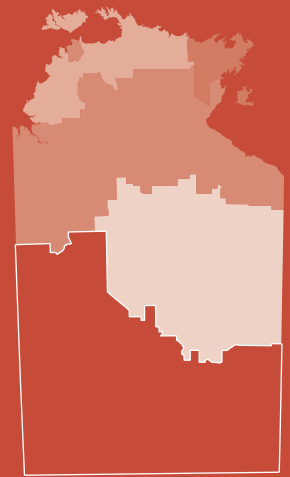


# STORY OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA 2021



## Acknowledgements

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

We wish to thank the many individuals who have contributed to the development of the featured stories. We also thank the data custodians who have assisted with preparation and release of the datasets, John Glover and Sarah McDonald at the Population Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU) at Torrens University and Fiona Shalley at the Northern Institute at Charles Darwin University who prepared some of the data tables.

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The data platform is available at [cmc.nt.gov.au](http://cmc.nt.gov.au).

## Disclaimer

This Story is for information purposes only. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the information is accurate, the Northern Territory Government and Menzies School of Health Research will not accept any liability for any loss or damage which may be incurred by any person acting in reliance upon the information.

Cover photos: The cover celebrates the rich cultural make-up of the children and young people of Central Australia.



Printed on 100% recycled paper.



# Introduction


**The Story of Our Children and Young People (the Story) addresses the demand for information about the wellbeing of children and young people. This Central Australia Story is an abridged version of the Northern Territory 2021 edition. It is a resource for people working for and with children and young people in Central Australia. It provides an evidence-base to support actions to improve outcomes.**

This 2021 Story builds on the 2019 edition with updated data for many of the measures, the addition of sub-regional data and data by Aboriginal status. A number of measures have been added to address the identified data gaps from 2019. Updates are also provided for many of the case studies presented in the 2019 Story.

There have been changes to the policy environment since the 2019 Story including revision of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the development of a Northern Territory Social Outcomes Framework. There has also been the disruption created by the COVID-19 pandemic including its implications to service delivery. The data measures and case studies in this Story have been considered in the context of this changing policy environment, with links to Closing the Gap and the Social Outcomes Framework highlighted alongside data measures using these icons:  

Much of the available data is service-based and commonly reports deficits rather than positive outcomes. The Editorial Committee investigated strength-based measures in the development of the Story and there will be continued effort in the preparation of the 2023 Story. A number of case studies highlight the positive work happening throughout the region.

## DATA PLATFORM

The most significant addition to the Story is an interactive data platform to complement the data available in this Story. It allows users to explore measures in comparison with Australia, the Northern Territory and its other regions. Trend data for select measures is also included to consider changes over time. Use the platform at [cmc.nt.gov.au/children](http://cmc.nt.gov.au/children). Measures for which trend data is available on the platform have this icon: 

The data presented in this Central Australia Story is drawn from the data platform and may vary slightly from the data presented in the Northern Territory 2021 edition of the Story. Technical commentary on the data is detailed on page 30 and also in Appendix I on page 128 of the Northern Territory 2021 edition.

## CHANGE FROM 2019 TO 2021

When comparing data from this 2021 Story with the 2019 Story for the region as a whole, a number of indicators suggest change. For example, the apparent retention of students from Year 7 to Year 12 has increased and the number and proportion of children in notifications with domestic violence as a contributing factor has increased. The proportion of births to women aged under 20 has increased slightly. For young people, the number of apprehensions of males and females has decreased and the proportion of young people enrolled to vote has decreased. Caution is required when making comparison using only two data points and over a short period. Trend data using multiple data points provides a more reliable assessment of change.

## THE NEST FRAMEWORK

The Story is underpinned by the national research of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) and the Nest outcomes framework. Through ARACY's research it was determined that for children and young people to thrive, they need to be valued, loved and safe; have material basics; be healthy; learning; participating and have a positive sense of identity and culture.

## HOW TO USE THIS STORY

You can use this Story in many ways, including:

- For community planning and local conversations
- As a tool to better understand indicators of wellbeing
- In service and organisational planning
- To support understanding of an outcomes-based approach
- As a reference when developing communication tools for community members and/or children and young people
- For the induction and training of staff
- To track progress against key indicators of wellbeing
- In the writing of grant applications
- When advocating for children and young people

Tell us how you are using the Story by visiting [cmc.nt.gov.au/children](http://cmc.nt.gov.au/children).

## ABORIGINAL FRAMEWORK

While the Story is underpinned by the national research of ARACY, it acknowledges the ancient authority and traditions of Aboriginal people by using a local framework, developed in 2019, which applies cultural metaphors. The Aboriginal Framework was updated in 2021 with blue dots around the upper half of the framework to depict the waters of the northern parts of the Territory, with the ochre dots around the lower half of the framework depicting the deserts of the southern regions.



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.

- a** Child or young person in the centre, with their family
- b** Children and young people form the inner circle
- c** They are 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
- d** The third circle represents grandparents, elders and those within the family across that generation. It also includes cultural authority groups, government, policy makers and decision makers
- e** Around the circles of people, are four groups of people talking and working together
- f** 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
- g** The dots around the outside hold the framework together, demonstrating a wholeness. The dots also allow for movement in and out of the framework.

## METAPHORS AND THE NEST DOMAINS

The metaphors used for the Aboriginal Framework 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.

The stories of the children and young people from Central Australia are told through these six domains.

**Being valued, 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 can provide essential items such as wood and bark for housing, tools for hunting and 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 and 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.

## CONTENTS

In this Story, you will find:

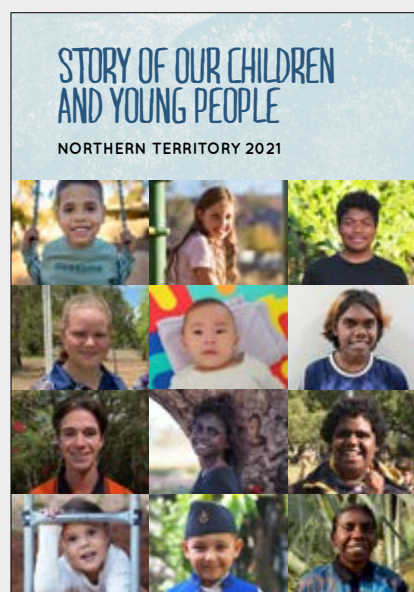
1. Information for Central Australia including Alice Springs and the balance of the region
2. Population information about families, education, employment, language and culture
3. Data for measures of child and youth wellbeing across the six domains outlined above
4. Case studies demonstrating positive change
5. Cultural stories of wellness
6. Links to the data platform containing further information

While the data highlight many stories, the Story uses a simple and direct approach in the presentation of measures. The Story deliberately refrains from providing interpretation or opinion. Definition of measures are included in the Northern Territory 2021 edition of the Story.

## GLOSSARY

Aboriginal	Aboriginal people, including Torres Strait Islanders and also to mean First Nations peoples
Child/children	Usually aged 0-9, statistically and legally aged 0-17
Children and young people	Children and young people, aged 0-24
Community	Inclusive of all forms of community: local community, schools, sporting clubs, arts and music clubs, faith communities and others
Domain	An essential outcome area of wellbeing which encompasses indicators related to a central subject
Early Childhood/early years	Refers to early development years of children, aged 0-5
Indicator	A broad and measurable concept that can indicate change
Family	Inclusive of related families, caregivers, guardians, kinship carers, foster or adoptive families and any other arrangements where children are in the official care of adults
Measure	A specific and quantifiable variable which addresses an indicator
Outcome	A goal or aspiration for the wellbeing of children and young people
Youth/young people	Young people, aged 10-17
Young adults/people	Young adults, aged 18-24

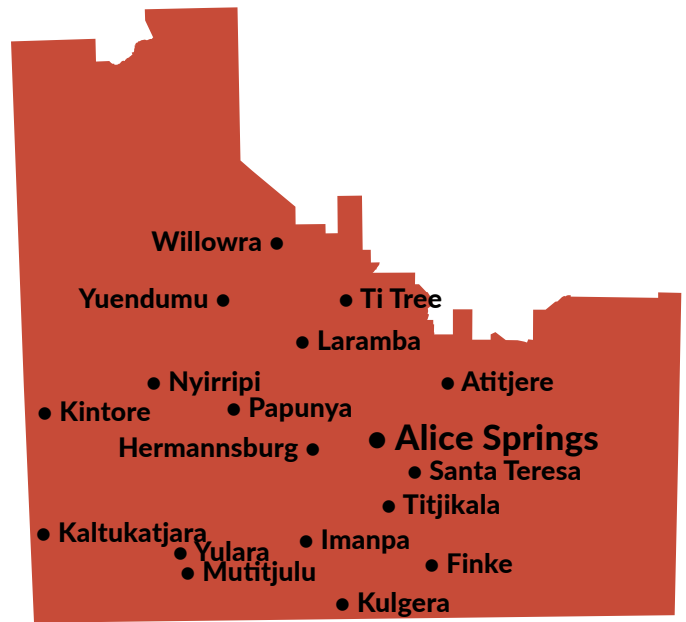
Further information about the development of the Story with context for each measure, referencing, data sources and appendices, can be found in the Northern Territory edition of the 2021 Story online, [cmc.nt.gov.au/children](http://cmc.nt.gov.au/children).





# People of Central Australia

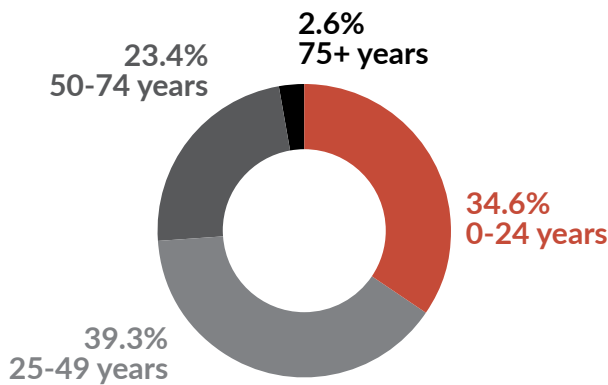
Central Australia covers the largest geographical area of the six regions, bordering Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland. The major centre is Alice Springs. The region includes 27 communities, 16 town camps and over 200 outstations.



## POPULATION

Central Australia has a population of 38,171 people. More than 4 in 10 people (41.2%) identify as Aboriginal across the region. Outside of Alice Springs 8 in 10 people (80.0%) identify as Aboriginal. Central Australia has the second highest proportion of people born overseas (18.2%) of all the regions after Greater Darwin. More than 1 in 3 people (34.6%) are children and young people, aged 0-24 and more than 1 in 10 people (11.6%) lived interstate five years earlier.

### Age distribution of population



	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
Total population	38,171	26,390	11,781
Aboriginal people <sup>a</sup>	41.2%	24.4%	80.0%
Children and young people, aged 0-24	34.6%	32.8%	38.6%
People who were born overseas <sup>b</sup>	18.2%	23.5%	5.5%
People who lived interstate five years earlier <sup>b</sup>	11.6%	12.6%	9.2%

Data source and year: ABS 3235.0 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2019; <sup>a</sup> ABS Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016; <sup>b</sup> ABS Housing and Population Census, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.

## FAMILIES

About 1 in 4 families, with children aged under 15 (25.6%), are single parent families. Almost 4 in 5 of these (83.6%) have a female at the head of the family. There is a higher proportion of single parent families outside of Alice Springs.

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
Families with children aged under 15, who are single parent families	25.6%	23.2%	31.8%
Single parent families, who have a female as the head of the family	83.6%	83.7%	83.4%

## EMPLOYMENT

More than 6 in 10 people, aged 15-64 (63.8%), participate in the workforce. Of those that participate in the workforce, about 1 in 10 people (9.2%) are unemployed. The proportion of workforce unemployment is significantly lower in Alice Springs (3.4%) than in the balance of the region (30.0%). The major industries in Central Australia are public administration and safety, health care and social assistance, and education and training.<sup>a</sup>

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
People, aged 15-64, who participate in the workforce (employed or actively looking for work)	63.8%	71.3%	46.4%
People who are unemployed, of those who participate in the workforce	9.2%	3.4%	30.0%

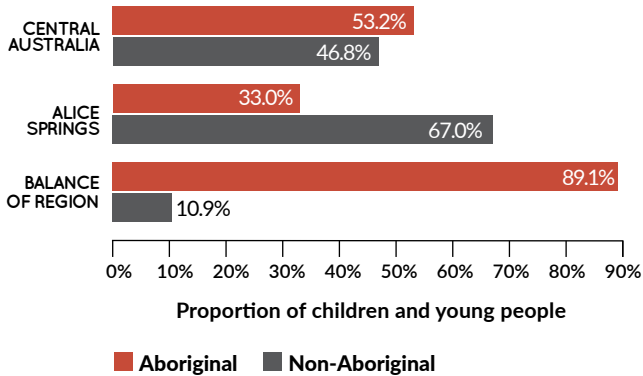
Data source and year: ABS Housing and Population Census, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016. <sup>a</sup> ABS Housing and Population Census, 2016.

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



There are 13,211 children and young people, aged 0-24, in the region. More than 6 in 10 children and young people (65.6%) live in Alice Springs. Across the region, more than half of children and young people (53.2%) are Aboriginal people.

## Proportion (%) of children and young people, aged 0-24, by Aboriginal status



Data source and year: Modelled based on SA2, IARE and IREG 2016 ERP and the ABS Census of Population and Housing, August 2016, prepared by PHIDU (special table).

## Number of children and young people

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
0-4 years	2,902	2,035	867
5-9 years	2,799	1,901	898
10-14 years	2,653	1,769	884
15-19 years	2,311	1,541	770
20-24 years	2,546	1,415	1,131
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,211</b>	<b>8,661</b>	<b>4,550</b>

Data source and year: ABS 3235.0 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2019.

# EDUCATION



Almost 4 in 10 people, aged 15 and over (37.6%), have a higher education qualification. For 1 in 10 people, aged 15 and over (10.8%), Year 12 is their highest level of education, and for 1 in 7 people, aged 15 and over (14.5%), Year 10 is their highest level of education.

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
People, aged 15 and over, who have a higher education qualification (above Year 12 level)	37.6%	46.2%	16.7%
People, aged 15 and over, for whom Year 12 is their highest level of education	10.8%	12.1%	7.8%
People, aged 15 and over, for whom Year 10 or equivalent (including Year 11, Certificate I and II) is their highest level of education	14.5%	14.5%	14.6%

# LANGUAGE AND CULTURE



Across the region, more than half of people (54.0%) speak only English. Outside of Alice Springs this drops to almost 2 in 10 people (18.9%). In Alice Springs, almost 2 in 10 people (19.1%) speak a language other than English at home. Outside of Alice Springs this increases, with more than 6 in 10 people (62.3%) speaking a language other than English at home.

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
People who speak only English	54.0%	68.6%	18.9%
People who speak an Aboriginal language at home	21.6%	5.4%	60.5%
People who speak a language other than English at home (including Aboriginal languages)	31.8%	19.1%	62.3%

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



# Domain 1

## Being valued, loved and safe

Children and young people should be valued, loved and safe in the environment they grow up in, both in the family and the broader community. This need includes having loving family relationships, positive connections with their peers and other adults, and personal and community safety. These factors are critical for children and young people's healthy development and their ability to socialise, to understand society and to shape their future. When children are valued, loved and safe, they are more confident, resilient and have a stronger sense of identity.


The available data for this domain is service-based and commonly reports deficits rather than positive outcomes. The Editorial Committee investigated strength-based measures and there will be continued effort in the preparation of the 2023 Story. A case study highlights the positive work being done to ensure children and young people are valued, loved and safe.

There is the addition of one measure in this domain for the number of young people in detention. This new measure responds to a data gap identified in the 2019 Story.

In this domain, the two outcomes of safe families and safe communities are explored through eight indicators and one case study.


## 1.1 Safe families

### 1.1.1 Domestic and family violence

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

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	Number	1,360	979	381
	Proportion	14.0%	15.0%	12.0%
Aboriginal	Number	1,231	nr	nr
	Proportion	24.0%	nr	nr
Non-Aboriginal	Number	129	nr	nr
	Proportion	2.8%	nr	nr

Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (special table extracted on 9 August 2021), 2020-21. Proportions calculated using 2016 ERP based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table).  
Note: (nr) not reportable due to small numbers.

Number of domestic and family violence offences where children, aged 0-17, were subject to violence or heard/saw the incident 



Data source and year: NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (special table extracted on 4 August 2021), 2020-21.  
Note: This measure is not available by Aboriginal status.

### 1.1.2 Child abuse or neglect

Child abuse and neglect refers to behaviour or treatment that either harms or has the potential to harm a child or young person, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, exposure to domestic and family violence, sexual abuse and neglect.

Number of notifications of child abuse or neglect

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	5,366	4,163	1,203
Aboriginal	4,634	3,437	1,197
Non-Aboriginal	732	726	6

Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (special table extracted on 9 August 2021), 2020-21.  
Note: Children can be reported on more than one occasion in a year.

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

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	Number	2,518	1,869	649
	Proportion	25.9%	28.5%	20.4%
Aboriginal	Number	2,103	1,460	643
	Proportion	41.0%	66.1%	22.0%
Non-Aboriginal	Number	415	409	6
	Proportion	9.0%	9.4%	2.4%

Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (special table extracted on 9 August 2021), 2020-21. Proportions calculated using 2016 ERP based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table).



Substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect are those in which an investigation of a notification has confirmed there was reasonable cause to believe the child had been, or was likely to be harmed.

#### Number of substantiated investigations for children, aged 0-17

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	465	363	102
Aboriginal	419	317	102
Non-Aboriginal	46	46	0

Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (special table extracted on 9 August 2021), 2020-21.

Note: In July 2018 the NT Government introduced the One Child One Case policy to improve the way in which the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities responds to subsequent notifications for children who have a current open case. As a result, fewer investigations have been commenced.

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

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	Number	437	341	96
	Proportion	4.5%	5.2%	3.0%
Aboriginal	Number	392	296	96
	Proportion	7.6%	13.4%	3.3%
Non-Aboriginal	Number	45	45	0
	Proportion	1.0%	1.0%	0%

Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (special table extracted on 9 August 2021), 2020-21. Proportions calculated using 2016 ERP based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table).

Resubstantiation refers to the circumstance when children who were the subject of a substantiated episode of child abuse and neglect are the subject of another substantiation within 12 months.

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

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	Number	43	33	10
	Proportion	18.8%	17.7%	23.3%
Aboriginal	Number	nr	nr	10
	Proportion	nr	nr	23.3%
Non-Aboriginal	Number	nr	nr	0
	Proportion	nr	nr	0%

Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (special table extracted on 9 August 2021), 2020-21. Proportions calculated using numbers of children who were the subject of a substantiated investigation in 2019-20. Note: 1. (nr) not reportable due to small numbers.

2. In July 2018 the NT Government introduced the One Child One Case policy to improve the way in which the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities responds to subsequent notifications for children who have a current open case. As a result, fewer investigations have been commenced.



## BREAKING DOWN GENDER STEREOTYPES – UPDATE

The Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention program continues the work to challenge gender stereotypes, with a new series of Mums Can Dads Can posters. A similar project, Girls Can Boys Can, was launched in 2020 to show equal and respectful relationships between girls and boys. Both projects aim to stop violence before it begins, by building awareness in children about equal and respectful relationships between girls and boys, and women and men. The intention is for children to thrive and grow up to be whoever they want to be, free from discrimination.

Meeting the unique circumstances of 2020, the team also developed a set of resources with messages related to the challenges of COVID-19 such as learning from home and changed hygiene habits.

Images: New Mums Can Dads Can and Boys Can Girls Can posters

## Number and proportion (%) of children, aged 0-17, in out-of-home care 2020-21



		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	Number	137	121	16
	Proportion	1.4%	1.8%	0.5%
Aboriginal	Number	132	116	16
	Proportion	2.6%	5.2%	0.6%
Non-Aboriginal	Number	5	5	0
	Proportion	0.1%	0.1%	0%

Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (special table extracted on 9 August 2021), 2020-21. Proportions calculated using 2016 ERP based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table).  
Note: 1. Numbers are estimated as at 1 July 2021. 2. Geography is where children are placed and not where they are from.

## 1.2 Safe communities

### 1.2.1 House break-ins

The number of reported house break-in offences for houses with children is not available, however there is data on all house break-in offences. This was chosen as one measure of community safety as it relates to a child's sense of safety in their community and at home.

#### Number of house break-in offences



Data source and year: NT Department of Attorney General and Justice (special table extracted on 11 August 2021), 2020-21.

### 1.2.2 Children and young people as victims of crime

Offences against the person are crimes that involve physical harm or force, such as physical assault.

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

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	Number	268	221	47
	Rate	27.6	33.8	14.8
Aboriginal	Number	227	180	47
	Rate	44.2	81.4	16.1
Non-Aboriginal	Number	41	41	0
	Rate	8.9	9.5	0

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

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	Number	513	390	123
	Rate	131.1	179.8	70.6
Aboriginal	Number	426	nr	nr
	Rate	200.2	nr	nr
Non-Aboriginal	Number	87	nr	nr
	Rate	48.8	nr	nr

Data source and year: NT Department of Attorney General and Justice (special table extracted on 11 August 2021), 2020-21. Rates calculated using 2016 ERP based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table).  
Note: 1. Crimes are counted once for each incident. Victims may be counted more than once, for different incidents, in a year. 2. (nr) not reportable due to small numbers.

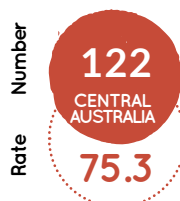
### 1.2.3 Young people involved in crime

An apprehension is any offence where a young person was arrested, issued a summons or notice to appear before court, or referred for youth diversion.

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

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	Number	469	429	40
	Rate	269.8	305.7	119.3
Aboriginal	Number	462	422	40
	Rate	415.2	914.8	61.4
Non-Aboriginal	Number	7	7	0
	Rate	8.0	8.4	0

#### Number and 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 extracted on 17 August 2021), 2020-21. Rates calculated using 2016 ERP based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table).  
Note: 1. Number and rate of apprehensions of females is not reportable by Aboriginal status or sub-region due to small numbers.

2. Apprehensions are calculated as one event for a person for one date.  
3. In July 2020 the NT Department of Attorney General and Justice changed their standard counting rules to include where a young person received a 'Youth Diversion Assessment' as they are alleged to have committed an offence(s).

## 1.2.4 Youth diversion

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

Number of diversions for young people, aged 10-17



Data source and year: NT Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Services (special table extracted on 9 August 2021), 2020-21.

Note: 1. This measure is not available by Aboriginal status. 2. Measure is not reportable by sub-region due to small numbers.

## 1.2.5 Young people in detention

Daily average number of young people, aged 10-17, in a youth detention centre



	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA
All	10.4
Aboriginal	10.0
Non-Aboriginal	0.4

Data source and year: NT Department of Territory Families Housing and Communities (special table extracted on 19 August 2021), 2020-21.

Note: This measure is not available by sub-region.

## 1.2.6 Young people in prison

Daily average number of young men and women, aged 18-24, in Northern Territory prisons

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
Men	All	80.8	74.6	6.2
	Aboriginal	78.6	72.5	6.1
	Non-Aboriginal	2.2	2.1	0.1
Women	All	2.1	2.1	0
	Aboriginal	2.0	2.0	0
	Non-Aboriginal	0.1	0.1	0

Data source and year: NT Department of Attorney General and Justice (special table extracted on 9 August 2021), 2020-21.



visit the data platform for more information on these measures.  
[cmc.nt.gov.au/children](http://cmc.nt.gov.au/children)





# Domain 2

## Having material basics

Material basics are the foundational elements that children and young people need in life. These include a safe house to live in, adequate and nutritious food, clean water and appropriate clothing. Income is crucial for a family to pay for basic living expenses. Children who experience poverty early in life are more likely to experience ongoing disadvantage.

The majority of the measures in this domain are reported from the 2016 Census and so there are no changes since the 2019 Story. A measure specific to children, aged 14 and under, has been added to the indicator of internet access. Mobile phone use remains a data gap.

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

### 2.1 Financial stability

#### 2.1.1 Socioeconomic disadvantage

The measure of Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage is a score for relative socioeconomic disadvantage, with scores below 1,000 indicating relative disadvantage, and scores above 1,000 indicating relative advantage.

Scores for relative socioeconomic disadvantage



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

#### 2.1.2 Family income

Department of Social Services classify households with children aged 15 and under, earning under \$36,515 per annum in receipt of the Family Tax Benefit Part A as 'low income' households.

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



Data source and year: Department of Social Services, prepared by PHIDU (special table), June 2017.

Note: 1. Households are private dwellings only.  
2. This measure is not available by sub-region or Aboriginal status.

### 2.2 Adequate housing

#### 2.2.1 Severely crowded households

The ABS defines households as severely crowded when four or more extra bedrooms would be needed to accommodate the number of people usually living there. Information on overcrowding is not available for families, children or young people. This measure is based on people of any age.

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

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	Number	1,459	127	1,332
	Rate	506.2	61.1	1,661.9
Aboriginal	Number	1,432	103	1,329
	Rate	1,408.9	276.4	2,065.0
Non-Aboriginal	Number	24	24	0
	Rate	13.2	14.4	0

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

Note: 1. Rates are expressed as number per 10,000 population of usual residents.



## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING WITH A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Since September 2020, the Apmere Urtle Transitional Housing Program (Apmere Urtle) has been providing supported accommodation to young families, single mothers and older single women in Alice Springs. Consisting of 20 units, it has been developed as a transitioning housing model with a community development approach.

The Apmere Urtle approach was developed in partnership between Community Housing Central Australia and the Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group, with the support of the Northern Territory Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities. In its first three months, Apmere Urtle completed a staged intake to capacity and has remained full since.

Apmere Urtle is aimed at people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless and demonstrate a willingness to engage in a personalised program of services. Residents are supported according to their individual or family needs. Support includes child playgroups, a cooking program, legal support and training in a variety of life skills.

Members of the Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group said, "Children do well when parents are supported. This transitional housing space supports the wellbeing of children, parents and families so everyone can thrive in a housing space with strong supports that feels like a community."



Apmere Urtle supports residents with the necessary skills to transition into maintaining their own home. There are entry interviews, tenancy agreements and inspections. Ongoing support is provided when moving into independent long-term accommodation. There has been one person who has made the transition into alternative accommodation, with another two on the way.

The program aims to reduce homelessness, building capacity and skills of residents in a supportive community environment. Tully McIntyre, Coordinator at Community Housing Central Australia, which operates the program said, "When children live in stable homes, they have better health outcomes, go to school, and thrive in their lives. We want people to have their own home and the opportunity to access support, resources and training."

Photo: A mother with her child at Apmere Urtle

## 2.2.2 Children and young people who are homeless

The ABS defines homelessness as the condition when a person's current living arrangement is in a dwelling that is inadequate; has no secure tenure; or does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations. This includes people living in temporary arrangements, boarding houses, tents or sleep out and in severely overcrowded dwellings.

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




Data source and year: ABS Housing and Population Census, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.  
Note: This measure is not available by sub-region or Aboriginal status.

## 2.3 Communication and technology

### 2.3.1 Internet access

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

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	72.6%	80.2%	43.5%
Aboriginal	42.9%	58.1%	26.2%
Non-Aboriginal	83.5%	85.0%	71.1%

Proportion (%) of children, aged 14 and under, living in dwellings from which internet was not accessed 

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	29.0%	11.9%	67.4%
Aboriginal	54.9%	30.8%	71.1%
Non-Aboriginal	4.9%	4.5%	14.3%

Data source and year: ABS Housing and Population Census, 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 

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	14.8%	7.6%	42.1%
Aboriginal	36.7%	20.4%	54.8%
Non-Aboriginal	6.7%	4.8%	21.9%

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



visit the data platform for more information on these measures.  
[cmc.nt.gov.au/children](http://cmc.nt.gov.au/children)



# INCREASING INTERNET ACCESS

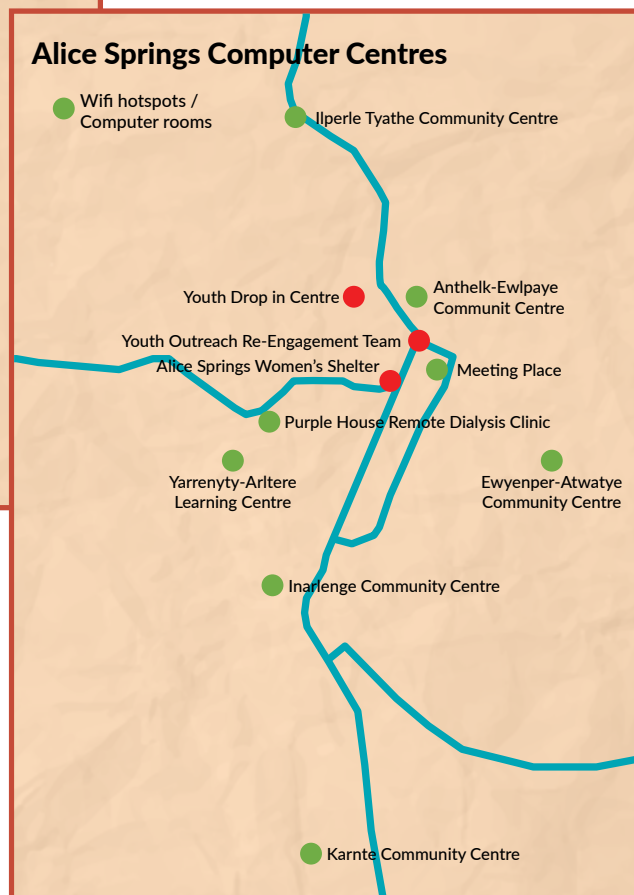
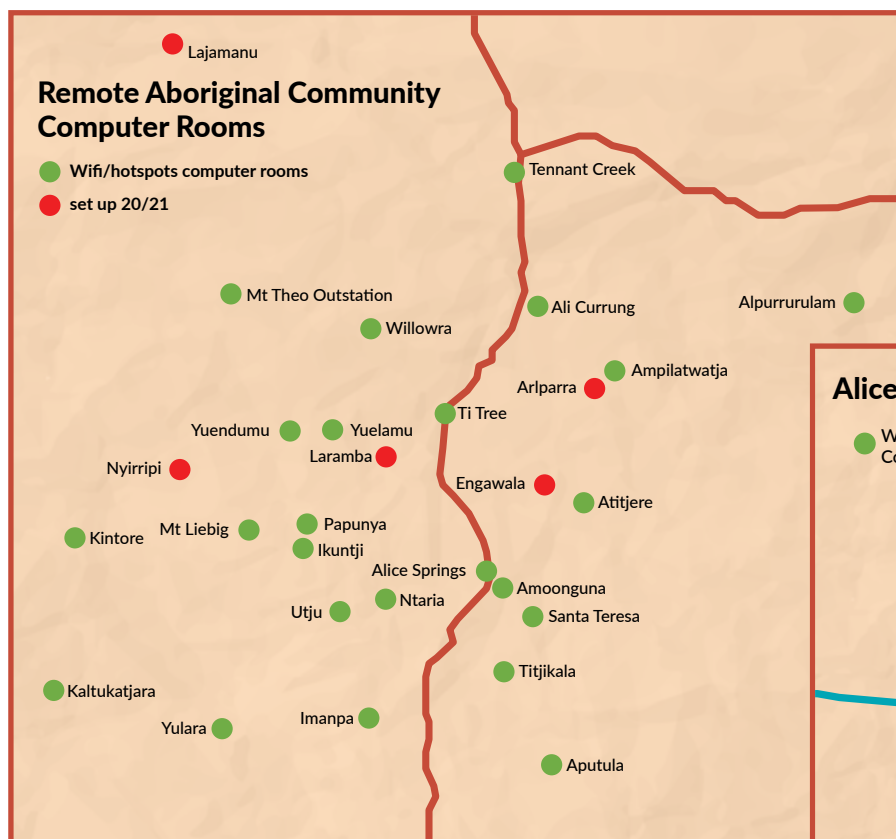
The Central Australian Youth Link Up Service (CAYLUS) has been working to overcome the challenges of internet access in communities across Central Australia and Alice Springs. These areas often do not have access to the same level of telecommunications infrastructure and resources as other areas of the Northern Territory. The work began in 2002 with the first computer room established in Papunya to help children and young people who had fallen behind in their education. Since then, CAYLUS have been working to establish computer rooms in other communities.

In 2020, COVID-19 resulted in changes to the way people travelled and interacted, highlighting the importance of access to technology and communications. People living in remote communities needed to travel into town to access services, which increased the risk of exposure to COVID-19. To facilitate people being able to stay safe in communities, the project was expanded with extra funding to increase the number of wi-fi hotspots and computer rooms throughout the region.

Since 2020, five new wi-fi hotspots and computer rooms have been established in remote communities (Nyirripi, Lajamanu, Engawala, Arlpara, Laramba). There are 27 communities across Central Australia and 12 town camps in Alice Springs which now have either a wi-fi hotspot or a computer room, or in some cases both. Community control is an important part of the project and communities have the capacity to restrict access to particular websites they deem harmful, either temporarily or permanently.

Initial feedback has been positive, with two families from one of the communities stating they feel their children and young people are safer now, as they don't need to travel into the town to obtain internet access.

Images: Maps created using Google Earth





## SCHOOL PROJECT TO SMALL BUSINESS

**Luke Haywood and Jett Egan, aged 16, are Year 11 students and business owners. Last year, as part of a project for their Personal Learning Program at St Philips College in Alice Springs, they came up with an entrepreneurial gardening business idea.**

Through personal drive and commitment, and with the support of their parents, brothers and the Business Enterprise Centre, Luke and Jett progressed their idea and developed it into a business. "Our parents have been our biggest supporters, most of the equipment is owned by our parents. They drove us everywhere before Luke got his driver's licence, getting our name out and about." J&L Gardening was officially registered in 2021 and now has over 50 customers. In October 2020, they helped plan, budget and create a Peace Garden for their college.

They do most of their jobs on weekends, and are slowly building up an equipment base, initially purchasing items to fill the gaps in what they could borrow from their parents. "At the start we only knew basic skills, we have had to learn things like irrigation and invoicing. Now we have the capacity for more complex projects on top of normal garden maintenance." They have learnt a lot about running a business, from organising insurance, to invoicing, budgeting and cashflow management.

Luke reflects, "You just have to do it. Some people have great ideas, but they don't have the will. The message I would send to everyone is to not second guess themselves, and from there you grow your confidence and knowledge."

Photos: Jett (left) and Luke (right) on the job





# Domain 3

## Being healthy

It is essential to take good care of the health and wellbeing of children and young people to ensure good health and opportunity into adulthood. Health is impacted by many factors including individual physiology, lifestyle, environmental and cultural influences and access to appropriate health care and support services. Children are particularly vulnerable in their early years and dependent on parents and caregivers for their physical and emotional needs.

There have been a number of developments in the measures used to indicate the health of children and young people from the 2019 Story. A measure of pre-term births has been added and three indicators of the health of young people have been added to address data gaps identified in 2019 – smoking prevalence, being mentally healthy and incidence of sexually transmissible infections.

In this domain, three outcomes of healthy before birth, healthy in the first year and growing up healthy are explored through 16 indicators and one cultural story of wellness.

### 3.1 Healthy before birth

#### 3.1.1 Early antenatal visits

Antenatal care is the care received from health professionals during pregnancy to support the health of both the pregnant woman and the unborn child.

Proportion (%) of pregnant women with first antenatal visit in first trimester (less than 14 weeks) **CTG** **SOF**

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	81.0%	85.6%	74.8%
Aboriginal	68.4%	68.4%	68.4%
Non-Aboriginal	93.0%	93.2%	92.3%

Data source and year: NT Perinatal Data Collection, prepared by NT Department of Health (special table), 2019.

#### 3.1.2 Regular antenatal visits

Proportion (%) of pregnant women who attended five or more antenatal visits **CTG** **SOF**

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	93.2%	94.7%	91.3%
Aboriginal	88.4%	86.7%	89.3%
Non-Aboriginal	97.9%	98.2%	96.9%

Data source and year: NT Perinatal Data Collection, prepared by NT Department of Health (special table), 2019.

#### 3.1.3 Teenage mothers

Proportion (%) of births to women aged under 20 **SOF**



Data source and year: NT Perinatal Data Collection, prepared by NT Department of Health (special table), 2019.  
Note: This measure is not reportable by Aboriginal status due to small numbers.

#### 3.1.4 Smoking during pregnancy

Proportion (%) of women who reported smoking during pregnancy **CTG**

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	23.0%	19.4%	27.7%
Aboriginal	39.6%	nr	nr
Non-Aboriginal	7.0%	nr	nr

Data source and year: NT Perinatal Data Collection, prepared by NT Department of Health (special table), 2019.  
Note: (nr) not reportable due to small numbers.



visit the data platform for more information on these measures.  
[cmc.nt.gov.au/children](http://cmc.nt.gov.au/children)

## 3.1.5 Alcohol consumption during pregnancy

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

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	5.5%	5.6%	5.3%
Aboriginal	9.0%	12.0%	7.3%
Non-Aboriginal	2.1%	2.7%	0%

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), 2019.  
Note: Babies exposed to alcohol in third trimester is not reportable by Aboriginal status due to small numbers.

## 3.2 Healthy in the first year

### 3.2.1 Pre-term births

Pre-term birth is associated with increased risks including long-term neurological disability, re-admission to hospital in the first year of life and perinatal death.

Proportion (%) of pre-term births (less than 37 weeks)  

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	8.5%	7.1%	10.2%
Aboriginal	10.4%	9.0%	11.2%
Non-Aboriginal	6.6%	6.3%	7.6%

Data source and year: NT Perinatal Data Collection, prepared by NT Department of Health (special table), 2019.

### 3.2.2 Low birthweight

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

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	7.2%	6.5%	8.2%
Aboriginal	9.4%	nr	nr
Non-Aboriginal	5.2%	nr	nr

Data source and year: NT Perinatal Data Collection, prepared by NT Department of Health (special table), 2019.  
Note: (nr) not reportable due to small numbers.

## 3.2.3 Infant mortality

Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) 



Data source and year: Australian Coordinating Registry, Cause of Death Unit Record Files, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2014-18.

Note: This measure is not available by sub-region or Aboriginal status.

## 3.2.4 Breastfeeding

Proportion (%) of babies exclusively breastfed to 6 months of age 



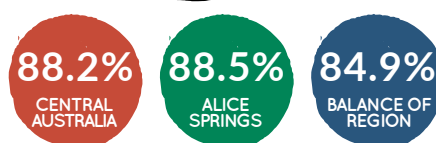
Data source and year: 2017-18 National Health Survey and 2018-2019 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, ABS. Data extracted for non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal populations separately using ABS TableBuilder and combined, 9 August 2021 (special table).

Note: 1. Survey results for children aged 6 months to 3 years at time of data collection. 2. The 2019 Story reported exclusive breastfeeding to 3 months of age. 3. This measure is not available by region or Aboriginal status.

## 3.3 Growing up healthy

### 3.3.1 Child immunisation



Proportion (%) of children fully immunised at age two 



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

Note: This measure is not available by Aboriginal status.

### 3.3.2 Bodyweight for children and young people

Proportion (%) of children and young people, aged 2-19, who were overweight or obese  



Data source and year: 2017-18 National Health Survey and 2018-2019 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey ABS. Data extracted for non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal populations separately using ABS TableBuilder and combined, 9 August 2021 (special table).

Note: This measure is not available by region or Aboriginal status.



## NWARAN, AN ASTROLOGICAL NAMING CEREMONY

“My name is Manju and I was born in Kathmandu, Nepal. I came to Australia in 2007 and my husband and I have two children. In Nepalese culture we hold an astrological naming ceremony, a ‘Nwaran’, on the 11th day after the birth of a baby. A priest visits the family for the ceremony and family and friends attend, it is quite big.


During the Nwaran, a Hom (meaning fire) is conducted to purify the baby, mother and house. We put ghee on a stick of wood and light it and the priest says a mantra. This is very auspicious and means the family and the house are purified. Bad spirits will be removed from the house.

Nepalese people have two names, their common name and an astrological name. As part of the Nwaran, the priest will look at the time of the birth of the baby and make an astrological horoscope. The China (pronounced ch – e – na), also known as Janma Kundali, is an astrological chart which is prepared based on the date, time and place of a baby’s birth. The chart determines the location of planets, the sun and the moon. This sets out the astrological aspects of a person.

When a child is unwell, the China can be used to determine what has caused the illness. If anything arises for health and wellbeing, for physical and mental health we can look to the astrological reading. If a child is unsettled, we believe there are bad shadows and the Astrologer can look to the China to see the cause and how it can be fixed. My children’s China is with my husband’s family in Nepal.”

Photo: Manju (right) with her mother Mohan (left) and children Nirran and Myra

### 3.3.3 Children and young people with a disability


Number and proportion (%) of children and young people, aged 0-24, who have need for assistance with core activities 

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	1.5%	1.9%	0.8%
Aboriginal	1.5%	3.1%	0.7%
Non-Aboriginal	1.8%	1.9%	1.6%

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

### 3.3.4 Mentally healthy


Mental health-related conditions are common and only a small proportion of individuals with these conditions are ever admitted to hospital. However, hospital admission records provide a consistent and reliable measure for mental health.

Number and rate (per 10,000 population) of hospital admissions for mental health-related conditions for young people, aged 15-24 

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA
All	Number	239
	Rate	444.2
Aboriginal	Number	168
	Rate	567.8
Non-Aboriginal	Number	71
	Rate	293.3

Data source and year: NT Department of Health (special table), 2020. Rates calculated using 2016 ERP based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table).  
Note: This measure is not available by sub-region.

### 3.3.5 Smoking prevalence among young people

Proportion (%) of young men and women, aged 15-24, who are current smokers 

		NORTHERN TERRITORY
Men		46.3%
Women		24.5%

Data source and year: 2017-18 National Health Survey and 2018-2019 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, ABS. Data extracted for non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal populations separately using ABS TableBuilder and combined, 9 August 2021 (special table).  
Note: This measure is not available by region or Aboriginal status.

### 3.3.6 Sexually transmissible infections

Data is not available for all sexually transmissible infections (STIs). This Story reports the rates of two common diseases, chlamydia and gonorrhoea.

Number and rate (per 100,000 population) of chlamydia and gonorrhoea notifications among young people, aged 15-24

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA
Chlamydia	Number	406
	Rate	7,546.6
Gonorrhoea	Number	396
	Rate	7,360.7

Data source and year: NT Department of Health (special table), 2020. Rates calculated using ABS Census 2016 data, prepared by NT Department of Health (special table).  
Note: 1. Data are reported by NT health districts, which varies marginally from the geography used elsewhere in this Story. 2. This measure is not available by sub-region.

### 3.3.7 Death of children and young people

Death rate (per 100,000 population) for children, aged 1-14, and young people, aged 15-24 

		NORTHERN TERRITORY
Children		32.5
Young people		119.0

Data source and year: ABS 3303.0 Causes of Death, 2019.  
Note: 1. ABS rates are based on preliminary death data and are subject to revision. 2. This measure is not available by region or Aboriginal status due to small numbers.



visit the data platform for more information on these measures.  
[cmc.nt.gov.au/children](http://cmc.nt.gov.au/children)



# Domain 4

## Learning

Children and young people are constantly learning as they grow and develop. Learning takes place in many ways, at home with family, through interaction with the wider community and in formal settings, like schools.

There are a number of developments, from the 2019 Story, in this domain. A measure of developmentally on track has been added as an additional indicator for transitioning to school. There has been a change in the measure for preschool attendance to report the proportion of children attending a preschool program for 15 hours or more per week, to be consistent with national reporting. A measure of vocational education and training participation has also been added.

In this domain, six outcomes of parent engagement in learning, early childhood learning, transitioning into school, school attendance, school progress and vocational learning are explored through 15 indicators and one case study.

### 4.1 Parent engagement in learning

#### 4.1.1 Reading at home

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a nationwide survey of how young children are developing and their readiness for formal schooling as they begin their first year of full-time school. Teachers complete a questionnaire based on their knowledge and observation of the children in their class.

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

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	65.1%	81.3%	27.4%
Aboriginal	33.5%	50.4%	19.9%
Non-Aboriginal	95.1%	95.2%	93.8%

Data source and year: Australian Early Development Census, prepared by Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment (special table extracted on 6 October 2021), 2018.

Note: Results include teachers' responses of 'Somewhat true' or 'Very true'.

### 4.1.2 Participation in Families as First Teachers

There are a number of early childhood and family support programs, Families as First Teachers (FaFT) being one of them. The aim of FaFT is to improve developmental outcomes for children by working with families and children, aged 0-4, prior to school entry. Data is not available to measure Territory-wide participation in similar programs.

Participation in Families as First Teachers program


	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
Number of communities	8	4	4
Number of children	318	136	182
Average days for children	16.4	18.1	15.2

Data source and year: Families as First Teachers (FaFT) program, prepared by NT Department of Education (special table) 2020.

Note: 1. Children can attend multiple FaFT program sites during the year; each child is counted once in a sub-region; data for the region may count a child more than once if they have attended a FaFT program in more than one sub-region in the year.

2. The average days is the average number of days each child attended over the reporting period.

## 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 (SOF) 

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	81.0%	88.7%	63.1%
Aboriginal	64.2%	70.8%	58.9%
Non-Aboriginal	97.0%	96.8%	100%

Data source and year: Australian Early Development Census, prepared by Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment (special table extracted on 6 October 2021), 2018. Note: Results include teachers' responses of 'Somewhat true' or 'Very true'.

## 4.2 Early childhood learning

### 4.2.1 Child care attendance

Proportion (%) of children, aged 0-5, attending approved child care (SOF) 

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA
All	23.7%
Aboriginal	11.9%
Non-Aboriginal	34.9%

Data source and year: Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (special table), December quarter 2020. Proportions calculated using ABS 3235.0 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.

Note: This measure is not available by sub-region.

### 4.2.2 Preschool attendance

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

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	79.0%	84.9%	47.8%
Aboriginal	59.4%	66.1%	48.5%
Non-Aboriginal	93.0%	93.4%	0%

Proportion (%) of children, aged 4, attending a preschool program for 15 hours or more per week

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	83.4%	87.6%	43.8%
Aboriginal	72.1%	84.7%	43.8%
Non-Aboriginal	88.5%	88.5%	0%

Data source and year: Age Grade Census, prepared by NT Department of Education (special table), 2020. Proportions calculated using 2016 ERP based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table).

Note: Data include NT Government and Catholic schools only and does not include preschool programs provided at centre-based care by a qualified worker.

## 4.3 Transitioning into school

### 4.3.1 Developmentally on track

The AEDC measures the early development of children aged 5 across five key domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school-based), and communication skills and general knowledge. Children are considered 'developmentally on track' if they score in the top 75% of the scores for the reference population in a domain.



Proportion (%) of children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains (CTG) (SOF)   

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	36.7%	46.0%	15.1%
Aboriginal	20.5%	36.4%	8.0%
Non-Aboriginal	51.9%	50.2%	80.0%



Data source and year: Australian Early Development Census, prepared by Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment (special table extracted on 6 October 2021), 2018.

### 4.3.2 Developmental vulnerability

Children are considered 'developmentally vulnerable' if they score in the lowest 10% of the scores for the reference population in a domain.

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

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	38.5%	27.4%	64.2%
Aboriginal	59.3%	nr	nr
Non-Aboriginal	19.0%	nr	nr

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


	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	25.9%	14.9%	51.7%
Aboriginal	44.4%	nr	nr
Non-Aboriginal	8.5%	nr	nr

Data source and year: Australian Early Development Census, prepared by Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment (special table extracted on 6 October 2021), 2018.

Note: (nr) not reportable due to small numbers.

### 4.3.3 Developmental strengths

The Multiple Strengths Indicator (MSI) was developed in 2017 to complement the existing AEDC measures of vulnerability with a strength-based view of early childhood development. The MSI uses the same Early Development Instrument used in the AEDC and has 39 items.

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

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
Highly developed strengths	All	42.9%	50.1%	26.3%
	Aboriginal	29.2%	39.6%	21.2%
	Non-Aboriginal	55.8%	54.7%	73.3%
Well developed strengths	All	21.2%	25.2%	11.8%
	Aboriginal	19.3%	nr	nr
	Non-Aboriginal	22.9%	nr	nr
Emerging strengths	All	35.9%	24.6%	61.8%
	Aboriginal	51.4%	nr	nr
	Non-Aboriginal	21.3%	nr	nr

Data source and year: Australian Early Development Census, prepared by Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment (special table extracted on 6 October 2021), 2018.  
Note: (nr) not reportable due to small numbers.

### 4.3.4 Transition attendance

School attendance in Transition, NT Government Schools 

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	71.2%	80.3%	47.9%
Aboriginal	54.4%	62.4%	46.2%
Non-Aboriginal	90.1%	90.9%	71.4%


Data source and year: Enrolment and Attendance data, prepared by NT Department of Education (special table), 2020.  
Note: Data reporting period covers weeks 1 to 4 and weeks 5 to 8 of each term in a calendar year.

## 4.4 School attendance

### 4.4.1 School attendance

School attendance in Year 3, NT Government schools 

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	74.2%	82.9%	55.2%
Aboriginal	61.3%	70.0%	53.7%
Non-Aboriginal	90.5%	90.7%	84.1%

School attendance in Year 7, NT Government Schools 

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	67.9%	73.6%	43.5%
Aboriginal	60.0%	66.6%	42.3%
Non-Aboriginal	83.9%	84.1%	nr

Data source and year: Enrolment and Attendance data, prepared by the NT Department of Education (special table), 2020.  
Note: 1. Data reporting period covers weeks 1 to 4 and weeks 5 to 8 of each term in a calendar year. 2. (nr) not reportable due to small numbers.

Proportion (%) of all Preschool to Year 12 students, with more than 80% school attendance, NT Government schools 

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	39.4%	53.3%	12.4%
Aboriginal	19.7%	29.1%	10.2%
Non-Aboriginal	77.1%	77.4%	69.2%

Data source and year: Enrolment and Attendance data, prepared by the NT Department of Education (special table), 2020.  
Note: 1. Students who are passive at the end of the reporting period are excluded. 2. Students can attend multiple school sites during the year; each student is counted once in a sub-region; data for the region may count a child more than once if they have attended a school site in more than one sub-region in the year.



visit the data platform for more information on these measures. [cmc.nt.gov.au/children](http://cmc.nt.gov.au/children)





## TRANSFORMING LEARNING – UPDATE

Sadadeen Primary School has maintained their child centred framework and is achieving positive outcomes for their students. From 2019 to 2021, there was a decline in major behavioural incidents by 50%. One teacher shared that they are “teaching now, (it is) not just behaviour management.”

Photo: Principal Donna Wright with students Lani (left) and Myraleigh

## 4.4.2 Continuation to Year 12

This measure is the proportion of students enrolled in Year 12, out of all students enrolled in the corresponding cohort in Year 7, for Northern Territory Government and Catholic schools. The rate may not accurately reflect all students who have completed Year 12 as students may travel to attend school in other regions or interstate.

Apparent retention from Year 7 to Year 12

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA
All	57.4%
Aboriginal	34.3%
Non-Aboriginal	146.5%

Data source and year: Age Grade Census data, prepared by NT Department of Education (special table), 2020.

Note: 1. Data include NT Government and Catholic schools only. 2. Data is an underestimate due to interstate movement of students between Years 7 and 12 to complete school. Similarly results for regions may under or overestimate apparent retention as a result of movement of students between regions. This is most common with students from remote areas going to Greater Darwin and to Alice Springs to complete school. 3. This measure is not available by sub-region.

## 4.5 School progress

### 4.5.1 Literacy and numeracy skills

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is a nationwide annual assessment for students. The test assesses skills considered essential to progress through school in the domains of reading and writing, language conventions and numeracy. Due to the disruptions to education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, NAPLAN assessments were not completed in 2020.

Proportion (%) of students in Year 3 reaching the minimum national standard in literacy

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	71.6%	83.7%	47.9%
Aboriginal	56.8%	70.0%	46.6%
Non-Aboriginal	92.5%	92.3%	nr

Proportion (%) of students in Year 3 reaching the minimum national standard in numeracy

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	73.3%	85.7%	48.7%
Aboriginal	58.5%	72.7%	47.3%
Non-Aboriginal	93.8%	93.7%	nr

Proportion (%) of students in Year 7 reaching the minimum national standard in literacy

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	54.3%	70.4%	28.8%
Aboriginal	42.8%	58.5%	28.8%
Non-Aboriginal	86.0%	86.0%	nr

Proportion (%) of students in Year 7 reaching the minimum national standard in numeracy

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	49.4%	58.9%	34.8%
Aboriginal	37.3%	40.4%	34.8%
Non-Aboriginal	80.0%	80.0%	nr

Data source and year: NT Department of Education (special table), 2019.

Note: 1. Data include NT Government and Catholic schools only. 2. (nr) not reportable due to small numbers



visit the data platform for more information on these measures. [cmc.nt.gov.au/children](http://cmc.nt.gov.au/children)



## 4.5.2 Year 12 or equivalent completion

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

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	38.8%	54.5%	20.4%
Aboriginal	18.6%	40.3%	11.7%
Non-Aboriginal	69.4%	68.3%	74.9%

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

## 4.5.3 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 

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	95.3%	95.3%	na
Aboriginal	96.9%	96.9%	na
Non-Aboriginal	94.6%	94.6%	na



Data source and year: NT Department of Education (special table), 2020.

Note: 1. (na) not available. 2. Data include NT Government and Catholic schools only.

## 4.6 Vocational learning

### 4.6.1 Vocational education and training participation

This measure reports young people, aged 15-24, who participated in both government subsidised and fee for service vocational education and training (VET) enrolments in 2019, regardless of the year they commenced. It includes school students engaged in VET.

Number and rate (per 1,000 population) of young people, aged 15-24, who participate in vocational education and training  

		CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	Number	2,167	1,854	313
	Rate	402.7	604.4	135.1
Aboriginal	Number	791	556	235
	Rate	267.5	569.6	118.8
Non-Aboriginal	Number	1,375	1,298	77
	Rate	568.0	620.7	233.7

Data source and year: NCVER Total VET Activity prepared by NT Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (special table), 2019. Rates calculated using 2016 ERP based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table).





# Domain 5

## Participating

It is important for the wellbeing of children and young people that they actively participate with their peers and within the community. Participation can take many forms – it can include children and young people being involved in sport, recreational or social activities, or volunteering with community groups. A key element of participation is children and young people being listened to and supported to have a say on issues affecting their lives and their community.




Measures in this domain focus on young people, aged 15 and above, as there is a lack of reliable information for participation among younger age groups other than formal education. Most measures in this domain use census data. As the latest census was in 2016, the data in these measures

has not changed since the 2019 Story (except for some minor adjustments for changed regional boundaries).

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

### 5.1 Participation in employment or education

#### 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   

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	56.9%	75.4%	31.1%
Aboriginal	35.5%	62.4%	24.9%
Non-Aboriginal	91.7%	91.8%	91.2%

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  

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	18.8%	7.6%	44.6%
Aboriginal	46.7%	17.6%	60.5%
Non-Aboriginal	3.2%	3.6%	0%

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 Australian Government employment program operated in remote areas. The program aims to improve job seekers' skills and improve their employability, as well as benefiting the local community.



#### Proportion (%) of young people, aged 15-24, participating in the CDP

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	2.6%	0.3%	5.9%
Aboriginal	5.3%	1.2%	7.0%
Non-Aboriginal	na	na	na

Data source and year: ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.  
Note: (na) not available.

### 5.2 Participation in the community

#### 5.2.1 Young people volunteering

Proportion (%) of young people, aged 15-24, who spent time doing voluntary work  

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	13.5%	18.7%	6.2%
Aboriginal	6.2%	10.0%	4.7%
Non-Aboriginal	24.2%	24.8%	19.0%

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 young people, aged 18-24, enrolled to vote 



Data source and year: NT Electoral Commission, 31 March 2021. Proportions calculated using 2016 ERP based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table).  
Note: 1. Proportions are calculated using estimated resident populations, with no adjustment for residents not eligible to vote. 2. This measure is not available by Aboriginal status.



## FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

In Central Australia, an initiative to provide young people with opportunities for employment and skill development is resulting in young people having ongoing employment. Meeting the Youth Gap (MTYG) is a collaboration between the Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service, MacDonnell Regional Council and Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation. Since its inception in June 2019, MTYG has employed 80 participants (47 female and 33 male) across 13 remote Aboriginal communities. Employees are aged 16-30, with 88.9% of employees aged 16-24.

Employees work with the local youth service to run programs for children including sports, games and bush trips. Employing more youth workers has led to partnering organisations increasing their capacity. Since MTYG began youth service activities have increased by 29%.

An independent evaluation conducted by Nous in 2021 reported that the flexible design of the program allows employees the flexibility to engage in a way which works for them. Employees can choose their hours and are paid for the hours they work. Most participants complete their hours on a part-time basis. As at 21 April 2021, 30 of the 80 employees had completed over 200 hours of work, with another 18 having worked between 101 and 200 hours. The evaluation reported the communities of Hermannsburg, Kintore and Willowra had the highest employee work hours.

Participants have the option to formally graduate from the program by completing the core components including at least 200 hours of supervised work sessions, three review basics sessions and key education sessions on mental health, money management, alcohol and other drugs, and youth work.

The evaluation report details the success of one particular participant 'Raymond' whose consistent participation has contributed to strong improvements across all reporting domains. He said of the program, "It's good to look at my job in different ways – talking and learning new things."

MTYG has resulted in 11 young people being employed on an ongoing basis and over one-third of participants have successfully completed the core components of the program.

Photo: Galvin from Ntaria, a participant of the MTYG program



## Domain 6

# Positive sense of identity and culture

Having a positive sense of identity and culture is fundamental to a child or young person's wellbeing. Identity and culture are broad topics which are complex to define. Identity is generally understood to be a person's sense of self, their understanding of who they are, both individually and within their social context. Culture can be described as a shared approach and understanding of people's existence in relation to other people and their environment. Culture encompasses intangible concepts such as religion or spirituality, value systems and norms of behaviour as well as tangible or material items such as food, clothing, art and literature.


Many of the measures in this domain are reported from the 2016 Census with no update to the data available. In this Story there are a number of developments in the measures. The language spoken at home measure has been expanded to include the proportion of young people who speak Aboriginal languages. There are two additional measures presenting

information on language and culture in schools and Aboriginal employment in the Northern Territory Government.

In this domain the three outcomes of connection to culture, spirituality and cultural diversity are explored through eight indicators and one case study.

## 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 


	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	47.3%	71.0%	14.0%
English	Aboriginal	24.4%	68.2%
	Non-Aboriginal	80.8%	81.9%
All Aboriginal languages	26.1%	5.6%	54.8%
Northern Desert Fringe Area Languages	4.0%	na	na
Arandic	10.0%	na	na
Western Desert Languages	6.8%	na	na
Other Australian Indigenous Languages	3.2%	na	na

Data source and year: ABS Census of Population and Housing, prepared by PHIDU (special table), 2016.  
 Note: 1. Languages spoken at home by less than 1% of the population are not included in this table. 2. When English is recorded it indicates only English is spoken at home. 3. (na) not available.

### 6.1.2 Connection to Aboriginal culture

Connection to Aboriginal culture is complex and varied, often stemming from practices in the family, in ceremonies and on country which differ across nations and language groups. There is not a measure to adequately represent this connection.

### 6.1.3 Aboriginal culture in the workplace

Proportion (%) of employees of the Northern Territory Government who identify as Aboriginal 



Data source and year: NT Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (special table), June 2021.  
 Note: 1. Data include permanent, temporary, contract and casual employees. 2. Data does not include Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and NT Legal Aid.

### 6.1.4 Language and culture in schools

Proportion (%) of classroom teachers in Northern Territory Government schools who identify as Aboriginal



Data source and year: PIPS pay data, prepared by NT Department of Education (special table), 24 June 2020.  
 Note: Data exclude other teaching staff (assistant or senior teachers and teaching principals) and school council employees.



visit the data platform for more information on these measures. [cmc.nt.gov.au/children](http://cmc.nt.gov.au/children)

## 6.1.5 Organisations promoting culture

Number of registered organisations promoting culture and the arts 



Data source and year: Register of Cultural Organisations – Australian Government, 5 March 2021.

Note: 1. Numbers reflect Registered Cultural Organisations (organisations that can receive tax deductible donations and which promote cultural arts and language diversity). For a full list go to: [www.arts.gov.au](http://www.arts.gov.au). 2. This measure is not available by sub-region.

## 6.2 Spirituality

### 6.2.1 Connection to Aboriginal spirituality

Aboriginal spirituality is broad and holistic and can be understood as a framework that guides all aspects of life including relationships with family, community, environment, animals, plants and the land. While this is an important indicator of wellbeing for Aboriginal children and young people there is no quantitative measure of spirituality for Aboriginal children and young people.

### 6.2.2 Connection to a faith tradition

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

	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	ALICE SPRINGS	BALANCE OF REGION
All	49.4%	44.0%	57.0%
Aboriginal	58.5%	48.7%	62.4%
Non-Aboriginal	48.6%	49.6%	40.2%

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


Note: Religion does not include secular or other spiritual beliefs.

## 6.3 Cultural diversity

### 6.3.1 Overseas-born

Proportion (%) of children and young people, aged 0-24, born overseas 



Proportion (%) of Australian-born children and young people, aged 0-24, who have both parents born overseas 



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



### TIME ON COUNTRY – UPDATE

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, the Yuendumu School country visit program wasn't possible. In June 2021, Yuendumu hosted a week-long country visit across three sites: New Haven, Jila Well and Nyinyirripalangu. Elders told stories about sacred sites along the Jardiwampa songline and how they came to be. Children and their families went hunting and learnt about digging for yarla (bush potato). The visits are highly valued by the community and school as an important opportunity for children and young people to see their country and learn from their elders.

Photo: Cynthia Wheeler digging for yarla (bush potato)



## DATA CONSIDERATIONS

**This Central Australia Story provides more extensive information than presented in the Story of Our Children and Young People, Northern Territory 2021. The data presented in this Central Australia Story is drawn from the data platform which may result in minor differences to the data presented in the Northern Territory 2021 edition.**

The main reason for this variation is there are some records with missing data for Aboriginal status, location or gender (when reported). Missing data is treated differently between the Northern Territory 2021 edition and this Central Australia Story:

- In the Northern Territory 2021 edition, records with missing data are included at the level for which data is available with a note reporting missing data for other levels of reporting. For example, if a record does not have location data for a region, the item will be reported for the Northern Territory but excluded in the regional data.
- This Central Australia Story and the operation of the data platform requires consistency of data between levels of reporting. This requires exclusion of the small number of records with missing data for location, Aboriginal status or gender at all levels of reporting. For example, if a measure presents data by Aboriginal status then records with missing data for Aboriginal status are excluded from all levels of reporting for that measure.

A separate technical consideration is the need for care when publishing data with small counts due to the risk of confidentiality. Data with a count of less than 5 have been suppressed. It is also necessary to suppress related data which allow the calculation of the small number. The suppression of data with small counts has resulted in some items being 'not reportable'. The presentation of information by sub-region and Aboriginal status has resulted in an increase in the amount of data that are 'not reportable'.

For further technical commentary on the data, read Appendix I on page 128 of the Story of Our Children and Young People, Northern Territory 2021.

## ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ARACY	Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
CDP	Community Development Program
CFCA	Child Friendly Community Australia
FaFT	Families as First Teachers
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex and Asexual
MSI	Multiple Strength Indicator
NAIDOC	National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NT	Northern Territory
NTCET	Northern Territory Certificate of Education
PHIDU	Public Health Information Development Unit
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
WHO	World Health Organisation



# Where to from here?

For our children and young people of Central Australia to flourish and reach their potential, there are basic human needs which must be met. While many of our children and young people are flourishing, there are too many who face substantial challenges. The data in this Story highlight both indications of positive change and areas where considerable improvement is needed.

Further information is available for all measures in this Story on the data platform, allowing comparison with Australia, Northern Territory and its other regions. Trend data for select measures is also included to consider changes over time. Use the platform at [cmc.nt.gov.au/children](https://cmc.nt.gov.au/children).

## Process towards the next Story



This is the second Story, a biennial commitment by the Northern Territory Government to track progress over time across key indicators of wellbeing for children and young people. In 2023, progress will again be reviewed through both data measures and stories of positive change. Attention will once more be given to meeting identified data gaps and there will be continued effort to report relevant local indicators.

Further information 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 2021 Story at [cmc.nt.gov.au/children](https://cmc.nt.gov.au/children).

