



YOUTH ISSUE – BRIEFING

TO: CHIEF MINISTER

DATE: 1 DECEMBER 2014

FROM: JOSHUA JACKSON (JNR)

TOPIC: YOUTH JOBLESSNESS IN THE BARKLY REGION AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE TERRITORY

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Northern Territory (NT) Government:

1. create opportunities for young people in small communities in the NT workforce;
2. create Ranger programs to look after communities and land management in the Barkly region; and
3. establish an education facility such as a Batchelor College in the Barkly region.

BACKGROUND

Youth joblessness in the Barkly Region of the NT is in desperate need of attention. Assistance to facilitate employment opportunities for young people is much needed. When teenagers either graduate Year 12 or drop out of Years 10, 11, and 12 they have little to no job opportunities in their communities as most jobs are already taken by older people who have more experience and knowledge. Young people are wanting to work to earn their own income and to support themselves and help their family, however most young Indigenous young people in the Barkly need much more support in finding jobs.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

I believe that when someone leaves school, it is the perfect time to get them into employment. I say this because of my personal experiences and what I see in my community of Elliott and surrounding towns and communities.

When you are going to High School (for remote towns and communities this would be boarding school) you are in the routine of waking up early in the morning and going to sleep early at night, these are two of the key things we must have in our professional lives while working to have a proactive work life style. That is why I think the best time to get a young person from remote towns and communities into a job is when they have either dropped out of school or graduated Year 12.

When I dropped out of Year 12 only after my first term, I went back to my community of Elliott. I approached the then Community Coordinator and asked him to employ me in any jobs available, he told me that he would not give me a job and told me to go back to school. I understand that he thought he was doing what was in my best interest but I was not having that as my final answer as I had decided I did not want to graduate Year 12.



My partner is from a remote Community in the North West Kimberley's, I moved there so I could hold a job as I did not want to rely on welfare money. I moved away from my Community, my home because I had to seek work elsewhere. I was very fortunate and I got handed a job straight away at the Community Store.

Not many young people from my community can do this, a lot of them are afraid to move away from home. I am very blessed as my mother walked alongside me as I was growing up and going to school.

This is not the case for many young and old people from Remote Towns and Communities in the NT and Australia. Many young people are left to do things themselves as their parents are either to drunk or not interested in helping them.

Three years after moving away from my Community, my older brother called me and told me that the young men in my community were breaking into the shops so much that the shop owners were now putting their prices up, these young men were taken out to the Ceremony Grounds and beaten by their brothers, cousins, uncles and fathers. They were only a few years younger than I was when I left home.

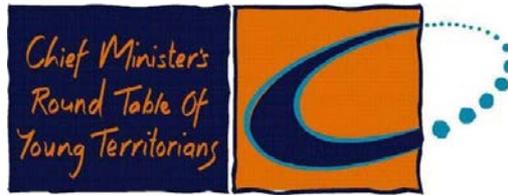
DISCUSSION

The target group of this community based project was young people aged between 15 and 25, in small Territory communities. Too many people in this age group are unemployed, relying on family, friends and welfare money to support them, binge drinking, on drugs, breaking into stores, in jail, having babies and in domestic disputes. Many young people get into an unhealthy lifestyle that is hard to break.

The vision for this project is on youth joblessness in the Barkly Region of the NT because it saddens me when I see so many young people with the potential to do great things in life for themselves and their communities sitting down under a shady tree drinking their lives away. In my community the young children often do not have many good role models and leaders to look up to, a lot of the "could have been someone great" have either gone down the road of drinking, doing drugs, time in jail, have gotten to comfortable relying on welfare money or alternatively moved away and done really well for themselves somewhere else.

Young people in the Barkly are faced with the decision to leave home and find work or stay in community and go onto welfare benefits, most teenagers do not want to leave home and stay in their communities, and these youth depend on family and friends to support them while they rely on welfare benefits. Work is easier to find for males who live in communities as sometimes the Cattle Stations nearby provide work, although it is not a fulltime deal. As for females there are fewer job opportunities, many young women in the Barkly settle down at a young age and their chance of becoming pregnant rises.

In small communities it is difficult for a young person to obtain a job, as most of the jobs are taken by older people who have more experience and knowledge. Teenagers who do not have a job face the decision to move away from their communities to find work or stay and depend on welfare money. Many young people in the Barkly are interested in looking after land and wildlife, a Rangers program would be an ideal career pathway for many young people.



The Barkly Regional Council could have more employees for housing, the cemetery, parks and gardens and community clean-ups. Julalikari Aboriginal Council could employ people into active programs for communities in the Barkly region.

There should also be programs implemented to encourage young people to up skill, such as providing more training opportunities, apprenticeships and vocational education programs. The Batchelor College is a very successful Indigenous education facility and more models of this should be set up across the NT. The benefits of an education facility such as the Batchelor College would benefit the whole of the Barkly region, young and old alike and would mean people would not need to travel as far to study and increase their job prospects.

I want to see a great change happen in the Barkly region which starts with getting young people into jobs. I have worked with many young people who have the potential to do great things in life for so many people, the thing they lack is support and guidance, if they only had the support and guidance needed I believe things would change for the better. I know that this could only happen when all members and stakeholders work together to make this possible.

Stakeholders in the Barkly Region that need to be actively engaged include:

- NT Government;
- Federal Government;
- Barkly Regional Council;
- Julalikari Aboriginal Council;
- Papulu Apparr-Kari Aboriginal Cooperation;
- Stores in communities;
- Cattle Stations;
- Contractors; and
- Private Business Owners (e.g. Mechanics).

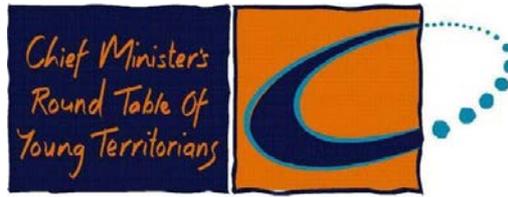
Two surveys were conducted for this project, the first was lengthy and obtained qualitative data from 11 young people living in Tennant Creek, Elliott, Borroloola and Corella Creek Community. Five respondents attended High School in their town of Tennant Creek and the remaining six left their community to attend boarding school spread across Kormilda College, Palmerston Senior College, St John's College and Marrara Christian College.

Very detailed responses were obtained through the first survey, which formed the basis to create a second shorter survey, to obtain quantitative data and to encourage a larger number young people to provide their views on employment in remote communities.

A copy of the results from survey two can be found at **Attachment A**. The survey results from survey one can be found at **Attachment B**.

Some responses from the surveys include:

- 100% of respondents said that if they had work waiting for them in their community when they completing high school they would be more likely to work
- Only 36% (survey two) and 45% (survey one) completed high school
- Only 50% of respondents (survey two) and 64% (survey one) are currently employed



From the survey results it can be seen that there is a clear demand and wish from young people themselves to see more opportunities in their hometowns in terms of education and employment.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

The recommendations in this briefing align with the following NT Government priorities:

Framing the Future

Prosperous Economy – Objective 1 ‘Advance the development of Northern Australia’, Objective 2 ‘Increase the capacity and capability of Aboriginal Territorians and businesses and Objective 4 ‘Support workforce attraction and retention’.
Strong Society – Objective 1 ‘High levels of employment’.

NT Youth Participation Framework 2014-2017

Learning Goal – Young Territorians are engaged with positive education and career expectations through the actions of ‘Develop Local Jobs for Local People’ initiatives to expand employment opportunities in regional and remote areas’, ‘Assist business to create local Indigenous workforce opportunities’ and ‘Build productive partnerships and collaborations with industry and education and training providers to create structured pathways to employment for students.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Ultimately this project aimed to inform the NT Government about the issue of joblessness in remote communities of the NT and the negative effects it has on them from the perspectives of young people in communities. It is hoped that the NT Government consider this project and its recommendations when looking at youth joblessness in remote communities and to create better pathways to fulltime jobs for stronger futures in remote communities of the NT, including my hometown of Elliott.



Attachment A – Survey Two Results

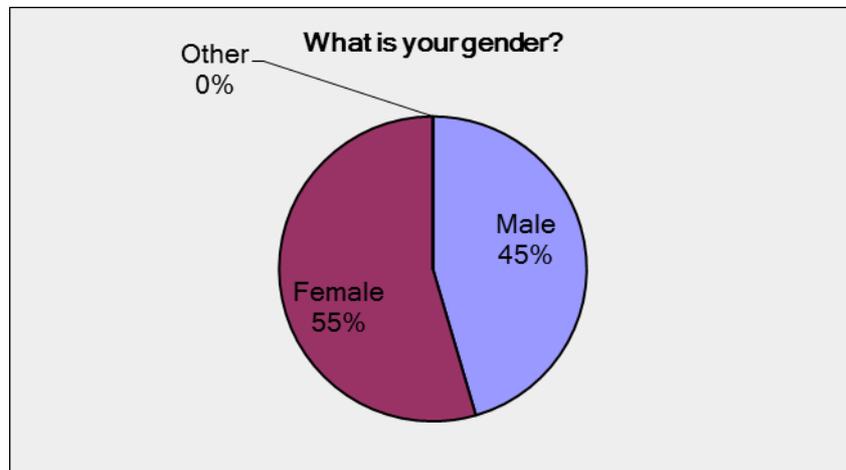
A total of 22 young people responded to this survey.

Q1.

What is your age?

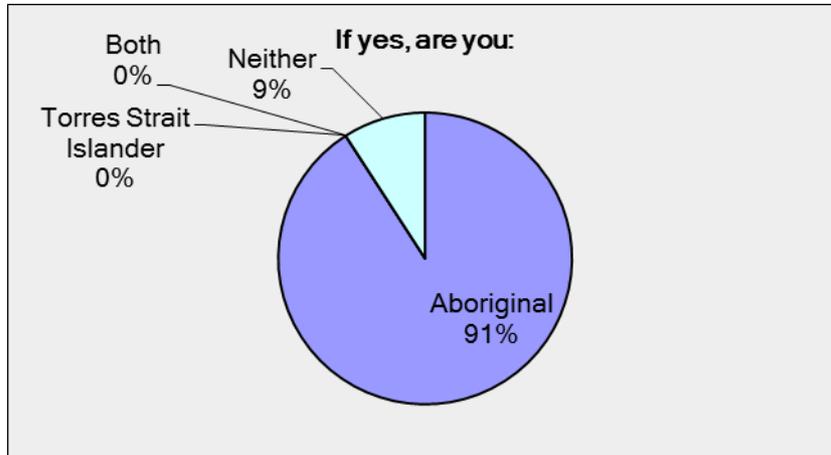
Age	Number of Respondents
16	1
17	4
18	2
19	2
20	2
21	1
22	2
23	0
24	3
25	4

Q2.





Q3.

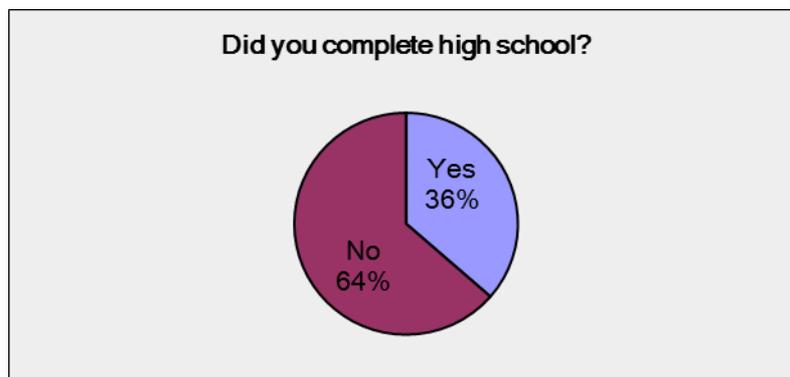


Q4.

What community/town do you live in?

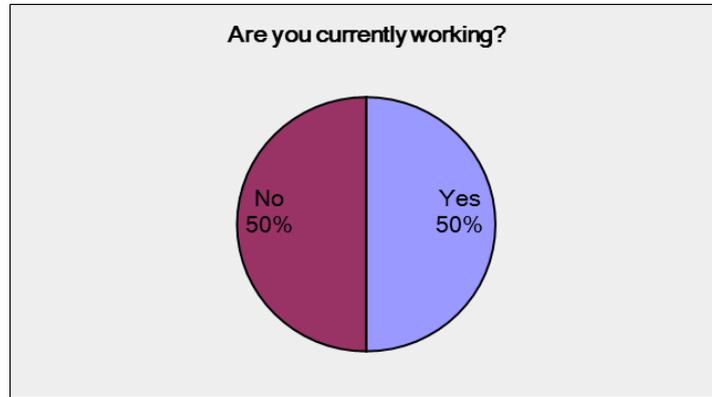
Response	Number of Respondents
Canteen Creek	5
Elliott	11
Darwin	2
Skipped question	4

Q5.

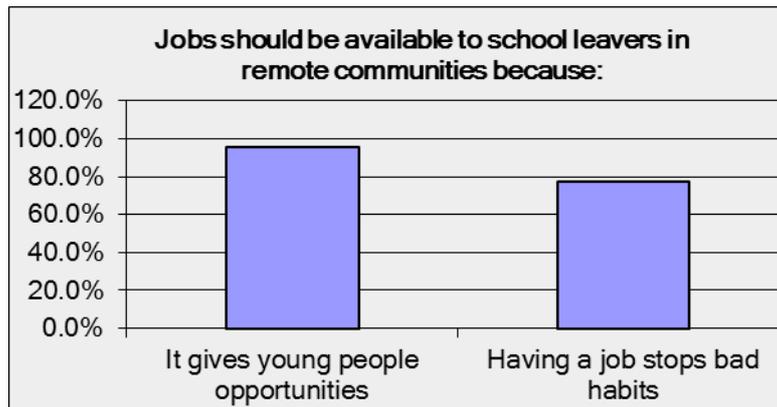




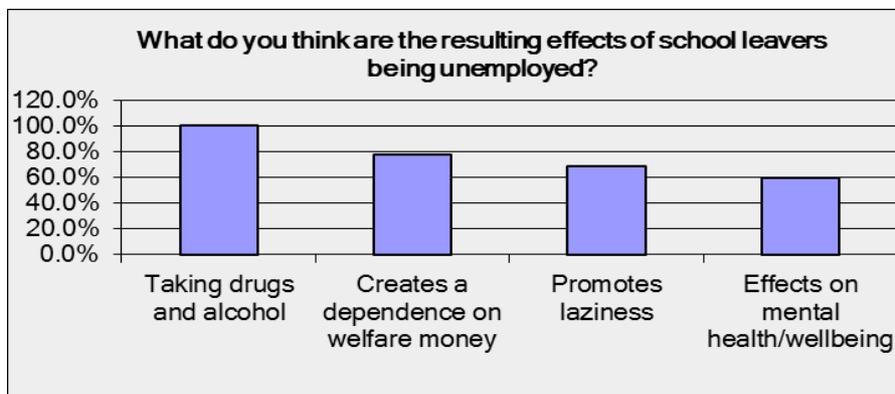
Q6.



Q7.

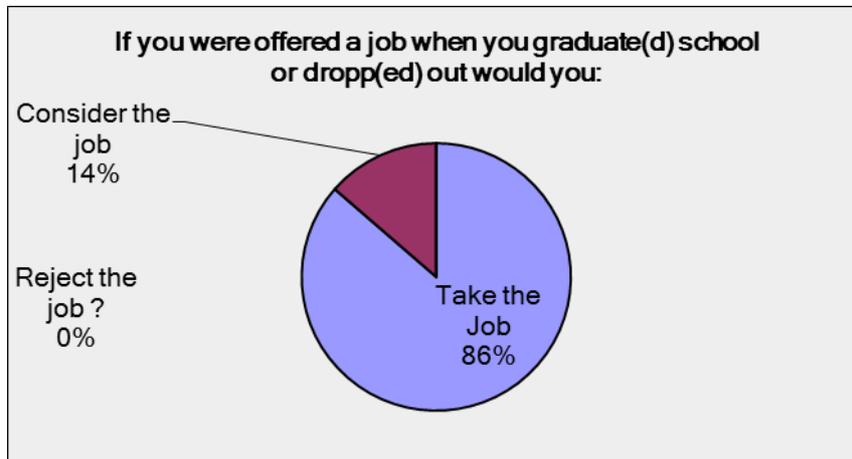


Q8.





Q9.



Q10.

What issues are caused from unemployment in remote communities?

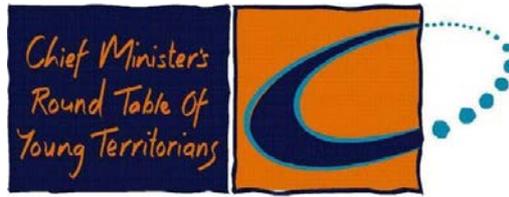
- Sometimes people get bored.
- Unemployment creates a cycle of disengagement, disadvantage and various anti-social issues and behaviours for remote communities.
- Drinking, fighting, family violence and drugs.
- Fighting, neglecting children, gambling, and family conflicts.
- Drinking, violence, and gambling.
- Drinking, fighting, domestic violence and gambling.
- Fighting and spending money the wrong way.
- Drinking, gambling, fighting and break-ins.
- Laziness, no sense of responsibility and drinking.
- Drinking, fighting and taking drugs.
- Alcohol and drugs.
- Drinking and violence.
- Drinking, taking drugs and gambling all your money.
- Drinking, gambling and fighting.
- Drinking, drugs, crime, boredom, peer pressure for those who have a job not to go to work.
- Drinking problem, gambling and drugs.



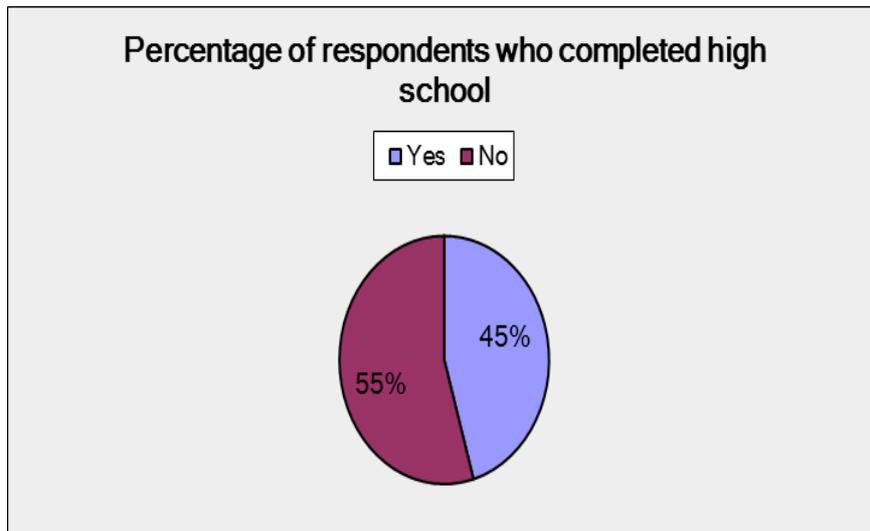
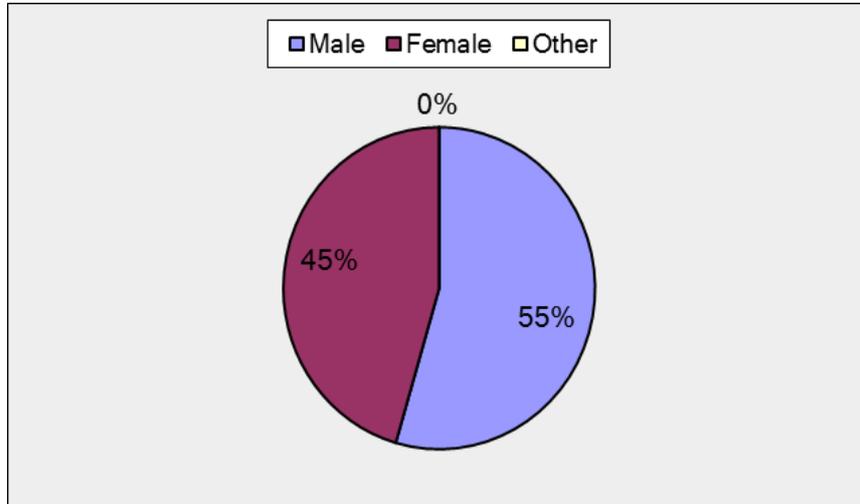
Q11.

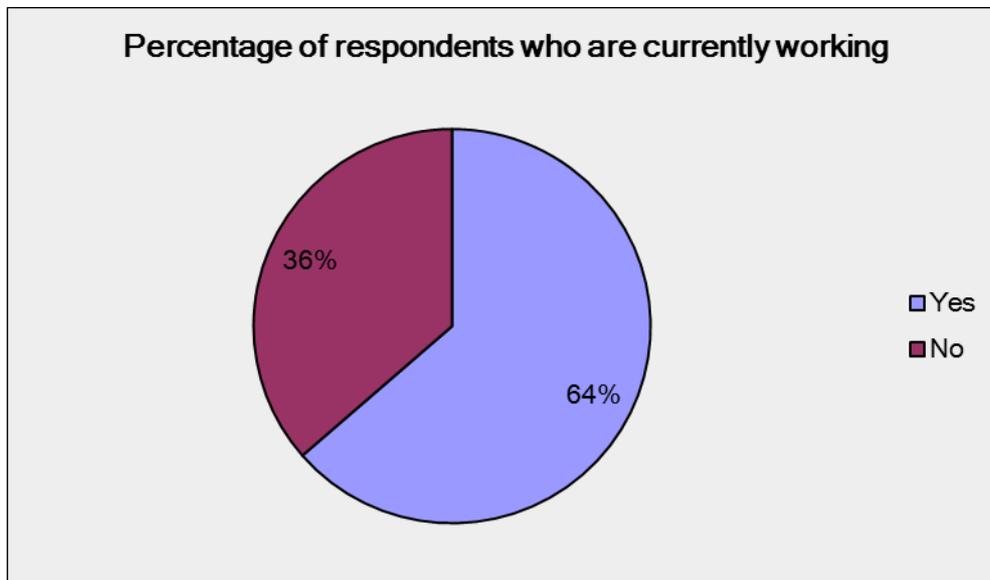
What jobs do you think your community needs/would you like in your community?

- Apprenticeships, School-Based Traineeships and Graduate Positions.
- Youth worker, community service and going out bush (contract fencing).
- Women's groups, childcare, and medical employees.
- Rangers, sports, and teachers.
- Community welfare, more jobs in the Government Departments, School, clinic, police and council.
- T&J Construction and Rangers Program.
- Work experience is one of the most needed, it can give young people leaving school the examples of working and a bit of how it feels to work. It gives young people more things to put on their resume, which would show a little more qualification than just having a blank resume when they apply for their first jobs.
- Rangers to look after our country to monitor people, keep animals protected and to look after the environment. Gardeners to clean and tidy the community living areas and a new football oval.
- Locals working at the stores and Rangers.
- Health and environment and Rangers.
- Rangers Program and looking after the old people.
- Local Council, Rangers Program and a new football oval.
- Helping the Elderly by cleaning their homes and yards.
- Waitressing, child minding and construction.
- Cleaners for the elderly homes and Rangers.



Attachment B – Survey One Results





Of the survey respondents who are currently working, their jobs are as a community service officer, Youth/sports recreation officer, administration officer, studying youth development full time and at the Town Pool.

Some comments from respondents who believe that jobs should be available to remote students leaving school or dropping out were:

- *‘Saves young people from doing wrong - great opportunity for them - might be a great career choice.’*
- *‘Even remote school leavers deserve employment, no one should be excluded just because of their location! Opportunity to gain new skills and gives young people a sense of independence and pride.’*
- *‘So they can earn their own money to help they're family with food etc.’*
- *‘Otherwise they might turn to drugs and alcohol.’*
- *‘To help youths get their life back on track and so they have something to do rather than sitting around doing nothing or getting drunk.’*
- *‘To earn money.’*
- *‘To help teach them responsibility and independence.’*
- *‘Because in some remote community such as Elliott a lot of those teenagers are drinking alcohol and wasting their lives away.’*
- *‘So they can have a better chance at getting a fulltime job, help stop the cycle of sit-down money from the government.’*



Respondents stated the following why they think training/work experience should be available to remote students after school, on weekends and school holidays:

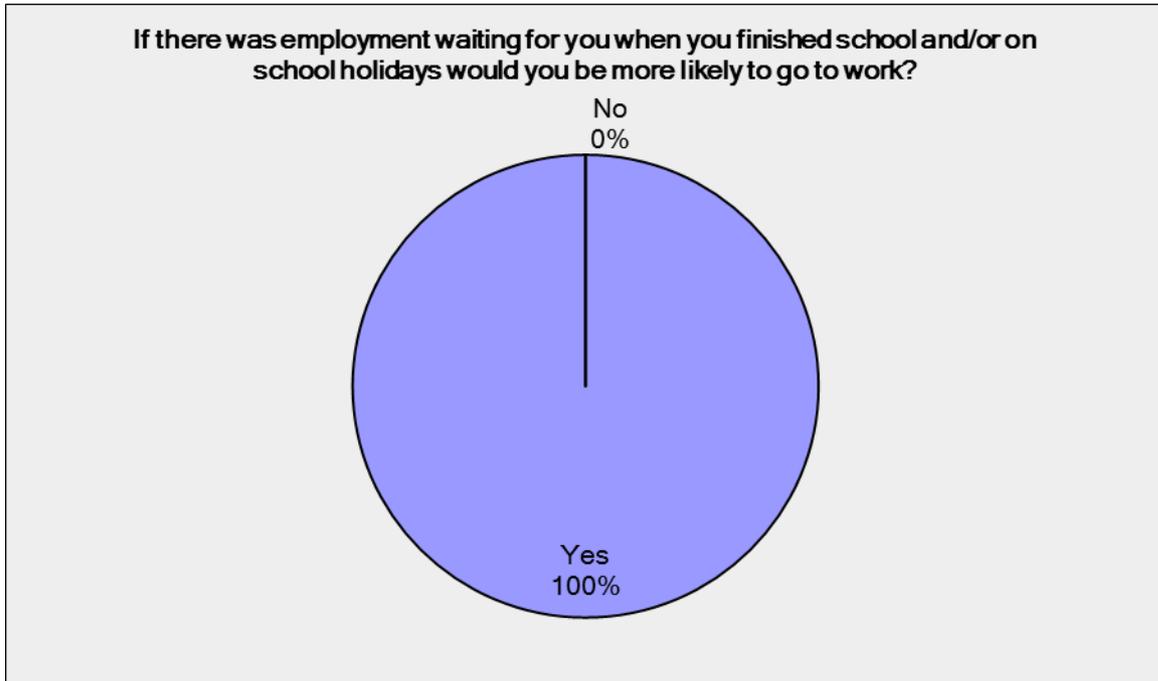
- *'Better handling of things - know what they're doing - looking for jobs.'*
- *'It would help them to adjust with the workforce easier - If they had poor working skills - they could tackle anything.'*
- *'Leads to full-time employment - so they have an understanding of the workforce - gives great career options.'*
- *'Will help students gain an understanding of what the workforce is about - Equip them with the skills they will need in the future - good learning and exposure to different environment, people and different kinds of work types e.g. Admin, mechanics, working in shops ,cattle stations etc.'*
- *'It will help us all with our future when we do get a better job.'*
- *'Too get more experienced and ready for the job they need.'*
- *'It would help students a lot if they finished school with experience and certificates rather than coming out of school without any. It is so hard to get a job because nowadays no one really wants to employ someone with no experience or qualifications.'*
- *'To get them prepared for what's ahead.'*
- *'Because in the long run they might be offered a job and they'll know how it's done cos they'll have the knowledge.'*
- *'So they can get an idea of what life is like after school, and to get some experience.'*

Respondents stated believe the effects that happen to school leavers in remote communities who have no employment opportunities when finished school are:

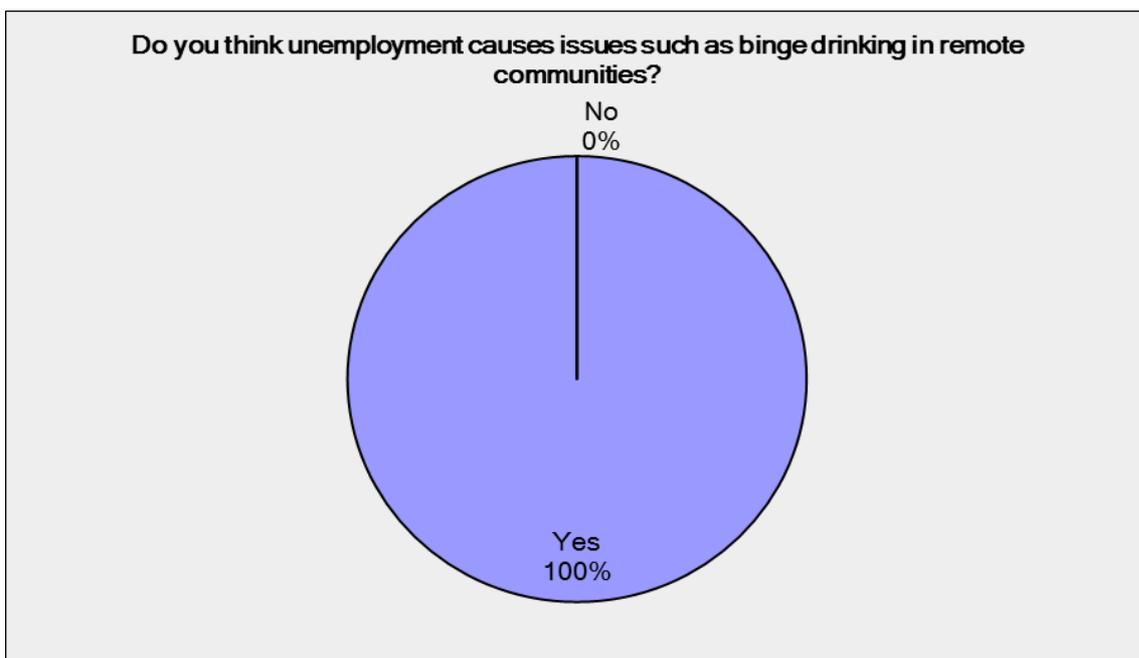
- *'Bludge the system – experience.'*
- *'Currently youth are following others by turning to alcohol and drugs - Young girls are becoming young mothers.'*
- *Alcohol abuse - drug abuse - end up in jail - have no money to support themselves or families.'*
- *'They get bored. Most follow in the footsteps of those before them and end up drinking and sniffing - some try hard to gain employment but without help or opportunities they sign up for benefits and stay unemployed.'*
- *'There see other adults drinking so they have nothing else to do then copy. There are young kids who has left school and break in onto shops, house etc.'*
- *'They turn to drugs and alcohol.'*
- *'Some sit around in the house all not really doing anything, walk around all hours of the night and others get drunk.'*
- *'they become alcoholics and druggies and sniffers'.*
- *'Drinking. Drugs and jobless.'*
- *'Drinking, Fighting, Stealing and so on.'*



- *'They have to rely on sit-down money from the government to support them, binge drinking with others because they have nothing else to do.'*



100% of respondents stated they would work if there were jobs available to them.



100% of respondents believe unemployment causes issues such as binge drinking in remote communities.



The majority of respondents believe that if there more activities and sports, employment opportunities and education that cycles of binge drinking and other negative issues would decline in remote communities. Others also stated:

- *'Put in place work for school leavers so they won't get into binge drinking and other bad things.'*
- *'We need people to guide them and explain to them why it is good to have a job, and the bad side of drugs.'*
- *'It would be good if all the people in the community could get together and organise fun things not just only for kids but for adults too. Then hopefully the drinking would stop for a while if everyone has something to do.'*
- *'Offer a "try-a-trades" through the school before students leave. Schools can work together to organise transportation into town, offer this with the help of other businesses.'*

Respondents believe the following jobs are needed and most important in their communities:

- Police
- Shops
- Medical staff/health workers/aged care/childcare
- Youth workers
- Mentors
- Apprenticeships/training/ more trade options/construction work
- Teacher assistants (young people)
- Sporting and recreational jobs to support sports
- Training for jobs
- Aboriginal painting
- Leadership positions
- Rangers

'Teenagers helping out with childcare, sports and recreation, shops and at the library. It would be good for the police officers could show the kids around the police station so they would have ideas on what they would like to do and the same thing for the shops. Get someone to mind the kids at the swimming pool while swimming. We should get our old people back into aboriginal painting so they can show us young teenagers and we could learn more about our culture.'

'Rangers to look after the country, mentors, counsellors, care takers, electricians and plumbers.'

Respondents believe these jobs are important because:

- *'There is not much sport that happens - the young people are abusing drugs/alcohol.'*



- *'All people play a part in keeping our community strong and functioning, these jobs (all jobs!) keep the community moving forward and keep the people active and learning.'*
- *'It would really help all of us with the future and then when it's our turn to have kids we can teach our own.'*
- *'We need our own people to stand up for our own kind and help make it a better place.'*
- *'Cause it keeps them busy and off the stuff.'*
- *'Because you can get jobs like this outside of the community.'*
- *'Too help the people who has left school to at least get a goal in their lives.'*
- *'I think that Aboriginal people in my community should be employed in these roles with the proper training and certificates because it will help the wider community.'*

Respondents also stated that their dream careers are:

- Paramedic
- Early childhood educator providing daily balance of active/quiet, indoor activities
- Sports and Recreation manager/coordinator
- Electrician
- Nutritionist/Teaching children about the benefits of eating good food, staying active, appreciating each other
- Hairdresser
- Land management
- Youth Worker
- Mechanic
- Work with AFL
- Nurse

'To run my community in the right way, helping everyone and working with other organisations so that everyone is looked after.'

Some respondents believe their town/community cannot do anything to support their dream career, others believe their through traineeships being available in their community and bringing trainers to communities.

'It would help if my community could raise money to build more buildings so we could have a hairdresser thing going and we all could join in. It would be great if the teachers at the school would let us teenagers go and help out with the kids it will actually help us with our future.'