



FAQs

What is the National Indigenous Immersion Program and where is it held?

- The program is an intensive two-week cross cultural experience in the remote Indigenous community of Nganmarriyanga (Palumpa), home to approximately 500 people and located in the Northern Territory's far north-west.
- The program begins with a 2 day orientation in Darwin, including cultural awareness training, before flying into the community by light aircraft.
- The time in community involves a mix of activities organised and run by the Immersion group. There are also opportunities to immerse in daily life with local community members, including school and parish activities. The program concludes with a two-day debrief in Darwin.
- The Immersion Program focuses strongly on relationship – with the community, with fellow Vincentians, with self and with God.

Who can apply?

- The Immersion Program is open to current Australian St Vincent de Paul Society members and volunteers aged 18-79, with a minimum of 12 months involvement in the Society.
- Society employees who are also members/volunteers are eligible in the latter capacity, and would be required to take annual leave if selected.

How do I apply?

- Applicants must complete and submit an application form by 16 November 2018, to the contact details included in 'more information'.
- Application forms are available on the Vinnies website: https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Our_Impact/Indigenous_Australia/Immersion_Program_2019/

How are participants selected?

- A rigorous selection process has been developed to ensure consistency and transparency in managing the large number of applications received each year.
- Applicants will be shortlisted for referee contact and/or telephone interview by the program's selection panel.
- The selection panel considers each applicant's involvement in the Society, willingness to get involved in activities in community (such as sports, craft, dancing, school classes, and cane toad collecting!), a demonstrated openness to exploring and sharing Vincentian and Aboriginal spirituality; as well as the overall participant mix (age, gender, location, skill set), group dynamics and previous immersion and formation opportunities and experiences.
- We strongly encourage volunteers and members with experience leading kids camps or buddies days to apply.
- Successful applicants will demonstrate:
 - An interest in sharing themselves and learning from fellow participants and our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in the community
 - Excellent communication skills
 - A willingness to interact with a broad range of people and be flexible and adaptive to different conditions and experiences; and
 - They are team players who will be actively involved with preparation and activities leading up to, during and after the program.
- The final group will consist of 8-10 people including a spiritual adviser and program coordinator/s. All participants must also obtain a Northern Territory Ochre Card, (the Territory's working with children check). The program will assist participants with their Ochre card applications.

What are the key application and program dates?

- Applications open 1 October 2018
- Applications close 16 November 2018
- Shortlist interviews Mid to late November 2018
- Un/successful applicants notified December 2018 (Successful applicants must then immediately begin NT Ochre Card application process.)
- 2019 Immersion Program 6-21 April 2019

How much does it cost?

- Participants must cover the cost of their flights to and from Darwin, as well as contributing \$400 (or \$250 for students and pensioners) toward transport to and from Nganmarriyanga via light aircraft. Accommodation and meals during the program are covered by the Society.

What are accommodation and living conditions like in Nganmarriyanga?

- The program takes place on the cusp of the wet season, so the weather is hot and humid.
- You will also be away from many conveniences of modern life for two weeks, including sleeping on inflatable mattresses, simple food and no TV.
- Participants must have a willingness to live in a communal environment with fellow participants.

How fit and healthy do I need to be?

- Participants require a moderate level of fitness and good health to actively participate in the program, including sport and games with children, walks around the community and contributing to communal living tasks, such as cleaning and meal preparation.
- All participants must have ambulance cover in the event an emergency medivac is required.

How long has the program been running?

- The first National Indigenous Immersion Program was held in 2004.

Who coordinates the program?

- The program is a Special Work of the Society's National Youth Team and is managed by the National Indigenous Immersion Program Committee, a sub-group of the National Youth Team. A small working group is also established for coordination of each annual program.

Where can I get more information?

- More information and application forms are available from the Vinnies National Office, the Vinnies website, by email: immersion@svdp.org.au or by phone: (02) 6202 1213.

