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MEDIA RELEASE

ASTHMA FOUNDATION NT STRUGGLING TO BREATHE

Since 2018 The Asthma Foundation of Northern Territory (AFNT) has received diminishing Commonwealth funding. It is set to receive only \$42,000 this year – 28% of what was previously provided.

This has resulted from the Federal Government channelling money for its Asthma Management Program (AMP) exclusively through Asthma Australia (AA). The AMP is aimed at improving the management of asthma across the country. Allocations used to go directly to all States and Territories to implement programs to meet local needs and circumstances. Distribution is now determined by AA – an organisation created from Foundations on the east coast and SA. AFNT and the Asthma Foundation of WA are not part of AA.

AA has been unwilling to fund the AFNT service model that has been successfully delivering for decades. Funding has only been offered for a model reliant on telephone access, web-based interactions and an extensive health infrastructure.

“That model shows little understanding that the conditions for service delivery in the NT need more intense investment if people are to be properly engaged. For some of the most vulnerable peoples in the NT engagement demands personal connection and regular follow-up. The AA approach limits the cultivation of culturally appropriate ways to embed good asthma control practices.” said Dr Ian Crundall, Chair of AFNT

Evaluation of the AMP notes that clients are seeking a service which is “less formal, more personalised and flexible so as to suit their personal circumstances”. This is precisely what Asthma NT has been providing for decades and yet AA has steadily reduced funds.

“We have drawn heavily on our reserves and curtailed programs to maintain the service components that Commonwealth funds used to support. The current level of service provided by AFNT is no longer sustainable. Our focus on delivering meaningful services to remote and regional areas is certainly at risk. AFNT will continue to operate but its ability to cover the breadth of the Territory will be severely limited.” said Dr Ian Crundall

“For the sake of \$150,000 from the annual AMP budget of \$2.1M, the future of AFNT is looking dire. AFNT has not been asking for more money, only what it used to be granted. We are about to lose capacity and compromise service because of the priorities set by AA. It has nothing to do with the effectiveness of AFNT.

Helping Territorians Breathe Better



AFNT acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we meet and conduct our services, respecting language and culture and Elders past and present.

