

October 2025



MAPPING THE DIGITAL GAP

Measuring Digital Inclusion and Media Use in Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

Pipalyatjara and Kalka, SA
2025 Community Outcomes Report



Acknowledgement of country

We respectfully acknowledge the Pitjantjatjara people, the traditional owners for Pipalyatjara and Kalka, and pay our respect to their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we work, live and undertake our research.

About the Mapping the Digital Gap research project

Mapping the Digital Gap is a 4-year research project working in partnership with local organisations in 12 remote First Nations communities, to generate a detailed account of digital inclusion and uses of digital services including news and media, track changes over time, and inform appropriate local strategies and services enabling informed decision making by remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is a supplementary project to the Australian Digital Inclusion Index, coordinated within the RMIT University node of the Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision Making and Society in partnership with Telstra.

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The 'Mapping the Digital Gap' project received funding support from Telstra and the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (CE200100005).

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Suggested citation: Featherstone, D, Ormond-Parker, L, Kennedy, J, Hawkins, L, Parkinson, S, Bawden, S, Thomas, J, Hegarty, K, Barton, A, Fox, T (2025) *Mapping the Digital Gap: Pipalyatjara and Kalka WA Community Outcomes Report 2025*. ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision Making and Society: RMIT University, Melbourne.
DOI: 10.60836/spvv-g735

Acknowledgements and thanks

We would like to thank the following key contributors to this research:

Community research partner

Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY)
Women's Council

CEO: Andrea Mason (2025); Liza Balmer (2024-25)

Community co-researchers 2024-25

2024: Renae Fox, Danny Fox

2025: Tenisha Fox

Research participants and stakeholders

Thank you to all the community residents and local agency staff who generously participated in the surveys and interviews, providing the personal experience to make this research meaningful. During our two visits in 2024 and 2025, we conducted 139 surveys with First Nations community residents and 16 interviews with community leaders, residents and stakeholder agencies, including:

- + APY Council
- + NPY Women's Council
- + PY Ku Aboriginal Corporation
- + Pipalyatjara Clinic (Nganampa Health Service)
- + APY Land Management
- + Mai Wiru Regional Stores Council Aboriginal Corporation
- + Ninuku Arts
- + PY Media
- + SA Department for Energy and Mining

Pipalyatjara Kalka research trip dates

17-20 February 2025; 5 – 8 March 2024

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1. Executive summary

This report outlines findings from our first two research visits to Pipalyatjara and Kalka communities. Pipalyatjara and Kalka are situated at the north-western corner of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in South Australia close to the WA and NT borders. The APY Lands are under the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act, granted by the SA Parliament in 1981, with regional governance by APY Council. The nearest regional centre is Alice Springs (700 km north-east of Pipalyatjara). The traditional owners are the Pitjantjatjara people.

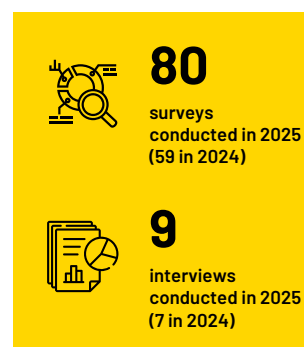
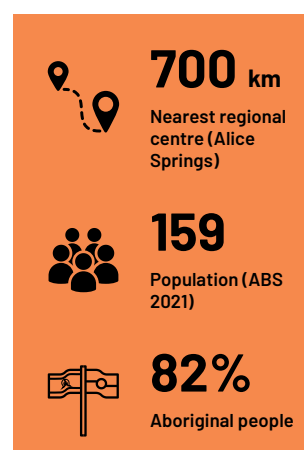
The APY region covers an area of 105,000 km². It spans a series of mountain ranges below the southern side of the Northern Territory border, the Musgraves, Mann and Tomkinson Ranges, with connections to the Petermann Ranges in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The population of the APY region is approximately 2,337 people (ABS 2021), with most people living in 6 major communities—Pukatja (Ernabella), Amata, Iwantja (Indulkana), Mimili, Kaltjiti (Fregon) and Pipalyatjara—or regional hub Umuwa or one of 10 minor communities and homelands including Kalka.

The two research visits to Pipalyatjara and Kalka were from 5 – 8 March 2024 and 17-20 February 2025. The RMIT University team worked with community research partner Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council and co-researchers Tenisha Fox (2025) and Renae Fox and Danny Fox (2024). The research included 59 surveys with residents in 2024 and 80 in 2025, as well as seven interviews with community leaders and agency staff in 2024 and nine in 2025. Thanks to all residents and agency staff who participated in the research and made us feel welcome.

This 2025 Outcomes Report seeks to reflect the lived experience and views of Pipalyatjara and Kalka residents and agencies. It outlines changes in communications and media services and usage from our 2024 and 2025 survey results, combined with analysis of interviews and existing literature, and an audit of existing infrastructure and services. Full survey results from 2024-25 are included in Appendix 1.

The report concludes with suggested strategies for a local Digital Inclusion Plan, intended to assist community agencies, leaders and residents to better understand the barriers to digital inclusion, develop local strategies to address these barriers, and support planning and partnerships with government and industry stakeholders.

This report is part of our commitment to Indigenous data sovereignty, providing data and research findings to the participating communities to use for their own analysis, planning and advocacy. It is intended to assist local and regional agencies, leaders and residents to better understand the barriers to digital inclusion, develop place-based strategies to address these barriers, and support planning and partnerships with government and industry stakeholders.



Pipalyatjara / Kalka at a glance

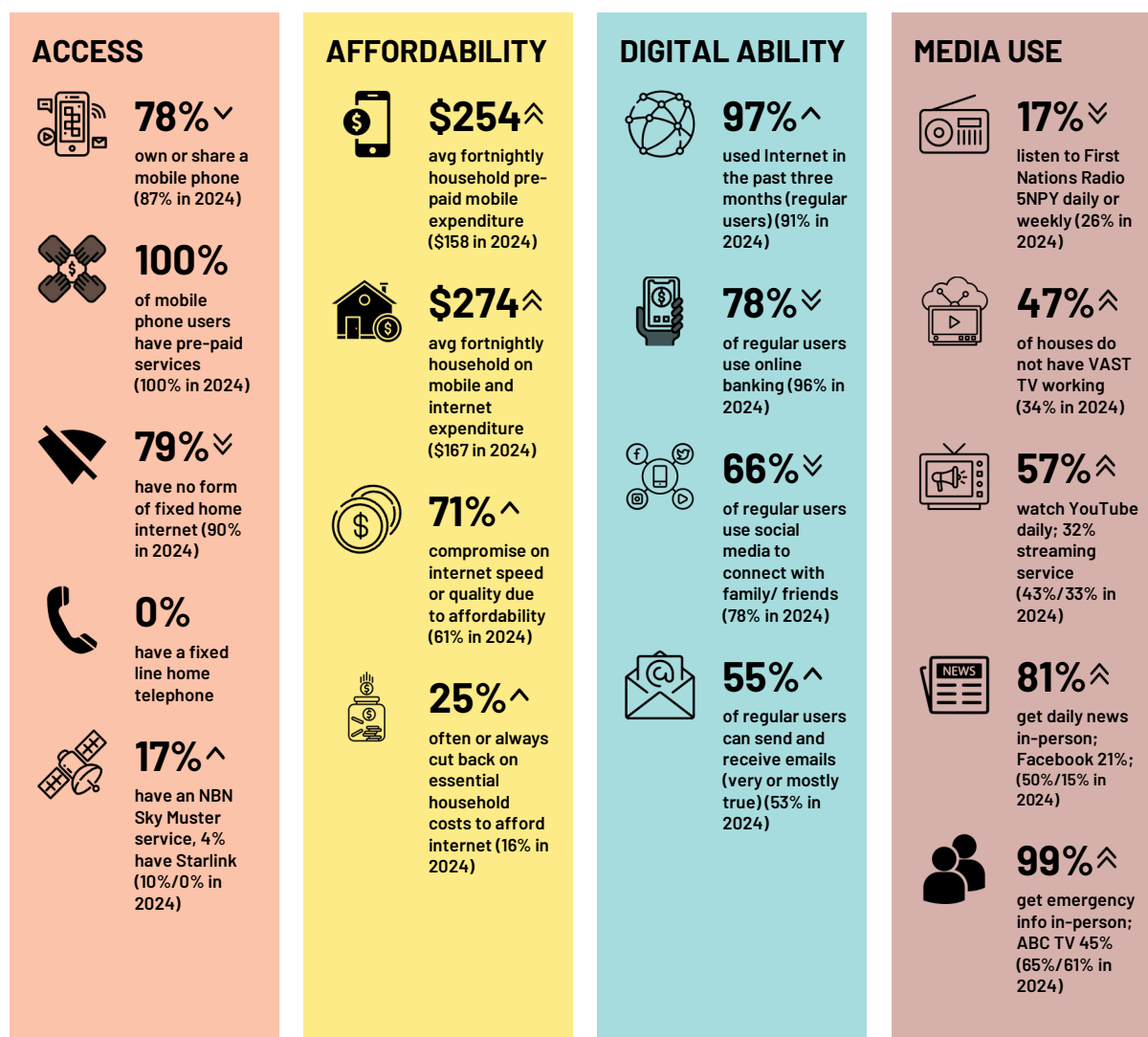
Distance	1,720 km	to nearest capital city (Adelaide)
Dwellings	39 / 20	private dwellings
	4.1 / 5.6	people per ATSI household
Language	88%	speak an Aboriginal language
Income	\$293	median personal ATSI income



Figure 2: Aerial view of Kalka community

Key survey findings

Below is a summary of the weighted 2025 survey results, showing changes since the 2024 survey.



Full weighted 2024-5 survey results are available in Appendix 1. An audit of demographics and communications and media services in Pipalyatjara and Kalka is provided in Appendix 2.

What is digital inclusion? How is it measured?

Digital inclusion refers to equitable and reliable access to and use of information and communication technologies for participation in social and economic life.

The Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) is a biennial national survey that measures three dimensions of digital inclusion: Access, Affordability and Digital Ability. ADII scores range from 0 to 100. The higher the score, the greater level of digital inclusion. ADII scores are relative, enabling comparisons across demographic groups and geographic areas over time.

The Mapping the Digital Gap project uses an amended version of the ADII survey to collect digital inclusion data. This enables us to compare results for the participating remote communities, towns and homelands with the national results collected by the ADII, and to track changes in digital inclusion between and within these sites.

In 2021, Closing the Gap Outcome 17 was introduced to ensure First Nations people have *"access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision making regarding their own lives."* Target 17 includes a target of equal levels of digital inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2026.

Combined with ADII data collection, the Mapping the Digital Gap project is helping, for the first time, to track progress towards Target 17 for remote, regional and urban First Nations people.

DIGITAL INCLUSION



ACCESS

- > Reliable access to phone and internet
- > Access to IT devices and/or facilities
- > Access to trusted media, news and information



AFFORDABILITY

- > Affordable phone and internet services
- > Affordable devices



DIGITAL ABILITY

- > Ability to use digital devices, software and online services
- > Awareness of cybersafety, scams, and viruses

ADII First Nations data dashboard

The [First Nations dashboard](#) on the ADII website provides interactive charts and community-specific results from the initial ten research sites in 2022. The dashboard will be updated in 2025 with 2024 survey results, including results from Pityatyatjara and Kalka. The Mapping the Digital Gap [2024 Outcomes Report](#) also provides findings from 12 Phase 1 sites from 2022-24.



View dashboard using the QR code below:



Figure 3: First Nations dashboard on ADII website:
digitalinclusionindex.org.au/dashboard/firstnations.aspx

2. Introduction

The Mapping the Digital Gap project tracks changes in digital inclusion and media and communications use in each research site over three years. This report outlines findings from our first and second visits to Pipalyatjara and Kalka in 2024 and 2025, drawing on survey and interview results across both years.

Survey data has been cleaned and weighted to ensure findings are representative of all First Nations residents in the two communities. The report also includes suggested strategies in the local Digital Inclusion Plan (chapter 6) to address needs identified through the research.

2024 Findings

Reliable communications access is a foundation for community wellbeing, service delivery and daily life.



“Connectivity is essential. We can’t exist in this world without it anymore.”

—Liza Balmer, NPY Women’s Council CEO, 2025

Pipalyatjara and Kalka community, like the other communities in the APY Lands, had experienced only incremental improvements in communications services over the 20 years since the fibre optic rollout in 1998. The installation of the 4G mobile service in Pipalyatjara in May 2018 was a major upgrade, making telephony and internet connectivity more available for residents and generally reliable. Since that time, there had been almost universal uptake of pre-paid mobile services by Anangu residents, with 87% of those surveyed owned or shared a mobile phone and 100% of these on pre-paid plans.

During our first visit in 2024, we found that the Pipalyatjara mobile service was relatively fast and reliable. There were a range of broadband connectivity options available—ADSL, Sky Muster, Starlink, fibre to the building—however these were only being taken up by agencies and non-Anangu staff, with our survey finding that no Anangu households in Pipalyatjara had phone or internet access. There was a free Wi-Fi hotspot at the Pipalyatjara store which was well utilised, especially by children, as well as the Centrelink Wi-Fi at the neighbouring PY Ku centre. There was a computer and two phones available for Centrelink and banking use in the PY Ku Centre, where the staff member provided most community services and support in using online services. The one public phone by the store was broken at the time of our visit.



Figure 4: Pipalyatjara mobile tower

In contrast, Kalka had very limited connectivity access with no public phone, Wi-Fi hotspots or community office to access support. Four of the twenty Anangu households had Sky Muster services. These provided the only means of internet or voice access in Kalka without having to travel to Pipalyatjara or to seek out a weak mobile signal from Irrunytju (Wingellina) 30km away in WA. In 2021, Telstra had been funded to install a small cell mobile tower in Kalka, along with six other small APY communities, however installation had been delayed by COVID-19 travel restrictions and signing of land use agreements. Residents were eagerly awaiting the mobile service although we heard frustration over the delays.

Our survey found a high level of internet use, with 87% having used the internet in the last week and 91% within the last three months. Over half said they used the internet multiple times a day. Our survey found relatively high use of online services and applications, with digital ability scores slightly above other similar remote communities. However a high proportion of some cohorts—elderly, people with disability, those who did not complete Year 10 at school or limited English literacy—had limited or no digital skills and were reliant on service providers or family to use online services. With cyber-safety, scams and elder fraud also raised as issues, there is a need for more digital skills training and mentor support but limited options available.

Affordability was affecting internet usage and ability to purchase or replace broken devices, with particular impact on the most vulnerable residents. 65% of respondents reported sometimes cutting back on food or other essentials in order to afford communications, and a further 16% regularly cutting back. 61% of respondents said they compromise on internet speed or quality to prioritise affordability.

Another driver for fast, reliable broadband in remote communities is effective delivery of services such as health, education, welfare, and retail for food, fuel and other essentials. We interviewed local service providers and agencies in Pipalyatjara and Kalka to find out about their use of communications and broadband services, and applications such as telehealth and cloud-based systems. While most gave positive feedback on their current services, we heard complaints about reliability and speed of Sky Muster services by some agencies, with clinic staff very pleased about the recent upgrade to Starlink. All agency staff talked about the importance of communications for their work and client communications.

There was limited access to media services in Pipalyatjara with the 5NPY radio service only working in Kalka. Access to free-to-air TV services was also limited, with VAST direct-to-home satellite services not working in 34% of households. Along with changing consumer choices, this was adding to high uptake of online streaming and subscription services, privatising the costs of entertainment and adding to household data costs.

2025 Findings

Our follow-up research visit in February 2025 followed the introduction of a community-wide Wi-Fi network by NBN in Pipalyatjara in November 2024, providing free Wi-Fi access to residential areas. Six APY communities had this service installed in 2024-25 as part of an Australian Government funded community Wi-Fi program to 23 communities nationally, building on a pilot in four sites including Indulkana in the APY Lands. The network was distributed from central hub at the PY Ku Centre, with three NBN Sky Muster satellite dishes providing Sky Muster Plus Premium backhaul to a network of access points distributed across the community, enabling unlimited download and sufficient broadband speeds for video streaming. This system enables community control over hours of operation and content filtering.

There was high uptake of the Wi-Fi services with an average of 800GB of data used by over 300 devices monthly. Residents were appreciative of having Wi-Fi close to their homes rather than having to go to the store for Wi-Fi when out of mobile credit. Parents were pleased that children could access internet closer to home where they could be supervised, however some also said that the full-time service meant that children were staying up late at night, impacting on school attendance.

While the introduction of the Wi-Fi network was aimed at improving affordability, our survey found increases in 2025 on those cutting back on food and essentials to afford internet and those who compromised on internet speed or quality due to affordability. Household expenditure had increased since our 2024 visits, up from an average of \$167/month for phone and internet costs to \$274/month. This is primarily due to increases in pre-paid mobile data usage, with increased data use for online applications and streaming services inside of houses where the Wi-Fi network does not reach. There

were calls for the Wi-Fi service to be available inside the house, with references to Tjuntjuntjara community in WA where this is the case.

Meanwhile, the poor connectivity in Kalka had still not changed, with residents getting frustrated by delays in the installation of the small cell mobile tower. The pole had been delivered but residents had not been informed when the service would be available (activated following our visit in May 2025). In the meantime data costs by the four houses with Sky Muster had increased, suggesting legacy plans, with one household switching to a Starlink service. We also heard of one Pipalyatjara household taking up Starlink, particularly for improved speed and latency for online gaming.

Our survey found that average digital ability scores had increased in Pipalyatjara and Kalka, from an aggregate skills measure of 13.8/30 in 2023 to 17.5/30 in 2024. However, digital ability remains a critical barrier to digital inclusion for many residents, especially the elderly, unemployed and those with limited English literacy. While mobile and internet use is common—especially among younger people for social media, streaming, and gaming—residents generally have very limited usage beyond the basic applications of banking, MyGov, and media consumption. There was no regular digital skills program available in the community, despite strong demand from elders and CDP participants. There was also increased concerns about cyber-safety issues and the impact of internet use on the wellbeing of children, as well as the impacts of scams and online gambling on adults. Agencies and residents called for greater cyber-safety training, as well as a local digital mentor to provide digital support and awareness.

With the Radio 5NPY service still not working in Pipalyatjara, and no local broadcasting studio since the 2000s, there was strong demand for local broadcast media services to be revitalised. Despite an upgrade of VAST satellite dishes on most households, an increased number of households reported VAST satellite television services not working (47%), particularly due to the cost and complexity of replacing and activating set-top boxes. There was a demand for television services—both for news and entertainment—with calls for local broadcasting to be returned.

While communications infrastructure in Pipalyatjara is among the strongest of the sites visited, the key barriers to digital inclusion now lie in affordability, digital ability, and the availability of culturally grounded support and learning pathways. Meanwhile, over the hill, Kalka is still awaiting basic communication services.

Proposed Digital Inclusion Plan

A proposed digital inclusion plan is provided in Section 6, outlining a list of potential strategies to improve digital inclusion based on input from research participants.

While communications services are relatively good in Pipalyatjara, with reliable 4G access and the new community Wi-Fi network, Kalka is still awaiting mobile connectivity and has no public communications services. Beyond access, the next-level challenges of mobile affordability and digital ability are critical barriers, with a need for ongoing solutions to address these.

We recognise the complexity in trying to implement a local digital inclusion plan, with communications, media and digital support delivered by external providers or regional agencies. However, the APY region has a strong history of advocating for improved communications and media services. We hope that this draft plan can assist in planning and advocacy for future digital inclusion activities to meet the emerging needs of Pipalyatjara and Kalka residents and service providers.

The Mapping the Digital Gap team are happy to continue to assist with development of this plan and options for implementation of strategies.

3. Communications & media in Pipalyatjara & Kalka

Existing telecommunications services



Mobile coverage

4G mobile coverage to Pipalyatjara is provided from a single mobile tower on the northern side of the community. The mobile service was initially installed as part of the Mobile Black Spots Program along with 5 other APY communities in 2019. The coverage footprints can be seen at telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage.

Kalka is one of six sites to be approved for a small cell mobile tower under RCP funding. This was yet to be installed during our 2025 visit, with installation due by mid 2025.



Backhaul to community

There is Telstra fibre optic backhaul to Pipalyatjara and Kalka, connected to the fibre backbone on the Stuart Highway via the APY lands of South Australia (see Figure 6 in Chapter 4). The APY fibre network was installed in the late 1990s, enabling terrestrial broadband in the region for the first time.



Public phones

There is one free Telstra public phone in Pipalyatjara near the store, which is well used especially by elderly, children and those without mobile credit. There are none in Kalka despite having no mobile coverage or other public means of making calls.



Landlines

Landline connections are available to most agencies and staff residences in both Pipalyatjara and Kalka. However, no First Nations residents surveyed had landline phones installed at their household in 2025.



Fibre to the premises

There are Telstra fibre connections to the school and health clinic in Pipalyatjara.



ADSL access

A few community agencies and staff residences have ADSL connections, still available in Pipalyatjara and Kalka via the Telstra copper network.



NBN services

Pipalyatjara and Kalka are in the satellite delivery zone under NBN planning. Most agencies use Sky Muster services, including the store, PY Ku Centre and art centre in Kalka. Most staff houses also have Sky Muster as well as several Anangu households in Kalka.



Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite

In 2025, we found low uptake of Starlink services in Pipalyatjara and Kalka, although there were plans for uptake at the clinic and store. One Anangu household had recently set up a Starlink service.



Community Wi-Fi Mesh

NBN installed a free community-wide Wi-Fi network in Pipalyatjara and Kalka in October 2022, distributed to three access points in residential areas. This was a pilot site to trial the model before expanding to 23 sites in 2024/25 (see Case Study section 6).



Public Wi-Fi hotspots

Pipalyatjara and Kalka community office also has a public Wi-Fi hotspot available during work hours as well as the DSS Wi-Fi enabling limited services. Previously PY Media provided free Wi-Fi from the Media Centre since 2009.

Media services



Radio services

- + Radio 5NPY was not operating during our visit, with no ABC or other radio services available
- + Pipalyatjara RIBS studio was previously at the school. PY Media are seeking a new location to re-establish it.



TV services

TV services are only available via VAST direct-to-home satellite, which provides access to all Freeview services and ICTV. However, 47% of those surveyed in 2025 did not have VAST TV working despite replacement of satellite dishes.



Newspapers

There are no newspapers available in the APY region.



Figure 5: 2025 research team Lyndon Ormond-Parker, Co-researcher Tenisha Fox and Daniel Featherstone

4. Communications history in the APY region

About the APY lands

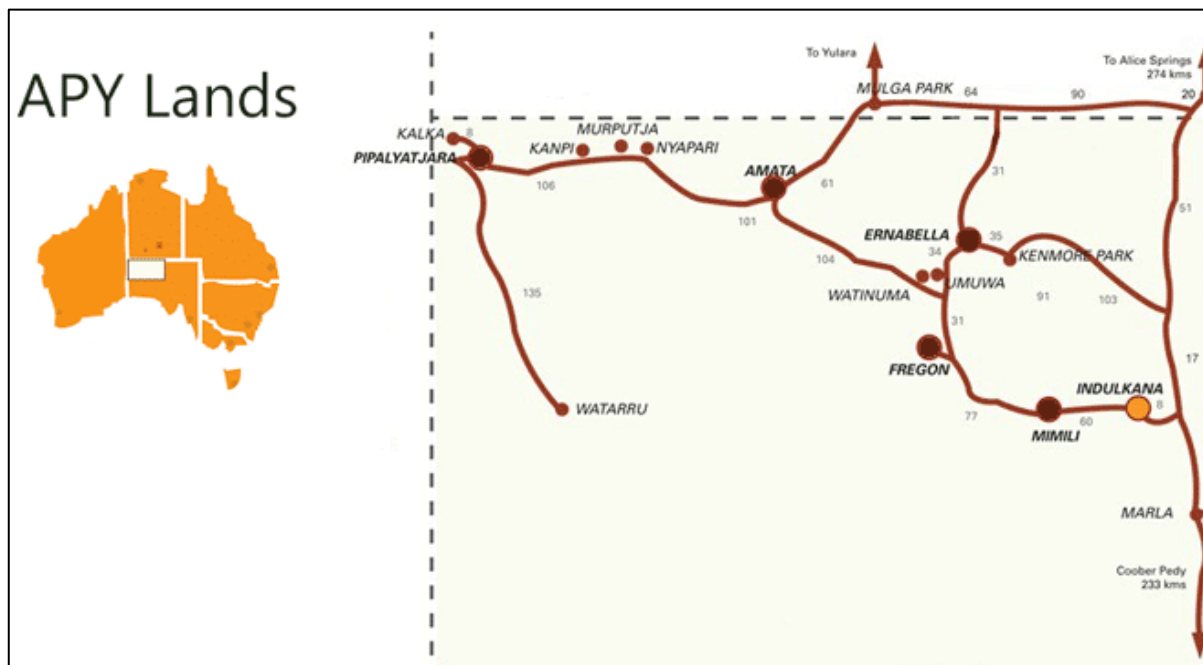


Figure 6: Location of communities on the APY Lands of WA, with Pipalyatjara and Kalka to the east

The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands are located in the remote northwest of South Australia, bordering the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The region encompasses a dramatic landscape of the Musgrave, Mann and Tomkinson Ranges, running east to west along the southern side of the Northern Territory border, interspersed with isolated hills, breakaway country and vast sandhill plains. APY country also has deep cultural and kinship ties extending west into Ngaanyatjarra communities in Western Australia and north into the Petermann Ranges of the Northern Territory. The area is home to approximately 2,337 people (ABS 2021), most of whom are Anangu, with Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara—dialects of the Western Desert Language—being the main languages spoken. The APY Lands comprises six medium to large communities, 10 smaller communities and several homelands in South Australia, with affiliation with four communities to the north in the Northern Territory and Yalata on the southern coast of South Australia. Despite its geographic isolation, the APY Lands remain a stronghold of cultural continuity, where *Tjukurpa* (Law/Lore) underpins daily life and connects people with their land, families and neighbouring desert communities.

Since the removal of community-run offices in the late 2000s, almost all programs are regionally coordinated across the APY lands. Most regional agencies are based out of Umuwa—APY Council, Remote Anangu Service Aboriginal Corporation (RASAC), APY Land Management, PY Media and TAFE SA—with Nganampa Health and NPY Women's Council based in Alice Springs. The lack of central coordination and governance between agencies and service providers makes a place-based approach to our research more challenging in Pipalyatjara and Kalka, with a regional approach more appropriate. For this reason, this section seeks to provide regional history and context for communications and media services.

Changing modes of communications

Traditional modes of communication by Anangu (APY people)¹ include oral speech, hand signs, facial gestures, rock and body art, *Inma* (dance/song), *Tjukurpa* (Law/Dreaming), rock painting and petroglyphs, smoke signals, message sticks and more. While many of these communication modes remain actively used today, Western communication technologies have been rapidly adopted as they have become available. This has facilitated communications and social networking within and beyond the region and with service agencies in Alice Springs, Port Augusta, Adelaide and elsewhere.

Prior to the establishment of the Ernabella Mission in 1937, there were very few means of communication outside the region. From the 1940s, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) facilitated HF radio networks to enable emergency medical contact, which quickly became the backbone of communications across the desert. Through the 1950s–1980s, HF radio was used not only for emergencies but for everyday conversations, cultural coordination and social interaction, with Anangu engaging in group discussions in language, connecting families and communities across vast distances.

However, with a single channel shared by RFDS, station managers, Aboriginal communities and other remote users, there was a high level of congestion, with station users reportedly trying to block Anangu conversations by blowing into the microphone. This led to both the Nganampa Health Service and Pitjantjatjara Council arranging their own VHF frequencies in the late 1970s. Suzanne Bryce from NPY Women's Council, who lived in Pipalyatjara from the 1970s, described how "Pitjantjatjara Council grew and got strong by VHF radio power", with community leaders from Pipalyatjara, Amata, Pukatja and the other communities able to discuss issues and plans via VHF radio. Another challenge was retaining 12V batteries needed for VHF receivers installed in homelands. These were sometimes re-purposed when the car battery was flat, thus compromising communications.

The introduction of the HF Radphone system allowed connections to the national telephone network, though this operator-assisted service relied on a single open channel, meaning calls could be heard by everyone on the network. Despite these limitations, HF radio remained vital communications technology, sustaining community life, cultural business and essential services in the desert prior to the introduction of modern telecommunication systems in the 1990s. This included a daily news and information program in Pitjantjatjara language shared across the HF radio network from Alice Springs known as PitChat.

Arrival of telephony

In about 1987, Telecom Australia (now Telstra) set up the first telephony system in the region using a Digital Radio Concentrator System (DRCS) solar-powered microwave repeater network. A series of large towers were constructed across the lands at 40–50 km intervals, enabling lines of up to 13 repeaters to extend from the exchange to communities up to 600 km away. The DRCS network provided up to 127 lines for voice and low speed data traffic (maximum 9.6 kbps), with local copper networks installed. This enabled service providers to communicate directly via phone and fax (the primary means of distributing public notices, purchase orders and written information). Public phones were installed for residents' use.

By the mid-1990s the DRCS network was plagued by issues of congestion, insufficient line capacity and failing repeater batteries causing outages. Fax was a primary means of sharing documents well into the 2000s, with a lack of internet access beyond costly satellite services.



Figure 7: HCRC repeater tower

¹ A collective grouping of people from Western Desert language groups—Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjara, Manyjilyjarra, Pitjantjatjara, Pintupi, Luritja—as well as neighbouring groups including Martu Wangka and Wongatha.

Need for improved broadband communications in the region

The region continued to struggle with very poor communications services throughout much of the 1990s, with APY Council advocating for improved telecommunications infrastructure and services in the APY Lands. This led to Telstra rolling out a fibre optic network through the region in about 1998. The rollout of the fibre optic network enabled most telephony traffic to be transferred to the fibre optic backhaul, reducing pressure on the DRCS network and local exchanges. The fibre network improved speed and reliability of communication services in the larger APY communities, particularly for the schools which had fibre connectivity installed. However most service providers were still reliant on internet access was still satellite or dial-up over phone lines, with fax a primary means of sending information and purchase orders. Exchanges were later upgraded to include ADSL services, enabling services providers to switch from satellite services, as well more landline capacity to meet growing demand.

The smaller communities and homelands were still reliant on the DRCS network for telephony and in 2002 the towers were upgraded to a new Higher Capacity Radio Concentrator (HCRC) system. This provided more phone lines and improved reliability, however at a maximum 19.2 kbps, it enabled only very basic telephony with very limited dial-up internet access.

With increased line availability, PY Media undertook a project with Telstra in 2002 to support Anangu households to apply for home phones, named the iConnect phones project. Interested households could sign up to have a phone line installed, with limitless incoming service and outgoing emergency call capability without any obligatory service fees. To avoid running up bills, which historically resulted in non-payment and termination of service, households could purchase a pre-paid card. Hundreds signed up, improving household phone access while the program operated.

The fibre optic backhaul enabled a 3G mobile tower to be installed in the largest community of Pukatja (Ernabella) in 2001, with rapid uptake of mobile phones by residents. However, despite ongoing demand, mobile services were not provided in other communities in the region until the late 2010s.

The fibre optic network also enabled local fibre optic connectivity to key facilities in the major communities, including clinics, police stations and schools. APY Schools, which previously had relatively poor communications services, were upgraded to high-speed fibre optic connectivity in 2018-19 as part of a state-wide upgrade².

Extended Zones satellite service

Internet access was primarily via satellite up until the late 1990s, with the schools, health clinics, police stations, community offices and other agencies paying high rates for broadband satellite services that often did not meet their needs due to speed, latency or reliability issues. Telstra rolled out a subsidized satellite service in 2003,³ however this was intended for basic internet use, allowing only 1GB of data per month. There was no residential access to this service.

Radio and TV services

The pioneering community television station, Ernabella Video and Television (EVTV), was established in 1984, building on early productions in 1983.⁴ Elders wanted to ensure local language and cultural television content was produced and broadcast in the region in response to the impending introduction of mainstream television via the AUSSAT satellite.

² <https://www.telstra.com.au/business-enterprise/news-research/articles/bringing-high-speed-internet-to-south-australian-schools>

³ Two-way satellite services were rolled out under the Extended Zones program.

⁴ <https://pymedia.org.au/about/evtv/>

- + *'Their priority has been the video recording of traditional song and dance ("inma") and story ("tjukurpa"), several hundred hours of which comprise a priceless archive for Australia's cultural heritage ... A busy programme of traditional dance festivals in the communities and performance tours to major cities formed the basis of many of these recordings, but even more significant were the cross-country recordings of songlines and re-enactments of traditional stories on actual site.'* (Neil Turner, 1999)

Pukatja (Ernabella) community was the first APY community to have a TV broadcast service from 1984, set up initially by EVTV through local fundraising. Community radio and TV broadcasting was introduced in the region via the Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme (BRACS), initially in three communities from 1986—Pukatja (Ernabella), Amata, Pipalyatjara—before expanding to include nine more communities from 1996—Kaltjiti (Fregon), Iwantja (Indulkana), Mimili, Apatula (Finke), Kaltukutjara (Docker River, NT), Mutitjulu (NT), Imanpa (NT) and Yalata. All 12 communities were set up to deliver local radio and TV broadcasting by the early 2000s.⁵

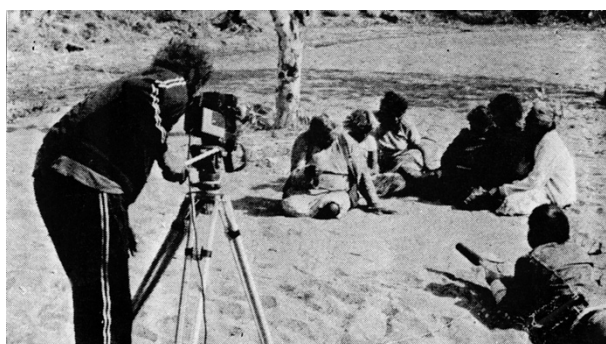


Figure 8: Simon Tjiyangu (deceased) videoing Minyma (women) telling Tjukurpa story, approx 1985

EVTV was re-named as Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (PY) Media to represent the media interests of people living on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. In 1996, PY Media relocated its regional office from Ernabella to Umuwa, 30km to the south, allowing more space for training and production. In 1998, PY Media established the cross-regional radio network service 5NPY (Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara), enabling live programming from BRACS communities and the hub studio in Umuwa to be distributed to over 20 APY and Ngaanyatjarra communities. Programming was streamed from Umuwa via phone link to Imparja Television in Alice Springs where it was forwarded to Sydney for uplink to the Optus B3 satellite. Each BRACS site was set up to re-transmit several TV and radio services from the satellite, with the ability to switch to local radio or TV programming on the community licensed channels.

From the early 2000s, PY Media expanded from radio, video and music production to support telecommunications and internet access services across the region.

Networking the Nation projects

Networking the Nation was a funding program available from the late 1990s to early 2000s, using funds from the privatisation of Telstra, for remote and regional organisations to apply for targeted communications and IT projects. PY Media applied to install a number of projects across the APY region, including a UHF Radio network, IT-access computers, a regional IT training program, emergency communications poles along roads (blue poles), and the development of the regional Waru Website. PY Media expanded its operations over the following years to implement these projects, resulting in much improved Anangu access to communications facilities and services in the region. However, with no recurrent funding for operations and maintenance of these projects, as well as staff changes over time, many of the projects were unable to continue beyond the 2000s.

⁵ This reduced to 8 RIBS sites during the late 2000s with CAAMA taking over support of the NT sites.

UHF radio network 2003

A UHF radio repeater network was installed by PY Media in about 2004 using Networking the Nation funding. This was highly utilised by Anangu, enabling free communications throughout the region on shared channels, often with multiple concurrent conversations occurring in language. Having communications access in cars when travelling on roads and bush tracks improved safety and provided the ability to call for support if broken down. This resulted in reduced burning of bushland, the previous means of signalling a need for assistance.

Despite its popularity, the UHF radio network fell into disrepair after a few years. A government contract to maintain the network was granted to an external provider. Despite this, batteries on repeaters were not adequately maintained, with some located at the top of hills.⁶

Some Anangu community leaders also asked for the network to be closed due to misuse and swearing by young people. We also heard about insults and arguments between adults on the public network leading to fights.

- + *"When the UHF come out, there was lots of arguments [and] everyone was listening to it. [There were not usage protocols, so we found] people not knowing how to use it and something been taken out of context, and then people getting their backs up and suddenly this big argument and then fights and so forth."*
(Richard King, APY General Manager APY, 2024)

PY Ku Centre rollout

The establishment of six PY Ku centres was an SA Government initiative, based on similar models of Rural Transaction Centres and telecentres in other states. The aim was to provide a community access facility for Anangu to learn to use online services through computer access and digital skills support, as well as a meeting/training room with videoconferencing facility. PY Media was commissioned to manage the rollout and operations of the PY Ku Centres, with five facilities (Amata, Mimili, Kaltjiti, Pipalyatjara, Iwantja) and three staff houses built in 2006-7.

The PY Ku Centres offered great potential as training and access facilities in the region. However, no operational funding was allocated by the SA or Australian Government, with the facilities expected to generate their own revenue through facility rental and service delivery. The lack of dedicated funding led to the PY Ku network becoming unsustainable and a financial burden for PY Media. A separate organisation, PY Ku Aboriginal Corporation, was established in 2011 with an enterprise focus to limit the risk to PY Media.

- + *"The PY Ku Centres [were] a dismal failure [for] all sorts of reasons. [And Anangu] weren't up to speed with doing things online then, it wasn't a simple transition [from never using internet to walking] into that building, there's a computer, go and renew your licence. [People] needed a lot more support [but that wasn't funded]. To this day I think it's a great resource wasted, I think it could be doing a lot more."* (Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024)

Mobile services in the APY region

Pukatja was the only community in the region to have a mobile service until 2018, when a further six APY communities had Telstra 3G/4G mobile services installed through co-funding under the Australian Government's Mobile Black Spots Program. The first of these was in Amata in November 2017.

⁶ Source: Prof. David Tafler, email correspondence, 17/9/25

- + *'A mobile base station has been switched on in the community of Amata, 115 kilometres south of Uluru, giving the town's 300 residents mobile phone access for the first time.'* (SBS News, 2017)

The introduction of mobile services was welcomed by community leaders and agencies, transforming communications access for Anangu residents who were previously reliant on public phones or local agencies. A further five towers were rolled out across the APY lands, initially to Indulkana, Fregon and Mimili, with Pipalyatjara and Umuwa the last to have towers activated in May 2018.

- + *"Things have improved [across the APY region with] mobile phone coverage now in all the major communities ... Connectivity to each other is huge. [Now] people are on their phones all day, every day talking to each other."* (Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024)

Service providers were able to communicate more readily with one another and clients while working across the region, as well as improving safety.

- + *"[The mobile towers enabled us to] communicate with our staff [and visiting agencies were safer]. We've got cars that [have 4G tracking] throughout the area [so now] as they pass a community, you know where they are on the lands."* (Richard King, General Manager APY, Teams Interview, 2024)
- + *"I've been visiting the Lands for the last 20 or so years and have seen the change. I remember it was all radio, when it was just radios between communities. But so, the change was awesome, having the internet come through."* (Mark Manning, Community Wellbeing Support Office, 2024)

The expansion of mobile coverage has impacted on social and cultural engagement in the region, with greater use of social media, texting and video communications. Anangu can deliver messages directly at funeral services by mobile when unable to attend in person, rather than sending a fax to be read out.

While many Anangu already had mobile phones for use in Pukatja and regional centres such as Alice Springs and Yulara, mobile phone usage rapidly increased across the region.

- + *"[What] we noticed almost immediately was that people adopted networks ... Everyone had to have a mobile phone. [But] mobile phone costs [also] went up [in a big way]."* (Richard King, as above, 2024)

In 2023, funding was approved under round one of the Regional Connectivity Program (RCP) to install 4G satellite small cell mobile services⁷ in six smaller APY communities—Kanpi, Nyapari, Kalka, Watinuma, Kenmore Park and Murputja school. However, the rollout of these mobile services was delayed by COVID-19 travel restrictions and issues relating to the lengthy process in gaining land-use agreements and travel permits approved through APY Council. The installation of all six small cell mobile services was completed by May 2025. However, in the meantime, residents of Kanpi and Nyapari had largely abandoned their communities, in part due to demand by young people wanting to live in communities with mobile services.



Figure 9: Satellite small cell setup. Photo: APY Facebook page, 25/3/2022

⁷ Telstra launched the satellite small cells product in 2018 to provide mobile coverage in low population sites at much lower capital cost than a macro-cell mobile tower.



"[The smaller communities are] all getting [small cell mobile by June], which should give us coverage right across the [whole region]. But since the other big communities got [mobile services], you notice that Murputja Kanpi Nyapari, everyone's moved to where their family are getting network. [Hopefully with] the network up and running [we will see the] younger people coming back."

—Richard King, General Manager APY, Teams Interview, 2024

RCP funding was also provided in 2023 to upgrade the 4G mobile tower in Pukatja with improved backhaul capacity, throughput speeds and coverage to reach the local airstrip. Telstra 3G services were switched off nationally in October 2024, with the towers in the seven large communities upgraded to 5G.

Satellite services

NBN provided improved and relatively affordable satellite services from July 2011 with the Interim Satellite Solution, and later the availability of NBN Sky Muster services from 2016. While ADSL was available in most communities, Sky Muster satellite became a primary means of internet access for many agencies and staff residences. However, there was very low uptake by First Nations households due to being a post-paid service. Most residents preferred the flexibility of mobile phones with access outside of homes and a pre-paid payment option.

The introduction of Starlink low Earth orbit satellite service in 2022 provided an alternate high-speed, low-latency broadband service with unlimited data-use. While we have seen rapid uptake of Starlink by agencies and staff in most other communities visited, the uptake in the APY lands is relatively slow due to existing ADSL and Sky Muster options and the higher monthly cost of Starlink.

Community Wi-Fi networks

Community Wi-Fi mesh networks were installed in six APY communities—Pukatja(Ernabella), Amata, Iwantja (Indulkana), Mimili, Kaltjiti (Fregon), Pipalyatjara—under the NBN First Nations Community Wi-Fi program between October and November 2024. This program delivered similar services in 17 additional communities across Australia in 2024-25, building on a model tested in four pilot sites since 2021 (including Warakurna, WA—see Case Study in our 2025 report).

The Wi-Fi mesh networks consist of a hub site, with three to four satellite dishes on the roof of the community office providing Sky Muster Plus Premium backhaul services, which enables unlimited data-use and speeds up to about 50Mbps. A small tower provides microwave links to 13 Access Points in residential and high-traffic areas around the community. While the service is mostly available outside of homes with line of sight to an Access Point, three community facilities are typically set up with internal access in each community. Further information about the new Wi-Fi network in Pipalyatjara is included in the Access section in Chapter 5.



Figure 10: Pipalyatjara and Kalka communities are nestled in the Tomkinson Range

5. Key findings from data analysis

This section provides key findings from the 26 interviews undertaken with community members and stakeholders during our three visits from 2024-25, as well as observational data and survey results. See Appendix 1 for the full set of comparative survey results for 2024 and 2025, following data cleaning and weighting against ABS data.

Communications access

The mobile service in Pipalyatjara is working well

The mobile service was installed in Pipalyatjara on 5th May 2018, with a new 30m tower built near the foothills of Mt Davies (see figure 4). The Telstra 4G mobile service provides a strong signal in the vicinity of Pipalyatjara community. The service is described as relatively reliable with fast speeds during the day, but slower during peak times in the evenings.

Pipalyatjara residents reported that the mobile service had significantly improved their communications access.

- + “[T]he mobile, it’s working very clear or good.” (Peter Watson, Pipalyatjara Community Chairperson, 2025)
- + “It’s all good, like everything is changing. And we are happy for [the] Telstra tower.” (Renita Roberts, Pipalyatjara resident, 2024)

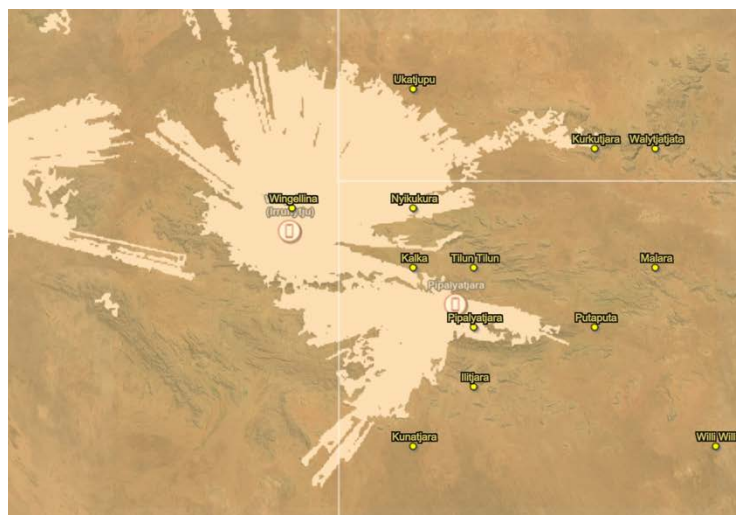


Figure 11: Map of Telstra 4G coverage from Pipalyatjara and Irrunytju, WA (Source: [First Nations Mapping Tool](#))

However, surrounding hills prevent the mobile signal from Pipalyatjara reaching Kalka or other homelands in the vicinity.

Figure 11 shows nearly overlapping coverage from mobile services in Pipalyatjara and nearby Irrunytju (Wingellina) across the border in WA.

Service providers also appreciated having mobile coverage across most APY communities, enabling them to more easily conduct their work and communicate with clients and other service providers.



“Before we had to carry our sat phone everywhere, and sometimes it works and sometimes they don’t. But now, with [the] Telstra towers [and small cells in] little communities, it’s fantastic.”

—Maile Miller, PY Ku Manager and CASO coordinator, 2025

While there are many positives to improved communications, we heard that the provision of mobile communications has led to changing behaviour, especially for young people as phones and social media have become increasingly essential to daily life.

- + *"Young people don't want to go out bush or go out for extended periods unless they have mobile coverage." (Liza Balmer, CEO NPY Women's Council, 2024)*

Kalka was awaiting a mobile service with no public communications services currently

The 4G satellite small cell mobile service planned for Kalka was still not installed during our 2025 visit, despite having been approved by APY Council in 2023. Some of the other five sites had already been installed. The sections for the Kalka mobile tower had been delivered and were awaiting construction, although the construction date was not known by any local agencies. It was completed after our visit in May 2025.



Figure 12: Sections of the small cell mobile tower awaiting construction in Kalka

When we spoke to them, Kalka residents were eagerly awaiting the mobile service.

- + *"We're still waiting for a long time for the mobile in Kalka." (Survey comment, 2025)*
- + *"People are looking forward to [having a mobile service. They will be] happy to get Telstra in Kalka." (Tenisha Fox, Co-researcher/Kalka resident, 2025)*

With no public phone in Kalka, and health service staff based in Pipalyatjara, the mobile service will provide much-needed access to emergency services.



"[Reliable connectivity is needed in] places like Kalka where there's no clinic [or community office]. We don't have those points of contact that people historically used to go to [if they needed] to call the ambulance after hours [or police]. We had an incident [in Kalka] last year where some boys were mucking around in a car that caught fire. Luckily, we had a youth worker there that was able to respond and call the clinic."

—Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024

- + *"[The mobile will make it] easy to make phone calls and for emergency call to Pipalyatjara [clinic]." (Rena Fox, Kalka resident/Co-researcher, 2024)*
- + *"We will be happy when the mobile comes to Kalka. We need it for emergency because there hasn't been a public phone for six years. We need a public phone in Kalka too." (Survey comment, 2024)*

Meanwhile, the lack of mobile coverage was noted as a challenge by staff at Ninuku Arts, based in Kalka.

- + *"[In Kalka we are] in a blackout zone [so] the artists [who] come to the art centre ... don't have any connectivity for the day. [This can be a] blockage for them coming ... " (Georgie Gengos, Ninuku Arts Manager, 2025)*



Figure 13: Ninuku Arts centre in Kalka

Ninuku Arts had installed a Starlink service in 2025, however they found it risky to rely on this for making calls.

- + “We use Starlink [for Wi-Fi calls] but sometimes we face challenges [when] the phones don’t work with Starlink. So, if something’s happening at the art centre and we can’t make any calls it means it’s quite a hairy situation.” (Georgie Gengos, Ninuku Arts Manager, 2025)

The local APY Land Management office is also based in Kalka, with agency staff using satellite connectivity for voice and data. The RASAC-run visiting agency staff accommodation is also located in Kalka, however this facility does not have a satellite service.

- + “We use Starlink [at the Land Management office], and we’ve got access to the internet and [Wi-Fi calls. But people] staying in the RASAC accommodation [don’t] have any way to access the internet.” (Kieran Jairath, APY Land Management, 2025)

The NBN community Wi-Fi network provides affordable outdoor internet access

As outlined in section 3, Pipalyatjara is one of six APY communities included in the NBN First Nations Community Wi-Fi Program, delivered to 23 remote communities since late 2024. The community-wide Wi-Fi model is designed to address demand for connectivity near homes in residential areas, rather than at a central hotspot.



Figure 14: Three NBN satellite dishes on the PY Ku Centre provide backhaul for the Wi-Fi mesh network

The new Wi-Fi mesh network was activated in Pipalyatjara on 14 November 2024. The network hub is located at the PY Ku centre, with three NBN dishes on the roof providing backhaul via six Sky Muster Plus Premium services. A small central mast connects to about 12 Access Points located on buildings and houses, providing coverage across the majority of the community. One internal access point is located in the PY Ku centre.

In the 10 months since installation, network usage has been reasonably high with the service operating 24/7. NBN usage data shows a monthly average of 720GB of data consumed by over 300 devices, with individual users consuming an average of 3.1GB per device.

The main online use was web-browsing, including browser-based streaming and gaming, accounting for 43% of total traffic consumed. TikTok made up 23% of data-use with Netflix and YouTube together accounting for 8%.

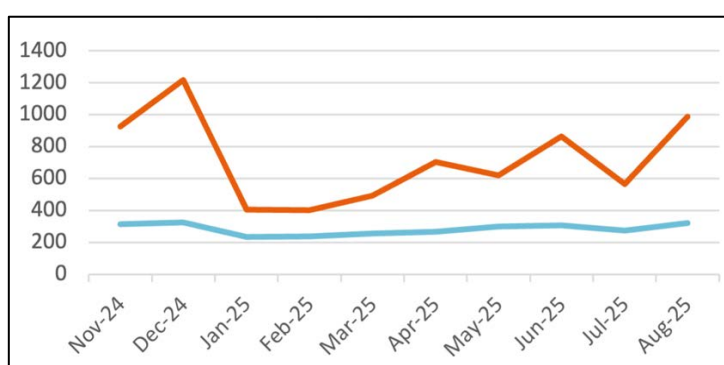


Figure 15: Pipalyatjara Wi-Fi usage since November 2024, showing monthly data usage (orange) and number of devices used (blue)

The introduction of the Wi-Fi network has been transformative for Pipalyatjara residents, who pointed to free Wi-Fi as one of the few ways to reduce pre-paid mobile data costs. Free Wi-Fi access enables residents without mobile credit to stay connected, access services and maintain social ties.



"[The free Wi-Fi helps] our people who got no credit for their phone, or just to talk to their families what's happening a long way [away]. And that's what is good."

—Peter Watson, Pipalyatjara Community Chairperson, 2025

- + "They're all using that free Wi-Fi in Pipalyatjara community." (Tenisha Fox, Co-researcher/ Kalka resident, 2025)

The survey comments in Appendix 1 demonstrate the positive community response to the new Wi-Fi network, with a few examples below.



"We love the free Wi-Fi. The kids used to go down to the store for Wi-Fi, now they get it at home." (2025)

"We're happy to have the Pipalyatjara Wi-Fi, it's good when we run out of credit." (2025)

"The Wi-Fi is good, saves us walking and saves money for top-up." (2025)

Service providers also emphasised how the Wi-Fi reduces digital exclusion and provides an important backup to access online services when phone credit runs out.

- + "Free Wi-Fi is one of the only things that enables people to continue to connect when they run out of credit." (Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024)
- + "[Free Wi-Fi helps] people with their needs for Centrelink [reporting. Most] use their own devices [so now] they can [use online services] from anywhere in the community." (Maile Miller, PY Ku Manager and CASO coordinator, 2025)

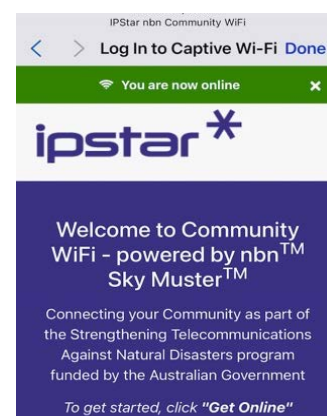


Figure 16: A STAND Wi-Fi hotspot is at the store

Previously a free Wi-Fi hotspot had been installed by NBN at the store under the Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) program, with this service still well-used. The PY Ku Centre, located next to the store, also provides limited 24/7 Wi-Fi to enable access to Centrelink and government services. While these were well-used, locals raised concerns about young people gathering at these sites to access Wi-Fi. Having Wi-Fi access closer to home enables easier supervision of children, especially at night.



"[The] kids [used to hunt for Wi-Fi a] long way from houses ... Now they're using it closer to the houses, closer to the families [where] everyone see [them. The Wi-Fi is] really working and the kids [and] families are happy."

—Peter Watson, Pipalyatjara Community Chairperson, 2025

Content filtering is applied to block access to content that could pose a risk to internet-users or is deemed illegal, inappropriate or objectionable, including pornography, liquor e-commerce and gambling sites⁸. The community can choose to block additional sites or content types.

⁸ Source: Email from Sam Di Marco, NBN, 12/2/2025

- + “[NBN has blocked access to] the gambling sites and [sites] where people can access porn. [At the meeting about the Wi-Fi network, community members] were advised that those sites would not be available.” (Maile Miller, PY Ku Manager and CASO coordinator, 2025)

Prior to the Wi-Fi network’s installation, a training session was run by Australian Private Networks (APN) to advise residents about how to access the Wi-Fi and local management options, with information provided through brochures and posters in the PY Ku Centre. When we spoke to Community Chairperson Peter Watson, he told us that the Council would consider revising network access hours.

- + “The Council can have a talk about this [community Wi-Fi and] switching off and on. [We can ask NBN to switch it [off] in the middle of the night and switch it on again towards 6:00, something like that [so we’re] keeping it safe for the kids.” (Peter Watson, Pipalyatjara Community Chairperson, 2025)

A school staff member advised that a primary school student was refusing to attend school following a late night of playing online games. They suggested the community should consider turning the Wi-Fi off overnight and back on after school starts in the morning. This call was backed up by some residents.

- + “[Some kids are] awake all night [so] they sleep in ... They need go to school [but] they sometimes sleep. [And] they’re not listening to their teacher [because they’re tired].” (Tenisha Fox, Co-researcher/Kalka resident, 2025)

The PY Ku Centre was keen to have access to the Wi-Fi inside the Centre as a reciprocal benefit for hosting the Wi-Fi equipment and providing on-site support for APN.

The Wi-Fi network uses Sky Muster satellite backhaul, which can be impacted by rain or heavy cloud cover. Network outages can last for hours or days during summer rainfall periods. The network is also vulnerable to power outages, with the UPS having only a short battery backup. As the Wi-Fi is now a primary service for residents, these outages can have an impact.

Some residents were keen to have in-house access to the Wi-Fi network, with several survey comments referencing the Tjuntjuntjara Community Wi-Fi model that provides Wi-Fi repeaters within each residence (similar to the Kalumburu model).



“We want the Wi-Fi connected to our house like they have in Tjuntjuntjara, so we can use it inside. That’s a good one.” (Survey comment, 2024)

This is one of the proposed strategies in the Digital inclusion Plan. NBN Co is also exploring options to support in-house Wi-Fi access.

Pre-paid mobile is the primary means of home phone and internet access

As with other remote communities visited, Anangu in Pipalyatjara and Kalka rely primarily on pre-paid mobile phones for phone and internet access. While Pipalyatjara has had a mobile service since 2018, Kalka was still awaiting a small cell mobile service at the time of our 2025 visit.

Our 2025 weighted survey results found that 78% of Pipalyatjara and Kalka respondents own or share a mobile phone, down from 86% in 2024. The average number of mobile phones per household rose from 2.5 in 2024 to 3 in 2025, with 100% being smartphones. All respondents reported using pre-paid services, with none having shifted to post-paid.



Figure 17: Pipalyatjara resident Anyupa Martin on her mobile phone

95% of regular internet-users also reported using their smartphones as the primary device for household internet access in 2025 (97% in 2024), with decreased use of other devices. Use of tablets fell from 12% to 4% in 2025, and laptop computers from 8% to just 1%. Meanwhile, there was a doubling in online use of smart TVs, up from 34% to 67%. When asked about phone use for voice calls, 77% of respondents reported using a mobile phone in 2025 (86% in 2024), with no households having a fixed line telephone in either year.

There is limited public phone access and none in Kalka

There is only one Telstra public phone within Pipalyatjara community, located outside the store, with none in Kalka. Calls are free via the public phone. In 2025, we observed regular use of the public phone, including by children, elderly people and those with disability.

Prior to the mobile service being installed in Pipalyatjara in 2018, voice communication had been restricted to public phones and local agency landlines. While the free Wi-Fi network now enables mobile calls when pre-paid credit has run out, the public phone provides an important means of making calls for people without a mobile phone.

- + “[Most people use] their own phone, but people with no phone, they still use the public phone ... next to the shop.” (Renita Roberts, Pipalyatjara resident, 2024)

15% of respondents reported using the public phone for calls in 2025 and 48% described it as reliable. With the public phone handset broken at the time of our 2024 visit, only 6% surveyed said they used the public phone for calls and only 11% described it as reliable. The phone had reportedly not worked for months, pointing to the need for more regular maintenance.

There is one phone available for Centrelink calls in the PY Ku Centre, however our survey found very limited use of community agency phones for personal use in 2025 (2%, down from 17%).

With no public phone in Kalka, the only means of making calls is via Wi-Fi at one of the four households with a Sky Muster service. Some residents described walking to a nearby hill where they could access a very weak mobile signal from Irrunytju (Wingellina) 30km away, but this was not reliable.

- + “In Kalka we don’t have internet but have a little bit of mobile signal from Irrunytju sometimes.” (Survey comment, 2024)



Figure 18: Despite a security cage, the public phone handset was missing in 2024

Fixed broadband take-up is low in Pipalyatjara households but higher in Kalka

Our 2024 survey found that only 10% of survey respondents had fixed household broadband in 2024, with all of these in Kalka where there is no public phone or shared Wi-Fi.



“We live in Kalka so no public phone or mobile, so we only have the satellite at home. It doesn’t work when it’s raining.” (Survey comment, 2024)

- + “We have SkyMuster so everyone comes to our house because of no other internet in Kalka.” (Survey comment, 2024)

By 2025, the rate of household broadband had increased to 17% with Sky Muster services and 4% with Starlink, with the fixed broadband services primarily in Kalka. Anecdotally we heard that four houses in Kalka had Sky Muster services during our 2025 visit.

However, residents of these households raised concerns about high prices for excess data, suggesting that they were using legacy Sky Muster plans. There was no apparent awareness of the Sky Muster Plus Premium product, introduced in mid 2023, which provides unlimited data and higher download speeds of up to 100Mbps. In most communities we visit, we hear of difficulty in signing up for Sky Muster services as well as reluctance to commit to monthly bills due to affordability challenges on low incomes.

+ *"Sky Muster is sometimes good but money problem for us." (Survey comment, 2024)*

For this reason, there was also low take-up of Starlink services by Anangu households due to the high monthly cost of \$139 per month. In 2024, some people expressed interest in having the benefits of in-house broadband access, fast speeds and unlimited downloads. By 2025 there was initial uptake by one household in Pipalyatjara and one in Kalka. Starlink was seen as more cost-effective than using mobile data for streaming and better for gaming. Being a faster service than the community Wi-Fi, these houses were popular with family and friends.

+ *"We've got Starlink. It's good for streaming. Everyone comes to our house for Wi-Fi." (Survey comment, 2025)*

Most agencies are using Sky Muster services with mixed feedback

During our first visit in 2024, most local agencies and staff residences were primarily using NBN Sky Muster. While this was meeting basic needs, we heard calls for more speed and data limits, with 4G providing better speed and lower latency.

The Pipalyatjara Store is reliant on Sky Muster for internet access, including for all sales transactions. During our 2024 visit, the storekeepers described regular outages during cloudy conditions, affecting access to the ATM and EFTPOS and impacting store operations. They had requested Mai Wiru, the agency managing the regional store network, to upgrade to Starlink but this was not yet in place when we visited in 2025. While they were not interviewed, the new store managers again expressed frustration with the Sky Muster service, which was slow and had regular outages.

The clinic had previously used Sky Muster, with reports of it being very slow and frustrating when using the cloud-based records systems.

+ *"It's almost impossible to write notes even because your typing is always [lagging] behind your hands. [And to] send something to a printer, it's so long and clunky. [Being busy] it's very easy to get distracted when you've got a very long and slow process to even print the form." (Penelope Gibson, Registered Nurse, Pipalyatjara Clinic, 2024)*

Ninuku Arts in Kalka was also using Sky Muster, which they described as working fine for most needs. However, during our 2024 visit, Ninuku Arts staff described relying on Sky Muster for phone calls due to their landline having not worked since November 2023. They had reported the fault several times but had been waiting for four months for Telstra to do the repair.

We heard that unreliable connectivity can also impact on Anangu engagement with using the internet.



"[Unreliable or slow internet] can be really challenging for people especially around accessing things like Centrelink and tax, and [online services] become really complicated and people end up disengaged."

— Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024

There was initial uptake of Starlink satellite services by agencies and staff in 2025

Starlink low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite services have been available in central Australia since late 2021, providing an option of high-speed, low latency broadband with unlimited data caps. LEO satellite services can provide improved experience for cloud-based IT systems and gaming, which require reliable high speed and low latency, as well as two-way applications such as videoconferencing.

Starlink had rapid uptake nationally due to providing faster, more reliable internet than Sky Muster or ADSL. It is widely used by service providers with the health clinic having recently installed a Starlink service when we visited in 2024.

- + *"It's only a couple of months [since it was installed but] it makes a huge difference here." (Penelope Gibson, Registered Nurse, Pipalyatjara Clinic, 2024)*

Starlink was described as a valuable backup when Telstra fixed line services are unavailable.

- + *"[Starlink is] really good. [When] Telstra's out at least we've got communications [now]. It's safer for nurses to be able to communicate with one another if need be." (Steff Laws, Community Health Nurse, Pipalyatjara Clinic, 2025)*

Outages can have significant impact on services, including power outages

Despite fibre optic connectivity and relatively new mobile infrastructure, mobile outages remain a challenge in Pipalyatjara.

- + *"Wingellina's [mobile service is] pretty bad. That one goes down quite a lot, and Pip[alyatjara]. Those two are the most affected with outages." (Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024)*

While the fibre optic network has been mostly reliable, we have heard reports of a four-day network outage in 2023 caused by damage to Telstra's fibre optic cable near Kanpi in South Australia, with a previous network-wide outage in 2021, which lasted three weeks.

This disrupts the store operations and local services as well as access to emergency communications. Liza Balmer described multi-day network outages as common.

- + *"Internet outages [are quite frequent in Pipalyatjara]. It's quite common you'll see an email, 'the internet's down', and sometimes that can be for a number of days." (Liza Balmer, as above, 2024)*

Power outages can also be a cause of internet and mobile outages. Satellite services and Wi-Fi are reliant on mains power, usually without battery backup. Mobile and fixed line phone services continue through short outages with battery backup at the exchange and batteries now upgraded to 12-hour capacity. Some outages can last for days or weeks due to waits for parts or technical support.

During power outages, the Pipalyatjara Store closes due to lack of power and internet backup. Pipalyatjara clinic has a backup generator to provide food and fuel supplies when community power or internet is out. It also has a Sky Muster satellite service which is not impacted by Telstra outages.



Figure 19: Pipalyatjara store

All power supply in Pipalyatjara and Kalka is provided by three local diesel generators. Power reliability is often an issue in remote communities due to harsh conditions and remoteness challenges for diesel

supply and maintenance. We heard that Pipalyatjara's power supply had been unreliable in the past, however has improved with only three outages in the last two years.

To reduce reliance on diesel fuel, a solar farm is planned for Pipalyatjara in the coming years. A representative from DEM was in town meeting with the community council to discuss this project. She outlined the benefits of a solar power and battery bank—improved reliability, reduced diesel and freight costs and reduced emissions. As with existing generators, the solar farm will have remote monitoring of its operations to ensure any maintenance needs are identified and addressed quickly.

All residential houses in Pipalyatjara now have smart power meters as part of a regional rollout, similar to the system used in other states. Smart meters have also been introduced in Kalka with online payment activated when the mobile tower was installed in May 2025. The smart meters can be recharged via pre-paid meter cards at the store, via Centrelink or phone, or using an online payment system. Money Mob has been commissioned by DEM to provide community-based training and support for Anangu households to adapt to use of smart meters and learn to do online recharge payments.

The smart meters are connected to a cloud-based management system via the 4G network, using a very small amount of data to monitor power use and remaining credit.

Service delivery and use of online services

The PY Ku Centre provides the Centrelink agency and computer access

With essential services such as Centrelink, banking, health, bill payments and licensing increasingly transitioning to online delivery, clients require digital access and skills to use these services. While most Pipalyatjara and Kalka residents have become familiar with online services and apps on their mobile phones, many still require support, particularly elderly people, low digital users and those with limited English. The PY Ku Centre in Pipalyatjara provides basic support to help residents with government services and navigation of online systems.

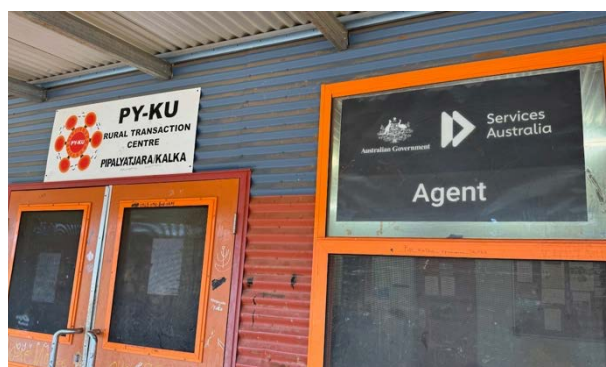


Figure 20: The PY Ku Centre is the local Centrelink and CASO agent

The PY Ku Centre, managed by Mai Wiru Aboriginal Corporation, provides the local Centrelink agency for both communities as well as mail delivery, banking and other government services. The Centre has one public access computer and two phones for Centrelink use as well as free Wi-Fi provided by the Department of Social Services. It also provides community administration through the Community Administration Support Organisation (CASO) contract.



"[P]art of our role [is to help] those who don't have the skills and the knowledge of how to use [the] digital equipment [and online services]. We assist them with doing their banking or any other administration needs that they have, paying their bills, fines, over the phone and on internet with the banks."

—Maile Miller, Regional PY Ku Coordinator, 2024

Residents rely heavily on local staff to manage more complex tasks involving Centrelink and MyGov system, with basic digital support provided by the PY Ku Centre Coordinator.

- + “[People need] someone in the community who’s doing the Centrelink [support] to be proficient in knowing these things so then they can be the one trusted with that information.” (Maile Miller, as above, 2024)

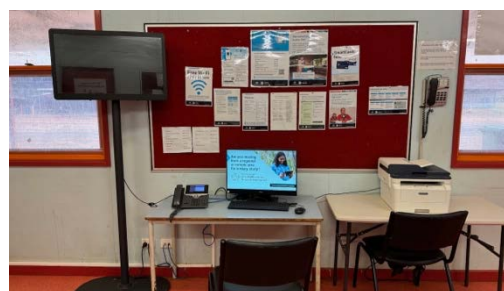


Figure 21: Centrelink computer in the PY Ku centre

However, we heard that there are tasks that the PY Ku staff are unable to assist people with, leaving some gaps in the digital support available.

- + “There’s a lot of work to be done around getting people registered online, so with MyGov ID but also tax and [fines and other issues] that we can’t avoid it, it’s not going away.” (Liza Balmer, NPY Women’s Council CEO, 2024)

MyGov can be particularly challenging for Anangu residents who often lack the stability of phone numbers and digital IDs required.

- + “MyGov, and all the things associated with MyGov, rely on you having the same mobile phone number that you had when you set it up. So that automatically rules a lot of people out. But even people who do have some stability can’t remember all the details that they registered with.” (Liza Balmer, as above, 2024)

In the wake of Robodebt, many Anangu residents still get letters from Centrelink querying payments or requiring payments to be returned. Without dedicated support, this leaves vulnerable people in an untenable position of debt to repay and no income. Due to the number of such situations in the region, NPY Women’s Council set up a Centrelink Support Agent to assist APY clients in this situation.

- + “Our Centrelink Agent is part of a trial community partnership program [since 2023] and it’s going to continue, which is really great news.” (Liza Balmer, as above, 2024)

More support is needed in use of banking services, with elders prone to financial abuse

The shift to online banking has created challenges for those with low literacy or unstable connectivity. Our 2025 survey found that 78% of people had used online banking in the last six months, however many of these were assisted. The PY Ku Centre staff told us they regularly provide banking support.

- + “[Some people] are capable of using [online banking by] themselves, [but for those] who don’t know how to use the computer, our staff assist them.” (Maile Miller, PY Ku Coordinator, 2024)

Password security has also been identified as a challenge, with only 53% of survey respondents in 2025 reporting they were confident in setting up secure passwords for their online services or device (responded very true or mostly true), down from 71% in 2024. Large shared households and device sharing make it difficult to keep passwords or banking details secure. Some residents seek support from agencies for privacy or security reasons, to avoid log-in details being shared with family members. However, many agency staff do not have capacity to provide digital support amidst busy workloads.

- + “Community officers [are] inundated with [tasks] every day. Well, they might help you to ring the bank one time, but they’re not going to [have time to] sit down and educate you about how to set-up your online banking or anything.” (Wanita Manning, Community Wellbeing Support Office, 2024)

With a culture of support within families, Elders often rely on assistance from family members to use online banking or to pay bills. However, this can lead to issues of Elder financial abuse, where family members have the password to access Elders' bank accounts and make transfers without their permission.

- + *"The old people don't necessarily know how to do telephone banking so they [ask a family member] 'can you pay this bill'. [But then] the kids are transferring the money out soon as it hits." (Richard King, General Manager APY Council, 2024)*
- + *"Sometimes the older person would give their phone to their grandchild or child who would set up a [recurring] transfer from their grandparent's or parent's account to their account. [We helped] people to switch off the recurring deductions." (Wanita Manning, as above, 2024)*

This builds on an already high incidence of financial abuse. 'Humbugging' (making unreasonable or excessive demands) for money has been further enabled by the shift to online banking.

- + *"[Mobile] phones have [made it even easier for] grandchildren stealing their grandparent's money." (Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024)*

It also results in mistrust of online services.



"I don't want the internet. People take my money." (Survey comment, 2024)

While phones have security settings, our 2025 survey results indicate relatively low of awareness of online privacy and security options. 57% were able to set privacy settings, 55% could identify which apps are safe to download and 53% could confidently decide what personal information to share online. Only 34% knew how to check if online information is trustworthy.

This points to the need for ongoing training and support in safe use of online banking and other services. There were calls for more digital support for Elders to help reduce Elder abuse and improve scam and cyber-safety awareness.

There is demand for local digital mentors to provide support

While the PY Ku Centre provides digital support to clients, we received many survey comments requesting general computer access and additional support.

- + *"We need some training here for Elders to learn to use computers, phones, online services." (Survey comment, 2024)*
- + *"We need a place to learn to use computers, with an Anangu helper." (Survey comment, 2024)*

With no Anangu staff employed in the PY Ku Centre during either of our visits, we heard calls for an Anangu digital mentor to support Elders and reduce demand on local service providers. Resident, Renita Roberts, had previously worked in the PY Ku Centre, supporting clients with Centrelink needs, use of MyGov and internet banking, building upon years of experience in similar roles in Irrunytju community.



Figure 22: Residents using the Centrelink computer in the PY Ku Centre

- + *"I've been helping people [in the Py Ku Centre] to do internet banking [and use the] computer there in the office." (Renita Roberts, Pipalyatjara resident, 2024)*

Community leaders described this as essential in bridging the gap between government services and community members, especially for Elders and those with low literacy.

- + *"We should get [a digital mentor to] help people." (Renita Roberts, as above, 2024)*
- + *"[A digital mentor] would have lots of value, [especially for] the older ones." (Richard King, General Manager APY, Teams Interview, 2024)*

Digital skills development is typically driven by the need to undertake an often time-sensitive task such as accessing MyGov, activating a SIM, doing online banking, completing a form or paying a bill online. There were calls for on-demand training when these needs arise, rather than 'just in case' training.



"A digital mentor is exactly what's needed. It should be a well-paid position ... The disconnect between community people is so vast that they [need] a mentor in between to help them to access [the services they need]."

— Mark Manning, Community Wellbeing Support Officer, 2024

Workplace digital skills development is mostly via on-the-job training

Digital skills are now required for many of the jobs in the community. While most young people are very proficient with mobile phone applications, there is a need for support to develop workplace digital skills through training, particularly in use of computers and digital applications. RASAC manages the regional CDP and provides workplace training, however this has traditionally been focused on technical roles and equipment-use, not digital skills training.

- + *"[CDP is focused on] building skills [and] activities that they do in their sheds ... They haven't got the [computer] set-up [or training to show] them how to set-up their email [or identify] dangerous scams." (Wanita Manning, Community Wellbeing Support Office, 2024)*

We heard that the lack of digital skills is a limitation on the type of roles that people can undertake.



"It narrows the role of what people do because they don't have a lot of digital skills. The younger that they are, the more likely that they are to have some digital skills. [Most older people struggle] using email for example or searching for things—it takes a bit of coaching to get people into a basic level and I haven't seen the resources to support that."

— Penelope Gibson, Registered Nurse, Pipalyatjara Clinic, 2024

TAFE SA has a learning centre in Pipalyatjara, however training is delivered intermittently with no local coordinator for the facility. Driver's license training was being delivered at the centre during our 2024 trip by a visiting provider. We were told the facility has a computer lab set up but there was no community access or support available, despite interest from many residents.

- + *"TAFE used to help us a little bit for internet banking... They've got computers there." (Renita Roberts, Pipalyatjara resident, 2024)*

This would be an ideal location for basic digital skills workshops, however formal or accredited training typically has limited success. The most successful training model is demand-based workshops targeted

to local interests using appropriate delivery methods and resources. On-the-job training in the use of workplace equipment and applications is also effective where the skills are immediately applied.

Nganampa Health Service provides basic training for Aboriginal health workers, mostly in Alice Springs.

- + “[We do some in-house training but there is not] enough support. [We] were using the TAFE a bit last year and they were trying hard to bring people along with their IT skills.” (Penelope Gibson, as above, 2024)



Figure 23: The Learning Centre in Pipalyatjara (managed by TAFE SA) has a training room with computers

Similarly, Ninuku Arts offers on-the-job training in the use of the SAM database and taking and uploading digital photographs of artworks. APY Land management also do on-the-job training in digital technologies required for ranger work.

Telehealth is regularly used at the Pipalyatjara health clinic

Telehealth can improve health outcomes through more immediate diagnosis and treatment. It also reduces patient travel to regional centres for consultations and can provide external support to clinic staff in emergencies.

- + “In an emergency situation [time is critical, so we do a] video link [to a remote doctor].” (Penelope Gibson, Registered Nurse, Pipalyatjara Clinic, 2024)



Figure 24: Pipalyatjara clinic

The Pipalyatjara Clinic is managed by the regional Nganampa Health Service and provides primary health care as well as emergency care. Telehealth is used regularly at the clinic, particularly to support continuity of care by doctors based in Alice Springs, with some better at engagement with clients than others.

- + “[It can be] difficult to have that engagement with a person through a screen. [I] helped the renal physician talk to a patient on video link this week which was fantastic. [Some] doctors are very good at establishing a connection with a person through the video before they start to have a consult. [They try to] establish where a person is from and who are their family and make an effort to understand the factors that are affecting their health. [But there] are others probably that don’t [make the effort].” (Penelope Gibson, as above, 2024)

A room with a telehealth camera and large screen had previously been used in the clinic, however, this was no longer in use, with iPads now providing more flexible telehealth throughout the clinic.

- + “SA Health [and] Alice Springs Hospital [have] changed their system, which is why we can’t use the big screen anymore, which is a real shame. [We now do telehealth] on an iPad, [such as for] wound review... The advantage of having an iPad is you can move it from room to room.” (Steff Laws, Community Health Nurse, Pipalyatjara Clinic, 2025)

While telehealth reduces some travel, emergency evacuation travel is still needed for procedures which cannot be undertaken at a remote clinic. This is often the result of people waiting too long before visiting the clinic for treatment, causing the health condition to become chronic.

Education outcomes and student engagement have improved with digital tools and access

Alongside mobile and Wi-Fi, the South Australian Government and Telstra invested in high-speed fibre for schools. Over 500 schools across the state, including in regional South Australia, are being connected to internet speeds up to 1GBps. This ensures rural and remote students can access the same digital learning opportunities as those in Adelaide.



"Every school, every teacher, every student should have access to fast, reliable internet... regardless of location—no exceptions." (Scott Bayliss, SA Education CIO, quoted in Telstra Enterprise online story, 2018)

Pipalyatjara School is one of 10 Anangu schools in the APY region coordinated by the SA Department for Education, with 67 students enrolled in 2024. Communications and IT infrastructure is centrally managed by SA Government with a high-speed fibre optic connection and local networking to the classrooms. This enables use of IT equipment and applications by all age groups within the school. Digital technologies and application had been integrated into all aspects of the curriculum by 2025.



Figure 25: Pipalyatjara Anangu School entrance

The art centre uses a cloud-based database for art cataloguing and sales

Ninuku Arts is an Aboriginal-owned and -governed art centre based in Kalka and also supporting artists from Pipalyatjara and Irrunytju.

Staff members use the Story Arts Money (SAM) cloud-based platform to catalogue the artworks, document artist biographies and stories, and record sales. The Story Art Money (SAM) platform was developed by central Australian arts peak body, Desart, and is used by art centres nationally, with an updated version currently in development. While the system worked over the art centre's Sky Muster service, uploading of large files was challenging, with Ninuku upgrading to Starlink by 2025 as a result. Training in use of the SAM platform has been provided for arts workers by Desart but currently most data entry is undertaken by the Art Centre coordinators.

Ninuku staff described how the SAM platform acts as an important archive of artists and artworks. A community access computer in the art centre is regularly used by artists to look at photos and paintings.

- + "Often when someone finishes a painting they'll go back through their old artworks [on SAM] and say, 'I want to do something like this'." (Georgie Gengos, Ninuku Arts Manager, 2025)



Figure 26: The Ninuku Arts studio space

Ninuku Arts also uses its new website (ninukuarts.com.au) to promote the centre and its artists, provide an online gallery of the paintings, showcase recent exhibitions and as an online store for direct sales of artworks and merchandise linked to the SAM platform. Previously they relied primarily on works being sold at exhibitions or by galleries.

Access to media and news services

Despite VAST satellite dish upgrades most households are still without TV services

Household access to free-to-air television services has reduced in most remote communities across Australia over the last decade due to a range of issues with VAST direct-to-home satellite television equipment. Our 2025 survey found that VAST TV services were only working in about 53% of Pipalyatjara and Kalka households, down from 66% in 2023.

In 2024 we heard demand for satellite dishes to be repaired or replaced.

- + “[We] really want someone to help fix the [VAST] dish so they can get TV. [People want to] watch TV, movies, news, football’s coming up ...” (Renita Roberts, Pipalyatjara resident, 2024)

This is despite regional efforts to address the loss of TV services, with VAST satellite dishes recently replaced on most houses in Pipalyatjara and Kalka prior to our 2025 visit, most likely by APY Housing.

- + We got a new TV dish in the houses, [so they] work [good now].” (Peter Watson, Pipalyatjara Community Chairperson, 2025)

This upgrade was needed. VAST satellite had initially been installed in remote communities in 2013 under a federal government digital switchover program, replacing previous local analogue TV broadcasting with a direct-to-home model. No funding was allocated for coordinated VAST maintenance programs in remote communities, with maintenance deemed a householder responsibility. However, the cost of technicians, including travel from Alice Springs, is prohibitive for individual households.

While this had reduced satellite reception issues, the primary point of failure is the set top box, which is seen as a household responsibility. 95% of respondents without VAST services working cited set top box issues as the reason. With the cost of replacement at over \$400 in the Pipalyatjara Store, people wanted these to be supplied or more affordable and with easier to activate smart cards.



Figure 27: There were new VAST satellite dishes on most houses in 2025 (Wi-Fi repeater in background)



“[A set top box] costs a lot of money and [it’s hard] to activate it.”

— Tenisha Fox, Co-researcher/Kalka resident, 2025

- + “It’s really complicated [to] reactivate [the smart card. We had a] lightning strike that affected the aerial. We had to then call the manufacturer and they had to reset the system, it’s not easy that whole VAST stuff.” (Liza Balmer, CEO NPY Women’s Council, 2024)

With TV services not working, some households manage to access the free external Wi-Fi to enable video streaming. However, most rely on pre-paid mobile for streaming services, adding significantly to household costs.

While remote communities have followed the trend towards increased use of streaming and on-demand services, there is still community demand for free-to-air TV services, especially First Nations content such as ICTV and NITV as well as sports.

+ “ICTV is very popular.” (Liza Balmer, CEO NPY Women’s Council, 2024)

There was interest in having television broadcast services re-established to enable free-to-air TV access as well as a local content channel. This would save household costs in replacing set top boxes, reduce expenditure on mobile data and provide access to reliable sources of news and information.



“[Digital TV transmission] would be great because that’ll give people that choice [of free-to-air TV services again]. That way, all they have to do is get an aerial and they’re good to go.”

— Richard King, General Manager APY, Teams Interview, 2024

Local news and information are mostly shared via community channels and in-person

Local news and information in Pipalyatjara and Kalka are currently shared through community-based channels and face to face communication, rather than through mainstream broadcast or print media. The 2025 survey shows that the primary source of news and information is direct, in-person communication (81% daily) with other key sources being Facebook (21% daily, 22% weekly), other social media (20% daily, 25% weekly), commercial television (13% daily, 24% weekly) and NITV (9% daily, 13% weekly). This reflects the ongoing cultural practice of oral communication but also the failure of broadcast media infrastructure.

When asked about sources of emergency information, in-person networks were almost universal in 2025 (99%, up from 65% in 2024), overshadowing the more formal channels such as ABC TV (45%, down from 61% in 2024), commercial TV (42%, up from 24% in 2024), First Nations radio (26%) and social media other than Facebook (25%). This underlines the importance of trusted community networks during crises, even as formal broadcast and digital systems vary in reliability.

There is demand for re-establishment of local radio and a RIBS studio in Pipalyatjara

Radio 5NPY, operated by PY Media, has been a trusted source of regional news, weather, and community information since the late 1990s, with most broadcasting delivered in language. However, neither Radio 5NPY nor ABC radio was available in Pipalyatjara during both our visits, while 5NPY was available in Kalka. There is regular movement to Irruntju, which has the Radio NGM service, and other APY communities with 5NPY. As a result, First Nations radio was cited as an occasional source of news and information (2% daily, 9% weekly).

In 2025, only 17% of respondents reported listening to Radio 5NPY each week and 45% occasionally (down from 26% and 31% in 2024), with most of this usage reported by Kalka residents. The primary means of accessing radio is via car radio (84% in 2025, 96% in 2024), with low home radio use (3% in 2025). Access via phones and tablets had increased in 2025 (43%, up from 15% in 2024) and via the VAST set top box on the TV (19% in 2025).

While Pipalyatjara had a BRACS radio studio established in the school in the 1990s, this was not replaced after the building was removed during the 2000s. The radio transmission equipment was relocated within the school, however this had not been operating for some time prior to our visit due to lack of a dedicated broadcast facility and funding constraints for technical support.

During our visit we heard several calls for local radio broadcasting to be reintroduced in Pipalyatjara.

- + *"We really want radio here [again] so we can have our own [media] in the community and people [working] there." (Renita Roberts, Pipalyatjara resident, 2024)*
- + *"We want to see the media going in Pipalyatjara. I did that work for a long time to keep the culture and language strong." (Survey comment, 2024)*



"I want the Radio 5NPY back strong with people sharing stories from all the communities. We used to have it but it's dropped down. I am blind so radio is the main way I get the news." (Survey comment, 2024)

Media organisations like PY Media have played an important role in digital skills training over the years.

- + *"[Media centres are] great training grounds. People built careers in there [and had] exposure to digital technology in a safe way so they're learning rather than just picking up a [mobile] phone and working it out." (Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024)*

In recent years, PY Media purchased a sea container to relocate the equipment to enable technical access, however this had not yet been commissioned. Following our 2025 visit, PY Media staff returned to Pipalyatjara to work out what was needed to re-establish the radio service. It is hoped this will be in place for our next visit.

Affordability

Affordability is a significant concern, with high costs of living

Affordability remains a critical barrier to digital inclusion, with average household expenditure on mobile services rising sharply from \$167 per month in 2024 to \$274 in 2025. 100% of those with a mobile phone are on pre-paid rather than post-paid services, with most using one to two \$39 recharge vouchers per fortnight.

- + *"Mobile data is expensive because everything is on the internet now." (Survey comment, 2024)*

Cost of living is an ongoing challenge for Pipalyatjara and Kalka residents, with higher freight costs raising the cost of food, fuel and other essentials in recent years. With an average weekly personal income in Pipalyatjara and Kalka of \$305 (ABS 2021), low-income families are juggling the costs of food, power recharge, mobile credit and other essentials.



Figure 28: \$35 recharge increased to \$39 in 2024



"Do I buy food or do I buy power? That's the kind of thing [people are facing. Jobseeker allowance] is well and truly below the minimum wage so the low levels of income and the high cost of living [and] other extra costs [make it much harder to survive than] 20 years ago."

— Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024

- + *"[Some people] are not getting any form of payment and living in communities where you pay outrageous expenses for groceries ... They are really starving." (Mark Manning, Community Wellbeing Support Officer, 2024)*

With rising data-use and pre-paid mobile rates, internet costs can be a significant burden, with many Anangu facing difficult choices between food, essentials and communications. In 2025, 25% of

respondents said they often or always cut back on essential household costs to afford internet (22% in 2024), while a further 41% sometimes did so (58% in 2024). 71% said they compromise on internet speed and/or quality to prioritise affordability in 2025, up from 46% in 2024. Among low internet users, 40% cited cost as a key reason for not using the internet.

We heard that power meter costs also impact on power reliability in houses, with reports of some people lighting fires inside houses during winter to stay warm. Without household power, people also cannot charge mobile phones.

The community Wi-Fi now provides a backup service when people run out of pre-paid mobile data. Additionally, since July 2024, Telstra introduced a low-cost Pre-paid Community Mobile plan, which provides 25GB of data for \$25 over a 14-day period.⁹ The APY postcodes are eligible for these plans, however there was no awareness of the new plan during our 2025 visit.

Affordability of devices is a challenge with high turnover

The cost of purchasing mobile phones was also raised as a significant burden with high turnover of devices.

- + *"Because of the difficult conditions, being desert environment, the phones don't last long, they get broken by kids or whatever." (Mark Manning, Community Wellbeing Support Office, 2024)*

We also heard that it has become harder to get a replacement SIM due to having their ID associated with an existing SIM. While this may be intended to reduce replacement of phone numbers, it can lead to difficulty where there is a lack of information or support about this policy.

- + *"If someone has a SIM card with an ID attached, they can't get another ... SIM. So, even though it started off everyone got the phones, and they were connected, and then over time it's getting much harder for people to be connected because of the ID situation with the SIM cards." (Mark Manning, as above, 2024)*



Figure 29: There is high device turnover, largely due to screen damage

Digital ability

Digital ability levels are relatively high, but are limited by mobile-only use and English literacy

Digital skills remain uneven across the population in Pipalyatjara and Kalka, with big skills gap between younger residents and Elders, as well as gaps for people with disability, limited education or low English literacy. While there is almost universal use of smartphones, social media and content streaming, especially among younger people, most residents face challenges in developing broader digital skills such as computer-based tasks, internet searching, form completion, online safety and setting passwords.

- + *"There are very few [Centrelink] customers that have the literacy [to use online services] independent[ly, so we] show them how to create a bank account, how to create their email and how to [use] their Centrelink accounts and [other services]." (Maile Miller, PY Ku Coordinator, 2024)*
- + *"There is definitely a lack of technological literacy out here." (Kieran Jairath, APY Land Management, 2025)*

⁹ <https://www.telstra.com.au/mobile-phones/prepaid-mobiles/prepaid-community-plan>

Digital ability indicators show mixed results. Based on analysis of our 2025 survey results, Pipalyatjara and Kalka residents had an average digital ability score of 16 out of 30. This is the total of scores out of 5 for the six digital skill types, as shown in Table 1 below. The 2025 score showed a small reduction on the 2024 result of 17.7, however slightly higher than the average score of 15.5 across the 11 sites visited in 2024. It points to more work being needed to improve digital ability.

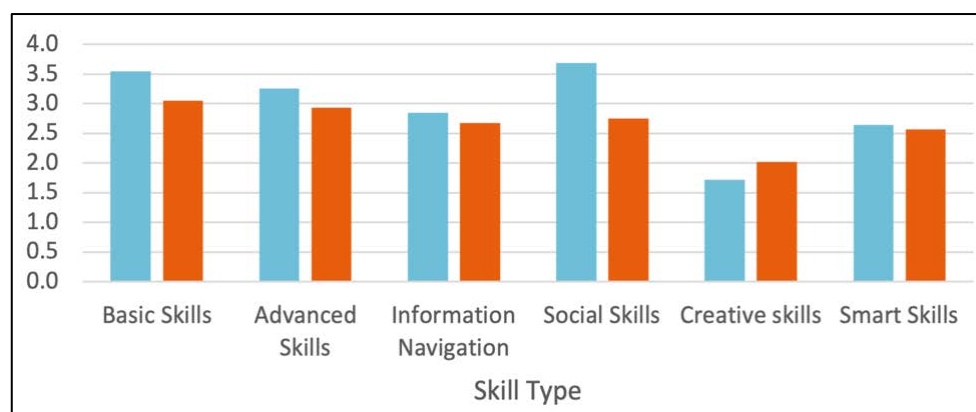


Table 1: Digital Ability scores for the six skill types (out of 5) in 2024 (blue) and 2025 (orange)

There was a marked decrease in digital skills in some areas between the 2024 to 2025 surveys. For example, the proportion of respondents confident in opening a browser tab fell from 65% to 34%, and those able to complete online forms dropped from 54% to 20%. This suggests growing exposure to digital technologies is not yet translating into greater proficiency.

However, there are a range of obstacles preventing the development of higher-level digital skills such as office-based applications, content creation and online learning. Survey results show a strong reliance on mobile devices for internet access, with 95% of regular internet users in 2025 accessing online services through a smartphone. Use of other devices was limited, with 67% reporting smart TV use, but very few using tablets (4%), laptops (1%) or desktop computers (0%). Despite high smartphone access, digital confidence remains low in many areas: only 34% said they could open a new browser tab, 20% could complete online forms, and less than half felt confident managing secure passwords (45%) or recognising safe apps to download (31%). Skills in privacy and online safety were particularly low, with no respondents reporting confidence in using privacy settings.

Language and literacy are also significant factors. In 2025, 96% of respondents spoke a language other than English at home. Just 68% said they understood written English well and 79% spoken English. Education levels further shape digital ability with 75% of respondents reporting their highest schooling as Year 10 or below, while 25% had completed Year 11/12 or a tertiary qualification.

Current digital skills in Pipalyatjara and Kalka primarily relate to the use of mobile devices and applications of everyday relevance, such as social media, online entertainment, online banking and online learning, rather than office-based applications. In 2025, 83% of respondents reported using online banking in the last six months, and 62% had accessed government services online, both slightly lower than in 2024. By contrast, 91% had used online entertainment services, showing the popularity of streaming and gaming. Participation in online learning also increased, with 60% reporting recent experience compared with 38% in 2024, indicating a growing role for digital technologies in education and skills development.

The 2025 survey found variations in confidence across several key skills compared with 2024. Only 55% of respondents reported being confident in sending and receiving emails (up slightly from 52% in 2024), while just 20% said they could complete online forms, down from 54% in 2024. Confidence in finding and installing apps also dropped sharply, from 62% in 2024 to 33% in 2025 and only 34% felt able to open a new browser tab, compared with 65% the previous year. Skills related to online safety and privacy were

similarly low, with fewer than half of respondents confident in setting passwords securely or recognising safe downloads. While year-to-year variation in the sample group may play a role, the weighted survey results indicate a broader pattern of exposure to internet-use not yet translating into higher-level digital ability.

These findings point to the need for more digital training and support, with targeted support needed for the elderly, people with disability, people with low English literacy and low levels of education.

Social media is a primary communication mode however usage has decreased

Social media is a primary means of communications and accessing news and information for most residents. The primary platforms for sharing stories and media content are Facebook, TikTok (preferred by younger people) and Instagram, with social media also a primary source of news and information (Facebook 21% daily and other social media 20% daily in 2025).

Some social media use has increased slightly, with 60% having engaged with content that made them feel connected to community (57% in 2024) and 34% engaging with online groups (16% in 2024). However, personal communications via social media have decreased since 2024, with those using social media to keep in touch with family or friends having dropped from 78% in 2024 to 66% in 2025. Our survey also found a drop in use of platform management tools, with only 49% confident in managing contact lists (down from 83% in 2024) and 42% knowing how to change who they share content with (79% in 2024).

The reason for this reduced social media usage is not clear, however it reflects what we heard anecdotally about reduced use following vitriolic online racism in the lead-up to and following the Referendum on the Voice to Parliament in 2023 as well as family conflict arising from online comments.

Email is not commonly used by Anangu, other than for work purposes or to set up online services, with only 55% confident in sending and receiving emails in 2025 (53% in 2024).

Elders called for responsible social media use and programs to address cyber-safety issues

While residents welcomed mobile and Wi-Fi connectivity in the region (to provide the ability to call family), leaders and educators have warned about online harms including bullying, credit depletion and exposure to harmful content.

- + *"There's a lot of problem for this happening on the phone. [Some people are talking rough way] on the phone, on the Facebook. A lot of our young people are doing bad things [online]." (Peter Watson, Pipalyatjara Community Chairperson, 2025)*

Social media is now the most common form of communication, especially among young people. While it connects families, it also fuels conflict, jealousy and exposure to harmful content.

- + *"The most negative thing [with] social media [use is] how quickly that can escalate into violence, bullying and exploitation. [We hear that some] kids [are] copying the violence that they [see online]." (Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2025)*



"[Social media has] good things, like contacting families [but also] bad things, like kids, especially the boys watching the bad things [online]."

—Renae Fox, Kalka resident/Co-researcher, 2024

- + *"Facebook [is] causing issues between family members, fighting, escalating feuds." (Wanita Manning, Community Wellbeing Support Officer, 2024)*

In 2024 interviews, local agencies identified a range of online safety issues prevalent in the community, from accessing inappropriate content to sexting, grooming and online bullying. We also heard of cases of technology-facilitated abuse and device control within family violence situations.



"Phones are often destroyed as an act of violence against a woman [in] jealousy [situations]. Without a phone their safety risk increases quite dramatically. [We] give a lot of our clients' phones [so] that they can call us and we can call them but also so they can call the police."

—Liza Balmer, as above, 2024

With most children now using mobile phones for entertainment, often with limited parental controls or supervision, we heard of increased risk of access to inappropriate content.

- + *"Kids [are] self-educating through TikTok and Facebook. [But this can be dangerous] with algorithms pushing them to stuff which they probably shouldn't be using as education. [So we need] education in safe use of social media and the ability to analyse what's real and what's not and build [their] analytical skills." (Richard King, General Manager APY Council, 2024)*

There were calls for more cyber-safety awareness and training. The school delivers some formal lessons on safe internet use and has resources to promote cyber-safety awareness and protective behaviours for young people. NPY Women's Council also plays a part in cyber-safety awareness.

- + *"I think it's probably a role for us [through] the youth program in saying, 'Well, you're about to get connectivity—here's some rules around social media.' It's simply knowing their rights, that you can report people, you can block people. [There are prevention strategies] which a lot of people don't know about." (Liza Balmer, as above, 2025)*

During the late 2010s, the inDigiMOB project and local schools have sought to prepare communities for these risks. However, there is no ongoing training and support program in the region, with efforts underway by NPY Women's Council to address this need.

- + *"We did make a little video some years ago now called 'Facebook goes to the Disco' and it was all about how to treat Facebook properly [when they go to a community] disco." (Liza Balmer, as above, 2024)*

PY Media has also produced a range of targeted cyber-safety messages for sharing on Radio 5NPY and Facebook (pymedia.org.au/cyber-safety-project). APY schools introduced policies and programs to address cyber-safety concerns when mobile service were being rolled out.

- + *"Policies will be in place and we'll talk to community, we'll talk to governing council, we'll talk to the children ... If there are issues, we'll do that together." (Sharon Diglio, Principal, Amata Anangu School, in SBS News story, 2017)*

The Australian Government passed legislation in July 2025 to restrict access to social media platforms for children under 16, coming into effect 10 December 2025¹⁰. Given the high reliance on social media as a primary means of communications and maintaining connections with dispersed family and friends, this legislation will have significant impact in a remote First Nations context.

¹⁰ For more information, see: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/industry-regulation/social-media-age-restrictions>

Scams are increasingly prevalent via text and social media

Scam calls, texts and online messages are becoming more commonplace, with more sophisticated scams now deliberately targeting remote First Nations people. There is increased impersonation of banking, telco or government services, such as Centrelink or the Australian Taxation Office seeking urgent payments or bank details.

- + *"We don't want scammers ringing up to our phone. But they've been doing that, ringing up at old people's phone." (Renita Roberts, Pipalyatjara resident, 2024)*

We heard that many Anangu have been impacted by scams across the region.

- + *"We were constantly helping people who had fallen victim to scams." (Mark Manning, Community Wellbeing Support Office, 2024)*

These include finance scams such as offers of bank loans or compensation payments, lotteries or prize scams. We heard several stories of people impacted by romance scams.



"[Scammers use] fake profiles [to] scam for money, like in love with someone, like they're dating. And then they think it's maybe real and they in love and they're sending the money."

— Renae Fox, Kalka resident, 2024

- + *"Some people are doing it, they [are] sending money [to] someone [they met online]." (Tenisha Fox, Co-researcher/Kalka resident, 2025)*

The ACCC have set up the [Scamwatch](#) website for reporting and updates on latest scams.

Online gambling has emerged as a major issue

Online gambling is rapidly becoming one of the most concerning digital harms in Pipalyatjara and Kalka. Regional agencies reported a spike in online gambling since mobile coverage expanded, linking it to family violence and community disharmony.

- + *"[Online gambling], it's huge. And people [are no longer] coming out of their houses. [They are] locked away in their bedrooms all day [gambling]." (Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2025)*
- + *"Quick way they got online [once they get paid and are] playing all night." (Tenisha Fox, Co-researcher/Kalka resident, 2025)*

While card game gambling has been a part of community life for decades, the shift from cash wages to online banking, along with the introduction of mobile, has resulted in a shift to online gambling. Unlike traditional card games, online gambling removes the physical reminder of cash spending.



"People used to only be able to sit around and play cards with whatever money they got out through the ATM, nowadays it's so easy to access all of your funds that are in your bank account and it's gone. [They] download an app and assign it to their credit card or someone's credit card. [Some people] don't understand that every time that they get more coins or whatever it's actually costing money."

— Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024

Online gambling has emerged as a major affordability issue, with money lost quickly after payments arrive. The removal of the Basics card, which restricted the card to approved suppliers, has also been seen as a contributor to the spike in online gambling.

- + *"[Some people] wanted to stay on the Basics card because [that] was the only protection they had against their children using their cards for online gaming and purchases. [The debit card is] effectively like a credit card whereas ... you can't spend anything online on a basics card" (Liza Balmer, as above, 2024)*

Despite gambling sites being filtered out on the community Wi-Fi network, residents could easily access a range of gambling sites via the mobile network. As a result, a growing proportion of household income is spent on gambling, often at the expense of food and other essentials. Gambling was linked to isolation, mental health impacts, and worsening poverty.

Large sums of money were reported as being lost quickly, often within a day of being received. We heard that a big win by one local led to a spate of online gambling with huge losses, including artists spending thousands of dollars of art sales earnings within a day or two. Sadly, this addiction to gambling has resulted in people spending money intended for caring of vulnerable family members.

- + *"Online gambling [is a big problem here]. Someone will get a few thousand dollars and it's gone by the next day. [Some residents] have such strong gambling addictions that they're spending [the payments of] people in their care ... they've spent it all." (Georgie Gengos, Ninuku Arts Manager, 2025)*

In 2025, NPY Women's Council is looking closely at this issue to identify possible awareness or interventions to help reduce its impact. Financial counselling, strengthening education about online harms and addressing access to gambling platforms are seen as critical to community wellbeing.

Local digital media content production, archiving and sharing

There is a long history of broadcasting and media production in the APY region

The APY region pioneered the use of media and digital technologies to document and preserve language and culture. Since the 1980s, hundreds of videos have been recorded by EVTV and PY Media in the APY Lands, including *Inma* (cultural dance events), re-enactments of *Tjukurpa* (Law/Lore) on country, oral histories, cultural knowledge programs such as bush foods and medicine, and community information videos in partnership with local agencies.¹¹ The audio collection also contains a range of oral histories, music recordings and radio interviews recorded over the last 30 years. Their extensive collection of video, audio and photographs is stored at Irrunytju, with digitisation underway to ensure long-term access (subject to cultural protocols). These recordings include cultural performances and oral histories events, forming a valuable regional archive.

As outlined in section 4, Pipalyatjara was one of three APY communities initially funded under the Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme (BRACS) from 1986, with local radio and TV broadcast equipment set up in the local school. Local broadcasters were trained by EVTV Coordinator Neil Turner and Anangu video producers from Pukatja, including Simon and Pantjiti McKenzie. Over the next 20 years there was regular broadcasting from Pipalyatjara, including over the regional radio network 5NPY, with several cultural videos produced in and around Pipalyatjara and Kalka.

Music recording has also flourished in the two communities with several local musicians involved in the UPK recordings at nearby Tilun Tilun homeland and other sites as well as music development programs run by PY Media and Ngaanyatjarra Media since the mid 2000s.

¹¹ <https://pymedia.org.au/about/video-archive/>

However, the school building containing the radio studio was demolished in the late 2000s, with no new site established for the radio studio equipment. 5NPY and ABC radio continued broadcast in Pipalyatjara and Kalka without local content. Mainstream TV services were also broadcast locally, with a switcher installed in about 2003 to enable Indigenous Community TV weekend broadcasts to be played over the community licensed channel. This was replaced with a dedicated ICTV transmitter in 2007 shortly before NITV was established, which replaced ICTV on the satellite channel provided by Imparja television.

The gradual introduction of shared internet access in the 2010s and mobile access since 2018 has changed the way Anangu access media, with increasing use of social media and streaming platforms.

- + *"Radio was big at one point. [Radio 5NPY still] gets listened to a fair bit. [But] the landscape has changed. Just having the [mobile] network out there now has really changed the way people use media, use their phones and engage with the outside world. [Nowadays] people may choose their media elsewhere." (Richard King, General Manager APY, Teams Interview, 2024)*

While PY Media still runs the regional 5NPY radio station from Umuwa, there has been a decline in interest on local broadcasting at the seven funded Remote Indigenous Broadcast Service (RIBS) sites. As a result, PY Media uses other platforms now to share video and audio content including music.



"[Previously] there was a lot more engagement with the radio [for] sharing music and information. [As in the] city or anywhere else, digital platforms and social media [have] become the prominent platform that Anangu want to engage with for sharing content. [So now we focus on] what community seems to be engaging with the most [such as video and music production]."

— Liam Convey, PY Media Manager, 2025

Anangu are increasingly producing and sharing their own content, with high engagement online.

- + *"Anangu media content, some of it's in the millions of views and it's just home-recorded, DIY content." (Liam Convey, as above, 2025)*

The free Wi-Fi networks are making it more affordable for Anangu to stream and download movies.

- + *"You can't necessarily access [the Wi-Fi network from] inside the house, but outside you can access it. So people [are] not streaming as much as we thought they would, but they're downloading [movies and shows] and then watching [it] later." (Richard King, APY General Manager, 2024)*

PY Media has been archiving its extensive collection of video and audio recordings in recent years, building on work done to digitise historic Ernabella Video Television (EVTV) productions for broadcast on ICTV during the 2000s. The video collection consists of over 3,000 hours of recorded material in the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara languages by EVTV and PY Media since 1983. As works are digitised, PY Media shares public content on various platforms—ICTV, indigiTUBE, Ara Irititja, Vimeo, Spotify, NITV.

The Ara Irititja archive preserves APY history and cultural knowledge

For many years, APY Elders called for an audio-visual archive to be created to document the region's history. They wanted a means to repatriate the thousands of historic photographs, diaries, interviews, videos and audio recordings and cultural artifacts collected by mission staff, explorers, non-Indigenous staff and museums. This led to the establishment of the *Ara Irititja* (stories from long ago) archival project in 1994. It was initiated by Elders, Peter Nyangu and Colin Tjapiya, with support from Pitjantjatjara Council anthropologist, Ushma Scales, and archival consultant, John Dallwitz.

Originally set up as a File Maker Pro database, the collection was stored on stand-alone Apple Mac computers in schools, organisations and community centres in communities across the APY and Ngaanyatjarra lands, with designated users able to add metadata such as names, locations, dates and other information to contribute to the collection's development. This was due to the lack of internet access in most communities as well as a desire by Anangu to manage access and ensure sensitive and deceased content did not show, with the ability to restrict images of deceased persons. Separate men's and women's collections were established for gender-specific content, with strict access protocols.

For many years, the Ara Irititja computers were updated once or twice a year with new material. Project staff visited each of the sites and uploaded the latest version of the collection. Beyond the historic collection, contemporary photo collections, videos, music and documents were added to the collection, which grew to hold over 100,000 items by 2010.

There were also over 50 other First Nations organisations and community collections around the country using the Ara Irititja database system to manage their own local archives. During the 2000s, a new cloud-based version of Ara Irititja was developed to enable the collection to be shared online, while maintaining cultural management protocols and passwords for access restriction levels. This renewed software was later retained by the software developer and marketed as the Keeping Culture Knowledge Management System, to enable a licence model with ongoing development and support for the growing number of collections nationally.

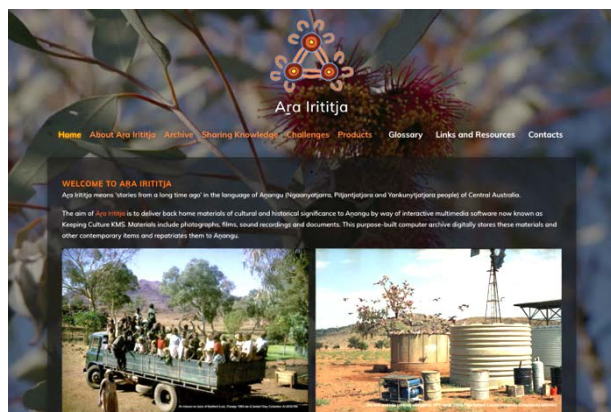


Figure 30: Homepage of Ara Irititja website (irititja.com)

Despite ongoing funding challenges, the Ara Irititja archive collection has continued to expand to over 300,000 items by 2020. While the cloud-based version has improved access to the public collection, the software licence restrictions, lack of community access computers and connectivity challenges in some sites have made access to the collection more difficult. We found no computers in Pipalyatjara or Kalka that were set up to enable Ara Irititja access.

- + *"We've got a public computer [for Ara Irititja access in the Alice Springs office] that people [use] when they're here. They love it and they'll sit in there all day. [People] pore over photos and even though they might be 30 years old they still love looking at them. [But] I don't think people are accessing it out bush as much as they could be and Ara Irititja doesn't have the funding that they used to." (Liza Balmer, NPY Women's Council CEO, 2024)*



Figure 31: Mt Davies near Pipalyatjara

6. Considerations for local Digital Inclusion Plan

Developing a local Digital Inclusion Plan enables a coordinated place-based approach to address some of the challenges outlined in this report. It also provides a useful tool for advocacy to government, industry, and for fundraising efforts. The proposed strategies outlined below, based on community input, are suggestions to improve communications services and digital inclusion in Pipalyatjara and Kalka. These are not intended to be prescriptive, nor are they listed in order of priority. In the APY context, the stakeholders are mostly regional and external agencies rather than local.

Identified issue	Possible actions	Potential stakeholders
Communications access		
Public phone: No public phone at Kalka since 2010s	Install a public phone in a central location in Kalka to enable emergency communications and use by people without mobile phones	Telstra APY Council
Wi-Fi hotspot in Kalka: No free internet access in Kalka	A free Wi-Fi hotspot in Kalka, possibly on the public phone, would provide affordable internet access, including when mobile credit runs out, and reduce demand on private Sky Muster services	NBN Co Telstra
In-house Wi-Fi access: NBN community-wide Wi-Fi network in Pipalyatjara primarily available externally; community demand for in-house access	Upgrade NBN Community Wi-Fi network to enable in-house access	NBN Co Australian Government
	OR Provide affordable Wi-Fi repeaters in the store to enable Wi-Fi signal to be boosted inside houses	Pipalyatjara Store / Mai Wiru
Store broadband upgrade: Regular internet outages at Pipalyatjara Store impact on EFTPOS sales and ATM use	Upgrade Sky Muster service to Starlink to improve speed and reliability	Pipalyatjara Store / Mai Wiru
Coordinated technical support: Lack of timely and affordable technical support for Telstra services and IT	Need for better coordination of technical / IT support between agencies to reduce number and cost of technical trips	APY Council Telstra
Affordability		
Affordable mobile data: More affordable pre-paid mobile plan options are needed	Availability of Telstra Pre-paid Community Plan and/or lower-cost alternatives to Telstra recharge (e.g. Boost, Belong)	Telstra Pipalyatjara Store
Connectivity awareness: Need for awareness of affordable plans / options for mobile and home broadband	Provide easy-to-read materials in store (posters, brochures); broadcast radio messages outlining options for NBN Sky Muster and any other providers	Telstra NBN Co / RSPs PY Media

Identified issue	Possible actions	Potential stakeholders
Digital ability		
Community access computers: Demand for community access computers for learning and internet use	PY Ku (Mai Wiru) to seek funding to set up access computers in Pipalyatjara PY Ku Centre meeting room for community use and learning- requires access computers, printer / scanner, digital mentor to provide supervision / support role, rental contribution	PY Ku / Mai Wiru Australian Government (funding) Work Ventures (laptop donation)
Digital skills development: Need for more digital skills and cyber-safety training, especially for seniors, low English speakers and people with vision and hearing impairment	Provide informal targeted digital training and support, including cyber-safety and scam awareness, online privacy and elder financial abuse Provide local support to use online banking and services	NPY Women's Council Money Mob Talkabout PY Ku / Mai Wiru TAFE SA
Targeted learning resources needed for elders and other target groups	Provide targeted learning resources for elders and people with vision and hearing impairment Produce local language videos and radio messages with e-safety information and what to do to avoid risks. Play on Radio 5NPY and on TVs in PY Ku centres	ACCAN Office of e-Safety NPY Women's Council Money Mob Talkabout PY Media
Targeted youth training: Concerns around cyber-safety issues among young people especially online bullying, inappropriate content	Arrange cyber-safety awareness workshops in school and workplaces, as well as locally targeted posters and radio promos to build awareness	Pipalyatjara School / Education SA NPY Women's Council Office of e-Safety PY Media
Digital Mentor: Need for mentor support in use of government and online services.	Employment of digital mentor / IT support roles to support people to learn / use government and online services. Could be located in PY Ku Centre or TAFE SA facility	NG Council / CDP PY Media Department of Social Services / Centrelink
Workplace digital skills: Demand for IT skills for workforce readiness and use of online services	Provide specific training workshops or one on one support in workforce readiness skills as needed (e.g. office-based applications, file management, keyboard skills, CV / letter writing, email use, job search)	APY Council / CDP

Identified issue	Possible actions	Potential stakeholders
Media access and production		
VAST TV services not working: Despite upgrade of VAST satellite equipment, 47% of households without VAST TV services working, mostly due to set-top box failure,	Coordinated program to replace set-top boxes and assist with activation of smart cards <u>OR</u> a new VAST set-top box design not reliant on smart cards	APY Council PY Media Australian Government
	More affordable VAST set-top boxes in stores	Pipalyatjara Store / Mai Wiru
	Advocate for funding to install digital TV broadcasting to replace VAST home TV services	APY Council / CDP PY Media
Local radio service: Demand for return of local RIBS radio service in Pipalyatjara, plus regular contribution to regional Radio 5NPY program	Identify local radio broadcaster to train to do radio broadcasting and other media work with PY Media Ensure radio studio set up for local broadcasting and sharing to Radio 5NPY	PY Media
Low radio access: Low household access to radio services	Install speaker near PY Ku Centre or in store for residents to hear Radio 5NPY Promote the 5NPY radio app on Android phones	Pipalyatjara Store / Mai Wiru PY Media
Local media production: Strong interest in media production of local language and cultural content, including in school	Re-establish the Pipalyatjara RIBS as a media production and broadcast facility Work with Pipalyatjara School to support students to learn radio broadcasting and media production	PY Media Pipalyatjara School / Education SA
Archive access: Need for community access to Aṛa Irititja archive of locally produced cultural and historic content	Provide dedicated Aṛa Irititja archive computer in PY Ku centre or other community access facility <u>Notes:</u> Need for funding to sustain Aṛa Irititja archive project; PY Media also working on archive, requires means of access; AIATSIS archiving facility now open in Alice Springs	Aṛa Irititja PY Media First Nations Media Australia AIATSIS

Appendix 1: Summary of survey results

This section provides the full list of weighted survey results undertaken with First Nations participants in Pipalyatjara and Kalka from 2024-25.

Demographics	2024	2025
Gender	55% female; 45% male	59% female; 41% male
% Aboriginal respondents	100%	100%
Education		
Completed year 11 or 12	57%	0%
Completed year 10 or below	43%	75%
Holds tertiary education qualification (certificate, diploma, degree)	0%	25%
Employment		
Employed or on CDP	53.4% (30.6% of these full-time)	44% (17% of these full-time)
Unemployed	10%	10%
Undertaking home duties	11%	14%
% looked for work in past month	25%	15%
Welfare		
Receives Centrelink payments	98%	92%
Most common payments	Parenting Payment (29.4 %), JobSeeker / Youth Allowance (44.9 %), Disability Support Pension (14.7%), Aged pension (8.4 %)	JobSeeker / Youth Allowance (46%), Disability Support Pension (30%), Parenting Payment (15%), Aged pension (4%)
Housing - Live in a multi-generational or shared household	92%	91%
Average number of people per household	7.2	6.1
% with long-term disability or health condition	22%	25%
% speak language other than English at home	96%	96%
ATSI languages spoken (multi-choice question)		
Pitjantjatjara	98%	94%
Ngaanyatjarra	17%	9%
Aboriginal English	0%	8%

	2024	2025
Understanding of English (very or quite well)		
Spoken English	94%	79%
Written English	91%	68%
Household income		
Households with weekly income of \$1-\$399	4%	0%
\$400-\$999	23%	13%
\$1000-\$1999	51%	71%
above \$2000	22%	15%
Phone use	2024	2025
Primary devices used for phone calls		
Mobile phone	86%	77%
Phone in community office or workplace	17%	2%
Public phone	6%	15%
Fixed line telephone in home	0%	0%
No phone access	8%	5%
Reliability of public phone		
Stated the public phone was reliable	11%	48%
Stated public phone was not reliable	84%	5%
No public phone available	5%	15%
Rate of mobile phone ownership	63% + 24% shared with others (96% are smartphones)	61% + 17% shared with others (100% are smartphones)
Pre-paid mobile phone use		
% of phone owners on prepaid services	100%	100%
Avg number of prepaid services per household	2.5	3.0
Media use	2024	2025
Radio Access (multi-choice question)		
Via car radio	96%	84%
Via phone or tablet	15%	43%
Via TV using VAST satellite	4%	19%
Via radio at home	18%	3%
Never listen to radio	37%	38%

	2024	2025
Radio programs listenership		
Local First Nations radio service	26% daily or weekly, 31% occasionally	17% daily or weekly, 45% occasionally
ABC Radio	7% daily or weekly, 30% occasionally	2% daily or weekly, 31% occasionally
Commercial radio	Not available	Not available
TV Access (multi-choice question)		
Watch on TV via VAST satellite	65%	55%
Via computer or tablet	58%	56%
Only watch TV outside of home	22%	6%
Never watch TV	7%	8%
VAST TV Access		
% with working VAST service	66%	53%
Without working VAST service	34% (73% due to set-top box not working, 67% damaged dish or cabling; 17% TV not working)	47% (95% due to set-top box not working, 0% due to damaged dish or cabling)
Most popular sources of TV and online media content (multi-choice question)		
YouTube	43% daily, 36% weekly	57% daily, 23% weekly
Streaming service	33% daily, 31% weekly	32% daily, 31% weekly
ICTV	42% daily, 30% weekly	9% daily, 30% weekly
NITV	38% daily, 20% weekly	10% daily, 30% weekly
ABC TV	35% daily, 17% weekly	16% daily, 23% weekly
Commercial TV	33% daily, 15% weekly	26% daily, 21% weekly
Primary sources of news and information (multi-choice question)		
Direct / in-person communication	50% daily, 1% weekly, 10% occasionally	81% daily, 10% weekly, 9% occasionally
Facebook	15% daily, 15% weekly, 17% occasionally	21% daily, 22% weekly, 11% occasionally
Other social media	9% daily, 9% weekly, 19% occasionally	20% daily, 25% weekly, 8% occasionally
Commercial TV	17% daily, 18% weekly, 46% occasionally	13% daily, 24% weekly, 34% occasionally
ABC TV	17% daily, 27% weekly, 41% occasionally	4% daily, 30% weekly, 38% occasionally

	2024	2025
NITV	17% daily, 8% weekly, 44% occasionally	9% daily, 13% weekly, 38% occasionally
First Nations radio	9% daily, 9% weekly, 24% occasionally	2% daily, 9% weekly, 43% occasionally
ABC Radio	8% daily, 0% weekly, 19% occasionally	2% daily, 7% weekly, 28% occasionally
ICTV	17% daily, 8% weekly, 31% occasionally	0% daily, 12% weekly, 24% occasionally
Primary sources of emergency information (multi-choice question)		
Direct / in-person communication	65%	99%
Commercial TV	24%	42%
ABC TV	61%	45%
Local noticeboards	8%	15%
First Nations Radio	27%	26%
Other social media	3%	25%
Internet use		
Latest internet use		
Have used the internet in the past week	87%	80%
In the past month	1%	5%
Never uses the internet	8%	8%
Rate of internet use (of respondents who used internet in last three months)		
Use the internet almost constantly	20%	33%
Several times a day	34%	31%
About once a day or several times a week	22%	26%
Regular internet users (Sections below refer to respondents who had used the internet within last six months)		
	91%	91%
Primary online devices (multi-choice question)		
Smartphone	97%	95%
Smart TV	34%	67%
Tablet	12%	4%
Games console	6%	7%
Portable laptop or notebook computer	8%	1%

	2024	2025
Use of Internet provided by others (multi-choice)		
Public space with free Wi-Fi	60%	66%
Government or community office	22%	66%
Shopping centre, retail, or service business	36%	22%
At houses of friends or family	29%	9%
Low or non internet users (non use in last 6 months)	9%	9%
Reasons given for not using the internet more – low/non internet users (multi-choice)		
The internet is too expensive for me	10%	37%
I am not confident using the internet	65%	19%
I don't have access to a suitable device	0%	19%
I do not have convenient internet access	45%	15%
I have a disability that restricts internet use	9%	11%
Use of fixed internet services		
Does not have fixed home internet	90%	79%
NBN Sky Muster satellite	10%	17%
Satellite (other than NBN Sky Muster)	0%	4%
Data allowances of those with fixed broadband		
Have less than 49 GB / month	8%	0%
Between 50-199 GB / month	92%	25%
Above 200 GB / month	0%	0%
Have unlimited internet data	0%	17%
Frequency of exceeding fixed broadband data limits		
1 - 5 times	90%	19%
6-11 times	8%	7%
Every month	2%	0%
Use of mobile broadband services		
Do not have any mobile broadband device	94%	96%
Use a laptop/tablet SIM	6%	2%

Affordability	2024	2025
Expenditure		
Average monthly household expenditure on pre-paid mobile	\$158	\$254
Monthly household expenditure on phone and internet services	\$167	\$274
% of respondents who cut back on essential household costs to afford personal or household internet		
Sometimes	58%	41%
Often or always	22%	25%
% of respondents who compromise on internet speed and/or quality to prioritise affordability	46%	71%
Digital Ability	2024	2025
Regular internet users (The following sections refer to respondents who used internet in last three months)	92%	97%
Basic digital ability metrics (very true / mostly true)		
Open a new browser tab	71%	66%
Send and receive emails	52%	55%
Choose keywords to search for information	57%	53%
Find and install apps	78%	61%
Complete online forms	74%	49%
Connect to a Wi-Fi network	94%	73%
Online security and cyber-safety awareness (very true / mostly true)		
Add or remove friends or followers on social media	83%	49%
Decide what personal information to share online	57%	53%
Set/manage secure passwords	68%	53%
Set/adjust privacy settings	65%	57%
Check if information is trustworthy	30%	34%
Manage how much information about me is collected	30%	32%

	2024	2025
Creative activities (very true / mostly true)		
Produce online content	14%	32%
Post videos	46%	38%
Create websites	9%	3%
Awareness of online copyright law	19%	9%
Use of smart devices (very true / mostly true)		
Connect smart devices (e.g. smart TV) to the internet	55%	58%
Adjust smart device privacy and security settings	38%	31%
Primary online activities (activities undertaken in past six months)		
Online banking	94%	78%
Accessing government services	94%	58%
Online learning / study	37%	34%
Comparing prices of products or services	54%	48%
Tracking packages	46%	44%
Online buying / selling	42%	33%
Booking medical appointments	19%	12%
Social media use (activities undertaken in past six months)		
Keeping in touch with family or friends	80%	66%
Meeting new friends or reconnecting with old friends online	54%	54%
Engaged with content that made you feel connected to community	50%	60%
Engaging with online groups	18%	34%
Online entertainment (activities undertaken in past six months)		
Used online entertainment services	99%	95%
Attended an online music, arts, or cultural event online	55%	57%

Survey comments:

Feedback on community Wi-Fi network in Pipalyatjara



We love the free Wi-Fi. The kids used to go down to the store for Wi-Fi, now they get it at home (2025)

- + We're happy to have the Pipalyatjara Wi-Fi, it's good when we run out of credit (2025)
- + Wi-Fi is palya (good) (2025)
- + The free Wi-Fi is in five APY communities. It's really good (2025)
- + The Wi-Fi is good, palya (2025)
- + I live in Blackstone mostly, they should get a Wi-Fi like in Pipalyatjara (2025)
- + It's good having the free Wi-Fi near our house, it's a good signal on the veranda (2025)
- + The Wi-Fi is good for us (2025)
- + The free Wi-Fi is good, easy to use near my home (2025)
- + Wi-Fi is good, it's on our house (2025)
- + The Wi-Fi doesn't reach our house near the south side of town, facing the wrong way (2025)
- + The Wi-Fi is good, saves us walking and saves money for top-up (2025)
- + We want Wi-Fi inside [the house to use] for Netflix (2025)
- + I want internet inside the house, like Tjuntjuntjara (2024- prior to Wi-Fi network installation)



We want the Wi-Fi connected to our house like they have in Tjuntjuntjara, so we can use it inside. That's a good one (2024)

- + We like the Wi-Fi in Tjuntjuntjara, we should get it here (2024)
- + We want the free Wi-Fi all around the community (2024)

Waiting on mobile service in Kalka

- + We're waiting for the mobile to be installed in Kalka (2025)



We're still waiting for a long time for the mobile in Kalka (2025)

- + We like the Wi-Fi, it makes it easy when we run out of credit (2025)
- + We're waiting for the mobile (2025)
- + No phone in Kalka (2025)
- + Waiting for Telstra tower (2025)
- + It's good we're getting mobile in Kalka (2025)
- + We're looking forward to the mobile coming to Kalka (2025)
- + We still waiting for the mobile in Kalka, will be good (2025)
- + We have our own satellite internet, we all pay for it. We're waiting for the mobile in Kalka (2025)
- + We're waiting for the mobile in Kalka (2024)
- + We want the mobile in Kalka but I may not get it at the homeland (2024)
- + In Kalka we don't have internet but have a little bit of mobile signal form Irrunytju sometimes. We want the mobile here (2024)



We will be happy when the mobile comes to Kalka. We need it for emergency because there hasn't been a public phone for 6 years. We need a public phone in Kalka too (2024)

- + We live in Kalka so no public phone or mobile, so we only have the satellite at home. It doesn't work when its raining (2024)

- + We're still waiting for the mobile. We need the TV fixed up too, set box costs too much (2024)
- + We have SkyMuster so everyone comes to our house because of no other internet in Kalka (2024)
- + We want mobile in Kalka (2024)

Issues with VAST TV services / Cost of set-top boxes



It's good that they fixed the satellite dish for the TV. I had to buy a new box for \$500 in Wingellina. They don't sell it here (2025)

- + We want TV but set top box costs too much (2025)
- + We need a TV and VAST box (2025)
- + It's good to have TV working again, we didn't have it for a long time (2025)
- + Need help to set up [VAST] TV box (2025)
- + We need TV broadcasting in Pip (2025)
- + We need the TV dish fixed up (2024)
- + Waiting for TV (2024)
- + I want to get Foxtel to get sports. The VAST TV is not working (2024)



We need TV working to make it easy to get news and save money on mobile for watching (2024)

Affordability

- + My son, niece and nephew use phone for TikTok [so I] have to buy more credit (2024)
- + We want internet at home and a TV (2024)
- + Changed home internet plan to be slower to make it cheaper (2024)
- + Mobile data is really expensive (2024)
- + Mobile data is expensive because everything is on the internet now (2024)
- + We want Wi-Fi at our house but too expensive (2024)
- + We want Wi-Fi (2024)
- + Sky Muster is sometimes good but money problem for us (2024)

Device needs

- + I share a phone with my daughter, need to get my own phone. Maybe next week I'll buy a new one for about \$340 (2025)
- + Waiting for a mobile (2025)
- + Would like to get a mobile phone (2025)
- + I need a mobile phone. I keep my SIM card but have to borrow phone to use (2025)
- + I've got no phone, too much money (2025)
- + I need to save up for tablet (2025)
- + Have a SIM card but no phone. Screen is broken. Would use the internet if phone was working. I want to take phone to Alice Springs for fixing. Screen broken by my 4yr-old granddaughter. Don't want to buy a new phone because granddaughter will break it again (2024)
- + I gave my phone to my 13-year-old daughter. I plan on buying a new phone when I have the money (2024)
- + Hoping to buy a phone. Will get one next week (2024)
- + I need a phone but need help to get one (2024)



I can't afford to buy a mobile phone, too expensive. I've waited a couple of months since I lost it. It's hard to do things without a phone (2024)

- + My old phone broke. I want a new phone but costs too much (2024)
- + I use a flip phone to stop the kids taking the phone to use for games (2024)
- + Sometime I go to Alice Springs for NDIS care, I need my phone to talk to family (2024)



I share a mobile with my partner but he is travelling so I do not have access. It's too expensive to have another phone (2024)

Training or support needs

- + We need more help to learn to use internet and phone (2025)
- + I need help to learn to use phone and internet. I never learnt (2025)
- + I need help with banking on phone (2025)
- + I've just got my phone and learning how to use it. I need some help (2025)
- + Want to learn more about using internet on mobile phone (2025)
- + We should have a place to learn to use internet or get help (2025)
- + Need more computers [to learn] (2025)
- + We should have computers for people to learn and get help (2024)
- + I don't use the internet. I get help from the Centrelink (2024)
- + I Don't want the internet. People take my money (2024)
- + I need someone to help me learn to use the phone and online services. I get help to do myGov or other things but want to do it myself (2024)



We need a place to learn to use computers, with an Anangu helper (2024)

- + We want Wi-Fi to our house so I can learn to use a computer at home (2024)
- + I need help to use phones and set it up for me (2024)
- + We need some training here for elders to learn to use computers, phones, online services (2024)
- + We need some more help for people to learn computers and about scams (2024)

Demand for return of local radio and media service

- + We want radio and media in Pipalyatjara again (2024)
- + We want to see the media going in Pipalyatjara. I did that work for a long time to keep the culture and language strong (2024)
- + We should have a Pipalyatjara radio person working to tell stories from this side (2024)



I want the Radio 5NPY back strong with people sharing stories from all the communities. We used to have it but it's dropped down. I am blind so radio is the main way I get the news (2024)

- + We want our own music and videos and stories on the radio and TV (2024)
- + We should get Pipalyatjara radio going again with PY Media (2024)

Starlink use

- + We've got Starlink. It's good for streaming. Everyone comes to our house for Wi-Fi (2025)

Other comments

- + I make my own music using Logic Pro or GarageBand and make video clips and post on TikTok. I do it for fun (2025)
- + We need the public phone fixed (2024)
- + I post videos of song performances using community Wi-Fi to upload videos. Can get shop Wi-Fi from house (2024)
- + I like to make and share TikTok videos with community (2024)

Appendix 2: Community communications audit

About the community	
Community Name	Pipalyatjara / Kalka
Alternate name	Mt Davies
Traditional owners / Language group	Pitjantjatjara
Location (coordinates)	Pipalyatjara - Latitude -26.1635499 Longitude 129.1714386 Kalka - Latitude -26.11252 Longitude 129.153076
Region	Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Western Australia
LGA / Shire / Regional Council	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Council (https://anangu.com.au/)
Land Council	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Council
Regional Service Centre, distance	Alice Springs - 700 km north-east
Remoteness (ABS)	Very remote
Population data – ABS 2021	
ABS 2021 Census All persons QuickStats	Pipalyatjara - https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/SAL41164 Kalka - https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/SAL40653
ABS 2021 Census Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people QuickStats	Pipalyatjara - https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/ILOC40200108
Total population	159 (130 ATSI) / 112
ATSI population	81.8%
Gender breakdown (ATSI)	Pipalyatjara - 42.9% male, 57.1% female Kalka - 42.3% male, 57.7% female
Median Age / breakdown (ATSI)	Pipalyatjara - 30 for ATSI population; Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 18.8% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 5.0% of the population Kalka - 26
Families	Pipalyatjara - 38; Average children per family -1.3 for families with children, 0.5 for for all households Kalka - 23; Average children per family - 2.6 for families with children, 1.8 for for all households
Language groups / number of speakers	Pitjantjatjara - 117 (74%); Ngaanyatjarra - 8 (5%)
% ATSI people who speak an ATSI language	88.1%
% ATSI people who speak English at home	No data
Employment levels	56 people (42.1%) were in the workforce, 61 (45.9%) were not in the workforce. Of those working, 26.8% (15) were employed full time, 25% (14) were employed part-time. 13 people were unemployed.
Education levels – No of people reached	14 students attending primary or secondary school. Educational attainment was: Bachelor Degree level and above - 7.5%; Year 12 - 9.0%; Year 11 - 6.8%; Year 10 - 24.1%; Year 9 or below - 33.1%

Number of dwellings, people/household	Pipalyatjara - 39 occupied private dwellings (28 ATSI households); Average people per household - 3.3 (4.1 for ATSI households) Kalka - 20 occupied private dwellings; Average people per household - 5.6 per ATSI households)
Housing suitability	Average 1.4 people per bedroom
Median Weekly ATSI household income	\$1291 (\$706 for ATSI households) / \$1337
Median Weekly ATSI personal income (15+)	\$293
Average weekly rent	\$83 (\$83 for ATSI households) / \$100
Average motor vehicles per dwelling	0.7 / 1.3
Community services and plans	
Community layout plan	https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2021-07/LOP-Pipalyatjara and Kalka-LP1-Amendment-10-map-set.pdf
Agencies in community	Pipalyatjara - APY Council, PY Ku Centre (operated by SA Government - provides Centrelink, post service, housing RASAC (municipal services, pool, workshop/ fuel supply etc), Pipalyatjara Community Store (operated by Mai Wiru Stores), Pipalyatjara School (Education SA), Pipalyatjara Clinic (Nganampa Health Service), Police Post, NPY Women's Council (youth development), Learning Centre (SA Government/ TAFE). Kalka - APY Rangers, Ninuku Arts
Regional agencies / other providers	SA Government agencies, PY Media, Telstra, NBN Co/APN, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Cowell Energy, SA Water
Community development plan/s	APY Strategic Plan 2021-25
Power supply / type / backup in community	Diesel generators (under Remote Area Energy Supply scheme), with backup generator for clinic; plans for solar farm
Use of pre-payment meters in households	Yes
Communications services available	
Public phones – number / location	One only, near community store (handle broken at time of 2024 visit); No public phone in Kalka since about 2018
Home phones	Limited staff houses and agencies only, most staff use mobile
Mobile service	Telstra 3G/4G macro cell tower in community, installed May 2018; No mobile coverage in Kalka at time of 2024 visit (4G small cell installed May 2025)
Mobile coverage and reliability	Good signal across Pipalyatjara community, some congestion in afternoons, good coverage at time of visit. Occasional dropouts due to fibre optic cable damage or network outages.
Public Wi-Fi services	NBN Community Wi-Fi mesh network installed in Pipalyatjara by APN in 2024; Free DHS Wi-Fi at Py Ku centre 24/7; Free Wi-Fi hotspot at store Pipalyatjara 6am to 6pm weekdays
ADSL usage	There are ADSL ports available, however most are not being used. No First Nations households have ADSL services

Business grade or fibre optic services	Pipalyatjara Community School likely has fibre optic connections with business grade services
Fibre to community	Yes, the fibre optic is delivered through the APY Lands, with a runoff line to Pipalyatjara
NBN Sky Muster satellite services	In 2025, most local agencies had Sky Muster (Pipalyatjara community store, Pipalyatjara clinic, Learning Centre, RASAC workshop, NPY Women's Council, APY Land Management) as well as most staff houses. In 2025, 6 Anangu households had Sky Muster services, including three in Kalka
Starlink satellite services	Pipalyatjara Clinic (installed early 2024); Ninuku Arts (2024)
UHF or HF Radio	Sky Muster - Most local agencies (Pipalyatjara community store, Pipalyatjara and Kalka Artists, NPY Women's Council) have Sky Muster satellite services, as well as most staff houses. According to our survey, about 4% of First Nations households have Sky Muster service
Status of services – faults, issues etc	There were reports of occasional mobile service outages, with power outages an occasional issue. There was an extended Telstra outage for about 3 weeks in mid 2022, with no phones or Internet, due to fibre cut at Kanyipi. Satellite services provide redundancy, enabling agencies to continue to operate and use of EFTPOS and ATM at the store
Communications programs history (Mobile Black Spot Program, Regional Connectivity Program etc)	Mobile Black Spots Program Round 1 (Pipalyatjara mobile tower completed May 2018, one of 6 mobile towers on the APY Lands completed November 2017 to June 2018); NBN Wi-Fi hotspot (funded by NBN under Communities in Isolation program); Kalka small cell tower funded under Regional Connectivity program Round 1 along with five other APY sites Yunyarinyi/Kenmore Park, Nyapari, Murputja, Kanpi and Watinuma; PY Media delivered a number of communications programs in the APY Lands under Networking the Nation funding in the early 2000s, including the PY Ku centre network
Any planned upgrades?	Kalka small cell awaiting installation in March 2025, approved by APY Council in July 2023; Solar power farm upgrade due 2027
Emergency information system	Emergency services managed by SA Police (nearest police station in Amata). Emergency communications mostly via mobile or satellite phone currently
Telemetry network	Monitoring of power generator by Cowell Electric under the Remote Area Energy Supply (RAES) scheme, with electricity charging via smart pre-payment meters introduced regionally since July 2022; Management and monitoring of water supply by SA Water since 2005 in nine APY Lands communities—Indulkana, Mimili, Fregon, Umuwa, Ernabella (Pukatja), Kenmore Park, Amata, Pipalyatjara and Kalka—including tanks, 53 bores, 4 desalination plants, 1 wastewater treatment plant. Smart metering technology used since 2013 for measuring consumption, chlorination and identifying leaks

Media services available	
Radio services broadcast – AM or FM	Radio 5NPY (101.13FM)(not working at time of 2025 visit)
TV services – local broadcast, number of DTH services, number working	VAST direct-to-home satellite access only, but 47% of those surveyed in 2025 did not have VAST TV working
RIBS radio station	Previously located in school, not currently equipped with studio equipment or staffed
RIMO – regional provider	Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Media
Community access facilities	
Internet access facility	Two computers in Centrelink office provided by DHS for use of government services and banking; Videoconferencing in community office
Public Wi-Fi availability, free or voucher system, agency, RSP, monthly download limit	NBN set up WiFi Mesh network to all dwellings in Pipalyatjara and Kalka on 18 October 2022. Pipalyatjara and Kalka community office have public Wi-Fi available during work hours
Access computers available in other facilities – art centres, store, community office, youth centre etc	Py Ku centre/ Centrelink have one computer for access to Centrelink and government services; Learning Centre (TAFE SA) have computers for training purposes; No other known community access computers
Any programs running to support community access – provider	Not currently



Figure 32: Painting of local symbol Partilpa(Ringneck Parrot) on shed, Mt Davies under cloud in background

Appendix 3: Photos of research activities



Figures 39 and 40:
Daniel with Freddie
Ken, Colin Paddy, co-
researcher Danny Fox,
and Lawrence Brumby
(2024); Lyndon with
Danny Fox and Tenisha
(2025)



Figures 41 and 42:
Jenny doing survey
with Lorabelle Atira
(2024); Mark Jennings
and family (2025)



Figures 43 and 44:
Jenny Kennedy doing a
survey with PY Media
Chair Jacob McKenzie
(2024); Daniel surveys
resident Freddie Ken
(2024)



Figures 45 and 46:
Daniel doing survey
with resident Anyupa
Martin outside PY Ku
Centre (2025);
Residents Deano
Robert and Anuwa
Roberts (2025)