the planning framework adopted for this project, the report focuses on Steps 1 to 4 of the workforce planning process. It establishes the evidence base and identifies workforce planning opportunities. Community validation, implementation planning, governance arrangements, and monitoring (Steps 5 to 7) remain a future phase of work.

Key Findings

- Tennant Creek has a population of 3,080 people, with Aboriginal residents comprising 55.4% of the population. The community has a relatively young population and serves as a key service hub for the Barkly region.
- The strongest finding across the workforce analysis is that labour force participation is a more significant challenge than unemployment. Although Aboriginal residents account for approximately half of the working-age population, their labour force participation rate is 33%, which is significantly lower than for non-Aboriginal residents which is 83%. In 2021, 760 Aboriginal residents were not participating in the labour force compared with 403 who were participating.
- Among Aboriginal residents who do participate in the labour force, employment outcomes are comparatively strong, with 78% employed and 22% unemployed. This suggests that increasing participation and strengthening pathways into employment are likely to have greater impact than focusing solely on unemployment.
- Education and workforce outcomes are closely linked. School attendance rates remain low, particularly for Aboriginal students, and participation declines significantly through secondary school and beyond. Literacy, numeracy and educational attainment data indicate that workforce development challenges begin well before entry into the labour market.
- Employment in Tennant Creek is concentrated in essential service sectors, particularly:
 - Health Care and Social Assistance
 - Public Administration and Safety
 - Education and Training
 - Construction
- Aboriginal employment is concentrated in publicly funded service sectors, while participation remains comparatively low in several private sector industries, including construction, retail, and accommodation and food services.
- Training activity is well established through local schools, registered training organisations and apprenticeship pathways. However, stakeholder feedback suggests that training does not always translate into employment outcomes and that there is a disconnect between training delivery and local workforce demand.
- Housing affordability, childcare availability, transport, licensing, identification requirements, and access to support services were consistently identified as barriers to workforce participation.
- The report identifies government grant programs and funding allocations that include Tennant Creek and

Barkly locations.

While resources are being directed towards multiple programs and initiatives, stakeholders identified a need for stronger coordination, alignment and progression pathways.

Community and Workforce Strengths

Tennant Creek has a number of significant strengths that provide a foundation for future workforce development:

- Established Aboriginal organisations with trusted relationships, cultural knowledge and experience in delivering employment, community development and support services.
- Existing education, training and workforce development infrastructure, supported by practitioners experienced in remote delivery.
- A strong service-sector employment base and an experienced local workforce with cultural knowledge, language capability and place-based expertise.
- Ongoing demand for workers across multiple sectors, with employers willing to support training, mentoring and on-the-job learning.
- Strong cultural knowledge and connection to Country that can support employment, enterprise development and culturally appropriate training and workforce pathways.
- Strong local networks and collaborative relationships among employers, community organisations, training providers, schools and government agencies.
- Established regional governance arrangements and strategic initiatives that provide a foundation for coordinated workforce planning and action.

Priority Areas for Workforce Development

Analysis of workforce data, stakeholder consultations and existing strategic plans identified the following priority areas.

1. Strengthen Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Skills (LLND)
Low LLND skills were consistently identified as a foundational barrier affecting education, training participation, employment access and job retention.
2. Improve Youth Engagement and School-to-Work Transitions
Low school attendance, declining retention through secondary school, and limited pathways into employment contribute to long-term workforce disengagement.
3. Align Training with Employment Opportunities
Training delivery needs stronger alignment with local jobs, industry demand and future project opportunities to improve employment outcomes.
4. Improve Work Readiness and Employment Support
Stakeholders identified work readiness, workplace expectations, communication skills and employment preparation as key areas requiring additional support.
5. Remove Practical Barriers to Employment

Lack of identification documents, limited access to local driver training and testing, and delays or eligibility restrictions associated with Criminal History Checks (CHCs), Ochre Cards and Working with Children Checks (WWCCs) can prevent otherwise job-ready individuals from entering training and employment. These barriers should be addressed through accessible local support and more timely administrative processes, while preserving child-safety and other regulatory safeguards.

6. Expand Wraparound Supports

Childcare, housing, accommodation, alcohol and other drug services, and case management supports were identified as critical enablers of workforce participation.

7. Improve Coordination Across the Workforce System

Stakeholders identified fragmentation across training, employment and service providers and highlighted the need for stronger coordination and shared planning.

Implementation Approach

This report does not complete the implementation phase of the workforce planning framework. However, the evidence collected indicates that successful implementation will require:

- Community validation of findings, priorities and opportunities.
- A coordinated workforce planning and governance approach.
- Strong collaboration between community organisations, employers, training providers and government agencies.
- Alignment with existing initiatives, including the Barkly Regional Deal and Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030.
- Ongoing monitoring and review of workforce participation, training outcomes and employment outcomes.

The report identifies a Stakeholder Working Group and dedicated coordination function as potential mechanisms to support implementation, subject to future community validation and planning processes.

Immediate Decisions Required

To progress from evidence gathering to implementation, the following immediate decisions are required:

1. Confirm that the findings and priorities identified in this report should proceed to community validation.
2. Determine the process for completing Steps 5 to 7 of the workforce planning framework, including community engagement, implementation planning and monitoring.
3. Establish governance arrangements to coordinate workforce planning activities across stakeholders.
4. Prioritise workforce development actions based on the evidence presented and community validation outcomes.
5. Identify responsibility for ongoing coordination and monitoring to support implementation and reporting.

This report should be viewed as a foundation for the next phase of community-led workforce planning, focused on validating priorities, developing implementation strategies, and establishing mechanisms for delivery, review and continuous improvement.

Introduction

Purpose of the Report

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

Focusing on the Tennant Creek 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 stakeholder consultations, 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 a *Tennant Creek 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 Tennant Creek Workforce Plan with these established priorities and community-led directions.

Report Format

The structure of this report follows the seven-step planning framework developed by Informed Solutions (Informed Solutions (NT) Pty Ltd, 2014), mapping the key steps identified in the planning method flowchart outlined in Figure 1.

This report focuses on Steps 1 to 4 of the framework only. These steps are designed to build an evidence base by describing the community context, workforce landscape, identified needs, and key issues. Steps 5 to 7 have not been completed as part of this report and represent a subsequent phase requiring community validation, implementation planning, governance arrangements, and ongoing monitoring and review.

Steps 1 and 2 of the framework focus on providing a comprehensive understanding of the community context and workforce landscape, identifying community demographics, existing infrastructure and services, education and training opportunities and outcomes, key local industries and employers, workforce demand, and economic indicators.

Steps 3 and 4 are informed by community consultation activities conducted throughout the course of the project, or through secondary sources such as previous consultation notes. These steps identify the future needs of community members, undertake an issues analysis, and assess barriers, opportunities, and limitations. Additionally, they focus on determining the leadership and coordination required to implement recommendations arising from community input. In cases where direct consultation has not yet taken place, it is essential that future engagement be undertaken to validate community issues and barriers, and to prioritise aspirations based on the insights gathered from stakeholder consultations

Steps 5 to 7 constitute the community validation, implementation, and monitoring phase of the framework. These steps are intended to occur after the evidence and issues identified in Steps 1 to 4 have been reviewed and validated by the community and key stakeholders.

Steps 5 and 6 outline the implementation strategies and recommendations developed by the community to drive this work. These steps will identify actions, responsibilities and accountabilities, in order that stakeholders collaborate effectively to deliver 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.

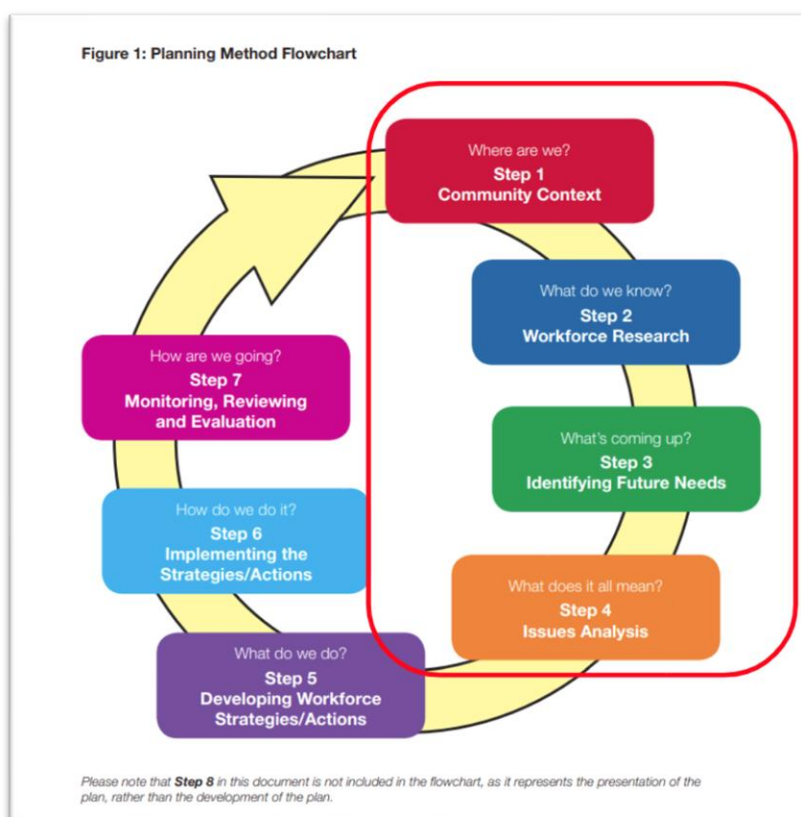


Figure 1: Planning Method Flowchart (Informed Solutions (NT) Pty Ltd, 2014)

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.

Data Collection Framework

Consistent with the project's scope, this report utilises the framework as a guide and focuses on completing Steps 1 to 4 only. The findings are intended to inform the future completion of Steps 5 to 7 through community validation, implementation planning, governance arrangements, and ongoing monitoring and review.

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., Future Projects Scoping in Barkly August 2025, Readyng Tennant Creek for Economic Expansion, 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, Barkly UMEL Youth Case Study)
5. Stakeholder consultations (with existing 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

Due to the short timeframe for this report, direct community consultation with community members was not undertaken. Engagement was instead conducted with employers, training providers, and government stakeholders, and supplemented by existing consultation findings, including those informing the Barkly Regional Deal initiatives.

As a result, primary data reflecting current community perspectives on skills, training preferences, employment barriers, and local capacity was not directly collected. These findings should therefore be interpreted with this limitation in mind.

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 in industry categories. For example, in industries that hired the highest number of Aboriginal workers in the region. It would be insightful to know the positions they filled within the

industry.

- Where data refers to jobs filled by Aboriginal people, it would be valuable to distinguish between local Warumungu 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 across all communities.

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 these specific communities. As such it is important to view this report as a foundation for community-led consultation to validate findings and collaboratively develop implementation strategies that are responsive to local priorities and capabilities.

Step 1: Community Context

Tennant Creek Community Profile and Demographics

Languages spoken in the community/region	The primary language spoken in Tennant Creek is English. The main Aboriginal languages spoken are Warumungu, Warlpiri, and Alyawarr. Other languages spoken in the Barkly region include Kriol, Warlmanpa, Kaytetye, Jingili, Garawa, Mudburra, Anmatyerre, Wambaya, Arrente, Pitjantjatjara, and Luritja.																																																																																								
Traditional owners	The traditional owners of Tennant Creek are the Warumungu.																																																																																								
Population	Table 1: Population of Tennant Creek <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>265</td><td>235</td><td>61</td><td>64</td><td>22</td><td>20</td><td>346*</td><td>324*</td><td>671*</td></tr><tr><td>15-24</td><td>120</td><td>121</td><td>50</td><td>35</td><td>17</td><td>6</td><td>190*</td><td>163*</td><td>347*</td></tr><tr><td>25-44</td><td>240</td><td>254</td><td>201</td><td>215</td><td>39</td><td>33</td><td>476*</td><td>505*</td><td>978*</td></tr><tr><td>45-64</td><td>171</td><td>189</td><td>181</td><td>181</td><td>50</td><td>30</td><td>402*</td><td>399*</td><td>801*</td></tr><tr><td>65+</td><td>57</td><td>66</td><td>95</td><td>55</td><td>13</td><td>7</td><td>159*</td><td>121*</td><td>280*</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>851*</td><td>861*</td><td>588*</td><td>549*</td><td>137*</td><td>103*</td><td>1567*</td><td>1512*</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Total Population</td><td colspan="2">1707* (55.4%)</td><td colspan="2">1135* (36.8%)</td><td colspan="2">241* (7.8%)</td><td></td><td></td><td>3080*</td></tr></table> Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table I01. Selected Person Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex * Note: Totals do not equal the sum of individual figures due to data perturbation applied to census data for confidentiality purposes.	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	265	235	61	64	22	20	346*	324*	671*	15-24	120	121	50	35	17	6	190*	163*	347*	25-44	240	254	201	215	39	33	476*	505*	978*	45-64	171	189	181	181	50	30	402*	399*	801*	65+	57	66	95	55	13	7	159*	121*	280*	Total	851*	861*	588*	549*	137*	103*	1567*	1512*		Total Population	1707* (55.4%)		1135* (36.8%)		241* (7.8%)				3080*
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Location	Tennant Creek is located 1,015 km south of Darwin and 507 km north of Alice Springs.																																																																																								

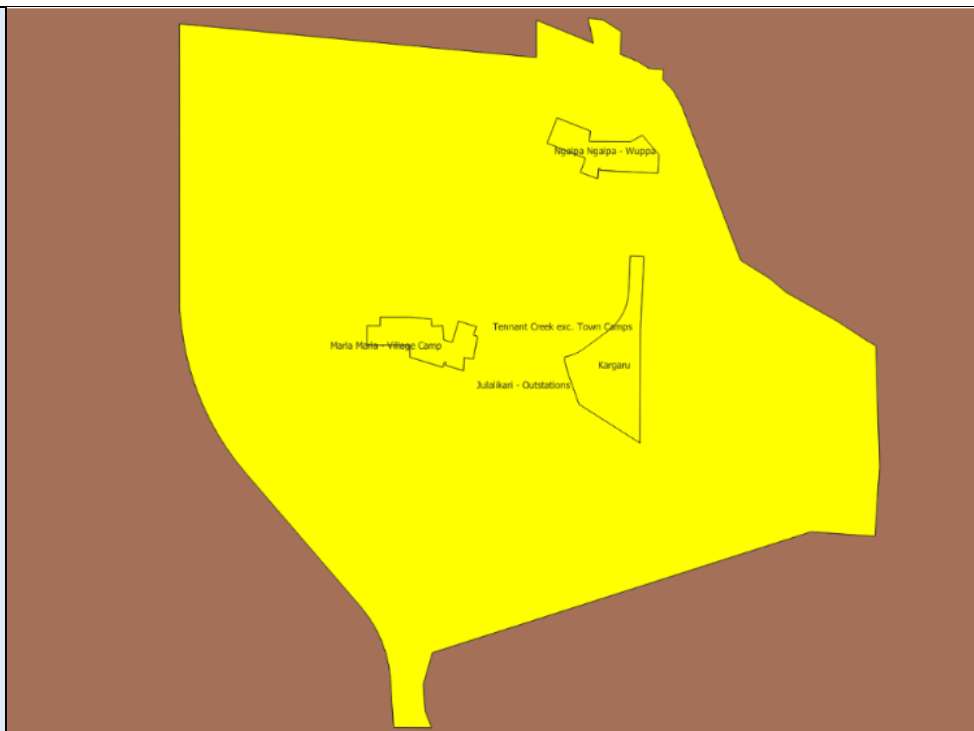


Figure 2: Map of Tennant Creek

Barkly LGA Extent

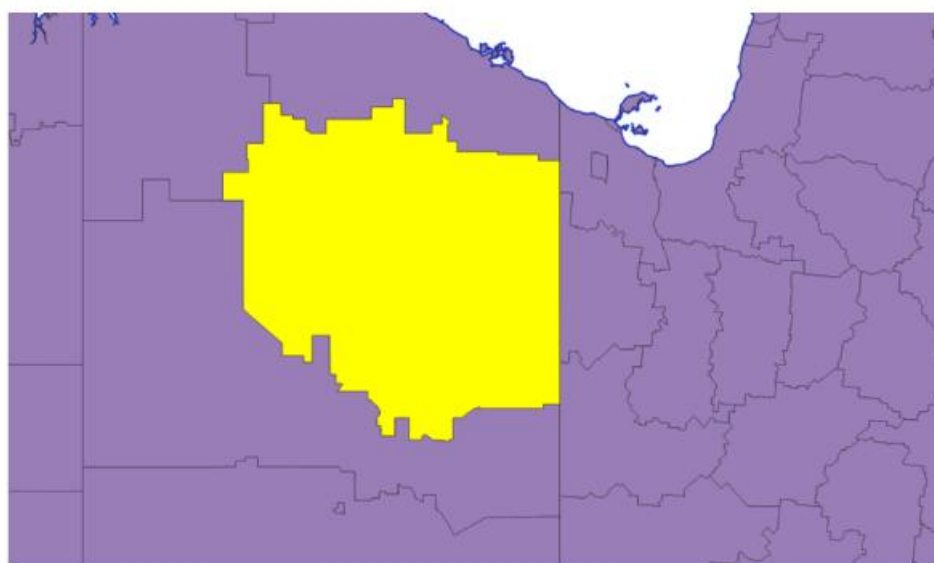


Figure 3: Map of Barkly LGA Extent

Access

Tennant Creek can be accessed all year round via Stuart Highway.

Infrastructure, Services and Events

Internet Access	Internet in Tennant Creek is primarily served via NBN and 4G/5G mobile networks. Major providers include Telstra, Skymesh and Optus.												
Freight Services	Many freight services pass through Tennant Creek providing road transport for goods along the Stuart Highway. Local freight operators include MSC Freight and Tennant Creek Freight Lines. Major regional freight forwarders include Northern Territory Freight Services (K&S Corporation Ltd.), Northline, and Greyhound freight that offer regular connections from Darwin to Adelaide. Air freight services are also available via Tennant Creek airport with Qantas Freight.												
Health Services	- Tennant Creek Hospital (20 beds and 16 chair renal unit) - Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation												
Children's and Youth Services	Children's Services - Kentish Early Learning Centre - Tennant Creek Preschool Youth Services - Tennant Creek Youth Centre												
Education and Training	Education - Tennant Creek Primary School - Tennant Creek High School Registered Training Organisations with an office in Tennant Creek (RTOs) - Batchelor Institute Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) - Charles Darwin University (CDU) - Saltbush Social Enterprise - Flinders University - GTNT Group - Central Desert Training Pty Ltd												
Local Business Services	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>☒ Fuel station</td><td>☒ Plumbing Services</td></tr> <tr> <td>☒ Café</td><td>☒ Building Contractors</td></tr> <tr> <td>☒ Food shops</td><td>☒ Civil Contractors</td></tr> <tr> <td>☒ Supermarket</td><td>☒ Carpenters</td></tr> <tr> <td>☒ Electricians</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>☒ Hardware Store</td><td></td></tr> </table>	☒ Fuel station	☒ Plumbing Services	☒ Café	☒ Building Contractors	☒ Food shops	☒ Civil Contractors	☒ Supermarket	☒ Carpenters	☒ Electricians		☒ Hardware Store	
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☒ Food shops	☒ Civil Contractors												
☒ Supermarket	☒ Carpenters												
☒ Electricians													
☒ Hardware Store													
Regional Businesses and Projects	Mineral Resources - Tennant Consolidated Mining Group Pty Ltd (Tennant Mines), a wholly owned subsidiary of Pan African Resources PLC. (Nobles Nob, Juno, Mauretania, and Chariot) - Tennant Creek - Northern Iron (Warrego) - 50 km northwest of Tennant Creek												

	• Avenira Ltd (Wonarah) - east of Tennant Creek • Castile Resources (Rover 1) - 80km southwest of Tennant Creek • Verdant Minerals Pty Ltd (Ammaroo Phosphate) - 200km southeast of Tennant Creek 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 Cattle Stations (Barkly) • Banka Banka West Station and Tourist Park – 100km north of Tennant Creek • Helen Springs Station – 130 km north of Tennant Creek • Creswell Downs – 250 km northeast of Tennant Creek • Alexandria Station – 273 km east of Tennant Creek • Mittiebah Station – 318 km east of Tennant Creek • Brunette Downs Station – 350 km northeast of Tennant Creek • Avon Downs Station – 420 km east of Tennant Creek • Anthony Lagoon Station – 440 km northeast of Tennant Creek • Rocklands Station – east of Tennant Creek		
Community Services, Facilities and Amenities	<table> <tr> <td> ☑ Aged care service ☑ Child and family services ☑ Youth services ☑ Alcohol and other drug services (AOD) ☑ Employment services ☑ Sport and rec hall ☑ Library ☑ Safe house ☑ Basketball court </td> <td> ☑ Skatepark ☑ Swimming pool ☑ Football oval ☑ Trade training Centre (Juno Centre) ☑ Training rooms (Business Hub) ☑ Museum ☑ Church services ☑ Post office ☑ Bank </td> </tr> </table>	☑ Aged care service ☑ Child and family services ☑ Youth services ☑ Alcohol and other drug services (AOD) ☑ Employment services ☑ Sport and rec hall ☑ Library ☑ Safe house ☑ Basketball court	☑ Skatepark ☑ Swimming pool ☑ Football oval ☑ Trade training Centre (Juno Centre) ☑ Training rooms (Business Hub) ☑ Museum ☑ Church services ☑ Post office ☑ Bank
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Aboriginal Organisations	• Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation • Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation • Manungurra Aboriginal Corporation • Papulu Apparr-Kari Aboriginal Corporation • Central Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Unit (CAAFLU) Aboriginal Corporation • Barkly Region Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Group (BRADAAG) Aboriginal Corporation • The Tennant Creek Mob Aboriginal Corporation (The Mob)		

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)	• CatholicCareNT • Northern Australia Disability Service (NADS) Day Centre • Saltbush Employment Services • Australian Red Cross
Other Community Service Organisations	• RN Employment Services • Tennant Creek Women's Refuge Inc. • Our Community Shed
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 Commonwealth Statutory Authority • Central Land Council • Northern Land Council
Visitor Accommodation	• Goldfields Hotel Motel • Bluestone Motor Inn • Safari Lodge Motel • Tennant Creek Caravan Park • Outback Caravan Park and Cabins • Threeways Roadhouse (25km north of Tennant Creek)
Power/Water	Electricity in Tennant Creek is provided by Territory Generation Tennant Creek Power Station. The network is managed by Power and Water Corporation and is a predominantly gas-fired grid. Electricity retailers include Jacana Energy and Rimfire Energy. Drinking water for Tennant Creek is supplied by Power and Water Corporation and comes from the Cabbage Gum and Kelly Well aquifers, south of the town.
Community Events	Tennant Creek events • Tennant Creek Cup (held in May) • Desert Harmony Festival (held in August) • Tennant Creek Show (held in August) • Barkly Rodeo (Tennant Creek) (held in October)

	Barkly events • Barkly May Day Muster (held in May) • Barkly Races (held in June) • 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 the workforce data for Tennant Creek exploring 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 town, 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 work¹. The cohort does not assume that all people who are not in the labour force are available for or seeking employment.

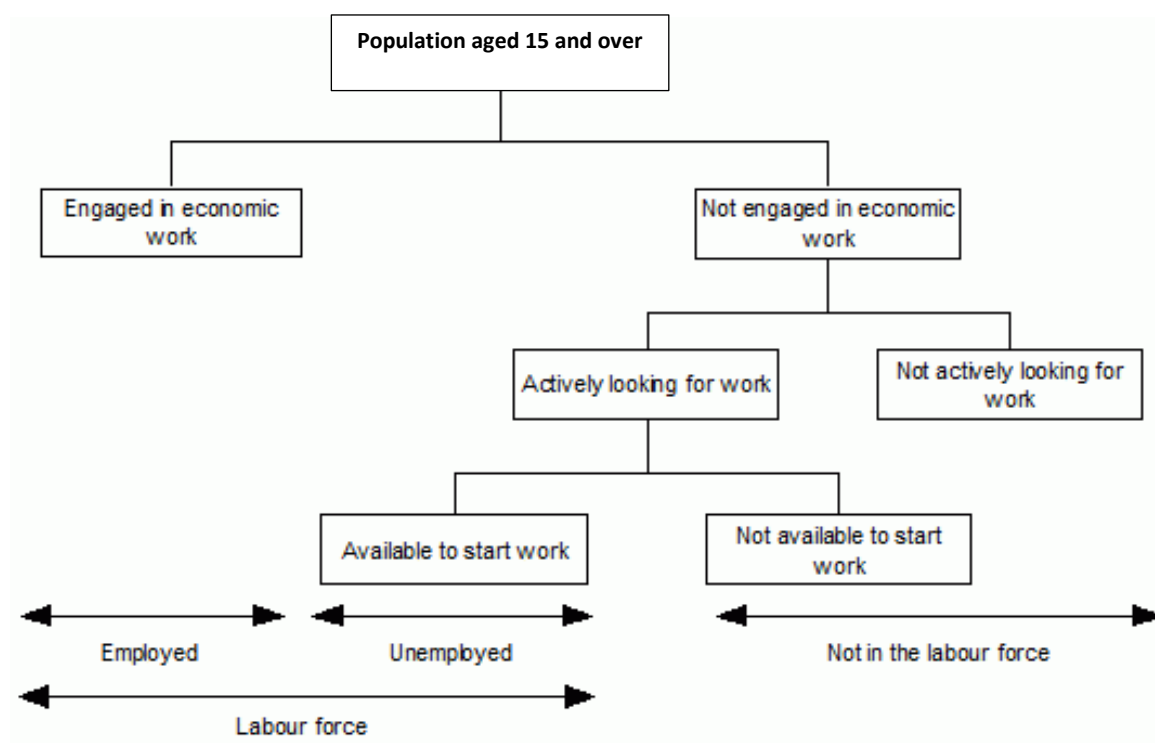


Figure 4: The Labour Force Framework

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)) and are either unemployed and actively looking for work, or eligible to work but not actively looking for work.

¹Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023b).

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 activities².

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 work.

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.

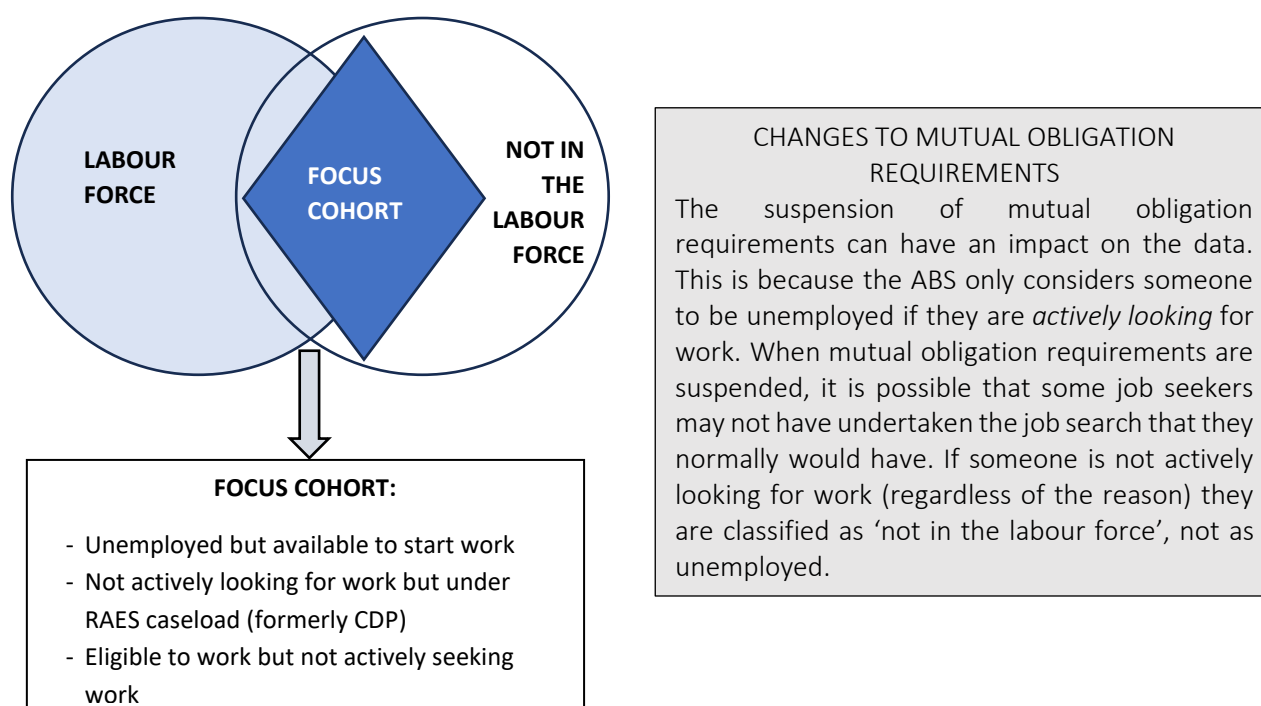


Figure 5 Focus Cohort

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.

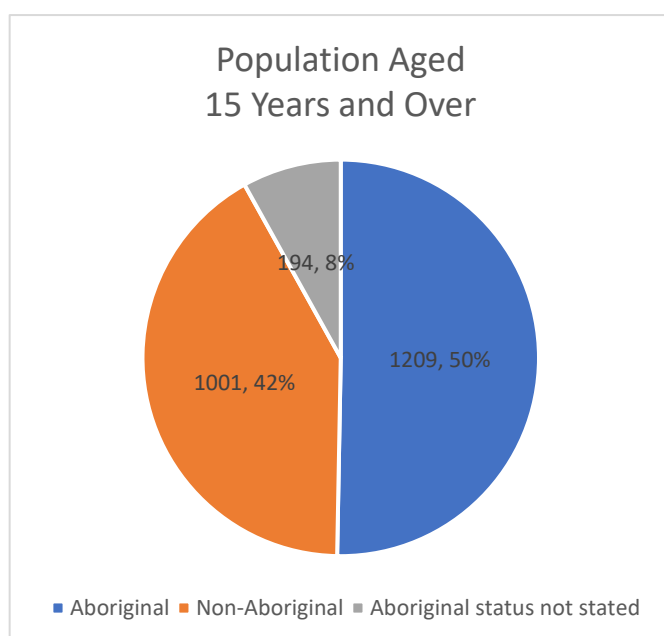
Not in the Labour Force

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)

²National Indigenous Australians Agency (2023).

2.1 Workforce Demographics

Population Aged 15 Years and Over



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 6: Population Aged 15 Years and Over

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table I19

Table 2: Employed and Unemployed (seeking work) in Labour Force by Age, Gender and Aboriginal Status

Age	Employed (Full time, part time, away from work)						Total*	Unemployed (Seeking work)						Total*	Total in Labour Force		TOTAL*
	Aboriginal		Non- Aboriginal		Total*		All	Aboriginal		Non- Aboriginal		Total*		All	(A)	³ (N-A)	All
	(A)		(N-A)					(A)		(N-A)							
	M	F	M	F	A	N-A		M	F	M	F	A	N-A				
15-24	10	32	47	25	44	70	114	7	7	0	3	18	10	28	62	73	135
25-44	68	65	174	196	138	364	502	32	30	4	0	60	4	64	188	384	572
45-64	55	53	163	145	111	307	418	4	8	5	12	11	7	18	130	308	438
65+	10	14	41	27	22	68	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	78	95
Total*	142	165	432	392	313	818	1131	46	44	8	9	87	20	107	403	830	1233

Data compiled from Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table I21

* Note: Totals do not equal the sum of individual figures due to data perturbation applied to Census data for confidentiality purposes.

³Non-Aboriginal labour force figures were calculated by subtracting the Aboriginal labour force figures in Table I21 from the total labour force figures in Table G46 of the 2021 Census of Population and Housing for Tennant Creek (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

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

Age	Not Seeking Work				Total Not in Labour Force*		TOTAL*
	Aboriginal		Non- Aboriginal		Aboriginal	Non- Aboriginal	All
	(A)		(N-A)		(A)	(N-A)	
	M	F	M	F			
15-24	90	80	5	3	173	12	185
25-44	133	150	6	18	284	31	315
45-64	101	122	25	16	223	47	270
65+	41	50	49	28	86	77	163
Total*	371	396	87	76	760	168	928

Data compiled from Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table I21, and table G46

* Note: Totals do not equal the sum of individual figures due to data perturbation applied to Census data for confidentiality purposes.

Of the 2,404 total residents aged 15 years and over in Tennant Creek, 1,209 people (50%) are Aboriginal while 1001 (42%) are non-Aboriginal.

Across the population aged 15 years and over, 403 Aboriginal people and 830 non-Aboriginal people were in the labour force, while 760 Aboriginal people and 165 non-Aboriginal people were not in the labour force. This highlights that low labour force participation, beyond unemployment alone, is a significant workforce challenge.

Labour force participation is concentrated in the 25–44 and 45–64-year age groups, which accounts for the most employed and unemployed persons seeking work. However, there are also substantial numbers of Aboriginal people in these age groups (284 and 223 people respectively) who are not participating in the labour force, suggesting that barriers to workforce engagement extend beyond job availability and include factors such as caring responsibilities, health issues, education participation, welfare dependence, and other forms of economic inactivity.

Young Aboriginal people aged 15–24 years have the highest rate of non-participation with 73% ($173/235 \times 100\%$) of 15–24-year-olds not in the labour force. This suggests significant challenges in supporting school-to-work transitions and early workforce engagement.

Labour force participation declines substantially among those aged 65 years and over, reflecting retirement and reduced workforce attachment among older residents. However, even within the prime working-age population between 25 and 64 years, a large proportion of residents remain outside the labour force.

Unemployment levels in each category are relatively modest compared with the number of people who are not participating in the labour market at all (i.e. not seeking work). The primary workforce challenge appears to be increasing labour force participation rather than reducing unemployment.

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 33% for the Aboriginal labour force and 83% for the non-Aboriginal labour force.



Figure 7: Labour Force Numbers

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table I19

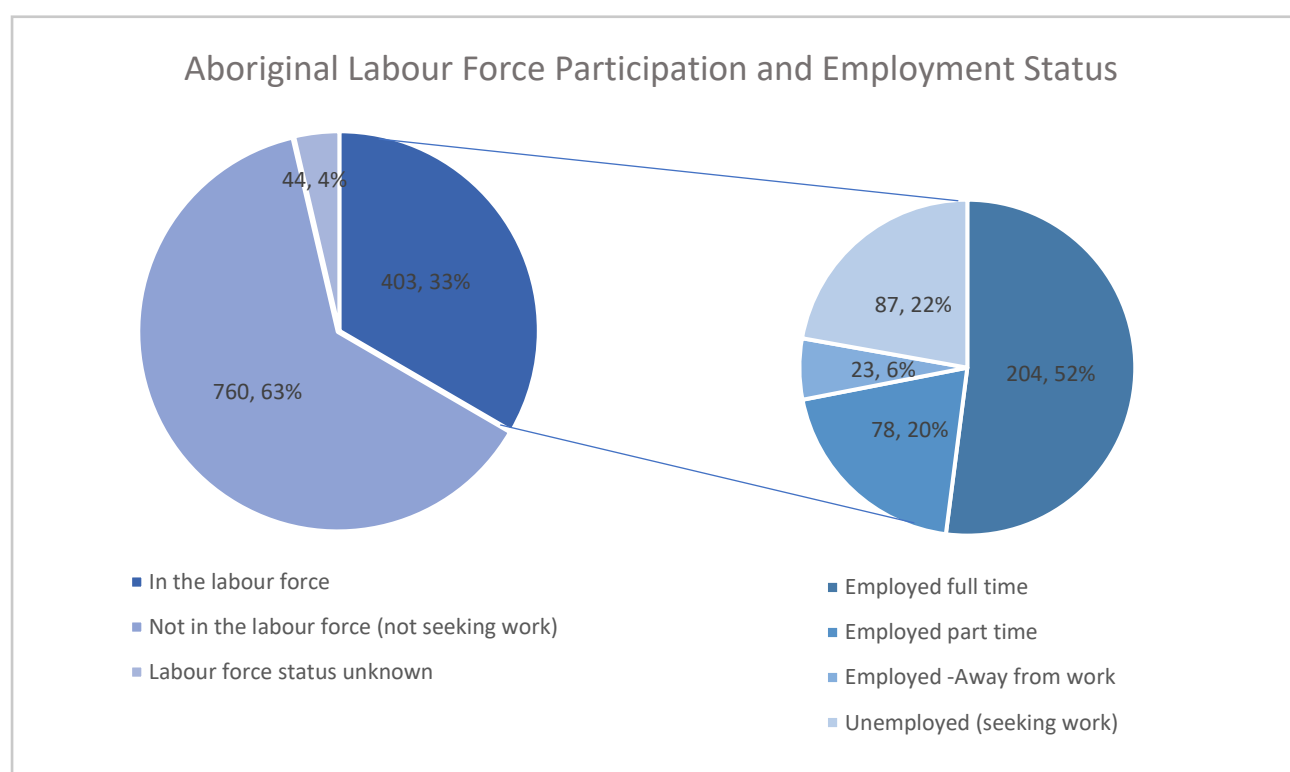


Figure 8: Aboriginal Labour Force Participation and Employment Status

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table I19, and table I21

Figure 8 shows that 33% ($403/1209 \times 100\%$) of Aboriginal residents aged 15 years and over were participating in the labour force, while 63% ($760/1209 \times 100\%$) were not participating. Among those participating in the labour force, 78% were employed (full-time, part-time and away from work) and 22% were unemployed and actively seeking work.

Labour force participation numbers have been drawn from the 2021 Census data of respondents who indicated that they were either 'in the labour force' or 'not in the labour force.' The participation rates were calculated as a percentage of the total population aged 15 years and over, including persons whose labour force status was not stated.

Employment Status



Figure 9: Aboriginal Employment Status

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table I21

'Employed- Away from work' refers to people who had a job in the week before the Census but were away from work on holidays, on paid leave, on strike, or were temporarily stood down during the Census week. It also includes people who stated they worked in the previous week but did not provide the number of hours worked. These individuals are classified as employed by the ABS. (ABS, 2021)

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

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

Table 4 CDP and RAES Flow Caseload

Flow Caseload*							
Community Cluster	CDP						RAES
	2024-2025				2025-2026		Nov 2025-Jan 2026
	Jul-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Jan-Mar 2025	Apr-Jun 2025	Jul-Sep 2025	1 - 31 Oct 2025	
Tennant Creek	582	584	547	541	588	457	504
Barkly	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
Tennant Creek	<20	<20	24	21	<20	<20
Barkly	67	79	64	57	44	<20

^ Employment placement and employment Outcomes data is not available yet for RAES.

**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	2023-2024				2025-2026	
	Jul-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Jan-Mar 2025	Apr-Jun 2025	Jul-Sep 2025	1 - 31 Oct 2025
Tennant Creek	<20	<20	<20	<20	23	<20
Barkly	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.

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

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.'

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.

CDP participation in the Barkly Region remained consistent through 2024–25, with caseloads around 1,900 participants, followed by a slight dip in October 2025. Overall, there is minimal change in participation, with fluctuations likely reflecting seasonal work, participants exiting CDP, changes to program eligibility criteria, participants disengaging or non-compliance with the program requirements.

Over the same period, employment placements declined from 79 in late 2024 to 64, 57, 44 and <20 by October 2025. Employment outcomes remained low relative to caseload, fluctuating between 23 and 74 participants achieving 13- and 26-week outcomes before dropping to <20 in the most recent period.

The data indicates a cycling cohort, where participants move through short-term placements without transitioning into sustained employment

Data indicates:

- **Stable Participant Base:** The system is engaging a relatively stable cohort of participants, but only a small proportion are transitioning into employment
- **Low outcomes:** In Tennant Creek, fewer than 20–24 participants per quarter were placed into employment from a caseload of over 500, indicating limited conversion from participation to employment outcomes. This highlights a persistent gap between engagement in employment services and successful transitions into work.
- **Employment placement pattern:** Data from 2023–24⁴ (not presented in this report) shows a similar pattern to 2024–25, particularly in the January–March and April–June quarters, with 24 and 12 participants placed into employment respectively in both quarters in both years. However, the number

⁴National Indigenous Australians Agency (2026).

of participants achieving outcomes remained consistent across all quarters, at <20.

JobSeeker Recipients

Table 7: Total JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance (other) Recipients for Tennant Creek -June 2025-February 2026

JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance (other) Recipients by Statistical Area Level 2 ⁵			
SA2: 702021056		SA2 Name: Tennant Creek	
Year	Month	JobSeeker Payment	Youth Allowance (other)*
2025	June	455	90
	July	460	90
	August	465	95
	September	470	100
	October	480	100
	November	490	105
	December	490	100
2026	January	490	100
	February	485	100

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					
Current month		January 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
Northern Territory		25,015	15.4	19,925	12.2
Alice Springs		2,115	11.7	2,378	13.2
Barkly		1,576	36.6	1,162	27.0
Belyuen		24	22.6	18	17.0
Central Desert		1,277	53.1	908	37.7

Source: Australian Government Department of Social Services (2026), compiled by .id Informed Decisions.

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 1,576 (36.6%) in January 2026. ⁶

⁵Australian Government Department of Social Services (2026).

⁶Profile.id (2024).

Individual Incomes

2021 Census data on residents weekly personal income highlights a clear income divide, with Aboriginal residents concentrated in lower income brackets and non-Aboriginal residents more likely to earn higher weekly incomes.

There is a pronounced income gap across all brackets, with limited overlap between the two populations, suggesting structural differences in employment type, hours worked, and earning capacity.

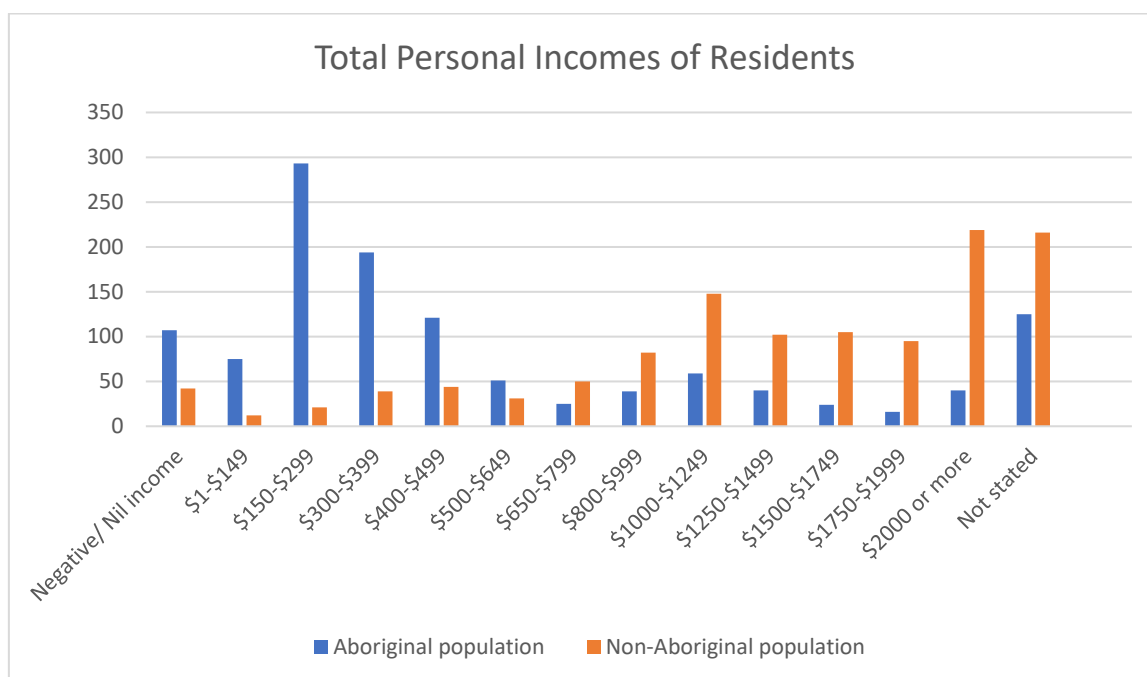


Figure 10: Total Personal Incomes of Residents in Tennant Creek

Source: Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 2021 Census of Population and Housing Tennant Creek. I08 Personal Income (Weekly) by Sex for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Persons., G17 Total Personal Income (Weekly) by Age by Sex

- **Aboriginal income distribution is concentrated in lower brackets**, with most individuals earning below \$499 per week. This aligns with higher rates of part-time, irregular, or program-based income rather than full-time employment. This suggests a cohort that is either unemployed, underemployed, or reliant on income support, highlighting barriers to consistent workforce participation.
- **Non-Aboriginal residents are concentrated in higher income brackets (above \$1,000 per week)**, indicating greater access to full-time, stable, and higher-paying roles.
- **The income distributions points to a segmented labour market**, where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations are participating in different types of employment with varying levels of security and pay.

2.2 Skills in the Community

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

Education

The data below in Table 8 indicates that despite the Aboriginal population being larger across all age groups, educational enrolment rates are higher in the non-Aboriginal population with a 10% difference recorded, except among those aged 25 and over age which is at 8%.

Table 8: People Enrolled in an Education Institute in Tennant Creek

Population	Age groups:	Total people in age bracket	Total no. enrolled in an educational institution	% of age group enrolled
Aboriginal	0-4 years	184	29	16%
	5-14 years	321	280	87%
	15-24 years	239	54	23%
	25 and over	964	19	2%
Non-Aboriginal	0-4 years	72	19	26%
	5-14 years	59	57	97%
	15-24 years	81	27	33%
	25 and over	916	96	10%

Source: Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table I01

This difference across the younger cohorts indicates that fewer Aboriginal individuals are entering or staying in education, which reduces the future pool of qualified workers, and a weaker pipeline of skilled Aboriginal employment for Tennant Creek. The gap points to barriers to retention including cultural relevance of education, financial or family responsibilities, and disengagement from formal systems.

Table 9: School Profile Data

Metric	Tennant Creek Primary School	Tennant Creek High School
Year Range	T-6	7-12
Total Enrolment Numbers	309	142
Aboriginal Students	78% (241)	75% (107)
Total Males Enrolled	157 (51%)	67 (47%)
Total Females Enrolled	152 (49%)	75 (53%)
Language Background Other Than English	63%	66%
Teaching Staff	35	20
Non-Teaching Staff	21	9
Student-to-Teacher Ratio	8.8:1	7.1:1
Student attendance rate (Semester	57%	

1, 2025)		48%
- Aboriginal Students' Attendance Rate	51%	41%
- Non-Aboriginal Students' Attendance Rate	79%	79%
Students Attending 90%+ of the Time	13%	14%
- Aboriginal Students' Attendance	10%	8%
- Non-Aboriginal Students' Attendance	27%	38%
ICSEA Value (National Average)	732 (1000)	754 (1000)
School ICSEA Percentile	2	2

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (n.d.-a, n.d.-b). © 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.

Table 10: Tennant Creek High School Senior Secondary Outcomes for Students Who Left School in the Reporting Year

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Senior secondary certificate awarded	10	6	14	8	8
Completed senior secondary school	10	6	18	8	8

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

Common educational challenges and contextual factors across the schools include:

- **Student cohorts are predominantly Aboriginal**, with 78% at the primary school and 75% at the high school, indicating that education outcomes in Tennant Creek are closely tied to outcomes for Aboriginal students.
- **Attendance rates are low across both schools**, at 57% for the primary school and 48% for the high school, with lower attendance among Aboriginal students (51% and 41% respectively) compared to non-Aboriginal attendance (79%).
- **Consistent attendance is low**, with 13–14% of students attending 90% or more of the time, dropping to 8–10% for Aboriginal students, indicating limited continuity in learning.
- **High proportions of students from language backgrounds other than English (63 and 66%)** point to additional learning support requirements around language and literacy. School curriculums, Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses and further education options could benefit from incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices, including facilitating classes in Aboriginal languages, to improve engagement and learning outcomes (AITSL, 2020; Whatman & Duncan, 2020).
- **The transition from primary to high school shows a decline in overall enrolments and a shift in gender composition**. Male enrolments decrease from 157 to 67 (a 58% reduction), while female enrolments fall from 152 to 75 (a 51% reduction). Male representation declines from 51% to 47%, while female representation increases from 49% to 53%, indicating relatively stronger retention among female students.

- Both schools have very low ICSEA scores (732 and 754), placing them in the 2nd percentile nationally, reflecting significant socio-educational disadvantage.

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), 2024).

Literacy and Numeracy

National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) performance data indicates that scores across both schools are below the national average. National averages are provided in brackets alongside the NAPLAN scores in Table 11.

The NAPLAN results for both schools are for 2025.

Table 11: NAPLAN Scores

Subject	Year Level	Tennant Creek Primary School	Tennant Creek High School
Reading	3	230 (402)	N/A
	5	346 (492)	N/A
	7	N/A	367 (538)
	9	N/A	458 (568)
Writing	3	247 (414)	N/A
	5	293 (480)	N/A
	7	N/A	357 (538)
	9	N/A	425 (575)
Spelling	3	253(405)	N/A
	5	344 (487)	N/A
	7	N/A	405 (542)
	9	N/A	503 (569)
Grammar	3	207 (408)	N/A
	5	319 (497)	N/A
	7	N/A	354 (539)
	9	N/A	499 (559)
Numeracy	3	258 (405)	N/A
	5	349 (492)	N/A
	7	N/A	405 (545)
	9	N/A	453 (573)
Participation Rate		77% (95%)	49% (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.

Scores are presented alongside the average score for all Australian students, shown in brackets.

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

The data shows:

- **A significant performance gap:** All reported scores are below national averages across all subjects and year levels.
- **Low participation rates,** particularly at the High School level (49%) indicate disengagement.
- **Literacy outcomes are low,** with gaps in reading, writing, spelling, and grammar, indicating foundational skill challenges that persist through schooling.
- **Numeracy outcomes lag significantly behind national averages,** suggesting broad learning gaps across both literacy and numeracy domains.
- **The consistency of underperformance across all subjects** suggests systemic challenges, rather than subject-specific issues, likely linked to attendance, language barriers, and socio-educational disadvantage

The School Profile Data in Table 9 indicates that 63% and 66% of students for both the Primary and High School come from a language background other than English. 2021 Census data also indicate 43%⁷ of Aboriginal residents' report speaking a language other than English at home, indicating a high prevalence of Aboriginal language use in Tennant Creek. As English is not the first language for many students, lower NAPLAN performance should be interpreted within this broader linguistic context, which likely contributes to underperformance across literacy-based domains.

This underscores the need for workforce planning to recognise that many Aboriginal community members come from a language background other than English, and that education and training initiatives are likely to be more effective when First Nations languages are integrated into delivery, both within the curriculum and as a vehicle for learning. Additionally, acknowledging that most First Nations people have distinct learning styles and cultural knowledge systems would help strengthen the relevance of these pathways

Engagement in Tertiary Education

According to the 2021 Census, 23 (1.9%⁸) Aboriginal residents in Tennant Creek were recorded as having attended a vocational education and training provider, university, or other higher education institution.

Table 12: Tertiary Educational Institute Attendance

Educational Institution Type	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Vocational education (including TAFE and private training providers)	3	33
University or other higher education	11	59
Other types of educational institutions	9	16
Total	23	108
Type of educational institution not stated	168	24

Source: Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table I06

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021).

⁸Calculated as a percentage of the total Aboriginal working-age population (15 years and over) of 1,209.

The data indicates low levels of participation in tertiary education among Aboriginal residents in 2021. This may be partly associated with lower literacy and numeracy skills as reflected in the NAPLAN scores.

Qualifications

According to the 2021 Census, 205 Aboriginal residents in Tennant Creek (17%) reported holding a non-school qualification. These qualifications include certificates, diplomas and university-level qualifications and represent the highest non-school qualification attained by respondents.

Table 13: Highest Non-School Qualification

Non-School Qualification	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Postgraduate Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate	3	135
Bachelor's degree	21	197
Advanced Diploma or Diploma	45	120
Certificate III & IV	95	189
Certificate I & II	13	11
Certificate Level, nfd	28	16
Total	205	668
Level of education not stated	108	54

Source: Data Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table 120c

The data indicates that qualification attainment among Aboriginal residents is concentrated at the Certificate III and IV level, with fewer residents holding diploma or university qualifications. A substantial number of respondents also had their level of education recorded as "not stated", which should be considered when interpreting the results.

The distribution of qualifications suggests opportunities to strengthen pathways into higher-level qualifications and support progression beyond certificate-level training.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Appendix 1.1 presents the Tennant Creek High School VET data for 2022-2024. The data indicates:

- There was a good level of enrolment but inconsistent completions. Total enrolments for 2022–2024 was 110 but completions were 45.
- The industry with the highest enrolments each year was Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies with 59% of all enrolments (65) and 73% of all completions (33).
- The second highest industry with outcomes was Society and Culture with 19 enrolments and 7 completions.

- Enrolment declines over the 3 years from 55 to 38 to 12 by 2024. This suggests a contraction in training delivery, access, or participation.
- Management and Commerce, Architecture and Building, and Food Hospitality and Personal Services show no completions despite enrolments which may indicate low student retention, the training is not aligned to local employment opportunities, course delivery or support challenges.

The 2025 VET student data for Tennant Creek High School was not available.

Appendix 1.2 presents Charles Darwin University (CDU) VET program enrolment data for Tennant Creek from 2023 to 2025. The data indicates that:

- Training activity declined over the period, with total enrolments decreasing from 136 in 2023 to 101 in 2025, representing a reduction of approximately 26%.
- Aboriginal participation increased as a proportion of total training activity. Aboriginal enrolments increased from 51 enrolments in 2023 to 57 in 2025 and accounted for most of the enrolments in both 2024 (64%) and 2025 (56%).
- Training delivery was significant in short courses, licences and industry skill sets, particularly in areas such as construction, transport, agriculture, land management and workplace safety. High-volume courses included NT White Card, Agricultural Chemical Skill Sets, Heavy Vehicle Driving Skills, and Food Safety Supervision Skills.
- Training activity appears aligned to local and regional employment opportunities, particularly in industries such as agriculture, land management, transport, construction and community services.
- Relatively fewer enrolments were recorded in higher-level vocational qualifications, with Certificate III and Diploma-level courses attracting smaller numbers compared to short-course and ticket-based training.

The training profile is characterised by a strong uptake of licences, tickets and industry-specific skill sets. These courses support both entry into employment and the ongoing skill and compliance requirements of the existing workforce.

Appendix 1.3 presents unit enrolments and completions by VET Funding Group in Tennant Creek from 2023 to 2025. Analysis of the data indicates that:

- Community services, Health and Education consistently had the highest enrolments and completions across all years. However, enrolments declined from 448 (2023) → 389 (2024) → 338 (2025).
- Building and construction enrolments increased significantly from 31 (2023) → 97 (2024) → 174 (2025).
- Primary Industry demonstrated consistent completion rates compared to its enrolments 56 (60), 30 (31), 50 (50).
- Engineering and Mining had strong outcomes in 2023 but dropped to <5 in 2024 and then again had strong enrolments and completions in 2025. This tends to indicate inconsistent delivery availability rather than a lack of demand or capability. (It is also worth noting that Tennant Mines commenced operations at Nobles

Gold Mine in 2025.)

- Enrolments in Business and Clerical steadily decreased over the 3 years from 78 (2023) to 44 (2025).
- Tourism and Hospitality enrolments also continued to decline from 32 (2023) → 18 (2024) → 6 (2025).

Appendix 2 presents apprenticeship and traineeship counts and completions by qualification in Tennant Creek from 2023 to 2025. The data shows that:

- A/T in Tennant Creek are relatively low overall, with most qualifications recording fewer than five commencements per year. This suggests that structured workforce pathways exist across a range of industries but are generally limited in scale.
- Agriculture and Rural Operations remain the dominant apprenticeship and traineeship pathways, accounting for a substantial proportion of commencements and completions across the period.
- The diversity of qualifications is high relative to the overall volume of activity, suggesting apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities are spread across many occupations but are typically supported by small cohorts.

Apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities are available across a diverse range of occupations in Tennant Creek. While commencement numbers are generally small, this is broadly consistent with the scale of the local labour market and employer base. The more significant challenge is maintaining sufficient and consistent apprenticeship and traineeship activity over time to strengthen local workforce pipelines and meet current and future workforce demand, particularly in priority industries and trade occupations.

Table 14: Barkly Data: Distinct Client Count by Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and Funding Source, 2024

RTO Name	Funding Source										
	Fee for Service	Fee Free TAFE	General Recurrent	NTG DET	Territory Workforce Program	Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grant	Other Govt. Funded	User Choice	Build Skills	Job Trainer	TOTAL distinct clients by RTO
Government/ Public Provider											
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE)	27		181								208
Charles Darwin University (CDU)	12		245	4				87			348
Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services							29				29
Taminmin High School Council				10							10
William Angliss Institute of TAFE	1							1			2
Not-for-Profit (NFP)											
Family Planning Welfare Assn of NT Inc	1										1
Royal Life Saving Society Australia NT Branch Inc	65										65
St John Ambulance Australia Incorporated	168										168
SJT Training Aboriginal Corporation	6							1			7
The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation	2	2		2				5			11
Private-for-Profit											
Gisborne Services Pty Ltd	57										57
Intercept Group Pty Ltd				9							9
Karen Sheldon Group Pty Ltd						2					2
Learning Knowing Achieving Pty Ltd	1	6						2		3	12
Star College Australia Pty Ltd		15						4	32	11	62
Dovaston Consulting Group Pty Ltd	7	66			11			23			107
Eagle Training Services NT Pty Ltd	64										64
Outback Stores Pty Ltd	2							8			10
Coastal & Rural Training Pty Ltd								42			42
Jenagar Pty Ltd	8										8
Response Services Employment & Training Pty Ltd	5										5

Train Safe NT Pty Ltd	7										7
TOTAL distinct clients by funding source	433	89	426	25	11	2	29	173	32	14	1234

Source: Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations. (2026). Data provided to Desert Knowledge Australia for report purposes only. [Unpublished raw data].

Note: International Other Revenue was not included in the above data set, as it was only applicable to CDU with a total of 5 distinct clients.

- 5 of the RTOs are Government owned/ Public sector, 5 are Not-for-Profit (NFP) and 12 are Private organisations.
- The Government owned/ Public Sector RTOs accounted for 48.4% (597) of the 1234 distinct clients. The NFPs 20.4% (252), and the private-for-profit 31.2% (385).

Table 15: Barkly Data: Distinct Client Count by Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and Qualification Type, 2024

RTO Name	Qualification Type									
	Cert. I	Cert. II	Cert. III	Cert. IV	Diploma	Unit Only	Short Course and Skill Set	Learner Support	Ticket/ Licence/ Compliance	TOTAL distinct clients by RTO
Government/ Public Provider										
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE)	54	30	34	4		86				208
Charles Darwin University (CDU)	2	86	61	18	3	10	120	7	41	348
Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services			3			26				29
Taminmin High School Council	5	5								10
William Angliss Institute of TAFE			2							2
Not-for-Profit (NFP)										
Family Planning Welfare Assn of NT Inc						1				1
Royal Life Saving Society Australia NT Branch Inc						65				65
St John Ambulance Australia Incorporated						168				168
SJT Training Aboriginal Corporation			1			6				7
The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation	2	5	2			2				11
Private-for-Profit										
Gisborne Services Pty Ltd						57				57
Intercept Group Pty Ltd						9				9
Karen Sheldon Group Pty Ltd							2			2
Learning Knowing Achieving Pty Ltd		5	5		2					12
Star College Australia Pty Ltd			15	11	4	32				62
Dovaston Consulting Group Pty Ltd			39	27	41					107
Eagle Training Services NT Pty Ltd						64				64
Outback Stores Pty Ltd		7	1	2						10
Coastal & Rural Training Pty Ltd			27	15						42
Jenagar Pty Ltd						8				8
Response Services Employment & Training Pty Ltd			4	1						5
Train Safe NT Pty Ltd						7				7
TOTAL distinct clients by qualification type	63	138	194	78	50	541	122	7	41	1234

Source: Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations. (2026). Data provided to Desert Knowledge Australia for report purposes only. [Unpublished raw data].

Note: International Other Revenue was not included in the above data set, as it was only applicable to CDU with a total of 5 distinct clients.

- Unit Only programs accounted for the largest share of reported participation, with 541 of 1,234 reported client clients (44%). Certificate and Diploma programs accounted for 523 (42%, followed by Short Course and Skill Set programs with 122 (10%), Ticket/Licence/Compliance training with 41 clients (3%) and Learner Support with 7 (less than 1%).
- Fee for Service was the largest funding source, accounting for 433 reported clients (35%), closely followed by General Recurrent funding with 426 (34.5%). Fee for Service delivery was strongly concentrated in Unit Only training, which accounted for 403 of its 433 clients (93%). General Recurrent funding supported a broader mix of delivery, including 204 reported clients in Certificate and Diploma programs, 105 in Short Course and Skill Set programs, 69 in Unit Only training, 41 in Ticket/Licence/Compliance training and 7 in Learner Support⁹.
- Certificate III was the most common accredited qualification level, accounting for 194 reported clients, followed by Certificate II with 138, Certificate IV with 78, Certificate I with 63 and Diploma programs with 50.
- Charles Darwin University (CDU) recorded the highest level of participation of any RTO, with 348 reported clients, representing 28% of all reported participation. Of these 245 were funded through General Recurrent funding. CDU was also the dominant provider of Short Course and Skill Set delivery, accounting for 120 of the 122 reported clients (98%), and recorded the highest level of participation in Certificate and Diploma programs, with 170 reported clients.
- Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) recorded the second highest level of participation, with 208 reported clients, including 181 funded through General Recurrent funding. BIITE also recorded the second highest participation in Certificate and Diploma programs, with 122 reported clients.
- St John Ambulance Australia Incorporated recorded 168 reported clients, all funded through Fee for Service arrangements and participating in Unit Only training.
- Dovaston Consulting Group Pty Ltd recorded the highest Fee Free TAFE participation of any RTO, with 66 reported distinct clients, all undertaking Certificate or Diploma programs.

Structured qualification delivery was concentrated within three funding sources; General Recurrent, User Choice and Fee Free TAFE¹⁰. Together, they accounted for 464 of the 523 reported clients in Certificate and Diploma programs (88.7%). All User Choice participation was in qualifications, while 87 of the 89 Fee Free TAFE reported clients undertook Certificate or Diploma programs. Government funding supported most Certificate and Diploma participation, as well as a range of shorter and targeted training.

Overall, the funding sources had distinct delivery profiles. Fee for Service was predominantly associated with Unit Only training, while General Recurrent funding supported the broadest range of program types. General Recurrent, User Choice and Fee Free TAFE collectively supported most Certificate and Diploma participation. This pattern suggests that structured qualification delivery is more commonly supported through government funding streams, while Fee for Service arrangements are more commonly associated with discrete units. This may reflect differences in the purpose, eligibility and design of the respective funding arrangements; however, the available data does not establish the reasons for the observed distribution.

⁹See Appendix 3: RTO Qualification/Program Type by Funding Source.

¹⁰See Appendix 3: RTO Qualification/Program Type by Funding Source.

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

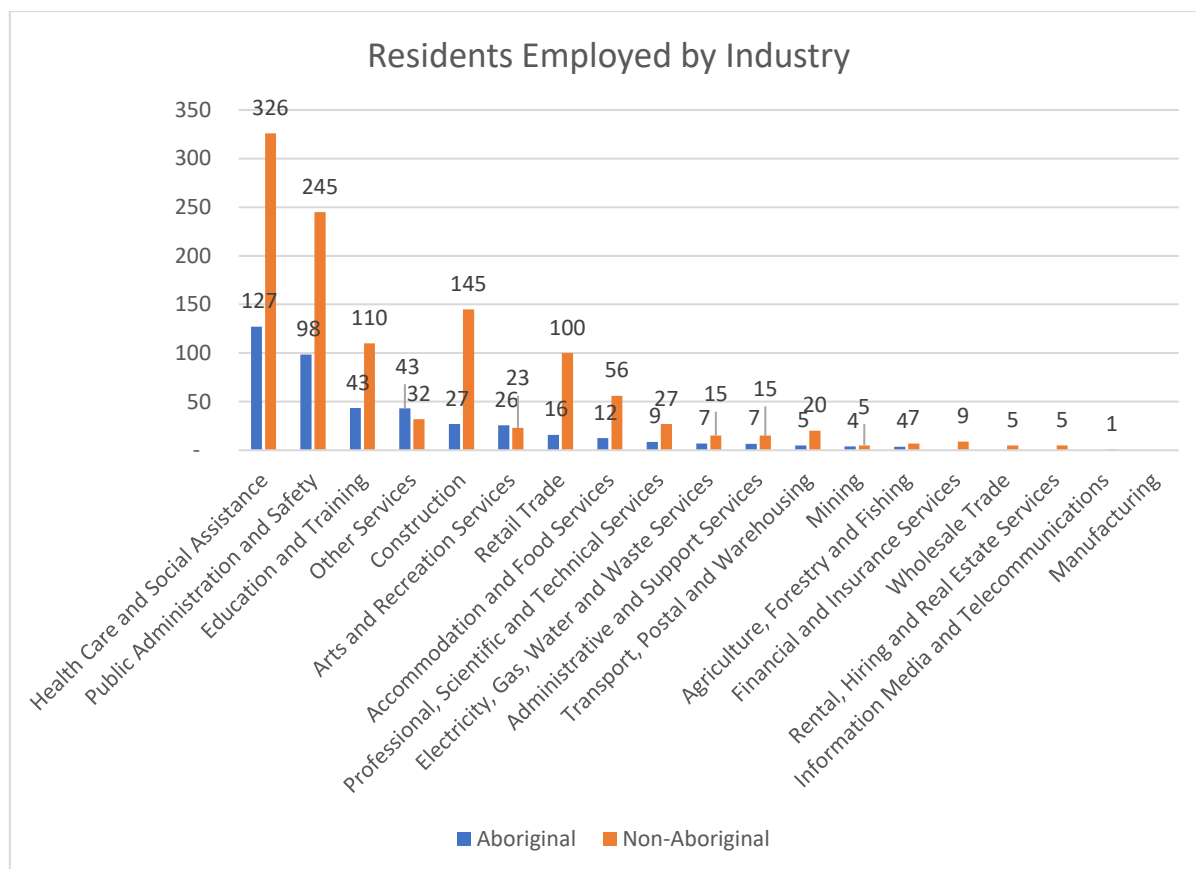


Figure 11: Residents Employed by Industry in Tennant Creek (Modelled from ABS Census 2021 and NIEIR 2024 data)

Data source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026). Tennant Creek and Barkly Profile Data. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2026

The data indicates:

- Aboriginal employment in Tennant Creek is concentrated in essential service sectors, particularly health, public administration, and education, reflecting the structure of publicly funded employment in the region. (Health care: 127 (28%), Public Administration 98 (29%), Education and training 43 (28%)).
- Aboriginal workers are more strongly represented in community-oriented and culturally aligned industries than in mainstream commercial sectors. (Other services 57% (43), Arts and Recreation 53% (26)).
- Aboriginal workers are underrepresented in private sector and trade driven industries. (Accommodation and Food 18% (12), Construction 16% (27), Retail 14% (16).)
- Despite strong demand in construction (172 jobs), Aboriginal participation remains low (27), indicating a disconnect between training pathways and employment in trade-based industries.
- While Aboriginal representation in mining appears relatively high (43% - 4), the sector employs very few residents in total (9) and does not significantly contribute to overall employment outcomes.

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

Industry	Aboriginal	%	Non-Aboriginal	%	Total
Health Care and Social Assistance	127	28%	326	72%	453
Public Administration and Safety	98	28%	246	72%	344
Construction	27	16%	145	84%	172
Education and Training	43	28%	110	72%	153
Retail Trade	16	14%	100	86%	116
Other Services	43	57%	32	43%	75
Accommodation and Food Services	12	18%	56	82%	68
Arts and Recreation Services	26	53%	23	47%	49
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	9	25%	27	75%	36
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	5	20%	20	80%	25
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	7	32%	15	68%	22
Administrative and Support Services	7	32%	15	68%	22
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	4	36%	7	64%	11
Mining	4	44%	5	56%	9
Financial and Insurance Services	-	0%	9	100%	9
Wholesale Trade	-	0%	5	100%	5
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	-	0%	5	100%	5
Information Media and Telecommunications	-	0%	1	100%	1
Manufacturing	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	428	27%	1147	73%	1575

Data source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026). Tennant Creek and Barkly Profile Data. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2026

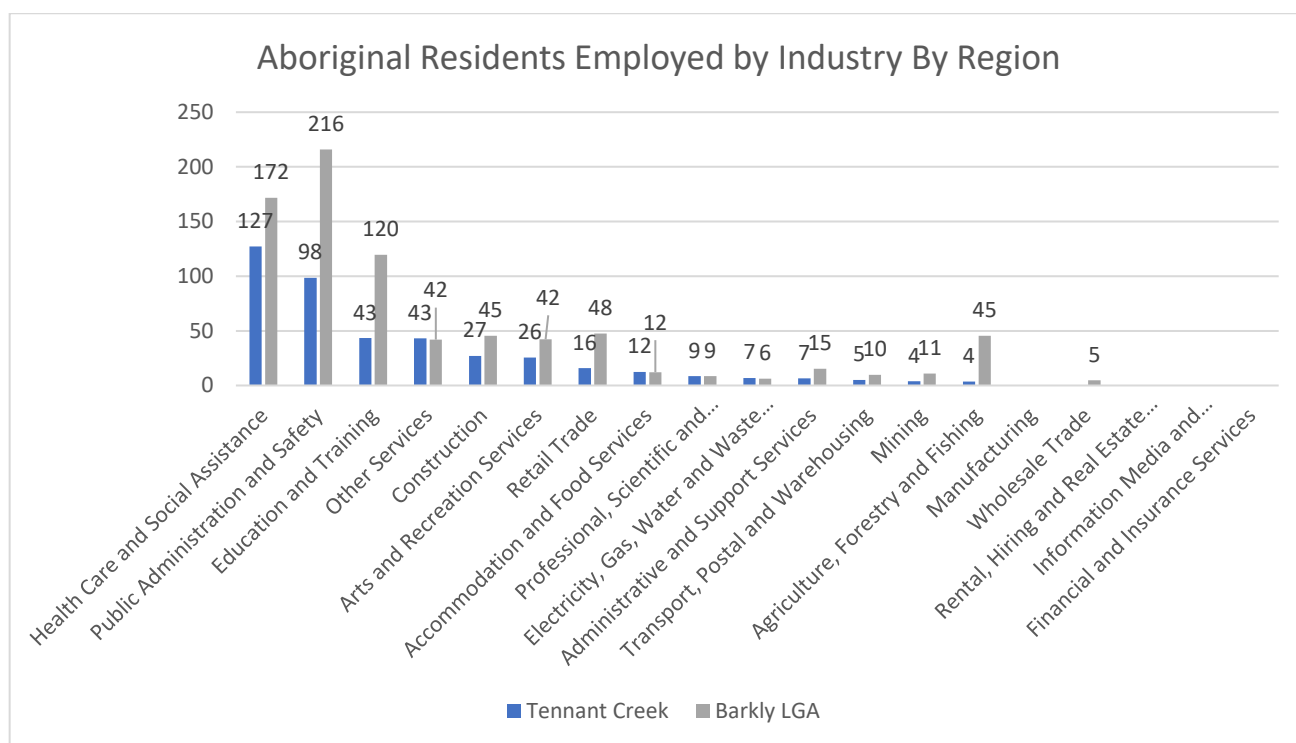


Figure 12: Aboriginal Residents Employed by Industry in Tennant Creek and Barkly LGA (Modelled from ABS Census 2021 and NIEIR 2024 data)

Data source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026). Tennant Creek and Barkly Profile Data. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2026

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

	Tennant Creek			Barkly LGA			Northern Territory		
	Total	Aboriginal	%	Total	Aboriginal	%	Total	Aboriginal	%
Public Administration and Safety	344	98	28%	503	216	43%	24146	3,220	13%
Health Care and Social Assistance	453	127	28%	503	172	34%	21427	2,467	12%
Education and Training	153	43	28%	290	120	41%	11984	1,918	16%
Retail Trade	116	16	14%	179	48	27%	10323	997	10%
Construction	172	27	16%	193	45	23%	10089	969	10%
Accommodation and Food Services	68	12	18%	101	12	12%	8815	503	6%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	36	9	25%	36	9	25%	6947	449	6%
Other Services ¹¹	75	43	57%	82	42	51%	6571	789	12%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	25	5	20%	30	10	33%	5761	289	5%
Administrative and Support Services	22	7	32%	43	15	35%	3944	428	11%
Manufacturing	-	0		3	0	0%	3699	208	6%

¹¹Other Services includes personal services; religious, civic, professional and other interest-group services; selected repair and maintenance activities; and private households employing staff (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

Mining	9	4	44%	49	11	22%	3515	434	12%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	11	4	36%	417	45	11%	3116	353	11%
Arts and Recreation Services	49	26	53%	69	42	61%	2920	574	20%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	22	7	32%	22	6	27%	2165	154	7%
Wholesale Trade	5	0	0%	12	5	42%	1994	86	4%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	5	0	0%	5	0	0%	1855	67	4%
Information Media and Telecommunications	1	0	0%	1	0	0%	1483	161	11%
Financial and Insurance Services	9	0	0%	9	0	0%	1243	72	6%

Data source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026). Tennant Creek and Barkly Profile Data. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 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.

- Across all geographies, Public Administration and Safety, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Education and Training show high job numbers and relatively high Aboriginal participation.
- Aboriginal participation is consistently lower in private sector industries, including construction, retail, and hospitality, highlighting a structural divide between public and private employment.
- While some industries like Arts and Recreation and Other Services demonstrate strong Aboriginal representation, these sectors are relatively small and do not significantly influence overall employment outcomes.
- Manufacturing, Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services, Financial and Insurance Services, and Information Media and Telecommunications show no Aboriginal employment in Tennant Creek and the Barkly LGA, with a 4-6% participation rate in the Northern Territory. This indicates structural exclusion from parts of the local economy.

Appendix 4 provides an exploratory comparison between the industries in which Tennant Creek residents are employed and related VET activity delivered between 2023 and 2025.

Workforce Demand

A review of publicly advertised job vacancies identified 34 vacancies across multiple employment platforms during February 2026. While not a complete measure of workforce demand, the vacancy scan provides a snapshot of occupations and skills being sought by employers at the time of the review.

Table 18: Employment Opportunities and VET Pathways in Tennant Creek (February 2026)

Role	No. of Roles	Key Requirements	VET Pathway	Employment Type	Organisation
Community Services					
Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Workforce Worker	ATSI identified	Criminal History Check (CHC), Ochre Card, Cert IV AOD (or willing)	Community services, health and education	FT	Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation (AHAC)
Grow Well Liaison Officer	ATSI identified	CHC, Ochre, Driving License (DL), report writing, community health knowledge	Community services, health and education	FT	AHAC
Continuous Quality Improvement Facilitator	ATSI identified	Business/health/compliance qualification	Business and clerical / Community services	FT	AHAC
Children and Family Intensive Support Youth Worker	ATSI identified	CHC, Ochre, child/family experience	Community services, health and education	FT	AHAC
Men's Centre Team Leader	ATSI identified	CHC, Ochre, DL, data/reporting, Primary Health Care (PHC) understanding	Community services, health and education	FT	AHAC
Maternal Early Childhood ALO	ATSI identified	CHC, Ochre, DL, 4WD	Community services, health and education	FT	AHAC
Client Support Officer	ATSI identified	Admin + IT skills, CHC, Ochre	Business and clerical	FT	AHAC
DFSV Community Connectors	Not stated	CHC, community engagement experience	Community services, health and education	Casual	AHAC
DFSV Project Coordinator	Not stated	Human services qualification + experience	Community services, health and education	FT	AHAC
Community Care Coordinator	Not stated	Aged Care/NDIS + management qualification	Community services, health and education	FT	Barkly Regional Council
Community Youth Justice Officer	Not stated	CHC, Ochre, DL	Community services, health and education		Dept. of Corrections
Out of Home Carers	Several	Cert III/IV Child/Youth, First Aid, Ochre	Community services, health and education	FT/PT	Kentish Community Services
Community Development Officer	Not stated	CHC, Ochre	Community services, health and education		Central Land Council
Health					
Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) Support Officer	2 (ATSI identified, male and female)	Cert III Aboriginal Health (or willingness), DL	Community services, health and education	FT	AHAC
Diabetes Educator - Registered Nurse (RN)	Not stated	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) RN + Graduate Cert Diabetes	N/A (university pathway)	FT	AHAC

Aboriginal Health Practitioner / RN	ATSI identified	AHPRA registration (Aboriginal Health Practitioner (AHP) or RN)	Community services, health and education	FT	AHAC
Aboriginal Health Practitioner – Child & Maternal	ATSI identified	AHPRA RN, CHC, Ochre, DL	Community services, health and education	FT	AHAC
Sexual Health Aboriginal Health Practitioner	ATSI identified	Cert IV ATSI Primary Health + AHPRA	Community services, health and education	FT	AHAC
Maternal Early Childhood Health Program Coordinator	ATSI identified	Cert IV/Diploma ATSI Primary Health	Community services, health and education	FT	AHAC
Registered Nurse	Not stated	AHPRA RN, Bachelor Nursing	N/A (university pathway)	FT	Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARRCS)
Education and Child Care					
Child Care Centre Educators	Several	Cert III or Diploma Early Childhood Education and Care, First Aid, Ochre	Community services, health and education	FT/PT	Kentish Community Services
Early Childhood Teacher	1	Teaching qualification + registration	N/A (university pathway)	FT	Kentish Community Services
Tennant Creek Primary School Principal	Not stated	Teaching leadership qualification	N/A (university pathway)	FT	Dept. of Education
Trades, Transport and Technical					
Handyman		White Card, CHC, Ochre, DL	Building and construction	FT	AHAC
HC Truck Driver	Not stated	Heavy Combination (HC) License, White Card, First Aid, Checks	Transport and storage	Casual	Barkly Regional Council
Qualified Plumber	1	Cert III Plumbing, White Card, DL	Building and construction	FT	Territory Water Solutions
Administrative and Corporate					
Library Officer	Not stated	IT skills, Ochre, admin capability	Business and clerical	Casual	Barkly Regional Council
Customer Service Officer	Several	Data entry, basic finance	Business and clerical	PT/FT	Dept. of Logistics and Infrastructure
Entry Level Recruitment	Several	Entry-level admin/general	Business and clerical	PT/FT/Casual	Dept. of Corporate and Digital Development
Assistant Project Officer	ATSI identified	CHC, Ochre, DL	Business and clerical		Central Land Council
Primary					
Ranger Group Facilitator		CHC, Ochre, DL	Primary industry		Central Land Council
Hospitality					
Cook		Cert III/IV Commercial Cookery	Tourism and hospitality	PT	ARRCS
Other Services: Cleaning					
Cleaner	Not stated	CHC, Ochre, DL	General education and training	PT	Barkly Region Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Group (BRADAAG)
Environmental Services Cleaner	Not stated		General education and training	FT	Dept. of Health

Source: Desert Knowledge Australia analysis of publicly advertised job vacancies in Tennant Creek identified through LinkedIn, SEEK, EthicalJobs.com.au and Jora during February 2026. The results represent vacancies visible during the scan period and are not a complete measure of workforce demand.

-  Clear entry level roles (7)
-  Entry level role/ Trainable pathway (6)

Key observations from the February 2026 vacancy snapshot include:

- Demand was concentrated in community services, health, education and care-related occupations.
- Multiple vacancies were identified for Aboriginal-identified positions, particularly within community-controlled organisations.
- Many roles required industry-specific qualifications, licences, registrations or clearances, including Ochre Card/ Working with Children Clearance, Criminal History Checks, driver's licences, White Cards and AHPRA registration.
- Several positions provided entry-level or trainable pathways, particularly in administration, community services, hospitality and support roles.
- Workforce demand was evident across both vocational and university-qualified occupations.

Appendix 5 presents the qualifications required and relevant VET pathways associated with publicly advertised role vacancies identified in Tennant Creek during a February 2026 vacancy scan. The appendix provides a point-in-time overview of the skills, qualifications and training pathways linked to occupations being advertised at the time of 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 2021) 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 Tennant Creek 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)**: \$194.3million¹² - 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**: \$174.5 million¹³ – 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 11% gap between these two figures (resident GRP is 89% of total POW GRP) suggests that some economic activity is generated by workers who are not residents (e.g. non-resident workers, contractors, or regional workforce movement).

Economic activity is concentrated in health care and social assistance, public administration and safety, construction, and education and training.

Table 19: Total Regional versus Aboriginal GRP Data for Tennant Creek

Category	POW Workforce Size	Workforce Size (Employed Residents)	POW GRP (\$)	Employed Resident GRP (\$)	POW GRP Per Worker (\$)	Employed Resident GRP Per Worker (\$)
All workers	1597	1573	194,339,942	174,567,787	121,690	110,977
Aboriginal workers	418	428	44,957,453	45,654,650	107,553	106,669

Data source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026). Tennant Creek and Barkly Profile Data. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2026.

The data shows:

- Tennant Creek's place-of-work workforce (1,597) is only slightly larger than its employed-resident workforce (1,573), a net difference of 24 workers. This indicates a relatively small net reliance on workers from outside the area
- While Aboriginal residents make up 55.4% of the Tennant Creek population, they account for 26–27% of the workforce, indicating a significant gap in workforce participation. Aboriginal workers' share of economic output is broadly aligned with their workforce representation: they comprise 26% of the POW workforce and generate 23% of POW GRP, while Aboriginal employed residents account for 27% of the resident workforce and generate 26% of employed-resident GRP.
- Aboriginal workers recorded lower GRP per worker than all workers, 11.6% lower for the POW workforce and 3.8% lower for employed residents. This may reflect a greater concentration of Aboriginal workers in

¹²ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026).

¹³ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026).

lower output industries or roles. However, the small difference in employed-resident GRP per worker indicates that employed Aboriginal residents generate a similar level of economic output per worker to the overall employed-resident workforce.

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

Data source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026). Tennant Creek and Barkly Profile Data. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2026.

The data shows:

- Tennant Creek accounts for 59.8% of the Barkly LGA's place-of-work workforce and 61.8% of its employed residents but generates only 37.6% of place-of-work GRP and 37.3% of employed-resident GRP. This is consistent with employment in Tennant Creek being concentrated in service-based industries that generate lower GRP per worker than the capital-intensive industries operating elsewhere in the region.
- Tennant Creek's place-of-work GRP per worker is \$121,690, which is \$71,798 lower than the Barkly LGA average of \$193,488. As Tennant Creek forms part of the Barkly LGA, this comparison indicates that high-value economic activity elsewhere in the region is lifting the regional average. This is likely to reflect the concentration of capital-intensive industries, such as mining and pastoral operations, outside Tennant Creek.
- Tennant Creek functions primarily as a regional service hub, with employment concentrated in public administration, health care, education and community services. These sectors generally generate lower GRP per worker than the capital-intensive mining and pastoral industries operating elsewhere in the Barkly region.
- Aboriginal workers account for 28.7% of the Barkly place-of-work workforce and 31.3% of the region's employed residents.
- More than half of the Barkly region's Aboriginal workforce is concentrated in Tennant Creek, which accounts for approximately 54% of both Aboriginal place-of-work workers and Aboriginal employed residents.
- Aboriginal GRP per worker is higher across the Barkly LGA than in Tennant Creek, by \$20,042 for the place-of-work workforce and \$25,609 for employed residents. As Tennant Creek is included in the Barkly figures, this indicates that Aboriginal workers elsewhere in the region are lifting the regional average. This indicates that Aboriginal workers in the wider Barkly are more likely to be engaged in higher-value or land-based industries.

Table 21: GRP and Employed Residents for Tennant Creek

GRP Value added – Employed Residents						
Industry	Total Employed Residents Value Added (\$)	Aboriginal Employed Residents Value Added (\$)	Aboriginal Share of Value Added (%)	Total Employed Residents (no.)	Aboriginal Employed Residents (no.)	Aboriginal Share of Employed Residents (%)
Health Care and Social Assistance	40,198,855	11,288,719	28%	453	127	28%
Public Administration and Safety	28,713,841	8,220,495	29%	344	98	28%
Construction	20,784,127	3,269,413	16%	172	27	16%
Education and Training	16,194,197	4,590,481	28%	153	43	28%
Retail Trade	8,378,175	1,151,999	14%	116	16	14%
Accommodation and Food Services	6,247,012	1,145,286	18%	68	12	18%
Mining	5,763,327	2,469,997	43%	9	4	44%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	5,026,837	1,675,612	33%	11	4	36%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	4,823,544	1,523,224	32%	22	7	32%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	3,912,531	782,506	20%	25	5	20%
Other Services	3,789,384	2,165,362	57%	75	43	57%
Financial and Insurance Services	3,570,714	-	0%	9	0	0%
Arts and Recreation Services	3,327,629	1,761,686	53%	49	26	53%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2,133,504	514,984	24%	36	9	25%
Wholesale Trade	1,349,388	-	0%	5	0	0%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1,053,105	-	0%	5	0	0%
Administrative and Support Services	1,016,843	312,875	31%	22	7	32%
Manufacturing	-	-		-	0	
Information Media and Telecommunications	-	-		1	0	0%
GST Registered Businesses (June 2025)	160	13				

Data source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026). Tennant Creek and Barkly Profile Data. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2026. Economic data is modelled from ABS Census 2021 and NIEIR 2024 data.

This data shows:

- The regional economy is primarily driven by the Health Care and Social Assistance sector:
 - Health Care and Social Assistance: \$40.1 million (23% of Resident GRP)
 - Public Administration and Safety \$28.7 million (16%)
 - Construction: \$20.7 million (12%)
 - Education and Training: \$16.9 million (9%)
 - Retail Trade: \$8.3 million (5%)

Table 22: Employed Residents GRP compared for Tennant Creek and the Barkly Regional Council LGA

Industry	Tennant Creek		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	1,675,612	195,418,293	21,295,583
Health Care and Social Assistance	40,198,855	11,288,719	44,665,394	15,251,598
Public Administration and Safety	28,713,841	8,220,495	42,045,267	18,036,131
Education and Training	16,194,197	4,590,481	30,730,720	12,668,583
Mining	5,763,327	2,469,997	30,463,300	6,769,622
Construction	20,784,127	3,269,413	23,382,143	5,501,681
Retail Trade	8,378,175	1,151,999	12,966,223	3,450,688
Accommodation and Food Services	6,247,012	1,145,286	9,262,811	1,116,001
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	4,823,544	1,523,224	4,823,544	1,339,873
Arts and Recreation Services	3,327,629	1,761,686	4,753,755	2,910,462
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	3,912,531	782,506	4,646,130	1,486,762
Other Services	3,789,384	2,165,362	4,105,166	2,100,317
Financial and Insurance Services	3,570,714	-	3,570,714	-
Wholesale Trade	1,349,388	-	3,148,572	1,210,989
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2,133,504	514,984	2,133,504	514,984
Administrative and Support Services	1,016,843	312,875	2,033,685	730,041
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1,053,105	-	1,053,105	-
Manufacturing	-	-	-	-
Information Media and Telecommunications	-	-	-	-
GST Registered Businesses (June 2025)	160	13	178	14

Data source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026). Tennant Creek and Barkly Profile Data. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2026. Economic data is modelled from ABS Census 2021 and NIEIR 2024 data.

- The Aboriginal economic contribution is stronger in Barkly's production industries (e.g. agriculture \$21M; mining \$6.7M), with significantly lower contributions in Tennant Creek, indicating greater engagement of Aboriginal workers in land-based and resource sectors outside the town.
- Tennant Creek dominates the region's service industries, contributing more than 50% of Barkly's output (e.g. health \$40M vs \$44M, public administration \$28M vs \$42M, education \$16M vs \$30M), reinforcing its role as the primary service delivery hub.
- Tennant Creek accounts for 48.7% of the Barkly region's population (3080 / 6316¹⁴) and 59.7% of the employed resident workforce (1597/2672¹⁵) but a much lower share of the Employed Resident GRP (37%), indicating that while it concentrates employment and service delivery, higher-value production activity occurs elsewhere in the Barkly.
- While agriculture represents the highest economic value in the Barkly (\$195M), and mining contributes a smaller but significant share (\$30M), data indicates these resource-based industries are not the primary employers of the Tennant Creek workforce.

Tennant Creek functions as the service and administrative centre of the Barkly region, with economic activity concentrated in government, health, and community services. In contrast, the broader Barkly economy is driven by high-value production industries such as agriculture and mining, which generate significantly greater economic output but employs fewer people. Aboriginal workers contribute proportionately to economic output within industries; however, participation is concentrated in service sectors within Tennant Creek, while higher-value opportunities are more prevalent outside the town.

Workforce development in Tennant Creek needs to move beyond service-sector alignment and focus on creating accessible pathways into higher-value regional industries, while also increasing Aboriginal workforce participation within the town's existing employment base.

Implications for workforce planning:

- ✓ **Participation gap, not productivity gap:** Aboriginal workers contribute at similar levels to non-Aboriginal workers once employed, suggesting that the key issue is access to employment, not capability or performance.
- ✓ **Training is aligned to service sectors:** Current VET pathways (e.g. community services, health, business) align with the dominant job base in Tennant Creek but reinforce concentration in lower-value industries.
- ✓ **Access gap, not training gap:** While training activity in higher-value industries such as mining and agriculture is evident in Tennant Creek, access to both training and employment pathways remain constrained. Lower language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) capability presents a foundational barrier to Aboriginal training participation, while higher-value jobs are largely dispersed across the Barkly region. Together, these factors limit the translation of training into employment outcomes and highlight structural barriers including mobility, licensing, and work readiness.
- ✓ **Foundational skills gap:** Lower levels of language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills act as an upstream barrier to both training participation and employment, limiting access to formal pathways and higher-value industries.

The challenge is not connecting training to jobs; it is enabling people to enter the system in the first place.

¹⁴ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026).

¹⁵ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026).

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.

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.

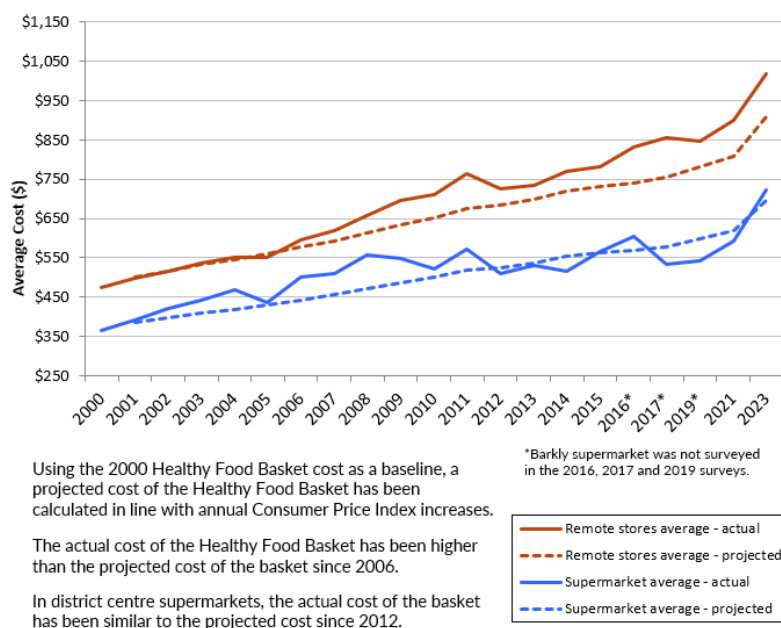


Figure 13: Market Basket Survey - Cost of a Food Basket from 2000-2023

Source: Northern Territory Government, NT Market Basket Survey 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 \$865 in the Tennant Creek Supermarket, 24% more expensive than the \$698 cost in Alice Springs supermarkets.¹⁶
- 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 \$880 in the Tennant Creek Supermarket compared to \$890 in Alice Springs.¹⁷
- From 2021 to 2023, the cost of the Healthy Food Basket rose by 22% in supermarkets.¹⁸

A single parent with dependent children receiving the maximum JobSeeker Payment of \$866 per fortnight¹⁹ falls \$1 short of affording the "Healthy Food Basket" and \$14 short of the "Current Diet Basket," before accounting for other essential living expenses such as rent, utilities and transport.

¹⁶NT Health (2023).

¹⁷NT Health (2023).

¹⁸NT Health (2024).

¹⁹Services Australia (2026).

A 2024 survey by CHOICE²⁰ comparing supermarket basket prices across states based on 17 items, including 10 commonly found in children's lunch boxes found that:

- The average basket price without taking specials into account across 104 supermarkets in 27 locations across Australia, was Aldi \$75.98, Woolworth \$90.08, Coles \$90.90 and IGA \$101.84. The cheapest basket across all states among the 4 major supermarket chains was found to be Aldi, and IGA had the most expensive basket.
- The average price of a grocery basket in the NT was Woolworth \$89.67, Coles \$90.86 and IGA \$107.60.
- Across all the states IGA had the most expensive baskets of the 4 major supermarket chains, of which NT had the most expensive IGA basket at \$107.60.

Tennant Creek currently has one supermarket which is an IGA.

Supermarket grocery prices (without specials) Baskets compared



Fieldworkers priced groceries at 104 supermarkets in 27 locations across Australia in December 2025. This is the average basket price without taking specials into account. (A price was deemed to be a special when we had evidence of a temporary price reduction.) There were 17 grocery items in each basket (6 fresh and 11 packaged items). At Aldi, our basket consisted mostly of home-brand goods, while at Coles, IGA and Woolworths, we included more name-brand products. To see a full list of everything in each store's basket, visit choice.com.au/cheapestgroceries.

Figure 14a: CHOICE Supermarket Basket Survey, average supermarket basket price across Australia (2024)

Average price of grocery baskets by supermarket (with specials): State-by-state comparison



Fieldworkers priced groceries in 104 supermarkets in 27 locations across Australia in December 2025. The average price per supermarket for each state includes specials on non-fruit and vegetable items. There were 17 grocery items in each basket (6 fresh and 11 packaged items).

Figure 14b: CHOICE Supermarket Basket Survey, average supermarket basket price across the NT (2024)

Source: CHOICE (2026), *Supermarket basket survey (17 items across 27 locations)*. Available at: <https://www.choice.com.au/shopping/everyday-shopping/supermarkets/articles/cheapest-groceries-australia#how-does-iga-compare>

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 113 remote stores²¹ nationwide by lifting the subsidy cap.

²⁰CHOICE (2026).

²¹The program covered 113 stores in March 2026 and was expected to expand to approximately 225 remote stores nationwide (Brennan, 2026).

Transportation Costs

Transportation costs are another significant cost of living which impacts workforce planning. Tennant Creek is located 988km from Darwin and 508km from Alice Springs.

The 2025 Northern Territory Council of Social Services (NTCOSS) Cost of Living in the NT: Utilities and Transport Factsheet noted that as at June 2025 Tennant Creek had the second highest per litre cost of unleaded petrol prices of Major Centres in the NT at 219.5 cents per litre.²² This price was well above the national average price per litre of 179.3 cents. The price of diesel in the Barkly region was 232.8 cents

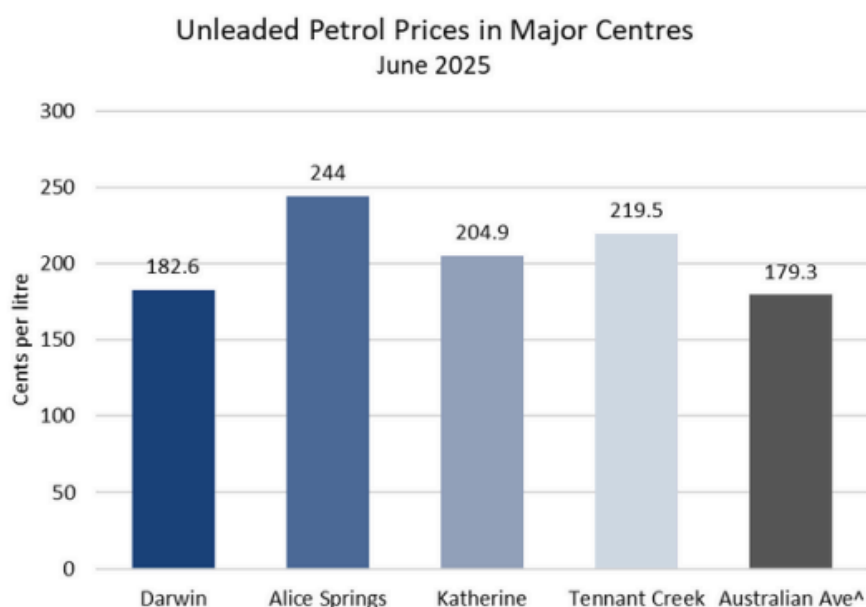


Figure 15: Unleaded Petrol Prices in Major Centres (June 2025)

Source: NTCOSS (2025b) Cost of Living in the NT: Utilities and Transport Factsheet

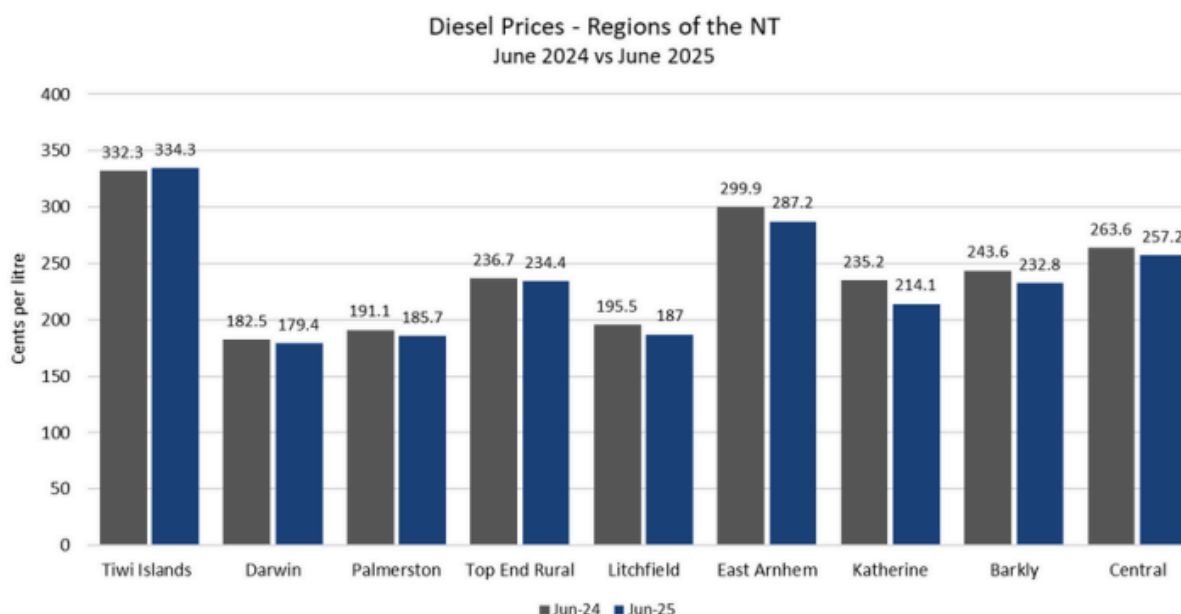


Figure 16: Diesel Prices – Regions of the NT (June 2025)

Source: NTCOSS (2025b) Cost of Living in the NT: Utilities and Transport Factsheet

²²NTCOSS (2025b).

As of June 2025, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for fuel decreased by 6% in the Northern Territory, compared to a 10% decrease²³ nationally. This indicates that while fuel prices declined across Australia, NT households experienced a more limited reduction.

As of 30 March 2026, fuel prices in Tennant Creek remain elevated, with unleaded at 280.9 cents per litre and diesel at 355.9 cents per litre. These high prices reflect ongoing volatility in global fuel markets, including supply disruptions associated with conflict in the Middle East. (Petrol Spy, 2026).

Greyhound Australia offers daily services connecting Darwin and Alice Springs to Tennant Creek. A one-way fare from Tennant Creek (depending on if it is early bird or flexible prices) can range between \$215-\$331. A one-way fare from Tennant Creek to Alice Springs can range between \$215-\$239.

Air North offers 3 flights a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) from Tennant Creek to Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine. The cost of a one-way ticket is as follows:

- Tennant Creek to Darwin can range between \$708 (Airsaver) and \$1125 (Airflex).
- Tennant Creek to Alice Springs can range between \$770 (Airsaver) and \$993 (Airflex).
- Tennant Creek to Katherine can range between \$655 (Airsaver) and \$810 (Airflex).

The region's geographic isolation presents structural challenges for both workforce planning and participation. Although Away from Base funding can support travel for Aboriginal participants to access training and employment opportunities outside community, reliance on external training delivery may still limit participation due to potential barriers such as family and caring responsibilities, cultural and community obligations, the need to spend extended periods away from home, and varying levels of confidence and readiness to undertake training in unfamiliar environments. It also increases the cost and complexity of delivery for training providers, particularly where trainers and resources must be transported into remote communities or regional centres.

Utilities

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

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 nationally²⁴. This indicates that while fuel 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%.²⁵

CPI for gas and other household fuels decreased by 1.9% compared to a national increase of 5.7%.²⁶ Although gas and other fuel prices rises were lower than nationally, overall utility costs continued to place relatively higher 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.²⁷

²³NTCOSS (2025b).

²⁴NTCOSS (2025b).

²⁵NTCOSS (2025b).

²⁶NTCOSS (2025b).

²⁷NTCOSS (2025a).

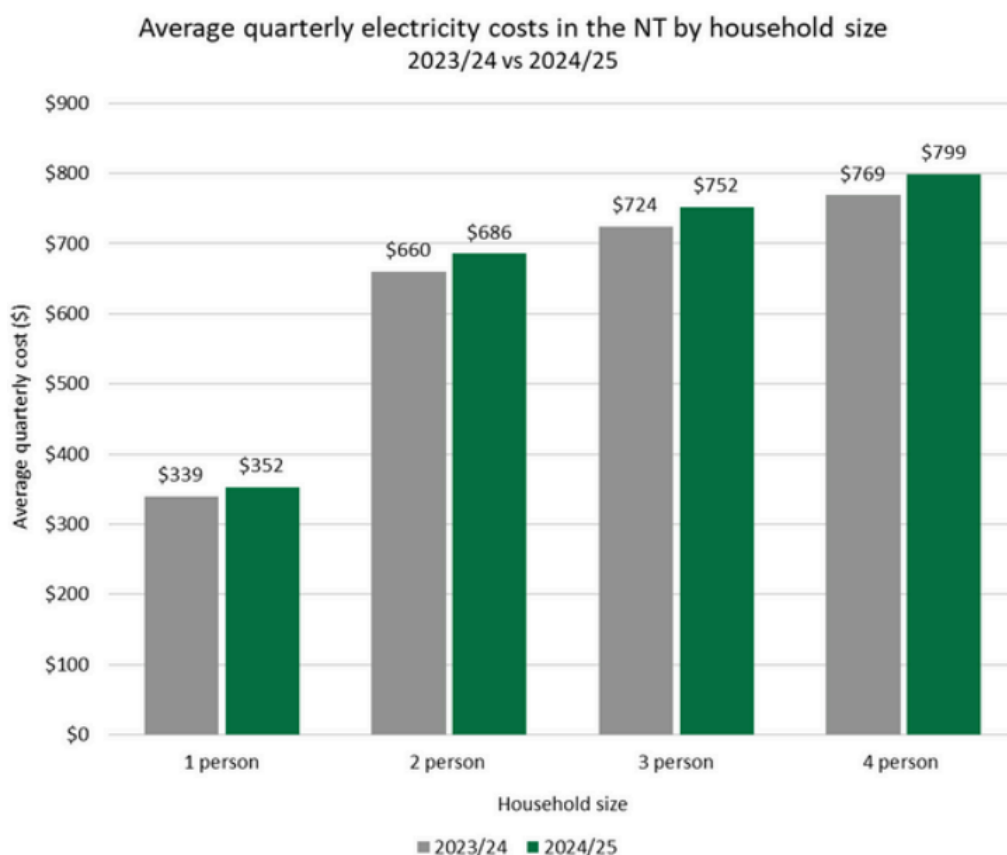


Figure 17: Average quarterly electricity costs in the NT by household size (2023/24, 2024/25)

Source: NTCOSS (2025b). *Cost of Living in the Northern Territory: Utilities and Transport Factsheet*

The average quarterly electricity costs in the NT were up between \$14-\$30 between 2023-24 and 2024-25 depending on the size of the household²⁸.

In Tennant Creek, prepayment meters are widely used in town camps and across many public housing dwellings. When prepayment meters are not sufficiently topped up, electricity supply is disconnected. While involuntary self-disconnections fell from 51 in 2022–23 to 39 in 2023–24, largely due to the \$350 energy relief payment for the 2023-24 year, Tennant Creek still recorded the highest disconnection rate among major centres.

²⁸NTCOSS (2025b).

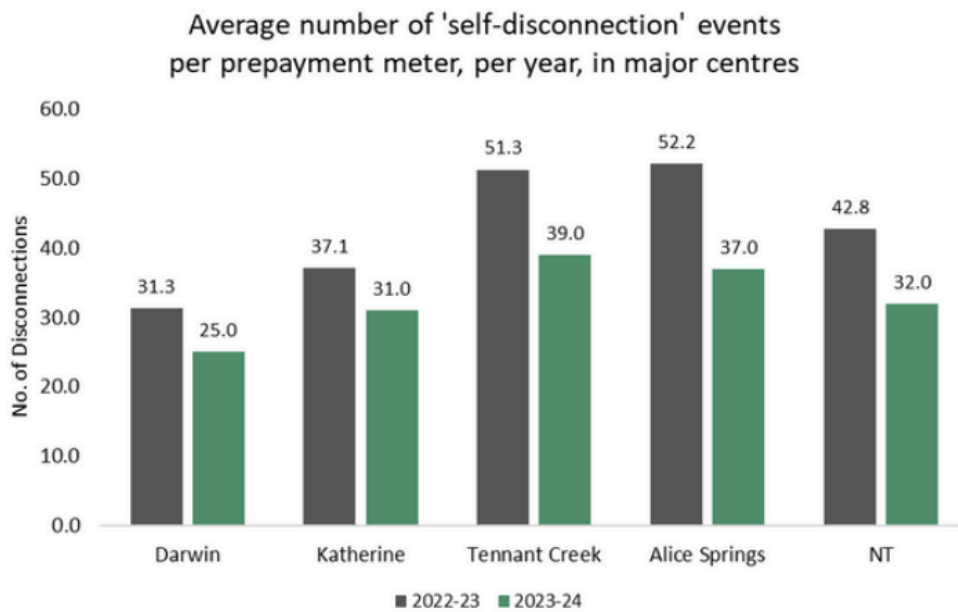


Figure 18: Average number of involuntary self-disconnections (2022-23, 2023-24)

Source: NTCOSS (2025a). *Cost of Living in the Northern Territory*

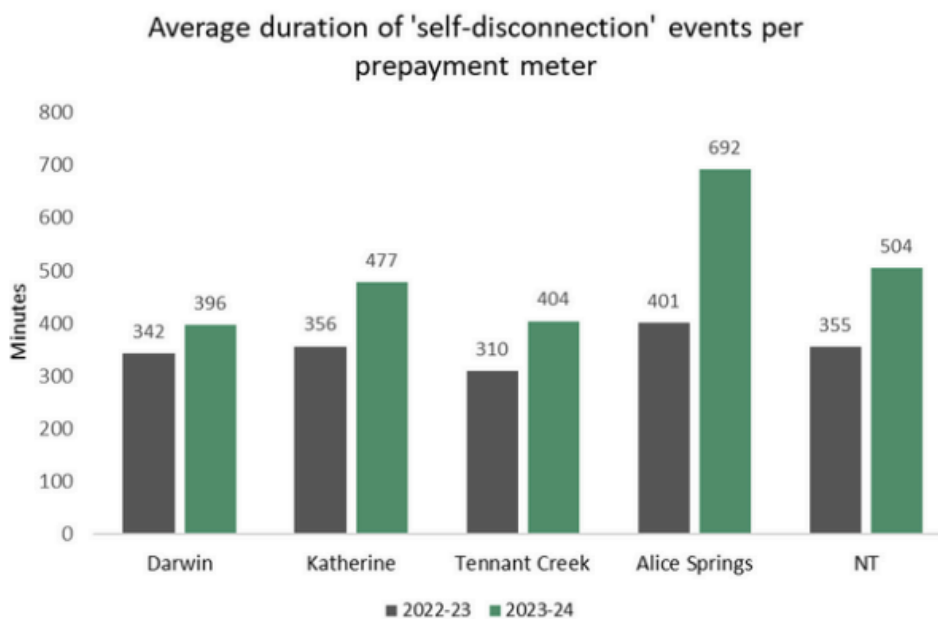


Figure 19: Average duration of involuntary self-disconnections (2022-23, 2023-24)

Source: NTCOSS (2025a). *Cost of Living in the Northern Territory*

Although self-disconnection events decreased in number, their average duration increased across Tennant Creek, rising by 26% from 310 minutes (approximately 5.1 hours) in 2022–23 to 404 minutes (approximately 6.4 hours) in 2023–24.

Extended loss of power due to high unpaid energy bills can disrupt daily routines, reduce capacity to engage in work, and impact job stability, with broader consequences for health and wellbeing.

Housing

Private rental prices continue to increase in most regions across the NT, putting added stress on the household budget and many households in deep housing stress.

In May 2024 a search of properties for rent in Tennant Creek revealed four rentals:

- Three one-bedroom, one bathroom studio units ranging from \$210 - \$290
- One three-bedroom, one bathroom detached unit for \$440 per week²⁹

As of 31 March 2026, a similar search revealed a total of two rental properties:

- One one-bedroom, one bathroom for \$380 per week
- One two-bedroom, one bathroom for \$460 per week³⁰.

The median rent for a three-bedroom house in Tennant Creek from March 2025 - February 2026 was \$520 per week.

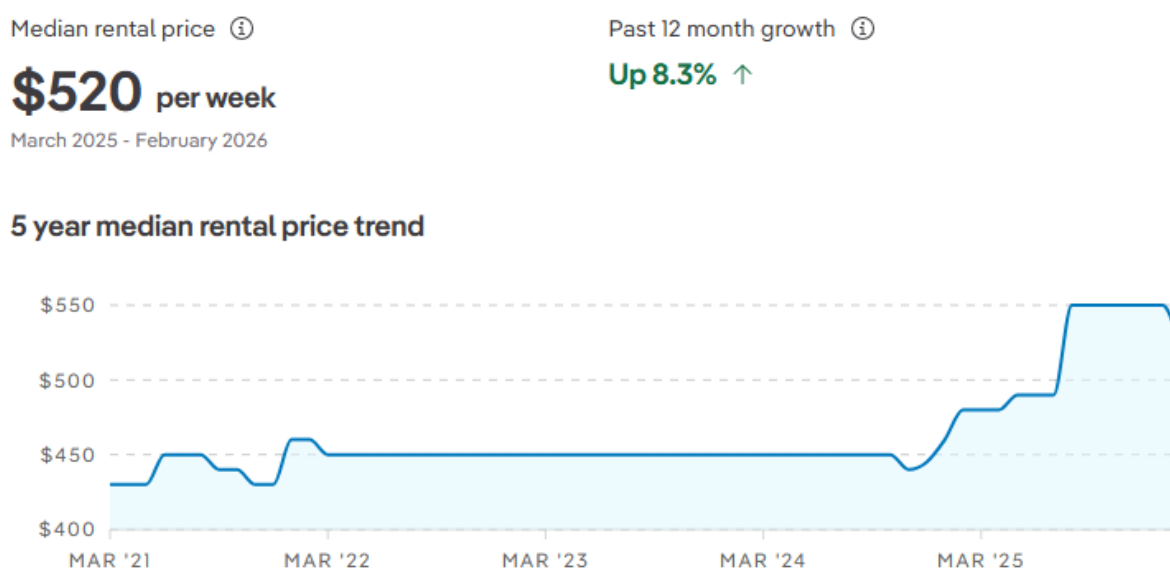


Figure 20: 5-Year Median Rental Price Trend for a 3 Bedroom House in Tennant Creek

Source: Realestate.com.au (2026b), Tennant Creek, NT 0860 – property market and listings³¹

The public housing remote rent framework applies to tenants living in the Tennant Creek Community Living Areas (CLA) and is calculated at \$70 per bedroom per week. Houses with more than 4 bedrooms are capped at \$280 per week³².

²⁹Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (2024a).

³⁰Domain (2026) and Realestate.com.au (2026a). Accessed 30 March 2026.

³¹Realestate.com.au (2026b). Accessed 31 March 2026.

³²Northern Territory Government (2026).

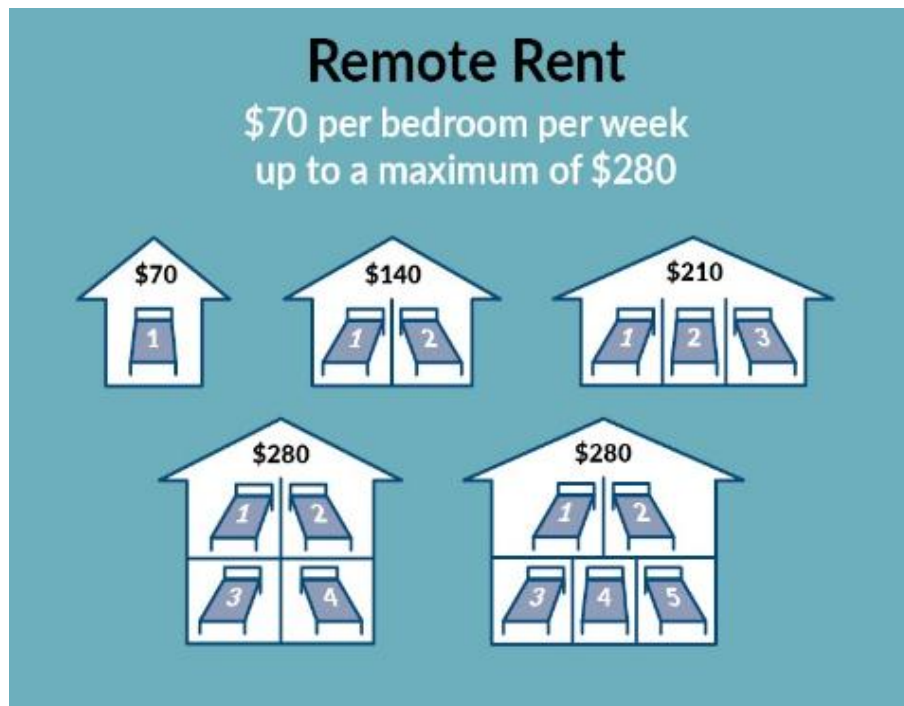


Figure 21: Remote Rent Model

Source: Northern Territory Government (2026), Remote rent, Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development

The current maximum fortnightly JobSeeker payment for a sole parent with a dependent child or children is \$866³³. A sole parent with two children renting a three-bedroom house under the remote public housing rental model, would spend 48% (\$420) of their income on rent, leaving \$446 for other essential needs such as food, utilities, and transport over 2 weeks.

Renting a two-bedroom unit under the remote public housing rental model would equate to spending 32% of the JobSeeker payment and result in rental stress. (Rental stress happens when the rent is more than 25% of the total assessable household income³⁴.)

The maximum JobSeeker payment for a sole parent is insufficient to cover the median cost of private rental housing; housing costs alone exceed available income.

³³Services Australia (2026).

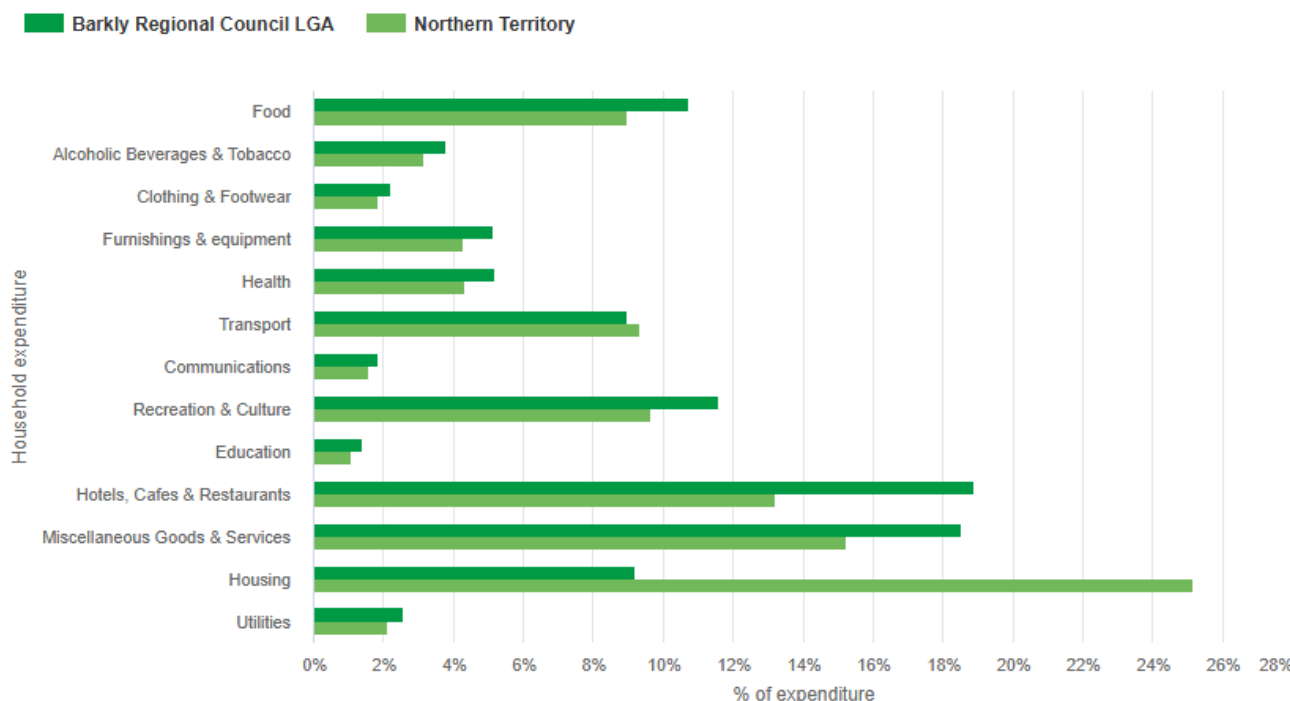
³⁴Northern Territory Government (2026).

Regional Household Expenditure

While community-specific data is not available, expenditure patterns for the broader Barkly Regional Council LGA area provide important insights:

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

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

- 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.

Household Income

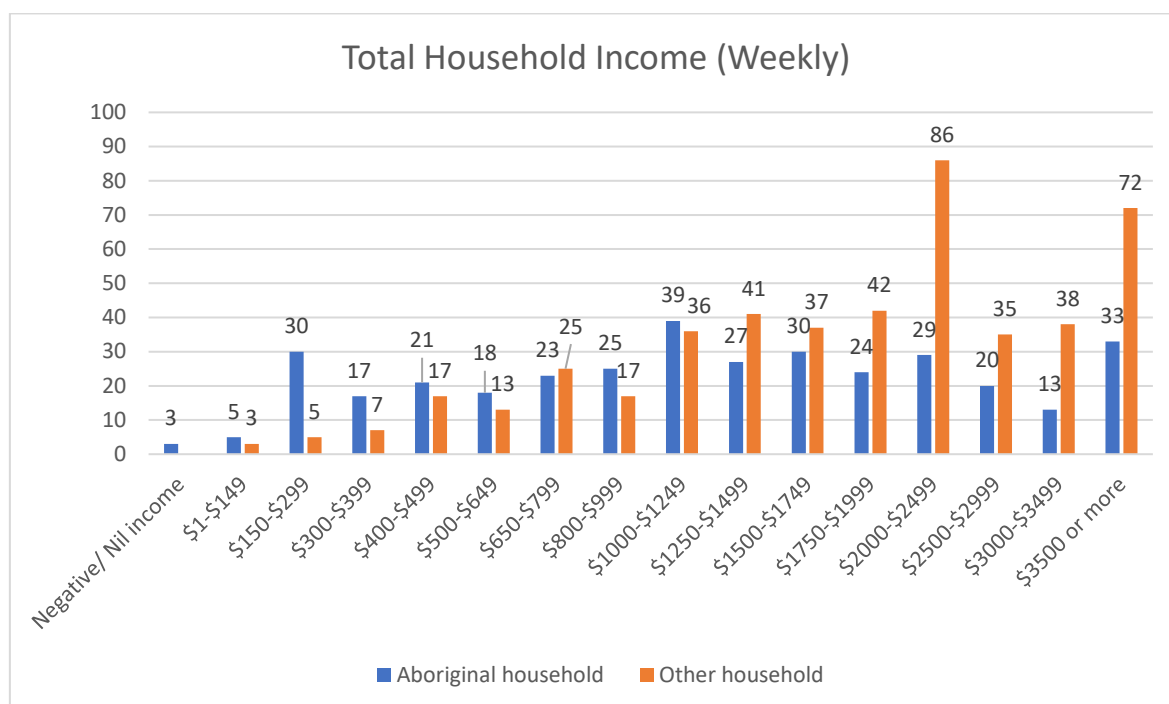


Figure 23: Weekly Reported Aboriginal Household Income

Data compiled from Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing: Tennant Creek, table I17

Aboriginal households are overrepresented in lower income brackets (70% earning less than \$500 per week) and underrepresented in higher income categories (30% earning above \$1,750). While some parity exists in mid-income ranges (e.g. \$1,000–\$1,249: 39 vs 36), a clear divergence emerges at higher income levels. This reflects both lower workforce participation and a concentration in lower-paying industries, highlighting the need for stronger pathways into higher-value employment.

The median weekly household income in Tennant Creek is \$1677, and \$1210 for Aboriginal households³⁵. The main source of income for Aboriginal residents of the town is 68% government benefits, and 31% employment. This is in stark contrast to the main sources of income for the whole town which is 60% from employment and 37% from government benefits³⁶. According to CLA reports by Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation which is a housing municipal service provider in the CLA's, there is an average of 14 persons per home³⁷.

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. Barkly is ranked 10th³⁸ out of 19 LGAs in the Northern Territory, indicating it is relatively less disadvantaged than many other regions within the NT. However, this position should be interpreted within the broader NT context, where overall levels of disadvantage remain higher than the national average.

³⁵ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026).

³⁶ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026).

³⁷Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (2024a).

³⁸Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023a).

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

These results reflect limited access to income, employment opportunities, and financial resources.

Indicating:

- Low household incomes
- High reliance on income support
- 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 (2023c).

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.

Investment and Opportunity: Current Funding Allocations

Government investments in a region present significant opportunity for workforce planning and economic participation. Analysis of unfinished government projects and grants published by BushTel³⁹ as of 3 March 2026 identified grant programs with a combined face value of approximately \$1.8 billion that include Tennant Creek. However, this figure does not represent confirmed expenditure or investment in Tennant Creek or the broader

³⁹Northern Territory Government (n.d.-d). The project and grant list was last updated 3 March 2026.

Barkly region. It includes the full value of grants delivered across multiple regions and, in some cases, up to 99 communities.

The grants have been grouped into two categories: regional grant programs that include Tennant Creek and community-specific allocations. Where funding has not been apportioned by region or community, the full grant value has not been treated as confirmed local investment.

The analysis is based on information available through BushTel and may not capture all relevant grants or investments. For multi-community and multi-region programs, the amount ultimately allocated or spent specifically within Tennant Creek or the broader Barkly region cannot be determined from the available data.

Regional Grant Programs That Include Tennant Creek (\$1.72 Billion)

The total face value of regional grant programs that include Tennant Creek is \$1.72 billion. These programs primarily support employment and community development, family support, education and health services. the \$1.72 billion represents the combined value of the broader grant programs and should not be interpreted as funding allocated exclusively to Tennant Creek or the Barkly region.

Many of these programs are delivered by recipient organisations across multiple regions or communities, sometimes covering up to 99 communities. As the available data does not apportion the funding by region or community, the amount allocated to or spent within Tennant Creek or elsewhere in the Barkly, cannot be reliably determined.

Table 24: Face Value of Regional Grant Programs that Include Tennant Creek, by Program Category

Program category	Amount* (\$M)	No: of communities shared across	Share of total program face value (%)	Primary initiatives	Timeframes*
Public Health Services	\$594.3M	5	34.54%	Health workforce outcomes and support for rural health services and clinics	2023-2027
Mental Health	\$256.4M	5	14.90%	Intervention and support for mental health and suicide prevention	2021-2026
Crisis Accommodation	\$191.1M	5	11.11%	Support for affordable housing for homelessness and emergency accommodation for domestic violence.	2021-2027
Broadcasting and Telecommunications	\$190.8M	5	11.09%	Improve digital connectivity to regional, rural and remote Australian communities.	2021-2031
Vocational Education (see Table 25)	\$97M	5	5.64%	Support activities to progress Jobs and Skills Councils programs.	2023-2028
Indigenous Employment and Business	\$78.5M	99	4.56%	Activities that focus on getting Indigenous Australians into work	2021-2028
Carers of People with Disabilities	\$56.9M	5	3.31%	Young carers bursary program	2019-2027
Settlement Services	\$55.6M	5	3.23%	To allow former members of the Youpla Group to undertake Sorry Business.	2024-2026
Energy Resources	\$45M	6	2.62%	Coordinated national approach to solar research in Australia.	2023-2031
monHumanities	\$40.9M	5	2.38%	Support artists in regional and remote areas of Australia.	2021-2028

Indigenous Health	\$40.4M	5	2.35%	Medical outreach for chronic disease and suicide post intervention	2021-2026
Community Development	\$27.1M	5	1.58%	Child and parent, and Family and relationship services	2021-2026
Farming	\$14.9M	5	0.87%	Empower land carers to adopt climate smart agricultural practices	2024-2028
Local Government	\$11M	15	0.64%	Benefit communities through improved roads and infrastructure	2021-2026
Aged Care	\$7.8M	2	0.45%	Support eligible older people to live independently at home and in community	2024-2027
Public Diplomacy	\$6.4M	5	0.37%	Support administration of an Indigenous Language Centre in the Barkly	2024-2028
Health Promotion and Prevention Programs	\$5.6M	5	0.33%	Primary health networks (aged care) and best practice for organ donation and transplants.	2021-2027
Cancer Treatment and Support	\$0.13M	5	0.01%	Improving access and bringing gaps in head and neck cancer support across Australia	2024-2027
Higher Education	\$0.2M	5	0.01%	Teaching scholarships	2024-2037
Indigenous Arts and Culture	\$0.14M	12	0.01%	Support Indigenous Australians to maintain their culture	2025-2026
Legal Services	\$0.19M	4	0.01%	Improve wellbeing of families with children at risk of separating due to family violence	2023-2027
Media and Communications	\$0.13M	2	0.01%	Support portion of wages for journalists producing core news content	2026-2028

Source: Northern Territory Government (n.d.-d).

**Each program category includes multiple grants awarded to different organisations. The amounts shown represent the aggregated face value of these grants, including programs delivered across multiple communities or regions. They should not be interpreted as confirmed allocations to or expenditure within Tennant Creek. The timeframes shown reflect the earliest start date and latest end date among the grants included in each category.*

Based on the data above, the five categories with the highest aggregated grant program face values were:

- Public Health Services- \$594.3M
- Mental Health - \$256.4M
- Crisis Accommodation - \$191.1M
- Broadcasting and Telecommunications - \$190.8M
- Vocational Education \$97M (see Table 25 for details)

Table 25: Breakdown of Vocational Education Grant Programs that Include Tennant Creek

Recipient Organisation	Amount* (\$M)	No. of communities shared across	Grant Term	Project Name and Details:
Powering Skills Organisation Ltd	\$43.4M	4	30/06/2023 - 30/06/2028	Industry Clusters Grant Opportunity – Stage 2: Strengthening Australia's National Vocational Education and Training System (2021–2025)
Skills Equipped Ltd	\$53.5M	5	30/06/2023 - 30/06/2028	Industry Clusters Grant Opportunity – Stage 2: Strengthening Australia's National Vocational Education and Training System (2021–2025)

The purpose of the grant is to enable the grantee to undertake activities that support the implementation of the Jobs and Skills Councils program, previously known as Industry Clusters. The program aims to provide industry with a stronger and more strategic voice, as well as a broader role in ensuring Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system continues to meet the needs of employers and learners.

Source: Northern Territory Government (n.d.-d).

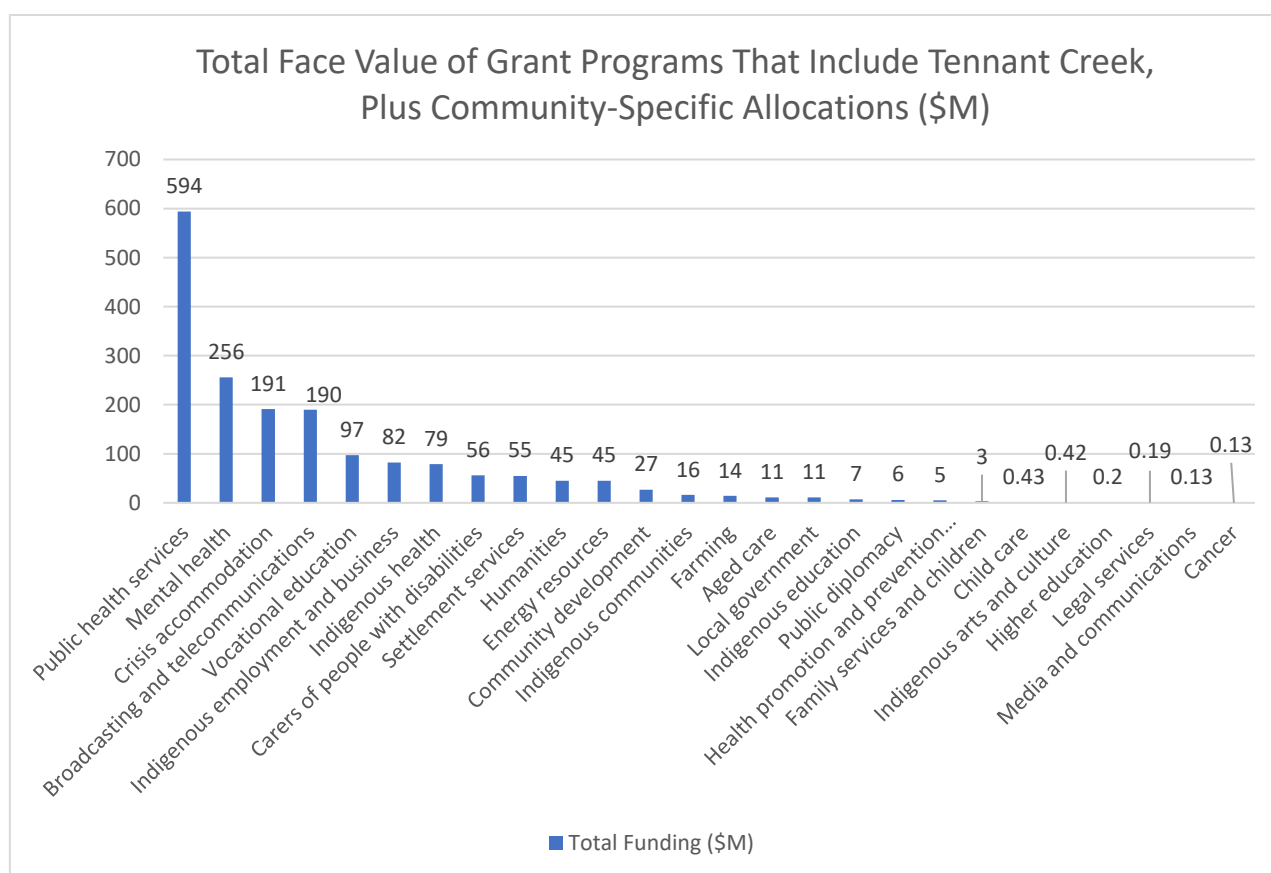


Figure 24: Total Face Value of Grant Programs That Include Tennant Creek, Plus Community-Specific Allocations (\$M)

Source: Northern Territory Government (n.d.-d).

Tennant Creek Community-Specific Investments (\$80 million⁴⁰)

Table 26: Tennant Creek Community-Specific Investment

Program Category	Project Funding (\$M)	No. of Grants	Organisation	Key Investment Areas	Timeframe*
Aged Care	\$3.41M	4	Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation (2 grants, \$0.70M) Barkly Regional Council (2 grants, \$2.7M)	Indigenous employment and Fair Work Commission boost	2024-2026
Childcare	\$0.43M	1	Kentish Community Services Ltd	Early childhood education and care operations	2024-2026
Family Services and Children	\$3.83M	1	Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation	Children and family intensive support	2021-2026
Humanities	\$4.33M	2	Barkly Regional Arts Inc. (1 grant, \$1.69M) Papulu Apparr-Kari Aboriginal Corporation (1 grant, \$2.63M)	Facilitate the ongoing preservation of Indigenous languages and operational costs.	2022-2026
Indigenous Arts and Culture	\$0.27M	1	Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation	Strategic activities to support Indigenous Australians to maintain their culture	2025-2027
Indigenous Communities	\$15.58M	5	Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation (2 grants, \$5.62M) Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation (3 grants, \$9.96M)	Activities that focus on getting Indigenous Australians into work, and activities that ensure the ordinary law of the land applies to Indigenous communities.	2020-2028
Indigenous Education	\$7.27M	4	Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation (1 grant, \$0.08M) Barkly Regional Council (1 grant, \$2M) Papulu Apparr-Kari Aboriginal Corporation (2 grants, \$5.13M)	Activities that focus on getting children to school	2023-2026
Indigenous Employment and Business	\$4.42M	11	Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation (3 grants, \$1.06M) Barkly Regional Council (8 grants, \$3.35M)	Activities that focus on getting Indigenous Australians into work	2025-2028
Indigenous Health	\$39.56M	7	Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation (2 grants, \$0.31M) Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation (2 grants, \$25.14M) Barkly Regional Council (1 grant, \$1.63M) Tennant Creek Mob Aboriginal Corporation (1 grant, \$2.08 M)	Activities that ensure the ordinary law of the land applies to Indigenous communities, and to improve the health of all Aboriginal people through a variety of activities.	2022-2028

⁴⁰Northern Territory Government (n.d.-d).

			Barkly Regional Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Group Aboriginal Corporation (BRADAAG) (1 grant, \$5.29 M)		
TOTAL	\$80M	36			

Source: Northern Territory Government (n.d.-d).

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

The largest funding categories for community-specific investments was:

- Indigenous Health (\$39.56M)
- Indigenous Communities (\$15.58M)
- Indigenous Education (\$7.27M).

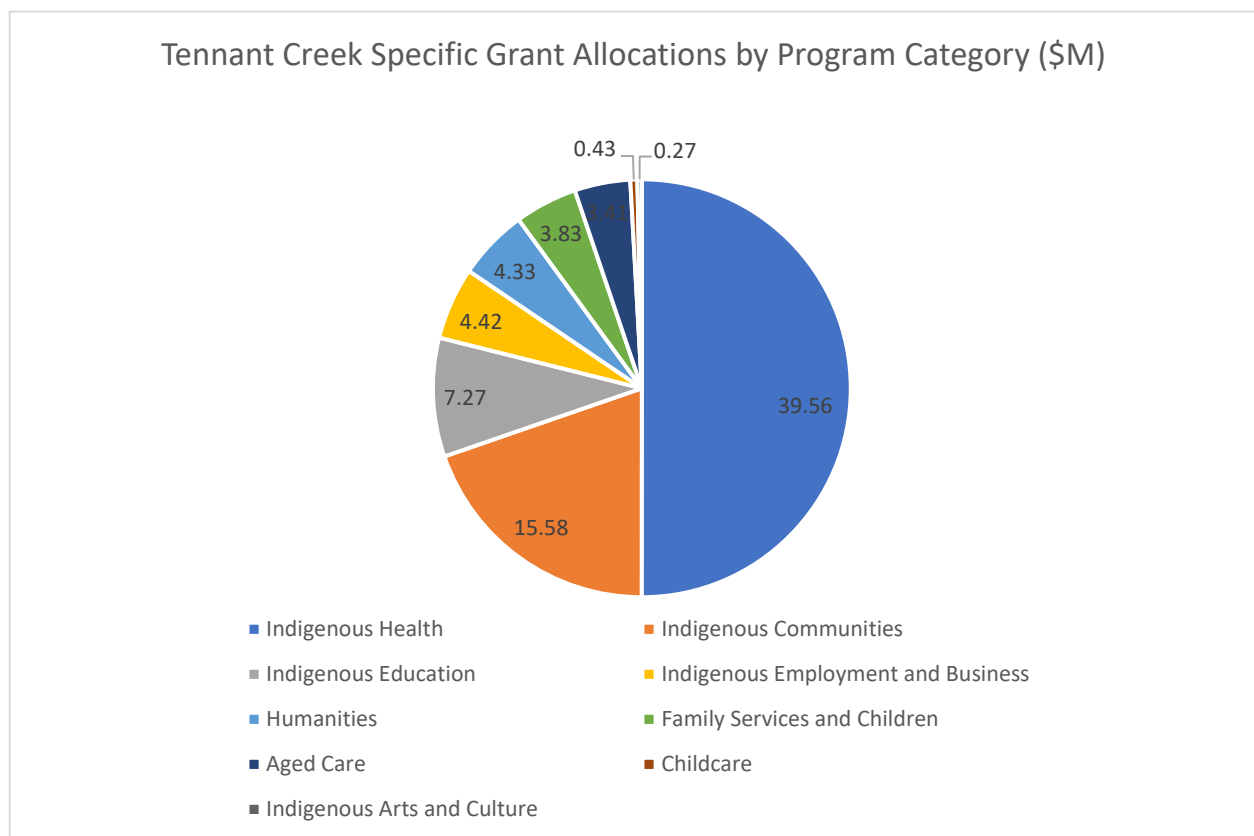


Figure 25: Tennant Creek Specific Grant Allocations by Program Category (\$M)

Source: Northern Territory Government (n.d.-d).

The program category that received the largest grant allocations specific to Tennant Creek as at 3 March 2026 was Indigenous Health.

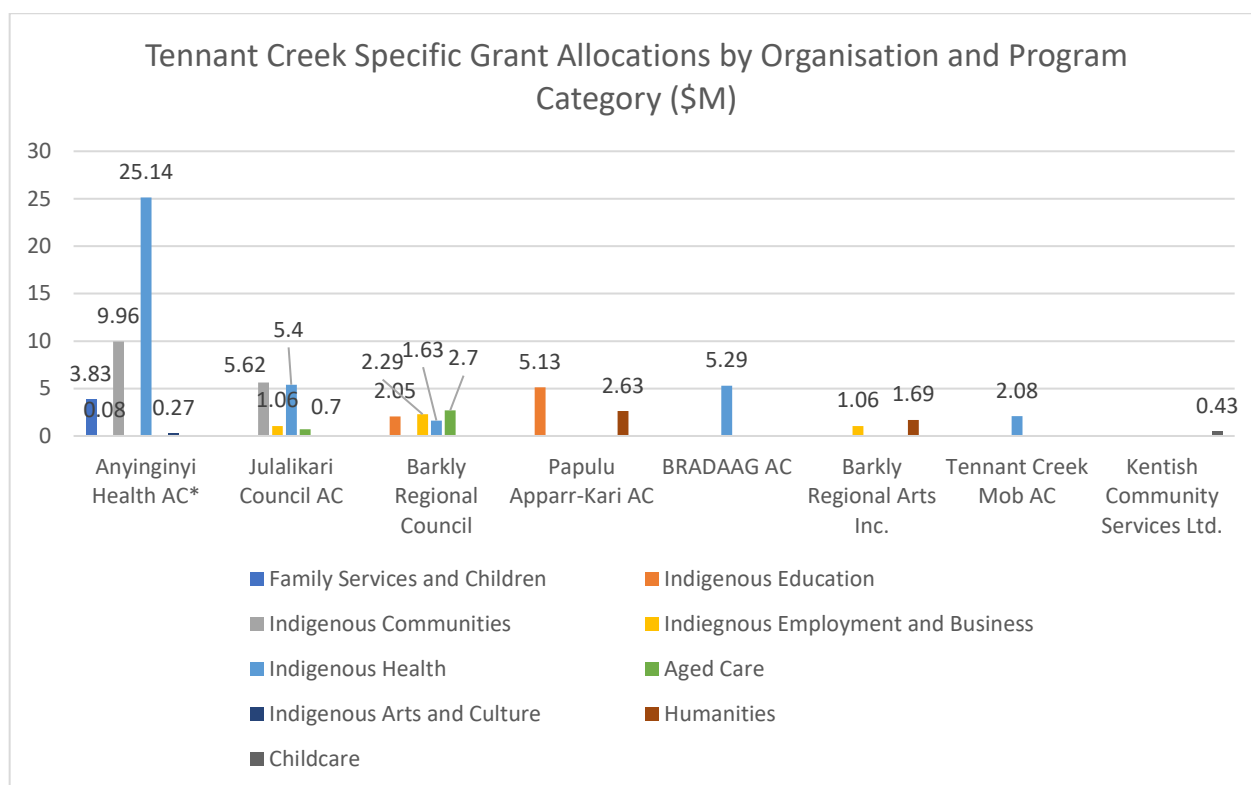


Figure 26: Tennant Creek Specific Grant Allocations by Organisation and Program Category (\$M)

Source: Northern Territory Government (n.d.-d).

*AC = Aboriginal Corporation

As at 3 March 2026, Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation had the largest total value of Tennant Creek-specific grants for projects that were still active, valued at \$39.28 million.

The data shows:

- Substantial investment is directed toward Aboriginal employment initiatives, including the Indigenous Employment Initiative Program (\$82M). This includes the Ranger Program (\$57M), and multiple job creation projects.
- Government funding is primarily directed toward community services and social programs, with limited direct investment in production-oriented industries such as mining and agriculture.
- Training and employment initiatives are fragmented across multiple programs, suggesting a lack of a unified workforce pipeline.

Implications for workforce planning:

- The local workforce is highly dependent on government funding, creating risks around sustainability as many roles are tied to grant cycles rather than ongoing economic demand.
- Employment pathways are largely program-based and service focused, with many roles tied to funded initiatives such as community wellbeing, youth engagement, and employment pathway programs rather than private sector demand. This means participation outcomes may not translate into long-term, stable employment without stronger industry links.
- There is a disconnect between funding and high value industry employment, with limited pathways from funded programs into sectors such as mining and agriculture that drive regional GRP. A shift is needed

from program-based employment to industry-linked pathways.

- Workforce development should leverage Aboriginal organisations as employment pipelines, strengthening their role in delivering training, work readiness, and progression into jobs.
- Better coordination is needed across programs, to create a clear, integrated pathway from training to employment and progression outcomes.

Strategic considerations:

- ✓ Shift focus from program outputs/activities to employment outcomes, linking funding to measurable employment, retention, and progression outcomes.
- ✓ Leverage existing programs as employment pipelines connecting participation to training, employment, and long-term career progression.
- ✓ Embed LLND capability into all workforce pathways as lower LLND skills present a foundational barrier. It should be integrated into all training and employment programs rather than treated as a separate intervention.

The available evidence suggests that coordination and progression pathways are significant issues; however, the adequacy, accessibility and effectiveness of existing investment also require further assessment.

Step 3: Stakeholders Identified Needs and Priorities

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

Tennant Creek Stakeholder Consultations

Over three weeks in March 2026 DKA engaged with nineteen stakeholders representing sixteen organisations and representative bodies in Tennant Creek through both in person consultations in the town and via online meetings. Stakeholders represented a broad cross-section, including state and local government departments and agencies, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), non-government organisations (NGOs), industry and private sector employers.

Given the limited timeframe for delivery, stakeholder consultation was necessarily focused on service providers, employers, and government representatives. This is complemented by the extensive community consultation already undertaken through the development of the Barkly Regional Deal, Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy 2030, and Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030.

Accordingly, this analysis draws on and aligns with the community priorities, needs, and aspirations identified through these existing processes, building on prior engagement rather than duplicating consultation activity.

Table 27: Tennant Creek Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholder category	Organisations represented	Participants
Aboriginal organisations, land interests and community representation	Central Land Council Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation	2
Government and local government	National Indigenous Australians Agency Empowering the Bush, Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development Barkly Regional Council, including the Mayor	4
Regional governance and coordination	Barkly Regional Deal Governance Table	1
Employment and workforce services	RN Employment Saltbush Social Enterprises	3
Community services	Barkly Region Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Group	1
Education and training	Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Tennant Creek High School Charles Darwin University	5

	JUNO Centre	
Industry, business and economic development	Tennant Mines Centrefarm Aboriginal Horticulture Limited Territory Water Solutions	3
Total	16 organisations or representative bodies	19

Note: Participant numbers include only those who attended the consultation. Additional stakeholders were invited to participate, including two representatives who confirmed but did not attend; others did not respond or were unable to attend.

Listed below are the key issues and community priorities that were identified in the consultations.

Key Issues and Priorities:

➤ LLND Skills

Low levels of LLND capability were identified as a fundamental barrier to both training and employment. This issue was consistently raised among stakeholders and is linked to broader challenges within the education system, including disengagement and limited accessibility of learning for students whose first language is not English.

LLND gaps impact an individual's ability to:

- Engage in training programs
- Navigate systems such as employment services and income support
- Sustain employment

LLND should be treated as a foundational component of workforce development, rather than a separate or optional intervention.

➤ Youth Disengagement and Education Gaps

Stakeholders identified significant challenges in engaging young people in education and transitioning them into employment. Key issues include:

- Difficult transition from primary to secondary school: Stakeholders noted that the transition period can be challenging, with some young people returning to secondary school with a shift in attitude as they seek greater independence and identity. This can impact behaviour, attendance, and ongoing engagement with schooling.
- Limited access to in-person teaching and reliance on online learning: Constraints in teacher availability mean some subjects are delivered online. However, stakeholders highlighted that limited LLND skills, combined with lower levels of independent learning readiness, reduce engagement and learning outcomes in these formats. In-person, hands-on learning approaches were consistently identified as more effective; however, delivery is constrained by a shortage of qualified staff.
- Lack of student engagement and perceived relevance of education: Stakeholders noted that some students struggle to see the connection between education and future employment pathways. This is

further influenced by limited visibility of local Aboriginal role models in sustained employment, which can affect aspirations and motivation.

- Limited access to career guidance and pathway support: Stakeholders identified a lack of dedicated career guidance in school (e.g. career advisers or counsellors) to support students in understanding employment pathways, navigating options, and completing applications. While exposure activities such as job expos provide initial awareness, there is often limited or nil follow-up to translate this into tangible outcomes. For example, stakeholders noted that employers attended with interactive demonstrations, but there was no structured support to guide interested students through next steps, such as application processes or entry pathways. This limits the effectiveness of such activities in supporting transitions into employment.
- School attendance patterns and timing of delivery: Stakeholders noted that standard school hours do not always align with local routines, with some students more likely to engage later in the day.

There is a need for more flexible and culturally appropriate education models to improve engagement, relevance, and outcomes, including:

- Learning on Country
- Two-way learning approaches
- Greater inclusion of the Warumungu language and culture

➤ Limited Work Readiness and Employment Preparation

Stakeholders highlighted that many job seekers are not considered work-ready, lacking the soft skills, particularly in relation to:

- Punctuality and attendance
- Routine and structure
- Communication and workplace expectations, including staff not turning up to work but failing to call to notify their employers.

These challenges are compounded by limited exposure to employment environments and a lack of structured pathways from education into work.

➤ Disconnection Between Training and Employment

Consultations identified a disconnect between training delivery and employment outcomes. Training is often not clearly linked to job opportunities, resulting in:

- Low motivation and completion rates
- Limited translation of qualifications into employment
- Perceptions that training lacks practical value

There is a strong need to better align training with real job pathways and employer demand.

➤ Access Barriers:

A range of practical barriers continue to limit participation in both training and employment, including:

- Lack of identification documents
- The application of the Ochre Card/ Working with Children Check (WWCC) and Criminal History Check (CHC) system was identified as a structural barrier to employment. While designed to safeguard children, its broad application across a wide range of roles, combined with strict eligibility criteria can exclude individuals with historical or low-risk offences, including those unrelated to child safety. This has the effect of limiting workforce participation by excluding otherwise job-ready candidates.

Any consideration of these arrangements should maintain child-safety requirements and be led by the relevant regulatory authority, with a focus on ensuring that screening and eligibility processes remain proportionate to the risk profile and requirements of specific roles.

- Delays and restrictions associated with Ochre Card/ Working with Children Checks were identified as another significant barrier. One stakeholder reported that processing delays were so extensive that the 90-day exemption period allowing staff to work without an Ochre Card had expired, and the card was still not received. This backlog was noted to affect multiple staff across organisations
- Limited access to driver licensing due to the absence or very limited availability of DriveSafe NT classes was identified as a key barrier. Stakeholders noted that while a driver's licence is often a prerequisite for employment, access to licensing in Tennant Creek is constrained by the lack of locally available DriveSafe NT courses.
- A review of the published DriveSafe NT session timetable⁴¹ indicates that no classes were delivered in Tennant Creek in 2025, with only two sessions delivered in 2024 (4–8 March and 17–21 June), both occurring in the first half of the year with no further sessions thereafter. At the time of writing, no sessions are scheduled for 2026. The website also notes that sessions in remote locations are subject to change at short notice, further limiting reliability and forward planning for participants in the town. Stakeholders also highlighted the absence of permanently based staff to conduct driver testing, further constraining local access to obtaining a license.

➤ Limited Access to Childcare and After-School Care

Lack of childcare and after-school care was consistently identified by stakeholders as a significant barrier, limiting the ability of parents and carers to participate in both employment and training. In the absence of accessible options, stakeholders noted an informal practice where some workers attend meetings with their children present, reflecting the lack of viable alternatives. These barriers prevent otherwise capable individuals from entering or progressing through employment pathways.

➤ Income Support as a Barrier to Workforce Participation

Welfare payments were identified as a disincentive to workforce participation. One stakeholder described income support as a “safety blanket,” noting that transitioning into employment requires individuals to report changes to Services Australia (Centrelink), which can be a complex and time-consuming process. This is particularly challenging for those moving in and out of short-term or casual roles, or where participation is intermittent due to family or cultural obligations, as individuals are required to repeatedly update their circumstances. As a result, some individuals may be reluctant to take up employment due to the perceived risk and administrative burden associated with these transitions.

➤ Lack of Appropriate Worker Accommodation

Stakeholders identified a shortage of suitable short-term accommodation for workers. Models such as dedicated worker quarters where individuals have a private space to sleep, wash, and store belongings were noted as effective, as they provide a stable living environment with fewer external pressures. This type of accommodation was seen to support workforce participation by enabling workers to focus on employment without competing with household or financial demands (of overcrowding and humbug).

⁴¹Northern Territory Government (n.d.-b).

➤ Housing and Workforce Stability

Housing was identified as a critical constraint on workforce participation, retention and local business expansion. The lack of quantity and quality long-term rental housing is a key inhibitor to attracting new permanent workforce to the town. As previously mentioned in section 2.4 under cost of living: housing, long-term rentals are hard to come by with only two rental properties available in March 2026. This was the same in February 2026⁴².

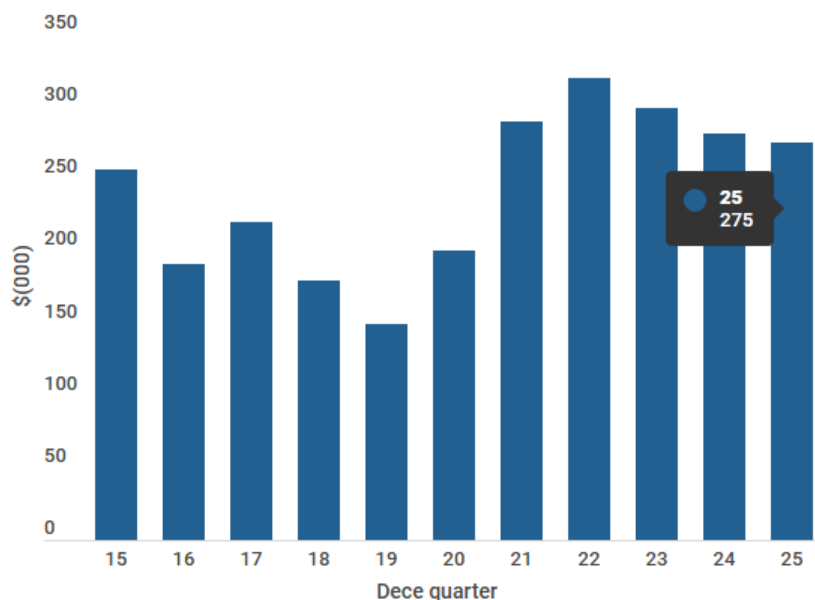


Figure 27: Tennant Creek Median Price of Houses Sold (Dec quarter 2015-2025)

Source: Department of Treasury and Finance; Real Estate Institute of the Northern Territory⁴³

In December 2025, the median house sale price in Tennant Creek was \$275,000, with only 10 properties on the market during this period. This sale price suggests the cost of land acquisition and construction exceeds the market value of completed dwellings. This finding is consistent with broader observations raised by the Commonwealth Government Select Committee on Northern Australia⁴⁴, which noted that in some parts of Northern Australia, builders are unable to recover construction costs and may incur losses of up to 20 per cent⁴⁵.

This acts as a disincentive to property developers, limiting private sector investment in new housing. In Tennant Creek, development may also be influenced by a range of land availability, infrastructure, planning, approval and tenure considerations. Collectively, these factors can extend development timeframes and increase complexity and cost, which constrain the feasibility of new housing development, with flow-on implications for workforce attraction and retention.

Access to social housing is also highly constrained, with wait times estimated between six and ten years. In late 2023, there were 199 applications on the social housing register, while only four dwellings were allocated over the year. At the same time, 10 properties remained vacant but unavailable due to ongoing assessments, maintenance, or major upgrades.

⁴²Domain (2026) and Realestate.com.au (2026a). Accessed 30 March 2026.

⁴³Northern Territory Government (n.d.-b).

⁴⁴Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (2024b).

⁴⁵Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (2024b).

The housing pressure is further reflected in the high levels of overcrowding. Data from the Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation Community Living Areas Report indicates an average of 14 people per dwelling⁴⁶.

These conditions limit access to stable and supportive home environments, with implications for rest, routine, and personal space. Stakeholders noted that this affected workforce participation, including attendance and productivity.

Additionally, Tennant Creek functions primarily as a service hub, with a significant proportion of employment concentrated in the public sector. The Northern Territory Government holds a number of residential leases in the town; however, the scale of these holdings and their potential influence on housing availability particularly in the context of workforce accommodation, has not been examined.

➤ Need for Wraparound and Intensive Support

Aboriginal employment outcomes are strongly influenced by access to wraparound support, including pre- and post-employment support, case management, housing, childcare, and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services. Stakeholders emphasised that employment alone is insufficient without these supports. Participation is shaped by interconnected social factors, including AOD use, financial pressures (e.g. income sharing or “humbug”), and the availability of safe and stable home environments, all of which affect an individual’s capacity to engage consistently in work.

Workplace requirements, particularly in industries such as mining, further highlight the importance of addressing these factors. Even entry-level roles can involve operating heavy machinery and therefore require strict adherence to work health and safety (WHS) protocols, including daily drug and alcohol testing. While critical for maintaining safe workplaces these requirements present challenges for individuals managing AOD related issues.

Stakeholders, including BRADAAG, noted an increasing demand for AOD support services, with a growing number of individuals self-presenting for treatment. However, service capacity is constrained by workforce shortages, including a lack of staff to deliver their culturally responsive therapeutic model. This limits the ability to meet current demand.

Workforce development within the AOD sector also faces challenges. While there is demand for locally trained workers, some individuals completing AOD programs are reluctant to work within their own community due to cultural considerations, including potential personal or community implications if issues arise.

There is interest in expanding local delivery of Certificate IV in AOD programs in-house, however, this is currently limited by the availability of qualified trainers and the need to rely on RTOs for delivery. Stakeholders noted that, in remote contexts, training delivery can be affected by scheduling and minimum cohort sizes, which may impact the consistency and timeliness of access to training.

➤ Fragmentation and Lack of Coordination

The training and employment system is fragmented, with multiple providers competing for the same funding and participants. There is limited coordination, communication, or shared planning across organisations. Stakeholders consistently identified the need for a central coordinating function.

⁴⁶Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (2024a).

➤ Away From Base Funding Model

Away-from-base funding was mentioned as a challenge in training delivery for remote participants. Away-from-base funding refers to a few funding arrangements offered by Services Australia and NIAA that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and trainees to travel away from their home community to participate in education, training, work placements, or other compulsory learning activities not available locally. Funding may cover costs such as travel, accommodation and meals, and is tied to specific eligibility criteria, programs, cohorts and activities. For example, in claiming ABSTUDY away from base funding, the amount received will vary depending on the individual student costs involved in attending and how the activity has been arranged⁴⁷.

Consultation revealed that to meet minimum participant numbers, providers draw students from multiple regional communities; however, participants sometimes fall under different eligibility criteria, and it can be administratively burdensome, complex and time consuming to track and manage eligibility across students.

➤ Workforce Instability and Capacity Constraints

Workforce capacity is constrained by staff shortages, difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified trainers, and a transient workforce, limiting service delivery and the ability to scale effective programs.

These challenges are compounded by limited training and supervision capacity, with insufficient trainers and experienced staff to support workforce development and on-the-job capability building.

This creates a cycle where workforce shortages persist due to the lack of capacity to build the local workforce.

➤ Out-migration of young families and skilled workers

Stakeholders noted a pattern of families relocating from Tennant Creek as children reach secondary school age, reflecting concerns about access to education and broader family support. Similarly, some skilled workers were reported to relocate once they start or have young families, seeking locations that better support family needs. This contributes to ongoing challenges in retaining both families and a stable workforce.

➤ Need for Flexible Workforce Models

Stakeholders identified limitations in traditional “one person per role” employment models, particularly in contexts where availability may be influenced by cultural and family obligations. There is a need for more flexible approaches, including training multiple individuals for the same role (labour pool model), to support continuity of service and reduce disruption when individuals are unavailable.

Potential flexible workforce models could include shared positions, relief pools or seasonal labour arrangements that allow organisations to respond to fluctuations in workforce availability and labour demand. For example, workers may engage in one type of work during a peak season and transition to other employment opportunities as demand shifts. This approach supports ongoing workforce participation while aligning with local conditions and employment patterns.

Any implementation of flexible workforce models should be considered on a case-by-case basis and be subject to employer demand, operational requirements, industrial relations obligations, secure employment principles and consultation with employers, employees and relevant representatives. Such approaches should be viewed as complementary workforce strategies that may be piloted and evaluated in appropriate contexts. rather than as a replacement for ongoing, secure employment opportunities.

⁴⁷Services Australia (2025).

Community and Workforce Strengths

Stakeholder consultations also highlighted significant strengths and assets that provide a foundation for future workforce, training and economic development initiatives. These strengths demonstrate that the challenge is not an absence of capability or opportunity, but rather the need to better connect, support, and build upon existing community resources and workforce potential.

➤ **Aboriginal organisational capability and leadership**

Tennant Creek benefits from a few well-established Aboriginal organisations with extensive experience delivering services, employing local people, and supporting community development. These organisations hold strong community relationships and local knowledge, making them critical partners in workforce development, training delivery, and employment pathways.

Aboriginal-controlled organisations are well placed to engage local people, understand cultural obligations, provide culturally safe environments and deliver the wraparound support required to sustain participation in training and employment. This positions them to contribute to the design and delivery of culturally appropriate workforce initiatives.

➤ **Existing education and training capability**

The region already has a range of training and workforce development infrastructure, including training facilities, community learning environments, schools, employment service providers, and registered training organisations. Existing trainers and workforce practitioners also collectively hold substantial experience in delivering programs in a remote context and supporting local delivery.

Although capacity is constrained in some areas, this infrastructure and expertise provide a foundation for improving access to training, strengthening coordination and expanding delivery aligned with local and regional workforce needs.

Strengthening and coordinating existing resources may be as important as creating new services.

➤ **Strong service-sector employment base and existing workforce capability**

Tennant Creek functions as an important regional service hub, with employment concentrated in areas such as public administration, health, education and community services. Ongoing demand across these sectors provides significant opportunities to strengthen local employment pathways into entry-level, support, and professional roles.

Skilled Aboriginal workers are employed across community services, health, education, local government, civil construction, ranger programs and other sectors. These individuals represent an important workforce asset and provide visible examples of successful employment pathways for younger Aboriginal people. Local workers also bring deep cultural knowledge, local language capability, community connections and place-based expertise that strengthen service delivery and are not easily replicated by externally recruited staff.

The presence of an experienced local workforce provides a strong foundation for workforce development initiatives, including upskilling, mentoring, career progression and the transfer of knowledge to emerging workers.

Collectively, these capabilities provide a platform to further expand workforce participation and strengthen local employment outcomes.

➤ **Strong Demand for labour across multiple sectors**

Consultations consistently identified ongoing workforce demand across a range of industries. Service-sector employers, government agencies, community-controlled organisations, health providers, aged care services, disability services, education providers, hospitality businesses, civil construction projects, and mining operations all reported difficulty recruiting and retaining staff.

This demand represents a significant opportunity for local workforce development, particularly where training can be directly linked to identifiable job vacancies and career pathways. Stakeholder consultations revealed that employers are willing to invest in training courses, mentoring, and on-the-job learning where appropriate support mechanisms are available.

➤ **Cultural knowledge and connection to Country as an economic and workforce asset**

The region's strong cultural foundations, including Warumungu language, cultural knowledge, connection to Country and community networks, represent important workforce strengths. These strengths provide opportunities to support employment, enterprise development and service delivery across a range of sectors, including land and natural resource management, cultural tourism, education, community services and culturally informed service provision.

Learning on Country and two-way learning approaches were identified not only as effective engagement strategies, but also as mechanisms for recognising, valuing and strengthening existing community expertise. Further incorporation of cultural knowledge into education, training and workforce development initiatives presents an opportunity to build on local strengths while creating pathways that are both culturally responsive and aligned with community aspirations.

➤ **Strong Local Networks and Collaborative Relationships**

Consultations demonstrated a high level of commitment among organisations, employers, training providers, schools and community leaders to improving employment outcomes. Existing informal partnerships and collaborative relationships between community organisations, service providers, employers, government agencies, and education and training providers already support referrals, participant engagement and service delivery across the region. These networks bring local knowledge of individual and community needs and provide a foundation for stronger coordination, shared planning and collective action to maximise available resources, reduce duplication and inform the design of more effective workforce initiatives.

➤ **Established Regional Governance and Strategic Focus**

The Barkly region has a network of governance forums, committees, Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, and industry bodies that provide a foundation for coordinated workforce development.

These established regional governance arrangements and existing strategic initiatives provide mechanisms through which workforce priorities can be coordinated, advocated for and aligned with broader regional development objectives.

Many of the barriers identified through consultation are structural rather than individual in nature.

While the community's existing strengths do not remove these barriers, they provide practical assets, capabilities and aspirations upon which future workforce development can build. Efforts should combine action to address structural barriers with investment in existing organisations, facilities, networks, cultural capabilities and employment pathways to unlock and strengthen local workforce potential.

Table 28: Tennant Creek Initiatives Identified via the Stakeholder Consultations, March 2026

Issue Category	Issue Sub-category	Details
Coordination	Workforce coordination (system level - demand)	Establish a regional or central coordinator to connect organisations, coordinate workforce development, identify workforce and training needs, and convene employers to plan and develop workforce pipelines aligned to priority skill areas.
	Training coordination (delivery level - supply)	Map RTO capabilities and areas of specialisation, and coordinate training delivery across the year to clarify roles, reduce duplication, and align provision to identified workforce needs.
	Shared delivery	Create coordinated approach to meet minimum training numbers with cost sharing and guaranteed places.
Training	LLND	Prioritise LLND support as a foundational core workforce development need.
	Training pathways	Link training directly to employment placements.
	In-house delivery	Support in-house delivery of training such as Cert IV in AOD with trainer capacity. (Access to grant funding to create their own training materials)
	Training facility	Maximise the use of existing facilities such as JUNO for training delivery.
	Coordination	- Centralised regional coordinator. - Explore the development of a standardised participant consent process that enables individuals to voluntarily authorise nominated organisations to share relevant training, employment and support information, including USIs where appropriate. Any process must be subject to formal privacy, legal, cybersecurity and data-governance review; comply with applicable legislative requirements; limit data collection and sharing to the minimum necessary; and be based on specific, informed and revocable consent.
Employment	Work readiness (soft skills)	Deliver programs focused on punctuality, communication, and workplace expectations.
	Labour hire	Explore local labour hire models.
	Flexible models	Trial labour pools, job sharing, and seasonal work models.
Education	Career guidance	Introduce on-the-ground career advisers in the schools.
	Delivery model	Explore flexible school models including adjusted hours.
	On Country learning	On Country education delivery supports capacity building in a different way and supports more two-way learning.
Childcare	Access	Increase access to childcare and after-school care.
Access	Identification	Support access to identification documents.
	Licensing	Provide local driver testing and licensing support.

Housing	Worker accommodation	Develop worker quarters or camp-style accommodation.
	Pathways to home ownership	Improve access to home ownership pathways, including existing schemes, supports, and financing options.
	Tenant incentives	Introduce incentive programs that reward tenants for maintaining their homes, taking pride in their property, and reporting maintenance issues early.
Support Services	Wraparound support	Expand pre- and post-employment support.
	AOD services	Increase AOD service capacity.
Funding	Flexibility	Advocate for flexible funding models.
Economic Development	Industry development	Establish Tennant Creek as a Centre of Excellence in mineral exploration, building on its unique geological assets, existing training activity, and regional capability.

Data source: DKA Stakeholder Consultations, March 2026.

Alignment with Existing Regional Strategies

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.

This report sits alongside the extensive consultation and priorities identified through the Barkly Regional Deal, Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030 and Barkly Workforce Strategy 2030 and aligns with their focus areas, particularly in relation to workforce development, housing, and economic growth. The priorities most directly relevant to workforce development are summarised below.

Table 29: 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 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. • Strengthen 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).

While these strategies are regional in scope, several initiatives and projects specifically reference Tennant Creek, including:

- Barkly Business Hub (Economic Development Initiative 3, *Barkly Regional Deal Implementation Snapshot*).

- Youth Justice Facility (Economic Development Initiative 4, *Barkly Regional Deal Implementation Snapshot*).
- Student Boarding Accommodation (Social Development Initiative 18, *Barkly Regional Deal Implementation Snapshot*).
- Multi-Purpose Accommodation Facility (Social Development Initiative 17, *Barkly Regional Deal Implementation Snapshot*).
- Upgrade of the Nyinkka Nyunyu Cultural Centre, identified under Target 2 of the *Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030*.
- Battery Hill Mining Centre and Visitor Information Centre, identified under Target 2 of the *Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030*.

These initiatives support objectives related to workforce development, education and training pathways, tourism, community services, and economic development in Tennant Creek.

The Barkly Workforce Strategy 2030 provides the broader regional framework for workforce development across the Barkly region, including priorities relating to foundation skills and work readiness, education and training pathways, mentoring and support programs, culturally safe workplaces, and business development.

These priorities provide important strategic context for workforce planning in Tennant Creek.

The full Barkly Regional Deal Implementation Snapshot, Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030 targets, and Barkly Workforce Strategy 2030 targets are provided in Appendices 6, 7 and 8.

In 2024, the Barkly Regional Deal supported the Backbone Youth Meeting (July) and the Tennant Creek Youth Roundtable (October). These meetings were attended by 23 and 17 stakeholders (including young people), respectively. Feedback from these consultations identified the following priorities for young people:

- **Safe House:** Access to a safe space providing rest, food, laundry facilities, transport home, counselling, and support from experienced staff. Potential locations include the Tennant Creek Youth Centre (TCYC) or other available buildings in town.
- **Wellbeing:** Increased access to counsellors and youth workers to provide support and guidance.
- **Education and Work Experience:** More flexible and culturally appropriate learning opportunities, including two-way learning, outdoor education, VET pathways, work experience, excursions, and adult support.
- **Sport and Recreation:** Greater access to competitions, events, training, and resources, with opportunities for all age groups.

Young people also expressed a desire for ‘a range of experiences and trips outside Tennant Creek, not just bush and cultural trips ⁴⁸’, and also wanting ‘more than cultural guidance ⁴⁹’. They highlighted the need of ‘adults in their lives as mentors, role models, providing ongoing support, for activities and pathways to reach their goals ⁵⁰’.

Young people also raised concerns about community safety, including alcohol-related harm and fighting. As noted in the *Barkly UMEL Youth Case Study* presentation (Barkly Regional Deal, 2024), these issues are consistent with

⁴⁸Barkly Regional Deal (2024, slide 16).

⁴⁹Barkly Regional Deal (2024, slide 16).

⁵⁰Barkly Regional Deal (2024, slide 16).

findings from the 2023 Family, Domestic and Violence (FDV) report, which indicated that all youth surveyed reported feeling unsafe in relation to FDV. These conditions highlight the broader environment in which young people are navigating education, training, and employment pathways, and reinforce the importance of wraparound support, safe spaces, and stable environments to support sustained workforce participation.

Barkly Regional Council - Regional Plan

The Barkly Regional Council (BRC) 2025–26 Draft Regional Plan outlines the Council’s strategic focus for the year, as 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 28: Barkly Regional Council Draft Plan: Strategic Priority 2

Source: Barkly Regional Council (2025), Draft Barkly Regional Council Regional Plan 2025–2026

Regional Growth		
GOAL	OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
Create opportunities for Economic Development and growth	4.1 Advocate for natural resources and agriculture development	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 support 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 29: Barkly Regional Council Draft Plan: Strategic Priority 4

Source: Barkly Regional Council (2025), Draft Barkly Regional Council Regional Plan 2025–2026

Strategic Priorities 2 (Our Employees) and 4 (Regional Growth) address workforce capability and the economic conditions that drive job creation. 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 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, 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 30a: 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 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 200 km south-east of Tennant Creek	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 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 (ALED)	Not available	Ali Curung	2023 information describes this as part of an ALED 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: Alekarenge Horticulture Pty Ltd and Centrefarm (2023); Australian Mining (2025); Beetaloo Energy Australia Limited (2026); Castile Resources Ltd (n.d., 2025); CuFe Ltd (n.d., 2025); Emmerson Resources Ltd (2025); GHD Pty Ltd (2022); Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (2024); Northern Territory Geological Survey (2020, 2026); Northern Territory Government (2021, 2026); Pan African Resources PLC (2025); SunCable (2024); Tamboran Resources Corporation (2025); Tennant Minerals Ltd (n.d.); and Verdant Minerals (n.d.).

Table 30b: 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 Tennant Creek
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.	Directly relevant because the operation is close to 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.	No employment number or workforce commitment specifically for Tennant Creek available
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.	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	Close to Tennant Creek, but no information on allocated positions for Tennant Creek 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 Tennant Creek or Barkly residents available

Project	Construction employment	Operational employment	Likely occupations (indicative only)	Employment status as at 30 July 2026	Relevance to Tennant Creek
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.	Regionally relevant because of its proximity to Tennant Creek No information on how many jobs will be filled locally.
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.	Its proximity to Tennant Creek creates potential regional relevance, but no information on allocated positions for Tennant Creek 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 and approximately 130 km south of Tennant Creek. 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	Close to Tennant Creek and existing transport, power and gas infrastructure. No positions have been specifically allocated to Tennant Creek 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. The source does not specify how many positions will be filled by Tennant Creek residents

Project	Construction employment	Operational employment	Likely occupations (indicative only)	Employment status as at 30 July 2026	Relevance to Tennant Creek
Concept or Exploration Phase					
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 project is 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 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.	Approximately 95 km west southwest of Tennant Creek. No local employment allocation available.

Source: Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2026); Alekarenge Horticulture Pty Ltd and Centrefarm (2023); Australian Mining (2025); Beetaloo Energy Australia Limited (2026); Castile Resources Ltd (n.d., 2025); CuFe Ltd (n.d., 2025); Emmerson Resources Ltd (2025); GHD Pty Ltd (2022); Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (2024); Northern Territory Geological Survey (2020, 2026); Northern Territory Government (2021, 2026); Pan African Resources PLC (2025); SunCable (2024); Tamboran Resources Corporation (2025); Tennant Minerals Ltd (n.d.); and Verdant Minerals (n.d.).

Understanding the project pipeline enables workforce planning to support the development of targeted training pathways, alignment of skills with industry demand, and planning 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, economic context, and stakeholder consultations in Tennant Creek presents the following opportunities for workforce planning:

Table 31: Workforce planning Opportunities

1. LLND as a Foundational Barrier	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	Low levels of language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills limit participation in training and employment. This affects: • Ability to engage in training • Navigation of employment systems • Sustained participation in work
Opportunity:	Embed LLND as a core component of all workforce development to improve participation, completion, and employment outcomes.
Action:	• Integrate LLND into all training programs rather than delivering it as a standalone service. • Deliver contextualised LLND linked to jobs and industries • Increase culturally appropriate LLND delivery models, including on-Country learning. • Leverage existing grants such as the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) Program to deliver LLND training aligned to workforce pathways. • Strengthen referral pathways between employment services, RTOs, and LLND providers.
2. Disconnection Between Training and Employment	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	Training is not consistently linked to employment outcomes, resulting in: • Low motivation and completion rates • Limited transition into jobs • Perception that training lacks value
Opportunity:	Align training delivery directly with local job opportunities and future project demand.
Action:	• Link training programs to available job pathways and placements. • Develop cohort-based training tied to specific employers or industries. • Use the project pipeline to prioritise training aligned to upcoming jobs.
3. Fragmentation and Lack of Coordination	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	The system is fragmented, with: • Multiple RTOs competing for the same participants and funding • Limited coordination or shared planning • Duplication of training delivery

Opportunity:	Improve system efficiency and outcomes through coordinated workforce planning and training delivery.
Action:	• Establish a regional workforce coordinator. • Map RTO capabilities and align delivery across providers • Develop a shared training calendar and coordinated delivery model. • Plan training on a circuit basis across the NT, so all communities are covered and know when training will occur. • Aggregate participants across organisations meet cohort requirements, coordinated by a regional training coordinator.
4. Access Barriers (Licensing, ID, Compliance)	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	Access to employment is limited by: • Lack of identification • Delays and restrictions in Criminal History Checks (CHC) and Ochre Card/ Working with Children Checks (WWCC) • Limited access to driver licensing and training
Opportunity:	Address practical and administrative barriers that prevent otherwise job-ready individuals from entering the workforce, while maintaining necessary safety and regulatory safeguards.
Action:	• Establish local driver training and testing capacity. • Support individuals to obtain identification documents and mandatory licences and tickets. • Improve the timeliness and accessibility of CHC, Ochre Card and WWCC processes where possible. • Request that the responsible regulatory authority review the application of CHC and WWCC requirements to determine whether they are proportionate and avoid unnecessarily restricting workforce participation. Any review must preserve child-safety requirements and be led by the responsible regulatory authority.
5. Childcare as a Workforce Constraint	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	Limited childcare and after-school care restrict participation in employment and training.
Opportunity:	Increase workforce participation by enabling parents and carers to engage in work and training.
Action:	• Expand childcare and after-school care services. • Provide childcare support linked to training participation. • Explore community-based childcare models with local workforce.
6. Housing Constraints	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	Housing shortages and overcrowding:

	- Limits workforce attraction and retention - Affects attendance and productivity - Reduces workforce expansion
Opportunity:	Strengthen workforce stability through improved housing access and accommodation models.
Action:	- Develop worker accommodation (e.g. work camps, quarters). - Increase housing supply and alternative housing models. - Improve pathways to home ownership and tenant stability.
7. Need for Wraparound Support	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	Employment outcomes are affected by AOD use, financial pressures such as “humbug”, and a lack of stable environments. Demand for wraparound support, including AOD services and case management, exceeds local capacity due to workforce shortages, limited trainer availability and reliance on external RTOs.
Opportunity:	Build the local workforce and internal training capability needed to strengthen and sustain wraparound support services.
Action:	- Develop training and mentoring pathways for local people to enter and progress within support and training roles. - Support in-house delivery of relevant qualifications, including Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs. - Secure funding to develop culturally appropriate and locally relevant training materials. - Strengthen internal delivery models to reduce reliance on external RTOs.
8. Youth Disengagement and Weak Transition Pathways	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	Young people face: - Disengagement from education - Limited career guidance - No clear transition pathways into training and employment
Opportunity:	Strengthen early workforce pathways and improve youth engagement.
Action:	- Introduce dedicated career guidance roles supported through education funding streams. - Expand work experience and school-to-work pathways. - Improve follow-up from job expo and exposure activities. - Implement flexible (start later in the day/ sundown classes) and culturally appropriate (On Country Learning and two-way learning) education models.
9. Income Support Disincentives	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	Income support settings create: - Administrative burden - Uncertainty when transitioning in/out of work

	• Reluctance to take up employment
Opportunity:	Improve transition from income support into employment.
Action:	• Provide transition support for individuals entering employment. • Simplify reporting and administrative processes. • Support flexible work arrangements aligned with local conditions. • Introduce targeted incentives and transition supports to encourage movement from income support into employment.
10. Inflexible Workforce Models	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	Some employment models may have limited capacity to accommodate: • Cultural and family obligations • Intermittent availability • Local labour dynamics
Opportunity:	Test flexible workforce approaches that support participation and service continuity while maintaining fair, secure and sustainable employment.
Action:	• Pilot labour-pool, relief or job-sharing models where there is demonstrated employer demand. • Explore seasonal workforce models and local labour-hire approaches where appropriate. • Design and evaluate pilots in consultation with employers, workers and relevant representatives. • Ensure all models comply with industrial relations requirements and secure employment principles. • Prioritise permanent employment where ongoing roles are available and avoid casual employment becoming the default model.
11. Funding Constraints	
Gap/ Barrier Identified:	Funding models do not reflect: • Remote delivery costs • Small cohort realities • Administrative complexity across funding streams
Opportunity:	Improve access to training through more flexible funding approaches.
Action:	• Advocate for flexible funding models. • Support smaller cohort delivery. • Simplify funding eligibility and administrative processes.

These opportunities highlight the need for a coordinated and locally informed approach to workforce development. Strengthening alignment between training and employment, alongside building local capacity, will be critical to improving workforce participation. Ongoing collaboration and targeted use of existing resources will support the delivery of sustainable employment pathways in Tennant Creek.

Tennant Creek Workforce Action and Implementation Plan

The Tennant Creek Workforce Action and Implementation Plan consolidates the identified workforce opportunities and consultation findings into 10 implementation strategies. Each strategy and its actions are classified as either a:

- direct workforce action
- workforce-enabling action, or
- community development action with a defined workforce link.

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

The implementation plan is provided in Appendix 9: Tennant Creek Workforce Action and Implementation Plan.

Table 32 below summarises the classification and implementation priority of the 10 strategies.

Establishing the Tennant Creek Workforce Working Group under Action 1 is the essential first step. Once the Working Group is established, the three immediate priorities are to strengthen coordination between training providers and employers (Action 2), align training with identified employer demand and employment opportunities (Action 5), and embed language, literacy, numeracy, digital and work readiness support within training and employment pathways (Action 3).

Actions addressing childcare, wellbeing, housing and accommodation are broader enabling community development actions that support workforce participation and retention and require coordination with wider community services and housing and infrastructure planning.

Table 32: Summary of the Tennant Creek Workforce Action and Implementation Plan

Action	Implementation strategy	Classification	Implementation priority
1	Establish a coordinated, place-based governance approach to align stakeholders and guide workforce development in Tennant Creek	Workforce-enabling action	Essential first step
2	Strengthen coordination and collaboration across training providers and employers to improve alignment between training and employment outcomes	Workforce-enabling action	Immediate priority 1
3	Embed language, literacy, numeracy, digital and work readiness skills as core components of education, training and employment pathways	Direct workforce action	Immediate priority 3
4	Strengthen youth engagement and school to work transitions through clear, culturally appropriate pathways into training and employment	Direct workforce action	High priority
5	Align training delivery with local labour demand and future economic opportunities to support sustainable employment outcomes	Direct workforce action	Immediate priority 2
6	Reduce barriers to employment by addressing identification, licensing, compliance requirements and transport	Workforce-enabling action	High priority
7	Strengthen wraparound support by integrating employment, social and wellbeing services to support engagement and sustained participation in employment	Community development action with a workforce link	High priority
8	Improve workforce participation and retention by increasing access to appropriate housing and worker accommodation	Community development action with a workforce link	High priority
9	Improve transitions from income support into employment by reducing administrative complexity and providing targeted transition support	Workforce-enabling action	Medium term enabling priority
10	Promote flexible employment models that align with local labour dynamics and cultural obligations	Direct workforce action	High priority

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Appendix 1: Vocational Education and Training (VET) Data

A1.1 VET student data, Tennant Creek High School, 2022–2024

The 2025 VET student data for Tennant Creek High School was not available.

Note: * Percentages represent each industry's share of total student VET enrolments or qualification completions across all industry subjects in the relevant year.

Years	2022				2023				2024				2022-2024	
Industry	VET Student Enrolments		Qualifications Completed		VET Student Enrolments		Qualifications Completed		VET Student Enrolments		Qualifications Completed		Total Enrolments and Completions	
	No.	% *	No.	% *	No.	% *	No.	% *	No.	%*	No.	%*	Total Enrolments	Total Completions
Total	55	100%	4	100%	43	100%	38	100%	12	100%	3	100%	110	45
Engineering and Related Technologies	11	20%	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	0		12	4
Automotive Engineering and Technology Certificate I Certificate III	4 2	10%	- 4	100%					- 1					
Mechanical and Industrial Engineering and Technology Certificate II	1	8%												
Civil Engineering Certificate III	4	2%												
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	29	53%	0	0%	31	73%	30	79%	5	42%	3	100%	65	33
Agriculture Certificate I Certificate II Certificate III	- 6 4	18%			10 - -	23%	10 - -	26.33%	5 - -	42%	3 - -	100%		
Horticulture and Viticulture Certificate II	19	35%			11	27%	10	26.33%						
Environmental Studies						23%		26.33%						

Years	2022				2023				2024				2022-2024	
Industry	VET Student Enrolments		Qualifications Completed		VET Student Enrolments		Qualifications Completed		VET Student Enrolments		Qualifications Completed		Total Enrolments and Completions	
	No.	% *	No.	% *	No.	% *	No.	% *	No.	%*	No.	%*	Total Enrolments	Total Completions
Certificate I					10		10							
Education	2	4%	0	0%	1	2%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%	3	1
Teacher Education Certificate III	2	4%			1	2%	1	3%						
Society and Culture	5	9%	0	0%	10	23%	7	18%	4	33%	0	0%	19	7
Human Welfare Studies and Services Certificate III	1	2%							1	8%				
Sport and Recreation Certificate II	4	7%			10	23%	7	18%	3	25%				
Food Hospitality and Personal Services	8	15%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8	0
Food and Hospitality Certificate I	8	15%												
Management and Commerce	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	2	0
Office Studies Certificate III					1	2%			1	8%				
Architecture and Building	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	1	0
Building Certificate III									1	8%				
School-based apprenticeships and traineeships	5		N.A		2		N.A		5		N.A		12	N.A

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

A1.2: Charles Darwin University (CDU) VET Program Enrolments in Tennant Creek (2023–2025)

Year	2023		2024		2025	
Grand Total Enrolments	136		115		101	
Program Name	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Total	51	85	74	41	57	44
Certificate I in Workplace Skills	2	0				
Certificate II in Sport and Recreation	6	6	7	5	0	1
Certificate II in Community Services			8	3	7	2
Certificate II in Workplace Skills					22	
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	0	2				
Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher)			1	0	1	0
Certificate III in Music			4	0		
Certificate III in Sport and Recreation			1	0		
Certificate III in Sport, Aquatics and Recreation					2	0
Certificate III in Fitness					1	1
Diploma of Child, Youth and Family Intervention			0	1		
Food Safety Supervision Skill Set	2	23	9	6		
Basic Culinary Skills			4			
Agricultural Chemical Skill Set	1	8	5	2	9	7
Apply Poison Baits for Vertebrate Pest Control in Rural and Environmental Landscapes	1	2				
Snake ID Capture and Relocate			9	1		
Bushfires FF1			1	4	1	2
Work Safety at Heights	1	2				
Heavy Vehicle Driving Skills	3	14	2	7		
4WD Operations on Unsealed Roads	12	8	1	1	2	0
ATV, UTV and Bikes	3	7				
Traffic Management Work Zone 2 & 3	7	6				
Maintenance			3	2		
NT White Card	5	3	19	7	9	11
Licence to Operate a Forklift Truck	7	3			1	11
Licence to Operate a Boom Type Elevating Work Platform (11 Metres or More)	1	1				
Licence to Drive a Heavy Rigid Vehicle			0	2	1	5
Licence to Drive a Multi Combination Vehicle					1	1
Licence to Drive a Heavy Combination Vehicle					0	3

Source: Charles Darwin University (2026, April). Unpublished raw data provided to Desert Knowledge Australia.

A1.3: Unit Enrolments and Completions by VET Funding Group in Tennant Creek (2023–2025)

Year	2023		2024		2025	
Industry Description:	Unit Enrolments	Unit Completions	Unit Enrolments	Unit Completions	Unit Enrolments	Unit Completions
Community services, health and education	448	405	389	327	338	296
Business and clerical	78	57	72	52	44	22
Primary industry	60	56	31	30	50	50
Arts, entertainment, sport and recreation	54	51	36	19	39	25
Transport and storage	53	47	59	57	24	21
Engineering and mining	50	45	≤ 5	≤ 5	55	51
Tourism and hospitality	32	17	18	11	6	6
Building and construction	31	29	97	97	174	169
Animal Care and Management	-	-	9	9	6	6
Automotive	-	-	6	6	10	7
General education and training	6	6	≤ 5	≤ 5	≤ 5	≤ 5
Food processing	≤ 5	≤ 5	7	7	≤ 5	≤ 5
Process manufacturing	≤ 5	≤ 5	≤ 5	≤ 5	≤ 5	≤ 5
Utilities	-	-	≤ 5	≤ 5	≤ 5	≤ 5
Transmission, Distribution and Rail Sector	-	-	≤ 5	≤ 5	≤ 5	≤ 5

Source: Department of Education and Training. (2026). Data provided to Desert Knowledge Australia for report purposes only. [Unpublished raw data].

Note: To protect individual privacy, cells with a value between 1 and 5 are suppressed and reported as '≤5'.

Appendix 2: Apprenticeship and Traineeship (A/T) Count and Completions by Qualifications in Tennant Creek (2023–2025)

Year	2023		2024		2025	
Program Name	Count of A/T	A/T Completion	Count of A/T	A/T Completion	Count of A/T	A/T Completion
Total	57	27	76	34	33	21
Certificate II in Agriculture	12	9	11	7	5	4
Certificate II in Community Engagement			1			
Certificate II in Community Services	1					
Certificate II in Rural Operations	5	3	2	2		
Certificate II in Sport and Recreation			3			
Certificate III in Agriculture	6	3	12	7	3	3
Certificate III in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration			3	1	1	
Certificate III in Business	1		3		2	1
Certificate III in Carpentry		1	5		1	
Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations					1	
Certificate III in Commercial Cookery	1					
Certificate III in Community Pharmacy					1	
Certificate III in Community Services	2		2		2	
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	5	1	3	2	3	1
Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician	1		2	2	5	
Certificate III in Engineering - Mechanical Trade				1		
Certificate III in ESI - Distribution Overhead						1
Certificate III in Health Services Assistance					1	
Certificate III in Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology					1	
Certificate III in Horticulture					1	
Certificate III in Individual Support	3			2	1	
Certificate III in Information Technology						1
Certificate III in Instrumentation and Control			1	1		
Certificate III in Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology			1			
Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services)	1	1		1		

Year	2023		2024		2025	
Program Name	Count of A/T	A/T Completion	Count of A/T	A/T Completion	Count of A/T	A/T Completion
Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher)			2	1		
Certificate III in Mobile Plant Technology	1		2	1		
Certificate III in Plumbing	1	1	5	1	1	2
Certificate III in Rural Operations	11	7	3	3		
Certificate III in Water Industry Operations				1		
Certificate IV in Agriculture	1		4	1	1	2
Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs	1	1	2			
Certificate IV in Building and Construction	1					
Certificate IV in Business					1	1
Certificate IV in Community Services					1	
Diploma of Child, Youth and Family Intervention	2					
Diploma of Community Services			6		1	4
Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care			3			1
Diploma of Mental Health	1					

Source: Department of Education and Training. (2026). Data provided to Desert Knowledge Australia for report purposes only. [Unpublished raw data].

Appendix 3: RTO Qualification/Program Type by Funding Source

Barkly delivery region | Collection year 2024

RTO	Qualification/program type	Fee for Service	Fee Free TAFE	General Recurrent	NTG DET	Territory Workforce Program	Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grant	Other Govt. Funded	User Choice	Build Skills	JobTrainer	TOTAL distinct clients by RTO qualification/ program type
Government/ Public Providers												
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Certificate I	–	–	54	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	54
	Certificate II	–	–	30	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	30
	Certificate III	–	–	34	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	34
	Certificate IV	–	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4
	Unit Only	27	–	59	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	86
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Total		27	–	181	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	208
Charles Darwin University	Certificate I	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
	Certificate II	–	–	40	–	–	–	–	46	–	–	86
	Certificate III	–	–	28	–	–	–	–	33	–	–	61
	Certificate IV	–	–	10	–	–	–	–	8	–	–	18
	Diploma	1	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3
	Unit Only	–	–	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	10
	Short Course and Skill Set	11	–	105	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	120
	Learner Support	–	–	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7
	Ticket/Licence/Compliance	–	–	41	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	41
Charles Darwin University Total		12	–	245	4	–	–	–	87	–	–	348
Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services	Certificate III	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	–	3
	Unit Only	–	–	–	–	–	–	26	–	–	–	26
Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services Total		–	–	–	–	–	–	29	–	–	–	29
Taminmin High School Council	Certificate I	–	–	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	5
	Certificate II	–	–	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	5

RTO	Qualification/program type	Fee for Service	Fee Free TAFE	General Recurrent	NTG DET	Territory Workforce Program	Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grant	Other Govt. Funded	User Choice	Build Skills	JobTrainer	TOTAL distinct clients by RTO qualification/ program type
Taminmin High School Council Total		–	–	–	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	10
William Angliss Institute of TAFE	Certificate III	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	2
William Angliss Institute of TAFE total		1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	2
Not-for-Profit Providers												
Family Planning Welfare Assn of NT Inc	Unit Only	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Family Planning Welfare Assn of NT Inc Total		1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Royal Life Saving Society Australia NT Branch Inc	Unit Only	65	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	65
Royal Life Saving Society Australia NT Branch Inc Total		65	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	65
SJT Training Aboriginal Corporation	Certificate III	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
	Unit Only	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6
SJT Training Aboriginal Corporation Total		6	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	7
St John Ambulance Australia Incorporated	Unit Only	168	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	168
St John Ambulance Australia Incorporated Total		168	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	168
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

RTO	Qualification/program type	Fee for Service	Fee Free TAFE	General Recurrent	NTG DET	Territory Workforce Program	Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grant	Other Govt. Funded	User Choice	Build Skills	JobTrainer	TOTAL distinct clients by RTO qualification/ program type
Coastal & Rural Training Pty Ltd Total		–	–	–	–	–	–	–	42	–	–	42
Dovaston Consulting Group Pty Ltd	Certificate III	3	21	–	–	–	–	–	15	–	–	39
	Certificate IV	4	19	–	–	–	–	–	4	–	–	27
	Diploma	–	26	–	–	11	–	–	4	–	–	41
Dovaston Consulting Group Pty Ltd Total		7	66	–	–	11	–	–	23	–	–	107
Eagle Training Services NT Pty Ltd	Unit Only	64	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	64
Eagle Training Services NT Pty Ltd Total		64	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	64
Gisborne Services Pty Ltd	Unit Only	57	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	57
Gisborne Services Pty Ltd Total		57	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	57
Intercept Group Pty Ltd	Unit Only	–	–	–	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	9
Intercept Group Pty Ltd Total		–	–	–	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	9
Jenagar Pty Ltd	Unit Only	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8
Jenagar Pty Ltd Total		8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8
Karen Sheldon Group Pty Ltd	Short Course and Skill Set	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	2
Karen Sheldon Group Pty Ltd Total		–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	2
Learning Knowing Achieving Pty Ltd	Certificate II	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	5
	Certificate III	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	5
	Diploma	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
Learning Knowing Achieving Pty Ltd Total		1	6	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	3	12
Response Services Employment & Training Pty Ltd	Certificate III	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4
	Certificate IV	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Response Services Employment & Training Pty Ltd Total		5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5
Outback Stores Pty Ltd	Certificate II	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	–	–	7

RTO	Qualification/program type	Fee for Service	Fee Free TAFE	General Recurrent	NTG DET	Territory Workforce Program	Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grant	Other Govt. Funded	User Choice	Build Skills	JobTrainer	TOTAL distinct clients by RTO qualification/ program type
	Certificate III	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
	Certificate IV	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	2
Outback Stores Pty Ltd Total		2	–	–	–	–	–	–	8	–	–	10
Star College Australia Pty Ltd	Certificate III	–	15	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	15
	Certificate IV	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	11	11
	Diploma	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	–	–	4
	Unit Only	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	32	–	32
Star College Australia Pty Ltd Total		–	15	–	–	–	–	–	4	32	11	62
Train Safe NT Pty Ltd	Unit Only	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7
Train Safe NT Pty Ltd Total		7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7
TOTAL distinct clients by funding source		433	89	426	25	11	2	29	173	32	14	1234

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

Notes:

1. Total reported clients' is the sum of the reported distinct client counts. A client may be counted more than once if they participated in multiple programs or received training through different funding sources.

2. Records funded through International–Other Revenue are excluded.

Appendix 4: Indicative Comparison of Resident Employment by Industry and VET Activity

Purpose and scope. This appendix provides an exploratory comparison between the industries in which Tennant Creek residents are employed and related VET activity delivered between 2023 and 2025. It considers the number of filled jobs held by residents, Aboriginal representation within each industry, the relevance of available VET categories, the volume and direction of VET activity, and whether a directly related, broadly related or no clear corresponding VET category can be identified.

Important interpretation note. The analysis identifies the availability and relevance of related VET categories. It does not assess whether training provision matches employer demand or whether individual learners obtained employment. It should not be interpreted as evidence that training is, or is not, translating into employment outcomes.

A4.1 Analytical Approach

The comparison presents the source figures without assigning locally developed high, moderate or low scores. VET activity is presented using the reported annual unit-enrolment and unit-completion figures. The relationship between an industry and a VET category is classified only to make the analytical mapping transparent.

Relationship between industry and VET category

Classification	Interpretation
Directly related category	The VET category clearly relates to occupations within the industry.
Broad or indirectly related category	The category is aggregated, supports multiple industries or relates to only some industry occupations.
No clear corresponding category	No corresponding VET category can be identified from the available data.

This classification describes the relationship between the training category and the industry. It does not establish a formal pathway, employer demand or an employment outcome.

A4.2 Data limitations

- **Different measures:** Resident employment records filled jobs held by residents, whereas VET activity records unit enrolments and unit completions. These measures are not directly comparable.

- **Unit enrolments are not learner counts:** One learner may enroll in multiple units and can therefore be counted more than once. The data does not show the number of distinct learners or how many were enrolled in complete qualification programs.
- **Unit completions are not qualification completions:** Unit completions record completed units of competency, not completed qualifications or distinct learners. Enrolments and completions reported in the same year may not relate to the same units or learners and should not be used to calculate qualification completion rates.
- **No linked employment outcomes:** The data does not identify whether VET participants subsequently obtained employment, remained employed or changed industries. The comparison therefore identifies potential relationships between training categories and industries rather than verified employment outcomes.
- **Aggregated VET categories:** Several VET categories cover more than one industry. For example, Community Services, Health and Education cannot be divided into separate health, community services and education components.
- **Cross-industry relevance:** Some VET categories support employment across multiple industries. For example, Business and Clerical training may support work in public administration, retail, administrative services and other industries. The full activity count cannot be attributed to any one industry.
- **Geographic mobility:** Training undertaken in Tennant Creek may support employment elsewhere in the Barkly region, the Northern Territory, or interstate. The data does not identify the employment destinations of VET participants.
- **Different reference periods:** Resident employment is modelled from ABS Census 2021 and NIEIR 2024 data, while the VET series covers 2023–2025. The datasets therefore do not represent the same point in time.
- **Suppressed small values:** Values reported as ≤5 prevent exact totals and percentage changes from being calculated.
- **Modelled employment data:** The resident employment figures are modelled estimates and are subject to the assumptions and limitations of the underlying ABS and NIEIR data.
- **Filled jobs do not measure demand:** The employment table records existing filled jobs. It does not include vacancies, projected workforce demand, workforce turnover or positions employers have been unable to fill.
- **Resident-based employment scope:** The data records the industries in which Tennant Creek residents are employed. It does not identify all jobs located in Tennant Creek or jobs filled by non-residents, including FIFO or other incoming workers. A small resident employment base therefore does not necessarily indicate that few jobs exist in that industry.
- **Broad industry categories:** Employment data is reported by industry and does not identify individual occupations or job roles. Industries contain occupations with different qualification requirements, and a related VET category may not provide a pathway to every occupation within an industry.
- **Aboriginal participation in VET is unavailable:** The VET activity data is not disaggregated by Aboriginal status. It is therefore not possible to compare Aboriginal participation in VET directly with Aboriginal representation in resident employment.
- **Informal and non-accredited training:** The VET data does not capture informal or non-accredited training, including workplace-based training that is not reported through the VET system; that may support employment, particularly in community-based settings.

A4.3 Indicative Comparison of Resident Employment by Industry and VET Activity

Industry	Resident Employment	Aboriginal Representation	Relevant VET Category	VET Unit Activity, for the period: 2023 → 2024 → 2025	Indicative Relationship
Health Care and Social Assistance	453	127 (28%)	Community services, health and education	Enrolments: 448 → 389 → 338 Completions: 405 → 327 → 296	Broad/aggregated category. It is relevant to health occupations, but the health-specific component cannot be isolated.
Public Administration and Safety	344	98 (28%)	Business and clerical	Enrolments: 78 → 72 → 44 Completions: 57 → 52 → 22	Indirectly related category. It may support administrative positions but does not correspond to all occupations across public administration and safety.
Education and Training	153	43 (28%)	Community services, health and education; General education and training	Combined category Enrolments: 448 → 389 → 338 Completions: 405 → 327 → 296 General education and training Enrolments: 6 → ≤5 → ≤5 Completions: 6 → ≤5 → ≤5	Broad/aggregated category. Relevant activity is present, but the combined category cannot be attributed solely to education occupations.
Construction	172	27 (16%)	Building and construction	Enrolments: 31 → 97 → 174 Completions: 29 → 97 → 169	Directly related category. Unit enrolments and completions increased across the period; employment outcomes cannot be determined.
Retail Trade	116	16 (14%)	Business and clerical	Enrolments: 78 → 72 → 44 Completions: 57 → 52 → 22	Indirectly related category. It may support some retail roles, but no retail-specific VET category was identified.
Other Services	75	43 (57%)	No single corresponding category identified	Not determined	No clear corresponding category. Other Services covers diverse activities and cannot be reliably matched with one VET category.
Accommodation and Food Services	68	12 (18%)	Tourism and hospitality	Enrolments: 32 → 18 → 6 Completions: 17 → 11 → 6	Directly related category. Unit enrolments and completions declined over the period.
Arts and Recreation Services	49	26 (53%)	Arts, entertainment, sport and recreation	Enrolments: 54 → 36 → 39 Completions: 51 → 19 → 25	Directly related category. Unit enrolments and completions declined overall between 2023 and 2025, despite increasing slightly from 2024 to 2025.

Industry	Resident Employment	Aboriginal Representation	Relevant VET Category	VET Unit Activity, for the period: 2023→2024→2025	Indicative Relationship
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	36	9 (25%)	No corresponding category identified	Not identified	No clear corresponding category. Available VET categories do not clearly correspond with the industry's core professional and technical occupations.
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	25	5 (20%)	Transport and storage	Enrolments: 53 → 59 → 24 Completions: 47 → 57 → 21	Directly related category. Unit enrolments and completions declined between 2023 and 2025; employment outcomes cannot be determined.
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	22	7 (32%)	Utilities	Enrolments: 0 → ≤5 → ≤5 Completions: 0 → ≤5 → ≤5	Directly related category, with five or fewer unit enrolments and completions recorded in each of 2024 and 2025.
Administrative and Support Services	22	7 (32%)	Business and clerical	Enrolments: 78 → 72 → 44 Completions: 57 → 52 → 22	Broad/indirectly related category. It is relevant to administrative occupations but also supports employment across several industries.
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	11	4 (36%)	Primary industry	Enrolments: 60 → 31 → 50 Completions: 56 → 30 → 50	Directly related category. Unit enrolments and completions varied across the period. The data does not identify whether this activity supported local or regional employment.
Mining	9	4 (44%)	Engineering and mining	Enrolments: 50 → ≤5 → 55 Completions: 45 → ≤5 → 51	Directly related category. Activity varied substantially; the data does not show whether learners entered local or regional mining employment.
Financial, Real Estate and ICT Services	15 combined	None recorded (0%)	Business and clerical	Enrolments: 78 → 72 → 44 Completions: 57 → 52 → 22	Indirectly related category. Business and Clerical training may support administrative roles within these industries, but no VET activity directly corresponding to core finance, real estate or ICT occupations was identified in the available data.

Data source: Resident employment data: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2026). Tennant Creek and Barkly Profile Data. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2026. Economic and employment data modelled from Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2021 and NIEIR 2024 data. VET activity data: Department of Education and Training. (2026). Data provided to Desert Knowledge Australia for report purposes only. [Unpublished raw data].

Note: Financial, Real Estate and ICT Services combines Financial and Insurance Services (9 employed residents), Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (5), and Information Media and Telecommunications (1), giving a combined total of 15 employed residents. No Aboriginal employed residents were recorded in these industries. This indicates an absence of recorded employment rather than definitive evidence that no Aboriginal residents were employed in these industries.

Appendix 5: Qualifications Required and Relevant VET Pathways for Role Vacancies - February 2026

Occupation	No. of Roles	Qualification	Details	Education/ Training Provider	Cultural Framework
Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Workforce Worker	1	CHC43215 Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs (CHC43215 -	Duration: 1-year Course fee: NTG supported for eligible NT residents. Student contribution: \$4246.55.	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 
Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) Support Officer	2	HLT30121 Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care	Duration: 12–24 months Course fee: QLD Government subsidised for eligible students Student contribution: \$1695	Dijan Training Program Ltd. (NT) (https://training.gov.au/training/details/HLT30121/rto) Nationally, offered by CQ University (QLD), TAFE QLD, Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia. One RTO is offering it in NT	Caring for Family and Community 
Sexual Health Aboriginal Health Practitioner	1	HLT40221 Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice	Duration: 2-4 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Caring for Family and Community 
Maternal Early Childhood Health Program Coordinator	1	HLT40221 Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice	Duration: 2-4 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Caring for Family and Community 
Out of Home Carers	Several	CHC32015 Certificate III in Community Services	Duration: 1-2 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Caring for Family and Community 
Child Care Centre Educators	Several	CHC30125 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	Duration: 1.5 – 2 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Caring for Family and Community 

Early Childhood Teacher	1	Bachelor of Education Early Childhood and Primary	Duration: 4-8 years Course fee: Commonwealth supported places are available	Charles Darwin University (Danala - Education and Community Precinct, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 
Primary School Principal	1	Bachelor of Education Primary + Leadership experience	Duration: 4-8 years Course fee: Commonwealth supported places are available	Charles Darwin University (Danala - Education and Community Precinct, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 
Qualified Plumber	1	CPC32420 Certificate III in Plumbing	Duration: 3 years, Course fee: NTG supported for eligible NT residents. Student contribution: \$4,231.15.	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Online)	Building the Community 
Cook	1	SIT40521 Certificate IV in Kitchen Management	Duration: 1.5-3 years Course fee: NTG supported for eligible NT residents. Student contribution: \$5447.75	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Palmerston)	Servicing the Community 
Diabetes Educator - Registered Nurse	1	Bachelor of Nursing	Duration: 3-6 years Course fee: Commonwealth supports places are available	Charles Darwin University (Casuarina, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 
Aboriginal Health Practitioner - Registered Nurse	1	Bachelor of Nursing	Duration: 3-6 years Course fee: Commonwealth supports places are available	Charles Darwin University (Casuarina, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 
Ranger Group Facilitator	1	AHC21024 Certificate II in Conservation and Ecosystem Management	Duration: 6 months, Course fee: Fee Free TAFE	Charles Darwin University (Casuarina, Remote Campus)	Working on Country 
Community Care Coordinator	1	CHC42021 Certificate IV in Community Services	Duration: 1 year Course fee: Fee Free TAFE	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 

Community Youth Justice Officer	1	CHC42021 Certificate IV in Community Services	Duration: 1 year Course fee: Fee Free TAFE	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 
CaFIS Youth Worker	1	CHC42021 Certificate IV in Community Services	Duration: 1 year Course fee: Fee Free TAFE	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 
Men's Centre Team Leader	1	CHC42021 Certificate IV in Community Services	Duration: 1 year Course fee: Fee Free TAFE	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Online)	Caring for Family and Community 
Grow Well Liaison Officer	1	CHC32015 Certificate III in Community Services	Duration: 1-2 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Caring for Family and Community 
DFSV Community Connectors	Several	CHC32015 Certificate III in Community Services	Duration: 1-2 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Caring for Family and Community 
Community Development Officer	1	CHC32015 Certificate III in Community Services	Duration: 1-2 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Caring for Family and Community 
Client Support Officer	1	BSB30120 Certificate III in Business	Duration: 1-2 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Servicing the Community 
Customer Service Officer	1	BSB30120 Certificate III in Business	Duration: 1-2 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Servicing the Community 
Assistant Project Officer	1	BSB30120 Certificate III in Business	Duration: 1-2 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Servicing the Community 

Library Officer	1	BSB30120 Certificate III in Business	Duration: 1-2 years Course fee: \$2.20 per nominal hour for enrolment. Students can apply for fee exemption.	Batchelor Institute	Servicing the Community 
HC Truck Driver	1	VTP442 NT White card Heavy Combination (HC) License	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: 2-3 days Course fee for HC licence between: \$1600-\$2900	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Remote)	Building the Community 
Handyman	1	VTP442 NT White card	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	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs, Casuarina, Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Remote)	Building the Community 
Cleaner	2	On the job training, experience			Servicing the Community 

Source: Desert Knowledge Australia analysis of publicly advertised Tennant Creek job vacancies identified through LinkedIn, SEEK, EthicalJobs.com.au and Jora during February 2026. Qualification requirements were drawn from the vacancy advertisements and related nationally recognised training and course availability were checked against training.gov.au, Charles Darwin University and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education during February–March 2026.

Note: Qualification pathways are indicative and based on nationally recognised training packages listed on training.gov.au and typical industry requirements.

Provider and course information: Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, n.d.-d); Charles Darwin University (n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, n.d.-d, n.d.-e, n.d.-f, n.d.-g, n.d.-h, n.d.-i); and Training.gov.au (n.d.).

Appendix 6: 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 Tennant Creek 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 7: 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 • Tennant Creek - quality accommodation options for both tourists and business travellers • Tennant Creek visitor experiences - gold rush and ore mining interpretive displays • Newcastle Waters - off-highway camping facilities including cultural tourism offer • Tennant Creek – 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	• Culturally safe workplaces across the Barkly	• Workforce Development • Small and	• Regional Development Strategy (the Deal)	• Barkly Regional Deal (All) • Patta Warumungu Aboriginal Corporation

all employers to create high performing, culturally safe and responsive work environments	• High performing workplaces across the Barkly	medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) • Aboriginal Corporations • Not-for-profits • All Industry and Private Investment	• 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)	• 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	• Tennant Creek 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 • Tennant Creek 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	• Targeted regional	• Research	• Wonarah Phosphate	• NT Government

Make the most of every opportunity arising from the critical minerals and mining sector	industry engagement framework to maximise long-term outcomes • Increased community benefit from existing and new mining operations. • Supporting improvements to regulatory processes	projects • Exploration • Mining	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 Mines • Nolans – Arafura resources • Northern Iron • Newcrest Mining	• Barkly Regional Council • CLC / NLC • Minerals Council Australia (NT) • Mining Companies • Traditional Owners • Business operators • ICN • Energy Club • NAIF
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Source: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (2022), Barkly Economic Growth Strategy 2030, pp. 58–63.

Appendix 8: Barkly 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, JobSeekers, 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: Barkly Regional Deal (2023), pp. 32–40.

Appendix 9: Tennant Creek Workforce Action and Implementation Plan

Note: The table below identifies first steps only and does not provide a comprehensive list of all actions required to implement each strategy.

Strategy and consolidated actions	Suggested lead organisation	Potential Partners	First steps	Potential Timeframe	Measures	Key risks	Status
1. Establish a coordinated, place-based governance approach to align stakeholders and guide workforce development in Tennant Creek, including dedicated coordination to support training delivery and workforce pathways. a. Establish a Tennant Creek Workforce Working Group. b. Appoint a dedicated Workforce Coordinator. c. Develop a shared Tennant Creek workforce plan. d. Create a centralised training and service map. e. Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework. f. Align activities with the Barkly Regional Deal, Regional Workforce Strategy and other relevant initiatives to avoid overlap and duplication.	Northern Territory Government—Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (DTBAR), with oversight and place-based coordination through the Barkly Regional Deal Governance Table	Barkly Training Education and Employment Network (BTEN); Barkly Regional Council (BRC); Registered Training Organisations (RTOs); Employment services.	a. Confirm the governance structure and membership of the Workforce Working Group. b. Define and fund the Workforce Coordinator role and appoint the coordinator. c. Agree on priorities and sequencing and commence the centralised service map. d. Establish key performance indicators and reporting arrangements.	Establishment: 0–6 months; Workforce plan: 12–18 months; Implementation and monitoring—ongoing	a. Working Group established b. Workforce Coordinator appointed c. Workforce plan completed d. Service map operating e. Monitoring framework implemented f. Reduced duplication g. Stakeholder participation	a. Unclear authority or accountability b. Duplication with existing governance arrangements c. Inconsistent participation d. Limited information sharing	Proposed—highest priority
2. Strengthen coordination and collaboration across training providers and employers to improve alignment between training and employment outcomes. a. Reposition the Barkly Training and Employment Network (BTEN) as an outcomes-focused coordination mechanism. b. Provide a dedicated coordination function. c. Introduce an action-oriented meeting format. d. Maintain a training demand register. e. Group demand into priority industries. f. Aggregate participant numbers. g. Confirm participant commitments before delivery. h. Develop a regional training calendar and circuit-based delivery model. i. Map RTO capability. j. Strengthen collaboration between Skills NT, DTBAR and stakeholders. k. Introduce funding mechanisms that support smaller cohorts.	Northern Territory Government—Department of Education and Training (Skills NT), with DTBAR and the BTEN Coordinator	BTEN Coordinator; BTEN members; RTOs; Employers; Employment services; ACCOs; Community organisations; BRC.	a. Confirm BTEN’s mandate, membership, accountability and coordination arrangements. b. BTEN Coordinator to establish action-tracking format. c. Develop the training demand register and map RTO capability and priority industry groupings. d. Aggregate confirmed participants and prepare a 12-month regional training calendar	Governance and mapping: 0–6 months; Coordinated delivery: 6–12 months; Then ongoing	a. BTEN meetings and actions completed b. Training demand register maintained c. RTO capability map completed d. Shared calendar operating e. Participants aggregated f. Confirmed training seats g. Joint programs delivered h. Circuit delivery undertaken i. Fewer duplicated or cancelled courses	a. Unclear responsibility b. Insufficient confirmed participants c. Organisations do not share information d. Privacy and consent requirements e. Providers compete rather than collaborate f. Funding remains volume-based g. Commitments are withdrawn after courses are scheduled	Proposed—highest priority
3. Embed language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills and work-readiness skills as core components of all education, training and employment pathways. a. Provide ongoing, culturally appropriate and locally relevant language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) support from school through to work. b. Fund an RTO or local organisation to deliver LLND programs in Tennant Creek. c. Introduce pre-employment programs covering communication, punctuality, routine and workplace expectations. d. Use flexible and modular delivery combined with practical, job-based learning. e. Support a Step-Up Certification Model linked to recognised progression and incremental pay increases. f. Review nominal hours for remote delivery so they reflect the time required to achieve competency and address LLND needs.	Northern Territory Government—Department of Education and Training (Skills NT), working with the Workforce Coordinator and RTOs	Batchelor Institute; Charles Darwin University (CDU); Local training organisations; Tennant Creek High School; Employers; Employment services; ACCOs; LLND providers; Australian Government agencies.	a. Assess local LLND and work-readiness needs and map existing LLND services. b. Identify a funded local delivery organisation and suitable qualifications and workplaces for a pilot. c. Design culturally appropriate and modular delivery and establish referral and assessment processes. d. Commence discussions with RTOs and the Northern Territory Government about nominal hours and the Step-Up Certification Model.	Assessment and design: 0–6 months; Pilot delivery: 12–18 months; Funding review: 1–3 years	a. LLND assessments completed b. Enrolments c. Attendance d. Unit and qualification completions e. LLND progression; f. Participants completing pre-employment programs g. Progression through certification levels h. Employment placements i. Retention at 3, 6 and 12 months	a. LLND is delivered separately from vocational training b. Insufficient local delivery capability c. Short-term funding; d. Stigma associated with LLND support e. Nominal hours do not cover actual delivery needs f. Certification is not linked to workplace progression	Proposed—highest priority
4. Strengthen youth engagement and school-to-work transitions through clear, culturally appropriate pathways into training and employment. a. Establish pathways from school into training and local jobs, including vocational education and training (VET) in schools and	Northern Territory Government—Department of Education and Training	Workforce Coordinator; Tennant Creek High School; Batchelor Institute; CDU; RTOs;	a. Map existing programs and identify students requiring transition support. b. Fund career guidance counsellor and VET Coordinator for schools c. Establish an employer placement	Planning: 0–6 months; Pilot activities from the next school year; Accommodation assessment: 12–18	a. Students with transition plans b. Participation in career guidance and employer sessions c. Work experience placements	a. Limited placements b. School and provider staff turnover c. Weak follow-up d. Transport, housing and family	Proposed—high priority

Strategy and consolidated actions	Suggested lead organisation	Potential Partners	First steps	Potential Timeframe	Measures	Key risks	Status
traineeships. b. Deliver job expos and employer sessions with structured follow-up. c. Provide dedicated career guidance counsellors in school d. Fund paid work experience and school-based traineeships. e. Provide mentoring and transition support. f. Employ local education support workers, including Warumungu speakers. g. Trial flexible school hours and homework camps. h. Incorporate Learning on Country and local language. i. Provide practical education about work pathways. j. Fund youth-focused transition-to-work programs and exposure trips. k. Connect young people with Indigenous role models and mentors. l. Explore boarding or supported accommodation for students.		Youth and Community organisations; Local mentors; NIAA.	network, develop individual transition plans and identify local education support workers and mentors. d. Design paid work experience and transition to work pilots and assess demand and options for supported student accommodation.	months; Expansion: 1–3 years	d. Paid placements e. VET participation and completion f. Traineeships and apprenticeships g. School attendance and engagement h. Transitions into education, training or employment i. Retention at 6 and 12 months	barriers e. Insufficient mentors f. Flexible delivery cannot be sustained g. Disengaged young people are not reached h. Supported accommodation is not viable or funded	
5. Align training delivery with local labour demand and future economic opportunities to support sustainable employment outcomes. a. Maintain a live workforce demand list covering vacancies, upcoming roles and project-based opportunities. b. Work with employers to identify the precise skills, licences, qualifications and experience required. c. Embed work placements, internships, apprenticeships and traineeships into training pathways. d. Identify community training interests and prioritise delivery where these align with workforce demand. e. Build on existing mining and geology activity through industry partnerships, local training, field-based learning and pathways into mining roles. f. Engage Tennant Mines (Pan African Resources) as a priority employer to identify current and forecast workforce requirements associated with the Nobles operation and planned development of Juno, Mauretania, Chariot and White Devil, including opportunities to progressively increase the proportion of positions filled by Tennant Creek and Barkly residents and reduce reliance on FIFO and other non-resident labour where practicable	Tennant Creek Workforce Coordinator, working with employers, DTBAR and Skills NT	BTEN; DTBAR; Skills NT; Tennant Creek High School; CDU; Batchelor Institute; Tennant Mines; Mining and resources companies; Employment services; ACCOs; Barkly Regional Council; NIAA.	a. Establish the live workforce demand list and identify major employers and future projects. b. Confirm vacancies and occupational requirements and compare community training interests with demand. c. Identify employers willing to provide placements or recruit graduates and select priority industry pilots. d. Develop a mining and geology training partnership proposal to build on existing training activity to deliver local training, field-based learning and pathways into mining roles. e. Engage Tennant Mines to document current and forecast roles associated with Nobles, Juno, Mauretania, Chariot and White Devil, including required skills, licences, qualifications, experience and anticipated recruitment timeframes. f. Establish, where information is available, the current number and proportion of positions filled by Tennant Creek residents, other Barkly residents and non-resident workers, and identify practical local recruitment and workforce development opportunities.	Demand list: 0–6 months; Employer engagement and requirements mapping: 0–6 months Pilot pathways: 12–18 months; Industry expansion: 1–3 years	a. Workforce demand list maintained b. Employers participating c. Courses linked to identified roles d. Placements, internships, apprenticeships and traineeships e. Participants recruited into identified jobs f. Employment retention at 3, 6 and 12 months g. Local mining and geology training delivered h. Tennant Mines engaged in workforce planning. i. Number and proportion of employees who are Tennant Creek or Barkly residents j. Number and proportion of Aboriginal employees k. Number of apprentices and trainees employed l. Local employee retention at 3, 6 and 12 months m. Number of roles transitioned from non-resident to resident workers n. Number and value of contracts awarded to local suppliers o. Local supplier participation in procurement opportunities	a. Vacancies or projects do not proceed when expected b. Employer requirements change c. Training interests do not align with available jobs d. Employers do not provide placements e. Participants complete training without securing employment f. Industry training is delivered without pathways for residents g. Participants secure employment, but delays in completing required compliance checks postpone commencement h. Employers do not provide sufficiently detailed workforce or resident employment data. i. Some roles cannot practicably be filled locally because of specialised skill, experience, accreditation or workforce availability requirements. j. Local recruitment expectations are not supported by sufficient lead time, training or workplace support.	Proposed—highest priority
6. Reduce barriers to employment by addressing access to identification, licensing, compliance requirements and transport. a. Establish priority Ochre Card/ Working with Children Check processing for job-ready applicants with confirmed job offers. b. Review Criminal History Check and Ochre Card/Working with Children Check eligibility requirements with a focus on ensuring that screening and eligibility processes remain proportionate to the risk profile and requirements of specific roles. c. Reduce processing delays and backlogs.	Northern Territory Government—DTBAR as coordinating agency, working with the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure, SAFE NT and the local Workforce Coordinator	Northern Territory licensing and screening agencies; DTBAR; NIAA; Employment services; RTOs; Employers; ACCOs; Community transport providers;	a. Map the identification, licensing, screening and transport barriers affecting job-ready participants and identify the responsible agencies. b. Establish referral and case management processes and introduce an identification and compliance checklist. c. Agree on priority WWCC arrangements and publish a driver training and testing schedule.	Immediate support: 0–6 months; Service and transport pilots: 6–12 months; Systemic improvements: 6–18 months	a. Identification obtained b. Ochre Cards and clearances processed c. Licences and tickets obtained d. Processing times e. Driver training and testing sessions delivered f. Participants supported by the local access role	a. Statutory requirements cannot be changed b. Screening backlogs c. Limited driver-training or testing capacity d. Documentation, eligibility or fine-related issues e. Transport services are not financially viable	Proposed—high priority

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d. Support employer-led and community-based transport. e. Establish minimum service requirements and a 12-month forward schedule for driver training and testing. f. Provide scheduled on-site licence testing. g. Assign responsibility for monitoring delivery and following up missed services. h. Establish a locally based role to help participants obtain identification, licences and clearances.		Workforce Coordinator.	d. Identify local transport gaps and develop employer-led and community transport pilots.		g. Transport services operating h. Job commencements enabled i. Fewer compliance- and transport-related delays	f. Responsibilities are divided across agencies g. Employers do not participate	
7. Strengthen wraparound support by integrating employment, social and wellbeing services to support engagement and sustained participation in employment. a. Provide childcare linked to training and employment. b. Trial community-based childcare and workforce-linked childcare grants. c. Support in-house delivery of qualifications such as Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) and culturally appropriate training materials. d. Assign a case manager to each participant. e. Coordinate employment, training and support services. f. Provide on-the-job support during the first three to six months. g. Formalise the roles of employment services and employers. h. Provide mentoring from training into employment. i. Establish a culturally appropriate men's cool-down space. j. Provide deescalation training. k. Deliver financial literacy programs covering employment income, income support transitions and home ownership.	Northern Territory Government—Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development, coordinated locally through the Workforce Coordinator	ACCOs; Health and AOD services; Employment services; RTOs; Batchelor Institute; CDU; Childcare and early childhood providers; Employers; BRC; NIAA; Community organisations.	a. Map existing support services, referral pathways, childcare demand and workforce gaps. b. Clarify the lead case management model, formalise referral and follow-up responsibilities and identify staff for qualification development. c. Assess childcare models and identify a location and service model for the men's cool down space. d. Design on-the-job, mentoring, deescalation and financial literacy supports.	Service mapping and design: 0–6 months; Pilots and workforce development: 6–12 months; Expansion: 1–3 years	a. Participants allocated case managers b. Referrals completed c. Childcare places and hours available d. Parents entering training or work e. Local staff trained f. Qualifications completed g. Mentoring and on-the-job support delivered h. Service vacancies reduced i. Participants retained at 3, 6 and 12 months j. Reduced escalation incidents	a. Services remain fragmented b. Unclear case-management responsibility c. Insufficient childcare educators d. Regulatory requirements e. Short-term funding f. Limited qualified supervisors g. Staff attrition h. Privacy constraints i. Support is withdrawn too early j. Increased qualifications do not translate into increased service capacity	Proposed—high priority
8. Improve workforce participation and retention by increasing access to appropriate housing and worker accommodation. a. Plan and release larger pre-approved areas of land for housing. b. Assess modular or prefabricated housing. c. Develop worker and transitional workforce accommodation. d. Establish separate and culturally appropriate hostel accommodation for young women and men. e. Introduce rent-to-own and lease-to-own models. f. Provide information and application support for home ownership and Aboriginal loan programs. g. Introduce pride in home and healthy housing programs. h. Employ healthy housing officers. i. Develop local housing repairs and maintenance teams linked to training and employment. j. Increase awareness of multi-tenant leases.	Northern Territory Government—Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development, with Barkly Regional Council and relevant Aboriginal land and housing organisations	Aboriginal housing and land organisations; Traditional Owners; NIAA; Employers; Developers; Community housing providers; Financial institutions; Training providers; RTOs; ACCOs; Community organisations.	a. Assess permanent, transitional, student and visiting workforce accommodation demand and audit available land, buildings and vacant housing. b. Identify approval barriers, assess modular housing options and develop short-term accommodation proposals. c. Identify suitable home ownership and tenancy support models and map repair and maintenance demand. d. Prepare business cases and investment proposals.	Assessment: 0–12 months; Short-term accommodation and program pilots: 1–2 years; Major land and housing supply: 3–5 years	a. Land released b. Dwellings and accommodation places constructed or refurbished c. Transitional and hostel places available d. Vacancies attributable to housing e. Staff attraction and retention f. Overcrowding g. Tenant stability h. Home loan applications and approvals i. Maintenance completed j. Local workers trained and employed k. Number of multi-tenant leases established	a. High construction and maintenance costs b. Land and approval delays c. Unclear ownership and management d. Displacement of resident housing f. Unsuitable prefabricated designs g. Finance and eligibility barriers h. Limited local repair capability	Proposed—high priority
9. Improve transitions from income support into employment by reducing administrative complexity and providing targeted transition support. a. Provide short-term wage top-ups or transition payments. b. Simplify reporting for people moving in and out of work. c. Provide clear guidance and assistance. d. Allow participants to trial employment for a defined period without immediately losing income support. e. Deliver education explaining the financial, skill development and career benefits of employment, including clear comparisons between income support and potential earnings.	Australian Government—Department of Social Services (DSS) and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), with Services Australia	Workforce Coordinator; NIAA; Employment service provider; ACCOs; Financial-literacy providers; Community organisations; Australian Government agencies.	a. Map common income-support and reporting barriers and identify participant groups and suitable employers. b. Develop clear transition and reporting information and establish one-on-one assistance. c. Investigate wage top-up, transition-payment and employment-trial options. d. Design community education activities using realistic employment and income scenarios.	Design and agency engagement: 0–6 months; Pilot support: 6–12 months; Evaluation and expansion: 1–2 years	a. Participants receiving transition assistance b. Reporting issues resolved c. Employment trials commenced d. Participants entering employment e. Income support debts or interruptions avoided f. Retention at 3, 6 and 12 months g. Participant understanding of income changes	a. Income support rules cannot be changed locally b. Incorrect or inconsistent advice c. Income uncertainty discourages participation d. Administrative complexity continues e. Transition payments create unintended effects f. Employment does not provide sufficient or stable hours	Proposed—medium-term enabling priority

Strategy and consolidated actions	Suggested lead organisation	Potential Partners	First steps	Potential Timeframe	Measures	Key risks	Status
10. Promote flexible employment models that align with local labour dynamics and cultural obligations. a. Establish shared workforce or labour pool models where employer demand exists. b. Support job-sharing and flexible hours where operationally feasible. c. Align employment with seasonal and project-based demand where feasible. d. Work with employers to adjust start times, shift patterns and work arrangements where feasible within the requirements of the role or service. e. Ensure models support secure employment and comply with industrial requirements.	Tennant Creek Workforce Coordinator, working with participating employers and employment service providers	Workforce Coordinator; RN Employment; Saltbush; Barkly Regional Council; NIAA; ACCOs; Labour hire providers; Services Australia; Industry and project employers.	a. Identify suitable employers, roles and industries and assess operational and safety requirements. b. Consult employers and workers on suitable workforce models. c. Identify and train potential labour-pool participants. d. Develop rostering, absence management and reporting arrangements. e. Pilot a small-scale model and evaluate outcomes.	Design: 0–6 months; Pilot: 6–12 months; Expansion: 1–3 years	a. Employers participating b. Labour pools established c. Participants trained d. Labour pool placements e. Job-sharing arrangements f. Shifts filled g. Reduced vacancies and service interruptions h. Workers returning after cultural or family leave i. Employment retention j. Employer and worker satisfaction	a. Models are unsuitable for safety-critical or continuity-dependent roles b. Insufficient or unstable hours c. Administrative and rostering complexity d. Income-reporting issues e. Employers do not participate f. Labour pools do not have enough trained workers g. Flexible arrangements affect service delivery	Proposed—high priority