

# Barkly UMEL Youth Case Study



# Purpose of today's presentation

1. Explain Middle Space UMEL
2. Share how we are using this approach on a youth case study in the Barkly
  - Why a case study on youth?
  - Our methods
  - Our learnings so far



# What is Middle Space UMEL?

Understanding, Measurement,  
Evaluation and Learning

- Mixture of wumpurani and papulanji ways of doing research and evaluation- *'meeting in the middle space'*
- Puts Wumpurani knowledge and ways of doing things first
- Has a ripple effect
- Used in Backbones around Australia
- Our team did 'Two Worlds UMEL' Training developed by Kowa

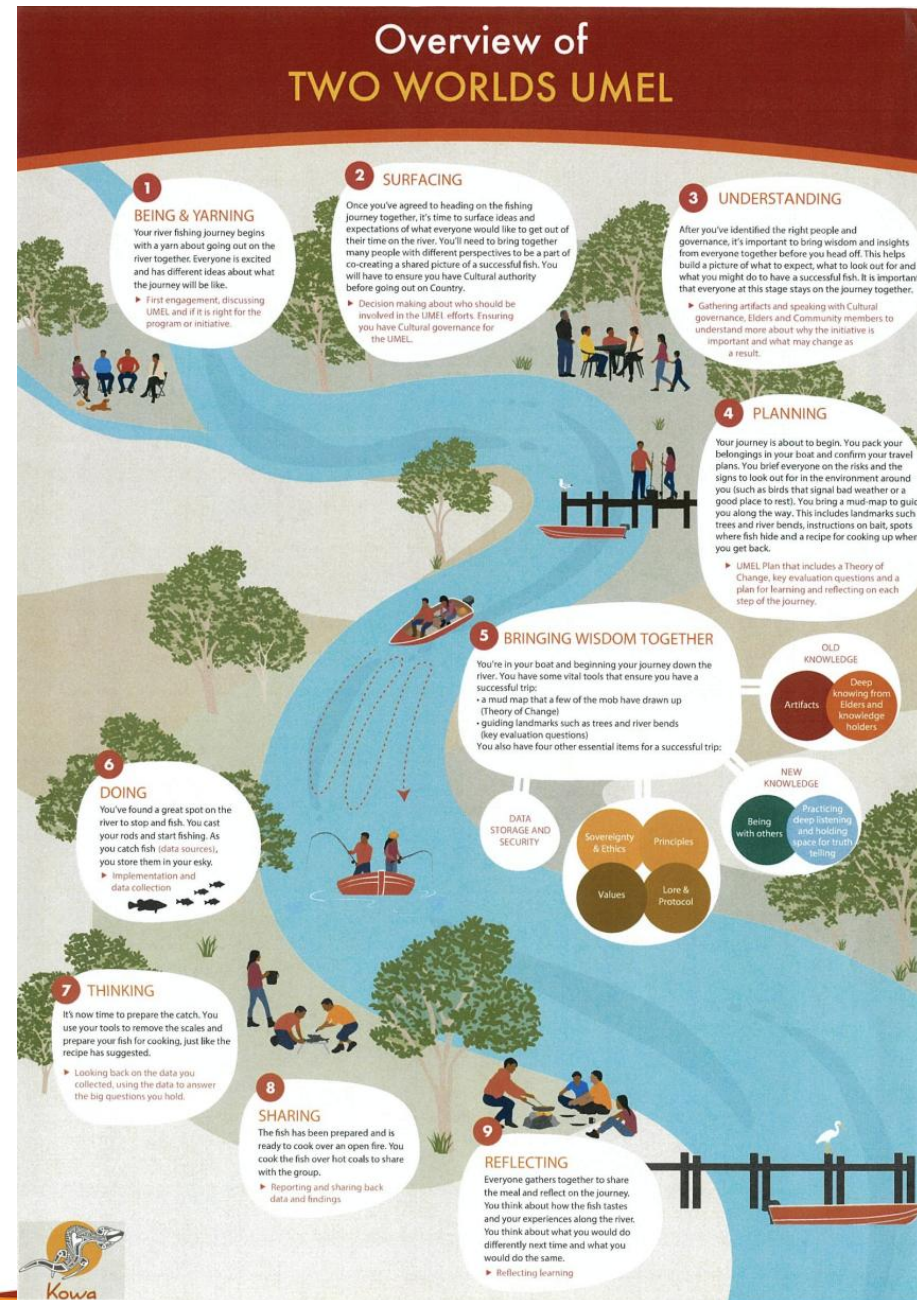


# Middle Space UMEL

*Are we in a canoe or a speed boat as we travel the river?*

Guided by our principles:

- Trust
- spending time to UNDERSTAND
- Wumpurani deciding
- Co-creating
- Respect for each other's views
- Sharing responsibility for learnings and improvements
- Reflecting on our journey and going back to the start

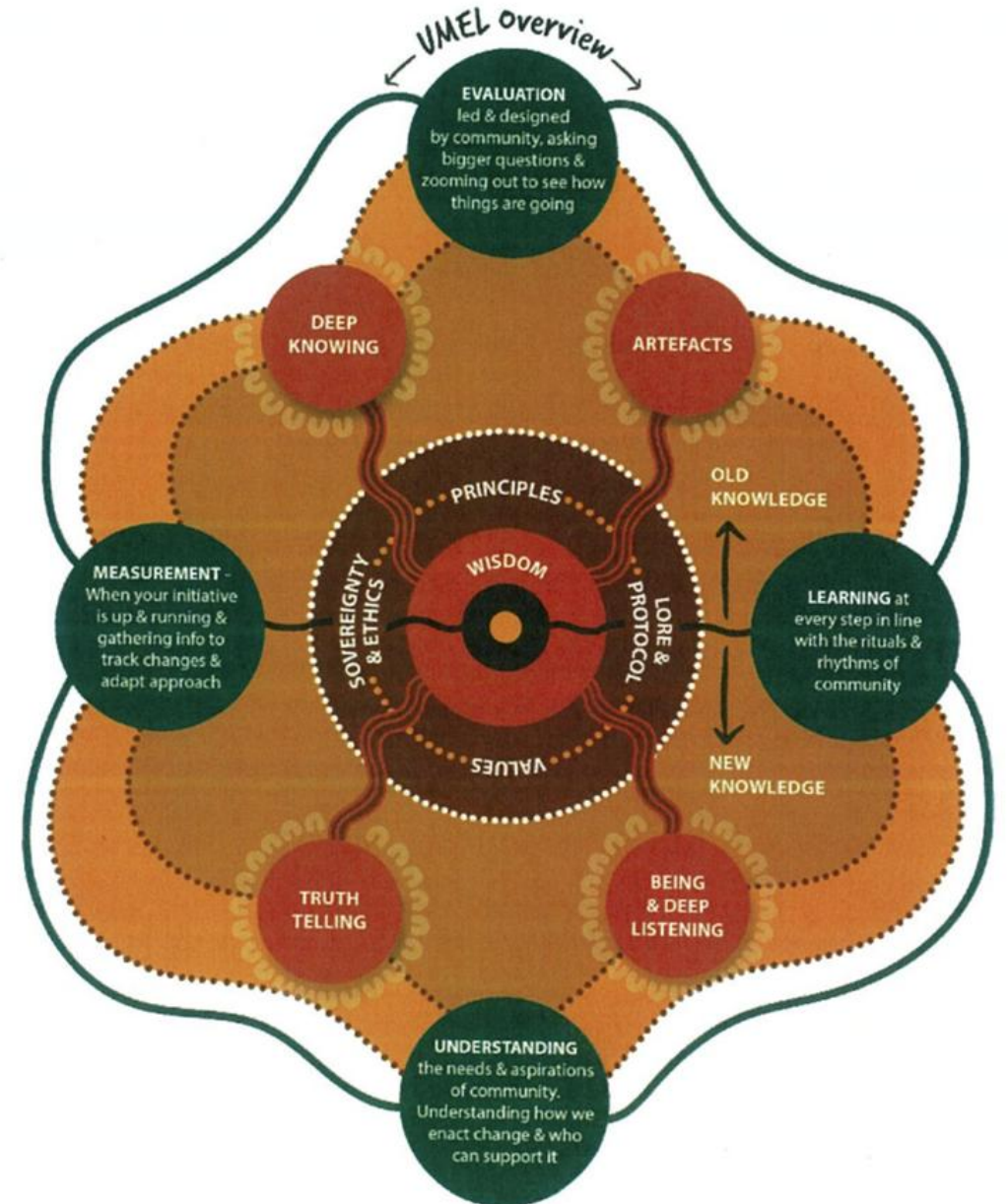


# Middle Space UMEL

*'What data and stories are we listening to on our journey?'*

Values a range of data sources and methods:

- Old knowledge, new knowledge
- Deep listening, truth-telling
- Impact Yarns, Surveys
- Theory of change
- Sensemaking



# Why a Youth Case Study?

2019 BRD Crisis Youth Support Initiative  
TFHC request (thanks Soana!) to include  
young people in the design and decision  
making.

Governance Table endorsement June 2024.

Backbone Community Researcher Case study  
to explore:

- Needs and experiences of youth in  
Tennant Creek/Barkly
- How to include youth in this process
- Youth programs strengths and gaps

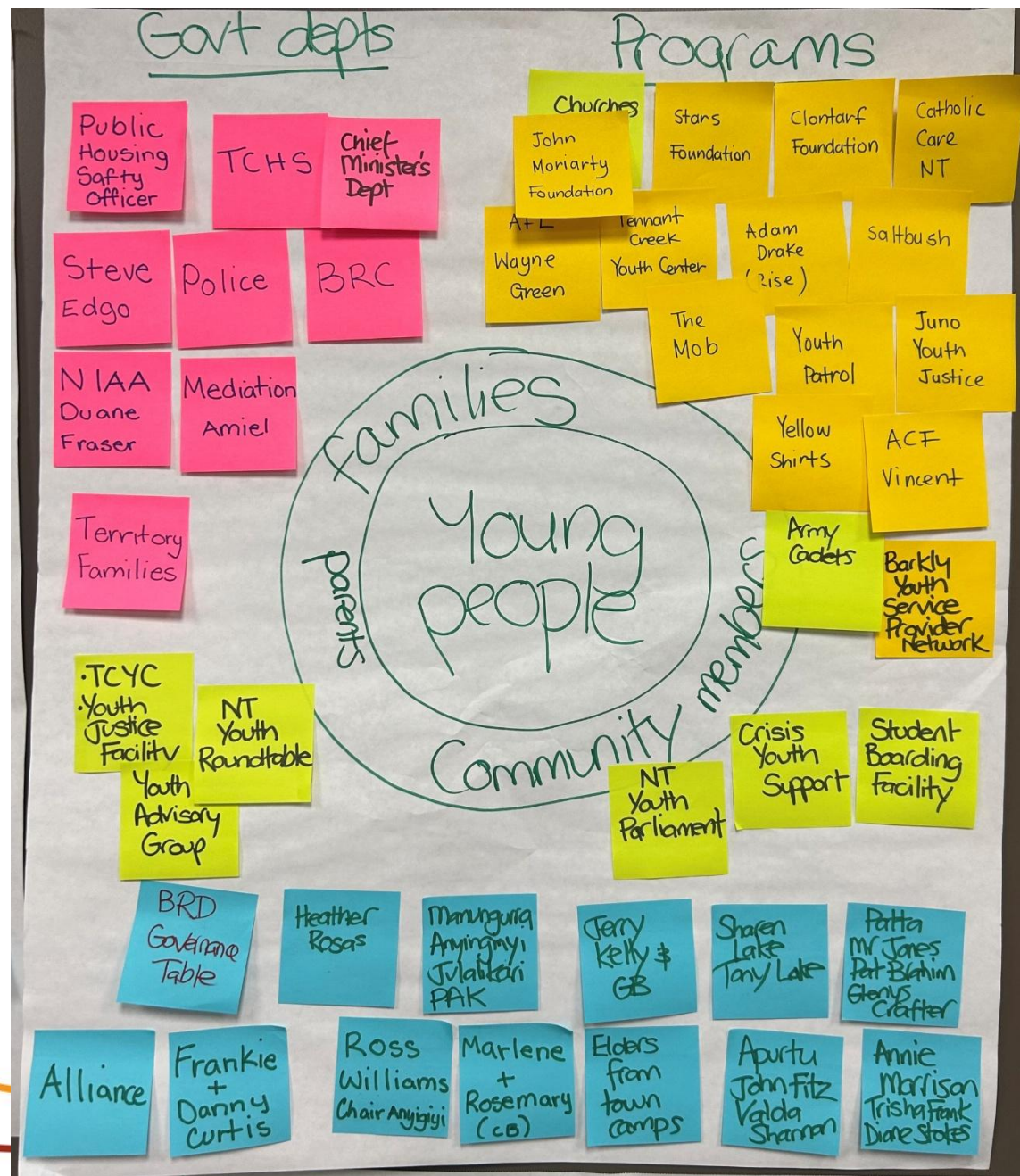
We are in the **Understanding** phase to inform  
the design of an initiative which we will later  
measure and evaluate.



# UMEL Planning: The start of the river journey

## Who should be part of the UMEL?

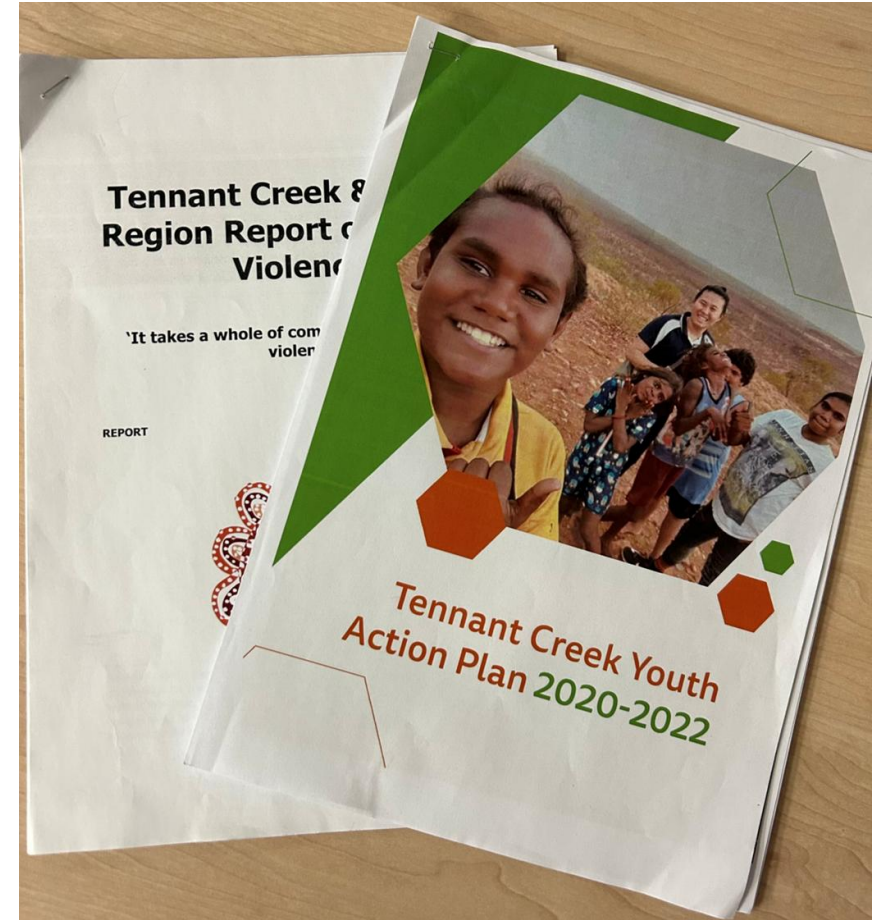
## Youth Stakeholder mapping



# Understanding Data Source One: What youth consultations and research have taken place recently in the Barkly?

We analysed data from 2018-2024 including:

- 1000 Voices Report (2018)
- Operation Hammond Project (2021-2022)
- Tennant Creek Youth Action Plan 2020-2022
- Youth meeting with Minister Uibo (2022)
- Backbone Crisis Youth Support and Tennant Creek Youth Centre Surveys (2022)
- Story of our Children and Young People (2019-21)
- Barkly Region Report on Family Violence (2023)
- Backbone Youth Meeting (July 2024)
- Tennant Creek Youth Roundtable (Oct 2024)
- Backbone Youth Survey (currently open)





**Youth Meeting (23) and Youth Roundtable (17)**



# We have used a range of data sources and methods to include our **UMEL** stakeholders

**Impact Yarns** with 22 community members and services



**Youth Survey** (co-created with youth and services) 46 respondents so far)

**Program data** from Youth services (9)



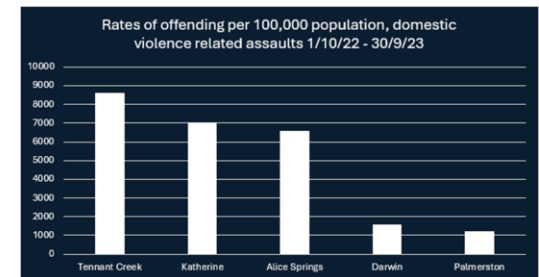
CatholicCare NT



## Tennant Creek Youth Survey

This survey is collecting the voices of young people in the Barkly. This information will be shared with community leaders, youth programs and government services to help them understand your experiences and ideas about how we could help make things better for you.

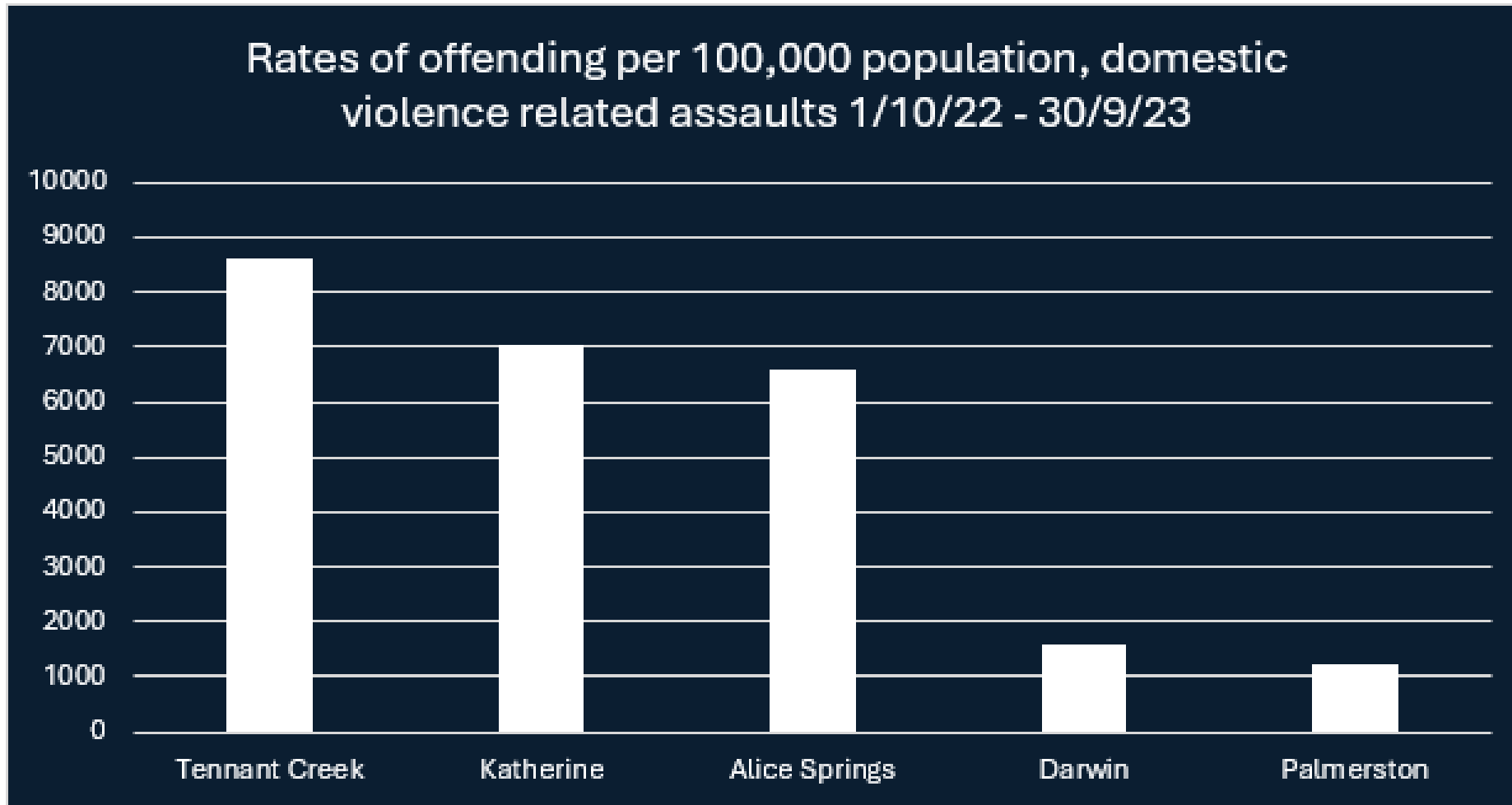
**National and Territory data**



## Understanding Data: What does the 2021 Census tell us about young people in the Tennant Creek?

Age	Population	Living in overcrowded houses	%
0-4	271	Not available	
5-9	217	Not available	
10-14	180	118	66%
15-19	167	126	76%
20-24	185	110	60%

# Understanding Data: What does NT data tells us about FDV in TC?



Northern Territory Government and Territory Community Safety. 2023. Mapping of current investment and activity to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence in the Northern Territory. A report prepared by the Northern Territory Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Interagency Coordination and Reform Office. Available at: [https://tfhc.nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/1274038/dfsv-mapping-report.pdf](https://tfhc.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1274038/dfsv-mapping-report.pdf)

# Youth Roundtable Oct 30



# Understanding: Feedback from the July Youth Meeting (23) and Oct Youth Roundtable (17)

*'What did they tell us about how to spend the \$3 million?'*

**Safe House:** A safe place to rest, get food, laundry, transport home, counselling, experienced staff. Could be at the TCYC or an unused building in town.

**Wellbeing:** Counsellors and youth workers to talk through stuff and get support.

**Education and Work Experience:** Alternative learning- two ways, outdoors, VET, work experience, trips, adults supports

**Sports:** More competitions and events, training and resources, sports for all ages



### *Good things about TC*

Its a small community and you feel connected to people

Family and friends are the best thing about living here

### *Hard things about TC*

Drinking and fighting are the worst things about living here

There's not much to do here

## What young people say/want (across all the youth data sources)

### What young people want more of

**We want** more guidance/mentoring/support from adults

Somewhere safe to go at night

More opportunities to learn skills and do work experience and have support to get a job

More ways of learning-outside, two ways, VET programs

More of a voice for young people

More sports activities and competitions with rules and adults supervising

More counselling and people to talk to about stuff

More activities and programs, at night and for different ages

**Clear and common stories across the different data sources and stakeholders**



# Different and opposing stories across the different data sources and stakeholders

## Culture

Young people want to have a range of experiences and trips outside Tennant Creek, not just bush and cultural trips

Older people are talking more about culture than young people. Older people worry about loss of cultural practices, authority and identity and want young people to learn culture and language

Young people want more than cultural guidance. They want adults in their lives as **mentors, role models, providing ongoing support** for activities and pathways to reach their goals

Young people are talking more about **problem drinking and fighting than adults**. It is their main worry and challenge

Different stories in the data

The main message from 23 young people at the July 31 meeting was that a **safe house was needed** for young people to have somewhere safe to go at night

## Safety

Some program data shows only **one case in 12 months when services could not find a safe place** to take a young person at night

Many respondents to the youth survey say **they feel safe at home**, most, or all of the time

The 2023 FDV Report states that **100% of youth surveyed feel unsafe from FDV**



# Issues we need to understand better before we make decisions

**Who, within 'Family'** are young people going to for help and safety?  
If they have a role model, who is it and why?

**What exactly do young people mean by a 'safe house?'**  
Are we talking about the same or different things?

Why are youth asking for a 'safe house' when **some service data and many young people say they have safe places to go?**  
Do diverse groups of youth feel safe at home?

**Things we need to understand better**

What do we know about the **supports adults need** to be the mentors/supports/guides that young people want in their lives?

People talk about CLA **Community Centres** as places for youth activities.  
What is happening with those and will youth have a say in how they are used?

**This work is ongoing.  
Next steps include:**

Share learnings  
Quarterly roundtables  
Collect missing data  
Define youth  
Theory of change

We need to hear more from young people not at school, those involved in the justice system and young parents

We need to hear more from young people, families and programs in small communities and homelands across the Barkly

**Data we still need to get**

We need data from schools, child protection and the police

We need more current data from youth services to map programs, identify gaps and understand outcomes

**Thankyou and QUESTIONS...???**

**For more information contact the Backbone  
Community Researchers:**

Mobile: 0428 905 039

[lucy.mcgarry@barklybackbone.com.au](mailto:lucy.mcgarry@barklybackbone.com.au)