

South West Hospital and Health Service

# PULSE

JULY–AUGUST 2024 EDITION



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We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands across the South West. We also pay our respects to the current and future Elders, for they will inherit the responsibility of keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture alive, and for creating a better life for the generations to follow.

We believe the future happiness and wellbeing of all Australians and our future generations will be enhanced by valuing and taking pride in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples—the oldest living culture of humanity.

## SOUTH WEST TRADITIONAL OWNERS

- Augathella – Bidjara** (Bid-jara)
- Bollon – Kooma** (Coo-ma)
- Charleville – Bidjara** (Bid-jara)
- Cunnamulla – Kunja** (Koun-yah) with other interests
- Dirranbandi – Yuwaalaraay/Euahlayi people** (You-wal-a-ray/ You-al-e-i)
- Eromanga – Boonthamurra** (Boon-tha-murra)
- Eulo – Budjiti** (Bud-ji-ti)
- Injune – Bidjara** (Bid-jara)
- Mitchell – Gunggari** (Gon-gari)
- Morven – Bidjara** (Bid-jara)
- Mungindi – Kamilaroi** (Car-milla-roy)
- Quilpie – Boonthamurra, Mardigan, Wongkumara** with other interests
- Roma – Mandandanji** (Mand-an-dand-gee)
- St George – Kooma** (Coo-ma) with **Kamilaroi, Mandandanji, Bigambul and Gungarri** interests
- Surat – Mandandanji** (Mand-an-dand-gee)
- Thargomindah – Kullilli** (Coo-lee-lar)
- Wallumbilla – Mandandanji** (Mand-an-dand-gee)

This newsletter is produced by the South West Hospital and Health Service. All feedback and contributions are welcome. All published material has been approved by the Health Service Chief Executive.

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**Cover Image:** South West HHS Dental Assistant Yia with Wyatt during Dental Health Week in Morven.



**QUALITY**



**COMPASSION**



**ACCOUNTABILITY**



**ENGAGEMENT**



**ADAPTABILITY**

“ A culture of sustainability is one where the organisation and its people believe in the importance of building a healthy environment and improving the lives of others. Employees will make decisions and act in ways that support good decisions not only because they believe it to be ‘the right thing to do’ but that it is the absolute ‘necessary’ thing to do. ”

Page 17, Queensland Health Climate Risk Strategy 2021 – 2026.



## From the Board Chair

**Climate change is a global public health crisis, as it has the potential to significantly impact human health and wellbeing. Residents of South West Queensland have already experienced the impacts of climate change with the increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events e.g. prolonged heatwaves and droughts, fierce bushfires and regular major flood events. These weather events place a myriad of pressures on the Hospital and Health Service, through both the climate event itself, and the resulting flow on effects on physical health and mental wellbeing.**

In Queensland, the public health system contributes close to 50% of all government emissions, of which 90% is related to electricity consumption. The South West HHS has commenced actively implementing climate change adaptation measures. By 2030, we are aiming to have 50% renewable energy in place, and plan to reduce emissions by 30% (based on 2005 levels).

To achieve these 2030 targets, we will all have to proactively drive tangible and real improvements in the sustainability of our services. However, whilst we do this, we must ensure that we continue to deliver safe and effective health services to our rural communities – that is, after all, our core business. The real kicker or revelation associated with any sustainability actions that we may undertake in our workplace is that this needs to be implemented within existing budgets.

As you think about your workplace, what adaptations could you make? Is it possible to decrease the amount of waste going into landfill? Can we recycle waste? Can we capture and reuse rainwater? Is there waste water that could be recycled for other purposes? Are there known leaks within water pipes that needs repairing? How many lights use LED bulbs? Can we reduce our need for travel by engaging in more virtual gatherings and telehealth opportunities?

The Board sincerely thanks the many work units who have already commenced acting on opportunities that will assist in transitioning to reduced emissions. In many ways, the South West HHS is leading by example in numerous small communities, however we still have much work to do to building sustainability improvements into our services whilst still delivering safe and high quality healthcare.

The Board held a virtual meeting in August, which is a small contribution to climate change sustainability within the South West HHS. However, we were back on the road in September, when the Board returned to Charleville. Board members visited Waroona Residential Aged Care Facility, the Charleville Hospital, the Royal Flying Doctor Service base as well as hosted a community engagement session for interested staff and health consumers. We enjoyed catching up with staff and hearing more about climate action interventions you may be making in your workplace.

Kind wishes

**Karen Tully, Board Chair  
South West Hospital and Health Board**





# Board out and about in Mungindi



Mungindi community with Board and Executive members



Claire Alexander and Dr Carl de Wet



Robyn Brumpton catching up with Daryl Jensen, Lukas Cook, Lewis Well and Kevin McCosh in Mungindi



Mungindi RN Kate Imeson with Karen Tully



Rebeca Greenway and Karen Tully address the Mungindi community



Mungindi staff Laura Blyth, Hilary Campbell and Sweet Goetsch



Mungindi CAN member Lisa Orchin with Nurse Practitioner Ann-Margeret Jenkins and Acting HSCE Rebecca Greenway



# Message from the Acting Health Service Chief Executive Rebecca Greenway



As the 2023-2024 Financial Year formally closes, it is timely to reflect on some of our wonderful achievements across South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS).

Included in this edition is an overview of our 2023-24 Annual Report, which highlights a year of significant progress and success alongside a range of other progress reports regarding our quality of care, First Nations Health Equity progression and Consumer and Community Engagement and Clinician and Employee Engagement updates.

As detailed in our Annual Report for 2023-2024, we should all be proud of our continued strong performance across a range of key areas, including 89 per cent of emergency department patients being seen and either admitted or discharged within four hours of presentation, which was once again well above the 80 per cent statewide target.

As our service continues to evolve, we've also celebrated completion of major construction projects, including the new Community and Allied Health Buildings at Charleville and St George hospitals, as well as the ongoing replacement of the Morven Community Clinic and the new residential aged care wing at our Cunnamulla facility. Additionally, the HHS recorded an operating surplus of \$4.444 million for the year, positioning us strongly for the future and providing further opportunities for our Board to prudently reinvest into future capital and other projects for the longer term benefit of our communities for generations to come.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the official openings of the new builds in Charleville, Morven and St George over the next few weeks.

In the following pages you will see a feature on our Dirranbandi Medical Practice which deservedly maintained its accreditation status and I'd also like to make special mention of the fantastic work that has been happening behind the scenes at Waroona Multipurpose Centre in Charleville which was also recently assessed against national Aged Care Quality Standards – with full compliance against all requirements and standards confirmed for the first time since 2019. This is a wonderful achievement and, on behalf of the Executive Team, I'd like to thank both Waroona and Dirranbandi teams for their dedication and commitment.

In other news, our 2024 staff nominations have now closed. We will reveal this year's nominees before the end of September with winners to be revealed at a special ceremony in St George on Tuesday 29 October, which also coincides with our annual Community Advisory Network (CAN) Forum.

Awards this year include the annual Board Chair Award, the Deadly Achiever and Clinical Excellence Awards from the South West Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Advisory Council and our Clinical Council respectively, and the prestigious Fiona Holmes Award for an outstanding midwife.

Congratulations to all our nominees and thank you to everyone who took the time to submit a nomination. We look forward to sharing the outcomes with you in a special Staff Awards edition of Pulse following our ceremony!

Warm regards

**Rebecca Greenway**  
Acting Health Service Chief Executive



*It was a wonderful day in Surat when we welcomed the Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM at the end of August.*



*Governor of Queensland Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSCM and Professor Graeme Nimmo at our Surat facility*

# SOUTH WEST HHS ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

**Traditionally published within three months of the end of the financial year, the 2023-2024 Annual Report for South West HHS was recently formally tabled in the Queensland Parliament by the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women.**

Our annual report is a key statement of accountability to all communities and partners across the South West regarding our overall performance and financial stewardship and, once again, it is with great pleasure that we can reflect on another year of challenging, yet ultimately successful and positive growth.

During the reporting period, a range of key achievements were delivered as at 30 June 2024, including:

- ✓ Launch of *Our Way – Together First Nations Health Equity Implementation Plan* at a public event on 24 July 2023, and subsequent establishment of a Peak First Nations Health Equity Committee to oversee wider progress and report directly to the South West Hospital and Health Board which, since 1 December 2023, continues to meet every three months.
- ✓ A range of ongoing partnership work and co-design to improve patient travel, Domestic Family Violence response, *Growing Deadly Families*, progression of mental health and palliative care service commitments and other community focused health promotion activities.
- ✓ Progression of locally focussed grow our own strategies with a record breaking 44 nursing and midwifery graduates welcomed across the South West and the first cohort of 36 Darling Downs-South West Medical Pathway students commencing studies at the University of Queensland and University of Southern Queensland.
- ✓ Development of new **Climate Sustainability, Quality and Safety, Equity and Diversity Action Plan** and **Digital strategies** for further progression in the years ahead.
- ✓ Continuation of much needed infrastructure projects for the benefit of our communities and staff.
- ✓ Continued delivery of safe, effective, and sustainable care, with reported rates of performance once again amongst the highest in the state.

Within the wider context of ongoing workforce pressures, increasing presentations to our services and other significant challenges, these are truly wonderful outcomes for our communities.

With another exciting year ahead, wherever you are – and whatever role you play – we can be justifiably proud of our successes to date as we continue our journey of providing safe, effective, responsible and sustainable rural and remote health services that people trust and value.

**Our year on year achievements are of course only possible because of the unwavering dedication and commitment of all South West clinicians, visiting teams, and supporting staff – and our ever strengthening bonds with our valued partners – across the South West and beyond.**

**For all that you do, and your selfless enthusiasm and commitment towards advancing the needs of your local communities, we would also like to thank all Community Advisory Network chairs and members throughout the South West – and everyone who has either taken time throughout the year to participate in events hosted by the HHS or to provide valuable feedback on our services.**



**You can access the annual report and SWHHS strategies online.**

[Annual Report →](#)

[Health Equity →](#)

[Climate Sustainability →](#)

[Quality and Safety →](#)

[Equity and Diversity →](#)

[Digital Strategy →](#)



# COULD THIS BE SEPSIS?

**World Sepsis Day is held every year on 13 September and is an opportunity for people across the world to unite in addressing the impact of sepsis – a life-threatening condition that arises when the body’s response to an infection damages its own tissues and organs.**

Sepsis is often preventable but, when it does occur, it is a medical emergency that requires rapid treatment as sadly around 8,700 Australians die of sepsis related causes every year.

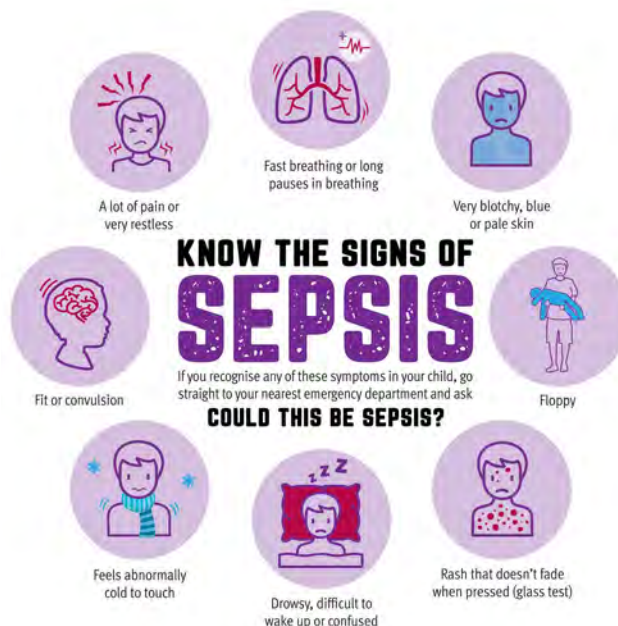
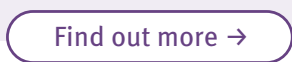
“It’s vital that we all stay vigilant to potential symptoms,” said Dr Carl de Wet, South West HHS’s Executive Director of Medical Services and Clinical Governance.

“As the number one cause of preventable deaths worldwide, infections can be triggered simply whilst being out and about. When you get a scratch or insect bite its therefore important to make sure you don’t just shrug this off as a minor inconvenience – take practical steps to clean wounds, maintain hand hygiene, and stay healthy.

“When it comes to sepsis, time is critical – as many survivors are often left with disability and other complications as a lasting legacy – but what’s particularly challenging is that sepsis can often be mistaken for a bad cold or gastro, so the more we know and can share about sepsis, the more lives we can help save.”

## Take action today:

1. **Take a moment to review Sepsis – explained in 3 minutes. This video outlines the common causes of sepsis, key symptoms and how sepsis is diagnosed and treated.**
2. **Visit the Queensland Health website for further information.**

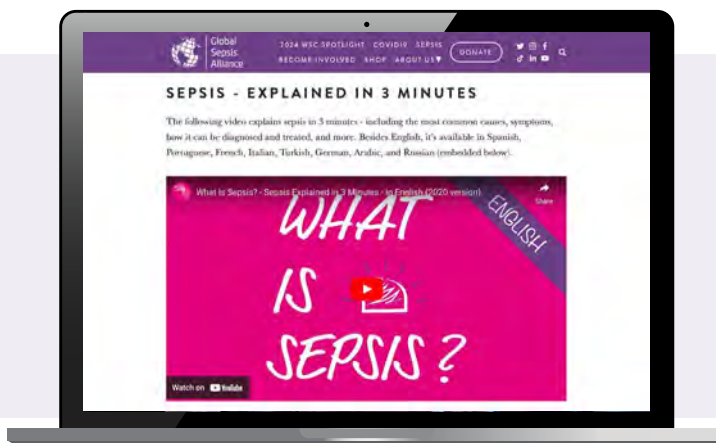


Signs might include symptoms such as: Fast breathing or breathlessness; Fever and chills or low body temperature; Fast heartbeat; Nausea and vomiting or diarrhoea; New fatigue, confusion, drowsiness or change in behaviour such as ‘feeling worse than ever’ – and we need to be conscious to these, particularly so in children.

There is no single test that can diagnose sepsis, but health professionals may ask you about your symptoms and what has happened to you in the lead up to your illness, monitoring your temperature, heart rate, breathing rate and blood pressure, performing a physical examination, and through tests including blood tests and medical imaging as needed.

“Your health and wellbeing is always of the upmost importance to us – so if you have concerns or think a loved one may have symptoms, trust your gut and ask ‘could this this be sepsis?’.

“Even if you have already seen a doctor or other health professional, I’d like to reassure you that it’s also totally OK to go back and ask again – particularly if you have recently been diagnosed with an infection but still feeling really unwell and not getting any better”, Dr Carl said.





# OUR COMMUNITIES

## A MESSAGE FROM SHELLEY LAWTON

Executive Director

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Engagement

**Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the “Close the Gap” Conference on the Gold Coast with several other staff from the South West HHS.**

The theme of the conference, “Prevention is better than Cure,” emphasised the need for collaborative partnerships among all stakeholders to support First Nations communities in addressing all aspects of First Nations Health.

The conference focused on sharing and discussing positive models of change and innovative initiatives. It aimed to develop a broader methodology for preventative programs that are culturally appropriate and capable of making a real impact.

The conference made us reflect on what Closing the Gap means to each of us. I believe when we think about Closing the Gap, we must consider our actions to achieve this. For too long, our systems have tried to ‘Close the Gap’ from a deficit model of care.

We need to shift to a strength-based approach.

To achieve this, we need real, genuine partnerships at all levels of our healthcare systems, particularly in primary health care. This will ensure that my people receive culturally appropriate care, continuity of care, and person-centred care.

Looking forward, our Healthy Equity Implementation Plan strengthens these ideals, and I am very much looking forward to seeing this implemented across our South West communities.

I also had the privilege of attending and presenting at the inaugural Joint Director General Forum in Brisbane recently with our South West Hospital and Health Board Chair Karen Tully, Acting Health Service Chief Executive Rebecca Greenway and key partners from the Aboriginal and Community Controlled Health Organisation sector.

This two-day forum, the first of its kind, provided a unique opportunity to showcase the power of partnerships in advancing Health Equity and aligning with Queensland Health’s First Nations First Strategy 2032.

The forum focused on four critical areas: eliminating racism, reshaping the system, transforming care, and strengthening the workforce.

The key to making meaningful progress in these areas lies in the development, implementation, and effective action of partnerships.

Through collaboration, we can ensure that the right people are working together with our First Nations communities, at the right time and in the right place, to create a healthier future for our people, and the South West as a whole.

Kind regards

**Shelley Lawton**  
EDATSIHE



*Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women, Shannon Fentiman with Shelley at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre*



# GROWING OUR OWN:

## Building a sustainable healthcare workforce in South West Queensland

**South West HHS is committed to building its diverse, highly skilled and sustainable workforce by focusing on recruiting, developing, and retaining local talent.**

South West HHS Executive Director of People and Culture Katie Eckersley said the "Growing Our Own" initiative was at the heart of this commitment, aiming to create opportunities for South West locals to access closer to home, and keep locally raised individuals within their communities for their professional careers.

"Creating a range of pathways that enable our young people to pursue health sector career opportunities within the South West is a vital way in which we will address our long-term workforce needs," Katie said.

"Our Work Experience program is a key component of the "Growing Our Own" initiative, designed to introduce high school students to the vast array of career opportunities in healthcare. Individual placements, facilitated throughout the school year, enable students to experience work in various healthcare roles and settings."

Roma Hospital piloted its Work Experience program in 2023, and following its success, two events have already been planned for 2024. Katie said the first event, held from June 17 to 21, provided students with a unique opportunity to engage in various hands-on learning activities and network with clinicians.

"This program goes beyond traditional placements by offering students insight to a range of clinical and non-clinical careers, including nursing, midwifery, medicine, allied health and the enabling services such as administration and operational streams," she said.

A September Work Experience event is planned for Roma Hospital, further expanding opportunities for students to explore careers in healthcare.

### Building the Future Together

South West HHS's commitment to growing its own talent is evident in the range of programs and initiatives designed to develop and retain local First Nations individuals. By investing in the future of its workforce, South West HHS was not only addressing the current healthcare workforce needs but is also ensuring a robust and sustainable healthcare system for the South West.



*Alicia Grantham (Seed Employment), Heidi Jones and Jeanette Gemmill (Cunnamulla P-12 State School) in front of Heidi's hand-painted mural*

### School-based traineeships (SBTs)

The South West HHS is also dedicated to providing school-based traineeships (SBTs) specifically designed for senior school students, with approximately 20 traineeships to be offered over the next two years.

Katie said these traineeships were available to students in Grades 10, 11, and 12, and span a range of occupations, including administration, kitchen operations, laundry operations, and individual support for aging and disability care.

Applications for traineeships will be accepted until the end of September 2024, with a bulk intake planned for January 2025. Interested students are encouraged to contact their school's Industry Liaison Officer, while internal staff are advised to discuss opportunities with their DON/FM or Service Director.

The program is delivered in partnership with key providers, such as TAFE Queensland, which serves as the Supervising Registered Training Organisation (SRTO), and Golden West Apprenticeships, the Group Training Organisation (GTO) responsible for employment and wages.

### Deadly Start: Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

The Deadly Start Education 2 Employment program is another integral part of South West HHS's strategy to build a sustainable workforce, said South West HHS Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Engagement, Shelley Lawton. Shelley said this program was specifically designed for senior school students who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and were interested in pursuing a career in healthcare.

"Launched in January, Deadly Start has already seen significant success, with seven students completing six months of in-school study to earn a Certificate II in Health Support Services. Following this, four students – three from Roma and one from Cunnamulla – progressed to the traineeship phase, where they are now working towards a Certificate III in Health Support Services.

"These students have been placed in roles as school-based Assistant in Nursing (AIN) and Assistant in Allied Health (AHA) trainees. During their traineeship, they will be linked with universities to explore further educational and career opportunities that align with their goals," Shelley said.

Shelley said expressions of interest for Deadly Start 2025 have recently opened, and interested students are encouraged to reach out to their school's Industry Liaison Officer.

**For more information or to get involved in any of these programs, students and staff are encouraged to contact their respective officers or email [SWHHS\\_trainees\\_WE@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:SWHHS_trainees_WE@health.qld.gov.au)**



*The Principal and staff from Charleville State School were ecstatic to have Vicki at their school*



*Vicki with Ruby from St Mary's Charleville*

## AUSTRALIAN NETBALL ICON VISITS THE SOUTH WEST

**The South West recently had the privilege of welcoming Australian netball legend Vicki Wilson, OAM, for her annual visit to the region.**

Vicki, who represented Australia in netball for an impressive 15 years from 1985 to 1999 – including four years as the national team captain – is widely regarded as one of the best goal shooters the world has ever seen.

South West HHS HOPE Program's Sue Eustace-Earle said Vicki's passion for netball extends far beyond her playing days.

"She has dedicated herself to the development of the sport at the grassroots level, and her commitment is evident in her founding and coordination of the Secondary Schools Netball Championships," Sue said.

"In partnership with the HOPE Program, Vicki has made it a tradition to visit the South West, where she leads coaching clinics and creates opportunities for children from prep to grade 12.

"Her visits also provide valuable mentoring for local coaches and umpires."

Sue said this year, Vicki emphasised the importance of holistic development – focusing not just on netball skills but also on the wider wellbeing of young athletes.

"Her message to the students was clear: eating well, staying hydrated, and supporting teammates are crucial to both personal and team success," she said.

"Vicki introduced simple physical movements designed to engage the whole brain, preparing students with the essential skills they need to thrive in both sports and academics.

"Vicki Wilson's ongoing dedication to the South West community is truly inspiring, and her visits continue to leave a lasting impact on our young athletes and future netball stars."



Indigenous Liaison Officers Angie, Jo and RJ join in on the on the NAIDOC celebrations



Indigenous Liaison Officer Jo with Exercise Physiologist Faith and Diabetes Educator Bebe at the NAIDOC Blak, Loud and Proud Community Luncheon.

## NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATIONS

**NAIDOC Week, a significant time for honouring the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, was celebrated between 7 and 14 July 2024.**

NAIDOC, originally standing for 'National Aborigines' and Islanders' Day Observance Committee', has evolved into a week-long celebration embraced by government agencies, schools, local councils, and workplaces nationwide.

South West HHS Executive Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Engagement, Shelley Lawton, said this year's theme: 'Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud!' celebrated the unyielding spirit of our communities.

"The fire symbolises the enduring strength and vitality of Indigenous cultures, passed down through generations despite numerous challenges," Shelley said.

"It represents a deep connection to the land, each other, and the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"As we honour this flame, we kindle the sparks of pride and unity, igniting a renewed commitment to acknowledging, preserving, and sharing the cultural heritage that enriches our nation."

Blak, Loud and Proud also encapsulates an unapologetic celebration of Indigenous identity, empowering us to stand tall in our heritage and assert our place in the modern world.

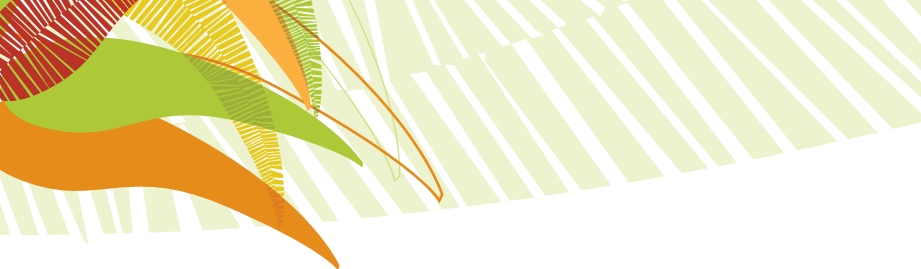
Through our collective efforts, we can forge a future where stories, traditions, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are cherished and celebrated, enriching the fabric of the nation with the oldest living culture in the world.

"Despite our celebrations, we must remain mindful of the ongoing inequalities that exist; a gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, significantly higher mortality rates for Indigenous children under five, and a substantial shortfall in literacy and numeracy achievements," Shelley said.

"These disparities remind us of the importance of continued efforts toward reconciliation and equality.

"Indigenous cultures in Australia are rich and diverse, with significant contributions across many fields, including the arts, media, academia, sport, and business.

"Part of my, yours, ours and everyone's role is to showcase the unique contributions of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people this week and every week."



# WELLNESS MY WAY PILOT: A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH

**After extensive planning, South West HHS has officially launched the Wellness My Way (WMW) pilot in the Maranoa Regional Council area.**

Running from August 2024 to March 2025, this initiative is a result of strong partnerships with Queensland Health's Health and Wellbeing Commission, South West HHS's Healthy Communities Team, and supported by research and evaluation from Health and Wellbeing Queensland (HWQ).

Kathy Morrow from the South West HHS Healthy Communities Team said the goal was to activate the community to improve the proactive identification of individuals living with chronic disease risk factors and streamline pathways for their participation in evidence-based prevention programs.

"The WMW pilot is a consumer-led, digitally enhanced prevention model designed to provide a single-entry point to prevention services and resources across health and community settings," Kathy said.

"Its objective is to reach individuals earlier in their health journey, integrate preventive care into daily community life, and promote consumer health literacy and positive health behaviours. Initially focusing on the communities of Roma, Injune, Mitchell, Surat, Wallumbilla, and surrounding areas, the WMW pilot provides various engagement pathways for consumers. They can opt-in through local marketing campaigns, trusted health professionals, community members, or direct SMS invitations.

"Participants complete a digital health and wellbeing assessment (either online or via phone), which helps identify chronic disease risk factors and provides a summary of their health status. From there, consumers receive tailored support from trained telephone coaches to help them develop action plans and, if necessary, receive referrals to prevention programs such as My Health for Life, smoking cessation, and mental well-being support."

Kathy said the program's early successes included engaging 86 consumers, with an impressive 73 completing the health check.

"While still in its early stages, 16 individuals have completed the full pathway, receiving referrals to various prevention services and resources," she said.

"The marketing campaign, informed by community input, has been well-received, featuring local people and places to resonate with the target audience. The campaign will continue to evolve, with ongoing feedback helping to fine-tune the initiative."

As the WMW pilot continues, the team is committed to iterative learning and refinement.

"The early results show strong engagement and positive feedback, with an average rating of 9.6 out of 10 from participants who would recommend the service to family and friends," Kathy said.

This pilot represents a significant step toward improving health outcomes in the Maranoa region and potentially serves as a model for other regions. Keep an eye out for updates as the Wellness My Way program progresses.





## KAMAL COMPLETES QUEENSLAND HEALTH'S FIRST SOCIAL WORK RURAL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

**In 2022, Kamal Mustafayev embarked on an ambitious journey, becoming the first social worker in Queensland Health to complete the Social Work Rural Development Pathway (RDP).**

This pathway, designed to transition health professionals from an HP3 grade to HP4 level, is an intensive training program aimed at expanding skills in rural generalist practice—a major shift from Kamal's previous role in community-based Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) counselling.

"When I first started the pathway, I had no idea how demanding it would be," Kamal said.

"Moving from a specialised counselling role to a rural generalist position was a huge adjustment. I had to extend my scope of practice quickly," Kamal added.

Based in St George, Kamal's studies were supported by the South West HHS – allowing him to enrol in the Graduate Diploma of Rural Generalist Practice through James Cook University (JCU) while managing a full clinical workload and developing projects for the pathway. Balancing full-time work, part-time study, and personal life was a challenge, but Kamal's dedication paid off.

"I was the first social worker in Queensland to undertake the pathway, so it was a learning curve for everyone involved. I was lucky to have strong support from my clinical supervisor, Rural Interpersonal Clinical Educator, and line manager, who guided me through the process and helped me balance my workload," he said.

Through the program, Kamal gained access to a wealth of resources, mentorship, and professional development opportunities.

"I was able to travel to metro hubs to shadow other clinicians and expand my knowledge," Kamal said.

"The South West HHS Executive Director of Allied Health even supported accessing additional studies, allowing me to pursue a Masters in Rural Generalist Practice."

Two years later, Kamal has successfully completed the pathway, becoming a trailblazer for other social workers across Queensland. His journey shows wonderful perseverance, and the importance of support systems in professional development.

**"Nothing good comes easy, but I'm so glad I took on this challenge. The pathway has expanded my skills and knowledge in ways I never imagined."**



Vicki with Ruby from St Mary's Charleville



Dental Health Week in Morven

## DENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2024

**Our Dental Health Team celebrated all things oral health by decorating the Roma Hospital foyer, visiting community groups, shopping centres and promoting the week at their clinics during the 2024 Dental Health Week held between 5 to 11 August.**

This year's theme was 'let's talk about gums' and promoted the importance of keeping your gums healthy as well as your teeth.

The team also shared a presentation on eligibility, sharing how patients can access our Dental Health Service at a Primary and Community Care Meeting.

They also shared key Dental Health messages at the South West Indigenous Network (SWIN) Playgroup at the Roma Skatepark.

Dental Health Week is always a fantastic way to promote our dental services and the Dental Health Team always enjoys these events by going above and beyond.

The team spoke to the parents about Oral Health and accessing our services and provided oral hygiene and prize packs for the children of Roma, Surat and Injune.

Thank you to our Dental Health Team for always going above and beyond during this week to promote the importance of oral health!



Roma Dental Clinic Reception



Roma Hospital Clinic Staff



## DENTAL HEALTH WEEK continued



Andrea (Oral Health Therapist) and Yla (Dental Assistant) in Morven



Dr Shane, Ninna – South West Indigenous Network and Mikayla



'Let's talk about gums' message promoted at Woolworths, Roma



Mikayla, Dr Shane and Megan from CWAATSICH



Andrea (Oral Health Therapist) and Yla (Dental Assistant) with Reuben in Morven

## AUGATHELLA HEALTH VISIT

Augathella State School students enjoyed a fun-filled morning with a focus on healthy lifestyle activities last month led by Zoey and Megan from the Healthy Communities Team and Jenny from HOPE.

Students in 5/6 year investigated the amount of sugar in different drinks, while 3/4 year students focussed on physical activity guidelines. To finish off the sessions, students had fun creating healthy fruit smoothies with the blender bike.





# SENIORS CELEBRATED OUT WEST

Seniors outback games: Spring Blossoms won the best dressed team



Quilpie Opals won best sun safe team



Seniors Outback Games oldest competitor Lottie Webster at 94



The Mitchell Budburra 2 team



Cindy and Cheeseey from Cunnamulla

**This year, Queensland Seniors Week in Charleville and Augathella was a grand celebration that spanned two weeks during August, offering a fantastic opportunity to honour and appreciate our senior community.**

South West HHS Healthy Ageing Project Officer, Deb Alick, said the event aimed to promote positive attitudes towards older people, encourage community participation and strengthen community connections.

“The festivities kicked off with the Augathella Seniors Fun Day, where laughter and joy was plentiful,” Deb said.

“Special guest and former Australian netballer, Vicki Wilson OAM, graced the event, bringing her warmth and enthusiasm to the celebrations.

“The students from Augathella State School added to the entertainment, delighting our seniors with their performances and Augathella Hospital staff members – including Melissa Russell, Noeleane McQueen, and Courtney Steadman – were also in attendance, contributing to the day’s success.”

**Both events brought people together, fostering stronger connections and creating memories that will last a lifetime.**

Deb said the excitement continued at the Charleville Seniors Fun Day, where activities were in full swing.

“Tilly and Alex from the Healthy Communities team had the tough job of judging the cook-off competition, which saw some fierce yet friendly rivalry among participants,” she said.

“The event also featured a rotation of games, where seniors competed with great spirit and camaraderie.

“The highlight of the day was the announcement of the winning team, the Flutterbyes with their victory adding an extra layer of excitement to an already vibrant day.”

Deb said Queensland Seniors Week events in Charleville and Augathella were a resounding success, filled with fun, community spirit, and celebration of our treasured seniors.

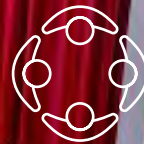


Quilpie Opals team members Margaret and Killer



Carol Lawton was the highest achiever with a mobility aid





## CHARLEVILLE HOPE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP WITH NOOSA FILM ACADEMY

**The South West HHS HOPE Program was thrilled to collaborate with the Noosa Film Academy (NFA) for an exciting series of workshops and film screenings in Charleville and Cunnamulla in August.**

This marked the fifth year that NFA has brought its acclaimed program to local schools, but it was the first time the program was extended to the broader community, with resounding success.

HOPE's Sue Eustace-Earle said the Noosa Film Academy, renowned for its Full Day Filmmaking and Acting for Screen Workshops, had been a significant force in nurturing young talent in Queensland since 2017. With over 450 school and community workshops under their belt, the Academy's impact on aspiring filmmakers and actors is undeniable.

"What made the recent workshops even more special was the presence of Academy Award-winning cinematographer Greg Huglin," Sue said.

"Greg, who shared an Oscar award for his cinematography in the 2010 Best Documentary, *The Cove*, brought his wealth of experience and passion to the participants.

"Alongside him was Andrea Huglin, the producer and co-director of the workshops, who has an impressive background in international tourism management and a deep commitment to fostering creativity."





During the workshops, participants were immersed in the art of filmmaking, gaining hands-on experience with professional equipment valued at over \$150,000.

From RED Dragon UHD 6k video cameras to Sennheiser Wireless mics, attendees had the opportunity to work with industry-standard tools, providing a truly authentic experience.

Sue said each workshop was designed to be a fully immersive experience, with participants learning how to shoot short dramatic films on location.

“Students rotated through various roles, including Director, Camera Operator, Script Supervisor, Actor, Sound Operator, and Editor, ensuring they gained a comprehensive understanding of the filmmaking process,” she said.

“The workshops were not only fun but also deeply educational, equipping participants with practical skills they could immediately apply.

“The partnership between HOPE and the Noosa Film Academy has undoubtedly enriched the Charleville and Cunnamulla communities.

“By opening the doors to the broader community, HOPE has helped to inspire the next generation of filmmakers and actors, giving them the tools and confidence to pursue their creative dreams.”

**Sue said the HOPE Program looked forward to continuing this partnership and bringing more opportunities for artistic expression to our communities in the future.**



**Check out the film made in Charleville *The Wedding Planner***



# STEP UP DIRT BIKE RALLY

**A total of 44 young people aged 5 to 17 from Charleville and surrounds participated in the Step Up Dirt Bike Rally in July.**

The overall goal of the program was to raise awareness of road safety, rider safety and dirt bike maintenance within the youth in our communities, and seek to reduce offences relating to current dirt bike usage in Charleville, as well as ensuring young people and the wider community remain safe and injury free more broadly.

The HOPE Program partnered with Charleville Blue Light and QPS Charleville and Cunnamulla to apply for funding through the Department of Youth Justice, Community Based Crime Action Grant.

Certified Dirt Bike Coaches, Terry and Shaun from Cycle Right Brisbane, conducted four sessions over two days and gave the riders the opportunity to increase their understanding of basic dirt bike operation and safe riding techniques in a controlled environment.

Participants practiced safe riding techniques with hands-on exercises. The Cycle Right sessions also covered pre-ride bike inspections and recommended protective gear. Representatives from the local Police and Murweh Shire highlighted the importance of Queensland Road rules, local laws and environmental concerns relating to dirt bike riding locally along with Queensland Ambulance Service colleagues also speaking about the importance of staying safe while riding and what to do in the event of an accident.

The Dirt Bike Rally also informed participants about the value of wearing protective gear and increase their awareness and acceptance of using appropriate personal safety equipment. Riders also learnt how good protective gear can help prevent injuries in a crash and also improve their ability to remain focussed on riding.



*Tahnee Reynolds and Alexa Little*



*Clay Egan*



District Crime Prevention Officer, Kate Todman, said "This grant provided us the funding to supply our motorbike enthused youth with a two-day training course, where they can come together to learn the basics of servicing their bikes, operating the vehicles in a safe manner while still having fun."

**The course also allowed us as a community to come together and provide a fun and safe environment for our youth whilst breaking down barriers and building positive interactions with Police and other agencies within the community.**

"At the end of the Cycle Right program, participants who successfully achieved the required standard of learning, will have gained a deeper understanding of Queensland's road rules. We also anticipate a reduction in offences that require police investigation.

"Further, the successful participants will have a much greater understanding of their own responsibilities towards rider safety and dirt bike maintenance".

Terry and Shaun really enjoyed the opportunity to work with the kids. "It was a wonderful, well run operation and we are looking forward to continuing with the partnership and hope to run another clinic with you in the future".





# OUR TEAMS

## R U OK? DAY 2024

**This R U Ok? Day was about reminding us that life happens every day with the theme R U Ok? Any Day.**

Whether it's a friend, family member, colleague, or teammate, the people we care about are navigating life's ups and downs constantly. That's why it's so important to ask R U OK? any day, not just on September 12.

The late Gavin Larkin started R U OK? in 2009, hoping to protect others from experiencing the pain his family felt when his father died by suicide.

He believed that 'in the time it takes to have a cuppa, you could start a conversation that could change a life'.

This belief that is backed by academic research that found that feelings of connection and belonging are a protective factor against suicide.

By having regular, meaningful conversations, we build trust and create safe spaces where people feel comfortable sharing what's really going on in their lives.

When we're connected in this way, we ensure that those around us know we're there when they need support.

We all know the power and meaningfulness of conversations. Sometimes just being there to genuinely listen and show someone you care might be all they need.

A simple conversation can change a life. Here in the South West, let's lead by example and ask R U OK? Any Day because it's a conversation worth having.



*Dirranbandi Medical Practice's Sian Hardie, Deb Harrigan and Dr Sarah Burrell*

## DIRRANBANDI MEDICAL PRACTICE GETS TICK OF APPROVAL

**The Dirranbandi Medical Practice achieved a significant milestone in early July, receiving the prestigious AGPAL (Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited) accreditation.**

Peta Hart, South West HHS's Service Director of Primary Care and Programs, said this accomplishment reflected the practice's unwavering commitment to the community's needs.

"The achievement of accreditation demonstrates the practice's commitment to quality assurance, continuous improvement, and the provision of safe and quality healthcare to their patients," Peta said.

"AGPAL accreditation is awarded to medical practices that meet the rigorous standards set by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). These standards, now in their fifth edition, are designed to protect patients by enhancing the quality and safety of healthcare services. They provide a framework for general practices to identify and address gaps in their systems and processes, ensuring the highest standard of care."

Peta said the accreditation process involved a thorough peer review by a team of surveyors.

"This team typically includes a qualified GP, a nurse, a practice manager, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander health worker, and occasionally an allied health worker," she said.

"All surveyors are required to have current experience in an accredited general practice, ensuring they bring relevant, practical insights to the assessment. During the site visit, the Dirranbandi Medical Practice received positive feedback from the surveyors, further affirming the quality of care and service provided by the team.

"This accreditation is a testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved at the Dirranbandi Medical Practice, ensuring that the community continues to receive the best possible healthcare."





# OUR NEW QUALITY AND SAFETY STRATEGY

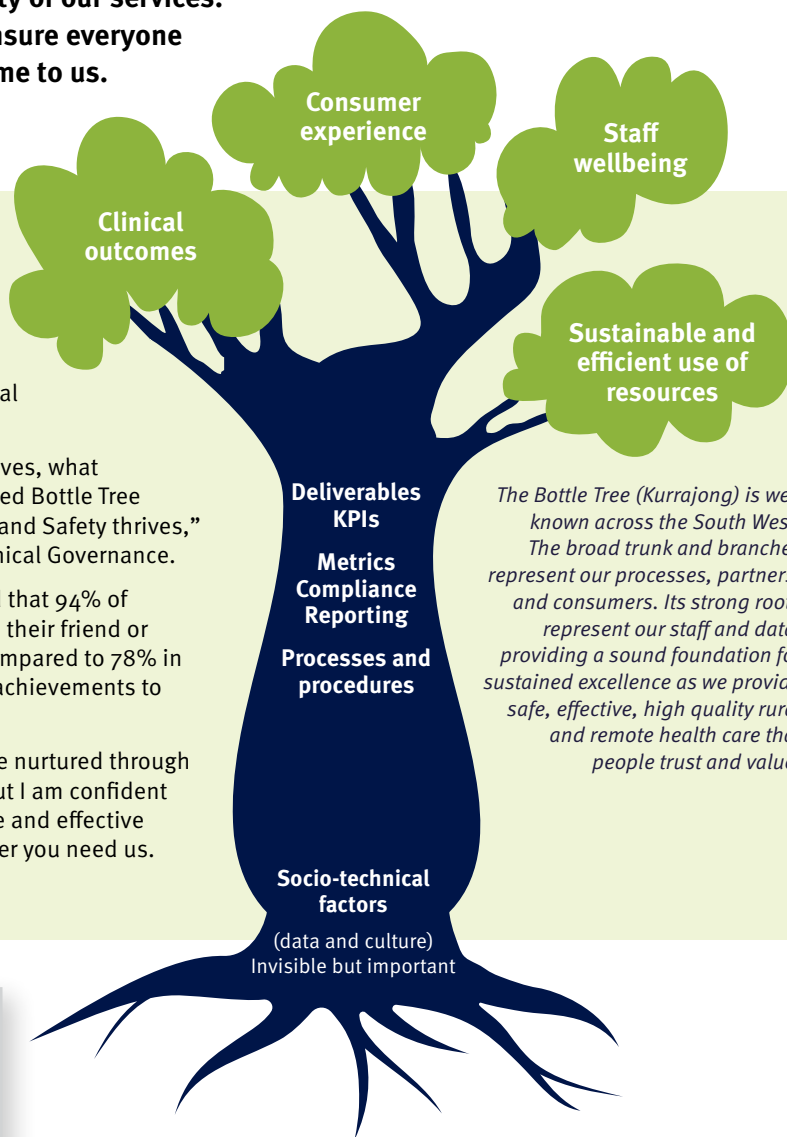
In the South West HHS, delivering excellent patient care is at the heart of everything we do. In partnership with our patients and their families, we are committed to taking actions that improve the safety and quality of our services. We see it as our responsibility and a privilege to ensure everyone receives safe personalised care every time they come to us.

Building on our strong ethos of safe, individualised, person-centred and highly reliable care, a new three year Quality and Safety Strategy has recently been developed to further empower our staff and teams to learn, develop and grow in a supportive environment and promote clinical excellence in a rural and remote context.

“Designed in partnership with staff and community representatives, what particularly resonates with me is the simple use of the much loved Bottle Tree (Kurrajong) to demonstrate the ecosystem within which Quality and Safety thrives,” said Dr Carl de Wet, Executive Director Medical Services and Clinical Governance.

“Through our recent staff patient safety survey, we can be proud that 94% of surveyed colleagues recently advised they would recommend to their friend or relative that they should be treated in their unit or work area, compared to 78% in 2022, and this further motivates us to continue to build on our achievements to date,” Carl said.

“But like all trees, our Quality and Safety Strategy will need to be nurtured through the years ahead and be adaptive to changing environments – but I am confident we will continue to shift the dial in ensuring the very best of safe and effective care for our communities and each other, whenever and wherever you need us.



*The Bottle Tree (Kurrajong) is well known across the South West. The broad trunk and branches represent our processes, partners, and consumers. Its strong roots represent our staff and data, providing a sound foundation for sustained excellence as we provide safe, effective, high quality rural and remote health care that people trust and value.*

**SWHHS Safety and Quality Strategy 2024 - 2027**

**Our goals**  
For our communities to have confidence in the safety and quality of our care, wherever and whenever they need it.  
To build on our current achievements by further improving quality and safety.  
To recognise and celebrate clinical excellence across our rural and remote region.

**Our priorities**

- Clinical outcomes
- Consumer experience
- Staff wellbeing and cultural safety
- Effective use of resources

**S.W.O.T**

**Our Strengths**

- Strong community engagement and partnerships
- Local wellness checks and governance reports
- Embedded committee framework and internal/external audit programs
- Re-embedded short notice assessment and accreditation process against NSQHS
- Visible Board and Executive leadership support and prioritisation for Clinical Governance, and Quality and Safety

**Our Weaknesses**

- Siloed operational practices – AGPAL, Aged Care, DIAL, NSQHS
- Limited resourced environment – remaining single points of failure, person-related practices rather than embedded governance
- Ageing infrastructure
- A need for more integrated and accessible technology, digital health and analytics
- Limited use of strong recommendations that effect and mitigate risk
- External factors with competing demands
- Multiple committees providing a mixture of operational/strategic direction, and duplication

**Our Opportunities**

- Embedding quality improvement at local team and facility levels
- Utilising consumer feedback more effectively to enhance safety and quality
- Adoption of real time and automated data and dashboards

**Our Threats and challenges**

- Competing demands of clinical versus quality on staff, resources, and time
- Embedding a just culture – balancing and mitigating potential secondary team discipline – learning from incidents and implementing improvements at scale
- Preventing progression of care or clinical risk may inadvertently lead to inefficient processes or discourage innovation and improvement
- Proliferation of data sources, the ability of staff to extract meaningful information, trends and practical knowledge is a timely one



[Read Strategy →](#)



# SOUTH WEST HHS EQUITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2024-2026

**Healthcare is first and foremost a people business and – driven by our vision to be a trusted and valued leader in the delivery of health services to rural and remote communities – our people matter.**

To further support our commitment to building an inclusive workplace, a new South West Equity and Diversity Action Plan was finalised in June 2024. The Action Plan was developed through findings of our recent Equity and Diversity Audit and Culture Compass staff engagement survey insights, with a focus on achievable steps to tackle key current challenges and barriers to providing equitable access and positive employment experiences for our staff.

Over the next two years, the following four key priority areas will be addressed through a range of measures and awareness actions that will:

<b>The Workplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Create inclusive and supportive workplace cultures, which instill a sense of belonging for all employees.</li> <li>✓ Build strong support mechanisms for employees.</li> <li>✓ Develop leadership and career opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Grow capability for collection of data to better understand diversity within South West HHS.</li> </ul>
<b>Recruitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify and dismantle barriers to recruitment of a diverse workforce.</li> <li>✓ Attract quality employees to achieve outstanding healthcare services for our South West communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Training and Capability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Build awareness and understanding of diversity within the workplace and its benefits.</li> </ul>

“Our mission has always been to deliver exceptional care to everyone – regardless of background, identity, or circumstances – and the Action Plan outlines a series of actionable steps we will take in partnership to ensure a more welcoming and inclusive workplace for everyone,” Executive Director People and Culture, Katie Eckersley said.

We also recognise, just as we serve unique and diverse communities across the South West with individual needs and aspirations, that all employees – wherever you are based and whatever role you play – should feel valued, respected and empowered within a supportive workplace that fosters a sense of belonging for all.

“This is also vital from a community perspective, as we want to do all that we can to ensure a workforce that best represents the people we are privileged to serve. And so, through the action plan, there are a range of opportunities for everyone to deepen their wider knowledge and appreciation of a range of considerations to ensure our facilities and places of business are welcoming environments.” Katie added.

The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated regularly, to ensure alignment with future best practice, and key achievements across South West HHS will continue to be shared in the Pulse.

## Diversity Fast Facts

As at 30 June 2024, South West HHS’s workforce included:

### 887 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff, of which:

- ➔ **91%** worked on the frontline / support roles, and **9%** in corporate roles.
- ➔ **79%** of our staff were permanent employees, with 16% temporary positions and 5% casual.
- ➔ **57%** work full-time, **36%** part-time with a further 8% under casual arrangements and less than 1% on a contractual basis.

Approximately:

- ➔ **85%** of our workforce are female, with **14%** male and **1%** non-binary.
- ➔ **6.5%** identify as First Nations people.
- ➔ **2.4%** of colleagues have a declared disability.
- ➔ **5.6%** of our staff speak a language other than English at home.



South West Hospital and Health Service

### Equity and Diversity Action Plan 2024 – 2026



[Read Action Plan →](#)



# OUR RESOURCES

*The new sensory garden at Cunnamulla*

## A NEW PLACE TO CALL HOME AT THE CUNNAMULLA MPHS

**The Cunnamulla Multipurpose Health Service (MPHS) has officially opened its new 10-bed residential aged care unit, marking the completion of a significant upgrade project across the South West region.**

The new unit is part of a \$12.056 million investment aimed at enhancing aged care services in four South West communities.

This final phase in Cunnamulla follows successful upgrades of residential aged care units at Injune, Surat, and Augathella MPHS's, completed in December last year.

South West HHS's Acting Health Service Chief Executive, Rebecca Greenway, said the opening of the new 10-bed unit in Cunnamulla was a testament to our ongoing commitment towards ensuring our communities have access to quality aged care services close to home.

"The recent upgrades at Injune, Surat, and Augathella provided two new single bedrooms with ensuites at each site, completed at a combined cost of \$4.79 million," she said.

"The Cunnamulla works, which represent a \$7.265 million investment, were partially funded through a \$5.115 million allocation from the Queensland Department of Health's Priority Capital Works program with the remainder of the funding provided jointly by the Commonwealth government and retained earnings held by the South West Hospital and Health Board."

The opening of the new unit in Cunnamulla replaces a temporary four-bed aged care unit that had been in place since March 2021 which was introduced to ensure continuity of care within the community following the closure of the nearby Yapunyah Lodge private aged care facility in December 2020.

Rebecca said that in addition to the new 10-bed unit, Cunnamulla residents now also have access to a new dedicated activity room, lounge, dining area, and a beautifully designed sensory garden.

"Local artists, and the Paroo Shire Council, collaborated with residents and staff to select paintings and sculptures that best enhance the atmosphere of residents' rooms, their common areas, and the sensory garden," she said.

Rebecca said the enhancements to the shared living and recreational spaces at the expanded facility will further enrich the quality of life for the aged care residents.

"As these projects come to fruition, the South West HHS continues to prioritise the well-being of its aging population, ensuring they receive the care, dignity and support they deserve whilst enjoying their later years in the communities they call home," she added.





# SAFE AND TOGETHER CORE TRAINING: EMPOWERING STAFF TO BETTER ADDRESS DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

## South West HHS continues to take significant strides in enhancing the safety and well-being of children and families affected by domestic and family violence (DFV) across South West communities.

Recently, a pivotal Safe and Together (S&T) Core Training session was held over four days, between 13 to 16 August, in Roma.

This training was made possible through the DFV Specialist Health Workforce Program funded by South West HHS and was attended by 32 participants, including 25 South West HHS staff members and seven participants from partner DFV stakeholder agencies. South West HHS Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Health Workforce Program’s Heather Scriven said most of the participants were clinical staff from various departments across the South West HHS.

“In addition to our staff, it was wonderful to also be able to extend invitations to seven participants from partnering agencies across the broader DFV sector, with two DFV staff members from Lifeline (one from Charleville and one from Roma), two DFV Support Workers from Far West Indigenous Family Services (servicing Charleville and Cunnamulla), and three Child Safety Officers from the Roma Department of Child Safety,” Heather said.

### The Importance of the Safe and Together Model

The Safe and Together Model, founded by David Mandel, represents a transformative approach to addressing the impact of DFV on children and families.

Moving away from the outdated ‘failure to protect’ scenario, this model is centred around the notion of keeping children ‘safe and together’ with the non-offending parent, usually the mother, whenever possible. Heather said that this was a key element of the Queensland Government’s updated child safety strategy and aligned with recent government reports, including the *Not Now*, *Not Ever* and *Hear Her Voice* reports, which emphasise the need for enhanced responses to DFV.

“The training, facilitated by Deb Nicholson from the Safe and Together Institute, provided participants with practical tools and strategies that can be immediately implemented in their day-to-day work,” she added.

“Deb, who has extensive experience working with Mandel in both the UK and Australia, guided participants through the core principles of the model, emphasising the importance of a fact-based assessment of perpetrators’ behaviour patterns, partnering with adult survivors, and understanding the complex intersection of DFV with other issues such as substance abuse and mental health.”

Heather said the feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the training’s value and the new confidence it has given them in handling DFV-related cases.

She said one Community Health Nurse Unit Manager commented: “The course was great last week, very informative, and I’m glad that I was given the opportunity to attend” with another Enrolled Nurse adding: “Thanks so much for the week last week, I learnt an amazing amount and am more confident and informed now about DFV.”

### CORE Training: Building Skills and Confidence

Heather said the CORE Training was designed to equip participants with the skills needed to effectively assess risk, understand the impact of DFV on children and family functioning, and make informed case decisions.

“Throughout the training, participants engaged in various exercises, including watching role-plays, and group discussions, regarding how to focus interviewing around keeping the Person using Violence in focus to ensure the safety of victim/survivors, and children,” she said.

“They also improved their documentation skills to better reflect a domestic violence-informed approach. Moreover, the training emphasised the development of action plans for participants to implement the Safe and Together Model in their work and influence broader community and family service systems.”

She said participants who completed the training and passed a post-test also received a certificate of completion, marking 22 hours of intensive, transformative learning.

### Moving Forward

As South West HHS continues to prioritise the safety and well-being of those impacted by DFV, the Safe and Together Core Training stands out as a critical investment in our staff’s professional development. Heather said by adopting this model, South West HHS was ensuring clinical staff were not only well-equipped to assess and intervene in DFV situations but were also leading the way in creating a safer, more supportive environment for children and families across the region.

“This training marks a significant step forward in our collective effort to respond to DFV more effectively, ensuring that we are better prepared to meet the needs of the communities we serve,” she said.

[Find out more →](#)



## SOUTH WEST HHS TAKES FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

**South West HHS has recently taken another significant step in its commitment towards environmental sustainability by partnering with DETA Consulting to conduct energy audits across six of our hospital facilities.**

This important initiative, carried out in collaboration with the Queensland Health Hospital Sustainability Branch, is supported by funding from the Queensland Health Emissions Reduction Program.

Director Governance Risk and Corporate Support, Tim Lyons, said the purpose of the energy audits were to closely examine and evaluate our current energy usage and provide us with a clearer understanding of where we can enhance our energy efficiency.

“This comprehensive process involved detailed data analysis, on-site inspections, and collaborative efforts with health service teams and Queensland Health,” Tim said.

“Findings from the audits will guide future initiatives across our facilities, targeting areas such as lighting and electrical upgrades, improvements to hydraulic systems and other system enhancements, as well as support the implementation of building controls and solar PV installations.

“These measures will significantly reduce our energy consumption, operational costs, and overall carbon emissions.”

He said the audits would provide a clear picture of the expected costs associated with necessary infrastructure upgrades and the time required to recoup the capital investment.

“This information is crucial for making informed decisions that will benefit both our health service and the environment in the long term,” he said.

“While reducing emissions is undoubtedly beneficial from an environmental perspective, it also brings considerable cost savings – and ensuring that our infrastructure is efficient and operating as designed is key to achieving these savings.”

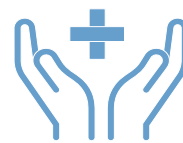
As we move forward with these findings, the South West HHS remains dedicated to implementing sustainable practices that not only reduce our carbon footprint but also ensure our facilities are operating at their best.

Tim said the next steps would involve detailed planning and prioritisation of the identified initiatives, with a focus on achieving the greatest impact in terms of energy efficiency and cost savings.

“By investing in sustainability now, we are not only supporting the environment but also ensuring that our health services remain resilient and financially sustainable for the future,” he said.

***“While reducing emissions is undoubtedly beneficial from an environmental perspective, it also brings considerable cost savings – and ensuring that our infrastructure is efficient and operating as designed is key to achieving these savings.”***





# OUR SERVICES

## QUALITY OF CARE UPDATE

To supplement our Annual Report and other performance reporting, such as our new First Nations Health Equity Scorecard, South West HHS also prepares a bi-annual *Quality of Care Report* for the wider information of the South West community.

This provides a short snapshot of wider service delivery and an opportunity to reflect on key achievements, recent challenges and how these might have been resolved as well as sharing areas of focus for the months ahead.

Greater transparency through data is a key driver in support for further improvements. Between 1 January and 30 June 2024, South West HHS's key achievements included:

- ✓ Continuing to deliver high rates of performance against our key targets and measures.
- ✓ Driving forward opportunities to engage staff, communities and partners in development of key strategic priorities – including development of new **Quality and Safety**, **Climate Sustainability** and **Digital** strategies.
- ✓ 68% of our staff participated in our first Culture Compass survey, with our highest scoring attributes including workforce safety and gender equity.
- ✓ Ongoing meetings of the South West HHS First Nations Health Equity Committee, comprising Chief Executive Officers of our key partners, to drive forward **First Nations Health Equity commitments**.
- ✓ Progressed a range of key infrastructure projects, including additional staff accommodation at Mungindi, replacement of Community Clinic at Morven, new Community and Allied Health Service buildings at St George and Charleville.

Key areas for continued focus over the next six months to 30 June 2024 include:

- ➔ Further progress First Nations Health Equity *Our Way – Together* commitments, including a zero tolerance statement for racial discrimination and / or institutional racism, supporting communications and staff awareness activities and participating in a statewide review of Cultural Practice training.
- ➔ Local teams will progress Cultural Compass actions to further strengthen organisational culture.
- ➔ Continuing to ensure models of care meet local needs in a sustainable manner.
- ➔ Further progress our commitments towards reducing historical health inequalities, promoting partnership working, improving our working environments and defining new models of service and care for the benefit of South West communities.
- ➔ Work with the Western Queensland Primary Health Network and partners to complete a Joint Health Needs Assessment to further advocate for local health needs and services for the future.



You can access the Quality of Care documents on our website.

[Find out more →](#)



# STRATEGY UPDATES

## CONSUMER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

[Read Strategy →](#)

Through our rolling four year *Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy*, we aim to ensure people and communities are supported wherever they are across the South West, ensuring the same quality of care is available to all and that everyone can be actively involved and engaged in their health services.

Another six months have recently passed with the following key achievements of note as at 30 June 2024:

- ✓ A range of local co-design, quality improvement and community engagement sessions, including with First Nations People, continue to be held on a regular basis.
- ✓ Through our Healthy Community, HOPE, TRACC and other key programs, including Oral Health, continued to host and participate in a wide range of health promotion activities:
  - Approximately 110 events, engaging around 6,100 participants in the six months to 30 June 2024 were held. Broadly, we continued to host at least one event every 1.5 days.
- ✓ Year to date complaints management continued to be met within key target measures:
  - Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, we received 115 complaints and 227 compliments – compared to 212 complaints and 299 compliments in the previous year.
  - However, we were marginally below our expectation to fully complete all complaints within 35 days of receipt, achieving 94% in time overall – due to some complaints requiring further investigation and follow up to inform response.
  - But despite this, our performance was almost 10% above the statewide target.
- ✓ An average of 5,364 people per month accessed the **South West HHS website** over the past 12 months, **including our careers page**.
- ✓ Achieved a 14% increase in our **Facebook** and 28% growth in **LinkedIn** followers over the year, against a 5% annual uplift target. Originally launched in July 2023, our **Instagram** following is now currently at about 600 accounts – so if you are not a subscriber, join us today!

Key areas for continued focus over the next six months to 30 June 2024 include:

- ➔ Continuing to catch up with our Community Advisory Networks (CAN) online at CAN Link-Ins, as well as at scheduled Board meetings around the South West – in addition to our annual CAN Forum coming to St George in October this year.
- ➔ Further progression of First Nations Health Equity Strategy commitments, including developing a zero tolerance statement for racial discrimination and / or institutional racism.
- ➔ Alongside our CAN and wider valued partners continuing to advocate on behalf of South West communities to ensure safe, effective, responsible and sustainable health services that people trust and value.

## CLINICIAN AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

[Read Strategy →](#)

And, alongside our *Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy*, we also have a *Clinician Engagement strategy* in place to outline our approach towards collaborate with clinicians and employees in the planning, design and delivery of healthcare.

Both documents are legislative requirements but for South West HHS, given the importance of team working across all aspects of the organisation, its been a long held tradition that this document should encompass both clinicians and all other South West employees.

Key highlights over the last six months to 30 June 2024 include:

- ✓ Inaugural Cultural Compass survey, generating a response rate of 68% (703 respondents).
- ✓ Continuing opportunities to engage staff in key strategic priorities – including progression of a new Workforce Strategy Implementation Plan, Quality and Safety Strategy, Climate Sustainability Plan, Models of Care / Service Delivery templates, Standardisation of Operational Services documentation and Digital Strategy 2024 and Beyond commitments.
- ✓ Continuation of our internal Leaders Connect, Administration Network Forum, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Advisory Council and reconfiguration of the South West HHS Clinical Council.
- ✓ Ongoing staff achievement and recognition via monthly SWSpirit staff recognition, Pulse articles and regular social media posting – alongside internal weekly eNews, monthly Virtual Town Hall meetings, and promotion of our 24/7 Ask Executive account.

Key areas for continued focus over the next six months to 30 June 2024 include:

- ➔ Progression of Cultural Compass insights and local action plans.
- ➔ Continued focus on mandatory training rates, and review of myPathway / Leader Landscape definitions.
- ➔ Getting ready for our annual staff awards celebration which will be hosted in St George during October
- ➔ Additional co-design in accordance with Operational Plan commitments and other key initiatives and partnership working opportunities.

[You can find the strategies and our latest updates online.](#)



## August 2024 #swSpirit

### Congratulations to Registered Nurse Karel-Anne Collie

**Karel-Anne is the well-deserved recipient for August’s #swSpirit recognition for her unwavering dedication to embodying the South West HHS values of quality, compassion, accountability, adaptability, and engagement.**

Injune Director of Nursing and Facility Manager, Kirsty Doonan, said Karel-Anne has been an integral part of the Injune Hospital for the past 10 years as the town’s Community Health Nurse.

“Karel-Anne’s commitment to her community is truly inspiring,” Kirsty said.

“A proud local, she is known for her ‘can-do’ attitude and her role as the go-to person for both staff and community members. Whether it’s organising the highly anticipated annual seniors luncheon or providing essential support to help people remain in the community longer, Karel-Anne’s contributions are invaluable.

“Her resilience and adaptability shine through in everything she does. She continuously adjusts to meet the evolving needs of her community and always puts the consumer at the centre of her care. Her compassion extends not only to the consumers she serves but also to her colleagues, making her an integral part of the Injune team.”

Kirsty said Karel-Anne has amazing working relationships with all staff, and the consumers of our services are in safe hands because she will always advocate for them.

**Congratulations, Karel-Anne, and thank you for all that you do for the Injune community! Your dedication and spirit truly exemplify what it means to live the values of South West HHS.**



### Celebrating excellence: Kimberley Clark

**We are delighted to announce Kimberley, Clinical Nurse at Dirranbandi Multipurpose Health Service (MPHS), has been recognised as our #swSpirit for July!**

This recognition celebrates her exceptional efforts and dedication to patient care. Penny Loughnan, Acting Director of Nursing at Dirranbandi MPHS, shared her admiration saying how she hears amazing compliments about Kimberley most days, from both community members and professionals.

“This morning, Rebecca (Bec) Crouch visited to check our Telehealth equipment and mentioned again what an amazing job Kimberley does,” Penny said.

“She has developed an exemplary model of care around telehealth in the community. Bec is also acknowledging Kimberley by taking her to a Forum in Brisbane to showcase telehealth services nationally.

“She is a wonderful support to all of the staff and keeps the Dirranbandi MPHS and Dirranbandi Medical Centre very connected.”

Penny said they were immensely lucky to count Kimberley a member of the Dirranbandi Health team.

“There would be no more worthy candidate for this award,” she added.

Dr Matt Lumchee, from the Princess Alexandra Hospital, who regularly works with Kimberley in his capacity as an Endocrinologist providing outreach telehealth services to South West residents, also couldn’t praise Kimberley enough.

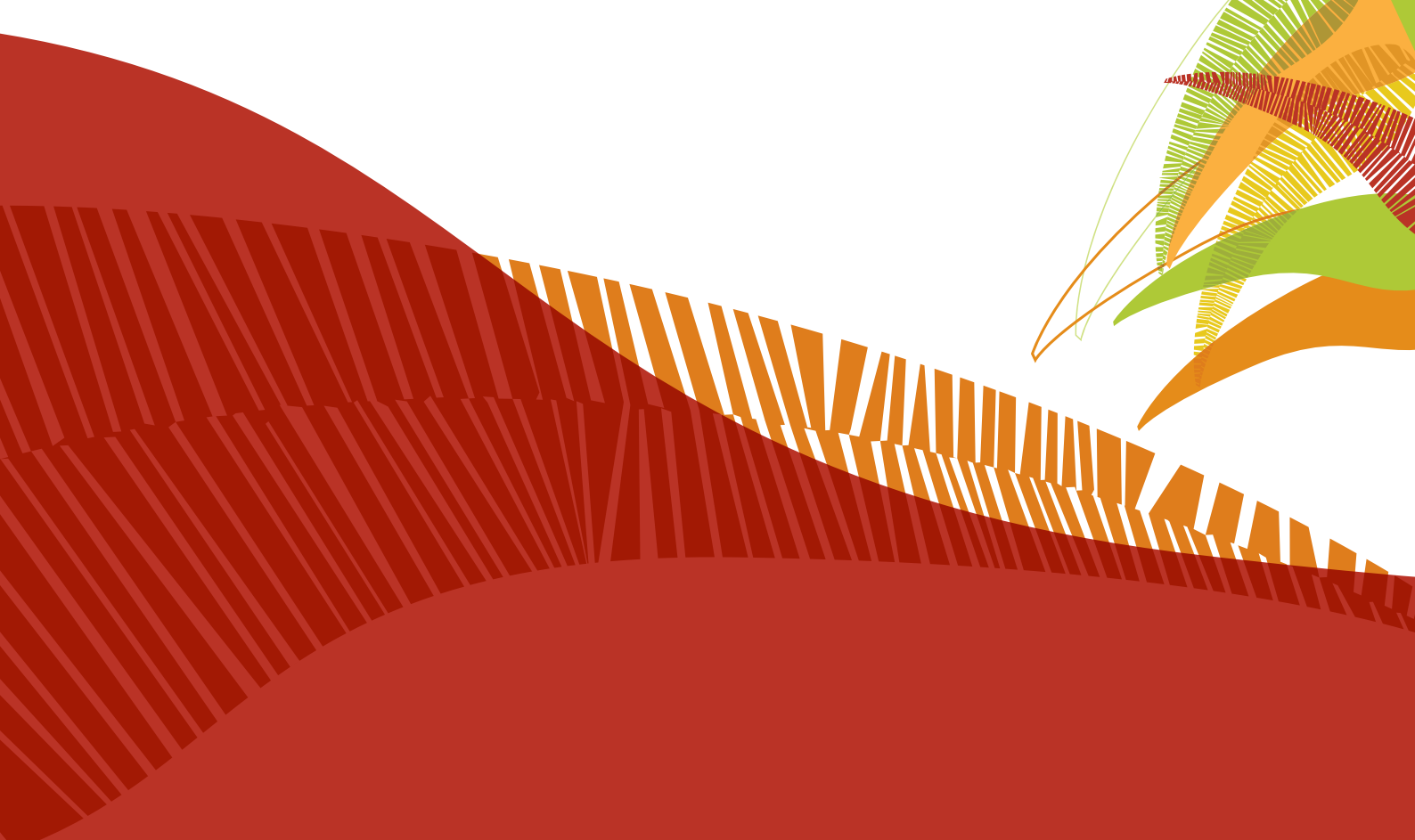
“She supports excellence in clinical care through her attention to detail and timely communication, enhancing health outcomes for patients we manage together,” Dr Matt said.

“Kimberley truly knows the patients in the community, and it shows in their video consultations. Her ability to form a strong rapport with the patients ties everything together—from their likelihood to return for follow-up appointments, to being concordant with their therapy, and being a central liaison point with the rest of the community healthcare team.

Dr Matt said Kimberley was really making a big difference.

“She is very humble and ‘no fuss,’ but she does an amazing job day in, day out, and I thought it is important that this is known more widely.”

**Kimberley exemplifies the South West HHS values with her spirit of dedication, compassion, quality and innovation that we strive for at Dirranbandi MPHS and across the whole South West. Thank you Kimberley for your invaluable contributions to telehealth services and patient care!**



[southwest.health.qld.gov.au](http://southwest.health.qld.gov.au)

