menzies SCHOOL OF HEALTH RESEARCH

MEDIA RELEASE

Keeping Place at the Centre: RHC3 Official Launch in Mparntwe (Alice Springs)

7 October 2025

This week marks a new era in remote health research, with the official launch of Menzies School of Health Research's (Menzies) Remote Health Systems and Climate Change Centre (RHC3), a sustainable, place-based research team with its hub in Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

This historic launch highlights the importance of place in remote health to drive stronger health outcomes. It will be conducted as part of the 10th Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium (8-9 October 2025) which is being held in the Northern Territory for the first time since the national Symposium's began in 2008.

Built on the legacy of Emeritus Professor John Wakerman who remains a mentor for the team, RHC3 has grown into one of the largest place-based research teams in Central Australia, prioritising close partnerships with local health services and community organisations.

Bringing together more than 30 research experts across remote health service delivery, workforce, climate change, head health and healing, and alcohol and other drugs, the Centre is committed to conducting research that meets local needs, translating knowledge into practice and policy, and ultimately improving the health of remote Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Understanding the impacts of climate change on remote communities, co-designing health workforce retention strategies and developing digital solutions to improve healthcare access are among the priorities of RHC3. The Centre's researchers work collaboratively with community, health services and policy makers to drive positive change.

The launch will also feature the unveiling of an artwork representing the Centre, created by Keioni Lander, a proud Arrernte, Kaytetye, Warlpiri & Anmatyerre woman. Titled '*We are all connected*', the piece captures the complex layers of remote health and emphasises the connections between people, communities, country and health.

The artwork incorporates key symbols – a gumtree, gum-leaves and nuts, hands, people and local communities, paying tribute to the Centre's place-based work grounded in environment, healing, co-design and collaboration.

The 10th Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium is delivered by the National Rural Health Alliance, in association with the Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN) and the Federation of Rural Australian Medical Educators (FRAME), under the

2025 theme of '*Research from the heart – shaping rural & remote health futures*'. It will see academics, researchers, policy makers and health professionals working in rural and remote health, alongside federal and state/territory government representatives and non-government sectors, converge in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) for the two-day Symposium. Alongside the official launch, RHC3 will also conduct a pre-symposium workshop, focused on research impact and what this means for a remote context.

Learn more about RHC3 via the Menzies website.

Quotes attributable to Menzies Remote Health Systems and Climate Change Centre (RHC3) lead, Associate Professor Alexandra Edelman:
"Celebrating RHC3 at the 10th Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium helps place a national spotlight on the importance of remote health research and the unique contribution Central Australia has in solving complex health challenges.

"RHC3 is striving to build 'systems for health' across Central Australia, bringing together communities, service providers and policy makers to understand local needs, service gaps and to collaboratively develop sustainable solutions.

"The official launch of RHC3 signals our team's maturity and commitment to grow research capacity and capability in Central Australia to help support better health and work towards Closing the Gap."

Quotes attributable to Menzies Principal Research Fellow, Associate Professor Deborah Russell:
"One of RHC3's key priorities is partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled and government organisations to stabilise the health workforce in remote communities.

"Staff retention helps support community trust in those who care for them, which enhances continuity of care and better health outcomes.

"We know there are a number of factors that contribute to staff turnover – like housing and safety – these challenges can only be addressed through collaborative action."

Quotes attributable to Menzies Principal Research Fellow, Associate Professor Supriya Mathew:
"Communities are at the heart of RHC3's work, from identifying health priorities, to leading the solutions. Citizen science – where local residents contribute to data collection and analysis – has been vital in our environmental work, where together, we're generating first-of-its-kind data for many remote locations.

"We've engaged more than 100 citizen scientists who are collecting place-based data, which will help inform climate-health solutions tailored to each location.

"What we learn in remote Australia not only shapes local health responses and preparedness but also drives global conversations on sustainable health systems and solutions."

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About Menzies School of Health Research
Menzies is at the forefront of health and medical research dedicated to improving the lives of peoples across the Northern Territory, Asia Pacific and beyond. By joining scientific knowledge with community wisdom, Menzies strives to Close the Gap, and shape a healthier, more equitable future where communities can thrive.

About Menzies Remote Health Systems and Climate Change Centre (RHC3):
RHC3, based in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), is a rapidly growing health systems strengthening and multisectoral research program emphasising equitable services and improving the social determinants of health in remote Australia. The RHC3 program, comprised of over 20 major research projects, connects communities, researchers, health service professionals and policymakers locally in Central Australia, across remote Australia and with international partners, with a focus on real-world impact. The establishment of RHC3 is an example of a sustainable program of health research in a remote setting, with important lessons learned on this establishment journey.

About the artwork: '*We are all Connected' by Keioni Lander*

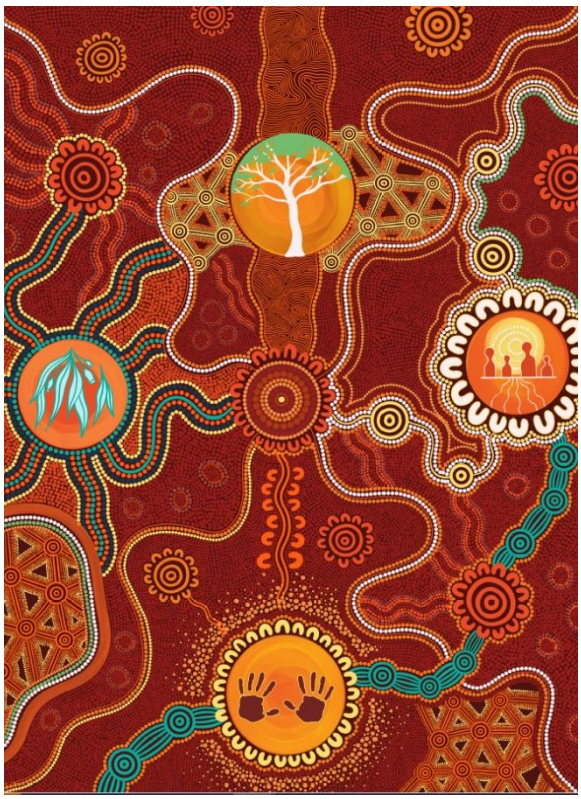
This piece captures the complex layers of remote health and emphasises the connections between people, communities, country and health.

The central meeting place represents RHC3. *There are four prominent icons attached to the central meeting place and communities represented throughout the design, which symbolises the Centre's translational studies with remote communities.*

*The **gum tree** represents the healthy and sustainable environmental impact the Centre aims to protect and provide.*

*The **gum leaves/nuts**: a traditional bush medicine that brings healing and cleansing.*

*The **hands** represent the hands-on, community-led approach that the RHC3 team is planning to implement.*



*The **figures** represent the Centre's efforts to create career pathways for community members.*

*The **many communities** represented throughout the design show the vastness of Central Australia. The circles linked by lines represent connections and show how all these elements are connected, which is also highlighted by the artwork's title.*