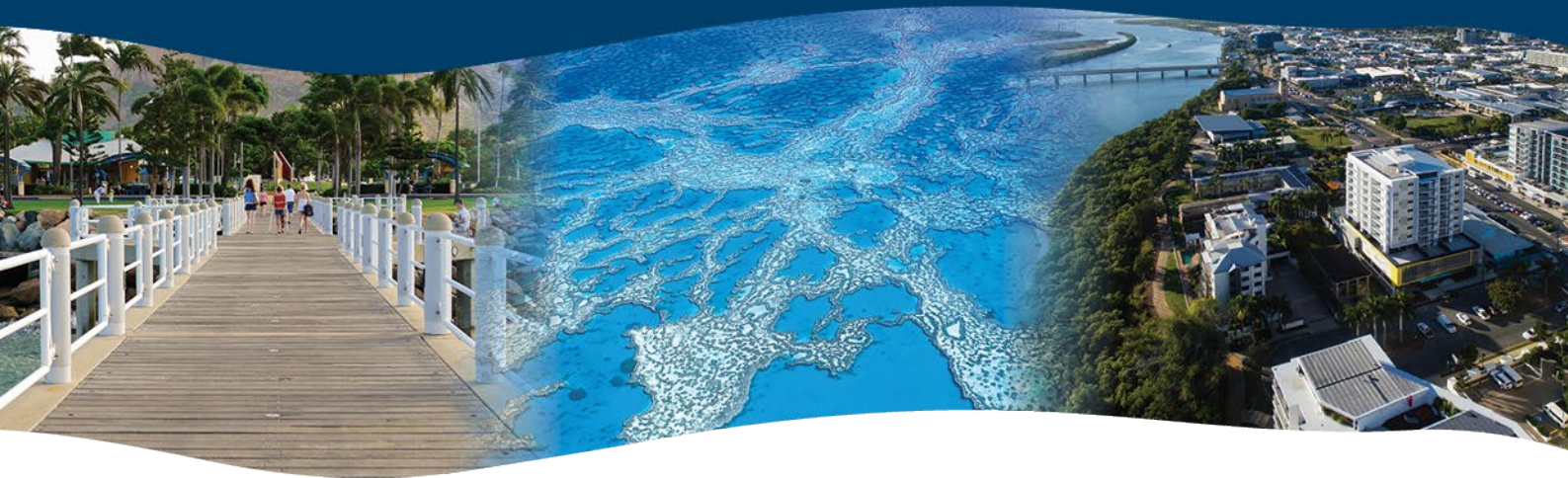




Northern Queensland Primary Health Network

Activity Work Plan

Aged Care

2025/26 – 2028/29

Updated August 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-EI - 1 - Early intervention initiatives to support healthy ageing and 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, 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 NQPHN's Compassionate Communities project and network of care finders.
- Deliver information sessions and awareness raising across 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 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.

The 2025/26 financial year description of activities

- Support the Older Persons Medication Management Pilot initiative expansion into further areas within the NQPHN region. The program currently provides services to an average of 1,000 unique clients per quarter across nine general practices.
- The initiative will continue to embed non-dispensing pharmacists in general practice to promote healthy ageing and/or prevent chronic disease complications, supporting people to remain in their homes, safely for longer.
- Continued implementation of evidence-based care model aimed to improve quality use of medications through activities such as medication reviews, patient education, and transition case conferencing, for older people with chronic conditions, those with polypharmacy, and/or those at risk of falls.
- PREM/QOL measures are to be used to benchmark against similar interstate initiatives.
- Support participating practices to identify potential billings that can self-fund/maintain the part-time pharmacist role beyond the funded period.

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

To support participating residential aged care homes (RACHs) in the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) region to have the appropriate virtual consultation facilities and technology to support telehealth and virtual care. This will support better health, wellbeing of older Australians living in residential aged care so they can access clinically appropriate telehealth care with primary and specialist health care professionals.

Description of activity

NQPHN will:

1. Support RACHs to ensure appropriate telehealth facilities and equipment are available and fit for use.
2. Provide on-site training, demonstrations, and hands-on support to RACH across the region as required.
3. Engage RACHs regularly to provide current information, guidance, and support related to telehealth and digital health initiatives.
4. Liaise with regional service providers and state health services to connect RACHs with appropriate clinical and support services for residents.
5. Monitor the use of key digital enablers (e.g. My Health Record and residential aged care clinical management systems) and encourage their uptake to support improved digital health capability.
6. Employ the appropriately qualified staff, or upskill existing staff, required to administer this Activity.
7. 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 Facility Support Service (RaSS) Clinical Pathways as well as:

- 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:

- 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.

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 Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (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 NQPHN region that commenced in May 2023, are provided including to sub-groups of First Nations people and people experiencing homelessness.
- In 2024 NQPHN provided an opportunity for organisations servicing priority populations (including LGBTQIA+, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and Disabilities) to tender to provide care finder support. Services are now operational and will be supported in 2025.
- 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.

NQPHN will work with providers to:

- Make quality enhancements based on feedback from CALD, veterans, care leavers, First Nations care finders target population, and relevant stakeholders in 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 Organisation (NACCHO) to ensure mainstream services interface with those being established for First Nations populations.
- Support the continuation of the established community of practice for care finder organisations and support their networking with 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 better understanding of consumer journeys and peer experiences in the field.
- Consolidate links, engagement, and networking opportunities for care finders to more than three hundred members of 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 milestones to inform program evaluation.
- Continually monitor and evaluate care finder service delivery demand, outcomes, collect data, and collaborate with care finder 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:

- 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 workshop for providers.
- Monitor key milestones throughout the activity period.
- NQPHN has transitioned all aged care home services into the care finder program. The previous providers have been decommissioned.

The 2026/27 financial year description of activities, continue to support commissioned services:

- Offering ongoing upskilling and education for care finder organisations and their staff. This includes face-to-face community of practice sessions to build workforce capability and promote best practices in aged care navigation.
- NQPHN will oversee resource access and information sharing.

Activities from 2025/26 will continue, such as performance monitoring, data management through the online portal, support for data collection and reporting, promotion with referrers, integration with health and aged care services, and milestone tracking.

