

Media Release

For Immediate Release

4 August 2022

Date announced for opening of new Health Care Clinic in Mapoon

The community of Mapoon is preparing to celebrate the opening of a new purpose-built Primary Health Care (PHC) Centre on 23 August.

The Thimithi Nhii Primary Health Care Centre will be opened by Apunipima Chairperson and Mapoon Mayor, Aileen Addo, who will cut the ribbon on the new facility in front of elders, community members, the local Health Action Team and local and regional dignitaries who are all invited to come and enjoy the festivities.

“This is fantastic news. We’re growing in size as a community and there was an increasing need for a Primary Health Care Centre to work alongside Queensland Health to match that population growth,” Mrs Addo said.

The new facility was made possible thanks to local Traditional Owner group, the Rugapayn Corporation.

“We’re extremely grateful to the Rugapayn Corporation for granting us the land to build a much-needed Primary Health Care Centre in Mapoon,” she said.

The new facility is funded by the Australian Government’s Rural & Remote Health Infrastructure Project, which funded the builds for Apunipima’s new PHC Centre in Kowanyama last year and the Aurukun and Coen facilities before that.

The design of the new facility comes after extensive consultation with the local community, driven largely by the Mapoon Health Action Team, a localised committee committed to improving health care for their community. The result is a facility that provides culturally appropriate health care yet meets the strict clinical standards and requirements demanded of any modern medical facility.

“What we are seeing with the new PHC Centre in Mapoon is exactly what ‘community control’ is all about. The Centre has been designed by community, it will be staffed and run by community and it will ultimately belong to the community,” said Apunipima CEO Debra Malthouse.

Currently Apunipima delivers its health services from the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service premises in Mapoon. This arrangement has limited Apunipima’s capacity to increase primary health care services in the community. Community control was always the goal for the community and having a stand-alone centre will give Apunipima the opportunity to respond to community health needs in a way that community want.

“From a health outcomes perspective, it’s vital for Mapoon to have their own health care, something that they own and control and can identify with. We are seeing more and more evidence all the time that culturally appropriate primary health care that is driven and led by the community, improves the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,” Mrs Malthouse added.

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. Apunipima will continue to work with the Mapoon Health Action Team as the clinic is established in the coming months and into the future to determine health priorities and assess key service delivery needs.

The build of the new facility was undertaken by James Construction Queensland before handing over to Apunipima’s infrastructure team who are currently hard at work undertaking the fitout and getting the Centre ready to show the community through on 23 August.

Mapoon resident and Primary Health Care Centre Manager, Debra Jia, is very excited about the opening and having the modern and spacious new facility to service the needs of her community.

“We want to nurture a friendly culture and offer a space where the community feels safe to come and see the doctor or the health worker regularly, or even just to stop in for a confidential chat in the air con,” Mrs Jia said.

Mrs Jia is an Alngith woman with family ties to Badu Island, Mornington Island and Lawn Hill (Waanyi) who has lived in Mapoon for over 30 years and has called it home for most of her life.

“This is a big step forward for Mapoon. The new PHC Centre will not only improve the health services available, but there are other flow-on benefits for the community like jobs and career pathways, so this is a big win all round.”

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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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