

# STORY OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

CENTRAL 2019







### Acknowledgements

In the spirit of respect, the authors acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country and recognise their continuing connection to their land, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to elders past and present.

We wish to thank the many individuals who have engaged in the development of this Story and in particular to those who have contributed the featured stories. We also thank the data custodians who have assisted with preparation and release of the datasets and the Population Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU) at Torrens University who prepared some of the data tables.

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Cover photos: Children and young people of the Northern Territory.

# Introduction

This regional Story of Our Children and Young People (the Story) provides a summary of the wellbeing of the children and young people from the Central region. It brings together 48 key indicators and five case studies, and is an abridged version of the Northern Territory edition, launched in November 2019.

This Story is the first in what will be a series of biennial stories, intended to track progress and provide a vehicle for local stories to be told. Key indicators, mapped over six domains, measure wellbeing from the antenatal period to young adulthood. Comparative data for the Northern Territory is included.

The data and case studies within these pages highlight many stories. For many children and young people, their lives are flourishing, they are loved and healthy, and have opportunities to learn and participate. However, across many measures, the data also highlight a distressing story, as a disproportionate number of our children and young people face significant challenges from their early years. As they progress through life, they continue to fall behind.

## AN AUSTRALIAN FRAMEWORK FOR THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This Story is underpinned by the national research of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth and its development of The Nest outcomes framework with six key outcomes, or domains. The Nest is a theoretical framework and one practical application of this is ARACY's Common Approach (see figure below). It places the child at the centre, surrounded by circles of influence from family relationships to community.

The Nest refers to six outcome areas, or domains. Through the research, it was determined that for children and young people to be well, they need to be loved and safe, have material basics, be healthy, be learning, be participating and have a positive sense of identity and culture.



ARACY's Common Approach®

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## ABORIGINAL FRAMEWORK

While this Story is underpinned by the national research of ARACY, it acknowledges the ancient authority and traditions of Aboriginal people by using a locally developed framework which applies cultural metaphors. This framework was developed by a cultural reference group of the Editorial Committee, led by its Aboriginal members, and modified through conversations with Aboriginal people from across the Territory.

The Aboriginal framework also has the child or young person in the centre (see below). The baby rests in a traditional bed made from wood, known as a Coolamon in some areas, otherwise known as a bassinette or cot. Children and young people form the inner circle, surrounded by a second circle of parents, uncles, aunts and those within the family across that generation. This circle also includes local service providers such as schools and clinics, and other people working with families. The third circle represents grandparents, elders and those within the family across that generation. It also includes cultural authority groups, government, policy and decision makers. Around the circles of people, are four groups of people talking and working together.

Everything is connected by travel lines which illustrate movement and flow, as everything co-exists. The movement is in all directions as people have responsibilities to each other. Through the kinship system, everything and everyone is connected including to the sun, moon, stars and universe. It is important for everyone to be working together and communicating with each other. The dots around the outside hold the framework together, demonstrating a wholeness. The dots also allow for movement in and out of the framework.



Aboriginal Framework

Source: Developed by a cultural reference group of the Editorial Committee and modified through conversations with Aboriginal people from across the Northern Territory. Painted by Cian McCue.



In the Aboriginal framework, significant elements of Aboriginal culture are highlighted. These cultural stories or metaphors were chosen to represent some of the many stories from across the Territory. The metaphors used were selected to be readily interpreted using the six domains of The Nest. These six areas of wellbeing for children and young people are the pillars around which this Story is written.

**Being loved and safe** – *Coolamon* – The Coolamon is a large bowl like carrier made from the wood of a tree. It is a traditional cot and keeps babies safe, strong and healthy.

**Having material basics** – *Tree* – Trees are used for wood and bark for housing, to make tools for hunting and personal safety, and are a source of bush food and medicine.

**Being healthy** – *Hunting and gathering* – Connection to land and culture through hunting and gathering ensures a healthy lifestyle – physically, developmentally and mentally. Plants and animals provide important food sources to maintain a healthy diet.

**Learning** – *Oral tradition* – There is a strong oral tradition in Aboriginal culture, as well as other cultures present in the Territory. Elders and grandparents sit with children and young people to pass on knowledge.

**Participating** – *Spear, boomerang and dilly bag* – Spears, boomerangs and dilly bags represent active participation in Aboriginal community life – hunting, fishing, gathering seeds and fruit, as well as leisure, music and dance.

**Positive sense of identity and culture** – *Kinship system* – Everything in Aboriginal life is connected to and given its place in the kinship system. It is about the whole universe, the planets, stars, moon and sun - everything is connected.

Whilst we are separating elements of wellbeing, in life they are intrinsically linked and so there is crossover between domains. We have attributed indicators to the domains in which they are most commonly reported.

Further detail about the development of the Story and its indicators, with referencing, data sources and appendices, can be found in the [Northern Territory](#) edition of the Story.





# Central

The Central region covers approximately 549,969km<sup>2</sup>. It sits at the southern end of the Territory. The region includes the major centre of Alice Springs and 27 communities, 16 town camps and over 200 outstations.



## POPULATION

Central region has a population of 38,481 people. Almost 3 in 10 people were born overseas, while 4 in 10 people are Aboriginal people. The greatest proportion of the Central population is aged 25-49 (39.8%), and when compared to the other regions, has the highest proportion of individuals aged 50-74 (22.9%). In 2016, more than 1 in 10 people had lived interstate five years earlier.

**38,481**

**Population**

**42.4%**

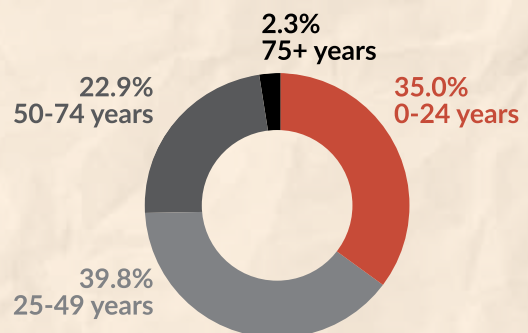
**Aboriginal people**

**28.3%**

**Overseas born**

**11.4%**

**Population who lived interstate five years earlier**



## LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The Aboriginal cultures of the Central region underscore and shape community; they are fostered in significant cultural institutions such as Akeyulerre, Alice Springs Desert Park, the Strehlow Centre and the Institute for Aboriginal Development. The spectacular landscape is richly inscribed with stories, song lines, history and tradition from the Aboriginal ancestors through to contemporary cross-cultural society. Annual arts, music and sporting events include the Desert Mob art exhibition and marketplace; Bush Bands Bash; Country Clash football carnival; Youth Arts and Music festival (YAM Fest); NAIDOC week and the Phoney Film Festival. Iconic activities in the region include the Finke Desert Race, Camel Cup, Henley-on-Todd dry river boat race, the Parrtjima Festival in Light and the Uluru Field of Light.

**52.8%**

About half the population speak only English

**22.7%**

About 1 in 5 people speak an Aboriginal language at home

Arrernte language dialects (10.6%) are the most common of the Aboriginal languages spoken

**10.6%**



## EDUCATION



37.1%

Almost 4 in 10 people (aged over 15) have a higher education qualification

10.6%

For 1 in 10 people (aged over 15), Year 12 is their highest level of education

14.7%

For 1 in 7 people (aged over 15), Year 10 or equivalent (including Year 11, Certificate I and II) is their highest year of education

## EMPLOYMENT



84.9%

More than 4 in 5 people of working age (15-64 years) participate in the workforce (employed or actively looking for work)

2.7%

At 2.7%, Central has the lowest proportion of unemployment of the NT regions

Major employment industries are public administration and safety, education and training, and health care and social assistance.

## FAMILIES



25.5%

1 in 4 families with children aged under 15, are single parent families

83.5%

More than 8 in 10 single parent families have a female as the head of the family

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

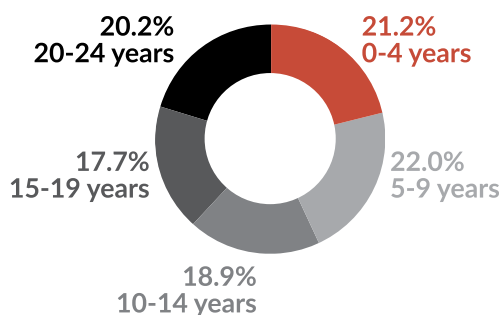


35.1%

Over 1 in 3 people are aged 0-24

48.1%

Almost 5 in 10 children and young people, aged 0-24, are Aboriginal people



The highest proportion of children and young people (22.0%) are aged 5-9.

In 2018, the *Child Friendly Alice* survey of over 600 adults in the Alice Springs area revealed people want their children and young people to grow up:

- safe and free, with safe spaces and environments with a good education, good employment and career opportunities
- loved and cared for, with happy and healthy lives respected and living in harmony, with strong families and social networks.

These themes were mirrored in the aspirations of the 400 children and young people surveyed, who want to have:

- more opportunities and places to cool down, play sport, participate in recreation and go shopping, with more activities and services
- better schools, education options and housing
- less crime and better safe spaces and security.

Aboriginal community groups advocate for community-led responses to family and domestic violence and other forms of violence that impact young people such as jealousy and bullying, management of drug and alcohol use and gambling, and environmentally healthy living conditions to ensure positive, safe and healthy home lives.



# Domain 1

## Being loved and safe

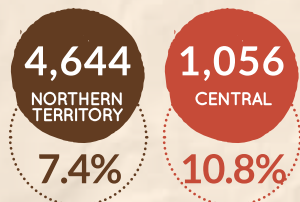
It is important for children and young people to grow up in a loving and safe environment. Children and young people need positive family relationships as well as positive connections with other people. They also need to be safe. The physical and emotional safety of a child are critical elements to their healthy early development, their ability to socialise, to understand society and determine their own future.

In this domain, two outcomes of safe families and safe communities, are explored through seven indicators.

### 1.1 Safe families

#### 1.1.1 Domestic violence

Number and proportion (%) of children, aged 0-17, in notifications with domestic violence recorded as a contributing factor



Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families (special tables), 2018-19; proportions estimated using ABS 3235.0 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2017.  
Note: NT data include 238 children who were interstate residents.

Number of domestic violence incidents where children, aged 0-17, were the subject of violence or heard/saw the incident



Data source and year: NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (special table), 2018-19.  
Note: NT data include 44 children with an unknown address.

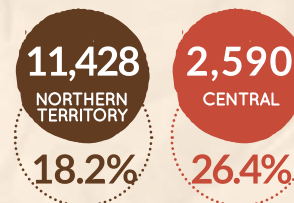
#### 1.1.2 Child abuse or neglect

Number of notifications of child abuse or neglect



Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families (special table), 2018-19.  
Note: NT data include 474 notifications for children who were interstate residents.

Number and proportion (%) of children, aged 0-17, with notifications of child abuse or neglect



Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families (special tables), 2018-19; proportions estimated using ABS 3235.0 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2017.  
Note: NT data include 283 children who were interstate residents.

Substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect are those notifications confirmed by investigation.

Number of substantiated investigations for children, aged 0-17

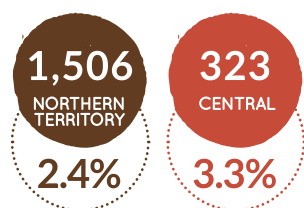


Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families (special table), 2018-19.  
Note: NT data include 25 cases involving interstate residents.





## Number and proportion (%) of children, aged 0-17, who were the subject of a substantiated investigation

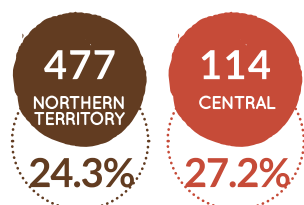


Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families (special table), 2018-19; proportions estimated using ABS 3235.0 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2017.

Note: NT data include 25 children who were interstate residents.

Resubstantiation refers to children who were the subject of a substantiated episode of child abuse and neglect who are then the subject of a further substantiation within three to 12 months.

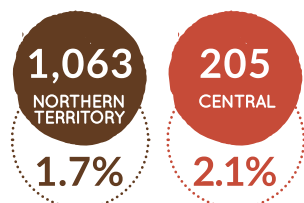
## Number and proportion (%) of children, aged 0-17, who were the subject of resubstantiation, within 12 months



Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families (special table), 2018-19.

Note: NT data include 29 children who were interstate residents.

## Number and proportion (%) of children, aged 0-17, in out-of-home care



Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families (special table), 2018-19; proportions estimated using ABS 3235.0 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2017.

Note: 1. Numbers are estimated at a point in time, NT data on 1 July 2019. 2. NT data include 61 children who were interstate residents.

# 1.2 Safe communities

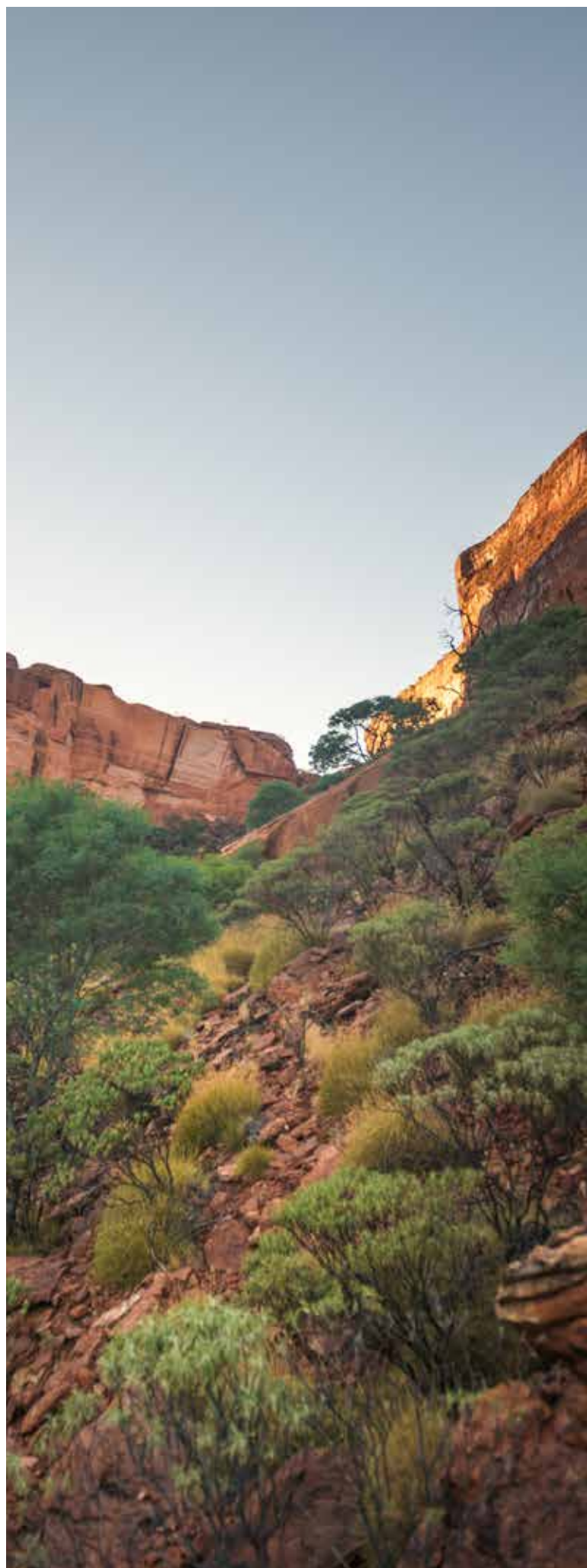
## 1.2.1 House break-ins

### Number of house break-in offences



Data source and year: NT Department of Attorney General and Justice (special table), 2018-19.

Note: 1. NT regional data are reported by standard ABS geography (SA3) which varies marginally from the geography used elsewhere in this Story. 2. NT data include 5 offences with an unknown address.







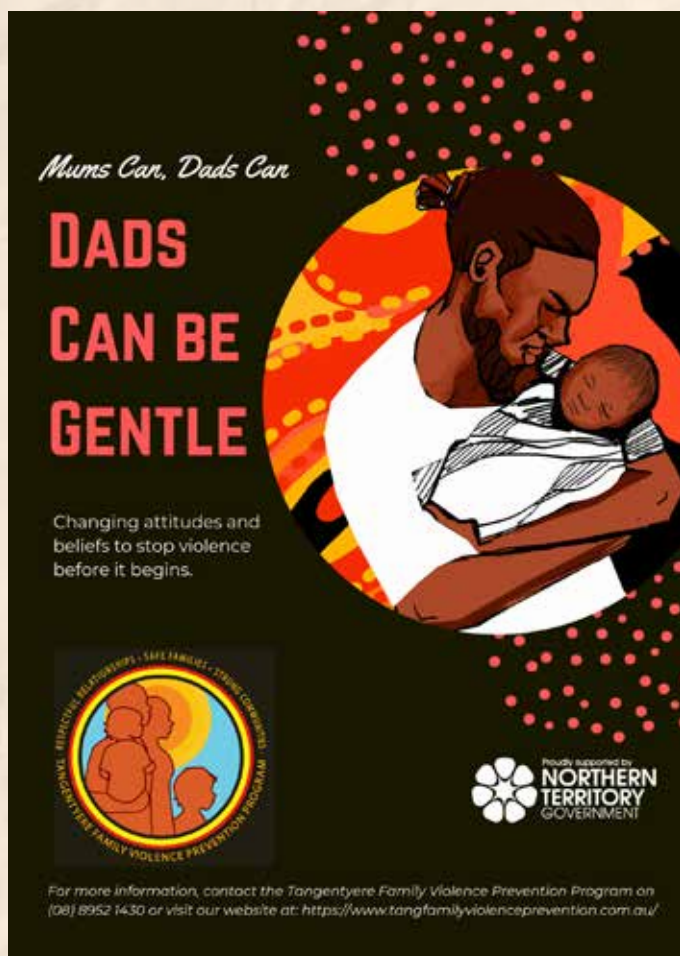
## BREAKING DOWN GENDER STEREOTYPES

The Mums Can, Dads Can project is a family, domestic and sexual violence primary prevention pilot project developed by Town Camp community members in Alice Springs. The project aims to challenge rigid gender stereotypes about the roles of men and women in regard to parenting and builds on the work currently done by the Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program.

National and international evidence demonstrates gender inequality and rigid gender stereotypes are a significant predictor of violence. Parents have a large influence on gender role socialisation of their children and it is hoped the Mums Can, Dads Can project will influence parents in their modelling of the next generation of parents.

This project is working with community members to identify unhelpful stereotypes and is developing and promoting key alternative messages which are culturally appropriate and resonate with the Alice Springs Town Camp communities. It is community strength based, fun and enjoyable. The project sends a powerful message to community members about gender stereotypes particularly in the context of mothers and fathers.

Posters show images of residents engaging in activities that are 'typically' seen as men's or women's roles and they are flipping those gender stereotypes.

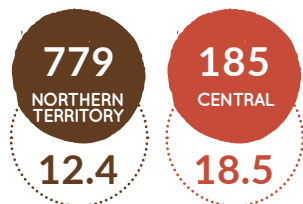




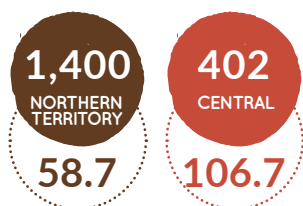
## 1.2.2 Children and young people as victims of crime

Crimes against the person are those that are performed against the will of another individual. These typically result in bodily harm, such as physical assault or battery.

Number and annual rate (per 1,000 population) of victims, aged 0-17, of an offence against a person



Number and annual rate (per 1,000 population) of victims, aged 18-24, of an offence against a person

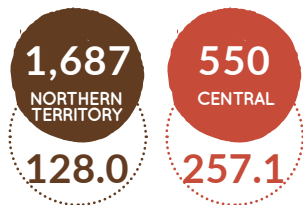


Data source and year: NT Department of Attorney General and Justice (special table), 2018-19; rates estimated using ABS 3235.0 – Regional Population by Age and Sex, Australia, 2018.

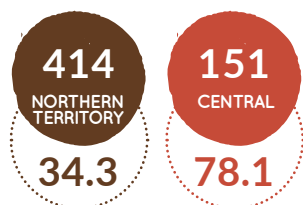
Note: 1. NT data include 3 children and 4 young adults with an unknown address. 2. Crimes are counted once for each incident. Victims may be counted more than once, for different incidents, in a year. 3. NT regional data are reported by standard ABS geography (SA3) which varies marginally from the geography used elsewhere in this Story.

## 1.2.3 Young people involved in crime

Number and annual rate (per 1,000 population) of apprehensions of males, aged 10-17



Number and annual rate (per 1,000 population) of apprehensions of females, aged 10-17



Data source and year: NT Department of Attorney General and Justice (special table), 2018-19; rates estimated using ABS 3235.0 – Regional Population by Age and Sex, Australia, 2018.

Note: 1. Apprehensions are calculated as one event for a person for one date. 2. NT regional data are reported by standard ABS geography (SA3) which varies marginally from the geography used elsewhere in this Story. 3. NT data include 1 male with an unknown address.

## 1.2.4 Youth diversion

Youth diversion programs include written or verbal warnings, family group conferences and victim-offender group conferences.

Number of youth diversions for young people, aged 10-17



Data source and year: NT Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Services (special table), 2018-19.

Note: NT data include 33 events for young people with unknown address.

## 1.2.5 Young people in prison

Daily average number of young men, aged 18-24, in NT prisons



Daily average number of young women, aged 18-24, in NT prisons



Data source and year: NT Department of Attorney General and Justice (special table), 2018-19.

Note: 1. NT data include 7.7 days for young men and 0.3 days for young women from interstate or with no known address. 2. NT regional data are reported by standard ABS geography (SA3) which varies marginally from the geography used elsewhere in this Story.





## Domain 2

# Having material basics

It is important for children and young people to have the material basics they need in life. Things like a house to live in, access to healthy food, clean water, clean sanitary systems, cooling and clothing. A family also needs the financial capacity to provide for these essentials. These are foundational elements to enable children and young people to flourish.

In this domain, four outcomes of financial stability, adequate housing, communication and technology, and access to transport, are explored through six indicators.

## 2.1 Financial stability

### 2.1.1 Socioeconomic disadvantage

The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) is an index of relative disadvantage. IRSD gives Australia a base score of 1,000. Areas with scores below 1,000 indicate relative socioeconomic disadvantage and areas that score above 1,000 lack disadvantage.

Scores for relative socioeconomic disadvantage

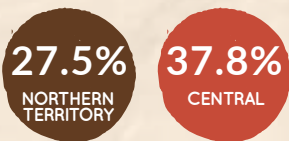


Data source and year: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016, prepared by PHIDU (special table).

### 2.1.2 Family income

Households with children aged 15 and under with an annual income under \$37,378 are considered low income households.

Proportion (%) of children, aged 15 and under, in low income households



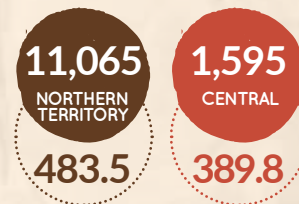
Data source and year: Department of Social Services, June 2017; ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.  
Note: Households are private dwellings only.

## 2.2 Adequate housing

### 2.2.1 Overcrowded households

The ABS defines severe overcrowding as when four or more extra bedrooms would be needed to accommodate the number of people usually living in a residence.

Number of people and rate (per 10,000 of the population) living in severely crowded dwellings



Data source and year: ABS Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2016.

Note: 1. Rates are expressed of number per 10,000 population of usual residents. 2. NT regional data are reported by standard ABS geography (SA3) which varies marginally from the geography used elsewhere in this Story.

### 2.2.2 Children and young people who are homeless

Proportion (%) of children and young people, aged 0-24, who are homeless



Data source and year: ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.

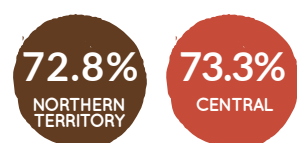




## 2.3 Communication and technology

### 2.3.1 Internet access

Proportion (%) of households where internet was accessed from dwelling

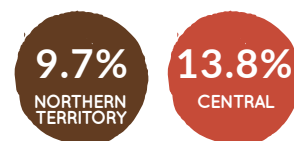


Data source and year: NT: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.  
Greater Darwin and regions: ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.

## 2.4 Access to transport

### 2.4.1 Household access to a vehicle

Proportion (%) of dwellings with no motor vehicle



Data source and year: NT: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.  
Greater Darwin and regions: ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.





## Domain 3

# Being healthy

It is important for children and young people to be healthy, including physical, developmental, psychosocial and mental health. Until around the age of 25 years individuals continue to develop. This is not only physically but also by the maturing of neural connections in the brain. It is essential to take good care of the health and wellbeing of children and young people to ensure optimal health and opportunity in adulthood.

In this domain, two outcomes of healthy before birth and growing up healthy are explored through 11 indicators.

### 3.1 Healthy before birth

#### 3.1.1 Early antenatal visits

Proportion (%) of mothers with first antenatal visit in first trimester (less than 14 weeks)



#### 3.1.2 Regular antenatal visits

Proportion (%) of mothers who attended less than seven antenatal visits



#### 3.1.3 Young mothers

Proportion (%) of births to women aged under 20



#### 3.1.4 Smoking during pregnancy

Proportion (%) of women who reported smoking during pregnancy

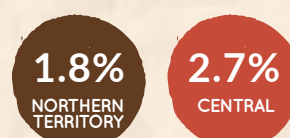


#### 3.1.5 Alcohol consumption during pregnancy

Proportion (%) of babies exposed to alcohol in first trimester of pregnancy



Proportion (%) of babies exposed to alcohol in third trimester of pregnancy



Data source and year: NT Perinatal Data Collection, prepared by NT Department of Health (special table), 2017.

Note: Data for NT regions are reported by NT Department of Health geography which varies marginally from the geography used elsewhere in this Story.







## AKALTYE IRREME NTHENHELE APEKE: LEARNING IS EVERYWHERE

'I have over 20 grandkids between six months and 10 years old. Twelve of them have been coming to our early learning activities at Children's Ground since we started it in 2016. None of my grandkids had been to early learning before and some of the older ones have struggled at school where they feel like they have to leave their language and culture at the door.

At Children's Ground, we take them out on their country and show them their place and ancestors, so they know who they are. They are learning from us, their family, and western educators too. We are teaching them in Arrernte and English. When they have their culture and identity with them all day, they are more confident to learn.

All the kids got into the routine from the start. They call it their school. They are learning so much: starting to learn to read, write and speak in Arrernte and in English, learning about their language, land and culture and about their health too. These little kids know more than my older kids do because being on country is important. Everything comes from the land - it's their identity. Being strong in who they are gives them confidence to learn. My older kids and grandkids didn't have the chance to learn like these little kids.

We have over 100 little ones coming to early learning with us. Every year more and more kids and families are coming because they can see their culture and their family respected and valued'.

Lorrayne Gorey, Senior Arrernte Educator and Leader at Children's Ground

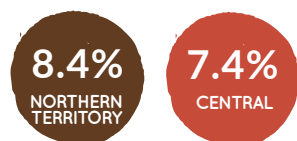
Photo: Lorrayne reading with some of her grandkids



## 3.2 Growing up healthy

### 3.2.1 Birthweight

Proportion (%) of babies with low birthweight (defined as less than 2,500g)

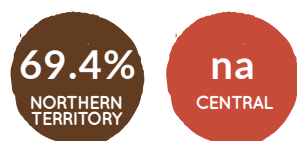


Data source and year: NT Perinatal Data Collection, prepared by NT Department of Health (special table), 2017.

Note: 1. Birthweights for live-born babies only. 2. NT regional data are reported by NT Department of Health geography which varies marginally from the geography used elsewhere in this Story.

### 3.2.2 Breastfeeding

Proportion (%) of children fully breastfed

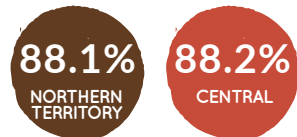


Data source and year: NT: ABS, National Health Survey, 2014-15.

Note: 1. (na) not available. 2. NT measures exclusive breastfeeding to around 4 months.

### 3.2.3 Child immunisation rates

Proportion (%) of children, at age 2, who are fully immunised



Data source and year: Australian Immunisation Register, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2018.

### 3.2.4 Child obesity

Proportion (%) of children and young people, aged 2-17, who were overweight or obese

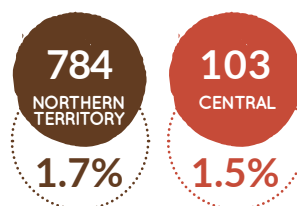


Data source and year: ABS, 4364.0.55.001 National Health Survey: First Results, 2017-18.

Note: (na) not available.

### 3.2.5 Children and young people with a disability

Number and proportion (%) of children and young people, aged 0-24, with a severe or profound disability



Data source and year: ABS Housing and Population Census, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.

### 3.2.6 Death of children and young people

Infant mortality is the number of deaths of children in a population before their first birthday and is expressed as the number of deaths per 1,000 live births in a year.

Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)



Data source and year: Australian Coordinating Registry, Cause of Death Unit Record Files, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2011-15.

Death rate (per 100,000 population) for children, aged 1-14



Death rate (per 100,000 population) for young people, aged 15-24



Data source and year: ABS 3303.0 Causes of Death, 2017.

Note: 1. (nr) not reportable because of small numbers. 2. ABS rates are based on preliminary death data and are subject to revision.







## Domain 4

# Learning

It is important for children and young people to be continually learning in both formal and informal ways. Children can learn at home with family, through interaction with the wider community and in formal settings, such as school.

Early education and participation, continual learning, emotional wellbeing and inclusion, and educational achievement are all important for successful progression through life. Active learning and school completion are important in supporting young people leaving school to achieve their goals and have a variety of future opportunities. While the indicators reported in this chapter are focused on formal learning, learning is not just about study at school, it is about all the experiences in the life of a child and young person.

In this domain, five outcomes of parent engagement in learning, early childhood learning, transitioning into school, school progress and school completion, are explored through 13 indicators.

## 4.1 Parent engagement in learning

### 4.1.1 Reading at home

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a nationwide data collection that shows how young children have developed as they commence their first year of full-time school. The results are derived from a teacher-completed instrument (or survey) for students, in each school, but are to be understood on a population level.

**Proportion (%) of children who are regularly read to or encouraged to read at home**



Data source and year: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), prepared by Australian Department of Education and Training (special table), 2018.  
Note: Results include teachers' responses of 'Somewhat true' or 'Very true'.

### 4.1.2 Participation in Families as First Teachers

The Families as First Teachers (FaFT) program is an early childhood and family support program, primarily for Aboriginal families in remote communities.

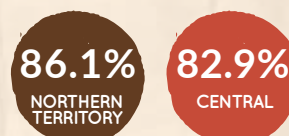
**Participation in Families as First Teachers Program**

	NORTHERN TERRITORY	CENTRAL
Number of communities	39	4
Number of children	2,633	166
Average days for children	19.0	17.0

Data source and year: Family as First Teachers (FaFT) program, prepared by NT Department of Education (special table), 2018.  
Note: Average days calculated using the weighted average for schools.

### 4.1.3 Parent engagement with school

**Proportion (%) of children whose parents or caregivers are actively engaged with the school in supporting their child's learning**



Data source and year: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), prepared by Australian Department of Education and Training (special table), 2018.  
Note: Results include teachers' responses of 'Somewhat true' or 'Very true'.

## 4.2 Early childhood learning

### 4.2.1 Childcare attendance

**Proportion (%) of children, aged 0-5, attending approved childcare services**



Data source and year: Productivity Commission Report on Government Services 2019, 2018.  
Note: (na) not available.



## 4.2.2 Preschool attendance

Proportion (%) of children, aged 4, attending a preschool program



Data source and year: ABS 4240.0 – Preschool Education 2018, Table 3, 2018; proportions estimated using ABS 3101.0 – Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2018.  
Note: (na) not available.

Average hours of preschool attendance for children, aged 3 or 4, NT Government schools



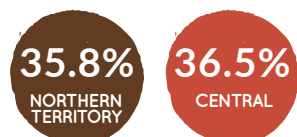
Data source and year: NT Department of Education (special table) 2018.

## 4.3 Transitioning into school

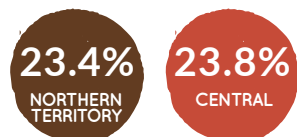
### 4.3.1 Developmental vulnerability

The AEDC measures early development of children across five domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school based), and communication skills and general knowledge. Children with a score in the lowest 10% of the national population in a domain are considered to be 'developmentally vulnerable' in that domain.

Proportion (%) of children assessed as developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains



Proportion (%) of children assessed as developmentally vulnerable in two or more domains



Data source and year: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), prepared by Australian Department of Education and Training (special table), 2018.

## 4.3.2 Developmental strengths

The Multiple Strengths Indicator (MSI) is a summary indicator that measures developmental strengths in the social and emotional development of children, using the data collected from the AEDC. It measures developmental strengths such as self-control, pro-social skills, respectful behaviour towards peers, teachers and property, and curiosity about the world.

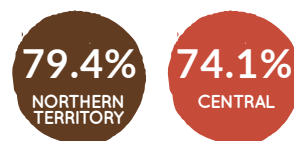
Proportion (%) of children assessed as having highly developed, well developed and emerging strengths using Multiple Strengths Indicator

	NORTHERN TERRITORY	CENTRAL
Highly developed strengths	43.8%	44.1%
Well developed strengths	21.6%	22.1%
Emerging strengths	34.6%	33.8%

Data source and year: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), prepared by Australian Department of Education and Training (special table), 2018.

### 4.3.3 Transition attendance

School attendance in Transition, NT Government schools



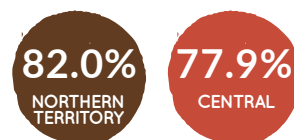
Data source and year: NT: NT Department of Education website, 2018. Greater Darwin and regions: NT Department of Education, Enrolment and Attendance data, prepared by NT Department of Education (special table), 2018.

## 4.4 School progress

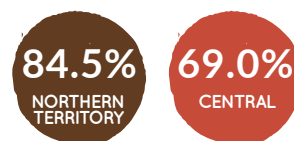
### 4.4.1 School attendance

The rate of school attendance presented here is the proportion of time students attend school as a proportion of the time they are expected to attend school.

School attendance, in Year 3, NT Government schools



School attendance, in Year 7, NT Government schools



Data source and year: NT: NT Department of Education website, Enrolment and Attendance, 2018. Greater Darwin and regions: NT Department of Education, Enrolment and Attendance data, prepared by the NT Department of Education (special table), 2018.







**'Feeling safe is central to good learning'**

## TRANSFORMING LEARNING

Over the past few years, Sadadeen Primary School in Alice Springs, has focused on embedding trauma informed, child-centred practices into their everyday work. Recognising the barriers to children engaging in school were all too evident, with many students with a background of complex trauma, ongoing intergenerational trauma or precarious living situations, the school saw it needed to approach learning in a new and family centred way.

The school started by developing a strong school vision across all staff levels, to create an aware and emotionally responsive environment, ready to meet the needs of its students. In its planning, the school acknowledged the relationship between learning, belonging, safety, culture and nurturing children. Understanding support for the wellbeing and learning of a child requires positive and effective relationships across all areas of a

child's life, the school partnered with government and non-government services to deliver and embed the trauma informed, family centred practice throughout the school.

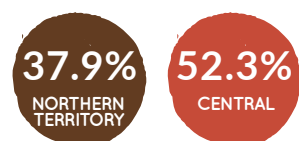
Key features of the practice include an understanding that feeling safe is central to good learning; a change in thinking about behaviour to the understanding that all behaviour communicates a need and it is about how you respond appropriately to that need; a belief that the physical environment is important, and playgrounds should be both exciting and relaxing spaces; and a strong commitment to building an inclusive and caring school environment.

After implementing the new approach, Sadadeen Primary saw a decline in behavioural incidents by almost 50 per cent between 2015 and 2017, as well as promising signs of improvement in literacy for children in the early years.

Photo: School Principal Ms Lizzy with students Lowanna, Justin, Johnic and Aaniyah in front of the school gardens

A school attendance rate of 80% is regarded as a threshold below which children have difficulty with the continuity of classroom learning.

**Proportion (%) of students with less than 80% school attendance, NT Government schools**

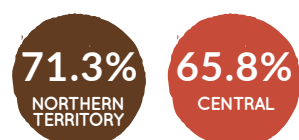


Data source and year: NT Department of Education, Enrolment and Attendance data, prepared by NT Department of Education (special table), 2018.

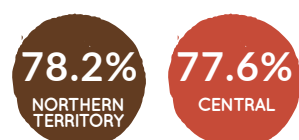
## 4.4.2 Literacy and numeracy skills

The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is a nationwide annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The test assesses skills considered essential to progress through school in the domains of reading and writing, language conventions and numeracy.

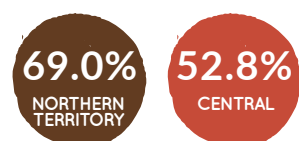
**Proportion (%) of students in Year 3 reaching the minimum national standard in Literacy, NT Government schools**



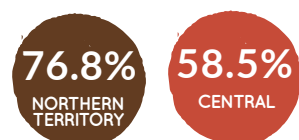
**Proportion (%) of students in Year 3 reaching the minimum national standard in Numeracy, NT Government schools**



**Proportion (%) of students in Year 7 reaching the minimum national standard in Literacy, NT Government schools**



**Proportion (%) of students in Year 7 reaching the minimum national standard in Numeracy, NT Government schools**

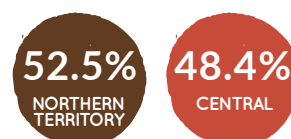


Data source and year: NT: ACARA NAPLAN – National Report for 2018, 2018. Greater Darwin and regions: NT Department of Education (special table), 2018.

## 4.4.3 Continuation to Year 12

The apparent retention rate is a measure of the proportion of young people who were enrolled in Year 7/8 and progressed through to Year 12 in 2018.

**Apparent retention from Year 7/8 to Year 12**

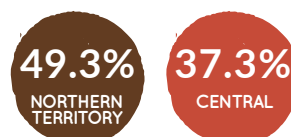


Data source and year: NT: ABS Schools Capped Apparent Retention Rate 2011-2018, 2018. Greater Darwin and regions: NT Department of Education (special table), 2018.

## 4.5 School completion

### 4.5.1 Year 12 or equivalent completion

**Proportion (%) of all young people, aged 20-24, who have attained a Year 12 or equivalent qualification**

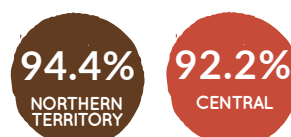


Data source and year: ABS Housing and Population Census, 2016.

### 4.5.2 NTCET completion

The Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) is the final school qualification for students in the Northern Territory.

**Proportion (%) of enrolled students who completed NTCET**



Data source and year: NT Department of Education (special table), 2018.







## Domain 5

# Participating

It is important for children and young people to be actively participating with their peers and within the community. Children can be involved by speaking up and sharing their views, being involved in sport or other recreational or social activities and by volunteering. Young people can participate in work, further study and can vote to have a say in our political leadership.

In this domain, two outcomes of participation in work or study and participation in the community, are explored through five indicators.

## 5.1 Participation in work or study

### 5.1.1 Young people earning or learning

Proportion (%) of young people, aged 15-24, who are engaged in school, work or further education and/or training

65.4%

NORTHERN TERRITORY

57.6%

CENTRAL

Data source and year: ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.

### 5.1.2 Unemployment among young people

Proportion (%) of young people, aged 15-24, who are unemployed

14.1%

NORTHERN TERRITORY

15.5%

CENTRAL

Data source and year: ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.

### 5.1.3 Community Development Program participation

The Community Development Program (CDP) is an employment program operated in remote areas by the Australian Government.

Proportion (%) of young people, aged 15-24, participating in the Community Development Program

1.8%

NORTHERN TERRITORY

2.5%

CENTRAL

Data source and year: NT: ABS Census of Population and Housing. Greater Darwin and regions: ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.

## 5.2 Participation in the community

### 5.2.1 Young people volunteering

Proportion (%) of people, aged 15-24, who spent time doing voluntary work in the previous 12 months

12.6%

NORTHERN TERRITORY

12.8%

CENTRAL

Data source and year: ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.

### 5.2.2 Young people enrolled to vote

Proportion (%) of people, aged 18-24, enrolled to vote

57.1%


NORTHERN TERRITORY

51.2%

CENTRAL

Data source and year: NT Electoral Commission, 28 June 2019; proportions calculated using ABS 3235.0 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2017. Note: Proportions are calculated using estimated resident populations, with no adjustment for residents not eligible to vote.





**'It's changed my life. We can support our families and also we are doing something good for our community'**

## BACK TO THE TOOLS

'My name is Clinton. I am a proud Arrernte man from Ltyentye Apurte and one of the founders of the Ltyentye Apurte Traditional Craft Centre. Before the Traditional Craft Centre I was working at the men's shed and Catholic Care. I didn't really know anything about doing craft and bush tools until my big brother, Dean, showed me some stuff. That's how I started and then I got the hang of it and the more I keep on doing it I get better and better.

We decided to make tools again, the grandsons got together and started making tools. It's pretty good I'm working for the Traditional Craft Centre otherwise I'd still be working over there (on Community Development Program). It's changed my life.

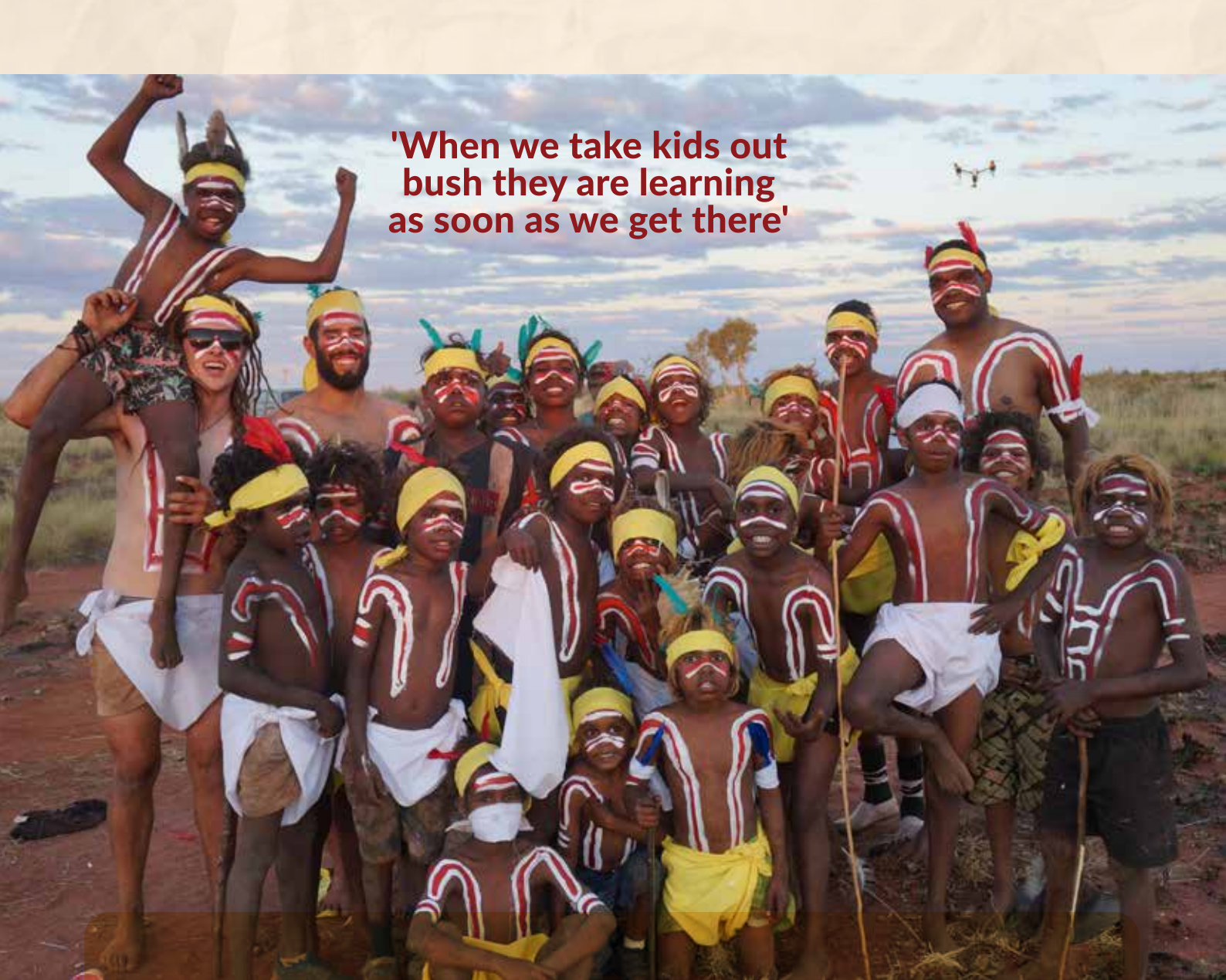
I think everybody looks up to us now we have jobs. We can support our families and also we are doing something good for our community.

They bring the school kids up to us once a week to learn from us to make woomeras and shields and boomerangs. I see the schoolkids changing because they are excited to come here and work with us. I heard my little nephew saying they 'can't wait to go up to the craft centre'.

Showing our work off makes me feel proud. Proud to be Aboriginal, proud to have culture, proud to have these skills, and to support this community. I'm proud of doing our traditional crafts'.

Photo: Clinton at home in Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa)





**'When we take kids out  
bush they are learning  
as soon as we get there'**

## TIME ON COUNTRY

'Kurdu kurdu (kids) don't know about their culture anymore, we need to teach them. Nyurru wiyi (long time ago) kids used to live on the country but now days they only got country visit. That's why it's really important for them to learn on country visit from all the elders. We can teach them everything about culture, hunting, dancing, bush tucker and the old people'. (Yuendumu elder)

At Yuendumu School, a country visit program is embedded into the annual school calendar and is an essential component of the school's bilingual curriculum. It was started with support from the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT) in 2006. Since then, an annual week-long country visit has been a significant community event. The visits involve the whole school population (up to

250 students) who are joined by parents, family members and elders over two or three camps. It is a time of learning and sharing between the generations. The highlight of the camp is 'painting up' where students learn their design, songs and dances from community elders. 'We went to Jurlpungu for country visit and we went hunting for kangaroo and had big fun in the bush. We ate the kangaroo we got. It was so tasty', a child shared.

A young Warlpiri educator shared, 'When we take kids out bush they are learning as soon as we get there. They all find something and we teachers have to explain it to them: when, where, what. But we learn a lot from kids too when we are out; they teach us. We need to make sure we go with old people, learn a lot more from them, deeper'.

Photo: Some of the Yuendumu group painted up at a country visit





## Domain 6

# Positive sense of identity and culture

Identity and culture underpins all other outcomes for children and young people's wellbeing. ARACY's review of research found a 'positive sense of identity and culture' is fundamental to a child or young person's wellbeing.

Identity and culture are broad reaching themes and are challenging to define for any child or community, as they are very personal, are dependent on a child's awareness of their own identity, and change as a child progresses through life. Identity is influenced by family, country, language, health, feeling loved and safe, involvement in the community and having access to other external influences. Each of these factors both define and are defined by identity and culture.

In this domain, three outcomes of connection to culture, spirituality and cultural diversity, are explored through six indicators.

## 6.1 Connection to culture

### 6.1.1 Language spoken at home

Proportion (%) of young people, aged 15-24, who speak English, Aboriginal languages and other languages at home

	NORTHERN TERRITORY	CENTRAL
English	54.0%	45.8%
Aboriginal languages	21.7%	27.4%
Other	Filipino/Tagalog 2.2%	Filipino/Tagalog 1.8%
	Greek 1.2%	

Data source and year: ABS Housing and Population Census, 2016.  
Note: Languages spoken at home by less than 1% of the population are not included in this table.

### 6.1.2 Aboriginal culture

Aboriginal spirituality and a connection to country help to guide a child's development, as well as teaching a child moral values of caring for others, responsibility and resilience.

Connection to Aboriginal culture is intricate, often stemming from practices in the family, in ceremonies and on country and as such, there is not a measure to adequately represent this connection.

### 6.1.3 Community education

Number of organisations promoting culture and the arts



Data source and year: Register of Cultural Organisations – Australian Government, 2019.

Note: 1. Numbers reflect Registered Cultural Organisations (organisations that can receive tax deductible donations and which promote cultural arts and language diversity). 2. NT data includes one Territory wide organisation.





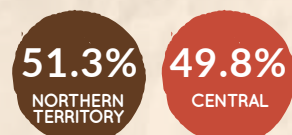
## 6.2 Spirituality

### 6.2.1 Aboriginal spirituality

Whilst this is an important indicator of wellbeing for Aboriginal children and young people, we do not have a quantitative measure of spirituality for young Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. The learning and development in connection with the Dreaming occurs with family, elders and community, often during times of being on country.

### 6.2.2 Religions

Proportion (%) of population, aged 15-24, identifying with a religion

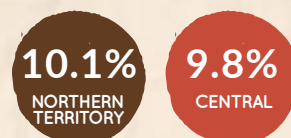


Data source and year: ABS Housing and Population Census, 2016.  
Note: For the purposes of this Story, religion does not include secular or other spiritual beliefs.

## 6.3 Cultural Diversity

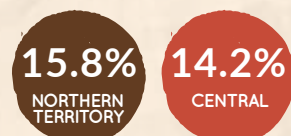
### 6.3.1 Overseas-born

Proportion (%) of population, aged 0-24, born overseas



Data source and year: ABS Housing and Population Census, 2016.

Proportion (%) of Australian born population, aged 0-24, who have both parents born overseas



Data source and year: ABS Housing and Population Census, 2016.



# Where to from here

There are many stories within these pages. For many of our children and young people, their lives are flourishing, they are loved and healthy, and have opportunities to learn and participate. However, the data also highlight a distressing story, as a disproportionate number of our children and young people face significant challenges. These challenges commonly begin in their early years, and as they progress through life, they continue to fall behind.

It is critical that we address the many challenges influencing the wellbeing of our children and young people. We all have a role to play in improving the outcomes for our children and young people. It requires a collaborative effort across the whole community, not just a role for government. Working together is essential and there are positive examples of this in many communities.

This is the first in a series of publications. A commitment has been made by the Northern Territory Government, to ensure in 2021, we reflect on our journey and review our collective progress across the measures and case studies in this Story, in the spirit of continuous improvement and progress.



The process toward the next Story

