



COMMUNIQUE

27 NOVEMBER 2025

Meeting #105, Garramilla (Darwin)

The Northern Territory Aboriginal Health Forum (the Forum) held its 105th meeting on 27 November 2025 to discuss the strategic health priorities for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory over the next four years.

The Forum is chaired by Rob McPhee and is comprised of senior representatives from the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments, Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT), Northern Territory Primary Health Network (NT PHN), National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), the Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet (DCMC) and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Forum strategic planning project

The Forum discussed its strategic priorities for 2026 – 2030 with a vision of Aboriginal people enjoying long, healthy lives centred in culture, with access to services that are prevention focussed, responsive, culturally safe and free of racism and inequity. The Forum re-committed to a shared commitment to improving Aboriginal health through strong collective decision making across the NT health system to inform investment, strategy, policy and the performance of Aboriginal health. The strategic plan is expected to be finalised and published in early 2026.

The Forum identified six priorities until 2030:

1. Transition to community control—accelerate transition of community clinics to community control
2. Health system interface—strengthen the interface between primary health care, acute care, hospitals, the NDIS and aged care
3. Health strategy and policy—align with and help drive a Territory-wide health workforce strategy including an Aboriginal workforce strategy for the community sector
4. Core services—embed core services frameworks, needs based funding and mapping
5. Health system performance, data and accountability—focus on transparent, open sharing of Aboriginal health data, consistent reporting, and review of NT Aboriginal health performance
6. Social determinants of health—advocate for housing, education, food security, and climate essential to improve health and wellbeing.

Residential aged care presentation

The Forum heard of the pressures on Northern Territory hospitals from a lack of residential aged care beds. To address this, current developments include a 120-bed facility under construction next to

Palmerston Regional Hospital and 26 new beds at Pearl Supported Care opening in December 2025. The Forum also noted the new aged care assessment pilot led by the NPY Women's Council.

Renal care model—Kimberly Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS)

The Kimberley Renal Service, operated by KAMS, presented to the Forum on a whole-of-system coordinated model that has reduced the number of people in the Kimberley on dialysis and increased those receiving transplants. The Kimberley model features a shared medical record system across services and co-location with tertiary facilities, supporting coordinated care. The Forum highlighted the value of this model as a potential direction for the NT.

NT Health will review the current renal investment and identify opportunities for reform aligned to the KAMS model, with AMSANT representatives to join the action plan governance forum for the Northern Territory kidney action plan.

Plan for urgent care delivered in remote areas

The Forum noted work underway by the urgent care steering committee to clarify how urgent care services are defined and funded in remote settings. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

Primary health care funding reform project

The Forum received a report on primary health care (PHC) funding reform. The report mapped Aboriginal PHC funding in the Northern Territory across 14 Aboriginal community-controlled health services and NT Health services. The report identified funding complexity and fragmentation, inequities in per-client funding, high administrative burden, inadequate core funding and funding disparities between remote and urban services. The Forum approved the release of a summary of the report and will continue work to maintain momentum on PHC funding reform.

Pathways to community control working group

A significant milestone was noted by the Forum with the completion of the transition of health clinics at Jabiru, Gunbalanya, Minjilang and Warruwi to community control with the Red Lily Health Board Aboriginal Corporation. The ongoing transition to community control in other regions was discussed and the Forum committed to accelerating transition where it was supported by local communities.

Next meeting

The next Forum meeting will be held on 26 February 2026 in Garramilla (Darwin).

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