



# Darwin Youth Action Plan 2019

# Welcome from Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

**The Vision of the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation is “Living Stronger, Living Longer”.**

Our Mission is “Larrakia working together caring for our land, our sea, our culture and our people.” We are delighted to see the development of this Local Action Plan. It is absolutely in keeping with our Vision of promoting strength and sustainability in our community, and the process for compiling the plan demonstrates the commitment of all the stakeholders to working together to achieve great outcomes for the people.

On behalf of the Larrakia People I commend this plan to you and urge all stakeholders to collaborate in delivering positive outcomes for our young people.



**Richie Fejo**  
Chairman  
Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation



## Acknowledgement of Country

The Darwin Local Action Group, comprised of key stakeholders within the local community, proudly acknowledges the Larrakia people as traditional owners of the land that we work and live on and further recognise the Larrakia people as having continuing connection to their lands, waters, families and communities.

We pay our respects to Larrakia elders past, present and emerging.

We also pay our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and recognise their rich cultures and their continuing connection to land and water.



## Foreword

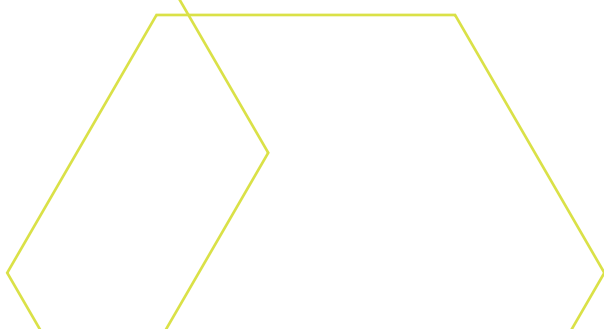
**All young people should be supported to be healthy, provided with equal opportunities to learn, thrive and grow and to be thought of and acknowledged as important members of the community, striving towards the best life possible.**

The Darwin Local Action Group is pleased to release its first Darwin Youth Action Plan to define issues and priority actions to achieve improved outcomes for all young people, especially those who are vulnerable and disengaged, to further strengthen the response of key stakeholders and the wider community.

This plan aims to guide our collaborative local decision-making activities through to implementation, ensuring we focus our efforts to empower disengaged and vulnerable young people living in the Northern Suburbs towards a safer and improved future.

The locally led Darwin Local Action Group has successfully been working in partnership with a diverse group of young people and youth service providers within the community - including Northern Territory Government agencies, community-led collective partnerships, organisations, local government, businesses, youth centres and community members.

Working with a variety of key partners will enable us, as a local group, to achieve our overall vision. The Darwin Local Action Group encourages young people and other key stakeholders, organisations, Northern Territory Government agencies and the wider community to join our journey to improve the outcomes of young people who are vulnerable or at risk.



# Darwin Local Action Group

In recognition of the holistic life and development needs of young people in Darwin, the Darwin Local Action Group includes representatives from sectors within the diagram below. Whilst gaps are evident, the Darwin Local Action Group encourages other stakeholders to join our work to achieve our collective vision and improve outcomes for young people.

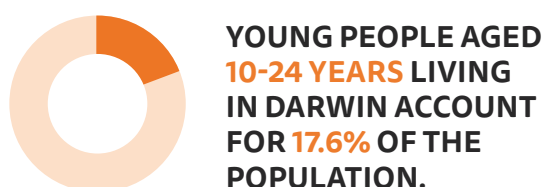
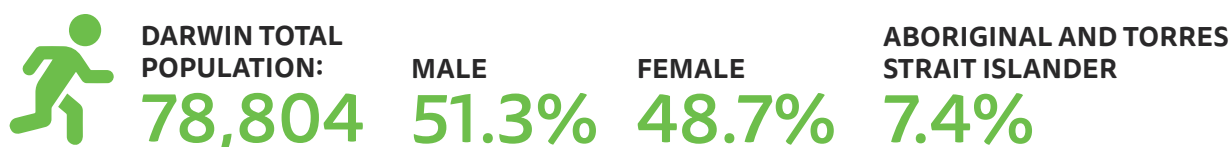


# A Snapshot of Darwin's Northern Suburbs

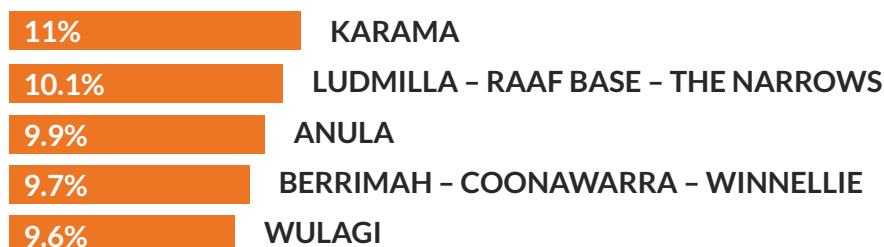
Darwin is the ancestral home of the Larrakia people, and the capital of the Northern Territory. Darwin's Northern Suburbs include: Malak, Bagot, Minmarama, Kulaluk, Northlakes, Karama, Leanyer, Casuarina, Alawa, Jingili, Wanguri, Tiwi, Nakara, Moil, Nightcliff, Anula, Brinkin, Wulagi, Wagaman, Lyons, Muirhead, Rapid Creek, Millner and Coconut Grove.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census population data, Darwin is home to people from diverse backgrounds, ethnicity and cultures from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Filipino, Chinese, Indian, Congolese and Greek communities among others.

## Darwin (Local Government Area) - People, Demographics and Education



ACCORDING TO THE CITY OF DARWIN YOUTH STRATEGY 2016-2021 - FIVE AREAS WITH THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGES OF 12-17 YEAR OLDS ARE:



# Purpose

**Territory Families has been working with communities to deliver a range of reforms that support young people and families in alignment with the Northern Territory Government's *Safe, Thriving and Connected Plan*.**

The Regional Youth Services Program is integral to Territory Families vision to empower families and communities for a safe and improved future. As part of the

Regional Youth Services Program, Regional Coordinators have been working with local action groups in 6 regions across the Northern Territory; Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, East Arnhem, Katherine, Palmerston and Darwin.

The local action groups work collaboratively and in partnership to identify improvements for the delivery of prevention and early intervention programs across existing youth and universal activities and programs addressing the needs of young people.





# Introduction

**Firstly, it is key to recognise that we all have a very powerful role to play in being responsive to and supportive of the needs of all young people, their families and community.**

A crucial key to the success of improving outcomes for young people, their families and wider community, rests in our ability and commitment to work in partnership and in collaboration, whilst valuing our young people's strengths, views and opinions.

Collectively, and with mutual respect, our focus is on improving the outcomes of all young people, especially those who are vulnerable and at risk.

Whilst the Darwin Youth Action Plan is the first tangible milestone for the

Darwin Local Action Group, it is also important to acknowledge and celebrate the valuable relationships and connections being developed and existing relationships being strengthened.

Following a wide-ranging and diverse engagement with young people, including the broader community, NGOs and stakeholders, the consultation captured diverse views as well as feedback of issues and concerns, for an identified roadmap of actions that both stakeholders and young people can work on together to develop and achieve.

During this process the Darwin Local Action Group have been able to identify and honour the great work that is currently taking place in the Darwin youth sector which has been delivered and supported by committed, passionate service providers and stakeholders.

## Vision

**Darwin Local Action Group 2019**

**This work is an opportunity to empower, positively shape and directly impact the lives of all young people particularly those who are vulnerable.**

**The vision is a long-term one which requires reflective practice, sustained effort and focus from the wider community, Non-Government Organisations, Local Government, Northern Territory Government agencies and Commonwealth agencies.**

***Darwin young people are safe, engaged, healthy, educated and valued members of the community***

# Scope

The Darwin Youth Action Plan will guide our work over the next two years, 2019 - 2021, and will be reviewed in 12 months. Focused on all young people, especially those who are vulnerable, aged 10-17 growing up, working, studying and 'hanging out', particularly where there is a large population of young people situated within the Northern Suburbs of Darwin.

## What Young People Told us

The Local Action Group gathered feedback from young people and the community to inform a list of goals and actions that address health, wellbeing, material and learning. The outcome areas for the Regional Youth Services Program has been adapted from the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, The Nest Framework. Actions in the Darwin Local Action Plan support this Framework. **Feedback and suggested improvements were welcomed and the feedback and contributions were essential in the development of this local action plan and was very much appreciated.**

Consultation was conducted directly with young people aged 10-17 at the following engagements:

- Couch Surfing Event organised by Anglicare NT and City of Darwin – Survey and youth consultation
- Student Voice Positive Choice Engagement Session – Youth consultation
- Darwin High School Health Expo - Youth consultation
- YWCA conducted a shopping centre survey and Youth Crisis Accommodation youth consultation

Feedback from young people and key stakeholders was gathered from other locally organised events, including:

- Community Led Action Day organised by Sanderson Alliance
- Youth Health Summit 2019 organised by Menzies School of Health
- Parent carer survey was distributed widely
- Northern Territory Youth Roundtable meetings

Other avenues of youth consultation included employing Balanced Choice's team to explore, engage and harness approximately 400 young peoples' opinions by allowing them to share their ideas, views and concerns over the course of a six week period. Over 20 consultations were held across schools, afterschool programs, Don Dale Youth Detention Centre and other youth groups.

Overall, more than 680 young people and key stakeholders were able to have input.

Following the extensive youth and community engagement, the Darwin Local Action Group analysed existing data, policies and research to identify key themes for inclusion in the youth action plan. The Local Action Group realise that it is not possible to include every issue and challenge raised and it is important to note that the Darwin Youth Action plan is the first plan which sets the foundation for ongoing work. As a local group, we prioritised key themes into goals and actions to guide our work over the next two years.



# Top Themes and Issues

**Young people are passionate about a number of vitally important issues, some top themes include:**

## 1. Safe places for healthy recreation

The top issue identified during local consultations with young people was having access to a youth drop-in center and locally accessible community space to 'hangout', connect with peers and engage in positive activities in a safe, air conditioned, space. Young people and other key stakeholders stated this space would enable young people to also link into vital support services, positive activities and programs whilst preventing the development of negative social patterns.

## 2. Mentoring and future opportunities

Young people and key stakeholders have highlighted the value and importance of consistently connecting with young people who are vulnerable to guide, nurture and mentor them positively through challenges. Mentoring roles actively create intentional effective relationships based on mutual trust and respect to increase community and personal accountability. Encouraging and motivating young people who are disengaged to make the right choices will develop a deeper understanding and accountability of positive decision-making, which would impact overall health, wellbeing and build a positive sense of culture and belonging.

## 3. Caring for the environment

Globally, young people are voicing their strong commitment, passion and motivation to drive positive change to protect the environment, focusing on the impacts of climate change and crisis. During local consultations, young people living in Darwin have identified climate change high in their priority of concerns.

Recently, in Darwin many young people gathered to take action in a climate strike highlighting the impact climate change has on future generations.

Priority issues identified by young people include:

- Lack of indoor and outdoor facilities for young people to connect with services, community and peers.
- Access to a youth and community centre within the Northern Suburbs.
- Increase positive engaging activities and programs for young people to participate in locally.
- The need to increase support to improve outcomes for vulnerable family members and the community, including members affected by drugs and alcohol.
- Increase linkages for young people, especially those who are vulnerable and disengaged, to access a variety of support from service providers at the point of need.
- Reduce barriers and challenges for young people, especially those who are disengaged, to access training and employment opportunities and plan future career pathways.
- Increase consistent mentors to guide young people through life's challenges and improve wellbeing whilst developing life skills.
- Increase food and housing security.
- Increase support for young people to prevent youth suicide.
- Increase relevant sexual health and sexual violence education to foster healthy expectations and relationships.



# Darwin Youth Action Plan Goals

The Darwin Local Action group will contribute, monitor and evaluate progress against each goal by working in collaboration, ensuring young people are involved in the action and monitoring and evaluation process. The following six goals reflect the voices and aspirations of young people who were consulted, inspired to strengthen the life and development needs of young people in Darwin.

These needs broadly include:

- Cultural
- Spiritual
- Psychological and emotional
- Social
- Physical

The following Goals were developed from the themes and priority issues identified through the consultations and feedback with young people and stakeholders. The key actions will support the improvement of outcomes for young people.

## Goal 1

**YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE COMMUNITY HAVE ACCESS TO INDOOR AND OUTDOOR SPACES.**

The top issue identified by young people during consultation was a lack of space for young people to meet with peers, connect to services and engage in positive social activities, resulting in young people feeling isolated and disempowered.

*“Physical environment impacts spirit, wellbeing and health”*

*“Young people are feeling isolated”*

### Key Actions

- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a youth and community drop-in centre within the Northern Suburbs to increase opportunities for young people to connect with peers, community and services.
- Explore opportunities within the Northern Suburbs to access, develop and promote communal outdoor areas for families to access and connect to nature.



## Goal 2

**YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO JOIN ACTIVITIES THAT ARE EMPOWERING, FUN AND ENGAGING.**

Young people consistently highlighted limitations when accessing programs and activities locally. Most activities and sporting programs require consistent attendance, financial resources and transport, which were out of reach for some young people.

*“Make sure you get out and do something positive”*

*“More recreational opportunities for young people”*

### Key Actions

- Provide opportunities for young people to access free sporting and recreational activities through targeted grant funding.
- Strengthen relationships of service providers and the community to deliver a variety of coordinated programs and activities.
- Ensure programs and activities are inclusive, accessible and provide young people nutritious food and safe transport.

## Goal 3

**YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTED TO ACCESS TRAINING AND CAREER PATHWAY SUPPORT.**

Young people acknowledged the importance and value of accessing education and recognised challenges faced by some young people experiencing complexities in their life. Reducing barriers and increasing opportunities to access education, training and other positive empowering programs would improve individual potential and growth.

*“Students in years 10, 11 and 12 face huge pressures and often aren't able to get information on training, VET courses and career planning. If you are facing challenges and are excluded from school it becomes harder”*

*“Develop healthy relationships with yourself and others”*

### Key Actions

- Explore opportunities to reduce barriers to training and education opportunities, ensuring young people who are disengaged have guided entry points, delivered by trainers who are experienced working with disengaged young people. This could include short courses building to longer term training to increase individual capacity and growth.
- Create opportunities to strengthen information delivery and support to young people on a variety of topics including planning career pathways, VET taster courses, support to access traineeships, and mapping out future education options.



## Goal 4

### YOUNG PEOPLE EMPOWERED TO ACCESS AND LINK WITH A VARIETY OF SERVICES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

Strengthen opportunities for young people to link, connect and obtain support at the point of need from service providers. Young people expressed difficulties when accessing consistent support whilst feeling overwhelmed with challenges in their life.

*“Have a stall so we know who you are – help young people to be connected with other organisations to make a change and feel linked in”*

*“Don’t conduct business in the office”*

*“We as a community should be better at connecting and supporting our young people to achieve better wellbeing”*

*“More drug safety programs”*

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#### Key Actions

- Explore best ways of connecting with young people and delivering information about services, how to access support and distribute education material.
- Create opportunities for local service providers to deliver pop up stalls and information sessions after hours, enabling young people to engage and connect in spaces they feel comfortable.
- Increase opportunities to develop positive social and emotional wellbeing support to prevent alcohol and other drug harms.

## Goal 5

### YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL INCLUDED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND ARE GENUINELY ENGAGED IN LOCAL DECISION-MAKING.

It is important that young people’s voices are heard and their views acknowledged. Increasing the opportunity for young people to participate in local decision-making is beneficial for all involved. This opportunity would increase personal accountability and responsibility whilst developing a broader mutual understanding of local concerns.

*“Listen to us, we are experts on being young”*

*“Co-design health support – it’s a two way learning process”*

*“Keep language simple – involve us”*

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#### Key Actions

- Explore, support and provide opportunity for young people to participate in local decision making that affect them.
- Collectively promote good news stories and engagement with young people to improve and influence community attitudes to value and respect young people.
- Support initiatives including Clontarf, Stars, Couch Surfing event, and NT Youth Roundtable and consider increasing the footprint of other local initiatives such as Student Voice Positive Choice within the Northern Suburbs to support young people.





## Goal 6

### YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE MENTORING AND GUIDANCE.

Young people and key stakeholders have highlighted the importance of consistently connecting with young people to guide, nurture and mentor them positively. Building positive relationships with young people will develop mutual trust and respect which will increase community and personal accountability.

*“Talk to people as people, power shift”*

*“Stay strong with culture”*

*“Being present with young people is important”*

#### Key Actions

- Empower and provide opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills and become positive, strong role models to support and guide other young people, inclusive of all cultures.
- Explore and increase opportunities for young people to develop positive relationships within the local community to increase health, wellbeing, connection to culture and sense of belonging.
- Support young people to access trauma-aware and culturally safe healing support by ensuring service providers have opportunity to learn and understand culturally appropriate trauma informed approaches.

## Goal 7

### DEVELOP COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND ACCESS COMMUNITY TRAINING.

Young people and key stakeholders have identified a gap and acknowledged the value of enabling and empowering parents, carers and members of the local community to strengthen, increase knowledge and become a more effective community. The impact of supporting each other within the local community and growing networks will increase positive support and outcomes for young people and the wider community.

*“We as a community should be better at connecting and supporting our young people to achieve better wellbeing”*

*“The ripple effect”*

#### Key Actions

- Supporting local community led initiatives and community based practices similar to Sanderson Alliance, to create safe environment in the home, school and community.
- Explore opportunities for the broader community to train and work together to build capacity, resilience and strengthen its response to local issues.



# Guiding Principles

The guiding principles create and reflect the vision, culture, core values and beliefs that underpin each goal and action in the plan.

All goals will be met with the following guiding principles:

<b>Community Ownership</b>	Community led and community driven
<b>Shared responsibility</b>	Shared accountability inclusive of all stakeholders
<b>Cultural Appropriateness</b>	Culturally inclusive, appropriate and safe
<b>Strengthening community capacity</b>	Increase community resilience, understanding and ability
<b>Working collaboratively and in partnership</b>	Working together cohesively and equally
<b>Safety of and respect for individuals</b>	Respect, value and provide equality for all individuals
<b>Inclusiveness and Diversity</b>	Include, represent and respect differences of all stakeholders

# Measuring Progress

**Delivery of the commitments in this action plan is important in the journey towards achieving improved outcomes for young people.**

The Darwin Local Action Group will continue to increase capacity and negotiate action leads and partner agencies and stakeholders.

Measuring the effects and understanding the impact of our combined achievements requires a collective approach. The Darwin Local Action Group will continue to work collaboratively, contribute and oversee implementation, delivery and monitoring by meeting regularly and review progress in 1 year.



# Acknowledgements

The Darwin Local Action Group, would like to express our gratitude to all the young people and wider community who participated during the extensive youth and community consultation.

You kindly shared viewpoints, opinions and stories – thank you!

Office of Youth Affairs, Territory Families, would like to express gratitude to the following organisations and key stakeholders for their continued support, expertise, advice and insights whilst working together, in partnership, to develop the Darwin Youth Action Plan - Thank you for your valuable time and contributions.

- Australian Red Cross
- Karama community resident
- Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation
- Casuarina Square
- (The GPT Group)
- NT Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation
- Top End School of Flexi Learning
- Sanderson Alliance
- City of Darwin
- Headspace
- Anglicare NT
- Department of Health, NT Suicide Prevention
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- The Shak
- YWCA Australia



## Get Involved

**We ALL have a very powerful role to play in responding to and supporting the needs of young people, their families and community.**

**We encourage you to become involved in our work to make a positive difference. Please contact the Office of Youth Affairs by emailing [TF.OYA@nt.gov.au](mailto:TF.OYA@nt.gov.au)**

## References

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016)
- Northern Territory Government (April 2018), Regional Youth Services Framework: A Roadmap to Support Young People to Connect, Thrive and Succeed
- Northern Territory Government (April 2018), Safe Thriving and Connected – Generational Change for Children and Families
- City of Darwin Youth Strategy, Young Darwin 2016-2021
- Northern Territory Government Department of Education
- Making Things Better for Children and Young People, Sanderson Alliance Report
- Youth Consultation Report and Surveys, Balanced Choice
- Northern Territory Suicide Prevention Suicide Prevention Strategic Framework 2018-2023
- Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the NT
- Department of Tourism, Sport and the Arts
- A Multicultural Northern Territory – Statistics from 2016 Census















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MAKE HAPPY KIDS



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