



Health Workforce
Queensland

HealthWorks

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02

CEO Message

03

Stakeholder Profile

04

Scholarship & Bursary Funding
Available: Win a Galaxy Tablet!

05

Health Workforce Needs
Assessment Summary

06

Recruitment Profile

07

Corporate Services Staff Profile

08

Vacancies



CEO Message

As restrictions ease and life slowly returns to some sort of “new” normal for us in Queensland, we direct our thoughts to our neighbours in the other States and Territories and wish them all well. At this point it is important to acknowledge the impeccable leadership at all levels of Government across our health sector, especially our Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector, Private Practice and remote and rural stakeholder networks.

There have been significant and exciting developments within the health sector in the time between our Autumn and Winter editions of HealthWorks. The sector said thank you and farewell to Professor Paul Worley, the inaugural National Rural Health Commissioner; we also passed on our congratulations to Associate Professor Ruth Stewart on her appointment to the role, we are enthusiastic for the future of things to come under her stewardship.

The final report from the National Rural Health Commissioner on the Improvement of Access, Quality and Distribution of Allied Health Services in Regional, Rural and Remote Australia was released in June. The report addresses issues and challenges impacting on access to services for rural and remote Australians and is a culmination of two years of consultations with the Allied Health Sector.

The Four Overarching Recommendations Include:

- The establishment of a "service and learning consortia" across rural and remote Australia, supported by new and existing program funding.
- The investment in strategies to increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the allied health workforce.
- A National Allied Health Data Strategy, including building a geospatial Allied Health Minimum Dataset that incorporates comprehensive rural and remote allied health workforce data.
- The appointment of a dedicated full-time Chief Allied Health Officer (CAHO) to work across sectors and departments including health, mental health, disability, aged care, early childhood, education and training, justice, and social services.

Staff Update

Over the last 12 months the agency has continued to grow and develop new capabilities. The Lead Agency and Governance functions continue to expand across the Rural Workforce Agency Network (RWAN) with the addition of the MDRAP Support Package and national representation. I can also announce my new appointment as RWAN Chair and Sarah Venn's additional role as RWAN Secretariat. To support the increased requirements on the Health Workforce and Service Planning arm of the business, we are pleased to announce that Meredith Sullivan has joined the Health Workforce and Service Planning Team as Team Leader.

In addition, I am excited to announce that we have appointed Zena Martin to the position of Deputy Chief Executive Officer. Zena previously held the position of Service Delivery Manager, and we welcome the appointment of Andy van der Rijt, who will now be undertaking this role. The Board, Leadership Team and all staff congratulate Zena, Sarah, Andy and Meredith on their new roles.

Contracts Update

I am delighted to announce that during this winter we have finalised our contracts with the Commonwealth Department of Health and are excited to continue to deliver the following programs:

Rural Health Workforce Support Activity, Health Workforce Scholarship Program, John Flynn Placement Program, and More Doctors for Rural Australia Support Package

Across the Agency, the number of Zoom and Microsoft Teams meetings have intensified, and the level of active engagement and collaboration has increased. This is an enormous testimony to the hard work and determination of each of our staff to ensure we continue to serve our remote and rural Queensland communities.



Associate Professor Ruth Stewart
Image: Supplied

A Love That Grew From Going Rural

Our intention for our student rural immersion programs is for them to be thought provoking, informative, career defining and memorable. What we didn't expect is for the Joint Rural Health Club Weekend hosted in Emerald in 2018 to be even more memorable for two students whose worlds were about to collide. One, from rural Queensland and always knew he wanted to be a General Practitioner, the other from the United States who had never considered a career in medicine. Sasha and Carolyn kindly share their life and experience with Health Workforce Queensland (HWQ).

Can you give us a brief history of where you are from, what interested you in becoming a Doctor and where you are currently studying/practicing?

Sasha: I'm from Rockhampton and have been interested in medicine since 'assisting' my Dad on his morning rounds at the Moura Hospital when I was 6. I'm now in my 4th year at JCU, enjoying clinical placement.

Carolyn: I am originally from Detroit, Michigan in the United States. I didn't grow up seeing a doctor (because of the health care system). It wasn't until I was in college studying Environmental Science and Geology (with a "Pre-Medicine" allocation) that I went on two study abroad programs that would set my path. After these two trips I saw myself in a role of public health. I applied to JCU's Master of Public Health Program/Tropical Medicine and was accepted. I am currently an intern at Townsville University Hospital.

How did you hear about HWQ and what events or programs have you been involved in with us?

Sasha: I heard about GROW Rural, an HWQ initiative in my first year of medicine. Heading out to the bush with likeminded people for a long weekend sounded like a great time, and it was. It was on GROW that I was made aware of the Joint Rural Health Club Weekend (JRHCW), and so I then joined my Rural Health Club (RHINO) and went along to Emerald for another weekend of rural immersion, clinical skills and networking.

Carolyn: I heard about HWQ when I joined our Rural Health Club, Club RHINO when I started at JCU. The first event that I went on was a Joint Rural Health Club Weekend to Warwick. That was such a game changer for me! Since then I have done two more Joint Rural Health Club Weekends, one to Cooktown and the other to Emerald. I have also been involved with Health Workforce Queensland through events with the National Rural Health Student Network and Club RHINO.

How did you both meet?

Sasha: It was on the JRHCW in 2018 that I met Carolyn. She was studying in Cairns at the time, and I was in Townsville, so we hadn't crossed paths until that weekend in Emerald. Initially she wouldn't have a bar of me, but after some persistence on my part, we realised our shared interests in folk music and all things outdoors, and that was enough to give me an in!

Carolyn: I was a 4th year medical student in Cairns. I flew down to Emerald and it was when the JCU students met at the airport that I was introduced to Sasha. From there we got to know each other throughout the day with the organised activities. In the evening he serenaded me with Bob Dylan. I was sold. I found someone who had an interest in rural health, wanted to work in rural Australia, was fascinated with the Kimberley and had a love of Bob Dylan. Two and a half years later I got to marry that very man!

Aside from meeting each other, what was the most memorable moment of the 2018 Joint Rural Health Club Weekend in Emerald?

Sasha: I particularly liked the networking dinners where local health professionals and students could mingle and mix. It made me aware of how welcoming, and how fun the rural health community is. I particularly enjoyed hearing the stories of when some of those health professionals began their rural practice over 30 years earlier in what sounded like the Wild Wild West.

Carolyn: It wasn't until that trip that I was exposed to Central Queensland. Prior to then I had heard people say very negative things about the area (most likely from individuals who had never been there). The highlight for me was seeing a thriving community in a BEAUTIFUL part of the country. I loved interacting with the doctors at the hospital and hearing about their lives outside of work and how involved they were with the community. I always loved the sessions where we could learn about different health disciplines and their interactions.

What appeals to you most about remote or rural practice?

Sasha: My first exposure to medicine as a profession was in the form of Rural Generalism, and it was that which inspired me to embark on my own medical career. I see it as a very challenging, and very rewarding career and one that will allow me to contribute positively to a community, and my own personal development.

Carolyn: The diversity of your scope of practice. I love the thought that I will always have to be on my toes in my line of work. As a rural doctor you're not only a patient's GP, you are the emergency doctor, you're a jack of all trades for your patients too. It is important in rural practice that you are confident in your ability to treat patients and that you are constantly learning and getting additional qualifications so you can best serve your community. I don't like seeing the same thing every day, and that is impossible in rural and remote practice. Plus working and living in paradise with wide open spaces, you can't beat it.

What has been your most influential experience or exposure to rural practice?

Sasha: Last year I undertook a placement in Broome, and it was the most influential exposure to rural practice that I've had. After 2 and a half years in a lecture theatre, my medical career was feeling a bit stale. It took 4 flights and 14 hours to get there from Townsville. For 3 weeks I was part of an incredible team at the Hospital and the Aboriginal Medical Service, and their passion and professionalism were truly inspirational. It felt like 'real medicine' and I loved it.

Carolyn: I knew that I wanted to be a rural generalist after hearing about it my first year of medicine. In my final year I was fortunate to have an extended placement in Ayr. I felt so necessary and part of the team. On top of that the skills I learnt made me feel 10x more confident than my peers who stayed at a large hospital.



JFPP 2019-2020 Financial Year Stats

The John Flynn Placement Program (JFPP) has always been extremely popular with medical students across the country.

We wanted to share some statistics with you to show how popular the program is, not only with our students but also the local community. Due to recent summer bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, there were a number of placements cancelled due to these events, as well as a reduction in the number of students applying.



Data reflects last financial year - Nationwide: 01/07/2019 - 30/06/2020



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*T&C's Eligibility Criteria at healthworkforce.com.au/scholarship-program

[Click here to enter](#)



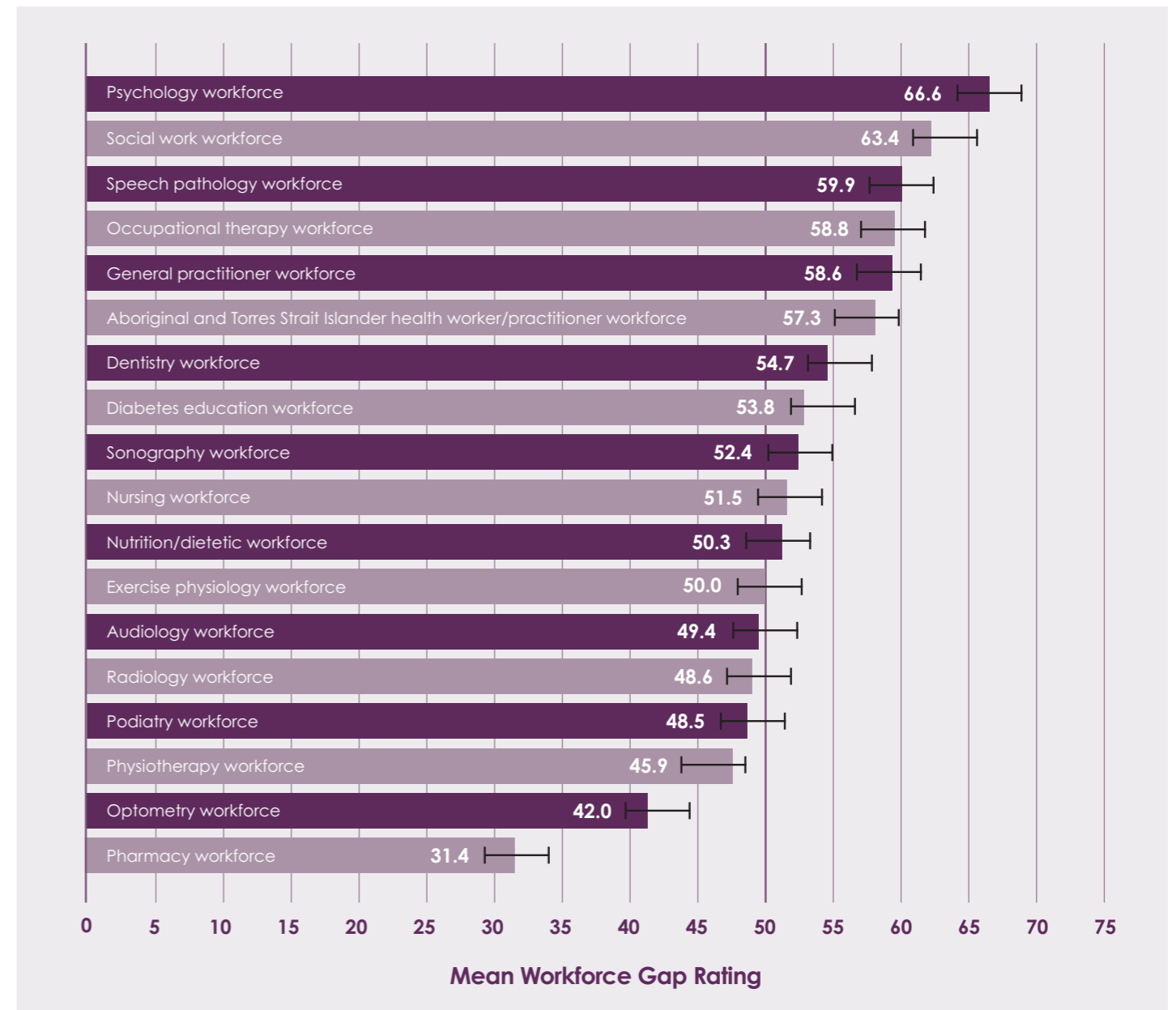
Health Workforce Needs Assessment Summary

Health Workforce Queensland undertakes an annual primary care workforce needs assessment for remote and rural areas of Queensland. The purpose of the needs assessment is to identify workforce challenges and service gaps in rural and remote locations.

The information gathered by the needs assessment guides the utilisation of resources and informs program planning and policy development; allowing Health Workforce Queensland to work in partnership with Primary Health Networks and other primary care organisations to strengthen primary care.

The 2019/20 survey asked participants to respond to phrased statements such as 'There is a serious gap in the physiotherapy workforce in my community' or 'There is a serious gap in mental health services in my community' by rating their level of agreement from '0 = Strongly disagree', to '100 = Strongly agree'. Higher scores reflected greater agreement that there was a serious gap.

The highest workforce gap ratings were for psychology, social work, speech pathology, occupational therapy and general practitioner workforce.



The highest service gap ratings were for mental health services, community-based rehabilitation services (added this year), alcohol and other drug services, disability services, aged care services and social support services, all with means of 60 or higher.

Planning for the 2020/21 needs assessment has commenced, with the survey to be disseminated in mid-September 2020.

For more information please contact: data@healthworkforce.com.au

Recruitment Profile: Going North

Dr Thompson Gana

What was it about the role in Cooktown that appealed to you?

There was a General Practitioner (GP) job opening in Cooktown which was advertised by both Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS) and Health Workforce Queensland. The exciting part about this job, was that it was accredited for a General Practice vocational training program that will lead to an award of the Fellowship of Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) on completion of the mandatory requirements. RVTS is the training provider for this vocational training.

The additional appealing factor of the GP registrar role is the compulsory requirement to complete the vocational training in one location thus eliminating the burden of relocating to another town or practice as is always the case for other GP registrars training with other training providers. Lastly, I wanted a small, remote and coastal town to undertake my GP training and Cooktown was the best fit for me.

What was it about the Health Workforce Solutions team that made the placement process so easy?

I am an International Medical Graduate (IMG) and it can be quite daunting dealing with new information, new environment and paperwork including VISA requirements. But my transition to Cooktown was stress free. Whenever I asked questions for direction or next step, I get a prompt response and clarity of response. Overall, you have a very knowledgeable and proactive team and I specifically commend the efforts of your Regional Coordinator, Northern Queensland (Caro Finlay) with whom I have interacted with most of the time transitioning to Cooktown. She has been excellent and she is very diplomatic.

Now that you are settled into your new role, what has been the most rewarding part of the role?

It's a constellation of factors that have made my role so far as a GP Registrar exciting and worthwhile. More specifically, it is the continued support I get from Health Workforce Queensland, RVTS and the Cooktown GP clinic that is really rewarding.

What is your favourite thing about Cooktown?

On most nights, there is a current of cool breeze blowing throughout the night; occasionally it can present as strong winds but generally, I find it very pleasant as you generally don't need a fan or air conditioner to sleep.



Corporate Services Staff Profile

Efiza Vanniasinghe

Tell us a little about your role as the IT Manager at HWQ.

My role is to lead the IT team and manage all things IT including providing advice on HWQ IT strategy. Primary responsibilities are IT projects, BAU and support; software development; Office 365 and Dynamics 365 management; IT equipment and licenses management; vendor management and many more. It's mostly quite fun since I am a tech-head and project manager naturally but there are times it can be very stressful too. We all know how unpredictable technology can be!

How long have you worked with HWQ?

Since November 2017.

How has the progression to cloud based software assisted in the development of HWQ?

The move to cloud based applications through HWQ Digital Transformation Program have provided greater flexibility for HWQ staff to access the systems and data anywhere and anytime. The merged of multiple data sources also allowed staff to refer to one system that allows various teams to run their processes and programs cohesively. Visibility across the organisation is also increased and staff are now able to draw on other team's input to further expand our services.

As the business has moved to a work from home model during COVID-19, what was the most challenging aspect of this from an IT perspective?

Not being able to discuss ideas/issues on ad-hoc, face to face basis. A lot of our work involved all four of us cross-functions and sometimes it can be challenging doing system design and trouble-shooting on video conference. Also, not being able to physically be with HWQ staff to assist them with their issues when we need to navigate through their machines.

What is your bucket list dream destination?

Zermatt and Zimbabwe in winter.

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

I haven't had the opportunity to visit remote/rural Queensland yet but I lived in Toowoomba 20 years ago and loved it. Camping in winter at Warwick was a must!

Tell us something that might surprise us about you.

I can sing but I can't dance and I loathe the summer!

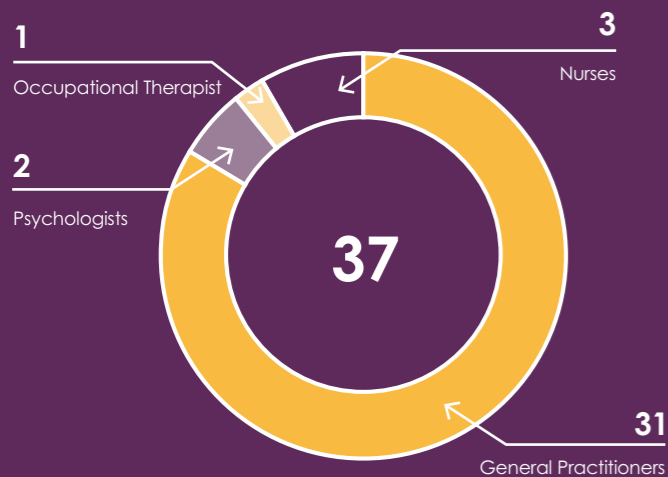
Finally, cats or dogs?

I grew up with cats but now that I have my Chilli the Cavoodle, hands down dogs from here onwards! Even though I am allergic to both.

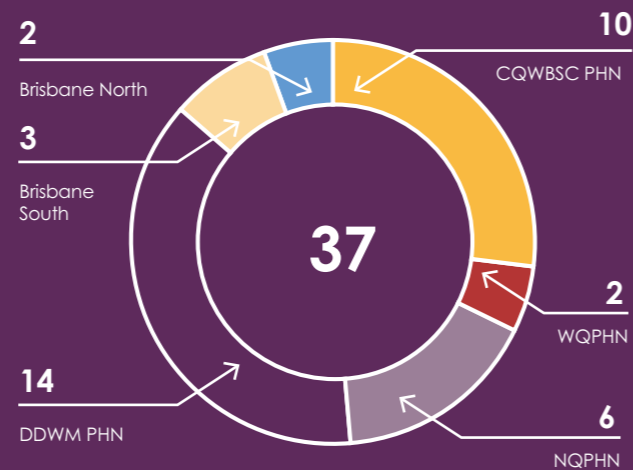


2019-2020 Financial Year Health Workforce Queensland Recruitment Summary

Permanent Recruits this Financial Year



Recruitment Numbers by PHN



Vacancies

General Practitioner

Boonah

Nestled in the Scenic Rim, Boonah is a stone's throw away from world heritage national parks, ancient rainforests, walking trails and breathtaking views. This longstanding practice has two sites and are seeking a full time GP, who will provide high quality health care to the local community.

Chinchilla

Famous for its melons and a renowned spot for fossicking, fishing, bushwalking and camping, Chinchilla is a four-hour drive west of Brisbane. This two Principal GP's at the Practice are both procedural GP's. Collectively they provide a wide range of medical services to provide the best health care service to their patients.

Maryborough

Based on the beautiful Fraser Coast, Maryborough is a historical city with striking art, buildings and museums. This thriving Allied Health private practice is based in Maryborough, and services the Fraser Coast and surrounding areas of the Wide Bay.

Mental Health Professional

Mount Isa

This organisation now has an opportunity available for an adaptable Psychologist, Mental Health Social Worker or Occupational Therapist to join their team in Mount Isa as a Mental Health Professional, on a full-time basis.

A true generalist role, you will have the opportunity to expand your skillset whilst working with a broad range of clients, including children and adults, older persons, people with drug and alcohol issues and those affected by natural disasters.

Practice Nurse

Yungaburra

Yungaburra is an idyllic "heritage" town at the heart of the Atherton Tableland. The practice is in a purpose designed building in an excellent location with the client base being a good mix of demographics for variety. The candidate will be a Registered or Enrolled Nurse who is keen to work in a general practice team, supporting other practice nurses and GPs to make patients feel welcome and supported while accessing a professional service.

Mount Isa

A Medical Centre in Mount Isa has a great opportunity for a full-time Registered Nurse to join their team. They are looking for a proactive candidate to fill this role, who can work independently and provide comprehensive nursing care to all categories of patients at the practice.

Registered Nurse

Hamilton Island

Hamilton Island is part of the Whitsundays, and in the heart of the Great Barrier Reef, Hamilton Island is one of Australia's most spectacular and sought-after holiday destinations.

This island practice is seeking a Registered Nurse with primary care skills and more than 2 years' experience to join the team in paradise.

For more information about any of the vacancies listed, visit our website healthworkforce.com.au/recruitment

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