



Warlpiri Boarding School Student Research

In 2024, the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust's Yitakimaninjaku, warrirninjaku, payirninaku manu pina-jarrinjaku (YWPP) community research team gathered stories from young people and adults about their experience of boarding school.

29 interviews with boarding school graduates and parents of students in Warlpiri communities.

22 survey responses from boarding school students in WETT's Boarding School Support program (44 students in 2024).

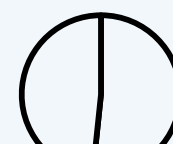
Most students feel that boarding school will give them a better education than in school in community, but find it hard to be away from family, elders and culture.

55% of students have been at boarding school for 2 years or more.

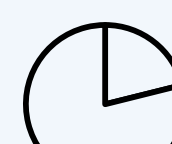
91% of students say they definitely or probably plan to finish Year 12.



36% of students say that sports is the best thing about boarding school.



55% of students say being away from home is the hardest part of boarding school.



19% of students say it's hard not speaking much Warlpiri at boarding school.

"I came [to boarding school] to explore more opportunities and to get out of home"
– Student, age 17.

"I'm here to learn about other places and even other people"
– Student, age 15.

"I'm here to get a better education and finish year 12"
– Student, age 14.

"It's good to get out of your box [at boarding school]. But it's also important to continue to preserve culture. Young people have cultural obligations and being away from family contributes to culture dying"
– Graduate, 20s, Lajamanu.

Recommendation 1: Boarding students need more support to stay connected to family, language and culture.



Most students want jobs that need more study or training after boarding school. Boarding school graduates say a jobs program to support youth after graduation would be helpful.

64% of students want a good job in their home community.

36% of students want a job elsewhere or to go to university.

"I want a job that's good enough and makes me happy"
– Student, age 16.

"When people come back from boarding school it would be good if there was a program to help people get straight into a job because there is a gap"
– Graduate, 20s, Yuendumu.

"After school I'll have a gap year to spend with family and after that maybe go to uni"
– Student, age 17.

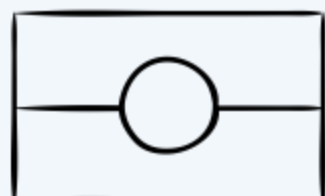
Students say they want to work in:

Trades like electrician, construction, engineering and mechanic.

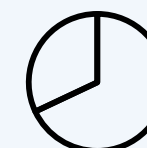
Professions like nurse, teacher, journalist, police officer, footballer & youth worker.



Recommendation 2: Graduates need strong jobs pathways program, apprenticeships and support for university.



Boarding school is giving students confidence and experiences of the wider world. Students look up to their families as role models and they want to be future leaders in their community.



68%

of students say that family are their role models.

"I came here to learn and have better education so I can be a stronger leader for my mob"
– Student, 16.

"I came to boarding school to be a leader for the young ones."
– Student, 15.

"I want to be like my grandmother and mother, become a teacher like them"
– Student, age 14.

"I want to be like my dad. He is a hardworking man and he inspires me."
– Student, age 16.

Recommendation 3: Youth need leadership development opportunities to help them grow as future leaders.