



## **Health matters – an update from your Community Advisory Committee**

It has been a busy and productive first half of 2025 for the Indian Ocean Territories Health Service (IOTHS) Community Advisory Committee. Two meetings have been held in recent months, allowing the Committee discuss a number of issues affecting the IOT and potential solutions.

During the meeting in February, the Committee spoke about a range of topics including mental health services, x-ray and mammogram screening equipment on Home Island, and updated communication material on various health assets to reflect the needs of our diverse communities.

A calendar of health events was also approved by the Committee, in order to facilitate focussed communications for the IOT throughout the year.

The Committee also met in May, with mental health services for IOT residents again identified as a key area of concern. Training is currently being delivered to IOTHS staff by Lifeline, and there is also work underway to run mental health first aid courses on the islands.

Discussions were also held on the schedule of visiting specialists, as well as allied health providers. The Committee was advised of upcoming visits by the National Disability Insurance Agency, and also representatives of the Department of Health, Disability, and Ageing to provide information on My Aged Care plans. Both visits are strongly supported from the committee members and highlights the impact of the committee's advocacy.

Over the two meetings this year, we also covered and followed up on a number of other important issues, including:

- transport options for residents with mobility issues
- the feasibility of 4G personal emergency alert buttons on Christmas Island
- the prevalence of diabetes in the IOT
- translated versions of medical information for IOT residents
- the presence of vermin and possible health implications for IOT communities
- the desire on island to have more female GPs and visiting specialists.

Follow-up actions have been noted for some items and it is always beneficial to hear the opinions and feedback from Committee members when discussing such important topics.

These meetings are vital for the successful design and delivery of community-driven and fit-for-purpose health services, and I am pleased to have representatives from Christmas Island and

the Cocos (Keeling) Islands involved in advocating for the best outcomes for our communities. The CAC meets every three months and if you have any health-related issues you would like raised, please contact a CAC Committee member or alternatively, email my office at [iotadministrator@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:iotadministrator@infrastructure.gov.au). The planned meeting dates can be found below.

The health services on Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands are delivered by the Indian Ocean Territories Health Service (IOTHS) through the Australian Government and include inpatient and emergency care, home and community health care, pathology and radiology services, oral health care, visiting specialist medical and allied health services and telehealth.

**Planned 2025 meeting dates for the IOTHS Community Advisory Committee:**

- Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025
- Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025