NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT







Great health for all Territorians

NT Health
STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2028



Acknowledgement of Country

NT Health respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the country on which we work and live throughout the Northern Territory. We recognise the deep connection Aboriginal people have with their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Elders past and present whose ancestral land we provide health services upon. Throughout this document the term Aboriginal should be taken to include Torres Strait Islander people. The term Aboriginal has been used in recognition that Aboriginal people are the Traditional Owners of the Northern Territory.

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CE Midway Message

NT Health is a robust and dynamic organisation that provides high-quality health care and services to the Northern Territory community across the continuum of life.

Our vision is 'Great health for all Territorians' and we continue to work towards improving outcomes for our community, through promoting wellbeing, preventing illness and providing patient-centred care that reflects community needs.

As we reach the midpoint in the delivery of our Strategic Plan 2023-2028, it's important to take the time to pause and reflect on what we have achieved so far, as well as review and reprioritise our actions and outcomes going forward.

We've made some great progress across each of our four strategic focus areas including launching a new chronic conditions prevention and early intervention framework, to keep people healthy and well for as long as possible. We expanded access to free immunisations for Territorians, through the rollout of the Meningococcal B vaccine for infants and teenagers and the RSV vaccine for pregnant mothers and babies.

Territorians are facing an unprecedented burden of kidney disease. The new NT Health Kidney Plan 2024-29 describes how we will partner with our stakeholders and the community to redesign our services and models of care to meet this growing clinical need.

But none of this work could be done without our people.

For me as the Chief Executive, my primary focus, first and foremost, will always be our people.

We have a diverse team of dedicated professionals who work together, in line with our values, Safe, Responsive and Kind, to achieve our mission.

The local knowledge and expertise that our people bring to their role makes a real difference to the way we deliver services to the community and achieve improved health outcomes for Territorians.

We continue to invest in our people through growing and developing them with increased training and leadership programs, enhancing nursing and midwifery student placements and career pathways while expanding medical programs so we can continue to grow our own workforce, at home, here in the Territory.

Increasing and enhancing Aboriginal employment and recognising and respecting the centrality of culture to health is necessary to enhance service access, equity and effectiveness.

While we are making good progress, this is an area where we need to do better.

Aboriginal people make up one third of the Territory's population yet make up almost 70 per cent of presentations to NT Health hospitals. In remote settings this is as high as 88 per cent.

In the past two years we have transitioned a number of NT Health clinics to Aboriginal community control including the Minjilang and Warruwi Medical Services and the Jabiru Health Clinic to the Red Lily Health Board.

We are continuing to progress with the transitioning of other health services in Central Australia and the Top End.

Community control increases the involvement of Aboriginal communities in health care decision making and improves service delivery and health outcomes.

Going forward, our NT Health Strategic Plan has been refreshed to reflect and integrate the three pillars of the Northern Territory Government – Restoring our terrific Territory Lifestyle; Reducing Crime; and Rebuilding our Economy. These three pillars set the direction for government and provide a concrete foundation for our agency.

We are truly on the frontline at NT Health. Every single Territorian will come into contact with the health system at some point in their life. The work we do really matters and can have a lasting impact.

A healthy population is the cornerstone of a thriving society. A society that is a great place to live, raise a family, start a business and enjoy a lifestyle like no other. A healthy population fosters economic stability, reduces crime, and promotes overall well-being through improved lifestyles and productivity.

Addressing the social determinants of health through improving social, physical and economic environments, create stronger communities and can lead to significant long term health benefits.

Healthy people are happier and more resilient and have less need for intervention, leading to a safer and more stable society.

Health services are vital for everyone at some point in their lives and we are committed to providing a whole-of-society approach to providing healthcare services that prevent illness and promote great health for all Territorians.



Chris Hosking
Chief Executive Officer NT Health
July 2025

Midway Review & Achievements

01.

Our People: Support and Develop our Workforce

- An investment of $500,000 has been allocated to centrally fund leadership programs for staff to ensure that development opportunities are more available and easily accessible for our up-and-coming leaders.
- NT Health transitioned its learning, development and performance management system from Work Partnership Plans to myPerformance in May 2024. myPerformance ensures that managers deliver high quality, constructive feedback to staff at regular, consistent intervals.
- The first One Allied Health Plan 2024-2028 was launched to provide significant opportunities to advance allied health led models of care through partnering with consumers, increasing access to professional development and career pathways, strengthening governance and leadership as well as facilitating the attraction, recognition and retention of allied heath professionals.
- Bolstering our nursing and midwifery through implementing a range of initiatives as outlined in the Nursing and Midwifery Plan 2023-28. This has included increasing student placements, introducing new fast-track pathways to transition undergraduate students into graduate nursing programs, as well as improving the structure of the graduate program to increase career pathways and opportunities.
- We continued to support and grow our medical workforce by investing in the Flinders Northern Territory Medical Program and supporting the development of a Charles Darwin University medical school.
- The Territory's first ever Chief Paramedic Officer was appointed to provide professional leadership, workforce planning and expert advice on paramedicine services and pre-hospital care. Through expanding the scope of practice for paramedics across a range of health services, including aged care and remote health settings, NT Health aims to improve patient outcomes and experiences, as well as reduce costs.
- We worked to sustainably increase our Aboriginal workforce by establishing the Aboriginal Health, Engagement and Workforce Division to drive systemic improvements in Aboriginal health, connect with community and build a skilled workforce. NT Health continues to support a number of Aboriginal students with their university studies through scholarships and cadetships. Implementation of an Aboriginal Health Care traineeship in Groote Eylandt has occurred as well as the introduction of an A02 entry level program into health.

02.

Promote wellbeing and prevent illness

- Launch of a new chronic conditions prevention and early intervention framework – Healthy, Well and Thriving 2024-2030 which aims to keep people healthy and well for as long as possible by focusing on prevention and early intervention.
- Development of a Diabetes Roadmap to provide a strategic and coordinated response to the high rates of diabetes across the NT.
- Co-designed and commissioned the first Lived Experience Network for the NT, to make sure that our mental health services are informed by the voices of people who access them.
- Expanded access to free immunisations for Territorians. This has included roll-out of the free Meningococcal B vaccine to infants under two years of age and teenagers aged 14-19 years, as well as the free RSV vaccination for pregnant women and their baby for the first 6 months of life.
- Launch of the NT Health Kidney Plan 2024-29. Territorians are facing an unprecedented burden of kidney disease. The Kidney Plan describes how we will partner with our stakeholders and the community to redesign our services and models of care to meet this growing clinical need.
- Launch of the Public Health Division Plan 2025-2028. This plan will guide our efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of Territorians and provides a comprehensive overview of the Public Health Division and its work to promote wellbeing, prevent illness and support health equity.

03.

Provide high quality health care that reflects personal and community needs

- Transitioned a number of NT Health clinics to Aboriginal community control including the Minjilang and Warruwi Medical Services to the Red Lily Health Board and the Jabiru Health Clinic to the Red Lily Health Board. Transition to community control aims to increase the involvement of Aboriginal communities in health care decision-making and improve service delivery and health outcomes.

- NT Health successfully underwent its first Short Notice Accreditation Assessment Program against National Safety and Quality Health Service standards. This was a fantastic collaborative achievement that showcased the safe, high-quality care that is provided to our patients.

- Reimagined and redesigned alcohol rehabilitation services in five regional centres to increase access to people using alcohol in harmful ways.

04.

Connect service delivery and support systems for a sustainable future

- NT Health has undertaken significant work to investigate and analyse the complexities of Commonwealth and Northern Territory government funding arrangements and negotiate for additional resources to address significant historical and on-going underfunding by the Commonwealth Government.

- NT Health has been working in partnership with the major private insurance providers to develop alternative private maternity options and experiences, to complement the current services at Royal Darwin Hospital. This follows the announcement that Darwin Private Hospital will stop providing maternity services in June 2025.

- Launch of the **NT Health Sustainability and Climate Adaptation Strategy 2024-2027.** NT Health will embed sustainability and innovation into our everyday practice to reduce our impact on the planet and adapt to climate change so we can protect and improve the health of Territorians now and into the future.



- **Expansion of pharmacists' scope of practice. This program will allow trained community pharmacists to treat additional common health conditions, making it easier for patients to access medication while helping to alleviate pressure on primary care services and hospital emergency departments.**

- **Reviewed and restructured our governance arrangements to ensure clarity in roles, responsibilities and accountability in agency decision making to make sure business is being delivered in an efficient and effective way.**

- **Opening of the purpose-built Alice Springs Hospital Accommodation, which includes 70 units to provide staff with short-term accommodation. Improving infrastructure is critical to providing a better staff experience and has greatly assisted in the recruitment and retention of employees in Central Australia.**





A Quality Health System for the NT

“Our quality health system fosters excellence, based on research, to share expertise and learning. Our collaborative workforce culture leads to shared achievements while cultural capability, distributed and inclusive leadership, quality improvement and research is woven through our health system.”

It is our pleasure to share the NT Health Strategic Plan 2023-2028.

As our services touch the lives of all Territorians, we are charged with the responsibility to make sure they receive the very best care, as close to home as possible and that it is culturally safe and responsive. This plan reflects our strength as a single, integrated health care service and provides a clear vision for our staff, patients, stakeholders and the community to deliver in partnership over the next five years.

We consulted widely with our staff, stakeholders and the community to develop this plan because we wanted to make sure it focused on what matters most to Territorians. We know that by working in partnership we are better placed to drive action, deliver change and achieve improvements in the health and wellbeing of Territorians.

The NT Health Strategic Plan 2023-2028 is transformative, bold and inspired by our collective dedication to understanding the unique needs of each person in our care. Together we have the opportunity to develop a high quality public health system that is recognised for its success in tackling complex public, regional and remote health challenges, a system that harnesses the benefits of learning, retains top talent and attracts new skills.

This plan is structured around four strategic focus areas that will enable us to achieve a new approach to designing and delivering care. Our focus is on preventative and primary health care and the use of the appropriate technology, infrastructure, environment and workforce approaches to provide personalised care closer to home. We will deliver care models informed by data and in partnership across the health and wellbeing sectors.

Our services need to be accessible to all; culturally safe and appropriate. We will continue our work with our partners, patients, carers and communities to provide a system that involves Aboriginal Territorians as active partners. We will strengthen our relationships with other government, non-government and Aboriginal controlled organisations to develop true partnerships and a more integrated health system.

Our commitment to leadership in remote care will continue, and our use of technology to bridge distances will expand. We will respond wholeheartedly to the opportunities for improvement that are presented by health data, technology, research and innovation; ensuring these are suited to the needs of Territory health consumers and clinicians.

Our staff are our greatest asset. We know that to provide excellent care experiences, we must acknowledge and appreciate our staff, whose skill, passion and commitment every day at work improves the lives of Territorians. Our staff will continue to lead the way in building a future-ready health system for the Territory; so we can respond to local needs, provide health education, support patient expectations for greater control of their own care and achieve the best health outcomes from available resources. Supporting our workforce to do what they do best, seek out opportunity and feel valued at work are vital parts of the NT Health Strategic Plan 2023-2028.

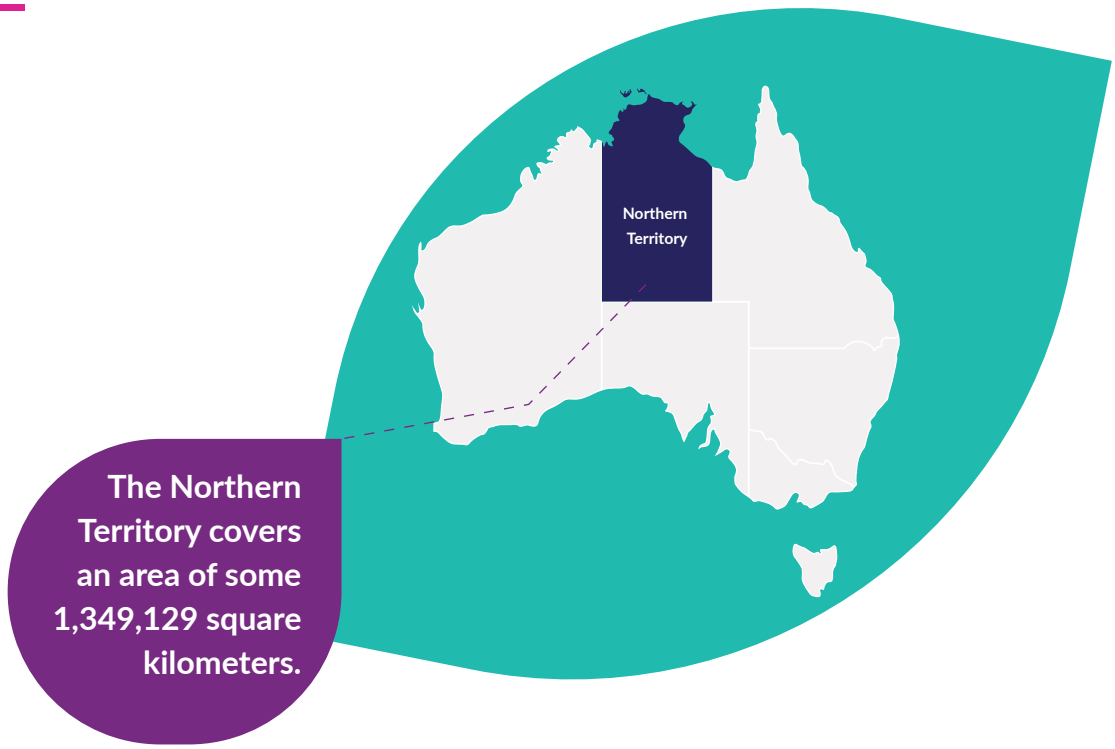
As NT Health, we will work together as one system in partnership with individuals, families, the community, Aboriginal heath organisations and stakeholders to provide high quality, evidence-based, patient-centred care.

We look forward to working in partnership to pursue our vision of:

Great health for all Territorians.

NT Health Leadership Committee

Health in the NT



The Northern Territory covers an area of some 1,349,129 square kilometers.

The NT's population is less than 1% of Australia's population.

30% of the population are Aboriginal people.



245,909
people live in the Northern Territory

The NT has the highest premature death rate across the total population.

70% who live remotely are Aboriginal and reside in one of 600 communities or remote outstations.

Language and culture are diverse with over 200 languages spoken.

There is an increasing prevalence of chronic conditions.

Our services

NT Health manages the Northern Territory public health system which includes the Regional Health Service. NT Health operates across five service delivery regions to provide the full spectrum of essential, quality health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care across the life course.

Each region is a service area that aligns NT Health with the NT Government regional boundaries and provides greater opportunity for collaboration; ensuring consistency with regional reporting; and strengthening local accountability and responsive care.

Public health services are provided through six public hospitals, including two in Greater Darwin, one in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Gove. The two largest hospitals are the Royal Darwin Hospital and the Alice Springs Hospital.

We provide direct care to the community through 39 primary health care centres and support 133 clinics/services operated by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations throughout the NT. Public health care accounts for 20 per cent of the NT Government's budget.

Regions





Our vision

Great health for all Territorians

Our vision

Great health for all Territorians

All Territorians should have great health.

Through four focus areas and an outcomes based strategy we will foster a system that encompasses person-centred care, providing value to the patient and client, while also carefully managing within our policy and budgetary restraints.

Our vision and strategic directions have been founded on several key drivers:

- Keeping our population well to reduce demand on health care services and focus on primary prevention.
- Empowering Territorians to improve health literacy through availability of information and data.
- Adopting new models of care that provide efficient, consistent and safe services to reflect best practice and contextually applied evidence based care.
- Harnessing technology to help overcome the physical and financial barriers of distance, and to improve decision making.
- Establishing workforce solutions to improve the retention of skilled staff, attract talent and introduce new ways of working.
- Maximising the power of partnerships within communities, government and non-government organisations, particularly with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to address inequalities in remote areas.
- Ensuring value and that “what matters to patients” is the basis for how care is provided


Life. Be in it.



Our values

Safe | Responsive | Kind

Our people will demonstrate our values in their work through their decision-making and interactions with patients, the community, peers and other organisations.

Our underpinning principles

- Consumers and communities are active participants in the design, decision-making and delivery of health care services
- Clinical and cultural governance is embedded in all we do
- Evidence and analysis inform clinical service design and delivery
- We are an environmentally and fiscally responsible organisation
- Equity underpins our decision making and investments

Pillars of Government

Going forward, our NT Health Strategic Plan Refresh has been designed to reflect and integrate the three pillars of the Northern Territory Government

Restore our lifestyle | Reduce crime | Rebuild the economy



Our goals and strategies


NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT
Northern Territory Government

Strategic focus area 1:
Support and develop our workforce

We are committed to supporting a workforce that is safe, responsive and kind. Staff will be empowered to work to their full scope of practice and ability, doing the best job they can every day and supported to achieve their career aspirations

Outcome	Goals
1.1 Improved attraction and retention of our skilled workforce	• Invest in our workforce and leaders to grow and develop their capabilities • Develop a compelling employer brand that attracts a quality health workforce aligned to contemporary models of care • Grow our local workforce through local education pathways
1.2 Our Aboriginal workforce is sustainably increased	• Maximise the opportunities provided through Aboriginal career pathways • Invest in the development of local community based workforce
1.3 We demonstrate a culture where staff feel valued, safe and supported	• Develop, promote and embed a safe, responsive and kind culture that promotes respect, compassion, inclusion, and collaboration • Recognise and celebrate our achievements
1.4 Provide culturally responsive services – supporting and encouraging culturally safe practice	• Integrate cultural values, strengths and diversity into service design and delivery • Continue to build, strengthen and maintain meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations • Develop cultural capability and competence across our workforce

We will measure our success by:

- The proportion of our workforce and by staff group that identifies as Aboriginal
- Vacancy and retention rates
- Number of people who report inappropriate workplace behaviours in our services
- Our workforce being representative of the diverse community we serve
- Proportion of staff reporting that our values are reflected in our work and activities
- Proportion of Aboriginal staff reporting feeling culturally safe
- Evaluation of professional development opportunities and uptake

Strategic focus area 2:
Promote wellbeing and prevent illness

We will tackle the fundamental issue of social determinants of health and build an environment that enables us to have the best start in life and support healthy lifestyles across our life span. Territorians will have an increased awareness of harms and be protected through legislation and action. Health care is something we will provide together with our partners and our communities.

Outcome	Goals
2.1 Territorians' lifetime physical and mental health improves	• Mental health and emotional and social wellbeing are embedded within all health care services and delivery • An integrated approach to mental health promotion and suicide prevention • Improve the life expectancy of all Territorians and reduce rates of chronic disease
2.2 Partner to build a health promoting environment	• Strengthen partnerships within NT Health and across agencies to deliver coordinated services at the local level • Integrate and reorientate services to focus on early intervention and health literacy • Develop and comply with legislation to enable and protect healthy environments • Develop and implement programs to prevent injury
2.3 Children have the best start in life, from before birth to under five years	• Strengthen multi-agency team approach to support a healthy start to life • Provide culturally competent care from conception, to birth and beyond
2.4 Territorians are supported to have healthy lives	• Provide information, education and resources to support people to take an active role in managing their own health care • Implement population wide awareness about lifestyle factors that contribute to chronic disease, and community-based prevention programs

We will measure our success by:

- Proportion of patients and carers with positive experiences of mental health support and services
- Rates of potentially preventable hospitalisations and rates of chronic disease (including obesity, type 2 diabetes, chronic kidney disease and cardiovascular disease)
- Proportion of the population smoking, consuming alcohol, undertaking exercise, eating a healthy diet and living with a healthy weight
- Data from NT stores about food and beverage
- Immunisation rates
- Life expectancy/mortality rates
- Proportion of babies born with a healthy birthweight
- Rates of hospital separations and admissions for injury

Strategic focus area 3:
Provide high quality health care that reflects personal and community needs

We will provide high quality care for Territorians that is safe, effective, and person-centred – with flexibility to adjust to personal needs and preferences, values and community context. At the same time we will provide more guidance to support self-managed care, and more choices to enable access to care closer to home.

Outcome	Goals
3.1 Community capability in managing health and wellbeing improves	• Our services are joined up and coordinated • Actively involve consumers, carers and the community in co-designing service planning, providing direction and decision-making
3.2 People have more choice in access to health care	• Deliver equitable and value-based health care models, centred on patient needs and preferences • Develop contemporary models to deliver care using technology
3.3 Access to treatment and care that meets individual circumstances	• Facilitate meaningful, open and unbiased consumer and carer engagement • Clinicians are supported to innovate and improve care models
3.4 Territorians feel safe in our care	• Strong clinical and cultural governance, systems, processes and standards are implemented • People accessing services know their rights and responsibilities

We will measure our success by:

- Use of telehealth by clinicians and patients
- Location of care: closer to and at home
- Proportion of NT primary care services that are managed by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
- Patient satisfaction rates
- Proportion of patients who attend a planned appointment
- In depth case studies learning from new models of care in partnership with research organisations

Strategic focus area 4:
Connect service delivery and support systems for a sustainable future

Our financial, digital, governance and infrastructure management will support new models of care and emergency planning while making sure we are an environmentally sustainable and fiscally responsible organisation. We will continuously improve our practice and care through learning, evaluating our programs and implementing actions.

Outcome	Goals
4.1 Our governance and financial systems support a sustainable future	• Reduce our environmental impact • Improve data to guide and support operational and strategic decision-making • Ensure strong governance through accountability and performance frameworks
4.2 Partner to address social determinants, challenges and trends in our community	• Plan, commission and deliver high quality services to achieve shared outcomes • Address the impacts of climate change through service design • Ensure an all hazards approach to disruptive events and emergencies
4.3 Enable, incentivise and implement new models of care	• Ensure clinical pathways focus on the whole of patient journey • Maximise the opportunities of technology to inform the delivery of safe high-quality care which is integrated, coordinated, person-centred and closer to home
4.4 We are a learning health system	• Strategically partner with research institutes, universities and leaders in research and innovation projects which benefit our community • Local research is aligned with our system challenges and opportunities • Develop research skills of our clinical staff and support their research engagement

We will measure our success by:

- Achievement of research partnerships aligned to local health initiatives involving leadership by local health and research teams, commencing from inception
- Achievement of agreed annual financial targets
- Development of clinical pathways that include primary care, hospital and post discharge care
- Energy usage including the proportion of our energy use that is from renewable energy sources
- Emissions and waste footprint
- Preparedness and responsiveness to disruptive events
- Implementation of a standardised quality improvement approach



Monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework

We will drive implementation of this plan through our operational business planning processes, monitor progress through our governance forums and report on our actions and achievements annually. We will continue to review and refresh this plan to make sure it remains responsive to contemporary events and developments and will evaluate at its end.



NT Health Strategic Plan 2023 -2028

Department of Health Strategy, Policy and Planning Branch
Email: OfficeoftheChiefExecutive.DOH@nt.gov.au
www.health.nt.gov.au

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT