



TERRITORY FAMILIES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

Mparntwe/Alice Springs Youth Action Plan 2023-2027





Acknowledgment of country

We, the Alice Springs Local Action Group, acknowledge that the Arrernte people own this land on which we are privileged to live and work. We acknowledge the deep connection to language and land of the Arrernte people and pay our respects to Elders past present and emerging.

Mparntwe/Alice Springs is built on Arrernte country. Arrernte people have lived in the region for tens of thousands of years and continue to make a strong contribution to the rich culture of the town, which was established initially as the base for the overland telegraph line in 1871.

Mparntwe/Alice Springs is geographically isolated and has a challenging environment. It services the Central Australian region, covering an area of 872.861 square kilometres.

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Foreword

As representatives from Mparntwe/Alice Springs on the 2022 and 2023 NT Youth Round Table, we would like to introduce this youth action plan and acknowledge the commitment and work of the Local Action Group in bringing this important document to life. In our time on the NT Youth Round Table, we are provided the opportunity to build leadership qualities, learn public speaking and communication skills and develop an understanding of the importance of a youth voice in the development of policies that affect young peoples' lives. Having all been born and raised in Mparntwe/Alice Springs we know the community we live in and the community we want to see into the future.

A community where young people feel safe and loved, have material basics, are healthy in all respects, are engaged and learning towards their chosen path, are participating as a valued member of their community, have a positive sense of their culture and identity and have a commitment to a sustainable environmental future. The Mparntwe/Alice Springs Youth Action Plan 2023-2027 delivers a blueprint for that future and we are pleased to give it our endorsement.

- NT Youth Round Table

Introduction

The Mparntwe/Alice Springs Youth Action Plan (YAP) has been developed with a focus on young people feeling safe, connected, healthy and supported to achieve their goals and aspirations and be recognised for the valuable contribution they make within their community.

This YAP focuses on Mparntwe/Alice Springs while recognising that a significant proportion of young people travel between remote areas of Central Australia into Mparntwe/Alice Springs on a regular basis. This directly impacts service delivery in town and underpins the focus of this YAP, which seeks to acknowledge and respond to this situation.

The YAP acknowledges the priorities of the Northern Territory Government, is a key component of the Regional Youth Services Framework and links to the Northern Territory Youth Strategy 2023-2033. It has been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and informed by a broad range of consultations and various research documents and reports listed within this plan.



Young people were consulted as part of the development of the YAP in recognition of the value of young people contributing directly to and having a voice in, areas of policy and decision making that affect their lives. The Mparntwe/Alice Springs Local Action Group (LAG), the stakeholder group responsible for developing this YAP, comprises membership from Northern Territory Government agencies, local government, non-government organisations and various other community services. This group represents many of the youth services who directly work with young people in Mparntwe/Alice Springs. Their expertise and connection with young people was crucial in guaranteeing meaningful consultation occurred, ensuring this plan is informed and appropriately targeted.

This YAP acknowledges that any engagement with young people must include parents, families and carers to ensure achievable outcomes, recognising young people are part of family and cultural systems. The YAP also recognises the need for government and non-government organisations in the youth sector to have accurate data, collected via mixed methodologies, to inform appropriate and responsive service delivery to young people.

The goals, objectives and actions within this YAP have been aligned to the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth the Nest Framework and the Northern Territory Youth Strategy 2023-2033 with the addition of a seventh domain of 'Environment and Sustainability'.

It is also acknowledges there are several actions that cross over domain areas and are relevant to several domains and actions, with items placed in the most relevant domain.

This YAP has also sought to align to several key frameworks, strategies and plans as listed below. It therefore aims to avoid duplication of any of the strategies or actions within these other frameworks or plans.

- Northern Territory Youth Strategy 2023-2033
- Northern Territory Education Engagement Strategy 2022-2031
- Northern Territory Social Outcomes Framework
- Closing the Gap, Northern Territory Implementation Plan 2019-2029
- Everyone Together Aboriginal Affairs Strategy 2019-2029
- The Northern Territory's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028
- Northern Territory Aboriginal Justice Agreement Action Plan 2021-2022 and Implementation Plan 2021-2027
- 10 Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory (draft strategy)
- Northern Territory Youth Detention Centres Model of Care
- Youth Services Mapping Project 2022
- Quality Standards Framework for Flexible Education Programs

There are several key overarching enablers, which are embedded within the service delivery of the agencies and organisations represented within the LAG.

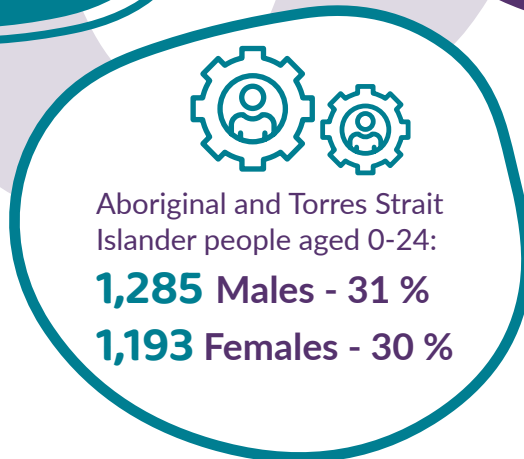
These enablers are integral to the work of these agencies and organisations.

- Systems supporting young people are child centred, trauma informed, culturally safe and inclusive of gendered lenses.
- Children and young people have the ability to self-refer to support services.
- Young people and their families are at the centre of all services.
- Priorities, needs and decision making processes are youth and family designed, delivered and evaluated.
- Funding to ensure effective program and service delivery to young people living and visiting Mparntwe/Alice Springs from the Central Australian region is maintained.
- Positive representation of young people in services and in the local media is embedded.
- Youth services feature life skills programs in service delivery where possible.
- Services utilise a restorative practice framework in their program delivery.
- Children, young people and families have access to adequate and culturally appropriate health and wellbeing information.
- Monitoring and evaluation is conducted across programs and services to ensure they are delivered where they are needed most.



Community profile of Mparntwe/Alice Springs

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021





Mparntwe/Alice Springs
total population:

28,601



**Disability,
health/old age**

Young people aged
15-19 engaged in
unpaid care work:

95 Males

99 Females



Domestic work

Young people aged 15-19
engaged in unpaid domestic work:

67 Males and **90** Females
do 5-14 hrs per week

9 Males and **13** Females
do 15-29 hrs per week



Childcare

Young people aged
15-19 engaged in
unpaid care work:

51 Males

94 Females



Young people engaged in education:

Primary:

1,244 Males

1,159 Females

TAFE aged 15-24:

72 Males

48 Females

Secondary:

781 Males

766 Females

University aged 15-24:

49 Males

111 Females

Domain 1: Being loved and safe

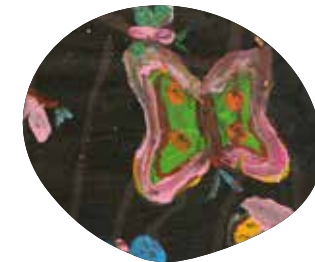
Goal - All young people feel loved and safe in their community

Objective:

Organisations and programs work with young people and their families in a child-focused manner that prioritises the wellbeing, safety and opportunities for young people to grow and thrive.

Actions:

1. Encourage all youth services to embed trauma informed practices throughout their work with young people and their families.
2. Support the development of integrated programs to assist young people who are out late at night to find safe supported accommodation where required.
3. Proactively support and lead locally driven culturally appropriate and inclusive youth public safety initiatives.
4. Develop and provide focused innovative, targeted and effective health and wellbeing material to children and young people.



Domain 2: Having material basics

Goal - All young people to have access to material basics; i.e. housing, food, water etc.

Objective:

For all children and young people in Mparntwe/Alice Springs to have access to stable housing, adequate nutritious food, clean drinking water, adequate clothing and footwear that children and young people require in order to thrive.

Actions:

1. Advocate for an increase in targeted tenancy support services and inter-agency collaboration and coordination for households with young people.
2. Explore opportunities to increase access to crisis accommodation for young people who are homeless.
3. Support the provision of programs to support young people into independent living.
4. Develop a range of advocacy strategies to reduce financial hardship experienced by young people and their families.
5. Support improved access by children and young people to safe transport solutions.



Domain 3: Being healthy

Goal - Families and young people are healthy and have access to health services when needed.

Objective:

To increase awareness, understanding and access to health-related services for children, young people and families whilst developing their capacity to make informed decisions to improve and/or maintain optimal health and wellbeing.

Actions:

1. Increase youth engagement in healthy eating activities and programs specific to Central Australia.
2. Create and sustain broad-based approaches that showcase healthy eating and promote traditional food sources and healthy lifestyles.
3. Support the provision of health literacy programs in schools and community centres.
4. Develop and provide age-appropriate, youth friendly and culturally sensitive health promotion material to children and young people.
5. Continue to advocate for funding and resources to support ongoing health and wellbeing services and programs for young people including mental health and alcohol and other drugs program.



Domain 4: Learning

Goal - Children and young people having access to meaningful learning and leadership opportunities that encourage personal development and enable employment pathways.

Objective:

Support the development of positive and innovative learning environments that engage children and young people to best prepare them for future employment and positive engagement in the community.

Actions:

1. Work with key stakeholders and communities to grow mentoring programs working with Aboriginal youth at risk.
2. Strengthen culturally appropriate personal development pathways for young people.
3. Promote and collaborate on opportunities for family and mentor support for children and young people while they are at school.
4. Support Aboriginal leadership programs for young people.
5. Facilitate and work with education providers to deliver flexible, culturally safe, innovative and meaningful learning opportunities.
6. Support opportunities to provide learning opportunities during the evening for young people who have disengaged from school and their families.



Domain 5: Participating

Goal - Children and young people are included and participate in all aspects of community life

Objective:

Continue to develop and expand the range of children and youth friendly activities, events, celebrations and appropriate public spaces.

Actions:

1. Increase the number of Aboriginal people employed in the youth services sector.
2. Support the design and construction of public spaces in Mparntwe/Alice Springs that are more appropriate and purpose built for young people.
3. Create and support the voice of young people in the design of urban spaces to inspire positive interactions between young people and the general public.
4. Support and grow existing programs that facilitate youth participation in sport, arts and culture.
5. Advocate for reliable access to Wi-Fi connectivity in town camps and communities.
6. Advocate for sufficient and enhanced school holiday and after-hours programs that support inclusion, learning and health and wellbeing.
7. Create more opportunities for young people to be involved in decision-making about things that are important to them.



Domain 6: Having a positive sense of culture and identity

Goal - Young people have a strong sense of identity and connection to their community and culture

Objective:

Create and/or expand on local opportunities for acknowledging, learning, and celebrating young people and culture.

Actions:

1. Advocate for more cultural learning to feature throughout the community.
 - a) Create and support more opportunities for young people and the wider community to acknowledge and celebrate culture.
2. Support healing centres and other activities that promote cultural connection.
3. Utilise opportunities to promote the value and worth of young people as active community members.



Domain 7: Environment/Sustainability

Goal - Central Australia's unique natural environment is valued and celebrated by young people of the region

Objective:

Encourage and assist young people to learn, actively participate in and protect the local environment, to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

Actions:

1. Promote cultural learning of traditional foods, bush medicine and flora and fauna.
2. Support young people to engage in citizen science and bush trips, learning from and caring for the environment.
3. Support establishment of programs where young people grow their own food in schools and community centres.
4. Encourage the provision of Aboriginal run local environmental awareness programs.
5. Endorse advocacy for environmental issues in schools.
6. Create pathways for young people to shadow Indigenous Rangers.



Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following organisations and key stakeholders involved in the Mparntwe/Alice Springs Local Action Group including:

Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, Department of Education, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities, NT Police, Northern Territory Council of Social Services, Alice Springs Town Council, MacDonnell Regional Council, Central Desert Regional Council, Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation, Gap Youth and Community Centre, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Alice Springs Youth Accommodation Support Service, NT Shelter, Bushmob, Australian Red Cross and the NT Youth Round Table.

The Local Action Group would also like to thank the young people from Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation Town Camp Youth Hubs for their contribution to the 'Children and Young People Consultation' that informed the development of this Plan and the artwork which appears within these pages.

