

National Dementia Action Plan 2024-2034

Annual Activity Reporting

First Report (2025) – Northern Territory



Introduction

The [National Dementia Action Plan 2024-2034](#) (Action Plan) provides a comprehensive framework for dementia policy across Australia. The Action Plan outlines a strategic approach to improving the lives and care of people living with dementia, ensuring coordinated efforts across all levels of government.

Annual activity reporting provides information about how jurisdictions are implementing the Action Plan. This first report provides an outline of activity underway aligned to the agreed national priority actions for the first 3 years. The Collective Priority Framework identifies these as:

- Action 3: Empower individuals and communities to minimise risk where they can, and delay onset and progression
- Action 4: Improve dementia diagnosis and post-diagnostic care and support
- Action 8: Improve dementia data, maximise the impact of dementia research and promote innovation.

Sub-actions are included for the priority actions in each report to reflect relevance to work underway. Reported activity may contribute wholly or in part to these sub-actions. Some activities may span more than one high-level action.

Annual reports also provide an opportunity to share information on activities underway for any actions in the Action Plan.

Future reports will provide updates on work in progress, new dementia-related initiatives or changes to existing policies and programs.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) will report on key progress indicators to show how the Action Plan is making a difference to improve outcomes for people living with dementia. This will be publicly tracked and reported through the [National Dementia Action Plan indicators dashboard](#) on the AIHW website.

Activity reporting templates for national priority actions

ACTIVITY REPORTING – State/Territory	
<p>Action 3 – Empower individuals and communities to minimise risk where they can, and delay onset and progression.</p> <p><u>Relevant sub actions -</u></p> <p>3.1 Improve Territorians’ awareness of risk factors and preventive actions that can be taken to reduce the risk of developing, delay the onset or slow the progression of dementia. This includes health promotion and prevention programs which support overall health.</p> <p>3.5 Implement evidence-based interventions to reduce the risk of dementia, including for higher risk populations and people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI).</p>	
<p>Rationale for sub-action focus areas</p>	<p>3.1 Improving awareness of dementia risk factors is critical in the Northern Territory context, where higher rates of chronic disease, remoteness, and health inequities contribute to increased dementia risk, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. Strengthening prevention and health promotion supports early intervention and empowers individuals to take protective action across the life course.</p> <p>3.5 Implementing evidence-based interventions supports reduction of modifiable risk factors and progression of cognitive decline. Targeted interventions for higher-risk groups, including people with chronic disease and those in remote communities, are essential to improving long-term outcomes and reducing demand on acute and aged care services.</p>
<p>Work underway</p>	<p>3.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Top End and Central Australian Memory Services provide education to raise awareness of dementia risk factors and preventative actions, including outreach to remote communities. • The NT Seniors Policy promotes healthy lifestyles, social connection and physical activity for older people through public health and community-led initiatives.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NT Health clinical staff education sessions (Grand Rounds) build capability of hospital-based medical, nursing and allied health staff in understanding dementia risk factors and prevention. • NT Health deliver the Older Australians Wellbeing Program (OAWP), a preventative health and wellbeing initiative delivered in the Northern Territory through partnership with the Northern Territory Primary Health Network (NTPHN). It is designed to support older people to maintain independence, improve quality of life, and reduce risk factors associated with chronic disease and cognitive decline, including dementia. • The NT Government (NTG) provides peak body grants that support senior Territorians through systemic advocacy and representation. Council on the Ageing (COTA) NT has enabled community engagement and healthy ageing initiatives through delivery of healthy ageing programs, including pilates, tai chi, seated aerobics, and dementia-friendly activities such as line dancing and choir participation. <p>3.5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory Services across the Top End and Central Australia deliver evidence-based interventions, including cognitive screening, early intervention strategies, and referral pathways for people at risk or with mild cognitive impairment. • NT Health supports dedicated clinical capacity within Memory Services, the NTG funded position supports delivery of assessment and intervention services.
<p>Achievements and insights</p>	<p>3.1</p> <p>The Northern Territory Seniors Policy 2021–2026 focuses on activities that will have the greatest impact on improving the quality of life of older people as they age. To encourage social participation in the community and reduce the risk of dementia, programs have been introduced for older people, including walking netball, social bowls, masters squash events, social table tennis and aqua aerobics sessions. These initiatives support key modifiable risk factors for dementia, including physical inactivity and social isolation, by promoting active lifestyles, social connection and overall health and wellbeing.</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>Delivery of evidence-based interventions through Memory Services has strengthened early identification and management of cognitive decline, highlighting the value of specialist-led, multidisciplinary approaches.</p>
<p>Strategic collaboration and partnerships</p>	<p>NT Health partners with NTPHN to deliver health promotion and wellbeing programs targeting older Territorians.</p> <p>Collaboration with COTA NT supports delivery of community-based healthy ageing activities.</p> <p>The NT Health Memory Services work with primary care providers and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to strengthen early intervention and prevention pathways.</p>

ACTIVITY REPORTING – State/Territory

Action 4 – Improve dementia diagnosis and post-diagnostic care and support.

Relevant sub actions:

4.3 Clarify pathways for dementia screening, assessment and diagnosis across the country, including identification of best practice.

4.7 Improve support, care coordination and planning for people living with dementia and their carers following a dementia diagnosis, including models for First Nations, CALD and other diverse communities.

<p>Rationale for sub-action focus areas</p>	<p>4.3 Timely diagnosis remains a key challenge in the Northern Territory due to geographic dispersion, workforce limitations, and access barriers. Strengthening clear pathways for assessment and diagnosis improves early identification and supports access to appropriate care.</p> <p>4.7 Effective post-diagnostic support is an important priority in the Northern Territory. Enhancing care coordination and support services ensures people living with dementia and their carers receive ongoing, culturally appropriate and person-centred care.</p>
<p>Work underway</p>	<p>4.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NT Health contributes to national initiatives such as the Australian Dementia Network (ADNeT), supporting clinical data collection, benchmarking and improvement of diagnostic pathways. • Increased access to diagnostic technologies, including PET imaging, has strengthened specialist diagnostic capability in the Northern Territory. • Community Allied Health teams work in partnership with GPs, including in remote settings, to support early identification, screening and assessment of cognitive impairment. <p>4.7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NT Health funds clinical positions to support diagnosis and post-diagnostic care, including specialist geriatric and registrar roles, and dedicated support through Individualised Support Services. • In 2025, NT Health funded a psychiatry registrar role to strengthen integration between mental health and geriatric services. • NT Health supports the Australian Government’s Hospital to Aged Care Dementia Support Program (HACDSP) through in-kind contributions, improving transition from hospital to aged care services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidisciplinary collaboration within NT Health supports care planning, referral pathways, and ongoing support for people living with dementia and their carers. • The Safe and Found program supports people living with dementia who are at risk of wandering, enabling rapid response through information sharing with police.
Achievements and insights	<p>The NT Health-funded Out-of-hospital Care program provides a transition pathway for people with mild cognitive impairment and dementia to receive interim care outside of the hospital while awaiting residential aged care placement. This approach improves continuity of care and reduces reliance on hospital-based services. It also provides a more appropriate and supportive environment for people living with dementia, enabling stabilisation of symptoms and improved wellbeing.</p>
Strategic collaboration and partnerships	<p>NT Health works closely with Dementia Australia, meeting regularly to ensure strong case coordination and engaging in community forums to support people living with dementia and their families and carers.</p> <p>NT Health collaborates with Dementia Support Australia programs, including the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS), and HACDSP to support coordinated responses.</p> <p>Partnerships with primary care providers, aged care services, and community organisations support integrated and person-centred care pathways.</p>

ACTIVITY REPORTING – State/Territory

Action 8 – Improve dementia data, maximise the impact of dementia research and promote innovation.

Relevant sub actions:

8.4 Promote whole-of-system approaches to improve dementia data, (e.g. through clinical quality registries).

8.5 Improve health, social and aged care data collection, accessibility and integration to support research, inform policy and service planning, monitor improvements and reporting on outcomes for all types of dementia.

<p>Rationale for sub-action focus areas</p>	<p>8.4</p> <p>Improving dementia data is critical in the Northern Territory to inform service planning, policy development, and resource allocation. Enhanced data collection and integration supports a better understanding of dementia prevalence, service use, and outcomes, particularly for Aboriginal populations and people living in remote areas.</p> <p>8.5</p> <p>Strengthening data systems supports research, innovation, and evaluation of programs to improve care quality and effectiveness. Improved accessibility and use of health, social and aged care data enables evidence-informed decision-making and strengthens outcomes for people living with dementia.</p>
<p>Work underway</p>	<p>8.4</p> <p>Through in-kind support NT Health contributes to national dementia data initiatives, including the ADNeT registry. ADNet connects research with clinical care and this supports clinical data collection, quality improvement and allows for national benchmarking, improving dementia diagnosis, treatment, care, and outcomes.</p> <p>8.5</p> <p>The NT Health Statistics and Informatics unit provides leadership in health statistics and analysis to inform and improve health service delivery and planning, health outcomes, and wellbeing for older Territorians across the life course. The statistical analysis provided by the unit informs NT programs and guides future policy design, supports evaluation, and improves health care knowledge. Current research by the unit on dementia prevalence, ageing population and aged care servicing will inform dementia strategy and policy and services to older Territorians. The Health Statistics and Informatics unit is preparing a report on dementia incidence and prevalence using NT Health administration datasets due for release in late 2026.</p>

Achievements and insights	<p>In 2025 the Northern Territory Government’s Health Statistics and Informatics unit released a Fact Sheet <i>Profile of Older Northern Territorians</i>.</p>
Strategic collaboration and partnerships	<p>Ongoing collaboration with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to discuss improvements reporting methodology for national datasets, including NDAP indicators and dementia prevalence analysis.</p> <p>Collaboration across NT Government agencies (e.g. seniors, disability and housing) to improve data integration and support whole-of-government planning for ageing and dementia services.</p>

Other activities underway

Governments undertake activities across the breadth of the Action Plan. The table below provides an opportunity to showcase any activities that support the Action Plan’s broader actions, in addition to the identified priority actions.

ACTIVITY REPORTING – State/Territory		
OTHER ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY (if applicable)		
NDAP Action(s)/sub- action(s)	Activity	Achievements and Insights