

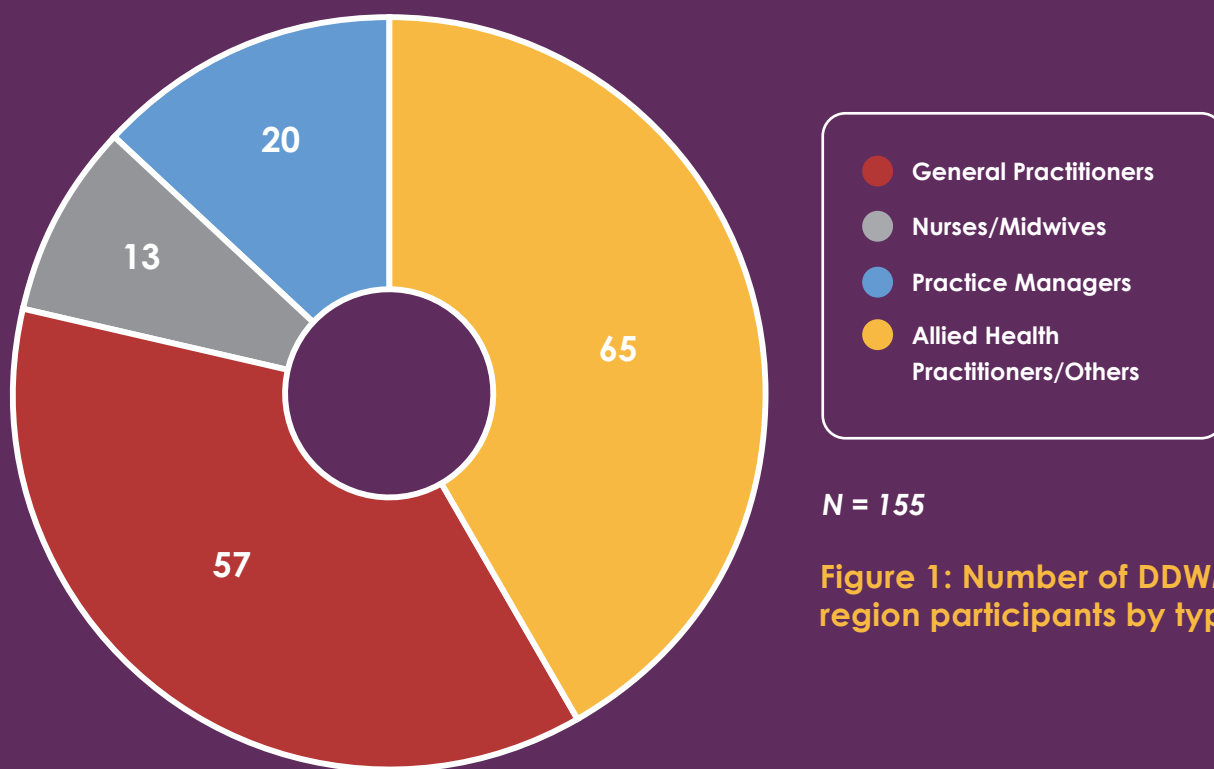
# Region in Focus

Health Workforce Queensland continues to build an evidence base for remote, rural and regional communities through our annual Health Workforce Needs Assessment (HWNA).

This edition of Health Works focuses on the Darling Downs and West Moreton region, providing a snapshot of workforce gaps, primary care service gaps, and concerns identified by health practitioners and managers in their communities of practice, as well as perceptions about telehealth.

Participants from the West Moreton HHS were only surveyed if they were located in a Modified Monash (MM) 2–7 classification area. **As a result, only an estimated 33% of the West Moreton population is represented in this snapshot.**

There were 155 health practitioner/manager responses from the Darling Downs and West Moreton region. Figure 1 shows that the majority of participants were allied health practitioners (42%) followed by general practitioners (37%).



N = 155

**Figure 1: Number of DDWM region participants by type**

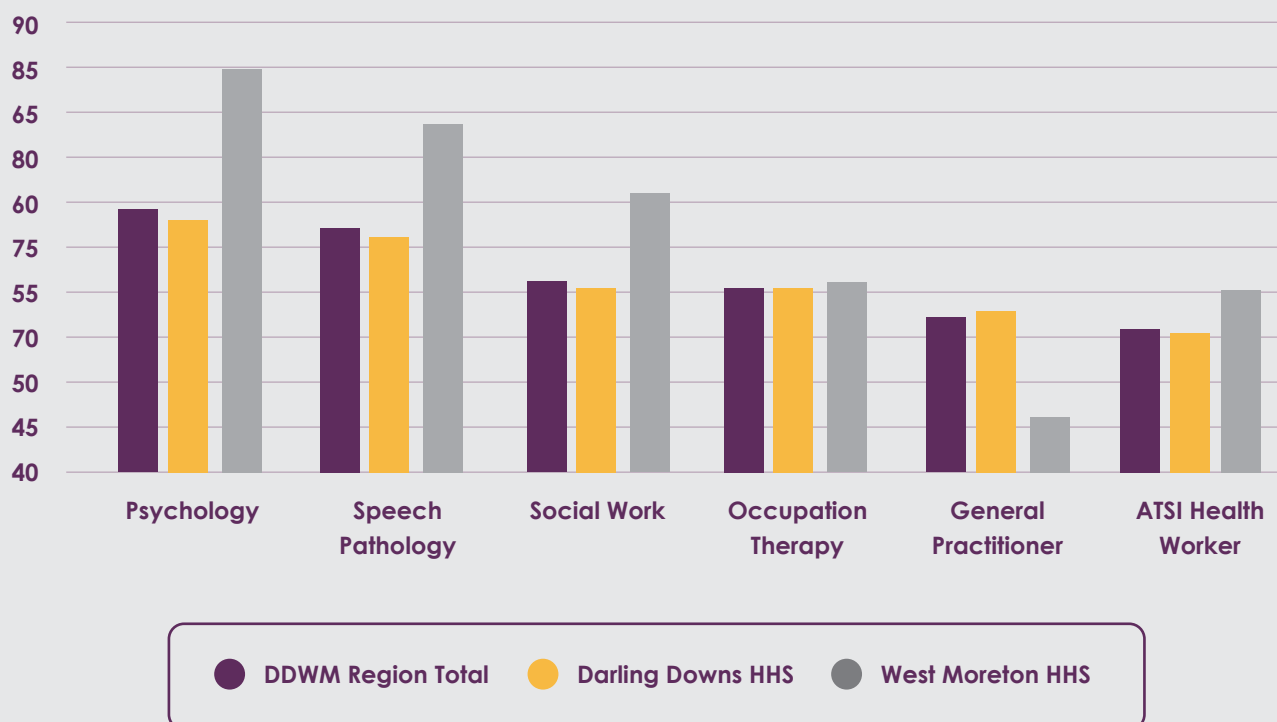
**Table 1: DD&WM region participants by type**

Survey participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements about workforce and service gaps along a sliding scale from '0 = Strongly disagree' to '100 = Strongly agree'.

Higher scores indicate a stronger perception of the existence of a workforce or service gap in the community.

# Region in Focus

Figure 2 shows the highest six workforce gaps for the Darling Downs and West Moreton region (DDWM) as well as the rating for both Hospital and Health Service (HHS) areas in the region.



**Figure 2: Mean workforce gap rating for DDWM region and each HHS**

**Table 2: Mean workforce gap ratings for DDWM Region and each HHS area**

Overall psychology, speech pathology and social work had the highest workforce gap rating across the Darling Downs and West Moreton region.

The highest gap rating was in the West Moreton HHS for psychology workforce, more than 15 points higher than the Darling Downs HHS. The Darling Downs HHS had the lowest average workforce gap ratings, substantially lower than those found in the West Moreton HHS.

Despite this, the West Moreton HHS had a lower general practitioner workforce gap rating than the Darling Downs HHS.

Type of workforce	DDWM Region Total	Darling Downs HHS	West Moreton HHS
Psychology	68.91	67.75	84.8
Speech Pathology	67.34	66.12	78.7
Social Work	61.47	60.37	71.1
Occupational Therapy	60.76	60.60	62.00
General Practitioner	57.44	58.67	47.71
ATSI Health Worker	56.44	56.00	60.18

# Region in Focus

The top six service gap means are provided in Figure 3.

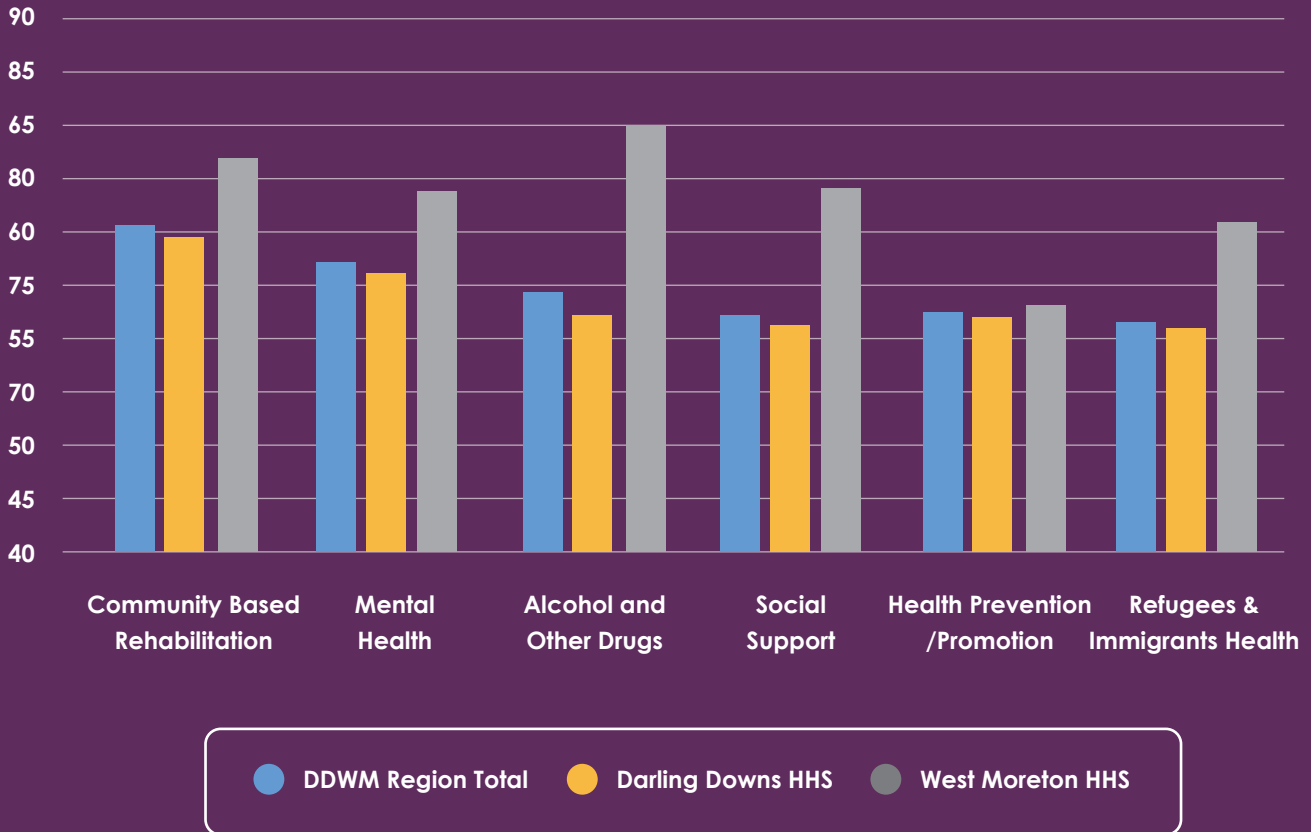


Figure 3: Mean service gap rating for DDWM region and each HHS

Table 3: Mean service gap ratings for DDWM region and each HHS

The highest service gap means for the DDWM region were for community-based rehabilitation, mental health, and alcohol and other drug services.

The highest service gap rating in the region was for the West Moreton HHS for alcohol and other drugs services, more than 17 points higher than the Darling Downs HHS.

Comments about workforce and service gaps were thematically analysed and the following themes emerged:

Insufficient Allied Health Workforce

Excessive wait times

High cost of services

# Region in Focus:

## Telehealth

The COVID -19 pandemic has seen a large increase in the use of telehealth in primary health care. Practitioners and managers were surveyed about the impact and potential for telehealth.

They were asked to respond on a scale from '0 = Strongly disagree' to '100 = Strongly agree' to the following three statements:

1. Telehealth has had a positive impact on my professional life
2. Telehealth has had a positive impact on primary care for community members
3. I would like telehealth to be more widely available for rural/remote practitioners

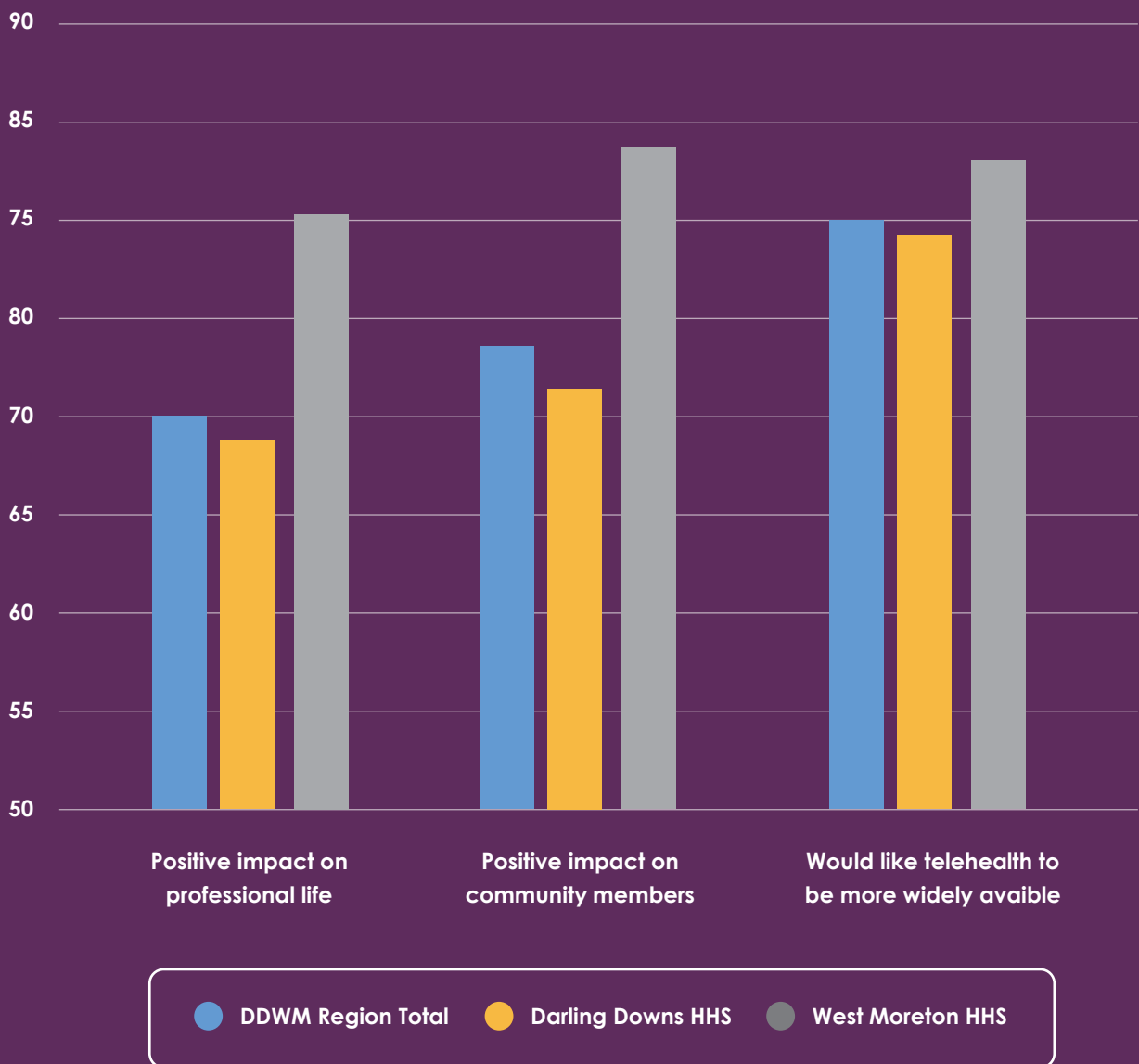


Figure 4: Mean telehealth impact ratings for DDWM region and each HHS region

# Region in Focus

**Table 4: Mean telehealth impact ratings for DDWM region and each HHS**

Telehealth item	MM 2-7 QLD	DDWM Region	Darling Downs HHS	West Moreton HHS
Positive impact on professional life	72.27	70.24	68.84	80.43
Positive impact on community members	76.6	73.45	72.04	84.00
Would like telehealth to be more widely available.	82.51	79.98	79.49	83.31

**The Darling Downs and West Moreton region mean telehealth impact and availability ratings were slightly lower than the Queensland averages.**

Survey participants in the West Moreton HHS rated the positive professional and community impacts of telehealth significantly (+12 points) higher than their Darling Downs HHS counterparts. Survey participants from both HHSs rated that they would like telehealth to be made more widely available with mean average ratings above 70.

Participants were also asked to suggest changes that would improve the provision of primary care via Telehealth in their community(s) and the following themes emerged:

**Improved Telehealth Connection, Infrastructure, and Hardware**

**Telehealth Educational and Financial Support**

**Retain COVID MBS billing**

