

Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment 2025-31 – Aboriginal Interpreter Service

FEDERATION FUNDING AGREEMENT – AFFORDABLE HOUSING,
COMMUNITY SERVICES AND OTHER

Table 1: Formalities and operation of schedule

Parties	Commonwealth Northern Territory
Duration	This Schedule is expected to expire on 30 June 2031.
Purpose	<p>This Schedule supports the delivery of the Aboriginal Interpreter Service investment priority under the <i>Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment: Investing in Aboriginal Self-determination to Close the Gap in the Northern Territory Partnership Agreement</i> (NTRAI Partnership Agreement).</p> <p>The NTRAI Partnership Agreement is between the Commonwealth, the Northern Territory and the Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT).</p> <p>This Schedule recognises that continued investment in Aboriginal Interpreter Service is essential to support achievement of multiple outcomes under the <i>National Agreement on Closing the Gap</i> (National Agreement).</p> <p>This Schedule aims to deliver on key objectives set out in the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, which are aligned to the Priority Reforms set out in the National Agreement, including:</p> <p><u>Priority Reform Two</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the capacity and capability of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) in remote communities to deliver high quality services. • Tangible action and local jobs in remote communities in line with the Aboriginal employment target in the Additional Terms of this Schedule. <p><u>Priority Reform Three</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the standard of remote services, including the design, management and delivery of high-quality, culturally responsive services.

- Ensuring Aboriginal people living in remote communities have equitable access to mainstream services in a way that is relevant to their context.
- Identifying and eliminating racism in mainstream organisations and institutions delivering services to remote communities.
- Embedding and practicing meaningful cultural safety in government organisations delivering services to remote NT communities.
- Delivering mainstream services for remote communities in partnership with remote communities and their organisations.

Funding provided under this Schedule builds on previous Commonwealth investment in remote Aboriginal communities through the NTRAI and is intended to supplement service delivery in the Northern Territory. It is not intended to exclude or disadvantage the Northern Territory Government from accessing other funding sources, including from the Commonwealth.

Acknowledging the supplementary nature of NTRAI investment, where the Northern Territory Government negotiates with the Commonwealth for new funding for services and programs within the scope of NTRAI, the Northern Territory will notify the Commonwealth of the funding being provided under NTRAI for those services and programs with appropriate records maintained.

Aboriginal Interpreter Service

This Schedule provides supplementary funding to support the delivery of high-quality Aboriginal interpreter services through the Northern Territory's Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS).

The Schedule expands delivery of Aboriginal Interpreter Services in critical sectors including in health and emergency services, domestic, family and sexual violence services, legal and justice contexts. This Schedule also supports strengthening of partnerships with community language centres and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Partnership under the National Agreement, along with strategic alignment of interpreter service delivery in the tri-border area of the NT, Western Australia and South Australia.

To enable the expansion of interpreter services, the Schedule supports the implementation of recruitment, retention and professional development systems and strategies to further develop the Aboriginal interpreter workforce. These initiatives will improve access to

	<p>appropriately qualified* interpreters for Aboriginal language speakers across the NT, including speakers of NT Aboriginal languages who are outside of the NT.</p> <p>The Schedule also supports the promotion of the Aboriginal Interpreter Service within government and non-government agencies and service providers, and amongst Aboriginal language speakers, with the aim of increasing demand for Aboriginal language interpreters. To improve the effectiveness of interpreter utilisation, the Schedule also supports an increase in the provision of working with interpreters training to service providers who interact with Aboriginal language speakers.</p> <p>The Parties recognise that Aboriginal interpreters are a critical enabling service that are essential for safe, effective and equitable treatment and engagement with Aboriginal language speakers, across a range of settings.</p>
Governance	<p>The NTRAI Partnership Agreement sets out the enduring shared decision-making arrangements to guide NTRAI investment and maximise alignment to Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, including establishing the NTRAI Joint Steering Committee (JSC). To facilitate shared decision-making, monitoring and oversight of NTRAI investment by the JSC, the NT Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare biennial plans to outline the strategic direction of outputs funded through this Schedule and submit these for consideration by the JSC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Biennial plans provide a mechanism for shared decision-making and oversight of investment and reform effort, not operational arrangements for service delivery. Plans do not establish additional requirements for the purpose of assessing performance against milestones for the provision of payments to the NT Government. • Prepare progress reports at 6-month intervals as per the due dates in Table 2 which will be submitted to the JSC for consideration. <p>The JSC will provide advice to the Commonwealth delegate on the alignment of plans and progress reports with the Partnership Agreement and Closing the Gap Priority Reforms. This advice must be provided within 10 business days of the plan being tabled. The Commonwealth delegate will consider the JSC's advice in determining relevant milestone</p>

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	<p>payments.</p> <p>If the JSC does not provide advice regarding alignment with the Partnership Agreement and the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms within 10 business days, the Commonwealth delegate will proceed with their consideration of the relevant milestone payments.</p> <p>The parties acknowledge payment decisions are a matter for the Commonwealth delegate in line with the <i>Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations</i>. The Commonwealth will make payments subject to performance reports demonstrating relevant milestones have been met by the NT Government.</p> <p>Consistent with the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, the JSC will monitor the progress and outcomes of this Schedule to ensure this investment priority remains responsive to the evolving needs of remote NT Aboriginal communities. This may include recommending to the Ministers responsible adjustments to this Schedule over time.</p> <p>In accordance with Clause 14 of the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, the parties will work collaboratively through the JSC to embed Priority Reform 4 into the monitoring and evaluation of progress and outcomes relating to outputs delivered under this Schedule.</p>																																
Estimated financial contributions	<p>The Commonwealth will provide an estimated total financial contribution to the Northern Territory of \$54.981 million in respect of this Schedule.</p> <table><tr><th>Table 1 (\$ million)</th><th>2025-26</th><th>2026-27</th><th>2027-28</th><th>2028-29</th><th>2029-30</th><th>2030-31</th><th>Total</th></tr><tr><td>Estimated total budget</td><td>8.500</td><td>8.755</td><td>9.018</td><td>9.288</td><td>9.567</td><td>9.854</td><td>54.981</td></tr><tr><td>Less estimated National Partnership Payments</td><td>8.500</td><td>8.755</td><td>9.018</td><td>9.288</td><td>9.567</td><td>9.854</td><td>54.981</td></tr><tr><td>Balance of non-Commonwealth contributions</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td></tr></table>	Table 1 (\$ million)	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	Total	Estimated total budget	8.500	8.755	9.018	9.288	9.567	9.854	54.981	Less estimated National Partnership Payments	8.500	8.755	9.018	9.288	9.567	9.854	54.981	Balance of non-Commonwealth contributions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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Additional terms	<p>Roles and responsibilities</p> <p>The Northern Territory is responsible and accountable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Delivering Aboriginal Interpreter Services across the NT, including in remote communities and for managing associated financial and service delivery risks.																																

- Reporting on the delivery of outputs funded through this Schedule in accordance with the milestones at Tables 2 and 3.

The Commonwealth:

- Is responsible for making payments under this Schedule to support the Northern Territory to deliver the agreed remote policing outputs.
- Commits to sharing relevant data aligned with outcomes identified in the NTRAI Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Framework to support its implementation.

The Commonwealth and Northern Territory are responsible for:

- Upholding FFA Principles including demonstrating evidence of cost-effectiveness.
- Liaising with the JSC prior to the release of any media statements relating to the Schedule.
- Actively participating in the implementation of the overarching NTRAI MEAL Framework as described under the monitoring and evaluation section of this schedule.

Reform Ambition

Payments provided through this Schedule support essential service delivery to Aboriginal Territorians who live, or are from, remote NT communities. The parties agree a principle underpinning this Schedule is ensuring the continuity of these services is maintained through certainty of funding flows and appropriate service delivery risk management.

To support this continuity in service delivery, and in accordance with Clause 23 of the *Federation Funding Agreement – Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other*, the NT Government will report the minimum required to demonstrate milestones have been met, as set out at Table 2 and Table 3.

Acknowledging the shared reform ambition set out in the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, the parties also commit to working towards the below aspirational targets over the six-year term of NTRAI investment for the Aboriginal Interpreter Service.

These targets reflect the shared aspirations of the parties to the NTRAI Partnership Agreement and are not intended to represent benchmarks for the purpose of assessing performance against milestones for the provision of payments to the NT Government under this Schedule.

- This Schedule sets a target of 95 per cent Aboriginal interpreter employment across the Aboriginal Interpreter Service and seeks to

	<p>continuously increase the proportion of the workforce with ongoing employment arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 76 per cent of interpreting completed by accredited/qualified* interpreters. <p>Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation will occur through the NTRAI MEAL Framework as outlined in the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, and the FFA Schedule – NTRAI Evaluation.</p> <p>The JSC will oversee the development of the overarching NTRAI MEAL Framework which will be underpinned by Schedule specific 2-year plans, a contemporary program logic and a data matrix to outline the intended links between the activities, outputs and outcomes supported by this Schedule and the broader outcomes and objective of the Partnership Agreement. The data matrix will outline the proposed measures, baseline data and indicators for monitoring and evaluating progress and outcomes achieved by the outputs funded through this Schedule.</p> <p>Through Clause 14.3 of the NTRAI Partnership Agreement the Commonwealth and Northern Territory commit to maximize transparency in relation to broader funding commitments and allocations for remote service delivery in the NT. This requirement will be met by the parties through the NTRAI MEAL Framework.</p>
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Table 2: Performance requirements, reporting and payment summary

Output	Performance milestones	Reporting Period	Report due	Payment
Continued delivery of Aboriginal interpreter services NOTE: The activity being reported for this milestone relates to the previous NTRAI 2024-25 Aboriginal Interpreter Service FFA Schedule and is provided for continuity of information flows only.	Provision of a final report that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total hours of training undertaken by Aboriginal interpreters. The number and percentage of the interpreter workforce who are Aboriginal. The total hours and number of Aboriginal interpreter jobs by region, sector, client type and language. 	1 January – 30 June 2025	30 November 2025	\$2,125,000
Continued and expanded delivery of Aboriginal interpreter services	<u>Milestone 1</u> Provision of a 2-year Plan in accordance with the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC and consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1.	1 July 2025 – 30 June 2027	30 November 2025	\$1,275,000
		1 July 2027 – 30 June 2029	1 April 2027	\$437,750
		1 July 2029 – 30 June 2031	1 April 2029	\$464,409
	<u>Milestone 2</u> Provision of 6 monthly progress report on the 2-year plan that also includes the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC and consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports submitted 1 April will be assessed against Table 3 only. Reports submitted 1 October will be assessed against Table 3 and against the annual target for completed assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum 4,500 completed assignments annually, by 30 June. 	1 July – 31 December 2025	1 April 2026	\$2,975,000
		1 January – 30 June 2026	1 October 2026	\$2,845,375
		1 July – 31 December 2026	1 April 2027	\$2,845,375
		1 January – 30 June 2027	1 October 2027	\$3,156,187
		1 July – 31 December 2027	1 April 2028	\$3,156,167
		1 January – 30 June 2028	1 October 2028	\$3,018,659
		1 July – 31 December 2028	1 April 2029	\$3,018,657
		1 January – 30 June 2029	1 October 2029	\$3,348,389
		1 July – 31 December 2029	1 April 2030	\$3,348,388
		1 January – 30 June 2030	1 October 2030	\$3,448,841
		1 July – 31 December 2030	1 April 2031	\$3,448,841

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Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Pathways	<u>Milestone 3</u> Provision of a 2-year Plan in accordance with the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1.	1 July 2025 – 30 June 2027	30 November 2025	\$850,000
		1 July 2027 – 30 June 2029	1 April 2027	\$437,750
		1 July 2029 – 30 June 2031	1 April 2029	\$464,409
	<u>Milestone 4</u> Provision of 6 monthly progress report on the 2-year plan that also includes the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports submitted 1 April will be assessed against Table 3 only. • Reports submitted 1 October will be assessed against Table 3 <u>and</u> the annual target for completed training hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A minimum of 2,000 hours of interpreter professional development training and development annually, by 30 June. 	1 July – 31 December 2025	1 April 2026	\$1,275,000
		1 January – 30 June 2026	1 October 2026	\$1,094,375
		1 July – 31 December 2026	1 April 2027	\$1,094,375
		1 January – 30 June 2027	1 October 2027	\$1,352,648
		1 July – 31 December 2027	1 April 2028	\$1,352,648
		1 January – 30 June 2028	1 October 2028	\$1,161,023
		1 July – 31 December 2028	1 April 2029	\$1,161,023
		1 January – 30 June 2029	1 October 2029	\$1,435,024
		1 July – 31 December 2029	1 April 2030	\$1,435,024
		1 January – 30 June 2030	1 October 2030	\$1,478,073
		1 July – 31 December 2030	1 April 2031	\$1,478,075

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Table 3: Milestone requirements

Report	Key deliverables
2-year Plans	<p>Plans should outline the strategic direction of outputs funded through this Schedule over a 2-year period, including how the delivery of outputs is intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • align with the NTRAI Partnership Agreement and the Priority Reforms outlined in the Purpose section of this Schedule. • meet relevant performance milestones; and • strive to achieve the reform ambition as set out in the Additional Terms section of this Schedule. <p>For the <i>Continued and expanded Aboriginal Interpreter Services</i> output, the plan must include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the AIS demand-driven activities supported by the Schedule, including but not limited to in health and emergency services, domestic, family and sexual violence services, legal and justice contexts and the tri-border area. • The NT's involvement in the Closing the Gap Language Policy Partnership and Community Language Centre's. • Work to progress the development of a strategy for improving service delivery coordination in the tri-border area of NT, WA and SA, including consultation with other relevant interstate providers on roles, responsibilities and service delivery arrangements for NT Aboriginal language speakers living outside the NT. • Overview of promotion, engagement and training activities to increase demand for, and effective utilisation of Aboriginal interpreters. <p>For the <i>Aboriginal Employment and Career Pathways</i> output the plan must include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned recruitment and retention efforts to maintain and increase the Aboriginal interpreter workforce across all sectors, including opportunities to leverage Aboriginal Language Centres to expand the Aboriginal interpreter workforce. • Planned professional development opportunities for the Aboriginal interpreter workforce across all sectors. • Description of planned professional development and training.
6 monthly Progress Reports	<p>6 monthly progress reports must demonstrate progress or achievement of annual milestones and provide an update on the elements within the 2-year plan.</p> <p>For the <i>Continued and expanded Aboriginal Interpreter Services</i> output must also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress against AIS activities by sector in particular health and emergency services, domestic, family and sexual violence services, legal and justice contexts and the tri-border area. This must include a breakdown of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number of languages services have been provided in ○ number of interpreters per language

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ number of accredited/qualified¹ interpreter per language.• Progress on partnership arrangements and/or activities to strengthen and support:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Closing the Gap Language Policy Partnership○ Sector specific services○ Community Language Centre's• Community and stakeholder engagement• Promotional activities including the delivery of <i>working with interpreters training</i>.• The number of languages interpreting has been provided in, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The total hours and number of completed interpreting assignments by region, sector, client type, language and interpreter qualification type.○ The percentage of interpreting hours provided by accredited/qualified² interpreters.• Progress towards a strategy for tri-border interpreter service delivery. <p>For the <i>Aboriginal Employment and Career Pathways</i> output must also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment, retention and professional development programs and initiatives undertaken in the reporting period.• The following demographic information on the interpreter workforce*:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Location○ Employment Status○ Indigeneity○ Age○ Gender |
|--|--|

*Note workforce information is point in time due to reporting system limitations.

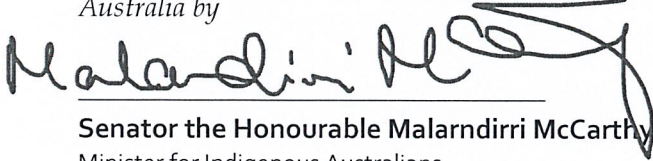
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² *ibid.*

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The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this schedule as follows:

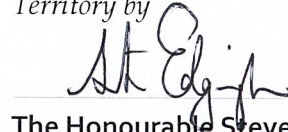
Signed for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of
Australia by



Senator the Honourable Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

Date: 14.11.25

Signed for and on behalf of the Northern
Territory by



The Honourable Steven Edgington MLA
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Date: 18/12/25

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