



# MEDIA STATEMENT

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## **Federal Budget: AMSANT welcomes key Closing the Gap investments**

The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) has welcomed significant new investments in Aboriginal health, housing, family safety and remote employment in the 2026–27 Federal Budget, describing them as important steps toward improving outcomes for Aboriginal communities across the Northern Territory.

AMSANT Chair Rob McPhee said the budget — which delivers a significant \$793.7 million Closing the Gap package over five years — reflects growing recognition that improving Aboriginal health outcomes requires action beyond the walls of clinics and hospitals, alongside a genuine commitment to community control.

“We welcome the investments in remote housing, Aboriginal health infrastructure, community safety, family support and employment programs,” Mr McPhee said.

“These are all critical parts of improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities.”

Mr McPhee said AMSANT particularly welcomed the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Schedule under the National Health Reform Agreement — the first dedicated Schedule for Aboriginal health within the national hospital funding agreement.

“This is an important structural reform and recognition that Aboriginal health outcomes must be embedded across the broader health system,” he said.

AMSANT welcomed several key investments impacting Aboriginal communities, including:

- \$248.7 million Commonwealth investment for a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Schedule under the National Health Reform Agreement, matched by states and territories
- \$218.3 million over five years to support the delivery of the Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices national plan in response to family, domestic and sexual violence, including the establishment of a new National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Peak.
- \$144.1 million over two years for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service infrastructure, including clinics and staff housing
- Expanded investment in remote employment and economic participation programs
- Measures to help reduce the cost of food and essential goods in remote communities
- Direct commissioning through NACCHO for two remote First Nations youth mental health services

- Additional investment in culturally safe mental health and crisis support services, including 13YARN

Mr McPhee said the budget's broader focus on equity and social determinants, including housing, early childhood and employment, aligns with what Aboriginal organisations have consistently advocated for.

"Health outcomes are shaped by much more than healthcare alone," he said. "If we want to close the gap in life expectancy and wellbeing, we also need sustained investment in the conditions people live in — housing, education, safety, employment and strong families."

The budget also confirmed funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) infrastructure.

"Modern infrastructure matters," Mr McPhee said. "Safe clinics, staff housing and fit-for-purpose facilities are essential to attracting and retaining workforce and delivering quality care in remote parts of the Territory."

At the same time, AMSANT said long-term reform of Aboriginal primary healthcare funding remains critical to ensuring services can continue meeting growing demand.

"While there are important commitments in this budget, Aboriginal health services continue to face increasing pressure from complex funding arrangements, workforce shortages, population growth and rising demand," Mr McPhee said.

"We know communities need stable, long-term funding that allows services to plan ahead, grow workforce capacity and continue delivering comprehensive care close to home."

AMSANT said there also remains an important opportunity to ensure ACCHSs play a central role in delivering early childhood developmental supports under the Commonwealth's Thriving Kids reforms.

Mr McPhee said the peak body looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with governments, NACCHO, member services and communities to strengthen Aboriginal community-controlled healthcare and improve outcomes across the Northern Territory.

"We know what works," Mr McPhee said. "The focus now should be on building long-term, stable systems that support the transition to community control and deliver lasting change."

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