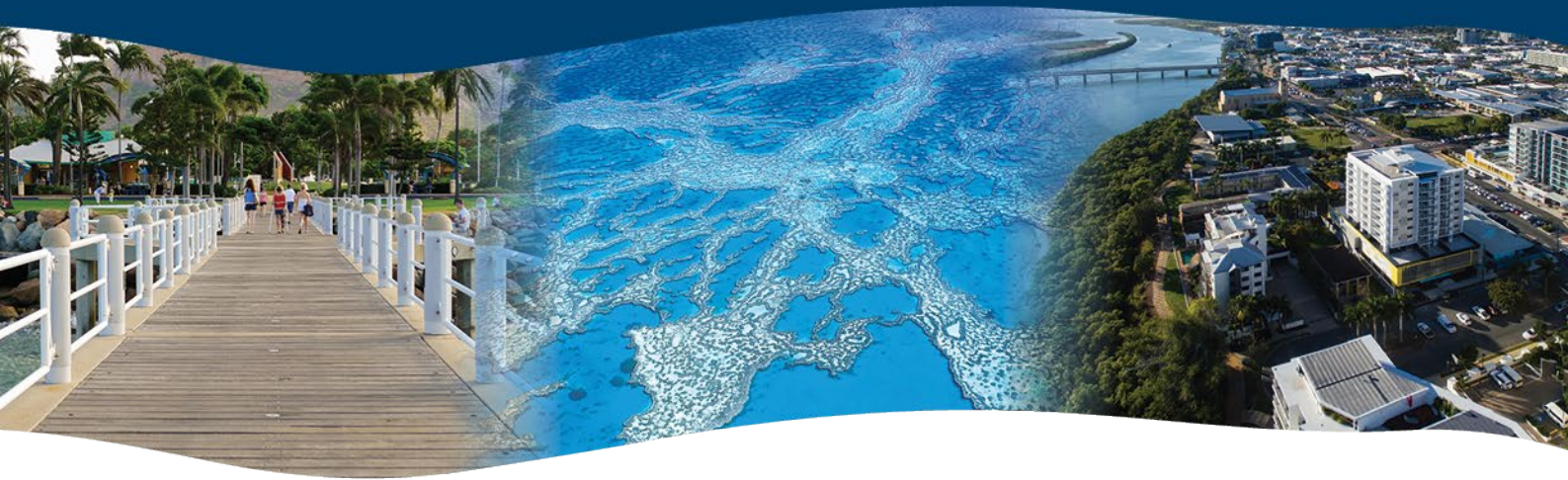




Northern Queensland Primary Health Network

Activity Work Plan

Aged Care

2023/24 – 2027/28

Updated March 2026



NQPHN acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Nation Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of this land. We respect their continued connection to land and sea, country, kin, and community. We also pay our respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging as the custodians of knowledge and lore.



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Disclaimer

All activities captured in this Activity Work Plan are identified in the Joint Regional Needs Assessment conducted by Northern Queensland Primary Health Network and have been approved by the Department of Health, Disability, and Ageing.

AC-OSP - 1 - Aged Care On-site Pharmacist Measure – Residential Aged Care Home Support Grant Program

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Aged Care.

Aim of activity

To increase uptake of the Commonwealth Aged Care On-Site Pharmacist (ACOP) measure by residential aged care homes (RACHs) around Australia and improve access to ACOPs by RACHs.

Description of activity

This activity will coordinate the provision of information to RACHs about the Aged Care On-Site Pharmacist (ACOP) Measure, and support RACHs to engage eligible pharmacists.

The activity will also identify eligible pharmacists and facilitate their engagement with RACHs seeking the ACOP service. Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) will provide support to pharmacists in communication with other ACOP providers, general practices, and allied health service providers.

AC-CF - 5 - Care Finder - Assistance with Care and Housing (ACH) Transition Quarantine Program

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Aged Care.

Aim of activity

To establish and maintain a network of Care Finders to provide specialist and intensive assistance that help people within the Care Finder Target Population to understand and access aged care and connect with other relevant supports in the community.

As part of the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) will undertake and commission dedicated activities which support better health, wellbeing, and access to primary care and aged care services for senior Australians.

Description of activity

NQPHN will:

- Provide a continuation of services by two providers transitioned (2022-23 financial year) from Assistance with Care and Housing (ACH) to the Care Finder program as of 1 January 2023.
- Provide specialist and intensive assistance to help people within the Care Finder Target Population understand access to aged care and connect with relevant supports in the community.
- Deliver care based on the model enhancements developed during the Care Finder codesign workshops that informed human-centric referral pathways and service delivery.

Both transitioned service providers have opted to discontinue service provision for Care Finder (2024/25 financial year).

NQPHN has supported transition of active clients to other active services. This activity will finish in June 2025.

AC-EI - 1 - Early intervention initiatives to support healthy ageing & ongoing management of chronic conditions

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Aged Care.

Aim of activity

As part of the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) will undertake and commission dedicated activities which support better health, wellbeing, and access to primary care and aged care services for senior Australians.

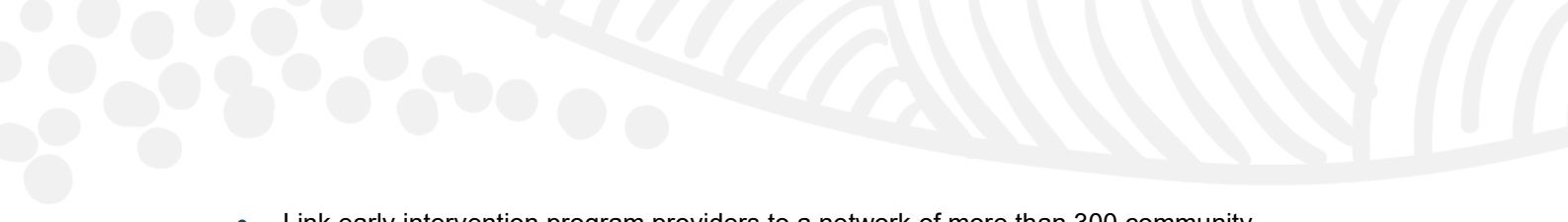
The aim of this activity is to support senior Australians to live at home for as long as possible through commissioning early intervention activities, and models of care for chronic disease management that support healthy ageing.

An additional aim of this activity is to empower general practitioners and other primary health care workers through training, tools, and resources which contribute to improved health and care outcomes for older people.

Description of activity

NQPHN will:

- Leverage NQPHN's chronic disease strategy to support older person's health in line with the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.
- Support the implementation of the activities commissioned in 2022-23, following on from consultation and codesign workshops.
- Partner with organisations that align with identified needs, but interface with upstream prevention activities, or tertiary services.
- Continue to identify training opportunities for primary health care professionals and work collaboratively with internal NQPHN teams, including the Primary Care Engagement and Workforce Development teams to consolidate these opportunities.
- Support active healthy ageing groups and available early intervention activities in communities.
- Commission innovative early interventions initiatives to promote healthy ageing and slow decline or prevent chronic diseases complications, including embedding the developing model of Non-Dispensing Pharmacist in General Practice.
- Engage peak bodies and/or specialist organisations to support recruitment of pharmacists within our region, or outside NQPHN if the workforce is not available, while monitoring and evaluating the program and clinical governance of commissioned services.
- Support student-led allied health outreach for older Australians in rural and remote communities.

- 
- Link early intervention program providers to a network of more than 300 community connectors network from the NQPHN compassionate communities project and network of Care Finders.
 - Deliver information sessions and awareness raising across the sector and communities.
 - Seniors and carer groups to be aware of commissioned services and programs to increase uptake and support healthy ageing.
 - Regularly monitor and contract management commissioned providers and reporting.

The 2025/26 financial year description of activities

- Consider extension and possible expansion of pilot to other areas within the NQPHN region (if funding permits), using insights from external evaluation of program.
- Support general practice to sustain service by improving understanding of possible Medicare Benefit Scheme (MBS) billings.
- Investigate potential for inter-sector referral (i.e. between tertiary care and primary care services).
- Continue to promote service to primary care providers and community.

AC-VARACF - 2 - Support RACHs to increase availability and use of telehealth care for aged care residents

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Aged Care.

Aim of activity

As part of the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) will undertake and commission dedicated activities which support better health, wellbeing, and access to primary care and aged care services for senior Australians.

The intended objectives of these activities are to improve outcomes for senior Australians by:

- commissioning services which address identified needs and gaps in your local primary health and aged care systems
- enhancing access to general practitioners (GPs) and other primary health care providers
- supporting access to aged care services and other relevant supports in the community
- building the capacity of health and aged care professionals to deliver high quality care
- improving coordination, integration, and continuity of care.

Description of activity

This activity supports participating residential aged care homes (RACHs) in the NQPHN region to have the appropriate virtual consultation facilities and technology, so their residents can access clinically appropriate telehealth care with primary health care professionals.

NQPHN will:

- Assist participating RACHs to have appropriate telehealth facilities and equipment to enable their residents to virtually consult with their primary healthcare professionals. These facilities should be compatible with the existing virtual consult technology used by providers in our region and be guided by recognised eHealth standards (e.g. the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine telehealth framework).
- Provide training to participating RACH staff to support them to have the capabilities to assist their residents in accessing virtual consultation services.
- Promote the use of enablers of digital health (such as My Health Record).
- Consult with jurisdictional authorities to ensure the initiative complements, not duplicates, efforts underway by state and territory governments to improve technological interoperability between the aged care and health systems.
- Employ the appropriately qualified staff, or upskill existing staff, required to administer this activity.
- Establish RACH networks in Cairns, Townsville, and Mackay to support broader RACH deliverables and engagement.

AC-AHARACF - 3 - Enhanced out of hours support for residential aged care

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Aged Care.

Aim of activity

As part of the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) will undertake and commission dedicated activities which support better health, wellbeing, and access to primary care and aged care services for senior Australians.

The intended objectives of these activities are to improve outcomes for residential aged care home (RACH) residents in the after-hours period, support RACHs to develop or strengthen their After-Hours Action Plan and escalation process when a resident's health deteriorates after hours, including the utilisation of existing Residential Aged Care Support Services and Residential Aged Care Support Services Clinical Pathways in addition to:

- commissioning services which address identified needs and gaps in your local primary health and aged care systems
- enhancing access to general practitioners (GPs) and other primary health care providers
- supporting access to aged care services and other relevant supports in the community
- building the capacity of health and aged care professionals to deliver high quality care
- improving coordination, integration, and continuity of care.

Description of activity

NQPHN will:

- Provide guidance to assist participating RACHs in northern Queensland to develop and implement after-hours action plans which support their residents to access the most appropriate medical services out-of-hours.
- Educate participating RACH staff in out-of-hours health care options and processes for residents.
- Encourage participating RACHs to implement procedures for keeping residents' digital medical records up to date, particularly following an episode where afterhours care was required.
- Support engagement between RACHs and their residents' GPs (and other relevant health professionals), as part of afterhours action plan development.
- Codesign an After Hours Toolkit to strengthen their existing After-Hours Action Plan.

AC-CF - 4 - Care Finder

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Aged Care.

Aim of activity

The Australian Government, in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, has tasked NQPHN with activities to improve health, wellbeing, and access to primary and aged care services for senior Australians.

The initiative aims to maintain a network of Care Finders who provide specialised assistance to help people understand and access aged care and connect with community supports.

Key goals include:

- enhancing coordination for accessing aged care
- increasing understanding of aged care services
- encouraging engagement with the aged care system
- boosting the Care Finder Workforce's ability to meet client needs
- raising access rates to aged care services and other supports.

Description of activity

NQPHN will:

- Support delivery of the five Care Finder Services commissioned in 2023, based on local needs informed by the Health Needs Assessment and the supplementary health needs assessment.
- Ensure services covering the whole of the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) region, that commenced in May 2023, are provided, including to sub-groups of First Nations people and people experiencing homelessness.
- Provide specialist and intensive assistance to help people within the Care Finder target population understand access to aged care and connect with relevant supports in the community.
- Deliver care based on the model enhancements developed during the Care Finder codesign workshops that informed human-centric referral pathways and service delivery.

In 2024 NQPHN provided an opportunity for organisations servicing priority populations (including LGBT+, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and disabilities) to tender to provide Care Finder support. Services are now operational and will be supported in 2025.

NQPHN will work with providers to:

- make quality enhancements based on feedback from CALD, veterans, care leavers, First Nations, the Care Finders target population, and relevant stakeholders within the aged care sectors, community groups, and carers services

- continue to review the implementation model to ensure the Care Finder service is meeting the needs of older people, particularly vulnerable older people without support and those eligible for services
- work with National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (NACCHOs) to ensure mainstream services interface with those being established for First Nations populations
- support the continuation of the established community of practice for Care Finders organisations and support their networking within the local aged care system
- support the established local Care Finder network in northern Queensland to share experiences, peer support, and de-identified case studies for Care Finders to have an improved understanding of consumer journeys and peer experiences in the field
- consolidate links, engagement, and networking opportunities for Care Finders to more than 300 members of the health community connectors network in northern Queensland through the compassionate community's movement as sources of referrals from communities
- continue to provide opportunities for Care Finders to network with aged care assessment services, aged care service providers, the health and human services sector, and the broader community and social services to ensure continuity of care
- submit reports as outlined in funding schedule milestone to inform program evaluation
- continually monitor and evaluate Care Finder service delivery demand, outcomes, collect data and collaborate with Care Finders organisations to ensure service is responsive to aged care navigational barriers and improve referral pathways thus improving customer experiences and understanding of aged care services.

The 2025/26 financial year description of activities

Continue to support commissioned services:

- with performance monitoring
- monitor and manage the performance of contracted Care Finder organisations, including reviewing data reported in the designated online portal
- ensure services respond to local needs and are delivered by a qualified workforce and follow functions as detailed in policy guidance
- support Care Finder organisations to collect required data and report via online portal
- promote Care Finder Services with referrers
- facilitate community of practice to support enhanced integration with health services, other aged care services, and other system at the local level
- deliver annual Care Finder workshops for providers
- monitor key milestones throughout the activity period

NQPHN has transitioned all aged care home services into the Care Finder program. Previous providers have been decommissioned.

