

## Information sheet

# School attendance officers

## Introduction

The Northern Territory (NT) Government was elected with a clear mandate and is committed to delivering on its three priorities of Reducing Crime, Rebuilding the Economy, and Restoring the Territory Lifestyle. One of the key activities to support achievement of these priorities is increasing attendance by holding parents to account for sending their children to school. This is not new work for the Department of Education and Training (department). It is already within the scope of the *Education Act 2015* (NT) to issue notices and directions in relation to school enrolment and attendance. This includes issuing compliance and infringement notices to parents of students and independent students who do not attend school on a regular basis.

The introduction of 24 School attendance officers will support the NT Government's commitment to increasing attendance and supporting students to engage in education and learning. School attendance officers will be regionally based to ensure connection with schools and communities. All schools, including urban, regional, and remote will receive a service. Advocating for children to be in school every day is the key to the future success of the NT and is a shared responsibility that sits with all of us.

## Purpose

School attendance officers deliver services that aim to:

- increase attendance in NT schools through targeted compliance activities
- hold parents to account for sending their children to school every school day
- improve student outcomes including educational attainment through regular attendance at school.

## Functions

School attendance officers undertake a range of responsibilities to promote regular attendance and meaningful engagement in education and learning. Their responsibilities include:

- raising awareness and educating parents that it is the law to send their children to school
- undertaking mobile engagement and compliance patrols of shopping centres, CBD areas, Darwin and Palmerston bus interchanges and known hot spots for anti-social behaviour and truancy
- approaching students found in public spaces during school hours and questioning as to why they aren't in school
- working collaboratively with partner agencies including non-government and community organisations to ensure support is provided where necessary
- working directly with schools, students and families and refer complex cases to the department's Student Engagement Advisors for intensive case management
- issuing compliance and infringement notices to parents of students and independent students who are identified as being non-compliant with the *Education Act 2015* (NT). The fine is \$370 for parents and \$37 for independent students.