



Aboriginal Medical Services  
Alliance Northern Territory  
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## MEDIA STATEMENT

25 September 2025

AMSANT CEO Dr John Paterson retires after 40 years of service

The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) today acknowledges with deep respect the retirement of Dr John Paterson after more than 40 years of service as a key advocate and leader for Aboriginal health in the Northern Territory (NT).

Dr Paterson – who steps down as Chief Executive Officer of AMSANT after almost 20 years in the role – has been a tireless advocate for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal Territorians, playing a pivotal role in building and strengthening the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector and championing better health outcomes through community-led solutions.

Steadfastly working across the NT, as well as at the national level, Dr Paterson has been instrumental in advancing policies, improving healthcare infrastructure, and advocating for culturally safe and accessible services. His efforts have helped establish many of the systems and programs that support Aboriginal people living in remote and urban communities across the NT.

“John’s legacy is immense. He has been a fearless advocate for Aboriginal health, a mentor to countless leaders, and a driving force behind lasting change. On behalf of the AMSANT Board, staff and member services, we thank John for his extraordinary contribution and wish him the very best for a well-earned retirement,” said AMSANT Chairperson Rob McPhee.

A proud born and bred Territorian with family ties to the Ngalakan people in Ngukurr, Dr Paterson has worked in Aboriginal affairs in the public and community sectors at a local, Territory and Federal level since 1979. He has held many leadership roles in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) including as Chair of the NT Aboriginal Health Forum, Convenor of the Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APO NT) and member of the National Coalition of Peak Aboriginal Organisations (CoPs) in the development of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

In 2022 as recognition of his leadership, particularly in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector and advocacy during COVID-19, he was awarded the title of Honorary Doctor of Arts by Charles Darwin University (CDU).

“It has been the privilege of my life to serve our communities over the past four decades — working with, learning from, and standing alongside Aboriginal people to ensure health systems respect our culture, respond to our realities, and meet our needs,” Dr Paterson said.

“I have seen what is possible when governments trust Aboriginal people to lead the solutions. While I retire from this role, I know the sector is strong, united and ready to continue this work. I look forward to watching AMSANT and our member services build on this progress and deliver the next chapter of better health for our people.”

AMSANT will make an announcement shortly regarding interim leadership arrangements as it progresses recruitment for the CEO role.

The organisation remains committed to John’s vision: well-supported Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs), stronger infrastructure, government partnership, and sustainable health equity for Aboriginal communities across the Northern Territory

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