The Northern Territory Government has released a new action plan to increase the number of Aboriginal health workers by 10 per cent per year.

"I can see this profession actually disappearing if we don't act now," Minister for Health Robyn Lambley said.

"The number employed in NT Government clinics has declined by more than 20 per cent, from 97 in 2003 to just 77 in 2013.

"This trend is even more disturbing when you look at the Aboriginal Health Worker registration data.

"The total number of registered Aboriginal health workers in the Territory fell by about 30 per cent between 2000 and 2010.

"A review in 2010 by the NT Department of Health identified this rapid decline.

"But the former Labor Government did not undertake any practical steps to address it.

"We keep coming up with reports essentially saying the same thing, but until we get on the ground and start doing something, working with these communities, nothing will change."

Mrs Lambley today detailed the Country Liberals Government's Back on Track plan at the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Summit in Cairns.

"We are committed to achieve an increase of 10% additional Aboriginal health workers registered each year in the NT," Mrs Lambley said.

"The Back on Track plan will also concentrate on five communities initially.

"We are immediately starting with Wadeye, west of Darwin, and Papunya, west of Alice Springs.

"The goal I have set for Wadeye is to have three health workers employed in the next 12 months, and the goal for Papunya is to employ two health workers.

"This is an aggressive and ambitious plan, but there is no option other than to get Back on Track."
"We have a real opportunity to match the improvements in closing the gap in the health status of indigenous and non-indigenous people, by increasing the Aboriginal health workforce.

"I will Chair the Back on Track Action Taskforce to ensure that I will have a stake in the solutions identified by those with experience in the area.

"The NT should be leading the nation on this.

"This Territory Government is committed to achieving these targets and to sharing our expertise to encourage all states to follow our lead.

"We cannot afford to let this fall by the wayside if we are to see real progress in Indigenous health outcomes and economic opportunity in our remote communities."

The Northern Territory will host the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Summit next year.

Minister Lambley was given the message shield from Queensland Health Minister Lawrence Springborg in a handover ceremony this afternoon.

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