

South West Hospital and Health Service



PULSE

JAN-FEB 2024 EDITION



CONTENTS

Board Chair	2
Board out and about	4
HSCE Message	5
South West HHS – A child Safe Organisation	
Our Communities	
Dedicated advocate for First Nations in the South West	7
HOPE's year ahead	8
South West welcomes nurses and midwives	9
Welcome to our new Executive Support Coordinator	12
Engaging with the Mitchell community	12
Using the Queensland Digital Licence to confirm patient identity	13
Healthy Communities gearing up for big year	14
Battle of the Balonne	15
Our Teams	
South West staff rolling up their sleeves	16
Oral Health Team on the road	17
Our Resources	
South West HHS receives first electric vehicle	18
Our Services	
First Rural Disaster Management Workshop	20
South West Spirit Award:	
Catherine Ole – January	21
Hope Ferguson – February	22

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 – Kooma** (Coo-ma)
- Eromanga – Boonthamurra** (Boon-tha-murra)
- Injune – Kongabula** (Kong-ga-bull-a)
- Mitchell – Gunggari** (Gon-gari)
- Morven – Bidjara** (Bid-jara)
- Mungindi – Kamilaroi** (Car-milla-roy)
- Quilpie – Mardigan** (Mar-d-gan)
- 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 – Kullila** (Coo-lee-lar)
- Wallumbilla – Mandandanji** (Mand-an-dand-gee)

Cover Image: Director General Michael Walsh with Board Chair Karen Tully and HSCE Dr Anthony Brown

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.

Contact: SWHHS_Communications@health.qld.gov.au



QUALITY



COMPASSION



ACCOUNTABILITY



ENGAGEMENT



ADAPTABILITY

“ Reputation is a measure of trust. Trust ultimately is a reflection of culture. Culture is a product of the expectations of the organisation. ”

AICD Governing to Protect Vulnerable People, page 64.



From the Board Chair

The South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) vision is ‘to be a trusted and valued leader in the delivery of health services to rural and remote communities’. Our stated South West HHS purpose is ‘to provide safe, effective, responsible and sustainable rural and remote health services that people trust and value’.



Both our vision and purpose statements deliberately use the word ‘trust’. Patients rightly expect that the South West HHS has their best interests at heart and trust that we are highly competent in providing care. Which we do provide – in spades!

In recent weeks, staff at each of our facilities have pledged to keep our children and young people (aged 18 or younger) safe and to do what is best for them when they receive care from any of our staff, regardless of the location of that care. This initiative was developed because of a recommendation identified by the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse.

This means that when young people seek care, they will experience a feeling of being valued. It means that our staff will fully listen to them when they speak. We will hear their words and the tone of their speech. We will provide a comfortable and culturally appropriate space for them where they can build trust with us, and where we can get to know and understand them fully.

This means that explanations about the care they are receiving will be delivered using words, objects, and pictures which they can understand. They will be able to have a say in decisions which affect them. We will enable them to speak up about what makes them feel safe and unsafe. Essentially, we are embedding a child-safe culture where protecting young people is everyone's business.

As John F Kennedy said in 1963, children are the world’s most valuable resource and its best hope for the future. Within the South West HHS, we will ensure that the world’s most valuable resource will feel safe when they seek healthcare from us and will trust us to always provide quality care.

The South West HHS has over 130 elderly people who live in our residential aged care facilities in Waroona (Charleville); Westhaven (Roma) and our Multipurpose Health Centres in Augathella, Cunnamulla, Dirranbandi, Injune, Mitchell, Mungindi, Quilpie and Surat. Older people who can no longer live independently can reside in a safe and supportive environment where they receive assistance with the activities of daily living and receive specialised care with round-the-clock supervision and monitoring. The trust placed in our staff to provide this care offers peace of mind to both residents and their families.



In recent times, we have struggled to maintain full staffing levels at Waroona and Westhaven, and the board extends sincere thanks to those aged care staff who consistently deliver high-quality care, despite the staffing challenges.

I was pleasantly surprised to recently learn that the care provided at Waroona in recent times has been positively extraordinary. Star ratings were instigated as a recommendation from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, and 'care minutes' refers to the amount of direct care that residents receive from registered nurses and enrolled nurses. Waroona has been rated as one of Queensland's 'top five' most caring homes, using care minutes as the measure. Congratulations to the staff on this extraordinary achievement, as our elderly folk deserve nothing less.

For overall service provision, Waroona currently has a four (out of 5) star rating. Residents in Westhaven in Roma currently enjoy a 5-star service. The board extends its sincere congratulations to all staff who have embedded a culture of quality care in all our aged care residential facilities.

2024 has seen the board out and about in Mitchell in January, and Roma in February, where we held committee meetings, board meetings, CAN link-ups, community engagement sessions and interacted with staff as we toured facilities. In March, we plan to be in Wallumbilla for our monthly board meeting.

It was also an honour to welcome the Director General of Queensland Health, Michael Walsh, to Roma recently. He was eager to view the Roma Hospital and meet with staff and was mightily impressed by the obvious quality of care provided and the workplace culture. Congratulations to all who contribute daily to our high-trust culture which enables us to provide safe, effective and responsible health services that our community has come to trust and value.

Kind wishes

Karen Tully and the South West Hospital and Health Board

Board out and about



Karen Tully, Anna Cross, Sheryn Hanna, Louisa Dufty and Dr Carl de Wet



Jared Lewis, Samantha Mawn and Kerry Glendenning



Mitchell's Anna Cross speaking with the Board and Executive Leadership Team



L to R: Dr Carl de Wet, Chris Hamilton, Dr Anthony Brown, Jan Chambers, Anna Cross, Jan Pallisier, Claire Alexander, Jackie Rose and Karen Tully



UQ Pharmacy Students Elly McGinn and Myneika Morrow with Clinical Pharmacist Caitlin O'Rourke



From the Health Service Chief Executive

Dear all

I hope you all had a rejuvenating festive season and had precious moments with loved ones. It's my pleasure to share some updates with you as we dive into 2024.

We were honoured to host Director-General Queensland Health, Michael Walsh, who witnessed first-hand the dedication and passion of our staff in Roma and those staff visiting from across the South West.

His has very impressed by the welcome he received in Roma. He thought the hospital and the student accommodation were outstanding.

A warm welcome to the 34 graduate nurses and midwives joining us in the South West. Your enthusiasm and fresh perspectives are invaluable assets as we navigate the year ahead. We hope you have a positive clinical and social experience that you look fondly upon your time in the South West HHS for years to come.

We recently convened our South West Leaders Connect Forum in Charleville. Significant business included the introduction of the South West HHS as a designated Child Safe Organisation which aligns us with Queensland Health's commitment to safeguarding children and young people. This will be further detailed in this edition of the Pulse. We also took initial steps to co-design a new Quality and Safety Strategy that was further discussed with CAN members during the Board's February meeting.

Prioritising the well-being of our staff is paramount. This year we're dedicated to fostering a supportive workplace culture that celebrates diversity and promotes psychological safety for all. Part of this is our Culture Compass – the first Staff Experience Survey designed by our staff for our staff. I am looking forward to seeing the results of the survey and gathering constructive feedback to ensure we continue to improve across all areas of the Health Service.

In our commitment to sustainability, we will be launching a South West HHS Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan in the near future as we embark on initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint. Together, we can ensure a greener, more sustainable future for generations to come.

As we start to turn our mind to the challenges and opportunities for the Financial Year ahead, the Executive Team and I are eager to collaborate further with each of you as we continue in partnership to provide the highest-quality healthcare and workplaces our communities and teams deserve.

Dr Anthony Brown
Health Service Chief Executive



Emergency Crisis Support

Triple Zero – for emergencies

Lifeline – 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636



South West HHS – A Child Safe Organisation

All children and young people who attend Queensland Health services have the right to feel safe, valued, listened to, and informed.

That's why the South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS), alongside key stakeholders, proudly announced its status as a Child Safe Organisation at the Senior Leaders Forum in February.

Executive Director Primary and Community Care, Rebecca Greenway, shared this milestone with leaders from across the HHS.

"In response to recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Minister for Health and Ambulance Service and the Director-General, Queensland Health have co-signed a Queensland Health Child Safe Organisation Commitment," Rebecca said.

"Queensland Health has a zero-tolerance policy for child abuse, neglect, and harm.

Everyone within the Queensland Health system, including employees, volunteers, and service providers, holds a responsibility to respect and promote the rights of children and young people.



What it means to be a child safe organisation

The Australian Human Rights Commission defines a child safe organisation as one that consciously and systematically:

- ✔ Creates an environment where children and young people's safety and wellbeing are at the centre of thought, values, and actions.
- ✔ Places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people.
- ✔ Creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people.
- ✔ Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying harm.
- ✔ Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.

Every member of our organisation plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

All Queensland Health agencies have an obligation to proactively create and maintain an organisational culture where the safety of children and young people is a priority, even those primarily providing adult-focused services.

Rebecca said South West HHS's commitment to becoming a Child Safe Organisation reflects its dedication to providing a safe and supportive environment for all children and young people accessing Queensland Health services.

By aligning with the National Principles, the HHS reaffirms its role in promoting the safety, wellbeing, and rights of every child and young person in its care.



Background for the Queensland Health Child Safe Organisation Commitment

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the devastating impacts of child sexual abuse and the significant role that organisational culture, leadership, and governance play in ensuring environments are safe for children.

Findings from the Royal Commission identified various contributing factors, including poor practices, inadequate governance structures, failures to respond to complaints, and cultures of secrecy.

In response, the Royal Commission developed ten 'child safe standards' to minimise opportunities for harm to children and promote protective factors within organisations. These standards were later endorsed by the former Council of Australian Governments as the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, providing a nationally consistent approach to fostering child safety and wellbeing.

It's essential to understand that the National Principles extend beyond clinical child protection services. Their implementation aims to ensure that organisations themselves are child-safe environments with adequate policies and processes to protect children and young people from harm occurring within the organisation.



OUR COMMUNITIES

DEDICATED ADVOCATE FOR FIRST NATIONS IN THE SOUTH WEST

Shelley Lawton is no stranger to the South West and advocating for the communities in its footprint.

As the newly appointed Executive Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Engagement Shelley's priority is our First Nations community and consumers.

"My foundation is to place First Nations voices, lived experience and stories at the centre of our everyday work," Shelley said.

Shelley is committed to listening and learning with the communities that she services, building and sustaining trust through authentic relationships.

"I want to work comprehensively with all our South West HHS staff and external partners to embed, provide support for, First Nations Health Equity development and execution," she said.

Shelley is driven to:

- Improving access, that is free from institutionalise racism and racial discrimination.
- Ensuring the delivery of culturally appropriate services.
- Better culturally appropriate person-centred care.
- Commit to meaningful, solution focused first nations health initiatives with our key partners to improve health eco-system alignment, collaboration and co-creation.
- Inspire, improve, and innovate quality, culturally informed models of primary and acute care that address indicators such as:
 - Discharge Against Medical Advice
 - Selected potentially preventable hospital admissions
 - Cultural competency
 - First nations people in the health workforce

Shelley spearheaded the implementation of the South West Hospital and Health Service's First Nations Health Equity Strategy, titled "*Our Way – Together*" and supporting Implementation Plan outlining milestones to be achieved by 30 June 2025.

This strategy aims to prioritise the voices, experiences, and stories of First Nations peoples, placing them at the forefront of healthcare initiatives. Shelley's commitment to listening, learning, and building authentic relationships within these communities underscores her mission to eradicate institutionalised racism and racial discrimination from healthcare access.

Central to her strategy is the ambitious goal of achieving life expectancy parity for First Nations peoples by 2031.



Shelley Lawton (right) – Executive Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Engagement pictured with Karen Tully

With Shelley's leadership, the South West is ready to set a new standard for First Nation Health Equity, to 'pave the way for a future where every individual receives the care and support they deserve, regardless of their background'.



HOPE'S YEAR AHEAD



HOPE is a community program that's been working across the Paroo and Murweh Shires since mid-2015. The HOPE program's focus is to work with the communities of Cunnamulla and Charleville to support young people to lead healthy lives and reach their potential.

2024 is set to be another jam-packed year for the HOPE Program with a number of new and ongoing programs and events already in planning.

Self-Care, We Care Multicultural Festival

October is the annual Charleville Community - Self Care, We Care Multicultural Festival. The festival is all about coming together as a community, celebrating the diversity in Charleville and having a lot of fun. It also kicks off Queensland Mental Health Week and provides an opportunity to let the community know what services are available plus the inclusion of multicultural food as a way to get people together. HOPE partners with many agencies in the community to host the event and aim to make the event free and inclusive to all.

Chiggy's Skateboarding Workshop

Kicking off the new year is an exciting activity to keep the kids entertained during the school holidays and away from screens and devices. Chiggy's Skateboarding will be travelling to the South West to provide the ultimate skateboarding experience in a fun, safe, and friendly environment for all ages, abilities and styles. Participants will learn new tricks, build confidence, and improve skills.

Rachel Downie

Cyber Safety expert and founder of Stymie, Rachel Downie is returning to Charleville and Cunnamulla early February. Rachel has visited our communities for many years and is always asked to return. She speaks to students, staff, and parents to tackle issues such as cyberwellness, personal safety, bullying and harm.

Peer Skills Training

The Local Drug Action Team (LDAT) program supports community organisations to reduce harms from alcohol and other drugs in their local area. The HOPE Program has partnered with the Australian Drug Foundation LDAT program for many years to provide successful programs in Paroo and Murweh shires.

The first LDAT program for 2024 is the Peer Skills Facilitator Training held in Charleville on 14 and 15 February. The Peer Skills program assists young people to develop skills, knowledge and strategies to help themselves and effectively support peers, friends and family members. Peer Skills also assists young people to connect with adults in supportive roles within their communities and is for young people between the ages of 11 and 18.



South West Careers Expo

Schools from all over the South West are invited to attend South West Careers Expo on 26 March at the Charleville Show Grounds. This will be the fourth year of the Careers Expo and last year saw an amazing 47 exhibitors, 12 guest speakers and over 250 students. HOPE partners with RESQ+ and Charleville High School to host the event and is expected to be bigger and better this year. It's a perfect opportunity for the students to learn about different industries and what type of careers they may want to pursue, along with opportunities to engage tertiary organisations.

Uncle Robbie Cooks

The Uncle Robbie Cooks Program returns in 2024 to provide masterclasses in how to cook cheap wholesome meals with ingredients you can get from the local store. Former MasterChef contestant Robbie Cooper, and his wife Nat, deliver culturally appropriate cooking and nutrition lessons with a focus on healthy choices to school students and community groups in the South West. HOPE has partnered with RESQ+ to bring out Robbie and Nat Cooper to our communities.

10th Anniversary for the Deadly Recruits Camp

The Deadly Recruits camp is run annually in June for 30 high school students across the South West who gather on Tinnenburra Station for a six-day camp to connect with country, make new friends and recognise their strengths and capacity for teamwork.

The camp wouldn't be possible without the generosity of our partners and support from Defence Force Recruiting and RESQ+ providing the bulk of the funding.

Inspiring Young People to Work in Health

HOPE is partnering with the Future Workforce Action Group and Southern Queensland Rural Health to develop appropriate programs to pique interest in health careers for students of all ages. The aim is to encourage and inspire them to learn about careers in health. One exciting program is a Teddy Bears Hospital for year 3 students in Charleville. Students will all receive a teddy bear to care for while visiting health care professionals, such as a Physiotherapist, Dietitian and Speech Therapist.

Health promotion – Sun Safety Incentive for Youth

Sun Safety is a key focus for the HOPE Program in 2024, with funding provided by Qld Government's Skin Cancer Prevention Branch to fund ideas from the youth in the South West, to make youth events more sun safe. There have already been some discussions with young people and one idea is to plant more trees in school grounds to create more shade for future generations. The Murweh Shire has also received a portable sunscreen dispenser that will be available at outdoor events to provide free sunscreen.

We know that Melanoma is the most diagnosed cancer for young people and Queensland has the unenviable record of having the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, due to high levels of ultraviolet radiation year-round, our active outdoor lifestyle and an inadequate uptake of sun safe behaviours. And certainly, here in the South West we should always slip, slop, slap, seek, slide – and do so year-round.





34 NEW NURSE AND MIDWIFERY GRADUATES JOIN SOUTH WEST HHS FOR START OF YEAR

South West HHS Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery Services Chris Small said this year's February graduate intake of 34 was one more than last year and a new February record for the health service.

"I believe this year's intake is reflective of the strong ongoing interest among graduates in joining the health service. We hope to accept a further smaller intake in August," Chris said.

The overall 2023 nurse graduate intake – including the February and August intakes – was a record for the South West HHS, with a total of 44 new graduates taken on during the course of the year, and 2024 could be another big intake year.

It's wonderful to be welcoming these new graduates to the region and I'm sure that they will enjoy rewarding careers.

All 34 new graduates undergo a week's orientation at Roma Hospital before being assigned to health facilities throughout the region.

"They will then work in a variety of areas, including acute medical, surgical, emergency, maternity, aged care, community and primary health and supporting the hospital-based ambulance in the facilities where these are located. The size of this year's intake indicates just how attractive the health service is being viewed by new graduates as an area in which to pursue their careers." Chris said.

Chris said the South West HHS's 12-month graduate program had been reviewed last year and was now aligned with the endorsed graduate certificate level by Central Queensland University for the graduates' future career pathway.

New nurse graduate Bridget Struber is a Roma native who is undertaking her graduate year at Roma Hospital where she will be rotating through various areas in the Perioperative Department.

"I graduated from the University of the Sunshine Coast with a Bachelor of Nursing Science in 2023," Bridget said.

"In my final year, UniSC offered a versatile learning approach, where my final theory subjects were delivered online. This enabled me to return to Roma and work throughout various departments of the Roma Hospital as an Assistant in Nursing."

"The Country University Centre in Roma also enabled successful completion of my degree, through utilisation of their quiet study environment, academic resources and learning advisors. I will continue to utilise the great resources offered at CUC throughout the year to complete my graduate nursing certificate."

Bridget said she was excited to have returned to Roma.

"I believe the familiarity of the rural lifestyle, friendly community and social country activities, in conjunction with the supportive members of the healthcare team at the Roma Hospital will ensure a healthy work/life balance. I look forward to being a member of a health service that provides a diverse range of services to rural communities."

Bridget said she chose to work within the South West as she had a strong interest in contributing to the delivery of high quality healthcare to regional and remote communities.



Jamie Whitney

Our 32 new nurse graduates will initially be posted to Roma Hospital (eight), three each to Westhaven and Waroona, two each to Charleville, Augathella, Cunnamulla, Quilpie, Mungindi, Surat, Mitchell, and St George, and one each to Dirranbandi and Injune. Our two midwives will be posted initially to Roma and St George.



Bridget Struber

“Having worked as an Assistant in Nursing at the Roma Hospital, I have seen the clinical and educational guidance, support and encouragement that graduate RNs receive. The South West provides vast learning opportunities, support and skill acquisition to successfully consolidate theory to practice.”

Bridget said she was inspired to take up nursing as a career because it was a caring profession.

“Like my most nurses, I like helping people and being able to build relationships with patients to ensure they feel comfortable and cared for during their toughest times. Nursing in a rural hospital allows for exposure to a vast range of clinical conditions, and skill and knowledge development,” she said.

New nurse graduate Jamie Whitney is also a Roma local who will be working at Roma Hospital during his graduate year and undertaking rotations in different departments, including the Inpatient Unit, Emergency Department and Aged Care.

“As a Roma local, I wanted to stay and work in the area,” he said.

“My mother’s side of the family has always lived in the area going back to my great grandmother in the Mungallala area. It was my past experiences of being a patient during hospitalisations as a child that inspired me to become a nurse. I learned that nurses do more than take blood pressure and give medications; they are there to support and care for their patients during the most difficult times of their lives. Nurses tailor the care they provide to each patient, whilst advocating for the patient’s rights and choices.”

Jamie completed his nursing degree with the University of Southern Queensland.

I chose to complete my studies online as this allowed more opportunities to continue working, whilst giving me the flexibility to adjust my study schedule to suit my needs at the time.

“Rural and remote nursing is my main area of interest. This stems from the inherent challenges faced in the provision of care within the rural and remote setting. I find rural and remote nursing allows for a broad skill set to be developed and more autonomy in the nursing scope of practice, which is very satisfying.

“At present, there are three specific fields that I find interesting: emergency nursing, palliative care and wound care. I would like to gain more exposure and experience to all areas though, before I decide on one.”

Chris added the South West HHS was committed to providing training opportunities for graduate nurses and midwives.

“There’s no denying how important nurses are in our community and to our health service. Nurses make up almost 50 per cent of our health service workforce; they provide care at almost every stage of our lives across our GP clinics, our hospitals and in the community.”

I wish each and every one of the nurses starting over the next few weeks the best of luck as they embark on this next stage of their careers.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW EXECUTIVE SUPPORT COORDINATOR

The newest addition to the South West Hospital and Health Service Chief Executive (HSCE) office is Samantha Thrupp.

Sam brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm into the role of Executive Support Coordinator.

In her new capacity, Sam will be reporting to Leigh Burton, Executive Director Governance Strategy and Performance, overseeing the seamless functioning of the HSCE's office to ensure the delivery of client-focused executive management.

Leigh said with a focus on effective resource management and professional leadership, Sam's responsibilities encompass a range of crucial tasks, including managing executive support resources, providing assistance with correspondence and information management, and offering guidance to the Executive Support Officer group.

"Sam brings to the table over 28 years of corporate experience, primarily from the telecommunications and local government sectors," Leigh said.

"Her tenure as part of the senior management team at Maranoa Regional Council has equipped her with invaluable knowledge and skills in customer service, community development, recruitment, and regulatory compliance. Despite her extensive corporate background, Sam's heart lies in serving regional communities, a passion that led her to embrace her career change with open arms.

"Her move to the South West HHS signifies not only a professional transition but also a personal commitment to making a positive impact on the healthcare sector," he said.

Sam is deeply rooted in the Roma community, having returned to the area over two decades ago with her partner and son. Embracing the country lifestyle, she finds solace in outdoor activities like running, biking, and the occasional round of golf, all while cherishing moments with her loved ones.



As Sam embarks on this new chapter, her dedication, expertise, and vibrant spirit promise to enrich the team and elevate the standard of executive support across the organisation.



USING THE QUEENSLAND DIGITAL LICENCE TO CONFIRM PATIENT IDENTITY

The Queensland Digital Licence has been available across the state since November last year and the number of Queenslanders downloading and using the app is steadily increasing.

This means you will be able to use your Digital Licence to prove your identity and personal details when presenting to hospital or other services.

The Digital Licence is the equivalent of the physical licence under Queensland law and is a legal and legitimate form of identification. The Digital Licence can be verified in various ways depending on your business needs and the transaction risk.

- ✓ Visual verification
- ✓ Scanning the Digital Licence
- ✓ Storing information from the Digital Licence (PDF copy)

Each method offers security features to ensure the digital licence you are verifying is authentic.

You can find out more about the Digital Licence verification options and the security features they offer on the:

[Digital Licence →](#)

[How to video →](#)

[What to look for poster →](#)

If you have further questions about the Digital Licence, visit the website or contact the Digital Licence Project team at digitallicence@tmr.qld.gov.au.

[Find out more →](#)

[Email enquiry →](#)



ENGAGING WITH THE MITCHELL COMMUNITY

In our continuing effort to foster closer ties with local communities, the South West Hospital and Health Board recently brought its meeting to Mitchell on 22–23 January 2024.

The meeting included a community engagement function at the Mitchell Shire Hall, drawing over 50 attendees from the local community. Board members and members of the South West HHS Executive Leadership Team were eager to connect with residents and gain insights into their concerns and priorities.

Board Chair Karen Tully and Health Service Chief Executive Dr Anthony Brown were among the leadership team who addressed the gathering. Topics ranged from ongoing capital works to workforce challenges and service improvements.

Discussions highlighted upcoming projects such as the redesign of medical facilities and the purchase of essential equipment, reflecting the Board's commitment to enhancing healthcare services in the region. One key concern voiced by the community was the availability of medical services, particularly regarding the medical workforce and access to chemotherapy.

Dr Mostafa Vahibi's permanent appointment was met with gratitude, emphasising the importance of having sufficient medical staff in the area.

South West HHS Executive Director of Medical Services, Dr Carl de Wet, provided insights into efforts to bolster the medical workforce, including recruitment initiatives for Principal House Officers (PHOs). The role of Nurse Practitioners was also emphasised as a vital component of the healthcare model in South West communities.



Dr Carl de Wet, Sheryn Hanna and Anna Cross at Mitchell

Acting Executive Director Primary and Community Care, Louisa Dufty, highlighted advancements in palliative care and mental health services, underscoring the commitment to comprehensive healthcare delivery.

Dr Brown shed light on collaborative efforts with stakeholders to improve health outcomes, including enhanced chemotherapy services supported by the Darling Downs HHS.

The event concluded with expressions of gratitude to all participants and a call for continued dialogue and engagement.

Mitchell's Director of Nursing Anna Cross was commended for her team's dedication, and the welcoming nature of Mitchell towards new staff was acknowledged.

The engagement session reaffirmed the importance of community involvement in shaping healthcare services, with the Mitchell Community Advisory Network playing a crucial role in amplifying the consumer voice.

As we move forward, we remain committed to addressing community concerns and working collaboratively to ensure the provision of high-quality healthcare services for all residents.



Adrienne Mansfield, Dr Carl de Wet and Karen Tully with Helen Mason and Ruby Waldron



Mitchell community at the Engagement session



Rob Cornish and Donna McCarroll with Louisa Dufty



healthy COMMUNITIES

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES GEARING UP FOR A BIG YEAR

The Healthy Communities team is very excited to welcome two new Health Promotion Officers in March and we will be recruiting to the Community Nutritionist and Allied Health Assistant positions as well.

Healthy Communities will continue to focus on health prevention and promotion strategies at a community level across the South West Region and work closely with Health and Wellbeing QLD to embed many of the statewide health prevention initiatives in our communities. Some of these programs include Heart Foundation Walking, Pick of the Crop, PodSquad, 10,000 Steps and Birdies Tree.

Our team members include Kathy Morrow, Team Leader Healthy Communities, Megan Andrews, Community Exercise Physiologist, and our Health Promotion Officers Alex McKinna and Tilly Byrne-Kirk who start in March. Both Alex and Tilly have backgrounds in nutrition and dietetics and have completed student placements in the South West HHS in 2023.

Alex and Tilly will have a role in re-developing our South West cooking and nutrition program once they settle into their roles in March. With their nutrition backgrounds, and familiarity with the previous program, we are confident it will be well received.

Megan, our Community Exercise Physiologist has commenced a new service model in 2024. This is a self-management exercise program aimed at increased health prevention strategies in the South West. It is an 8-week exercise program delivered under the guidance of the Exercise Physiologist at a community level. This program aims to encourage participants to be independent and self-manage their health outcomes through implementing exercise and physical activity into their lifestyle to encourage an increase in positive health behaviors.

One of the larger projects the team has been working on is a new Prevention Model of Care to be piloted in the Maranoa Region in 2024 in partnership with Health and Wellbeing QLD.

The program is aimed at building a digital front door that includes completing an online health and wellness assessment, followed by telephone sessions with a health coach for consumers to be directed to a range of health prevention services and resources that are specifically applicable and available to them depending on their health needs.

This project is entering the stakeholder engagement phase before implementation begins later in the year. The pilot will inform the appropriateness of continuing the model across the South West post evaluation with the possibility to help inform other regions across the state move forward with this model.

We can't wait to catch up with everyone across the South West in 2024!



Winners Corporate Division – Dr Tim, Dr Alex and Med Student Jack



Dr Alex



St George staff lining up at the start line

BATTLE OF THE BALONNE

The St George ‘Battle on the Balonne – Backwards’ was held on the last weekend in February.

The St George Hospital and St George Community and Allied Health had a few staff represented on the organising committee as well as competitors as individuals and in teams.

Sprint distance:

5KM RUN, 20KM CYCLE AND 750M SWIM

- Dr Craig, Tess (OT), Dr Alex and Judy (Physio) all completed individually.

Enticer distance:

2.5KM RUN, 7.5KM CYCLE AND 400M SWIM

- Dr Ashleigh and Dr Sally competed individually.
- Three teams entered this distance.
- In the Corporate Teams division, the ‘Rapid AF’ Team of Dr Alex, Dr Tim and Medical Student Jack were the winners and brought the trophy back to the Hospital.
- The Golden Allies took home 1st place in the mixed teams division. Robyn and Nick from the Community and Allied Health Team, and Matt, Site Manger from Hutchinson’s who are currently completing our new St George hospital building, took out this division.
- Dr Craig, Tess (OT) and Dr Alex backed up from their individual races to be part of teams in the entice distances, with Dr Alex being a part of the Rapid AF Team. Dr Craig and Tess were part of the St George Triathlon Team.



Dr Craig



Winners Corporate Division – Dr Tim, Dr Alex and Med Student Jack



Tess Warboys



Winners Mixed Teams Division – Nick, Robyn and Matt



Dr Alex

It was great to see a staff cheer squad at the event, along with the St George community, to support this event.



OUR TEAMS

SOUTH WEST HHS STAFF ROLLING UP THEIR SLEEVES

South West HHS staff are rolling up their sleeves and getting down to business with Healthcare Records management.

South West HHS Manager of Health and Clinical Information Emma Humphreys said paper-based facilities had long faced the obstacle of managing healthcare records storage that complied with relevant storage standards and regulations.

“The South West Health Information team concentrated on enhancing governance in 2023 and created resource materials to help staff comprehend the procedure in compliance with legal requirements,” Emma said.

With the necessary support, facilities may now complete the work of sentencing healthcare records – which are currently kept in secondary storage locations.

Emma said Grace Records, a Toowoomba-based offsite storage provider, had partnered with South West HHS and other hospitals and health services. She said they (Grace) utilise a secure electronic portal which makes the patient healthcare record available at the point of care, if necessary.

“Our South West facilities are putting a lot of effort into getting their inactive healthcare records processed and prepared for offsite storage collection that will take place in the upcoming months,” Emma said.

“Recently, Surat, Dirranbandi, Roma, Charleville, Mungindi, and Wallumbilla have commenced actioning a sentencing plan, with several facilities in preparation phase.

Surat Hospital Rode Cowling (RN)

“Over the last few months, Surat has sentenced approximately 2,000 healthcare records, with a further 800 each at Dirranbandi and Charleville – alongside 160 at Wallumbilla and an impressive 1,350 at Mungindi and 5,000 at Roma.”

Emma congratulated Belinda Sparkes (AO), Kasha Murray (AO), Ailish Wallace (RN), and Rode Cowling (RN) for driving the change for Surat.

“The South West HHS recognises and commends Rode for her initiative in spearheading the work at Surat and her dedication; without her unwavering work, the facility would not be at the current level of compliance,” she said.

Every facility is making progress towards the goal, and all employees should be applauded for their hard work.



Surat Hospital L to R: Ailish Wallace (RN), Belinda Sparkes (AO), Rode Cowling (RN) and Kasha Murray (AO/HIO)



Dearne Radnedge (AO) Dirranbandi Hospital



ORAL HEALTH TEAM ON THE ROAD

The South West HHS Oral Health Team have already travelled many kilometres across the South West this year, visiting our communities.

Director Oral Health, Sandra Dolan, said this year the team would be continuing with their outreach services and School Dental Services providing services for adults and children.

“Already this year the team have been to Roma, Charleville, Surat, Mitchell and upcoming trips are scheduled for Quilpie, Dirranbandi and St George,” Sandra said.

“This year, we are working on training sessions within our HHS regarding eligibility and how other teams can refer patients to our services.

“We are also delivering Hygiene Health Information sessions for our colleagues, for example our new graduate midwives, which is an exciting new endeavour.

“This year we will continue to attend The New Parent Café and Kindergartens and Day Care Centres across the South West and have information stalls at the Under 8s Days across the region.”

Sandra said this year they were working in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders by hosting formal and informal sessions about their services and how patients can make appointments.

It will be a busy 12 months but we are very excited what we can achieve for 2024!

She added for everyone to keep an eye out for all things Oral Health as part of this year’s Oral Health Day on 20 March.



CWA 100 year Anniversary Health Promotions Megan, Danielle and Shane



Shane, Danielle, Lee and Natasha Westlands Plaza Health Promotions



Cameron Whitelaw & Natasha Maher

Dr Cameron Whitelaw



Roma Hospital Dental Team – Front L-R Shane Fernando, Mikayla Henningsen, Yla Abulencia – Back L-R Lewis Ferguson, Miranda Walker, Danielle Lee, Lee Godfrey.



Outreach School Dental Van Janette Dimond & Mary Collier





OUR RESOURCES



Fuelling up the EV in Miles



One of the new EV charging posts at Roma Hospital

SOUTH WEST HHS RECEIVES FIRST ELECTRIC VEHICLE

The South West HHS has taken delivery of its first electric vehicle (EV) as part of a broader, ongoing sustainability program.

The vehicle has a range of around 430 km and will be used primarily for staff travel around Roma.

South West HHS Director of Governance, Risk and Corporate Support Tim Lyons picked up the Tesla Model Y at Eagle Farm in Brisbane on 16 February and drove to Roma with a stop at Miles to recharge the vehicle.

We charged using the fast charger in Miles – 25 minutes cost \$9, and put about 240 km of juice back in.

“Along the way, lots of features have now been road tested, including the car karaoke! Now the car is in Roma, it will be available through our normal staff vehicle booking process and we will be arranging familiarisation sessions for staff before they use the vehicle.”

Mr Lyons said EV chargers had been built at the Roma Accommodation Precinct and Roma Hospital carpark.

Further chargers are planned for Charleville and St George, allowing the health service to incorporate further EVs into its fleet and allow for travel between sites.



“The Roma chargers are the first universal, public use chargers in Roma.”

“These chargers meet a need as there are increasing numbers of electric vehicles appearing in the South West, so it is imperative that sufficient infrastructure exists to service this growing need. Chargers are free use at this time. However, they will be switched to pay for use once economy of scale is in place in these areas.”

Mr Lyons said the delivery of the first EV was part of broader health service activity aimed at addressing strategic risks relating to adapting to a changing climate and transitioning to a zero carbon output future.

“Broader sustainability activity across South West HHS includes establishment of a Sustainability Working Group, which is working to reduce waste, and leveraging state government programs to build additional infrastructure to reduce greenhouse emissions,” he said.

A health service Sustainability Strategy is also in the final stages of development and will be released and implemented in the coming months to guide overarching sustainability activity.

“A Sustainability Action Plan will be released at the same time to define key short term targets which we are developing with Queensland Health’s Hospital Sustainability Unit.”

KEY TIPS

EV’s are not the same as vehicles with combustion engines. Here are some top tips to follow when booking this vehicle:

- ✓ ALWAYS make sure the car is plugged in when you finish your trip to ensure it has enough charge in it for the next user.
- ✓ There is no engine, so the car does not need to start. To enable driving, put the key card on the centre console.
- ✓ All information relating to the car is provided via the tablet in the centre – have a play around before you drive to find what you are looking for (like the air con, or car karaoke...)
- ✓ If you lock the keys in the car, give CSU a call and they can unlock remotely.
- ✓ To find the odometer for the logbook, tap the car icon in the bottom right hand corner of the central screen then tap ‘Trips’. The car will record how many kms your last trip was should you forget.
- ✓ Teslas have a few gimmicks built in. Have fun, but please don’t leave the horn as a fart sound for the next user!

Tim Lyons picking up car at Eagle Farm in Brisbane

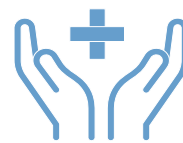


The EV Charger build site



Rebecca Mitchell driving the EV





OUR SERVICES

FIRST RURAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

In a significant step towards enhancing disaster preparedness and response in rural communities, South West Service HHS hosted the first Rural Hospital and Health Service Disaster Management Workshop on January 17 in Roma.

The workshop served as a collaborative platform, bringing together key stakeholders from various organisations, including the Queensland Police Service (QPS), Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), Central West Hospital and Health Service (HHS), Darling Downs HHS, Disaster Management Branch (DoH), Digital Continuity (eHealth), and South West HHS.

South West HHS Disaster Management's Bob Khalsa said the primary goal of the workshop was to establish effective disaster management strategies that prioritise and enhance healthcare delivery to rural and remote communities during emergencies.

"Participants aimed to identify potential challenges, share best practices, and create a framework for coordinated response efforts," Bob said.

"The workshop included panel discussions, interactive sessions, and collaborative activities aimed at identifying gaps in current disaster management practices and formulating targeted solutions.

"Participants had the opportunity to share their experiences, learn from each other, and establish networks for future collaboration.

It marked a significant milestone in the collective effort to strengthen healthcare delivery in rural and remote areas during emergencies, as well as fostering inter-agency collaboration.

Bob said the outcomes and action plans established during the workshop were poised to contribute to more resilient and well-prepared communities in the face of future disasters.



The primary goal of the workshop was to establish effective disaster management strategies that prioritise and enhance healthcare delivery to rural and remote communities during emergencies.

January 2024 #swSpirit

With her compassionate approach to quality and adaptable services focussing on the needs of our residents and care service recipients, Nursing Director of Aged Care – Catherine Ole – is our first #SWSpirit recipient for 2024!

Based in Roma, Catherine extensively travels and engages with our eight Multipurpose Health Services and our Residential Aged Care Facilities at Waroona (in Charleville) and Westhaven (Roma) to ensure the needs of each individual resident is respected, and their dignity is maintained.

“Cath has been instrumental in supporting our staff across the South West as we continue to navigate the dynamic and complex national accreditation and service requirements whilst – at all times – striving towards continuing excellence and improvements across our aged care services,” said Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery Services, Chris Small.

“Recently, Cath has also been leading our Executive Leaders, Directors of Nursing, Primary and Community Care Service Directors and other key staff through important accountability considerations and discussions regarding our National Aged Care obligations.”

“This is particularly important when you consider that approximately 60% of our admitted beds provide residential aged care services. Catherine’s leadership and willingness to roll up sleeves to support our teams on the floor is also very much appreciated and is a continuing inspiration.”

With her relatable, but always patient and dignity-first approach, Catherine strives to ensure South West HHS delivers best practice, person-centred services where our consumers and residents are informed and supported to make choices of their choosing to enhance their quality of life.

“Working in aged care can sometimes be challenging, however is also personally rewarding in so many ways,” added Chris.

“As our services and facilities continue to evolve to ensure contemporary provision of service, I know that Cath would be the first person to selflessly acknowledge that the care we provide is a team effort.



Nursing Director of Aged Care, Catherine Ole

“But with her leadership and focus on the importance of consumer led care, I am confident our teams will continue to serve in an inclusive manner that best supports our seniors to deservedly fully enjoy their later years.”

Cath’s colleagues describe her as warm and knowledgeable. She brings a great balance to the team and is a pleasure to work alongside.

Thank you, Catherine, for all that you do in support of our Residential and Aged Care Services to ensure our teams provide inclusive care that celebrates the dignity, unique lived experiences and diversity of South West seniors in a person-centred manner!



February 2024 #swSpirit

Hope Ferguson is our February #swSpirit recipient.

Hope has been in the CSU Team for almost two years and has been the Acting CSU Manager multiple times during this time, and most recently for the last seven months to mid-February 2024.

Tim Lyons, Director Governance Risk and Corporate Support, said Hope embodies all of the South West HHS values of adaptability, accountability, compassion, quality and engagement and in particular has shown extremely strong alignment with the latter two.

“Hope has worked with clinical and non-clinical staff to ensure that the HHS fleet and accommodation meet the needs of our staff and to thoughtfully resolve (often quite emotive) issues with thought, empathy and professionalism.

“She has managed multiple projects during this time, including developing an accommodation data set, working across the HHS to establish accommodation naming conventions, preparing for a trial of a new Resource Management System, developing and implementing an accommodation quality matrix, as well as having a key role in the build of the new EV chargers at Roma Hospital.

“She has never shied away from a challenge and has been an amazing force to drive continual improvements to the way accommodation, fleet and patient travel are managed, while building great partnerships across all areas of the Health Service and beyond.”

He said Hope was dropping back to part time at the end of February to ensure that she has time for her nursing studies.

“As she transitions to part-time status to pursue her nursing studies, we are confident that Hope will continue to excel and make invaluable contributions to our team and the broader health service and communities,” Tim said.

“We wish her the very best in this new chapter of her journey.”

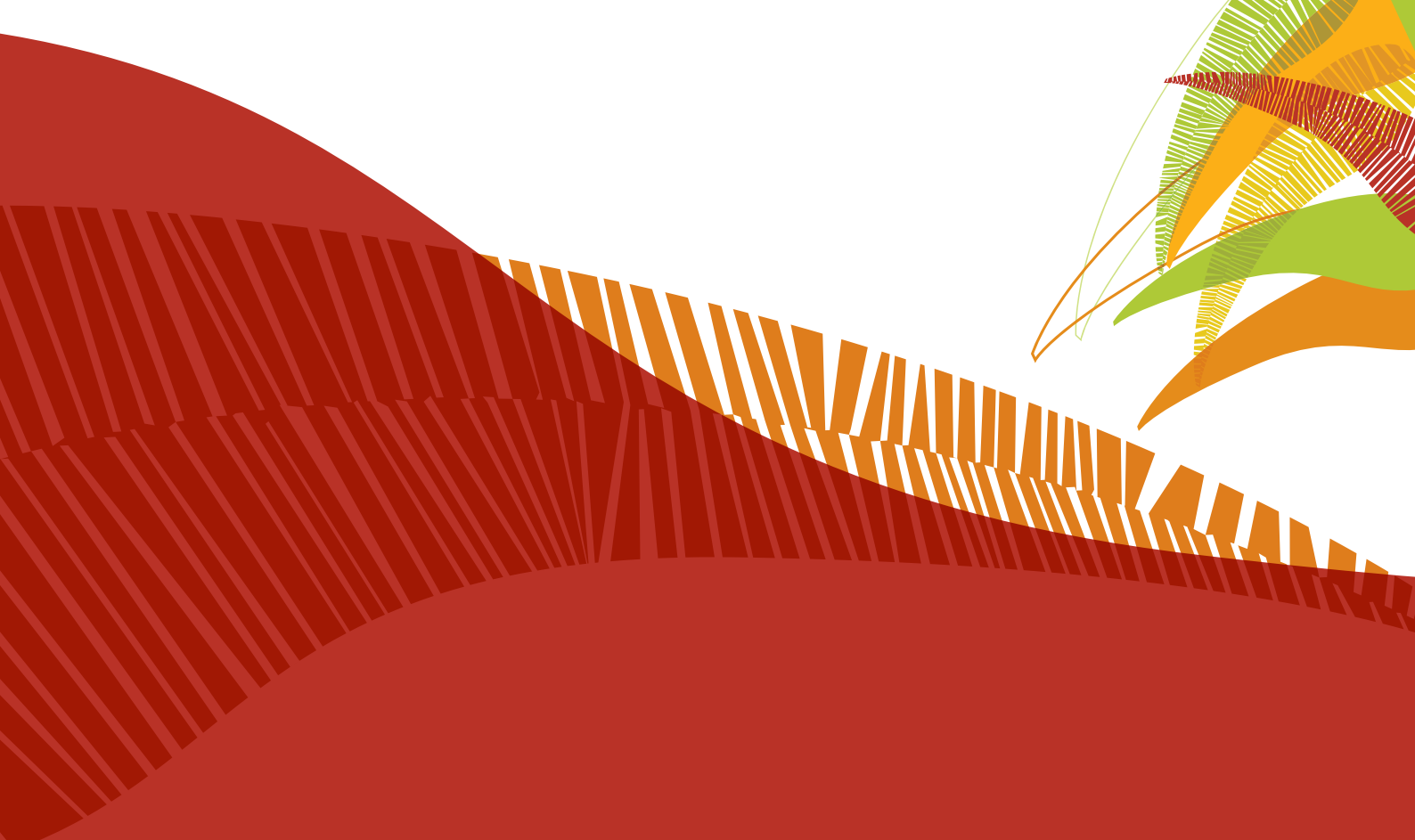
Alex Cherry, HSCE Executive Support Officer also applauded Hope for her friendly and approachable way.

“She is always happy to help solve or assist with any problems I bring to her and is always really friendly and always accommodating. Her actions always seem to look at improving and growing the health service in the corporate space,” Alex said.

Congratulations Hope for this well-deserved recognition and thank you for your outstanding service to the South West HHS.



Acting CSU Manager, Hope Ferguson



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