



Healthy North Coast Aboriginal Partnership Agreement

1. Purpose

To describe the commitment by North Coast Aboriginal Medical Services and Healthy North Coast (known furthermore as Partners) to work together to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

2. Preamble

The Partners recognise and seek to progress the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031 vision whereby “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long, healthy lives that are centred in culture, with access to services that are prevention-focused, culturally safe and responsive, equitable and free of racism.”

The National Plan sets out four areas of reform which are related to this agreement:

- Priority Reform 1 – Formal partnerships and shared decision making
- Priority Reform 2 – Building the community-controlled sector
- Priority Reform 3 – Transforming government organisations
- Priority Reform 4 – Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

The Partners also recognise, and seek to implement, the Primary Health Network and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations Guiding Principles adopted nationally in 2016. The Guiding Principles identify key areas where PHNs and ACCHS should collaborate and the role that each provider should play in these activities.

This agreement clarifies the relationships and commitments between HNC and AMSs across the North Coast. It does not seek to replicate or replace the Northern NSW Partnerships Forum or Mid North Coast Accord which supports integrated care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between primary health care and the acute care system and is hosted by the Local Health Districts.

3. Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) and Aboriginal Medical Services (AMSs)

North Coast ACCHOs are the experts in Aboriginal health delivering holistic, comprehensive and culturally appropriate health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the region. ACCHOs are at heart and by constitution Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community organisations.

4. Healthy North Coast (HNC)

HNC delivers the Primary Health Network program on the North Coast. HNC works to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, and to improve coordination of care.

5. Principles

The Partners adopt the following principles with regard to the implementation of this agreement:

1. Self-determination is critical to Closing the Gap. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health outcomes will be achieved when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people control them.
2. Evidenced-informed decision making creates better outcomes.
3. By working in partnership we are more effective and efficient – directing precious resources where they are most needed.
4. Responsibility for improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is shared across the health system.
5. It is OK to disagree respectfully.
6. Transparency assists to build trust and partnership.

6. Governance

The Chief Executives of each Partner organisation manage this agreement.

Partners meet quarterly (four times annually) to review progress and discuss issues relating to this agreement.

Working groups may be established, and additional meetings organised, as required to progress agreed priorities.

7. Dispute resolution

In the first instance disputes will be managed CEO to CEO and/or via the Partners forum.

If resolution is not achieved the Partners will engage an independent facilitator to help broker a solution.

8. Term

This MoU commences on the date of signing and concludes on 30 June 2026, unless terminated beforehand.

An organisation may withdraw from the Agreement by sending their intent to withdraw in writing to all Partners and giving four weeks' notice.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Under this agreement, the Partners agree to:

- Attend all Partnership meetings, or nominate a delegate to attend if they are not available.
- Assign staffing resources to support the development of agreed priorities in line with agreed work and project plans.
- Share in the organisation of workshops and meetings unless otherwise agreed.

Healthy North Coast

- Healthy North Coast will contribute a grant to the Many Rivers Alliance to support the establishment of a part-time secretariat position at a total cost of \$50,000 per annum plus GST, as per Schedule 1.
- Healthy North Coast commits to work collaboratively with Partners with regards to commissioning activities in the spirit of respect and working together to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health outcomes.

Aboriginal Medical Services

- The Aboriginal Medical Services commit to work collaboratively with Healthy North Coast and other AMSs and maintain shared responsibility as per this agreement.
- The Aboriginal Medical Services commit to being transparent with Partners and will work through challenges and barriers as they arise together.
- The Aboriginal Medical Services will nominate the Partner organisation that will host the Many Rivers Alliance secretariat funding (Schedule 1) to Healthy North Coast.

10. Work plan

The Partners will develop and approve annual work plans which will summarise the agreed activities to be collectively undertaken by Partners, as per Appendix I.

11. Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

The Partners shall obtain agreement from the other Party before releasing any confidential information relevant to this agreement or to any person. The parties acknowledge that this obligation survives the expiry or termination of the Agreement.

Appendix I: 2022-2023 and 2022-2024 Work Plan

Additional workshops, meetings and project plans may be required to manage each project.

Project	Timeline	Lead Partner
1. Development of a joint North Coast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Needs Assessment a. Community engagement to be conducted b. Inclusive of medical specialist access focus	By 30 June 2025	Healthy North Coast
2. Development of Aboriginal specific Mental Health, Suicide Prevention & AOD community-controlled service model inclusive of: a. Collective priority setting b. Agreement of SEWB Outcomes Framework c. Development and agreement of a 2023-2024 AOD ICE funding service model d. Development and agreement of SEWB program model e. Consideration of Brain and Mind Institute systems dynamic model proposal	By 30 June 2025	All
3. Development of a HNC preferred provider model	By 30 June 2023	Healthy North Coast
4. Development of a Partnership led Integrated Team Care service model for implementation in 2024-2025 inclusive of: a. Consideration of medical specialist access b. Consideration of Closing the Gap component c. Consideration of Supplementary Services	By 30 June 2025	All