



Health Workforce  
Queensland

# Health Works

Issue #15

**02**

CEO Message

**03**

Good News - Dr Hernandez

**04**

GROW Rural CQ

**05**

Training & Events

**06**

Gladstone Health Services Plan

**07**

Stakeholder Group Meeting

**10**

Staff Profile

**11**

Region in Focus

**15**

Job Vacancies

# CEO Message

**It's been another bumpy few months with lockdowns causing uncertainty for the whole Country. I particularly want to send my thoughts and wishes to everyone in New South Wales and Victoria. Here in Queensland the measures that the Government has taken enabled us to attend the Rural Doctors Association Queensland (RDAQ) annual conference at the end of June.**

Proudly maintaining our position as conference partner, we were involved in various events and activities at the RDAQ Conference. Our Chair, Dr Ross Maxwell and I presented at the **"Rural Workforce Forum - A Brighter Future"**, where we had the benefit of catching up with old colleagues and friends, and meeting new ones. It was humbling to witness an entire room of Doctors honoring the work of the Chief Health Office, Dr Jeanette Young with a standing ovation.

If you missed the wrap up in the most recent issue of Health Works Digital Magazine you can read all about it on our website [here](#). Additionally, the QRMFN Backbone of the Bush Award was presented at RDAQ which you can also read about [here](#).

On Monday 30 August 2021 we launched our Strategic Plan for 2021-2026. This strategic plan outlines the priority areas for Health Workforce Queensland for the next 5 years. These priorities will be implemented through operational activities, which are the responsibility of the Board, CEO and all agency staff to enact. The strategies are closely aligned with the current programs and services we deliver through our funding contracts. You can read more about the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan [here](#).

A recent major event on our calendar was GROW Rural Central Queensland, which took place at the end of July. The GROW Rural program offers a one-of-a-kind rural immersion experience, aimed at attracting current students to a rural career. The brand-new cohort of 30 interdisciplinary students who participated were selected through a competitive application process and will remain on the program until 2023. This is the start of their journey into exploring the possibilities of rural health, developing new friendships, and connecting with the communities of Woorabinda, Moura and Theodore.

Unfortunately, due to a snap COVID-19 lockdown whilst in Theodore this year, the team had to act quickly and made the decision to cut the event short. Their priority was to ensure the safety of the communities and participants, and the cohort were transported home safely. However, despite the disruption, the events that the students did get to experience saw them forge new friendships and will pave the way for next year. You can read more about it on page 4 of this issue.

Finally, our annual Health Workforce Needs Assessment (HWNA) report was published on 31 August. With a focus on the primary health care landscape, the Health Workforce Needs Assessment identifies high priority locations, professions and workforce requirements to develop and support evidence-based and effective models of service delivery in remote and rural Queensland. The findings of this report identifies where our efforts are most needed. You can read this report on our website [here](#).



**Dr Ross Maxwell**  
Board Chair

**Chris Mitchell**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Good News - Dr Hernandez

Earlier this year Health Workforce Queensland placed Dr Paula Hernandez in a new role at Grace Family Practice and Skin Care in Bundaberg. We caught up with Dr Hernandez recently to see how the move went and how she and her family have settled into life in Bundy.

**“Overall, it was a great move. New skills, new patients, fresh start, short commute, more family time and more work satisfaction.”**

Dr Hernandez shared. She was looking for a change to regional Queensland and wanted to develop new skills.

**“Bundy seems to have it all; beach, friendly people, no traffic, and opportunities to learn new skills.”**

Dr Hernandez said her recruitment process with the Health Workforce Solutions team was good, there was clear communication, prompt reply and after her CV was checked, selected practices were contacted quickly.

Dr Hernandez was also eligible for relocation support which she said was useful and helped to pay all the additional expenses.

The most rewarding part of Dr Hernandez role is her patients.

**“The people are friendly, grateful, and really want to establish a relationship with the doctor. I can really be a part of their lives. Work satisfaction is great, patients in rural areas want to**

**improve their health and are grateful for what you do. I am also learning new skills in skin cancer and other procedures.**

**And the best thing about moving to a smaller regional community are the new adventures, better work/life balance, happy kids, new friends. It can be daunting to move out of the comfort zone but there was a lot to gain. My family and myself are enjoying the change!”**

Health Workforce Queensland assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers, nurses, allied health professionals and general practitioners (including locums) to find their dream job in remote and rural Queensland.

Remote and rural Queensland communities provide a unique opportunity to further your health career. Our Health Workforce Solutions team provide a personal recruitment approach when assisting you throughout the placement process and can offer various financial support options such as relocation incentive packages.

Current vacancies are on the Health Workforce Queensland website.

[Click Here for Website](#)

Our team can be contacted on email.

[Click Here for Email](#)

# GROW Rural CQ Students Spirits High Despite Early Cancellation Due to COVID-19 Lockdown

**The enthusiasm of first year health students to be part of the GROW Rural program was evident from the 100+ applications Health Workforce Queensland received for the Central Queensland 2021-2023 cohort.**

The 30 successful health students and Health Workforce Queensland staff commenced their first GROW Rural event together at the end of July as they travelled by coach from Rockhampton to Woorabinda. Woorabinda was, for many students, their first introduction to an Indigenous community which included a cultural awareness session delivered by Elders, bush stories and an introduction to traditional medicine.

Myella Farm Stay, located just outside Baralaba, was the next stop where everyone was warmly welcomed by the Eather family and introduced to their extended family of residential and fostered pets. After an informal dinner, under the stars, with local health professionals the students awoke to a spectacular sunrise shrouded in mist. A country breakfast was followed by whip-cracking and lassoing lessons, with plenty of sore hands, before travelling to Theodore where the students took part in a smoking ceremony beside the Dawson River. Students also had the privilege of listening to the life story of local Indigenous artist Wayne Martin.

Disappointingly, it was at this point, GROW Rural received word Brisbane was about to go into lockdown. The difficult decision, to cancel the remainder of the program, was made and transport arrangements put in place for everyone to travel back to their respective destinations.

The seven hour trip back to Brisbane by coach provided plenty of time to reflect on the friendships we'd formed, the fantastic experiences we'd had and how there is strength through adversity. This was beautifully illustrated by the capacity of the students to support one another in their disappointment and by generously assisting those students with additional transport needs. Although the first GROW Rural Central Queensland 2021-2023 event had only just begun, the spirit of GROW had undoubtedly woven itself into our memories and was aptly captured by one student who wrote:

**“ The GROW rural program has been such an amazing experience for me! I didn't really know what to expect at first, but it was fair to say, I had one of the best times of my life after meeting the lovely organisers, other health students and engaging in the cultural activities.**

**You get a beautiful insight into the realities of rural practice, make strong friendships and most of all, can develop a passion for health and people in a whole new way. This is an experience I would recommend ANY health student and I can't wait to do it again next year.** ”

## Training & Events: Supporting Rural Health Professionals

**Since the previous edition of Health Works, we have been fortunate enough to hold two more Professional Development workshops. These were Trauma in July and Emergency Mental Health in August.**

Our ever-popular Trauma Workshop was held in Cairns and attended by 17 delegates.

Remote and rural general practitioners are often called upon to manage trauma in its early phase and generally require a higher level of emergency skills to manage the patient until specialist treatment can be accessed.

Held across two days, the Trauma Workshop provided delegates with various skill sessions in advanced trauma care, special trauma injuries including burns, spinal, and eye injuries, as well as a mini simulation in severe and paediatric trauma and plastering techniques.

Our most recent workshop, Emergency Mental Health was slightly affected due to the recent lockdown in South East Queensland. With the lockdown ceasing the Monday prior to our workshop, we were glad to see that 12 delegates attended.

General practitioners are reported to be the most common providers of mental health services and are often the first point of contact for patients experiencing these types of problems.

Presented by Dr Darren Neillie, Forensic Psychiatrist for Queensland Forensic Health, and Dr David Nguyen, Psychiatrist, this highly interactive workshop ensured delegates were

engaged in case studies and discussion over a range of topics including common mental disorders; the mental state examination; and how to deal with a mental health emergency.

The second day focused on case-based workshops including the assessment and management of suicide risk, violence and acute confusion.

**“ Excellent content and skills stations. Delivered by a great team whose experience and tips/tricks, will prove to be invaluable to myself and my future patients.** ”

– Trauma Workshop Delegate

**“ A very useful workshop with focus on framework for acute mental health management in a rural & regional setting.** ”

– Emergency Mental Health Workshop Delegate



# Development of a Gladstone Health Services Plan

On Wednesday 14 July 2021 our Team Leaders of Health Workforce Solutions and Health Workforce & Service Planning, Sandra Bukumirovic and Meredith Sullivan, travelled to Gladstone to participate in the first consultation meeting for the development of a Gladstone Health Services Plan.

The Gladstone Health Services Plan is an initiative to develop and sustain services for the Gladstone region, as it was identified by the Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN (CQWBSC) as an area where health services were not meeting the needs of the community.

Auspices of the Health Services Plan is the CQWBSC PHN who have procured the services of

Central Queensland Rural Health to develop the Plan, in consultation with local government, health practitioners and the Gladstone community.

A steering committee has since been established to guide the development of the Gladstone Health Services Plan of which Health Workforce Queensland is heavily involved. As well as participating in the development and analysis of community and health practitioner surveys we are also assisting in the gathering of service utilisation and population health data.

We look forward to reporting the outcomes of this project as they arise.

of JCU GP Training; Robin Whyte - CEO of NQPHN; Cleveland Fagan - CEO of QAIHC; Kari Arbouin - Executive Director for the Office of Rural and Remote Health; Deborah Miller- Acting Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officer, Queensland Health; and Sandy Gillies - CEO of WQPHN.

The HWSG is an important group that provides advice and insights that challenge and validate the health professions and locations that are most in need in remote and rural Queensland. The HWSG provides important input to the Agency's annual Health Workforce Needs Assessment which provides a detailed narrative about the current and emerging workforce issues for each health discipline in Queensland.

Current and emerging workforce issues and opportunities were considered and discussed, as stakeholders provided their own perspectives from within their own professions. These included:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
2. Allied Health
3. Nursing
4. Medical

The issues and opportunities have been gathered from the sessions and will be considered for broader discussions on remote and rural health workforce solutions.

A highlight of the day was the stakeholder presentations which focussed on the collaborative and innovative workforce projects in remote and rural Queensland. We thank the following Organisations for their input into the session:

Organisation	Topic
Southern Queensland Rural Health (SQRH)	UDRH Initiatives
Australian Practice Nurse Association (APNA)	Transition to Practice
Rural Doctors Association of Queensland (RDAQ)	Reflective Practice
Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC)	Making Tracks Towards Health Equity
Health Workforce Queensland (HWQ)	Supported Student Placements - Going Rural

We thank everyone for their contributions and conversations on the day, the energy from meeting face to face was evident and appreciated by all.

As we continue to collaborate, we look forward to seeing positive outcomes for our remote and rural Queensland communities.

# 2021 Health Workforce Stakeholder Group Meeting

On Thursday 16 September Health Workforce Queensland hosted its 5th annual Health Workforce Stakeholder Group (HWSG) meeting. Several remote and rural health stakeholders congregated at the Novotel in South Brisbane for the first face to face HWSG meeting since 2019.

Stakeholders who could not attend in person joined virtually.

The HWSG continues to expand its organisation membership, and in 2021 we welcome the inclusion of Murtupuni Centre for Rural and Remote Health, Director Sabina Knight; Office of Rural and Remote Health - Future Proofing Our Rural Workforce Collaborative (FORCE) Chair Dr Ewen McPhee; and Southern Queensland Rural Health's Director Geoff Argus.

We also welcomed new faces from existing organisation members, Katherine Isbister - CEO of CRANaplus; Paul Gibson - Director of Policy and Research at IAHA; Lawrie McArthur - Director



# Training & Events Scoping Out Gladstone

Health Workforce Queensland Training and Events team were in Gladstone in August, scoping ideas and event planning for the next RDAQ conference.

Team Leader Aimee Najdovski said,

“It’s really exciting to be able to hold the event in Gladstone in 2022, this will be the first time in RDAQ’s history that...”

... the conference has been in Gladstone, the community are really getting on board and are so supportive and helpful.”

Aimee, Barb Lawless and Melissa Cutter are pictured below at the Big Crab Restaurant in Miriam Vale.

Keep an eye out as registrations for the conference are opening later this year.

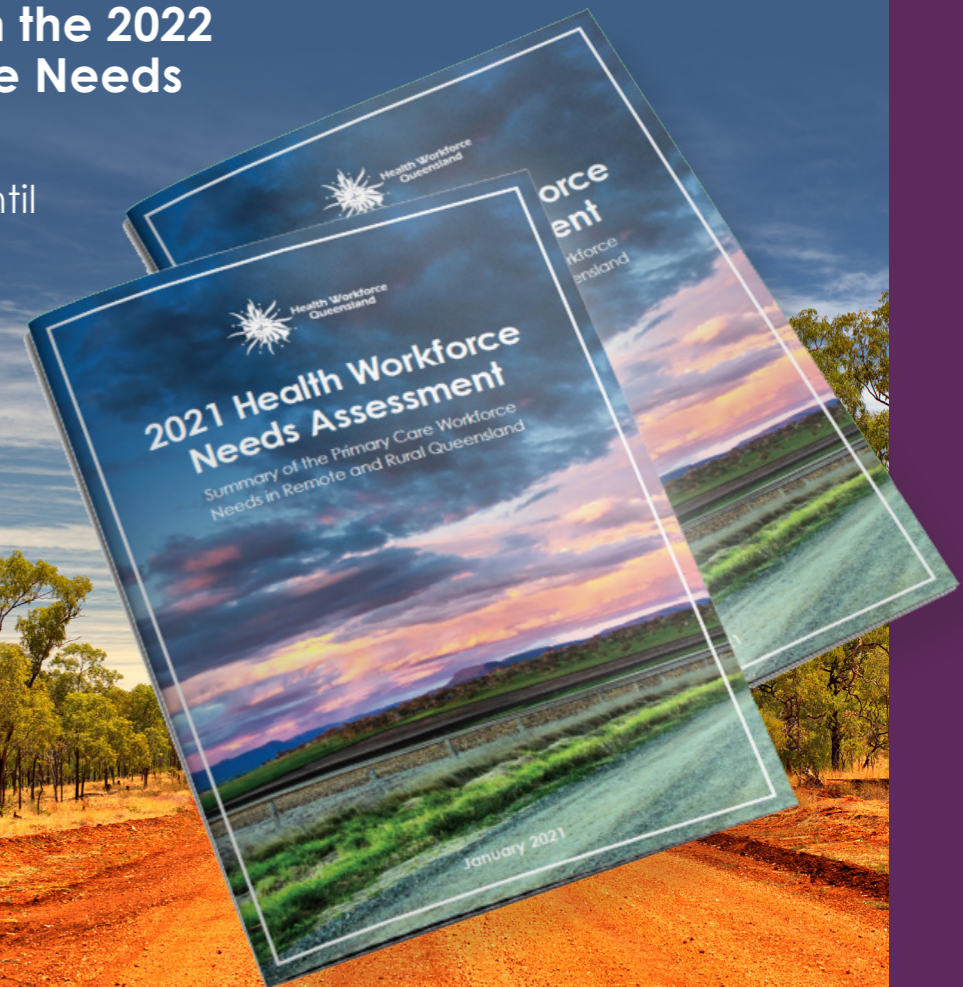


# BE PART OF THE SOLUTION!

## Have your say in the 2022 Health Workforce Needs Assessment.

Survey now open until 30 November 2021.

[Participate Now](#)



## SAVE UP TO 20% IN 2021

Register before **10 November 2021** for one of our **2022 workshops** to **save up to 20%** off your registration fee!

# Staff Profile: Kin Chen

### Tell us a little about your role at HWQ.

I am a member of the Corporate Services team, which supports the Agency's administrative, finance and information (IT) processes. As the Business Process Analyst, I maintain the Business Management System, making sure workflows run effectively and efficiently, to meet the ISO9001 compliance standards.

A large part of my role involves working with internal teams, developing and improving processes for their day-to-day tasks, to achieve their objectives and contribute towards our Agency's success. But more importantly, driving improvements to maintain a high level of customer service excellence.

### How long have you worked with HWQ?

I joined HWQ in 2016 and am fortunate to witness and be part of its incredible growth journey.

### What gets you out of bed in the morning?

I get up in the morning knowing the work we do in the Corporate Services team has enabled the Agency to grow and offer a wider range of services across rural and remote Queensland communities.

I am also greatly encouraged and motivated by our Leadership Team, who are constantly looking over the horizon and recognised the need to embrace technology and innovate early on. It enabled a smooth transition to working from home mode while making sure that our customers need continued to be met.



### Where is the best location you have visited in remote/rural Queensland?

I had the opportunity to visit Durham Downs, north of Roma, when the rains had come after the Millennium drought had broken. It was lush, green and teeming with wildlife compared to the dried, brown desolate fields from a few years before.

### Tell us something that might surprise us about you.

I have well developed googling<sup>1</sup> skills. As a result of many years of intense practice, I can<sup>2</sup> usually find the information you are after within a reasonable<sup>3</sup> time.

<sup>1</sup>googling /'gu:gliŋ/verb - an ability to quickly and accurately grok<sup>4</sup> what is presented, strip out the un-needed bits, then pass it through a search engine (previously preferred Google now DuckDuckGo) and manifest the information required from the results

<sup>2</sup>can - within a 75% certainty

<sup>3</sup>reasonable - under 60 minutes excluding weekends and public holidays

<sup>4</sup>grok /grɒk/ verb - understand (something) intuitively or by empathy

### What Netflix / Stan/TV series are you currently loving?

I thoroughly enjoyed the Narcos miniseries on Netflix. The scenes were very realistic and now other movies of a similar genre seem lacking in believability of its characters and events.

### Finally, are you an over the toilet roll or under the toilet roll type?

Being a Business Process Analyst, I tend to be a stickler for rules. I adhere closely to the inventor's<sup>5</sup> intended way for hanging toilet paper, over the roll.

[<sup>5</sup>Click Here to see the correct way](#)

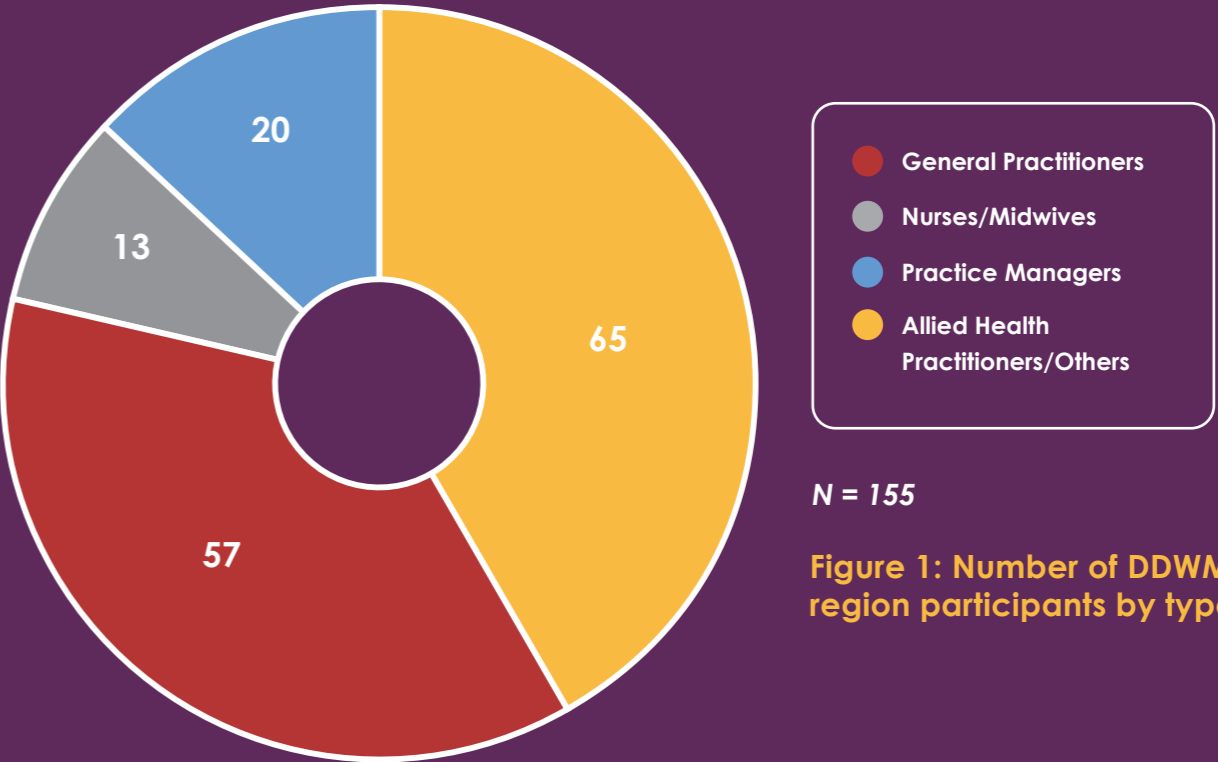
# Region in Focus

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.

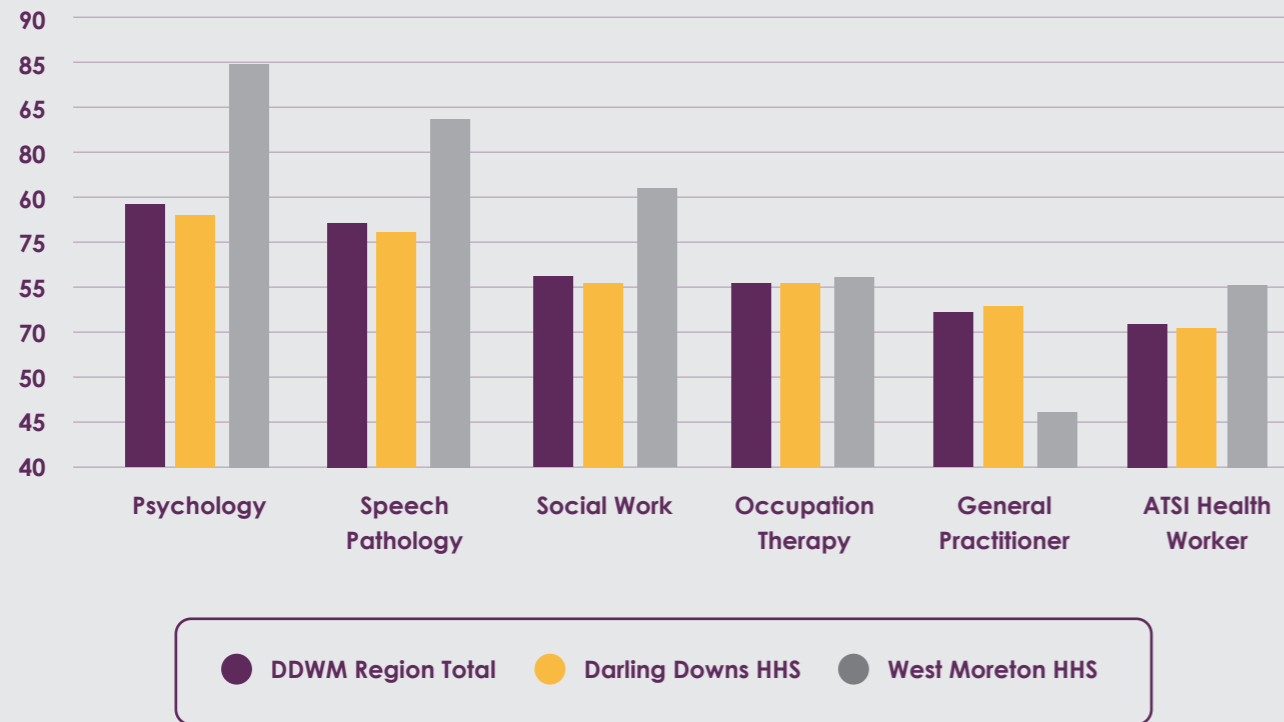


Figure 2: Mean workforce gap rating for DDWM region and each HHS

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.

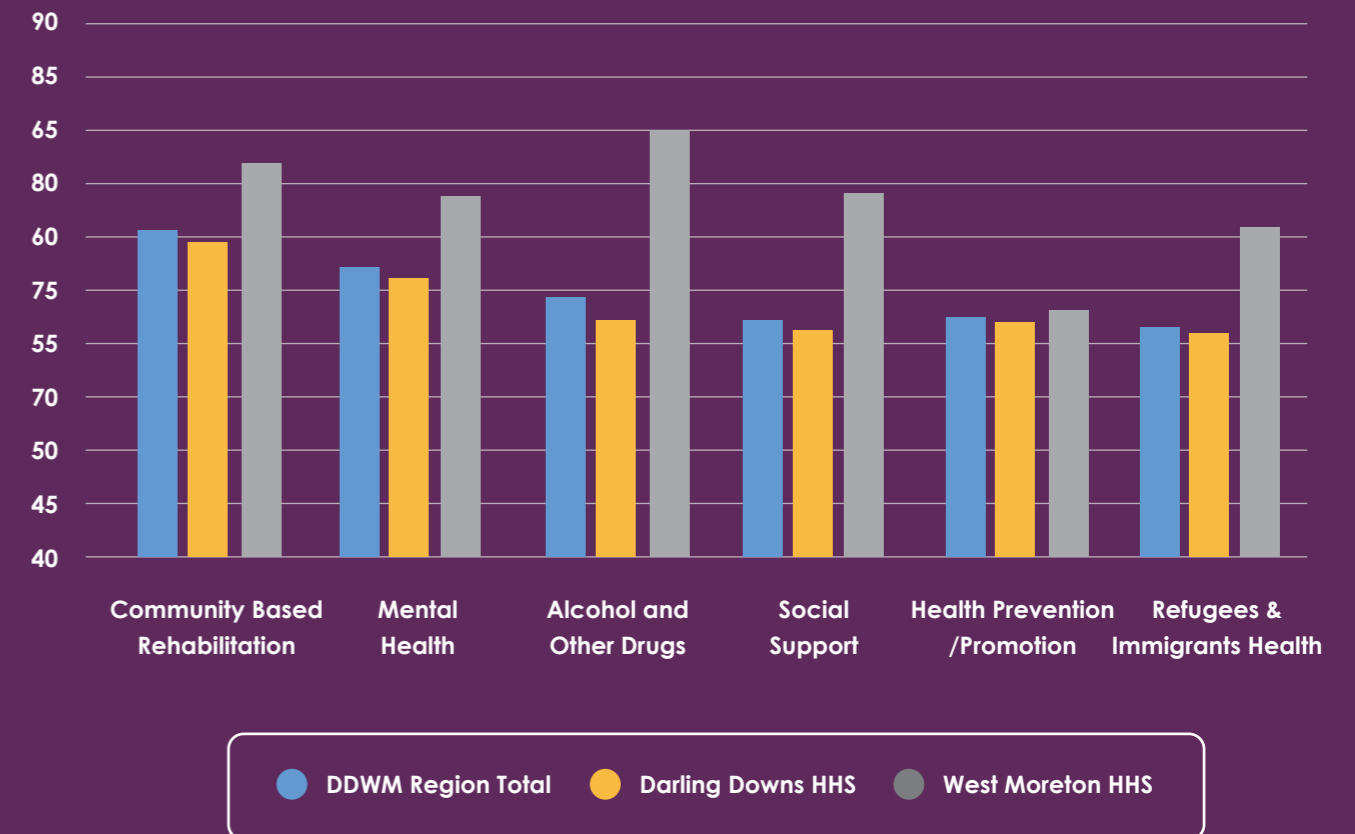


Figure 3: Mean service gap rating for DDWM region and each HHS

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

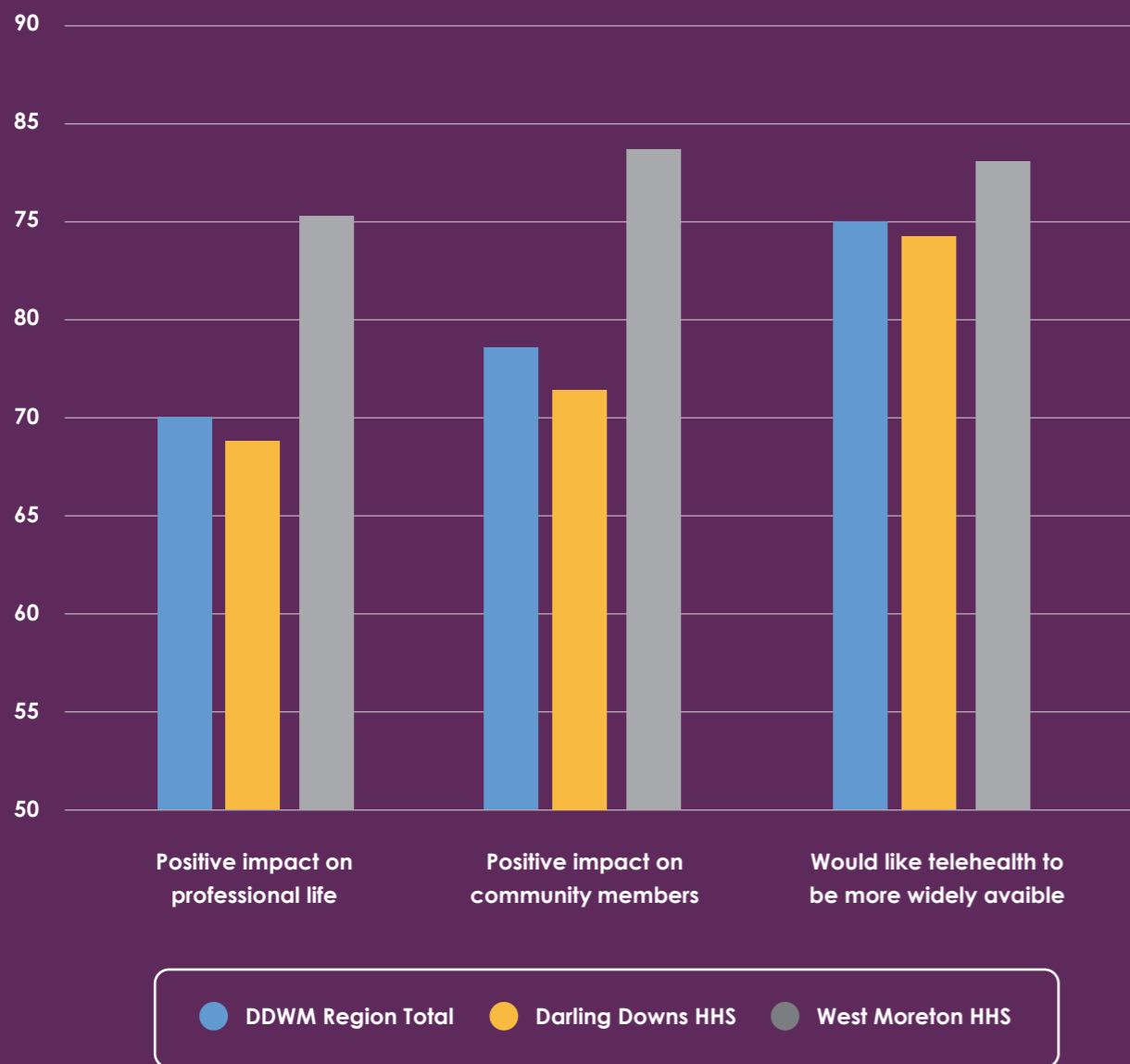


Figure 4: Mean telehealth impact ratings for DDWM region and each HHS region

# 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





# Vacancies

## General Practitioner AMS

### Innisfail

Are you interested in using your skills as a General Practitioner to make a real difference? Work directly within an Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation that is owned and managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide vital services to the beautiful Innisfail community. Located 1 hour south of Cairns and 3.5 hours north of Townsville, Innisfail is surrounded by the Great Barrier Reef, stunning islands, lush rainforest and waterfalls. If you are looking to be part of the change, to help close the gap on health care where it is needed, apply for this unique and important role. Further information can be found on our website.

## General Practitioner

### Monto

A mixed billing rural General Practice located on the grounds of the Monto Hospital require a GP to join the team. The practice facilitates an on-site pathology service with QML and hosts specialist telehealth appointments and visiting allied health professionals. Monto is a small close knit rural community located 200km west of Bundaberg and 235km south of Rockhampton. The town of approximately 1800 has 4 primary schools, a high school, and facilities to cater for everyday needs. The district is also home to the picturesque Cania Gorge National Park. Go to our website for further information.

## Registered Nurse

### Emerald

A high-end General Practice in Emerald is seeking a Registered Nurse on a full-time basis. The practice has a strong focus on quality patient centred care and operate on a high nursing staff to doctor ratio, to ensure they maintain attention to detail and deliver exceptional care. Salary is \$60,000-\$85,000 per year and relocation assistance may be available. The thriving regional town of Emerald provides a great rural lifestyle and work/life balance and is located 270km west of Rockhampton. For more information on this position go to our website

## Exercise Physiologist

### South Burnett Region

Are you a motivated and dynamic practitioner and love what you do? This could be your dream role. Based in Nanango, Kingaroy and Murgon in the beautiful wine region of South Burnett you will be part of a fun-loving dedicated team, committed to excellence. This practice empowers people to better manage their chronic health and/or mental health outcomes and they require an Exercise Physiologist to join their team of Allied Health professionals. For more information on this position go to our website.

**Contact us for more information on our current vacancies:**

**P:** 07 3105 7800 | **E:** [hws@healthworkforce.com.au](mailto:hws@healthworkforce.com.au)

Level 4, 348 Edward Street, Brisbane QLD 4000

📞 07 3105 7800

✉ [admin@healthworkforce.com.au](mailto:admin@healthworkforce.com.au)

📄 07 3105 7801

🌐 [healthworkforce.com.au](http://healthworkforce.com.au)



**Health Workforce  
Queensland**