Foreword

This strategic plan sets out a vision, principles, goals and action areas that can guide nurses and midwives working to improve the health and wellbeing of Northern Territorians. It is framed with an understanding that such work takes place within a multi-disciplinary team. In partnership with other professionals, government and non-government agencies we will work collaboratively with our community to address the social determinants of health and achieve our vision of an NT Nursing and Midwifery Workforce that is compassionate, competent, confident, contemporary, capable, and committed to leading contemporary person centred health care.

The strategic objectives and action areas define our collective commitment to achieve the highest standard of professional practice. They provide the strategic leadership and direction for the provision of health services in the Northern Territory so that Territorians can access the care they need, when they need it, and as close to home as possible.

The Northern Territory population is estimated as 241,590 or one per cent of the total Australian population and has a population density of only 0.2 people per square kilometre compared to Australia’s population density of 2.9 people per square kilometre. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders comprise thirty per cent of the population of the Northern Territory, the highest proportion of any state or territory.

On almost all indicators Aboriginal Territorians experience less favourable health outcomes than other Territorians. The social determinants of health; poverty, poor educational outcomes, unemployment and remote living are responsible for a substantial portion of the gap in health outcomes experienced by Aboriginal people, and lay outside the direct influence of health services. It is a major focus of this plan to ensure that nurses and midwives in the Northern Territory are doing all we can to strengthen cross-sector initiatives. As a jurisdiction the provision of Aboriginal health care is one of our core activities. In this respect we are leading the way nationally by meeting our target to “close the gap” on Indigenous health outcomes in 2013. Our plan provides a strategic framework for nursing and midwifery to continue to contribute to these improvements.

From 1 July 2014 the Public Health System in the NT, operating under the new Health Services Act 2014, comprises three entities; the Department of Health, the Top End Health Service and the Central Australia Health Service. The two Health Services are each governed by a Health Service Board which is accountable to the Chief Executive through Service Delivery Agreements, as well as reporting directly on their performance to the Minister for Health. The structural change, as articulated in the New Service Framework (NSF), aims to afford greater control of health care decision-making by local communities, improves the flexibility, responsiveness and innovation capacity of the public health system and, provides for more efficient and effective public hospital and community health services.

Nurses and Midwives are critical to health service delivery across all of the components of NT Health including acute care, specialty Territory wide services, mental health and primary health care (incorporating remote health clinics, outreach services, prison health, Police watch houses and urban health).

This plan provides a ‘blue-print’ for action plans across all of these practice areas.

I look forward to working with nurses and midwives across all of these services to implement action plans that will make a critical contribution to the health and welfare of all Northern Territorians.

Dr Robyn Aitken
A/Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer
Leadership

Leadership by nurses and midwives is central to providing strategic, expert, evidence-based advice to ensure that decision making relating to policy; purchasing; quality and safety; risk identification and management; business and financial planning; and workforce education, training, development and planning are contextualised within the realities of person centred health care. Nurses and midwives are represented at all decision making levels within the New Services Framework (NSF).

The Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer (CNMO) provides NT wide professional leadership, advice, strategic planning and national and international representation of the profession across both Government and non-Government organisations. As the designated Nursing and Midwifery ‘Clinical Lead’ within the Department of Health the CNMO is a member of the Department of Health Executive. The CNMO has an operational role within the policy and strategy branch of the System Manager, and fulfils professional leadership functions for nurses and midwives employed within the Department of Health and Territory Wide Services.

The CNMO is supported in this role by the staff of the Office of the CNMO. These senior nurses and midwives provide contemporary evidence based policy advice, and contribute to NT wide strategic planning, professional governance and consistency of practice for identified program areas.

The two Executive Directors of Nursing and Midwifery (one each for Top End and Central Australia Health Services) participate at an Executive level within the Health Service for service wide achievement of contemporary nursing and midwifery professional standards. They assume responsibility for development and implementation of policy directives, strategic workforce, education and professional development plans; and ensure operational implementation of appropriate human resource, industrial relations, finance, and quality and safety standards.

Directors of Nursing fulfil these professional roles at regional hospitals and within each division, working closely with the team of managers and multi-disciplinary health professionals.

Co-Directors, Nursing and Midwifery Directors and Clinical Nurse/Midwife Managers provide operational leadership at the department, ward, and clinic level. They also oversee the quality and safety of patient care delivered by the health assistant workforce (e.g. Patient Care Attendants/Patient Services Assistants).

Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Nurse Consultants, and Clinical Nurse Specialists are equipped with qualifications and experience to fulfil extended and advanced practice roles within NT Health.

Along with clinical Education Consultants and Clinical Nurse Educators the nursing and midwifery leadership team support the provision of education for every registered nurse, registered midwife and enrolled nurse to provide evidence-based, culturally responsive person centred care to the highest standards of clinical and professional practice.

The role of nursing and midwifery leadership at each level works together to support the delivery of efficient, safe and effective quality health care. Together they are an asset to NT health and should be valued for their individual and collective expertise and leadership for driving the action that aim to achieve of the goals, values and strategic objectives set out in this plan.
Our Vision
The NT Nursing and Midwifery Workforce will be compassionate, competent, confident, contemporary, capable, and committed to leading person centred health care.

Our Mission
Nurses and midwives will lead contemporary compassionate, safe, evidence based person centred care across diverse geographical and cultural contexts in collaboration with individuals, families, communities and our health professional colleagues.

Our Values

NT nurses and midwives have integrity
We care about people using our services, our fellow health professionals and the communities in which we work and live
Compassion drives us to embrace diverse cultures, perspectives and experiences as we engage in person-centred professional, nursing and midwifery practice
We are honest, trustworthy, ethical in our behaviour; we are culturally responsive, and respect the traditional owners of the land on which we practice.
We pay tribute to and are guided by traditional elders and professional role models past and present

NT nurses and midwives are accountable
We are accountable to our community and ourselves for culturally responsive, caring and compassionate professional behaviour
Responsibility for our decisions, sustainable use of resources, and personalising health care drives leadership, quality and safety, risk management and innovation
We are accountable for our self-care and our responsibility to support, mentor, develop and coach our peers across the lifespan of participation in the nursing and midwifery workforce

NT nurses and midwives are relevant today and ready for tomorrow
We are committed to developing nursing and midwifery led models of care, and advancing and extending our scope of practice to respond to health needs today and build capacity for preventing illness and promoting health for tomorrow
We strive to continuously improve our knowledge and skills and the evidence base for our practice

NT nurses and midwives are committed to delivering high quality care
Being passionate about delivering safe, high quality, person-centred, evidence based nursing and midwifery led models of care drives practice development and nursing and midwifery research
We encourage, recognize and celebrate excellence in contemporary nursing and midwifery practice and the achievements of the nurses and midwives who have brought us to where we are today

NT nurses and midwives value partnerships
We recognise that the primary partnership is between the nurse/midwife and the person and their family at the centre of nursing and midwifery care
We are committed to working alongside fellow health professionals, and articulating the critical, irreplaceable value and contribution of nurses and midwives to the multidisciplinary team
Our Challenges and Opportunities

- Workforce flexibility, responsiveness, effectiveness and resilience
- Models of nursing and midwifery care that are accessible, innovative, effective and reflect unique local conditions
- Promoting a nursing and midwifery culture that is supportive, inclusive, and incorporates transparent decision making, two-way honesty and respect, with equitable professional opportunities at all levels
- Applying research to practice, sharing data to improve practice, and researching our actions to develop evidence of outcomes.
- Educating our workforce in the context of geographical and professional diversity and isolation
- Leadership, partnership, and leading the way for better, safer, culturally responsive and more compassionate care

Strategic Objectives

Our strategic plan will drive the efforts and priorities of nurses and midwives at all levels, and is built on the foundation of the seven strategic objectives of NT Health. These are:
Strategic Objective 1 – Promote and protect health and well-being

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<td><strong>1.1</strong> Promote nursing and midwifery as a caring, kind, and compassionate profession, and live up to public expectations of honesty, capability and integrity</td>
<td>Evidence of media messaging and a public profile that positions NT nurses and midwives as caring for, and caring about people, and are trustworthy, professional, and capable</td>
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<td><strong>1.2</strong> Build nursing and midwifery workforce capacity for preventing illness and promoting health for tomorrow</td>
<td>Clearly articulating primary health care capabilities within position descriptions and recruitment and development policies and practices for nurses and midwives</td>
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Strategic Objective 2 – Deliver appropriate care to vulnerable people and populations

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<td><strong>2.1</strong> Implement models of nursing and midwifery care that are innovative, effective and responsive to the high proportion of Aboriginal people within the population of the NT and the burden of disease individuals, families and communities experience</td>
<td>Reviewing and improving policies and processes for delivering primary health care models of nursing and midwifery care in prisons, remote communities, and acute care settings Establishing nurse practitioner positions in the priority areas of child health and chronic disease that provide prevention and care coordination for vulnerable populations across the lifespan Reviewing and improving communication systems and processes to promote models of care that lead to better coordination and integration of Maternity, Child and Family Health services.</td>
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### Strategic Objective 3 - Improve Aboriginal health outcomes

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<td><strong>3.1</strong> Enhance peoples’ access to culturally appropriate health care by increasing the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people within the nursing and midwifery workforce</td>
<td>Developing an workforce strategy to increase participation of Aboriginal people in nursing and midwifery</td>
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### Strategic Objective 4 – Better coordinate and integrate care

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<td><strong>4.1</strong> Lead innovations in care that encourage consistency of peoples experiences and the care they receive across diverse workplaces</td>
<td>Evidence of greater consistency of nursing and midwifery practices across acute care, mental health, AOD services and primary health care</td>
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<td><strong>4.2</strong> Establish partnerships for streamlining care across diverse settings</td>
<td>Establishing and consolidating professional partnerships with NGO health service providers</td>
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### Strategic Objective 5 – Strive for clinical and corporate excellence

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<td><strong>5.1</strong> Celebrate and promote excellence in nursing and midwifery care</td>
<td>Increasing the profile of the nursing and midwifery awards and better articulating the characteristics of clinical excellence</td>
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<td><strong>5.2</strong> Promote a nursing and midwifery culture that optimises the role of nurses and midwives in corporate governance</td>
<td>Evidence of nursing and midwifery leadership at all decision making levels relating to health services governance, nursing and midwifery practice, and profession standards</td>
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<td><strong>5.3</strong> Implement robust systems of governance for setting, implementing and monitoring compliance with clinical and professional standards</td>
<td>Implementing procedures, policies and management tools that ensure compliance with clinical and professional standards</td>
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### Strategic Objective 6 – Build a flexible, highly skilled and culturally safe workforce

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| **6.1** Develop an evidence based approach to supporting transition from student to graduate and a flexible workforce that can work safely across practice settings | Developing evidence based recruitment and retention strategies that include educational innovation and specifically address the challenges of working in remote, isolated and low resource environments  
Education and research partnerships with Tertiary institutions |
| **6.2** Fully utilise nursing and midwifery skills and knowledge across the entire career structure | Developing a matched workforce and education plan that optimises capability across all classifications  
Responding to the recommendations of the Nursing and Midwifery career structure review |
| **6.3** Embed cultural responsiveness into nursing and midwifery practice                 | Developing KPIs for nursing and midwifery behaviours that demonstrate cultural responsiveness |

### Strategic Objective 7 – Drive financial sustainability

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<td><strong>7.1</strong> Develop and implement workforce reforms based on nursing and midwifery led models of care</td>
<td>Implementing positions that utilise the full scope of existing nursing and midwifery roles</td>
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<td><strong>7.2</strong> Advance and extend our scope of practice to respond to health needs today and into the future 1-7</td>
<td>Achieve the aims of the Nurse Practitioner Strategic Plan</td>
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Strategic plan for Nursing and Midwifery in the Northern Territory 2015-2018