

Health Works

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Health Workforce
Queensland



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CEO Message

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”
– African Proverb

I feel the quote above very much reflects the rural health sector in Queensland. There are many organisations working in the sector and many of those organisations are working together to deliver improved outcomes for those in remote, rural and regional Queensland communities. With limited resources and capacity across a vast scope, this strategic collaboration is a significant strength of the sector.

Over the years we have worked closely with many organisations who align with our goals and values. Both [Western Queensland PHN \(WQPHN\)](#) and [CheckUP](#) are members of our Health Workforce Stakeholder Group and provide input and feedback on our annual Health Workforce Needs Assessment. We have worked with both organisations on various projects in the past and more recently we have formalised these partnerships.

On 5 April Chair Rob Stable and myself signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Dallas Leon, Chair and Stuart Gordon, CEO at WQPHN. I'm also pleased to announce that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with [CheckUP](#) and Health Workforce Queensland has been agreed and it will be signed in the near future. The two MoUs are a significant achievement for all involved, and recognises



the investment from all involved in nurturing these partnerships.

The MoUs enable us to collaboratively, efficiently and appropriately respond to the health workforce needs across the remote and rural Queensland. Our next steps with WQPHN and

CheckUP are to develop the respective operational plans of how our organisations will work together to achieve the goals of the respective MoUs. I look forward to our continued work with WQPHN and CheckUP and I will continue to provide updates on the progress of our combined work.

Congratulations to RDAQ

In speaking of collaboration, one partnership that has endured for many years is our partnership with the [Rural Doctors Association of Queensland \(RDAQ\)](#). The past week myself and some of the team attended the 2019 RDAQ Conference in Cairns and this year marked 30 years of operation for RDAQ. This significant milestone was incorporated in the theme of the Conference 'As Time Goes By' and the three days of the conference provided many opportunities for reflection. Congratulations RDAQ! You can read our full acknowledgement to RDAQ [here](#) on our website.

The front cover image was taken by Mike O'Brien and was an entry in our 2018 Annual Report Photo Competition.

2018 Minimum Data Set Summary Report

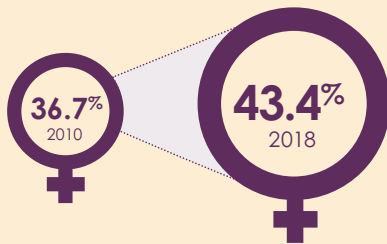


We presented the findings of the MDS Summary Report at the 2019 RDAQ Conference, Rural Workforce Breakfast on Friday 7 June.

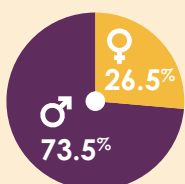
The MDS Summary Report provides a snapshot of the general practitioner workforce throughout remote, rural and regional Queensland. Information generated by the minimum data set informs policy development relevant to the remote, rural and regional health workforce at local, state and national levels, and supports services for the recruitment and retention of remote, rural and regional medical professional services in Queensland.

The infographics below provide an overview of key data from the 2018 Minimum Data Set Summary Report.

Proportion of female practitioners working in remote, rural and regional locations have increased from 36.7% in 2010 to 43.4% in 2018.

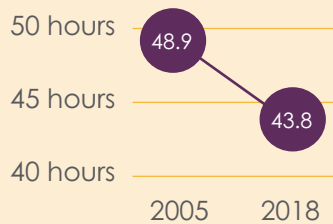


On average, female practitioners self-reported working approximately 10 hours per week less than male practitioners.



In very remote communities, female practitioners represented only 26.5% of the workforce.

Since 2005, the average self-reported total hours worked by medical practitioners in remote, rural and regional Queensland has decreased by five hours, from 48.9 hours in 2005, to 43.8 hours in 2018.



DID YOU KNOW?

The average age of remote, rural and regional medical practitioners in Queensland was 49.9 years?

49.9 years

Only 4% of medical practitioners self-reported working as a 'Solo' doctor.

4%

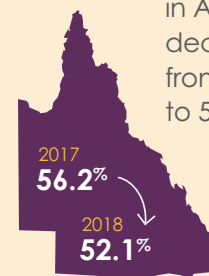


2.3% described themselves as 'Solo co-located', that is working solo at premises shared with at least one other doctor.

2.3%



The proportion of practitioners trained in Australia has decreased in QLD from 56.2% in 2017 to 52.1% in 2018.



We encourage you to visit our [website](#) for the full MDS Summary Report.

From Victoria's capital to Queensland's Darling Downs...

Dr Jeet Patel has had a wealth of medical experience across three countries and now calls home the riverside rural town of St George.

After completing his undergraduate degree at one of India's premier medical schools, he moved to the United Kingdom to complete general practice training and achieved MRCGP qualification. In addition to working in the National Health Service, from 2011 Jeet was a reservist in the British Army and five years later was deployed to Afghanistan as a medical practitioner working alongside Aussie and Kiwi practitioners.

Having obtained a Fellowship, he made the move down to Melbourne, which provided a base to do a few locum placements in the bush across Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. It was the early rural exposure during his undergraduate degree and these locum placements that sold him on the idea of working as a rural GP.

"In December 2018, I visited St George to complete a short locum...I thoroughly enjoyed this experience and decided to make the move. Plus, I think I preferred rugby to AFL!"

With a town population of 2,400, St George Medical Centre is

growing and had been on the search for an additional GP for some time. The practice currently has a part-time VR doctor as the practice principle and now Jeet as the only fulltime VR doctor, with three registrars undertaking training at this point in time. It can easily be seen the need for a GP like Jeet in St George.

"I have always been up for a challenge...I felt that there was a real need for a doctor down in St George and that I could really make a difference to the healthcare provision here."

With an interest in the field of skin cancer and chronic disease, Jeet has many ideas he hopes to pursue and improve the service delivery in these fields for the people of St George. The rural practice also gives him the chance to pass on his years of knowledge and experience through working with and training medical students and younger GPs. "I really like the practice where I work. It's both fulfilling and rewarding in so many ways. I have been able to build relationships with the patients and have been able to positively impact their lives, or at least I hope I have!" Jeet said.

Since making the move on 1 April (no April fool's joke!), Jeet has had some time to explore the region, including the annual St George show, short breaks in Toowoomba and visiting local farms. Most importantly, he can report that the bread from the local St George bakery is second to none!

"I still need to catch some yabbies. Although I haven't been out fishing much, I certainly wish that I would bag a cod or four! In the outback, you learn to appreciate the little things in life."

Health Workforce Queensland provided free of charge recruitment services to St George Medical Centre and financially assisted Dr Jeet Patel with his relocation and orientation to the town. The Agency will continue to support Jeet through the 5 Year Scheme.

Conferences are the perfect mix of upskilling and networking!

Did you know that, as part of the Health Workforce Scholarship Program, bursaries can be used towards attending discipline-relevant conferences?

Since the Program commenced, medical, nursing and allied health professionals from rural Queensland have been approved for bursaries to attend the conferences below...

- Gundy Medical Muster
- North Queensland PHN Conference
- ATSA Independent Living Expo
- RACGP Practice Owners National Conference
- Australian College of Nurse Practitioners National Conference
- Australian Podiatry Conference
- CRANA Annual Conference
- Occupational Therapy Australia National Conference and Exhibition
- Medicine Management: Society of Hospital Pharmacist's Conference
- SARRAH National Conference
- The Enrolled Nurses' Conference
- Australasian Diabetes Congress
- RANZCOG Annual Scientific Meeting
- RDAQ Conference
- Women's and Children's Health Update
- National Massage and Myotherapy Conference
- National Conference Speech Pathology Australia
- Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA) Conference
- National OT Aged Care Symposium
- Dietitians Association of Australia National Conference
- General Practice Training and Education Conference
- Australian Diabetes Educators Association Top End/Northern Australia Conference
- Australasian Sonographers Association Conference

Is there an industry conference you're interested in attending?

[Click here](#) to check your eligibility and to apply for funding.

GROWing Connections in Theodore

Medical student Zoe Byrne leveraged the professional connections she made during the first year of GROW Rural for her recent university placement.

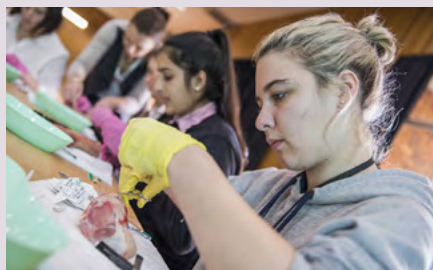


Zoe undertaking her university placement at Theodore Medical Centre.

I've always been really interested in population health and I've been inspired about ensuring equity of access to health care. Yet it took me some time to fully understand that we have significant access issues across Australia. The complexities of health care access across rural Queensland is truly fascinating on a social, political, ethical and economic level. This interest led me to GROW Rural...

“Initially I applied to GROW Rural to get a better understanding of health care services in rural Queensland.”

During my first year of GROW Rural we were exposed to a variety of health facilities throughout Central Queensland, including the Baralaba Hospital, Moura Dawson



Suturing skills in Biloela for GROW Rural.

Medical Practice and Theodore Medical Centre and Hospital. It was interesting to see how each health facility adapts to the community and their needs.

Dr Bruce Chater, practice principal, gave us a tour of the Theodore Hospital and was part of the group discussion on how to overcome some of the challenges of rural practice such as distance from family and friends and available professional support. After visiting Theodore, I felt there was something really special about the community and health professionals working there. They showed me that when you actively engage in patient's healthcare this fosters the patient's self-care. You've never seen a community so connected and invested in their own health!

When I had the opportunity to select where I would go for my University placement, I submitted a preference to go to Theodore. I was lucky enough to return to Theodore and to the Theodore Medical Centre! I spent seven weeks working under the provisions of Dr Bruce Chater and Dr Adele Love. I was allowed to engage actively with taking patients' histories, examinations, results and some

surgical skills. Most importantly I was an active member of the health care team.

I thrived when I was in rural Queensland! I loved just doing what I wanted, without all the demands of city living. My mental health was clear, and conversation became more important. I went for a swim or run most afternoons, and I had time to work through my studies. Other medical students and I went on trips most weekends exploring the region. From this, friendships really blossomed. Overall, life was great, and I'd go back in a heartbeat.



Dressed up for the community Trivia Night at the Theodore RSL.

I'm so grateful for my opportunity to explore Central Queensland with GROW Rural and how this unique opportunity lead to the next. After I graduate I hope to do my internship rurally and see where that takes me...

Congratulations!

At the 2019 RDAQ Conference, the QRMFN were pleased to announce two recipients of the Backbone of the Bush Award.



Name: **Caroline Hennessey**

Current Location: **Cedar Vale**

Length of Service in Rural: **25 Years**

Doctor Partner: **Michael Rice**

Caroline is an Occupational Therapist working in enhanced primary care, NDIS and private practice and is a current Board Member for BeauCare, a child care and community services organisation which provides opportunities for people to maximise their quality of life. She has a significant interest in continuing professional education and is the Education Coordinator for the state professional body.

She has also been involved in the national professional body's conference committee and public relations activities. She was the inaugural Chair in Allied Health for the QEII Jubilee Hospital. She has been a past manager of her son's sports teams, tuckshop volunteer and past committee member of Beaudesert C&K and Scouts. Caroline's support and encouragement enabled Michael to undertake significant work over the years with RDAQ.

“Most of all, she's influenced our sons to develop into the fine, respectful and thoughtful young men they are today.”

Name: **Tina Hamilton**

Current Location: **Strathdickie**

Length of Service in Rural: **29 Years**

Doctor Partner: **Robert Thompson**

Tina runs her own Paediatric Occupational Therapy Practice in Strathdickie and has done so for the last eight years. Employing two part-time OTs, Tina is able to open the practice to both OT and medical students. She is the current Treasurer of the Whitsunday Uniting Church, President of the Whitsunday Equestrian Group and Convenor of the local flower show!

In 1999, Tina was the first OT to live and work in the Torres Strait! She has worked with adult patients in private practice, veterans' services, WorkCover clients, and QHealth. She has also been a tuckshop volunteer and Secretary of the P&C at her children's school. Tina has been a great support to her husband whilst he undertook his Fellowship and has been by his side as they moved across states for his training.

“I should have nominated her years ago.”

We have a unique opportunity for non-VR GPs to receive fully funded training to complete their Fellowship!

Mount Isa, St George and **Cooktown** each have a fulltime General Practitioner vacancy, which are targeted pre-approved locations for the **2020 Remove Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS)**. RVTS is a vocational training program for medical practitioners in communities throughout remote and rural Australia.

As targeted pre-approved locations, **training is fully funded by the Australian Government** and the four-year training program is delivered by Distance Education and Remote Supervision to Fellowship of the ACRRM and/or RACGP.

Training will commence in February 2020. To be successful for inclusion in the 2020 RVTS, you will need evidence of an offer of employment from the Mount Isa, St George or Cooktown practice and then undertake an interview with RVTS. Health Workforce Queensland may be able to financially support your move to the above location and during your training you will be supported by RVTS!

It is strongly recommended to apply through Health Workforce Queensland for the above positions, as successful applicants will receive significant assistance and guidance with the RVTS application.

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View the job ads : [Mount Isa](#) | [St George](#) | [Cooktown](#)
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With small delegate to presenter ratios, our CPD Workshops are one of a kind!

Anaesthetic and Emergency Response Workshop

[20 July | Sunshine Coast, QLD](#)

[Sunshine Coast Medical Education](#) is a collaborative project by four practising Specialist Anaesthetists and provide medical professionals with education and training that is relevant, up-to-date, and of high quality. SCME will be presenting our Anaesthetic and Emergency Response Workshop.

The aim of this one-day workshop is to upskill delegates in **CICO (can't intubate can't oxygenate)** and **cardiac arrest situations** and provide access to the emergency response activities required in the **JCCA CPD Program**.

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Trauma Workshop

[17-18 August | Townsville, QLD](#)

Rural areas typically have a higher incidence of trauma from farming, mining and motor vehicle accidents. Due to the cruciality of care in a trauma case, rural GPs are often called upon to manage the patient until specialist care is provided.

Dr Jamie Thomas, Staff Specialist, Emergency and Trauma Centre at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital will lead attendees through **high level skills** needed for the emergency care of trauma cases.

Health Works

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