

# Northern Territory PHN – Commonwealth Psychosocial Support

## ACTIVITY WORK PLAN

phn NORTHERN TERRITORY
An Australian Government Initiative

RURAL Workforce AGENCY NT

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# Commonwealth Psychosocial Support Measure – Program Delivery (service delivery)

## 1. Aim of Activity

The aim of this activity is to ensure psychosocial services can be accessed early to support people living with severe mental health challenges and who are unable to obtain it through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

This activity combines several activities within Northern Territory Primary Health Network's (Northern Territory PHN) previous Activity Work Plans under the National Psychosocial Support Measure to reflect new funding arrangements from 1 July 2021, in line with the Commonwealth Psychosocial Support – Commonwealth Guidance.

## 2. Description of Activity

This activity will continue to provide support to clients who have been found to be ineligible for the NDIS. The activity will also support up to 30 percent of total clients who have not yet tested their eligibility for NDIS support, to test NDIS access or to transition to appropriate psychosocial services.

Psychosocial services are delivered in regional and remote communities of the Northern Territory (NT). They are delivered in groups and individual sessions depending on individual and community needs. This may include outreach, men's and women's groups and one on one services in community. All services are currently run face to face in different types of venues such as recreation halls, outdoors in culturally safe areas and at health clinics. Due to the complexities of remote access and the transient population often found in the NT's remote and regional areas, no limit to a client's duration of support has been created.

The programs and client outcomes are measured/evaluated through several different tools. Strength assessments used include the Outcome Star, Stay Strong Recovery Plan and the Aboriginal and Islander Mental Health Initiative (AIMHi) Stay Strong App. These tools are culturally appropriate for the client cohort in regional and remote communities.

Provision or facilitation of training and/or resource development in processes, reporting or supports relating to psychosocial support services may also be commissioned under this activity, including clinical supports for providers.

On 3 March 2025, the Department of Health, Disability & Ageing issued a variation to the funding schedule: Primary Health Networks (PHN) – Commonwealth Psychosocial Support

(CPS), confirming funding for the CPS program until 30 June 2027. Northern Territory PHN allocated funding to all existing providers with the unallocated funding utilised to expand CPS to regions where CPS is not currently delivered.

Workforce access, capacity and capability are critical areas of need to support the delivery of commissioned programs by Northern Territory PHN. Where required, this activity could include workforce development initiatives to improve access, quality and sustainability of services to the communities in the NT.

# 3. Needs Assessment Priorities

**Northern Territory PHN Needs Assessment Priorities 2024/25 – 2026/27**

| Priority | Page reference |
|---|---|
| Mental Health - Deliver mental health services in line with the NT Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan for Integration and Co-Investment. | 64 |
| Population Health - Equitable access to health care and social services, especially for those living in rural and remote areas. | 52 |
| Population Health - Contribute to intra and inter sectoral partnerships and system wide approaches to address barriers to access to primary and mental health care for at-risk populations. | 51 |

# 4. Demographics

All NT residents across the Territory with severe mental illness, aged 16 years and over.

# 5. Consultation and Collaboration

**Consultation**

Each commissioned service has included consultation with community and people with lived experience in the development of the program. A needs assessment was completed by each provider to identify needs in communities that do not current have psychosocial services.

**Collaboration**

Ongoing collaboration with sector and community to inform quality improvement and adjustments to commissioned services at a service delivery level. Collaboration occurs with

Northern Territory PHN, federally funded Transition Support Project (TSP) and commissioned service providers.

## 6. Milestones

In January 2025, CPS funding was allocated through 4 different providers to reach the remote communities of Belyuen, Wagait Beach, Dundee Beach, Jabiru, Pupunya, Haast Bluff, Mount Leibig, Yundemu, Mataranka, Jilkminggan, Barunga, Wugularr (Beswick) and Pine Creek.

## 7. Commissioning

Co-design has occurred at a provider level to ensure appropriate services are delivered. This has been effective in identifying and tailoring the program to different client cohorts. Those involved in co-design include, Northern Territory PHN, local providers, people with lived experience/carers, NT Health and representatives of the First Nation's community.



# Commonwealth Psychosocial Support Measure – Program Delivery (access enablers)

## 1. Aim of Activity

The aim of this activity is to ensure psychosocial services can be accessed early to support people living with severe mental health challenges and who are unable to obtain it through NDIS. Furthermore, it is to co-ordinate referral processes to support consumer access, work with service providers to integrate processes for information sharing with consumers and engage health professionals to provide information on other support services.

This activity combines several activities within Northern Territory PHN's previous Activity Work Plans under the National Psychosocial Support Measure to reflect new funding arrangements from 1 July 2021, in line with the Commonwealth Psychosocial Support – Commonwealth Guidance.

## 2. Description of Activity

**Service Navigator**

The access enabler component of this activity will provide support to clients who require help with navigating to different psychosocial services. The Service Navigator role was reestablished in January 2025 and will focus on facilitating streamlined access to a comprehensive range of health and support services for consumers with psychosocial and clinical needs. This involves establishing efficient referral processes, standardising intake procedures and ensuring thorough assessments are conducted to match individuals with appropriate services. Service Navigators collaborate closely with various stakeholders, including healthcare providers, community organisations and government agencies, to integrate information sharing mechanisms, develop resource materials and engage with health professionals to disseminate information about available services and supports. They also work in tandem with NDIS Local Area Coordinators to identify service gaps and ensure a joint understanding of referral pathways, supports and emerging issues. This will be delivered across the NT through a provider located in the Top End region. The provider has relationships across the NT and will utilise this and their current services to increase access to psychosocial services across the NT.

**NDIS Testing Support**

A mix of clinical (allied health and aboriginal health practitioners) and non-clinical staff (lived experience workers) are undertaking these activities. Strength assessments used include the Outcome Star, Stay Strong Recovery Plan and AIMHi Stay Strong App. These tools are culturally

appropriate for the client cohort in regional and remote communities. LSP-16 and the World Health Organisation Disability Assessment Schedule (WHODAS) are being used for NDIS applications. The Recovery Assessment Scale – Domains and Stages (RAS-DS) is not currently being used by any provider as it has been deemed not culturally appropriate.

**Regional Loading**
On 3 March 2025, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing issued a variation to the funding schedule PHNs – CPS, confirming funding for the CPS program until 30 June 2027.

**PHN Operational**
The workforce undertaking activities to manage commissioned service providers and psychosocial contracts consists of a Regional Health Partnerships Lead (1 x Full Time Equivalent (FTE) ) who works in conjunction with the Regional Health Partnerships Manager.

Provision or facilitation of training and/or resource development in processes, reporting or supports relating to psychosocial support services may also be commissioned under this activity, including clinical supports for providers.

Workforce access, capacity and capability are critical areas of need to support the delivery of commissioned programs by NT PHN. Where required this activity could include workforce development initiatives to improve access, quality and sustainability of services to the communities in the Northern Territory.

# 3. Needs Assessment Priorities

**Northern Territory PHN Needs Assessment Priorities 2024/25 – 2026/27**

| Priority | Page reference |
|---|---|
| Population Health - Equitable access to health care and social services, especially for those living in rural and remote areas. | 52 |
| Population Health - Provide access to health prevention, promotion, early intervention and navigation supports for at-risk populations. | 56 |
| Population Health - Contribute to intra and inter sectoral partnerships and system wide approaches to address barriers to access to primary and mental health care for at-risk populations. | 51 |

# 4. Demographics

All NT residents across the Territory with severe mental illness, aged 16 years and over.

# 5. Consultation and Collaboration

**Consultation**
Each commissioned service has included consultation with community and people with lived experience in the development of the program. A needs assessment was completed by each provider to identify needs in communities that do not current have psychosocial services.

**Collaboration**
Ongoing collaboration with sector and community to inform quality improvement and adjustments to commissioned services at a service delivery level. Collaboration occurs with Northern Territory PHN, federally funded TSP and commissioned service providers.

# 8. Milestones

In January 2025, the service navigator role was contracted to increase access to psychosocial services across the NT.

# 9. Commissioning

Co-design has occurred at a provider level to ensure appropriate services are delivered. This has been effective in identifying and tailoring the program to different client cohorts. Those involved in co-design include Northern Territory PHN, local providers, people with lived experience/carers, NT Health and representatives of the First Nation's community.