

East Kimberley Allied Health Framework

An initiative of the East Kimberley Allied Health Project (2025)



East Kimberley Allied Health Framework

Purpose

This framework informs, guides and strengthens allied health workforce development, service planning and integration across the local healthcare ecosystem incorporating three priority areas and key enablers to support meaningful action.

The East Kimberley Allied Health Framework was created in response to the urgent need for greater access to a range of allied health services to meet the complex needs of our diverse population, many of whom are vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Vision

A thriving, interconnected ecosystem of public, not-for-profit and private allied health services to support equitable access to high-quality, sustainable, person-centred allied health care.





How to use this framework

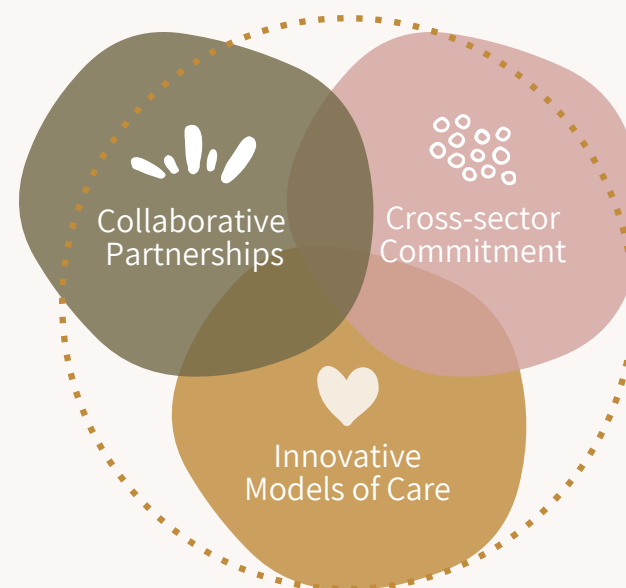
The framework serves as local evidence to support current and future funding and advocacy initiatives. It acts as both a strategic and practical tool to inform allied health service planning and coordination efforts in the region. It is designed for use by health, community, and social services, allied health providers, community leaders, and sectors beyond health, including education and training, workforce development, early years, disability, and aged care.

The inclusion of the **Allied Health Service Planning, Funding and Advocacy Checklist** (Appendix 1) is a helpful tool to help guide theory into action.

Working Together for Success

Collaborative partnerships, innovative models of care, financial investment and cross-sector commitment are urgently needed to meet the complex and diverse needs of our community.

Achieving transformative, systemic change requires participation and investment by individuals and organisations at local, state, and national levels.



Developing the framework



The development of this framework was facilitated by Wunan Health and Wellbeing Centre in collaboration and consultation with the East Kimberley Allied Health Project's Advisory Group.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank everyone who contributed by sharing stories and providing personal experiences including the Halls Creek and Kununurra Child and Parent Centres (CPC) WA teams, and other individual allied health providers including Calm and Connected (East Kimberley branch).

Funding for the East Kimberley Allied Health Project and the development of this resource was generously provided by **LotteryWest**.

Contributing Advisory Group Member Organisations

- Boab Health Services
- Kimberley Therapy Services (KAMS)
- Majarlin Kimberley Centre for Remote Health
- Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service (OVAHS)
- WA Country Health Services (WACHS)
- Wunan Health and Wellbeing Centre (including headspace Kununurra)
- Wunan Foundation
- Wayfinder (Job Pathways)
- Yura Yungi Medical Service (YYMS)

A message from Dr Stephanie Trust



For a very long time, I've recognised the critical role allied health plays in providing comprehensive primary health care for our communities, families, and patients.

As a GP, I've witnessed firsthand the severe shortage - and at times, the complete absence - of local allied health providers, which has caused significant challenges for our patients across the East Kimberley.

Reflecting on my early days as an Aboriginal Health Practitioner, working alongside Puggy Hunter and others, I saw firsthand the importance of allied health and cultural security in delivering optimal patient care.

We envisioned a model of care that integrated both cultural and clinical expertise, ensuring that health services were not only effective but also culturally safe and relevant for all of our community. Thirty years on, aspects of that original model and vision are now incorporated into this framework.

This framework was developed through consultation with East Kimberley allied health stakeholders and others in response to the region's health and wellbeing needs. Thank you to everyone involved in this project and the creation of this important resource.



Dr Steph Trust

Clinical Director

Wunan Health and Wellbeing Centre



Priority Areas

To guide initiatives and investment to increase access to allied health services in the East Kimberley region:

1

From surviving to thriving: a diverse and supported East Kimberley allied health workforce.

Call to Action: Career pathways to enable a locally grown allied health workforce

Call to Action: Optimise a supported local workforce

2

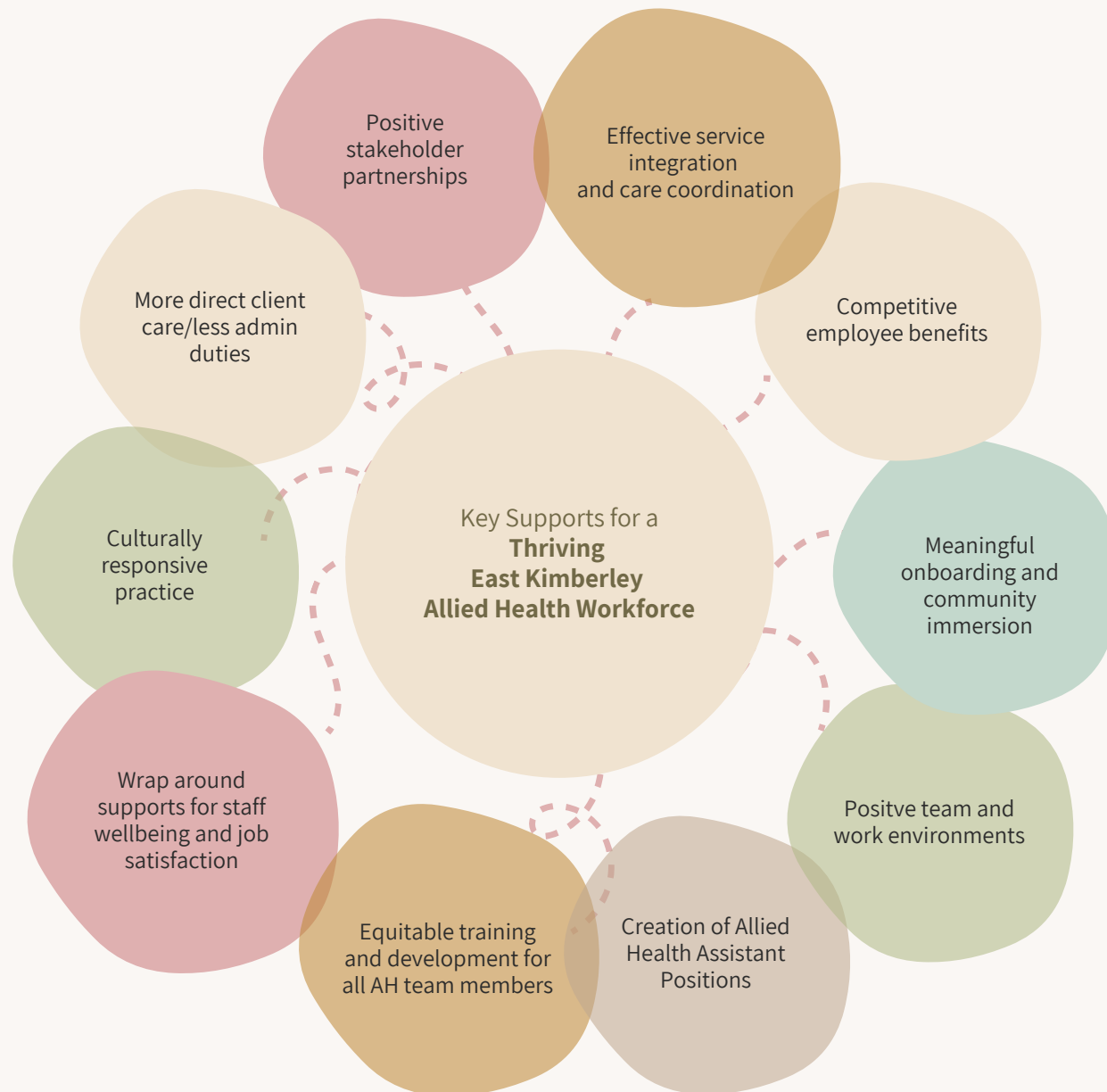
Right care, right place, at the right time: high quality, safe, and timely access to allied health services.

3

Enhanced allied health service integration, collaboration and continuity of care.



High-quality, sustainable and accessible person-centred allied health services for the East Kimberley:



Priority Area 1: From surviving to thriving: a diverse and supported East Kimberley allied health workforce.

A thriving and well-supported **culturally safe** allied health workforce is essential for achieving optimal health outcomes in the East Kimberley. To ensure sustainable, culturally responsive services, we must focus on both **growing our own** allied health providers and attracting, recruiting, and retaining high-quality professionals to the region.

Call to Action: Clear career pathways to enable a locally grown allied health workforce.

Key Enablers

Access to local allied health education and training

- Offer face-to-face delivery of Vocational Education and Training (VET) skill sets, pre-traineeships, traineeships, and qualifications. Priority needs include Certificates III and IV in Allied Health Assistance, Aboriginal Health Practitioner, Mental Health, etc.

- Advocate for allied health bridging, undergraduate, and post-graduate courses through the East Kimberley Regional University Study Hub (RUSH) due to open 2025.
- Promote training and career pathways into allied health through local schools, Registered Training Providers (RTO), employment and skills centres and other local networks and events.

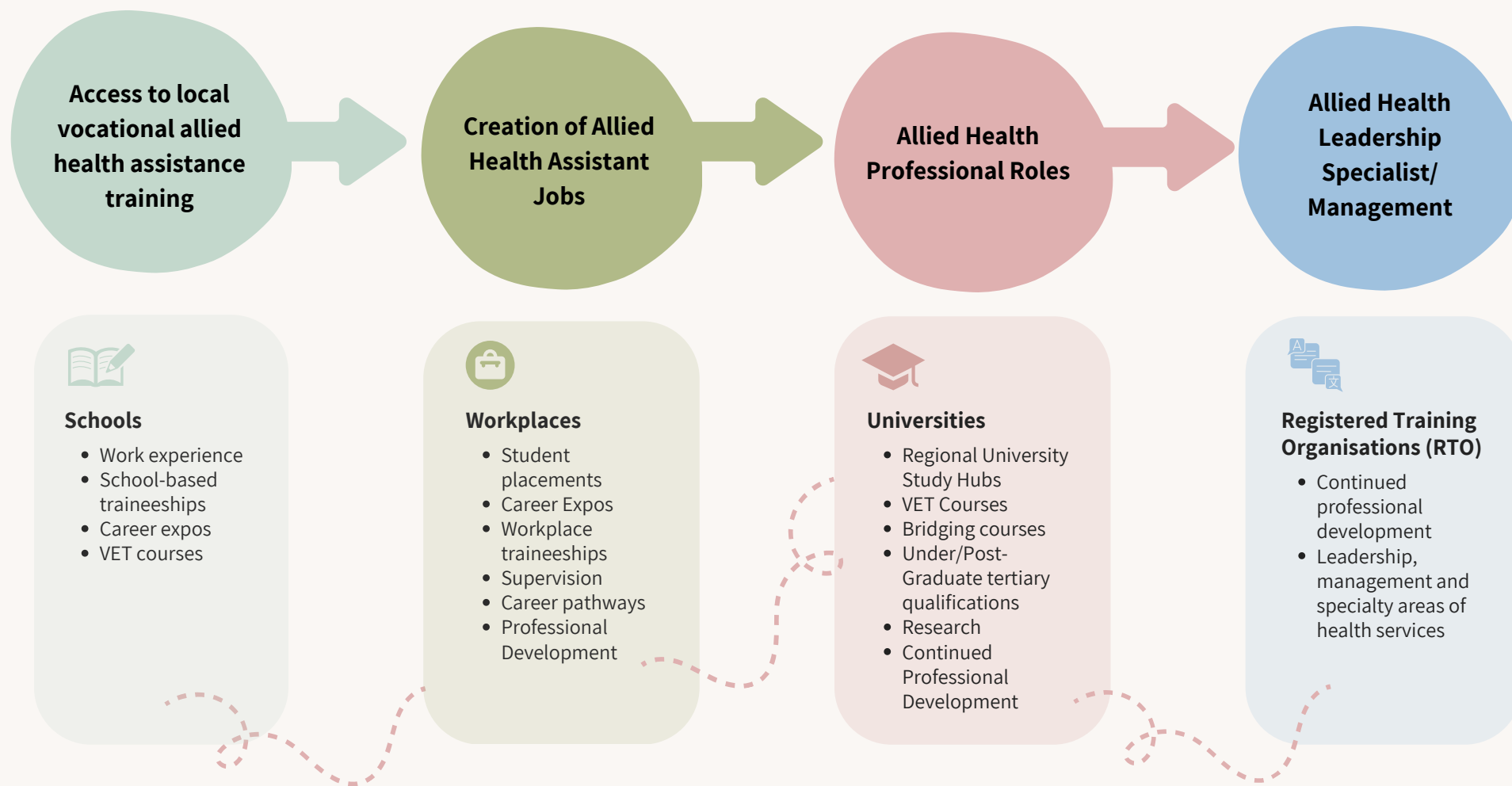
Strengthen cross-sector partnerships

Collaborate with local education, training, and employment services and boarder stakeholders to support local education pathways into allied health including:

- **East Kimberley Rural University Study Hub** (RUSH) (coming 2025)
- **Community Skills WA**
- **Department of Education WA** (local high schools)
- **Insight Training** (RTO)
- **Indigenous Allied Health Australia**
- **Job Pathways**

- **Majorlin Kimberley Centre for Remote Health**
- **Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services** (KAMS)
- **Kimberley Group Training**
- **Kununurra Jobs and Skills Centre**
- **North Regional TAFE** (RTO)
- **University of Notre Dame Australia** (Broome) (RTO)
- **Wunan Foundation**

Career Pathways for a locally grown workforce:



Priority 1: A diverse and supported East Kimberley allied health workforce

Increase student placements opportunities

- Create more opportunities for student placements with local allied health professionals. This includes expanding local organisational capabilities to host and supervise secondary, vocational, and tertiary student placements.

Build allied health assistant roles into models of care and funding streams

- Incorporate allied health assistant positions into existing models of care. Foster partnerships and build capacity for place-based roles across towns and communities in the region, ensuring consideration of Aboriginality as an essential criterion in accordance with the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA).

Call to Action: Optimise a supported local workforce

To ensure our workforce not only survives, but thrives, East Kimberley service providers must prioritise supporting and developing staff, ensuring they are suitability qualified and confident to meet the unique challenges and needs of the region.

By creating environments that promote wellbeing, positive partnerships, community immersion, and sustainable self-care, we can alleviate risks such as job dissatisfaction and staff burnout.

A key enabler for driving meaningful change for consumers and increasing job satisfaction among local providers is to prioritise diversity-sensitive care. When consumers feel respected, valued, and safe, service effectiveness improves (reducing non-attendance to appointments) and job satisfaction increases.



Key enablers for workforce sustainability

Key Enablers	Examples
Effective, localised recruitment and onboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate time and resourcing for comprehensive onboarding including immersion in local communities and cultural/social activities.
Focus on relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate opportunities for employees to build professional relationships with community members and service providers including beyond the health sector. • Encourage social engagements and immersion with the community such as local cultural, community, and social events, with a focus on Aboriginal participation.
Embed culturally responsive care across all levels of the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise building and embedding organisation-wide culturally responsive capabilities (including cultural clinical supervision). This includes clinical governance, models of care, service delivery and inter-agency multidisciplinary care teams. • Advocate for resource allocation to enable access to local clinical cultural supervision, cultural security training, navigation, coaching and / or mentoring.
Optimise direct client care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adequate staffing and resourcing within models of care to minimise the burden of logistical, administrative and compliance tasks, especially for outreach or funded programs. These tasks can be managed by allied health assistants or non-clinical roles.
Invest in equitable training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align professional development in alignment with local needs such as trauma-informed practice, cultural responsiveness practice, clinical yarning, community development, and health service leadership and management. • Afford equitable professional development supports to all members of the allied health team including allied health assistants. • Leverage local resources by engaging with local education, training, and employment organisations to support early and mid-career allied health team members. • Provide appropriate supervision and delegation. Ensure clear expectations and defined responsibilities in position descriptions for staff providing supervision, as well as those requiring supervision. • Allocate resources to develop capabilities for supervision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⌚ allied health trainees and / or assistants ⌚ students (school-based, vocational, and tertiary) ⌚ early career employees, including clinicians and those new to leadership roles. • Support providers to develop and maintain skills required to work to full scope of practice.

Priority 1: A diverse and supported East Kimberley allied health workforce

Support employees to succeed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the unique needs of individual's including those new to the health sector, previously disengaged from regular or full-time employment or those with a long-term unemployment history.• Seek sufficient supports and resourcing for entry level employees with targeted initiatives such as workplace readiness programs, mentoring, coaching, wellness supports and skill development.
Support workforce benefits and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the unique challenges faced by rural and remote healthcare workers by offering competitive employee benefits for all members of the multidisciplinary team, including staff recruited locally.• Incentives or benefits to consider include cost-of-living and remoteness (e.g. housing, electricity, and annual return airfares), employee wellbeing, peer support, salary sacrifice, workplace flexibility, additional leave, and professional development allowances or benefits.

Helpful Tools and References:

[Allied Health Assistant's National Association \(AHANA\)](#).

[Guide to Workforce development: Social Assistance and Allied Health Workforce Skills \(WA Government\)](#).

[Social and Emotional Wellbeing: A Welcome Guide for the Aboriginal Workforce \(KAMS\)](#)

[Transition to Remote and Rural Allied Health Toolkit \(SARRAH\)](#)

[Workforce Development Strategy 2018 – 2020 \(IAHA\)](#).

[Workforce Wellbeing Guide: A self-reflection and self-care resource for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in the Kimberley \(UWA\)](#).

[Working as an Allied Health Provider and the NDIS \(NDIS\)](#)

[Our Healing Ways, Supervision, A Culturally Appropriate Model, Victorian Dual Diagnosis Education and Training Unit, 2012 \(accessed via HealthInfoNet\)](#).

[Supporting and Developing the Allied Health Assistant Workforce, Government of WA \(Department of Health\), 2015](#)

[The Superguide: a handbook for supervising allied health professionals, Health Education and Training Institute, 2012](#)

Stakeholders in Allied Health, Education, Training and Workforce Development:

[CRANApus](#)

[Kimberley Health Professional Network](#)

[Rural Health West](#)

Priority Area 2: Right care, right place at the right time: High quality and safe access to allied health services.

Our vision is for East Kimberley residents to access the right allied health service, when and where they need them, at any stage of life, with the freedom of choice and control with their care.

Key Enablers

Prioritise connection, safety, and belonging

- Ensure individuals feel **heard, respected, and empowered** when engaging with allied health services from childhood to aged care.
- Create **safe and supportive spaces** and allow time for families to be heard. Adopt a strengths-based, family-focused approach, built on respect, inclusiveness, and collaboration.
- Use clear, accessible language that fosters a shared understanding between the healthcare team and the individual.

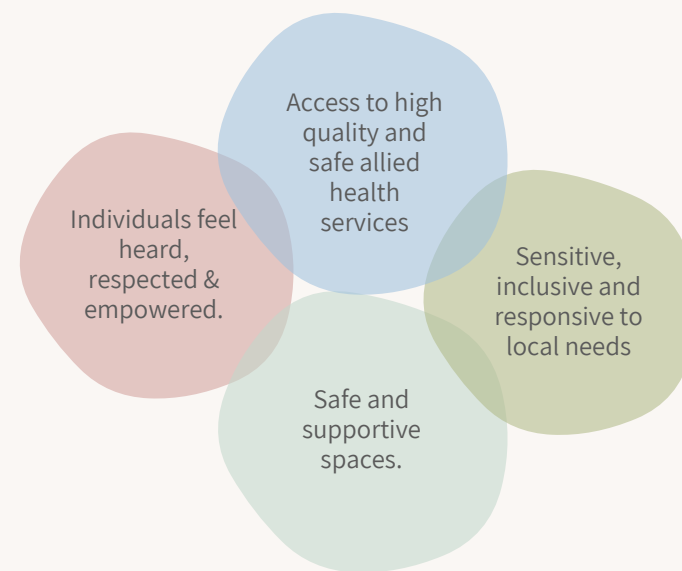
- Encourage a no-wrong-door approach, with a well-informed team about other allied health and wraparound services.

Strong understanding of the diversity in your community

- Tailor **diversity-sensitive** and inclusive services to meet the unique, individual needs of the community.
- Recognise true cultural safety requires **transformational change** to organisation-wide systems and its **enabling environment**.
- Foster individual and organisational commitment to genuine and **critical First Nations' Allyship**.
- Develop an understanding of local **Aboriginal ways of knowing, being, and doing**, including cultural and health needs.

- Embed **culturally responsiveness practices** across all levels of the organisation including clinical governance, models of care, [multidisciplinary care] team meetings and service delivery.
- Acknowledge culturally responsive practice requires a commitment to **lifelong reflective practice, learning and action**.

Person-centred allied health care:



Priority Area 2: High quality, safe, and accessible allied health services

Commit to recognising and elevating Aboriginal expertise

There is no knowledge like local knowledge: Aboriginal people's knowledge and deep understanding of the local community and culture is essential for high quality, safe care.

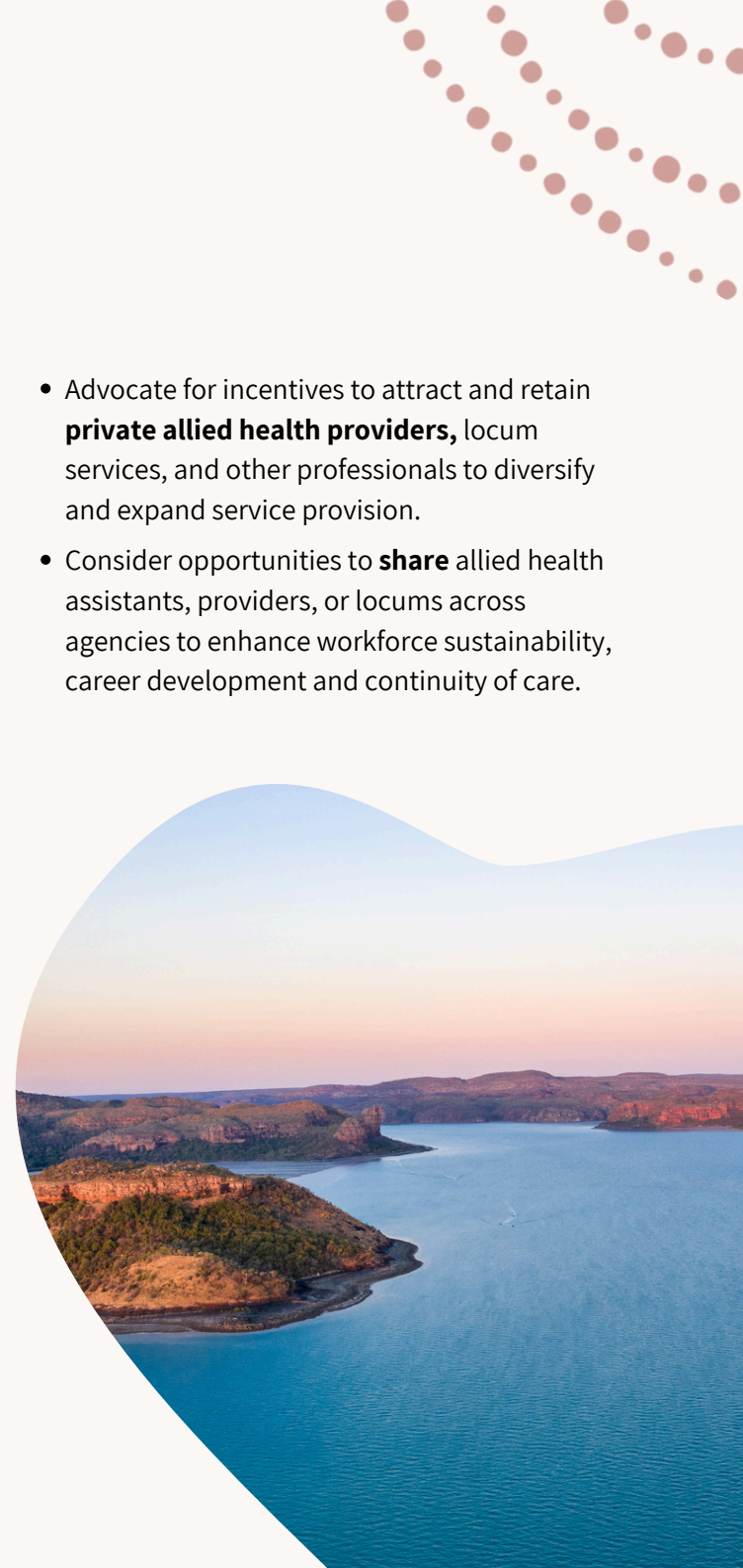
- Develop **cultural clinical supervisors**, mentors, coaches, or connector roles including clearly defined responsibilities and boundaries and sufficient training to build confidence and expertise in cultural supervision and guidance.
- Strengthen **Aboriginal empowerment** by sharing power and responsibility between allied health providers and Aboriginal staff within the multidisciplinary team.
- Ensure **appropriate** recognition and remuneration for those guiding and leading and **cultural expertise**. This addresses **cultural load**: the often-unrecognised, invisible workload organisations place on Aboriginal employees to provide local and cultural knowledge, advice, and support.

- Promote **transformational leadership** over transactional leadership to enhance interprofessional, culturally safe, collaborative practice.

Advocacy and investment for sustainable, multidisciplinary allied health services for the region

- Advocate for **flexibility** and **realistic funding** with commissioned services, grants and contracts to enable services to adapt workforce and service delivery to respond to local needs, including intensive supports or longer-term interventions.
- Develop strategies to **better integrate digital health**, such as telehealth, into service delivery ensuring adequate wrap around support.

- Advocate for incentives to attract and retain **private allied health providers**, locum services, and other professionals to diversify and expand service provision.
- Consider opportunities to **share** allied health assistants, providers, or locums across agencies to enhance workforce sustainability, career development and continuity of care.



Priority Area 2: High quality, safe, and accessible allied health services

Helpful Tools and References:

[10 ways to be a genuine ally to First Nations communities \(Amnesty International\)](#)

[Clinical Yarning \(UWA\) \(article and video\)](#)

[Cultural Responsiveness in Action Framework \(IAHA\)](#)

[Cultural Security Framework \(KAHPE\)](#)

[Deficit Discourse and Strengths-based Approaches \(ANU\)](#)

[East Kimberley Child and Family Service System Map \(BBY\)](#)

[Family Matter Report 2023 \(SNAICC\)](#)

[First Nations people often take on the 'cultural load' in their workplaces](#)

[Employers need to ease this burden \(The Conversation\)](#)

[Outback Tom yarns with mob about being a good ally \(YouTube\)](#)

[Resources to help you be a better First Nations Ally \(TASCI\)](#)

[Social and Emotional Wellbeing Fact Sheet \(TIMHWP\)](#)

[WellMob Healing Our Way](#)

[Working together in Aboriginal health: a framework to guide health professional practice. BMC Health Serv Res 20, 601 \(2020\), Wilson, A.M., Kelly, J., Jones, M. et al.](#)

Helpful Education and Training:

[Clinical Yarning \(WACRH\)](#)

[Indigenous Allied Health Australia \(IAHA\)](#)

[Indigenous Psychological Services](#)

[Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council](#)

[Kimberley Jiyigas](#)

[The WA Aboriginal Leadership Institute \(WAALI\)](#)



Priority Area 3: Enhanced allied health service integration, collaboration and continuity of care.

Effective integration of allied health services with General Practice and other primary healthcare providers is essential for improving local health outcomes. Integration refers to the **coordinated** and **collaborative** effort of allied health professionals and other healthcare providers to deliver comprehensive and **seamless care** across different **settings**.

Improved service integration requires timely **communication, planning, and coordination** to ensure individuals receive efficient, safe, and comprehensive care. The benefits include enhanced consumer satisfaction, improved service effectiveness and efficiencies, better continuity of care, and stronger relationships between providers individuals and their families.

Local challenges with delivering effective integrated care include high staff turnover, high rates of complex conditions with comorbidities, workforce sustainability, competing priorities, high service demand, long waitlists (for allied health services) and limited resources to facilitate effective integration.

Two key drivers to support effective integration are **communication** and **information sharing** between services and providers.

Key Enablers

Invest in building positive relationships for coordinated, collaborative care

- Integrated, comprehensive primary health care requires strong **leadership** and dedicated **resourcing** for **multidisciplinary care coordination**, planning and building and maintaining collaborative relationships with referrers and providers.

Clear allied health referral pathways

Promote the use of **Clinician Assist WA** (formerly HealthPathways WA) as the central access point for information on local allied health services.

Information to include:

- **service catchment areas** including outreach locations and schedules.
- **referral processes**, including **user-friendly** forms.
- **eligibility criteria** including inclusions and exclusions, fees and appointment **wait times** (if applicable).



Priority Area 3: Enhanced allied health service integration, collaboration and continuity of care

Efficient Communication and Information Sharing Pathways

Timely and efficient exchange of consumer information and clinical correspondence is essential for effective care coordination among internal and external care provider.

- Embed clear **information sharing pathways**, responsibilities, and protocols for timely exchange of consumer information to ensure it is accessible when required, even when individual clinicians are unavailable.
- Ensure all providers in the care team have a **mutual understanding** of the required information for effective referrals, triaging, and safe client care.
- Facilitate transdisciplinary, interagency **collaboration** through regular, coordinated case reviews or meetings for shared-care, complex or high-risk individuals.

Optimise Digital Health Capabilities

Advances in digital health can enhance efficiencies, access, and availability of allied health services especially in regional and remote areas.

- Allocate sufficient resources to implement, maintain, and train staff on the safe and effective use of digital technologies.
- Optimise and promote **My Health Record** to support individual health information sharing across services.
- Optimise **secure-messaging** platforms and functionality to share consumer information quickly and securely across all primary health care services and providers.

Advocate for an East Kimberley regional allied health network

- A dedicated role, portfolio, or partnership to facilitate local inter-agency East Kimberley allied health service coordination. This may include regular service coordination, planning and information sharing, meetings, monitoring and evaluation, networking, peer coaching, professional development with linkages into local networks and consortiums such as the Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum (KAHPF) and relevant sub-committees.

- Develop a digital, single point of access to a regional allied health travel and outreach schedule for all providers delivering services across the East Kimberley.
- Create and manage an online networking and informal information sharing channel (such as a social media platform) for local allied health providers to connect informally.



Priority Area 3: Enhanced allied health service integration, collaboration and continuity of care

Helpful Tools and References:

[Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care](#)

[Clinician Assist WA](#)

[Continuous Improvement Cultural Responsiveness: Audit Tool \(Bond University\)](#)

[Cultural Safety for Health Professionals \(HealthInfoNet\)](#)

[Cultural Security Framework, Guide and Self-Assessment Tool \(KAHPF\)](#)

[Cultural Safety in Practice with Children, Families and Communities \(ECDIP\)](#)

[Exploring Allied Health Information Sharing \(ADHA\)](#)

[NSQHS Standards: Communication support for Patient Referral and Multidisciplinary Collaboration \(ACSQHC\)](#)

[NSQHS Standards: User Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health \(ACSQHC\)](#)

[The Fundamental of Multidisciplinary Teams \(PEA\)](#)

Stakeholders

[Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum](#)

[Kimberley Health Professionals Network](#)

[Majarlin Kimberley Centre for Remote Health](#)

[Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health \(SARRAH\)](#)

[WA Primary Health Alliance \(WAPHA\)](#)



Additional References:

[2020 -25 National Health Reform Agreement, Department of Health and Aged Care, 2024](#)

[2020–25 National Health Reform Agreement \(NHRA\), Department of Health and Aging, 2020](#)

[Better Health for the Bush: Framework and model of care, PHN Hunter New England and Central Coast, 2024](#)

[Draft National Allied Health Workforce Strategy: Consultation Draft - V2.0, Department of Health and Aged Care, 2025](#)

[Evidence Brief: Growing up Strong Kids in the East Kimberley, Binarri-binya yarrowoo \(BBY\), 2022](#)

[Kimberley Needs Assessment 2022 - 2024, WAPHA, 2022](#)

[Report for the Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government on the Improvement of Access, Quality and Distribution of Allied Health Services in Regional, Rural and Remote Australia Commonwealth of Australia \(Department of Health\) 2019](#)

[Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce - Scope of Practice Extract of Final Report, Department of Health and Aged Care, 2024](#)

[Wunan Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework, Wunan Foundation, 2024](#)

About Wunan Health

Wunan Health and Well-Being Centre:

Wunan Health and Well-Being Centre (Wunan Health) opened in 2020 and is a purpose-built, multidisciplinary, and accredited Aboriginal-owned private medical practice based in Kununurra, in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia (WA).

Wunan Health is proudly owned and operated by Wunan Foundation, a not-for-profit Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.

Contact Details

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Appendix 1: Allied Health Service Planning, Funding and Advocacy Checklist

The following checklist reflects the priority areas of the East Kimberley Allied Health Framework:

Locally grown allied health workforce, education and training pathways

- ☐ Create allied health assistant roles within allied health teams, with meaningful workplace supports for entry-level roles.
- ☐ Advocate for local allied health education and training delivery in the East Kimberley.
- ☐ Host allied health work experience and student placements (high school, VET, and university).

Culturally responsive practice capabilities

- ☐ Invest in clinical cultural supervision, mentoring and / or coaching including ongoing reflective practice.
- ☐ Recognise and appropriately remunerate local Aboriginal expertise in your team.

Allied health workforce sustainability

- ☐ Facilitate, fund, and empower career and leadership development pathways for all members of the allied health team.
- ☐ Provide competitive employee benefits and incentives for all allied health staff.
- ☐ Meaningful onboarding and prioritise community immersion and positive workplace environments.

- ☐ Ensure sufficient wrap around supports for direct client care, staff wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Integrated, comprehensive allied healthcare

- ☐ Ensure sufficient resourcing for effective multidisciplinary, inter-agency care coordination.
- ☐ Elevate community engagement and building stakeholder relationships as core responsibilities, alongside clinical work.
- ☐ Ensure strong governance and resourcing for service planning and multidisciplinary team care.

Partnerships, stakeholders and funding

- ☐ Explore partnerships with local employment, jobs and skills, and education and training providers.
- ☐ Liaise with the KAHPF and other local groups, professional and peak bodies to collaboratively address local needs and impactful advocacy.
- ☐ Evidence supports from local stakeholders including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to strengthen grant applications (e.g. letters of support).
- ☐ Seek innovative investment and flexible funding to meet local needs, including adequate provisions for costs associated with remote and complex health care service delivery.