



**NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life*

### **West Arnhem and Katherine Regional Councils express their ‘extreme anger and disappointment’ at health service provision out bush**

19 August 2019

At their meeting at Jabiru this week the Northern Land Council’s West Arnhem and Katherine Regional Councils passed a resolution expressing anger and disappointment at the poor state of health services for remote communities in the Katherine and West Arnhem regions.

Topics of particular concern included misdiagnosis of serious medical conditions at community clinics and the continuing crisis relating to non-existent or inappropriate morgue facilities in the larger remote communities.

While accepting that staff at regional clinics undertake important work in difficult circumstances Regional Council members were concerned that the resources and level of service available was not equivalent to the standard of care provided in the main Territory population centres of Darwin and Alice Springs.

Noting that the Commonwealth Government has significant responsibility for remote area health funding, the resolution calls for both the Commonwealth and NT Governments to address this issue. Former Commonwealth Health Ministers (in particular Minister Woolridge) acknowledged the issue of the shortfall in MBS/PBS funding flowing to remote Territory residents on a per-capita basis, in comparison with people living in Darwin.

Members also expressed their disappointment at the perceived failure of the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the Northern Territory (AMSANT) to adequately advocate the concerns of their remote, regional and homelands communities in respect of these issues.

Regional Council members called on Federal Government Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt, along with his colleague the Federal Health Minister Hon Greg Hunt to immediately review all primary, acute health and medical service provision, and the funding of those services across the NLC regions in the NT.

**NLC contact: Leah McLennan  
Media and Communications Officer  
Ph: 08 8920 5209  
Mob: 0427 031 382**