

Building Healthier  
Communities

Department of Health and Community Services

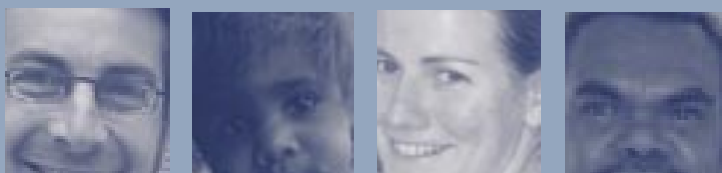
# Katherine Regional Plan

2004+



Northern Territory Government  
Department of Health and Community Services





**Building Healthier Communities**

# **Katherine Regional Plan**

**Department of Health and Community Services**



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# Ministers' Message

In February 2004, Government launched *Building Healthier Communities* – our commitment to ensuring all Territorians enjoy long and healthy lives, and that we have health and community services that are responsive, accountable and effective.

Since then local staff of the Department of Health and Community Services have worked tirelessly – including meeting with and listening to members of the Katherine community – to turn our vision and priorities into hard and fast action plans.

*Building Healthier Communities* has a sense of urgency and makes a call to action to tackle on-going issues in new ways. The last thing we wanted was for it to be a strategy that remained just that and gathered dust. So it's really exciting to see *Building Healthier Communities* visible and to hear people talking about it everywhere we go in the Territory.

The Department's plan for Katherine is part of the first exciting step. It reflects the voice and needs of locals and is the blueprint for health and community services in your region from 2004 plus.

We thank the local staff and community for making this happen, for their ideas and shared responsibility, and we look forward to seeing the plan unfold.



**The Hon Peter Toyne MLA**  
Minister for Health

**The Hon Marion Scrymgour MLA**  
Minister for Family and Community Services

# CEO Message

*Building Healthier Communities* is Government's broad platform for continuing reform and focus, a document of vision, values and priorities. The release of this framework is significant in giving our Department a fresh start, and reshaping our identity.

The Katherine Regional Plan has been developed to ensure that local geographic issues within this region are enmeshed in our overall strategic direction and deliverable outcomes. The process that has led to the development of the Plan has involved the active participation of the local staff and key stakeholders. A suite of Departmental action plans will support the implementation of this Plan. The first steps under these plans are outlined in the Departmental Divisional plans, which can be found on [http://www.nt.gov.au/health/corporate/business\\_plans/business\\_plans.shtml](http://www.nt.gov.au/health/corporate/business_plans/business_plans.shtml)

Like other regions in the Northern Territory, the Katherine region shares common features such as being relatively small in population; large in geographical area; complex in health and wellbeing issues but with a critical mass that creates the opportunity for service innovation with a reliance on close working relationships. Evident in the development of the Plan were common priorities that emerged from other regions exhibiting the same features. These include recruitment, retention and development of our staff with a



**Robert Griew**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Department of Health and  
Community Services

particular emphasis on the Aboriginal workforce; identification of service gaps and care closer to home and the need for collaborative partnership and links with others and the community.

A feature unique to the Katherine region is the devolution of the management of the remote primary health care services to local health boards. My Department has a commitment to nurture and support collaborative links with our existing and future health partners.

Essentially, this Plan outlines the Department's performance agreement with the Katherine regional community.

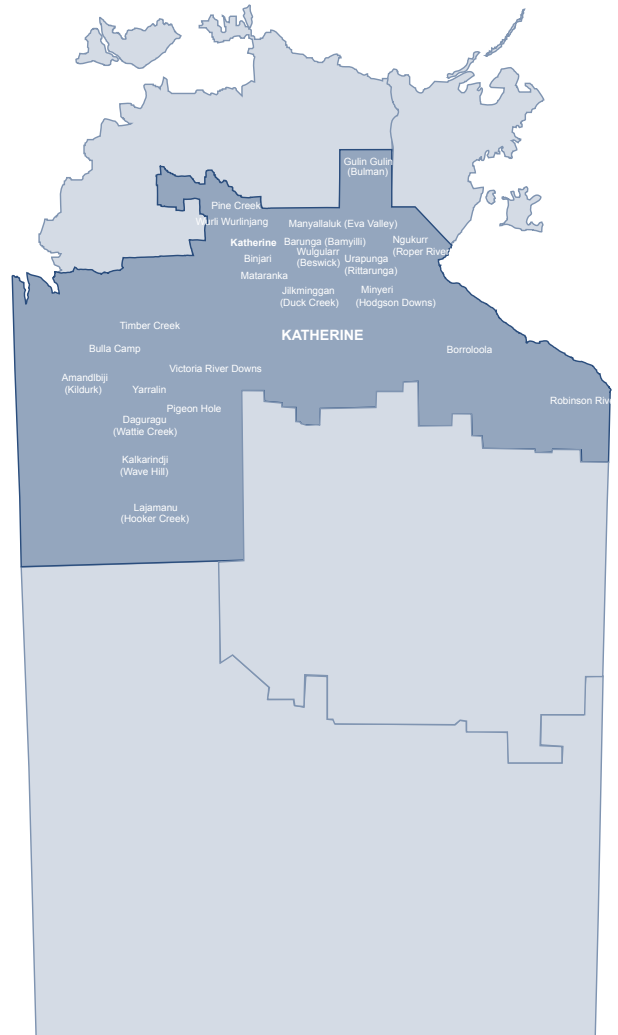
# Katherine Region

The Katherine region covers an area of approximately 340,000 square kilometres between the borders of Western Australia and Queensland, extending as far as Dunmarra to the south and Pine Creek to the north.

The Department of Health and Community Services employs 316 staff in the Katherine region. Services include the Katherine District Hospital, which is an accredited 60 bed non-specialist medical, diagnostic and treatment facility that caters for the needs of the population of Katherine town and the region. The hospital is situated approximately 3 kilometres from the centre of town.

The Government Centre houses the Urban Community Health Centre and program areas under the Community and Health Services Divisions. Kintore Street Community Services offers a range of professional services to the Katherine and regional communities.

The Katherine region has a population of approximately 18,325 people.



# Addressing substance misuse

The Department of Health and Community Services, together with other areas of Government, plays a major role in combating substance abuse. We are committed to working in partnership with others to reduce substance abuse in the Katherine region.

### How we are going to do it

- Provide an opportunity for relevant staff to be trained to provide brief interventions in relation to smoking, nutrition, alcohol consumption and physical activity
- Recognise the association between substance misuse and domestic violence issues
- Raise awareness that smoking within the Katherine region is an issue
- Review the community patrols intervention strategy
- Increase the effectiveness of sobering-up shelters
- Develop further community-led health promoting actions for community events
- Active participation in the local Harmony group
- Identify treatment service needs and consider strategies to meet needs

### How we will know this has been achieved

- Community focused health promotion activities implemented
- Review of community patrols intervention strategy completed

# Recruitment, retention and development of staff

In acknowledging the value of our staff, the Department will support our local staff including the strengthening of our Aboriginal workforce and the development and implementation of strategies to recruit and retain quality staff.

### How we are going to do it

- Implement ongoing appropriate skills development including maintaining a skill mix, supervision from experienced staff and support for a budget for professional development
- Promote and support flexible work and employment practices
- Encourage staff rotations
- Liaise with relevant agencies to improve the access to appropriate housing
- Develop appropriate eligibility criteria for locally recruited Aboriginal Health Workers
- Continue to liaise with other agencies to improve payroll services
- Promote an employment package for Katherine which includes; accommodation, lifestyle, and professional development information
- Refine local orientation and induction programs and processes
- Review student placement including marketing, support and conditions such as accommodation

### How we will know this has been achieved

- Demonstrated improvement in retention rates
- Evidence of orientation and induction packages developed for the Katherine region
- Number of staff accessing training
- Increased Aboriginal workforce in the region





# Establishing partnerships and links with others

The Department is committed to enhancing our working relationships with others to provide better quality health and community services.

### How we are going to do it

- Ensure local participation in the development of contractual arrangements with Health Boards, non-government organisations and private providers
- Adopt an integrated approach to service planning and delivery
- Consider the use of alternate flexible work practices, for example Telehealth
- Improve information sharing with other providers in health and community services. This includes the improvement of communication in areas of pre-admission and post-discharge using Health Connect
- Increase the engagement and collaboration between programs in regard to Preventable Chronic Disease Management issues
- Increase community participation

### How we will know this has been achieved

- Demonstrated evidence of collaborative approaches to solving local issues
- Demonstrated examples of community engagement



# Improved IT systems and communication

The Department recognises the need to improve health and community services especially in remote areas through technology and knowledge.

### How we are going to do it

- Improve communication by developing the Katherine Intranet site and identifying a site manager
- Ensure IT training for staff within an appropriate time frame
- Increase the utilisation of video conferencing facilities for client services
- Identify and refer issues concerning IT systems which have an implication on human resource services
- Encourage the development of staff to efficiently use information technology systems to support their work
- Support the expansion of Health Connect within the Katherine region

### How we will know this has been achieved

- Expansion of Health Connect
- Improved IT support services to staff



# Pathways Home and care closer to home

Develop appropriate ways of delivering health and community services closer to home.

### How we are going to do it

- Improve discharge planning process and follow through with remote clients
- Reduce waiting lists and 'no shows' to outpatient clinics and theatre time
- Implement a local consistent approach to the Territory-wide management of Patient Assisted Travel Scheme
- Assist families and communities in remote areas to maintain family cohesion, address family violence and prevent children coming into care
- Develop an integrated community-based family program
- Support development of Domestic and Family Violence services based around the new Safe House at Borroloola

### How we will know this has been achieved

- Reduction in hospital waiting lists
- Total number of clients accessing community support services
- Reduction in the number of children being placed into care
- Facilities such as safe houses working effectively



# Inter-hospital transfers and retrievals

Build better systems for delivering services and undertake training for staff to enhance service delivery in the Katherine region.

### How we are going to do it

- Increase usage of video conferencing, for example Telemedicine
- Develop plans for the implementation of Tele-radiology and scanning
- Reduce transfers to Darwin by increasing specialist mental health support to Katherine Hospital for local mental health admissions
- Facilitate early discharge from Darwin specialist mental health inpatient unit to Katherine Hospital with management support from Top End Mental Health Services
- Increased training and support to Katherine Hospital to facilitate more localised mental health care
- Review and develop strategies for mental health liaison and referral at Katherine District Hospital

### How we will know this has been achieved

- Improved pathways for mental health clients from entry to exit
- Increased usage of video conferencing



# Addressing service gaps

The Department has identified ‘gaps’ and aims to respond to the needs of people in the Katherine region.

### How we are going to do it

- Redevelop and enhance homeless services
- Implement Katherine Crisis Service System Redevelopment project
- Enhance family and youth support services in Katherine
- Develop child protection protocols and integrated service networks to operate in Katherine
- Develop programs addressing child protection and domestic violence issues at Borroloola
- Implement visiting child psychiatric services
- Allied Health and training services will be provided to the Katherine Transitional Care Unit
- Establish accommodation services for people with disabilities with high medical needs
- Scheduled and agreed service visits by Aged and Disability teams to Katherine remote

### How we will know this has been achieved

- Demonstrated improvements in pathways and access to services
- Development of the child protection protocols and integrated service networks
- Examples of innovative approaches supporting family and youth services to strengthen communities
- Increased service visits to remote communities



## Best practice quality service provision

Develop innovative and appropriate ways of delivering health services.

### How we are going to do it

- Standardisation of clinical practice across Territory Urban Community Health
- Facilitate and increase the use of the Katherine Health Library to support clinical activities, provide information on evidence-based policy, practice and best practice and supporting professional development
- Maintain participation on Quality, Occupational Health and Safety and other continuous improvement forums
- Ongoing implementation of the recommendations for accreditation of Katherine Hospital
- Implement recommendations from the Katherine Aged and Disability Program review

### How we will know this has been achieved

- Recommendations implemented from the Katherine Aged and Disability review
- Demonstrated examples of best practice in service delivery within the Katherine region





# For further information

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[http://www.nt.gov.au/health/corporate/business\\_plans/katherine.pdf](http://www.nt.gov.au/health/corporate/business_plans/katherine.pdf)

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