



BIG RIVERS HEALING FOR OUR MOB:

Supporting Recovery from Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence.

November 2025



KATHERINE WEST HEALTH BOARD
Aboriginal Corporation



phn
NORTHERN TERRITORY
An Australian Government Initiative

RURAL
Workforce
AGENCY NT



NORTHERN TERRITORY
GOVERNMENT



340,000 km²

Big Rivers region of the
Northern Territory

21,500

approximate population
in the Big Rivers region

4

partner
organisations

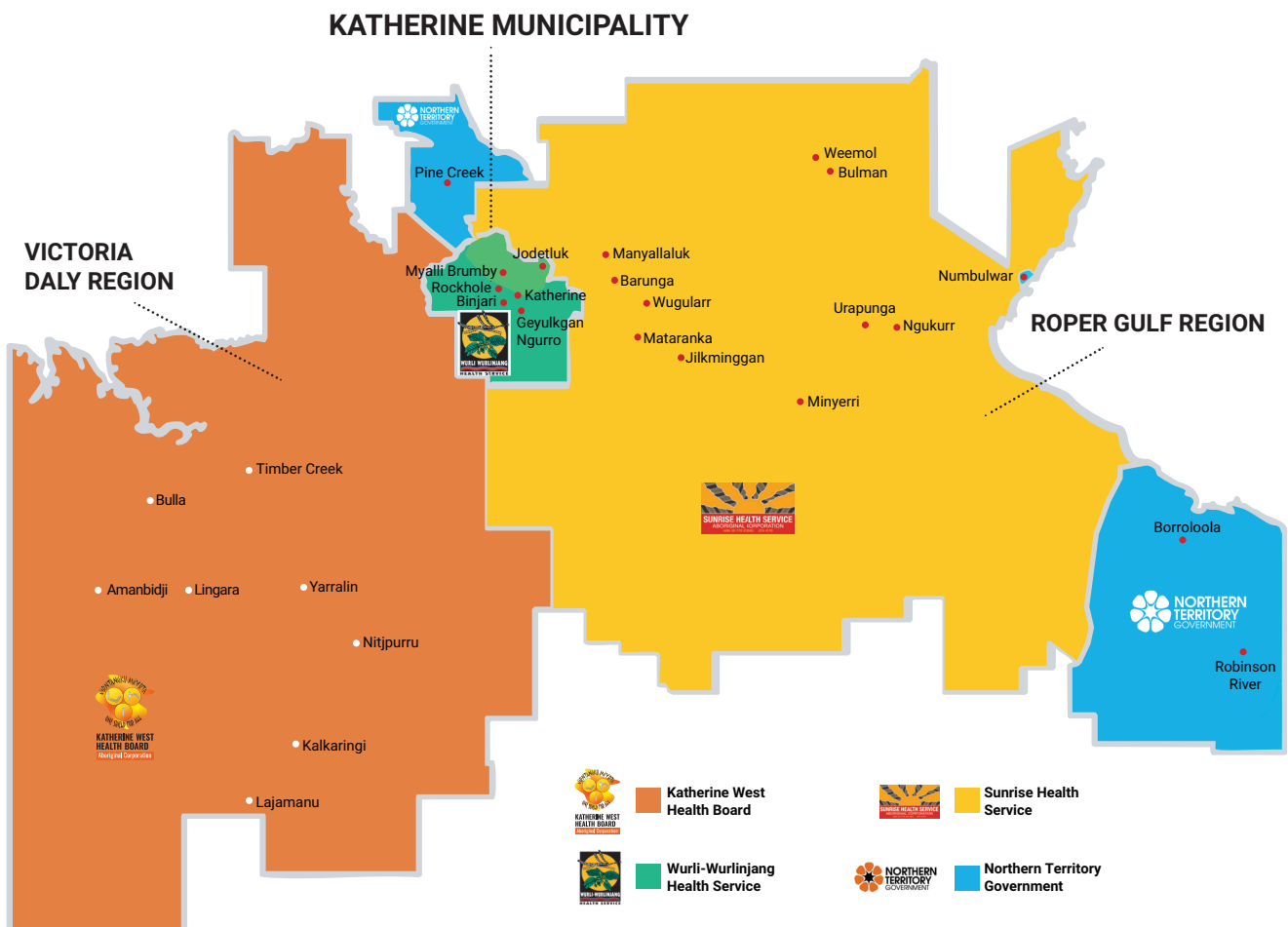


Introduction

The Big Rivers Supporting Recovery from Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) – Healing for Our Mob program provides culturally-safe, trauma-informed practical and therapeutic care to FDSV victim-survivors, their families and communities to support their longer-term recovery and healing from FDSV.

The program also raises awareness about FDSV and works with communities to build skills and strength to support victim-survivors, and to lead sustainable primary prevention and early intervention programs.

The program is delivered through a strong, collaborative partnership by 3 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) – Katherine West Health Board (KWHB), Sunrise Health Board (Sunrise), Wurli-Wurlinjang Health Service (Wurli) – and NT Health. It's delivered across the culturally and linguistically diverse, 340,000 km² Big Rivers region of the Northern Territory.



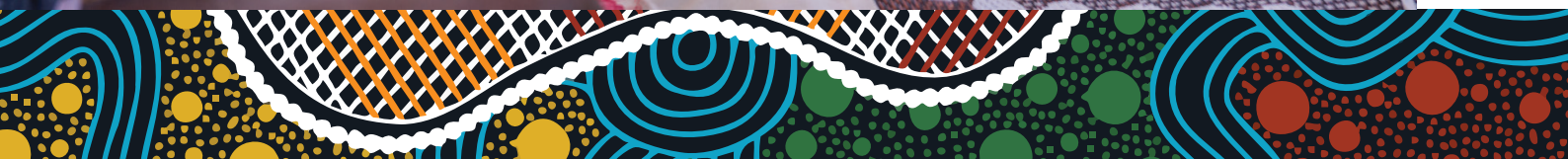
Big Rivers regional approach for services and support

The 4 partner organisations delivering the Healing for Our Mob program - KWHB, Sunrise, Wurli and NT Health – independently operate healthcare clinics across the Big Rivers region. The clinics are often the first point of contact for people experiencing FDSV and play a key role in early detection, intervention, specialised care, treatment and referrals for people experiencing FDSV.

The 4 partner organisations have a history of working in collaboration, including during the COVID pandemic and, since 2023, working in partnership to deliver the Big Rivers Tackling Indigenous Smoking program.

These foundations enabled the Healing for Our Mob program to design and roll out culturally secure client services, systems and processes consistently and time-effectively across the region from late 2024.

The program provides a “no wrong door” approach for clients accessing the program, and collaboration and information sharing – within established confidentiality and consent protocols – to provide holistic case management and care coordination, reduce the need for clients to repeat their stories, and reduce service duplication, notably as clients travel across the vast region.



The Healing for Our Mob program also draws on local knowledge, community consultation and stakeholder engagement to provide services tailored to each community's unique needs.

The Big Rivers Regional Projects Governance Group, comprising the CEO and a Board Director from each community-controlled organisation, and counterparts from NT Health, provides local knowledge and experience for strategic guidance and oversight of the program.

With community input, guidance from the governance group, and additional program funding, Big Rivers regional programs grew from two programs in late 2024 – the Healing for Our Mob and Tackling Indigenous Smoking programs – to include FDSV primary prevention and early intervention programs, and additional support for children and young people healing from trauma by late 2025.

The expansion of the Big Rivers services and programs provides additional and complementary services, care and support for FDSV victim-survivors, their families and communities. It also recognises the importance of community connection, support and understanding to the healing journeys of FDSV victim-survivors, their families and communities.

Supporting recovery from FDSV

Healing for Our Mob

- For FDSV victim-survivors, their children and communities.

Healing for children and young people.

Health promotion

Tackling Indigenous Smoking

FDSV primary prevention:

- FDSV prevention education (for 5-18yo children)
- Preventing tech-based abuse against women and children

FDSV early intervention:

- Walking a new path together (for 11-17yo boys)
- Strong men leading change



Healing for Our Mob service areas

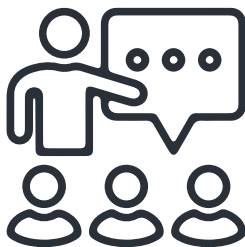
The Healing for Our Mob program has 3 service delivery areas:



- **Practical support:** individual conversations to assess client needs, understand their concerns and support their ongoing healing. This includes support to navigate and access services and warm referrals, and victim-survivor safety.



- **Therapeutic support:** individual and group therapeutic support delivered by a team of FDSV-specialised social workers, counsellors and engagement officers. Team members work with victim-survivors to understand their strengths, worries and needs and support their recovery from trauma.



- **Awareness and advocacy:** FDSV awareness-raising and prevention activities and events delivered on country, and school sessions on healthy relationships and protective behaviours to build strong, supportive and empowered communities. The program also works to elevate community voices on what's needed to support healing in funding applications and community consultation submissions.

The program team is based in Katherine, with regular, scheduled travel across the region to maximise time spent in communities with clients, health clinic staff and local services.

Clients are referred to the program by all partner organisations – KWHB, Sunrise, Wurli and NT Health – as well as regional FDSV service providers and by self-referral. Weekly intake assessment meetings and regular case conferencing support a client-centred, coordinated provision of care and support.



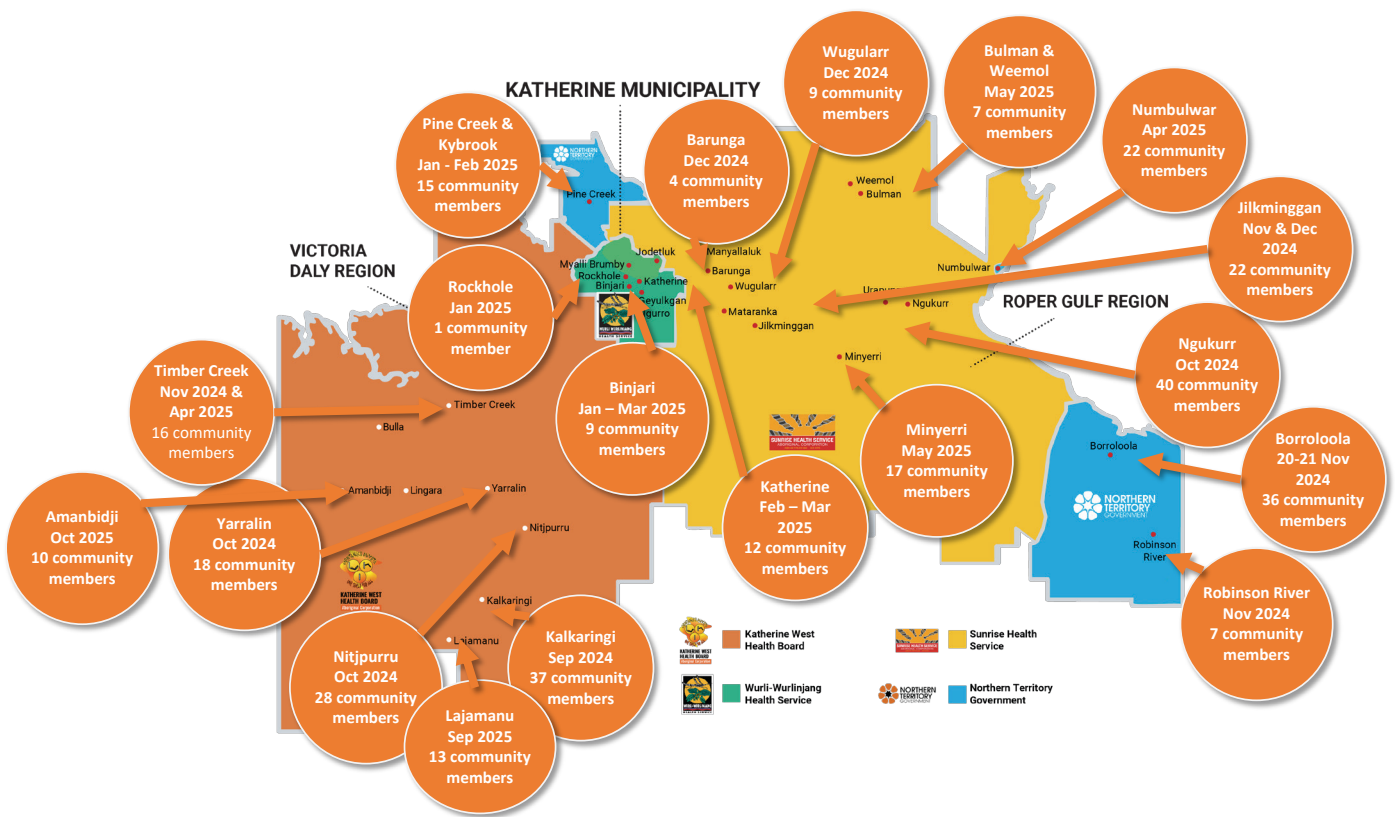


Guided by community voices

An initial focus for the program was to hear from communities about their concerns, needs and service gaps, and to better understand community awareness of, and attitudes towards, FDSV.

Over 12 months, in 20 Big Rivers communities, 323 community members spoke to program staff in one-on-one conversations and group discussions.

Those community voices continue to inform the program’s service delivery and priorities, FDSV education and awareness activities, and advocacy to ensure services meet local needs and respond to the voices, ideas and solutions provided by community members.



323 community members consulted from Sept 2024 – Oct 2025

78% women
22% men

84% Aboriginal
5% non-Aboriginal
1% un stated



The program's activities, guided by community voices, include:

To make it safer for someone experiencing FDSV, communities need:

- 1. Safe houses**
- 2. Counselling**
- 3. More services for men.**
- 4. FDSV education, awareness and empowerment.**

- Work with safe houses to build staff capacity, provide FDSV awareness activities, and support women and children accessing safe houses.
- Continue, with Victoria Daly Regional Council, to advocate for a safe house in Timber Creek, and support community advocacy for improved availability of safe houses.
- Link with other programs, including the Preventing tech-based abuse against women and children, Walking a new path together and Strong men leading change programs to support on country men's groups and safe and supported yarning.
- Promote the program's therapeutic support and link clients to other social and emotional wellbeing programs and services.
- Record community voices on healing for education and social media.

For healing, communities need:

- 1. Time on country**
- 2. Community activities**
- 3. Having someone to talk to and to listen.**
- 4. FDSV education and awareness.**

- Provide on country activities for women and girls, including cook-ups, camps and yarning circles.
- Link with regional services to support on country men's groups and safe and supported yarning.
- Provide therapeutic and practical care and support, case management and warm referrals to support FDSV victim-survivors, their families and communities heal.
- Participate in community events, including Barunga Festival, Kalkaringi Freedom Day Festival, Big Rivers AFL days, raising FDSV awareness and promoting the program.

Community awareness of the types of violence was strong, with awareness varying across the region.

- Facilitate Mooditj leader training for staff in partner and community organisations to deliver culturally secure resilience, relationships and sexual health education to young people.
- Provide on country FDSV awareness-raising and prevention activities and events, empowering communities to identify red flags, and know how to safely support victim-survivors and people using violence.
- Build local capacity for staff within partner organisations and FDSV specialised services to deliver FDSV awareness and empowerment activities.

Communities identified the clinic, police, safe house, family members, and Elders and older people as people who can help FDSV victim-survivors.

Not all communities have permanent police or clinic staff, and only 7 of the 20 Big Rivers communities consulted have a safe house.

- Work with health clinic staff, police, safe house staff and community leaders to build consistent language and understanding of FDSV for identifying, assessing and responding to FDSV.
- Roll out the Strong men leading change program, empowering men to take active roles in preventing FDSV, with program guidance from Elders and local leaders.
- Continue to build consistent community awareness about types of FDSV, red flags, and formal and informal supports available in communities, and empower communities to support the safety of FDSV victim-survivors and their families.
- Support community advocacy for improved availability of safe house accommodation and to address other FDSV sector service gaps.
- Work with FDSV services and NT government agencies to support victim-survivors and elevate their voices and concerns for service availability and accessibility at forums including the NT Family Safety Framework and Big Rivers DFSV Network meetings.



Shame and fear were identified as the greatest barriers for FDSV victim-survivors to get help and stay safe, and more than half of respondents said FDSV was or sometimes is a private matter that can only be talked about within the family.

- Deliver on country FDSV education and awareness activities, helping people to understand and overcome barriers for seeking and offering help, and access available FDSV services in the region.
- Deliver FDSV awareness and prevention sessions in schools and with community groups aimed at empowering people and communities to recognise and respond to FDSV and support the safety of FDSV victim-survivors and their families.

The program team members acknowledge the generosity and openness of community members in sharing their knowledge and experiences of what's needed to keep FDSV victim-survivors, their families and communities safe and to support healing from violence.

Information from the consultation continues to guide and inform program planning, service delivery priorities, FDSV awareness activities and advocacy, and conversations with communities.



Healing for Our Mob clients

Clients are referred to the program by all partner organisations – KWHB, Sunrise, Wurli and NT Health – as well as regional FDSV service providers and self referrals. Clients must not be at immediate risk of harm and must consent to the referral.

As at 30 September 2025:

Client demographics were:



The 3 most identified client recovery needs recorded during program intake assessments were:



Building a support network
in the community.



Counselling.



Community FDSV
education and awareness.

The 3 most identified client concerns recorded during program intake assessments were:



The status of a domestic
violence order (DVO) – if one
was being applied for, in place
or due to expire for the person
who has used violence.



The location of the person who
has used violence – this could
be in the same household, in
the same community, or their
expected change in location.



Housing insecurity
experienced by
the client.

KWHB, Sunrise and Wurli have agreed consistent processes and systems to record client demographics, service needs and a client's healing journey in Communicare, their electronic patient record system.

The consistency in record-keeping across the 3 partner organisations supports client-focused, timely and coordinated client care and support. It also supports efficient and consistent reporting for ongoing program monitoring and evaluation, and it guides and informs program planning, service delivery priorities, FDSV awareness activities.



FDSV investment recommendations for the region

Since program commencement in late 2024, and acceptance of client referrals from May 2025, the Healing for Our Mob program has continued to advocate for FDSV victim-survivors, their families and communities.

Advocacy has been emboldened by conversations and discussions with 323 community members from 20 Big Rivers communities as part of a community consultation. It has also been emboldened by client records in Communicare systems that identify client concerns and support needs.

FDSV investment recommendations for the Big Rivers region are:

- Increased funding for crisis and after-hours support for FDSV victim-survivors, including increased support staff based in the community, support for victim-survivors leaving a community, and a safe house in Timber Creek.
- Increased support and services for people who use FDSV, especially men, to break the cycle of violence. Programs should focus on healing and accountability to foster emotional regulation and enable safe reconnection with families and communities, to connect with culture and spirit, and be provided on country.
- Support for creating family safety plans and support for men returning home from prison to break the cycle of violence.
- Investment in Health Justice Partnerships as a way to integrate healthcare and legal support to address the diverse and intersecting barriers faced by Aboriginal people in accessing justice and support.
- Long-term funding for meaningful and sustainable change, based on community consultation and codesign that honours lived experience and local expertise. A minimum commitment of 4 years is essential for delivering FDSV programs that empower communities to lead healing initiatives, address cycles of violence and build resilience.
- Recognition – in FDSV policy, practice, service delivery and system reform – that social determinants of health – including housing, overcrowding, substance dependency, food security and sanitation – can increase the risk of FDSV being used and being experienced.

The work of the Big Rivers Healing for Our Mob program, and investment recommendations, align with the NT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028, Target 13, The National Agreement on Closing the Gap and National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2023.





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