



MEDIA RELEASE

Big-RIVERS project to support regional, integrated renal care

15 October 2025

Recent funding from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Integrated Multidisciplinary Models of Primary Care will see the Big-RIVERS (**R**egional **I**ntegrated **V**ision for **E**ffective **R**enal **S**upport) project rolled out over the next four years.

Responding directly to the needs of local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, the project aims to support integrated, holistic and patient-centred care for people in the Big Rivers region of the Northern Territory (NT).

The project will involve Wurli Wurlinjang Health Service, Katherine West Health Board Aboriginal Corporation, Sunrise Health Service, NT Health and Menzies School of Health Research working in partnership to embed efficient workflows for active monitoring, identification and management of chronic conditions.

Partners will utilise and build upon Territory Kidney Care (TKC), a trusted clinical decision support tool used across the NT. The team will also engage with consumers and communities through renal social days and develop culturally appropriate resources for kidney health education.

The NT experiences some of the highest rates of chronic diseases, including kidney disease, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, which disproportionately impacts First Nations peoples. This project aims to help health systems better identify and manage chronic conditions, reducing the risk of people 'falling through the gaps'.

Read more about the project:

https://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Projects/Kidney/The_Big-RIVERS_Project/

Quotes attributable to Project Chief Investigator, Dr Natasha Pavlin:

"The Big-RIVERS Project will foster a collaborative, regional approach to renal health and will contribute to the evidence base for shared service delivery for our vulnerable, mobile patient cohort.

"I'm looking forward to leading this locally-grounded initiative and commit to staying responsive to community and health service needs throughout the research process."

Quotes attributable to Research Fellow at Menzies School of Health Research, Dr Sophie Pascoe:

“The original idea for this project was instigated four years ago as part of our work with Wurli Wurlinjang around Territory Kidney Care (TKC). Clinicians on the ground mentioned the need for regional, renal-specific care coordination and we recognised the value of embedding TKC as a platform to enable data integration and collaborative workflows across health services.

“We are looking forward to building relationships across the region and running social days with dialysis patients to align with health promotion and education initiatives.”

Quotes attributable to Executive Manager Clinical Operations, Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corporation, Kym Monzari:

“At Sunrise Health Service, our strength in the region comes from standing alongside our Katherine community-controlled health services Wurli Wurlinjang, Katherine West Health Board. By sharing knowledge and learning together, we can grow stronger as one, always focused on improving care for the families and communities we serve in the big river’s region.

“Partnering with Menzies allows for expansion of vitally required services to be implemented and information collected to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people.”

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About Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies is at the forefront of health and medical research dedicated to improving the lives of peoples across the Northern Territory, Asia Pacific and beyond. By joining scientific knowledge with community wisdom, Menzies strives to Close the Gap, and shape a healthier, more equitable future where communities can thrive.