

28 Feb 2023

The Honorary Mr Mark Butler

RE: Cut of funds to Asthma Foundation of the Northern Territory (AFNT)

The accurate detection and effective management of asthma and other respiratory diseases from an early age is critical to avoid the devastating effects that otherwise result and the associated costs this adds to the health system.

It is imperative that initial contact is face-to-face so the complexities of the condition can be properly communicated and the use of different devices and medications can be fully explained and demonstrated. This support should continue until the patients have confidence in self-management.

From working with the Asthma Foundation NT for many years, I know this is the approach that has long been taken in the Territory. I appreciate too that, being based in Darwin, this has necessitated travel to other parts of the Territory to undertake client consultations and to build local capacity with training and education. Many of my patients have been serviced by AFNT, all of whom have been complimentary of the quality of service provided.

I understand this approach is now at risk because Commonwealth funds have been cut by Asthma Australia. I heard the CEO on radio saying that AA is an organisation that provides direct services to all Australians, but that contravenes what is practically happening for people in the NT. Thus, I am at a loss to know why this situation has arisen.

The NT is unique with different clientele where the burden of disease is higher. I fear that remote and regional parts of the Territory will soon receive a significantly inferior service due to the decisions of Asthma Australia. If Asthma Australia does not want the AFNT to provide the service that is needed, who do they expect will?

As a clinician and researcher who services the NT, I plead that the money once paid to AFNT should be reinstated so continuity of care can be maintained for all Territorians.

Yours sincerely



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Cc Dr Crundall, Chair of AFNT