

Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment 2025-31 – Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

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 Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Accountability (MEAL) priority under the Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment: Investing in Aboriginal Self-determination to Close the Gap in the Northern Territory Partnership Agreement (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) (NTRAI Partners).</p> <p>This Schedule recognises that investment in MEAL is essential to identifying and strengthening the outcomes of NTRAI investment, in alignment with the Socio-economic Outcome areas under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement).</p> <p>This Schedule aims to deliver a Monitoring Evaluation, Accountability and Learning framework, inclusive of systems level outcomes aligned to relevant Closing the Gap Socioeconomic Outcomes. The MEAL Framework will assist the NTRAI Joint Steering Committee (JSC) to monitor progress and outcomes from NTRAI across all investment priorities and to monitor progress toward the objectives of the NTRAI Partnership Agreement¹, which are aligned to the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement.</p> <p>This Schedule also aims to strengthen shared decision-making and accountability around the delivery of NTRAI investment and enhance learning to improve the outcomes of NTRAI investment, over time.</p> <p>Funding provided under this schedule builds on previous Commonwealth investment in remote Aboriginal communities through the NTRAI and is intended to supplement monitoring and evaluation activities for services supported by NTRAI investment It is not intended to exclude or</p>

¹ Progress will be measured against outcomes identified in the MEAL framework which will be aligned to relevant Socioeconomic Outcomes under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (not Targets).

<p>disadvantage the Northern Territory Government from accessing other funding sources, including from the Commonwealth.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Without detracting from the Parties' commitment to the objectives under the NTRAI partnership agreement, including those in relation to the priority reforms and socio-economic outcomes of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Parties recognise that the investment will contribute to systems level outcomes which may be impacted by external factors, outside the scope of NTRAI. Noting the supplementary nature of NTRAI, the Parties acknowledge that data provision under the MEAL framework, wherever possible will align with the monitoring and evaluation of outputs and outcomes directly funded by the NTRAI investment.</p> <p>Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Accountability</p> <p>The Northern Territory will lead the development and Implementation of the MEAL framework in partnership with the Commonwealth and APO NT. The MEAL framework will encompass all NTRAI investment and will include the following elements:</p> <p><u>Systems Level Outcomes Framework (Outcomes Framework)</u></p> <p>The Outcomes Framework will outline short-, medium- and long-term outcomes for all NTRAI investments against the objectives of the Partnership Agreement, including alignment with the relevant socio-economic outcomes and Priority Reforms under the National Agreement.</p> <p><u>Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan</u></p> <p>The M&E Plan will include Program Logics and Data Matrices for all NTRAI programs/ initiatives, including indicators at the output and outcome level, which will be linked to the Outcomes Framework.</p> <p><u>Data monitoring</u></p> <p>As a key accountability and oversight mechanism, the JSC will receive six-monthly data reports to monitor progress towards outcomes associated with NTRAI investment, in line with the data matrices for NTRAI programs/ initiatives. The JSC may draw on monitoring data to recommend adjustments to other NTRAI Schedules over time, to ensure investment</p>

	<p>priorities remain responsive to the evolving needs of remote NT Aboriginal communities.</p> <p><u>Accountability and Learning</u></p> <p>Additional accountability and learning mechanisms will be embedded within the MEAL framework to ensure transparency, continuous improvement, accountability and participatory decision-making through the JSC. APO NT will co-lead the development of accountability and learning mechanisms under the MEAL framework, which may evolve over time.</p> <p>APO NT will lead on the development of a Partnership evaluation framework to establish how the NTRAI Partners will measure, review, and improve the performance and outcomes of the NTRAI Partnership. APO NT will lead the delivery of independent Aboriginal-led evaluations and/or reviews of the NTRAI Partnership, based on the Partnership evaluation framework, to be funded separately to this Schedule.</p> <p>As part of the approach to accountability and learning, reporting on implementation of the MEAL Framework, including the outcomes supported by NTRAI investment, will be provided to Aboriginal communities, including through Annual Reports and an End of Term report.</p> <p><u>Mid-point review and end of term evaluation</u></p> <p>An independent mid-point review will be undertaken in 2027-28 to assess progress toward the objectives of the NTRAI Partnership Agreement and may recommend adjustments to the NTRAI investment based on emerging evidence and changing needs of communities.</p> <p>An independent end-of-term evaluation will assess the degree to which the objectives of the NTRAI Partnership Agreement have been achieved.</p> <p>As part of its role in leading on accountability and learning, APO NT will deliver independent Aboriginal-led evaluations and/or reviews of NTRAI investment to complement the mid-point review and end-of-term evaluation, also funded separately to this Schedule.</p> <p>This Schedule consolidates the performance requirements of the NTRAI 2024-25 Evaluation Schedule.</p>
<p>Governance</p>	<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 JSC. To ensure monitoring and oversight of NTRAI investment the JSC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jointly develop the MEAL framework and agree any changes to the framework over time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor NTRAI programs/initiatives by reviewing 6 monthly data reports on NTRAI programs/initiatives. • Jointly develop the scope of the independent mid-point review and end-of-term evaluation. • Ensure that NTRAI investment remain responsive to the evolving needs of remote NT Aboriginal communities. <p>To facilitate shared decision-making the NT Government will submit all outputs funded through this Schedule for consideration by the JSC.</p> <p>The JSC will provide advice to the Commonwealth delegate on the alignment of outputs with the NTRAI Partnership Agreement and Closing the Gap Priority Reforms. This advice must be provided within 10 business days of the plan being tabled.</p> <p>The delegate will consider the JSC’s advice in determining relevant milestone payments. If the JSC does not provide advice regarding alignment of the outputs 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>Estimated financial contributions</p>	<p>The Commonwealth will provide an estimated total financial contribution to the States of \$8.364 million in respect of this Schedule.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="8">Table 1</th> </tr> <tr> <th>(\$ 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> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Estimated total budget</td> <td>1.054</td> <td>1.076</td> <td>1.598</td> <td>1.521</td> <td>1.144</td> <td>1.971</td> <td>8.364</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Less estimated National Partnership Payments</i></td> <td><i>1.054</i></td> <td><i>1.076</i></td> <td><i>1.598</i></td> <td><i>1.521</i></td> <td><i>1.144</i></td> <td><i>1.971</i></td> <td><i>8.364</i></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> </tbody> </table>	Table 1								(\$ million)	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	Total	Estimated total budget	1.054	1.076	1.598	1.521	1.144	1.971	8.364	<i>Less estimated National Partnership Payments</i>	<i>1.054</i>	<i>1.076</i>	<i>1.598</i>	<i>1.521</i>	<i>1.144</i>	<i>1.971</i>	<i>8.364</i>	Balance of non-Commonwealth contributions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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<p>Additional terms</p>	<p>Roles and responsibilities</p> <p>The Northern Territory is responsible and accountable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting on the delivery of outputs funded through this Schedule in accordance with the milestones at Table 2 & 3. • Tabling completed evaluations and reviews of NTRAI-funded programs/initiatives with the JSC upon completion. • Considering reasonable requests from the Commonwealth for additional data and information pertaining to NTRAI investments outside of regular milestone reporting set out in relevant FFA Schedules. <p>The Commonwealth is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making payments under this Schedule to support the Northern Territory to deliver the agreed outputs. • Ensuring funding agreements with the NT Block Grant Authority and APO NT support engagement with the MEAL Framework. • Tabling completed evaluations and reviews of NTRAI-funded programs/initiatives with the JSC upon completion. <p>The Commonwealth and Northern Territory are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Maximising transparency in relation to broader funding commitments and allocations for remote service delivery in the Northern Territory, in line with clause 14.3 of the Partnership Agreement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ This will be achieved by financial information being made available by the parties in relation to NTRAI and related remote programs/initiatives. <p>The Commonwealth, the Northern Territory and APO NT are responsible for participating in evaluations and reviews of the NTRAI Partnership and considering recommendations to strengthen partnership processes.</p> <p>Aboriginal Engagement</p> <p>When seeking to engage external consultants to deliver components of the MEAL framework, such as the independent mid-point review and independent end of term evaluation, the Northern Territory commits to procuring the services of appropriately qualified Aboriginal researchers and evaluators, and/or Aboriginal-owned consultancy agencies, wherever possible and in line with Northern Territory Government procurement requirements. Where practicable, this will also be done in partnership with the JSC.</p>
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Output	Performance milestones	Reporting Period	Report due	Payment
One-off NTRAI baseline data report	Provision of a report to the JSC outlining baseline data on activities supported by the 2025-2030 NTRAI Federation Funding Agreement Schedules, inclusive of the components outlined in Table 3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline data will be used where possible and appropriate to track progress towards outcomes, consistent with the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan developed as part of the MEAL framework. 	N/A	1 May 2026	\$400,000
One-off Progress report on the initial development of the MEAL Framework	Provision of a progress report on the development of a Monitoring Evaluation Accountability Learning (MEAL) framework including the components outlined in Table 3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This milestone recognises progress made on the development of the MEAL framework commensurate to the FFA schedules signed and engagement undertaken prior to this Schedule being signed. 	N/A	Upon signing (expected in 2025-26)	\$254,000
Monitoring	Provision of six-monthly MEAL Progress Reports on implementation of the MEAL framework including the components outlined in Table 3.	1 January -- 30 June 2025	1 October 2026	\$161,315
		1 July -- 31 December 2026	1 April 2027	\$161,315
		1 January -- 30 June 2027	1 October 2027	\$165,000
		1 July -- 31 December 2027	1 April 2028	\$165,000
		1 January -- 30 June 2028	1 October 2028	\$168,428

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		1 July – 31 December 2028	1 April 2029	\$168,428
		1 January – 30 June 2029	1 October 2029	\$171,746
		1 July – 31 December 2029	1 April 2030	\$171,746
		1 January – 30 June 2030	1 October 2030	\$176,000
		1 July – 31 December 2030	1 April 2031	\$176,000
	Provision of a six-monthly Data Monitoring Report including the components outlined in Table 3.	1 July – 31 December 2025	1 July 2026	\$215,000
		1 January – 30 June 2026	31 January 2027	\$215,000
		1 July – 31 December 2026	1 July 2027	\$219,500
		1 January – 30 June 2027	31 January 2028	\$219,500
		1 July – 31 December 2027	1 July 2028	\$224,000
		1 January – 30 June 2028	31 January 2029	\$224,000
		1 July – 31 December 2028	1 July 2029	\$229,000
		1 January – 30 June 2029	31 January 2030	\$229,000
		1 July – 31 December 2029	1 July 2030	\$234,000
		1 January – 30 June 2030	31 January 2031	\$234,000
	Provision of an Annual Report for Aboriginal Communities and Organisations including the components outlined in Table 3. Reporting on the delivery of outputs can be delivered annually; reporting may only reflect progress against outcomes from year 3 and will be dependent on the	1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026	30 March 2027	\$323,000
		1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027	30 March 2028	\$328,909
		1 July 2027 – 30 June 2028	30 March 2029	\$336,000

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	availability and collection of data identified in the data matrices. The Annual Report must be made publicly available for Aboriginal communities and organisations once agreed by the JSC.	1 July 2028 – 30 June 2029	30 March 2030	\$343,000
		1 July 2029 – 30 June 2030	30 March 2031	\$351,000
Evaluation	Provision of a Monitoring Evaluation Accountability Learning (MEAL) Framework jointly developed and agreed by the JSC, including the components outlined in Table 3. The MEAL Framework is intended to be dynamic and will be updated over time, subject to the agreement of the JSC.	N/A	1 May 2026	\$300,000
	Provision of a plan on the agreed approach to capturing NTRAI service user experiences under the partnership to support the implementation of the MEAL Framework, including the requirements set out in Table 3. The plan must be developed in consultation with the JSC.	N/A	1 May 2026	\$100,000
	Provision of the scope for the independent NTRAI mid-point review , including the components outlined in Table 3.	N/A	1 July 2027	\$375,000
	Provision of the NTRAI mid-point review . The Final Report will reflect the scope agreed by the JSC.	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2027	7 February 2028	\$125,000
	Provision of the scope of the independent NTRAI end-of-term evaluation including the components outlined in Table 3.	N/A	30 September 2028	\$400,000
	Provision of the independent NTRAI end-of-term evaluation . The end-of-term evaluation will reflect the scope agreed by the JSC.	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2029	1 July 2030	\$400,000

	<p>Provision of an End of Term Report for Aboriginal Communities and Organisations, including the components outlined in Table 3. The End of Term Report must be made publicly available for Aboriginal communities and organisations once agreed by the JSC.</p>	<p>1 July 2025 - 30 June 2030</p>	<p>1 May 2031</p>	<p>\$400,000</p>
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<p>Table 3: Milestone requirements</p>	
<p>Report</p>	<p>Key deliverables</p>
<p>A plan on the agreed approach to capturing NTRAI service user experiences</p>	<p>This plan must be aligned with the commitment to Accountability and Learning under the partnership agreement, developed in consultation with JSC, and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An approach for capturing perspectives of people receiving services and support under NTRAI across the life of the partnership • An outline of how experiences are to be incorporated and used in the implementation of the MEAL Framework • Consideration of appropriate intervals to capture user experiences
<p>One-off NTRAI baseline data report</p>	<p>Baseline data will be used where possible and appropriate to track progress towards outcomes, consistent with the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan developed as part of the MEAL framework. Baseline data, where available, will be reflective of the disaggregation required by milestones reports in 2025-2030 NTRAI Federation Funding Agreement Schedules, and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal employees, disaggregated by gender, where possible • Service delivery organisations as NT Government, non-government organization, or Aboriginal community-controlled • Region and community where services are delivered

	Where baseline data is unavailable NTG commits to supporting the development of baseline data to support future program evaluation efforts
Monitoring	
6 Monthly MEAL Progress Report	<p>MEAL Progress reports will capture information regarding the implementation of activities required to implement the MEAL framework and may include updates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for and implementation of program level evaluations • Progress of data development activities • Progress on the implementation of the plan for capture of user experience data • Challenges around implementation of the MEAL framework • Any proposed or approved updates to the MEAL framework • Updates on any process and/or outcomes evaluations of NTRAI programs progressed during the reporting period. <p>The Commonwealth is responsible for reporting to the JSC on implementation of the MEAL framework in relation to non-government schools and Aboriginal community-controlled sector strengthening investment.</p>
Data Monitoring Report	<p>Provision of a six-monthly Data Monitoring Report including the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data required to measure progress against indicators identified in program-level data matrices. • Data will be included in reports at intervals consistent with timeframes for the collection of data specified in data matrices, noting that some data within data matrices, at the outcome level, will be collected less frequently. <p>The Commonwealth is responsible for ensuring data reporting on NTRAI investment in non-government schools or Aboriginal community-controlled sector strengthening investment is provided to the JSC.</p>

<p>Annual Report for Aboriginal Communities and Organisations</p>	<p>The annual report for years 1 and 2 will focus on the delivery of outputs (and outcomes where data is available) while reports in subsequent years will look toward the outcomes of NTRAI investments. Where available and appropriate reports will also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key findings of program level evaluations that have been conducted (where applicable) • Progress on objectives regarding Priority Reforms under the partnership and in line with the National Agreement • Progress on the achievement of outcomes identified in program logics and data matrices in the MEAL Framework • Information on how investments are aligned Socio- Economic Outcomes under the National Agreement • Regional disaggregation of data (where possible and appropriate) <p>Where available and appropriate the Commonwealth will provide information to NTG on NTRAI investment in non-government schools and Aboriginal community-controlled sector strengthening, for inclusion into annual reporting.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	
<p>MEAL Framework</p>	<p>The MEAL framework will be developed in partnership with the Commonwealth and APO NT and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Systems Level Outcomes Framework (Outcomes Framework), which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maps the short, medium and long-term outcomes for investment priorities ○ Maps how program outcomes align with Socioeconomic Outcomes under the National Agreement. ○ Maps how investment priorities align with the achievement of objectives of the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, which are aligned to the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement. • A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program Logics and Data Matrices for all NTRAI-supported programs/ initiatives, linked to the Outcomes Framework. Program Logics and Data Matrices will be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and/or Closing the Gap policy partnerships. The data matrices should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators for monitoring and evaluation, incorporating baseline data • Data sources (collection, reporting frequency, ownership) • Draft evaluation questions • A description of how Accountability and Learning processes will be implemented through the MEAL Framework. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This should include provision for Accountability and Learning processes to evolve, including in response to the outcomes of a scoping study led by Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory, and the independent mid-term review. • Principles to guide the monitoring and evaluation at individual NTRAI schedule level. <p>The Commonwealth is responsible for ensuring elements of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (data matrices, program logics and evaluation questions) relating to NTRAI investment in non-government schools and Aboriginal sector strengthening is provided to NTG to facilitate the inclusion of these initiatives within the MEAL Framework.</p>
<p>End of Term Report for Aboriginal Communities</p>	<p>The End of Term Report for Aboriginal Communities must outline key findings of program level evaluations, and the outcomes of NTRAI investment in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the contribution investments have made toward socio- economic outcomes under the National Agreement and key objectives of the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, which are aligned to the priority reforms of the National Agreement. • Regional disaggregation of data (where possible and appropriate)

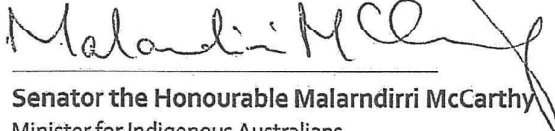
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	<p>Where available and appropriate the Commonwealth will provide information to NTG on NTRAI investment in non-government schools and Aboriginal community-controlled sector strengthening, for inclusion into the End of Term Report for Aboriginal Communities.</p>
<p>NTRAI Mid-point Review</p>	<p>The scope of the mid-point review must be developed in partnership with the JSC, be aligned to the MEAL Framework, and include a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing how investments are progressing against objectives in relation to priority reforms identified in the NTRAI Partnership Agreement • Assessing progress against outcomes identified in program logics and data matrices under the MEAL Framework • To what extent the MEAL Framework has been implemented and whether it is supporting good monitoring and evaluation practice • Providing information on how investments are aligned to socio-economic outcomes under the National Agreement. <p>The Commonwealth is responsible for ensuring information relating to progress on NTRAI investment in non-government schools and Aboriginal sector strengthening is provided to NTG to facilitate the inclusion of these initiatives within the NTRAI Mid-point review.</p>
<p>NTRAI End of term evaluation</p>	<p>The scope of the end-of-term evaluation must be developed in partnership with the JSC and aligned with the MEAL Framework, including a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress made toward achieving objectives identified in the NTRAI Partnership Agreement in relation to the Priority Reforms • Progress made towards outcomes identified for program level investments under NTRAI including alignment to socio-economic outcomes under the National Agreement. <p>The Commonwealth is responsible for ensuring information relating to NTRAI investment in non-government schools and Aboriginal sector strengthening is provided to NTG to facilitate the inclusion of these initiatives within the NTRAI end of term evaluation.</p>

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WITHOUT PREJUDICE

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: 31 January 2026

Signed for and on behalf of the Northern
Territory by



The Honourable Lia Finocchiaro MLA
Chief Minister

Date: - 9 MAR 2026