The Learning Community Centres in Nyirrpi, Lajamanu, Willowra and Arlparra have quickly become vital hubs of formal and informal learning and community activity. Planning is underway to open a fifth centre in Yuendumu in mid 2014.

Situated in the civic heart of these communities, the Centres are supported by a Batchelor Institute Coordinator/Mentor. Local people are employed in a range of roles essential to the outreach, learning support and day-to-day operations of the Centres.

Since 2010, Batchelor Institute has enjoyed a strong partnership with the Warlpiri Education Training Trust (WETT) which is administered by the Central Land Council and with the Australian Government to fund these vibrant community hubs.

On any day, people may visit the Centre to attend a food preparation workshop, or learn in groups or individually such skills as internet banking, or even come as a family to record their history and stories and songs in the Centre’s cultural database.

In any week, there may be five or six courses, in areas like business, iPad training, construction, interpreter training, First Aid, safe food handling, fire preparedness, bread-making, land management and driver education. Some courses are accredited, others informal. The Centre also hosts weekly meetings by local groups as well as visiting support agencies like Centrelink.

At regular intervals, a reference group comprising local representatives meets to guide the day-to-day activities and direction to ensure the Centre best matches the thinking of the community. This advice builds on Batchelor Institute’s commitment to ‘both ways’ education that supports shared learning journeys and strengthens Indigenous identity.

Both-ways is a philosophy of education that brings together Indigenous Australian traditions of knowledge and Western academic disciplinary positions and cultural contexts, and embraces values of respect, tolerance and diversity.
Key areas of learning and community engagement

Shaped by the needs of each community, the Centres focus on three areas of learning and community engagement:

Learning for work
Centre coordinators and teaching staff from Batchelor Institute and other training providers support the work people are doing in their community through targeted courses, such as:

- language literacy and numeracy, land management, computer literacy, children's services, health, education, business, visual arts, media and music, food preparation, and community services.

Learning for life and wellbeing
The Centres have responded quickly to the high demand in computer skills that are tied to essential life skills and personal management skills.

They include:

- internet banking, emailing, Facebook, accessing relevant websites, managing bank accounts, taxation and superannuation, registering for an ABN or birth certificate.

Learning for strengthening cultural identity
Users of the Centre may record family stories, songs, accounts of history and important events and store these in the Centre's cultural database along with photographs and film footage. This material can be accessed at each of the Learning Community Centres.

For more information contact:

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Jirtirlparnta (Nyirripi) Learning Community Centre
Phone: (08) 8956 8645

Lajamanu Learning Community Centre
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