



MEDIA STATEMENT

UPDATED 25 NOVEMBER 2025

One year on from the coronial inquest: The Territory is still to act to address the scourge of domestic violence

The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the Northern Territory (AMSANT) has marked one year since the release of the NT’s landmark domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) coronial findings with a renewed call for urgent reforms to keep women and children safe.

The coronial findings, handed down on 25 November 2024 by NT Coroner Elisabeth Armitage, followed Australia’s largest-ever DFSV coronial inquest and exposed deep systemic failures that contributed to the deaths of four Aboriginal women — Kumarn Rubuntja, Kumanjayi Haywood, Miss Yunupingu and Ngeygo Ragurk — whose lives were taken by their partners with known histories of violence.

In the 12 months since those findings, five more Aboriginal women have allegedly been killed by their partners across the Territory.

On the 12-month anniversary — which also marks the first day of the annual 16 days of activism — the Aboriginal community controlled sector says the ongoing deaths are a tragic reminder of the continuing DFSV crisis. One year on, data from the NT Police, NT Coroner and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) highlight the scale of DFSV in the Northern Territory:

- DFSV accounts for more than 60% of assaults in the NTⁱ.
- Over 80% of police time is spent responding to DFSVⁱⁱ.
- The NT has the highest rate of DFSV in the worldⁱⁱⁱ.
- NT Police forecast a 73% increase in DFSV reports over the next decade^{iv}.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women face intimate partner homicide at seven times the rate of all Australian women nationally^v.
- Nearly 3 in 4 (74%) hospitalisations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples due to assault were linked to family violence.

“Family violence is a Territory-wide crisis,” AMSANT Chair Rob McPhee said. “Aboriginal women are bearing the heaviest and most devastating impacts. Every woman and child deserves to be safe. We wouldn’t accept this level of violence anywhere else. We must create the conditions that stop it from happening at all.”

“One year on from Australia’s largest DFSV coronial inquest, we must collectively hold ourselves accountable. This means every organisation, every sector, every partner — including government — playing their part. But meaningful change will only happen if Aboriginal-led solutions are at the heart of the response. We are standing together as the ACCO sector, alongside DFSV services in the NT, to drive change collectively.”

Coroner Armitage was clear that Aboriginal-led responses are essential. She found that none of the four women whose deaths were examined were “invisible” to the system — each sought help many times, and each partner was well known to police and services — yet the system failed to protect them.

She emphasised that high rates of DFSV are rooted in trauma, loss and grief, and called for investment in Aboriginal leadership, local decision-making, community-designed solutions, and prevention that addresses root causes, not just responses after violence occurs.

Mr McPhee said while many recommendations have been accepted in principle, the reality on the ground does not reflect the urgency or scale needed.

“A year later, in principle acceptance isn’t making women and families safer. It doesn’t reduce risk. It doesn’t address root causes,” Mr McPhee said. “We need real investment in exactly what the coroner identified: prevention, early intervention, community leadership and culturally responsive support.”

“Our duty of care is to ensure no woman’s cries for help go unheard again,” Mr McPhee said. “When we avoid the truths about harm of the past, we keep misdiagnosing the present. As ACCOs and DFSV organisations, we are standing together to advocate, to lead, and to ensure the voices of Aboriginal women, families and communities shape the solutions. If we stand together — and are resourced to do even more — we will be stronger, and the Territory will be safer.”

AMSANT is working with other community organisations, DFSV services and Aboriginal leaders to drive for community-led solutions and calling on government to work with the sector to look at different ways of addressing the scourge of domestic violence, as consistently recommended by Coroner Armitage.

Media contact: Amy Price, 0437 027 156

ⁱ NT Crime Statistics, AGD to June 2025

ⁱⁱ NT Coroner, 2025

ⁱⁱⁱ NT Coroner, 2025

^{iv} NT Police, 2025

^v Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2025

ADDENDUM

AMSANT notes and welcomes the launch of the NT Government’s DFSV Reduction Strategy 2025 – 2028 and Safety Roadmap, and looks forward to working collaboratively on their implementation and monitoring. AMSANT continues its call for the ACCO sector and frontline services delivering on-the-ground programs and support to be meaningfully included in the engagement process.