



TAIHS
Townsville Aboriginal &
Islander Health Service

Newsletter

Chairperson's Message



Dorothy Smith

Welcome to our first community newsletter. This will be coming out at the end of each month to keep members, community and stakeholders informed about what's happening at TAIHS.

At the Annual General Meeting in November 2025, the Board was pleased to see Michael Illin re-elected and to welcome new board member, Donald Whaleboat. While Donald is new to the current Board, he has previously served as a Director and Chairperson and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the board.

We started the new year with a new Strategic Plan (2026–2029). It recognises who we are and where we've come from, while setting a clear direction for a strong and sustainable future.

This year, the Board is also pleased to launch our Cultural Governance Framework, developed in partnership with Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA). Cultural governance is central to how TAIHS walks with our community—guided by cultural integrity, respect, and the authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. This document is underpinned by our Cultural Capability Framework. I'd like to acknowledge the artist whose work is featured on these documents: Jamahl Ross.

I'd like to acknowledge Pat Turner as she steps down as CEO of NACCHO and as Lead Convenor of the Coalition of Peaks. Since 2016, Pat has led NACCHO with strength and integrity, making an outstanding contribution to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector. We recognise her leadership and the significant work she has delivered across the sector, and we thank her for her service. We wish Pat all the very best for a well-earned retirement.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, and we welcome your feedback on anything you'd like us to cover in future editions.

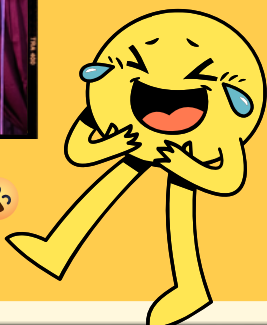
Primary Health Care

Deadly Funny

The SEWB team hosted the inaugural Deadly Funny Heats in Townsville, part of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival aimed at showcasing First Nations talent.

Hosted by Leon Filewood and Genoa Gela, the event featured 2016 Winner Jalen Sutcliffe and crowned Arika Appleby as the Townsville Heat winner. Participants will travel through communities to find the next winner for 2026, with national finalists earning a trip to perform at the Deadly Funny National Grand Final, recorded for NITV. The national winner will receive a significant cash prize.

HAHA!



Health Alerts

Unfortunately, whooping cough cases are rising in our community. It starts like a common cold with symptoms such as a runny nose and fatigue.



After a few days, intense coughing fits develop, often ending with a crowing "whoop" sound. However, infants under six months, vaccinated children, teenagers, and adults may not show this typical sound.

In adults, whooping cough can cause serious complications, with coughing lasting up to three months.



During wet season awareness of health risks, particularly melioidosis, is crucial. This infectious disease, caused by the bacterium *Burkholderia pseudomallei* found in soil and water & can be severe, especially for individuals with diabetes, alcohol use issues, or weakened immune systems. Symptoms include pneumonia, skin infections, and sepsis.

Our Flu Vaccination Campaign Commences in April 2026
"Don't Get Flu Babe"

Breast Screen Visit

The Breast Screen van is visiting us again from 23rd March - 2nd April

Thanks to the fantastic response we received last year, Breast Screen Queensland has increased its visiting days.

Booking an appointment is simple! You can either schedule online <https://www.breastscreen.qld.gov.au/> or call 132050 to speak with one of their friendly team members.



Primary Health Care

Deadly Choices - Cowboys Community Day

It's That Time Again!

The NRL season has officially kicked off, and we are excited to celebrate our partnership with the North Queensland Cowboys!

TAIHS Deadly Choices - Community Day will be a fun-filled event for families of all kinds. This is your opportunity to come out and meet some of the amazing players from the North QLD Cowboys!

Join us for:

FREE EVENT - 13th April 2026 - FREE BBQ**FREE Rides**Chance to win **FREE Prizes** and **FREE tickets** to upcoming home games

Our **2026 Health Check Shirts** have also arrived, and we want our community to look fantastic while cheering for their favorite teams so schedule your 715 today.



Free Lung Screen - Free Bowel Screen - Free Check - Free Shirt

Lung cancer is the most common cancer and a leading cause of cancer deaths among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Australia introduced the National Lung Cancer Screening Program, offering free low-dose CT scans for high-risk individuals, particularly focusing on Indigenous populations.

To schedule an appointment with our GPs, call 4759 4000, and remember to request your free shirt when you return for results!



Bowel cancer stands as one of the most prevalent cancers affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the risk escalating as age increases.

However, there is some positive news: when detected early, 90% of bowel cancers can be treated successfully.

Contact us today on 4759 4000 to schedule an appointment with one of our GPs, and don't forget to ask for your free shirt when you come back for your results!

Community & Youth Services

New Program to Support Young Families

We are excited to announce that we are now supporting young parents through our newly funded program Supported Tenancies for Young Parents STYP

STYP provides support for young parents with areas including tenancy, living skills, parenting skills, educations, employment and wellbeing goals

Through outreach case management, our service will help young parents build stability and skills to maintain their tenancy

Referrals are accepted by:

- Department of Housing
- Community Housing Providers
- Queensland Health

To be eligible for support, clients must be:

- 16-25 years of age
- A parent, pregnant or expecting a child
- Living in Public or Community Housing Accommodation
- Living in Townsville Local Government Area (LGA)
- Willing to engage with case management services

Foster & Kinship Care Service

The Foster and Kinship Care Service, has received more funding to increase carers, improve placements and help keep children and young people out of residential care.

The additional service types will now include:

Connecting Kin

- Identify and engage extended family members who could care for a child.
- Family finding and relationship mapping.
- Support family decision making around kinship care.

Equipping Kin

- Conduct initial kinship carer assessments.
- Provide preparation, screening, and early training.

Supporting Kin

- Ongoing support for approved kinship carers, including reassessments and case support.

Foster Care Recruitment

- Attract and assess new foster carers.
- Promote fostering and manage applications.

WELL DONE



TAIHS
TOWNSVILLE AREA INDEPENDENT HOUSING SERVICES

SUPPORTED TENANCIES FOR YOUNG PARENTS

SUPPORTING YOUNG PARENTS AND FAMILIES TOWARDS INDEPENDENT LIVING

WHO CAN WE SUPPORT?
Young parents and / or young people that are pregnant or expecting a child who are:

- Located in Townsville
- Local Government Area
- Aged 16 - 25 years
- Residing in long-term in a Department of Housing or Community Housing accommodation

WHAT WE DO?
TAIHS Supported Tenancies for Young Parents Program support families residing in social and community housing to sustain and maintain their tenancy towards stability.

Through outreach case management, we support in areas such as:

- Tenancy skills and advocacy
- Practical support with basic home maintenance
- Parenting skills development and support with navigating complex systems
- Living skills and empowerment towards independent living

REACH OUT!
Speak with your housing provider or Queensland Health provider to complete a referral or contact us directly.

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