

Home at heart of doc's work

KEEPING patients at home and out of hospitals and clinics is the number one concern for Darwin kidney doctor Jaqui Hughes.

Dr Hughes, who works in Royal Darwin Hospital's Renal Therapy Unit, was on Friday named the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association's indigenous doctor of the year.

She has spent 10 of her 20 years in the professional field dedicated to helping Territorians with kidney disease.

"I'm a senior specialist physician and I work with Top End renal services and have one really important role, I lead the New Start Dialysis Transition program," she said

"We know it's necessary to develop a fit-for-purpose recovery model but on the other hand, can you deliver it? We've been able to do that, work out what is needed and make sure we deliver and our clients get what they need."

Dr Hughes said regardless of their ailment, patients

wanted to be recovering in the comfort of their homes.

"We know getting people home is the number one priority," she said.

Through home haemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis or kidney transplantation, Dr Hughes and her team provide a number of options to those suffering from kidney problems, particularly among indigenous and Torres Strait Islanders.

But her work has had an impact across the country, with the development of a Renal Health Road Map, helping to determine how all Australians could better plan their route back to health.

"The Renal Health Road Map will help us turn our focus to improving people's health early on, to try and reduce the rate of end-of-road kidney failure," she said.

"That's the beauty of Territory clinicians – we can provide direct care to people but can also change Australia's care system and innovate to improve our health."



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Picture: KATRINA BRIDGEFORD