



# Mparntwe/Alice Springs Youth Action Plan 2019-2021

# Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land where we live, the Arrernte people and pay respects to their Elders past, present and their future leaders. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to

the life of Mparntwe/Alice Springs and this region. We also acknowledge the Elders past, present and future of all communities and cultural groups of Central Australia that identify Mparntwe/Alice Springs as part of a broader Indigenous community.

## Introduction

The Mparntwe/Alice Springs Youth Action Plan 2019-2021 (Youth Action Plan) is a key component in the implementation of the Regional Youth Services Framework established by the Northern Territory (NT) Government in April 2018. The Youth Action Plan was developed in collaboration with key community partners, including young people, and outlines the goals and priorities for the community over a minimum two-year period.

The Regional Youth Services Framework recognises that each region of the NT is unique, and allows for differences across the Territory reflecting local needs and priorities. The Youth Action Plan is focussed on Mparntwe/Alice Springs and surrounding town camps, however, it is recognised that over the next two years there will be a broader regional approach to planning and investment in services, reflected under Goal 3.

A stakeholder consultation process was established, led and managed by Territory Families. Centred in Choice was contracted to document this process, and prepared a final report titled Consultation on the Alice Springs Youth Action Plan 2019-21.

Young people were consulted through face-to-face surveys in December 2018 and January 2019. This was facilitated and conducted with the assistance of youth service providers and government agencies. The Youth Action Plan also draws on responses from young people cited in the Time to Talk Alice Springs Report by 2017 NT Youth Round Table members Cassie Boyle and Brooke Johnson, and Young

People's Voices – Evaluation of Summer in Alice school holiday campaign 2017-2018. Valuable data was also obtained from the Child Friendly Alice Community Profile that surveyed over 1000 people through 2018, 470 of which were children and young people under the age of 18.

The consultation process encompassed the broadest possible range of service providers related to youth in the Mparntwe/Alice Springs region. This included the Australian, Northern Territory and local governments, non-government organisations and services related to youth welfare, law, police, youth diversion, accommodation, transport, health, mental health, education and training and employment. Representatives from these services formed the Mparntwe/Alice Springs Local Action Group (LAG) which became responsible for input into the sector consultation process and the development of the Plan.

The Consultation on the Alice Springs Youth Action Plan 2019-21 report and its identified action strategies formed the basis of the goals and action areas within the Youth Action Plan and provides historical and contextual information that relates to this plan. Community support and contribution towards the key action areas of this plan will ensure its success and the continued collaborative partnerships within the Mparntwe/Alice Springs community.

### **Mparntwe/Alice Springs Local Action Group**

# Community Profile – Mparntwe/Alice Springs

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 872,861km<sup>2</sup>.



DARWIN IS  
**1,494km**  
TO THE NORTH



ADELAIDE IS  
**1,531km**  
TO THE SOUTH



AVERAGE DAILY TEMPERATURE  
RANGE IN JANUARY  
**22.2 – 37.0 °C**



AVERAGE DAILY TEMPERATURE  
RANGE IN JULY  
**3.6 – 20.7 °C**

## MPARNTWE/ALICE SPRINGS IN 2016:



TOTAL POPULATION WAS  
**24,757**

**18%**  
WERE ABORIGINAL OR  
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER \*

**23%**  
WERE BORN OVERSEAS  
UP FROM 11% IN 2001

## IN 2016 THERE WERE:



FAMILIES WITH  
CHILDREN

2 PARENTS: **2530**

1 PARENT: **931**

## CHILDREN AGED:

0-4: **1819**    5-14: **3373**    15-17: **913**

## IN 2016 THERE WERE:

YOUTH AGED 10 – 17:    TOTAL: **2486**    F: **1159**    M: **1327**

*\*Noting that not all these residents would be from Mparntwe/Alice Springs.*

### Growing diversity

While the total population of Mparntwe/Alice Springs has remained fairly stable over the last 25 years, it is now a much more diverse community than it was in the early 1990s. In the last 15 years many migrants from overseas have added to the richness of the town's cultural diversity, now making up almost one-quarter of the population.

### A transient population

When compared to Australia, and the Northern Territory as a whole, Mparntwe/Alice Springs has a very transient population. After five years, only about 40 per cent of people stay. The Aboriginal population tends to be more stable, with a little over half still living in the town after five years.

Mparntwe/Alice Springs is the main service centre for many remote Aboriginal communities in central Australia. Visitors from remote communities come to Mparntwe/Alice Springs for a range of reasons, including to access services that are not available in their home communities. This can have a direct impact on services in the town and the ability to respond effectively to this population fluctuation must be considered in the implementation of this Youth Action Plan.

## GOAL 1

### BUILD CAPACITY OF EXISTING YOUTH SERVICES TO ENABLE LONG TERM SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Many services report that they are currently working to full capacity. Government funding to youth services needs to be reviewed and strategically applied to support new initiatives and enable services to meet contractual goals.

#### Action areas

- Review funding levels to youth service providers to ensure they have capacity to deliver innovative sustainable programs.
- Investigate the feasibility of non-government organisations (NGOs) within the youth sector gaining some level of access to shared government agency databases. This could provide more effective services to meet the needs of at risk young people, particularly those being case managed.
- Initiate cross-sector training and professional development to ensure NGO and government staff are aware of their capacity and permissions to share information between services. Establish information sharing rights and responsibilities through Service Level Agreements.
- Support networking events to boost professional development within the youth sector.
- Build evidence based evaluation into all funded youth programs.
- Lobby for the establishment of a youth in-patient mental health service with a resident clinical psychologist.



## GOAL 2

### IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM

Local Action Group members identified that there were multiple barriers to young people accessing effective, restorative support to improve outcomes once they enter the youth justice system.

#### Action areas

- Lobby for the establishment of a dedicated children's court, with a permanent children's and youth court judge.
- Investigate the Koori court model for Alice Springs and surrounding remote communities, which has a judge and Aboriginal elders as part of the court process.
- Streamline diversion options for young people especially those living remotely. This requires:
  - » NGOs and regional councils to be included in the process to provide support for remote offenders.
  - » Reduce the time lag between offending and referrals to diversion.
  - » Clarify the services for youth justice and diversion available in remote communities (eg. services provided through regional councils and NT Police).
  - » Strengthen the confidence Police have in the diversion process through improving training and operational models.
  - » Reduce the timeframe between when a young person is apprehended and when the case file is handed out.
  - » Investigate funding options to improve systems for communication and collaboration between remote services and Mparntwe/Alice Springs services.

## GOAL 3

### BETTER SUPPORT FOR REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Remote Aboriginal communities rely on Mparntwe/Alice Springs for many services and young people see Mparntwe/Alice Springs as part of their broader community.

#### Action areas

- Support consistent resourcing of services across the whole region.
- Increase resources to support youth diversion in remote communities.
- Develop a process to establish an institutional systematic response through NT Government and youth justice/diversion programs.
- Support the resourcing of localised Aboriginal leadership programs and initiatives for young people in remote communities.

**“We can't resource town and not remote and expect people to stay out bush. It is important to put resources into supporting good things happening for young people in remote communities”.**



## GOAL 4

### SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MENTORING PROGRAMS FOR ABORIGINAL YOUNG PEOPLE

Aboriginal mentors have contributed to successes in youth diversion, social and emotional wellbeing and employment pathways.

#### Action areas

- Ensure there is an Aboriginal mentoring component as well as Aboriginal employment targets in funded programs. In particular, specific initiatives and funding are required for Aboriginal mentors to support and guide service providers and to work directly with Aboriginal youth at risk.
- Youth leadership initiatives and programs should be supported and further developed.
- Ensure there is mentoring for and by young people in funded youth programs.
- Build evidence-based evaluation into youth mentoring programs.

“The youth survey and summary data (Attachments B and C Consultation Report on the Mparntwe/Alice Springs Youth Action Plan 2019-2021) shows that 30 percent of participating youth surveyed in Mparntwe/Alice Springs are disengaged from school”.

## GOAL 5

### IMPROVE EDUCATION, TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR DISENGAGED YOUTH

A significant barrier in the transition to work is the lack of appropriate job or training opportunities for young people with limited pre-employment skills.

#### Action areas

- Consult with young people about what they need to help them get to school.
- Support young people to engage in experiential learning and personal development rather than be directed into vocational training programs.
- Provide learning opportunities for disengaged young people through the evenings or at night.
- Investigate funding options to support community based education responses in both the urban and remote context.
- Build collaboration between the youth sector, NT Government, Department of Education and schools to support professional development of staff and case management support for young people.
- Investigate opportunities for family support and mentor support for young people while they are at school.
- Consider gender issues when developing strategies for re-engaging young men and women in schools and education pathways.
- Improve access to education and training for young people in detention.
- Strengthen pathways to real local employment opportunities such as Aboriginal Community Police Officers, Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers and municipal services work.



## GOAL 6

### DEVELOP INTEGRATED PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE OUT LATE AT NIGHT

Children and young people on the streets late at night are not necessarily engaged in anti-social, destructive or illegal behaviour. However, without responsible adult supervision they are vulnerable, at risk and can benefit from proactive intervention.

#### Action areas

- Develop integrated programs to assist young people who are out late at night to find a safe place and provide support where this is not available.
- Support the strengthening of roles and responsibilities of parents of young people who are out late at night.
- Initiate consultation between Territory Families and the youth sector about how to extend and improve the process of screening and referral of young people who are out late at night.
- Increase programs that support early intervention before young people become at risk.
- Encourage timely information and data sharing between police and the youth sector regarding youth anti-social and criminal activity to better inform the community.
- Increase the capacity for self-referral by children and young people to Territory Families.

## GOAL 7:

### ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING OPTIONS THAT ARE FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people, particularly those leaving care, have a right to safe, secure accommodation to enable positive whole of life choices.

#### Action areas

- Address the need for the provision of supported youth accommodation for transition into tenancy.
- Build an understanding within youth accommodation services (existing and future improved services) that young people may be recovering from trauma and homelessness and may not be able to immediately take up school or structured activities.
- Encourage the utilisation of supported bail accommodation by the courts for young people engaged in the juvenile justice system.
- Address the urgent need for accommodation for young people who are homeless.





### Acknowledgements

- Northern Territory Government
  - The non-government youth sector
  - NT Council of Social Services (NTCOSS)
  - Alice Springs Town Council
  - Child Friendly Alice Community Profile
- The following reports:
- Report to Minister Anderson MLA 2009: Youth Anti-Social Forum-December 2008
  - NTG Youth Action Plan 2009 - 2011
  - The Kelly Report on the Coordination of Youth Services in Alice Springs, 2010
  - Alice Springs Youth Hub: A Discussion Paper - February 2011
  - Better Strategies to Respond to Youth Issues - May 2012
  - Better Strategies - Alice Springs Executive Summary - February 2015
  - Improving After-Hours Youth Services in Alice Springs: NTG Youth Sector Consultation Workshops - May 2017
  - Time to Talk Alice Springs: NT Youth Round Table 2017
  - Evaluation report on the Summer in Alice School Holiday Campaign 2017 - 2018

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