MEDIA RELEASE

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New report card calls for transparent reporting on promised DFSV reforms in the NT

The Northern Territory Government has rated 33 of the 45 initiatives in its domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) strategy as 'on track', but a new report card from the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) has found insufficient publicly available information to independently verify those ratings.

AMSANT's second report card, released today, examines the Government's first published progress report on the NT DFSV Reduction Strategy 2025–2028, covering July to December 2025. It found that the update did not explain how progress was measured against the Strategy's objectives or provide a methodology for determining the ratings.

The findings come after the first anniversary of the NT's DFSV Reduction Strategy on Wednesday and two years since NT Coroner Elisabeth Armitage handed down 35 recommendations following the deaths of four Aboriginal women. 25 November also marked the start of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

AMSANT CEO Donna Ah Chee said the findings raised serious questions about accountability for reforms intended to keep Aboriginal women and children safe.

"The Government says 33 initiatives are on track, but on track towards what? Without clear measures and transparent reporting, communities have no way of knowing whether these reforms are making women and children safer," Ms Ah Chee said.

"Two years ago, the Coroner set out what needed to change after the deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurk, Kumarn Rubuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood. Their families and communities deserve to know that the commitments made in response are being delivered."

The report card also found:

- of the seven strategy initiatives AMSANT assessed as fully aligned with the Coroner's recommendations, only two were rated 'on track' by the Government
- NT Police provided no progress data for its five initiatives in the July–December 2025 reporting period, including four assessed by AMSANT as fully aligned with the Coroner's recommendations
- the Coroner's recommendations, 32 of which the Government supported in full or in principle in 2025, were referenced only once in the Government's progress report.

The report card is a desktop assessment of the Government's published reporting. It does not assess services or outcomes on the ground.

“We recognise that reforms take time to deliver. But even at this early stage, the Government should be able to show how it is measuring progress against its commitments. Without that, it is difficult to know whether the work being reported is leading to meaningful change,” Ms Ah Chee said.

The findings follow the independent review into the Department of Children and Families (DCF), which identified systemic failures and made 45 recommendations accepted by the NT Government. The report card warns that many revisit issues raised in earlier inquiries and reviews, reinforcing the need for clear accountability over implementation.

Ms Ah Chee said the report card pointed to a broader pattern of governments accepting recommendations from coronial inquests and independent reviews without establishing the partnerships and accountability mechanisms needed to deliver lasting change.

“We cannot keep responding to systemic failures with new recommendations only to lose sight of whether previous commitments have been delivered. The Government’s response to the coroner’s recommendations lacked clear governance, public reporting and a link to an accountability framework. The DCF’s recommendations cannot go the same way,” she said.

“The Government has committed to Closing the Gap and to sharing decisions with Aboriginal communities. The NT Children and Families Tripartite Forum provides an existing mechanism to do that, and it must be central to how these reforms are delivered and monitored.”

AMSANT welcomes the stronger Aboriginal voice offered by the Government’s new DFSV Aboriginal Advisory Group. AMSANT says advice to the Minister and shared decision-making through the Tripartite Forum serve different purposes, and both are needed if the Strategy is to deliver.

AMSANT is calling on the NT Government to:

- implement the Review’s 45 recommendations in genuine partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations through the Tripartite Forum
- give the Tripartite Forum oversight of the DFSV Reduction Strategy, which runs until 2028
- use the evidence and existing data to develop shared data measures, establish baselines, and measure and report on progress and outcomes.

“Aboriginal communities and organisations must be partners in the decisions that affect their lives, from how reforms are designed to how their success is measured,” Ms Ah Chee said.

“Women and children deserve to be safe. We know what needs to change. The next test is whether the Government will work with communities to deliver it, and show that it is making a difference.”

AMSANT’s Report Card #2 is available here.

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ABOUT THE REPORT CARD:

This is AMSANT’s second report card tracking the NT Government’s response to the Coroner’s landmark recommendations following the deaths of four Aboriginal women. Our first report card examined how those recommendations were reflected in the Government’s DFSV Strategy. This one examines the progress the Government has reported.

The purpose of the report is to strengthen accountability, prioritise progress and support a coordinated Territory-wide response to a crisis that leaders across the NT agree is urgent and disproportionately affecting Aboriginal women and children.

Media contact: Amy Price, 0437 027 156