



MEDIA STATEMENT

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Back to school, back to strong health

As the new school year begins across the Northern Territory, the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) is encouraging families and communities to support kids to return to school—recognising education is a strong part of good health, opportunity and wellbeing.

Going to school supports not only learning, but children’s physical health, mental wellbeing, confidence and connection to community.

‘School is about much more than classrooms,’ AMSANT Chair Rob McPhee said. ‘It’s where children build confidence, relationships, routines and skills that support their health for life. Every day at school helps set kids up for stronger futures.’

Supporting children to stay connected to learning is especially important given the long-term health benefits education provides. Children who stay engaged in learning are more likely to experience better physical and mental health, stronger employment opportunities and longer life expectancy.

Research shows each additional year of education reduces adult mortality risk by nearly 2%, while completing secondary school reduces mortality risk by almost 25%¹.

‘Education is one of the strongest predictors of lifelong health,’ Mr McPhee said. ‘That’s why encouragement, support and understanding are so important—especially in the early weeks of the school year. When kids feel supported to go to school, everyone benefits.’

AMSANT also highlighted the importance of early childhood education and adult learning programs, noting that learning at every stage of life strengthens families and communities.

‘Education doesn’t stop at the school gate,’ Mr McPhee said. ‘Early childhood programs, literacy support, bilingual and cultural education and lifelong learning all play a role in keeping our communities strong. When we encourage and support kids to learn, we’re investing in healthier families and a stronger Territory.’

AMSANT wished students, families, teachers and schools a positive start to the 2026 school year.

ENDS

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¹ Balaj, M., et al., *Effects of education on adult mortality: a global systematic review and meta-analysis*. The Lancet Public Health, 2024. 9(3): p. e155-e165.