



MEDIA STATEMENT

10 FEBRUARY 2026

New report card calls for shared accountability on coronial DFSV recommendations

The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) has released a new report card assessing progress against the 35 recommendations made by NT Coroner Elisabeth Armitage in 2025 following the landmark inquest into the domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) related deaths of four Aboriginal women.

AMSANT says the purpose of the report is to strengthen accountability, prioritise progress and support a coordinated Territory-wide response to a crisis that leaders across the NT agree is urgent and disproportionately affecting Aboriginal women and children.

The NT has the highest rate of DFSV in the world, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women face intimate partner homicide at seven times the rate of all Australian women nationally. NT Police forecast a 73% increase in DFSV reports over the next decade.

‘DFSV is one of the most critical issues facing the Northern Territory, and Aboriginal women continue to bear the most devastating impacts,’ AMSANT Chair Rob McPhee said.

‘We agree this must be a priority, and this resource is one part of making sure our collective commitments to addressing this crisis translate into real, measurable progress on the ground.’

The report card compares the Coroner’s 35 recommendations with the Northern Territory Government’s subsequent response and the DFSV strategy 2025–2028, using only publicly available information. It finds:

- 12 recommendations are not included in the strategy
- 16 are only partially aligned
- none of the 35 are fully measurable within the strategy’s monitoring framework
- just 17% of the overall assessment is rated green.

AMSANT says this does not diminish the importance of the strategy but highlights a gap in transparency and measurement that must be addressed if reform is to lead to safer outcomes.

‘These recommendations arose from the deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurk, Kumarn Rubuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood. The Coroner made clear that these women were not invisible to the system, yet the system failed them. We all share responsibility to make sure that doesn’t happen again,’ Mr McPhee said.

‘This report card is also a practical resource for the whole sector—community organisations, services and governments—to track progress together and share accountability for change.’

A key finding of the report card is that many recommendations focused on Aboriginal community-led solutions, cultural authority and long-term system reform are either absent or not measurable within the strategy’s program logic and data framework.

AMSANT says accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure progress can be tracked and understood by communities.

‘If we can’t measure whether reforms are improving safety, reducing violence or addressing root causes, we can’t honestly say we are turning the tide,’ Mr McPhee said.

‘This report card is a starting point. It is based solely on public documents and does not assess implementation on the ground. We welcome further information that strengthens the picture.’

AMSANT is calling for the Coroner’s recommendations to be clearly re-centred within the Territory’s DFSV response, alongside genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities, transparent resourcing and stronger evaluation mechanisms.

The Northern Territory Government last week announced its plan to extend the mandatory minimum non-parole period for perpetrators of domestic violence-related murders.

‘We all share a commitment to serious and urgent action on domestic violence, but it requires a suite of action across the board, starting with the Coroner’s recommendations,’ Mr McPhee said. ‘And that action needs to be led by the community too, not just government.’

‘What we’re saying is: let’s work together to make sure the reforms are visible, measurable and accountable to the families and communities who are still living with the consequences of violence.’

‘Wherever there is violence, there is resistance. This report card is part of a collective push to ensure the lives of these women lead to real change.’

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MR002/2026