

Media Release

For Immediate Release

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Thimithi Nhii Primary Health Care Centre opens in Mapoon

Dignitaries from all over Queensland headed for the tiny Cape York community of Mapoon on Tuesday for the opening of Apunipima Cape York Health Council's Thimithi Nhii Primary Health Care Centre.

This is Apunipima's fourth standalone Primary Health Care Centre built under the Federal Government's Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Project and the result is a win for the community of Mapoon and Cape York communities in general.

Mayor of Mapoon and Apunipima Chairperson, Aileen Addo thanked a long list of people before cutting the ribbon in front of the community and guests to officially open the new facility.

"This is something very positive, it's been a long time coming but it's finally here. This community is growing and we have to build infrastructure to go with that growth," Mrs Addo said.

According to Mrs Addo, the flow-on effects from the opening of the new centre will resonate for years to come.

"This is about more than just health, this is another strategy we've put in place to close the gap. This is about getting everything in order and seeing better outcomes like more community-based jobs, better infrastructure and community development."

Just prior to the speeches a feast was initiated with the Mapoon Health Action Team (HAT) serving a local favourite, fried scones with butter and honey.

HAT Chair and local Councillor, Dawn Braun was ecstatic that opening day had finally arrived.

"This is so important for Mapoon, it's what the community has asked for and what the community wanted, you can't imagine how long we've waited for this," she said.

As a HAT member for over eight years, Mrs Braun stressed the importance of having Community Controlled Health Care.

"We desperately needed our own building so that we can increase services and provide culturally appropriate health care. We know this will make a big impact."

By the end of the speeches, the air began to fill with the smell of roasting meat as the barbecues were fired up and local Apunipima staff and community volunteers cooked up a feast for the guests.

Apunipima has worked out of the Queensland Health clinic since 2008 with the office consisting of a small donga behind the clinic. PHC Manager Debra Jia said the team are extremely grateful to Queensland Health for the great relationship they've enjoyed but said it's a huge relief for Apunipima to finally have a purpose-built space.

"The donga was very compact, but being in the new centre is going to open up more avenues for health service delivery," Mrs Jia laughed.

Services available when the Thimithi Nhii Primary Health Centre opens will include Medical and Allied Health services as well as Health Promotion and Prevention programs. Social & Emotional Wellbeing activities will also be available through Apunipima's Men's Support programs.

Mrs Jia has lived in Mapoon for 30 years and her dream is to see this centre continue to grow and she says that will mean continued expansion of those services.

"When I'm 80 I want to be still coming to this centre and seeing it still expanding and growing with the community. Over the last 30 years Mapoon has gone from its infancy to now, where it has two health services and we can keep going. There is so much more opportunity now for us to improve services and we'll keep working with the Health Action Team and the community to achieve those goals."

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About Apunipima

Apunipima Cape York Health Council is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. We provide comprehensive Primary Health Care and Social Emotional Wellbeing Services to eleven Cape York communities.

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