NORTHERN TERRITORY PHN

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2023–24



phn NORTHERN TERRITORY
An Australian Government Initiative

RURAL Workforce AGENCY NT

SHAPING A HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR TERRITORIANS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Northern Territory PHN acknowledges the First Nations people of the Country on which we work and live, and we recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and skies. We pay our deepest respects to Elders present, emerging and across time.

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2023–24 SNAPSHOT

OUR WORK IN 2023-24

$77 million
invested to improve the health of Territorians. This represents an
INCREASE OF ALMOST
12%



HEALTH WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT NUMBERS increased from
181 TO 248





Over
$1 million
invested in **ABORIGINAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP**

OUR COMMUNITY

Northern Territory is home to more than
253,000 PEOPLE



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make up
26.3%
of the population



74.6% of the Territory's First Nations population
LIVE IN REMOTE
or very remote areas





Around a
THIRD
of Territorians are aged between
0 - 24



More than

1,400 HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

attended over

65 CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) EVENTS



Over

220 HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS

commissioned

OUR ORGANISATION (AS AT 30 JUNE 2024)

91 EMPLOYEES

13.2% ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER REPRESENTATION



Almost

11%



of employees work

PART-TIME

Over

60% OF MANAGEMENT ROLES are held by **WOMEN**

39 YEARS

average age of employees

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

The 2023–24 financial year has been one of significant delivery for Northern Territory PHN.

Our commitment to supporting culturally safe primary and mental health care services, underpinned by a strong and sustainable health workforce, is helping us meet the changing needs of the communities we serve.

This annual report highlights our role in shaping a healthier future for Territorians, both as a commissioner of health services and in driving system integration.

This year marked an important milestone with the launch of our 2024–29 Strategic Plan. The strategy signals a shift in our approach to health care service delivery, with a renewed focus on improving health outcomes for First Nations people in the Territory through Aboriginal-led health services and seeking to enhance Aboriginal agency across everything we do and support.

We continued to gain momentum in health workforce recruitment following the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and our support for health care service providers was boosted by several new training initiatives.

Internally, we have maintained a strong focus on equipping employees with the tools, support and training needed to deliver on our priorities and maintain a culturally safe working environment. This year saw the introduction of our leader and workforce culture program and the development of our People Plan.



Our focus on an inclusive and diverse workforce was further enhanced with opportunities to participate in events such as NAIDOC Week and Top End Pride.

This year, we also entered into a new Enterprise Agreement which received 98 per cent employee support.

Our organisation continued to strive to improve corporate governance, engaging Board Matters to assist us to ensure our governance processes are fit for purpose, now and in the future. These improvements were acknowledged when we successfully completed our Stage 1 audit for ISO 9001 certification.

With this strong governance and internal culture, innovative leadership, and community-focused approach, we are well positioned to lead primary and mental health care service provision into the future.

John Rawnsley

Board Chair
Northern Territory PHN



Gillian Yearsley

Chief Executive Officer
Northern Territory PHN



ABOUT US

OUR VISION

Our vision is for a culturally safe, inclusive, person-centred and integrated health care system that helps Territorians thrive.

OUR PURPOSE

At Northern Territory PHN, we seek to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of communities across the Territory.

As an independent not-for-profit organisation funded by the Australian Government, we have a dual role. We are responsible for commissioning contemporary primary and mental health care services to the community. This means we oversee the delivery of vital health care initiatives to meet the needs of Territorians. We are also a Rural Health Workforce Agency (RWA), deploying skilled health care professionals to areas where they are needed most.

Our goal is clear—to create a primary and mental health care system that is responsive, coordinated and tailored to the diverse needs of our communities.

Our overarching commitment is to drive health system reform, ensuring equitable access to care closer to home and fostering a culturally safe and inclusive environment for health and wellbeing.

This includes delivering on the Australian Government's Health Reform Agenda for the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Our purpose is underpinned by:



Centering on cultural safety and inclusiveness



Actively listening and amplifying perspectives



Collaborating with our community



Focusing on solutions for the future



OUR OBJECTIVES

As a Primary Health Network, our core objectives are to:



BUILD CAPACITY IN PRIMARY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVISION

We provide resources, training and support to enable primary care and mental health service providers to plan, support and deliver high-quality care.



COMMISSION HEALTH SERVICES

We identify service gaps and consciously commission culturally appropriate and safe services that meet our community's unique health needs through various activities, such as health promotion, prevention, early intervention, treatment and management of chronic conditions.



COORDINATE HEALTH SYSTEM INTEGRATION

We partner with collaborators and the community to shape an integrated and coordinated approach to primary and mental health care delivery, promoting better health and wellbeing outcomes for Territorians.



CHAMPION HEALTH WORKFORCE REFORM

We address health workforce shortages in the Northern Territory, listening to the needs of the health sector, growing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, and responding through initiatives that support retention, access, recruitment and advocacy for future needs.

OUR VALUES

TRUSTED PARTNER

Working with others to promote unity and collective responsibility. We support each other to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes for our communities.

AUTHENTIC

Acting with integrity, we are open, ethical and accountable in our actions and decisions. We are transparent and consistently do what is right in challenging situations.

CULTURALLY SAFE

Committed to continuous learning and improved practices that deepen our understanding of how to best support culturally safe and responsive health care across the lifespan, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

COURAGEOUS

Leading the way, speaking up, challenging inequity, embracing change, taking responsibility, advocating for the most disadvantaged communities, empowering others to embrace curiosity, and making meaningful changes in the health care system.

INCLUSIVE

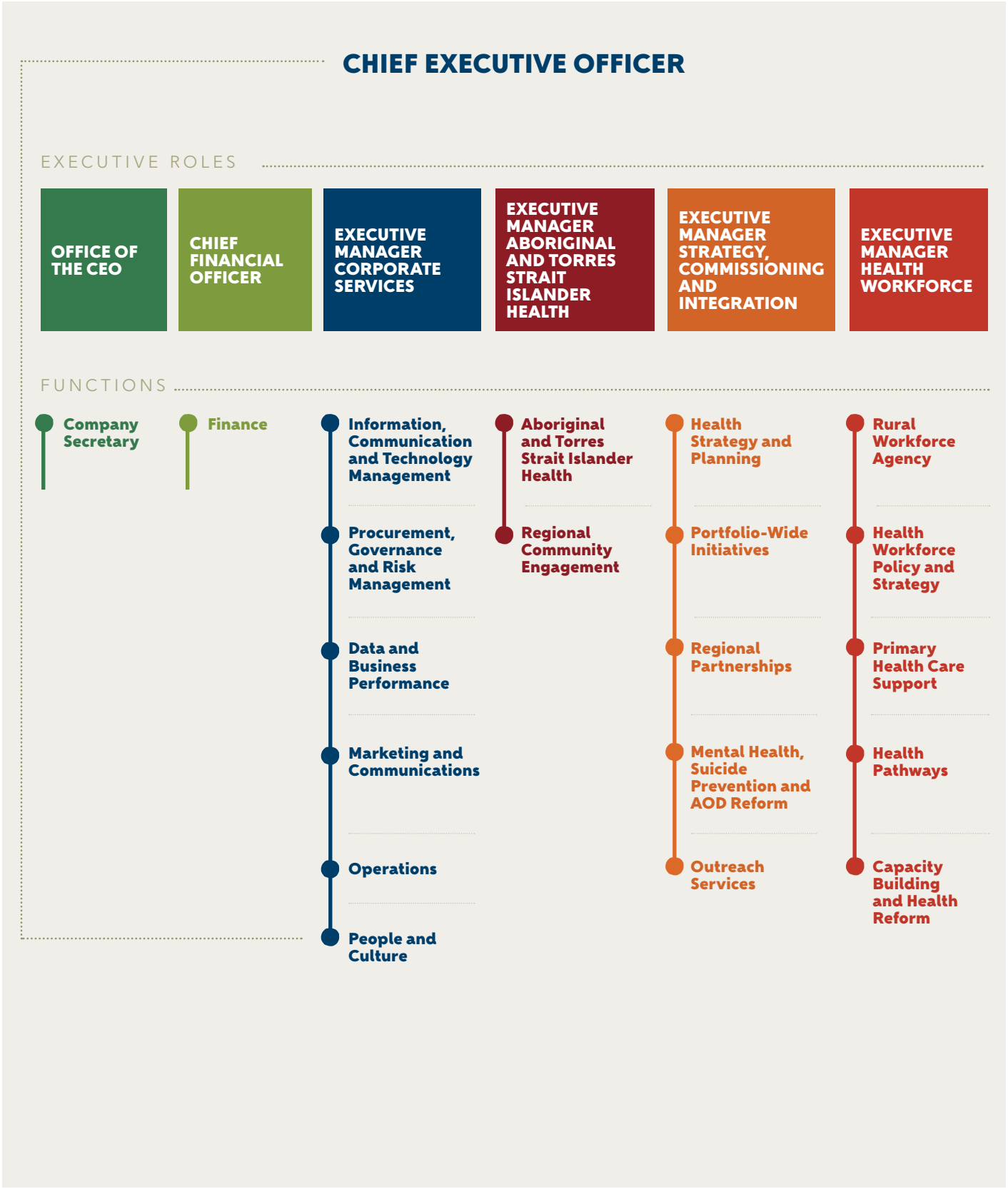
Valuing cultural responsiveness, inclusion and diversity, and fostering an atmosphere that celebrates diversity and promotes equality.





OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

(as at 30 June 2024)



BRANCHES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Our objective

To improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly those living in rural and remote communities, and create a culturally safe health care system that involves Aboriginal people in decision-making and prioritises their unique health care needs.

What we do

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health branch supports primary and mental health service providers to deliver targeted health services specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our branch is composed entirely of Aboriginal employees who are deeply committed to culturally safe, person-centred and inclusive service delivery, meaningful engagement with communities, and advocating for Aboriginal health needs at local, state and national levels.

We lead advocacy efforts on key initiatives, including:

- transitioning to community-controlled health services, empowering communities to have greater control over their health care
- driving funding reforms that prioritise sustainable, culturally appropriate health services for Aboriginal communities.

Our services

- **Primary and mental health services:** Working with service providers to ensure access to culturally safe and community-specific primary care and mental health support, including social and emotional wellbeing services.
- **Community engagement and advocacy:** Advocating to ensure that Aboriginal health needs are front and center in policy discussions and funding decisions at both a territory and national level.
- **Workforce development:** Expanding and supporting the Aboriginal health workforce, ensuring more Aboriginal people are trained and employed in health care roles, which is essential for improving long-term health outcomes.
- **Cultural frameworks:** Developing and maintaining culturally-led frameworks that underpin all our services. These frameworks ensure that cultural safety is at the heart of our work and delivery, prioritising Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing. Our frameworks guide both ourselves and service providers on the importance of cultural responsiveness, ensuring respect for Aboriginal traditions, values and beliefs is embedded in every aspect of health care.

Corporate Services

Our objective

To provide contemporary and effective corporate services and innovative business solutions to the organisation.

What we do

The Corporate Services branch is responsible for the internal operations of our PHN and assists the organisation to deliver its core business activities. The branch provides support to the Board, Office of the CEO and each area of the business.

Our services

- Data and insights
- Governance and risk management
- ICT transformation
- IT and systems
- Marketing and communications
- Operations and facilities management
- People and culture
- Procurement and contracts development

Health Workforce

Our objective

To build the capacity of the Northern Territory primary health care sector to recruit, train and retain workforce, and to support health system reform through innovative and sustainable models of care.

What we do

Through our Rural Workforce Agency NT, the Health Workforce branch attracts, recruits and supports the rural and remote health workforce in the Northern Territory.

Our services

- Recruitment and retention services
- GP Locum Program
- GP fellowship support
- Workforce Incentive Program
- Clinical education and professional development grants
- Health Workforce Scholarship Program
- Future workforce development
- Health Workforce Needs Assessment
- Workforce Planning and Prioritisation Program
- Workforce reform

Strategy, Commissioning and Integration

Our objective

To support the delivery of primary and mental health care services through effective, evidence-based and collaborative commissioning.

What we do

The Strategy, Commissioning and Integration branch commissions primary and mental health services in the Northern Territory, while coordinating integration across the health system. The branch supports local primary care and mental health service providers.

The branch also delivers key frontline-facing supports for general practice accreditation, quality improvement, workforce development, digital health, primary and tertiary health care system integration.

Our services

- Health Needs Assessment
- Joint Regional Planning with the health sector
- Commission primary and mental health care programs, including social and emotional wellbeing services
- Support commissioned providers through contract management
- Manage provider reporting to inform data-based decision-making
- Strategic future planning
- Program evaluations
- Lead and facilitate opportunities for advocacy
- Lead and/or facilitate co-design with health providers and community
- Identify opportunities for co-investment
- System integration via GP liaison, NT HealthPathways and digital health supports
- Targeted capacity building in disability, aged care, palliative care and immunisations
- Targeted supports for general practice including accreditation and quality improvement
- Support the implementation of the Strengthening Medicare agenda

LOCATIONS

Our PHN has offices in three locations across the Northern Territory:

DARWIN

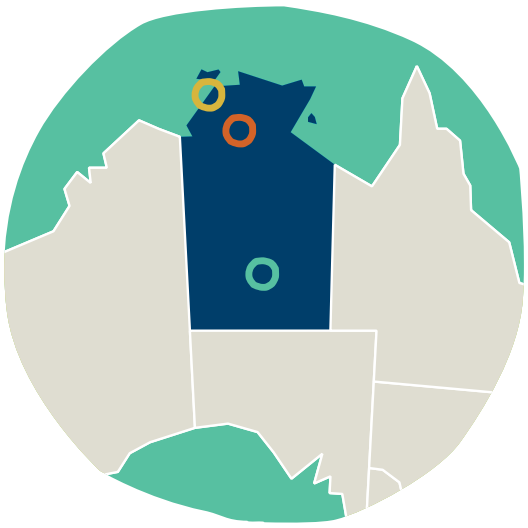
23 Albatross Street
Winnellie
Phone: 08 8982 1000

ALICE SPRINGS

Centre for Remote Health West Wing
5 Skinner Street
Phone: 08 8950 4800

KATHERINE

11/25 First Street
Pandanus Plaza
Phone: 08 8982 1040



OUR GOVERNANCE

NORTHERN TERRITORY PHN BOARD

Northern Territory PHN is overseen by the Northern Territory PHN Board. The Board provides leadership to the organisation and oversees its strategy, governance and performance.

As at 30 June 2024, our board members were:

- Mr John Rawnsley (Board Chair)
- Mr David Blair (Deputy Chair)
- Ms Helen Bowden
- Ms Heather D'Antoine
- Dr Samuel Goodwin
- Ms Liza Houghton
- Ms Sue Korner.

The Board is supported in its function by Ms Nutisha Todi (Company Secretary), the Senior Executive Leadership Team and the following councils and committees. Advice and recommendations are provided to the Board to ensure robust governance and decision-making.

CLINICAL COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Northern Territory PHN's Clinical Council and Community Advisory Council provide strategic guidance and advice on locally relevant clinical and consumer matters.

The Community Advisory Council consists of members with knowledge of the health priorities in their communities. This might come from their personal experience as a patient or carer, or from their employment in areas like health consumer advocacy, population health or community services. Members are not required to have clinical experience.

The Clinical Council members come from a range of professional backgrounds including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, general practitioners, nurses, pharmacists and allied health professionals.

FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Finance, Audit and Risk Management (FARM) Committee assists the Northern Territory PHN Board by overseeing financial management, audit processes and risk management. It reviews financial reports, budgets, risk frameworks and compliance systems, ensuring adherence to standards and regulations. The Committee also monitors internal controls, fraud detection and external audit performance.

As at 30 June 2024, committee members were:

- Mr David Blair (Chair)
- Dr Samuel Goodwin
- Ms Susan Korner
- Mr John Rawnsley.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Governance Committee is established by the Northern Territory PHN Board to provide oversight and recommendations on governance and nominations-related matters. It supports the Board in succession planning, policy reviews and Director appointments, while ensuring that diversity, skills and training needs are met. The Committee also oversees the evaluation of Board performance and the Directors' Remuneration Policy. Its role is to enhance governance practices and ensure effective Board operations.

As at 30 June 2024, committee members were:

- Mr David Blair (Chair)
- Ms Heather D'Antoine
- Ms Liza Houghton
- Ms Susan Korner.



NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The Nominations Committee plays a crucial role in supporting the Northern Territory PHN Board by overseeing the selection, appointment and re-appointment of Directors. Its responsibilities include ensuring a transparent process for Board appointments, managing succession planning, and regularly reviewing the Board's skills matrix to maintain an appropriate balance of expertise and diversity.

As at 30 June 2024, committee members were:

- Mr John Rawnsley (Chair)
- Mr David Blair
- Mr Samuel Keitaanpaa
- Ms Erin Lew-Fatt
- Ms Catherine O'Connell.

RURAL WORKFORCE AGENCY NT COMMITTEE

The Rural Workforce Agency NT Committee, established as a Board committee, assists in overseeing the organisation's role as a rural workforce agency. Its responsibilities include guiding the Health Workforce branch strategy, monitoring its performance and budget, and promoting strategic partnerships.

As at 30 June 2024, committee members were:

- Dr Samuel Goodwin (Chair)
- Ms Helen Bowden
- Ms Heather D'Antoine
- Ms Liza Houghton.



SENIOR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Senior Executive Leadership Team (SELT) is the organisation's principal leadership team, responsible for guiding and implementing the strategic direction of the organisation, overseeing financial and business performance, and supporting the Northern Territory PHN Board.

As at 30 June 2024, members were:

- Ms Gillian Yearsley, Chief Executive Officer (Chair)
- Mr Paul Connolly, Executive Manager, Health Workforce
- Ms Jessica Dooley, Acting Chief Financial Officer
- Mr Darcy Godden, Executive Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
- Mrs Ali Lloyd, Executive Manager, Strategy, Commissioning and Integration
- Ms Lauren Rayner, Acting Executive Manager, Corporate Services.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) includes management representation from each service area of the business. The role of the team is to provide advice and recommendations to the Senior Executive Leadership Team about matters related to the effective management of the organisation. The team also supports the delivery of strategic priorities for the organisation.

As at 30 June 2024, members were:

- Health Workforce Program Manager (Chair)
- Communications and Operations Manager
- Finance Manager
- Health Strategy and Planning Manager
- Health Workforce Development Manager
- Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and AOD Reform Manager
- People and Culture Manager
- Primary Health Care Manager
- Regional Health Partnerships Manager
- Shared Services Manager.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Committee provides direction and leadership to maintain effective workplace health and safety, and achieve improved safety performance and culture.

As at 30 June 2024, committee members were:

- Mental Health Workforce Development Manager (Chair)
- Regional Health Partnerships Coordinator (Secretariat)
- Governance Lead
- Health Workforce Support Officer
- Marketing and Communications Officer
- People and Culture Manager
- Primary Health Care Lead
- Regional Health Partnerships Lead
- Strategy, Commissioning and Integration Executive Manager.

OUR PRIORITIES





FOCUS AREA 1

FOSTERING CULTURAL RESPECT, SAFETY AND RESPONSIVENESS

Northern Territory PHN is dedicated to nurturing and advancing cultural practices that positively impact the health and wellbeing of our communities.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023–24:

- Launched the Northern Territory PHN Strategic Plan 2024–29 with a focus on Aboriginal-led and culturally safe health care services.
- Invested over $1 million to design and implement an Aboriginal health leadership course.

CASE STUDY

CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING

In 2023–24, Northern Territory PHN offered cross-cultural training to service providers working in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The training was designed to help organisations better understand the cultures of the communities they serve.

It was also an opportunity to share learnings and experiences, and discuss ways to embed culturally safe, respectful and responsive practices throughout the workplace.

The benefits of the training were seen by both PHN staff and our service providers, and are another step toward culturally safe health care.



CASE STUDY

TARGETED REGIONAL INITIATIVES FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION (TRISP) PROGRAM

Four new suicide prevention activities received $1.26 million in funding this year as part of the Northern Territory PHN Targeted Regional Initiatives for Suicide Prevention (TRISP) program.

The program aligns with 'Keeping Everyone Safe', the NT's suicide prevention implementation strategy for 2023–28.

Under TRISP, activities aim to address the unique risk factors for suicide in regional and remote areas of the NT and focus on community-based approaches.

NT PHN's Suicide Prevention Lead, Simon Casey, said the program employs locals in support roles.

"As part of the program, these new initiatives are building a local workforce of support workers, which not only helps provide meaningful employment for Aboriginal people, but also allows organisations to have a deeper understanding of the community's needs," Simon said.

"Suicide rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are twice that of non-Indigenous Australians. Our remote communities face many challenges in accessing essential services, placing them at even higher risk.

"To combat this, TRISP is prioritising initiatives that cater to the needs of priority populations in each region, ensuring culturally sensitive and practical suicide prevention activities."

The four organisations that have received funding under TRISP are:

Barkly region: Canteen Creek Owairtilla Aboriginal Organisation

East Arnhem region: Aboriginal Resource and Development Services (ARDS) Aboriginal Corporation

Barkly region: Alekarenge Horticulture Pty Ltd

West Arnhem region: Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation



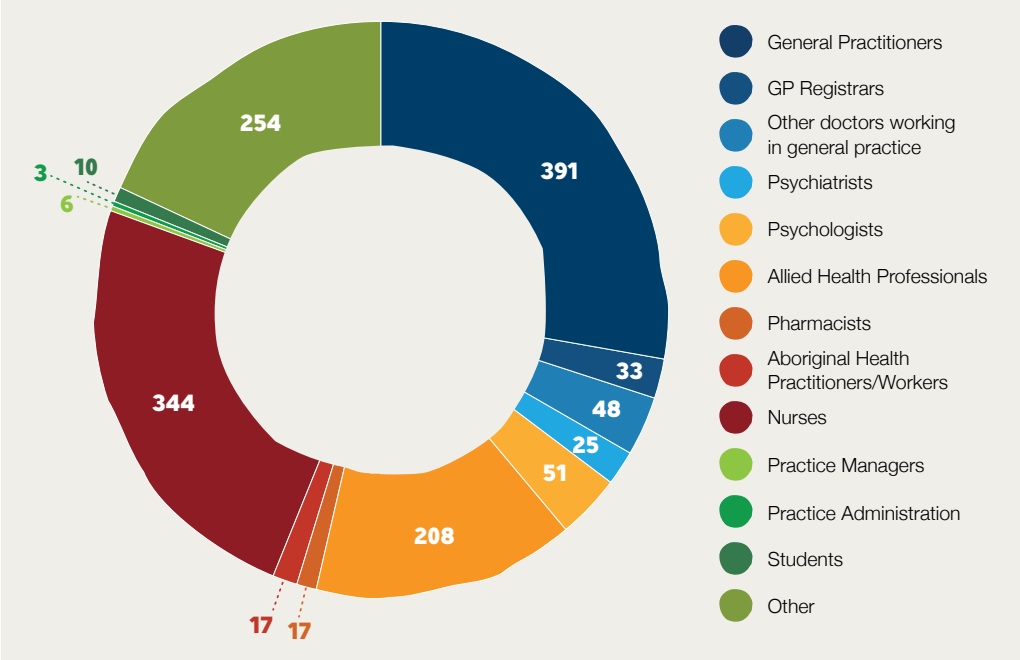
FOCUS AREA 2

SUPPORTING PRIMARY CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS

Northern Territory PHN is committed to developing the capacity and capability of primary care and mental health services to improve access to high-quality care for Territorians.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023–24:

- Facilitated 69 Continuous Professional Development (CPD) events for 1,407 health professionals, including 391 general practitioners.
- Delivered the GP Grants Program with 82 practices implementing activities toward priority areas including accreditation, infection prevention and control, and digital health.
- Supported consultation with pharmacists on the National Immunisation Program in the NT.
- Supported implementation of digital health activities including NT HealthPathways, Primary Sense, My Health Record and Provider Connect Australia.



*Profile of attendees by profession

Location / Region	
Alice Springs	9
Darwin	13
Katherine	6
Nhulunbuy	5
Online	36
Total	**69**

*Number of clinical education and CPD events delivered by location

CASE STUDY

LOCAL LINK SUPPORTS DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE RESPONSE

This year, Northern Territory PHN commissioned Local Link, a new service to support the primary care response to those affected by family, domestic and sexual violence, and child sexual abuse (FDSV).

Local Link aims to strengthen the primary care sector's ability to recognise and respond to this critical issue in a safe and appropriate way.

In 2024, Central Australian Women's Legal Service (CAWLS) was chosen as the provider for Local Link.

Tessa Hughes, Regional Health Integration Lead at NT PHN, emphasised the importance of educating GPs and health care workers about the new service.

"Local Link will play a crucial role for clinicians in supporting patients facing FDSV," Tessa said. "By providing training, advice and help finding the right services, we can ensure that those in need will get the support they need."

CAWLS will run the program in the Barkly and Central Australia region, working closely with local stakeholders, health services and professionals to enhance service coordination and support quality.

Anna Ryan, Chief Executive Officer of CAWLS, expressed her enthusiasm about Local Link's potential to promote stronger partnerships across the sector.

"With a focus on partnership and connection, Local Link will play an important role in fostering both confidence and collaboration," Anna said.

"This will lead to a more cohesive service sector response for those experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence across Central Australia and the Barkly region.

"We expect the Local Link team to provide tailored training and service mapping, combined with secondary consult services for health organisations."

Local Link is part of the broader efforts of Northern Territory PHN to combat all forms of FDSV, including violence against women and children.

The initiative supports the implementation of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–32.

FOCUS AREA 3

COMMISSIONING SERVICES TO MEET LOCAL HEALTH NEEDS

Northern Territory PHN is committed to evolving how we commission programs and services to be culturally safe, transparent, meaningful, outcomes-focused and innovative.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023–24:

Over 220 commissioned programs, including:

- mental health
- youth mental health
- social and emotional wellbeing
- stepped care mental health
- alcohol and other drugs (AOD)
- chronic disease management
- allied health outreach
- suicide prevention
- support and recovery services – after care
- after hours
- aged care
- volatile substance
- Strengthening Medicare
- COVID-19
- health justice.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Head to Health

Head to Health provides timely mental health advice, assessment and treatment.

In the Northern Territory over the 2023–24 financial year:

- 2,032 people made contact with the Head to Health service
- 1,281 calls were received
- 1,941 people were screened using the Intake and Referral Decisions Support Tool (IAR-DST).

**Sourced from H2H national dashboards with FY 23/24 date filters*

Short Term Therapies

The Short Term Therapies program provides psychological therapies to vulnerable people experiencing mild to moderate mental illness, and to those who have attempted or are at risk of suicide.

In the Northern Territory over the 2023–24 financial year, there were:

- 1,900 active clients
- 2,071 active episodes of care
- 10,371 service contacts.

**Sourced from A1 PMHC-MDS, filtered for STT providers, FY 23/24*

Headspace

Headspace provides early intervention mental health services for people aged 12 to 25.

In the Northern Territory over the 2023–24 financial year, there were:

- 7,462 occasions of service
- 1,835 young people who accessed services
- 1,069 new young people engaged.

**Sourced from headspace FY report for NT PHN*

Shared Medical Appointments

The Shared Medical Appointments (SMA) service model is based on group medical consultation that encourages a two-way exchange of knowledge and community input into how the group sessions are delivered.

As at 30 June 2024, there were:

- 738 people oriented to SMA
- 236 people trained to deliver SMA
- 61 Aboriginal Health Workers / Practitioners / RNs consulted/trained
- 22 Aboriginal community consultations
- 55+ SMA sessions delivered
- 270+ Aboriginal people who had attended an SMA for a health consultation.

CASE STUDY

HEALING AND RECOVERY SERVICE TO AID SUICIDE PREVENTION

A partnership between Northern Territory PHN and the NT Government is enabling Territorians to have access to a new healing and recovery service for suicide prevention.

Our organisation is working with service provider Danila Dilba Health Service to deliver the $3.3 million community-led program which aims to help reduce suicide rates in the NT.

The Greater Darwin Healing and Recovery Service will provide tailored support to Territorians experiencing a suicidal crisis or who have attempted suicide, as well as their families.

NT PHN Chief Executive Officer Gill Yearsley said the program has been carefully designed to ensure it meets the complex mental health care needs of Territorians.

“The new Darwin Healing and Recovery Service is being led by community voices,” Gill said.

“The Territory’s population is over-represented in suicide statistics, particularly within the Aboriginal population, so we need to ensure Territorians have access to appropriate mental health and suicide prevention services.

“Working closely with First Nations service providers and community members to deliver culturally safe mental health support is an important part of this new service.”

Danila Dilba Health Service Chief Executive Officer Rob McPhee said the new program is locally responsive and person-centred.

“The facts tell us that the relative risk for suicide or self-harm following an earlier suicide attempt is incredibly high,” Rob said.

“There has been broad consultation with 19 local organisations, review of the best available evidence and workshops focused on co-design with community members, government and community providers to ensure all stakeholders can have a say.”

“Through integration, we will ensure clients receive the right care at the right time, increasing their sense of safety and wellbeing.”

The program will initially run for five years.



FOCUS AREA 4

INTEGRATING LOCALLY RESPONSIVE HEALTH SYSTEMS

Northern Territory PHN is dedicated to aligning and collaborating on shared priorities and strengthening culturally safe, integrated, coordinated and locally responsive health care.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023–24:

- Collaborated with over 100 individual commissioned providers to deliver culturally safe primary and mental health care services for Territorians.

CASE STUDY

OUTBACK ACTIVE FOR SENIORS

In 2024, our PHN collaborated with Charles Darwin University (CDU) and Southern Cross Care to launch Outback Active in Katherine, a program aimed at keeping older Australians active and healthy.

Outback Active is a free 12-week program, tailored for individuals aged 65 and above and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 50 years and above.

Using TeleFit technology, the program offers participants the opportunity to engage in exercise sessions from their own homes.

The first four sessions are led by an experienced exercise physiologist. The remaining sessions are conducted by either an exercise scientist or a CDU exercise and sports science student under supervision.



Christine Butler, NT PHN's Katherine Regional Community Engagement Lead, performed the Acknowledgement of Country at the program's launch.

"Staying active keeps you strong, healthy and mobile," Christine said.

"As our population ages, it's important to fund programs that assist older Australians to remain physically active."

The program continues to be offered to people living in Katherine.

CASE STUDY

MOVEMENT DISORDER SPECIALIST PROGRAM

A collaboration between Northern Territory PHN and NT Health has seen the introduction of the NT's only movement disorder specialist program to support people living with Parkinson's disease.

The program was highlighted at a PHN-sponsored series of events held during Parkinson's Awareness Month in April 2024, aimed at increasing understanding about the condition.

Parkinson's disease affects approximately 1 in every 350 Australians. The disease is a neurological condition that impacts movement, causing tremors, stiffness and balance symptoms. It's one of many movement disorders that make it hard to control muscles and coordination.

Throughout the month, nurse specialist Yolanda Gomez and movement disorder speech pathologist Annabelle



Macansh coordinated several activities including a meetup for people living with Parkinson's to connect, share their stories and discuss ways to manage the challenges of the disease.

Group singing sessions helped people improve their breathing and enjoy a sense of community, and tai chi classes provided a gentle way to work on balance, flexibility and relaxation—essential skills for those with movement disorders.

The month of activities proved successful in not only raising awareness about Parkinson's but also providing tools and strategies to support people living with this disease.

FOCUS AREA 5

EVOLVING OUR ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

Northern Territory PHN is committed to enhancing our organisational capability and transforming our workplace environment to empower our people to contribute to health equity.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023–24:

- Successful completion of stage 1 of the ISO 9001 certification process, as part of an ongoing commitment to quality management.
- Implementation of the Northern Territory PHN 2024 Enterprise Agreement following a 98 per cent staff support rate.
- Introduction of a hybrid working policy to expand flexible work practices.

CASE STUDY

EVOLVE: NT PHN PEOPLE PLAN 2024–29

Launched in 2024, the Evolve: NT PHN People Plan 2024–29 details how our organisation will develop and sustain a capable, competent and motivated workforce over the next five years.

Our PHN strives for a culture of high performance where teams are engaged, valued and always learning. This gives our work greater purpose, instilling in us a continuous improvement mindset and a dedication to the organisation's strategic plan and objectives. Having capable, high-performing teams and a strong workplace culture is essential to our success.

The Plan addresses workforce development across three strategic focus areas:

- fostering effective leadership and a culture of high performance
- building skills and capability
- being an employer of choice.

Activities are underway to deliver on the objectives of this Plan.



FOCUS AREA 6

SUPPORTING THE RURAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

Northern Territory PHN is committed to achieving sustainable workforce solutions to improve primary and mental health care access in the Northern Territory.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023–24:

- Recruitment of 248 health professionals to the Northern Territory including:
  - 38 doctors
  - 79 nurses
  - 126 allied health professionals
  - 5 Aboriginal health practitioners.
- Over 60 per cent of recruits were placed in remote or very remote areas.
- 1,921 days of GP locum cover provided.
- 1,972 outreach services delivered.
- 69 workforce education events delivered to over 1,400 health professionals.
- Over $2 million awarded in workforce grants.
- Scoping of the NT's first primary health care graduate nursing program.
- Convening an expert committee to scope health training programs for remote Aboriginal people on-country.
- Increased recruitment numbers every year for the duration of the 2018-23 Strategic Plan.
- Support for over 70 clinicians to become credentialled immunisers.

CASE STUDY

NORTHERN TERRITORY'S FIRST NURSE-LED HEALTH CARE CLINIC



In 2023, Berry Springs opened its doors to the Northern Territory's first nurse practitioner-led health care facility.

Positive disruptor and innovative nurse practitioner Kylie Straube took up the challenge for the pilot program and was awarded the 2023 Nurse of the Year Award by the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association for her efforts.

Demonstrating an unwavering commitment to patient care, Kylie received the coveted nursing award for her ability to find innovative solutions and make transformative changes.

The nurse practitioner-led medical clinic was introduced after the Northern Territory PHN stepped in to find a new clinic operator to service the Berry Springs region.

Remote Territory Healthcare was successful in its tender to preserve this vital service and help safeguard the health and wellbeing of local residents.

The decision to keep the clinic open has proven to be a catalyst for positive change, enabling accessible and high-quality medical services to continue to be delivered to local Territorians.

CASE STUDY

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2023

Each year, the Northern Territory PHN Health Professional of the Year Awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding achievements of primary health care professionals across the Territory.

The recipients of the 2023 Awards included:

Administrator's Medal – Health Professional of the Year
Katherine West Health Board

General Practitioner of the Year
Dr Michelle Scerri

Nurse of the Year
Emer O'Connor

Allied Health Professional of the Year
Tamika Galea

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker of the Year
Elaine Campbell

Support Person of the Year
Amanda Short

Health Care Team of the Year
Danila Dilba, Malak

Health Care Service of the Year
Katherine West Health Board



CASE STUDY

EARLY CAREER NURSE PROGRAM

Primary health care in Central Australia continued to grow and develop in the 2023–24 financial year, with the latest cohort of nurses graduating from the Early Career Nurse Program.

Since 2020, Northern Territory PHN has funded Central Australian Aboriginal Congress to support the operation of the two-year program. The program offers participants a structured career pathway into primary health care, experience delivering culturally responsive care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and the opportunity to undertake an acute care placement at Alice Springs Hospital.

Recent graduate Jessica shared her experience.

“During the program, I was part of a team of health professionals who all supported and mentored me to ensure my experience and knowledge base was enhanced every step of the way,” Jessica said.

“My ambition is to stay in Aboriginal primary health care and complete post-graduate studies in diabetes education and management.”

Participants join the program from across Australia and the Northern Territory, and gain an increased understanding of Aboriginal culture and how to deliver culturally responsive health care.

Twelve nurses have so far completed the program; eight nurses are now employed in primary health care roles across the NT, with four nurses employed at Congress.

Congress Senior Clinical Nurse Educator Joeleen Brown said she has loved watching young nurses go through the program.

“It has been great watching them graduate and get specialised roles in primary health care. It’s very special to watch their journey.”

The Early Career Nurse Program is part of Northern Territory PHN’s aim to build and strengthen the primary health workforce in the NT, and provide more accessible health care for all Territorians.



CASE STUDY

GP LIAISON ROLE INTRODUCED

When Dr Roxane Craig started her new job as a GP liaison with Darwin Hospital in 2023, she wasn't expecting just how much difference she would make in the world of health.

Established by Northern Territory PHN, the GP liaison role aims to improve communication between GPs and hospitals, and enable better outcomes for patients.

With her extensive experience across both public and private health care, Roxane was the perfect fit for the role.

"It's about making sure people get the care they need without waiting unnecessarily," Roxane explained. "I've seen first-hand how effective communication can change outcomes."

GPs are often the first point of contact for patients with health concerns, and they rely on timely updates from hospitals to deliver ongoing care.

This connection is crucial for closing the health care gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, where access to specialist services can be a challenge.

In her day-to-day work, Roxane assists doctors by facilitating hospital discharge summaries for post-hospital care and providing guidance on best practices for navigating the hospital system.

A lifeline for many time-poor GPs.

Roxane also runs regular teleconferences, connecting rural and remote GPs with hospital specialists as part of their ongoing professional development.

Whether it's addressing minor queries or more complex issues, Roxane ensures that every enquiry is answered promptly. Roxane now handles 300 to 500 requests each month. Most are resolved within days.

Johana Zuluaga, NT PHN Primary Health Care Manager, emphasised the importance of the role.

"Roxane's work has been a key factor in ensuring GPs and specialists can collaborate effectively," Johana said. "It's not just about improving communication—it's supporting better patient outcomes."

For Roxane, it's also about ensuring people, especially those in remote areas, get the care they deserve.

"It's rewarding to know that by simply connecting people, we're making a difference in patients' lives."

The GP liaison role will continue in 2024-25.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

$95m
TOTAL INCOME

$3.2m
TOTAL EQUITY

81%
INVESTED IN PRIMARY AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND WELLBEING

98%
TOTAL INCOME RECEIVED FROM AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE AND NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

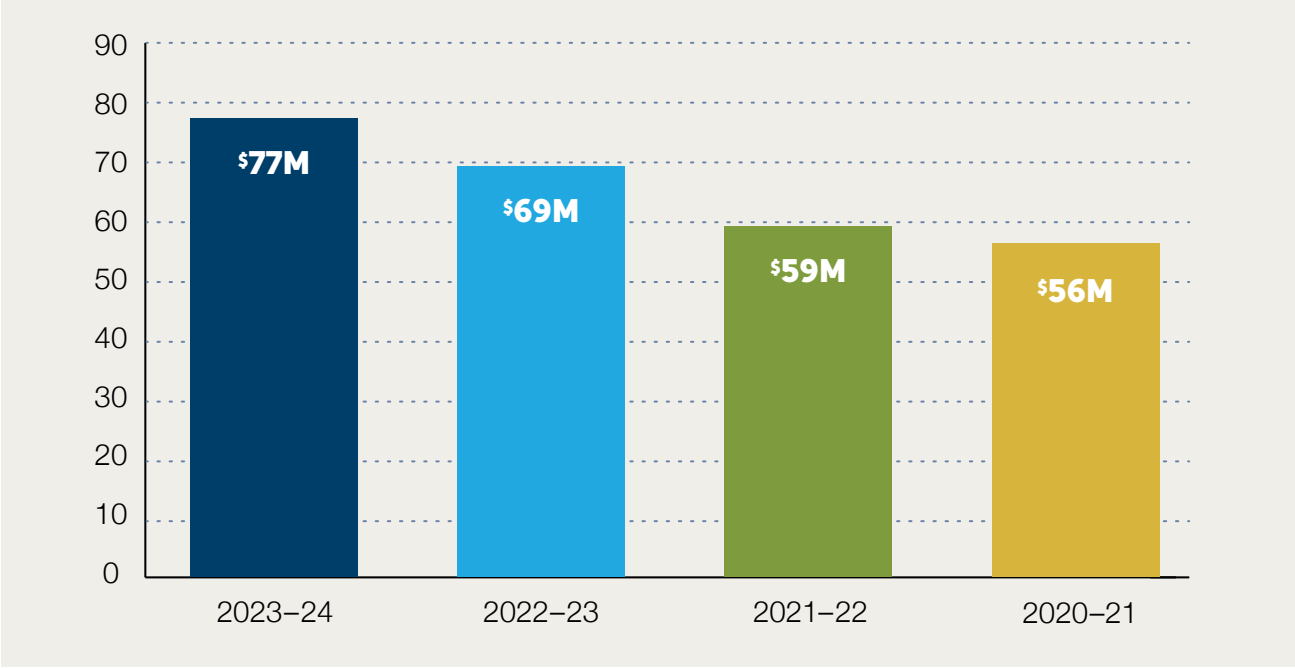
$154,902
NET SURPLUS POSITION



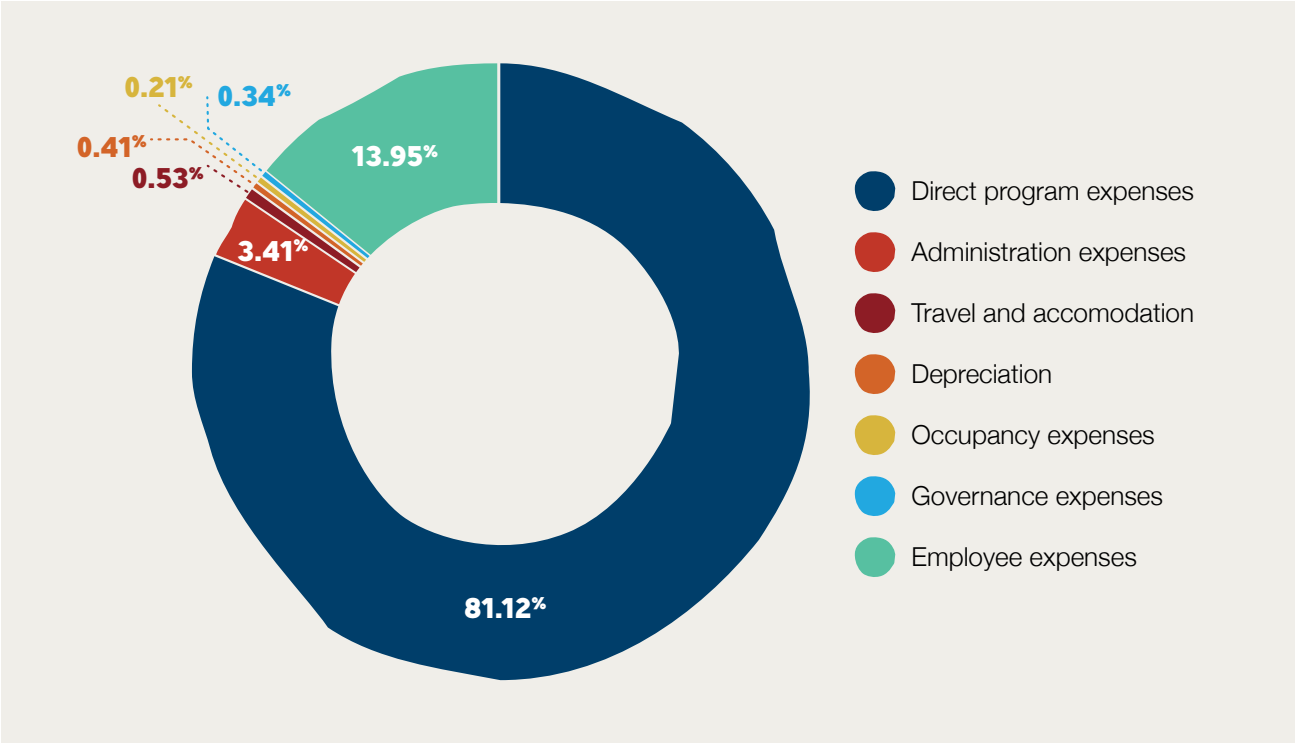
BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE IN 2023-24

NORTHERN TERRITORY INVESTMENT

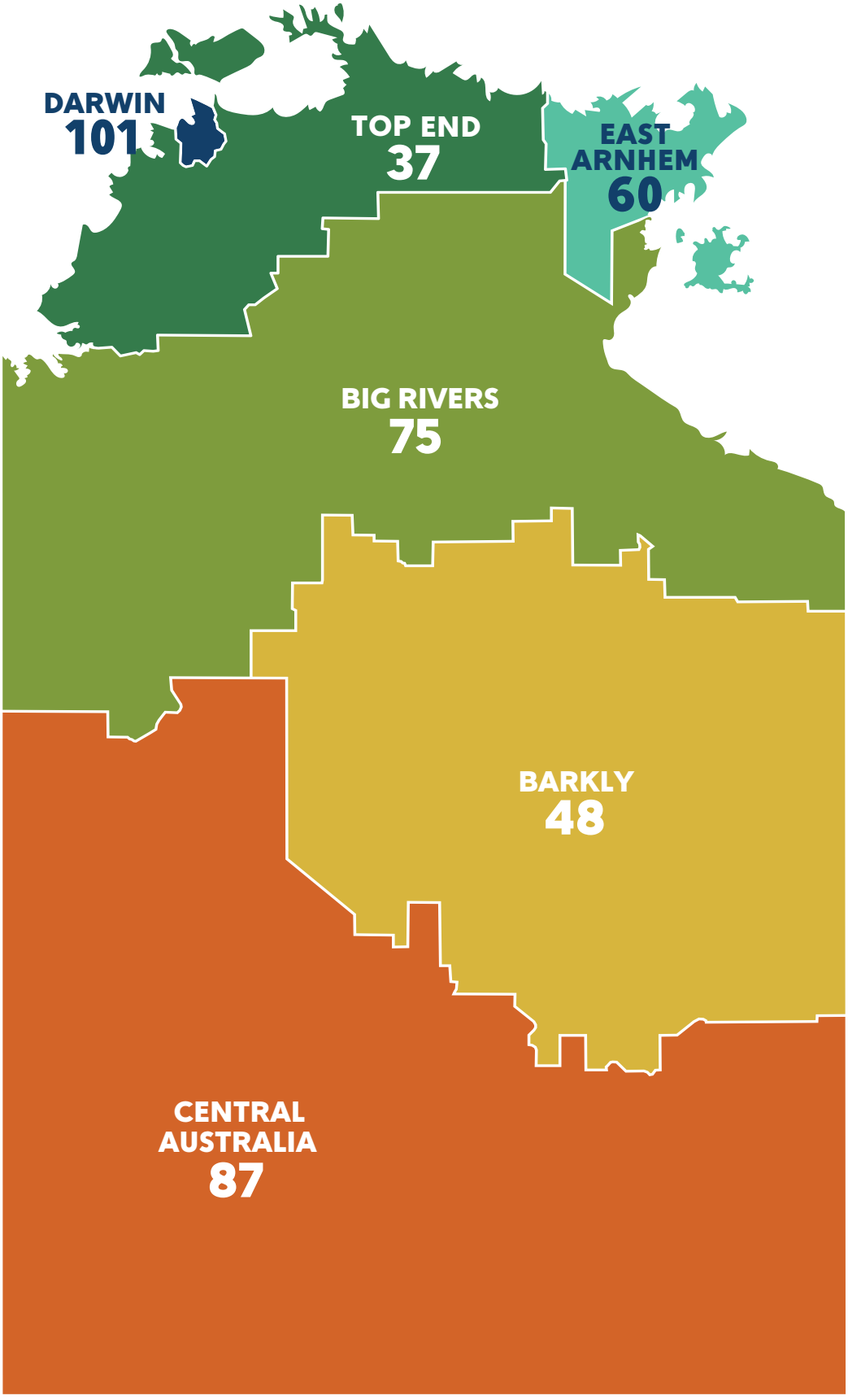
$77 million was invested to improve the health of Territorians. This represents an increase of almost 12 per cent from $69 million in 2022–23.



ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES



NUMBER OF CONTRACTS BY REGION



Contracts per region for FY23/24 (Source: contract hub + manual review FY23/24)

FUNDING INVESTED BY SCHEDULE

$6.6 million
CORE FUNDING

- Corporate governance
- Health system integration
- Core flexible commissioning
- COVID-19

$44.6 million
MENTAL HEALTH / AOD

- Primary mental health care
- Drug and alcohol
- Psychosocial support
- Family, domestic and sexual violence
- National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement and Bilateral PHN Program

$2.6 million
POPULATION HEALTH

- NDIA Mainstream Capacity Building
- Movement Disorder Nurse Specialist Pilot
- Aged care

$14.1 million
PRIMARY CARE

- Integrated Team Care Program
- After hours
- Aged care
- Digital health
- Palliative care
- Endometriosis and pelvic pain GP clinics
- PHN Strengthening Medicare
- Urgent Care Clinics Program

$9.1 million
WORKFORCE

- Rural health workforce
- Health Workforce Scholarship Program
- Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program (MOICD)
- More Doctors for Rural Australia Program
- Pre-Fellowship Program
- Innovative Practice Fund





phn NORTHERN TERRITORY
An Australian Government Initiative

RURAL Workforce AGENCY NT

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