

## **Menzies launches campaign to bring world-class genomic science to the Northern Territory**

**19 May 2026**

Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) has launched an End of Financial Year campaign to raise \$100,000 to bring next-generation genomic sequencing technology to the Northern Territory (NT).

The new equipment, the Illumina MiSeq i100 Plus, will transform how researchers' study, track, and understand infectious diseases across northern Australia.

### **Seasonal shifts are changing the Territory's infection patterns**

Menzies Director, [Professor Alan Cass AO](#), said the NT is experiencing changes in the timing, spread, and behaviour of infectious diseases, and researchers need the tools to understand why.

"In the Northern Territory, the seasons shape the infections we see. Melioidosis surges in the Wet, respiratory infections rise in the Dry, and skin infections spread rapidly in the Build-Up," Professor Cass said. "These patterns are shifting, and we need fast, local genomic capability to understand what's changing and how to protect our communities."

Genomic sequencing enables researchers to read the DNA of bacteria, viruses, and parasites, helping them identify infections, track their spread, and understand how strains evolve over time.

### **Local capability is critical**

Menzies infectious diseases specialist [Dr Ella Meumann](#) said the new sequencer will strengthen research and public health surveillance across the NT.

"Expanding our sequencing capacity isn't just about technology, it's about people," Dr Meumann said. "This upgrade allows us to train more students and early-career researchers in cutting-edge genomics, building a stronger scientific workforce for the Territory."

### **Melioidosis and Strep A among key research priorities**

The MiSeq i100 Plus will support high-impact research into:

- Melioidosis, including new Asian strains now geolocated in northern Australia
- Strep A and skin infections, which can lead to rheumatic heart disease
- Ear infections in children, a major cause of hearing loss

- Respiratory infections, from RSV to pneumonia
- Malaria, including drug-resistant strains. Sequencing strengthens Menzies' globally recognised malaria research and supports the development of new tools that improve regional health security.

Menzies [Professor Bart Currie](#) said melioidosis research is a clear example of why local sequencing matters.

"We've identified three Asian strains of melioidosis now present in northern Australia. Only genomic sequencing can show how they arrived, how they're spreading, and what this means for communities across central and northern Australia," Professor Currie said. "This is work that must be led from the Territory."

### **A Territory-wide asset**

The new sequencer will be shared with partners including:

- Charles Darwin University
- NT clinicians
- NT medical students
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre

It will also support training for the next generation of NT scientists.

### **A call to the community**

Menzies is calling on supporters across the NT and beyond to help raise \$100,000 by 30 June.

"Your gift doesn't just buy equipment, it builds capability, protects families, and strengthens the future of health in the NT," Professor Cass said.

**Donate today:** To support the campaign, visit: [Menzies End of Financial Year Campaign](#)

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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.