Northern Territory Government

Central Australia Attendance Issues

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School Attendance Officer

Position involves-

- Monitoring enrolment and attendance throughout Central Australia – remote and very remote schools
- Tracking of students
- Supporting staff with Student Attendance Management System (SAMS)
- Providing data to DET Executive, Principals and DET Project Managers
- Liaising with outside agencies such as Crime Prevention Unit, Congress Youth Outreach Team, Tangentyere Youth Services, Alice Springs Library with regard to non-attending students

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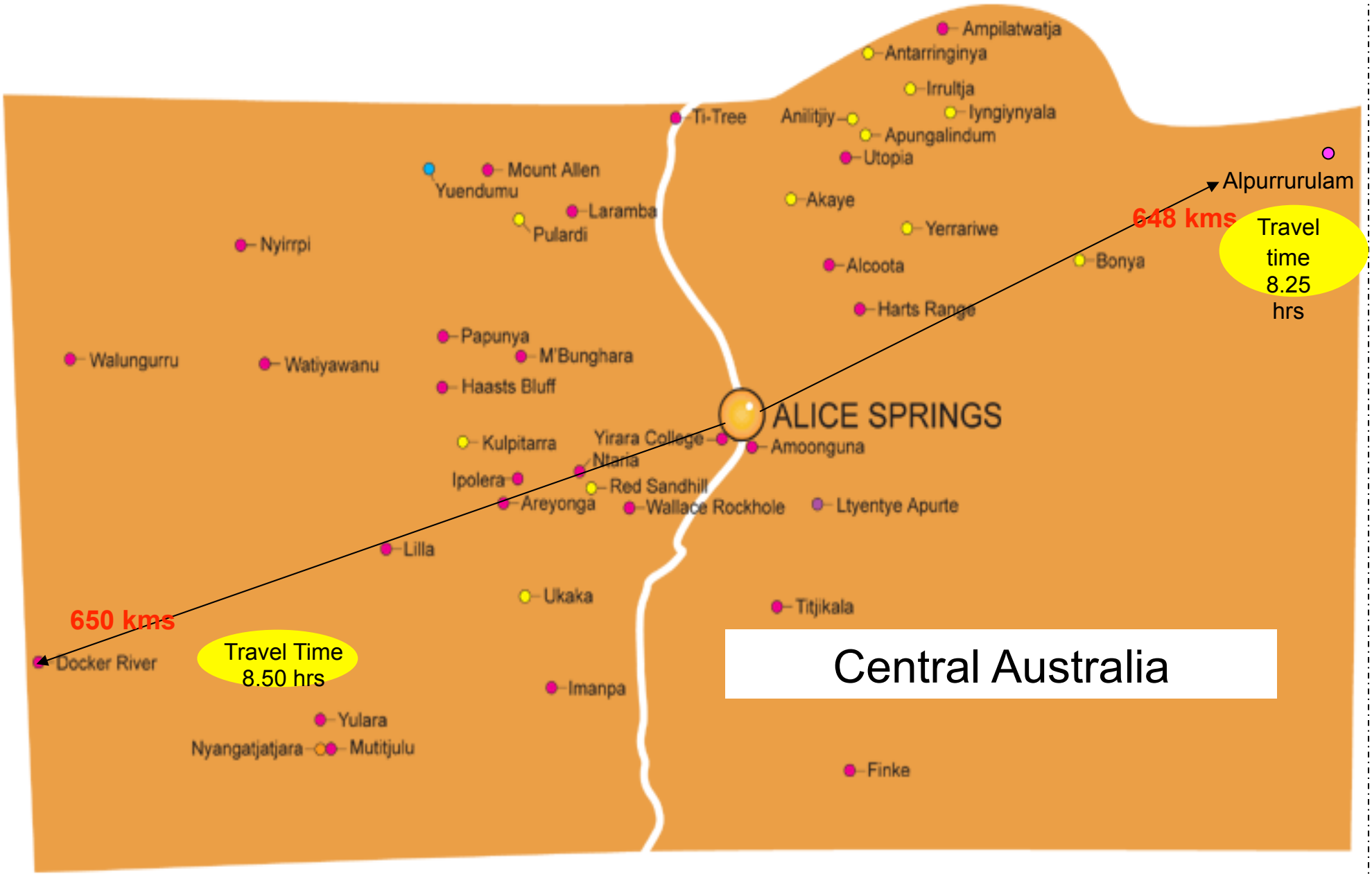
Remote School – Tyranny of Distance



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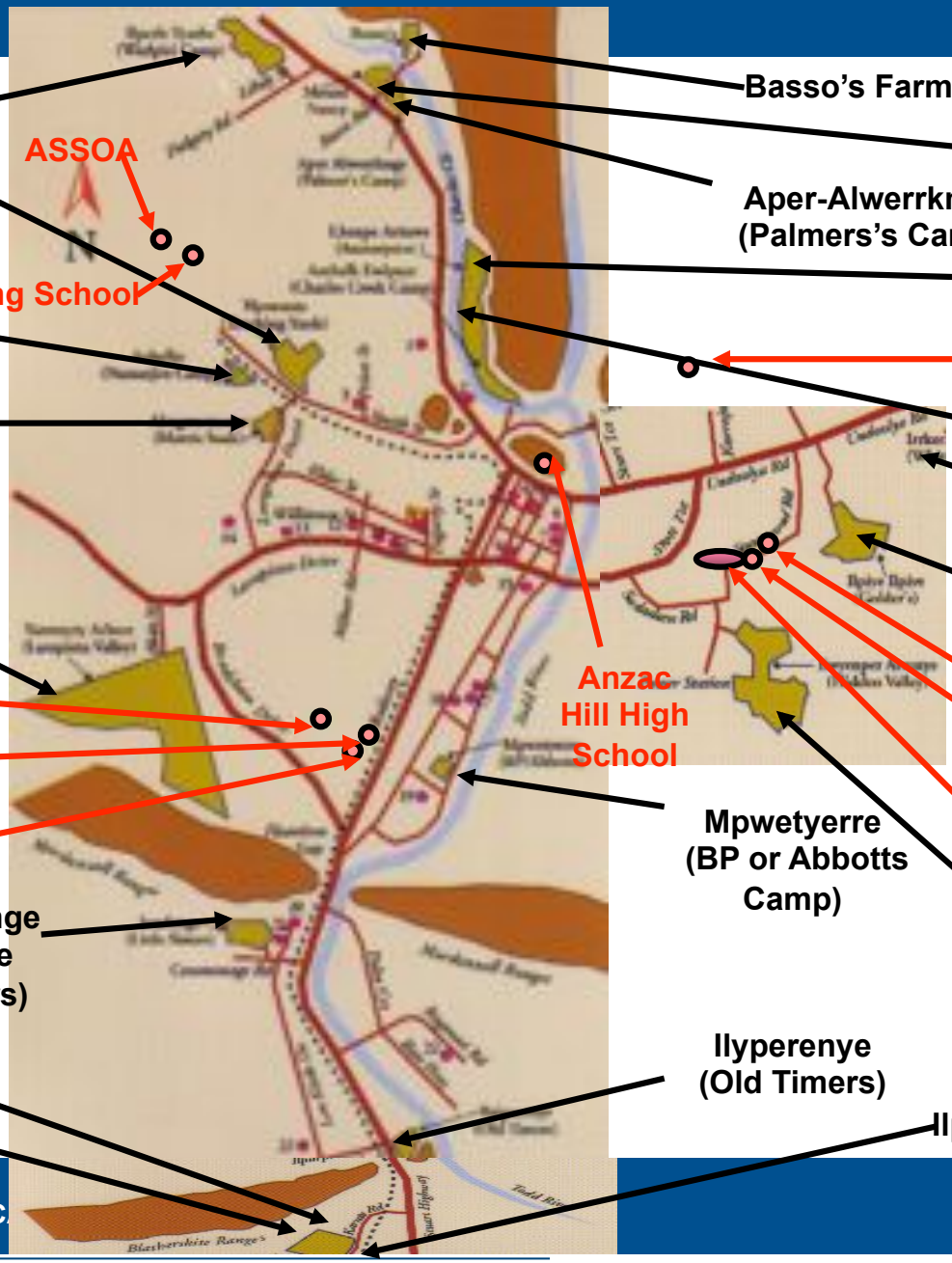
Alice Springs Town Camps



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Factors contributing to poor attendance

- High transient population across the border
- Ad hoc sporting events held in community
- Domestic violence – lack of safety, social issues including substance misuse, inadequate shelter, child protection issues
- Transport, fuel availability
- Poor nutrition
- Chronic disability
- Cost of living
- Income security
- Cultural obligations
- Clarity about who is primary carer of child
- Health – ear infections, eyesight, adult renal care
- Environmental health – fresh water, sewerage
- Flooding
- "White fella obligations" – appointment with Centrelink
- Alice Springs is the Service Centre for Ngaanyatjarra Shire and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Shire
- Perceived lack of relevance of education – both parents and students
- Royalty payments and meetings

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DET's 6 Point Plan to Improve School Attendance

1. Policy and Procedures

   Develop school and department policies and procedures to record and track attendance and if necessary intervene in student absenteeism

2. Coordination of school based staff

   Coordinate and train school staff who work on improving school attendance

3. Community engagement

   Partnerships between community and government

4. Accountability

   Continual review of school and department practices to improve attendance

5. Locally based solutions

   Local attendance strategies for improving school attendance

6. Inter-agency and cross sector collaboration

   Work with other agencies in a whole of government approach to improve school attendance

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My position supports DET 6 Point Plan to Improve School Attendance

- Monitoring attendance data and providing reports to Principals on a weekly basis.
- Policies – Enrolment policy, absentee policy, recording student attendance policy
- Support schools attendance strategies by-

  giving support to SAMS operators, using different tools to document attendance
- Attendance workshops with AIEWs and HLOs
- No school no pool
- Trialing ‘No school no service” being trialed at Ntaria and being extended to Alice Springs
- Parent education and engagement
- Working with Indigenous Priority Projects Unit role modeling and mentoring
- Alice Springs Education Strategy promoting programs – Clontarf, Girls at the Centre, Polly Farmer – data support

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What is the Impact of not Going to School Regularly?

Days Absent	Total Number of Years Missed (compulsory schooling)
1 day per week	2 years missed
1.5 days per week	3 years
2 days per week	3 and a half years
3 days per week	5 and a half years
5 weeks per term	4 and a half years
Average 5 days per term	1 year

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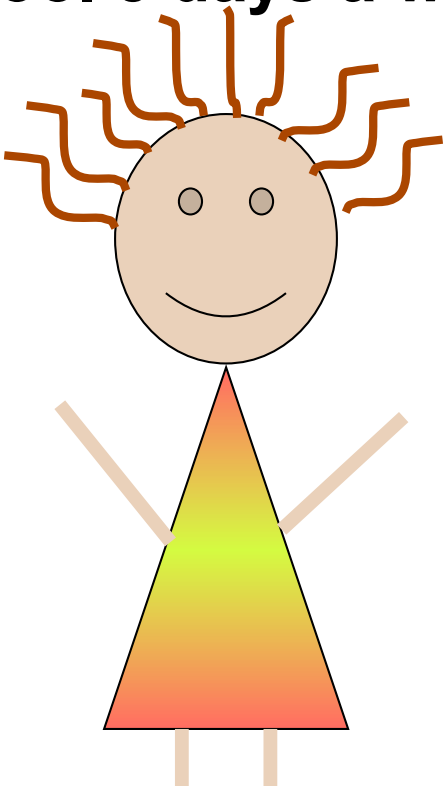
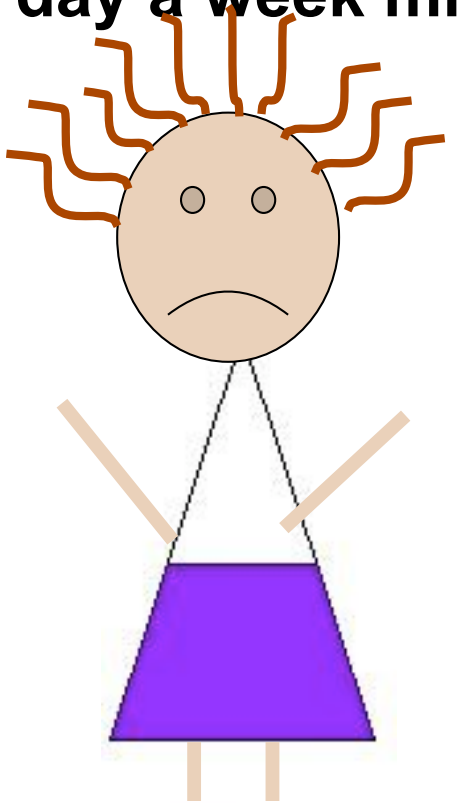
School 5 days a week



1 day a week missed



Education: Our schools, our community, our future

School attendance is everyone's business:
parents, schools, community and government.

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