

COMMUNITY WORKFORCE PLAN
SOUTHERN TANAMI -
YUENDUMU, YUELAMU AND
NYIRRIPI



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Introduction

Purpose of the Report

The Northern Territory Government (NTG) has engaged Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA) to develop Community Workforce Plans for communities in Central Australia. The initial pilot reports focus on Ntaria (Hermannsburg) and Ti Tree (including Pmara Jutunta). In collaboration with the Department of Trade, Business, and Asian Relations (DTBAR), this initiative seeks to identify community priorities to unlock economic growth in remote Aboriginal communities in Central Australia, embracing local leadership and governance and delivery of targeted skills, training, employment and enterprise services and support.

Following the completion of the pilot reports and in line with updated requirements, this report provides a comprehensive analysis of the current demographic and economic landscape, establishing a baseline for future community workforce planning. The consolidated data contained in this report will enable both community stakeholders and government bodies to pursue the following objectives:

- Enhance community awareness and understanding of current and future industry, business, and workforce opportunities within both local communities and the broader regional cluster;
- Support the development of key initiatives aimed at creating employment opportunities and pathways through targeted training and industry development;
- Facilitate increased engagement in apprenticeships, traineeships, and school-to-work pathways, particularly focusing on youth;
- Optimise the use of existing training facilities and identifying future training needs;
- Identify foundational skills, literacy and numeracy, and pre-employment training needs through extensive stakeholder engagement.

Report Format

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

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 past meeting notes where direct consultation has not yet occurred. These steps aim to identify the future needs of community members, undertake an issue 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 instances 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 previous consultations.

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, ensuring that all stakeholders including VET training organisations, industry employers, local employers, community, the Northern Territory and Federal Government collaborate effectively to deliver the community workforce plan. This stage will include the establishment of a coordinated governance approach to workforce planning by engaging stakeholders through a Stakeholder Reference Working Group to guide decision-making and implementation of workforce plans.

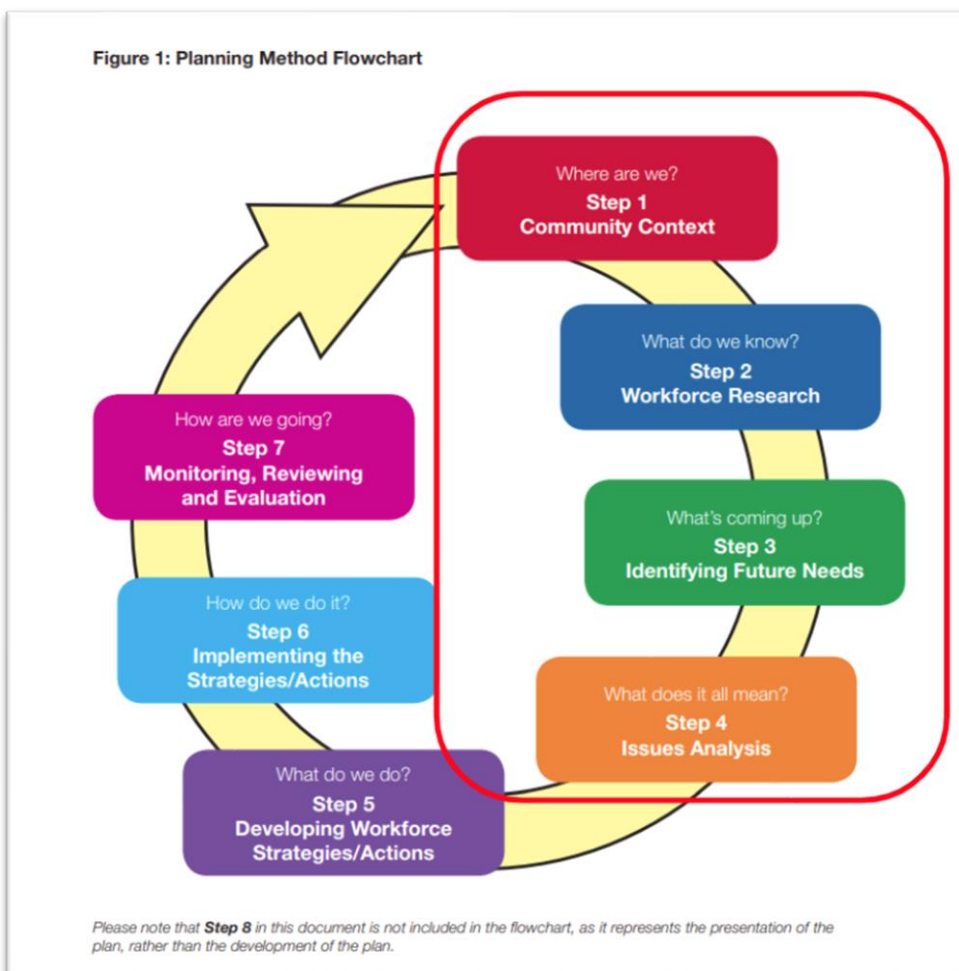


Figure 1: Planning Method Flowchart

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 and stakeholder feedback and should be guided by the nature of the strategies developed. Existing targets, including Closing the Gap and NTG employment goals, should be incorporated and reviewed in collaboration with governance groups, Local Decision Makers (LDMs), and other stakeholders. This process should be ongoing, with plans to be reviewed annually or biannually, as scheduled by the relevant governance groups.

Data Collection Framework

Based on feedback received from the development of the Pilot reports, this report utilises the framework as a guide, focussing on collating data for Steps 1 to 4.

The data has been organised into the following categories:

1. **Community Demographics and Skills**
 - a. Population statistics and trends (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. Active employers and service providers
 - b. Current business operations
 - c. Employment capacity
 - d. Service delivery frameworks
 - e. 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

The project phases outlined below detail the steps taken to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the collected data:

1. Collection of publicly available data (e.g., ABS demographics, DSS data)
2. Review of internal NTG reports (e.g., Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Remote School Action Plans and OCARC consultations)
3. Stakeholder consultation (with existing employers and relevant government departments)
4. Community governance and stakeholder validation of data
5. Production of three distinct report formats:
 - a. Comprehensive technical report
 - b. Community-focused version
 - c. Government presentation format

Methodological Limitations

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

1. Data and Geographic Limitations

This analysis relies primarily on 2021 Census data and 2023 Remote Towns Jobs Profile information, which may not fully reflect current demographic and employment conditions in 2025. Detailed employment data, including the vacancy rate and sector-specific vacancies, is primarily available for Yuendumu, with more limited data for Yuelamu and Nyirripi, potentially obscuring important community-specific variations.

2. Desktop Research Constraints

As a desktop research exercise, this report has not incorporated direct community consultation to validate findings. The absence of primary data collection means current skills, training preferences, employment barriers, and community capacity have not been directly assessed from community members' perspectives. This limitation is particularly significant when considering cultural factors that may influence workforce participation and the appropriateness of proposed solutions.

3. Data Perturbation

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) uses data perturbation to protect individual privacy, especially in small communities. This process involves making small random adjustments to all counts, including totals, which results in small discrepancies between disaggregated data and published totals. These adjustments generally do not affect broader analyses, however totals in this report may differ slightly from the sum of their components.

4. Data Gaps

Several important data points are unavailable, including:

- Upcoming VET training schedules
- Comprehensive qualification levels of current job holders
- Titles / roles of job holders in industries
- Industry-specific employment data that aligns with VET training categories

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. These limitations highlight the importance of viewing this report as a foundation for further community-led consultation to validate findings and collaboratively develop implementation strategies that are responsive to local priorities and capabilities.

Executive Summary

This report examines the workforce planning landscape across the communities of Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi in the Northern Territory, providing a foundation for Community Workforce Plans that support improved economic participation.

Key Challenges

Across these communities, significant workforce potential remains unrealised, with 19% of the Aboriginal working-age population participating in the labour force compared to 310 Community Development Program (CDP) participants in Yuendumu alone. This disparity exists alongside a 26.6% job vacancy rate in key sectors, particularly education and healthcare, highlighting a significant gap between available workers and unfilled positions. This gap could stem from qualification barriers, geographic isolation, cultural sensitivities and relationships and disconnect between current VET training opportunities and actual employment opportunities.

Education and Training Landscape

The education and training landscape presents both challenges and opportunities. While literacy, numeracy, and formal qualification levels are below national averages, the decline in VET participation in Yuendumu (an 89% decrease since 2016¹) and a disconnect between courses of study and local employment opportunities represent addressable barriers to workforce planning.

Opportunities for Growth

Despite these challenges, investments totalling over \$186.6 million across the three communities, particularly for the Central Land Council's Ranger program, aged care, childcare, and healthcare, create significant potential for employment growth. Community-identified projects and initiatives further highlight opportunities for workforce planning through infrastructure projects, service improvements, and cultural initiatives that could simultaneously address community needs and create meaningful local employment opportunities.

Workforce planning Opportunities

To address these challenges, the report considers the following strategies for workforce planning:

1. **Align VET training with local job opportunities:** Ensure vocational training programs meet the needs of local employers, ensuring that students/ job seekers gain and strengthen the necessary skills for available positions.
2. **On Country Training:** Provide training programs within the communities to reduce geographic barriers and improve accessibility.
3. **“Earning While Learning” Models:** Implement paid traineeships that allow individuals to gain practical on-the-job experience while completing their training, improving their chances of future employment.
4. **Culturally Responsive Pathways:** Create employment pathways that are culturally appropriate,

¹ Data drawn from Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2025) 2023 Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Yuendumu. Northern Territory Government, Darwin. Pg 52 – 58.

supporting cultural values in the workplace.²³

5. **Leverage Existing Investments for Employment Growth:** By connecting existing investments with community goals and adopting targeted recruitment and procurement approaches, communities can develop sustainable employment pathways that help reduce economic hardship and strengthen local economies. Funding agencies should consider prioritising where possible local organisations that deliver projects within their own communities.

² Evans, O (2021). *Gari Yala (Speak the Truth): Gendered Insights*. Sydney, Australia.

³ Australian Public Service Commission (2019). *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework*. <https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-workforce/cultural-capability-framework>.

Introduction

Step 1: Community Context

Community Profiles and Demographics

Step 1 provides an overview of Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi, including their geographical location, demographic profile and the services available in each community. This information provides a foundational understanding that is important for informing workforce planning.

Communities	Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi													
Language/s	The primary language spoken in Yuendumu and Nyirripi is Warlpiri while in Yuelamu its Anmatyerre and Warlpiri.													
Traditional owners	The traditional owners of Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi are primarily Warlpiri and Anmatyerre (Anmatjere) peoples.													
Population	<p>Table 1: Total Community Populations</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yuendumu</th> <th>Yuelamu</th> <th>Nyirripi</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Population</td> <td>740⁴</td> <td>149⁵</td> <td>251⁶</td> <td>1140</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi.</i></p>					Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi	Total	Population	740 ⁴	149 ⁵	251 ⁶	1140
	Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi	Total										
Population	740 ⁴	149 ⁵	251 ⁶	1140										
Indigenous status	<p>Table 2: Community Aboriginal Population</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yuendumu</th> <th>Yuelamu</th> <th>Nyirripi</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Aboriginal Population</td> <td>616 (83.2%)</td> <td>142 (95.3%)</td> <td>232 (92.4%)</td> <td>990</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi.</i></p>					Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi	Total	Aboriginal Population	616 (83.2%)	142 (95.3%)	232 (92.4%)	990
	Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi	Total										
Aboriginal Population	616 (83.2%)	142 (95.3%)	232 (92.4%)	990										
Location	<p>Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi are situated in the Central Desert region of the Northern Territory, with Alice Springs serving as the main regional centre.</p> <p>Yuendumu Located on the edge of the Tanami Desert, 290 km northwest of Alice Springs along the Tanami Road on the Yuendumu Aboriginal Land Trust⁷.</p> <p>Yuelamu Located on the Yalpirakinu Aboriginal Land Trust, 280 km northwest of Alice Springs and about 70 km east of Yuendumu.⁸</p> <p>Nyirripi</p>													

⁴Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing, Yuendumu I01 Selected Person Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

⁵Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing, Yuelamu I01 Selected Person Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

⁶Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing, Nyirripi I01 Selected Person Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

⁷BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Yuendumu. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/198>.

⁸BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Yuelamu. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/197>.

	Located close to the southern and southwestern extent of traditionally owned Warlpiri land on the Yunkanjini Aboriginal Land Trust. It is approximately 440 km from Alice Springs and 150 km west-southwest of Yuendumu. ⁹																				
Access	<p>Yuendumu Accessible via the Tanami Highway, the road is fully sealed and takes approximately three hours by car from Alice Springs.¹⁰</p> <p>Yuelamu The road from Alice Springs to Yuelamu is sealed from the Stuart Highway to the Mt Allen turnoff, followed by a 31km unformed gravel road, which can be affected by heavy rainfall.¹¹</p> <p>Nyirripi Accessed via the Tanami Highway to Yuendumu and then turning left onto the Nyirripi Road, which is a 150 km gravel road requiring careful road condition checks.¹²</p> <p>The Centre Bush Bus provides a weekly transport service between Yuendumu, Yuelamu, Nyirripi and Alice Springs. Yuendumu's service operates on Tuesdays. Yuelamu's service departs on Monday and returns on Tuesday. Nyirripi's service also runs on Monday, returning on Tuesday. Residents of these communities use this service to access essential services in Alice Springs.</p> <p>Table 3: Bus Timetable and Costs¹³</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Destination</th> <th>Frequency</th> <th>One-way Fare (Adult)</th> <th>One-way Fare (Child)</th> <th>Return Fare (Adult)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yuendumu</td> <td>Weekly</td> <td>\$140</td> <td>\$105</td> <td>\$280</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yuelamu</td> <td>Weekly</td> <td>\$110</td> <td>\$85</td> <td>\$220</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nyirripi</td> <td>Weekly</td> <td>\$175</td> <td>\$130</td> <td>\$350</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source: Centre Bush Bus (n.d.) Bus Timetables. https://centrebushbus.com.au/bus-timetables/</i></p>	Destination	Frequency	One-way Fare (Adult)	One-way Fare (Child)	Return Fare (Adult)	Yuendumu	Weekly	\$140	\$105	\$280	Yuelamu	Weekly	\$110	\$85	\$220	Nyirripi	Weekly	\$175	\$130	\$350
Destination	Frequency	One-way Fare (Adult)	One-way Fare (Child)	Return Fare (Adult)																	
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Infrastructure and Services

Internet Access	<p>Table 4: Community Internet Access</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Community</th> <th>Mobile Coverage</th> <th>Broadband Access</th> <th>Wi-Fi Hotspot Availability</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yuendumu</td> <td>Telstra</td> <td>Telstra</td> <td>Not available</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yuelamu</td> <td>Telstra</td> <td>Not available</td> <td>Not available (private Wi-Fi provided and serviced by Activ8me)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nyirripi</td> <td>Telstra</td> <td>Not available</td> <td>CAYLUS Computer Room (private Wi-Fi provided and serviced by Activ8me)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Community	Mobile Coverage	Broadband Access	Wi-Fi Hotspot Availability	Yuendumu	Telstra	Telstra	Not available	Yuelamu	Telstra	Not available	Not available (private Wi-Fi provided and serviced by Activ8me)	Nyirripi	Telstra	Not available	CAYLUS Computer Room (private Wi-Fi provided and serviced by Activ8me)
Community	Mobile Coverage	Broadband Access	Wi-Fi Hotspot Availability														
Yuendumu	Telstra	Telstra	Not available														
Yuelamu	Telstra	Not available	Not available (private Wi-Fi provided and serviced by Activ8me)														
Nyirripi	Telstra	Not available	CAYLUS Computer Room (private Wi-Fi provided and serviced by Activ8me)														

⁹ BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Nyirripi. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/128>.

¹⁰ BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Yuendumu. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/198>.

¹¹ BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Yuelamu. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/197>.

¹² BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Nyirripi. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/128>.

¹³ Centre Bush Bus (n.d.) Bus Timetables. www.centrebushbus.com.au/bus-timetables/

Source: Data compiled from BushTel (n.d.) Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. www.bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile

Freight Services

Freight services to the communities of Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi are primarily provided by two key operators, Stanes Transport and Centre Bush Bus:

Stanes Transport: Operates on a rotating fortnightly schedule, servicing the communities at different intervals. During Week 1, Stanes Transport delivers to Yuendumu and Yuelamu on Thursdays, Nyirripi is not serviced during Week 1. In Week 2, the schedule changes slightly, with Yuendumu and Nyirripi receiving deliveries on Thursdays, Yuelamu is not serviced in Week 2.¹⁴

Centre Bush Bus: Offers both passenger and freight services to all communities. Their schedule is more consistent, with services to Yuendumu on Tuesdays, and both Yuelamu and Nyirripi on Mondays.¹⁵

Local Businesses

Table 5: Local Community Businesses

No.	Yuendumu ¹⁶	Yuelamu ¹⁷	Nyirripi ¹⁸
1	Central Desert Regional Council	Alpirakina Store Aboriginal Corporation	Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
2	Central Land Council	Council Office (Central Desert Regional Council)	Central Desert Regional Council
3	Centrebuild Pty Ltd	Mount Allan School (NT Department of Education)	Ngurratjuta/ Pmara Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation
4	Kurra Aboriginal Corporation	Yuelamu Aged Care Centre (Central Desert Regional Council)	Nyirripi Aged Care (Central Desert Regional Council)
5	Mai Wiru Regional Stores Council Aboriginal Corporation	Yuelamu Early Childhood Centre (Central Desert Regional Council)	Nyirripi Arts Centre (Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Corporation)
6	Mampu Maninja Kurlanga Jarla Patu Ku Aboriginal Corporation	Yuelamu Health Centre (Central Australia Health Service)	Nyirripi Community Store (Nyirripi Aboriginal Corporation)
7	National Indigenous Australians Agency	Yuelamu Night Patrol (Central Desert Regional Council)	Nyirripi Early Childhood Centre (Central Desert Regional Council)
8	Nguru-Walalja Store (Outback Stores Pty Ltd)		Nyirripi Health Centre (Central Australia Health)

¹⁴ Stanes Transport (n.d.) Delivery Areas. www.stanestransport.com.au/delivery-area.

¹⁵ Centre Bush Bus (n.d.) Bus Timetables. www.centrebushbus.com.au/bus-timetables/

¹⁶ BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Yuendumu. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/198>.

¹⁷ BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Yuelamu. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/197>.

¹⁸ BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Nyirripi. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/128>.

			Service)
9	Tanami Cleaning and Maintenance Pty Ltd		Nyirripi Police Station - Unstaffed (Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services)
10	Tanami Regional Dialysis (Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation Operating as Western Desert Dialysis)		Nyirripi School (NT Department of Education)
	Wallcon Pty Ltd		
11	Warlpiri Media Aboriginal Corporation		
12	Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Corporation		
13	Yapa-Kurlangu Ngurrara Aboriginal Corporation		
14	Yuendumu Baptist Church		
15	Yuendumu Centrelink (Services Australia Trading as Centrelink)		
16	Yuendumu Health Centre (Central Australia Health Service)		
17	Yuendumu Police Station (Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services)		
18	Yuendumu School (NT Department of Education)		
19	Yuendumu's Women's Centre Aboriginal Corporation		

	<p>Source: Data compiled from BushTel (n.d.) Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. www.bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile</p>									
Regional Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arafura Nolans Bore Mine • Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education • Cattle Stations within 100km of Yuendumu: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mount Doreen Station is located approximately 20 km away - Coniston Station is located approximately 22.5 km away - Dneiper Station is located approximately 33 km away - Mount Denison Station is located approximately 54 km away - Napperby Station is located approximately 64 km away - Anningie Station is located approximately 79 km away - Pine Hill Station is located approximately 84 km away - Mount Skinner Station is located approximately 98 km away • Central Desert Regional Council • Central Land Council • Department of Children and Families • Department of Education • Department of Health • Department of Human Services (Centrelink) • Newmont Tanami Gold Mine • Northern Territory Police, Fire Emergency Services 									
Health Services	<p>Table 6: Health Services</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yuendumu</th> <th>Yuelamu</th> <th>Nyirripi</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yuendumu Health Centre</td> <td>Yuelamu Health Centre</td> <td>Nyirripi Health Centre</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Data compiled from BushTel (n.d.) Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. www.bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile</p>	Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi	Yuendumu Health Centre	Yuelamu Health Centre	Nyirripi Health Centre			
Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi								
Yuendumu Health Centre	Yuelamu Health Centre	Nyirripi Health Centre								
Education and Training	<p>Education in Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi is provided through government-run schools that integrate bilingual and culturally responsive learning approaches. These schools serve predominantly Aboriginal student populations, with almost all students speaking a language other than English at home.</p> <p>Table 7: Education and Training Facilities</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yuendumu</th> <th>Yuelamu</th> <th>Nyirripi</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yuendumu School</td> <td>Mt Allan School</td> <td>Nyirripi School</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Willow Tree Training Pty Ltd</td> <td></td> <td>Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Data compiled from BushTel (n.d.) Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. www.bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile</p>	Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi	Yuendumu School	Mt Allan School	Nyirripi School	Willow Tree Training Pty Ltd		Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi								
Yuendumu School	Mt Allan School	Nyirripi School								
Willow Tree Training Pty Ltd		Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education								
Children's Services	<p>Table 8: Children's Services</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yuendumu</th> <th>Yuelamu</th> <th>Nyirripi</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yuendumu Preschool</td> <td>Yuelamu Childcare Centre</td> <td>Nyirripi Child Care Centre</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yuendumu Childcare</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi	Yuendumu Preschool	Yuelamu Childcare Centre	Nyirripi Child Care Centre	Yuendumu Childcare		
Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi								
Yuendumu Preschool	Yuelamu Childcare Centre	Nyirripi Child Care Centre								
Yuendumu Childcare										

	Centre		
	Yurrampi Child and Family Centre (Yuendumu)		
	Source: Data compiled from BushTel (n.d.) Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. www.bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile		
Community Services	Table 9: Community Services		
	Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi
	Yuendumu Women's Centre	Yuelamu Aged Care Centre	Nyirripi Aged Care
	Purple House	Night Patrol	
	Territory Families		
	World Vision		
	Source: Data compiled from BushTel (n.d.) Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. www.bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile		
Aboriginal Organisations	Table 10: Aboriginal Organisations		
	Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi
	Kurdiji Wita Yuendumu Aboriginal Corporation	Alpirakina Store Aboriginal Corporation	Ngurratjuta/Pmara Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation
	Kurra Aboriginal Corporation, Tanami Regional Dialysis (Western Desert Dialysis)	Inkwareny Artists of Yuelamu	Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Corporation (operating Nyirripi Arts Centre)
	Mai Wiru Regional Stores Council Aboriginal Corporation		Nyirripi Aboriginal Corporation (operating Nyirripi Community Store)
	Mampu Maninja Kurlanga Jarla Patu Kua Aboriginal Corporation		
	Southern Tanami Kurdiji Indigenous Corporation		
	WANTA Aboriginal Corporation		
	Warlpiri Media Aboriginal Corporation		
	Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation (WYDAC)		
	Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Corporation		
	Yapa-Kurlangu Ngurrara Aboriginal Corporation		
	Yuendumu Women's Centre Aboriginal Corporation		
	Source: Data compiled from BushTel (n.d.) Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. www.bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile		
Government Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Desert Regional Council • National Indigenous Australians Agency • Centrelink (Services Australia) 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Australia Health Service • Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services • NT Department of Education
Regional Council	Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi are part of the Central Desert Regional Council, who are responsible for providing local government services, infrastructure management, and community development programs across the communities.
Visitor Accommodation	Visitor accommodation is available in Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi with varying options across these locations. Central Desert Regional Council manages and offers commercial accommodation to contractors and other authorised visitors to communities in the Central Desert region.
Power/Water	Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi all receive electricity at the Northern Territory standard tariff with standard connection charges. Yuendumu has high-quality groundwater monitored to meet demand, ¹⁹ Yuelamu’s drinking water is treated at an advanced plant, with non-potable water supplied for hygiene purposes, ²⁰ while Nyirripi relies on limited groundwater treated with sodium hypochlorite. ²¹ Plans are underway in Yuelamu for a dual reticulation system for potable and non-potable water, as the local dam is unusable due to blue-green algae contamination. All three communities have fully reticulated sewerage systems.
Community Events	<p>Yuendumu typically hosts an annual Territory Day event, which could present some employment opportunities. The event usually includes festivities at the Yuendumu Football Oval and an official fireworks display.²²</p> <p>The Central Desert Regional Council operates a School Holiday Program in all four communities²³ which presents an opportunity for temporary or short-term employment of additional staff required to facilitate programs and meet supervision ratios for children and young people enrolled.²⁴</p> <p>The Healthy Homes Connect Expo, which debuted on November 28, 2024 in Yuendumu may become an annual event, connecting service providers with Yuendumu residents.²⁵</p> <p>Yuendumu plays in the Central Australian Football League (CAFL), with the 2025 season commencing in April.²⁶</p>

¹⁹ BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Yuendumu. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/198>.

²⁰ BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Yuelamu. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/197>

²¹ BushTel (n.d.) Community Profile – Nyirripi. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/128>

²² Facebook (2025) Event: 2024 Territory Day - Yuendumu. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1019892296520339>

²³ Central Desert Regional Council (2025) Yuendumu School Holiday Program, Central Desert Regional Council. <https://centraldesert.nt.gov.au/our-council/news/53-yuendumu/1806-yuendumu-school-holiday-program>.

²⁴ Central Desert Regional Council (2025) Youth Work School Holiday Program, Central Desert Regional Council. <https://centraldesert.nt.gov.au/our-council/news/1780-youth-work-school-holiday-program>

²⁵ Central Desert Regional Council (2024) Healthy Homes Expo in Yuendumu, Central Desert Regional Council. <https://www.centraldesert.nt.gov.au/our-council/news/1794-healthy-homes-expo-in-yuendumu>.

²⁶ Play AFL (n.d.) TIO CAFL. <https://play.afl/northern-territory/competitions/tio-cafl>

Step 2: Workforce Research

Step 2 presents workforce data for Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi, including demographic details, labour force participation

rates, and employment status. This information is useful for understanding the local workforce contexts.

Target Group

To define the target group for this report, DKA considered several factors, the number of individuals in the labour force including the workforce participation rate, and those classified as not in the labour force.

Target Group Definition

The Target group is the total labour force *less (-)* those who are currently employed *plus (+)* individuals eligible to work but not actively seeking employment

For the purpose of this report, the target group comprises individuals who are either currently registered under the CDP caseload or are unemployed and actively seeking work. This includes individuals who are eligible to work but not actively seeking employment.²⁷²⁸

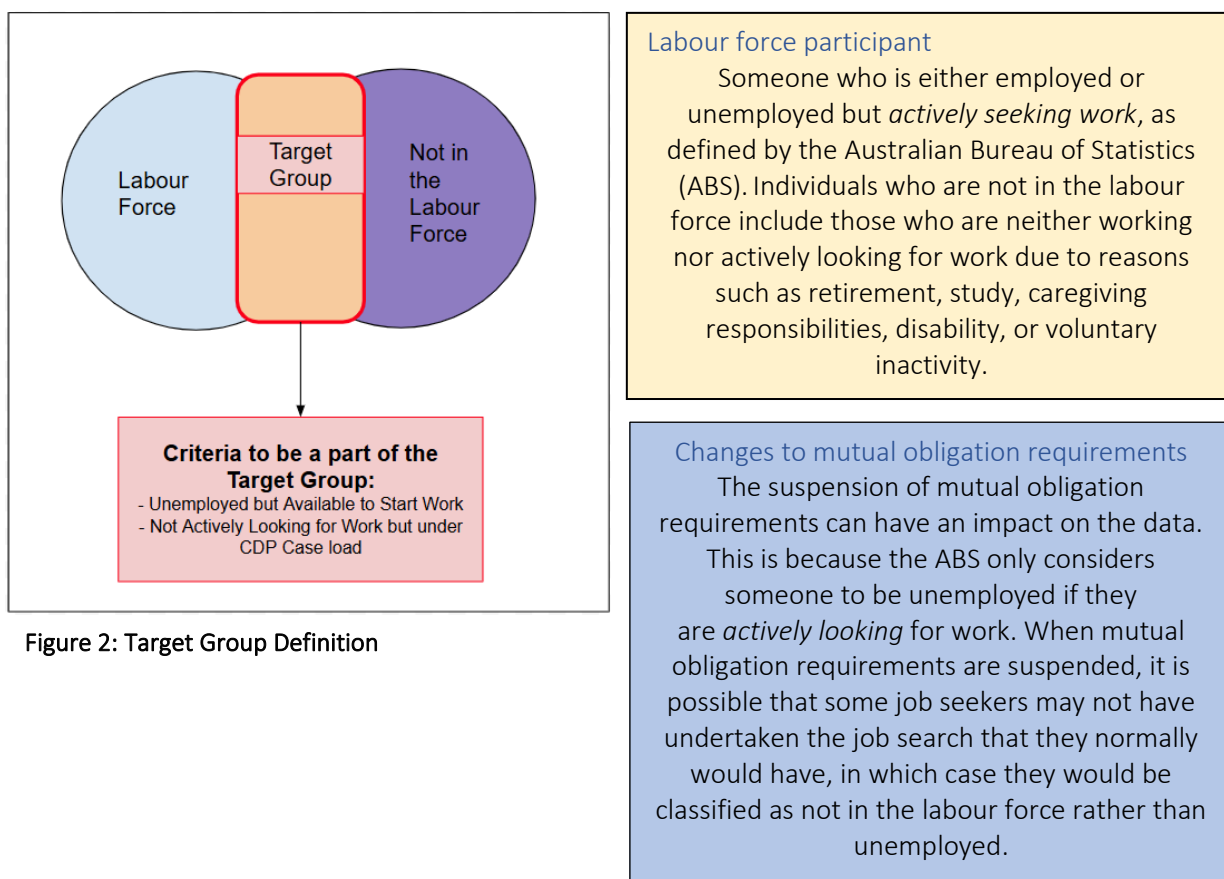


Figure 2: Target Group Definition

²⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). *Labour Force Explained*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/labour+force+explained>

²⁸ *Jobs and Skills Australia (2024) Small Area Labour Markets, September Quarter 2024*. https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-12/small_area_labour_markets_-_september_quarter_2024.pdf

2.1 Workforce Demographics

Working-Age Population

Across the three communities, the working-age population (15+) consists of 830 people, with 680 individuals (82%) identifying as Aboriginal. The distribution varies by community:

- Yuendumu: 418 Aboriginal working-age residents²⁹
- Yuelamu: 102 Aboriginal working-age residents³⁰
- Nyirripi: 160 Aboriginal working-age residents³¹

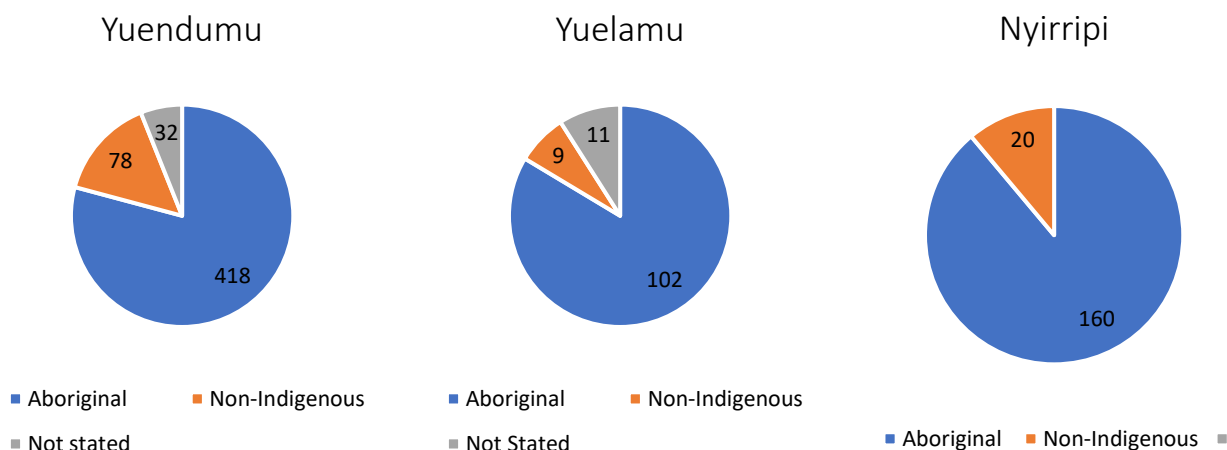


Figure 3: Working Age Populations in Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing Community Profiles

This report aims to address the barriers, successes and complexities faced by the 680 working aged Aboriginal residents of the Southern Tanami region with residential addresses in Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi.

Labour Force Participation

Labour force participation is the standard indicator of how many people aged 15 and over are actively involved in the labour market, either working or unemployed but actively seeking work, expressed as a percentage of the working age population.

21% of Aboriginal working-age residents (143 of 680) are actively participating in the labour force, while 79% (537) are not engaged in the workforce:

- Yuendumu: 95 individuals are participating in the labour force; 307 are not participating³²

²⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Yuendumu. I19 Selected Labour Force, Education and Migration Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021

³⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Yuelamu. I19 Selected Labour Force, Education and Migration Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021

³¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Nyirripi. I19 Selected Labour Force, Education and Migration Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021

³² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Yuendumu. I19 Selected Labour Force, Education and Migration Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021

- **Yuelamu:** 28 individuals are participating in the labour force; 73 are not participating³³
- **Nyirripi:** 20 individuals are participating in the labour force; 134 are not participating³⁴

Nyirripi has the highest proportion of non-participating residents at 87%.

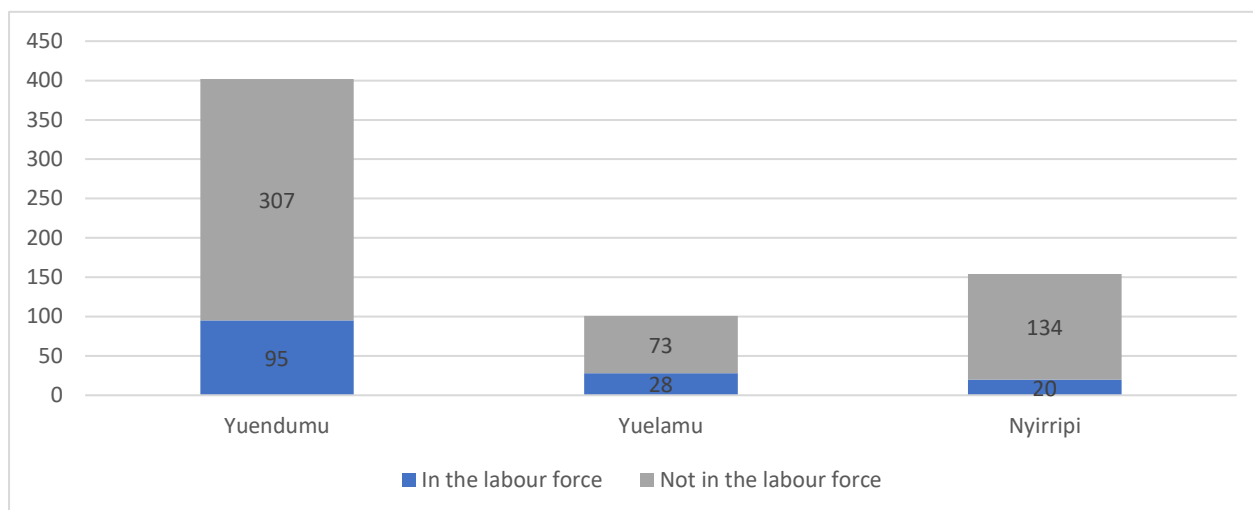


Figure 4: Aboriginal Labour Force Participation in Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing Community Profiles, 121

Labour force participation rates have been calculated based on 2021 Census respondents who indicated that they were either 'in the labour force' or 'not in the labour force.' Individuals who did not state their labour force status have been excluded from the analysis.

³³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Yuelamu. 119 Selected Labour Force, Education and Migration Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021

³⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Nyirripi. 119 Selected Labour Force, Education and Migration Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021

Employment Status

2021 census data show 109 Aboriginal residents are employed across the three communities: 46 full-time, 38 part-time and 25 were away from work.³⁵

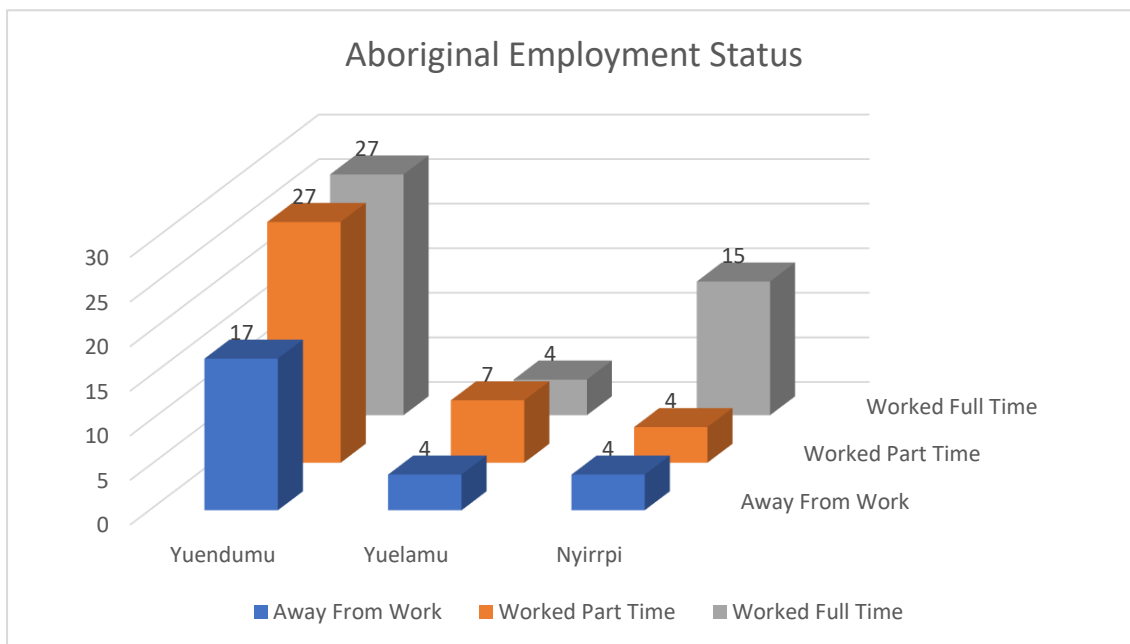


Figure 5: Aboriginal Employment Status

Source: Compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census of Population and Housing Community Profiles, I21

Community Development Program (CDP) Participants

CDP is the primary form of work engagement in the three communities, with participation rates well above local employment levels. CDP participation is not in itself considered employment; however, CDP participants may be employed, unemployed or not in the labour force depending on their individual circumstances.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Dictionary (2021) clarifies CDP and its inclusion in the labour force as follows:

‘The CDP is a government initiative that aims to improve the economic and social well-being of remote communities. It assists job seekers in remote areas to gain skills, training, and capabilities to find:

- sustainable employment and
- contribute to their communities through a range of flexible activities.

CDP participants receive income support payments and are not considered to be in an employer/employee relationship with their provider. People who are only participating in this program are not considered to be employed unless they also have a non-CDP job. CDP participants who are not employed are classified as either unemployed or not in the labour force, depending on their job search activities.’ (Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), Community Development Program Participation (CDPP))

Participants who are unemployed but actively seeking work are counted as participating in the labour force, but participants that are unemployed and not actively seeking work are not included the labour force.

³⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. I21 Labour Force, Status by Age by Sex for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Persons. Canberra: ABS, 2021

Based on the 2023 Remote Towns Jobs Profile, there was 235 CDP participants in Yuendumu as of December 2023:

- Nearly half (46.4%) of which were aged 25-44,³⁶ a key working-age group with employment rates of 85-90% nationally.³⁷
- CDP Employment outcomes for Yuendumu were < 20 individuals securing work for 13 weeks in 2023.³⁸

Additional data as per Tables 11-13 below, was provided by the National Indigenous Australian Agency (NIAA) for the communities of Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. The data contains information about participants placed in employment as well as participants achieving outcomes.

Table 11: CDP Flow Caseload

Flow Caseload*							
Community Cluster	2023-2024				2024-2025		
	Jul-Sep 2023	Oct-Dec 2023	Jan-Mar 2024	Apr-Jun 2024	Jul-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Jan-Mar 2025
Southern Tanami	490	497	525	538	537	531	551

*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 12: CDP Participants Placed in Employment

Participants Placed in Employment**							
Community Cluster	2023-2024				2024-2025		
	Jul-Sep 2023	Oct-Dec 2023	Jan-Mar 2024	Apr-Jun 2024	Jul-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Jan-Mar 2025
Southern Tanami	22	<20	<20	<20	26	22	<20

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

Table 13: CDP Participants Achieving Outcomes

Participants Achieving Outcomes							
Community Cluster	2023-2024				2024-2025		
	Jul-Sep 2023	Oct-Dec 2023	Jan-Mar 2024	Apr-Jun 2024	Jul-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Jan-Mar 2025
Southern Tanami	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20

Data Source for Tables 11, 12 and 13: National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) Community Development Program (CDP) data request, prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia on behalf of DTBAR, NTG, June 2025

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.'.

The Southern Tanami Community Cluster shows 490-551 participants per quarter from July 2023 to March 2025, with participant numbers increasing 12.4% over the reporting period. Employment placement data shows mixed performance with 22 placements in 2023-24 but declining to suppressed numbers (<20) in January-March 2025. Broader programme outcomes remain consistently suppressed across all quarters (<20 participants), indicating limited success in achieving outcomes beyond employment placement.

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023) Labour Force Survey. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, 2023.

³⁸ Department of Trade, Business and Innovation, Northern Territory Government (2025). 2023 Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Yuendumu. Northern Territory Government, Darwin. Pg 58.

A note on CDP participation vs. persons of employable age, the total number of CDP participants in a region maybe higher than the total number of employable residents as the geographic boundaries for CDP regions will include homelands and people who are employed and on CDP.

The broader regional context shows CDP participants increased from 703 in July 2023 to 826 in the North-West Alice Region as of June 2024,³⁹ underscoring the magnitude of regional workforce development challenges.

Table 14: CDP Regional Date Report 2003-2024

CDP Region number and name	Jul 2023	Aug 2023	Sep 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	Jun 2024
19-Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands SA	906	913	912	882	872	875	857	855	838	842	839	873
20-South East Alice Region NT	469	473	471	466	458	446	444	447	457	457	428	431
21-South West Alice Region NT	280	279	284	278	281	295	286	269	257	272	285	267
22-West Alice Region NT	492	484	477	466	462	456	462	465	449	455	455	460
23-Alice Springs District NT	849	849	814	829	858	873	855	900	937	965	991	996
24-North East Alice Region NT	530	551	570	594	599	590	589	607	611	594	580	586
25-North West Alice Region NT	703	708	713	723	739	727	737	761	772	781	810	826
26-South East Barkly Region NT	416	390	404	392	396	402	392	396	406	402	404	411
27-Far West Alice Region NT	616	614	598	576	576	563	570	576	571	565	578	556
28-North Barkly Region NT	760	760	756	728	749	732	721	733	739	760	746	757

Source: NIAA (2024). Community Development Program Regional Data Report 2023-2024. www.niaa.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2024-12/Community-Development-Program-Regional-Data-Report-2023-2024.pdf

Jobseeker Recipients

JobSeeker and Youth Allowance recipients in the Central Desert Regional Council LGA also increased from 908 (37.7% of population aged 15-64) in March 2020 to 1,188 (49.4%) in December 2024.⁴⁰ This upward trend, alongside increasing CDP participation, indicates growing employment challenges in the region.

³⁹ NIAA (2024). Community Development Program Regional Data Report 2023-2024. www.niaa.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2024-12/Community-Development-Program-Regional-Data-Report-2023-2024.pdf

⁴⁰ Profile.id. (2024). JobSeeker and Youth Allowance recipients in the RDA Northern Territory. <https://profile.id.com.au/rda-northern-territory/job-seeker?Geocode=70620>

Table 15: JobSeeker and Youth Allowance Recipients in the Northern Territory

JobSeeker export reset 					
Current month	December 2024		March 2020		
Region - LGA/SA2	Job Seeker and youth allowance recipients	% of 15-64 age population	Job Seeker and Youth allowance recipients	% of 15-64 age population	Change
Northern Territory	23,650	14.5	19,925	12.2	+3,725
Belyuen	23	21.7	18	17.0	+5
Wagait	47	18.7	37	14.7	+10
Darwin Waterfront Precinct	15	5.8	14	5.4	+1
Coomalie	147	18.9	113	14.5	+34
Twi Islands	815	47.7	599	35.0	+216
Victoria Daly	730	38.4	494	26.0	+236
West Daly	1,102	53.7	735	35.8	+367
Central Desert	1,188	49.4	908	37.7	+280
MacDonnell	1,523	36.8	1,143	27.6	+380

Source: Profile.id. (2024). JobSeeker and Youth Allowance recipients in the RDA Northern Territory. <https://profile.id.com.au/rda-northern-territory/job-seeker?Geocode=70620>

Individual Incomes

2021 Census data on Aboriginal household incomes reveals:

- 84.5% of Aboriginal residents (579 individuals) earn less than \$500 per week⁴¹
- The most common income range is \$150-\$299 per week (55.8%, 383 individuals)⁴²
- 12.4% of Aboriginal residents (85 individuals) report incomes under \$150 per week⁴³
- 4.5% of Aboriginal residents (31 individuals) report negative or no income⁴⁴

These patterns reflect significant economic hardship and strong reliance on government support programs, highlighting the need for accessible local employment opportunities with liveable wages. The table below presents the distribution of individual incomes based on the 2021 Census data.

⁴¹ Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. 108 Total Personal Income (Weekly) by Sex for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Persons. Canberra: ABS, 2021

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

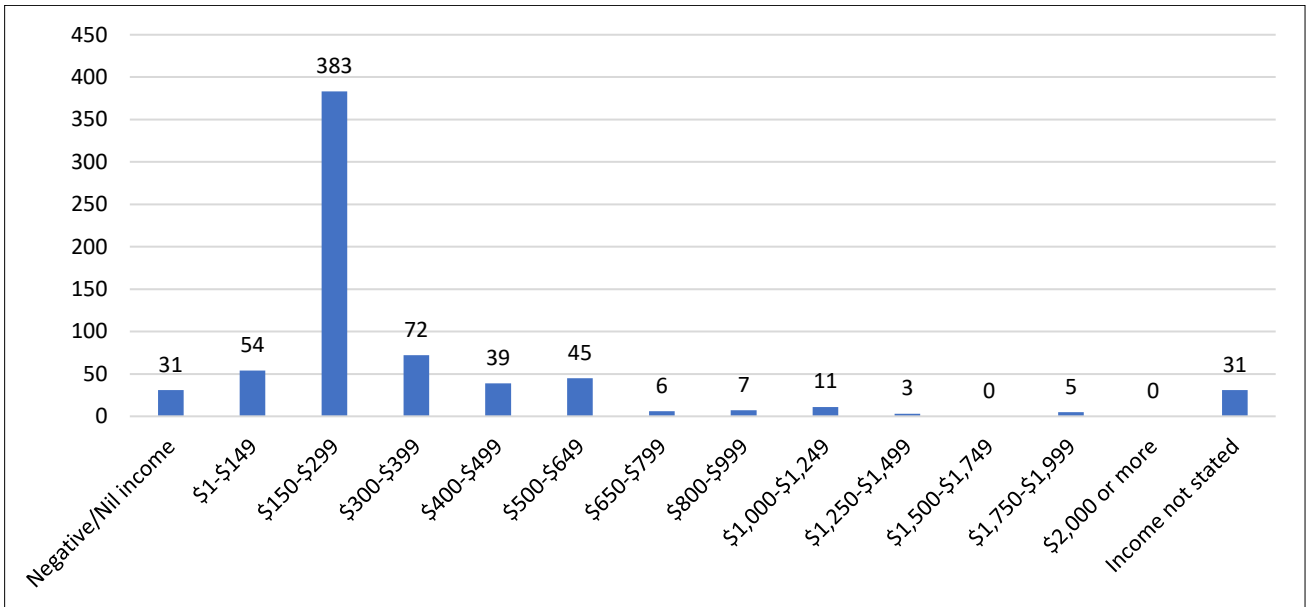


Figure 6: Total Personal Income of Aboriginal Residents

Source: Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile

The above demographic and employment data presented highlights several key considerations for workforce planning:

1. **Significant labour force potential:** With 19% of Aboriginal working-age residents participating in the labour force, there is considerable unrealised workforce potential that could contribute to community development and local economic growth.
2. **A need for tailored approaches:** Each community has distinct demographic and employment profiles requiring customised workforce planning strategies rather than one-size-fits-all solutions.
3. **Economic precarity:** The concentration of residents in lower income brackets indicates widespread financial vulnerability, reinforcing the importance of creating sustainable employment opportunities.

2.2 Skills in the Community

This section analyses education and training levels across the three communities, which directly impact workforce capacity and employment opportunities.

Education

The educational landscape across Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi reveals significant challenges that directly impact workforce planning opportunities. Understanding the educational context is important in designing appropriate workforce strategies that are responsive to the unique needs of these remote communities.

Table 16: Indigenous Young People Enrolled in an Education Institute

Community	Age groups:	Total Indigenous people in age bracket	Total no. enrolled in an educational institution	% of age group enrolled
Yuendumu ⁴⁵	0-4 years	62	7	11%
	5-14 years	138	119	86%
	15-24 years	99	23	23%
Yuelamu ⁴⁶	0-4 years	9	0	0%
	5-14 years	26	21	81%
	15-24 years	29	3	10%
Nyirripi ⁴⁷	0-4 years	23	4	17%
	5-14 years	46	33	72%
	15-24 years	41	0	0%

Source: Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, I01

Table 17: School Profile Data

	Yuendumu School ⁴⁸	Mount Allan School ⁴⁹	Nyirripi School ⁵⁰
Location	Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi
Year Range	T-12	T-12	T-10
Enrolment Numbers 2024	145	79	42
Aboriginal Students	98%	99%	100%
Non-English Language Background	98%	97%	100%
Student-to-Teacher Ratio 2024	8.5 to 1	11.3 to 1	4.7 to 1
Attendance Rate (Semester 1, 2024)	41%	55%	49%
Students Attending 90%+ of the Time	4%	10%	3%
VET in School	Available	-	-
Senior Secondary Outcomes	1 completion, no certificates awarded (2022)	1 completion, no certificates awarded (2024)	-

⁴⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Yuendumu. I01 Selected Person Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021

⁴⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Yuelamu. I01 Selected Person Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021

⁴⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Nyirripi. I01 Selected Person Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021

⁴⁸ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2024) Yuendumu School, My School. <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50068>

⁴⁹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2024) Mount Allan School, My School. <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50105>

⁵⁰ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2024) Nyirripi School, My School <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50112>

School Funding 2023 (Per Student 2023)	\$5,724,730 (\$44,377)	\$1,666,274 (\$23,468)	\$2,081,169 (\$46,248)
ICSEA Value (National Average)	632 (1000)	608 (1000)	635 (1000)

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All three schools share several educational characteristics that have important implications for workforce planning:

- **Cultural Context:** With 98-100% Aboriginal student enrolment and 97-100% of students with a language background other than English, education and subsequent workforce planning must be culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate.
- **Attendance Challenges:** School attendance rates range from 41% in Yuendumu to 55% in Yuelamu, with few students (3-10%) attending 90% or more of the time. These attendance patterns impact the consistency of learning and skill development necessary for workplace readiness.
- **Socio-Educational Disadvantage:** All three communities score between 608-635 on the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA), significantly below the national average of 1000. This places them in the 0th percentile nationally, indicating substantial socio-economic barriers to educational achievement.
- **Limited Secondary Education Completion:** While Yuendumu and Mount Allan schools offer Year 12, completion rates are extremely low, with one student completing Year 12 in both Yuendumu (2022) and Mount Allan (2024), but no NTCET Certificates awarded.
- **Access to Secondary Schooling and VET in Schools:** Yuendumu is the only school offering VET in Schools, with 15 students enrolled across Building (Cert II) and Food & Hospitality (Cert I) in 2023, and 4 students completing Cert I in Food & Hospitality in the same reporting period. Expanding VET programs across all schools, tailored to local workforce needs, could enhance job readiness, provide students with practical skills and create pathways for future employment.

Literacy, Numeracy and Language Context

The 2024 NAPLAN results provide context for understanding foundational skills relevant to workforce planning.

Key NAPLAN data points:

- **Year 5 Reading scores:** Yuendumu 187, Mount Allan 313, Nyirripi 207 (National average: 492)
- **Year 5 Numeracy scores:** Yuendumu 250, Mount Allan 301, Nyirripi 293 (National average: 489)
- **Participation rates:** Yuendumu 48%, Mount Allan 72%, Nyirripi 83% (National average: 95%)

Table 18: NAPLAN Scores

Subject	Year Level	Yuendumu School ⁵¹	Mount Allan School ⁵²	Nyirripi School ⁵³
Reading	3	No scores provided	No scores provided	No scores provided
	5	187 (492)	313 (492)	207 (492)

⁵¹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2024) Yuendumu School, My School. <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50068>

⁵² Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2024) Mount Allan School, My School. <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50105>

⁵³ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2024) Nyirripi School, My School <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50112>

	7	181 (492)	No scores provided	N/A
	9	No scores provided	No scores provided	N/A
Writing	3	No scores provided	No scores provided	No scores provided
	5	196 (485)	242 (485)	No scores provided
	7	264 (485)	No scores provided	N/A
	9	272 (574)	No scores provided	N/A
Spelling	3	177 (401)	187 (401)	No scores provided
	5	No scores provided	275 (486)	No scores provided
	7	308 (540)	No scores provided	N/A
	9	No scores provided	No scores provided	N/A
Grammar	3	No scores provided	191 (409)	No scores provided
	5	No scores provided	265 (498)	No scores provided
	7	84 (537)	No scores provided	N/A
	9	301 (555)	No scores provided	N/A
Numeracy	3	No scores provided	233 (404)	No scores provided
	5	250 (489)	301 (489)	293 (489)
	7	283 (540)	No scores provided	N/A
	9	364 (565)	No scores provided	N/A
Participation Rate		48% (95%)	72% (95%)	83% (95%)

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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.

While NAPLAN provides valuable insights into school-based literacy and numeracy development, these assessments are conducted in English and should be considered within the broader linguistic context of these communities. The 2021 Census indicates that Indigenous languages are the primary languages spoken at home:

- In Yuendumu, 96% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents primarily speak Indigenous languages at home, with Northern Desert Fringe Area languages being predominant⁵⁴
- In Yuelamu, 96% primarily speak Indigenous languages at home, with Arandic languages being predominant⁵⁵
- In Nyirripi, 95% primarily speak Indigenous languages at home, with Northern Desert Fringe Area languages being predominant⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Yuendumu. 105 Australian Indigenous Languages Used at Home by Proficiency in Spoken English for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Persons. Canberra: ABS, 2021

⁵⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Yuelamu. 105 Australian Indigenous Languages Used at Home by Proficiency in Spoken English for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Persons. Canberra: ABS, 2021

⁵⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Nyirripi. 105 Australian Indigenous Languages Used at Home by Proficiency in Spoken English for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Persons. Canberra: ABS, 2021

While most Indigenous language speakers report speaking English "very well or well" (87-90% across the communities), a portion report speaking English "not well or not at all" (4-9%).⁵⁷

This literacy, numeracy and language context informs workforce planning, highlighting the need for diverse employment pathways that recognize that most community members including school leavers come from a language background other than English and have different learning styles and knowledge systems, while providing opportunities for ongoing skill development that builds on existing linguistic and cultural strengths.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Yuendumu's VET participation shows significant changes between 2016 and 2023:

- Student numbers fell from 305 to 35 (an 89% decrease)⁵⁸
- Unit completions dropped from 919 to 61 (a 93% decrease)⁵⁹
- Training shifted away from high-demand sectors - community services, health, and education (previously 24% of enrolments) declined to zero enrolments⁶⁰
- Building and construction became dominant (51% of enrolments), despite limited local employment in this sector⁶¹

This shift away from high-demand employment sectors appears to represent a significant disconnect between training availability and the needs of the workforce.

Table 19: Yuendumu VET Student Data 2023 compared to 2016

VET Student Data - Yuendumu										
Industry by NT VET Funding	2016 VET Student Enrolments		2016 Unit Completions		2023 VET Student Enrolments		2023 Unit Completions		Student Enrolment Change	Unit Completion Change
	Number	% of totals	Number	% of totals	Number	% of totals	Number	% of totals	Number	Number
Arts, entertainment, sports and recreation	51	17%	148	16%	0	0%	0	0%	-51	-148
Automotive	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0
Building and construction	13	4%	51	6%	21	51%	43	70%	8	-8
Business and clerical	24	8%	52	6%	0	0%	0	0%	-24	-52
Community services, health and education	73	24%	160	17%	0	0%	0	0%	-73	-160

⁵⁷ Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. 105 Australian Indigenous Languages Used at Home by Proficiency in Spoken English for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Persons. Canberra: ABS, 2021

⁵⁸ Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2023). Remote Towns Jobs Profile, Yuendumu. Northern Territory Government, January 2025, Darwin. Pg 52-53

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Ibid

Engineering and mining	65	21%	159	17%	6	15%	6	10%	-59	-153
Food Processing	10	3%	180	20%	0	0%	0	0%	-10	-180
General education and training	52	17%	137	15%	1	2%	0	0%	-51	-137
Primary industry	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	1	2%	1	1
Sales and personal services	9	3%	0	0%	5	12%	7	11%	-4	7
Tourism and hospitality	0	0%	0	0%	7	17%	4	7%	7	4
Transport and storage	8	3%	32	3%	0	0%	0	0%	-8	-32
Total	305	100%	919	100%	35	100%	61	100%	-270	-858

Data compiled from Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2025) 2023 Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Yuendumu. Northern Territory Government, Darwin. Pg 52 – 58.

Table 20: A&T count for Apprenticeships and Traineeships in Southern Tanami

Program:	2022	2023	2024	2025
Certificate II in Retail Services	5	5	5	5
Certificate III in Retail	-	-	-	5
Certificate IV in Retail Management	5	-	-	-
Certificate III in Local Government	5	5	5	-
Certificate III in Carpentry	-	-	5	5

* All figures indicated as "5" in the above data have been modified to protect student privacy. Actual values are ≤ 5.

Source: Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations. (2025). Data provided to Desert Knowledge Australia for report purposes only. [Unpublished raw data].

Table 21: Student count for DET Funded VET Programs in Southern Tanami

Program:	2022	2023	2024
Certificate I in Automotive Vocational Preparation			6
Certificate I in Conservation and Ecosystem Management			16
Certificate I in Hospitality		7	
Certificate II in Automotive Vocational Preparation		7	
Certificate II in Civil Construction	5		
Certificate II in Conservation and Ecosystem Management	6	5	
Certificate II in Construction Pathways		9	
Certificate II in Resources and Infrastructure Work Preparation		5	
Certificate II in Retail Services	7	12	5
Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations	19		7
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	6		
Certificate III in Learning an Australian First Nation's Language		5	
Certificate III in Retail			5
Certificate IV in Retail Management	5	5	
Learner Support			7
NT White Card			21

* All figures indicated as "5" in the above data have been modified to protect student privacy. Actual values are ≤ 5.

**The A&T count for all other programs from 2022-2024 was zero.

Source: Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations. (2025). Data provided to Desert Knowledge Australia for report purposes only. [Unpublished raw data].

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Engagement in Tertiary Education

Census data (2021) shows minimal tertiary education participation across the three communities:

- Yuendumu: 10 Aboriginal residents attending university; 3 in vocational education
- Yuelamu: No Aboriginal residents attending tertiary education
- Nyirripi: 6 Aboriginal residents attending university; 5 in other educational institutions

This indicates limited access to further education and training opportunities, particularly in Yuelamu.

Table 22: Tertiary Educational Institute Attended

Educational Institution Type	Yuendumu ⁶²	Yuelamu ⁶³	Nyirripi ⁶⁴
University or other higher education	10	0	6
Vocational education (including TAFE and private training providers)	3	0	0
Other type of educational institution	0	0	5
Type of educational institution not stated	66	15	25

Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. I06, Type of Educational Institution Attending (Full-Time/Part-Time Student Status by Age) by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

Qualifications

The 2021 Census reveals limited formal qualifications held by Aboriginal residents across the communities:

- 28 Aboriginal residents hold bachelor's degrees or higher (Yuendumu and Nyirripi)
- 45 Aboriginal residents have Certificate level qualifications

The gap between available qualifications and job requirements creates barriers to accessing many vacant positions. Addressing this disconnect may be aided by expanding on-Country education, developing paid traineeships, and reconsidering qualification requirements for certain roles.

Table 23: Highest Qualification (Non-School)

Non-School Qualification	Yuendumu ⁶⁵	Yuelamu ⁶⁶	Nyirripi ⁶⁷
Postgraduate Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate	6	0	0
Bachelor's degree	18	0	4

⁶² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing: Yuendumu. Table I06, Type of Educational Institution Attending (Full-Time/Part-Time Student Status by Age) by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

⁶³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing: Yuelamu. Table I06, Type of Educational Institution Attending (Full-Time/Part-Time Student Status by Age) by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

⁶⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing: Nyirripi. Table I06, Type of Educational Institution Attending (Full-Time/Part-Time Student Status by Age) by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

⁶⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing: Yuendumu. I19 Selected Labour Force, Education and Migration Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

⁶⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing: Yuelamu. I19 Selected Labour Force, Education and Migration Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

⁶⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing: Nyirripi. I19 Selected Labour Force, Education and Migration Characteristics by Indigenous Status by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

Advanced Diploma	10	0	0
Certificate III & IV	20	5	8
Certificate I & II	12	0	0

Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile (Canberra: ABS, 2021); 2021)

The education and training context presented above provides direction for workforce planning:

1. **Address declining VET participation:** by improving access to training opportunities, ensuring programs align with community interests, addressing practical barriers such as transport and childcare, and creating clear employment pathways.
2. **Align training with sector opportunities:** by shifting VET focus to high-demand sectors such as community services, health, and education which have vacancies. (See page 32-33: Workforce Demand for the number of vacancies in 2023 as per the Remote Jobs Profile for Yuendumu.) 'The field of education studied is more important in determining employment outcomes for First Nations people than non-Indigenous people. First Nations people with qualifications in high demand fields were likely to be employed and to be working in roles directly relevant to their study.' (Nicolaou et al. 2023, page 38)
3. **Strengthen school-to-employment pathways:** by expanding VET in Schools programs that connect directly to local employment opportunities.
4. **Value cultural knowledge:** by creating employment opportunities that recognise and utilise traditional knowledge, language skills and expertise.
5. **Implement culturally responsive training approaches:** incorporate traditional knowledge, offer instruction in community languages, and accommodate cultural obligations.

By developing strategies that respond to community needs, build on existing strengths, and align with educational realities, workforce planning can create meaningful employment pathways benefiting both individuals and communities.

2.3 Employment

Building on the analysis of the education and training landscape, this section of the report examines current employment patterns, key industries, and job vacancies. The employment landscape across Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi reveals both trends and opportunities to inform workforce planning strategies. Understanding where jobs currently exist and where demand is growing provides context for aligning training opportunities with employment pathways.

Key Employment Industries

Three sectors dominate employment across Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi:

- **Public Administration and Safety:** 52 positions (37 in Yuendumu), representing the backbone of local employment⁶⁸
- **Education and Training:** 46 positions, ranking as the second-largest employer in Yuendumu and the primary employer in both Yuelamu and Nyirripi⁶⁹
- **Health Care and Social Assistance:** 27 positions total, with a stronger presence in Yuendumu than in Yuelamu and Nyirripi (4 positions each)⁷⁰

Several industries that typically employ significant numbers in regional Australia are notably absent, including mining, manufacturing, construction, wholesale trade, accommodation and food services, and transport.⁷¹

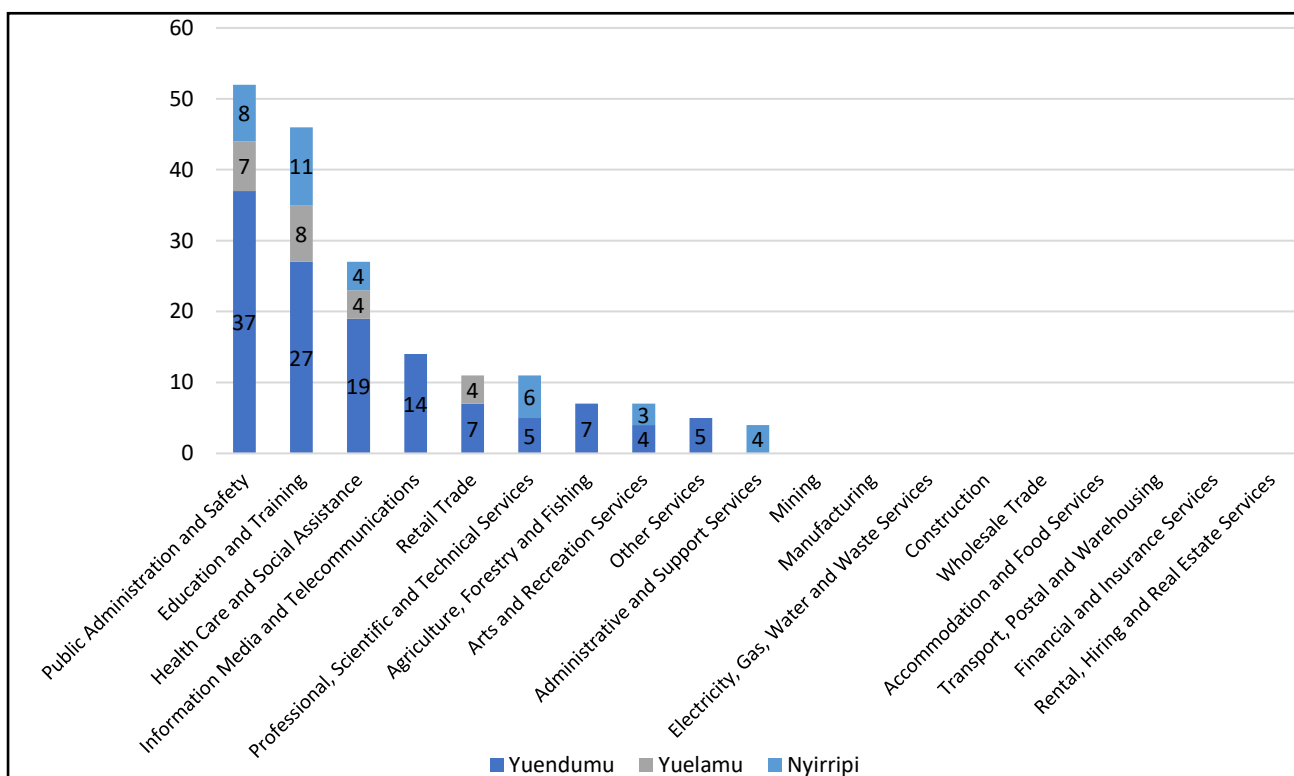


Figure 7: Total Employment by Industry (2021)

⁶⁸ Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing: Yuendumu. G54, Industry of Employment by Age by Sex; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing: Yuelamu. Table G54, Industry of Employment by Age by Sex; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Census of Population and Housing: Nyirripi. Table G54, Industry of Employment by Age by Sex. Canberra: ABS, 2021

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid

Occupational Distribution

The 2021 Census reveals three dominant occupational categories:

- **Professionals:** 69 positions⁷² (34.7% of employment), including teachers and health professionals
- **Community and Personal Service Workers:** 52 positions⁷³ (26.1% of employment), roles often requiring cultural knowledge
- **Managers:** 27 positions⁷⁴ (13.6% of employment), leadership roles in local organisations

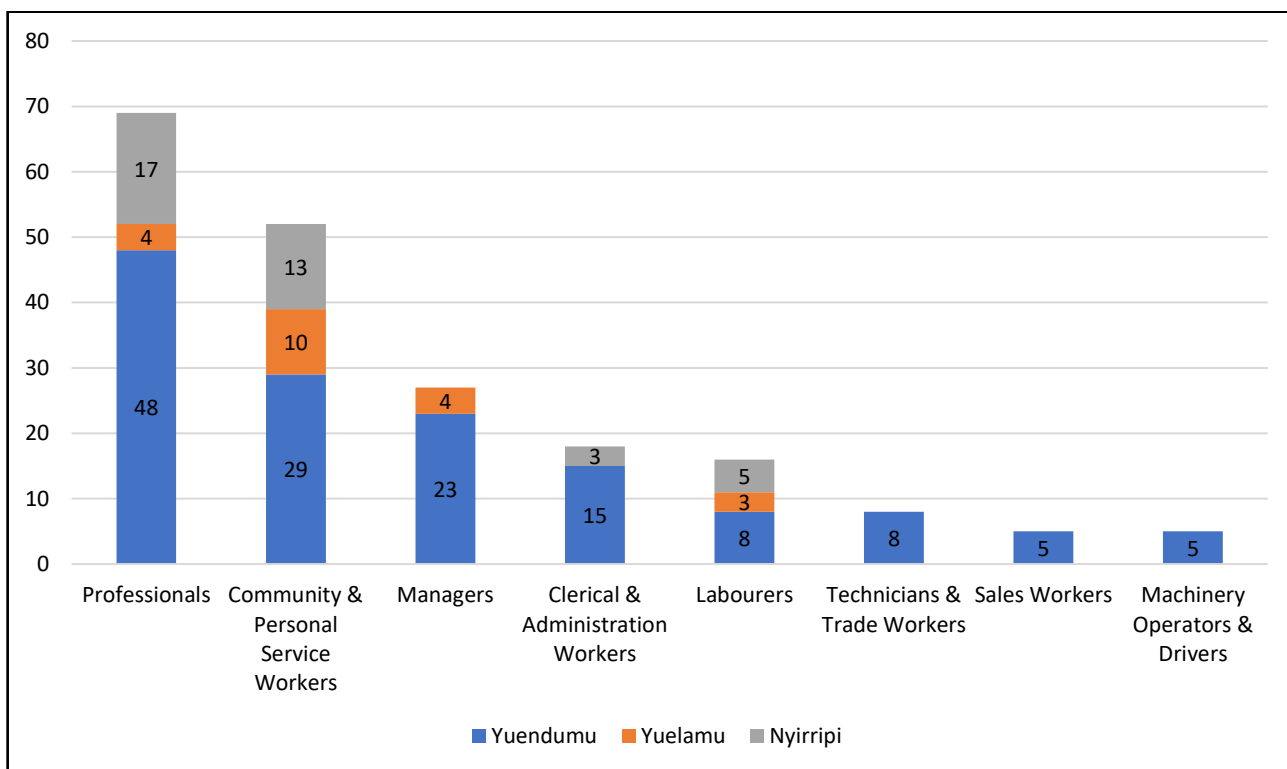


Figure 8: Total Employment by Occupation (2021)

Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 2021 Census of Population and Housing (Canberra: ABS, 2021)

The 2023 Remote Towns Jobs Profile for Yuendumu shows that Aboriginal community members hold 66.8% of filled positions (131 of 196)⁷⁵ with significant variation by occupation:

- **Highest Aboriginal representation:** Community and Personal Service Workers (94.5%)⁷⁶
- **Moderate Aboriginal representation:** Professionals (62.3%) and Clerical/Administrative Workers (52.6%)⁷⁷
- **Lower Aboriginal representation:** Managers (21.4%) and Technicians/Trades Workers (35.3%)⁷⁸

⁷² Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). Census of Population and Housing for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. Table G60: Occupation by Age by Sex. Canberra: ABS. Data compiled for Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi.

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2023) Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Yuendumu. Northern Territory Government, January 2025, Darwin. Pg 9.

⁷⁶ Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2023) Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Yuendumu. Northern Territory Government, January 2025, Darwin. Pg 35.

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ibid

These patterns highlight opportunities to increase Aboriginal representation in management and technical roles through targeted workforce planning strategies.

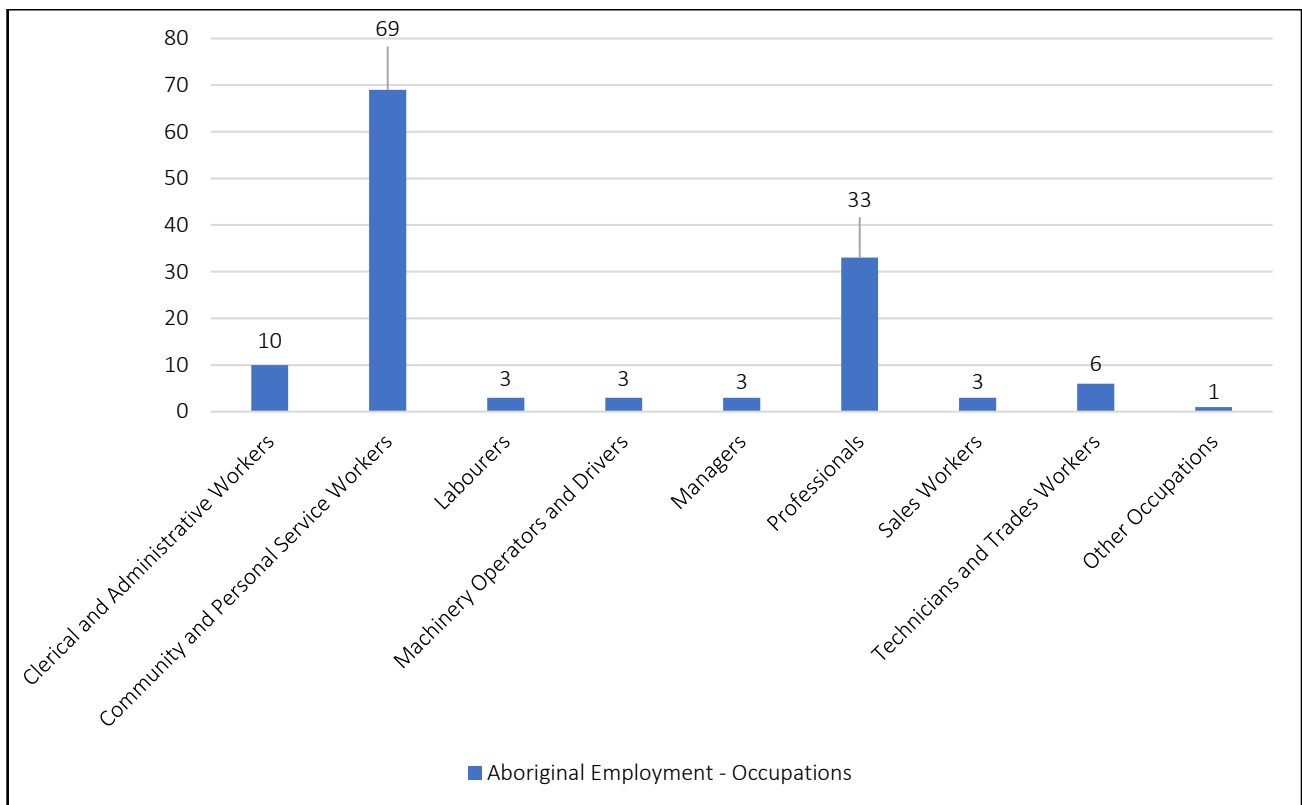


Figure 9: Aboriginal Employment by Occupation (Yuendumu - 2023)

Source: Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2023) Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Northern Territory Government, January 2025, Darwin

Workforce Demand

According to 2023 Remote Town Job Profiles data, Yuendumu has 71 vacant positions out of a total 267 jobs⁷⁹ (a 26.6% vacancy rate), indicating an unmet workforce demand. These vacancies are concentrated in:

- **Education and Training:** 25 vacancies (35.2%), primarily for teachers (14) and Aboriginal Education Workers (9)⁸⁰
- **Healthcare:** 17 vacancies (23.9%), including Aboriginal Health Workers (6) and Primary Health Organisation Managers (3)⁸¹

Notably, 22 positions⁸² (31% of vacancies) are designated as Indigenous-specific roles within Education, Health, and Environmental services, creating dedicated pathways for Aboriginal employment. However, a gap exists between these opportunities and the local workforce with 235 Aboriginal individuals in the CDP, job seekers outnumber vacancies by more than three to one.

Two key factors may be contributing to this gap:

⁷⁹ Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2023) Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Yuendumu. Northern Territory Government, January 2025, Darwin. Pg 23.

⁸⁰ Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2023) Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Yuendumu. Northern Territory Government, January 2025, Darwin. Pg 24.

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid

1. **Qualification requirements:** Many positions require formal qualifications that many job seekers do not possess. See Table 23: Highest qualifications (non-school) per community (page 30) and Table 24: Qualification Required to 2023 Role Vacancies (page 35).
2. **Training uptake:** Despite fee-free training pathways, uptake of VET courses and tertiary degrees is low (see Table 19: Yuendumu VET Student Data 2023 compared to 2016 (page 28), Table 20: Student count for DET Funded VET Programs in Southern Tanami (page 29), and Table 21: A&T count for Apprenticeships and Traineeships in Southern Tanami (page 29).

A core workforce planning challenge is therefore connecting available workers with existing opportunities through relevant training.

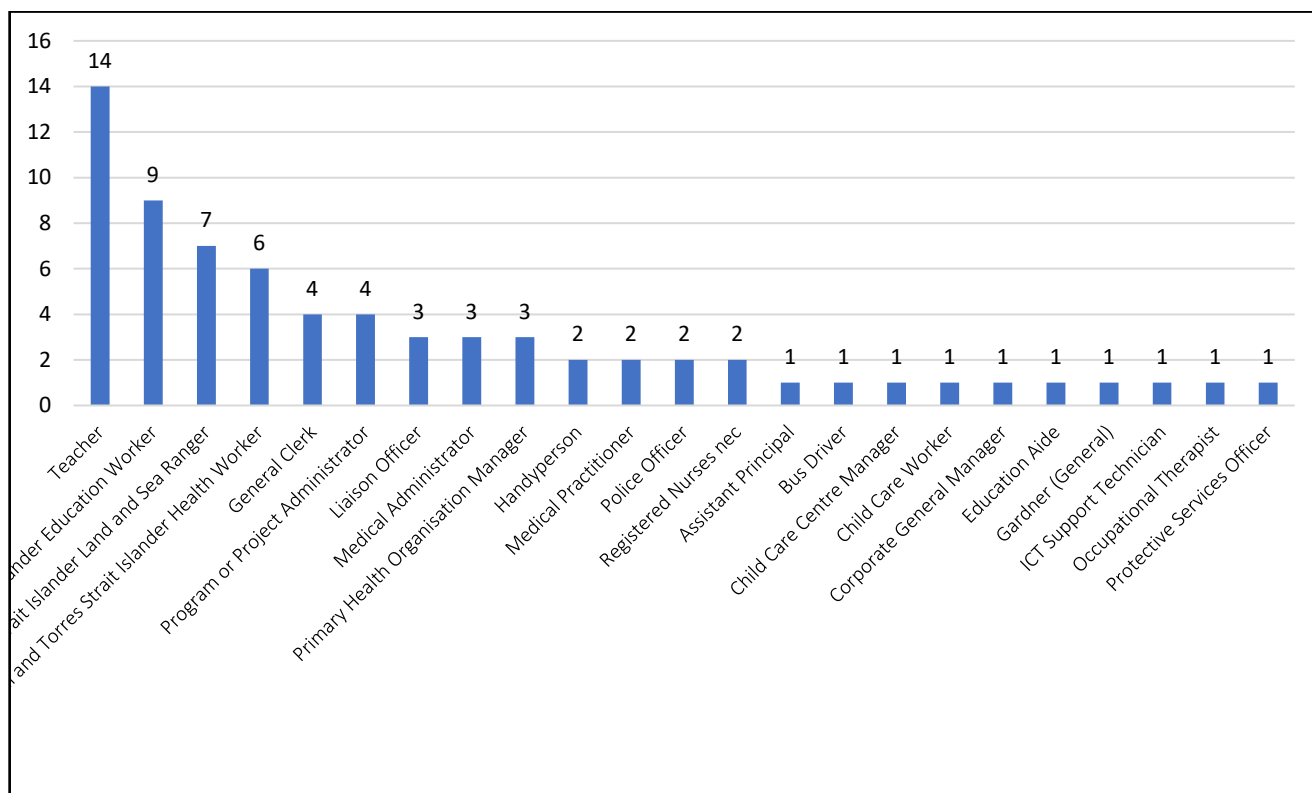

















Figure 10: Job Vacancies (Yuendumu - 2023)






Source: Department of Trade, Business and Innovation, Northern Territory Government (2025). 2023 Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Northern Territory Government, Darwin






Table 24: Qualifications Required and Education Pathways to 2023 Role Vacancies

Occupation	Employer	# of Roles	Qualification	Details	Education/ Training Provider	Cultural Framework
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker	Dept Education and Training	9	Certificate III in School Based Education Support	18 months, fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Caring for Family and Community 

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker	NT Health	6	Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice	2 years, fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Caring for Family and Community 
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land and Sea Ranger	Central Land Council	7	Certificate II in Conservation and Ecosystem Management On the Job Training	6 months, fee free	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs Campus)	Working on Country 
Assistant Principal	Dept Education and Training	1	Bachelor of Education + Relevant Experience	4 years, Commonwealth Supported places available	Charles Darwin University (Darwin Campus)	Caring for Family and Community 
Bus Driver	-	1	HR/HC License + Clearances	HR License: Must hold a Class C driver license for at least 2 years + complete theory + practical tests HC License: MR or HR license for 1 year + complete theory + practical tests	Theory test: -MVR Office Practical training + test: Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Servicing the Community 
Child Care Centre Manager	Central Desert Regional Council	1	Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (or similar) + Relevant Experience	1 year, fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Caring for Family and Community 
Child Care Worker	Central Desert Regional Council	1	Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	18 months, fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Caring for Family and Community 
Classroom Teacher	Dept Education and Training	11	Bachelor of Education (Primary or Secondary)	4 years, Commonwealth Supported places available	Charles Darwin University (Darwin Campus)	Caring for Family and Community 

Corporate General Manager	-	1	Diploma of Leadership & Management (minimum) Bachelor of Business + Relevant Experience	1 year, \$2701 (Government Supported Place) 3 years, Commonwealth Supported places available	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs) Charles Darwin University (Darwin)	Servicing the Community 
Education Aid	Dept Education and Training	1	Certificate III in School Based Education Support	18 months, fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Caring for Family and Community 
Gardner (General)	-	1	Certificate II in Horticulture On the job training	6 months, fee free (Alice Springs Campus)	Charles Darwin University	Working on Country 
General Clerk	-	4	Certificate III/IV in Business On the job training	6 months, fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students / 1 year fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Servicing the Community 
Handyperson	-	2	On the job training	-	-	Building the Community 
ICT Support Technician	-	1	Certificate III in Information Technology	12 months, fee free	Charles Darwin University (Online)	Servicing the Community 
Liaison Officer	-	3	Certificate II in Community Services	6 months, fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Caring for Family and Community 

Medical Administrator	NT Health	3	Certificate III in Business	6 months, fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Servicing the Community 
Medical Practitioner	NT Health	2	Bachelor's degree in a science-related field (e.g. Bachelor of Clinical Sciences) + Doctor of Medicine (MD)	3 years, (Commonwealth supported places available) 4 years, \$13,241 annually (Commonwealth supported places available)	Charles Darwin University (Darwin Campus) Flinders University	Caring for Family and Community 
Occupational Therapist	NT Health	1	Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Occupational Therapy	4 years, (Commonwealth supported places available)	Charles Darwin University (Darwin Campus)	Caring for Family and Community 
Police Officer	NT Police, Fire & Emergency Services	2	Internal Training	30 Weeks (applicants are paid to complete this training program)	Police, Fire and Emergency Services College (Darwin)	Servicing the Community 
Primary Health Organisation Manager	NT Health	3	Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice + Diploma of Leadership & Management + Relevant Experience	18 months, fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students 1 year, \$2701 (Government Supported Place)	Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs)	Servicing the Community 

Program or Project Administrator	-	4	Certificate IV in Business / Certificate II in Community Services	18 months, fee free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Servicing the Community 
Protective Services Officer	Australian Federal Police	1	Internal Training	15 weeks, (applicants are paid a base salary of \$62,263 per annum during this training course)	Australian Federal Police	Servicing the Community 
Registered Nurses	NT Health	2	Bachelor of Nursing	3 years, (Commonwealth supported places available)	Charles Darwin University (Darwin Campus)	Caring for Family and Community 
Senior Teacher	Dept Education and Training	1	Bachelor of Education + Relevant Experience	4 years, Commonwealth Supported places available	Charles Darwin University (Darwin Campus)	Caring for Family and Community 
Special Education Teacher	Dept Education and Training	1	Bachelor of Education + Postgraduate Degree in Education	4 years, (Commonwealth Supported places available)	Charles Darwin University (Darwin Campus)	Caring for Family and Community 
Vocational Education Teacher	Dept Education and Training	1	Experience in your field + Certificate IV in Training and Assessment	1.5 years, \$6,898.00	Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs)	Caring for Family and Community 

Source: Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2023) Remote Towns Jobs Profiles, Northern Territory Government, January 2025, Darwin⁸³

A request to the Department of Education and Training for school position vacancy data as of May 2025 revealed the following non-teaching vacancies across the three schools:

Table 25: May 2025 Education Vacancies (excluding teaching vacancies)

School	Yuendumu School	Mount Allan School	Nyirripi School
Location:	Yuendumu	Yuelamu	Nyirripi
Total Vacant Positions:	11	7	4
Position Title:			
Administrative Support Officer	1	1	1
Special Education Support Officer	2		
Project Assistant	1		

⁸³ Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (2023). Remote Towns Jobs Profile, Yuendumu. Northern Territory Government, January 2025, Darwin. Pg 24

Workforce Support Officer	1		
Senior Warlpiri Educator	3		
VET Trainer	1		
Maintenance Officer	1		2
School Based Apprentice	1		
Home Liaison Officer		4	
Engagement Team Leader		1	
Cleaner		1	
Community Liaison Officer			2

Source: Department of Education and Training. (2025). Data provided to Desert Knowledge Australia for report purposes only. [Unpublished raw data].

This employment analysis highlights six key employment priorities:

1. **Targeted Training Pathways:** Focus on creating clear training for high-demand occupations in education and healthcare.
2. **Align Training with Jobs:** Examine the disconnect between current VET offerings (51% in construction) and actual employment needs (primarily in education, health, and public administration).
3. **On-Country Training:** Develop local training options to overcome geographical barriers, particularly in sectors with current vacancies.
4. **Paid Traineeships:** Create positions that allow participants to earn an income while gaining qualifications, addressing both financial and qualification barriers.
5. **Selective Economic Diversification:** Explore opportunities in currently absent industries, guided by market demand rather than assumptions. Indigenous employed residents were absent in the Construction, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, Professional Scientific and Technical Services, and Administrative and Support Service industries for the region, despite each of these sectors adding value to the Gross Regional Product (GRP), see Table 27: GRP Value added -Employed Regional Residents (page 43).
6. **Build on Strengths:** Explore what is successful in attracting local candidates to roles in the Community and Personal Service sector (94.5% Aboriginal employment) and apply that to other sectors.

By addressing these priorities, workforce planning initiatives can create meaningful employment pathways that benefit individuals and strengthen local economies.

2.4 Economic Context

Economic factors significantly shape workforce participation in Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi. 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.

The regions are mapped below:

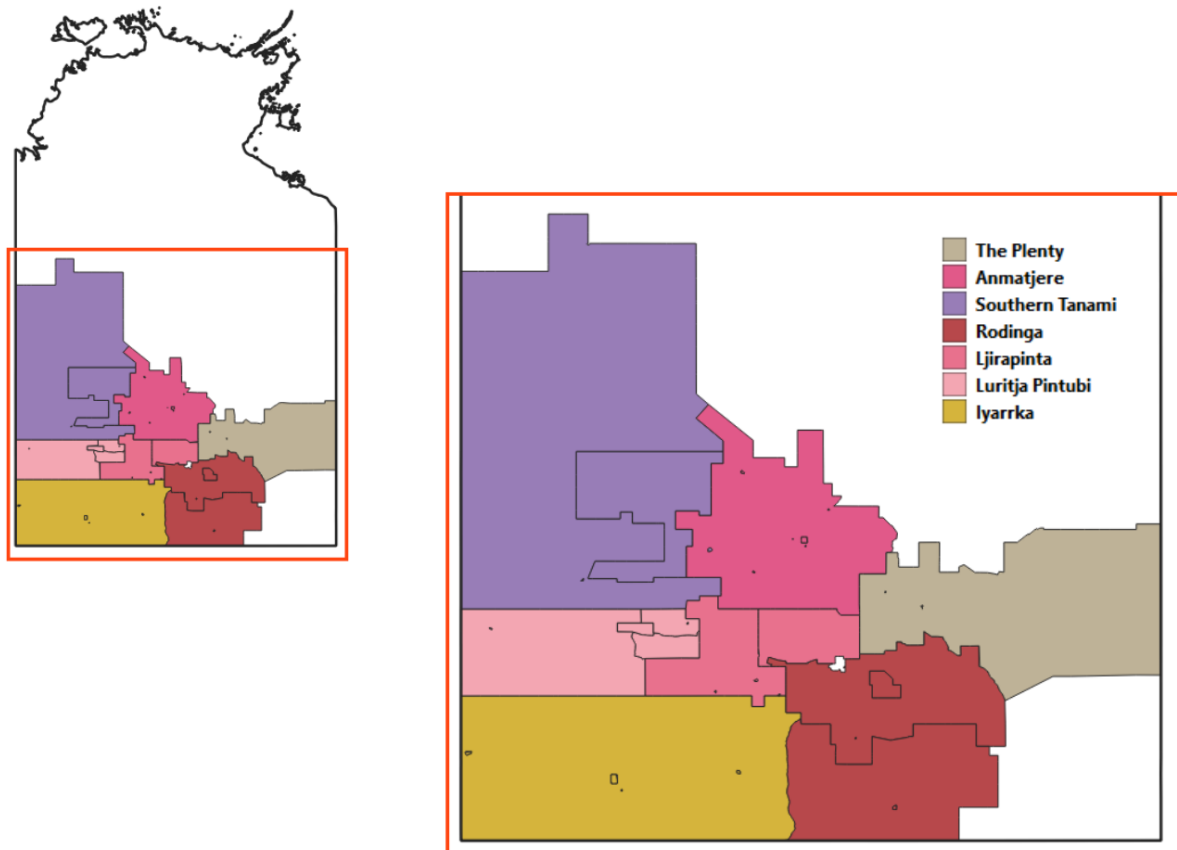


Figure 11: Map of Clusters

Source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2025). *Economic and Demographic Analysis of the Tanami Region*. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2025.

Dataset disclaimer - Data Sources

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

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

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

Gross Regional Product

The Tanami region reveals two distinctly different measures of economic output:

- **Total Place of Work (POW) GRP: \$1.14 billion⁸⁴** - representing all economic value produced within the region, regardless of where the workers are from i.e. resident or commuting workers.
- **Employed Resident GRP: \$96.1 million⁸⁵** - measures the economic value generated by local residents from the region.

The figures in Table 25 below reveal a large gap between the economic value produced within the region (POW) and the value generated by residents (Employed resident). The Employed Resident GRP accounts for 8.5% of the total POW GRP, indicating that most economic activity in the region is driven by non-resident workers or external operations, such as fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) mining workforces. This gap primarily stems from large-scale mining operations that generate considerable economic output but employ relatively few residents.

In the broader Tanami region, the mining sector contributes \$61.9 million (64.5%) to the resident GRP and employs 47 regional residents.⁸⁶ The mining activity is concentrated outside the three main communities, with census data showing minimal mining employment within Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi.

Table 26: Proportion of GRP Per Capita Generated by Indigenous People

Category	Total Workforce	Resident Workforce	POW GRP (\$)	Employed Resident GRP (\$)	POW GRP Per Capita (\$)	Employed Resident GRP Per Capita (\$)
Total Regional	1,167	372	1,136,579,389	96,125,869	973,932	258,402
Indigenous	183	157	122,999,389	23,485,273	672,127	149,587

Data source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2025). *Economic and Demographic Analysis of the Tanami Region*. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2025

- The POW GRP per capita for the region is approximately \$973,932, a figure consistent with a mining-intensive economy supported by a large non-resident workforce.
- Employed Resident GRP per capita is \$258,402, reflecting the average economic value generated by each resident worker.
- Indigenous employees comprise 15% of the total workforce, generate 10.8% of the region's POW GRP, and 24.4% of Employed Resident GRP.

⁸⁴ ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2025). *Economic and Demographic Analysis of the Tanami Region*. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2025.

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Ibid

Table 27: GRP Value added -Employed Regional Residents

Sector	Total Employed Residents	Indigenous Employed Residents	Indigenous % of Total Employed Residents (in industry)	Total Employed Residents Value Added (\$)	Indigenous Employed Residents Value Added (\$)	Indigenous Employed Residents % of Total Value Added
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	4	3	75	1409354	1057016	75
Mining	47	10	22	61948011	13466959	22
Construction	23	0	0	10490333	0	0
Retail Trade	11	0	0	708533	0	0
Accommodation and Food Services	5	0	0	379125	0	0
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	2	0	0	0	0	
Information Media and Telecommunications	34	12	36	1276700	455964	36
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	8	0	0	820306	0	0
Administrative and Support Services	9	0	0	933084	0	0
Public Administration and Safety	67	43	65	3206990	2078605	65
Education and Training	55	35	63	4121938	2607757	63
Health Care and Social Assistance	45	22	50	2738614	1369307	50
Arts and Recreation Services	34	14	42	1612664	679017	42
Other Services	29	16	57	1244347	711055	57

Data source: ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2025). *Economic and Demographic Analysis of the Tanami Region*. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2025⁸⁷

This regional data includes all communities in the Tanami region. The Demographic data is sourced from ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021; and ABS Regional Population Growth. Economic data is sourced from NIEIR, 2024; and .id modelling of NIEIR and ABS Census data.

The Southern Tanami Cluster is a resource-rich region with significant economic output, largely driven by non-resident workers and mining operations.

Workforce Distribution

The remaining resident GRP is distributed across several sectors:

- Construction: \$10.5 million (10.9%)⁸⁸
- Education and Training: \$4.1 million (4.3%)⁸⁹
- Public Administration and Safety: \$3.2 million (3.3%)⁹⁰
- Health Care and Social Assistance: \$2.7 million (2.8%)⁹¹

These economic patterns highlight key considerations for workforce planning:

1. A substantial economic disconnect exists between the region's wealth generation and local

⁸⁷ ID Consulting Pty Ltd (2025). *Economic and Demographic Analysis of the Tanami Region*. Unpublished report prepared for Desert Knowledge Australia, 2025. Demographic data is sourced from ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021, and ABS Regional Population Growth. Economic data is sourced from NIEIR, 2024; and .id modelling of NIEIR and ABS Census data.

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Ibid

employment participation, with most economic value flowing to non-resident workers or external entities.

2. While mining dominates regional output, service sectors (education, public administration, healthcare) collectively employ almost 50% of regional residents but generate 10.4% of resident GRP.⁹²
3. With only one GST-registered business as of June 2024,⁹³ private enterprise infrastructure is limited outside of mining.
4. Government benefits serve as the main income source for 72% of regional residents, compared to 28% deriving primary income from employment.⁹⁴

Cost of Living in Remote Communities

Remote communities in the Northern Territory face substantial cost of living pressures that directly impact workforce participation and economic wellbeing.

Food Security and Affordability

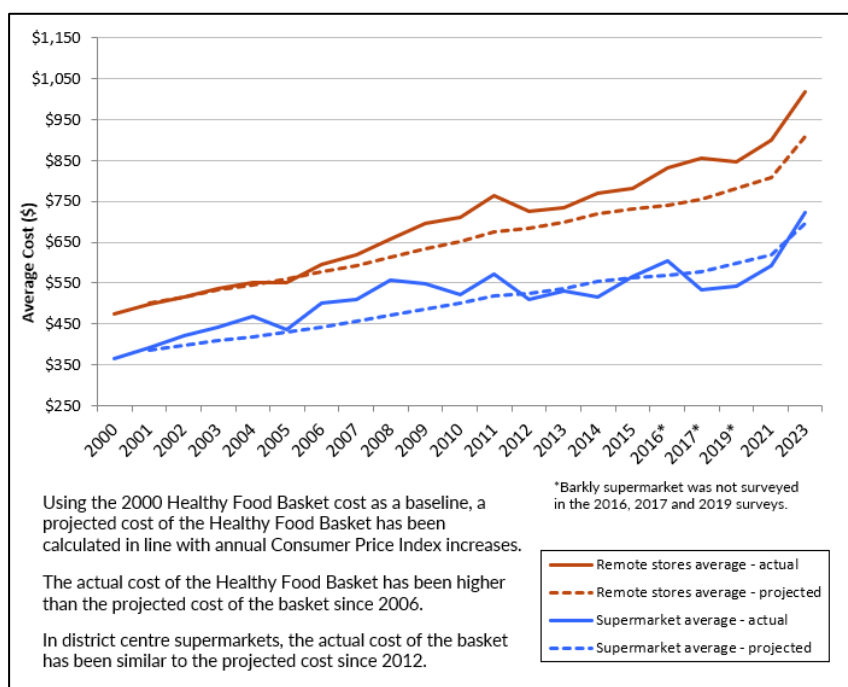


Figure 12: Market Basket Survey - Cost of a Food Basket from 2000-2023

Source: Northern Territory Government, NT Market Basket Survey 2023

The 2023 Market Basket Survey highlights the financial burden of basic nutrition in remote communities:

- The "Healthy Food Basket" (designed to feed a family of six for two weeks) costs an average of \$978 in Central Australian remote stores, 40% more expensive than the \$698 cost in Alice Springs supermarkets.⁹⁵
- The "Current Diet Basket" costs \$1,072 in remote stores compared to \$890 in Alice Springs.⁹⁶

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ NT Health (2023). Attachment A - 2023 NT Market Basket Survey Summary Report. Darwin. <https://data.nt.gov.au/dataset/nt-market-basket-survey-2023>

⁹⁶ Ibid

- From 2021 to 2023, the cost of the Healthy Food Basket rose by 13% in remote stores,⁹⁷ highlighting increasing cost pressures.

These costs create immediate financial challenges for job seekers. A single parent with dependent children receiving the maximum JobSeeker Payment of \$836.50 per fortnight⁹⁸ falls \$141.50 short of affording the “Healthy Food Basket” and \$235.50 short of the “Current Diet Basket,” before accounting for other essential living expenses. This financial gap illustrates how income support payments alone cannot meet basic needs and emphasises the importance of creating accessible local employment opportunities.

Transportation Costs

Transportation costs further impact workforce participation in geographically isolated communities, located 280-440 km from Alice Springs. The 2024 NTCOSS Transport Factsheet notes unleaded petrol reaching 268.7 cents per litre (16.7 cents higher than the previous year), well above the national average.⁹⁹

While the Centre Bush Bus offers weekly services connecting all three communities to Alice Springs, one-way fares range from \$110 to \$175. With almost a third of households reporting a combined weekly income of less than \$500¹⁰⁰ a return bus trip for one family member from Yuendumu would cost \$280,¹⁰¹ over half of that family’s combined income, \$220 if they lived in Yuelamu¹⁰² (44% of that family’s combined income) and \$350 if they lived in Nyirripi¹⁰³ (70% of that family’s combined income).

Table 28: Bush Bus Timetable and Costs¹⁰⁴

Destination	Frequency	One-way Fare (Adult)	One-way Fare (Child)	Return Fare (Adult)
Yuendumu	Weekly	\$140	\$105	\$280
Yuelamu	Weekly	\$110	\$85	\$220
Nyirripi	Weekly	\$175	\$130	\$350

Source: Centre Bush Bus (n.d.) Bus Timetables. <https://centrebushbus.com.au/bus-timetables/>

These high transportation costs limit access to training, employment, and services outside the community, emphasising the need for local employment and training options.

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Services Australia (2025) Jobseeker Payment. <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-much-jobseeker-payment-you-can-get?context=51411>

⁹⁹ Harding, M. and Pilbrow, J (2024). Cost of Transport in the Northern Territory Fact Sheet. Darwin: NTCOSS and Just Change. <https://ntcoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/2024-CoL-Transport-FINAL-030524.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. 117 total household income (weekly) by Indigenous status of household. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

¹⁰¹ Centre Bush Bus (n.d.) Bus Timetables. www.centrebushbus.com.au/bus-timetables/

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

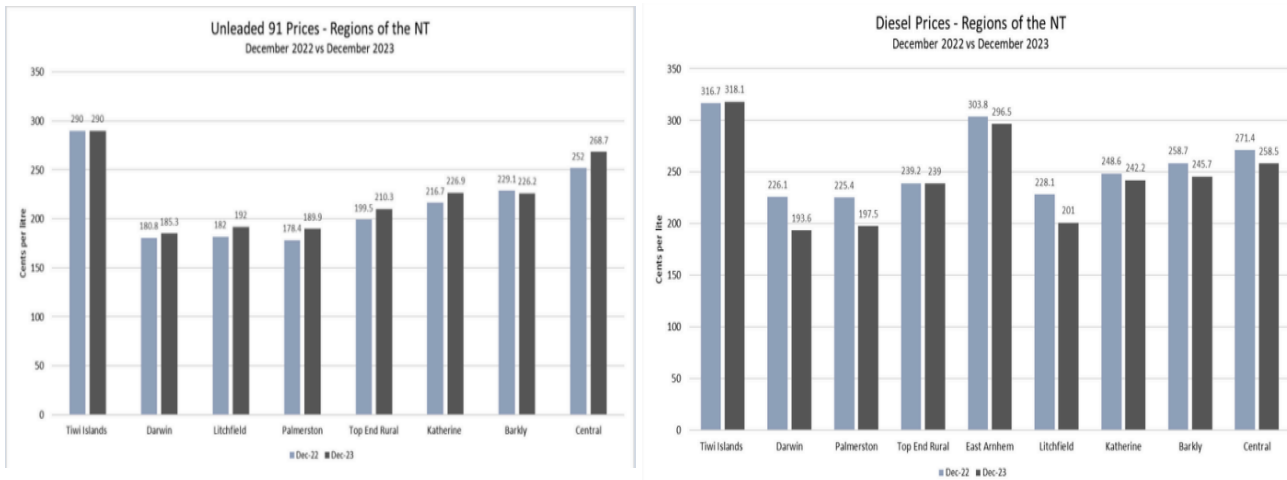


Figure 13: Unleaded 91 and Diesel Prices 2022-23 - Regions of the NT

Source: Harding, M. and Pilbrow, J (2024). *Cost of Transport in the Northern Territory Fact Sheet*. Darwin: NTCOSS and Just Change.

Regional Household Expenditure

While community-specific data is not available, expenditure patterns for the broader Central Desert Regional Council area provide important insights into financial pressures:

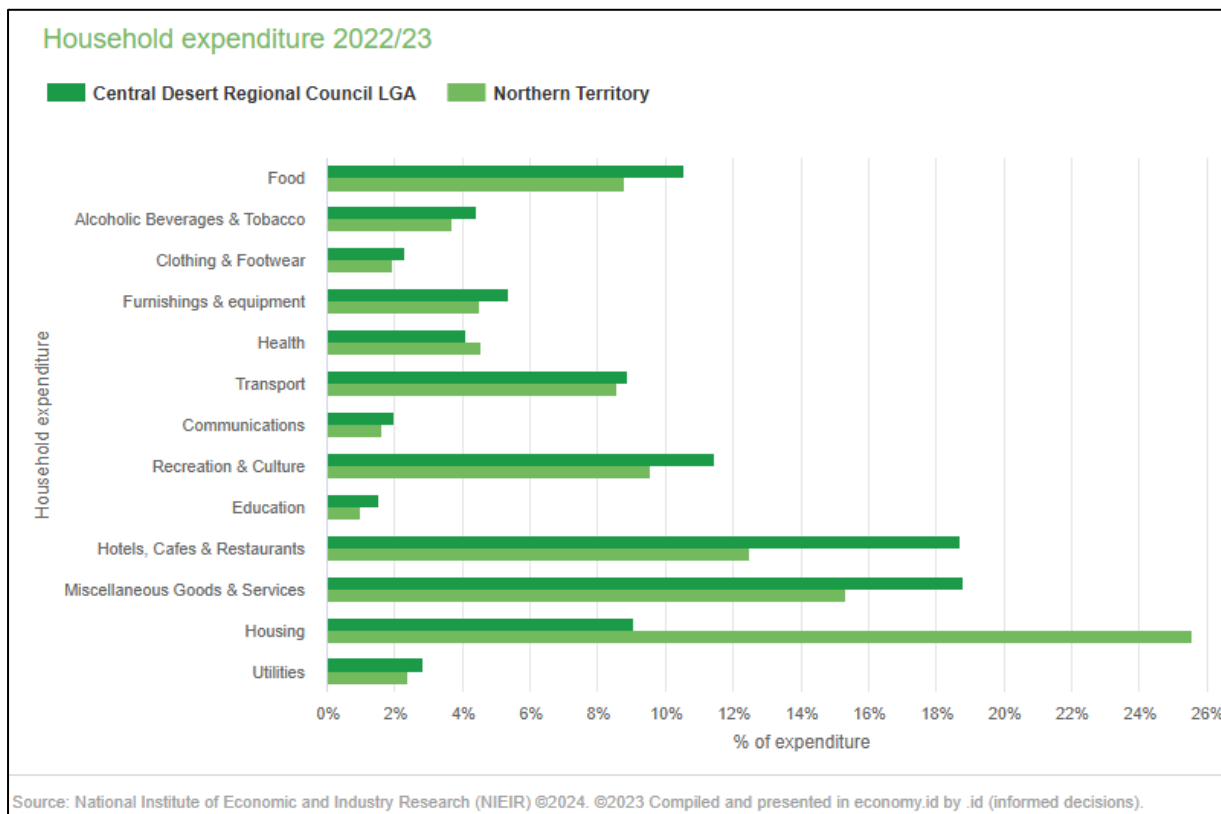


Figure 14: Household Expenditure 2022-23 Central Desert Regional Council LGA and Northern Territory

Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2024. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions)

- Households spend a higher proportion of total expenditure across most categories compared to NT averages.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ .id (Informed Decisions) (2024). *RDA Northern Territory, Household Expenditure*. <https://economy.id.com.au/rda-northern-territory/household-expenditure?IndkeyNieir=23402&WebID=130>.

- The most notable differences in expenditure allocation are toward food, recreation and culture, hotels, cafes and restaurants, and miscellaneous goods and services.¹⁰⁶

Household Income

Aboriginal household income data from the 2021 Census further highlight the significant financial challenges across Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi.

- 27.5% of households (46 out of 167) report weekly household incomes under \$499¹⁰⁷
- 46% of households (77 out of 167) earn less than \$800 per week.¹⁰⁸
- No households report income in the highest brackets (\$3,000+)¹⁰⁹

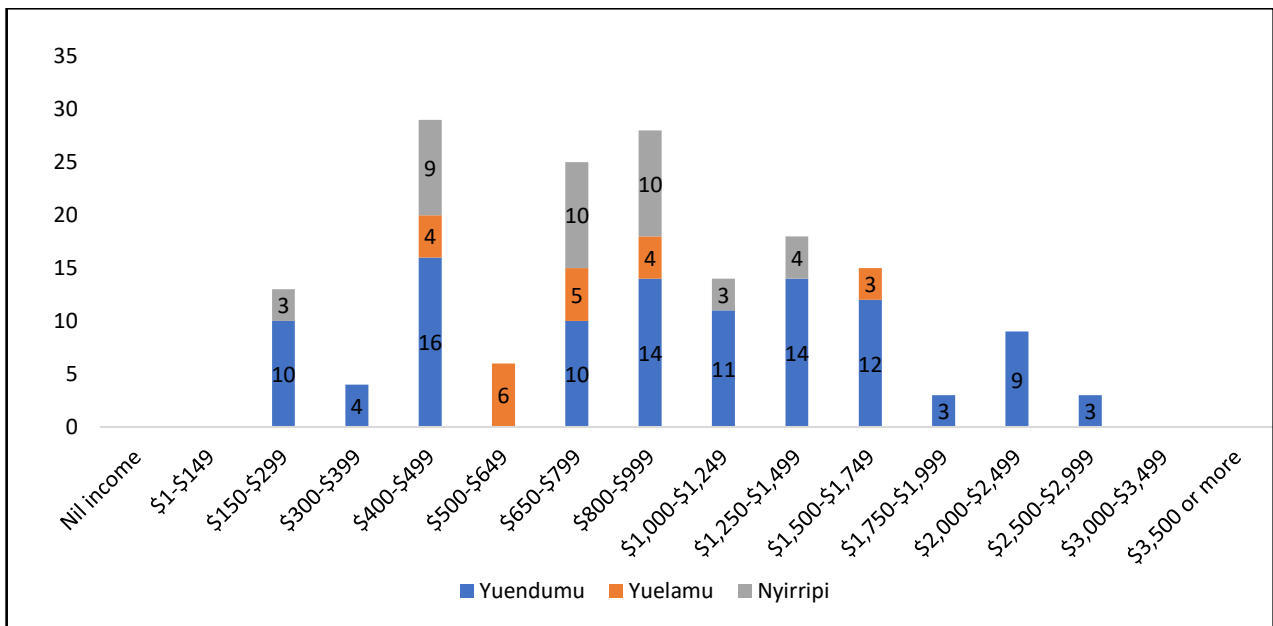


Figure 15: Weekly Reported Aboriginal Household Income

Source: data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile

This income profile, combined with high remote living costs, demonstrates the need for employment that provides sufficient income to meet basic needs. With 235 Aboriginal CDP participants in Yuendumu alone, transitioning even a portion to sustainable employment would significantly improve community economic wellbeing while strengthening the local economy through increased spending power.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ Data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. 117 total household income (weekly) by Indigenous status of household. Canberra: ABS, 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

Socio-Economic Disadvantage

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) illustrates these challenges, with the Tanami SA2 region scoring in the lowest decile nationally across all indices.¹¹⁰

Table 29: SEIFA Indexes for the Tanami SA2 Region

Index	Score	Decile	Percentile
Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage	524	1	1
Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage	704	1	1
Index of Economic Resources	563	1	1
Index of Education and Occupation	858	1	1

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

Note: The SEIFA 2021 data presented here is aggregated for the Yuendumu-Anmatjere Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2). This means that the scores reflect the combined socio-economic conditions of both Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi and the broader Anmatjere region, rather than these communities alone. While this data provides valuable insights, it should be interpreted with the understanding that variations may exist between communities.

These results indicate that these communities are among the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas in Australia, with limited economic opportunities, lower income levels, and significant barriers to education and employment.

Investment and Opportunity: Current Funding Allocations

Public funding data for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi reveals financial resources flowing into the region which create potential opportunities for workforce development and economic participation. Current unfinished projects\ grants Government funding published through BushTel and educational investments reported by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority indicate approximately \$186.6 million being allocated across Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi. These allocations fall into two distinct categories: Regional Investments and Community Specific Investments. Note that this analysis encompasses publicly available funding data and additional resources exist beyond those documented here.

Regional Investments (\$153.4 million)

The majority of funding (\$153.4M) supports regional initiatives serving multiple communities.

Key regional investments include:

- **Indigenous Employment and Economic Development Programs** (\$101.0M, 65.8% of regional allocation): The largest component comprises the Central Land Council Ranger Program (\$57.1M

¹¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/latest-release>

through 2028) and the Community Development Program (\$42.6M through 2025).¹¹¹ These initiatives represent the primary employment infrastructure across the region.

- **Senior and Elder Support Services** (\$17.8M, 11.6%): Multiple Commonwealth Home Support Program grants and First Nations Aged Care Infrastructure investments delivered through the Department of Health and Aged Care¹¹² provide essential services for older community members.
- **Early Childhood Services** (\$14.1M, 9.2%): The Community Child Care Fund¹¹³ supports critical early childhood development services across multiple communities.
- **Health, Safety and Family Support** (\$15.9M, 10.4%): Community Safety Patrol operations (\$8.7M), family support services (\$7.2M)¹¹⁴ and environmental management initiatives address wellbeing and safety needs.

Table 30: Regional Investments by Program Category:¹¹⁵

Program Category	Amount (\$M)	% of Regional	Key Initiatives	Timeframe
Employment & Economic Development	101.0	65.8%	Ranger Program, CDP	2019-2028
Senior & Elder Support	17.8	11.6%	Home Support, Infrastructure	2018-2025
Early Childhood Services	14.1	9.2%	Child Care Fund	2018-2025
Community Safety & Health	8.7	5.7%	Safety Patrol	2022-2025
Family Services	7.2	4.7%	Intensive Family Support	2021-2026
Land Management	3.2	2.1%	Southern Tanami IPA	2024-2028
Community Strengthening	0.7	0.5%	Families Brokerage Fund	2024-2025
Infrastructure	0.6	0.4%	Local Roads	2023-2026

Source: Data compiled from BushTel (n.d.) Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. www.bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile

Community-Specific Investments (\$33.1 million)

In addition to regional funding, each community receives dedicated resources targeted to specific local priorities. These location-specific allocations, which include both project funding from BushTel and educational investments from the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, differ substantially across the three communities:

- **Yuendumu (\$25.4M):** As the largest community, Yuendumu receives the highest location-specific allocation. Major components include programs supporting community governance and safety (\$11.0M) notably the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services; health initiatives (\$3.8M); and

¹¹¹ Data compiled from BushTel (2025). Yuendumu - Projects and Grants. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/198?tab=projects>; Yuelamu - Projects and Grants. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/197?tab=projects>; Nyirripi - Projects and Grants. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/128?tab=projects>

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ Ibid

cultural, arts, and media programs (\$3.7M) through Warlpiri Media.¹¹⁶ Educational funding adds another \$5.7M supporting 126.5 enrolled students.¹¹⁷

- **Nyirripi (\$5.5M):** With a focus on youth and community engagement, Nyirripi's specific funding emphasizes the Ngurratjuta Junior Ranger Program (\$2.3M), local employment and business development (\$0.5M), and infrastructure improvement through the aerodrome upgrade project (\$0.3M).¹¹⁸ Education funding provides \$2.1M for 44.9 enrolled students.¹¹⁹
- **Yuelamu (\$2.3M):** The most limited allocations are directed to Yuelamu, primarily supporting store sustainability and food security (\$0.5M) and local arts development (\$0.1M).¹²⁰ Yuelamu's education funding of \$1.7M supports 70.3 students.¹²¹

The distribution of these location-specific resources is summarised in the following table:

Table 31: Community Specific Investments

Community	Direct Project Funding (\$M)	Education Allocation (\$M)	Combined Total (\$M)	Primary Focus Areas
Yuendumu	19.6	5.7	25.4	Governance, Health, Media/Arts, Education
Yuelamu	0.6	1.7	2.3	Food Security, Arts, Education
Nyirripi	3.4	2.1	5.5	Youth Engagement, Employment, Infrastructure, Education
TOTAL	23.7	9.5	33.1	

Source: Data compiled from BushTel (n.d.) Community Profiles for Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Nyirripi. www.bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile

Workforce planning Considerations and Opportunities

The financial resources directed to the Yuendumu cluster present potential for local employment creation and workforce planning. The concentration of funding in employment and economic development programs (\$101.0M), constitutes nearly two-thirds of regional allocations. This emphasis on employment infrastructure through ranger programs and community development initiatives provides a foundation upon which targeted workforce strategies could be built.

This analysis is based on funding data published on BushTel and educational data from the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. Additional funding sources exist beyond the scope of this report. The BushTel presentation of funding creates methodological challenges in accurately attributing regional investments to specific communities, necessitating the careful distinction between regional and community-specific allocations presented in this analysis.

¹¹⁶ BushTel (2025). Yuendumu, Projects and Grants. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/198?tab=projects>

¹¹⁷ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2024) Yuendumu School, My School. <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50068>

¹¹⁸ BushTel (2025). Nyirripi, Projects and Grants. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/198?tab=projects>

¹¹⁹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2024) Nyirripi School, My School. <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50112>

¹²⁰ BushTel (2025). Nyirripi, Projects and Grants. <https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/profile/128?tab=projects>

¹²¹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2024) Mount Allan School, My School. <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50105>

Step 3: Identifying Future Needs – Community Aspirations and Workforce Planning Opportunities

The workforce planning landscape is significantly enhanced when aligned with community aspirations and priorities. Throughout Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi, numerous community-driven initiatives have been identified that offer dual benefits: meeting essential community needs while creating meaningful employment pathways for local residents.

OCARC Community Meetings

In 2023, a series of community aspirations were raised during OCARC meetings, identifying initiatives that present significant opportunities for workforce planning. These community-identified priorities span multiple sectors.

Yuendumu community members prioritised:

- Resource centre revival for vehicle repairs and tool access
- New community facilities including basketball courts, recreation halls, and playgrounds
- Reintroduction of CDEP-like programs offering skill development
- Local employment prioritisation, particularly for a community connector role
- Development of old copper mine blocks for local enterprise
- Establishment of a community museum
- Elderly care services to support seniors within the community
- Expanded Youth programs to engage young people
- Community-based dialysis services to reduce travel to Alice Springs

Yuelamu community members prioritised:

- Infrastructure development including men's spaces, streetlight repairs, and sporting facilities
- Road maintenance with priority for local operators
- Housing repairs addressing water, power, and pest issues
- Assistance and training for licensing, OCHRE cards and White cards
- Creation of jobs with proper entitlements including superannuation and leave
- Re-establishment of the Art Centre
- Support for agricultural entrepreneurship
- Increased Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisation services
- Housing construction and renovation

Nyirripi community members prioritised:

- Road and outstation infrastructure improvements
- Enhanced educational resources, including healthy food and bilingual education
- Expansion of the ranger program
- Creation of a community museum
- Recruitment of more workers for the Old People's Program

By prioritising these initiatives and employing local workers in their implementation, these communities have identified a pathway to stimulate economic growth while building a more skilled workforce. In communities with limited economic activity, these projects represent not only service improvements but important

employment opportunities that could enhance the capacity of residents while ensuring development benefits remain within the community.

School Action Plans: Education-Based Employment Opportunities

The On Country Learning Measure, a \$40 million initiative supported by both Northern Territory and Australian Governments, offers significant workforce planning potential across all three communities. School Action Plans, developed collaboratively with community members, cultural authorities, school staff, and students, outline several employment pathways for community members.¹²²

Yuendumu School's action plan highlights workforce planning opportunities through:¹²³

- Creating a Warlpiri Co-Principal position for cultural leadership
- Expanded employment for Yapa (Aboriginal) staff with training support
- Early childhood education positions
- A dedicated project officer to coordinate on-country initiatives

Mount Allan School's (Yuelamu) action plan highlights workforce planning opportunities through:¹²⁴

- Local school engagement team roles
- Teaching and mentoring positions in Learning on Country programs
- Support roles in literacy and numeracy programs
- Training facilitators for middle years employment pathways
- Increased government positions at the school for community members

Nyirripi School's action plan highlights workforce planning opportunities through:¹²⁵

- Government teaching positions for Yapa teachers
- Expanded school employment for local community members
- Community liaison and education support roles
- Cultural mentoring positions for community men and grandmothers

Supported by \$9.4 million in combined funding across the three schools in 2023,¹²⁶ these education-focused initiatives have the potential to improve learning outcomes and create sustainable, meaningful employment for local community members. By implementing the school priorities identified above, schools could leverage their existing funding to benefit the entire community.

¹²² Northern Territory Government, Department of Education. (2024). *On-Country Learning Measure: Central Australian Schools Action Plans*.

<https://education.nt.gov.au/statistics-research-and-strategies/on-country-learning-measure-central-australian-schools-action-plans>


¹²³ Education NT (2024) Yuendumu School Action Plan. https://education.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1369511/yuendumu-school-action-plan.PDF

¹²⁴ Education NT (2024) Mt Allan School Action Plan. https://education.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1369498/mt-allan-school-action-plan.PDF

¹²⁵ Education NT (2024) Nyirripi School Action Plan. https://education.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1369501/nyirripi-school-action-plan.PDF

¹²⁶ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2024) *School Finances: Yuendumu School, Mount Allan School, Nyirripi School. My School*. <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50068/finances>; <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50105/finances>; <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/50112/finances>.

2024 Action Plan



1. Create a Co-Principal Position
Work with Senior Warlpiri Educators and Elders to: recruit a Yapa Co-Principal who has responsibility for the cultural leadership of the school, and to promote a culturally responsive environment for all students, their families and the staff.

2. Employ More Yapa Staff
Help yapa staff to work at the school and to participate in training and development opportunities so they are:
Team Teaching with Kardiya
Supporting students with additional needs
Working with families to improve engagement and attendance.

3. Quality Secondary Programs for Students in Years 7 - 12
Employ classroom teachers with experience and expertise in teaching students at the secondary level, including:
Literacy & numeracy STEM Vocational Education
The Arts Physical Education.

4. Explicit teaching & learning of Warlpiri & English language, literacy, and numeracy.
Create another Early Childhood class so students have a better chance to engage and learn
Support the coordination and tracking of allied health services and programs, Improve the way student progress and achievement is monitored.

5. Expanded community engagement and On-Country Learning
Employ a Project Officer to:
work with Senior Warlpiri Educators, Elders, families and the staff
coordinate and support the delivery of On-Country initiatives in the school, including Country Visits, Culture Days, 50th Birthday celebrations and Bush Trips

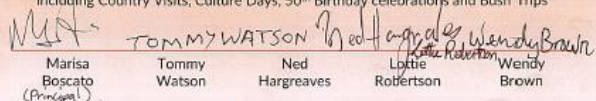

 Marisa Boscato (Principal) Tommy Watson Ned Hargreaves Lotte Robertson Wendy Brown

Figure 16: Yuendumu School Action Plan
Source: Northern Territory Government. Department of Education and Training. On Country Learning Measure: Central Australian Schools Action Plans

MOUNT ALLAN SCHOOL

2024 Action Plan




Our Aspirations
Our young people are strong in their identity and knowledgeable about Anmatyerr and Warlpiri Culture. Our young people are able to meet the challenges required for work and participation within and beyond Yuelamu Community.
Our young people have the skills to support self-determination and community development.

How are we going to get there?

PRIORITY 1 School attendance
• Our local school engagement team will help get kids to school and support them to stay at school.

PRIORITY 2 Meaningful learning and Pathways
• Strengthening our Learning on Country and Indigenous Language and Culture Programs
• High quality, engaging whole-school literacy and numeracy approaches to help our kids: (RWI phonics and LTD Maths)
• Training for Middle Years students as a pathway to employment

PRIORITY 3 The right people
• An increasing number of Yuelamu community members are employed in Government jobs at school.
• Our staff have good training to help them provide the best education for our kid

Dowreen Lata, Principal Rosina Stratford, LEaD Committee Aulung, Cultural Authority

Figure 17: Mount Allen School Action Plan
Source: Northern Territory Government. Department of Education and Training. On Country Learning Measure: Central Australian Schools Action Plans

CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Culturally Responsive Learning

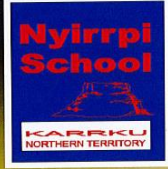




As a Community, We are One

In 2024, Nyirripi has asked for:
Meaningful Learning – The Right People – Wellbeing and Inclusion

STRONG LEARNING
We have more people to help our kids in the classroom "learning both ways" – "Jintangka Pina Jarrinjaku"
We have a Literacy Leader (Literacy Jamurunguru), helping Yapa and Kardiya Teachers work with big and small groups of Kurdu-Kurdu (Children) and Kurdu (Child) on their own.

STRONG PEOPLE
We will have:
Yapa Teachers working in Government Jobs
More Yapa from Nyirripi working at Nyirripi School (Nyirripi Kuurlu)
Working with community to help our kids become strong learners

WELLBEING AND INCLUSION
We will have teachers, community men and Grandmothers work with our kids to understand themselves and help them care for each other and be kind.

NYIRRIPI SCHOOL VALUES

Jintangka Pina Jarrinjaku Learning both ways
Mardanjaku Mawjarle Yalkanjaku Panaku
Pirjaku manu Wardingi Nginjanku
Being Strong and safe

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT EDUCATION NT ENGAGE GROW ACHIEVE
 School Principal Signature LEaD Committee Chair Signature Cultural Authority Signature

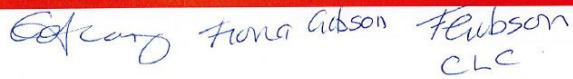


Figure 18: Nyirripi School Action Plan
Source: Northern Territory Government. Department of Education and Training. On Country Learning Measure: Central Australian Schools Action Plans

Central Desert Regional Council Community Plans

The Central Desert Regional Council community plans for 2024/25 also identify local priorities that connect directly to workforce planning.

Yuendumu's plan highlights workforce planning opportunities through¹²⁷:

- Creating Youth leadership programs
- Expanding aged care activities
- Community work orders
- Cultural tourism development
- Public infrastructure repair and upgrades

Yuelamu's priorities include¹²⁸:

- Increased cultural programs
- Tourism initiatives
- Enhanced aged care activities
- Providing upgrades to public infrastructure (specifically playgrounds and sporting facilities)

Nyirripi's priorities include¹²⁹:

- Street lighting and shade structure upgrades
- Sports facility improvements
- Youth programs and services

These community-identified priorities reveal several important themes for workforce planning:

1. **Alignment between community needs and job creation:** Across all three communities, there's a clear understanding of how addressing local needs can simultaneously create employment opportunities. From infrastructure projects to cultural initiatives, community members have identified practical projects that could employ local residents while improving quality of life.
2. **Emphasis on cultural and community led approaches:** A consistent theme is the importance of cultural leadership and locally driven initiatives. Positions like the Warlpiri Co-Principal, cultural mentors, and on-country project coordinators highlight the value placed on embedding cultural knowledge within employment structures.
3. **Service gaps as employment opportunities:** Communities have identified gaps in aged care, health services and youth programs that represent both community needs and employment potential. Addressing these through local employment creates improved service delivery while increasing economic participation.
4. **Infrastructure development as employment vehicles:** Infrastructure projects from road maintenance to building construction are viewed as vehicles for local employment, offering skills development while creating tangible community assets.

¹²⁷ Central Desert Regional Council (2024) Yuendumu Community Plan. <https://www.centraldesert.nt.gov.au/yuendumu/yuendumu-community-plan>

¹²⁸ Central Desert Regional Council (2024) Yuelamu Community Plan. <https://centraldesert.nt.gov.au/yuelamu/yuelamu-community-plan>

¹²⁹ Central Desert Regional Council (2024) Nyirripi Community Plan. <https://centraldesert.nt.gov.au/nyirripi/nyirripi-community-plan>

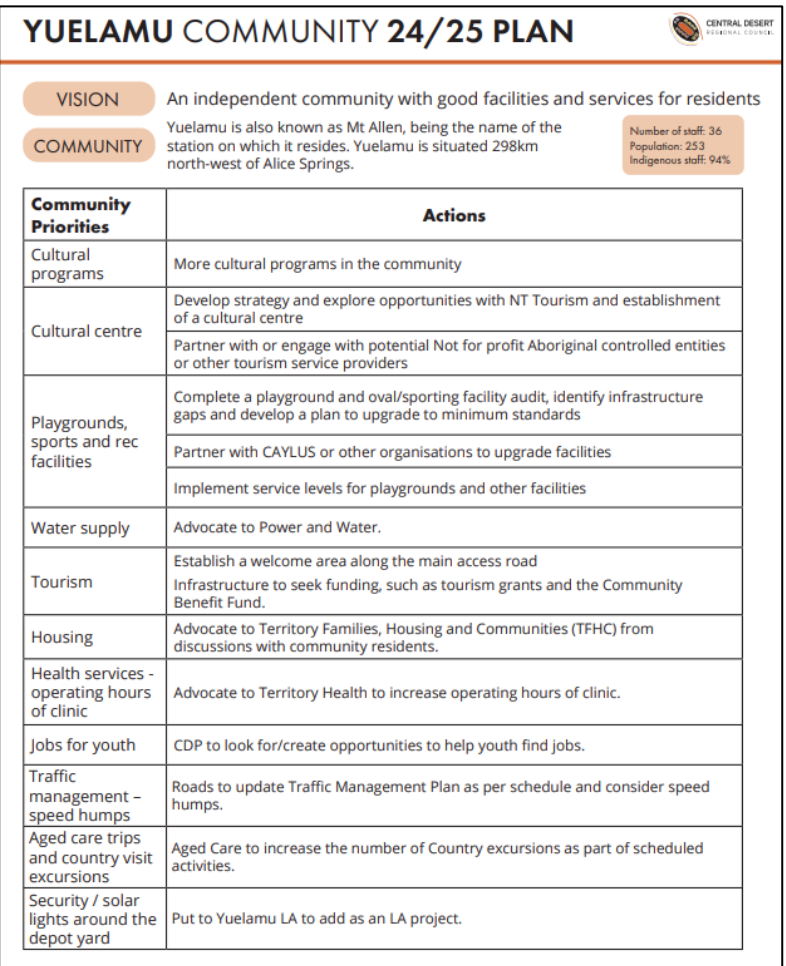
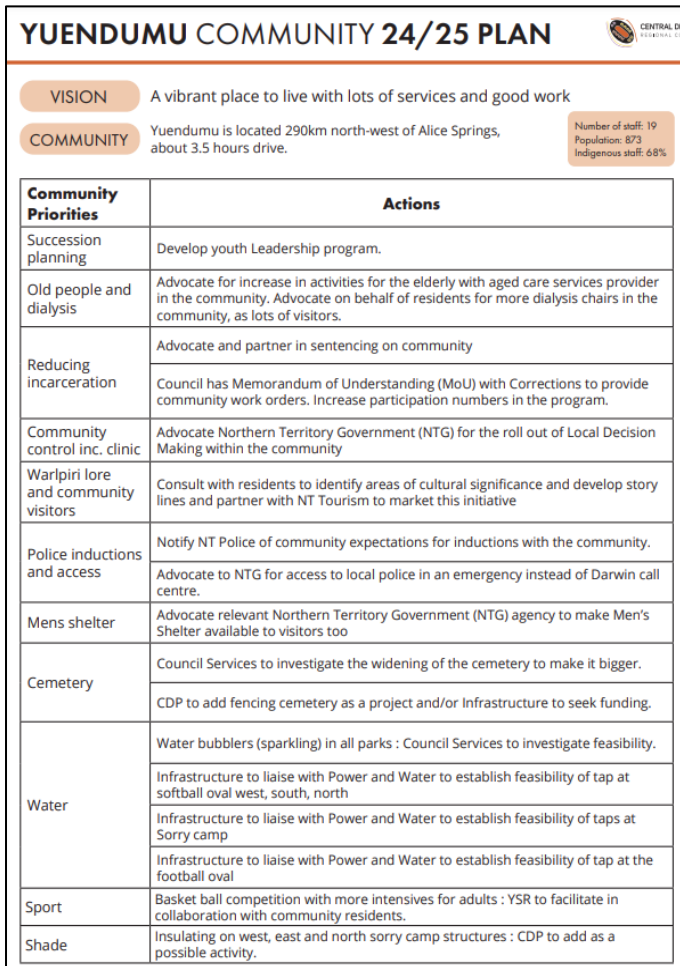


Figure 19: Yuendumu Community 24/25 Plan
Source: Central Desert Regional Council (2024) Yuendumu Community Plan

Figure 20: Yuelamu Community 24/25 Plan
Source: Central Desert Regional Council (2024) Yuelamu Community Plan

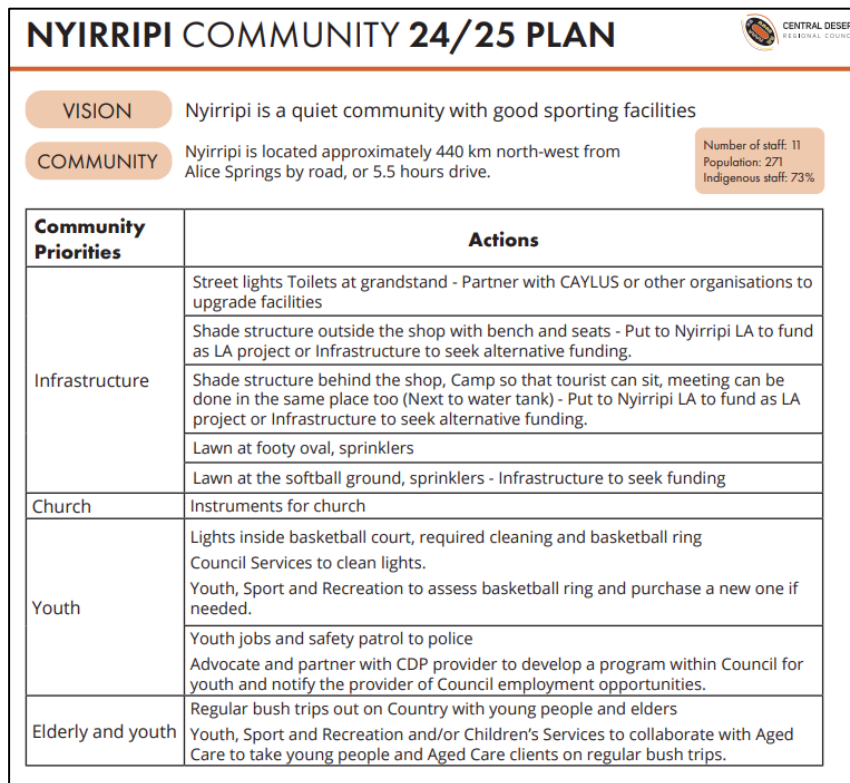


Figure 21: Nyirripi Community 24/25 Plan
Source: Central Desert Regional Council (2024) Nyirripi Community Plan

These aspirations present valuable opportunities that require targeted recruitment and procurement policies to ensure benefits reach Aboriginal community members. By establishing Aboriginal employment targets, creating pathways for local business participation, and providing appropriate training, these initiatives could address community needs while creating sustainable employment that strengthens local economies.

Workforce Planning Opportunities

The analysis of community demographics, education and training landscape, employment patterns, economic context, and community aspirations in Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi reveals several strategic opportunities. These approaches could address key workforce planning challenges while building on community strengths and existing investments. Implementation through a phased approach with community leadership and governance would maximize their effectiveness.

Opportunities that will have the greatest potential for immediate and sustained job creation, while also supporting broader community aspirations for economic participation and self-determination for job creation are:

1. **Creating a community skills directory** to connect local people with available jobs and employers.
2. **Supporting local enterprise development** (such as food services, tourism, and arts businesses).
3. **Establishing paid traineeships and hands-on job training** to build skills and create direct employment pathways, especially for young people.

These initiatives have the greatest potential for immediate and sustained job creation, while also supporting broader community aspirations for economic participation and self-determination.

1. Alignment of Training with Employment Demand

Challenge	Suggested Actions
<p>There appears to be a disconnect between current training offerings and existing employment opportunities.</p>	<p>1.1 Establish a Community Workforce Training Priority Framework that aligns VET offerings with sectors experiencing persistent vacancies and significant investment. VET training in education, healthcare, aged care, and conservation and land management could enhance employment outcomes for this cluster.</p>
	<p>1.2 Develop Sector-Specific Training Pathways for high-demand occupations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Support (Certificate III in Education Support) • Aboriginal Health Workers (Certificate IV in Aboriginal Primary Health Care) • Aged Care (Certificate III in Individual Support - Aging) • Child Care (Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care) • Land Management (Certificate II/III in Conservation and Land Management)
	<p>1.3 Create a Workforce Data Dashboard for each</p>

	community, tracking job vacancies, qualification requirements, and filled positions to provide real-time information for training providers and job seekers.
	1.4 Create a community skills directory to connect local talent with job opportunities.

2. Implement on-Country training solutions

Challenge	Suggested Actions
Geographic isolation creates significant barriers to accessing training, prohibitive for many community members.	2.1 Establish a Training Hub in each community, equipped with digital learning technology, dedicated training spaces, and accommodation for visiting trainers.
	2.2 Develop a Remote Delivery Model in partnership with registered training organisations (RTOs) such as Batchelor Institute and Charles Darwin University, combining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block training periods with trainers visiting communities • Online/virtual learning with local support • Workplace-based training and assessment
	2.3 Train and employ local training support officers to provide ongoing assistance between trainer visits, addressing literacy, numeracy, and digital skill barriers.
	2.4 Create a Regional Training Calendar coordinating all planned training delivery across the three communities to maximize resources and participation.

3. Develop a paid traineeship program

Challenge	Suggested Actions
Low household incomes (46% of Aboriginal households in this cluster earn less than \$800 per week) combined with high costs of living may mean many cannot afford to take time away from	3.1 Implement a Paid Traineeship Program in high-demand sectors, providing income while working toward qualifications, targeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Support Traineeships

income-generating activities for training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Health Worker Traineeships • Aged Care Traineeships • Child Care Traineeships • Ranger Traineeships
	3.2 Develop a "Step-Up" Certification Model that breaks qualification requirements into smaller, achievable units with associated pay increases as units are completed.
	3.3 Create Position Funding Pools for trainee roles, drawing on the allocations for Indigenous Employment and Business.
	3.4 Establish a Training Wage Subsidy for local employers who provide paid release time for employees to attend training.

4. Create Culturally Responsive Employment Pathways

Challenge	Suggested Actions
Aboriginal employment shows strong representation in community service roles (94.5%) but lower representation in management (21.4%) and technical positions (35.3%).	4.1 Develop a Cultural Workforce Framework identifying the factors that contribute to successful Aboriginal employment in community service roles and applying these lessons to other sectors.
	4.2 Implement a Community Leadership Pathway specifically designed to increase Aboriginal representation in management roles through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate IV in Leadership and Management • Cultural leadership mentoring program • Job shadowing opportunities with current managers
	4.3 Create Culturally Validated Job Descriptions for key roles, developed in partnership with community members to ensure they reflect cultural knowledge and strengths.

	<p>4.4 Support local enterprise: Encourage and support local Aboriginal-owned business development in areas such as food services, tourism, land management, the arts, or personal services like hair cutting. This can be done by running a business enterprise workshop to connect community members with business knowledge experts and supporting one to two business enterprise projects in each community per year.</p>
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5. Leverage Existing Investments for Employment Growth

Challenge	Suggested Actions
<p>Substantial investments across the three communities (\$186.6 million combined) are not yet fully translated into local employment opportunities.</p>	<p>5.1 Develop Employment Plans for Major Funded Programs, working with funding recipients to establish Aboriginal employment targets and pathways, particularly for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Land Council Ranger Program (\$57.1 million) • Aged Care programs (\$17.8 million) • Child Care programs (\$14.1 million) • Indigenous Health initiatives (\$8.7 million)
	<p>5.2 Implement local employment requirements for all government-funded initiatives, with appropriate targets for local Aboriginal employment.</p>
	<p>5.3 Establish procurement policy requirements for all government-funded initiatives that prioritise purchasing from local Aboriginal business enterprises.</p>

With community leadership and cross-sector collaboration, the workforce planning challenges identified in Yuendumu, Yuelamu, and Nyirripi could be addressed, creating meaningful employment pathways that contribute to community well-being and local economic development.

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