

COMMUNITY PROFILE

TENNANT CREEK

NAME[S] OF COMMUNITY:

TENNANT CREEK

ANYINGINYI CONGRESS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Outstations:

Tennant Creek is located on the Stuart highway, 504 km north of Alice Springs and 978km south of Darwin.

11 outstations where permanent residents, Kuraya, Kalumparlpa (Blue Bush), Mungalawurru, Warrego, Wgayala, Rockhampton Downs, Mutalki, Ngayarrmini, Munkarta, Kalinjarra and Greenwood

Name or number of clan/groups:

Tennant Creek township is home to a variety of clan groups. The main two are Waramungu and Walpiri.

Languages spoken:

Most Aboriginal people in Tennant Creek speak some English. Of the Aboriginal languages spoken the main two are Warumungu and Walpiri. The other main languages in the region are Walmanpa, Alyawarra, Kaytete, Wambaya and Jingili.

Population:

- Community -
- Outstations -

About 2500 for the town in total. Of patients to the clinic $\frac{1}{4}$ would be of non-indigenous descent.

The outstations have an estimated population of 500 - 600 in total.

Permit required:

To all outstations and communities outside the Tennant Creek town region

Name of the local governing body:

Central Lands Council and Tennant Creek council

Weather

During the summer months (Dec-Feb) is known as the wet season. They can receive 470mm rainfall annually.

Temperature during the summer months average 33 deg during the day. The heat is generally dry. Winter months the daily temp averages 25 deg

COMMUNITY HISTORY:

Initially a telegraph town along the route North from Adelaide. Gold was discovered in the early 1930s. Gold mining became the main industry of the town with the population growing as a result. Tennant Creek is now the major supply town for the Barkly Region. Gold mines still function in the area.

Yes, there is a creek called Tennant Creek, named by John McDouall Stuart when he crossed it in 1860 – the Overland Telegraph Station was established there in 1874. Yet the town or Tennant Creek is 11 kilometres to the south.

In 1860, on one of his first attempts to cross the Australian continent from South to North, explorer John McDouall Stuart passed through the centre of the Northern Territory, came across a low running creek and named it Tennant Creek after an associate and sponsor, Port Lincoln pastoralist, John Tennant.

In 1872 a temporary building for a telegraph repeater station was erected near the watercourse for Tennant Creek and, in 1874, the occupants of the Overland Telegraph Station completed the stone buildings, which remain today. You can still experience this, one of four remaining original telegraph stations. Its preserved buildings from a piece of living history and provide an insight into life as it was when the station was cherished as a “friendly island of comfort and conservation” for those first pioneers who travelled the long, lonely track beside the telegraph line. It wasn’t until the telegraph line was completed and the repeater station built that people moved into the area in small numbers. The station lies 11 km to the North of the town; it was closed down in 1979 and currently operates as a museum. Opposite the Telegraph Station are two lonely graves – one is of notorious cattle duffer Tom Nugent, the owner of Banka Banka Station, who died in 1911, and the other is of Archibald Cameron, an employee of the telegraph station who died in 1918.

The search for gold in the Northern Territory in the late 1870’s led to the discovery of small traces in the creeks and gullies South of the telegraph station in 1879. However the source of the gold remained a mystery and returns were insufficient to sustain prolonged interest and endeavour.

In 1926 a miner named Charlie Windley made a claim on the site of the Great Northern Mine. He was working in weathered rock and made enough to justify his efforts but the original source of the gold still lay undiscovered.

One of the telegraph operators, “Woody” Woodforde, had enlisted local Aborigines in the search for gold and in 1932, an Aboriginal man brought Woodforde a lump of black ironstone containing visible specks of gold. At the time this was revelation as good was usually found in and associated with quartz and had no prior associations with ironstone. This discovery led prospectors to cast their eyes upon previously overlooked geological formations in the area, particularly the hills to the south of the telegraph station which had caps of ironstone. There gold was found with ironstone deposits returning as much as 1.2kg per tonne. This led to Australia’s last great gold rush.

The Tennant Creek Telegraph Station remained an isolated outpost until the 1930’s when gold was discovered. The opening up of the rich Tennant Field, abundant in gold,

marked the start of Australia's last great Gold Rush. Despite warnings placed in the major newspapers by the federal government, concerning the harsh conditions and lack of facilities, supplies, food and water, 600 men soon flocked the hills of the district. By 1934 the numbers prompted the government to gazette a new township, to be called Tennant Creek.

One of the most famous gold finds was made by Joe Kaczinski and Dill Bohning who named their claim after Kaczinski's dog Peko. Peko Mines was established in 1949 and during its forty-year history; it made a major contribution to the development of Tennant Creek. Another successful (and earlier) venture was the Eldorado Mine, which opened in 1932 and closed in 1958, producing nearly 175000 grams of gold. As a significant producer of copper, it was the only mine in the field to continue production throughout World War 2

The discovery of the copper reserves proved very profitable with new mines established on that basis. The Noble Nob Mine, which started as a shaft mine, was founded by Jack Noble who, with his one good eye, formed a team with his friend and financier William Weaber, who was totally blind. It became an open-cut operation in 1967 after the main shaft collapsed. Nobles Nob produced assays which regularly exceed 100oz 93.2kg) of gold per metric ton. One particularly rich area within the ore body produced over 300 oz per ton. During its existence, Nobles Nob produced over a million ounces (32 tons) of gold.

After the visible surface gold was removed attention shifted, in the 1950's and 1960's to the portion of those same lodes which extended underground. Recent surveys indicate that there are still over 200 mines operating in the Tennant Creek region and modern technology has located further deposits with no visible outcrop on the surface. New mines are being developed by Giants Reef mining.

50km west of Tennant Creek is the mining settlement of Warrego which began production in 1971. Established by Peko Wallsend the town had a short but spectacular existence. In 1971 a concentrator was built and in 1973 a smelter was established. By 1975 the town was producing 95% of Australia's bismuth but later that year 550 men were retrenched and the town was closed down. It has since reopened as a working mine but is closed to visitors.

ACCESS TO COMMUNITY:

Road:

- All year access?
- Bitumen, dirt, 4WD or 2WD

The town is on the Stuart Highway, the main highway of the NT. It is sealed with all year access but can be closed for 3-4 day periods with heavy flooding associated with heavy rains during the wet season. Access to outstations is via dirt roads and 4WD is recommended and provided for outstation health visits.

Boat/barge:

NA

Plane:

- Name of airline(s):
- Cost per adult:
- Frequency:
- RFDS/AirMed access:

Air North flies between Alice Springs and Darwin 3 times per week, stopping at Tennant Creek and Katherine
Patients in need of evacuation are referred to the Tennant Creek Hospital where an Air Med flight can evacuate them to Alice Springs.

TYPES OF FUEL AVAILABLE:

- Diesel, leaded, unleaded, gas:
- Conditions of availability:
- Any mechanics available locally:

All - although a number of outstation are moving away from Leaded and Unleaded due to petrol sniffing, diesel however is still available
3 service stations and one 24 hr service station
A choice of several workshops in town

ALCOHOL:

- Conditions/restrictions on sale of alcohol/bringing alcohol into community:

2 hotel / pubs service Tennant Creek. There is also a memorial club and sports clubs which require membership. No take away alcohol is served in Tennant Creek on a Thursday.

SHOPS:

- Shop(s) available:
- Hours of opening:
- What is for sale (general overview):
- Fresh fruit/veg/milk/meat available:

Similar to any small country town in any state. Most essentials are available.

9-5 for most stores

1 supermarket services the town with a wide variety of perishables and non-perishables. There are also car parts, general store, clothing store, video store, Take Away's etc.

All

COMMUNICATIONS: Clinic/Home

- Phone access?
- Is there Internet/e-mail access? Any constraints on use?
- Is there a satellite dish? If so, who can access it

Yes

Internet and e-mail in the clinic

Attached to the hospital, can be accessed by doctors at Anyinginyi

LOCAL INDUSTRY/EMPLOYMENT:

- Is there a local industry? Mining, railway construction, pastoral, town services
- List any employment options for spouses of GPs: Broad range of possible jobs as one would find in country towns in Southern States

SCHOOL:

What schooling options are available locally?

- Primary Kindergarten – yr 12
Tennant Creek Public School
- Secondary and for what years of secondary school Tennant Creek High School
- If the school is bilingual, can non-indigenous students attend? All students welcome, classes in English only

RECREATION/SPORTING:

What recreation and sporting opportunities/facilities are there?

Swimming pool, recreational dam, bush walking, horse riding, football - AFL, basketball, tennis

MEDICAL:

- Health Service operated by: Anyinginyi Congress Aboriginal Corporation
- GP employed by: Anyinginyi Congress Aboriginal Corporation
- Hours of operation/on-call: 9am – 12pm, 1- 5pm weekdays only
On call is by rotation between RNs and doctors, averages 1 night per week and 1:4 weekends either as first or second on call. The hospital is always available to assist with emergencies. The hospital employs a medical superintendent and a senior medical officer. No on call associated with the hospital.
An additional private GP practise exists in Tennant Creek.

Staffing at the clinic:

- number of GP's: 4.
- number of RN's: 2

- number of Health Workers: Funding exists for 11 with numbers employed varying, at time of survey 7 Health Workers were employed.

Visiting health professionals:

- type of service (eg dental)
 - frequency and duration of visits
- Gynaecologist, paediatrician, ophthalmologist, surgeon and physician visit Anyinginyi. In addition to this orthopaedic, ENT and psychiatrists visit the hospital.
Every 6-8 weeks

GP ACCOMMODATION

- Type of housing available: 3 or 4 bedroom houses
- Furnished – yes, no, partially: Fully furnished but of varying qualities.
- Are whitegoods supplied, if yes, what: Yes- fridge, freezer, washing machine
- Other facilities supplied [eg. TV, radio]: TV video
- Linen & bedding No linen provided
- Electricity User pays

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water | Bore water only |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laundry facilities | Washing machine provided |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone/fax/ e-mail/Internet | STD not paid for nor is any home Internet access |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air-conditioning | All houses have some cooling system but it may only be an evaporative air conditioner |

RELIGION

Church services available in the community:	Catholic, Anglican, Uniting, AIM, Assembly of God, Lutheran
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OTHER THINGS FOR THE INCOMING GP AND FAMILY TO CONSIDER:

- Ask the GP & the clinic staff of any dominant local health & social issues to be aware of.
- On arrival in the community, ask an appropriate person to advise you of locations to avoid [eg sacred sites].