



Health Workforce  
Queensland

# Health Works

Issue #13

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# CEO Message

## Connecting Workforce to Communities

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the land and sea where we live and work, we pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders past, present and future, particularly those living and working in our Queensland remote and rural communities.

This edition of Health Works comes to you as we settle into our new office! Located a couple of blocks up from our old office, we haven't moved far, but this space is a breath of fresh air. We look forward to showing you around when you next visit. It also marks exactly 12 months since we all packed up and started working from home due to the COVID pandemic, so we are excited to be working together again in person.

Our thoughts again go out to those affected by the floods across our great State and those still dealing with the aftermath of the fires from 12 months ago.

Recently a section of our State was affected by a 3-day lockdown, I remain optimistic for Queensland as a record number of Queenslanders were out in force being tested. We watch with anticipation as the COVID vaccine rollout continues to reach new milestones and the most recent restrictions once again ease. The journey continues as we stand together to keep our communities and each other connected and healthy.

It has been a challenging yet positive start to the year, and I'd like to acknowledge some significant appointments over the past few months. I extend my congratulations to the following Executives on the recent appointment to their roles.

**Robin Whyte**, CEO of Northern Queensland Primary Health Network,

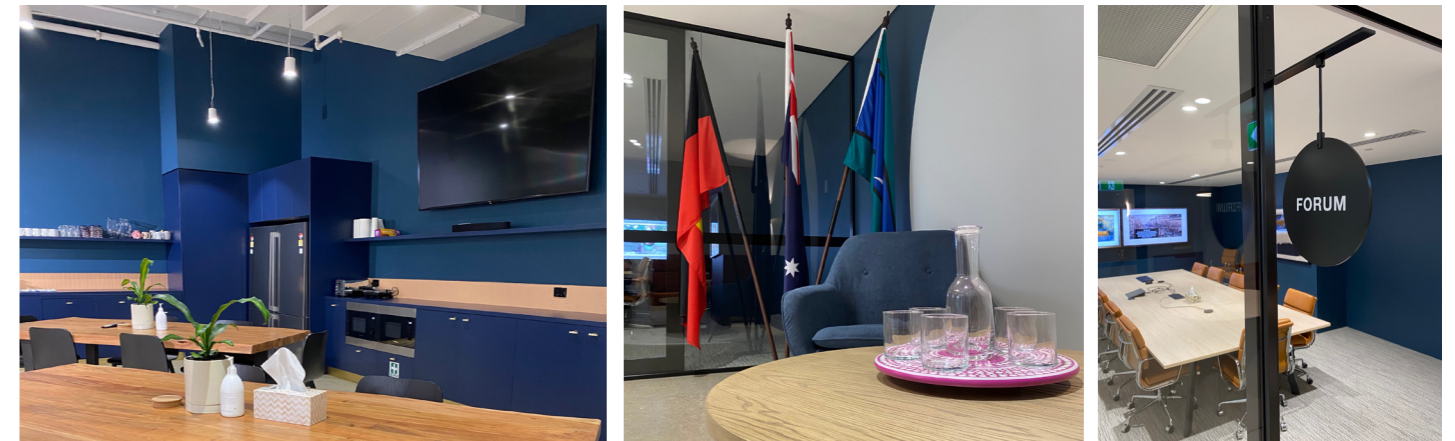
**Sandy Gillies**, CEO of Western Queensland Primary Health Network,

**Fran Avon**, General Manager of RDAQ Foundation (Rural Doctors Association of Queensland), and

**James William**, CEO of QAIHC (Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council)

On behalf of HWQ we look forward to continuing our collaborations with you and your organisations.

**Chris Mitchell**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Come and Visit  
Our New Office!**



# WE HAVE MOVED!

Our new address is:

**Level 4  
348 Edward Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000**

Please update your records accordingly.  
All other contact information remains the same.



# HWQ Staff Profile

**Keith Palanna** – Data & Evaluation Officer

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

As the Data and Evaluation officer within the Health Workforce and Service Planning team, my role is to provide validated evidence through the capture, collation, and evaluation of data to support health workforce and service planning activities. My role includes a range of analytical tasks, and data processing and evaluation associated with the programs and projects led by the agency. I undoubtedly love and believe in the work my fellow colleagues and I do at HWQ, knowing well that the stone we cast will create far reaching ripples for the betterment of all those who need it the most.

### How long have you worked with HWQ?

One hundred, fourscore and eight days. Excluding weekends.

### What is the best thing about being back in the office again, after working from home for the last 12 months?

I joined the HWQ family remotely and until very recently I worked from home, which was great in terms of the 11.235-step commute to work. Now that we have moved back to our amazing new office, other than conveniently side stepping some of my household chores, it has been great to finally meet in person my immediate and extended team members. Also, it helps that I am not constantly snacking at home anymore!

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

Sadly, I have not been able to squeeze in a lot of time exploring Australia or Queensland for that matter, but from my limited travels I would have



to say Maleny has done a terribly fantastic job in captivating me with its country side awesomeness. Yandina is a definite close second! Ooh, and camping at Bigriggen, Rathdowney! A dream come true would be to 'bus-life' my way through Australia.

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

I absolutely love the creative industries. I have acted in plays and played for multiple bands over a variety of genres during my time as an earthling. I come from a family of musicians and play 13 instruments mediocrely.

### What was the most recent TV show you watched on Netflix/Stan/TV?

It wasn't the most recent, but an unfortunate and touching limited Netflix series based on true events that I binged through was 'When They See Us'. I highly recommend prepping for the water works.

### Finally, cats or dogs?

I have never had a pet, but I grew up around people who did and what I have come to learn is I am undeniably a dog person. Doggos for the win!

# Rural Emergency Medicine Workshop Wrap Up

The Health Workforce professional development calendar for 2021 kicked off with the Rural Emergency Medicine workshop, the first in almost 12 months due to COVID-19. Our first workshop saw 19 delegates venture from all areas and organisations, some as far north as Cairns, Atherton and Mossman.

The two-and-a-half-day workshop, led by Emergency Physician, Dr Nigel Moore, provided delegates with the skills necessary to identify appropriate management techniques for patient care in every-day emergencies in rural and remote practices. Delegates obtained hands-on experience in airway management and orthopaedic emergency skills sessions, ensuring that they would be able to determine a relevant treatment plan during a real life scenario.

**"Excellent course – it should be on the list of every rural doctor to attend!"**

**"Great experience and update with upskilling for emergency practice in rural Australia."**

**"Great course. Excellent experienced presenters, highly recommended to all rural practitioners."**

Should you wish to upskill and further your knowledge for rural practice, our next professional development workshop is [Emergency Paediatrics on 15 – 16 May on the Gold Coast. Registrations are still open.](#)



You could be eligible for up to **\$10,000** for further education through the Health Workforce Scholarship Program

**Find out more now!**



**BOLD DREAMS BRIGHT FUTURES**  
equity // access // care

Annual Conference  
RACV Royal Pines Resort  
GOLD COAST  
24-26 June 2021

**RDAQ** 2021

**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**



Conference Partner

## New GP Recruited to Goondir Health Service in St George

**Dr Wood was recruited under a collaborative approach by Health Workforce Queensland (HWQ), the Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS) and Goondir Health Service (Goondir).**

HWQ recently met with Goondir Health Services CEO, Mr Floyd Leedie to discuss the appointment. Mr Leedie expressed the importance of having good quality health professionals available at their Service for the local community and said, **“a lot of our Mob had stopped seeking medical assistance due to the inconvenience caused by not having a local GP.”**

Goondir had the vacant General Practitioner position open for roughly 8 months. In collaboration with HWQ and RVTS through their targeted recruitment strategy, Goondir were able to find a suitable practitioner, Dr Gary Wood, who was able to provide a much needed service to the community, **“We sincerely thank Tessa and Sandra at Health Workforce Queensland who facilitated the recruitment of this position. Obtaining the RVTS targeted recruitment Strategy funding has been a big event for us, securing Dr Wood was something our community greatly needed.”**

Mr Leedie explained that there are a variety of barriers to attracting doctors to the region. They include the stigma of working in a rural area, and that generally medical students aren't exposed early enough in their training to the possibilities of working in remote or rural communities. Mr Leedie explained that he is keen to approach and work with students whilst they are at medical school and to expose what life is really like in rural Queensland as a health professional.

**“We continue to form collaborations that positively impact communities that need health workforce the most, we take heart in knowing this is why we do what we do”,** said HWQ CEO Chris Mitchell. **“Our relationship with both Goondir and RVTS has been forged over many years, and it is great to see Dr Gary Wood join Goondir to serve the community.”**

RVTS CEO, Dr Pat Giddings said, **“For the community, there are significant benefits, including the continuity of care for patients and having a doctor in the same location for a number of years.”**

**“It is great to hear that Gary has settled well into life in St George. Dr Wood comes from a strong background in paediatrics and has found that the medicine in St George has been interesting and rewarding. The benefit of RVTS training for the doctor is that it enables them to enhance their skills and expertise in general practice while staying working in the one location”,** Dr Giddings said.

Following on from the appointment of the new General Practitioner, Mr Leedie is excited by the opportunities this offers to Goondir and the Community, he commented, **“if we can show that we have a great service, then we can attract other great service providers into the community”.** An example of this is Goondir Health food service in collaboration with SecondBite and Fair Share. An approach by Goondir which demonstrates the provision of a 'holistic' model of health care services. The partnership utilises up to 6 tonnes of food each week which is donated to communities that need it most, complementing Goondir's general practice services and increasing community health with good nutrition.

Mr Leedie stated that **“because of the relationship and rapport that has been developed between Goondir Health Services and Health Workforce Queensland, there is a deeper understanding which contributed to placing Dr Wood. I believe that because of his experience and skills he could have been placed anywhere but because of our relationship and they knew we needed the right staff, they knew the kind of candidate we were looking for”.**

Mr Leedie's and Goondir Health Services' focus is on **“providing good quality health service options for the local Indigenous community”.**



**Left:** Dr Gary Wood, **Right:** Mr Floyd Leedie

## Growing a Rural Health Career from Immersion to Conversion

**Meet Jenna Perry, a former GROW Rural participant who recently joined Gidgee Healing in Mount Isa as a Dietitian. Jenna was kind enough to talk about her experience on the GROW Rural Central Queensland program and how her experience shaped her career.**

### **What is your favorite memory from GROW?**

One of my favourite memories from GROW Rural is visiting the Aboriginal community Woorabinda in Central Queensland. We were lucky enough to be taken for a tour around the community by the local elders and had the opportunity to listen to community members share their stories about both the challenges and enablers to their health and wellbeing.

### **What interested you in GROW?**

Growing up in a rural town in Tasmania and studying dietetics, I was always interested in rural health. I saw GROW as an opportunity to learn the necessary skills required to provide high quality and patient centered care in a rural or remote QLD setting.

### **Is there anything you learnt from GROW that will assist you in your position at Gidgee Healing in Mount Isa?**

Yes, the importance of taking the time to build relationships and trust with community.

### **Did you see yourself working rurally prior to participating in GROW?**

Yes, I always wanted to work in a rural or remote setting prior to commencing GROW, however, GROW confirmed that it was definitely something I wanted to pursue after graduating. I always thought I should wait until I had a few years of experience after graduating, but GROW opened my eyes to the opportunities and support when working in a remote setting as a recent graduate.

### **What was it about the Dietitian role at Gidgee Healing that appealed to you?**

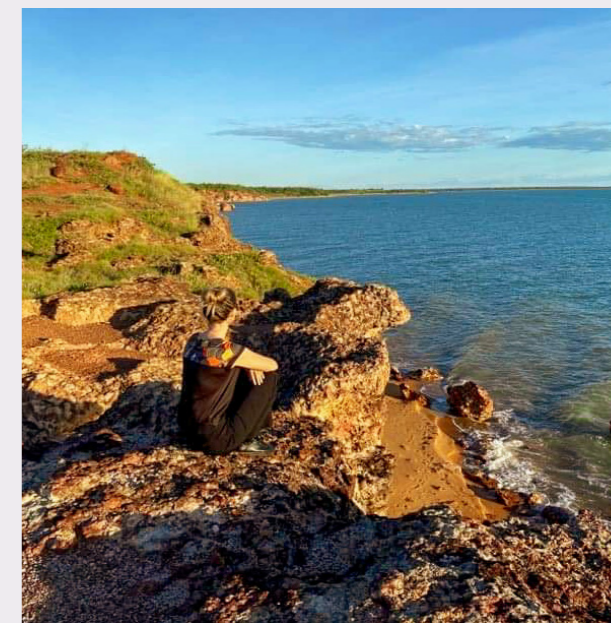
I have always wanted to work in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and am very passionate about providing culturally safe and responsive health care. Gidgee Healing is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service, which provides holistic health care services that are guided by the needs of community.

### **Have you found the transition to working in Mount Isa easier given your previous participation in GROW?**

Yes, I believe so. GROW instilled the importance of being community minded and building relationships when working in a rural or remote setting.

### **Why should others participate in GROW?**

I believe it's a great way to make friends and connections with students and staff from both medical and allied health backgrounds and gain an understanding of how we can work together.



Since starting my role at Gidgee Healing, I have reconnected with two students from GROW who are currently working in Mount Isa. Knowing people from a previous positive experience makes moving to a new location a whole lot easier.

### **What are your favourite things about working rurally?**

There's a few things: 1) Social life. Mount Isa is a very social community. Since moving here, I have started salsa classes, and started training for the local Gregory Canoe Race. 2) Every day is different. I enjoy the fact that things don't run how you are taught through a textbook at university. It's exciting to be able to adapt what you have learnt in a university. 3) I believe we have so much to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and perspectives and I am grateful to be in the position to experience that.

### **In your opinion what are the differences in working rural than metro? Are there additional skills you need?**

The main differences I have found in Mount Isa are a greater exposure to more complex and broad cases, generous support to undertake professional development, and limited access and availability to specialised health services. Additionally, Mount Isa has a high population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and therefore the approach to healthcare provided by Gidgee Healing is much more holistic, with a strong focus on culturally safe and responsive care.

In regard to additional skills, I believe adaptability, patience and the ability to be open minded are all crucial to working in a remote setting. Each day can be very different from one to the next, you have to be adaptable and patient with things not going to plan.

# Region in Focus

## Western Queensland Data Snapshot

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 Western Queensland, 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.

82 health practitioners/managers from Western Queensland responded to the 2021 surveys. The majority of participants were either allied health practitioners (45%) or general practitioners (27%).

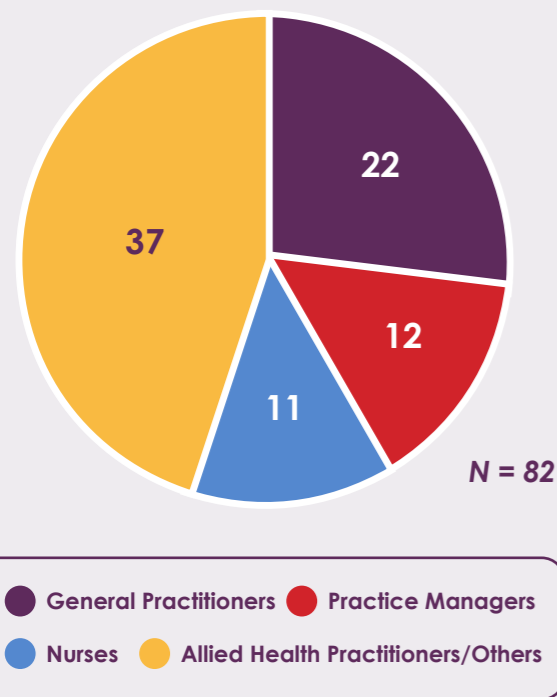


Figure 1: Number of WQPHN participants by type

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.

Figure 2 shows the highest six workforce gaps for the Western Queensland region as well as the rating for each Hospital & Health Service (HHS) in the region.

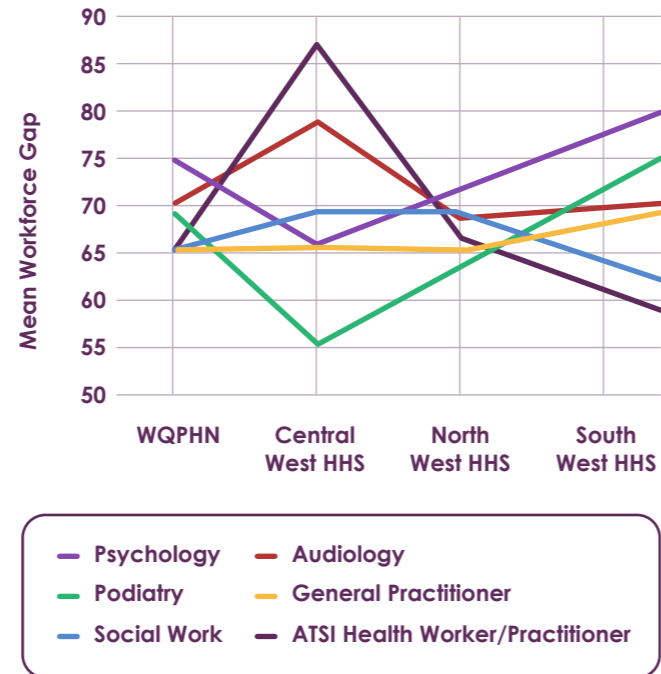


Figure 2: Mean workforce gap rating for WQPHN and each HHS region

Overall, psychology, audiology and podiatry had the highest workforce gap rating across the South West region. Despite being rated 6th overall, the workforce gap rating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker/Practitioners in the Central West was 86.88, the highest gap rating of any discipline. The top six service gap means are provided in Figure 3.

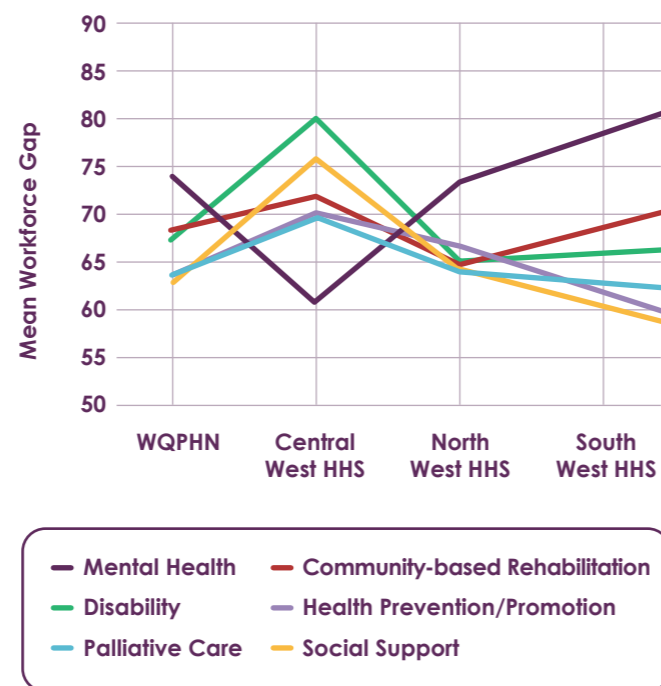


Figure 3: Mean service gap rating for WQPHN and each HHS region

# Region in Focus

The highest service gap means for the Western Queensland region were for mental health services, community-based rehabilitation services and disability services.

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

- Services/Staff Unavailable
- Inexperienced Workforce
- Service Funding/High Costs of Delivery

*"There is a gap for almost all disciplines in my current rural community/ town. My current community/town provides services to other smaller communities as many services are typically around 1000km away, therefore there is a need for increased services."*

*There is no community based rehabilitation services and the weekly support from Allied health is insufficient to cover need. Currently there is no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker and we rely on the Administration officer - identified position - for support.*

## Telehealth

The COVID -19 pandemic has seen a large increase in the use of telehealth in primary health care.

Practitioners and managers in remote and rural Queensland 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:

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

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:

- Infrastructure Upgrades
- Private Access to Public Infrastructure
- Retain COVID MBS Billing

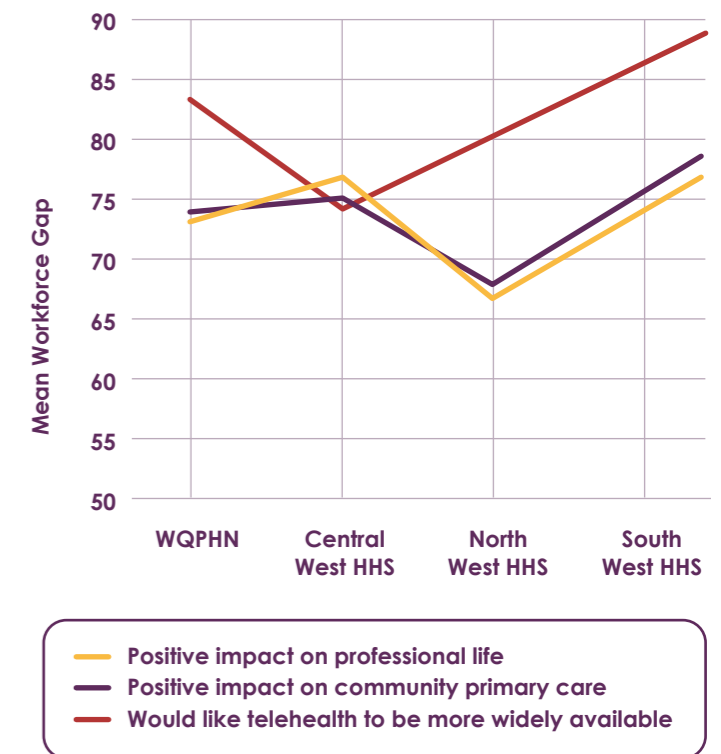


Figure 4: Mean telehealth impact rating for WQPHN and each HHS

*As it is such long distances to visit rural and remote sites, patients often have to pay extra for these consultations. If a patient is able to access therapy through telehealth they may see greater benefits without the financial impacts.*

*Set up telehealth rooms in community health centres with an available technician/ allied health assistant to provide support or any required hands on therapy as guided by allied health clinician.*

# HWQ Collaborations

## South West Health Forum

The South West Health Forum, hosted by the Western Queensland Primary Health Network (WQPHN) in conjunction with Health Workforce Queensland (HWQ), was held in Roma in March with over 100 delegates in attendance.

The two-day forum was designed to bring together health professionals, policymakers and supporting agencies to identify gaps in the health workforce and skill shortages, and to discuss the array of active initiatives in the area to help support and retain health professionals and their families.

*"The Forum was very positive and showed there is a willingness to collaborate more and unshackle some of the jurisdictional barriers that have hindered cooperation in the past, a sentiment that pleasingly has parallels with what's being strived for at a national level in rural health,"* Western Queensland Primary Health Network (WQPHN) CEO Sandy Gillies said.

Health Workforce Queensland CEO Chris Mitchell said *"the demand for services continues to climb and there is a need for additional health workforce, greater flexibility in service and workforce arrangements for remote and rural communities, particularly around shared funding models, staffing and skill mix to maximise the use of multidisciplinary teams"*.

*"Collaborating with communities and local health service providers is how we can best ensure we respond to known and emerging shortages that occur in the health workforce of the South West."*

*"I took away a sense of hopefulness, a sense of genuine collaboration and saw significant opportunities of how we can work together, to make sure our patients are better off, and our communities are healthier."*

HWQ are very pleased to be working with the WQPHN in hosting such a forum and are excited to see what key strategies emerge to help support those who really need it.



Left to right: Chris Mitchell, Prof Clair Jackson, Sandy Gillies, Stuart Gordon, Prof Ruth Stewart, Dallas Leon

# HWQ Collaborations

## Red Ant Conference

Kingaroy hosted more than 180 rural medicos, nurses, allied health professionals and medical students at the Red Ant Round-up Medical Conference in March.

The two-day conference brought together Queensland's rural medical community to share education, skills and support. The conference, an initiative of the Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network, provides education opportunities for rural and regional health professionals and the opportunity to build strong supportive networks.

Health Workforce Queensland's Future Workforce Team attended the conference, engaging and sharing information with students on the opportunities and activities available for them to experience the possibilities of a remote and rural career.

Additionally, the Health Workforce Solutions Team were in attendance, connecting and collaborating to address workforce needs within the region. Tessa, our Regional Coordinator for Darling Downs and West Moreton area, said *"it was very beneficial, and it was great to reconnect with stakeholders in the South Burnett region. Margie and the PHN team did a great job organising the conference and, as always, it was a very informative and successful event for Darling Downs."*



Kate Brosnan, Health Workforce Solutions Support Officer, at Red Ant Conference.

**Interested in a rural Allied Health career?**

We have a variety of **Allied Health** roles available in northern Queensland.

**Apply now!**

# Vacancies

## General Practitioner

### Chinchilla

Chinchilla is 293km west of Brisbane and is the undisputed melon capital, producing 25 per cent of the country's watermelons, rockmelons and honeydew melons. A practice in town requires a General Practitioner for obstetrics, paediatrics, emergency medicine, anaesthetics, orthopaedics, ultrasound, skin surgery, and musculoskeletal medicine. There are currently 4 registrars employed at the practice completing their GP placements. The practice is open Monday to Friday, with Night and Weekend Clinics on a rostered basis.

## Practice and Community Nurse - AMS

### Innisfail

Innisfail is a township of approximately 10,000, picturesquely situated at a river junction 5km from the coast and 90km south of Cairns. Several full-time Nursing positions are available in Innisfail and the surrounding regions of Tully, Babinda and Ravenshoe, within an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. This role is ideal for a nurse with a minimum of 12 months post-graduation experience within a hospital or primary health care setting to further their career.

## Speech Pathologist Rural Generalist

### Mount Isa

Mount Isa, situated in Queensland's vast North West, offers the relaxed lifestyle and close-knit, supportive community of a small town, without sacrificing the amenities of city living. This is an opportunity to enhance your career as a speech pathologist. To be eligible you must have a minimum of 2 years' experience. The position entails stepping into a supported leadership position supervising a small team of new graduate speech pathologists whilst conducting a service planning project through the level two Allied Health Rural Generalist Graduate Certificate.

## Clinic Coordinator - AMS

### Tully

Tully is located along the beautiful Cassowary Coast, 2 hours south of Cairns and 2 and a half hours north of Townsville. A Clinic Coordinator is required in Tully to provide clinical leadership for the delivery of evidence-based, multi-disciplinary, comprehensive primary health care services and business planning, administration and financial management. The organisation is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation owned and managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide culturally appropriate and comprehensive primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the communities of Innisfail, Tully, Ravenshoe, Mt Garnet and Babinda.



**Emergency Paediatrics Workshop**  
15 - 16 May 2021, Gold Coast



**Registrations Now Open!**  
**Trauma Workshop**  
24 - 25 July 2021, Cairns

Contact us today for more information on our current vacancies: P: 07 3105 7800 | E: [hws@healthworkforce.com.au](mailto:hws@healthworkforce.com.au)

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