

Thriving Kids

NATIONAL AGREEMENT ON FOUNDATIONAL SUPPORTS – BILATERAL AGREEMENT

Part 1 - Formalities and Operation of Bilateral Agreement

Parties to the Agreement

1. The Agreement is between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory.

Duration

2. This Agreement:
 - a. will expire on 30 June 2031 unless terminated by agreement in writing by the Parties or replaced by a new agreement
 - b. may be amended by agreement in writing by the Parties.

Purpose

3. This Agreement is a Schedule to the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement and the Heads of Agreement on the National Health Reform Agreement, National Disability Insurance Scheme reforms and Foundational Supports (Heads of Agreement).
4. In the event of divergence between:
 - a. this Agreement and the Heads of Agreement, the Heads of Agreement prevails
 - b. this Agreement and the National Agreement on Foundational Supports, the National Agreement on Foundational Supports prevails.
5. This Agreement will support the delivery within the Northern Territory of services, supports and information for children aged 8 years and under with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs, and their families, carers, and kin. These services, supports and information are collectively known as Thriving Kids.
6. Supports delivered under this Agreement must align with the National Model: Thriving Kids and Commonwealth and State Delivery Responsibilities for Thriving Kids, outlined in Schedules B and C of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports, with appropriate local adaptation to the specific needs and circumstances of the Northern Territory.
7. This Agreement establishes a framework for cooperative design and consideration of Thriving Kids supports:
 - a. the Commonwealth retains full discretion to approve/request amendment/decline an Implementation Plan. Approval of an Implementation Plan is a precondition to any Commonwealth financial contribution
 - b. nothing in this Agreement creates a binding obligation on the Commonwealth to fund services unless and until the Northern Territory's Implementation Plan is approved and funding made available through appropriation.

Estimated financial contributions

8. The Commonwealth, states and territories will co-fund Thriving Kids at a cost of up to \$4 billion new investment over 5 years (capped for all parties, split 50:50 on a per capita basis 0-64 years). All servicing/program costs, administration/overhead costs, indexation and demand management strategies required under Thriving Kids services are to be covered within this \$4 billion cap, with the volume of services aligned to this envelope.

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

9. The Commonwealth will provide a capped financial contribution to the Northern Territory totalling \$14.1 million (over 5 financial years: 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2031), towards Thriving Kids as outlined in Schedule A - Financial Contributions:
 - a. the Commonwealth financial contribution will be allocated in accordance with the funding methodology outlined at Schedule A - Financial Contributions and paid in accordance with Table 1.
10. The Commonwealth will use its residual financial contribution of up to \$600 million over 5 years, for activities and services aligned with Schedule C of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and Schedule B - Service Delivery of this Agreement.
11. The Northern Territory will deliver a final Implementation Plan that is acceptable to the Commonwealth, as a condition of receiving Commonwealth funding and must meet its matched funding contribution over the period of this Agreement based on Schedule A - Financial Contributions.
12. The Commonwealth will also provide its final Implementation Plan to the Northern Territory as part of its obligations under this Agreement.
13. Financial contributions must only be used in the provision of Thriving Kids in-scope activities specified in Schedule B and C of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and Schedule B - Service Delivery of this Agreement.
14. The Parties funding contributions must be aligned with the additionality principle outlined in Schedule A - Financial Contributions and as per clauses 60 and 61 in National Agreement on Foundational Supports.
15. Evidence of implementation of Thriving Kids supports and adherence to the additionality requirements will be required through statements of claims by the responsible Minister as per Table 1. This is a reciprocal requirement on all Parties.
16. Activities delivered under this Agreement are to be managed within the agreed funding envelope and are not demand-driven entitlements. The Northern Territory is responsible for managing service volume, prioritisation and delivery settings to operate within available funding.
17. Parties agree that the total Commonwealth and the Northern Territory funding contribution is to be spent within the term of this Agreement, with all funding to be fully expended by 30 June 2031. Unspent Commonwealth funding contributions to the Northern Territory not fully expended by 30 June 2031 will be returned to the Commonwealth.
18. In the instance that this Agreement is terminated early, Parties agree that any unspent Commonwealth funding contributions to the Northern Territory will be returned to the Commonwealth.

Part 2 - Governance

19. Consistent with the National Agreement on Foundational Supports, the Parties will work collaboratively through established governance mechanisms and mutually agree any additional governance mechanisms as required to monitor performance under this Agreement and to respond to any emerging issues as required.
20. Clause 8(c) of the Heads of Agreement and Part 3 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports delegates governance arrangements for this Agreement to responsible Ministers in each jurisdiction.
21. In the Commonwealth, the Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Disability and the NDIS is the responsible Minister for the purposes of this Agreement.
22. In the Northern Territory, the Minister for Disability is the responsible Minister for the purposes of this Agreement.

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

23. Responsible Ministers can authorise agreed functions of this Agreement to Senior Officials as required.
24. Dispute resolution for this Agreement has been set out in clauses 44 to 47 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports.
25. Amendments to this Agreement will only be made with agreement of the Parties in writing. All proposed amendments must be mutually agreed upon to ensure the continuity of this Agreement and its associated funding arrangements.

Part 3 - Principles

26. The combined Northern Territory and Commonwealth investment will be used to deliver information, services, supports and critical enablers as outlined in the National Model: Thriving Kids in Schedule B of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports.
27. Supports delivered under this Agreement will be delivered within a capped funding envelope with Parties putting systems in place to monitor and manage demand through proactive approaches that operate to ensure community expectations are being met.
28. Supports will be designed and implemented to ensure affordability for service users.
29. Supports delivered under this Agreement will be designed to respond to the different developmental needs within the Thriving Kids cohort (ages, developmental delay, autism, intersectional considerations).
30. Supports will be delivered in all settings families and children already interact with (where children live, learn, play) – including but not limited to Early Childhood Education and Care and school settings – with the type and mode of support/s provided based on the child and family's needs:
 - a. the extent to which particular settings are used as a site for delivery will take into account capped funding considerations.
31. The Parties agree children do not require a diagnosis to access Thriving Kids and any assessment of need will be based on functional need and implemented in a way that supports early access to services appropriate to individual needs.
32. Children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs will not be eligible for the NDIS from 1 January 2028 and will be supported by Thriving Kids:
 - b. a child who accesses Thriving Kids may concurrently be eligible for the NDIS, subject to the usual NDIS arrangements, where they also have substantially reduced functional capacity (high support needs).
33. All services have feedback loops to ensure continuous improvement and escalation pathways for complaints.
34. The Parties will support the interface between mainstream services, Thriving Kids and the NDIS, consistent with clause 21(i) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports:
 - a. the Commonwealth will provide for consultation the definition of low to moderate support needs to the Northern Territory in accordance with clause 14(a) of the Heads of Agreement to support all states and territories to apply nationally consistent functional needs identification and triage arrangements for Targeted Supports, consistent with National Model: Thriving Kids:
 - i. Commonwealth consultation with states and territories around definitions and the translation of these definitions into functional needs identification and triage arrangements for Targeted Supports will commence by no later than 18 May 2026

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

- ii. the requirement to apply a nationally consistent approach will not require all states and territories to use a single common needs identification tool
 - iii. The Northern Territory will provide information to the Commonwealth about its approach to functional needs identification and triage prior to 1 October 2026.
35. Programs and services linked to Thriving Kids investments must be visible and identifiable to service users and the wider community through navigation and referral services and resources and through the use of national branding. This does not limit the continued use by the Parties of existing programs and service names delivered by the Parties.
36. Parties agree to work collaboratively with all stakeholders, including but not limited to, early childhood, health, education, disability and community service in the development and implementation of services.

Part 4 - Roles and Responsibilities

37. The Commonwealth will commence rollout of supports no later than 1 October 2026, in consultation with the Northern Territory to ensure effective connection with existing and proposed systems with specific rollout arrangements to be set out in the Commonwealth Implementation Plan.
38. The Northern Territory will commence rollout of supports no later than 1 October 2026, in consultation with the Commonwealth to ensure effective connection with existing and proposed systems with specific rollout arrangements to be set out in the Northern Territory Implementation Plan as agreed by the Parties.
39. All supports are to be fully scaled and in place by 1 January 2028.
40. Parties agree to deliver this Agreement in line with nationally consistent system parameters in clauses 21 - 23 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports.
41. Consistent with clauses 21 - 23 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports, Parties agree to:
- a. participate in oversight and governance arrangements for Thriving Kids, including contributing to joint decision making on implementation planning where the Northern Territory and Commonwealth services delivered as part of this Agreement intersect
 - b. collaboratively monitor performance
 - c. collaboratively identify, escalate and manage risks or issues that may affect the delivery of Thriving Kids including, but not limited, to timely and effective:
 - i. delivery of activities, outputs and services
 - ii. management of issues or concerns raised by service users
 - iii. management of issues affecting reporting, data collection or evaluation requirements.
 - d. avoid creating service gaps between mainstream services, Thriving Kids and the NDIS, while ensuring additional Thriving Kid services do not exceed agreed funding caps
 - e. work collaboratively to support consistent and clear communication to the public on intent, implementation and outcomes of Thriving Kids. This includes collaboration around a national communications campaign delivered by the Commonwealth and key Northern Territory-level communications
 - f. collaborate on workforce, market and system stewardship in alignment with clause 21(g) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

- g. Parties will share information between each other and key workforces on services funded under Thriving Kids, and how to access them including any additions or changes, in a timely manner, to support national and local service navigation offerings
- h. consider the findings, recommendations, and/or outcomes of the rapid independent Review commissioned consistent with clause 37 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports.

Part 5 - Service Delivery

42. The Parties agree to deliver the services and activities, aligned with:
- a. the National Model: Thriving Kids, including the domains of support, enablers and service principles outlined in Schedule B of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports
 - b. quality and safety parameters as per clauses 21 and 22 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and system parameters outlined in clause 21 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports, including delivery approaches that are flexible and tailored to enable access for people living in remote and regional areas and in thin markets
 - c. Commonwealth and state delivery responsibilities in Schedule C of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports
 - d. the detail in the agreed Implementation Plan
 - e. Additionality requirements as outlined in clauses 60 and 61 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports.
43. The Northern Territory agrees to deliver services and activities as per Schedule B – Service Delivery to this Agreement. The Commonwealth agrees to deliver services and activities as per Schedule B – Service Delivery to this Agreement. An overview of delivery roles, services and the profile of investments for the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth is to be included as part of Schedule B – Service Delivery to this Agreement and the Parties Implementation Plans.
44. In line with Schedule C of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports, the Commonwealth continues to investigate the delivery of:
- a. a national MBS 3-year-old health and development check to complement state child development assessments and checks to support early identification of children with developmental delay/neurodevelopmental difference
 - b. integration of state child health checks into national online/digital information system/record to support early identification of children with developmental delay/neurodevelopmental difference.
45. The Northern Territory and the Commonwealth must each make a public statement or publish a factsheet, by no later than 31 March 2026 that outlines how they intend to finalise service design and engagement/consultation with stakeholders, ahead of finalisation of the Implementation Plan by 31 May 2026.

Part 6 - Implementation Plans

46. The Northern Territory will, in consultation with the Commonwealth, complete and maintain an Implementation Plan that details critical Northern Territory implementation information and references relevant Commonwealth implementation information. The Implementation Plan template will be agreed by the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory.

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

47. The Commonwealth will, in consultation with States and Territories, complete and maintain a Commonwealth Implementation Plan for national supports:
 - a. as part of this Implementation Plan, the Commonwealth will confirm whether services outlined in Schedule B of this Agreement will be delivered as national supports.
48. The Implementation Plans will be consistent with the services, outputs, milestones and timeframes set out in this Agreement. At a minimum the Implementation Plans must cover:
 - a. the expected total costs of services to be delivered each financial year, and over the life of the Agreement, in accordance with additionality requirements in clauses 60 and 61 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports
 - b. the expected profile of costs against the domains of support specified in the National Model: Thriving Kids outlined in Schedule B of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports
 - c. the servicing arrangements of the funded activity, including the settings, reach, coverage and make-up of the supports and services
 - d. the specific cohort/s expected to benefit from funded services and supports, including services that consider the unique needs of cohorts such as First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse groups, children in out-of-home care, intersectional needs and families experiencing crisis or family and domestic violence, and services in rural and remote and thin markets
 - e. the interface arrangements with other relevant service systems, including referral, consent, privacy and information sharing
 - f. alignment with the national model domains of support, enablers and service principles as per Schedule B of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports.
49. The Parties agree to share the draft Implementation Plan content with each other for review and feedback.
50. Parties agree their Implementation Plans will be completed by 31 May 2026.
51. Parties agree to provide evidence of commencement, and full implementation, of Thriving Kids supports, with reference to the Implementation Plan, through a statement of claims by the responsible Minister.
52. Where the Northern Territory is unable to maintain, deliver or report against the agreed Implementation Plan, the Northern Territory will work collaboratively with Commonwealth to identify contributing factors and agree on appropriate remedial actions as per clause 55 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports.
53. The Parties may vary the Implementation Plans. A variation must:
 - a. be in writing
 - b. clearly identify the provisions of the Implementation Plan being amended; and
 - c. be signed by authorised representatives of each Party.
54. A variation agreed under this clause does not constitute a variation to this Agreement.

Part 7 - Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

55. Existing reporting requirements for all Parties will remain in place where the service is existing or expanded, consistent with clause 17(e) of the Heads of Agreement.
56. Reporting obligations in this Agreement apply to all Parties and should provide information necessary to support the Parties in delivering on the objectives of this Agreement.

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

57. Information referred to in Part 7 will not be published without the consent of the Northern Territory.
58. New requirements must be agreed by the Parties and will only be applied to the extent necessary to provide clarity on Thriving Kids funding; children and families supported, method and intensity of support, outcome measurement, evaluation and continued learning to realise and sustain the intent, outcomes as listed in this Agreement, the Implementation Plans and the principles of Thriving Kids outlined in Schedule B of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports, consistent with clause 17(e) of the Heads of Agreement.
59. Data and information will be provided:
 - a. in Implementation Reports, consistent with clause 30(d) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports, with agreed elements included in the Annual Public Report
 - b. as part of evaluation activities and the rapid independent Review to assess implementation progress outlined in clause 37 - 41 of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports.
60. Data and information collected under this Agreement remains the responsibility of the collecting Party but will be shared with the Commonwealth for the purposes of monitoring, evaluation, policy development and public reporting:
 - a. the Commonwealth may use de-identified data to undertake national analysis, data linkage and evaluation activities, including through authorised third-party agencies, consistent with the relevant privacy legislation
 - b. publications drawing on shared data will acknowledge contributions of all parties and be subject to consultation, but consent will not be unreasonably withheld where material is de-identified and relates to national performance.
61. Parties agree to collect to the best of their abilities and supply agreed data and information for the purposes indicated in clause 59 of this Agreement. Agreed data and information will be provided in the following domains:
 - a. details of investments – service types, settings and geographical coverage and expenditure
 - b. number of clients supported and totals by each program/service/initiative
 - c. duration and frequency of support provided
 - d. average time between referral/intake and receipt of support
 - e. client outcomes
 - f. demographics and intersections – age, gender, First Nations, CALD
 - g. feedback, complaint and complaint resolution trends.
62. Parties agree to provide timely access to agreed datasets necessary to assess outcomes. The specificity of data will depend on the type of program or service, with these details to be agreed in the Evaluation and Reporting Framework.
63. Reported information will be shared reciprocally between both Parties, consistent with the timeframes outlined in clause 30(d) of the National Agreement on Foundational Support and Table 1 of this Agreement.
64. Parties agree to work collaboratively to design, agree and implement an Evaluation and Reporting Framework consistent with clause 30(f) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports, this will include data reporting requirements and templates. The Evaluation and Reporting Framework will be agreed in writing.
65. The Evaluation and Reporting Framework will support the provision of both national and jurisdiction level information that contributes to an effective evaluation of Thriving Kids.

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

66. Evaluation and reporting arrangements must commence as soon as practicable after 1 October 2026, aligned with the phased rollout and scaling within the Northern Territory and the agreed Evaluation and Reporting Framework.
67. The scope of the Evaluation and Reporting Framework will align with the domains as per clause 61 of this Agreement and may also include information on:
 - a. safeguards
 - b. service integration and interoperability
 - c. research and evaluation questions.
68. Parties agree to seek consent of participants to facilitate any client surveys or other methodologies that may be utilised as part of agreed arrangements.

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

Table 1: Performance requirements, reporting and payment summary

OUTPUT	REQUIREMENT	DUE DATE	PAYMENT
Milestone 1	Public statement to be made, or a factsheet published, that outlines how the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth each intend to finalise service design, including any engagement/consultation with stakeholders, ahead of finalisation of the Implementation Plan by 31 May 2026	31 March 2026	
Milestone 2	The Northern Territory and the Commonwealth to share draft Implementation Plans for review and feedback	1 May 2026	
Milestone 3	Commonwealth acceptance of the Northern Territory Implementation Plan	31 May 2026	
Milestone 4	The Northern Territory and the Commonwealth agree data and information requirements as part of the Evaluation and Reporting Framework outlined in Part 7 of this Agreement, and as defined below Table 1	30 June 2026	
Payment year 1 - 2026/27	Payment is dependent of satisfactory completion of milestones 1, 2, 3 and 4	July 2026	\$2.8m
Milestone 5	The Northern Territory and Commonwealth commence initial rollout of its contribution to Thriving Kids. The Northern Territory and Commonwealth provide evidence of implementation of Thriving Kids supports, and adherence to the additionality requirement specified in the estimated financial contributions section of this Agreement, through a statement of claims by the responsible Minister	No later than 1 October 2026	
Milestone 6	Commonwealth acceptance of the 6 monthly Implementation Report, as outlined in clause 30(d) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and consistent with Part 6 and Part 7 of this Agreement, provided by the Northern Territory	April 2027	
Milestone 7	Commonwealth acceptance of the 6 monthly Implementation Report, as outlined in clause 30(d) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and consistent with Part 6 and Part 7 of this Agreement, provided by the Northern Territory	September 2027	
Milestone 8	Annual Public Report published	December 2027	
Payment year 2 - 2027/28	Payment is dependent on satisfactory completion of milestones 5, 6 and 7	October 2027	\$2.8m
Milestone 9	The Northern Territory and Commonwealth supports are fully scaled and in place. The Northern Territory and the Commonwealth provide evidence of full implementation of Thriving Kids supports and adherence to the additionality requirement specified in the estimated financial contributions section of this Agreement through a statement of claims by the responsible Minister	1 January 2028	
Milestone 10	Commonwealth acceptance of the Annual Implementation Report, as outlined in clause 30(d) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and consistent with Part 6 and Part 7 of this Agreement, provided by the Northern Territory	September 2028	
Milestone 11	Annual Public Report published	December 2028	
Payment year 3 - 2028/29	Payment is dependent on satisfactory completion of milestones 9 and 10	October 2028	\$2.8m

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

Milestone 12	Supports remain scaled and in place		
Milestone 13	Draft terms of reference for the rapid independent Review agreed for subsequent consideration by First Ministers		January 2029
Milestone 14	Commonwealth acceptance of the Annual Implementation Report, as outlined in clause 30(d) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and consistent with Part 6 and Part 7 of this Agreement, provided by the Northern Territory		September 2029
Milestone 15	Annual Public Report published		December 2029
Payment year 4 - 2029/30	Payment is dependent on satisfactory completion of milestones 12, 13 and 14		October 2029
Milestone 16	Supports remain scaled and in place		\$2.8m
Milestone 17	Commonwealth acceptance of the Annual Implementation Report, as outlined in clause 30(d) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and consistent with Part 6 and Part 7 of this Agreement, provided by the Northern Territory		September 2030
Milestone 18	Annual Public Report published		December 2030
Payment year 5 – 2030/31	Payment is dependent on satisfactory completion of milestone 16 and 17		October 2030
Milestone 19	Supports remain scaled and in place		
Milestone 20	Northern Territory acquittal of the 5 years of joint investment, showing Commonwealth and State funding as per clause 17 of this Agreement. The Commonwealth will also acquit its investment over the 5 years		August 2031
Milestone 21	Commonwealth acceptance of the Annual Implementation Report, as outlined in clause 30(d) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and consistent with Part 6 and Part 7 of this Agreement, provided by the Northern Territory		September 2031
Milestone 22	Annual Public Report published		December 2031

As outlined in Part 6 of this Agreement, the **Implementation Plan** outlines how the jurisdiction (and Commonwealth at a national level) will roll out Thriving Kids. Its focus is on program level information and will include, but not be limited to, details on: scaling of services; quality, safety and safeguarding measures; and alignment with the national model and delivery responsibilities outlined in Schedule B and Schedule C of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports. The Implementation Plan can be updated when required via joint agreement. An Implementation Plan report will be provided at 6-month mark (April 2027) as per clause 30(d) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports to meet milestone 6.

Annual Implementation Report: a reporting template will be agreed as per milestone 4. The template will be used to produce an Annual Implementation Report by jurisdictions and the Commonwealth against the Implementation Plan and will include program and service user level data, on Thriving Kids. (As per clause 30(d) of National Agreement on Foundational Supports).

Annual Public Report (as per clause 30(e) of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports): developed from jurisdictions and Commonwealth's Annual Implementation reporting. Commonwealth to develop the report with agreed input by jurisdictions.

The **Evaluation and Reporting Framework** will outline the approach to data collection, evaluation and the rapid independent Review. This may include components such as methodology, data sources, outcome measures, stakeholders and timing.

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement as follows:

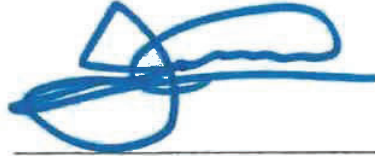
Signed for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by



The Honourable Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Ageing Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme

23 / 02 / 2026

Signed for and on behalf of the Northern Territory by



The Honourable Jinson Charls MLA
Minister for Disability

19 / 2 / 2026

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

Schedule A – Financial Contributions

This Schedule is to be read in connection with the estimated financial contributions section of this Agreement.

Summary

The Northern Territory will invest a total of \$34.2 million in their jurisdiction, over 5 years (2026-27 to 2030-31), aligned to Schedule B and C of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and other parameters in this Agreement. This comprises:

- a Northern Territory contribution of \$20.1 million, and
- the Commonwealth's contribution to the Northern Territory of \$14.1 million.

(\$ million)	[2026-27]	[2027-28]	[2028-29]	[2029-30]	[2030-31]	Total*
Commonwealth contribution to the Northern Territory	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	14.1

*Sum of contributions will not add to the sub-total due to rounding

Expenditure of the Northern Territory's contribution is to commence from 2026-27 financial year, with phasing to be detailed in the Northern Territory Implementation Plan developed by 31 May 2026 in accordance with Part 6 of this Agreement.

The Commonwealth will also invest its residual contribution of up to \$600 million, over 5 years (2026-27 to 2030-31), commencing in 2026-27, on national initiatives under Thriving Kids aligned to Schedule B and C of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports and other parameters in this Agreement. Phasing of this investment is to be detailed in the Commonwealth Implementation Plan developed by 31 May 2026 in accordance with Part 6 of this Agreement.

Funding allocation

1. The \$4 billion for Thriving Kids will cover five financial years 2026-27 to 2030-31.
2. The Commonwealth's contribution is comprised of the delivery of Commonwealth services of up to \$600 million with remaining funding of at least \$1.4 billion to be provided to states and territories in accordance with the terms specified in the funding allocation section.
3. Funding will be distributed on a per capita basis, with state population shares to be taken from the of ages 0-64 years. State population shares will be taken from the December data from the year that the Census was undertaken (that is, December 2021).
4. The calculation of the Northern Territory's matched contribution will be the total over the five years of the Agreement.

Additionality Assessment

5. An assessment by the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth must be undertaken to provide assurances to all Parties that their contribution to Thriving Kids funding is additional to existing servicing effort and funding as per clause 17 of the Heads of Agreement.

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

6. The additionality assessment must include a baseline of associated expenditure for services that meet the description and intent of Thriving Kids services, as outlined in Schedule C of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports, and existed in the Northern Territory in the financial year 2022-2023.
7. Additionality will be assessed at the aggregate level of existing investment across all relevant programs combined, rather than for each program individually.
8. Parties agree to inform each other of any proposed major changes to the baseline during the life of the Agreement in good faith, and on the understanding that there should not be any reduction of funding to the baseline.

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement Schedule B: Service Delivery

This Schedule provides an overview of the additional services that will be delivered by the Parties, consistent with Part 5 of this Agreement, and aligned to Schedule B and C of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports.

The parties acknowledge that the Northern Territory's service delivery context necessitates flexibility in design and delivery of services (as allowed by Clause 21f of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports). The below overview is a broad capture of the Thriving Kids services that the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth plan to deliver to support the eligible children, families, carers and kin in the Northern Territory. The parties acknowledge that services require flexibility to be responsive to local need, including place-based variables in workforce and service availability and market characteristics. The services to be delivered will be further refined through development of Implementation Plans, including consideration of interface with mainstream services (as per clause 21i of the National Agreement on Foundational Supports) and between State-led and Commonwealth-led Thriving Kids services.

Note:

- The final design and scope of individual services and initiatives will be refined by the Parties as part of implementation planning activities.
- All indicative expenditure to be further refined by the Parties ahead of commencement of services.

National Model component	State-led services	Indicative expenditure range over 2026-27 to 2030-31) as a percentage of the Northern Territory's total expenditure	Commonwealth-led national initiatives*	Indicative expenditure range over 2026-27 to 2030-31) as a percentage of Commonwealth's total expenditure
<p>Improved awareness of developmental delay/neurodevelopmental difference</p> <p>Activities that support greater parent/family/kin awareness of childhood development and neurodevelopmental difference (including autism) to support early identification where a child may be developing differently to their peers.</p>	<p>State-led services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State communication and awareness raising activities – primarily driven by local context – a multi-agency NT Government Communications Strategy will be developed and implemented over the 5-year agreement. • The Northern Territory Government agrees to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth on the national communications campaign • Other awareness raising activities can be delivered through non-government partners as detailed under the Information, Advice and Navigation section below. 	<p>As below – part of 35-40% for general supports</p>	<p>National Communications activities</p> <p>A communications campaign and/or other activities will work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise parental/family awareness around the signs of developmental delay/neurodevelopmental difference • build understanding of new service pathways and services available to support families and professionals • this will include a specific support for direct engagement with the Autistic and autism community. <p>This will complement any state awareness raising activities.</p>	<p>5%</p>
<p>Early identification of children with developmental delay/neurodevelopmental difference</p> <p>Routine child development and health assessments or checks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Northern Territory, government provides free baby and child health screening and assessment services for children from birth to 5 years of age through community health clinics and child health nurses. These checks are designed to monitor a child's physical growth, development, behaviour and wellbeing, and connect parents with support if needed. • If children are showing signs of developmental delay or parents have concerns about behaviour, communication, motor skills, or learning they are encouraged to speak with child health nurses or a GP for a formal developmental assessment referral. • Health professionals can refer and parents can self-refer to allied health services (e.g. speech therapy, occupational therapy), and GPs can refer to paediatric specialists for in-depth evaluation. • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families can also access culturally appropriate developmental screening tools through Primary Health Services (both non-government Aboriginal Controlled Health Services and NT Government Primary Health Care) who provide ASQ-TRAK milestone assessments. 	<p>Covered under 60-65% for targeted and general supports referenced below</p>	<p>Identification Comprehensive Health Assessment Program (CHAP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt the CHAP to offer annual health assessments for children aged 3-12 years with established or suspected neurodevelopmental delays or autism. The adapted CHAP would support children identified as having possible neurodevelopmental delays and/or autism to receive ongoing, coordinated, primary health care and other necessary supports, including appropriate referrals to Thriving Kids supports. 	<p>20-30%*</p>

National Agreement on Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement

National Model component	State-led services	Indicative expenditure range over 2026-27 to 2030-31) as a percentage of the Northern Territory's total expenditure	Commonwealth-led national initiatives*	Indicative expenditure range over 2026-27 to 2030-31) as a percentage of Commonwealth's total expenditure
<p>Information, advice and navigation</p> <p>National and local digital/phone-based information and advice on childhood development and Autism; and navigation support on where and how to access relevant supports.</p> <p>Information on available Thriving Kids supports that is maintained by all jurisdictions on an ongoing basis and is readily accessible to the community and key workforces who interact with or may refer children for supports.</p>	<p>Additional funding uplift</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund an uplift in staffing capacity for both the Children Development Teams and NT Community Allied Health Teams to assist in responding to the expected increase in service demand in regional centres, with a phased approach to reaching into more remote communities in the Barkly and Big Rivers Regions. Part of the education, training and capacity building role of the Children's Development Teams will be to work with partners in Early Childhood Education and Care sector to increase capacity of local workforce, parents and carers to identify developmental issues for their children and refer them to supports. Refer to "Targeted Supports" section below and Attachment B1. 	<p>35-40%</p>	<p>Online and phone information and advice, navigation, tools and resources</p> <p>National online information portal and self-service finder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding of a national provider who is known as a trusted source of online parenting advice and disability advice. Would provide information, tools and resources on development (things family can do at home to build child's skill). Materials are evidence based/peer reviewed. They would also deliver a national online self-service finder (for all Thriving Kids supports, including state-based offerings). <p>National phone information, advice and service finding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on developmental delay and autism for parents/family and advice on things families can do to support their child's development. They may also offer secondary advice for key professionals around development. Staffed by professionals (child and maternal health nurses, allied health). Referral/connection to state-based intake/navigation offerings. <p>Autism-specific national phone advice and service finding for families of Autistic children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding a national provider who is trusted to provide tailored information and support for families, particularly associated with transitions and engaging with new and unfamiliar environments, and what a diagnosis may mean. Staffed by experts with practice advice and lived experience best placed to support this cohort. Referral/connection to state-based intake/navigation offerings 	<p>32-35%</p>

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<p>Best practice parenting supports and programs</p> <p>Programs and/or supports to empower families, carers and kin with resources and skills required to assist and improve their child's learning and development through everyday activities. There is a soft entry to these supports/programs for the eligible cohort.</p>	<p>Best practice parenting supports and programs</p> <p>The Northern Territory Government will fund organisations* to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local programs and resources to support parents and carers, including peer-to-peer, online and face-to-face options. Capacity building for local playgroups and ECEC providers (supports early identification and early intervention). <p><i>*Including but not limited to non-government, Child and Family Centres, local government councils, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).</i></p>	<p>As above – part of 35-40% for general supports</p>	<p>Best practice parenting supports</p> <p>Positive Partnerships Program (augmentation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free professional learning for teachers and other school staff and workshops and information sessions for parents and carers to help build knowledge, skills and awareness of autism. Funding will complement existing Commonwealth investment to improve outreach to underserved cohorts <p>Virtual peer support for Autistic children</p> <p>Online peer support for children with autism and their families and kin, to assist with transitions at key points like entering childcare, preschool or school.</p> <p>Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHIPS)</p> <p>A central hub to enable engagement across jurisdictions, data collection, consistency in program roll out and early intervention mental health needs of children in regional, rural and remote schools. State governments would continue funding wellbeing coordinators in jurisdictions this operates.</p>	<p><5%</p>
<p>Targeted supports</p> <p>Targeted supports including group and 1:1 allied health, low-cost assistive technology related to development and more intensive capacity building to support families with complex needs/circumstances. Access to targeted supports is based on nationally consistent functional needs identification and triage arrangements. Support should be provided in all settings where children live, learn and play.</p>	<p>The Northern Territory will enhance its current early childhood intervention services that are provided through the Department of Health's Child Development Teams and Community Allied Health Teams. Supports will include group and 1:1 allied health, access to low-cost assistive technology related to development and capacity building to support families with complex needs/circumstances.</p> <p>An uplift in investment will provide an initial focus (first phase roll-out) on the Northern Territory regions of Barkly and Big Rivers who have had limited access to specialist Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) support.</p> <p>A further roll out into Top End, East Arnhem and Central Australian communities it is expected that uplifted specialist teams in the Darwin and Alice Springs hubs will be able to respond to the increase in demand in these urban centres.</p> <p>Children's Development Team</p> <p>A hub and spoke model is planned which will increase the capacity of the current Children's Development Team (CDT) in Darwin and Alice Springs to become the "hubs", with the specialist child and family intervention specialists with the regional community allied health teams as the spokes, who will work with local community-based child and family services in partnership with early childhood educators.</p>	<p>Approx 60-65%</p>	<p>Targeted Supports</p> <p>Not applicable</p>	<p>0%</p>

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	<p>a) Specialist CDT Team in Darwin is the hub providing specialist support to regional Community Allied Health Teams (CAHT) - Top End, Katherine and East Arnhem - as the spoke. Service delivery via FIFO, DIDO and Telehealth to communities identified.</p> <p>b) Specialist CDT Team in Alice Springs is the hub, they provide direct specialist outreach services (FIFO, DIDO, Telehealth) to Tennant Creek and remote Barkly and Central Australian communities.</p> <p>Multidisciplinary Specialist Early Intervention Teams (Hub) Multidisciplinary specialist early intervention teams (comprising Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Psychologists) with administration/Allied Health Assistant (AHA) support for logistics including Telehealth will be based at the "hub". These teams have a focus on early identification/assessment, early intervention planning and delivery of supports, education and training.</p> <p>Regional Allied Health Rural Generalist Teams (Spoke) Regional allied health rural generalist teams (comprising Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, Physiotherapists, Social Work, Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALOs) and AHAs) with focus on capacity building as well as early intervention and coordination to identified communities. These regional teams could include early childhood education specialists to support an integrated local response including upskilling and training of local workforce with child and family settings and will act as the spoke. This approach will aim to enhance existing systems and services and requires regional planning (collaboration between Departments of Health and Education and Training) in partnership with local community organisations and communities.</p> <p>*Refer to targeted supports model provided in Attachment B1</p> <p>NT Health meets its obligations and is accredited under the National Safety and Quality in Healthcare Standards and responds to strategic safety and quality risks in an integrated and consistent way. In particular, culturally responsive practice with cultural safety at its core is a key NT Health principle in delivering Early Childhood intervention services. The NT targeted supports model is well</p>			

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<p>Services within these domains should be designed to consider the unique needs of cohorts such as First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse groups, children in out-of-home care, intersectional needs and families experiencing crisis or family and domestic violence, and those who may not regularly interact with the broader service ecosystem as well as geographical considerations including rural and remote and thin markets.</p>	<p>aligned with the model developed by the Thriving Kids Advisory Group.</p> <p>NT Health principles for provision of Early Intervention Services include: family-centered care; goal based and time-limited; culturally responsive practice; trauma informed practice; alignment to best practice in ECI; value-based health care and delivery by multidisciplinary teams.</p> <p><u>Cohorts:</u> A significant proportion (approximately 50% based on NDIS participant numbers) of children who will benefit from Thriving Supports will be First Nations children in regional, remote and very remote locations. As such, current and future service design of both targeted and general supports does and will cater for the unique needs of this cohort. This includes geographic considerations and the challenges of thin markets.</p> <p>As outlined above under "Targeted Supports", uplifted investment for Thriving Kids in the Northern Territory will focus on the remote communities of Barkly and Big Rivers in the first phase who have limited access to specialist Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) support.</p> <p>Further roll out into Top End, East Arnhem and Central Australian remote communities is planned as second phase.</p>	N/A	<p>Facilitation of state delivery in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings</p> <p>To ensure state-delivered targeted supports are able to effectively connect with/be delivered in ECEC settings. Targeted ECEC providers across Australia will be supported to facilitate access to (state delivered) drop-in Thriving Kids supports at ECEC sites. This would be on top of supports available from the Inclusion Support Program.</p> <p>Note workforce measures include support for First Nations.</p>	15-17%

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<p>Enabling functions</p> <p>Supporting workforce capability readiness in key sectors, including primary care/health, early childhood education and care and schools.</p> <p>Reporting and evaluation of Thriving Kids. Effective reporting and evaluation arrangements are recognised as essential to the operation of the National Model.</p>	<p>Workforce</p> <p>As part of the targeted supports model in the Northern Territory, a focus will be to build the capacity of workforce in other sectors, including schools, early childhood settings, and generalist allied health to be able to recognise and where appropriate respond to developmental delay.</p> <p>It is recognised that complementary work is being done to support workforce capability through other national reforms and strategies that will have a positive impact on the broader disability ecosystem, including in allied health, education and early childhood.</p> <p>Reporting / Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Northern Territory Government will participate in national evaluation to a level that is commensurate to the investment being provided for Thriving Kids. Once agreed (as per Clause 43 of the Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement) data and information to inform reporting on the uplift of the Child Development Teams as part of the NT targeted supports model will be collected through strengthened internal reporting mechanisms. Once agreed (as per Clause 43 of the Thriving Kids Bilateral Agreement) data and information required to meet reporting obligations will be included in grant funding agreements with organisations outside of Northern Territory Government. 	<p>Approx 2% as part of the targeted and general supports allocations above</p>	<p>Workforce - National measures to assist workforce and build capacity readiness in key sectors, including primary care, ECEC and schools.</p> <p>Online and face to face training and resources, including a child development micro credential/e-learning suite, targeted and adapted to specific workforces (GPs/MACH nurses/ECEC and school educators, professionals) involved in development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will support professionals to understand developmental concepts and have safe conversations with parents where they have identified developmental delay or neuro-developmental difference and encouraging families to connect with Thriving Kids, where appropriate. It will also support teachers and ECEC workers' knowledge and skills around supporting common developmental disabilities/conditions, referral pathways, working with other professionals, implementing reasonable adjustments and communicating with parents/carers. <p>Coaching and capacity building for ECEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the role of Inclusion Agencies (IAs) to support early childhood educators in eligible CCS approved services to apply adjustments recommended by Thriving Kids or other relevant professionals, within educators' skill sets. Coaching would provide practical, tailored advice. <p>Primary care practice skills uplift and capability framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For children with neurodevelopmental differences and/or autism and their families. This would guide training, guidance, tools and other resources to support primary care professionals to better identify and respond to the needs of these children. This also contributes to government commitments through the Autism and Intellectual Disability Roadmaps. <p>Workforce - promote and embed the National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will raise awareness around the framework and develop detailed guidance materials on how practitioners can implement the Framework in service settings to improve the quality of supports. 	<p>23-26%.</p>

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			<p>National First Nations specific offering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to NACCHO for capacity and capability uplift of workforce. Note: state-specific investments are also expected for First Nations children and families. Funding to SNAICC for improving the awareness of Thriving Kids in First Nations communities, including their interactions with mainstream services, and working with Thriving Kids providers on best practice for First Nations children. <p>Reporting /Evaluation Deliver Thriving Kids monitoring, reporting and evaluation. Funding is for a third party to work with governments to design and undertake developmental evaluation, the scheduled rapid implementation Review specified in the National Agreement and implementation monitoring</p>	

*To be read in conjunction with clause 44 of this Agreement

Northern Territory Thriving Kids Model

