Appendix A: Bilateral Implementation Plan – National Skills Agreement Policy Initiatives

PRELIMINARIES

1. This implementation plan is made between the Commonwealth of Australia (Commonwealth) and the Northern Territory under the 2024–2028 National Skills Agreement (the NSA) and should be read in conjunction with the NSA and the NSA Bilateral Implementation Plan Guidance.

2. Once executed, this implementation plan and any updates agreed with the Commonwealth, will be appended to the NSA and will be published on the Commonwealth's Federal Financial Relations website (https://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au).

3. This implementation plan is expected to expire on 31 December 2028 (in line with the NSA), or on completion of the initiative, including final performance reporting and processing of final payments against milestones.

4. In all public materials relating to the policy initiatives, the Northern Territory will acknowledge the Commonwealth's contribution with the following statement: The Northern Territory (NT) Centre of Excellence for Regional and Remote Essential Care Services (the RRECS Centre of Excellence) is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and NT Government.

REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

Reporting

1. Performance reporting will be due by 31 March and 30 September each year until the cessation of this Agreement, or the final payment is processed.

2. The Northern Territory will provide to the Commonwealth a traffic light status and activity summary on all policy initiatives.

3. The Commonwealth will provide templates for the purposes of reporting.

Payments

1. The Commonwealth will make payment subject to performance reporting demonstrating the relevant milestone has been met. After the initial payment, second and subsequent milestone payments will be assessed and processed in the following reporting period.

2. As part of the performance reporting, the Northern Territory will provide evidence of what has been delivered in the reporting period. Payments will be processed once performance reports have been assessed and accepted.

3. Where a payment is due at a reporting period (31 March and/or 30 September), the Northern Territory will complete the relevant section of the reporting template and provide the evidence required as agreed in the Milestones and Payments associated with this Implementation Plan.

TAFE CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE (Clause A112 to A116 of the NSA)

The Northern Territory (NT) Centre of Excellence for Regional and Remote Essential Care Services (the RRECS Centre of Excellence)

1) Outline and priority area(s) addressed:

The Northern Territory (NT) Centre of Excellence for Regional and Remote Essential Care Services (the RRECS Centre of Excellence) model, aligns with the National Skills Agreement (NSA) initial priorities, particularly:

- A28 (b) Closing the Gap and
- A28 (d) Sustaining essential care services.

In recognition of the NT's:

- high disease burden in remote areas
- unmet demand for a culturally competent skilled health workforce
- high staff turnover in remote areas
- need to urgently develop local capacity and obtain community 'buy in' to support training and other initiatives

The priorities for the RRECS Centre of Excellence are:

1. create a sustainable, skilled, culturally competent, trauma informed and inclusive workforce for remote areas
2. develop culturally acceptable pathways for remote community residents to attain healthcare qualifications to ensure a viable community-based workforce
3. provide cultural safety and remote service delivery skills and training for the non-indigenous workforce in preparation for working and living in remote areas, with a particular focus on overseas trained staff
4. further develop relationships with employers to implement joint strategies to improve retention rates and support ongoing professional development of community employees
5. coordinate pertinent research to inform training and post training employment retention strategies.

The RRECS Centre of Excellence will align with the priority reforms under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (Closing the Gap) and will respect and support these priorities through genuine partnerships that are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of First Nations peoples.

The RRECS Centre of Excellence, by boosting critical remote and regional care and support workforces, and strengthening education and employment pathways, will align its activities with the following socio-economic targets on Closing the Gap:

Closing the Gap – Socio-economic Targets

1. Students achieving their full learning potential
2. Students reaching their full potential through further education pathways
3. Youth engaging in employment or education
4. Strong economic participation and development of people and their communities
5. Closing the Gap in life expectancy by 2031.

Charles Darwin University (CDU) and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) will partner to establish the RRECS Centre of Excellence.

- CDU is a Darwin based, dual sector tertiary education institution, which incorporates significant vocational (skills-based) and higher (academic-based) educational courses in the same institution. As the only NT based university it has strong relationships with

government and industry organisations with a significant presence in most regional and many remote areas of the NT.

BIITE, specialises in education and training for First Nations Australians. The institute offers a range of vocational education and training (VET) and higher education courses aimed at improving educational outcomes and fostering the development of First Nations students. It emphasises culturally appropriate learning and incorporates Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into its curriculum. BIITE is based in Batchelor, 100kms south of Darwin and is also deeply embedded in local communities and has a significant presence in most regional and many remote areas of the NT.

The NT Government invests approximately $55 million to CDU and BIITE to support training, education and workforce initiatives. This funding includes $14.6 million recurrent funding from the Commonwealth.

The NT Government through the Department of Education and Training (NT Government) will oversee the establishment of the RRECS Centre of Excellence. CDU, BIITE and the NT Government have an established Memorandum of Understanding, that sets out the terms of the partnership for the development and delivery of the RRECS Centre of Excellence.

The NT Government are included as a member of the RRECS Centre of Excellence governance framework, it will:

- oversee the delivery and operational activities including stakeholder engagement and relationships to ensure full probity, and
- ensure the functions and activities of RRECS Centre of Excellence aligns with NT Government priorities and the objectives of the NSA.

This is in addition to the Industry Stakeholder Reference Committee which will identify and consider Health sector specific priorities.

The current Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education (RATE) project exemplifies the partnerships achievable between BIITE, CDU and the NT Government This project outlines the collaborations between the CDU, BIITE and the NT Government that are aimed at achieving the visions of all three organisations.

- The RRECS Centre of Excellence will support regional and remote essential care services, with the overarching aim of addressing a Territory wide need for a sustainable, skilled and diverse workforce for remote communities. This initiative seeks to develop a robust workforce of Aboriginal Health workers embedded within their communities, ensuring continuity and cultural relevance in healthcare delivery and a local workforce that progresses through to managerial positions. In addition, the RRECS Centre of Excellence will have a focus on preparing the broader health and other professional workforce for employment in remote communities.

- The RRECS Centre of Excellence will also work towards the implementation of pathways to support the transition of health workers from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other health VET qualifications to higher level apprenticeships, at AQF level 7 and above.

- “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker” occupation is consistently identified as a ‘high priority’ in both the annual NT Skilled Occupation Priority List (NTSOPL) and the National Skills Priority List. Additionally, several other occupations (such as Registered Nurses) that will be supported by RRECS are listed in the NTSOPL as being either a ‘priority’ or ‘high priority’.

- The RRECS Centre of Excellence proposal is a comprehensive initiative designed to provide significant national value as a genuine TAFE Centre of Excellence for remote area health. It aims to become the national leader by offering educational pathways to First Nations Peoples in health vocations across various levels, including short courses, micro-credentials, certificates, degrees, postgraduate degrees, and PhDs.

In addition, the RRECS Centre of Excellence will support:

- The competency of existing and future health practitioners to work in remote areas and remote communities through specific micro-credentials and short courses addressing the unique needs of regional and remote populations. For example, design and delivery of courses that blend holistic concepts and are linked to identified targeted outcomes for the community incorporating units of competence from Foundation Skills (FSK), Business (BSB), Health & Community Services (CHC) and Information Technology (ICT) qualifications.

- Sustainability and resilience of the non-Indigenous workforce through opportunities for two-way learning led by community organisations/members, to prepare non-resident staff (health professions, teachers, etc) for immersion in remote and regional environments. This would include cultural competency/proficiency and remote community service delivery.

The RRECS Centre of Excellence model will equip current and future health care workers with the necessary clinical and cultural skills to successfully address the NSA initial priorities.

- It is anticipated that there will be several strategic partnerships formed as part of the RRECS Centre of Excellence. (Proposed partners appear in section 3 – Partnerships and Engagement), however, principal amongst these will be:
  - Menzies School of Health Research / CDU Menzies School of Medicine
  - Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT)
  - Key health employers including the NT Department of Health

Currently, there are many great initiatives employed across the jurisdiction, although these are largely undertaken in isolation with little coordination or pooling of resources. Likewise, there lacks strategy more broadly across NT (and nationally) to connect VET, higher education, research, community, industry and government. The RRECS Centre of Excellence will lead a coordinated response in partnership with governments, community, industry and the tertiary sector to grow the skills needed and meet workforce challenges in remote and regional essential care for NT residents, particularly First Nations Australians. It is expected this coordinated approach will set the precedent, and take the lead, for other regional and remote regions across Australia.

2) Functions and activities of the TAFE Centre of Excellence:

A 'Hub and Spoke' approach has the support of key external stakeholders, setting the foundation for the initial phases of the RRECS Centre of Excellence and could be expanded to support the development of a higher apprenticeship model.

The RRECS Centre of Excellence, will facilitate innovative training through a structured approach to developing the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary for fostering creativity and generating new ideas. It aims to equip individuals with techniques and strategies to think critically, solve problems, and approach challenges with a creative mindset.

This includes the establishment of a pipeline of entry level health workers who bring knowledge of the nuances of working in regional and remote areas. The aim is to ensure the pipeline returns workers to their communities of origin to create a culturally acceptable and sustainable workforce. It also includes the upskilling of the existing health workforce to the localised health needs of regional centres, particularly those with high populations of First Nations Australians. This is most important for health professionals who may have originated from elsewhere in Australia or around the globe.

Considerable consultation will also be undertaken with communities to get 'buy in' from the community itself and other organisations to support local people to be successful in the training they undertake, pursuing their career aspirations and managing their everyday community commitments.

The complexities of delivering training remotely across such a large geographical area, such as the NT, are well known, and CDU and BIITE are acknowledged experts in this area. The RRECS Centre of Excellence concept is designed to draw on the best models and practices across the NT in relation to establishing, consolidating, and upskilling a remote area health workforce.

In line with the priorities for the RRECS Centre of Excellence (as outlined in *Section 1. Outline and Priority Areas Addressed*), the key functions of the Centre of Excellence are to:

- cultivate a community driven First Nations workforce specifically for the regional and remote care sector
- design and implement innovative community-tailored pathways and learning journeys for care workers in regional and remote areas which meets the skills outcomes required by the community
- enhance the cultural knowledge, understanding and preparedness of health care sector professionals for regional and remote settings including the development of cultural competency/proficiency and remote service delivery units
- promote and facilitate higher apprenticeship models for health care workers in regional and remote areas
- deliver and advance research-informed, culturally sensitive training
- Provide national leadership to like-minded partners to build the capacity of regional and remote health care workers across Australia through the delivery of education and training
- develop and implement improved delivery strategies including the use of community mentors to support both trainers and students
- work closely with employers to address employee retention challenges and develop strategies to assist local people successfully navigate the first 12 months of employment and position themselves to realise their full capacity including progressing to higher professional and managerial roles
- enhance and capitalise on the digital literacy skills of community youth to promote health career pathways and support training particularly if undertaken in blocks

The key activities of the RRECS Centre of Excellence are to:

- identify sites for "Hubs" of learning in regional and remote areas of the NT, while ensuring identification and scoping processes minimise duplication of effort, and maximise collaboration, with existing Remote Training Hubs Network.
- integrate appropriate Foundations and Digital Skills at all levels of training
- design and develop micro-credentialling and skill sets to support clearly articulated and promoted pathways that provide credits to qualifications at AQF Level 7 and above
- creating culturally appropriate learning environments catering to individual learning styles and community-specific needs

- involve other community support organisations and mentors to ensure community members are given the best opportunity to succeed
- facilitate personal skill development
- advocate for and provide opportunities for First Nations health personnel to ascend into leadership roles within the health sector, fostering greater representation and influence
- use professionally and culturally appropriate methodologies, contextualise and adapt training products for replicable outcomes that can become a best practice model nationally.
- support students and employers post formal and informal training
- work closely with remote schools to promote local health employment opportunities and pathway students into post school training including apprenticeship opportunities.

Initial training identified that aligns with the holistic concept of health development in remote and regional areas:

- Community Services (family wellbeing & caring for elderly)
- Health (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health & laboratory services)
- Birthing and Children's Services
- Nutrition
- Sport and Recreation
- Focused micro-credentials, including:
    - Renal care
    - Emergency (advanced) suturing
    - Cultural awareness (localised)
    - Alcohol and drug related topics
    - Mental Health
    - Sexual Health
    - Health industry navigation (NDIS, etc)
- Caring for Country, rehabilitation programs & environmental care
- Wraparound services, including
    - Patient transport in remote communities
    - Maintenance of local airstrips and other infrastructure
    - Community and home care
    - Associated construction skills (installation of ramps and handrails, etc).

3) Partnerships and engagement:

Several industry partners and community connections have already been identified to support the RRECS Centre of Excellence. These will become members of the formal Stakeholder Management Committee. Some of these entities are co-located with CDU, giving the RRECS Centre of Excellence the opportunity to effectively leverage these existing relationships.

One such partnership, which is an important link to the RRECS Centre of Excellence, is the Menzies School of Health Research / CDU Menzies School of Medicine. The purpose of this partnership was to establish a medical program at CDU to graduate and retain more First Nations and local resident doctors in the NT to serve the NT community. The admissions process positively selects NT First Nations and NT resident students knowing that students drawn from local communities are more likely to remain in those communities when they graduate.

In addition to the strategic partnerships outlined above, other key partner organisations include:

- AMSANT
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHSs)
- Northern Institute

- Cancer Council NT
- Molly Wardaguga Institute for First Nations Birth Rights
- Northern Territory Primary Health Network
- Care Flight
- Industry Skills Advisory Council NT (ISACNT)
- Human Ability Jobs and Skills Council
- Carers NT
- NT Health
- NT Schools
- Health Services Union

Where relevant, the following national organisations:

- Coalition of Peaks
- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- First Peoples Disability Network

The RRECS Centre of Excellence will work with the National TAFE Network once established to drive excellence in teaching and learning and best practice in regional and remote essential care services development by TAFEs.

This will be a critical collaboration for the RRECS Centre of Excellence, and the NT commits to the RRECS Centre of Excellence operating in such a way that it:

- plays a national leadership role with employers, unions, universities, Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs), and other relevant stakeholders to identify, develop and deliver education and training solutions that meet industry needs across Australia, and
- partnering with TAFEs and other public providers across Australia to assist them to build their capability and capacity to deliver training.

Collaboration with other potential TAFE Centres of Excellence established to address the same national priority will involve sharing resources, enhancing best practices and coordination to ensure a unified approach for all TAFE Centres of Excellence.

The Queensland TAFE Centre of Excellence Health Care and Support, which will deliver critical higher-level skills training for Australia's essential care and support services, has synergies with the RRECS Centre of Excellence.

The TAFE SA Centre of Excellence in Early Childhood Education and Care, which will deliver critical higher-level skills training to grow and sustain Australia's essential care and support services, is another RRECS Centre of Excellence to collaborate with and share best practice and resources.

Stakeholder engagement will continue to grow and evolved as the NSA initiatives, and the National TAFE Network, are implemented, including the JSCs. This is underpinned by an evolving political and dynamic operating environment.

It is envisaged the Centre of Excellence will provide national leadership well beyond the Health sector, likely via the National TAFE Network. In particular, RRECS will provide leadership on the following:

- Advance methodologies for engagement in remote Communities
  - Cultural competence
  - Appropriate learning methodologies
  - "Both Ways Learning"

    - Mentoring
    - Community and other support organisation engagement
- Tangible learning resources (all formats)
- Nuances of the remote Health Sector
- First Nations Health
- Immersion opportunities for Health sector

The NT recognises the mutual benefits of collaboration between the VET and higher education sectors and commits the RRECS Centre of Excellence to developing partnerships to support and deliver on its objectives, including with universities, Jobs and Skills Councils, employers and unions. These partnerships could take different forms, and will evolve over time, but could include:

- university representation in the RRECS Centre of Excellence structures
- exchanging expertise and experience in the design and delivery of education and training relevant to the RRECS Centre of Excellence, including higher apprenticeship pathways
- establishing credit recognition arrangements and entry pathways between VET and higher education for education and training relevant to the RRECS Centre of Excellence
- facilitating joint opportunities for applied research relevant to the RRECS Centre of Excellence, and/or
- identifying pertinent research and securing funding.

The NT acknowledges that there is the potential for duplication of effort between the RRECS Centre of Excellence and relevant JSCs. The NT is committed to working with the Commonwealth to maximise the collective benefit for the skills and training system through the TAFE Centres of Excellence, and commits the RRECS Centre of Excellence to early and regular engagement with relevant JSCs on all its activities for the purposes of:

- minimising the potential for duplication of effort
- sharing learnings on best practice and support knowledge translation, and
- partnering on projects of mutual interest where appropriate.

The RRECS Centre of Excellence will have its own governance, led at executive level by CDU, BIITE and the relevant NT agency with an advisory committee of relevant health industry stakeholders.

The roles of NT Government, BIITE and CDU in the Executive Board are as follows:

- CDU & BIITE:
    - Equal partners in the RRECS Centre of Excellence business transactions
    - Public Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) with relevant RRECS qualifications on scope of registration
    - Oversight of academic development, including training products
    - Owners of RTO quality assurance and continual improvement strategies
    - Members of National TAFE Network
    - Access to research capability and strong relationships with other research bodies
    - Very experienced in remote community engagement and working in partnership together and with other remote service providers
- NT Government
    - Single Government conduit, both territory and Commonwealth
    - Government oversight on financial and milestone activities
    - Probity within a complex co-contribution environment with two independent public funded RTOs (partners)

The proposed organisation structure includes, an Executive Committee, Stakeholder Advisory Group and Director of the RRECS Centre of Excellence with basic administrative support.

The Stakeholder Advisory Group will be key to identifying and establishing focused pilot programs where research-informed training programs can be implemented. The collective knowledge and resources of each stakeholder will greatly assist a coordinated approach to remote area health, ensuring culturally appropriate methodologies prevail.

The TAFE Centre of Excellence will support and partner with other TAFEs across Australia (including dual-sector universities), including through the National TAFE Network (once established), to build capability, share curriculum and best-practice, and improve teaching and learning outcomes.

Commonwealth Investment ($)	State Investment ($)	Planned Start Date	Planned End Date
$10.04m	$10.04m	November 2024	31 December 2028

TAFE Centre of Excellence – approach to matched funding arrangements (clause A114 refers) – to be reconciled over the life of the NSA.

Details of matched funding	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
NT Government Investment	$3,500,000	$1,600,000	$1,600,000	$1,600,000	$1,740,000	$10,040,000
Commonwealth Investment	$290,000	$1,750,000	$3,000,000	$2,000,000	$3,000,000	$10,040,000

The NT Government will provide details of their matched funding contributions at the end of each financial year, commencing 1 July 2024 until 31 December 2028. Final payments under this implementation plan may be reduced where the total contribution by the NT Government over the life of the project does not align with the Commonwealth contribution.

Performance Indicators

Both CDU and BIITE are committed to continuous quality improvement and undertake ongoing evaluations of their community engagement, VET delivery, industry relationships and student outcomes.

Reporting will be aligned with identified focus areas and evaluation arrangements as agreed with the Commonwealth. Final reporting (and key indicators) will be established by the RRECS Centre of Excellence staff and following close consultation with key stakeholders. Performance indicators for the RRECS Centre of Excellence include a general framework including the following key areas:

Focus	Indicators
Strategy and Planning	• alignment with CDU/BIITE's Strategic Plan and sub-plans
Attraction and Retention	• commencements and completions • quality of programs and student outcomes

	• professional development programs, courses developed • workforce data (employment and job creation) • specific cohort data – Increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce participation rates. • participation rates - Industry snapshot • industry partnerships
First Nations Leadership	• engagement with and contributions to First Nations communities. • increasing skills base & quality • mentoring and support of leaders and newly qualified teachers.
Governance	• effectiveness of leadership structures and governance practices.
Health and Wellbeing	• program developed and participation outcomes documented • industry survey – feedback/results (regarding health and wellbeing of staff)
Research and best practise	• research output and impact • contributions to the field • case studies and highlights • national research - What does the data and evidence suggest? • global trends and opportunities.
Engagement and Market reach	• communication and dissemination of information engagement activities/outcomes (i.e. events, stakeholders' meetings) • collaboration with external partners and community involvement.

The CDU/BIITE CoE is committed to a comprehensive and professional reporting approach aligned with key priority cohorts, in accordance with mutually agreed indicators with the Commonwealth. The reporting will adhere to the Vision and Principles outlined in the National Skills Agreement. The following indicators will be utilised to ensure a thorough assessment of the initiative's impact on priority cohorts:

Indicators	**Target**
Commencement and Completion Numbers	• tracking enrolment and completion figures, with a particular focus on priority cohorts and ensuring a high level of success for enrolled individuals
Industry Feedback	• regularly collecting feedback from industry. • incorporating testimonials and case studies to provide qualitative insights into the impact of on workforce development.

	• employer satisfaction.
Qualitive Measures	• governance structures established • increased use/optimising existing TAFE footprint and/or opportunities for shared use of TAFE facilities. • strengthened alignment of training offerings and pathways with local labour market priorities.
New training delivery strategies developed	• new research projects established. • number of new partnership arrangements established (industry; employer; community; sector); • new products and/or pathways developed and implemented. • increased access to training for underrepresented cohorts: students who may face additional barriers.
Specific Examples for Key Cohorts	• documenting individual stories and journeys. • showcasing success stories and challenges faced by individuals within key cohorts.
Feedback for VET Students	• collaborating with industry partners to gather feedback on VET students' experiences, ensuring alignment with education expectations and industry requirements.
Measuring and Reporting	• developing a comprehensive scoping document within the CDU/BIITE CoE to measure and report against recommendations.
Employment Outcomes	• assessing the success of the CDU/BIITE CoE in facilitating employment opportunities for graduates. • industry retention rates.

Evaluation arrangements

The CDU/BIITE evaluation arrangements will be aligned with project key indicators (reporting outcomes) and identified funding milestones established with the Commonwealth measurement and evaluation criteria. The evaluation framework will focus on assessing each initiative's effectiveness, efficiency, and appropriateness.

To achieve this, we will define key questions related to the implementation, expected outcomes, the impact on priority groups/stakeholders, and how best to evaluate each initiative within set timeframes.

Our evaluation methodology will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the initiative's impact.

- Surveys and Interviews: Stakeholder and student surveys, interviews will be conducted to gather qualitative insights into the implementation process, identify challenges faced, and capture the perspectives of different participant groups.
- Data Analysis: We will utilise quantitative data to measure outcomes and assess the initiative's effectiveness, efficiency, and appropriateness.

Measurement Indicators:

- Implementation evaluation: We will document findings learned during the implementation phase, identifying any adjustments made and their impact on the initiative's direction.
- Outcome Results: We will measure and compare observed results against expected outcomes, with a particular emphasis on understanding variations across different cohorts.
- Cost-effectiveness: A comprehensive analysis will be conducted to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the initiative, ensuring efficient resource utilisation.

The evaluation process will be ongoing, with key milestones identified for continuous assessment. Preliminary evaluation findings will be available annually, allowing for timely adjustments and informing future policy decisions.

A Final Evaluation report will be completed by the end of the initiative, consolidating all findings and providing a holistic view of the RRECS Centre of Excellence's impact.

Findings will be dispersed through various channels, including reports, conferences, and stakeholder engagement sessions. Both CDU and BIITE commits to taking immediate and informed action based on the evaluation outcomes, ensuring continuous improvement and adaptability. By adhering to this evaluation plan, CDU/BIITE aims to uphold transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in the development and operation of the CoE.

MILESTONES AND PAYMENTS – TAFE CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

Policy initiative - Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence

Milestone	**Evidence / key deliverables**	**Payment Value – up to (Commonwealth funded)**	**Commonwealth Reporting period**
Milestone 1: Initial payment on agreement of implementation plan	Bilateral implementation plan agreed with Commonwealth.	$290,000	N/A
Milestone 2: Commonwealth acceptance that the Northern Territory has established the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence, to be demonstrated by: • development of a Project Plan with timeframes and deliverables for key Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence activities over the life of the NSA until December 2028, • establishment of a strategic partnership strategy, including representation from government, industry, unions, employers, First Nations communities, health and	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • the Project Plan, including: o an initial Partnership Strategy that includes initial stakeholder consultation and engagement, and evidence of pre-existing or emerging partnerships (including engagement with employers, unions, universities and Jobs and Skills Councils) o the Terms of Reference and membership for each of the sub-committees, cleared by key stakeholders o an initial workplan of planned activity of each of the sub-committees until 30 December 2025 (end of year 1), and	$750,000	30 September 2025

training organisations to support the delivery of project outcomes • identification and establishment of relevant sub-committees and working groups to progress activities/actions • Commencement of work on mapping the job role for a new Registered Nurse equivalent apprenticeship for aged care in consultation with stakeholders, and • Commencement of work on the quantitative and qualitative research on culturally appropriate and safe training options.	o an initial applied research framework that identifies initial priorities for exploration for the new Registered Nurse equivalent apprenticeship, and culturally appropriate and safe training options o an update on the quantitative and qualitative research project for culturally appropriate and safe training options.		
Milestone 3: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by the finalised Stakeholder Engagement Strategy that: • identifies key stakeholders, including First Nations organisations, and prioritises	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 31 March 2026 • the finalised Stakeholder Engagement Strategy which outlines the key stakeholders and their involvement in the development and delivery of the	$500,000	31 March 2026

their involvement in the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence • outlines an engagement plan agreed to by all stakeholders, including First Nations organisations • conduct community consultations to identify gaps in care services and training needs • early engagement with relevant Jobs and Skills Councils to mitigate duplication, identify partnership opportunities and ensure shared learnings into the future • commencement of work on an applied research framework and identify initial priorities for exploration in consultation with stakeholders • establish partnerships with regional healthcare providers, community leaders, First Nations organisations, and government agencies, and	Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence • details of community consultations conducted to date, includes the stakeholders consulted and the area of discussion • details of consultation with relevant Jobs and Skills Councils and identifies any formal partnerships, and • details of work to date on applied research framework and any initial priorities for exploration identified through this process.		

• stakeholder engagement activities.			
Milestone 4: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by a progress report outlining: • works commenced on the physical and digital resources, and expected timeline for their completion, and • progress of the recruitment effort, including the number of positions filled and mitigation strategy for filling any outstanding positions.	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 31 March 2026 • a status update on the development of physical and digital resources (e.g., telehealth tools, and • progress on recruitment effort of core staff, including culturally competent trainers and support staff, including number of positions filled through this process, any outstanding positions and the mitigation strategy for filling any outstanding positions.	$500,000	31 March 2026
Milestone 5: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by: • the completion and delivery of new training programs in aged care, disability support and primary health services.	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 30 September 2026 • a list of new accredited training programs that address regional and remote essential care needs (e.g., aged care,	$750,000	30 September 2026

	disability support, primary health services), and • an outline of culturally relevant content to support First Nations communities.		
Milestone 6: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by: • the implementation of a focused Pilot Program relative to remote area health. The pilot focus will be determined by Health Industry reference Committee.	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 30 September 2026 • pilot program outcomes, including participant demographics and completion rates, and • stakeholder engagement updates, including new partnerships or collaborations.	$1,000,000	30 September 2026
Milestone 7: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by: • the delivery of the infrastructure expansion.	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 31 March 2027 • details on the rollout of the telehealth platforms to enhance access to training and services, including dates of implementation and affected regions.	$250,000	31 March 2027

Milestone 8: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by: • scaling of the pilot program, and update on the specialised training pathways based on regional demand, including areas of focus.	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 31 March 2027 • details on the dates and regions that the pilot program was expanded to, and • details on the specialised training pathways.	$1,000,000	31 March 2027
Milestone 9: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by: • details on the community and industry engagement, including partnerships with local industry, First Nations organisations and employers for the development and delivery of training, and • planned showcases to engage with the community and employers.	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 30 September 2027 • a list of local healthcare providers who are involved in the development and delivery of training products for the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence, and • number and dates of the planned and executed regional events to showcase the impact of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence, including details of any additional stakeholders that have been	$500,000	30 September 2027

	engaged as a direct result of these events.		
Milestone 10: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by: • the mid-project impact assessment, outlining progress on delivery of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence, including detail on employment rates, care quality improvements and stakeholder feedback.	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 30 September 2027 • evaluation report outlining the outcomes of the first two years, including, employment rates, care quality improvements, and stakeholder feedback.	$500,000	30 September 2027
Milestone 11: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by: • details of industry partnerships and graduate placements.	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 31 March 2028 • an outline of partnerships established with regional employers to facilitate pathways for graduates, and • details on graduate placement rates.	$500,000	31 March 2028
Milestone 12: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches:	$500,000	31 March 2028

Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by: • the Industry Operational Sustainability Plans • long-term Sustainability Plans • ongoing partnerships, and • delivery of new technologies to enhance training.	• an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 31 March 2028 • Industry Operational Sustainability Plans, and Long-term Sustainability Plans, including diversified funding sources and partnerships, and • outline of new technologies introduced (e.g., virtual reality for care training) to enhance training effectiveness.		
Milestone 13: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by: • the project impact assessment.	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 30 September 2028 • workforce outcomes and regional impact • financial sustainability progress and projections, and • stakeholder engagement achievements and feedback, including with First Nations organisations.	$1,000,000	30 September 2028
Milestone 14: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by:	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches a Final Outcomes Report that includes: • the finalised Project Plan, including: o a summary of the achievements of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence	$1,000,000	30 September 2028

• an outline of progress against the deliverables specified in the Project Plan to 31 December 2028 • the Final Outcomes Report, summarising the outcomes and achievements of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence.	over five years, highlighting completed physical and digital resource works, regional impacts and improved care services, and o data on graduate numbers, employment outcomes, and service quality improvements.		
Milestone 15: Commonwealth acceptance of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence's continued operation, to be demonstrated by: • a Sustainability and Growth Plan for future sustainability.	Report signed by the relevant Northern Territory Senior Skills Official that provides an update on progress and attaches: • a Sustainability and Growth Plan, which details the plans for the continuation of the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence, including details on ongoing funding, partnerships, and program development • the Project Impact Evaluation Report with a summary of outcomes for the period to 31 December 2028 • recommendations for scaling or replicating the Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence model in other regions.	$1,000,000	31 December 2028
	Total	**$10,040,000**	

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this implementation plan as follows:

Signed *for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by*

The Honourable Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Skills and Training

19 / 3 / 2025

Signed *for and on behalf of the Northern Territory by*

The Honourable Jo Hersey MP
Minister for Education and Training

07/03/ 2025