

Headspace Demand Management and Enhancement

ACTIVITY WORK PLAN

phn NORTHERN TERRITORY
An Australian Government Initiative

RURAL Workforce AGENCY NT

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Building Cultural Capacity

1. Aim of Activity

The aim of this activity is to build the cultural capability of headspace services. Building cultural capability will help to improve access and provide better support for young people from priority groups including but not limited to those from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQA+ and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

There is a clear need to improve culturally responsive and inclusive services for priority youth populations—specifically those identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (31.8%), from the LGBTIQA+ community (24%) and CALD backgrounds (13.4%)—who engage with headspace. While these figures align with or exceed national population data, gaps remain in delivering services that are culturally safe, affirming and accessible to ensure equitable mental health support.

2. Description of Activity

The Project Officer will ensure consistent implementation, monitor progress, engage stakeholders, manage resources and sustain accreditation standards. This role is crucial for the success and sustainability of the inclusivity initiatives.

Staff training will focus on enhancing accessibility and engagement for CALD and LGBTIQA+ young people. Benefits include increased cultural sensitivity, improved communication skills, enhanced trust and rapport, reduced stigma and bias, and empowerment of staff as allies and advocates. Training will utilise existing and localised resources from organisations such as the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health, Transcultural Mental Health Centre and Rainbow Health Australia.

The Rainbow Tick accreditation demonstrates headspace's commitment to LGBTIQA+ inclusivity. It enhances cultural capability, increases accessibility, improves trust and reputation, and ensures high-quality care and continuous improvement. This nationally recognised standard signals a safe and welcoming environment for LGBTIQA+ youth.

The headspace Alice Springs program aims to engage young Indigenous males through culturally safe, gender-responsive approaches that foster resilience, wellbeing and connection to culture. Activities will be delivered in both group and one-on-one settings, with a focus on mental health, cultural identity and sexual health, alongside opportunities to strengthen connections with language, elders and Angangkere (traditional healers). The program will work in partnership with local organisations and contribute to building cultural capability across the

workforce. The Project Officer will also be centrally involved in the ongoing development of the headspace outreach service at Yulara/Mutitjulu.

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
Mental Health - Contribute to informed, inclusive services that provide timely, integrated, compassionate and culturally safe suicide prevention responses that meet the diverse needs of people across the NT.	35

4. Demographics

NT residents in the Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs regions.

5. Consultation and Collaboration

Consultation

There was consultation with staff at headspace Alice Springs, including the female Aboriginal Cultural Advisor, clinical team members, key community stakeholders such as Akeyulerre, Clontarf and local schools. A comprehensive review was also undertaken of service pathways for Indigenous young men accessing mental health services at headspace Alice Springs.

Collaboration

NT AIDS & Hepatitis Council (NTAHC)

- Focus: Health and wellbeing for LGBTIQA+ individuals
- Services: Counselling, sexual health support, peer groups, advocacy and outreach in regional communities. Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory (MCNT)
- Focus: Support for CALD communities
- Services: Youth programs, mental health support, language services, social inclusion, and advocacy for migrants and refugees.

Thorne Harbour Health (formerly VAC)

- Focus: LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing
- Services: Remote/online counselling, peer support and health education accessible in Katherine and Darwin.

Melaleuca Refugee Centre

- Focus: Refugee and asylum seeker support
- Services: Trauma-informed counselling, case management, settlement assistance and culturally appropriate youth support.

Young Women's Christian Association of Australia (YWCA) Darwin

- Focus: Inclusive youth and family support
- Services: Mental health, housing, community programs for vulnerable youth including LGBTIQA+ and CALD populations.

Pride NT

- Focus: Advocacy and visibility for LGBTIQA+ people
- Services: Community events, peer networks and initiatives promoting safe, inclusive environments.

Danila Dilba Health Service

- Focus: Indigenous health and mental wellbeing
- Services: Culturally safe health and mental health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, with benefits extending to LGBTIQA+ and CALD individuals within these communities.

6. Milestones

headspace Alice Springs:
Recruitment and employment of a male Aboriginal Cultural Advisor
Implementation of program

headspace Darwin:
A dedicated Project Officer employed to coordinate project initiatives
Staff training

Capital Enhancement and Infrastructure

1. Aim of Activity

The purpose of this funding is to enhance the quality of service, improve access to services and support headspace services by appropriately accommodating current and future staffing needs at headspace sites identified as highest need. The aim of the capital works is to enhance and modernise headspace premises through capital works activity including increasing building size, enhancing layout, upgrading or replacing equipment and furnishings and/or relocating services.

2. Description of Activity

The capital works funding will support infrastructure upgrades at headspace Darwin and headspace Yulara/Mutitjulu, ensuring both locations provide safe, welcoming, and culturally responsive environments for young people and their families. At headspace Darwin, enhancements will address the growing demand for services and an expanding workforce by modernising the existing premises. Planned works include the creation of quiet zones, additional therapy and community spaces, and improved telehealth capability through IT infrastructure upgrades. The refurbishment will be staged to minimise disruption and maintain service continuity, with input from local elders and community representatives to ensure the space reflects cultural needs and preferences.

At headspace Yulara and Mutitjulu, capital enhancements will focus on safety, comfort and accessibility. Planned works include painting, new flooring, shaded outdoor areas, fencing, security system upgrades, internal fit-out, improved climate control, refurbish old toilet block/bathroom, installation of a duress and security monitoring system, create comfortable, purpose-built spaces for counselling, creative activities, group activities and social engagement, provide a space for local youth and community members to gather, collaborate, and engage with support services. These upgrades aim to provide a more functional and welcoming environment for staff and young people. Once completed, the refurbishment will be formally launched to celebrate the strengthened service offering in the region.

3. Needs Assessment Priorities

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

Priority	Page reference
Population Health - Improve health literacy through approaches that are culturally responsive, trauma informed, community-led and place-based.	23

Priority	Page reference
Mental Health - Deliver mental health services in line with the Northern Territory Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan for Integration and Co-Investment.	64
Mental Health - Building stronger communities that have increased capacity to respond to and prevent suicidal behaviour through raising awareness and reducing stigma.	64
Population Health - Equitable access to health care and social services, especially for those living in rural and remote areas.	52

4. Demographics

This activity will target young people aged between 12 and 25 (the age range of headspace services) in Darwin City, Katherine and Alice Springs.

Although headspace services are open to all young people aged between 12 and 25, a significant proportion of the population that headspace Darwin, Yulara and Mutijulu services are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. A key part of this activity is creating a space that is culturally safe and relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their families. Therefore, the activity will engage with Indigenous Elders and local Indigenous artists to assist with making the space culturally safe and appropriate.

5. Consultation

Consultation

- Staff, young people and community partners to be a part of the initial assessment of the current space and identifying areas that can be temporarily repurposed as staff and service areas
- Partnering with Indigenous Elders and community representatives to gather insights on culturally appropriate design elements, as well as culturally inclusive signage and wayfinding
- Commission local Indigenous artists to create artwork for the refurbished building
- Staff and young people to evaluate the new space's functionality.

6. Milestones

headspace Darwin

Stage 1: IT infrastructure and setup of remote/alternative workstations.

Stage 2: Refit of administrative and non-clinical areas

Stage 3: Incremental refit of clinical areas

Stage 4: Communal spaces and final touch-ups

Post-refit Evaluation and Staff/Young Person feedback

headspace Mutitjulu and Yulara

Month 1-2: planning and design

Month 3: Procurement and tendering

Month 4: Refurbishment works start

Month 6: Completion of refurbishment, and equipment setup and office establishment

Month 7: Final inspections and handover, and official opening and launch

