

NORTHERN TERRITORY HUMAN SERVICES INDUSTRY

10 YEAR PLAN
(2019 – 2029)





Acknowledgement

National Disability Services (NDS), Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) and Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians across the lands on which we live and work and we pay our respects to elders both past and present.

National Disability Services (NDS), Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) and Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS), the partnering organisations, acknowledge and thank the Northern Territory Government for supporting this project.

The partnering organisations also thank the many organisations and individuals who participated in the consultation process. Their contribution has been instrumental in the development of this plan and in providing a foundation for ongoing industry development.

Finally, the partnering organisations acknowledge the important role played by the Human Services Industry Plan Advisory and Governance Groups, who provided their time and guidance in developing the plan.

Foreword

Human services are vital to improving the lives and wellbeing of Territorians and, through the quality services it provides, the industry is a significant contributor to the economic and social outcomes of the Northern Territory (the Territory).

The human services workforce is one of the largest and fastest growing of the Territory, with service providers of different sizes, locations and specialities operating right across the Territory.

Across Australia, human services face challenges brought about by significant change, including client choice and control, ongoing social policy reforms, and increasing demand for services from clients with multiple and complex needs.

The human services industry of the Territory recognises it has an opportunity to support transformative change towards more sustainable delivery of quality services. To seize this opportunity, the industry has led the development of a Human Services Industry Plan.

Our 10-year Human Services Industry Plan identifies the priorities and goals of the industry and encourages collaboration between stakeholders. Through connecting as an Industry, sharing information and embedding evidence, we can continue to build capability, capacity and leadership.

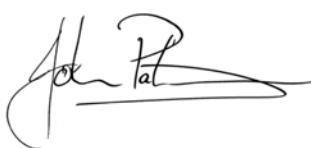
In achieving its goals, the industry will be well placed to provide Territorians with greater choice and control over the services they receive. Service provision will be culturally safe and available when and where it is needed. Our service providers will be strong, resilient and responsive to the communities in which they work.

We welcome this opportunity to collaborate with the community and Government to deliver the Human Services Industry Plan, contributing long-term social, economic and investment outcomes for our Territory.



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Human Services in the Territory

The human services industry in the Northern Territory (the Territory) is made up of service providers that aim to improve the quality of life of individuals and families, to enable their full participation in a strong, healthy and inclusive Territory.

Delivering consistent, high-quality human services is about supporting fellow Territorians across a continuum of care from primary to tertiary services: ensuring people receive the right service, at the right time, from the right provider.

The Territory is a unique context for the delivery of human services. The Territory's population is small and geographically isolated. At 245,000 people (in 2018), it accounts for only one per cent of the Australian population spread over 17.5 per cent of Australian land mass. 59.6 per cent of Territorians live in the Greater Darwin area, with the remainder spread over regional, remote and very remote areas of the Territory's 1.35 million square kilometre landmass⁽¹⁾.

The services provided in the Territory are wide and diverse, as there is no 'one size fits all' to the challenges experienced by Territorians. Organisations vary considerably in size, location, specialities, resources and governance models. Some organisations deliver specialist

services and work with specific groups of people. Others provide a wide range of services to help meet the different needs of people and families within a specific community or place. This Territory-wide diversity is a strength, often giving people choice about the type of support they want and the provider best placed to deliver it.

The industry is in a period of significant transformation, with increasing demand for services, growing complexity of population needs, the effect of technology, and increased costs associated with new and more complex service provision demands. Ongoing social policy changes and reforms led by the Australian and Territory Governments will also have a major impact on the way human service organisations operate.

This is a time for the industry to seize the opportunity provided by change, and to consider where we are and where we want to be in the future.

⁽¹⁾ NT Government 2018b, p7

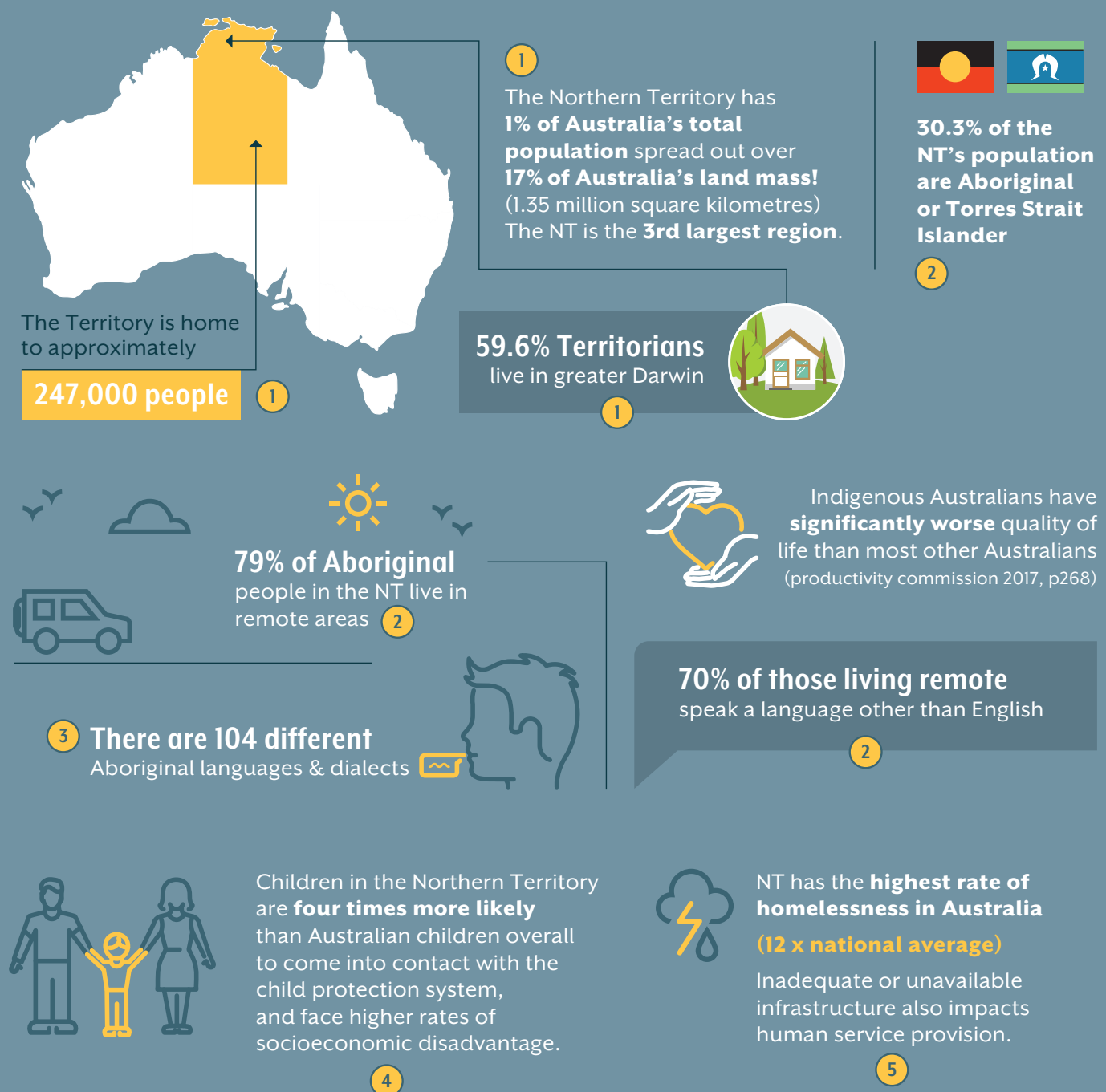
The Human Services Industry is represented by the following sectors:

- Youth
- Seniors
- Women's Services
- Family
- Men's Services
- Gambling
- LGBTIQ+
- Disability
- Housing and Homelessness
- Community Mental Health
- Community Legal Services
- Financial Hardship and Crisis
- Community Health
- Community Safety
- Alcohol and other Drugs
- Carers
- Domestic and Family Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Culturally/Linguistically Diverse Services
- Migrant and Multicultural Support
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
- Child Protection/Out of Home Care
- Home/Community Care (incl. Aged Care)
- Community Employment Services

Importance of the Industry to the Northern Territory

For Territory residents

The human services industry in the Northern Territory plays a vital role in the lives of Territorians. Access to high-quality human services contributes to the wellbeing of individuals and the welfare of the community as a whole, as most Territorians will need to access human services at some point in their lives.



Data references:

For the Territory economy

The human services industry is a large and significant contributor to the Territory's economy. Service providers operate across the Territory, from major hubs to some of the most remote and isolated regions. They are vital contributors to our communities through the services they provide, the revenue they generate and retain in the Territory, and the growing workforce they employ.



Health & Social Assistance is one of the NT's biggest employers!

with an estimated growth of more than 40% to May 2023, which will make it the largest contributor to the NT workforce (Australian Government Employment Outlook to May 2023)



This equates to 8% of the NT workforce

(Excludes those employed in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation's, government human service delivery (local, NT & Commonwealth), and private business)

6

There are 7600 people employed in NFP human service organisations

That's more than manufacturing and mining sectors combined



6



Recorded total annual revenue of \$952m and expenditure of \$860m

In comparison, total mining income from NT were \$3.0bn and sales from agricultural production were \$580m

6

Paid employee expenses
of approximately \$417m
(48% of expenditure),
which is fed back into
the NT economy. 6



Governments are a major source of income for the sector (either directly or through the provision of person centered funding), and therefore has significant influence over the sustainability of the sector. For some services, such as child protection, government is the only buyer of services.



Vision

“Strong and inclusive organisations;
supporting our people, our cultures
and our communities through
high-quality human services”



Industry Plan Outline

The Northern Territory's 10-year Human Services Industry Plan is designed to unite efforts across the public, not-for-profit and private sectors, with themes, priorities and actions targeted to building *“strong and inclusive organisations; supporting our people, our cultures and our communities through high-quality human services”*.

While every client, organisation and region in the Territory is unique, the themes and priorities identified were consistent throughout the consultation. It was identified that, for Territorians to receive consistent, high-quality outcomes, services must be person-centred, place-based, evidence-based, culturally safe, and secure. In order to deliver high-quality services, organisations must be sustainable, have skilled workforces, and be better connected across industry.

This Human Services Industry Plan:

- sets a vision for the future of the industry;
- aims to unify the industry and strengthen its ability to work with other stakeholders to achieve the vision; and
- identifies the themes, priorities and initiatives that will achieve the vision.

The implementation of initiatives and the ongoing industry planning process will provide an opportunity to influence how governments and providers work together to deliver high-quality human services for Territorians.

Throughout consultation*, industry identified four key **themes** that provide the framework needed to achieve the Industry Plan Vision. These are broken down into twelve **priorities** (areas of focus).



A Connected Industry

- ✓ Information and communication
- ✓ Governance and leadership



Strong and Sustainable Organisations

- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Advocacy



A Skilled Workforce

- ✓ Attraction and retention
- ✓ Cultural safety
- ✓ Capacity building
- ✓ Community workforce development



Quality Services

- ✓ Delivery
- ✓ Access and availability
- ✓ Community-led

Note: The priority areas have been attributed to one of the four key themes, however many of them are interconnected.

* For more information about the industry, themes discussed in the Industry Plan, consultation and project process, go to **www.nthsip.com** to find:

- The Discussion Paper (and summary)
- HSIP Consultation Summary & Plan Overview
- Regional Consultation Workshops Summary Report



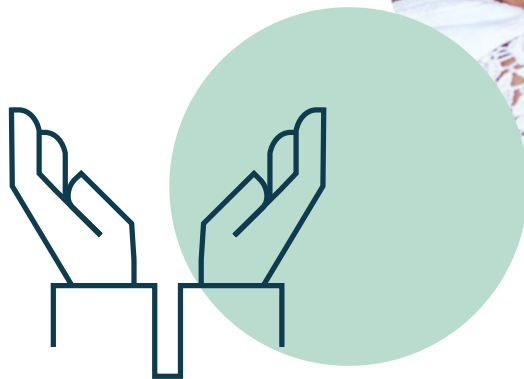
THEME 1: A CONNECTED INDUSTRY

In the Territory, the need for human services often exceeds supply. At times, people need to access a range of services across multiple providers and would benefit from a ‘wrap-around’, collaborative approach.

Collaboration and coordination in the human services industry could include partnerships and consortiums between organisations; shared resources (such as back-office administration, workforce and facilities); and the development of cohesive and multidisciplinary services or programs.

Examples of successful collaboration already exist in the industry: including peer networks; services brokered through working groups and shared infrastructure and resources. For the most part, however, industry fragmentation has contributed to duplication of services in some areas, and a lack of services in others.

Tools are available that allow organisations to share information (cloud-based storage); connect with remote or mobilised teams (tele/video-conferencing); increase communication and networks (social media); and improve decision-making (data analytics). However, connecting across industry can be challenging due to increased competitiveness in market-based systems (the NDIS)⁽²⁾; data and client confidentiality and security; and the cost of technological improvements and upskilling workforce. Remote communication remains an issue due to challenges including distance, lack of infrastructure and web connectivity.



Human service providers focus on continuous improvement of the quality of the services they provide. As the operating context becomes increasingly complex, the industry needs to find new ways of working in order to meet regulations, remain competitive, and ensure services and approaches are contemporary, evidence-based and meet the needs of Territorians.

Industry believes that building capacity in areas such as Collaboration, Information and Communication will be key to fostering a connected industry.

Collaboration

We work collaboratively to deliver meaningful support when and where it is needed, for all Territorians regardless of their needs or location.

We work cohesively across industry and with governments for the continuous improvement of human service delivery, and for greater social and economic outcomes for the Territory.

The human services industry in the Territory recognises the value of collaborating to achieve better outcomes for clients and create efficiencies in service delivery. There are already successful collaborative practices in place, but this activity is generally not part of an organisation's core business and can be challenging.

Business scope and models need to allow for partnership opportunities in order to meet client demand and outcomes. Current funding models and agreements, access to infrastructure, and IT, are often inhibitors of collaboration. Wherever relevant, partnership and co-design must include Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and the client/s.

⁽²⁾ National Disability Insurance Scheme

Shorter-term initiatives

- ✓ Develop a regional services directory across the human services industry – Further develop a pathway solution to link organisations/services and ensure high-quality client referrals.
- ✓ Initiate annual human service industry forums. Provide opportunities for remote travel subsidies.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Support organisations to develop strong industry orientation frameworks. These will incorporate the architecture of providers in a region or community and allow for greater connectivity and collaboration.
- ✓ Trial a pool-funded service delivery program that will incentivise and support organisations to work collaboratively by adopting a ‘collective impact / service model’.

Longer-term initiatives

- ✓ Develop a Human Services Industry Centre of Excellence (portal or hub). This resource will act as a repository and a community hub; facilitating good news stories; providing newsletters, a calendar of events and training; offering a research policy and compliance bank; and brokerage of community supports and services. It will also enable interfacing with clients and communities, allowing two-way information-sharing and learning.

Information and Communication

We are responsible and trusted stakeholders of our industry and our communities. By communicating effectively within and across our organisations, we share information and innovative approaches that will benefit all.

We collect, use and share evidence of best practice across the Territory, striving for continuous improvement and appropriate and consistent service delivery.

Communicating within organisations and across industry is valuable for the sharing of information, knowledge, practices and ideas. There are current resources and best practice models in existence, however there are gaps in awareness and accessibility.

Similar to shared facilities and resources, the use of fit-for-purpose shared technological platforms (where possible) would assist in delivering efficient services while connecting the industry as a whole.

Issues and challenges are similar across the Territory, yet the approach to addressing these will be unique. Strategies to ensure communication and engagement need to be tailored to regions/industry cohorts.

There is a need to curate, manage, and share knowledge across the industry.

Shorter-term initiatives

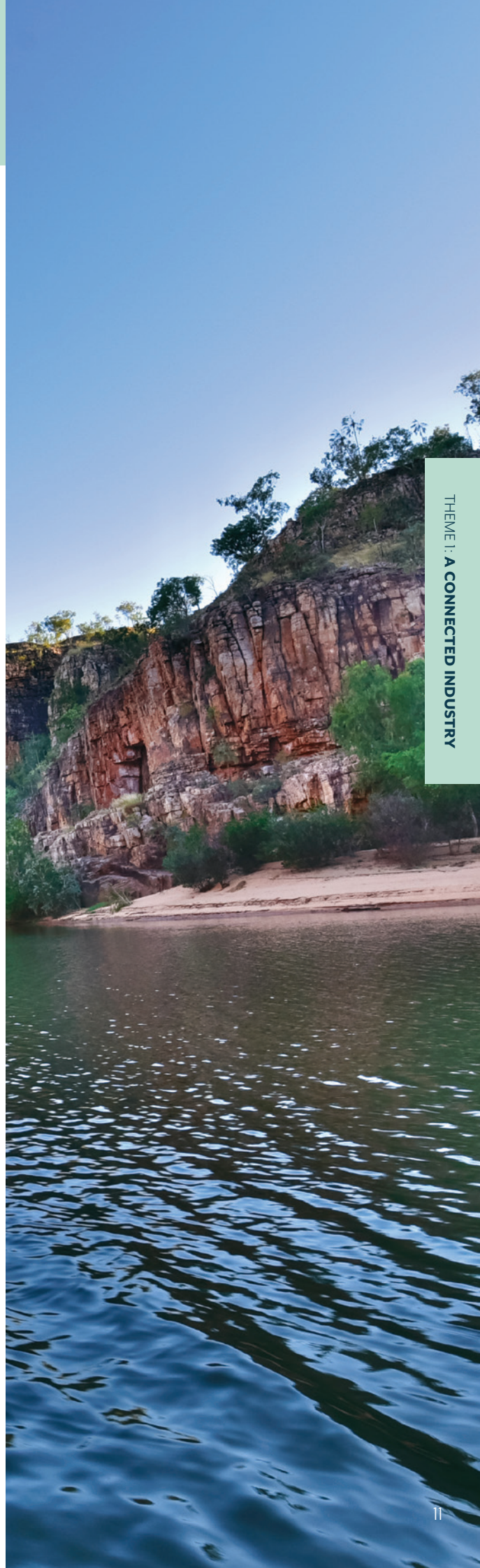
- ✓ Initiate IT, website, HR and IR training and upskilling to the industry: educate the industry on what is available and what is fit-for-purpose.
- ✓ Consider brokerage of services such as IT and insurance, as well as where this can be supported in the industry, and possibly through developing additional business partnerships.
- ✓ Collaborate with NT government to further develop its work on information-sharing and implementation across the wider human services industry.
- ✓ Develop principles to improve effective communication between non-Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal people and their communities.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Develop regional IT strategic plans that map both the current environment and the future needs of the community. The integration of shared platforms and technological evolution is to be considered throughout the body of work.

Longer-term initiatives

- ✓ Explore the opportunity to develop an NTG/NGO intranet to facilitate the repository of service information and a referral platform.
- ✓ Explore the opportunity to implement a framework for a shared client database (similar to MyGov), that connects organisations and services to achieve client-focused outcomes while protecting client confidentiality.





THEME 2: **STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATIONS**

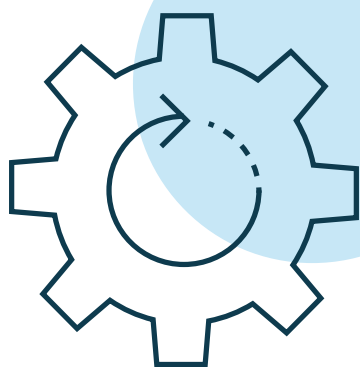
Across the different organisational types providing services in the Territory, organisations vary considerably with their governance capacity and capabilities, and there are common challenges to good governance.

Organisations balance the need for board members to have appropriate skill-sets or qualifications, with the need for diversity of lived experience and ‘on the ground’ understanding of the community’s needs. Boards lacking fundamental skills can be challenged by the increasing focus on risk and compliance.

The Territory’s small and sparse population can also make it challenging for members who find themselves in demand of numerous organisations needing to fill board positions.

In order to deliver consistent services for clients, organisations must be sustainable. The exit of a service or an organisation, particularly in remote areas, can create additional pressures on remaining services and lead to service gaps for clients.

Industry believes that focusing efforts in areas such as Governance and Leadership, Sustainability and Advocacy will be key to fostering strong and sustainable organisations.



Governance and Leadership

We have strong governance and leadership of our organisations and our communities; ensuring the human services industry remains resilient against current and emerging trends and can provide high-quality services and ongoing benefits to our economy and communities.

Our leaders represent our communities, and our communities lead our planning; promoting community well-being and reducing disadvantage.

Good governance of an organisation, with a continual focus on its vision, is key to strong and sustainable human service provision in the Territory. Training board

members in good governance is important to grow and support organisations and will be reflected in the quality of services they deliver. Leadership is essential to organisational sustainability, and ongoing investment in developing industry leaders is required.

To ensure balanced decision-making, boards and staff need to be representative of their respective communities.

Aboriginal community control is considered vital to reducing disadvantage, promoting community wellbeing and building sustainable local economies; with succession planning needed to grow this representation.

Shorter-term initiatives

- ✓ Organisations to self-assess their board composition and ensure leadership groups are diverse, skilled and reflective of their respective communities.
- ✓ Identify and/or further develop tailored resources on leadership and governance, ensuring industry awareness and accessibility (one location).
- ✓ Support organisations to seek expertise and support by external stakeholders, to help build capacity and accountability across an organisation.
- ✓ Brokerage of accessible, flexible and high-quality governance training for boards and senior managers, and advocate for all governance training to include leadership modules.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Create opportunities for leaders to connect across sectors.

Longer-term initiatives

There are no longer-term initiatives proposed.

Sustainability

We have strong and sustainable organisations and partnerships; delivering consistent, high-quality services that achieve long-term outcomes.

We are funded to provide person-centred supports to better the lives of all Territorians. Funding is flexible to meet the needs of the clients, empowering them to live a full and complete life.

High-quality services are delivered when governments and service providers work collaboratively and co-design policy, programs and funding models that meet the needs of the community.

Flexible, outcomes-driven funding gives organisations the agility and innovation to deliver services tailored to the people who access their services. Longer-term funding agreements support better organisational

planning and investment in local employment.

Stakeholders who completed the online survey cited that under-funding elements of service delivery was the single biggest funding issue, with concern that some organisations have diverged from their core service delivery in an effort to secure alternative means to 'prop up' services and remain sustainable. Some current funding models create difficulties for organisations to tailor services to the needs of the person or the community they support. This can lead to organisations tailoring their programs and services to meet the funding agreements and outputs required, sometimes at the expense of person-centred, place and evidence-based approaches (see also Quality Services).

There is agreement that organisations need to continuously improve transparency, outcomes-measurement and reporting; remaining accountable to both the people and communities they support and to program and funding partners.

Shorter-term initiatives

- ✓ Support organisations to develop capability statements that can be accessed through a central register, along with existing MOUs, to help support partnerships and co-design models.
- ✓ Continue to work with government to develop the social outcomes framework; ensuring there is consistency in language and agreed outcomes between industry and government.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Develop a consistent narrative around contract flexibility, so that organisations can negotiate contracts and change delivery outputs to ensure long-term outcomes are achieved. Consistent approaches to government contract management will safeguard against inconsistent approaches by agencies/government officers. This will be safeguarded through greater community access by contract managers, and regular evaluation of funding agreements.
- ✓ Promote and support social enterprise education and training.

- ✓ Develop a consistent approach to defining and measuring outcomes, along with change management support the transition to outcomes measurement approaches.
- ✓ Develop and implement overarching human service industry policy around suitable funding agreements, to be adopted by Commonwealth Government: similar to the NT Government's standard funding agreement and grants policy.

Longer-term initiatives

- ✓ Develop and provide frameworks for governments to work collaboratively with industry, and encourage co-design funding principles.
- ✓ Connectivity between all levels of government and across government agencies, to bring government funding into alignment and thereby simplify funding streams and support the sustainability of organisations.
- ✓ Future-proof the industry by having senior representatives of all stakeholders (all levels of government, relevant industry peak bodies, key industry representatives) work together to achieve the longer-term industry changes at a macro level.

Advocacy

We recognise and advocate for the social and economic value of the industry; driving positive change, investment and growth.

Collectively, a unified human services industry can strengthen, influence and drive progress, attract a workforce to support future growth, and lead continued quality improvement. Building advocacy skills at the individual, organisational and industry level is needed in order to influence the Territory's economic and social agenda for better human service industry outcomes.

There is a need to ensure adequate consideration of the NT context at a national level, for resource allocation and program prioritisation.

It is also important to understand the Territory's unique context for delivery of human services: peak bodies are strong advocates of the industry and have increased

their respective profiles significantly over the past decade. Similar to the members they represent, the capacity of peak bodies is limited by the enormous geographical spread and limited resources. Strengthening the role of the peaks would allow greater advocacy for industry at a Territory and national level.

Government plays a key role in the delivery of human services in remote communities. Greater advocacy and collaboration is needed between government agencies in support of the organisations that deliver critical services under their remit.

There is also an opportunity for the NT human services industry to consider partnering across Northern Australia to encourage growth and development; recognising the similar challenges of workforce demands, isolation, and capacity driven by economies of scale.

Shorter-term initiatives

- ✓ Human services industry stakeholders to develop and adopt principles that help communities identify local human services needs to inform service delivery. These principles will strengthen existing principles such as Local Decision Making (LDM) and the APO NT principles.
- ✓ Create greater opportunities for organisations to freely advocate for their particular client group.
- ✓ Provide advocacy training across the industry.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Review current resources available for social enterprise and industry business upskilling. Sustainable, profitable and for-purpose rhetoric needs to align with the industry's values and purpose.
- ✓ Develop new alliances with government agencies, business and industry, stakeholders and research bodies. These alliances will recognise and advocate the value of investing in the industry.

Longer-term initiatives

- ✓ Ensure the human services industry remains relevant throughout current and future economic frameworks.



THEME 3: A SKILLED WORKFORCE

A high-functioning human services industry requires flexible, skilled, multidisciplinary workers.

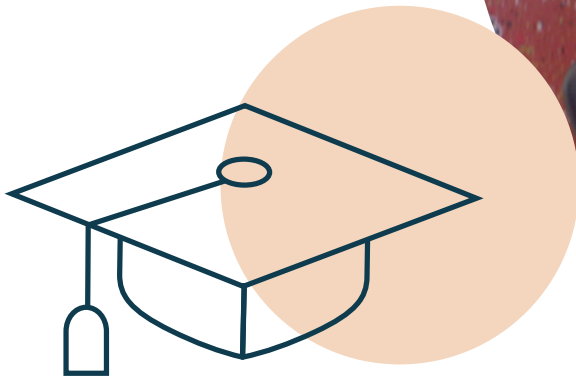
As technology in the human services industry develops, so will the need for new skills and new roles in the workforce. According to our stakeholders, 'soft skills' (such as the ability to work in teams, critical thinking, and communication) are already in demand and are expected to grow, alongside the requirement of 'skilled workers' driven by new policy frameworks, service provision models and regulatory requirements.

As some human services funding models move away from block funding to individualised, person-centred approaches (such as the NDIS)⁽²⁾, organisations require a greater focus on outcomes driven by consumer choices, while remaining cost-effective. This client-centred,

demand-driven competitive market will require a more diverse set of skills in human service workforces: for instance, customer service or marketing capacity to attract new clients.

The human services workforce is also highly mobile between providers and across jurisdictions, creating attraction and retention issues.

A culturally safe workplace provides a structure whereby all workers feel comfortable, supported and respected. The Territory's largely diverse population means that culturally safe and secure workplaces and service delivery are of critical importance.



The increased complexity of service provision and challenging funding and regulatory requirements heighten the need for highly-skilled and committed human service leaders to support the growth and sustainability of tomorrow's workforce.

Industry believes that focusing efforts in areas such as Attraction and Retention, Cultural Safety, Capacity Building and Community Workforce Development will be key to fostering a skilled workforce.

Attraction and Retention

We are an employment industry of choice; attracting and retaining a highly skilled, diverse and committed workforce.

In the Territory context, access to staff housing can be a challenge for some organisations in attracting and retaining their workforce.

Discrepancies in remuneration between organisations (namely NGO's and Territory/local government) has been identified as a challenge for some organisations (and potentially industry as whole) to retain quality staff.

Training programs are fragmented, and a more systematic approach to training and development needs to be implemented. There is also a real need to increase trauma-informed training across the entire human services industry in the Territory.

Mentoring programs aid in building workforce resilience, developing skills and attitudes across an organisation, and are considered a way to build better career pathways. Industry believes that mentoring is the most valuable activity in retention of the workforce.

Students, volunteers and carers are seen as valuable contributors to the human services industry workforce, and support is needed to build their skills and capabilities.

Shorter-term initiatives

- ✓ Support industry and skill recruitment drives.
- ✓ Promote the positive, vision-based culture and diversity of the human services industry, as well as the varied roles, opportunities, multiple entry points and pathways available to job seekers.
- ✓ Collaborate with other existing employment pathway programs across NTG and non-government providers.
- ✓ Industry to engage in workforce development and training initiatives provided by local and federal government. Through continued communication and collaboration between industry and government, additional workforce training models are to be explored where needed.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Traineeships to include road maps between government/corporate sectors and the human services industry. This will create awareness and opportunities for different skill sets and qualifications to consider the human services industry as a career.
- ✓ Develop a portal or hub that provides host organisations and direct supervisors with relevant student/employee supports, resources and calendars.

Longer-term initiatives

- ✓ Review of incentives such as relevant award rates and transferability of long service leave between organisations in the human services industry.

Cultural Safety

We are leaders of a culturally safe and secure industry, creating respectful and inclusive workplaces for all employees. As leaders in this regard, we will influence cultural safety awareness across all industries and across Northern Australia, for the benefit of everyone who works within, or accesses human services.

The Territory's cultural diversity is evident in our population, with over 100 different languages spoken by people who have migrated from Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa⁽³⁾. Of the diverse Territory population, 30.3 per cent are Aboriginal – the highest percentage in Australia⁽⁴⁾, making cultural comprehension a necessary skill.

There is a need to move beyond basic cultural awareness training to cultural safety and security training, using both local knowledge and online technology.

Recognising and valuing people with culturally lived experience should be prioritised when recruiting to positions working with Aboriginal people.

Shorter-term initiatives

There are no shorter-term initiatives proposed.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Non-Aboriginal organisations to seek appropriate cultural advice to ensure human services training is culturally safe and appropriate for Aboriginal workers.
- ✓ Develop a best practice training guide, to incorporate place-based training and Registered Training Organisations (RTO) engagement with appropriate cultural advisors.
- ✓ Explore brokerage or partnerships for culturally safe regional and remote training, placing the expertise back in the hands of Aboriginal Territorians.
- ✓ Develop and implement a 'language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) in the workplace' support program.

⁽³⁾ Northern Territory Multicultural Participation Framework 2016 – 19

⁽⁴⁾ NT Government 2017, p4

Longer-term initiatives

- ✓ Industry peaks to lobby for training in cultural safety as a mandatory requirement in workforce screening criteria, and for statutory requirements of cultural safety standards in the human services industry.

Capacity Building

We have professional career pathways, supporting people to enter purposeful and fulfilling employment in the human services industry.

We have a highly qualified and valued workforce, recognised for their contribution to the industry through shared skills, knowledge and culture.

The future workforce will require integrated and transferable qualifications as well as skills in cultural safety and security. To achieve this, workforce plans are necessary to map skill sets and competencies that align to the growing and changing needs of the industry, and that build workforce capacity.

Investment in staff is key to providing high-quality services and strengthening the industry workforce. While in some cases formal qualification requirements have created entry barriers to some of the workforce, these requirements can be incentivised by fostering career pathway plans.

Shorter-term initiatives

- ✓ Build capacity of human services workforce by encouraging workers from government, peaks or other industries to develop skills and gain broader role and industry experience by working in the human services industry (i.e. through the NT Government's NGO secondment program), which allows NT public servants to do work placements, secondments or temporary assignments in other agencies or with NGOs.
- ✓ Explore Virtual Reality and other augmented platforms for training delivery and workforce support.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Build further capacity of human services workforce by:
 - > allowing for the human services workforce to develop skills and gain broader role and industry experience by developing an initiative whereby staff can be seconded between industry and government, or even between peaks; and
 - > allowing for placements or temporary assignment opportunities between organisations within the industry.
- ✓ Industry to encourage embedding mentoring into organisations' job descriptions, especially in senior roles, and also into HR policies.
- ✓ Develop a human services industry two-way training portal, which informs the industry of training opportunities (reducing fragmentation), and collates an evidence base of community training needs.

Longer-term initiatives

- ✓ Advocate for funding to develop career pathways in the NT human services industry.
- ✓ Explore the opportunity to develop a human services industry workforce database.
- ✓ Explore opportunities for environment health training specific to the human services industry.

Community Workforce Development

Our local community workforce receives the support, training and development required so that we grow a skilled Aboriginal workforce.

The NT Government has stated: "A greater focus on skilling local (Aboriginal) people to deliver services will have tremendous benefits for workforce development, participation and engagement at the local level, bringing with it significant economic and social benefits."⁽⁵⁾

⁽⁵⁾ NT Government 2018a

Challenges to entering the workforce for Aboriginal people can be a significant factor that needs to be taken into account before formal qualifications can even be considered.

The NT Government is working on a range of strategies to address these factors, acknowledging that they will require long-term investment. Ensuring a person is job-ready will require an industry-wide approach. Community engagement, community involvement and ensuring workplaces are supportive, are all necessary to grow the local workforce.

When people are able to start training, they are sometimes linked to Registered Training Organisations who do not provide flexible and culturally safe training environments. Training needs to be contextualised and tailored to the trainees, and delivered in a remote, culturally safe setting.

Shorter-term initiatives

- ✓ Develop regional workforce plans. Consideration must be given to role flexibility and place-based needs, and recognise the value of cultural knowledge and language. Further development into regional training needs to be considered upon completion of the plans.

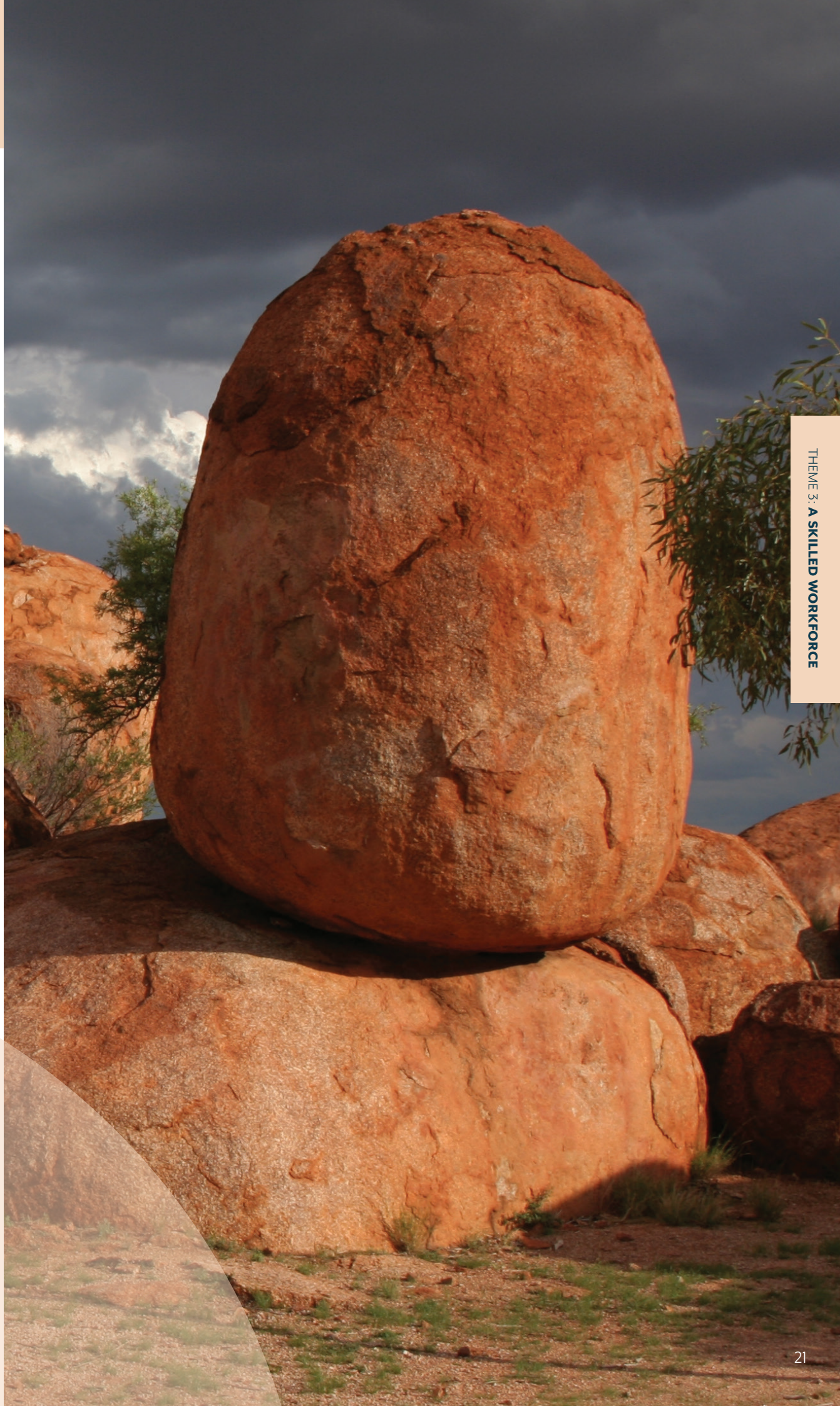
- ✓ Explore better ways to disseminate information about the support and assistance the NT Government provides for Aboriginal workforce planning across the industry.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Regional Planning, including LDM, to consider community engagement and communication around training programs and the importance of developing the human services workforce. This could be further developed by engaging the NT Government's Regional Economic Development Coordination Committees.

Longer-term initiatives

- ✓ Encourage greater industry engagement and collaboration with the NT Government Department of Education's Employment Pathways curriculum and certification. Further develop this to include traineeship and VET in school opportunities.





THEME 4: QUALITY SERVICES

Organisations can provide high-quality services for Territorians and their families in varied ways; depending on the needs of individuals, communities or service cohorts, and influenced by the size, location and purpose of each organisation.

Person-centred services respect individuals as experts in their lives and places the person receiving the service at the heart of all decision-making and actions relating to their support: providing the individual with choice and control over the services they receive. The person-centred approach is shifting program measurement to focus on outcomes rather than outputs. It is also shifting funding models away from 'block funding' arrangements to funding individuals based on their needs. This is creating a more competitive service delivery market, where consumers can drive demand. While there are benefits to this model in places that have many services to

choose from, in the Territory there are thin service provider markets in many areas. This can mean there is either a lack of choice or at times no service at all, especially for people living in regional and remote areas.

Place-based systems and services encourage people to come together to identify local challenges and consider local solutions. Place-based services encourage collaboration across various stakeholders of a particular community or region, to collaborate to address health, environmental and social issues that impact on a person's health and wellbeing.



Both person-centred and place-based models of care move away from a 'one size fits all' approach, and encourage people and their communities to be involved in the decisions that affect the services and outcomes they receive.

During consultations, stakeholders agreed that in the Territory context, person-centred, place-based and culturally safe models of care have fundamental challenges, but as an industry, are something we aspire to.

Industry believes that focusing efforts in areas such as Delivery, Access and Availability and Community Led will be key to fostering high-quality services.

Delivery

We work with people and communities to co-design our services, ensuring the best health, wellbeing and economic outcomes for people and their families.

Every Territorian is supported to live the best quality of life possible, through evaluated services and appropriate settings.

Stakeholders that took an online survey recognised person-centred, evidence-based and culturally safe and secure services as being equally important. Adequate resourcing, sustainable funding, access to information, appropriate training, and connectivity were all seen as areas that the industry could focus on to improve the delivery of high-quality services.

Place-based delivery (versus centralised and corporate services) needs to be co-designed at a local level to meet local priorities. Culturally safe service delivery is essential to achieve outcomes for Aboriginal people living in remote communities who may have complex health and welfare needs. Across the human services industry, services need to be culturally appropriate in order to meet the present and growing cultural and linguistic diversity of the Territory.

Outcomes measurement must be qualitative and quantitative, and provide evidence to inform high-quality services, local decision making and improved outcomes for Territorians.

Shorter-term initiatives

- ✓ Review Case Management Roles in the Human Services Industry. Consideration is to be given to practising higher professional standards, common language, and opportunities for education and training.
- ✓ Educate the industry on how to use data more effectively, while exploring ways for the industry to feed back useful and relevant data. This could be trialled through peer networking groups, facilitated by subject matter experts.
- ✓ Inform all organisations of national data terminology to ensure consistency.
- ✓ Provide industry with training/workshops on how to use data/evidence to inform service delivery.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Provide all levels of the industry with training to assist a person in crisis: developing a 'no wrong door' culture in the industry.
- ✓ Establish a coordinated, central body to collate, analyse and disseminate evidence, while upskilling those who will do collection on the ground. The Centre for Disability Studies is a good example of this model.
- ✓ Explore new and innovative ways to support organisations to collect and streamline quality data.
- ✓ Encourage industry advocacy to embed data collection in organisational planning to ensure quality improvement and high-quality services.
- ✓ Advocate for funding to include evidence-based data collection and evaluation to inform future service delivery.

Longer-term initiatives

There are no longer-term initiatives proposed.

Access and Availability

Human services are considered at all stages of place-based planning to ensure the best outcomes for the lives of Territorians, ensuring the right supports are available when and where they are needed.

Access to support and services when and where they are needed would benefit all Territorians. Knowing where to go for support, how to navigate the systems, and strengthening referral pathways will assist clients to access the services they need.

A coordinated, structured and consistent approach is required to provide a seamless service for clients and to eliminate gaps. Lack of space (infrastructure), logistics and the cost of delivery all limit the quality of services, and therefore must be considered at every stage of the service delivery planning process. As demand for services is expected to continue to grow, reviewing case management models should be considered to ensure clients transition between and from services in a coordinated way.

Connecting to services can be challenging, particularly for people living in remote areas. A lack of infrastructure and seasonal conditions can affect access to some remote areas for parts of the year. When remote areas are accessible, travel is time-consuming and costly for service providers. To help navigate these challenges, some organisations have considered alternative models of service delivery such as telehealth and virtual and augmented reality. The concept of using technology to deliver human services will continue to develop over the next 10 years, creating further improvements and efficiencies for the industry. These improvements will require careful planning, management and implementation to ensure services are culturally safe and appropriate at a local level.

Shorter-term initiatives

- ✓ Further develop and promote the use of Telehealth in communities by engaging remote health clinics.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Explore innovative ways to connect remote organisations with libraries and research centres to provide greater access to data and information to inform high-quality service provision.
- ✓ Provide Territorians with free call numbers for basic services in areas where this is needed.
- ✓ Establish partnerships with airlines and other transport providers to develop more cost-effective and efficient modes of travel.

Longer-term initiatives

- ✓ Human services to be considered at all stages of infrastructure and logistics planning.
- ✓ Continue to advocate for better infrastructure that connects remote communities, so that access to roads, phone and internet networks is not intermittent.

Community-led

Our industry empowers communities and develops the local capability to deliver human services so that Aboriginal people can deliver services to their people, who can live strong, healthy, fulfilling lives on community.

Our unpaid workforce is valued, heard and supported, we embrace their cultures and their experiences to better our outcomes.

For people in communities to receive place-based and person-centred services, planning needs to address all needs of the person, including basic needs such as food and shelter (which are unmet in some remote communities), as well as emotional, spiritual and social needs. Human services must recognise the unique cultural laws, systems and relationships of the community in which they operate. The role of carers (and kinship care requirements) particularly in remote communities, must be understood and respected.

Transitioning human service delivery to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to deliver the right services for their people is important. Transition planning is needed at every level of government and within industry for this to occur.

Shorter-term initiatives

- ✓ Investigate how the unpaid workforce that provide care, can be better supported to ensure they can provide the appropriate level of care.

Medium-term initiatives

- ✓ Advocate for pooling of funding to meet locally identified needs.
- ✓ Develop ways to financially support existing carer arrangements that compliment or take the place of human service delivery.
- ✓ Develop processes that incorporate the voices of carers and the unpaid workforce and those with lived experience into policy/program design.

Longer-term initiatives

- ✓ Advocate for place-based approaches (Local Decision Making) across all government funding (health, education, economic development) to empower communities and ensure services delivered for Aboriginal people are planned and led by community (and where relevant community-controlled organisations).
- ✓ Where non-Aboriginal organisations deliver human services in community, they need support and endorsement from Aboriginal organisations. As part of this service delivery, non-Aboriginal organisations need to provide the community with skill transferring opportunities to assist with local capacity building.
- ✓ When identified that a community wants to transfer an existing service to ACCO, transition planning is to be undertaken to transfer human service delivery to Aboriginal organisations.

Next Steps

In this Plan, the industry has set its vision for human services for the coming 10 years. The themes, priorities and initiatives listed in this document provide a foundation for ongoing industry planning and development.

The next steps allow for prioritisation of short-term initiatives, while seeking commitment from industry stakeholders to work together to achieve long-term needs and structural change.

Human Services Industry (HSI) Initiatives Action Plan

The development of a *HSI Initiatives Action Plan* will guide the implementation of the initiatives captured in the Industry Plan.

The Action Plan will:

- Seek ongoing commitment from stakeholders
- Focus on building capacity and capability
- List and prioritise initiatives
- Identify stakeholder groups and partnerships relevant to and accountable for actioning each of the initiatives
- Provide a process of monitoring and measuring milestones and key indicators of success

- Set timeframes for implementation
- Undertake an Economic Impact Analysis to measure the economic value of the industry to the NT economy and to support policy analysis and decision-making

Future-Proofing the HSI Initiatives Action Plan and the Industry

Good governance and leadership will support the implementation of the *HSI Initiatives Action Plan*. This leadership will bring together providers and key, high-level stakeholders to collaborate, achieve meaningful change and undertake longer-term planning for broader system changes.

Ongoing governance of the project includes representation from industry and government, including senior leadership representation from peak bodies and industry organisations. This committee will be tasked with the monitoring, decision-making and risk management of the HSI Initiatives Action Plan, ensuring it remains relevant as the human services industry continues to rapidly grow and evolve.



The Human Services Industry Governance Group (HSIPGG) provided sound governance and leadership throughout the planning process. To ensure ongoing certainty for the industry, the HSIPGG will continue to provide oversight and support during development of the Action Plan and while project capacity is established, and until such time as governance is transitioned to the NT Government and Non-Government Organisations Partnership Group (NNPG).

As an experienced group of decision makers from the NGO sector and the NT Government, the purpose of the NNPG is to:

- improve partnerships between the NT Government and NGO sector to support the government's social reforms;
- influence and add value to whole-of-government and NGO activities to carry out these reforms;
- support engagement between NTG agencies and the NGO sector at a senior level; and
- identify emerging issues and opportunities for both the NT Government and NGO sector.

Support needed to undertake next steps:

- ✓ Appropriate industry body to apply for an NTG special projects secondment position to provide project capacity to lead, develop and manage implementation of the Action Plan; and
- ✓ Identify longer-term capacity post initial implementation, to support medium and longer-term priorities and future-proofing of the Plan and the industry.

The Industry Plan Project

The NT Human Services Industry Plan (the Industry Plan) has been developed by the human services industry of the Northern Territory. National Disability Services (NDS) in the Northern Territory, in partnership with Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory Aboriginal Corporation (AMSANT) and Northern Territory Council of Social Services (NTCOSS) partnered through a Memorandum of Understanding to manage the project. The Northern Territory Government committed to support the development of the human services industry through funding and support.

A Northern Territory Human Services Advisory Group was formed to provide expertise and oversee the industry planning process and industry consultation; ensuring all voices across the sector were heard in the development of the plan. The Advisory Group comprised of key representatives from:

Human Services peak bodies:

- National Disability Services (NDS)
- Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT)
- NT Council of Social Service (NTCOSS)
- NT Shelter
- Alcohol and Other Drugs Association NT (AADANT)
- NT Mental Health Coalition (NTMHC)
- Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT)

Other Industry Representatives:

- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations – Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA)
- Youth Justice – North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)

NT Government:

- Department of Chief Minister (DCM)
- Department of Trade, Business and Innovation (DTBI)

The NT Human Services Industry Plan planning process was informed by the *NT Government and NGO Statement of Principles*, which guide how the two sectors work together to provide services to Territorians; and the *Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APO NT) Partnership*

Principles, which support a partnership-centred approach for non-Aboriginal organisations engaging in the delivery of services or development of initiatives in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Industry Consultation

The industry consultation phase included:

- ✓ The development and circulation of the NT Human Services Industry Plan Discussion Paper* (and Summary*) to introduce the Industry Plan project and guide thinking and discussions
- ✓ An online survey to capture industry contribution from March to May 2019
- ✓ Regional face-to-face consultation workshops held in Darwin, Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek
- ✓ Targeted interviews with key stakeholders from various human services providers and some government agencies
- ✓ Opportunity for industry members to submit a written or verbal submission in response to the Discussion Paper
- ✓ Industry symposiums in Darwin and Alice Springs that brought together key industry representatives to collate and validate the vision, themes and key priorities gathered from industry consultation
- ✓ Six meetings of the Advisory Group to provide expertise and validate industry responses

In total, over 340 stakeholders were engaged across 81 different organisations and agencies, providing valuable feedback into the industry's key priority areas, goals, and the steps needed to achieve its desired outcomes.

- 119 people from 57 organisations and government agencies working in the NT human services industry attended the five regional workshops.
- The online survey was completed by 87 stakeholders, 74 of which completed the survey in its entirety.
- Two written submissions were received in response to the Discussion Paper.
- 44 sector representatives represented the industry at the Symposiums, with one written response received.

* More information about the Industry Plan Project and consultations can be found at www.nthsip.com



Overview of Initiatives

The Northern Territory Human Services Industry Plan (2019–2029)

Theme	Priority	Initiative	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
A Connected Industry	Collaboration To develop efficiencies and excellence through collaboration	Develop a regional services directory across all of the human services industry	✓		
		Develop strong industry orientation frameworks		✓	
		Develop a Human Services Industry Centre of Excellence			✓
		Initiate annual human service industry forums	✓		
		Trial a collective impact / service model (pool-funded service delivery programs)		✓	
	Information and Communication To connect our industry through sharing of information & communication of best practice	Develop regional IT strategic plans		✓	
		Initiate IT, website, HR and IR training and upskilling to the industry	✓		
		Brokerage of services such as IT and insurance	✓		
		Collaborate with NT Government to further develop their work on information-sharing	✓		
		Develop principles to improve effective communication between non-Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal people and their communities.	✓		
		Develop an NTG/NGO intranet to facilitate the respository of service info and referral platform			✓
		Implement a framework for a shared client database (similar to MyGov)			✓



Theme	Priority	Initiative	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Strong and Sustainable Organisations	Governance and Leadership To develop strong Governance & Leadership in our Human Services Industry	Organisations to self-assess their board composition	✓		
		Create opportunities for leaders to connect across the sectors		✓	
		Identify and/or further develop tailored resources on leadership and governance	✓		
		Support organisations to seek expertise and support by external stakeholders	✓		
		Brokerage of accessible, flexible and high-quality governance training	✓		
	Sustainability To ensure our Industry, our organisations and our services are sustainable	Organisations to develop capability statements to support partnerships and co-design	✓		
		Develop and provide frameworks for governments to work collaboratively with industry			✓
		Develop consistent narrative around contract flexibility and contract negotiation to support long-term outcomes		✓	
		Promote and support social enterprise education and training		✓	
		Funding terms to align across all levels of government and government agencies			✓
		Continue to collaborate with government to develop the social outcomes framework	✓		
		Define & measure outcomes; support the transition to outcomes measurement approaches		✓	
		Develop and implement an overarching human service industry policy around suitable funding agreements		✓	
		Key stakeholders work together to achieve the longer-term industry changes at a macro level			✓
	Advocacy To build advocacy to influence and drive change	Adopt principles that help communities identify local human services needs to inform service delivery	✓		
		Sustainable, profitable and for-purpose rhetoric needs to align with the industry's values and purpose		✓	
		Develop new alliances across the industry ecosystem to recognise and advocate for industry investment		✓	
		Create greater opportunities for organisations to freely advocate for their particular client group	✓		
		Provide advocacy training across the industry	✓		
		Ensure the human services industry remains relevant throughout current and future economic frameworks			✓

Theme	Priority	Initiative	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
A Skilled Workforce	Attraction & Retention To attract & retain a skilled workforce of the future	Support industry and skill recruitment drives	✓		
		Promote the positive, vision-based culture and diversity of the industry	✓		
		Traineeships to include road-maps between government/corporate sectors and the industry		✓	
		Collaborate with other existing employment pathway programs across NTG and non-government providers	✓		
		Develop a portal or hub that hosts relevant student/employee supports, resources and calendars		✓	
		Engage in workforce development and training initiatives provided by local and federal government	✓		
		Review relevant award rates and transferability of long-service leave between organisations in the industry			✓
	Culturally Safe To be a culturally safe industry for all	Non-Aboriginal organisations to seek appropriate cultural advice		✓	
		Develop a best practice training guide, incorporating place-based training, RTO's and cultural advisors		✓	
		Explore brokerage or partnerships of culturally safe regional and remote training		✓	
		Develop and implement a 'LLN in the workplace' support program		✓	
		Culturally safe training to be a mandatory requirement in workforce screening criteria			✓
	Capacity Building To build capacity of our workforce	Build capacity through the NT Government's NGO secondment program	✓		
		Staff can be seconded between industry and government, or even between peaks, to build capacity		✓	
		Placements or temporary assignment opportunities between organisations within the industry		✓	
		Embed <i>mentoring</i> into job descriptions, especially in senior roles, and also into HR policies		✓	
		Develop a two-way training portal that informs the industry of training opportunities		✓	
		Explore virtual reality and other augmented training platforms	✓		
		Funding to develop career pathways in the industry			✓
		Develop a human services industry workforce database			✓
		Explore opportunities for Environment Health training specific to human services industry			✓
	Community Workforce Development To focus on community workforce development and the future of our communities	Develop regional workforce plans	✓		
		Regional planning to consider community engagement and communication around importance of industry workforce		✓	
		Disseminate information about NT Government support for Aboriginal workforce planning	✓		
		Encourage industry engagement of Dept. Education's 'Employment Pathways' curriculum and certification			✓

Theme	Priority	Initiative	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Quality Services	Delivery To deliver consistent, high quality services	Review Case Management Roles in the industry	✓		
		Provide all levels of the industry with training to assist a person in crisis		✓	
		Establish a coordinated, central body to collate, analyse and disseminate evidence		✓	
		Support organisations to collect and streamline quality data		✓	
		Explore ways for the industry to feed back useful and relevant data	✓		
		Inform all organisations of national data terminology to ensure consistency	✓		
		Embed data collection into organisational planning		✓	
		Provide industry with training/workshops on how to use data/evidence to inform service delivery	✓		
		Funding to include evidence based-data collection and evaluation		✓	
	Access & Availability To ensure all Territorians have Access & Availability to services	Connect remote organisations with libraries and research centres		✓	
		Provide Territorians with free call numbers for basic services in areas where needed		✓	
		Establish partnerships with transport providers		✓	
		Develop and promote the use of Telehealth in communities	✓		
		Human services to be considered at all stages of infrastructure and logistic planning			✓
		Advocate for better infrastructure that connects remote communities			✓
	Community Led To support community led planning & delivery of services	Pooling of funding to meet locally identified needs		✓	
		Financially support existing carer arrangements that compliment or take the place of human service delivery		✓	
		Incorporate the voices of carers and those with lived experience into policy/program design		✓	
		Investigate how the unpaid workforce can be better supported, ensuring they can provide the appropriate level of care	✓		
		Place-based approaches across all government funding			✓
		Non-Aboriginal organisations in communities need support and endorsement from ACCO's			✓
		When identified that a community wants to transfer an existing service to ACCO, transition planning is to be undertaken to transfer human service delivery to Aboriginal organisations			✓

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