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Mental health to be explored

DARWIN: Preventing the onset of mental health problems in Aboriginal people living in remote communities will be explored by an expanded Menzies School for Health. The Northern Territory's leading health research institute is set to double its capacity following a \$5.5 million grant from the NT government. Menzies' director, professor Jonathan Carapetis, said the expansion was the next step towards helping to ensure a healthier future for thousands of Aboriginal people.

"One of the things we are trying to do in the next 10 years is to continue the work we do in Indigenous health, tropical health and supporting the health of people in developing countries in our region," he said in a statement. Mr Carapetis said the money would allow the Charles Darwin University institute to expand its workforce from 162 to 400 over the next 10 years. "The diversity of our research at Menzies has expanded significantly in recent years and this expansion will allow us to continue to grow our research output," he said.

"We have got bigger plans for child health, particularly the early years. We are also very interested in expanding our work in mental health, looking at prevention, particularly in remote communities." NT Health Minister Chris Burns said the grant would improve health services for all territory families. "Menzies is acknowledged as the leading research institute on Indigenous health in Australia and its international reputation continues to grow," he said. Work on the extension is expected to begin within 12 months. - AAP