



phn
NORTHERN TERRITORY

An Australian Government Initiative

RURAL
Workforce
AGENCY NT

20
22
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20
23

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Northern Territory PHN acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country on which we work and live, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and to their cultures.

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SNAPSHOT

OUR COMMUNITY



population of

247,000



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

account for

26.3%
of the population



74.6%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in

REMOTE
or very remote areas

OUR HEALTH WORKFORCE

320

health professionals subscribed to the

'PROJECT ECHO' NETWORK

a knowledge sharing model that supports health care providers to provide best practice care in their communities.



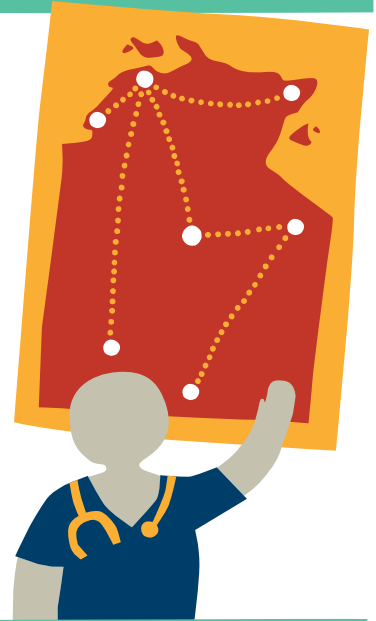
\$639,724

was allocated to a record number of remote health professionals through the

HEALTH WORKFORCE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Workforce Access Team coordinated
**1,271 VISITS,
EQUALLING
2,481 DAYS
OF OUTREACH
HEALTH SERVICES**

to remote communities through the Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program (MOICDP). This program provides chronic disease services to remote communities across the NT.



**776
HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS**

attended 64 Continuous Professional Development (CPD) events.



The Workforce Access Team provided regular access to GP locums in remote communities despite ongoing GP shortages. The result of this hard work was that

**1,373 DAYS OF
GP LOCUM COVER
WERE PROVIDED**

**181
PERMANENT
RECRUITS**

to the NT, this is a
52% INCREASE
on last financial year.

**\$1,000,000
IN FINANCIAL
INCENTIVES**

to medical practitioners through the Workforce incentive program – Doctor Stream.



SUPPORTING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE



\$1,400,000
OF GP SUPPORT GRANTS

to 40 general practice and ACCHS

Facilitated the delivery of the
PRACTICE LEADERSHIP MASTERCLASS TO 36 STAFF

from general practice and Aboriginal Community Controlled health services (ACCHS)



OVER 1200 ENGAGEMENTS

with private general practices across the territory



Supported general practice staff to attend

BI-MONTHLY PRACTICE MANAGER FORUMS

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

NT headspace sites

5588 SUPPORT SESSIONS

were held in 22-23

1455

young people received

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

807

NEW YOUNG PEOPLE

visited the headspace centre

547

young people

RETURNED FOR MENTAL HEALTH

support throughout the year.

Head2Health

1951

people made contact with the

HEAD2HEALTH SERVICE

106 CALLS WERE MADE

to Head2Health

1637 PEOPLE

used the intake and Referral Decisions Support Tool

CEO AND BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE

This report reflects upon the achievements, challenges and innovations that have taken place in 2022–23.

This year marks the end of our previous strategic plan and welcomes a new one to shape our direction for the next 5 years. This annual impact report speaks to the highlights we have already accomplished under our new focus areas and demonstrates Northern Territory Primary Health Network's commitment to our future goals. And while we can't include everything our incredible staff, team and stakeholders have accomplished, we hope this report gives you a snapshot of how we are continually striving to improve healthcare and support health workers in the region.

Over the year we have continued to harness our expertise in primary healthcare to drive systemic reform, integration and equitable access across the healthcare system. Our goal is to identify gaps and enhance integrated care through strategic partnerships across various health services.

We have made significant strides in evolving our organisational capability and fostering a culture of excellence. You will find highlights from the year, including case studies that exemplify our dedication to growth and innovation, so we are best placed to support the sector.

You can learn about our initiatives and programs aimed at supporting primary care in the Northern Territory, including our involvement in the Strengthening Medicare – GP Grants Program and our commitment to improving access to healthcare.

Discover our efforts to introduce new services that address the unique healthcare requirements of the Northern Territory. This includes the Care Finder program, aimed at providing specialised support to our senior citizens, and Medical Yarn Ups that aim to de-stigmatise seeking medical care among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by embracing culture and wisdom.

The report also delves into our recruitment and retention efforts, workforce incentive programs and support for health professionals in accessing continuous professional development.

These are just some of the key areas covered in our annual impact report, showcasing our dedication to enhancing healthcare in the Northern Territory.

We believe healthcare is not just about treating illnesses; it's about building a healthier and stronger community. Our dedication to this belief is reflected in the stories, data and initiatives detailed in this report. We are proud of the progress we have made, and remain committed to delivering accessible, quality healthcare services to the people of the Northern Territory.

We would like to express our gratitude to our dedicated team, our partners and the community for their unwavering support and collaboration.

As we look to the future, we are excited about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. With your continued support and partnership, we are confident we can continue to drive positive change and improve the health and wellbeing of all Territorians.

Thank you for your trust and commitment to the Northern Territory Primary Health Network.

Sincerely,

Gill Yearsley, CEO, NT PHN, and
John Rawnsley, Board Chair





OUR GOVERNANCE

NT PHN Board is responsible for providing leadership and overseeing the overall strategy, governance and performance of the organisation. It addresses the community's health requirements and focuses on the health needs arising from the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The strength and effectiveness of our independent, skills-based board is thanks to the diversity of its directors. They come from every corner of the NT bringing diverse skills, experiences and backgrounds. At least 3 director positions are reserved for people of Aboriginal descent. The board's composition aligns with the NT PHN constitution.

In 2022–23 our board members were:

1. John Rawnsley (Chair)
2. David Blair (Deputy Chair)
3. Heather D'Antoine
4. Dr Samuel Goodwin
5. Liza Houghton
6. Dr John Boffa
7. Dr John Paterson
8. Dr Marco Briceno.

To ensure it operates effectively and makes the right decisions, the board established several committees to provide expert advice and make recommendations. In line with our funding agreements and constitution, the board has one clinical council and one advisory council, which are key components of our governance and advisory structure.

These councils guide and advise our board on locally relevant clinical and consumer issues. This helps ensure the board's decisions, investments and innovations are person-centred, cost-effective, locally relevant and aligned to local care expectations and experience.

Council members are independent and selected based on skill. They come from a range of professional backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, GPs, nurses, pharmacists, allied health professionals and non-health professions such as researchers or academics.

Our councils represent all regions of the NT, and members have sound knowledge of the health priorities in their communities. Their knowledge comes from their experience as a patient or carer, or from their employment in areas like health consumer advocacy, population health or community services.



OUR
COUNCILS REPRESENT
**ALL REGIONS
OF THE NT,**
AND MEMBERS HAVE
SOUND KNOWLEDGE OF
THE HEALTH PRIORITIES
IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

OUR ORGANISATION

As a contemporary commissioner of primary healthcare on behalf of the Department of Health and Aged Care, we have a system-wide view that ensures considered coordination and integration of health services and workforce that are culturally responsive. We work with local health providers and stakeholders to ensure the delivery of accessible, high-quality and culturally appropriate programs and services that meet the needs of the diverse, vulnerable and unique populations we serve.

Just as we aim to ensure Territorians have access to health services, we aim to give the local health workforce access to support during recruitment, networks, education and training. We strive to ensure local healthcare professionals have stimulating, fulfilling and rewarding career opportunities in the NT.

The five C's of our core business are:



Capacity Building in Primary Care and Mental Health Service providers

We provide resources, training, and other supports to enable primary care and Mental Health Service providers to plan, support and deliver high-quality care.



Commissioning

We identify gaps in services and commission services that meet the unique health needs of our community.



Coordinating Health System Integration

We partner with collaborators and community to shape an integrated and coordinated approach to primary healthcare delivery, promoting better health outcomes for all Territorians.



Champion workforce reform for the Northern Territory

We address health workforce shortages in the Northern Territory, listening to the needs of the health workforce sector, responding through initiatives that support, retention, access, recruitment, and advocacy for future needs.



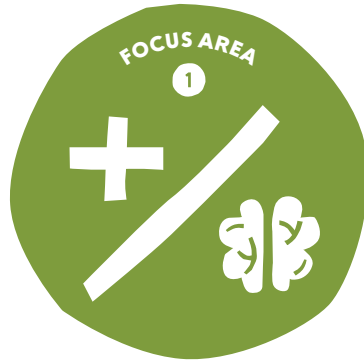
Culturally responsive

We champion cultural competency and cultural safety. Leading by example, we support providers to achieve cultural competency and cultural safety in the delivery of high-quality health care.

Our 2023-28 Strategic Plan identifies 6 focus areas, which we will report on in each annual impact report. They are:



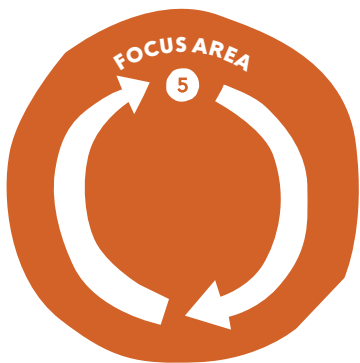
SUPPORTING OUR RURAL WORKFORCE



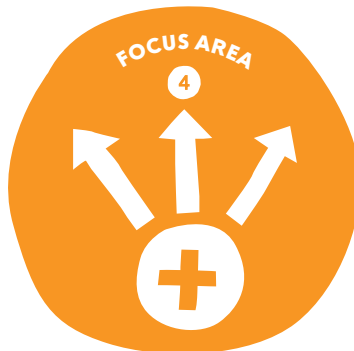
SUPPORTING PRIMARY CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS



COMMISSIONING SERVICES TO MEET LOCAL HEALTH NEEDS



EVOLVING OUR ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY AND GROWING OUR CULTURE



INTEGRATING LOCAL HEALTH SYSTEMS FOR IMPACT



DRIVING CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Our Statement of Comprehensive Income is in a net surplus position of \$240,624 for the year ended 30 June 2023.

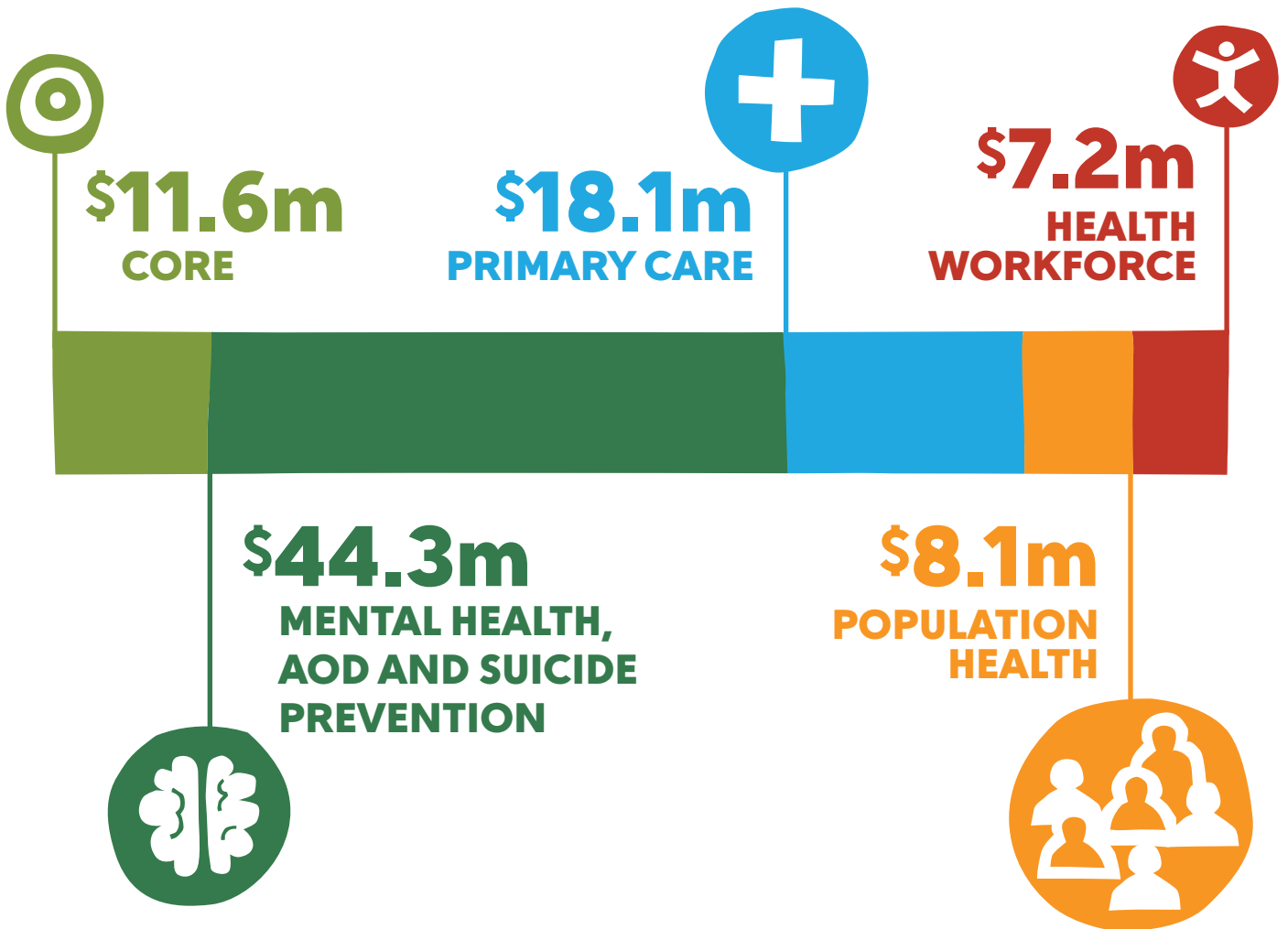
This year we provided more funding to services in the Northern Territory than ever before, investing \$70,970,834 in commissioned services and grants, to improve the health of Territorians. This represents a significant increase of 20% from last year's direct program expenditure of \$59,076,153.

Our Statement of Financial Position is in a strong net asset position of \$3,006,112, with total assets of \$39,010,600, and total liabilities of \$36,004,488 as at 30 June 2023.

Here is what we budgeted for in the 2022-23 financial year:

INVESTED
\$70,970,834

IN COMMISSIONED SERVICES AND GRANTS, TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF TERRITORIANS.



 You can find our full 2022-23 Annual Financial Report at ntphn.org.au/about/publications/annual-report.



SUPPORTING PRIMARY CARE

NT PHN is committed to developing the capacity and capability of primary care service providers to improve access to high-quality healthcare for all Territorians.

Here are a few highlights from the year:

GP grants to support general practice

We're thrilled to celebrate the success of the Strengthening Medicare – GP Grants Program.

At the beginning of 2023, the Australian Government pledged \$220 million to the GP Grants Program with PHNs across the country rolling them out to practices. Our NT clinics were eligible for up to \$35,000 each. It aimed to bolster primary healthcare by offering support to general practices and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOS) across the Northern Territory. The response was overwhelming, with an impressive 43 clinics applying for these grants, and 40 of them successfully securing the funding they needed.

Support and expansion

At NT PHN, we eagerly welcomed this announcement from Australian Health Minister, Mark Butler. The grants provided much needed support for our hardworking GPs and healthcare facilities, particularly after the challenging times brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. This financial support allowed these clinics to expand their capacity to meet the growing demand for healthcare services.

Innovation and training

By using these grants to invest in digital health capabilities, upgrading infection control measures, upgrading equipment, training and maintaining accreditation standards, our clinics can continue to serve our community.

Thank you to our local GPs who applied for the grant in order to strengthen healthcare in the NT.



Primary Sense uplift: improving healthcare data

Primary Sense, an innovative clinical auditing tool, is now at the forefront of our efforts to enhance patient care and streamline processes.

Primary Sense has been created by a dedicated team of experts to extract population health data and provide real-time medication alerts, detailed reports and patient care prompts for improved outcomes.

Recognising its enhanced functionality, NT PHN has adopted Primary Sense as its preferred clinical auditing platform, replacing the PenCS suite to ensure best practices in healthcare data management.

Our Primary Healthcare team piloted the platform, leading to successful installations in 30 general practices, driven by lessons learned and our Digital Health Innovation Grant to support ICT rollout. While 30 practices have embraced Primary Sense, 12 more are in various implementation stages.

Preparation has commenced to deliver education sessions to practices and their staff to support patient data reports, identify high-risk groups and enable safety alerts to proactively plan and improve a patient's care plan.

Data within Primary Health Insights (PHI), our storage and analytics platform, is de-identified and securely stored and will guide future strategies and funding opportunities. We will work with practices to enhance monthly benchmark reports, supporting quality care improvements across our network.

The adoption of Primary Sense marks a significant stride toward accessible, high-quality healthcare in the Northern Territory, benefiting patient outcomes and our healthcare landscape.

BMP Consulting health conference: building capacity in general practice

In October 2022, the Primary Health Development team led the coordination of the Practice Leadership Advantage masterclass to support general practices and clinical staff to increase skillsets in leadership, clinic standards and, using the Quadruple Aim to improve patient-centred care and practice sustainability.

With a strong cross-sector and regional participation from 17 general practices, the course led attendees to examine attributes and strategies to improve quality of care, patient experience and high performing teams.



The interactive sessions tailored discussions to a multidisciplinary team, encouraging attendees to self-reflect, troubleshoot and consider how to implement learnings into their own practice and role.

Themes identified as common barriers include:

- secure messaging of referrals and referral responses to/by specialists
- multiple handling of patient information
- how to find capacity in the practice for upskilling
- adapting and defining the concept of team-based care
- recruiting support and workshop shortages.

The Practice Leadership Advantage masterclass received significant positive feedback, with a 100% relevance rating to general practice. Furthermore, 84% of attendees expressed that their learning needs were fully met. To reinforce these learnings, mentoring sessions were offered to practices, providing invaluable support in staff management.

Medical Yarn Ups: embracing culture to deliver care

In June 2023, NT PHN commissioned 3 organisations – Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation and Danila Dilba Health Service – to run the initiative Medical Yarn Ups (MYUs). This program represents a step forward in our ongoing commitment to improving healthcare access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

What are Medical Yarn Ups?

MYUs, rooted in First Nations wisdom and culture, stand as a unique model of care. They create a communal space where individuals sharing similar health concerns come together in a culturally safe environment. Each group is guided by a trained facilitator and a general practitioner.

During MYUs, participants receive individual consecutive consultations, which open opportunities for mutual learning and understanding. By shifting the traditional power dynamics inherent in one-on-one doctor-patient interactions, MYUs play a pivotal role in enhancing primary healthcare access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

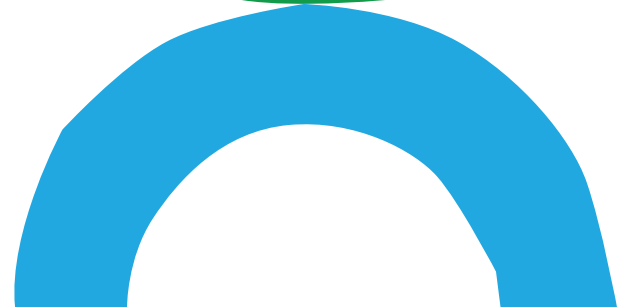
Collaboration and support

To ensure the success of MYUs, NT PHN enlisted the expertise of the Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine (ASLM). Their role involved assisting each Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) in crafting culturally appropriate, sustainable and community responsive MYU models. Professors John Stevens and Bob Morgan, experts in this field, provided invaluable face-to-face facilitator training and mentoring to each service.

In addition to ASLM's involvement, NT PHN fostered a critical partnership with the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT). This collaboration ensured that the MYU models developed were deeply rooted in local context and culture. Together with ASLM and the participating ACCHS, AMSANT played a pivotal role in creating culturally appropriate resources that resonated with the unique needs of each community.

A promising future

As the MYU trial groups set forth on their journey and the models continue to evolve, NT PHN eagerly anticipate the developments and insights that will emerge from this initiative.



COMMISSIONING SERVICES TO MEET LOCAL HEALTH NEEDS

NT PHN is committed to evolving the way we commission programs and services so they are transparent, meaningful, outcomes-focused and innovative.

Here are a few highlights from the year:

New service to help Territorians find aged care support

In 2023 we welcomed the new Care Finder services for the Northern Territory.

The Care Finder program provides specialist and intensive assistance to help senior Territorians navigate, understand and access aged care support.

Importantly, it provides local, face-to-face support for vulnerable populations in Darwin, Palmerston, Darwin rural area, Katherine and Alice Springs.

The program, which is being rolled out nationally, was announced by the Australian Government following recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2021).

As part of the program, Care Finders will focus on connecting with older people who have significant difficulty navigating the aged care service system. Care Finders will also assist people to access and connect with aged care services within their local community.

The Care Finder program aims to enhance the health and wellbeing of older and vulnerable Territorians, regardless of their location. The program provides a localised service tailored to the specific needs of senior Territorians who often encounter complexity and challenges when accessing aged care services.

Underlining the program is the unique workforce. The team possesses extensive knowledge of the aged care system and receives specialised training to assist older individuals in navigating the system. They facilitate connections to necessary services and maintain ongoing support to ensure that individuals consistently have their needs met.

Unifying against diabetes: NT diabetes summit

In November 2022, key health experts and organisations came together in Alice Springs with a singular objective: to combat the diabetes epidemic in the Northern Territory.

The NT Diabetes Summit, a collaborative effort involving NT Health, NT PHN, Menzies School of Health Research, AMSANT and the Australian Government, took place at the Alice Springs Convention Centre.

This summit was convened at a crucial juncture as diabetes rates among Aboriginal populations in remote NT communities continue to rise, ranking among the highest globally. Research by Menzies revealed that 17% of Aboriginal individuals in remote NT communities have diabetes, predominantly type 2 diabetes, a notable increase from 14.4% in 2012.

THE CARE FINDER PROGRAM AIMS TO ENHANCE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OLDER AND VULNERABLE TERRITORIANS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR LOCATION.



Among adults, the diabetes prevalence stands at 29%, with the greatest burden felt in Central Australia, where a staggering 40% of adults are now affected by the condition. Diabetes also serves as a major contributor to other health issues, including kidney disease, heart disease, strokes, impaired vision and amputations due to infections.

The conference saw over 350 delegates and key speakers in attendance, notably featuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presenters and panellists who shared lived experiences and insights into the intergenerational diabetes challenges faced by NT remote communities.

The second day of the summit delved into a multisectoral approach and organisation-wide collaboration to address the social determinants of health, including housing, education, physical environment and food security.

The feedback from the day was that the most worthwhile take-away from the event was hearing the lived experience stories, and understanding how important it is to ensure these stories help shape the future. 68 percent of people said the summit will inform their future practice, and 71 percent will recommend others to make changes to practice and/or policy following the day's presentations.

Expanding access to youth mental health services: Palmerston headspace launch

In October 2022, young people in Palmerston aged 12 to 25 were provided access to a youth-friendly, free and confidential mental health and wellbeing service, following the opening of headspace Palmerston.

Managed by Anglicare NT, headspace Palmerston complements the successful operation of headspace Darwin for the past 15 years and headspace Katherine for 3 years.

The new service was developed through intensive co-design involving young people, families, Elders, local stakeholders and the Palmerston and rural communities. A youth reference group provided insights into the service's overall design.

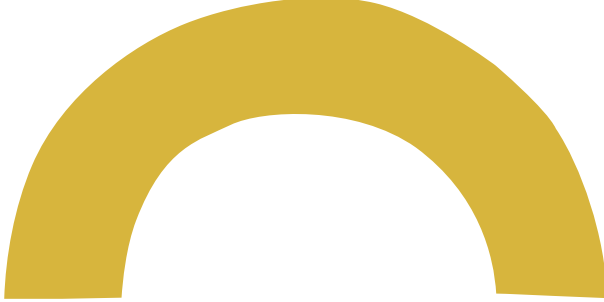
Uncle Tony Lee, a local Larrakia man, offered guidance on how headspace Palmerston can best serve the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and communities. Artworks by local Larrakia artists Taleena Lui Villaflor and Trent Lee are featured at the new service.

Funded by the Australian Government and commissioned through NT PHN, headspace Palmerston is set to make a significant impact on the Palmerston region and surrounding rural communities.

RIGHT:

The headspace Palmerston team at the 2022 launch

...THE MOST WORTHWHILE TAKE-AWAY FROM THE EVENT WAS **HEARING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE STORIES,** AND UNDERSTANDING HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO ENSURE THESE STORIES HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE.



DRIVING CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

NT PHN is committed to embedding and growing cultural practice that supports our communities.

Here are a few highlights from the year:

Bridging the language barrier with the plain English health dictionary

NT PHN is proud to have played a part in commissioning the Plain English Health Dictionary, released in June 2023.

This dictionary, specifically designed for Aboriginal Interpreter Services (AIS) interpreters in the health sector of the Northern Territory, serves as a comprehensive resource aimed at empowering Indigenous language interpreters while ensuring people can make informed decisions about their healthcare.

With the objective of bridging the language barrier, the dictionary facilitates the translation of medical English into plain English, adhering to the stylistic conventions found in Aboriginal languages.

To enhance clarity and comprehension, the dictionary incorporates illustrative elements, making it an invaluable tool. The artwork represents health concepts and healthy living practices preserved in Aboriginal art from the Northern Territory.

It was collaboratively designed by two NT artists; Josef Petterson, a Larrakia man, depicted the abundance of natural and healthy bush tucker available in Saltwater Country, including fish, turtle and goose. The crocodile symbolises the wisdom and dominance of the waterways.

Dean Jakamara Briscoe, an Anmatyerre man, portrayed the traditional ways of living in Central Australia, emphasising hunting, gathering and active lifestyles. The artwork showcases community health discussions and the collection of medicinal resources from the land, flora and fauna of Central Australia.

Celebrating NAIDOC week 2022: Get up! Stand up! Show up!

In a show of solidarity and respect, thousands of individuals and organisations, including many of our dedicated staff members, participated in the NAIDOC march held in Darwin in July 2022. This vibrant event celebrated the rich heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, as well as paying tribute to the wisdom and contributions of our Elders.

Each year, NT PHN actively encourages staff to attend the event and participate in NAIDOC events across the Northern Territory and would like to thank our staff for their enthusiasm and participation year upon year.





ABOVE:
NT PHN staff at the beginning of the 2022 Darwin NAIDOC march

Fostering cultural respect and advancing reconciliation: developing a new RAP Plan and Cultural Respect Framework

In our ongoing dedication to reconciliation and cultural respect, NT PHN partnered with local consultants Cross Cultural Consultants in 2023. Together, we are crafting our third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and, for the first time, a Cultural Respect Framework (CRF).

Our innovative RAP will span 2 years, reaffirming our commitment to the reconciliation process; the CRF will extend over a decade. This framework is designed to provide guidance, both internally and externally, ensuring that NT PHN operates in a culturally safe manner.

This initiative was undertaken with full support and endorsement from our board, aligning with our mission to foster an inclusive and culturally sensitive environment. To lay the foundation for these plans, Cross Cultural Consultants conducted comprehensive gap analyses, incorporating surveys and case studies that compared past RAPs with early drafts of the CRF.

From March to June, a series of workshops engaged our RAP working group, the Senior Executive Leadership Team and the Senior Leadership Team. These collaborative sessions served as forums to identify needs, focus areas for analysis and development priorities.

Currently, the RAP working group is reviewing two drafts of our RAP, offering valuable feedback to Cross Cultural Consultants. Concurrently, our board has also undertaken a thorough review of these drafts. Together we remain committed to gathering feedback, ensuring a comprehensive and thoughtful approach.



INTEGRATING LOCAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

NT PHN is committed to strengthening partnerships with key health sector stakeholders to provide integrated and coordinated healthcare.

Here are a few highlights from the year:

Welcoming a new Community Advisory Council

In the spirit of continuous improvement and community engagement, we have been pleased to welcome newly appointed members to the Community Advisory Council in 2023.

These dedicated individuals bring a wealth of knowledge regarding the health priorities within their communities. Their insights may stem from personal experiences as patients or caregivers, as well as their professional backgrounds in health consumer advocacy, population health or community services. It's important to note that clinical experience is not a prerequisite for membership.

The Community Advisory Council plays a pivotal role as an advisory body, providing strategic-level guidance and counsel to NT PHN's board. Through their diverse perspectives, the council ensures that our organisation's decisions – particularly those that may influence and drive change, investments and innovations – remain firmly patient-centred, cost-effective, locally relevant and aligned with local care expectations and experiences.

Council members are expected to:

- possess a comprehensive understanding of their roles and functions
- actively engage by offering constructive input
- represent the interests of various stakeholders
- foster productive relationships with other councils
- attend and contribute meaningfully to meetings
- communicate effectively
- demonstrate respect towards fellow members
- discharge their responsibilities with the utmost care and diligence.

RIGHT:

Our new community council meeting for the first time at the beginning of 2023



THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL PLAYS A **PIVOTAL ROLE AS AN ADVISORY BODY,** PROVIDING STRATEGIC-LEVEL GUIDANCE AND COUNSEL TO NT PHN'S BOARD.

More flexibility to deliver services to meet local needs

NT PHN has been reviewing its commissioning of services to improve integration and coordination of services, improve flexibility and respond to local needs.

Continued feedback from stakeholders, further supported by an evaluation of NT PHN funded Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) services, advocated for reforms to the way NT PHN administered its mental health service contracts. Providers were seeking to reduce the burden of administration and reporting, increase flexibility in service delivery and enable them to develop integrated place-based models of service delivery.

In response, NT PHN embarked on a process to consolidate a number of Mental Health and SEWB contracts under a single flexible Stepped Care contract. This will also involve developing service delivery plans with individual providers that allow them to deliver services that complement other services in the region and respond to local needs. Stepped Care aims to use the least intensive treatment and support options appropriate to individual needs and preferences.

A review of chronic conditions programs sought to understand how these programs are being delivered in the Northern Territory and the drivers of program efficiency and effectiveness.

The review involved a desktop examination of program documentation and provider reports, interviews with NT PHN staff and focus groups and interviews with providers. Key findings included:

- acknowledgment of the unique context of the NT's remoteness and associated challenges that drive an increased need for health services – in particular, the prevalence of chronic health conditions, and the lack of specialist workforce required to address these needs
- explicit funding guidelines can limit flexibility to address the complexity of remote service delivery with opportunities to meet the need for holistic, place-based approaches through program integration
- a lack of focus on prevention and early intervention activities while duplication exists in other areas
- the potential to improve efficiency through integration, greater collaboration between providers, streamlined contract management, flexibility in service design and delivery and outcomes-focused commissioning
- an opportunity to expand the use of existing governance structures that support local needs assessment and planning
- a need to clearly define and effectively measure and report against client outcomes.

These findings are informing improvements to existing services and the design of new commissioning activity.



NT PHN HAS
BEEN REVIEWING ITS
COMMISSIONING OF SERVICES
TO IMPROVE INTEGRATION AND
COORDINATION OF SERVICES,
**IMPROVE FLEXIBILITY
AND RESPOND TO
LOCAL NEEDS.**





Improving access to after hours services in remote communities

NT PHN understands that access to primary care services in remote communities is challenging and local health services work incredibly hard, with passion and commitment, to deliver high quality care to some of our most vulnerable populations. This year, we embarked on a journey that led us to facilitating a joint project with key partners to identify how we can improve access to care, specifically during after-hours.

The project steering committee includes representation from the NT Government Department of Health, Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT) and ACCHS from all regions across the Northern Territory. The Nous Group with leadership from NT PHN, has guided the project through to the next phase which is to commence piloting after hours services via a telehealth model. The pilot will include utilising medical professionals who may not necessarily be based in the Northern Territory but each understand and / or have experience working in remote Aboriginal communities. This is a key requirement of the model. Other key requirements include shared access to clinical systems and decision making tools that informs best decision-making at the time. The pilot enables this to be worked through to implementation.

Telehealth services during after hours already exist in parts of remote NT, however, utilising staff who are not already employed in the local health service reduces staff burnout and the capacity to deliver primary care during the day, won't be as impacted.



We are pleased to be able to join our key health services to commit to improving after hours service delivery together. NT PHN sees collaboration as being critical to driving change to supporting local health services to improve health outcomes.

EVOLVING OUR ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY AND GROWING OUR CULTURE

NT PHN is committed to building our organisational capability and culture so our people and systems work together to effectively deliver our work.

Here are a few highlights from the year:

Ensuring transparency across projects

NT PHN has developed a new centralised ICT system that directly impacts our daily operations and enhances our ability to serve our stakeholders.

In the past, NT PHN utilised a range of separate ICT systems across different teams. However, we recognised the need to streamline our communication processes and eliminate data barriers. As part of this strategic effort, our ICT Transformation team has been constructing a new centralised system that will encompass several key functions:

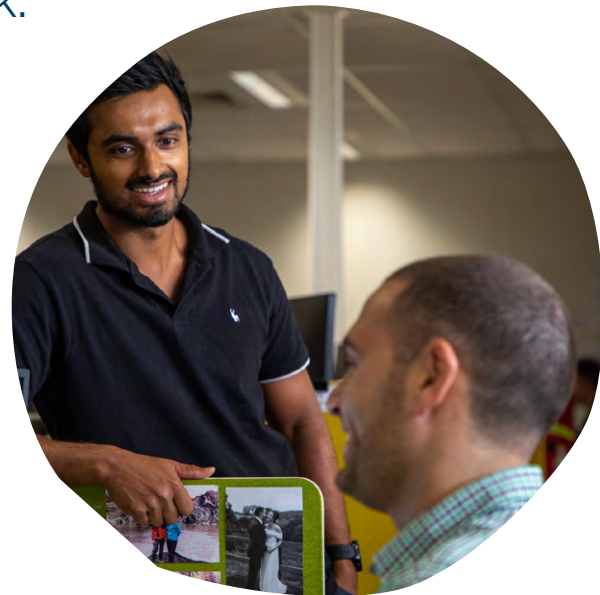
Customer relationship management (CRM): This component will serve as the hub where all stakeholder communications and interactions are recorded. It will provide us with a comprehensive view of our engagements with stakeholders.

Contract management: Our new system will facilitate the creation and management of contracts. This will significantly streamline the procurement process, ensuring greater efficiency and transparency.

Procurement: Within this system, we will conduct the procurement of health and other essential services. This streamlined approach will simplify the process, benefiting both our organisation and our stakeholders.

Recruitment and workforce management: This component will be dedicated to the recruitment and tracking of candidates in the health workforce space. It will enable us to better serve our healthcare professionals and address their unique needs.

The beauty of this system lies in its ability to consolidate all interactions and activities into one cohesive platform. Every conversation, every email, every interaction is recorded and readily accessible. This enhances our internal efficiency and allows us to have transparent and meaningful conversations with stakeholders.



WE RECOGNISED THE NEED TO
STREAMLINE OUR COMMUNICATION PROCESSES AND ELIMINATE DATA BARRIERS.

Investing in leadership: empowering NT PHN's future

At NT PHN, we value our people as our greatest asset. This year, we've taken significant steps to enhance our leadership capabilities by providing training through the Institute of Managers and Leaders.

Leadership at all levels: We believe leadership isn't tied to titles but is a quality within each of us. That's why this year we made leadership training available to all team members, from emerging talents to seasoned leaders.

Impact on stakeholder engagement: Investing in leadership has a direct impact on how we engage with our stakeholders. It not only provides the tools to build meaningful relationships, it also ensures effective communication and responsiveness.

Innovative solutions: We foster creative thinking and innovative problem-solving.

Stronger collaborations: Teamwork and collaboration lead to better partnerships.

Service excellence: Leadership training improves the quality of services we provide to stakeholders.

Investing in leadership secures a brighter future for NT PHN and the communities we serve. We're committed to nurturing exceptional leaders to meet evolving community needs.

BELOW:

A few of our NT PHN staff who have completed their leadership training



SUPPORTING OUR RURAL WORKFORCE

NT PHN is committed to supporting, recruiting and retaining an exceptional rural workforce here in the Territory.

Here are a few highlights from the year:

Northern Territory Health Workforce Needs Assessment

The annual Primary Health Workforce Needs Assessment (HWNA) report aims to enhance access, quality and sustainability in our priority areas. The HWNA informs responses to the NT's current primary health workforce needs, focusing on general practitioners, nursing workforce, allied health professionals and Aboriginal health practitioners. The focus for this year's assessment was the Barkly region. The report is based on surveys and consultations and is a vital resource for shaping future workforce development strategies at NT PHN.

In addition to the annual health workforce needs assessment, NT PHN is also responsible for supporting GP training in the NT through the development of a workforce needs and training capacity report specifically to inform GP Registrar placements. The report serves as an important tool in identifying GP catchments and distribution targets, drawing from workforce data and local insights. This information guides the distribution targets to be met by the GP colleges, namely the Royal Australian College of General Practice (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

In parallel, the Training Capacity Report assists the GP colleges in effectively matching registrars with suitable placements while identifying gaps based on available training capacity and accreditation status.



Partnerships to tackle health workforce shortages in the NT

NT PHN joined forces with the Northern Territory Government to address critical health workforce shortages across the Territory. This significant initiative was marked by the launch of a major advertising campaign by NT Chief Minister and Minister for Health, The Honourable Natasha Fyles.

Titled 'A great career in health, goes with the Territory,' the campaign introduced a dedicated website showcasing healthcare job opportunities across the Territory, providing comprehensive information on careers in primary healthcare, grants, incentives and the advantages of working in remote areas.

Leveraging social media and digital platforms within Australia and in key overseas markets like the UK and Ireland, the campaign aimed to attract healthcare professionals to make the move to the NT.

Tailored videos and advertisements within the campaign highlight the unique career experiences available to primary health workers in the Territory. The target audience includes general practitioners, nurses, allied health professionals and Aboriginal health practitioners.



The campaign's core message is straightforward: 'Challenge yourself, change lives.' A primary health career in the Territory promises a unique adventure, providing cultural experiences not found elsewhere while affording the opportunity to make a real difference.

Chief Minister Fyles underlined that the campaign would result in improved healthcare for Territorians. Greater access to primary healthcare professionals will alleviate the strain on Territory hospitals and emergency departments.

Alice Springs Sustainability Project: ensuring a bright primary care future

In collaboration with consultants, NT PHN embarked on the Alice Springs Sustainability Project to chart the course for sustaining general practitioner services and primary care in Alice Springs for years to come. The project revealed that workforce shortages represent the primary challenge to achieving GP sustainability in Alice Springs.

Through extensive engagement with stakeholders within the sector, we assessed requirements and gathered valuable insights. The culmination of this effort was the delivery of a comprehensive report, which was subsequently peer-reviewed by stakeholders.

The outcome was consensus on key areas that demand attention to fortify the sustainability of GP services in Alice Springs. These include exploring novel workforce models, providing essential housing support and establishing entitlements that facilitate the relocation and maintenance of the healthcare workforce.

In the upcoming financial year, our focus will shift towards the planning and development of initiatives targeting these agreed-upon areas. Many of these endeavours will necessitate advocacy efforts and long-term strategic planning to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.

Medical students' journey to Arnhem Land

In May 2023, NT PHN proudly played host to a group of 17 Indigenous students from the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA). This gathering marked a week dedicated to immersing these promising young minds in a unique blend of cultural richness and medical experiences. The occasion was part of our High School to Health Careers Program (HSHCP), which unfolded in Nhulunbuy.

HSHCP invites medical students from across Australia to venture into the heart of the Territory. Here, they gain invaluable insights into the intricacies of life and work within our region. The program provides participants with tangible, hands-on experience working within the Territory's rural and remote communities, all while delving into local culture.

For our Indigenous students, this journey held profound cultural significance, forging a deep and emotional connection to the land. This transformative experience was made possible with the support and guidance of local Yolngu Elders Mary and Murphy, who nurtured their connection to country.

As the program ended, many students reflected on the profound impact of their journey into these communities and their newfound connection to the land. It was a testament to the power of such initiatives in nurturing cultural understanding and inspiring the next generation of healthcare professionals to work in some of our most rural and remote regions.





'The networking aspect of the conference is great and also allows the remote staff to come and play. Very valuable for our clinicians who rarely get to attend conferences.'

COMPASS 2022: NAVIGATING THE WAY FORWARD

Compass, the flagship conference hosted by NT PHN, returned to the Darwin Convention Centre in August 2022.

Originally planned for 2020, the event was postponed due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Despite efforts to reschedule in November 2021, another delay was necessitated by a COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown in Darwin.

Following a 2-year hiatus, the conference drew over 400 delegates and again provided a vital gathering for Territory primary healthcare professionals to learn and finally see each other in person.

The theme for the conference was 'Navigating the Way Forward', thought to be especially pertinent considering the challenges posed by the pandemic.

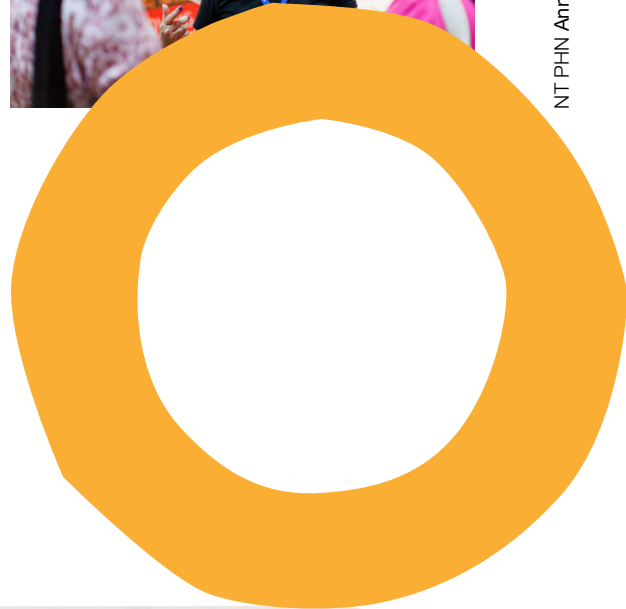
It offered an opportunity to celebrate the resilience of the primary healthcare workforce, reflect on key pandemic learnings and explore the opportunities that arose in its wake.



'Great conference, well put together and great to see the hard work put into it. Good opportunity to network with people NT wide'



'...Would definitely go to the next Compass Conference. The networking opportunities were excellent and I made some really useful contacts as well as catching up with people I've known and/or worked with over the last 30 years.'



'Really enjoyed the conversations and topics discussed, found some information really relevant to my practice and was also good to get other perspectives'



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN NT PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

The outstanding achievements of primary healthcare professionals in the Northern Territory were acknowledged and celebrated at the NT Health Professional of the Year Awards 2022.





Hosted by NT PHN, the awards ceremony took place during the Compass Conference gala dinner at the Darwin Convention Centre.

A record-breaking 80 nominations were received for the 2022 Awards, representing dedicated workers from across the NT, including regions such as Darwin, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy, Ramingining, Katherine, Maningrida, Pintupi and Urapunga.

These awards not only recognise excellence but also highlight the commitment and dedication of healthcare professionals who contribute significantly to the wellbeing of the Northern Territory's communities.

2022 NT Health Professional of the Year Award Winners

The recipients of the 2022 Awards are:

RACGP GP of the Year:

Dr Alan Kerr (Remote and Rural GP, Miwatj)

AMSANT Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Health Practitioner of the Year:

Chris Rankine-Johnson (Top End Health Service, Pine Creek)

Nurse and/or Midwife of the Year:

Rebecca Way (School Nurse, Tennant Creek Primary School)

CDU Allied Health Practitioner Health Practitioner of the Year (joint winners):

Alexandra Murrell (Speech Pathologist, Carpentaria Therapy Services) and Elaine Jaeschke (NT Health, Community Allied Health Team, Katherine)

AGPAL Primary Healthcare Support Person of the Year:

Anita Petersen (Mala'la Health Service – Aged and Disability Services).





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