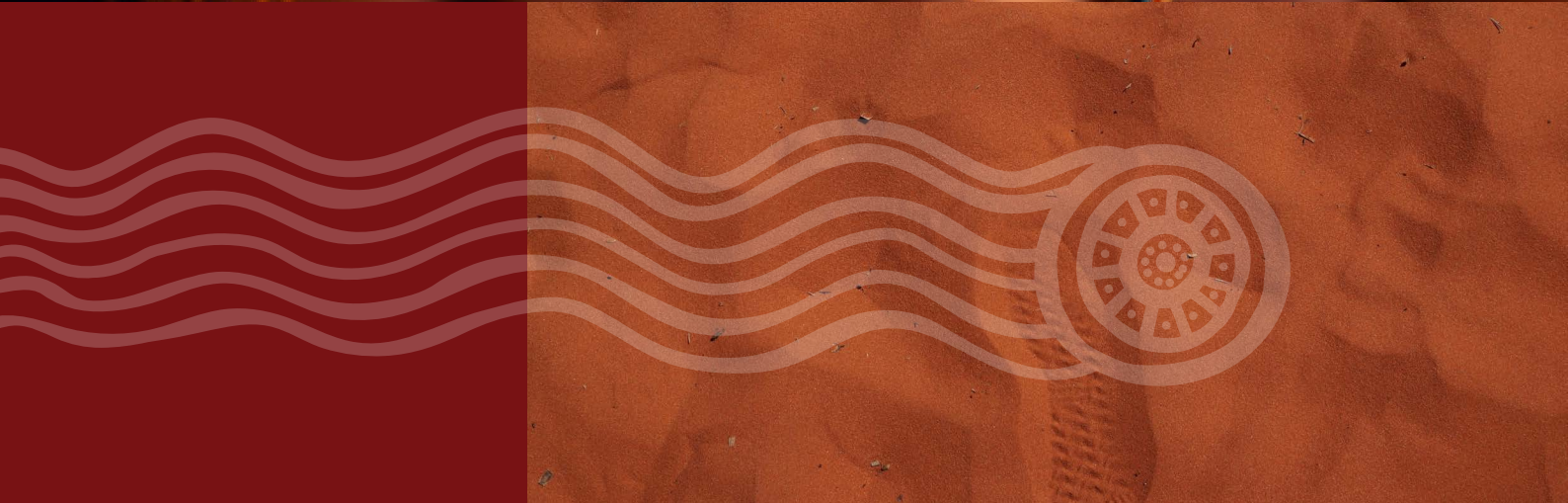
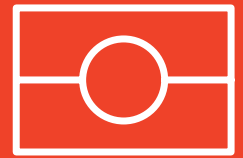




Annual Report 2023 - 2024

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this publication may contain words, names, images and descriptions of people who have passed away.



Acknowledgement of Country

Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Custodians of this land on which we work. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and commit to a future with reconciliation and renewal at its heart.

We recognise that the concepts of land, family and spirituality are directly linked to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ physical, mental, social, spiritual and cultural wellbeing.

The PHN would also like to acknowledge the resilience and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as some of the world’s longest lasting cultures, and recognise our responsibility to contribute towards a more equitable and culturally-safe primary care system.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| € Barunggam | € Kamilaroi |
| € Bigambul | € Keinjan |
| € Giabal | € Ugarapul |
| € Iman (Yiman) | € Wakka Wakka |
| € Jagera | € Yuggera |
| € Jarowair | |

Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN refers to the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia when acknowledging Traditional Owner groups.

Contents

1. Healthy organisation	12
-------------------------------	----

2. Healthy communities.....	24
-----------------------------	----

3. Healthy primary care	44
-------------------------------	----

4. Healthy partnerships	58
-------------------------------	----

Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN's full financial statements are available on the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission website: www.acnc.gov.au



The story behind our artwork

Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN commissioned Riki Salam from 'We are 27 Creative' to develop a bespoke piece of artwork to depict the PHN's commitment to reconciliation.



CONNECTED COUNTRY, HEALING PLACE

By Riki Salam

Kangaroo bounds on red sands, this land is ancient and connected, wind blows all traces as life disappears.

Rains renew Country, bird call pierces throughout, as landscape is coloured in diversity and grandeur. Carving its way through the land formations are created – Creation Spirit inspires song, dance, ceremony.

Water flows, knowledge is exchanged. This place of healing connects people to Country, Culture and Community.

Our knowledge is in this land and we are all connected to this place, healing begins.

Health and hope of the people is restored through listening, learning, sharing, caring and understanding one another.

Our year at a glance



\$45 M

invested in health programs this year



7,800+

contact instances with local general practices



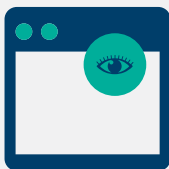
39

CPD events for local health professionals



821

instances of event participation



108,254

website page views



827

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients receiving funded care coordination services



1.73 M

views of social media posts



144,954

emails delivered



163,935

HealthPathways sessions (Darling Downs and West Moreton sites combined)



1,820

localised HealthPathways now live



↑34%

a rise in cervical screening self-collection from In Their Hands project



743

instances of stakeholder engagement



2

new Medicare Mental Health Centres opened



2

new Medicare Urgent Care Clinics opened



177

general practices in the region



1,321

GPs working in the region



895

allied health practices in our region



148

pharmacies in the region

Key milestones

August 2023:

- Ipswich Medicare Urgent Care Clinic opens
- Cervical Screening Project commences

September 2023:

- Digital Health Tools adoption campaign launches
- Allied Health Meet and Greets connect over 70 allied health professionals in Springfield and Toowoomba

October 2023:

- Toowoomba Medicare Urgent Care Clinic opens
- Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives Roadshow visits 12 locations across the region

November 2023:

- GP Portal launches on our website

January 2024:

- Kingaroy Medicare Mental Health Centre officially opens

February 2024:

- First 2000 Days Workshops in Springfield and Toowoomba
- Meet and Greets across the entire region

March 2024:

- Your Experience of Service (YES) Survey launches
- PHN co-facilitates Management of Advanced Dementia workshop in Toowoomba

April 2024:

- Assistant Minister for Mental Health & Suicide Prevention, Emma McBride MP visits headspace Ipswich

May 2024:

- First episode of 'GPs in a Pod' goes live
- Ipswich Medicare Mental Health Centre officially opens

June 2024:

- Winter VaxBus travels across the region, delivering 171 vaccinations
- PHN receives IMOC grant for Indigenous Wellness Connect in Goondiwindi

Chief Executive Officer's message



For our PHN, the 2023-24 financial year has been a year of growth and development as we work within and across the health system to ensure people living and working in our region can access affordable healthcare, with an appropriate healthcare professional at a time and place that suits them.

Through collaboration and partnership, we have seen some really positive outcomes in our two key areas of focus: the support and nurturing of a strong and resilient primary care sector; and commissioning of additional services in our region to enable equitable health and wellbeing across the lifespan.

Building on significant preparatory work undertaken in the previous fiscal year, this year we brought to fruition the launch of four major new services: two Medicare Urgent Care Clinics and two Medicare Mental Health Centres (formerly called Head to Health Centres).

The Medicare Urgent Care Clinics in Ipswich and Toowoomba have quickly made an impact on the number of people unnecessarily visiting the Emergency Departments of the two local hospitals in these areas. These clinics are averaging visits of more than 30 patients per day, and next year a third Medicare Urgent Care Clinic will be established in the Redbank area to further assist Ipswich Hospital's Emergency Department.

Mental health services received a major boost with the establishment of Medicare Mental Health Centres in Kingaroy and Ipswich. Both centres opened early ahead of their official launches in January and May, respectively. In exciting news, next year we will see the opening of a third Medicare Mental Health Centre in Warwick. We also introduced a Your Experience of Service (YES) survey to clients of the mental health services we commission to learn what is working well and what could be improved. The insights shone a spotlight on the fact that most people feel welcome (89%), safe (80%) and that their decision-making rights are respected (83%).

This year we were proud to launch our new program, Healthy Ageing Support. For the first time we have commissioned Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to deliver services to an entire eligible cohort of non- and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older persons. We continued our reconciliation journey this year with the development of our new Innovate RAP 2024-26, which will guide and measure our cultural capability and our ability to deliver culturally-safe and equitable health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the region.

We have continued to provide the primary healthcare professionals in the region with information, resources, tools and knowledge through our educational events, primary care support and communications framework, which included the launch of the 'GPs in a Pod' podcast this year. This engagement with GPs, general practice

staff, allied health professionals and other primary care providers across the region is a key part of what we do. We are regularly seeking input on how we might evolve and improve the way we provide this pivotal support. I would like to thank the local primary care workforce for everything they do every day – while working in health is incredibly rewarding, it requires strength, dedication and lots of hard work. We are so fortunate to have these highly skilled clinicians providing such excellent healthcare for our community.

There was also a keen focus on the early years, with the First 2000 Days Workshops, West Moreton Annual Maternity Symposium, recruitment of a Thriving Lockyer Kids Coordinator, and consultation and development of our Early Years Health Strategy.

Our ever-important stakeholder and community engagement activities continued through TALK ABOUT – an initiative we started in 2020 to learn about the experiences of our community members and health professionals – as well as Meet and Greet, workshops and through our committees. This year our engagement covered a diverse range of topics, from maternity care and first 2000 days, to homelessness and after hours service needs, to young people and their health. We continue to be grateful to our community for the input they provide to enable us to be truly person-centred.

I would like to extend my thanks to our Board of Directors, as well as the Clinical Council and Community Advisory Committees, for their ongoing commitment, support and insight. I would also like to recognise Stewart Gordon, our Executive Director – Primary Care and Integration who left us in late June to take on the role of CEO at Murrumbidgee PHN. Stewart left an indelible mark in our organisation, with his innovation and ability to bring diverse stakeholders together in the pursuit of better health outcomes. While he will be missed, we are heartened that his wealth of experience and capabilities remain within the PHN sector.

Finally, thank you to the staff of the PHN for your commitment to the incredible work we do along with your embodiment of our values, which allows us to maintain such a vital, caring and compassionate culture.

Sincerely,

Lucille Chalmers

CEO, Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN

Board Chair's message



It is my pleasure to present the 2023-2024 Annual Report for Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN.

We are now one year into implementing our Strategic Plan, and I am pleased to report that we have already made some great strides towards our commitment to work with our partners to strengthen primary healthcare for those who need it most.

The team has whole-heartedly accepted the challenge to deliver on our four strategic priorities: Healthy Communities (commissioning), Health Primary Care (capability building), Healthy Partnerships (connecting) and Healthy Organisation (enabling).

One of our key focus areas this year has been to establish high-performing, critical services in the wake of substantial planning and co-designing. I am incredibly proud of the PHN team for launching four new services in quick succession: Medicare Urgent Care Clinics in Toowoomba and Ipswich, and Medicare Mental Health Centres in Kingaroy and Ipswich.

The team has been collaborating across the region to commence development of our first Early Years Strategy, which will coordinate and prioritise sector-wide actions for improving the health outcomes of the most vulnerable in our community – our children and young people.

We have upped our game this year in terms of equity, by taking steps to ensure Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations are prioritised for receiving funding for services in support of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Family and community, Country and place, cultural identity and self-determination have been strongly identified as having a positive impact on the health and wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and I am pleased our organisation is supporting this, in accordance with the Department of Health and Aged Care's future direction.

We are similarly reimagining our mental health strategy and making strides in re-allocating our funding to ensure those most at need can receive the most benefits from our services. Exciting things are afoot which will be further evolved and embedded in the coming year.

In terms of primary care, MyMedicare and its effective implementation has been a big focus for GPs and staff in general practices this year. Our PHN continues to support primary care providers through education, information

and resources to support the roll out of this model, ensuring that people in our region have greater access to affordable and high-quality primary healthcare when they need it.

These are just some of the highlights during a year in which the PHN commissioned a total of \$45 million in primary healthcare services. Our commissioning team has also been busily putting in place improved systems and processes in support of this substantial body of work.

We have continued to delve into and document the needs of our communities, through the development of three Regional Health Needs Assessments, focusing on After hours Care, Multicultural Health and people at risk of or experiencing Homelessness. These initiatives were coordinated in conjunction with our Darling Downs Health and West Moreton Health partners as a precursor to the newly formed Regional Health Collaborative. The Regional Health Collaborative was established to implement whole of health system reform at a regional level and is headed up by a director who reports into the PHN.

In May 2024, we farewelled long time Board member, Andy Mellis. Andy leaves us following nine years on the Board of the PHN, and I would like to thank him for his significant contribution.

I would also like to thank the rest of the Board for your unwavering support and commitment.

To the hard-working leadership team and staff of Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN, thank you once again for another great year.

I look forward to our continued work in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Dr Tony Bayliss

Board Chair, Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN

What we do

We are one of 31 primary health networks across Australia.

Our role in the health system is to support primary healthcare — the initial care people seek in their communities, such as from GPs, pharmacies, and allied health professionals — and to collaborate with our partners to ensure appropriate care for those in greatest need.

Our vision



Healthy communities experiencing excellent healthcare, closer to home.

We see our role as a system integrator, providing coordination and support through health services commissioning.

Our focus is on building strong relationships and using innovative approaches to ensure our resources are used to the greatest affect. We support and listen to our stakeholders and communities, because we know we must work together to make real change.

Our purpose



To work with our partners to strengthen primary healthcare for those who need it most.

Our values



Transparency



Respect



Accountability



Collaboration



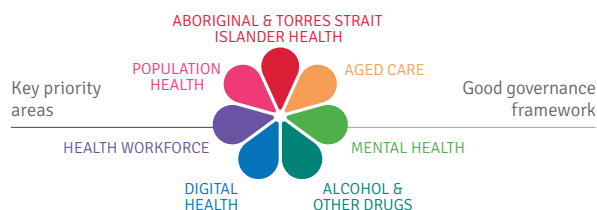
Integrity



Innovation

Our priorities

The work delivered by our PHN is framed by the seven national priorities handed to PHNs by the Department of Health and Aged Care, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, aged care, alcohol and other drugs, digital health, health workforce, mental health and population health.



Our strategy

Our strategic approach has four quadrants which allows us to focus on how we will deliver on our vision and purpose.



Healthy communities:

Enabling equitable health and wellbeing across our lifespan.



Healthy primary care:

Developing a thriving primary care system, that is strong and resilient, innovative and digitally enabled, with a supported and sustainable workforce.



Healthy partnerships:

Collaborating effectively, with a one system mindset.



Healthy organisation:

Empowering staff within a capable and impactful organisation.

About our region

Our PHN covers the Darling Downs and West Moreton region, which spans 99,000 km² and 12 local government areas (LGA). We have a diverse population of around 621,500 people. The region is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia and predicted to grow by 20% to 2030.

The major towns in our region are Ipswich and Toowoomba, plus the surrounding communities located in the Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim, Somerset, South Burnett, Cherbourg, Southern Downs, Goondiwindi and Western Downs LGAs. Our region also includes communities located in the Banana Shire and Brisbane LGA.

The traditional owner groups of the lands our region covers are:

- Jagera
- Yuggera
- Ugarapul
- Giabal
- Jarowair
- Wakka Wakka
- Kamilaroi
- Keinjan
- Barunggam
- Iman (Yiman)
- Bigambul

Our region is composed of urban, regional, rural and remote areas. The urban and regional areas are experiencing some of the highest population growth in the country, compounded by local health challenges including a high fertility rate, mental health issues, and increased chronic diseases.



Our regional snapshot

Who we are:



6.5%

identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



37.6

median age (Qld: 38.5)



8,500

babies are born here annually, fertility rate 2.09% (Qld: 1.7%)



16%

population born overseas

How is our health?



37%

have at least one chronic condition



37%

of adults are obese



13%

have a mental health or behavioural concerns



4.4

infant mortality per 1000 births (Qld: 3.9 per 1000)



3%

have COPD

What we do



73%

don't meet exercise guidelines



18%

of current adults smoke

How is our day-to-day life?



20%

no home internet access



21%

of households received rent assistance from government

For more information, please view our health needs assessment website:

ddwmhna.com.au



Healthy organisation

Empowering staff within a capable
and impactful organisation.

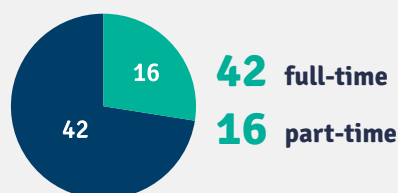
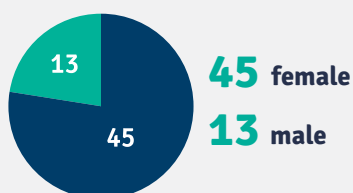


We're dedicated to enabling our staff to achieve great things within a supportive and innovative environment. We work by our values: transparency, respect, accountability, collaboration, integrity and innovation, and we are proud of our thriving workplace culture.

Over the last year, we have focused on increasing our use of data in decision-making and impact measurement. We have also fostered our strong partnerships with stakeholders from all corners of our region, including individual community members.

We believe that everyone should have a voice in the decisions that impact them and will continue to lead inclusive commissioning practices that drive positive system outcomes.

Keeping our organisation thriving



24
staff awards for commitment
to our values
*Collaboration, Integrity, Respect,
Innovation, Accountability and
Transparency*



66%
live in our region



80%
engagement score



90%
of staff say our PHN is
a truly great place to
work

Our Board

We are led by a highly qualified Board with a wealth of knowledge and demonstrated hands-on experience working within our region.

Chair



Dr Tony Bayliss - General Practitioner

Dr Tony Bayliss has been practising as a GP in the Ipswich area since 2012, having opened his own practice in 2015. Tony has served on the Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN Board since November 2017 and as Chair since 2019. He was appointed the Chair of the PHN Co-operative in 2024. Tony brings real-world skills and experience in clinical matters, corporate and clinical governance, finance and strategy and retains a passion for improving the health of the Darling Downs and West Moreton communities. He is an active member of the RACGP and the West Moreton Local Medical Association.

Board members



Deanne Minniecon - National Manager of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement at Diabetes Australia

Deanne Minniecon is an Aboriginal (Goreng Goreng) and Torres Strait Islander (Erub) woman with just under 30 years' experience working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and education. Deanne holds a Master of Health Science (Health Promotion) and is an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Faculty of Health, School of Exercise & Nutrition Sciences at Queensland University of Technology. Deanne is also on the Board of West Moreton Hospital and Health Service.



Professor Lauren Ball - Professor of Community Health and Wellbeing at the University of Queensland

Professor Lauren Ball is a Professor of Community Health and Wellbeing at the University of Queensland. Lauren brings more than 15 years' experience as a clinician and researcher in primary care as being a qualified dietitian, exercise physiologist and primary healthcare researcher. Beyond this, Lauren is a thought leader and strategist who is actively influencing positive change across primary care, community care, hospital services, allied health, health promotion and wellbeing and health policy.



Dr Vladislav Matic - General Practitioner

Dr Vladislav (Vlad) Matic is a GP with more than 25 years of remote, rural, regional, and urban general practice experience. Vlad is passionate about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, chronic and complex disease management, data, and clinical governance. In addition to contributing to GP and primary care Boards over the past 20 years, Vlad has also been very involved in the teaching of medical students and GP Registrars.



Elizabeth Adams - CEO Goolburri Aboriginal Health

Elizabeth Adams is currently the CEO Goolburri Aboriginal Health. She is a proud Aboriginal woman of the Mardigan people from Southwest Queensland with more than 30 years' experience in primary healthcare. Elizabeth's career began in nursing, where she discovered her spark for improving health outcomes for people in the community. In the years since, she has driven innovative improvements across the local health sector, resulting in the development of highly effective place-based health and social care solutions.



Megan O'Shannessy - CEO Rural Medical Education Australia

Megan O'Shannessy is the Chief Executive Officer of Rural Medical Education Australia, a local not-for-profit rural health education company that delivers the Griffith University Rural Medical program on the Darling Downs and Maranoa. She is a Registered Nurse and Midwife with extensive clinical and leadership experience in rural health across the Darling Downs region. Megan is a member of the Medical Board of Australia Queensland Board and President of Protea Place. She is an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Griffith University School of Medicine, has a Master of Public Health, a Bachelor of Nursing, midwife and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



David Cosgrave - Lawyer

David Cosgrave is a Toowoomba-based lawyer with extensive Australian and international legal, business, and management experience. David has served in a variety of executive level and Board roles across investment banking, telemedicine, healthcare, education, information technology and security. He has previously worked at the former Northern Sydney Area Health Service (NSAHS), Crosby Asset Management, CSIRO, the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) and his own businesses. David joined the Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN Board in November 2018 and brings to the role his experience in corporate governance, risk management, solving problems and strategic thinking.



Dr Andy Mellis - General Practitioner

Dr Andy Mellis has worked in General Practice since 2003 and had been based in Toowoomba since 2005. Andy worked at both James Neil Medical and Rangeside Medical, in the People First Health Group. Andy trained at Nottingham University and completed his specialist general practice training in the UK, before emigrating to Toowoomba in 2005. Andy is an accredited GP trainer and was a senior lecturer with the UQ school of medicine. Andy was a founding member of the Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN Board and committed to keeping quality general practice accessible to all. The Board farewelled Dr Andy Mellis in May 2024.

Our people

Our organisation is led by a passionate and highly experienced Executive Leadership Team.



Lucille Chalmers - Chief Executive Officer

Lucille is an experienced health and human services executive with a special focus on community health and primary healthcare. Lucille was previously Deputy CEO at Brisbane South PHN. Lucille has a deep commitment to improving community health and wellbeing with extensive experience in the design, delivery and commissioning of health and human services in Australia and the United Kingdom. She has a particular passion for community driven and place-based ways of working to address inequities and improve health outcomes. She is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and holds qualifications in Business (Philanthropy and Non-Profit Studies), Masters of Public Health and Bachelor of Applied Science (Speech Pathology).



Kate McLoughlin - Executive Director - Strategy and Operations

Kate serves as Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary for Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN, where she manages the company's finances and corporate responsibilities, and promotes a happy and healthy work culture. Prior to joining Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN, Kate served as Senior Finance Manager and Revenue Manager for Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service and Senior Business Analyst for Saxon Energy Australia. Kate holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education and a Masters of Professional Accounting from the University of Southern Queensland, and is a Certified Practising Accountant.



Jen Newbould - Executive Director - Strategic Commissioning

Jen joined Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN in 2023 with more than 20 years of direct experience in the commissioning context, with a focus on transformational systems change. Jen is a partnership broker and quality systems lead auditor with tertiary qualifications in management and leadership, business administration and accounting. Jen has worked with diverse communities and system partners to tackle disadvantage and to improve outcomes in mental health, suicide prevention, alcohol and other drugs, homelessness, child protection, justice and adult education, through senior leadership positions held in the UK and Australia spanning health, community services and public sector contexts.



Stewart Gordon - Executive Director - Primary Care and Integration

Stewart returned to work in the health sector after practising as an employment lawyer in the private sector. He began his career in healthcare, including serving as District Manager, with the Roma Health Service District in 2004. Stewart then assumed an executive position with the Darling Downs West Moreton Health Service District, where he gained significant leadership experience as Executive Director Rural Health and Aged Care. Stewart holds a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice, Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Business (Marketing and Human Resource Management), University of Southern Queensland. The PHN farewelled Stewart Gordon in June 2024.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Lee Paul

Primary Care Liason Officer

What is your role with the PHN?

Primary Care Liaison Officer – Ipswich and Lockyer Valley regions.

What is the best thing about working at the PHN?

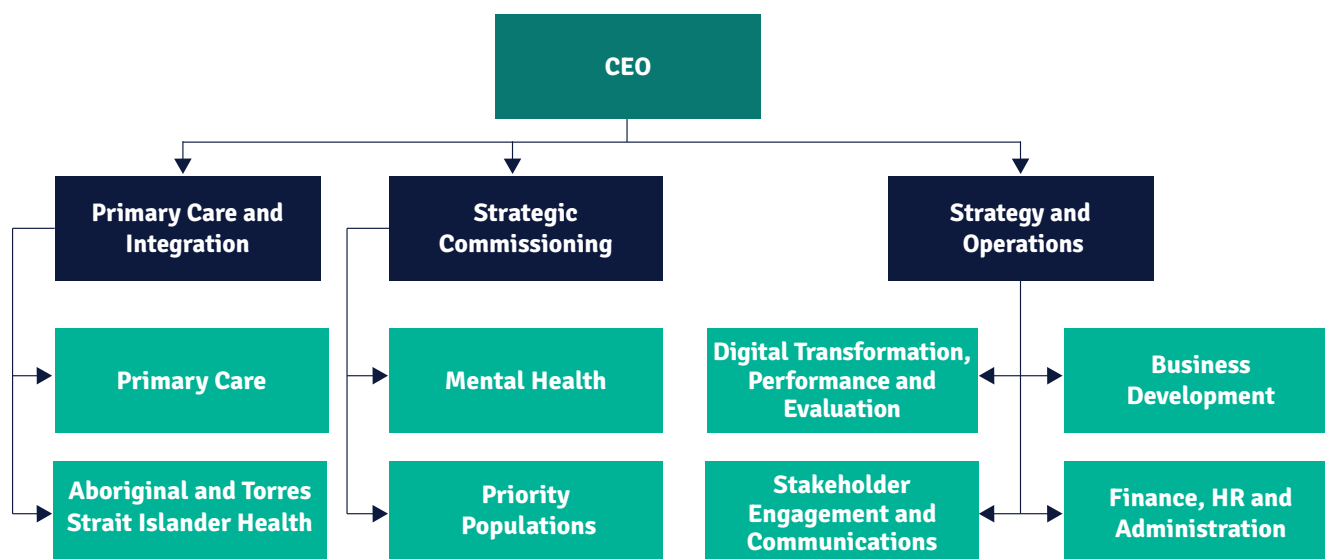
The best thing about working at the PHN is the support you receive from the company, but even more importantly, the friendships you make, doing a job that actually benefits the community.

What are you most proud of achieving this year?

Being a part of a team that presented and promoted the Cancer Screening project in the regions resulting in the doubling of testing across bowel/cervical and breast cancers and therefore potentially saving many lives.



Organisational structure



Looking after our people

This year, through a major staff consultation project, we revamped our induction and onboarding processes. This was an area identified for improvement through the previous year's staff engagement survey. As an outcome from this project, we introduced a 'MyPHN' induction portal to our intranet, where both managers and staff can access key information to support and nurture their first days, weeks and months in the PHN.

With our staff spread geographically across two offices, twice a year we bring all our staff together for development, education and to enhance our collaboration through teamwork. These events in September and April provided an opportunity to broaden our knowledge and capabilities in

commissioning, and strategic planning and implementation.

In May, we undertook an evaluation of staff psychological health and safety. The results of this first survey were above the benchmark in most categories, and we will be using insights from it to support continual improvement and evolution of our behavioural charter, which underpins our culture and the way we live and breathe our organisation's values.

We are proud to support our staff, their families as well as health professionals across our region through the provision of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), including free access to counselling support.



Our reconciliation journey

Our vision for reconciliation is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have equal access to high-quality primary care and improved health and wellbeing.

The development and implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) ensures the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are heard and considered in all of our decisions and actions. By improving cultural understanding throughout our PHN, we can influence sustainable change that will incorporate the knowledge, traditions, customs and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures.

With improved understanding, we will be able to provide efficient and effective support to our key health service delivery partners to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our communities.

This year we worked towards developing our new Innovate RAP, which will be launched later in 2024 to guide and measure our actions for the next three years. The new RAP is a continuation of the significant progress made this year.

Some of the initiatives we have undertaken this year on our journey towards reconciliation include:

- Staff celebrating NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week, including internal events in both offices, and attendance at community events.
- Updating our Acknowledgement of Country procedures to ensure staff respectfully acknowledge Tribal lands where appropriate.
- Staff attending cultural activities in personal time and sharing their reflections at all staff meetings.
- Introducing a new RAP governance structure which includes a Steering Committee and RAP Working Group to support the delivery of our actions.
- All staff participating in a Smoking Ceremony and session on local history at the staff workshop in April.





“ I love the work I am doing, feel that I am making a wonderful difference, and am excited by that. ”



Staff engagement

We undertake an annual staff engagement survey through third-party provider Best Practice Australia. The survey measures organisational culture across our PHN as well as many others, to provide us with insights into what is working well and what areas may need improvement.



90%
response rate



90%
view us as a truly
great place to work



94%
finds the PHN a supportive
organisation that puts values
into practice



80%
engagement rate
(PHN avg 68%)

Some of the reasons staff find us a truly great place to work:

“

The PHN has a positive workplace vibe where everyone's open, works together, making us all feel valued.

”

“

I love the work I am doing, feel that I am making a wonderful difference, and am excited by that.

”

“

I love the pace, nature and complexity of the work and feel that my contributions are meaningful.

”

“

A great group of people who come from a vast cultural and diverse background.

”

Health and safety

We are committed to upholding a workplace that is healthy and safe. Our Health, Safety, Environment and Community (HSEC) team is proactive at ensuring we maintain staff wellbeing as well as safety, through regular wellness initiatives.

This year we also encouraged staff to participate in the 'July Jaunt' to increase activity through walking. Across the month, our staff walked nearly five million steps.

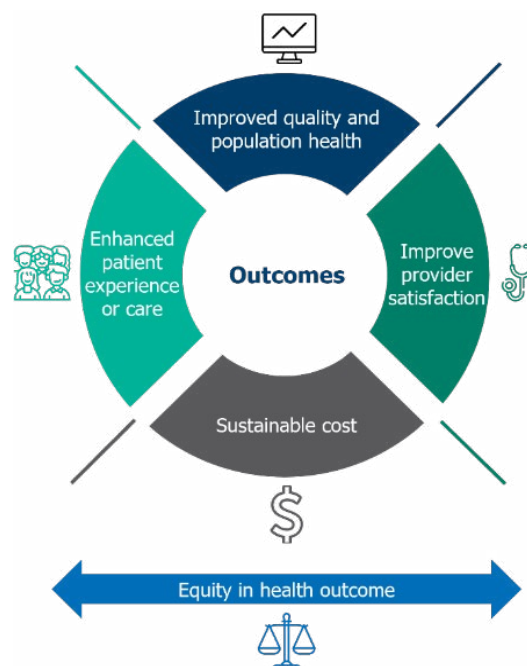
ddwmpnh.com.au/WhyWorkForUs

Our Quintuple Aim for healthcare improvement

The PHN uses the Quintuple Aim as an established framework for measuring improvement in the healthcare system. The Quintuple Aim provides a strategic perspective to the value and contribution of the PHN to the overall health of the community. It measures our local health system against quality and access, experience, satisfaction, cost and equity.

This complements the PHN Program Performance and Quality Framework that articulates Australian Government expectations about the role and performance of PHNs.

ddwmpnh.com.au/OurGovernance



Our members

Our PHN was originally formed in 2015 under a partnership between Darling Downs Health and GP Connections.

To support primary health service integration, foundational changes to the organisational structure have been undertaken with the following organisations also approved for membership:



West Moreton Health



Ipswich and West Moreton
Local Medical Association

Spreading the word

With the launch of several major new services, this year was a time of spreading the word and raising awareness amongst the community.

Over the course of the year we issued seven media releases, resulting in 46 media mentions.

We also launched a new 'Find the right care' website to help the community navigate through the various care options available locally, so they can select the right care at the right time.

FindtheRightCare.com.au

In late April, we launched a new podcast series for GPs – GPs in a Pod – which was cited in the top 80 of the Australian Medicine category within two weeks of starting.

ddwmpnh.com.au/Podcast

Our website has enjoyed steady growth, with more than 39,000 visitors viewing over 108,000 pages.

We established a GP portal to make it easier for GPs and general practice staff to find the information and resources they need to support them in achieving better patient outcomes.

ddwmpnh.com.au/GPportal

Our new virtual library now makes it easier to find all the education, reports, fact sheets and other types of information we produce about health support, learning and services in our region.

ddwmpnh.com.au/VirtualLibrary

This year we launched an Instagram channel, and our overall reach and engagement on social media has grown exponentially, with more than 1.7 million impressions of our social posts.

Our regular email newsletters continue to be popular with local health professionals. This year we delivered over 144,000 emails comprising information about services, general practice support, education and other key health initiatives.

Social media

We're active on Facebook, LinkedIn, X and Instagram.

1.7M
total impressions

4,404
followers



PHN website

Our website contains all you need to know about operating as a healthcare professional in our region.

108,254
views



Newsletters

HP News and PHN News are sent on a regular basis to an audience of over 2,900 local health professionals.

37
editions sent

87,825
total opens



Email campaigns

This year, email campaigns enabled us to share urgent updates, news, education and events to our audience.

124
email campaigns

145,640
total opens



The making of GPs in a Pod

This year we were proud to launch our first podcast - GPs in a Pod.

The initial idea of launching a podcast was sparked months earlier as a strategy to reach busy GPs and other health professionals in our region.

The first six episodes were released this financial year, launching the podcast into the top 100 health podcasts charts.

Hosted by Dr Tanusha Ramaloo, GPs in a Pod features short weekly episodes, each with a special guest. This year, the podcast covered wide-ranging topics including mental health, cervical screening and women's health, and digital health.

The podcast is being recognised nationally for its innovation and being a trusted source of information.

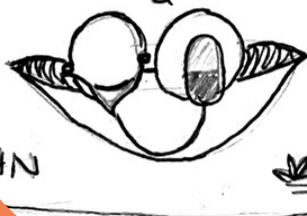
Most importantly, GPs in a Pod is now an established source of trustworthy, interesting and reliable information for local GPs.

GPs IN A POD



phn
DARLING DOWNS
AND WEST MORETON
An Australian Government Initiative

 Local Integrated
Primary Health Care





Healthy communities

Enabling equitable health and
wellbeing across our lifespan.



We work towards our vision of a healthier community with a lifespan approach: antenatal health, the early years through to older persons, mental health, suicide prevention and alcohol and other drugs are a major area of focus for our PHN, with the aim of enabling coordinated system responses and services.

Our PHN works with local Aboriginal Controlled Health Organisations and Elders to improve health and wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge the diverse and complex needs of communities within our region, including people experiencing homelessness, people with disability, LGBTIQ+, multicultural and rural and remote residents.

Building strong and healthy communities



827

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients receiving funded care coordination services



660

new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients accessed funded mental health services (within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander funding program)



3,131

people access care finder support this financial year



4,254

support activities provided by care finders



Percentage of children fully immunised at:

92.7%

1 year of age

91.3%

2 years of age

93.7%

5 years of age



The early years



8,340 births in our region



2.09
fertility rate



7%
low birth weight



14.7%
women smoking
during pregnancy



15.7
rate per 1,000 of
children living in out
of home care for South
West Queensland



49.2
percentage of children
developmentally on
track



4.4
annual infant
mortality rate per
1,000 children

A focus on the beginning

The early years was a growing area of focus for the PHN this year. Our focus on the early years is driven by our regional statistics - a high fertility rate and a large proportion of very young parents.

Getting things right in the first few years of life is a critical investment in lifelong health outcomes, and our future health system. Families in our region deserve well-coordinated, accessible and supportive health services to give their children the best start in life.

Developing the strategy

This year we developed our Early Years Health Strategy in consultation with local health professionals and health system partners. It sets our joint actions to improve equitable care for the early years, including pre-conception, antenatal care, First 2000 Days, childhood and adolescence. This strategy is based on our local health intelligence, and consultation with local health professionals at our First 2000 Days Workshops held in February 2024 in Toowoomba and Ipswich. The strategy will be published and commence implementation in the new financial year.

Building strong partnerships

This year we formalised our partnerships with Darling Downs and West Moreton Health Services, Department of Education Darling Downs and South West and Metropolitan South.

We have continued our place-based initiatives; Western Downs Futures and taken the next step in our Thriving Queensland Kids partnership with the recruitment of a Thriving Queensland Kids Coordinator. Thriving Lockyer Kids is supporting place-based work within the Lockyer Valley with a strong focus on supporting children 0-5 and their families to thrive.

ddwmpnhn.com.au/HealthyStart

What we did this year

GP education

The team provided GP education on paediatric sepsis via practice visits. We also produced a GPs in a Pod episode on paediatric anaphylaxis and allergies and infant introduction to solids in the GPs in a Pod (Episode 8: Food Allergy - with Maria Said AM from Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia), which had over 40 listens.

Sunshine Parenting Program and Circle of Security Program

Peach Tree Perinatal Mental Health were commissioned to deliver Sunshine Parenting Program and Circle of Security Program. The Sunshine Parenting Program is available face-to-face in Ipswich and online through the PHN region as a targeted six-week, non-clinical, early intervention group program for mothers 18+ years with an infant under 12 months of age. Both programs aim to improve early life experiences for children by supporting parents and caregivers; and reduce the burden of post-natal anxiety and depression through increased connections and social supports. This year the program supported 52 clients over 31 individual sessions and 16 group sessions.



Engaging the community: First 2000 Days

TALK ABOUT is an ongoing engagement campaign we run to ensure community voice is included in our health system intelligence and decision-making.

In April and May, we asked the community to tell us what is working well, and what could be done better to improve healthcare in the First 2000 Days.

We heard from 160 community members and 30 health professionals.

The community rated their experience with health services 5 out of 10.

Healthcare professionals rate their experience with these healthcare services 7 out of 10.



What is working well:

- Continuity of care through midwife programs, child health nurses, and general practice.
- Knowledgeable and accessible child health centres and initiatives like Cub Care and Midwife Group Practice care.
- Supportive community connections, such as childcare and support groups.
- Affordable healthcare services and immunisation programs.

What could be better:

- More education and information about raising a child during the first 2000 days.
- Assistance to navigate the healthcare service system, including reminders and follow-up appointments.
- Continuity of your healthcare throughout pregnancy and early childhood.



Older persons' health



111,403

are 65 years and over



130,152

projected population
over 65 by 2030

Highest prevalence chronic health conditions in
people >65:



28,885

cardiovascular



27,771

diabetes



63,478

musculoskeletal

What we are doing

The PHN works with primary care and service providers to help ensure older people living in our region are connected with services that enable older people to live well and stay connected. We have a clear action plan to implement system-wide improvements.

Our Older Persons' Health and Wellbeing Strategy – 'Feel Well, Live Well' – was launched in October 2022. It was developed to guide the way we plan and deliver community, primary and secondary health services to support older people to stay healthy, connected and

at home. The strategy recognises the important role families and carers play in helping to keep our older population healthy, happy, and fulfilled. The actions in this plan were developed following extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders including consumers, their family and carers.

ddwmpnh.com.au/OlderPersons

How we are doing it

Enhanced after hours support in residential aged care homes

In response to the Royal Commission's findings on the challenges older people face in accessing clinical support after hours, our PHN is assisting Residential Aged Care Homes (RACHs) in developing comprehensive after hours care plans.

These plans aim to manage residents' healthcare needs and explore alternative after hours service providers to reduce unnecessary transfers to the Emergency Department. With RACHs having received the Connect Care Health grants, RACHs are enhancing their telehealth capabilities, significantly improving access to health providers during after hours periods.

This unified effort aims to enhance RACH staff capabilities, ensure the wellbeing of residents, and minimise avoidable hospital admissions by addressing critical gaps in after hours care and improving overall health outcomes for the elderly population.

A focus on dementia

Our region covers many areas of high population growth, particularly ageing cohorts. In particular, West Moreton is the fastest growing region in Queensland and our population is ageing rapidly. By 2026, the portion of people aged 65 and older is expected to increase by 50% (to more than 60,000 people). We also know there are many older people living in rural and remote regions with less access to social and healthcare options.

Within the older person's population group, dementia is one of the leading causes of death. Upskilling and supporting local clinicians and families to provide dementia care was an area of focus this year. In March, the PHN facilitated the Management of Advanced Dementia workshop in partnership with Infinity Specialists. The event was attended by over 50 GPs and nurse practitioners and featured leading geriatricians speaking on topics including behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, the types of dementia, and RACH challenges.

In collaboration with West Moreton Health and Darling Downs Health, we were proud to provide Project ECHO® Older Persons Series, Dementia Awareness in the region. The seven-part ECHO Older Persons Series, Dementia Awareness ran from September to May, and covered topics including commencing dementia types, behavioural triggers and enabling environments. Each session was attended by an average of 51 participants.

The team also developed and enhanced the use of existing local dementia support pathways on West Moreton and Darling Downs HealthPathways. These pathways will support clinicians, primary care and the allied health workforce during consultations with patients, to support assessment and referral to local services. In addition to this work, the team developed new consumer-focused dementia support resources which detail the post-diagnostic care and support available for people living with dementia, and their carers and families, within their local area.

West Moreton Care Collaboratives

The West Moreton Care Collaboratives (WMCC) comprise of members from West Moreton Health, peak bodies, private and community organisations. WMCC encompass the Care at End of Life Collaborative and the Older Persons Care Collaborative. The Care at the End of Life Collaborative is aligned with the Greater Choices for at Home Palliative Care objectives and has developed a 2024-2027 Action Plan to address the needs of the local community. As a collective, the WMCC are auspiced under the governance of UniSQ.

Darling Downs Care at End of Life Collaborative

The Darling Downs Care at the End of Life Collaborative has been established to improve the provision of palliative care and end of life services for residents in the Darling Downs region with a focus on greater choice of quality, appropriate at home services.

Healthy Ageing Support – an early intervention initiative

Healthy Ageing Support was launched this year with the goal of helping connect older people to the primary care, community and at-home services they require to remain living as independently as possible in their own home and communities. The program aims to improve the older persons ability to coordinate and connect with the care they require between primary care, hospital and health services and government and non-government funded community or at-home services.

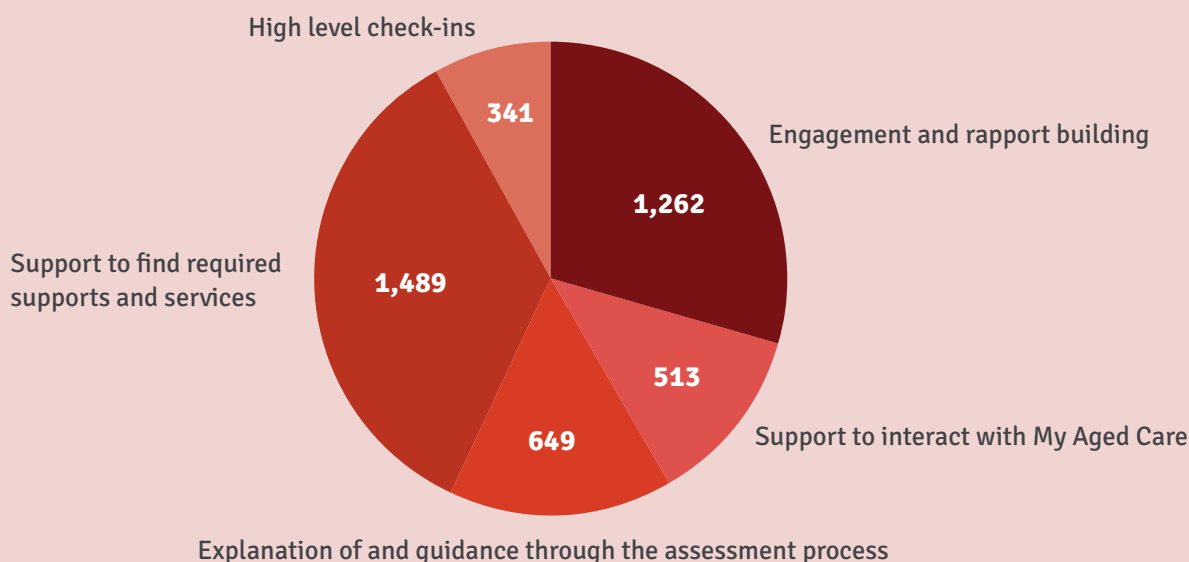
Healthy Ageing Support utilises a care-coordination service model delivered across the Darling Downs and West Moreton regions by its PHN-commissioned providers, Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement and Footprints Community. The eligible cohort is 65+ (or 50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples).

Each provider delivers the program for the entire eligible cohort in their commissioned region, with Goolburri being the first Aboriginal-owned health provider to be commissioned as a lead provider for non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at our PHN.

Care finder program

The care finder program supports vulnerable older people who would not be able to arrange support services without intensive support and do not have a family member or friend who can help. The PHN funds three service providers to deliver the care finder service, which helps people understand what aged care services are available, set up assessments and find and choose services. The commissioned providers in our region are: Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia, Footprints Community Services and STAR Community Services. This year, the program assisted 3,131 people.

Activities undertaken by care finders this year:





Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health



39,248

Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander People live in the
region



6.5%

of the population identify
as Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander

A fresh strategy in action

This year was our first full financial year of delivering on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy 2023-2027, which outlines our health equity approach towards closing the life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people.

Within this approach, we are:

- creating strong partnerships
- embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice in all we do
- fostering a culturally safe workforce
- using shared health intelligence to inform strategic and sustainable decision making.

Our aims

Our aims are for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our region to:

- have access to care within the local community that meets their health and wellbeing needs, and
- experience improved physical, social and emotional wellbeing outcomes and life expectancy equal to or better than the non-Indigenous population.

ddwmpnh.com.au/AboriginalHealth



Services we commissioned this year

Integrated Team Care

Integrated Team Care offers care coordination support for individuals with a chronic condition, and general support to access health services through outreach workers.

Support can include affordable medicines, transport services to and from medical appointments, and coordinated multidisciplinary care for those living with chronic disease.

Culturally appropriate mental health services

Free, culturally appropriate social and emotional wellbeing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with, or at risk of, mental health conditions.

This year we also commissioned the Regional Approach to Suicide Prevention which saw local Aboriginal Medicare Services running localised programs across our region.

Sunrise Way alcohol and other drugs treatment services

Residential services that provide live-in, culturally appropriate treatment and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who experience alcohol and other drug dependence.

Carbal Medical Services alcohol and other drugs treatment services

Services that provide outreach, culturally appropriate treatment and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who experience alcohol and other drug dependence.

Goondir Cultural Development Program

Provides an opportunity to reconnect with culture providing a pathway towards reconnection to country. Participants are taken through a range of cultural activities and experiences including boomerang and

didgeridoo making, cultural dance, storytelling and visits to culturally significant sites with the aim of improving cultural connection.

Goolburri Early Years and Infancy Program

Culturally appropriate antenatal and postnatal care in Toowoomba that offers inclusion of fathers in the early childhood phase of healthcare, increased access and attendance to GP, midwife and antenatal appointments, increased access to immunisation appointments, opportunistic healthcare for women and their children.

Culturally Appropriate Primary Care

We partnered with the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association to provide a cultural capability program focused on GPs and clinical staff in our region.

The training is developed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors to expand cultural and historical knowledge and understanding, with the aim of enabling providers to deliver culturally safe care. This program includes online, face to face and communities of practice and is in the early stages of its rollout.

Youth Street Crews

This program is delivered by Civic Assist to engage with young people who may be experiencing a range of issues in the Toowoomba CBD area every Thursday night.

Kambu Health

Kambu Health is an important health services partner, delivering primary care services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the region. We also commission Kambu Health to provide suicide prevention and Integrated Team Care programs.

Young Aboriginal Health Workers make a big impact

Michael and Josiah are two Aboriginal Health Workers with their sights set on influencing better health outcomes for their Mob.

Two years ago, the close friends successfully applied for our PHN's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Study Grants to support their studies in Cert IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care. The pair graduated shortly after, but this was just the beginning of their journey. Both men are now working as Aboriginal Health Workers and are planning to undertake their Master of Public Health early next year.

"Reflecting on the journey, I have to say the study grants were an important bridge from education to employment. It was the mental support of knowing we had the backing to take the next step," said Michael.

Michael and Josiah are currently employed at the Inala Southern Queensland Centre of Excellence, where they are continuing their clinical skill development and pursuing individual areas of interest.

"The role is essentially three parts - clinical, community development and health promotion. I love all parts of my work," said Michael.

Josiah has discovered a passion for diabetes education after sitting in on an appointment and experiencing the culturally safe environment he could provide for clients coming in for diabetes care and education.

"Being an Aboriginal man, I could feel that the client felt comfortable and related to me," said Josiah.

"At one point, a client even turned to me and asked me what I thought, even though I was just sitting in."

Josiah is pursuing this interest by completing a Graduate Certificate of Diabetes Education at James Cook University, in addition to his Graduate Diploma in Health Promotion.

In September, the men jointly facilitated a Men's Group through their workplace, resulting in local men of all ages attending to discuss their health and wellbeing.

"In the beginning we only had three men attend, but we adapted our approach to create a more relaxed structure and a few weeks later we had 21 men in the room," said Michael.

Michael and Josiah are preparing for the next step in their professional education.

"The more we know, the more we can do to influence the system," said Michael.

"I'd love to bring together the skills of Aboriginal Health Workers and use them more strategically towards Closing the Gap actions around community development, health promotion and cultural safety."

Michael and Josiah are big advocates for a career in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

"It's a very rewarding career. It can really take you places, from North Queensland to the South Burnett to Brisbane, I've enjoyed it all so far," said Josiah.



Bunya Family

Fundamentally, what we do is person-centred. Our person-centred approach ensures people who access health system supports and services, including carers and close supporters, are the experts of their personal health situation and need to be at the centre of our planning and commissioning decision-making.

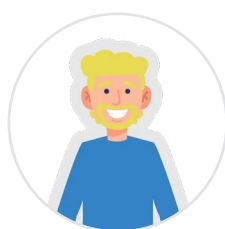
Our person-centred approach delivers care and support in partnership with the community to achieve the best outcomes for the community. This approach attempts to address the traditional power dynamic of system versus beneficiary to one where commissioners, providers and communities are equal

system partners and we will look to patient experience measures to test its effectiveness.

The 'Bunya Family' comprises a number of avatars of community members who represent 'real life' scenarios within our region. Each family member is a potential consumer of services in our healthcare system and we use them to map our care journeys.

The use of the Bunya Family is based on the Welsh model of the 'Jones Family'. The NHS in Wales used the Jones Family to steer conversations toward improving patient care.

Introducing our Bunya Family:



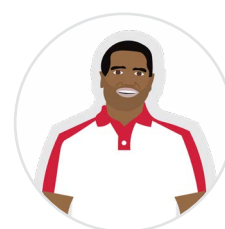
Jamie Bunya



Kiara



Abdul-Alim



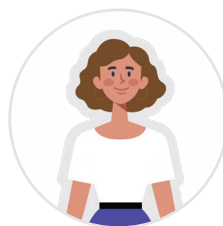
Uncle Mick



Patricia Bunya



Mani



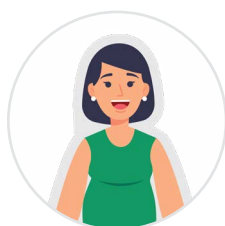
Marnie Stephenson



Ash



Sam



Jan Bunya



Charlie (Cha Cha)



Jim Bunya



Kaz



Lauren Bunya-Smith



Jamie Bunya



Paul Bunya and family



Mental health, suicide prevention and alcohol and other drugs



136,200
experience a mental
health condition



13.2 per 100
people experience
psychological distress



18%
people are current smokers



11.1%
use illicit drugs



17.2%
drinking >2 standard alcohol
drinks per day

Mental health and suicide prevention

We are committed to ensuring that people living with a mental health condition and alcohol and other problematic drug use in our region can access effective and appropriate treatment.

This year was a momentous year in the mental health space, with the opening of two new Medicare Mental Health Centres (formerly known as Head to Health Centres), including several visits from local dignitaries.

Our PHN funds primary mental health services within a person-centred stepped care approach. The stepped care model is based on five levels of care, of which we primarily fund Level 2 to Level 4 care (with Level 1 involving self-management care options and Level 5 care being coordinated through the hospital system). This model enables us to work with providers to deliver equitable and effective care.

A key initiative this year was the delivery of Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) training to general practices across the region. The Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool (IAR-DST) offers a standardised, evidence-based, and objective framework to support GPs and mental health clinicians in making informed mental healthcare recommendations.

Our 'Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives' initiative, which was formed in partnership with Darling Downs Health and West Moreton Health, aims to improve access to mental health, suicide prevention and alcohol and other drug services in the Darling Downs and West Moreton region.

This year we made significant progress in implementing several actions from the comprehensive joint regional Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, and Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan for FY24. The joint regional plan, titled 'Healthy Lives, Healthy Minds' (HML), was refreshed during 2023.

The Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives Roadshow helped promote the plan across the region and formal governance structures were established for lived and living experience priorities, data and information security, and suicide prevention. This led to the formation of working groups for each priority area under the plan.

HealthyMindsHealthyLives.com.au



Services we commissioned this year

Medicare Mental Health Centres (formerly Head to Health Centres)

An 'open door' approach that provides welcoming, low-stigma entry to mental health support through assessment and warm referrals to local services; located in Ipswich and Kingaroy.

Head to Health phone line

Complementing the face-to-face Centres, the phone line helps if you're looking for mental health information, services or supports. It is for consumers, their families, carers, GPs, service providers and other health professionals; available Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm (except public holidays).

The Older Men's Network (TOMNET)

Specialised support services and peer programs for men over 50, especially those at risk. Program offers up to 12 face to face or telephone sessions to help men manage anxiety and depression.

Psychosocial Support

Peer support for people who are diagnosed with a severe and complex mental health conditions who are currently being managed in the primary care setting via a GP and/or psychiatrist.

Creative Coping

A 20-week group therapy program that helps people build skills to manage overwhelming thoughts and emotions, reduce distress and make life changes.

Clinical Care Coordination

Mental health nurse services through a clinic setting or outreach model including clinical care coordination of services by a mental health nurse.

Targeted Psychological Therapies

Psychological therapies provided by mental health professionals to underserved groups.

Child and Youth Mental Health Services

Non-clinical care coordination to support young people; complementary to clinical therapeutic interventions, GPs, paediatricians and psychiatrists.

headspace

Assists young people aged 12 to 25 years with mental health, general health, drug, alcohol, education and employment issues.

Youth Enhanced Services

Ensures young people receive timely and convenient support through enhanced access tailored to their needs, including case management links to clinically and culturally appropriate services.

Suicide Prevention – Healing Workshops

Service options include the Find Healing (through Culture) and Walkabout Barber workshops, and access to integrated health services.

Suicide Prevention – The Way Back Support Service

One-on-one, non-clinical care and practical support that people can relate to following a suicide attempt. Support is provided for up to three months and targets those at the highest risk through referrals following hospital presentations.

Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances Program

Free, specialised and confidential counselling services to people affected by PFAS in the Oakey area.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention services

Culturally appropriate mental health services, including suicide prevention services, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Suicide Prevention – Reach Out and Recover (ROaR) Service

Culturally appropriate suicide prevention service that will support the client (and their care givers) to work with a range of practitioners including GPs, psychiatrists, addiction medicine specialists, psychologists, social workers, counsellors, nurses and Aboriginal health workers.

Accoras Psychosocial Outreach Program (APOP) program

Outreach mental health service supporting children (infant to 11 yrs) and their families to improve mental health and wellbeing, reduce waiting lists for local mental health services, and support the schools who are also supporting these vulnerable families.

Low intensity mental health program (formerly New Access)

Free service developed by Beyond Blue that provides support in the form of a specially trained coach and includes a 60 minute initial assessment followed by five x 30 minute sessions over six weeks. This service is specifically tailored for an older person's needs.

Youth Insearch

Peer-led youth suicide prevention program for young people aged between 12-24.

GP Psychiatry Support Line

Free-to-call hotline allows GPs to speak directly with a qualified psychiatrist about the mental health needs of their patients; available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Alcohol and other drugs



1,937

episodes of care for clients who received treatment for alcohol misuse



2,676

episodes of care for clients who received treatment for amphetamines and cannabis

Our PHN works with service providers to improve access to treatment and coordination of care for people who experience alcohol and other drug dependence.

This year, we have continued to engage, consult, and co-design our programs in collaboration with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled services, such as Carbal Health Services, Cherbourg Regional Aboriginal and Islander Health

Service, Goondir Health Services, Goolburri Health Services, and Kambu Health Service.

We also engage in partnerships with Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council and the Queensland Indigenous Alcohol and Other Drugs Network, which ensures our initiatives are not only culturally sensitive but also tailored to address the unique needs of the local community.

Services we commissioned this year

Lives Lived Well

Alcohol and other drug counsellors provide non-residential rehabilitation services, such as assessment, counselling, early and brief interventions, case management, group therapy, support group sessions and relapse prevention; includes culturally appropriate care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Sunrise Way

Residential rehabilitation treatment and aftercare support for individuals struggling with alcohol and other drug addiction in Toowoomba. Sunrise Way also provides culturally appropriate residential alcohol and other drug rehabilitation service based in Toowoomba.

Teen Challenge

This regional outreach service offers assessment, aftercare, and ongoing support for individuals and families addressing alcohol and drug issues, with a focus on young people aged 16-39. Open to all, it fosters a supportive and inclusive environment for those seeking treatment in the region.

EACH

Outclient treatment services including counselling, early and brief interventions, case management, and relapse prevention.

Ted Noffs program

Counselling and case management services for young people aged 12-25 struggling with drug and alcohol addiction in West Moreton region.

Medicare Mental Health Services open in Ipswich and Kingaroy

We were delighted open two new Medicare Mental Health Centres (formerly Head to Health) this year in Ipswich and Kingaroy. The Hon Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, officiated at both opening ceremonies.

The Centres were established following a rigorous co-design and tender process to identify a suitable provider and we were pleased to begin our partnership with the selected provider, Open Minds.

The Centres now offer Ipswich and Kingaroy locals access to a free service that provides a safe and welcoming space for people who may be in distress or crisis, or who need help finding the right mental health services for their individual needs.

The Centres work in conjunction with the Head to Health phone line, to support people either through the provision of care or the warm transfer of clients to other appropriate service providers in the area, depending on the person's individual needs. Since opening, the Centres have managed nearly 600 cases.

ddwmpnhn.com.au/MentalHealthSupport





Population health - priority populations



96,565

people were born overseas



57,722

people who speak a language other than English



53,902

people were born in countries where English is not the primary language

A focus on healthcare equity

Population health focuses on populations with greater needs and therefore potentially greater healthcare inequity. One population is people with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds whose first language is not English, including people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. In our region, Toowoomba, Ipswich and Lockyer Valley regional areas have higher than average rates of migrants who have entered Australia under humanitarian programs. The largest groups of people from non-English-speaking backgrounds India, Philippines and South Africa.

It also includes people who are or are at-risk of homelessness, the LGBTIQA+ community and people from socially or economically disadvantaged groups. These populations may present with complex health needs including chronic disease and mental health concerns and face additional barriers to the care they need.

This year we developed specific Health Needs Assessments to identify the regions health needs for multicultural communities and those at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. These publications ensure that our work to support identified priority populations is effective and sustainable.



Virtual Health Services program provides a new approach

Our PHN's chronic conditions programs were recommissioned during the year, with a focus on reaching priority populations in the areas of Somerset, Southern Downs, Western Downs and Goondiwindi. These regions were selected based on their population of 'rising risk' - people with one or two chronic conditions, balanced with consideration of other services in the region. Focused risk factors/conditions include obesity, physical inactivity, respiratory disease, arthritis, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and chronic pain.

As part of this new program of commissioned services, Goondir is delivering Virtual Health Services (VHS) via a VHS Hub in each of the four identified LGAs. Within the program, clients can take their health vitals on the devices in their comfort of their home and understand their health information which is monitored by their healthcare team. Whenever needed, the healthcare team can make contact via video call, phone, or an in-person appointment. A staged implementation is now being progressed across the region and has already received highly positive community and staff feedback.

Services we commissioned this year

Refugee Health Outreach Program

Aims to improve access and equity to primary healthcare for refugees through building health literacy and health system navigation; and providing education and support to general practice to build cultural responsiveness. This program is delivered in Toowoomba by Multicultural Australia and in Ipswich by SSI.

Healthy Living on a Budget

We funded a six-week program for people diagnosed with a chronic condition that have exhausted other funding options, such as health insurance, DVA, Medicare or NDIS funding.

My Health for Life

A free behaviour change program designed for people at high risk of developing a chronic disease. The program works in partnership with GPs and other clinical services to provide patients with the opportunity to participate in an evidence-based lifestyle modification program in their local community.

Interpreting for Allied Health Professionals Program

This service provides interpreter services at no cost to allied health professionals who work with patients from refugee and multicultural backgrounds across our region. The service enables allied health professionals to communicate with clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who do not use English as their first language.

Civic Assist - Improving Your Health

Civic Assist continued to deliver an after hours assertive outreach program within the Toowoomba

Central Business District on a Thursday night. The program focused on connecting with young people and providing health information and referral pathways via brief intervention.

Nurse-led Youth Sexual Health Program

The program improves access and equity for young people aged 12-25 years from Priority Populations to access sexual and reproductive health services and information. Priority is given to young people that are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, with migrant and refugee backgrounds, and disadvantaged young people. True Relationships and Reproductive Health delivered this program from their Ipswich and Toowoomba Clinics.

Is It True? – Sexual Health, Lifestyles & Relationship Program

True Relationships and Reproductive Health delivered the pilot program to Year 11 students at Harristown State High School. The Is it True? Program is a preventative program which aims to support the health and wellbeing of adolescents, including sexual activity, at risk behaviours and healthy lifestyles. It is the first time the program has been delivered in the PHN region with the aim of improving access and equity to health services for young people. The PHN is grateful for the collaboration with True Relationships and Harristown State High School in working to reduce the statistics around STIs and providing accurate and evidence-based information on reproductive health for young people in our community

Belong Hockey Program connects new community members

Each Thursday and Friday, up to 35 Adult Migrant English Program youth students come together to enjoy the Belong Hockey Program in Toowoomba.

The program is locally tailored to support the local migrant and refugee population and involves training, games and a shared morning tea. Over 20 Toowoomba locals are also involved in the program, reporting improvement to their own mental and physical wellbeing. Several female volunteers are playing the important role of role-modelling strong female leadership to the participants. Of the refugee and migrant participants, over 50% are women.

The benefits of the psychosocial program include improved physical health, social connection, improved confidence and an opportunity to

practice English. Over recent months, many of the participants have gained employment and noted that the program is positive activity to get them into the community each week.

This program is funded by the PHN through Multicultural Australia's Refugee Health Outreach Program. Psychosocial programs such as Belong Hockey form an important part of the PHN's commissioning approach by focusing on enhancing life skills, independence, and relationships to positively influence the health and wellbeing of people who may face additional barriers, thus reducing the likelihood of hospitalisation and length of hospital stays.



TALK ABOUT: Priority Populations

Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN's TALK ABOUT initiative is an ongoing research engagement project that facilitates community voices into the primary healthcare commissioning process. From 10 January until 21 February 2024 we ran the topic 'Priority populations' which covered multicultural and homeless communities.

This is what we learned:

Over **50,000 people** in our region were born in primarily non-English speaking countries. Research suggests multicultural communities experience:

Health
disparities

Language
barriers

Unique health
conditions

Prejudice

Discrimination

Racism

This information has been embedded in our Health Needs Assessment and across the PHN to ensure the voices of these disadvantaged community members are heard in our decision making processes.

We received responses from...



116 community
members



45 health
professionals

1
in
4

people said they were experiencing housing stress, homelessness, or were concerned about their housing stability.

Rating of experience with primary healthcare services: **7 out of 10**

What you thought works well



You mentioned...

- You receive information about healthcare from your local general practice, as well as family and friends.
- The services you needed most were mental health supports, general practice, and pharmacy.
- You could access some services after hours, such as the hospital, urgent care clinics, and some general practices.

You value services for how they...

- Listen to you, and you feel they believe you when you talk about your health.
- Are open-minded and considerate, and you don't feel you are being judged.

What you thought could be done better



You would like to see...

- More services closer to home, including online and home-visiting choices.
- More affordable allied health and disability services.
- Same-gender health workers with whom you can sensitively discuss your health and wellbeing.

You also suggested...

- More education and promotion about health and wellbeing.
- Building cultural awareness and safety, such as resources about providing care to meet your needs.
- Mobile clinics or transport options, and longer opening hours for the services you need most.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Lisa Rossington

Community Engagement Coordinator

What is your role with the PHN?

Community Engagement Coordinator

What is the best thing about working at the PHN?

The best thing about working at the PHN is the balance between working at your computer and away from your computer. Although we have a strong commissioning role which takes time at the computer, we also get to be involved in community and provider events which are always great to be a part of.

What are you most proud of achieving this year?

The relationships I have established with people in the community and organisations across Darling Downs and West Moreton, it has been great to be on the ground and hearing people's stories. Really listening to how we can invest in improving people's healthcare experiences.



Our staff engaging across the region



In February 2024, PHN staff and leadership visited towns around the region for the annual Health Professionals Meet and Greet, which were attended by hundreds of local primary care professionals and service provider representatives.



In June we were delighted to host local Elders and Aboriginal Health Workers for a celebration of National Reconciliation Week.

The Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives Joint Regional Strategy for Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and AOD went on a road show around the region in late 2023.

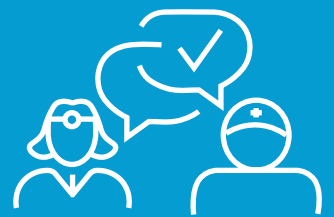


Our All Staff Workshop Day in April 2024 featured a moving session on local history and Smoking Ceremony at Picnic Point in Toowoomba.

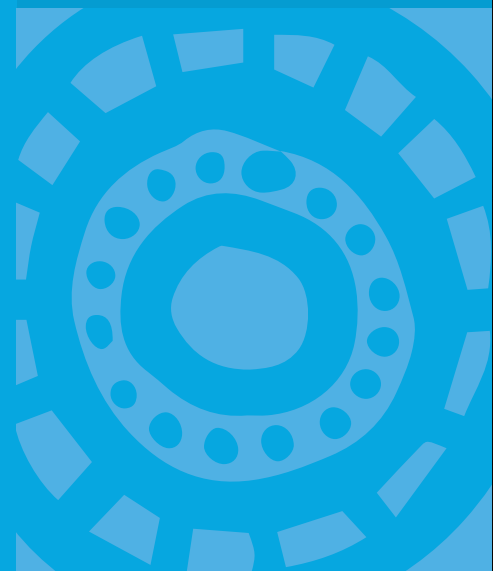




Healthy primary care



Developing a thriving primary care system, that is strong and resilient, innovative and digitally enabled, with a supported and sustainable workforce.



Building a thriving primary care system



33

general practices elected to participate in the after hours program



89.8% & 87.8%

general practices pharmacies
connect to My Health Record



698

PHN-funded after hours sessions conducted



15,161

consultations during PHN-funded after hours sessions



21

Development Grants to support allied health providers build their workforce capacity

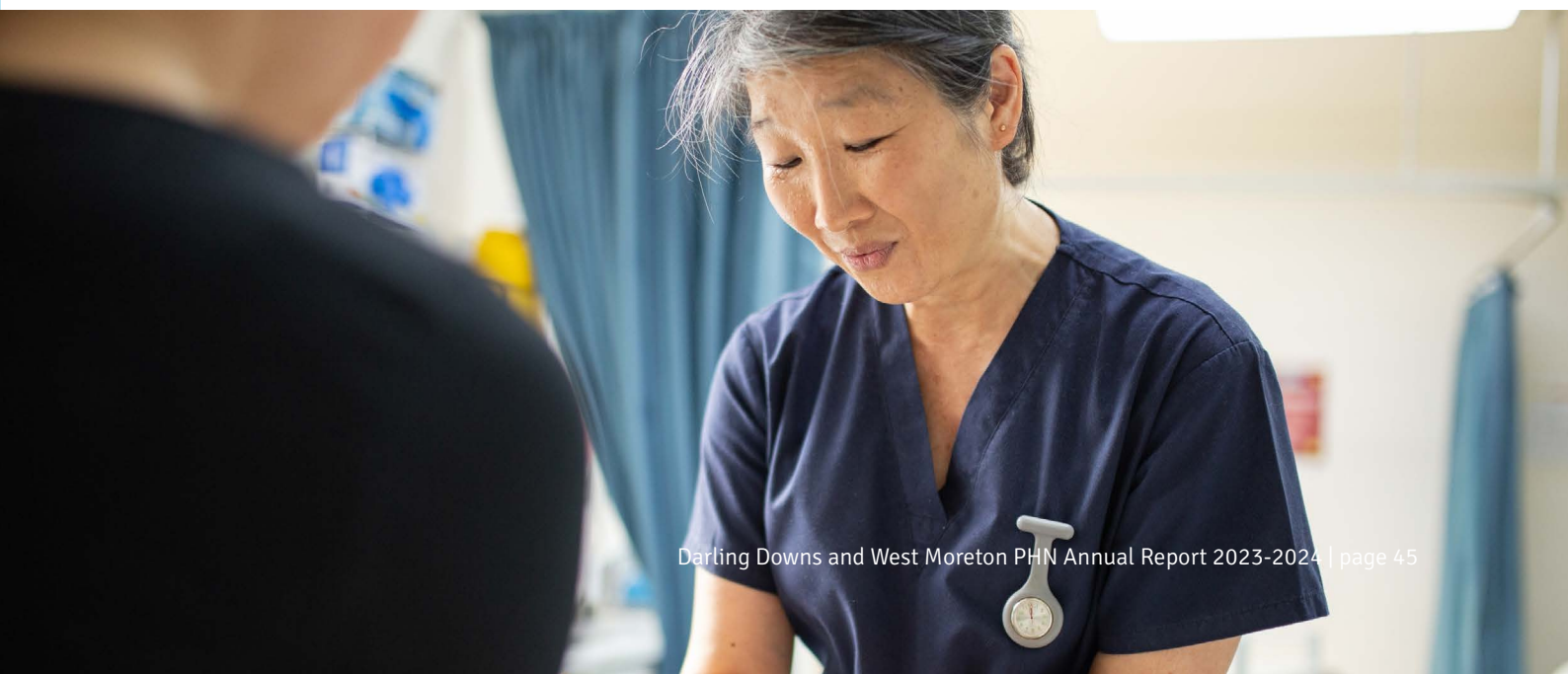


163,935

HealthPathways website visits

Our primary care team plays an important role in supporting general practices, GPs and allied health professionals to implement and maintain models of care that reflect best practice and meet the needs of local communities.

Key areas of focus this year including tackling workforce shortages, addressing sustainability and capacity needs within the system, and ensuring the delivery of excellent healthcare through ongoing quality improvement and education opportunities. We also focused on emergency preparedness by engaging the community and providing support to practices.



Supporting primary care

Our primary care liaison team has the important role of working collaboratively with general practices, GPs and allied health professionals to implement models of care that reflect best practice in primary healthcare through the use of data driven quality improvement initiatives.

This work is our contribution towards developing a thriving primary care system, that is strong and resilient, innovative and digitally enabled, with a supported and sustainable workforce.

Our work includes support in the areas of:

- **Accreditation:** our primary care liaison team members encourage general practices to become and maintain accreditation, and link with relevant providers to assist the accreditation process.
- **Workforce recruitment:** we regularly promote local primary care job vacancies in the area through our website, this year publishing 112 health-related vacancies.
- **Strengthening Medicare – General Practice Grants:** this program helped general practices and eligible Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to expand patient access and improve general practice services. The grants supported general practices and eligible ACCHOs to make investments in innovation, training, equipment, and minor capital works.
- **GP Smart Referrals:** we support the use of GP Smart Referrals, which are digital referrals integrated with GP practice management software (currently Best Practice and Medical Director) to enable faster, streamlined management of referrals to Queensland Public Hospitals.
- **Aboriginal Health Workforce funding of scholarships:** we supported the recruitment of much needed Aboriginal Health workers in our region.
- **Supporting practices to understand and implement MyMedicare:** voluntary patient registration model and associated program activities.
- **Quality Improvement:** our primary care liaison team works closely with general practices to implement quality improvement within Primary Care.
- **EAP program for general practices:** this service is offered to GPs, general practice staff and their families in response to the increased work pressures across the health sector.
- **General Practice Liaison Officers:** we engage two GPs as General Practice Liaison Officers, who attend GP practice visits with our primary care liaison team and provide education regarding the PHN's and Queensland Health programs designed to support and assist in connecting patients to the right care in the right place and the right time.
- **Patient Care Facilitator program:** launched in April to assist patients from Ipswich Hospital's general medical ward to avoid hospital readmissions. We look forward to reporting on the results in our next Annual Report.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Megan McLean

Primary Care Liason Officer

What is your role with the PHN?

I am a Primary Care Liaison Officer

What is the best thing about working at the PHN?

The best thing about working at the PHN is that it's different each day, and most of all the people make it easy for me to wake up and come into work, they are friendly, helpful and make me laugh.

What are you most proud of achieving this year?

Re-establishing the link between the Kingaroy GPs and the doctors at the Kingaroy Hospital and Health Service – a small accomplishment and this link is growing stronger.

Also working on the virtual GP project to be able to provide an alternative solution to the lack of GPs in our rural areas.



“

... a provider who already has an understanding of and experience in providing for the health needs in our area.

”

medicare Urgent Care Clinic

Toowoomba Medical & Dental Centre

Open 7 days
Walk-ins welcome | Bulk-billing

We Treat:

Mild illnesses including:

- + Respiratory symptoms
- + Diarrhoea/vomiting
- + Skin rashes including cellulitis

Minor injuries including:

- + Suspected fractures, sprains and dislocations
- + Lacerations/cuts requiring stitches
- + Removal of foreign objects from skin, eyes & ears
- + Burns and scalds
- + Bites



Medicare Urgent Care Centres open in Toowoomba and Ipswich

Medicare Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs) provide free, urgent treatment for conditions that aren't life threatening.

Medicare UCCs provide walk-in, bulk-billed care for extended hours, seven days a week for minor injuries and illnesses. They are for when people can't see their usual GP, but don't need to go to the emergency department. Radiology and pathology services are available onsite and no out of pocket expenses apply.

In our region, we launched a Medicare UCC in Ipswich in August and another in Toowoomba in October. These clinics were established through close collaboration with West Moreton Health and Darling Downs Health (respectively).

Both clinics operate seven days a week for extended hours and attract upwards of 30 - 50 patients per day.

Common presentations have included acute illness (eg. upper respiratory tract infections, viral, otitis media, urinary tract infections) and acute injury (eg. laceration, fracture, sprain, etc).

In a relatively short span of time, they are helping to reduce the load on local emergency departments, with 60% of patients through the Toowoomba UCC and 44% of patients through the Ipswich UCC indicating they would have otherwise visited the ED. To date, over 15,000 episodes of care have been provided across both clinics.

We recently received additional funding for a third Medicare UCC in our region, to be located in the Redbank area. Commissioning and establishment of that clinic will take place in the next financial year.

FindtheRightCare.com.au/UrgentCare



Enabling and supporting workforce

The general practice workforce planning and prioritisation program is a long-term project aimed at supporting the transition to college-led GP training through the provision of independent, evidence-based advice to the department and colleges (ACRRM and RACGP) on registrar placement in our region.

It will also provide advice on the training capacity and support needs in our region, and provide a detailed analysis of the various training pathways and recommendations to support the attraction and

retention of young rural doctors in West Moreton and Darling Downs.

This year our PHN facilitated a series of collaborative meetings with general practices and local stakeholders to understand their workforce needs, the distribution and capacity of GP registrar supervisors amongst our general practices, and their overall capabilities in relation to training the future workforce.

Allied health workforce

Allied health providers play a crucial role in delivering essential healthcare to thousands of people living in the Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN region.

This year we focused on supporting workforce shortages through the development of a funding model for Development Grants to support eligible Allied Health Providers to build their workforce capacity.

We invited allied health providers in our region to submit a grant application and awarded 21 grants.

Grant recipients utilised funds for a wide range of projects, such as upgrading equipment to permit more telehealth consults with rural patients, upskilling allied health assistants to enable them to provide a greater level of care through to establishing additional services or additional locations to provide their services.

Positive health outcomes from the grants included

- **Improved health outcomes for community**, particularly in regional and remote areas: with over 405 additional occasions of service being given, more than 292 new patients receiving care and an average increase of 2.15 (out of 10) in patient satisfaction.
- **Enhanced sustainability of the allied health workforce**; including 4 new allied health professionals recruited and more than 131 allied health professionals receiving professional development.
- **Opportunities for greater collaboration** between health professionals involved in patient care.
- **Development of alternative models of service delivery**: with 24 outreach clinics established, 104 Allied health assistant led clinics provided and an additional 183 patients seen through telehealth.



Development grants making a difference for our allied health providers

Geoff French, Practice Manager at Essential Health Services (EHS) has gained great benefits from the Development Grant they were awarded in 2023.

His cross-disciplinary team provides allied health and NDIS-registered services across chronic pain management, nutrition, physical training, and mental health in the South Burnett region. The Grant supported his practice to achieve greater collaboration with other health professionals involved in patient care, in particular they formed an 'allied health alliance' with Haly Health & Skin Medical Centre.

"Our psychologist now works from this practice two days a week. It offers the GP clinic and our practice the ability to supply additional professional services, create strong collaboration between a GP clinic and allied health team, and strong alliances in our community."

In addition, EHS was able to engage Medical Objects as a secure and reliable source of professional interactions between fellow

Allied Health practitioners, and GP clinics and Specialists. They also purchased online psychology testing kits and a professional subscription to Zoom, meeting another of the goals of the Grants (to support alternative models of service delivery).

"This means our services for psychological assessments may be delivered anytime, anywhere (in Australia, via zoom). The professional subscription has lots of additional features allowing delivery of services as an alternate service delivery."

The Grants also supported staff with ongoing study costs, meeting yet another intended goal of the Grants, which was to enhance the sustainability of the allied health workforce.

"Thanks to PHN funding, we have been able to build closer ties with practices like Haly Health to deliver much needed mental health services to our communities. This vision of services gives better patient care and outcomes by having all services in the one location."



Outside Haly Health and Skin Medical Centre:
Primary GP and Owner Dr. Isabelle Johnsen and Provisional
Psychologist Mrs. Esther Simick from EHS

Digital health

Digital health refers to using technology to improve the healthcare system for providers and patients alike, and improve health outcomes for Australians.

Digital health includes telehealth, electronic prescriptions, My Health Record, and secure messaging such as smart referrals to Queensland public hospitals.

We provide support to local health professionals to help them leverage the benefits of digital health to ultimately improve patient's health outcomes.

Increasing access to care through telehealth

Telehealth became an essential way to access healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic. While its use is no longer as widespread, access to video and phone consultations remains high in the region. Consumers continue to express the need for telehealth to improve access and more timely care, including to manage and monitor their health when face to face care may not be possible.

Connected Care Grants

Assisted residential aged care homes (RACHs) located within the region to purchase the equipment they needed in order to increase the number of video telehealth consultations offered to residents. 59 out of 64 RACHs participated in a consultation process to assess their digital capacity. Fifty-seven of those 59 RACHs made submissions for grants, with all those applying being successful in receiving grants.

Telehealth training

Comprehensive telehealth training was developed and delivered to Residential Aged Care Homes (RACHs) and GPs within our region. This training helped all healthcare professionals, including GPs, registered nurses, clinical nurses, and assistant in nursing professionals to be proficient in utilising telehealth technology to enhance resident care. The training is tailored to the specific equipment used by each RACH or GP as part of the Connected Care Grant and uses a fit-for-purpose platform such as Healthdirect Video Call, VisionFlex, or Queensland Telehealth. This project addressed the current gaps in knowledge and utilisation of telehealth services, to improve overall healthcare delivery and resident outcomes.

Quality Improvement and Clinical Audit

142 practices took part in our PHN's Quality Improvement initiatives and clinical audits this year.

Supporting virtual aged care

Specialist telehealth carts that provide Video Conferencing Software using digital peripherals such as a digital stethoscope, IR thermometer, sphygmomanometer, pulse oximeter and ECG and integrating with visionflex software. The cost of maintaining specialised telehealth equipment can be difficult to sustain for some care providers, particularly as costs increase over time. We also assisted providers to identify alternative solutions to help maintain a fit-for-purpose telehealth platform.

My Health Record

We promoted the adoption and use of My Health Record to primary care providers (general practices, pharmacies, some allied health providers and specialists). Over 89% of general practices and 87% of pharmacies connect to My Health Record. We also actively promoted the new My Health app to both consumers and providers. With new features such as the Aged Care transfer summary, default pathology and diagnostic imaging uploading, electronic prescription being added into the My Health app seeing further interest from healthcare professionals utilising My Health Record.

Provider Connect Australia (PCA)

This year we have been supporting practices to adopt Provider Connect Australia (PCA) - a secure, online portal for providers, connecting providers - to streamline their operations and enhance the sharing of relevant practice and healthcare professional information with other key services and providers.



PHN support in uptake of digital health tools

Our PHN has an important role to play in supporting general practices to adopt digital health technologies. These technologies can make their administrative work more streamlined and efficient, as well as helping GPs to better monitor and manage their patients with higher needs for improved health outcomes.

PHN staff worked closely with practices like Laidley Family Doctors to implement digital health initiatives such as Provider Connect Australia (PCA) to streamline processes in their practice.

PCA is an initiative of the Australian Digital Health Agency to help healthcare provider organisations update their business information in a single source. This improves the accuracy of healthcare service and practitioner information, while reducing duplication and streamlining notifications.

Assistant Practice Manager at Laidley Family Doctors, Ellisha Freeman, has found working with the PHN and implementing PCA has had real benefits in simplifying the process of maintaining and adding new health professional information associated with their practice in order to share that key information with a variety of different services and allied health providers they work with.

“Jake and Lee [at the PHN] have ... both been extremely supportive. No problem is too big to find an answer to, so they have been instrumental in getting us on board with doing this and being able to make the transition quite smooth.”



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Brian Kurth

**Director - Digital Transformation,
Performance and Evaluation**

What is your role with the PHN?

I am the Director of a team called Digital Transformation, Performance and Evaluation. This means we work with people in the PHN and our partners to harness data and technology, to help them do what they need to do, and hopefully make tasks easier and our projects more successful.

What is the best thing about working at the PHN?

The PHN provides an environment to learn and grow. There are so many opportunities to get involved, try new things, and learn from each other. This includes partnering with our local hospital and health services and joining communities of practice with other PHNs.

What are you most proud of achieving this year?

This year we achieved so much. If I had to pick something, it would be setting up a regular way for our community to share their experiences of using our PHN-funded services, through the Your Experience of Service (YES) survey. Engagement with our community and our stakeholders is really important and valued, and our PHN can now offer an additional safe and secure way for people to share their experiences of care. It was great to see the community and service providers engage in this, knowing it helps improve access to the care they need.



Disaster resilience and preparedness

With the reality that future disasters are likely to occur that will significantly impact medical practices and primary care providers, we recognise that the primary care sector stands to benefit from training and support to develop coordinated and practical disaster management plans.

This year we offered some general practices the opportunity to hold a one-on-one training session with AGPAL to equip them with essential knowledge and strategies for effective disaster management. Practices were given the option of discussing scenarios for ensuring business continuity in the instance of either extreme weather, data breach or loss, or power and data outages.

One participant, Julie Raine, Practice Manager, Redbank Plaza Medical, has shared how useful this was for her practice:

"I was lucky enough to be part of the disaster management coaching sessions with AGPAL, arranged by the Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN. The session allowed me to have a one to one session with a coach to discuss real life scenarios that we had experienced as a practice. It was an excellent opportunity to debrief and also look for areas of improvement for any future incidents. It also helped us identify some of the positive actions we had put in place at the time of the 'disasters'. It was good to hear examples from the coach from other real life scenarios and use that experience to update our disaster management plan to be better prepared."

Additionally, this year we developed links with District and Local Disaster Management Groups and the disaster coordinators within Queensland Health, and developed a framework to guide the PHN's response to Disaster Management.

How prepared is the community?

In late 2023 we conducted the TALK ABOUT topic 'Natural and Other Disasters'. Unlike other TALK ABOUT topics, this topic did not focus on one specific population or community. Natural and other disasters can happen to anyone at any time, so this topic focused on preparing to support the community access to primary care in these difficult times.

Over 43% of respondents said they have experienced a flood, along with many respondents also experiencing fires and storms. During these experiences, community members shared they were more likely to have seen a GP via telehealth over face-to-face.

When it came to planning, only 46% of respondents said they had any plans in place for times of disaster. Overall, respondents rated their confidence to care for health of self and others in a time of disaster six out of ten.

The PHN shared this information with local health providers and partners, and is undertaking ongoing work to ensure general practices and allied health are informed, equipped and supported to respond in the event of future disasters.



Cervical screening self-collection on the rise in response to 'In their hands' project

The 'In their hands' project has delivered a significant uplift in self-collection cervical screening and overall cervical cancer screenings in the region.

The project kicked off following changes that were made to the National Cervical Screening Program in 2022 that meant all eligible people – women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 74 – were enabled to choose to take their own sample, or have their healthcare provider collect their sample.

The aim of this project was to increase the uptake of cervical screening self-collection among under and never-screened groups, by working with primary healthcare organisations across the region and leveraging off established resources and education material made available by Queensland Health.

The successful implementation of this project resulted in large increases to the baseline data of self-collection cervical screening within the region. Between July 2022, and March 2024, the number of self-collection tests conducted rose from 1533 (20% of all tests) to 2984 (34% of all tests). This rise has exceeded the Queensland PHN average of 29% self-collection.

The project achieved this outcome over several rounds, with each round including training and clinical support.

After additional funding was provided in March 2024, the project expanded to reach priority populations, with a targeted consumer campaign for these groups developed to be rolled out into the new year.



HealthPathways

HealthPathways is an online portal to provide GPs and other health professionals with evidence-based, clinical support to be used at the point of care.

HealthPathways provides information on the assessment and management of a range of clinical conditions – including clear referral guidance for local hospitals, specialists and allied health.

The content is developed collaboratively by local GPs, hospital clinicians and a wide range of other healthcare professionals.

We manage two HealthPathways websites: one for Darling Downs and one for West Moreton. Each site contains close to 1,000 pathways with localised information about referral information and services in each area. Over the last 12 months, collectively our HealthPathways websites have amassed almost 164,000 website visits.

Each year, we continue to expand and update the medical topics available through HealthPathway so the localised information remains accurate and current. The pathways represent the ongoing collaboration between the PHN, Hospital and Health Services and healthcare providers in the region to ensure improved health outcomes.

1,820

localised HealthPathways
now available

163,935

HealthPathways
website visits



After hours services

The 'after hours' period for healthcare is between 6pm and 8am on weeknights, after 12pm on Saturdays and all day Sundays and public holidays.

To help alleviate long wait times in emergency departments during these times, we provide funding support for general practices to extend their opening hours into the after hours period. This provides much-needed additional services for the community and increased appointment availability for people in the region. We also support participating practices by funding business support tools to enhance the ongoing sustainability of these after hours services.

During the financial year, we supported 33 practices who elected to participate in the after hours program, with 698 after hours sessions conducted providing 15,161 consultations. This program will continue into the next financial year.



Healthy partnerships

Collaborating effectively,
with a one system mindset.



Our engagement approach

Our engagement approach is built upon our belief that every person is the expert in their own health.

As a health commissioning organisation, we ensure community members have a say in the design and establishment of these services. We also listen to service providers, primary care providers and our partners across the health and social services sectors to ensure we deliver the highest value with limited resources. In our complex health system, we acknowledge that effective change must be collaborative.

This year we facilitated 743 instances of engagement. This engagement was conducted via surveys, direct consultation, Kitchen Table Discussions and Yarning Circles. Using a range of methods helps ensure we hear from everyone in the region, including people living with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, older persons, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and LGBTIQ+ people.

Listening to the community provides insight into their first-hand knowledge of how the system works. Likewise, our close relationships with service providers and primary care providers helps us build a comprehensive view of how the system is functioning, and where the gaps may exist.

The TALK ABOUT campaign continued with four new topics; Young People and Their Health, Natural and Other Disasters, Priority Populations and First 2000 Days.

We also undertook consultation workshops to develop the new Health Needs Assessments (Homelessness, After hours and Multicultural) and the First 2000 Days Strategy which will be published in the new financial year.

TALK ABOUT

TALK ABOUT is an ongoing engagement project that facilitates the valuable role of community input, advice and informs our shaping of effective, accessible and high-quality local health services.

TALK ABOUT is a unique initiative, conceived of and developed by our PHN. It is an innovative model, originally introduced in early 2020 to add value and complexity to the PHN's Health Needs Assessment.

In the three years since, the PHN has engaged the community on 18 health topics and has heard from over 2,750 people. TALK ABOUT is run region-wide to reach a diverse range of community members with a new topic covered every three months. Each topic involves an online survey and a series of Kitchen Table Discussions.

This format has been developed to maximise reach within the community, with the goal of engaging with people in priority health populations who may have reduced trust in the system or low levels of access due to factors such as travel cost, internet access or disability access requirements. The online surveys are short, anonymous, and designed to gather insights around 'what is working well' and 'what could be done better'.

The Kitchen Table Discussions are facilitated by community hosts without the presence of a PHN staff member to ensure participants feel safe to share their experiences, ideas and advice.

This year, we engaged with 585 people across the following topics:

- Young People and Their Health
- Natural and Other Disasters
- Priority Populations
- First 2000 Days

Outcomes of TALK ABOUT

- TALK ABOUT establishes the important role of community voice in the commissioning and system improvement work undertaken by the PHN.
- The information collected through TALK ABOUT topics is included in the PHN's Health Needs Assessments.
- Information is shared across our PHN workforce and with our health system partners to help identify and explain gaps within the system.

ddwmpnh.com.au/TalkAbout 

Partnerships

We thank our health system partners and reflect on the many joint accomplishments this year.

Health and Hospital Services

Collaboration and integration is at the core of the work we do in our region, and a key component of our strategic plan. In particular, the working relationship between PHNs and their Hospital and Health Services counterparts is paramount to achieving a more connected health system.

West Moreton Health

We have a formalised agreement in place with West Moreton Health, and informally work together on a weekly basis across many local initiatives.

Two such programs are:

- 'Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives' initiative
- West Moreton Care Collaboratives

Darling Downs Health

Jointly covering a large rural region, the PHN and Darling Downs Health work closely together to ensure our wide spread and diverse community members have access to high quality healthcare.

Joint initiatives include:

- 'Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives' initiative
- Darling Downs Care Collaboratives
- Goondiwindi Cross Border initiative
- Cherbourg Health Council
- Rural health workforce



New services

Medicare Urgent Care Clinics

The Medicare Urgent Care Clinics are a new model of care to reduce pressure on our hospitals. They provide bulk-billed, culturally safe, equitable and accessible urgent care to all people, including vulnerable and young people.

People are able to attend a Medicare Urgent Care Clinic to see a doctor for non-life threatening acute episodic care for minor injuries and illnesses. This includes closed fractures, simple eye injuries, minor burns, treating a UTI or ear infection.

This year we opened the Ipswich and Toowoomba Urgent Care Clinics working in close partnership with West Moreton Health, Darling Downs Health and the QAS. Work is underway to open a third Medicare Urgent Care Clinic next year.

Medicare Mental Health Centres (formerly Head to Health)

Following a comprehensive stakeholder and community co-design process, the Ipswich and Kingaroy Medicare Mental Health Centres were opened this year in partnership with the selected provider, Open Minds.

Both centres provide free, no-stigma mental health support and work collaboratively with local hospitals, GPs, mental health service providers and other social services to ensure each person who walks into a centre is connected with the support they need.



Key partnerships

Regional Health Collaborative

The Regional Health Collaborative was established this year as a partnership between Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN, West Moreton Health and Darling Downs Health

The Regional Health Collaborative is an initiative to formalise health needs assessment, planning, and coordination across the health service systems using shared data and agreed metrics. This will enable us to have a clear view of our region's health needs and drive collaborative solutions to address these needs. The Regional Health Collaborative builds on the foundations of cooperation from the three organisations to work together on priority initiatives. Recent examples include improving mental health services through Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives.

Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives

The challenges our community and our health system have faced over the past few years are considerable and the impact on our collective mental health has been significant.

To make a difference, we need to work together. 'Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives' is our comprehensive Joint Regional Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Alcohol and Other Drug Plan.

The strategy is the result of extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders, including people with lived experience, service providers, clinicians and community stakeholders, and the strong partnership between West Moreton Health and Darling Downs Health and our PHN.

Darling Downs Care at End of Life Collaborative

The Darling Downs Care at the End of Life Collaborative has been established to improve the provision of palliative care and end of life services for residents in the Darling Downs region with a focus on greater choice of quality, appropriate at home services.

West Moreton Care Collaborative

The West Moreton Care Collaboratives (WMCC) comprise of members from West Moreton Health, peak bodies, private and community organisations.

WMCC encompasses the Care at End of Life Collaborative and the Older Persons Care Collaborative. The Care at the End of Life Collaborative is aligned with the Greater Choices for at Home Palliative Care objectives and has developed a 2024-2027 Action Plan to address the needs of the local community.

As a collective, the WMCC are auspiced under the governance of University of Southern Queensland.

Macintyre Health Alliance

The Macintyre Health Alliance is a collaboration between Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN, Goondiwindi Medical Centre, Darling Downs Health, Pius X Aboriginal Medical Service, Hunter New England Central Coast PHN and the Hunter New England Local Health District.

It was formed to make recommendations on the delivery of health services within the Toomelah, Boggabilla and Goondiwindi region, and advocate for improved health services and outcomes for the people living in these communities.

This year, the Macintyre Health Alliance formulated an innovative, multidisciplinary model of care, called Indigenous Wellness Connect. Designed to provide culturally safe, patient centred, digitally connected primary care that improves equity of access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people based in rural and remote Australia, this initiative is supported through an IMOC (Innovative Model of Care) grant, funded through support from the Commonwealth Government.

Within the Model, care will be delivered through a connected network of primary care services to the closest primary care hub and beyond to support underserved rural communities with Indigenous populations.

The care model will include the use of a sophisticated telehealth cart system with diagnostic peripheral tools, enhanced digital satellite connectivity, and remote support from a multidisciplinary team of GPs, allied health and specialists.

ddwmpnh.com.au/IndigenousWellnessConnect

Clinical Council

The Clinical Council plays an important role in providing advice on locally relevant clinical matters. With the Federal Government focus on primary care, including the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce and the Ten-Year Primary Care Plan, the Clinical Council supports collaboration as well as advocate, promote and encourage engagement across the healthcare system.

Our current council is made up of:

- Six West Moreton and six Darling Downs representatives
- Four doctors
- One practice manager
- Four allied health
- One registered nurse
- One Director Indigenous Health
- One GM Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- One representative each from West Moreton Health and Darling Downs Health

Our Clinical Council members are:

- **Dr Tony Bayliss:** PHN Chair and GP
- **Tamika Campbell:** Deputy CEO - Carbal
- **Dene Creegan:** Practice Manager
- **Dr Meech Freeman:** A/Clinical Director Rural Health – West Moreton Health
- **Dadirai Gara:** Psychologist
- **Simone Karandrews:** Sonographer and Community Advisory Council Representative
- **Rica Lacey:** Director Indigenous Health – Darling Downs Health
- **Wendy Owen:** Speech Pathologist
- **Judith Pasco (France):** Podiatrist
- **Dr Vishwas Raghunath:** Nephrologist/Obstetric Physician
- **Elise Stevenson:** Registered Nurse
- **Dr Tanusha Ramaloo:** Ex officio
- **Dr Joanna Pappas:** Ex officio

Community Advisory Committees

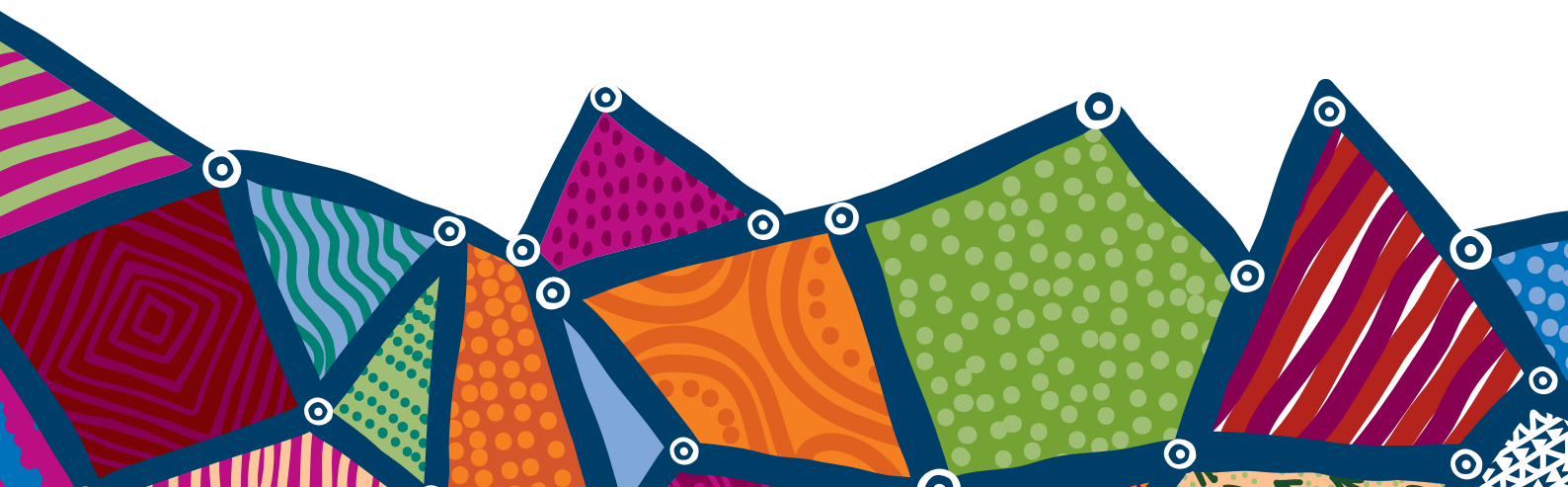
The role of the Community Advisory Committees is to provide the community perspective to PHN Boards to ensure that decisions, investments, and innovations are patient centred, cost effective locally relevant and aligned to local care experiences and expectations.

PHNs are expected to ensure that Community Advisory Committee members have the necessary skills to participate in a committee environment and are representative of the PHN.

To meet this requirement, we have two Community Advisory Committees in place; one in West Moreton and one in Darling Downs, each with up to nine members plus the Chair (Board representative).

Our Community Advisory Committee members are:

- **Elizabeth Adams:** Darling Downs Chair
- **Professor Lauren Ball:** West Moreton Chair
- **Anya Smith:** Community Representative
- **Bradley Jones:** Community Representative
- **Bree Manning:** Community Representative
- **Elizabeth Kerrison:** Community Representative
- **Louise Judge:** Community Representative
- **Rochelle Jesser:** Community Representative
- **Jason Erbacher:** Community Representative
- **Ellisha Freeman:** Community Representative
- **Kim Stanton:** Community Representative
- **Leonie Short:** Community Representative
- **Michael Winton:** Community Representative
- **Simone Karandrews:** Community Representative
- **Uncle Milton Walit:** Community Representative
- **Adem Stanton:** Community Representative







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Local Integrated
Primary Health Care