

TANGENTYERE  
COUNCIL  
REPORT  
DOCUMENT



Tangentyere  
Council

# Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments

Submission in relation to the House  
of Representatives Standing  
Committee on Employment,  
Education and Training

WORKING  
TOGETHER  
WALKING  
TOGETHER

# Table of contents

1. Executive Summary .....	3
2. Background.....	5
2.1. Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation (TCAC) .....	5
2.2. Alice Springs Town Camps.....	6
2.3. The Town Camp Wellness Framework .....	6
3. Each Domain impacts on Education Outcomes .....	7
3.1. Knowledge .....	7
3.1.1. The Metropolitan- Rural and Remote School Achievement Gap .....	7
3.1.2. Aboriginal Students and the Metropolitan- Rural and Remote School Achievement Gap.....	8
3.1.3. Challenges to Town Camp School Achievement .....	9
3.2. Shelter .....	10
3.2.1. Transport to/from Education .....	13
3.3. Keeping Our Country .....	16
3.4. Identity.....	18
3.5. Community .....	19
3.6. Leadership - Digital Delivery of Services including Education and Training.....	20
3.7. Healing .....	21
4. Responses to Inquiry Questions.....	23
4.1 A Child's Journey .....	23
4.2 Barriers and Proposed Ways Forward.....	24
4.3 Culture and Country .....	27
4.4 Community and Family .....	27
4.5 Initiatives .....	28
4.6 Innovation.....	28
4.7 Flexible Learning.....	30
4.8 Successful Pathways .....	31
5. Recommendations.....	32
6. References.....	34

# 1.Executive Summary

Tangentyere Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments.

Aboriginal students in Town Camps demonstrate lower levels of achievement compared with non-Aboriginal students due to complex social, cultural and environmental determinants.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that the Review:

1. Acknowledges Aboriginal children on Town Camps in remote areas face many barriers to attending, engaging and succeeding in education
2. Acknowledges the complexity involved in successfully delivering education to Aboriginal children on Town Camps
3. Supports provision of a designated funding source for each state and territory to ensure education providers to partner with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to jointly develop and manage education service delivery systems with the following features:
  - Codesign with Town Camp parents and leaders
  - Quality teachers and leaders with remote education experience
  - In recognition of the complex issues facing teachers in remote communities, develop a syllabus of training that will equip teachers for this role, including Anthropology, Australian History and Prehistory, an Indigenous language
  - A joint and ongoing commitment from providers to resource the initiative
  - Delivery on Town Camps (pop up facilities, hub and spoke models)
  - Strong strategic partnerships
4. Supports jurisdictions to implement strategies to overcome barriers to education participation faced by rural and remote students including, for example:
  - Using technology to create virtual rich learning environments.
  - Working with providers to improve access to ICTs and web and net connectivity.
  - Providing financial resources to education systems to counteract the negative impacts of climate change and natural disasters on the ability to deliver education and students to be able to take advantage of this.
  - Working with providers to develop alternative models of education delivered on Town Camps (pop up schools, satellite classrooms etc.)
  - Providing relevant quality secondary education provision in rural and remote areas using a blended learning mode of bricks and mortar and technology so that students do not have to leave country to attend boarding schools to receive a quality secondary education.
  - Supporting rural and remote secondary students to attend university through better Youth Allowance scheme
  - Supporting education system HR policies to attract, retain and develop the 'best and brightest' teachers and leaders to rural and remote education settings.
  - Supporting education systems to professionally develop teachers and leaders to employ strengths based, therapeutic trauma practices.
  - Ensuring rural and remote health and education systems can attract the 'best and brightest' health professionals to diagnose and respond to young people's education and health needs

- Ensuring adequate staff housing to support teacher retention.
  - Refreshing strategies to close education achievement and participation gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students focusing on;
    - Valuing education
    - Early Childhood education
  - Providing relevant and accessible secondary curriculum that supports Indigenous values
  - Furnishing education providers with funding controlled by parents/carers in partnership with the provider, like the previous ASSPA program, to allow providers to implement local placed-based solutions to ensuring year 12 completions and improvements in achievement (for example, incentive payments to parents and young people to attend education in holiday periods to improve educational attainment)
  - Assisting all levels of government to work with all stakeholders to economically develop rural and remote areas to create ongoing employment opportunities, especially for young people, for example ranger work, arts work, health and aged care training, teaching, interpreting.
  - Attracting, retaining and developing male and female Elders to lead educational development and delivery of curriculum targeting Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, with an emphasis on STEAM through utilising local biological and botanical knowledge.
  - Working with businesses and Chambers of Commerce to introduce a job guarantee for every Aboriginal student who completes year 12 and has the required industry skills. This could be through existing apprenticeships and traineeships or creation of new jobs.
  - Incentivising parents/carers to ensure at least 90% school attendance each school year (for example by making attendance bonus payments through welfare provision)
  - Providing funding for leadership programs to develop current and future Aboriginal leaders.
  - Employing Elders and members of the Women's Safety Group as curriculum development and implementation advisors and deliverers (as appropriate).
  - Assisting Aboriginal Community Organisations to remove barriers to school attendance including inadequate transport, inadequate nutrition and suitable clothing.
5. Supports jurisdictions to attract, develop and retain the best and brightest teachers and leaders to remote education settings.
  6. Encourages jurisdictions to continue the prominence of culture and country in Aboriginal education by ensuring their primacy in curriculum, assessment and teaching practices.
  7. Supports initiatives to increase the valuing of education by Aboriginal families in remote and complex educational environments.
  8. Promotes the importance of STEM teaching to the development of skills required by all students to become effective knowledge workers.
  9. Supports initiatives to provide a job guarantee to Aboriginal students who complete Year 12.
  10. Continues to support Aboriginal students to successfully achieve in Technical Education and University.

## 2. Background

Tangentyere Council is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation that delivers human services and operates social enterprises for the benefit of Aboriginal people from Alice Springs, its Town Camps and Central Australia.

### 2.1. Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation (TCAC)

TCAC is a community controlled Public Benevolent Institution delivering human services and social enterprise activities for the benefit of Aboriginal people from the Town Camps, Urban Alice Springs and Central Australia. TCAC was first incorporated in 1979. The organization was a finalist in the 2016 Reconciliation Australia, Indigenous Governance Awards and is one of the 8 largest Aboriginal Corporations in Australia. TCAC has 16 Corporate Members, over 600 Individual Members & provides services to in excess of 10,000 people from a region that covers approximately 873,894 km<sup>2</sup>. Service users come from a region that encompasses much of the southern NT including MacDonnell, Central Desert and Barkly Regional Councils; the APY Lands (SA) and the Ngaanyatjarra Council (WA).

The Corporate Members of TCAC are the Town Camp Housing Associations/Aboriginal Corporations and the members of these Associations/Aboriginal Corporations are individual members of TCAC. The TCAC Board of Directors is composed of the elected Presidents of the Alice Springs Town Camp Housing Associations/Aboriginal Corporations.

TCAC was formed to assist the Town Campers to gain legal tenure and in order to obtain water, electricity and housing. From 1979 until December 2009 TCAC operated as an Indigenous Community Housing Organisation (ICHO) and service provider.

In 2009, 11 Town Camp Housing Associations and 3 Aboriginal Corporations executed Tripartite Alice Springs Living Area Subleases with the Executive Director of Township Leasing (EDTL) on behalf of the Commonwealth and the CEO of Housing on behalf of the Territory. The EDTL then entered a Housing Management Agreement (underlease) with the Northern Territory Government making the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (DLGHCD) the Housing Authority for the Alice Springs Town Camps. TCAC demonstrated its adaptability to this changed circumstance by re-positioning itself as a Human Services Organisation and by developing and founding the Central Australian Affordable Housing Company (CAAHC). CAAHC was the first nationally accredited community housing provider in the NT. TCAC together with its subsidiary Tangentyere Constructions and CAAHC have proposed to the EDTL a collective strategy for the development and implementation a Community Housing Model. Both the EDTL and the DLGHCD through the Town Camp Futures Unit are receptive to this proposal.

Currently TCAC provides a broad range of Human Services including: (1) Community Centres; (2) Youth Development; (3) Tenancy Support; (4) Aged; (5) Municipal and Essential Services; (6) Repairs and Maintenance; (7) Construction; (8) Child Protection and Wellbeing; (9) Alcohol and Other Drug Harm Minimisation; (10) Community Safety and Wellbeing; (11) Violence Prevention; and (12) Employment.

TCAC is committed to the employment and capacity development of Aboriginal people. 55% of the TCAC workforce of 273 people is Aboriginal. Inherent within TCAC employment of local Aboriginal people is the

concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). An emphasis on CPD means that the organisation is well placed to recruit and develop jobseekers.

For the perspective of this submission TCAC will emphasise its understanding of the issues with respect to the Alice Springs Town Camps.

## 2.2. Alice Springs Town Camps

The following table provides an overview of the TCAC Town Camp Corporate Members:

Figure 1: Alice Springs Town Camps, Incorporation and Tenure					
Name	Alias	Incorporated	Tenure	Lot	Executed
Akngwertnarre	Morris Soak	14/11/1974	SPL-438	5150	22/12/1977
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Charles Creek	16/07/1974	SPL-426	3702, 3704, 1733	12/08/1977
Anthepe Housing	Drive In	8/03/1974	SPL-412	5146	8/11/1976
Aper-Alwerrkng	Palmer's Camp	17/04/1977	SPL-459	5180	25/07/1979
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Hidden Valley	11/08/1977	SPL-473	5189	30/01/1980
Ilparpa	Ilparpa	25/10/1979	SPL-493	5713	2/07/1980
Ilperle Tyathe	Warlpiri	17/11/1978	SPL-450	5149	30/01/1979
Ilyperenye	Old Timers	22/08/1977	SPL-550	5708	14/09/1981
Inarlenge	Little Sisters	28/02/1978	Crown-1112	3701	11/06/1973
Irrkerlantye	White Gate	28/10/1992	n/a	n/a	n/a
Itwiyethwenge	Basso's Farm	n/a	SPL-554	5123	16/07/1976
Karnte	Karnte	11/07/1983	Crown- 1111	7850	1/02/1988
Lhenpe Artnwe	Hoppy's Camp	6/08/1986	n/a	0	n/a
Mount Nancy	Mount Nancy	16/07/1974	SPL-409	5135	16/07/1976
Mpwetyerre	Abbotts Camp	25/10/1979	SPL-543	2664	4/07/1980
Nyewente	Trucking Yards	6/02/1975	SPL-449	5152	28/12/1978
Yarrenyty Arltere	Larapinta Valley	17/11/1978	SPL-536	5195	23/06/1981

## 2.3. The Town Camp Wellness Framework

TCAC has recently developed a Town Camp Wellness Framework which defines the overall balance within the Town Camp and impacts on the wellness of each individual living there. It aligns with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Nest (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (2014), the National Wellness Institute of Australia framework (National Wellness Institute of Australia Inc, accessed 13 December 2019), and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943) and sets out the most effective ways to achieve outcomes which matter most for Town Campers in our region. This has been developed by senior women and men residing in Town Camps and includes the following domains:

### 1. Knowledge

Formal and informal experiences in the classroom, at home and in community, throughout the course of one's life, to maximise life opportunities. Includes cognitive and creative pursuits to also enrich one's capacity to make decisions, problem solve and maintain mental agility.

### 2. Shelter

Access to basic things needed to live a 'normal' life, including financial and occupational wellness, stable and healthy housing, clean water, clothing, healthy food, etc.



3. *Keeping Our Country*  
Encompasses the interactions between individuals and their 'habitats' at a local, community and global level, and includes safety in nature, home, work and the community.
4. *Identity*  
A positive sense of self and culture underpins all of the other dimensions and is fundamental to overall Town Camp wellbeing. Cultural wellness refers to an ability to both enact one's own cultural values as well as interact effectively with people from different cultures and working towards eliminating racism and systematic discrimination, whilst spiritual wellness is seeking meaning in existence.
5. *Community*  
Embraces positive relationships and connections with families and others and includes love.
6. *Camp/Community Leadership*  
Engagement with peers and community, including governance and decision-making, determining systems and having a voice and say on matters. Includes access to digital systems and technology for social connections.
7. *Healing (Mind, Body and Soul)*  
Having one's physical, developmental, psychosocial and mental health needs met to achieve optimal developmental trajectories and opportunities. Includes access to preventative measures and health education as well as access to services to redress emerging health issues.

## 3. Each Domain impacts on Education Outcomes

Aboriginal people from Alice Springs, its Town Camps and Central Australia are impacted by the consequences of multidimensional and intersecting disadvantage.

TCAC considers that the context of the Alice Springs Town Camps needs to be considered with respect to the Metropolitan - Rural and Remote School Achievement Gap; and the Achievement Gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

### 3.1. Knowledge

#### 3.1.1. The Metropolitan- Rural and Remote School Achievement Gap

The gap in performance between metropolitan and rural students is well known and born out in key national and international indicators such as student achievement data for NAPLAN, Year 12 matriculation test scores, data for PISA and TIMSS and Year 12 completion rates. This data show that students in 'remote and very remote' areas perform at lower levels than 'provincial' and 'metropolitan' students. The data (e.g. 2012 NAPLAN data) when translated into years of schooling, where 30 score points is equivalent to one year's schooling, reveal that metropolitan students on average outperform students in provincial areas by around half a school year and outperform students in remote schools on average by around one and two third years. A similar pattern exists in TIMSS data for 2011, for example, where the gaps between metropolitan and remote and very remote students are approximately the equivalent of two years in schooling. As far as PISA 2012 results are concerned, students from metropolitan, provincial and rural and remote areas represented respectively 15 per cent, 10 per cent

and 6 per cent of students in the top band demonstrating a decreasing percentage of students in the top band with increasing distance from capital city CBD/metropolitan areas (OECD average of 9 per cent for males and 8 per cent for females). Finally, an analysis of 2012 PISA results for scientific literacy indicates that about 12 per cent of students are below the baseline and therefore 'at serious risk of not achieving at levels sufficient to allow them to adequately participate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce and to contribute as productive citizens. Representation of remote students within this 12 per cent is more than twice that of metropolitan students.

As a further illustration of this performance gap, at the national level, the COAG Reform Council's report *Education in Australia 2012: Five years of performance* (COAG, 2013) provides an indication of the size of the performance gaps in reading achievement between metropolitan and rural students by producing a number of tables for Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN Reading Achievement for the years 2008-2012. As an illustrative example, Figure 2 is a summary of these data for students meeting minimum reading standards in 2012:

Figure 2: Performance gaps between Metropolitan, Remote and Very Remote students: Percentage of students meeting minimum reading standards (2012) by Year Group.				
Reading Standards of: (2012)	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Metropolitan	96%	93%	97%	92%
Remote	85%	80%	85%	80%
Very Remote	59%	41%	55%	57%
Gap (Metropolitan-Remote)	11%	13%	12%	12%
Gap (Metropolitan -Very Remote)	37%	52%	42%	35%

Figure 2 demonstrates there are significant achievement gaps between the percentage of students meeting minimum NAPLAN reading standards for students in metropolitan, remote and very remote students. The table shows increasing performance gaps with increasing remoteness and gaps for each year level of approximately one and a half years' schooling between Metropolitan and Very Remote students.

### 3.1.2. Aboriginal Students and the Metropolitan- Rural and Remote School Achievement Gap

The National Assessment Program— Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2018 as well as indicating decreasing achievement with increasing remoteness for Indigenous students shows a significant performance gap between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students. This is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: National performance gaps for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN Reading				
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Indigenous	82.0%	77.2%	75.6%	73.9%
Non- Indigenous	96.6%	96.0%	95.4%	94.6%
Gap	14.6%	18.8%	19.8%	20.7%



Figure 3 demonstrates significant performance gaps between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous NAPLAN Reading results which also increase with years of schooling.

These gaps also appear in Year 12 completion rates, Year 12 university admission rates, and employment levels after leaving school.

Interestingly, the data for non-Indigenous students in remote locations is on par with non-Indigenous students in metropolitan regions, which strongly indicates language as a barrier to school performance (Biddle, 2010, p.67 and NAPLAN, 2012).

### 3.1.3. Challenges to Town Camp School Achievement

Together with determinants including Poverty, Housing, Environmental Health, Energy Security, Climate Change/Heat Mitigation, Transport and Digital Access factors related to History, Trauma, Minority Stress and Acculturation must be considered with respect to Town Camp School Achievement.

The Town Camps were established due to the “displacement of Aboriginal people from their traditional lands” (Tangentyere Council, 2016, p. 5). The history of the Northern Territory (NT) has involved significant violence against the Aboriginal population. The last officially sanctioned massacre in the NT took place in Coniston in 1928 (Wilson and O’Brien, 2003, p. 59). To many people Coniston represents the last battle in the war of conquest persecuted by European colonists against Aboriginal people. Additionally, the “state mandated separation” of children from their families is also included among the major disturbances inflicted upon Aboriginal people (Hunter, 1998, p. 11). In addition, the practice of taking children from their families continued well beyond the 1948 ratification of the UN “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” (Hunter, 1998, p. 11). This convention includes the forcible removal of children as an act contributing to genocide (Hunter, 1998, p. 11).

Many Town Camp residents face multidimensional disadvantage (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, 2015, p. 1-19). This is characterised by welfare dependence, poor educational attainment, problem drinking, violence, antisocial behaviour, crime and homelessness (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, 2015, p. 1-19). This is further exacerbated by language barriers, whereby many Indigenous students speak English as a third language, which impacts their school performance in a way that non-Indigenous remote students don’t seem to be affected. (Biddle, 2010, p.67 and NAPLAN, 2012). In this manner educational attainment and employment outcomes become both determinants and symptoms of disadvantage.

Understandably there is a significant preoccupation with educational attainment (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, 2015, p. 3) and employment (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, 2015, p. 6) as social determinants of disadvantage. The Forrest Review for example focuses on punitive strategies to improve school attendance (Forrest & DPM&C, 2014, p. 96), the use of ‘direct instruction’ to improve literacy and numeracy (Forrest & DPM&C, 2014, p. 94) and implementing mainstream strategies for the overall improvement of educational outcomes for Aboriginal children (Forrest & DPM&C, 2014).

Work by TCAC to informally investigate the issue of enrolments and attendance confirmed that attendance of students from the Town Camps at school daily requires significant work.

In the 2017 study “Keeping Strong: Digital technology, participatory research, and young people’s wellbeing amongst Alice Springs Town Camp communities”, a survey of mainly primary students showed 68 of 73 participants (93.15%) stated that school attendance is important. 42.47% also responded that school was either boring, hard or scary and that isolation has an impact (e.g. no friends, no family, far away). When asked how hard or easy learning at school was for them, 34.25% of the 73 students responded hard or very hard. Then top five things that participants liked about school include, in descending order, Sport, Friends, Learning, Play and Art.

### 3.2. Shelter

Poverty is a major obstacle to education and employment, and the deepest poverty in Australia is found in the Northern Territory (NT News, 2019), along with the highest prevalence of children at greatest risk of social exclusion (Uniting Care Ageing, 2017). The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) report ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage based on the Census of Population and Housing. The three Local Government Areas (LGAs) covering remote Central Australia (Barkly LGA, Central Desert LGA and MacDonnell LGA) all rank in the bottom 2 percent of all LGAs in Australia according to the 2016 SEIFA report (Regional Development Australia Northern Territory, accessed 13 December 2019).

Roughly 45 per cent of all Indigenous households in the NT are located below the poverty line, and the census suggests that the level of Indigenous poverty in remote NT has been increasing.

CDP also contributes to the problem, making income security reliant on mutual obligation conditions that many people cannot meet. We note that mutual obligation seems to only apply in one direction, with consistent failure in relation to the obligation of government to provide economic development and a base level of resources to support education, health, housing and other determinants of workforce participation.

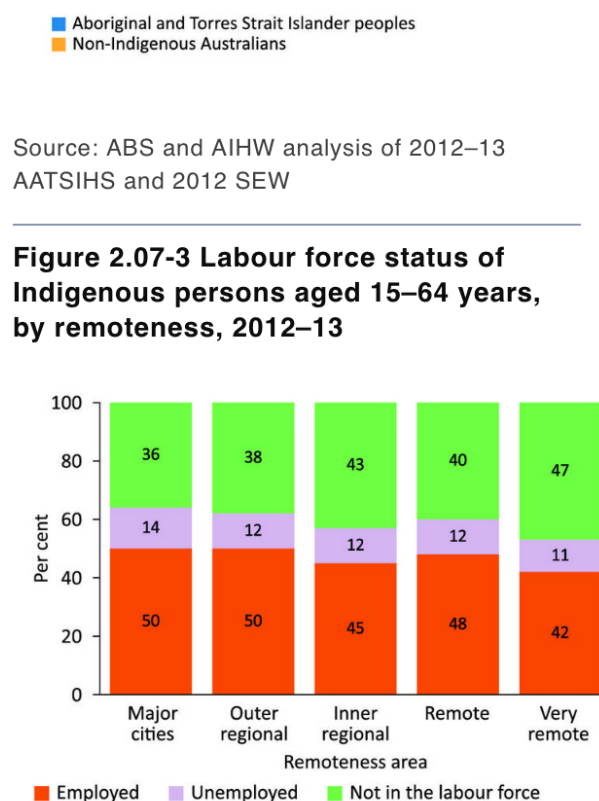
TCAC provided a submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee for the inquiry into the appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of the Community Development Program. In this submission we identified that research undertaken by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) at the Australian National University (ANU) demonstrated that Aboriginal people living in remote and very remote areas are breached from income support payments at ~56 times the rate of income support recipients in urban areas (Australian National University, 2017). During this submission we identified that the primary reason for this level of breaching was related to the significant level of participation required from remote income support recipients in ‘Work for the Dole’ and other mutual obligation activities. Activity requirements for remote income support recipients are far higher than that of urban job seekers.

The rates of breaching and the number of people not receiving income support contributes to the low rates of income support and means that the income support safety net is failing. The failure of this safety net impacts significantly upon children, families and other areas such as tenancy sustainability. When a recipient’s income support payments stop (even temporarily) all Income Management/Centrelink deductions stop. Stopped deductions result in debt including housing debts as rent deductions stop. This system can lead to significant additional financial stress on families who are already struggling financially, compounding other significant stressors they are often facing.

It is our opinion that making significant changes to the Centrelink and CDP systems to ensure food security to Indigenous people in our region would go a long way to improving school attendance as well as addressing other Closing the Gap targets, as the problems identified – life expectancy, child mortality, poor health, poor educational attainment - are caused by poverty. The NT is not on track for Child mortality, Early childhood education, School attendance, Life expectancy, Reading and numeracy or employment according to the latest Closing the Gap report (DPM&C, 2019).

We think families need real food security and income security - the base of Maslow's hierarchy of needs - before families can address school attendance, which is the basis of any ongoing pathways into education. This is supported by the consultations undertaken as part of the development of the Wellness Framework – see below.

According to the following table only 42% of Aboriginal people aged 15-64 from very remote areas are employed, 11% are unemployed and the remainder are not in the labour force.



Tangentyere is concerned that many people designated as 'not in labour force' simply don't receive any income. Once again, these figures and the following table have been outlined in our submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee for the inquiry into the appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of the Community Development Program. It is felt that there are multiple determinants impacting upon these figures.

The ability to obtain and to maintain housing reflects a major determinant of health and wellbeing. At present income support payments are inadequate to allow people to maintain an acceptable standard of living. The current level of payments undermines the sustainability of housing at the level of the individual, community and system. The inability to maintain housing directly impacts upon enrolments, attendance and attainment at school.

TCAC and its Corporate and Individual Members have concerns about rent affordability for residents of Urban, Town Camp and Remote Public Housing based on current levels of income support.

For the Town Camps (and Remote Communities) rent is currently based on the following table of maximum rents payable to the DLGHCD:

Figure 4: Remote Maximum Dwelling Rent				
Classification	4 Beds	3 Beds	2 Beds	1 Bed
New/Rebuilt	\$250	\$230	\$175	\$150
Refurbished	\$200	\$184	\$140	\$120
Existing	\$150	\$138	\$105	\$90

These maximum rents are significant when considered in the context of the current weekly rates of Department of Human Services income support payments. TCAC acknowledges that rent is currently rebated to 25% of household income. Newstart recipients for example will be left with \$208.50 per week after paying rent. This amount is not enough to meet basic material needs let alone provide the basis for social and financial inclusion.

TCAC, its Corporate and Individual Members and clients are concerned about the issues of Energy Security; Environmental Health and Debt. TCAC raised concerns about Energy Security with the NT Minister for Renewables, Energy and Essential Services (and Jacana) that have been heightened since the introduction of new smart pre-paid meters in Town Camps; Remote Communities and Urban Public Housing. These new pre-paid smart meters have had a significant impact upon households with respect to: (1) how power is purchased; (2) limitations about who can purchase power; (3) changes to emergency and friendly credit; and (4) anecdotal feedback about the affordability of pre-paid power. Point 4 aligns with the suspicion that tariff rates in the old standalone pre-paid meters may not have been adjusted for many years prior to the installation of new smart meters. A feature of smart meters is that they can be adjusted remotely whereas the old meters needed to be adjusted on site. Point 3 relates to features designed as a safety net, e.g. friendly credit which is an involuntary function is particularly unpopular for reasons associated with debt, disconnection and challenges to re-connection.

Jacana has provided the National Meter Indicator (NMI) for each Town Camp household. We are currently seeking consent from the head tenant from each dwelling. TCAC will also seek the consent from stakeholders living in urban Alice Springs who access TCAC programs.

TCAC has commenced seeking consent from Town Camp households to access Jacana energy data. To date we have received consent from ~170 households. We have now began receiving data from households in Town Camps that have consented to this process and the first wave of evidence is clear - In one Town Camp (with 23 tenanted houses) the average house will use a projected 8,437 kWh per annum (\$2,342 per annum). This average house will have 51 periods without power (involuntary self-disconnection) for a period of 238 hours. This means the average house loses power for about 5 hours every week in the last year.

Feedback from TCAC Corporate and Individual Members suggests that the installation of new smart meters has coincided with a significant increase in electricity prices. This has led to increased debt and increased power outages. TCAC is concerned on the net impact on a range of issues including: (1) food storage; (2) ability to wash people, clothing and bedding; and (3) ability to manage internal ambient temperatures (particularly in summer and winter).

The impact of heating and cooling will be considered in section 3.4 Climate Change/Heat Mitigation, but it should be noted that the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) produced houses that were not necessarily well constructed with respect to the cost-effective provision of optimal internal living environments.

The Centre for Appropriate Technology reported that SIHIP emphasised Safety and the first 4 HLPs at the expense of the remaining 5 HLPs in its report 'Housing Experience: Post Occupancy Evaluation of Alice Springs Town Camp Housing 2008-2011' (Centre for Appropriate Technology, 2012). Controlling the temperature of the living environment is HLP number 8. Further evidence for the need for the consideration of climate change and heat mitigation comes from the DLGHCD commissioned Deloitte Report titled 'Living on The Edge: Northern Territory Town Camps Review' (Deloitte, 2017). This report does not consider climate change and heat mitigation as part of its assessment of the future housing and infrastructure needs of the Territory's Town Camps. Town Camp houses do not have heaters and individuals are forced to purchase their own and these are usually inexpensive to buy and expensive to operate. Previously the houses had combustion stoves and people collected their own firewood, but these were removed. Cooling in summer is also a significant issue but this will be addressed later.

The current rates of Newstart undermine household energy security and this impacts upon the storage of food and the maintenance of safe internal ambient temperatures.

As at the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 570 Alice Springs households had prepayment meters. Of these 570 houses 420 had at least one self-disconnection event for a mean duration of 455 minutes (7.5 hours). Most of these households are Public Housing. 285 of these households are located on Town Camps.

Self-disconnections occur when energy consumers are unable to purchase power for their prepayment meter. The resultant lack of power places people at further risk.

Proof of Identity is also a significant barrier to Aboriginal people from Alice Springs, its Town Camps and Central Australia to be able to access a range of services and to exercise their rights as citizens. Locally individuals planning to enter educational institutions including Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and Charles Darwin University (CDU) are struggling to provide enough Proof of Identity to successfully apply for courses.

It is the view of TCAC that Proof of Identity is an issue for Aboriginal people in the NT. There are flexible, informal and community led mechanisms to tackle the issue of the impacts arising from access to Proof of Identity, but these only partially address the issue. These strategies whilst useful prevent people from full participation in society (driving with a licence, owning a passport etc.), make people vulnerable to changes in government policy (for example if Centrelink discontinued the RA010 form), exacerbate variations in nomenclature, addressing and DOB; make people reliant on poorly resourced and vulnerable services operated by ACCOs. Often cards issued by ACCOs have limited scope (geography and uses). Finally, the federated nature of Birth, Deaths and Marriages is an issue for individuals living in the tristate region.

It also needs to be acknowledged that access to Proof of Identity also prevents individuals from being accessing income support required to participate in education and training.

### 3.2.1. Transport to/from Education

Transport is a significant issue for people living in remote or regional areas including the Alice Springs Town Camps. Current rates of income support do not support sustainable vehicle ownership and yet options for public transport do not support positive outcomes for children and schooling; participation and employment; and public health.

The challenges to school transport for Town Camp children are outlined below (Department of Transport (a), accessed 2020).

Figure 5: School Buses

Name	Primary	km	Departure	Start	Interchange	Finish	Home	Time (Min)
Akngwertnarre	Bradshaw	2.3	7.33 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.28 pm	95
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Braitling	2.9	7.39 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.05 pm	66
Anthepe Housing	Gillen	6.7	7.40 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.37 pm	97
Aper-Alwerrkng	Braitling	1.8	7.35 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	2.55 pm	60
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Sadadeen	0.6	7.27 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.29 pm	102
New Ilparpa	Gillen	7.3	7.31 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	4.17 pm	146
Ilperle Tyathe	Braitling	2.7	7.33 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.33 pm	100
Ilyperenye	Bradshaw	5.4	7.37 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.30 pm	93
Inarlange	Bradshaw	4.3	7.44 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.31 pm	87
Irrkerlantye	Sadadeen	2.6	7.31 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.32 pm	101
Itwiyethwenge	Braitling	2.5	7.35 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	2.55 pm	60
Karnte	Gillen	7.6	7.42 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.35 pm	93
Lhenpe Artnwe	Braitling	3.7	7.39 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.05pm	66
Mount Nancy	Braitling	1.8	7.35 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	2.55 pm	60
Mpwetyerre	Gillen	3.2	7.39 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.42 pm	103
Nyewente	Braitling	2.9	7.34 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.29 pm	95
Yarrenyty Arltere	Gillen	3.2	7.30 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.25 pm	95

To highlight this issue, please consider the example of a primary school aged child from New Ilparpa. This child needs to travel to Gillen Primary School which is 7.3 kilometres from New Ilparpa. This child will need to catch the bus at 7.31 am for an 8.30 am start. Whilst school finishes at 2.50 pm this child won't return to New Ilparpa until 4.17 pm. This circumstance extends the school day by 146 minutes or 2 hours and 26 minutes. Residents want their children to attend school and to achieve good outcomes, but the addition of 2 hours and 26 minutes makes these aspirations more of a challenge than required.

Public transport is also limited in scope from the perspective of start and finish times, number of buses on some routes, reduced services on Saturdays, no services on Sundays and distances to bus stops. Public transport doesn't encourage or support participation and social inclusion.

Public transport to Town Camps is outlined overleaf (Department of Transport (b), accessed 2020).



Figure 6: Public Transport						
Name	CBD (km)	Bus Stop (km)	Buses	First	Final	Travel (Min)
Akngwertnarre	3.2	0.7	4	9.30 am	3.15 pm	10
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	1.7	0.4	4	8.45 am	2.45 pm	10
Anthepe Housing	8.2	1.0	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	37
Aper-Alwerrkng	4.1	0.3	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	16
Ewyenper-Atwatye	2.5	1.4	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	20
Ilparpa	8.5	0.4	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	19
Ilperle Tyathe	5.2	0.6	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	20
Ilyperenye	6.0	0.6	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	17
Inarlenge	5.0	0.8	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	18
Irrkerlantye	3.9	1.6	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	27
Itwiyethwenge	4.6	0.8	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	22
Karnte	9.0	2.0	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	48
Lhenpe Artnwe	2.2	1.1	4	8.45 am	2.45 pm	19
Mount Nancy	4.1	0.3	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	16
Mpwetyerre	2.6	0.6	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	13
Nyewente	2.8	0.7	4	9.30 am	3.15 pm	12
Yarrenyty Arltere	4.1	1.5	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	30

To highlight this issue, please consider the example of an individual from Karnte who lives 9 km from the CBD. This individual needs to walk 2 km to catch a bus to Alice Springs. This individual can catch on of the 10 buses that run between 7.10 am and 5.40 pm (return) on weekdays. Saturday services are reduced to 4 buses and no buses operate on Sundays. Other locations have less options, for example Akngwertnarre residents can only catch one of 4 buses per day.

Generally, the options for transport are private cars and commercial passenger vehicles but both are prohibitively expensive for those in receipt of income support. The schedule of prepaid tax fares outlined below demonstrates that the prepaid fare for 5 km is \$17 and 10 km is \$28. For an individual trip this is not prohibitively expensive but where other transport is unreliable then the cost becomes expensive where multiple trips are required throughout the week (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, 2020).

Figure 7: Pre-Paid Taxi Fare Estimates		
Distance	Up to 4	5 or More
5 km	\$17	\$22
10 km	\$28	\$40
15 km	\$40	\$57
20 km	\$51	\$74
25 km	\$63	\$91
30 km	\$74	\$109
35 km	\$86	\$126
40 km	\$97	\$143

Current rates of income support mean that people living on the Town Camps are less likely to have drivers' licences (~25% of adults have drivers' licences) or to own and maintain registered motor vehicles. As previously identified Baker Heart and Diabetes estimated that ~25% of households had access to a motor vehicle in an emergency (this did not specify that these motor vehicles were registered). TCAC

speculates that the reasons for low levels of drivers licensing are linked to resourcing and income support. Some barriers to licencing are as follows: (1) proof of identity; (2) outstanding fines; (3) drink driving offences; (4) literacy and numeracy; (5) spoken and written English; (6) poverty; and (7) access to a motor vehicle.

At the time of writing this submission, TCAC is commencing discussions with the George Institute of Global Health in consideration of a project to tackle licensing. TCAC has also collaborated with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics with respect to Drive Safe NT.

A tangible reminder of the ability to maintain motor vehicles comes from the number of abandoned motor vehicles removed in collaboration with our Corporate and Individual Members. This figure was 270 for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years combined.

Transport is crucial and people require the resources to purchase transport related goods and services. Transport is becoming a bigger issue with the extreme heat that is being experienced in regional and remote Australia.

### 3.3. Keeping Our Country

Prior to December 2009 TCAC implemented repairs and maintenance for Town Camp houses in accordance with the National Indigenous Housing Guide (NIHG). The NIHG was developed by Health Habitat. TCAC partnered with Health Habitat on the Fixing Houses for Better Health (FHBH) and the Maintaining Houses for Better Health (MHBH) prior to the Northern Territory National Emergency Response (NTNER) and the Subleases. Following the NTNER the Town Camps executed Tripartite Alice Springs Living Area Subleases with the Commonwealth and Territory Governments. The Tripartite Subleases had the impact of transitioning Town Camps from Community Housing managed by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Housing Organisation (ACCHO) to Public Housing managed by the DLGHCD. This change resulted in the de-emphasis of some Health Living Practices (HLPs) and the NIHG in the construction, refurbishment and maintenance of Town Camp housing. Additionally, repairs and maintenance has tended to be 'responsive' rather than 'cyclical'.

The Health Living Practices are outlined below:

Figure 8: Healthy Living Practices	
Health Living Practices	Details
Washing People	Ensuring there is hot and cold water and that the shower and bath work;
Washing Clothes & Bedding	Ensuring the laundry is functional;
Removing Waste	Ensuring drains aren't blocked and that the toilets are working;
Improving Nutrition	Ensuring adequate infrastructure for food storage and preparation;
Reducing Overcrowding	Ensuring health hardware can cope with the actual number of residents.
Reducing the Impact of Vermin	Reducing the impacts of animals, vermin and insects on the health of people <sup>1</sup> ;
Reducing Dust	Reducing dust <sup>2</sup> ;
Controlling Temperature	Ensuring adequate passive and mechanical cooling;
Reducing Trauma	Reducing trauma from non-life-threatening injury etc

The Centre for Appropriate Technology reported that the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) emphasised Safety and the first 4 HLPs at the expense of the remaining 5 HLPs in its report 'Housing Experience: Post Occupancy Evaluation of Alice Springs Town Camp Housing 2008-2011. Controlling the temperature of the living environment is HLP number 8.

<sup>1</sup> Through ensuring adequate insect screens etc.

<sup>2</sup> Reducing the prevalence of respiratory disease etc.

The de-emphasis of 5 HLPs and changes to repairs and maintenance has resulted in the shifting of costs from the 'landlord' to the households themselves. For example, houses built prior to December 2009 had solar hot water heaters installed. New houses constructed since December 2009 as part of SIHIP have electric hot water heaters. The reason for this change is about the cost of the construction process. The result is that the cost is shifted from the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development to the tenant. The outcome is increased power consumption and reduced energy security (as discussed earlier).

Other visible barriers attributable to inadequate income support that align with environmental health include the inability of households to manage hard rubbish and abandoned motor vehicles. Baker Heart and Diabetes has identified that ~25% of Town Camp households have access to a motor vehicle in an emergency and this lack of access demonstrates the logistical barrier for tackling the issue of hard rubbish.

TCAC seeks to support Town Camp communities to tackle a range of issues including those related to environmental health. This work happens at the level of the household and the community. One example is in the removal of abandoned motor vehicles, during 2017/18 and 2018/19 TCAC has worked with members to remove 370 abandoned motor vehicles.

TCAC has partnered with the University of Newcastle School of Architecture and Built Environment (SABE) to consider design-based approaches to both environmental health and crime prevention (through environmental design). TCAC is also working toward an interagency approach to animal management in partnership with Animal Management in Remote and Rural Indigenous Communities (AMIRRIC) and the Alice Springs Town Council.

TCAC, its Corporate and Individual Members want to progress toward the management of environmental health in the spirit of participatory development so that individuals, households and communities can manage these issues for themselves but feel that the current levels of income support are a major challenge to the most basic solutions. The issues arising from the low levels of income support are complicated by the cost shifting from program to individual (e.g. limited investment in passive cooling, installation of electric water heaters and the lack of cost-effective heating etc.).

Poor outcomes with respect to the Healthy Living Practices directly impact upon rates of school attendance and achievement. The impacts of inadequate access to infrastructure that supports outcomes HLPs 1,2 and 4 are clearly relevant to education outcomes.

Further, as Alice Springs experiences increasing warmer weather, it is anticipated that houses will become increasingly unhealthy and unsafe during period of extreme heat and that houses will become less cost effective during these times. Ultimately housing and services will need to adapt to the extreme heat that we can continue to expect.

Some residents have reported the failure of evaporative air-conditioners to TCAC, CAAHC and Tangentyere Constructions. It is however likely that the basis for the poor climatic performance of Town Camp (and other remote) housing is more complex than the failure of evaporative air-conditioners. It is likely that evaporative air-conditioners have been functioning but that they are insufficient to cool houses to optimal internal temperatures with such extreme weather conditions prevailing. The Bureau of Meteorology reports that between July 2018 and June 2019 that Alice Springs had a total of 129 days over 35°C and 55 days over 40°C. This period corresponded with a high volume of feedback to TCAC, its subsidiary Tangentyere Constructions and related party the Central Australian Affordable Housing Company (CAAHC) that Town Camp housing has performed badly with respect to internal temperatures. CAAHC provides Tenancy Management and Tangentyere Constructions employs Housing Maintenance Officers (HMOs) both as subcontractors to the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (DHLGCD).

To provide some context the 2004 report, *Climate Change in the Northern Territory* (Hennessy, 2004) noted that Alice Springs averaged 90 days over 35°C and 17 days over 40°C (at the time of publication). This report predicted that by 2030 these figures would increase to between 96-125 days over 35°C and to between 21-43 days over 40°C. The figures for 2018/19 have surpassed these predictions.

The rates of income support will also need to be reconsidered in the context of climate change as people become more reliant on passive and mechanical cooling and transport (other than walking).

### 3.4. Identity

Key characteristics of one's identity in a Town Camp include cultural practice and language. In education, there is often limited consideration of linguistic or cultural preservation and transmission. Under the title of "stopping distractions to education" the Forrest Review recommends "scheduling cultural ceremonies outside school hours or during school holidays" (Forrest & DPM&C, 2014, p. 99). In contrast other sources have identified that, "the stress of being denied instruction in one's mother tongue in the school context can set up a powerful sense of failure in young people" (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2009, p. 61). Language and culture are protective factors and to undermine such strengths further marginalises Aboriginal people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2009, p. 12).

Between 1974 and 2008 the multilingual nature of Aboriginal populations in the NT was supported through bilingual education (Simpson et al, 2009, p. 6). Bilingual education was introduced in recognition of the fact that "young people learn best when taught through their mother tongue" (Simpson et al, 2009, p. 6). Bilingual education was based on the "principle of building on what children already know" and of breaking learning down into manageable tasks (Simpson et al, 2009, p. 11). One of the key objectives of bilingual education was to work toward the acquisition of spoken and written English so that it could become the language of instruction (Simpson et al, 2009, p. 11). In 2008 the NT Government scrapped bilingual education (Simpson et al, 2009, p. 15). The decision to abandon bilingual education was influenced by NAPLAN results and the review of the NTNER (Simpson et al, 2009, p. 28). Ironically whilst the review of the NTNER was critical of the Department of Education it recognised bilingual education as a universal success factor (Simpson et al, 2009, p. 27). Despite this recognition bilingual education was abandoned as a result of the overall criticism outlined in the review (Simpson et al, 2009, p. 28). The reviewers had identified other success factors that were undoubtedly linked to bilingual education including empowered teacher and community relationships; and cultural and development programs (Simpson et al, 2009, p. 27).

TCAC clients on Town Camps are Aboriginal and predominately language speakers as outlined overleaf.

Figure 9: Language Groups			
Name	Alias	Location Type	Languages
Akngwertnarre	Morris Soak	Town Camp	Warlpiri
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Charles Creek	Town Camp	Arrernte, Anmatyerr
Anthepe	Drive In	Town Camp	Arrernte, Warlpiri, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara
Aper-Alwerrkng	Palmer's	Town Camp	Arrernte
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Hidden Valley	Town Camp	Arrernte, Warlpiri
Ilparpa	Ilparpa	Town Camp	Arrernte, Pertame, Luritja
Ilperle Tyathe	Warlpiri	Town Camp	Warlpiri
Ilpeye-Ilpeye	Golders	Town Camp	Arrernte
Ilyperenye	Old Timers	Town Camp	Arrernte, Warlpiri, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara
Inarlenge	Little Sisters	Town Camp	Arrernte, Warlpiri, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara
Irrkerlantye	White Gate	Town Camp	Arrernte
Itwiyethwenge	Basso's	Town Camp	Arrernte, Kaytetye, Anmatyerr, Alyawarr
Karnte	Karnte	Town Camp	Luritja, Pitjantjatjara
Lhenpe Artnwe	Hoppy's	Town Camp	Arrernte, Pertame, Luritja, Anmatyerr
Mount Nancy		Town Camp	Arrernte, Kaytetye, Anmatyerr, Alyawarr
Mpwetyerre	Abbott	Town Camp	Arrernte, Warlpiri, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara, Warumungu
Nyewente	Trucking Yards	Town Camp	Arrernte, Luritja
Yarrenyty Arltere	Larapinta Valley	Town Camp	Arrernte, Pertame, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara

### 3.5. Community

Across Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are vastly over-represented in the out-of-home care (OOHC) system. Despite best efforts, both the total number and the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children brought into OOHC continue to increase annually. At June 30 2018, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed into OOHC nationally was 59.4 per 1,000 children, 12 times the rate for non-Indigenous children (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019). Projections confirm that the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait children placed into OOHC will triple in the next 20 years, and yet the number of these children placed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers has steeply declined over the last 10 years, falling below 50% nationally for the first time ever in 2018 (Lewis et al, 2019).

Many of the statistics for the NT mirror these disturbing national trends. In June 2015 there were a total of 1,017 children in OOHC in the NT, of which 892 (87.7%) identified as of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent (Australian institute of Health and Welfare, 2016). By March 2019 the total figure in the NT of children in OOHC had reached 1,080, of whom 970 (89.8%) were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent (Territory Families, 2019). This figure constitutes a huge over-representation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children, and is of particular concern given that the total number of children in OOHC is projected to increase further to a figure of 1,300 in the NT by the year 2023 (Keeler, 2018). Against the national trend of increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait children being placed in OOHC, recent data supplied by TF indicates that the rate of removal of Aboriginal children in the NT has followed a consistent downward trend in the past five years, with 274 children entering care in 2014-15 compared with under 220 in 2018-19.

When viewed through the lens of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP), it is of further concern that in June 2018 the NT had the lowest percentage across all jurisdictions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC placed with family and kin (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019). Indeed, of the 970 Aboriginal children in OOHC in March 2019 only 265 (27%) were placed in family and kin care arrangements. This is despite the fact that



in the NT, family and kin care is formally recognised as the preferred placement type for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in line with the ATSICPP. Family and kin care is the only placement type that honours the primacy of the family and supports an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's continued connection to their language, land and culture.

The NT Government Department of Territory Families (TF) is attempting to address the above concerns. In 2018 TF funded three pilot family and kin care programs, and due largely to this new approach, the financial year 2018-19 has seen the biggest single increase in both the recruitment of, and placement with Aboriginal family and kin carers for Aboriginal children in the past ten years. This is promising, but clearly there is much more that needs to be done. In recognition of this, and of the need for widespread and continued systems change, TF is currently undertaking a transformation of the entire OOH sector. This transformation of OOH will implement a wide ranging set of reforms in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. These reforms will be grounded in the principle that 'every child deserves an upbringing where they are safe and connected with their culture and identity, supported to thrive, learn, and grow, and to reach their full potential' (Twyford, 2018).

Judith Herman makes the point that 'trauma is contagious' (Herman, 2015, p. 140). It appears evident that trauma, grief and loss from events such as the Coniston Massacre and the removal of children have been handed down through the process of countertransference as described by Herman (Herman, 2015, p. 140). Trauma contributes to and is perpetuated by high rates of family and domestic violence; and alcohol related harm. Colonisation has contributed to the loss of land, language and culture. Connection to land, language and culture are protective factors and their loss further exacerbates the impact of the traumatic events that have led to the displacement of Aboriginal people from their traditional lands (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2009, p. 60). As a result, educational attainment and employment outcomes are both determinants and symptoms of multidimensional disadvantage.

### 3.6. Leadership - Digital Delivery of Services including Education and Training

Town Campers have an growing appetite for self-determination, community leadership, and active participation. However, increasingly there is an expectation that individuals and families will participate in a digital world and access services, including government services online. TCAC is aware of the importance of online services including myGov, Centrelink (through myGov), My Health and the NT Concessions and Seniors Recognition Scheme to our stakeholders in Alice Springs, its Town Camps and Central Australia. Additionally, changes to pre-paid power and proposed changes to income management make the digital delivery of government services more important than ever. This technology has potential to promote better outcomes but without digital inclusivity and access to the NBN people will be excluded.

For the most part NBN services are pending. In other locations satellite services are available. Unfortunately, satellite services are more costly to consumers. Reliance on satellite will be the only option in remote Central Australia. TCAC is reviewing costs for satellite and fixed line services (once available) but income support is insufficient for this to be a priority compared with food, rent and utilities. The inability to obtain credit for post-paid internet, the lack of pre-paid internet and the cost of the access mean that those in receipt of income support from regional and remote Australia are further excluded. This reality has further downstream impacts for consumers. Access to internet would improve other systems that are currently in place for our stakeholders, one example is the ability to purchase pre-paid power online.

In recognition of this challenge TCAC is procuring filtered internet to be broadcast through WIFI from Community Centres on the Town Camps. TCAC is also procuring options for Town Camps without Community Centers. This model will be more effective where fixed line services are available as plans with no data limit can be purchased. TCAC supports such a proposal because it will support the digital delivery of government services, financial inclusion, safe access of the internet (filtered) and WIFI calls from smartphones (this will enhance safety).



The cost of internet access in remote and regional areas is more expensive due to the type of service available. Income support rates make access to the NBN cost prohibitive. Lack of digital inclusivity creates financial exclusion and reduces participation.

### 3.7. Healing

Aboriginal people living in remote areas, including Town Camps, have a shared experience of multidimensional disadvantage. TCAC recognizes the social determinants of health and the relationship between the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and inequities in health and well-being. These determinants relate to social, economic, environmental and cultural conditions.

TCAC recognizes a range of social determinants and behaviors that impact upon the health including: (1) Early Childhood; (2) Education; (3) Employment, (4) Economic Participation and Income; (5) Addictions; (6) Stress and Trauma; (7) Homelessness; (8) Food and Nutrition; (9) Crime and Convictions; (10) Social Inclusion/Exclusion; (11) Transport; and (12) Language and Culture. Some of these determinants are both determinant and symptomatic of a range of issues including behavioural issues and structural issues. Primary issues impacting upon job seekers and their families include issues such as overcrowding; high rates of mobility (between localities); health; addictions; anti-social behaviour; educational attainment; proof of identity and transport issues (including drivers licensing).

The burden of disease in remote and very remote areas is also another significant factor that requires consideration with respect to education attainment, participation and employment. The Alice Springs Town Camps provide a case study with respect to the prevalence of chronic disease that is comparable with other remote and very remote areas in Central Australia. According to the Heart of the Heart study 28.4%, 39.7% and 24.2% of residents suffer from diabetes, chronic kidney disease and cardiovascular disease respectively (Brown et al, 2014).

The following standardised mortality ratios presented by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report 'Chronic Diseases and Associated Risk Factors in Australia, 2006' outline the severity and prevalence of preventable chronic illnesses amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people nationally (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2016).

Figure 10: Standardised Mortality Ratios	
Chronic Illness	Standardised Mortality Ratio <sup>3</sup>
Coronary Heart Disease (or CVD)	5.0 (5 ATSI Deaths: 1 Non-ATSI Death etc)
Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke)	4.3
Lung Cancer	3.6
Colorectal Cancer	1.7
Diabetes	13.9
COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)	5.8
Chronic Kidney Disease	7.7

These diseases are associated with 'modifiable' risks factors which include those that are 'behavioural' and those that whilst termed 'biomedical' can at least be partly managed through behaviour. As implied

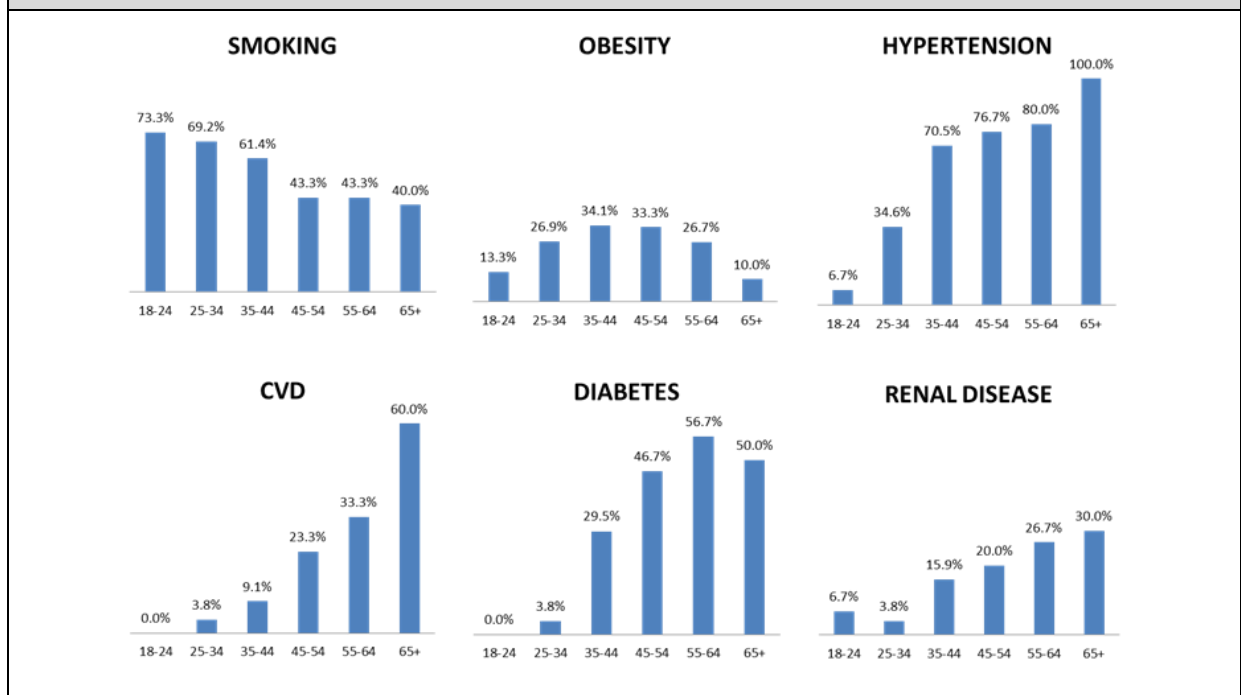
<sup>3</sup> Comparison of Indigenous death rates due to individual chronic illness verses non-Indigenous death rates due to individual chronic illness

by the term ‘modifiable’ these risks can be changed through the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices etc.

In a personal communication with Professor Alex Brown of Baker IDI, the following information was shared (Brown, A., 2011):

Central Australian Aboriginal people residing in the Alice Springs Town Camps have poor nutritional intake, low levels of physical activity, are more likely to smoke<sup>4</sup> and suffer from hypertension<sup>5</sup>. In addition, there is a significant proportion of this population that is overweight or obese. Aboriginal people are 13 times more likely to suffer from diabetes, 5 times more likely to suffer from heart disease and 7 times more likely to suffer from chronic kidney disease. Mortality rates for Aboriginal people are high and life expectancy is comparatively low. The reality for Central Australian Aboriginal people is that the risk factors and the prevalence of chronic illness contrast with the non-Indigenous population.

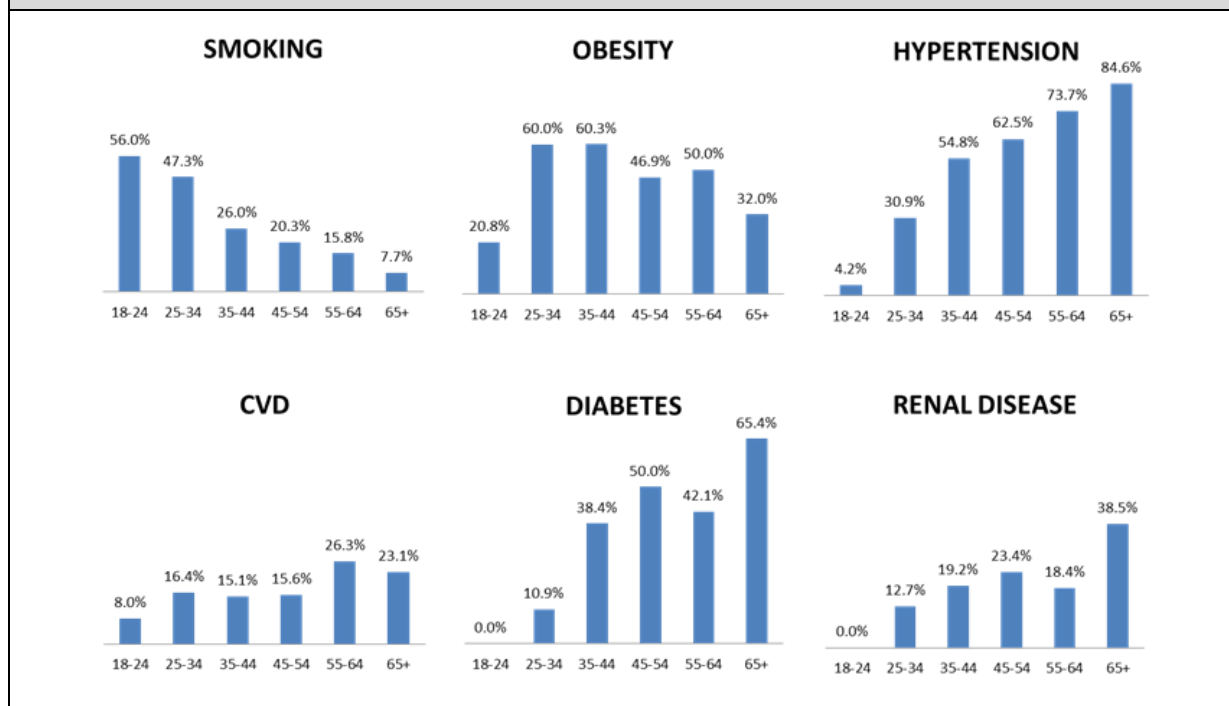
Figure 11: Outlines the prevalence of selected modifiable risk factors and chronic illnesses amongst Aboriginal Men (by age) in Central Australia



<sup>4</sup> E.g. 73% of Aboriginal males aged 18-24 smoke

<sup>5</sup> 100% of Aboriginal males over 65 years in age suffer from hypertension

Figure 12: Outlines the prevalence of selected modifiable risk factors and chronic illnesses amongst Aboriginal Women (by age) in Central Australia



## 4. Responses to Inquiry Questions

### 4.1 A Child's Journey

*A child's journey through early childhood, primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary education*

For the many reasons outlined in this paper, and for many children on Town Camps their journey through early childhood, primary, secondary and vocational and tertiary education is faced with many challenges to be overcome. These challenges require acknowledgement of the barriers Aboriginal children on Town Camps face to achieving success at school including challenges to attend school, to engage in school and to succeed in school. Critical to meeting these challenges, in our view, are a willingness of education providers to co-design education delivery with Town Campers and to vary service delivery to meet the often unique challenges Town Campers face in succeeding in education.

To illustrate this point, Tangentyere made a strategic decision to focus energy and resources on ensuring Town Camp children in the 0-5 year old age group obtained the benefits from an early childhood education experience. Partnering with the NT Department of Education, the Larapinta Child Family Centre and Child Friendly Alice, agreement and support was provided to deliver Early Childhood playgroups on Town Camps. Tangentyere created an Early Childhood Unit of four (a Coordinator, an Educator and two Community Connectors) with experience of Town Camp education challenges to drive the initiative. Tangentyere, the NT Department of Education and Larapinta Child Family Centre provided funding for the unit. A pilot was implemented on Trucking Yards Town Camp and following a successful evaluation extended to three more Town Camps. NT Department of Education Early Childhood Teachers are assisting with delivery. Progress, attendance and engagement are clearly evident and increasing following the impact of the Coronavirus on service delivery.

This model has many of the features we consider important to successful service delivery on Town Camps:

- Codesign with Town Camp parents and leaders
- Quality teachers and leaders
- A commitment from Tangentyere and providers to resource the initiative
- Delivery on Town Camps
- Strong strategic partnerships

## 4.2 Barriers and Proposed Ways Forward

*Key barriers to the education journey, including the effects of environmental factors such as drought on families and communities*

From the preceding discussion TCAC views the barriers and challenges as encompassing a range of social, cultural and environmental determinants. To increase the complexity of these multidimensional disadvantages it has been observed that factors can operate as both determinant and symptom.

Some of the ways to start to address these ‘barriers to equity’ are discussed in the table below.

<b><i>Living in rural and remote areas</i></b>	<b><i>Challenges and Proposed Ways Forward</i></b>
<p><i>This area is well researched with examples of issues to be addressed being:</i></p> <p><i>Restricted access to rich learning environments available to metropolitan counterparts. Lower value placed on education and its relevance by rural families relative to metropolitan counterparts. Restricted access to information and communication technologies and the greater impact of the most recent droughts and natural disasters on social, economic and environmental change in rural areas compared with metropolitan areas. [Alston and Kent (2006), Mission Australia (2006) and Sidoti (2000)]</i></p>	<p>A key issue for TCAC is to strengthen the culture with young people and their families of valuing education, commencing with Early Childhood Education.</p> <p>Ways forward, led mainly by education systems in co-design and cooperation with communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise the rich biological environment and deep local botanical and biological knowledge that exists in remote communities and develop a curriculum that embraces the opportunities that exist to capitalise on these environmental and human resources. Developing such a curriculum would increase the employment of elders and increase the cultural relevance of education, supporting attendance and engagement.</li> <li>• Once such a curriculum was developed and resourced, develop a campaign targeting parents/carers and young people to value education.</li> <li>• Use technology to create virtual rich learning environments.</li> <li>• Work with providers to improve access to ICTs and web and net connectivity.</li> </ul>

*Tertiary education for rural students typically means moving away from home and incurring considerable financial costs. As a result, higher percentages of rural students who have completed year 12 defer the offer of a tertiary education place at a rate two and a half times that of metropolitan students and often do not go on to study at university (VAGO, 2014).*

*Poorer Teacher Quality: Lack of professional learning opportunities for rural and remote teachers as well as lack of specialists. Difficulties in retaining qualified teachers and lack of adequate qualified casual replacement staff to support teachers engaging in a range of necessary activities, including professional learning. Poorer access to ICTs.*

*[Australian Council of Deans of Science (2005), The Australian Productivity Commission (2010), The Federation of Australian Scientific and Technology Societies (2002), The NSW Inquiry into Public Education (2002), and Sidoti (2000)]*

*Poorer Teacher Quality: Challenges in recruiting, retaining, professionally developing specialist staff, 'out of field' teaching, lack of quality resources, student access to outside area learning experiences and combined classes. [SiMERR (2006)]*

### **Indigeneity**

*This is also a well-researched area that focuses strategies on achieving equity of opportunity and equity of outcomes ('closing gaps').*

*At issue is these have not to date been successful so a total refresh of this approach by COAG is both*

- Provide financial resources to education systems to counteract the negative impacts of climate change and natural disasters on the ability to deliver education and students to be able to take advantage of this.
- Work with providers to develop alternative models of education delivered on Town Camps (pop up schools, satellite classrooms etc.)
- Provide relevant quality secondary education provision in rural and remote areas using a blended learning mode of bricks and mortar and technology so that students do not have to leave country to attend boarding schools to receive a quality secondary education.
- Support rural and remote secondary students to attend university through better Youth Allowance scheme
- Support education system HR policies to attract, retain and develop the 'best and brightest' teachers and leaders to rural and remote education settings.
- Support education systems to professionally develop teachers and leaders to employ strengths based, therapeutic trauma practices.
- Ensure rural and remote health systems can attract the 'best and brightest' health professionals to diagnose and respond to young people's health needs
- Ensure adequate staff housing to support teacher retention.
- As above

### **Challenges and Proposed Ways Forward**

- Refresh strategies to close education achievement and participation gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students focusing on;
  - Valuing education

welcomed and timely. As outlined, addressing the base of Maslow's hierarchy of needs would be the first step.

### **Living on a Town Camp**

- Early Childhood education
- Relevant and accessible secondary curriculum that supports Indigenous values.
- Provide education providers with funding controlled by parents/carers in partnership with the provider, like the previous ASSPA program, to allow providers to implement local placed-based solutions to ensuring year 12 completions and improvements in achievement (for example, incentive payments to parents and young people to attend education in holiday periods to improve educational attainment)
- All levels of government to work with all stakeholders to economically develop rural and remote areas to create ongoing employment opportunities, especially for young people.
- Attract, retain and develop male and female Elders to lead educational development and delivery of curriculum targeting Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, with an emphasis on STEAM through utilising local biological and botanical knowledge.

### **Challenges and Proposed Ways Forward**

- Work with providers to develop alternative models of education, especially secondary education delivered on Town Camps (pop up schools, satellite classrooms etc.).
- Work with businesses and Chambers of Commerce to introduce a jobs guarantee for every Aboriginal student who completes year 12 and has the required industry skills. This could be through existing apprenticeships and traineeships or creation of new jobs.
- Incentivise parents/carers to ensure at least 90% school attendance each school year (for example by making attendance bonus payments through welfare provision)
- Governments to provide funding for leadership programs to develop current and future Aboriginal leaders.
- Employ Elders and members of the Women's Safety Group as curriculum



development and implementation advisors and deliverers (as appropriate).

- Assist Tangentyere to remove barriers to school attendance including inadequate transport, inadequate nutrition and suitable clothing

### Challenges and Proposed Ways Forward - Poverty

Data regarding the local poverty are provided above. The challenges are many, including inability to provide food at home, adequate heating and cooling for good health and sleep, overcrowded housing meaning less sleep and more strain on existing resources, poor health of students and family, more imprisonment of significant family members, more contact with substance misuse, depression, suicide. A proposed way forward would be to ensure basic food and income security. In the short term this could be achieved by some reform of Centrelink requirements and increasing the amount of benefits. In the longer term, the state will have to make major adjustments to deal with the increased automation of work and reduced need for human employment while ensuring there is enough money in the system to keep the economy working.

This proposed way forward has recently been tested. The recent increase in benefits due to COVID-9 has produced clear improvements in the lives of children in the Town Camps. Youth workers report that children have been calmer, better fed and better dressed (McFarlane, B. 2020).

### 4.3 Culture and Country

#### *The role of culture and country in a child's learning*

Taking culture in its broadest sense to refer to a people's way of life - their ideas, values, customs and social behaviour, TCAC acknowledges that Town Campers have a unique view of the world based on at least five interconnected elements - land, family, law, ceremony and language.

Education service delivery on Town Camps is a useful and expedient way of helping combine these five elements to ensure a positive impact on the sense of identity and belonging of Town Campers that helps give meaning and purpose to their lives.

We therefore favour an approach to education that acknowledges and promotes use of the many Aboriginal languages on Town Camps, supports families in the socialisation of their children based on celebrating their identity and sense of belonging to Town Camps and the greater Alice Springs community (and of course Australia). We believe the best place to achieve this in the formative years of education up to 18 years of age is on Town Camps.

### 4.4 Community and Family

#### *Community and family structures that support a child's education and their attendance at school*

TCAC acknowledges the educational experiences of many Town Campers are not positive in that their experiences of success at school have not been what their families may have hoped it to be. Often affected by irregular attendance, a curriculum that failed to place due emphasis on the strength of Aboriginal culture and curriculum, assessment and teaching practices unsuited to Aboriginal learning, several families must be won over on the benefits of education. Having said that though, this is an

achievable goal given the strong desire and love of Aboriginal family and kin for their sons and daughters to have a rewarding, successful life.

Programs that raise awareness of the benefits of education and that target parents' skills in supporting their children as their first teacher are achieving success. To refer to the Early Childhood Education example above, many meetings are held with family and kin to obtain their permission and support for playgroups, parent tutoring is provided to help parents and kin support their child's learning and in one early childhood program we deliver (HIPPY) parents are coached in their home to deliver a lesson then mentored while they deliver it.

Building community and family support for the education of their children is a critical success factor for successful education delivery.

#### 4.5 Initiatives

*Effective government initiatives, past and present, that support remote communities to enable greater educational outcomes, including those that have improved attainment in literacy and numeracy*

TCAC would like to emphasise the need for different schooling models that provide educational delivery on Town Camps (thereby, for example, helping to overcome school attendance problems, allowing children to receive an education on their land with those they have grown up with, allowing community to more fully understand and get involved in education).

TCAC would also like to emphasise industry-education partnerships that provide Aboriginal students a job guarantees subject to achieving industry negotiated standards. There are jobs that Indigenous people have a market advantage such as interpreting, ranger work in remote communities, youth work, teacher assistant positions in remote schools, health workers. Greater investment in these industries would create opportunities for meaningful employment pathways.

It goes without saying that we reject any notion that Town Camp young people should be subjected to a separate Vocational/Work related curriculum. They should experience the same curriculum as all students so that their outcomes reflect the range of occupations of the general population.

#### 4.6 Innovation

*Innovative approaches to workforce, including recruitment, professional learning, retention and support, and lessons from communities that could be more generally applied*

The view we take is that in the not too distant future Australia will run out of natural resources and reach a plateau in terms of what it can derive from services such as education and tourism. In this scenario, as with countries like Singapore, will need to rely on the 'smarts' of our people and various geographic and other advantages to create wealth. This shifts the emphasis to knowledge as a factor of production (along with land, labour, capital and enterprise) and the ability of our workforce to get the most from all factors of production as 'knowledge workers'. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2007) include in these skills creative problem solving, planning and organising, using technology and learning to develop skills. Also included are innovative, inventive, and creative skills to generate and apply new ideas as knowledge workers in an interconnected and interdependent global economy (Marginson, Tytler, Breeman & Roberts, 2013; Productivity Commission, 2007, 2010). A more fulsome list of skills identified by ACCI include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Artistic aptitude</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Critical observation</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Design aptitude</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire to learn</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Logical thinking</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resourcefulness</li> <li>• Thinking outside the box</li> <li>• Tolerance of change</li> <li>• Troubleshooting</li> <li>• Value education</li> <li>• Willingness to learn</li> </ul>
---	---	--

This suggests that in addition to foundation literacy, numeracy, ICT and financial literacy skills greater emphasis needs to be placed on developing knowledge and skills from the study of STEAM subjects. We also argue that these ‘hard’ skills should be balanced with ‘soft’ skills and knowledge of how to use them effectively to be good human-beings/responsible citizens, contributing to society.

In developing our Wellness Framework, we have conducted 3 workshops with 22 participants representing 10 different Town Camps and 8 language groups. Essential ‘soft’ skills are identified as:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathising</li> <li>• Deep Listening</li> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Nonverbal communication</li> <li>• Persuasion</li> <li>• Presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public speaking</li> <li>• Teaching/facilitation skills</li> <li>• Reading body language</li> <li>• Storytelling</li> <li>• Verbal communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual communication</li> <li>• Writing reports &amp; proposals</li> <li>• Writing skills</li> <li>• Legal Studies</li> <li>• Basic First Aid</li> </ul>
---	--	---

We also contend there is bespoke knowledge and skills unique to being Aboriginal that we want the curriculum to develop and nurture not just in Aboriginal students but in all students (what is often referred to for non-Aboriginal students as ‘The Aboriginal Perspective’). For example, for Aboriginal students we want to see nurturing and development of unique language speaking and preservation skills, music skills, art skills, skills in caring for country and skills in honoring and modelling family relationship, responsibility and caring skills.

At the end of Year 12 we want the curriculum to have played its part in developing proud and strong Aboriginal men and women equipped with skills sets that allow them to thrive in two worlds, able to make a valuable contribution to their kin, mob, country, town and world.

This raises the question of whose job is it to make sure Aboriginal students on Town Camps acquire this knowledge and skills? We contend that it is everyone’s job to do this – all have a role to play. This includes, for example:

- Education authorities, including Boards of Studies, Curriculum Assessment Authorities, School Systems etc. One responsibility here is to ensure all trainee teachers have an experience working in remote areas including Town Camps.
- Parents/Carers. The responsibility here is to value education and promote it as an essential means of improving equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes.
- Children/young people/students. The responsibility here to be the best one can be to help build a better future for self, kin, mob and society.
- Employers/Chambers of Commerce/Business stakeholders. The responsibility here is to work with educators to assist them to develop programs that allow Australia’s workforce to be exemplary knowledge worker practitioners. Additionally, it is to fund programs that lead to a jobs

guarantee for each Aboriginal student who completes Year 12 and who has the required Industry skill sets.

- The NGO and 'Third Sector'. The responsibility here is to help Aboriginal young people compete in markets requiring unique skill sets (e.g. interpreter services, land care and environmental tourism) in addition to general knowledge worker labour markets (doctors, dentists, chemists, teachers, health professionals, engineers, mathematicians etc.)
- Elders and keepers of the Lore. The responsibility here is to educate Aboriginal young people in what it means to be a proud Aboriginal man and woman, to pass on unique knowledge from one generation to the next and to preserve culture. This includes passing on botanical and biological knowledge that can support STEAM curriculum. The responsibility to non-Aboriginal people is to share knowledge that can be shared on the past and future unique contribution of Aboriginal people to our beautiful country.

#### 4.7 Flexible Learning

*Access and support to deliver the Australian Curriculum (including STEM) in a flexible way to meet local learning needs and interest of remote students, including examples of innovative ways in which the curriculum is being delivered in remote school*

In relation an Indigenous STEM curriculum, Tangentyere Land and Learning project has been working in this field for more than 25 years and has several well-developed curriculum resources it can share.

Our Land and Learning program supports children and their teachers, teacher aides and Elders to deliver two-way science learning – Aboriginal learning and Western School learning. Some things students can learn include:

- cultural significance of particular sites and the past and current management of these sites;
- identify threatened and introduced species and their habitats, threats and impacts;
- traditional uses for plants and collect specimens of these plants to describe and label;
- identify tracks and other animal signs to survey the animals in different habitats; and
- collect water invertebrates to monitor waterholes.

We have worked with Aboriginal community schools and Elders in central Australia to teach two-way science about the bush since 1998. Land & Learning has worked on the ground with a total of 27 schools in the Northern Territory and 8 in Western Australia.

This program supports:

- Training teachers to deliver two-way science in schools with Aboriginal teachers, teacher aides and/or elders;
- Providing on-ground support for schools to plan topics integrating Aboriginal ecological knowledge and Western Science, including facilitating learning on country trips;
- Supporting Aboriginal teachers, assistant teachers and elders to deliver Aboriginal language and culture programs in schools; and
- Producing bilingual resources on Aboriginal ecological knowledge for schools.

This program has developed unique resources including:

- Extensive booklet with two-way science activities and worksheets and information on central Australian ecology;
- A series of local plant and animal photo-cards in local Aboriginal languages;
- Large format booklets on feral animals, fire and climate change; and
- Booklets and short films documenting school projects.

Land & Learning inspired the development of the CSIRO Two-way Science manual, an integrated learning program for arid-zone desert schools, published in 2019. More information can be found on our website (<https://www.tangentyere.org.au/education-and-learning#LandandLearning>).

## 4.8 Successful Pathways

*Successful pathways to ensure students have the knowledge and skills they need to enter further education and the workforce*

As discussed earlier, the key issue for Tangentyere is supporting those responsible for educating young people to ensure Aboriginal students participate in education, complete year 12 and achieve outcomes at levels comparable to the general population. The pathway to senior secondary education commences with Early Childhood Education and includes primary education. It involves strengthening the culture of valuing and supporting education by all involved in education especially parents and caregivers and students. It also involves allowing alternative modes of educational delivery such as pop up schools and satellite schools to flourish on Town Camps. Ensuring a curriculum that promotes strong Aboriginal men and women with the help of Elders is also involved as is providing the means for parents and carers to exercise local decision-making authority to steer education in their place in a direction community wishes. These arrangements must be in place to begin with.

Assisting students to complete Year 12 with comparable results to the rest of the population becomes the primary aim. Within the primary aim it is then possible for community to discuss and consider requests from young people to leave school early to pursue a traineeship or apprenticeship. Being able to do so requires a level of achievement in secondary education comparable to the general population. Currently this comparable level of achievement is not there for many reasons including poor attendance (linked to challenges presented by the determinants outlined earlier) and the traineeships and apprenticeships are not there.

We favour a jobs guarantee for every student that completes Year 12 with required knowledge and skill sets or elects to leave school prior to Year 12 only on condition it is into a traineeship or apprenticeship or employment opportunity with good prospects of career advancement. Government working with Industry at the national and state and territory levels can achieve this and provide the resources at the local level to allow engagement with Chambers of Commerce to achieve this. This will assist in incentivising and valuing education and help Town Camp youth to see a meaningful and optimistic future in which they thrive.

We aspire to have every Town Camp young person who chooses to do so to attend university and higher education institutions. Until the steps mentioned above are in place this will remain a significant challenge. Flexibility of pathways is an issue for consideration as progress is made.

## 5. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Review:

1. Acknowledges Aboriginal children on Town Camps in remote areas face many barriers to attending, engaging and succeeding in education
2. Acknowledges the complexity involved in successfully delivering education to Aboriginal children on Town Camps
3. Supports provision of a designated funding source for each state and territory to ensure education providers to partner with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to jointly develop and manage education service delivery systems with the following features:
  - Codesign with Town Camp parents and leaders
  - Quality teachers and leaders with remote education experience
  - In recognition of the complex issues facing teachers in remote communities, develop a syllabus of training that will equip teachers for this role, including Anthropology, Australian History and Prehistory, an Indigenous language
  - A joint and ongoing commitment from providers to resource the initiative
  - Delivery on Town Camps (pop up facilities, hub and spoke models)
  - Strong strategic partnerships
4. Supports jurisdictions to implement strategies to overcome barriers to education participation faced by rural and remote students including, for example:
  - Using technology to create virtual rich learning environments.
  - Working with providers to improve access to ICTs and web and net connectivity.
  - Providing financial resources to education systems to counteract the negative impacts of climate change and natural disasters on the ability to deliver education and students to be able to take advantage of this.
  - Working with providers to develop alternative models of education delivered on Town Camps (pop up schools, satellite classrooms etc.)
  - Providing relevant quality secondary education provision in rural and remote areas using a blended learning mode of bricks and mortar and technology so that students do not have to leave country to attend boarding schools to receive a quality secondary education.
  - Supporting rural and remote secondary students to attend university through better Youth Allowance scheme
  - Supporting education system HR policies to attract, retain and develop the 'best and brightest' teachers and leaders to rural and remote education settings.
  - Supporting education systems to professionally develop teachers and leaders to employ strengths based, therapeutic trauma practices.
  - Ensuring rural and remote health and education systems can attract the 'best and brightest' health professionals to diagnose and respond to young people's education and health needs
  - Ensuring adequate staff housing to support teacher retention.
  - Refreshing strategies to close education achievement and participation gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students focusing on;
    - Valuing education
    - Early Childhood education
  - Providing relevant and accessible secondary curriculum that supports Indigenous values
  - Furnishing education providers with funding controlled by parents/carers in partnership with the provider, like the previous ASSPA program, to allow providers to implement local placed-based solutions to ensuring year 12 completions and improvements in



achievement (for example, incentive payments to parents and young people to attend education in holiday periods to improve educational attainment)

- Assisting all levels of government to work with all stakeholders to economically develop rural and remote areas to create ongoing employment opportunities, especially for young people, for example ranger work, arts work, health and aged care training, teaching, interpreting.
  - Attracting, retaining and developing male and female Elders to lead educational development and delivery of curriculum targeting Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, with an emphasis on STEAM through utilising local biological and botanical knowledge.
  - Working with businesses and Chambers of Commerce to introduce a job guarantee for every Aboriginal student who completes year 12 and has the required industry skills. This could be through existing apprenticeships and traineeships or creation of new jobs.
  - Incentivising parents/carers to ensure at least 90% school attendance each school year (for example by making attendance bonus payments through welfare provision)
  - Providing funding for leadership programs to develop current and future Aboriginal leaders.
  - Employing Elders and members of the Women's Safety Group as curriculum development and implementation advisors and deliverers (as appropriate).
  - Assisting Aboriginal Community Organisations to remove barriers to school attendance including inadequate transport, inadequate nutrition and suitable clothing.
5. Supports jurisdictions to attract, develop and retain the best and brightest teachers and leaders to remote education settings.
  6. Encourages jurisdictions to continue the prominence of culture and country in Aboriginal education by ensuring their primacy in curriculum, assessment and teaching practices.
  7. Supports initiatives to increase the valuing of education by Aboriginal families in remote and complex educational environments.
  8. Promotes the importance of STEM teaching to the development of skills required by all students to become effective knowledge workers.
  9. Supports initiatives to provide a job guarantee to Aboriginal students who complete Year 12.
  10. Continues to support Aboriginal students to successfully achieve in Technical Education and University.

## 6. References

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner (2009). *Social Justice Report 2009*. Sydney, NSW: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019). *Child protection Australia: 2017–18*. Child welfare series no. 70. Cat. no. CWS 65. Canberra: AIHW

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2016). *Child protection Australia: 2014–15*. Child welfare series no. 63. Cat. no. CWS 57. Canberra: AIHW.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2016). *Chronic disease and associated risk factors in Australia*. Canberra: AIHW.

Australian National University (2017). *Deepening Indigenous Poverty in the Northern Territory*, <http://regnet.anu.edu.au/news-events/news/7002/deepening-indigenous-poverty-northern-territory>

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (2014). *The Nest Action Agenda*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

Biddle, N., (2010). A human capital approach to the educational marginalization of Indigenous Australians, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, p. 67.

Brown, A., Personal Communication (2011). Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute Central Australia

Brown, A. (2014) Heart of the Heart

Centre for Appropriate Technology (2012). *Housing Experience: Post occupancy evaluation of Alice Springs Town Camp Housing 2008-2011*. Alice Springs, NT: Centre for Appropriate Technology.

Council of Australian Governments (2013). *Education in Australia, 2012: Five years of performance*. Canberra: COAG.

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (2017). *Living on the edge: Northern Territory Town Camps review*.

Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. *Prepaid Fare Estimators*. Accessed 22 January, 2020, <https://dipl.nt.gov.au/strategies/commercial-passenger-vehicle-reforms/prepaid-taxi-fares/prepaid-fare-estimators>.

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2019). *Closing the Gap Report*. Canberra, ACT: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Department of Transport (a). *Alice Springs school bus timetable*. Accessed 22 January, 2020, [https://nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/268565/alice-springs-school-bus-timetable.pdf](https://nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/268565/alice-springs-school-bus-timetable.pdf).

- Department of Transport (b). *Alice Springs timetables and maps*. Accessed 22 January, 2020, <https://nt.gov.au/driving/public-transport-cycling/public-buses/alice-springs-timetables-and-maps>.
- Forrest, A. & Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPM&C). (2014). *The Forrest review: creating parity*. Canberra, ACT: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- Herman, J. L. (2015). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence--from domestic abuse to political terror*. United States: Basic Books
- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs. (2015). *Alcohol, hurting people and harming communities: Inquiry into the harmful use of alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*. Canberra, ACT: Parliament of Australia.
- Hunter, E. (1998). Considering Trauma in an Indigenous Context. *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*. 22, p. 9-18.
- Keeler, N. (October 2018). *Factor Projection Model and Out of Home Care Expenditure Model*, Territory Families.
- Lewis, N. et al, Family Matters 2019, *Family Matters Report 2018*, Melbourne: SNAICC – National Voice of Our Children.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.
- McFarlane, B. (9 June 2020). Postcard from the Field: Covid-19 in the Northern Territory, Arena, <https://arena.org.au/postcard-from-the-field-covid-19-in-the-northern-territory/> (accessed 19 June 2020).
- National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (2012), 2012 National report on NAPLAN, Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority.
- National Wellness Institute of Australia Inc, accessed 13 December 2019, <https://www.wellnessaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/NWIA-Dimensions-Definitions.pdf>
- Regional Development Australia, access 13 December 2019, <https://profile.id.com.au/rda-northern-territory/seifa-disadvantage-small-area>
- Simpson, J., Caffery, J., & McConvell, P. (2009). Gaps in Australia's Indigenous language policy: Dismantling bilingual education in the Northern Territory. *Discussion Paper 24*. Canberra, ACT: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation. (2016). *Submission to the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into Housing Repairs and Maintenance on Town Camps*. Alice Springs, NT: Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation.
- Territory Families, "OOHC Quarterly Charts", TF Quarterly Report – March 2019
- Twyford, L, A (2018). *New Narrative: Transforming Out of-Home Care in Partnership with Aboriginal Controlled Organisations*, Territory Families

UnitingCare Ageing. ( 2017) 'Child Social Exclusion (CSE) Index'. The CSE Index uses 2016 census data and data from other sources such as the latest Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) and the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results.

Wilson, B. & O'Brien, J. (2003). 'To infuse a universal terror': a reappraisal of the Coniston killings. *Aboriginal History*, 27, p 59-78



Tangentyere  
Council

**Tangentyere Council**

4 Elder Street  
Alice Springs NT 0870

PO Box 8070  
Alice Springs NT 0871

P 08 8951 4222  
F 08 8952 8521  
E [info@tangentyere.org.au](mailto:info@tangentyere.org.au)

WORKING  
TOGETHER  
WALKING  
TOGETHER