



MEDIA STATEMENT

12 NOVEMBER 2025

Strong Feet, Strong Futures: Every step matters New resources to support people living with diabetes in the NT

The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) and Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Congress) are calling for greater awareness and investment in foot health to prevent avoidable amputations and improve quality of life for people living with diabetes in the Northern Territory.

Across the NT, Aboriginal people experience some of the highest rates of diabetes and diabetes-related foot disease in the world. The NT also has the highest rate of diabetes-related lower-limb amputation in Australia. Diabetes Feet Australia estimates that the cost of diabetes-related foot disease (DFD) alone to the health system is \$1.6 billion annually.

Ahead of Diabetes Feet Day (12 November 2025) and World Diabetes Day (14 November 2025), AMSANT and Congress are launching two new community resources—a foot health promotion brochure and an additional poster—to help people living with diabetes look after their feet and reduce preventable amputations. The resources will be launched at the Strong Feet Community Day, a free community event to mark Diabetes Feet Day on 12 November 2025 at Tamarind Park in Darwin.

They are also urging communities, health professionals and policymakers to prioritise prevention—through regular foot checks as part of the comprehensive health checks offered through Aboriginal community controlled health services, early podiatry care, and access to affordable, good-quality footwear in remote communities.

“Foot care, wearing good footwear, and having regular foot checks annually are vital for people living with diabetes,” said Podiatrist and Strong Feet Project Coordinator, Frances Elcoate.

In response to an unmet need, the Ingke Arntarnte-areme (Looking After Feet) program at Congress and the Strong Feet Project coordinated by AMSANT was established in 2020. They form part of the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foot Complications Program, coordinated by the South Australian Health Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) and funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care (DOHAC). The program operates across the Northern Territory, South Australia, the Kimberley region in Western Australia and Far North Queensland.

Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) is the peak body for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) in the Northern Territory and Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Congress) is one of the largest ACCHS in the Northern Territory.

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Background information

Diabetes Feet Day, 12 November 2025 and World Diabetes Day, 14 November 2025

AMSANT and Congress are celebrating the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with diabetes while raising awareness about the importance of holistic diabetes healthcare, that includes foot health.

The aim is to provide some basic steps in preventing foot complications and increase awareness about the signs and symptoms of diabetes-related foot complications for people living with diabetes.

Why are we talking about First Nations Foot Health on Diabetes Feet Day?

Diabetes is a risk factor for foot complications: high blood sugar can damage the blood vessels and nerve supply to the feet. This can lead to loss of sensation, which in turn places the person at higher risk of injury and not noticing wounds or infections. Poor blood supply can lead to non-healing wounds and an increased risk of infection which may result in lower limb amputation.

- Diabetes-related foot complications (including ulcers, infection and amputation) can impact individuals, families, and communities.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of lower limb amputation in Australia (Lazzarini et al. 2012, Lazzarini et al. 2023).
- Diabetes Feet Australia estimates that the cost of diabetes-related foot disease (DFD) alone to the health system is \$1.6 billion annually (Ahmed et al. 2021), more than half of the total expenditure of diabetes nationally.
- Aboriginal people in Central Australia have among the highest rates of diabetes globally, with Top End Aboriginal people not far behind (Hare M et al, 2022).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples have a 3–6-fold increased risk of experiencing diabetes foot disease (DFD) and are up to 38 times more likely to undergo a major amputation and 27 times more likely to undergo a minor amputation compared to non-Indigenous Australians (West M et al, 2017, Norman P et al, 2010).
- The Northern Territory has the highest rate of diabetes-related lower limb amputation (65 per 100,000 people) in Australia (four times higher than the national average) with people in the NT also being significantly younger than in other jurisdictions (Dillion et al, 2017).
- It is estimated that of the 510,000 people living with DFD, 6300 will have a lower-limb amputation each year.

Community resources

The new community resources to help people keep their feet healthy include:

- The “Keeping Our Feet Healthy and Connected to Country” health promotion brochure
- the Congress “Charcot Foot” health promotion poster.

“Charcot neuroarthropathy, better known as “Charcot,” is a complex condition, most often affecting the foot and ankle bones in people with nerve damage (neuropathy),” said Congress Podiatrist Amy Schonewille.

“Charcot is a rare complication of diabetes, that is easily misdiagnosed or diagnosed late. The management of Charcot can be a long and complex often including weekly appointments with a podiatrist, multiple x-rays and scans and visits to the podiatry and surgical teams.

“This resource is being created to help people living with Charcot better understand the complex management of this condition.”

A Call to Action

AMSANT and Congress want to highlight the importance of ongoing investment and access to prevention, early podiatry intervention, and affordable footwear availability in remote communities. Many hospitalisations are preventable through primary healthcare and access to appropriate footwear.

We also encourage communities, health professionals, and policymakers to come together in recognising the importance of foot health in the journey of living well with diabetes.

We must support people with diabetes to eat well, have regular foot checks annually as part of the comprehensive health checks offered through Aboriginal community controlled health services, wear good footwear, stay active and take care for their feet.

Together, we can reduce preventable amputations, keep people strong on their feet, and support our people to walk on Country for generations to come.

Every step matters. By supporting prevention and podiatry care, we can reduce preventable amputations, keep people strong on their feet, and support communities for generations to come.

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