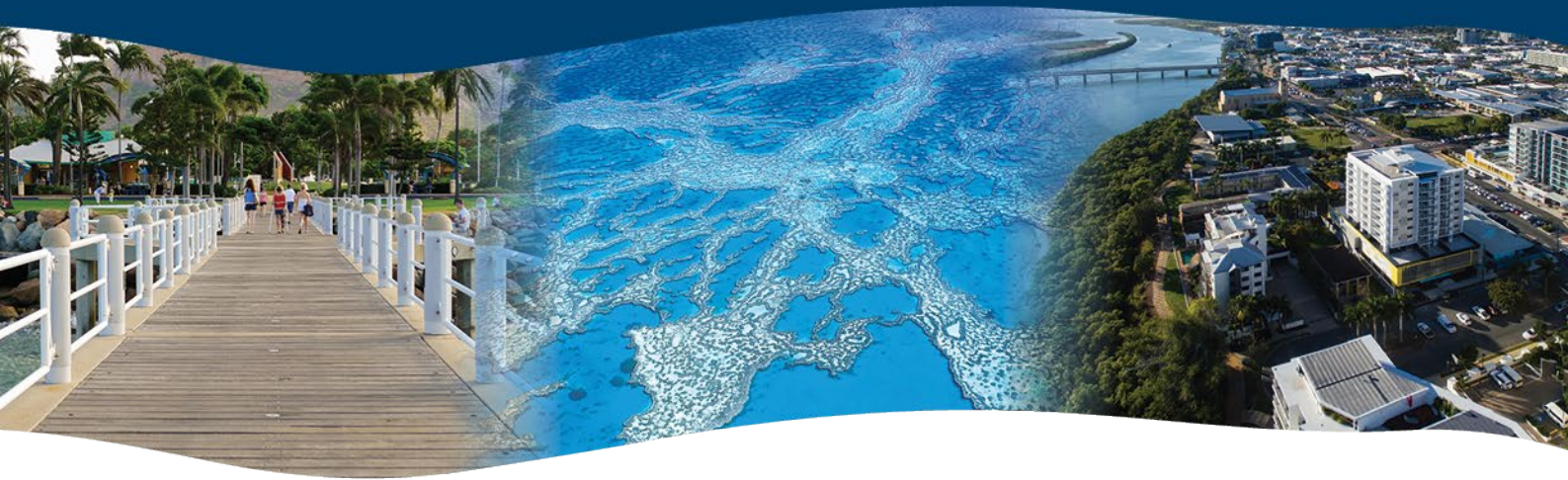




Northern Queensland Primary Health Network

Activity Work Plan

NMHSPA Bilateral PHN

2025/26 – 2028/29

Updated September 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.

NAB-DBST - 1 - Distress Brief Support Trial

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Mental Health Priority Area 5: Community-based suicide prevention activities.

Aim of activity

To deliver a non-clinical community-based approach to supporting people in distress in the Atherton and Mareeba regions. The Distress Brief Support (DBS) service will be delivered as part of the National trial, one of two Queensland sites in the National trial.

Description of activity

As part of commitments made by the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, and Victorian governments through bilateral agreements under the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, six DBS trial sites are being implemented across Australia.

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) has commissioned providers to deliver the two separate but interconnected elements of the Distress Brief Support service:

- **Coordination and support for identified community engagement points**
Identified volunteer individuals and groups in community that provide an immediate compassionate response to a person in community who is experiencing stress or distress, along with the offer of connection to further support.
- **Short-term psychosocial support team**
Providing compassionate practical support and working to establish connections to longer term support with and for the person.

A phased approach to service establishment was undertaken prior to service commencement to engage with local community members and providers.

A governance group has been established between NQPHN, Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service (CHHHS), and commissioned providers to monitor activity, and provide clinical and operational governance of the service.

NQPHN and the provider/s continue to be actively involved in both Queensland Communities of practice and national communities of practice and evaluation processes.

NAB-H2H - 5 - NAB - Adult Mental Health Centre and Satellite Network (Medicare Mental Health Centres)

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Mental Health Priority Area 7: Stepped care approach.

Aim of activity

To provide Medicare Mental Health Centre services in line with departmental guidelines, offering accessible clinical and non-clinical support, service navigation, and an alternative to emergency department presentation for people experiencing mental health distress.

Description of activity

Townsville Centre

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) commissions Neami National as the lead agency to deliver the Townsville Medicare Mental Health Centre. The Centre provides walk-in, no-cost access to clinical and non-clinical mental health support, assessment, brief interventions, and service navigation, offering an alternative to emergency department presentation. Service delivery is integrated with local primary care, Townsville Hospital and Health Service, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, and community services, and is overseen through joint governance and routine contract management.

NQPHN is a member of the Townsville Medicare Mental Health Centre Governance committee to further support the delivery of the service.

Additionally, a joint Governance Group, which includes NQPHN, the Townsville Hospital and Health Service (THHS), and Neami National, meets regularly, with the aim to continue to improve referral pathways and integration to ensure people can access the right service, at the right place, at the right time. This group considers relevant service delivery and clinical governance data to jointly identify opportunities for improvement across services and the broader system.

Cairns Centre

NQPHN partners with the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service (CHHHS) to establish the Cairns Medicare Mental Health Centre, with Mind Australia commissioned as the service provider. The Centre delivers accessible clinical and non-clinical mental health support aligned with stepped care principles, supported by joint governance and lived experience engagement to ensure local integration, cultural safety, and responsiveness to community needs.

NQPHN is a member of the Cairns Medicare Mental Health Centre Governance committee to further support the delivery of the service.

Additionally, a joint Governance Group, which includes NQPHN, the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, and Mind Australia, meets regularly with the aim to continue to improve referral pathways and integration to ensure people can access the right service, at the right place, at the right time. This group considers relevant service delivery and clinical governance data to jointly identify opportunities for improvement across services and the broader system.

Mackay Centre

NQPHN is partnering with the Mackay Hospital and Health Service (MHHS) and Grand Pacific Health as the commissioned service provider to establish and deliver the Mackay Medicare Mental Health Centre. Codesign has informed the establishment and delivery of the service, including engagement with lived experience representatives, local stakeholders, and service partners to ensure the model is locally responsive and integrated. Ongoing codesign and engagement will continue through governance arrangements and routine service review to support continuous improvement and responsiveness to community needs.

A Joint Governance Group has been established and meets regularly, with the aim to establish referral pathways and integration to ensure people can access the right service, at the right place, at the right time. This group will consider relevant service delivery and clinical governance data to jointly identify opportunities for improvement across services and the broader system. A Lived Experience Advisory Group has also been established and is integral to ensuring the codesign expectations of community can be adhered to and provide relevant feedback loops for service improvement opportunities.

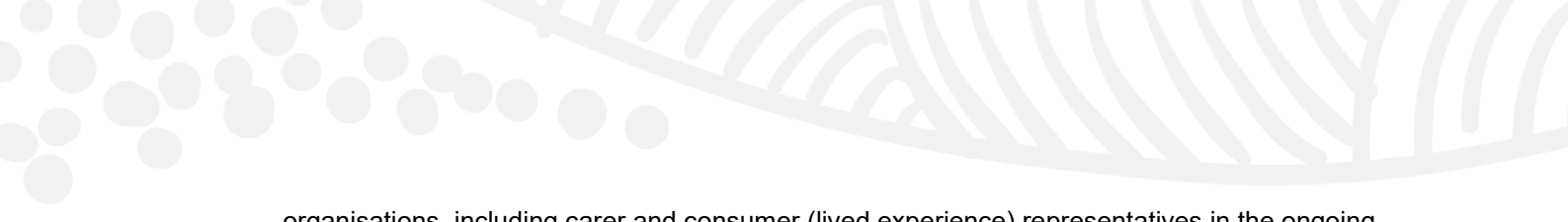
Torres and Cape Centre

NQPHN partners with the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service to establish Medicare Mental Health services across the Torres Strait and Cape York regions. Service development and delivery are informed by ongoing codesign with First Nations communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to ensure culturally safe, locally appropriate, and accessible models of care, supported through partnership governance and phased establishment.

Model of Care

NQPHN's Medicare Mental Health Centre's are delivered in accordance with the following principles:

- responding to people experiencing crisis or distress
- providing a central point to connect people to other services in the region
- assessing people's needs using the Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool (IAR-DST) to match them to the services they need
- providing evidence-based and evidence-informed immediate and short to medium episodes of care in line with a best practice stepped care approach
- the centre being a highly visible and easily accessible entry point for adults into the mental health system
- the centre providing on-the-spot treatment, advice, and support from a range of mental health professionals, without prior appointments or a fee
- the centre providing an alternative to presenting to an emergency department for people through offering extended opening hours
- the centre complementing rather than replacing or duplicating mental health services already provided in the community
- collaboration across the service sector to ensure the centre and other primary health services operate in an integrated way
- liaison with primary care services, public and private hospitals, general practitioners, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, and non-government and community



organisations, including carer and consumer (lived experience) representatives in the ongoing implementation of the service.

In line with NQPHNs mental health service principles, developed through codesign processes for stepped care services, commissioned providers will be encouraged to engage in new regional service provider networks where relevant to support improved access, transition, and access to the range of services to meet needs. NQPHN will ensure activity objectives are met through engagement with lead agencies on a minimum quarterly basis to monitor service deliverables, outcomes, and compliance.

Meetings will include opportunity to:

- obtain updates and discuss service performance indicators and reports
- understand service uptake, access issues, and opportunities for further service improvement.

Codesign

- In Cairns NQPHN, CHHHS, and Mind Australia will continue to utilise a codesign approach in the establishment of the service.
- In the Mackay region, NQPHN, MHHS, and Grand Pacific Health will continue to utilise a codesign approach in the establishment of the service.
- For the Torres and Cape centre, ongoing engagement with Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QHAIC)/Northern Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Alliance (NATISHA), and Cape and Torres Health Commissioning Ltd (CaTHC) has been undertaken and an approach to codesign that holds the First Nation communities at the centre will be developed.

NAB-UAS - 1 - NAB - Universal Aftercare Services

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Mental Health Priority Area 5: Community-based suicide prevention activities.

Aim of activity

To deliver non-clinical support services focused on providing practical psychosocial support to people who have attempted suicide or are experiencing a suicidal crisis, working alongside Hospital and Health Service (HHS) clinical care coordinators.

Description of activity

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) commissions services across northern Queensland to deliver non-clinical aftercare support to those who have attempted suicide or experience suicidal crisis in partnership with Hospital and Health Service (HHS) partners and in line with the guidance. A non-clinical assertive outreach approach is used to ensure that support is patient-centred, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the individual.

NQPHN commissions Wellways to deliver aftercare services across the Cairns, Townsville, and Mackay regions. The previous Way Back Support service delivered in partnership with the Cairns and Hinterland HHS has transitioned to the current governance arrangements with the exit of Beyond Blue from the model.

Wellways also delivers the Universal Aftercare (UAC) service in partnership with the Townsville and Mackay Hospital and Health Services. The implementation of the service will be monitored to ensure operationalisation of the model is informed by local needs and ongoing service development is incorporated from the beginning. Lived Experience Advisory Groups for the UAC program in each region has been established which will provide an important lens to delivery and quality improvement activities, including resource material for clients and loved ones.

The governance group established during implementation will continue to provide clinical and operational governance of the service, with the service provider now included in the membership.

Torres and Cape

NQPHN is working in partnership with the Torres and Cape HHS to establish universal aftercare services in the Torres and Cape region.

In the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) region, NQPHN has commissioned NPA Family and Community Services (NPAFACS) to deliver universal aftercare services as an extension of other psychosocial support services provided through NQPHN funding. This approach allows for efficient and effective use of resources into small and remote communities to improve access.

Significant community and provider consultation has occurred in partnership with the Torres and Cape HHS to inform commissioning approaches in the Torres Strait, Cooktown, and Weipa regions. Codesign work will inform the degree of localisation required and how the UAC model can be most effectively integrated with existing services and community agencies. Regular engagement with Queensland Health is taking place to discuss localisation needs prior to procurement.

NAB-HE - 3 - NAB - headspace Enhancement - Cairns

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Mental Health Priority Area 2: Child and youth mental health services.

Aim of activity

To enhance the capacity and accessibility of existing headspace services in Cairns to better meet local youth mental health needs by strengthening workforce capability, cultural safety, and service responsiveness for young people aged 12 to 25 years of age.

Description of activity

Under this activity, Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) provides enhancement funding to the existing headspace service in Cairns to strengthen capacity, accessibility, and responsiveness in line with national guidance and local needs.

Enhancement activities are designed to complement core headspace service delivery and include:

- workforce and service capacity initiatives to support timely access to care
- enhanced engagement and support for general practitioners within the headspace model
- activities to improve cultural safety and responsiveness, informed by First Nations guidance and recommendations
- targeted trauma-informed supports to address locally identified needs
- operational support to ensure service sustainability in the context of rising operational costs.

NQPHN monitors delivery of enhancement activities through structured contract management and engages with the service provider at least quarterly to review performance, access, and outcomes. NQPHN also maintains active engagement with headspace National to support appropriate governance and alignment with national expectations.

NAB-HE - 7 - NAB - headspace Enhancement - Mackay

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Mental Health Priority Area 2: Child and youth mental health services.

Aim of activity

To increase access to existing headspace services for young people aged 12 to 25 years of age residing in Mackay and surrounding communities who are experiencing, or are at risk of, mental ill health and related issues. Communities of interest include young people experiencing barriers to timely access to services in a regional setting.

Description of activity

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) commissions a lead organisation to deliver headspace services in Mackay aligned with the headspace model of care. Enhancement funding supports increased service accessibility through additional workforce capacity, improved intake and brief interventions, operational support to meet local demand, and culturally safe service delivery in line with First Nations recommendations. NQPHN manages the activity through routine contract management, performance monitoring, and engagement with the provider and headspace National.

NQPHN will ensure activity objectives are met through engagement of providers on a minimum quarterly basis to monitor service deliverables, outcomes, and compliance.

Meetings will include the opportunity to:

- obtain updates and discuss service performance indicators and reports
- understand service uptake, access issues, and opportunities for further service improvement.

Additionally, NQPHN maintains a relationship with headspace National through attendance at organised forums and relevant meetings to enable appropriate governance of contracts.

NAB-HE - 8 - NAB - headspace Enhancement - Townsville

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Mental Health Priority Area 2: Child and youth mental health services.

Aim of activity

To increase access to existing headspace services for young people aged 12 to 25 years of age residing in Townsville and surrounding communities who are experiencing, or are at risk of, mental ill health and related issues. Communities of interest include young people experiencing barriers to timely access to services in a large regional centre.

Description of activity

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) commissions lead organisations to deliver headspace services in Townsville in alignment with the headspace model of care. Enhancement funding supports improved service accessibility through additional workforce and general practitioners (GPs) support, operational capacity to meet local demand, and targeted support for trauma-related needs. NQPHN manages the activity through routine contract management, performance monitoring, and engagement with providers and headspace National.

NQPHN will ensure activity objectives are met through engagement of providers on a minimum quarterly basis to monitor service deliverables, outcomes, and compliance.

Meetings will include the opportunity to:

- obtain updates and discuss service performance indicators and reports
- understand service uptake, access issues, and opportunities for further service improvement.

Additionally, NQPHN maintains a relationship with headspace National through attendance at organised forums and relevant meetings to enable appropriate governance of contracts.

NAB-HE - 9 - NAB - headspace Enhancement - Whitsunday

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Mental Health Priority Area 2: Child and youth mental health services.

Aim of activity

Young people aged 12 to 25 years of age residing in the Whitsundays region who are experiencing, or are at risk of, mental ill health and related issues. Communities of interest include young people experiencing barriers to accessing services in regional and remote settings.

Description of activity

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) commissions a lead organisation to deliver headspace services via a satellite service in the Whitsundays (Proserpine), aligned with the headspace model of care. Enhancement funding supports increased service accessibility through additional workforce capacity, improved intake and brief interventions, targeted outreach to surrounding communities, and operational support to meet local demand. Activities also support culturally safe service delivery in line with First Nations recommendations. NQPHN manages the activity through routine contract management, performance monitoring, and engagement with the provider and headspace National.

NQPHN will ensure activity objectives are met through engagement of providers on a minimum quarterly basis to monitor service deliverables, outcomes, and compliance.

Meetings will include the opportunity to:

- obtain updates and discuss service performance indicators and reports
- understand service uptake, access issues, and opportunities for further service improvement.

Additionally, NQPHN maintains a relationship with headspace National through attendance at organised forums and relevant meetings to enable appropriate governance of contracts.

NAB-HE - 10 - NAB - headspace Enhancement - Sarina

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Mental Health Priority Area 2: Child and youth mental health services.

Aim of activity

Young people aged 12 to 25 years of age residing in Sarina and surrounding communities who are experiencing, or are at risk of, mental ill health and related issues. Communities of interest include young people experiencing barriers to accessing services in regional settings.

Description of activity

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) commissions a lead organisation to deliver headspace services via a satellite service in Sarina, aligned with the headspace model of care. Enhancement funding supports increased service accessibility through additional workforce capacity, improved intake and brief interventions, and operational support to meet local demand. Activities also support culturally safe service delivery in line with First Nations recommendations. NQPHN manages the activity through routine contract management, performance monitoring, and engagement with the provider and headspace National.

Further consultation continue with the Youth Advisory Group to determine alignment to community needs.

NQPHN will ensure activity objectives are met through engagement of providers on a minimum quarterly basis to monitor service deliverables, outcomes, and compliance.

Meetings will include the opportunity to:

- obtain updates and discuss service performance indicators and reports
- understand service uptake, access issues, and opportunities for further service improvement.

Additionally, NQPHN maintains a relationship with headspace National through attendance at organised forums and relevant meetings to enable appropriate governance of contracts.

