

South West Hospital and Health Service



PULSE

MAY-JUNE 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** (Boonthamurra, Mardigan, Wongkumara) with other interest
- 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 – Kullili** (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.

Contact: SWHHS_Communications@health.qld.gov.au

Cover Image: The Deadly Recruits Camp was well supported by Donna Burke, Miriam Airey and the Board Chair Karen Tully.



QUALITY



COMPASSION



ACCOUNTABILITY



ENGAGEMENT



ADAPTABILITY

“ Great boards are proactive, not passive. They are continually and actively looking to see how healthcare can be improved, reformed or become more sustainable. ”

Queensland Health Director General – Michael Walsh



From the Board Chair

In the lead-up to the new 2024 – 2025 operational year, there has been a flurry of activity (including consultation with staff) in recent months as we have examined our future priorities and planned for continuing improvements to healthcare and wellness provision. The responsibility for the well-being of staff and the ongoing provision of safe and effective quality services and care remains a key priority for the board, and board members receive regular reports on progress as the operational year unfolds. How we keep people safe whilst optimising resourcing and partnering across South West Queensland is important to all board members.

Accompanying this operational planning work, the board has also signed a service delivery agreement with Queensland Health for \$218 million, which is an increase of \$19.3 million on last year's budget. Along with accepting this money is also our acceptance of being able to deliver (and possibly exceed) performance targets across a range of areas that inform our core work, while staying within budgets. The board is proud to advise that optimising our resources whilst staying living within our means was achieved in the 2023–24 financial year.

Board members were delighted to note the employee response rate to the 2024 Cultural Compass Employee Experience survey and sincerely thank all staff members who provided frank and honest responses about their workplace experience. Currently, improvement-focused conversations are taking place

within workplace teams, and we look forward to seeing the implementation of measures in the coming twelve months which will strengthen our organisational culture, to benefit both staff and patients. This is an important priority that underpins all that we do within the Hospital and Health Service.

Board members were also immensely proud to learn that the South West HHS First Nations “Fail to Attend” team from Cunnamulla and Charleville, alongside our supporting partners at Toowoomba Hospital were shortlisted as a finalist in the Queensland Health Awards for Excellence within the ‘Partnering for Consumers’ category. Regrettably, we did not take home the award, however the real winners from having a caring cocoon of support wrapped around them when seeking healthcare are our patients who need support to attend appointments.





Congratulations to Nina Jordan, Janell Lobb, Mikaela Parlett, Nicole Pamerter and – in Toowoomba – Stewart Reid, alongside all associated support teams on initiating this superb work and representing us at the statewide award event last month.

The June meeting of the board was held in Injune, with all board members in attendance to approve an array of forward planning. A highlight was the visit to the Injune Multipurpose Health Service (MPHS), which has a warm and inviting atmosphere that exudes compassionate care for all, including to the aged care residents who call the MPHS home. Thank you to the Injune team who work hard seamlessly to provide the best possible care.

July saw the Board venture to the border town of Mungindi to connect with health consumers, service partners and staff in the most southerly health facility in Queensland. The healthcare ecosystem is complex, and moving throughout communities in South West Queensland and connecting with people is an important contributor to being able to govern inclusively and strongly. It is only by doing this that, collectively, we can identify and grasp opportunities for improvement and reform to improve health outcomes.

Kind wishes

Karen Tully, Board Chair
South West Hospital and Health Board

Board out and about



Gary Lesleighter, Rebecca Greenway and Ethan Capewell in Thargomindah



Dr Anthony Brown, Julie Stewart and Karen Tully in Thargomindah



Board members and Executives go through the new wing at the Cunnamulla Hospital



Board members at the Injune Multipurpose Health Service with Director of Nursing Kirsty Doonan (second from right) and Executive Director Finance, Infrastructure and Corporate Services Linda Patmore (right)



Linda Patmore, Tilly Byrne-Kirk, Megan Andrews and Alex McKenna in Thargomindah



Thargomindah CAN Chair Julie Stewart with Donna Burke



Bulloo Shire Mayor John 'Tractor' Ferguson with Claire Alexander in Thargomindah



Cunnamulla DON Tina Jackson with Board member the Honourable Paul Lucas



From the Health Service Chief Executive

As we put this edition of the Pulse together, I am incredibly grateful for the chance to go to Europe to follow my daughter in the forthcoming Olympics, Cycling World Championships and the Tour de France Femmes. I'd like to sincerely thank our Board and the Executive Team for providing solutions to enable me to experience this amazing opportunity.

Rebecca Greenway will do an amazing job in my absence as acting HSCE and I'm confident she will be well supported by her fellow Executives, senior leaders and of course all colleagues across the HHS. During Rebecca's service as A/HSCE, Robyn Brumpton will backfill as the Acting Executive Director Primary and Community Care over the next three months.

This has already been a particularly busy year, as you all are acutely aware and – no matter where you are located and the role you play – I thank you for all your care and dedication to keep our communities safe. Our collective achievements, including those detailed in the following pages, are only possible because of your continued hard work and focus on quality of care delivery.

As we enter a new financial year, it's timely to pause and take a moment to reflect on our many recent successes. These include:

- ✓ All of our facilities and the HHS are fully accredited to the highest standards of care. Our performance and activity data shows good access and outcomes of care that is amongst the best in Queensland. Financially, we are secure.
- ✓ We have also had an amazing response to our first Cultural Compass survey which gives us the opportunity to keep building on the positives and pay closer attention to areas that require further improvement as we continue our journey of improving our staff wellbeing and opportunity.
- ✓ Our recent staff Quality and Safety survey also shows an ever improving culture, and our compliance and risks are being well managed – all of which will continue to support improved patient and client outcomes.
- ✓ We have successfully completed a large number of facility new builds or upgrades for the benefit of everybody for generations to come.
- ✓ It is also pleasing that our local community forums continue to be well attended and our community are asking the hard questions on matters that are of the utmost importance to them and guiding us on how best we might provide services to them.
- ✓ Our valued partners and wider stakeholders are also more engaged through a range of key forums and individual projects as we continue to work closely to collectively focus on what matters – the people and communities we are all privileged to serve.

These are but a few of the examples of our recent journey together, and in recognition of your dedication and goodwill, I know there is still more that myself and your Executive Team can do, through direct leadership and advocacy on your behalf at the highest levels of State and Commonwealth government, to support you and our cherished rural and remote lifestyles.

Hopefully, the increased staffing that will be funded from our growth funding allocation announced in the 2024-25 State Budget goes some way to easing our burdens, enhancing our capability and capacity to further grow and improve overall care in a sustainable way.

While I am away, there will be a range of key projects continuing to be progressed that will further support service improvements, and everyone has a part to play. So please engage and bring your ideas to the table as we move through the design and implementation stages.

For example, we have a range of exciting infrastructure projects progressing in support of the Roma Hospital Administration and car parking project, Charleville and St George Theatre upgrades and the Dirranbandi housing project, and we are also progressing an internal governance review that will enable our HHS to work ever SMARTer.

And, through our new Quality and Safety, Climate Sustainability and Digital Strategies, supplemented with Culture Compass progression and continued progression of First Nations Health Equity commitments, we are continuing to build on our foundations to ensure a fit for purpose hospital and health service for the future that people trust and value.

Keep well and keep safe.

Dr Anthony Brown
Health Service Chief Executive

Breaking news from Paris!

Grace Brown wins Australia's first gold medal at Paris 2024 with stunning ride

Star cyclist Grace Brown has ridden the race of her life to win Australia's first gold medal of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in the women's road cycling time trial.

In treacherous conditions on a slippery course due to the Paris rain, Grace recovered from a disastrous start to power over the top of her rivals for the medals, hitting the finish line in a time of 39 minutes, 38 seconds. Her victory is Australia's first-ever medal in the time trial.

Dr Anthony Brown said it was one of the greatest days of his and wife Ruth's lives.

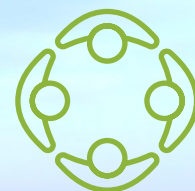
"We're just so proud of what Grace has achieved, not just at the Olympics but throughout her cycling career and, indeed, her entire life," he said.

"She has sacrificed much but, through determination, discipline, skill and strategy, she has succeeded."

Dr Brown said Grace would be retiring at the end of this season to be with her husband, family and friends and to pursue other life goals.

[▶ 'Can't ask for a better day': watch video](#)





OUR COMMUNITIES

RURAL IMMERSION PLACEMENT PROGRAM ALLIED HEALTH

Queensland Health's Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer are continuing to support the Rural Immersion Placement Program – Allied Health (RIPPAH) through the scale and spread of the RIPPAH model into more rural regions and more allied health professions.



Helen Wassman (left) with Liza-Jane McBride

RIPPAH is a clinical education initiative for students undertaking allied health university programs in Queensland. A RIPPAH experience gives students the opportunity to work in a minimum of two health service caseloads while immersed in the community for at least 10 weeks. This longer placement opportunity will provide richer experiences and deeper connections for both the student and the community, and provides students with wrap around social and financial support during the extended placement as well as opportunities to immerse themselves in the rural community.

In recent months, the Chief Allied Health Officer visited South West HHS where RIPPAH first began in 2023, and was thrilled to meet Philippa O'Brien, one of the first dietetic students to undertake a RIPPAH placement. As a new graduate dietitian, Philippa has now returned to Charleville and is settling in well to her new profession.

“Working at Charleville hospital has been an amazing experience. The Allied health team are extremely knowledgeable and always willing to help. I feel as though working rurally you can fully immerse yourself into the community, which helps when it comes to seeing patients. Overall, it has and continues to be such a wonderful experience both professionally and personally.”

Philippa O'Brien

In collaboration with local services, HHSs, University Departments of Rural Health (UDRH) at UQ and JCU and the OCAHO, RIPPAH is currently being scaled to other rural regions and professions in 2024 and 2025, including physiotherapy, speech pathology, occupational therapy, dietetics and nutrition and pharmacy across the Central Queensland HHS, North West HHS and Torres and Cape HHS.

For more information on RIPPAH and to watch the video click on the link below

[Find out more →](#)



MINDY'S LOVING HER NEW LIFE IN CHARLEVILLE

Mindy Crowe had always cherished the idea of living in a small, close-knit community. Her dream took shape in December 2023 when she, along with her husband Andrew and their two children, moved to Charleville.

Mindy, a general practitioner with a specialisation in obstetrics, found herself in a role that combined her passion for medicine with the warmth and charm of a rural town.

The Crowes' journey to Charleville was meant to be. Andrew found the timing perfect for a new adventure taking up a role with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). And, for Mindy, an opening for a much needed General Practitioner Obstetrician (GPO) position seemed like a dream come true.

"I contacted Deb (the South West HHS Executive Director Medical Services at the time) who efficiently arranged everything for our move and, from the moment we arrived, we knew we had found our new home," Mindy said.

"Charleville welcomed us with open arms. Everyone made us feel at ease right away and our next-door neighbours, affectionately called "Nana and Pop" by our children, have become like extended family. Life in Charleville has already been a wonderful experience – both for work and our personal life.

"I am loving my role as a GPO – it is always so varied and never one day is the same. My days can include being in the Emergency Department resuscitating a patient, to conducting antenatal clinics and participating in ward rounds with my clinical colleagues. Each day is different, and I really thrive on the variety and new challenges each day. The cohesion and dedication of the medical team in Charleville, and the South West HHS as a whole, has really made my working environment so special where everyone aims to provide the best care possible."

Mindy also said living in Charleville also meant adapting to a new home.

"Housing options were limited, but we've managed to secure a beautiful, big house with a pool which we are loving. I also love my gardening, so I'm able to spend time outside what we have already christened our 'Charleville dream house'. Our kids love it, and the support we have had from our neighbours and the community has been incredible with help always at hand if we get stuck with work."

Before moving to Charleville, Mindy spent time in Dalby, after stints in Darwin, Katherine, and Alice Springs during her junior doctor years.

"We also lived in Brisbane prior to our move out west and I really believe we have now found our true sense of belonging and can see us here in Charleville for many years to come."

Welcome to Charleville and the great South West Mindy! We wish you and your family many memorable years in your new home and community!





THE NEW ROMA HOSPITAL OFFICE BUILDING

As residents and frequent visitors to Roma will know, what we refer to as the ‘new’ Roma Hospital, installed next to the ‘old’ hospital, commenced service at the end of 2020, at which point the previous hospital – originally built in 1940 – was demolished.

Since then, works have been progressing to decontaminate the site in preparation for its next chapter.

And, as recently announced, including at a community forum, we are pleased to advise that a new Administration Block and additional carparks will now be constructed to expand the existing campus, and furthermore we will be doing so in a cost effective and environmentally sustainable way!

An administration block has always been on the plans for the Roma Hospital campus, and this will be the first phase of use for the old hospital site – as we still have the opportunity for further potential expansion options to be considered into the future.

But what's most exciting, and not necessarily initially planned for, is how we are going to go about this project – as over the coming months, we will be relocating a demountable office building currently installed at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Brisbane.

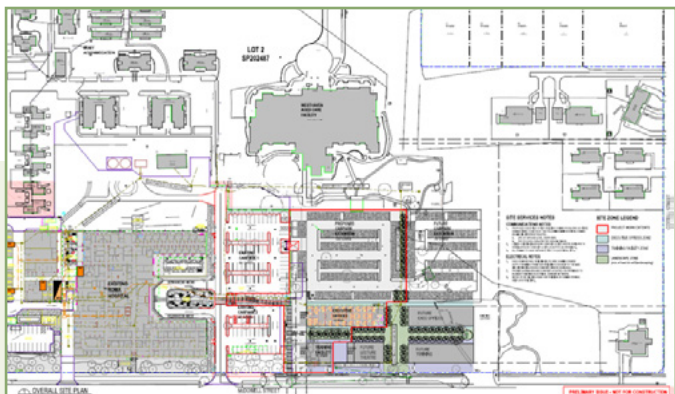
“This building is less than 12 months old and has been used as an executive office building by Metro South colleagues, but is now surplus to requirements due to other infrastructure developments there,” said Linda Patmore, South West HHS’s Executive Director Finance, Infrastructure and Corporate Services.

“The building will serve as the main administration hub for South West HHS and also allows us to address dual needs by greatly expanding the car park, addressing a known staff and community pressure.

“The repurposing of this building is an environmentally friendly way and is being delivered at effectively no direct cost to South West HHS – as works will be project managed via Queensland Health’s Health Infrastructure Queensland division on our behalf,” added Linda.

At our recent community engagement meeting, this proposed approach was well received with participants encouraging us to ensure the introduction of native plantings and providing welcome input about the best way to lay out additional car parking spaces. The additional car parking is also a win for staff and visitors to both Roma Hospital and the Westhaven Residential Aged Care Facility.

With further timelines to be determined, consultation will be scheduled in due course as the plans progress in the months ahead to ensure we make best use of this wonderful, innovative, and environmentally sustainable opportunity.



Above: Possible layout options.

Below: We also have further potential to expand our campus in future years



Following site clearance, we now have a clean slate to build on.



UNLEASHING PERSONAL POTENTIAL

The Unleashing Personal Potential (UPP) Program was recently delivered to Year 5 and 6 students from Charleville and Augathella in May.

South West HHS HOPE program’s Jenny Peacock said the program involved wellbeing and leadership workshops that empower our younger students to thrive as they continue to learn, live and lead, through simple strategies and support in engaging, relevant, challenging, practical and inspiring ways.

“The program specialises in building growth mindsets, grit, wellbeing, healthy relationship skills and leadership skills,” she added.

The program – provided to students from Charleville State School, St Mary’s and Augathella State School, and also students from Charleville High School – was a request from the School Based Youth Health Nurse, Mel Doolan, who met the Program’s creator at a conference she attended last year.

Mel said the students thoroughly enjoyed their sessions and they developed their confidence and leadership skills.

“They were beaming at the end, literally bubbling with enthusiasm with all that they had learned,” Mel said.



FORD DRIVER SKILLS FOR LIFE PROGRAM

The Ford Driver Skills for Life program returned to Charleville during May, with four students from Cunnamulla and 20 students from Charleville participating in the program.

South West HHS HOPE Program’s Jenny Peacock said the program teaches newly licensed, teen and learner drivers’ skills for safe driving beyond what they learn in standard driver education programs.

“The program offers hands-on driver training clinics – pairing learner, and newly licensed drivers, with professional instructors. Participants focus on some of the main issues and obstacles young drivers face that cause crashes, including hazard recognition, vehicle handling, speed management, space management and distracted and impaired driving,” Jenny said.

Queensland Police Service Liaison Officer Buddy said learning to drive was an important milestone in a young person’s life, but there were a lot of things to learn and remember.

“This program will help our young drivers become safer drivers,” she said.



UPP students from Charleville and Augathella schools



UNDER 8s DAY IN CHARLEVILLE

Under 8's Day is an annual event that celebrates the first eight years of children's lives and encourages learning through play.

This year's theme, "Connecting to Culture Through Play," celebrated the universal right of every child to play and encourages diverse play traditions and experiences from different cultures. It's a reminder that play knows no boundaries and has the power to bring children together, fostering understanding and self-discovery.

Never missing an opportunity to encourage healthy eating, HOPE's Jenny Peacock and members of the South West Mental Health team, Tegan and Kieran, added a Healthy Eating and Sun Safety stall to the fun event, providing cups of milk and apple slinkies.

Over 250 children attended the event from local schools, kindergartens, playgroups, and daycare.



St Mary's Girls enjoying the apple slinkies



Elanor Brassington enjoying U8s Day



Kids busy making apple slinkies

CHARLEVILLE YOUTH HUB OPENING

South West HHS HOPE Program's Jenny Peacock said it was an exciting time for the youth in Charleville with the opening of the Blue Light Social Circuit Youth Hub.

"Partnering with Queensland Police Service, Blue Light and the Murweh Shire, Council, the Youth Hub is a safe and welcoming place for young people to hang out, socialise and participate in supervised drug and alcohol-free activities that promote wellbeing and social connection," Jenny said.

"The Social Circuit allows volunteer mentors and local police to connect with our youth, build relationships and address any issues or concerns they may have in a supportive manner."

Jenny said the centre would also host wider support service providers so that young people could discuss personal and sensitive issues, and seek assistance, support and referrals in a positive and non-judgemental environment.

"The centre will also provide opportunities for building trust and rapport with local police and, by association, strengthen relationships between police and the broader community. Importantly, the centre will be a place where police can deliver crime prevention initiatives. Acting as role models and mentors, police and selected civilian volunteers will also empower and guide young people away from criminal and anti-social behaviour," she said.





MASTERCHEF FAVOURITE UNCLE ROBBIE RETURNS TO THE SOUTH WEST

Former MasterChef contestant, Robbie Cooper made a welcome return to the South West during June, delivering culturally appropriate cooking and nutrition lessons with a focus on healthy choices to school students and local community groups.

Our South West HHS HOPE program partnered with RESQ+ to bring Uncle Robbie out to Charleville and Cunnamulla providing masterclasses on how to cook cheap wholesome meals with everyday ingredients you can get from the local story.

“With the chilly weather upon us the most requested recipe during his visit was his famous curry and fried bread,” HOPE’s Jenny Peacock said.

“Having visited our communities last year it was wonderful that he was asked to return.

“We had about 30 people at CWAATSICH attend the Charleville session who cooked up a storm with Uncle Robbie sharing recipes and top tips to all involved. The sessions involved lessons in how to cook curries and stir fries.”

Charleville High School teacher Tammie Rose also said how much the kids love Uncle Robbie and really enjoy learning his style of cooking.





DEADLY RECRUITS BACK FOR ITS 10TH YEAR – BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER

The much anticipated Deadly Recruits Camp recently returned for its 10th anniversary, providing a wonderful opportunity for 30 students from Cunnamulla, Charleville, St James College, Toowoomba, and Marsden State High Schools to enjoy a five-night, six-day camp 90kms from Cunnamulla.

HOPE Program’s Suzanne Eustace-Earle said the camp was an enduring and inspiring example of our community working together, with HOPE partnering with the Defence Force Recruiting, Queensland Police Service (QPS), Paroo Shire, RESQ, CACH and local Elders to deliver this initiative.

“The Defence was represented by three Indigenous Defence Force recruiters, two senior Defence Force members (Cairns and South Australia) and three current members of the Defence Force that had previously attended the camp as students and are now currently serving their country,” Sue said.

“Milo and Challan from Cunnamulla (2014) and Anastasis from Charleville (2017/18) made a welcome return back to camp to share their experiences and let students know that it doesn’t matter where you come from there’s a job for you in the Defence Force. The last week in term two has a focus on work experience and careers and was an opportunity for the recruiters to talk about the 300 careers offered within the Defence Force as well as camp partnerships talking about careers in health, council, QPS and tourism.

“So far, 12 students have successfully entered the military after attending Deadly Recruits and we have just heard that two young women that attended camp last year have passed their testing and awaiting their enlistment dates.”

Sue said the week was always packed full of activities with students woken at 6am and not in bed before midnight.

“There is no mobile phone coverage and this year drills focused on teamwork,” she said.

“One activity simulated a car accident where the driver had been hurt and first aid had to be administered and a splint made then the patient and vehicle had to be transported 2.5 kms back to base,” she said.

“Young people also designed and made their own t-shirts portraying their own individual journeys. They learnt to use First Nation symbols to tell their stories and then had to draw them on canvases before transferring onto the tee shirt.

“This year’s camp song selected by students was “stand by me” and they made up verses that talked about their time on camp and how they had supported each other and felt part of a team.”

Sue said for some young people this was their first time in the bush and their first-time camping.

Thank you again to the generosity of the Tinnenburra landowners Lindsay and Carol Godfrey for having us back for yet another successful camp this year.





MAYOR'S LEADERSHIP MORNING TEA IN CHARLEVILLE

Murweh Shire Mayor, Councillor Shaun 'Zoro' Radnedge, was delighted to invite a select group of students from Cunnamulla, Charleville and Morven to attend a morning tea in Charleville in early June.

With the South West HHS HOPE program a proud partner of this event, its purpose was to engage with young people from across the Murweh Shire who aspire to be future leaders in our region.

South West HHS Executive Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Engagement, Shelley Lawton, joined Mayor Zoro to share their own life experiences growing up in Charleville, "proving that just because you grew up in the bush doesn't mean you can't succeed".

Mayor Zoro also invited Queensland Small Business Commissioner Ms Dominique Lamb, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner to also attend and inspire participants.

"We are really trying to motivate the next wave of leaders coming through our education system and Dominique Lamb is a very inspiring lady," Mayor Zoro said.

"I am grateful to have her speak to our future leaders. I was so impressed with the student engagement."

HOPE's Jenny Peacock said Dominique was a passionate supporter of Queensland small businesses and an advocate for regional communities.

"She especially enjoys engaging with young people from across the State who share her interest and vision for developing our future leaders."

Jenny said the Mayor was hoping to make the event even bigger and better next year.



Mayor Zoro, Dominique Lamb and Jenny Peacock



CHARLEVILLE'S ANNUAL HEALTHY LUNCHBOX COMPETITION HOTLY CONTESTED

The annual Charleville Show Healthy Lunchbox competition was once again a huge hit with community members of all ages.

South West HHS HOPE Program's Jenny Peacock said the competition was aimed to inspire families to create healthy and enjoyable lunch boxes.

"It is a great initiative that many families get behind. It also creates good discussions at home about healthy eating and what should and shouldn't go in lunchboxes," Jenny said.

An expert panel of South West HHS dietitians and students served as judges, looking at three key areas:

- ✔ How healthy is the school lunchbox? (such as five food groups based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating)
- ✔ How practical is the lunchbox to take to school or work?
- ✔ How appealing is the lunchbox to eat?

Jenny said the judges were thrilled to see so many colorful and balanced lunchboxes. This year's competition was sponsored by the Charleville Gym with the first prize presented with a beautifully engraved chopping board.



Judges Hayley, Phillipa and Megan

WINNERS

- ★ First – Fromm Family
- ★ Second – Addison McLeod
- ★ Highly Commended – Millie Carr

WESTHAVEN RESIDENTS ARE SHOW WINNERS



Some of our residents at Westhaven Residential Aged Care Facility were proud winners at the 2024 Roma Show in May.

Top left is Vera Laycock's quilted table runner that won second prize and top right is Edna Golding's Crochet Rug, which was highly commended.

Lower left is Hazel Moller's three distinct greeting cards – which won first prize and champion for best entry scrapbooking – and lower right is Joy Ries's diamond painting which won second prize.

Congratulations Vera, Edna, Hazel and Joy!





THANK YOU, DAPHNE AND TIM, AFTER 70 YEARS COMBINED SERVICE

Cunnamulla MPHS recently farewelled husband and wife duo Daphne and Tim Gall who have retired following many years of selfless and inspirational service to their local community.

Daphne started at the hospital as an enrolled nurse in 1978, and has continued to be a compassionate, dedicated and kind member of the nursing team for the last 46 years.

Tim has provided a vital operational / maintenance role over the last 24 years, always with a great sense of humour that would have staff, patients and visitors alike laughing and in cheerful spirits throughout the day.

“Daphne and Tim are a true inspiration to us all, and they will be greatly missed. On behalf of all members past and present of the Cunnamulla Team, I’d like to wish them all the very best for their future lives to together as they head off to make many more happy memories together,” said A/Director of Nursing and Facility Manager, Alycee Campbell.

Here in her own word’s is Daphne’s story:

“I started work in the old Cunnamulla Hospital in 1978 at the age of 19, I worked as an AIN in a hospital with no security and gauze verandas. I was very young and didn't know anything about nursing at the time, but over the years I have learnt a hell of a lot. We had no education in those years, but now education is plentiful in Queensland Health.

We then moved into the new hospital when it was built in 1984 and I studied my enrolled nursing at Charleville Hospital in 1995. I have loved being with my patients, and I have very much enjoyed my time as a nurse. I have met a lot of fellow nurses, doctors and hospital staff that I still remain friends with to this day. I will miss them all very much.

Thank you Queensland Health and thank you Cunnamulla Hospital.”



OUR TEAMS

Mitchell celebrates International Nurses Day



HONOURING INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Every year, on 12 May, we celebrate International Nurses Day (IND), the birthdate of nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale.



Roma celebrates International Nurses Day and International Day of the Midwife

This year's theme, "Our Nurses. Our Future. The economic power of care," emphasised the vital role nurses play in our communities and the broader impacts of their work. Health Service Chief Executive, Dr Anthony Brown, said nurses were the backbone of healthcare, providing essential care and support to patients daily.

"This year's theme aims to reshape perceptions and highlight how strategic investment in nursing can yield significant economic and societal benefits," he said.

"This year, as we do every year, we encouraged everyone to take a moment today to reflect on the remarkable impact of nurses and to celebrate their commitment, skills, and compassion which form the foundation of the healthcare profession they love. Your contributions are invaluable, and your dedication to patient care is deeply appreciated."

Thank you to all the nurses in the South West for your hard work and dedication to improving the health and wellbeing of our communities across the South West!



MIDWIVES JOIN TOGETHER FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE

Charleville midwife Nicola Frieberg

On 5 May, we celebrated International Day of the Midwife (IDM), a day dedicated to honouring the remarkable contributions of midwives to maternal and newborn health.

IDM provides an opportunity for midwives to celebrate their profession and for all of us to recognise their invaluable work.

Health Service Chief Executive, Dr Anthony Brown, shared how deeply we appreciate every midwife's dedication to delivering high-quality care with compassion and skill.

"Your commitment to supporting women and their families through one of life's most significant journeys is truly inspiring," he said.

"A special thank you goes to Anne Bousfield for her unwavering dedication to advancing rural and remote midwifery. Anne's enthusiasm for creating evidence-based knowledge and influencing state and national bodies is instrumental in ensuring that health services remain accessible, equitable, efficient, and sensitive to the needs of all.

"We were also delighted to see such strong support from our partners at the recent *Growing Deadly Families: First 2,000 Days* event on 30 April in Charleville. This event highlighted the collective effort to improve generational outcomes for mums, bubs, and families."

Charleville Hospital marked IDM with a lovely morning tea, where Midwifery Student Lily Robinson, Clinical Caseload Midwife Stephanie Hudson, and Clinical Caseload Midwife Nicola Frieberg – along with her Charleville-born daughter Elsie, celebrated by cutting a cake together.

Thank-you to all the wonderful midwives across the South West for the vital work you do every day. Your dedication makes a profound difference in the lives of countless families!



Lily Robinson Midwifery Student
and Stephanie Hudson Clinical Caseload Midwife



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE: ANNE BOUSFIELD'S INSPIRING KEYNOTE AT THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

South West HHS's very own Clinical Midwifery Consultant, Anne Bousfield, was the distinguished key note speaker at the Australian College of Midwives (ACM) Queensland Annual Conference, held in Toowoomba in May.

The conference, themed "Together Towards Tomorrow," attracted 170 delegates, including the new Chief Midwife and CEO of the College of Midwives.

Alison Weatherstone, ACM's Chief Midwife, praised Anne's moving keynote, saying Anne was an absolute inspiration.

"She had the whole audience captivated by her story, and there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Her story highlighted the priority of equity of access to rural and remote areas, making her a perfect choice for our keynote this year. She received a standing ovation—everyone got goosebumps from her heartfelt and raw presentation. Anne's speech stood out as she shared her journey and the challenges and triumphs in providing maternity care in rural and remote areas," Alison said.

"Her mother, Beth Treasure, who turns 90 this year, was also present, underscoring the generational impact of midwifery. Anne highlighted her mother's experiences of giving birth in the 60s in Mitchell and contrasted them with today's rural and remote birthing services."

Reflecting on her mentors and their influence on her 37-year career, Anne honoured several key figures including Sister Tickell, the first midwifery activist she knew, who encouraged her to be an activist, Dr Bruce Sutherland, who pioneered waterbirth and upright breech birth at the Hawthorn Birth Centre, Dr Laurie Murton, who significantly advanced neonatology and administered the first surfactant in Australia, Dr Neil Roy, former Director of NETS and Justine Caines, founder of the What Women Want political party.

She also mentioned Carolyn Farndon, a senior midwife at Roma Hospital who broke barriers for midwifery training in rural areas and Emeritus Professor Lesley Barclay, who guided Anne during challenging times in her career. Anne also shared poignant personal stories, including her mother's resilience and confidence in midwives during times of limited medical support, which influenced Anne's career path.

She recounted a 1957 newspaper clipping about her father's emergency medical retrieval from Mitchell to Brisbane, highlighting the stark differences between rural and urban communities.

Anne's presentation was a profound reminder of the importance of dedicated healthcare professionals in rural areas and the incredible impact they have on their communities. South West HHS is immensely proud of Anne Bousfield's achievements and contributions to midwifery.



Anne and her mother

Anne's mother, Anne and Alison at the conference



ADMINISTRATION STAFF CELEBRATED ACROSS THE SOUTH WEST

On 3 May 2024, we celebrated Administrative Professionals Day, in recognition of the continuing hard work and dedication of our administrative staff across the South West.

This special day highlights the essential roles colleagues play in supporting the internal workings of our health service. Health Service Chief Executive Dr Anthony Brown said, no matter where you were based — whether in a clinical support, community-facing, or back-office role — administration contributions were vital to our mission of providing the highest standards of care for the people and communities we serve.

“Your collective wisdom, practical knowledge of local protocols, and commitment to tackling issues head-on amidst multiple competing priorities are invaluable,” Dr Brown said.

He said, that because of the administrative staff:

- Clinics, clinicians, and referral processes run smoothly.
- Appointments and triages are managed efficiently, and patient records are maintained securely.
- Phones are answered professionally, and callers are connected appropriately.
- Accounts are settled promptly, ensuring timely processing of invoices and billing.
- Vacancies are filled, and new staff are onboarded effectively.
- Supplies are maintained and replenished without interruption.
- Patients and staff receive necessary support with travel, accommodation and claims.
- Crucial data and clinical information are compiled, submitted and used to advocate for our communities.
- Meetings and engagement opportunities with partners, key stakeholders, and communities are well-managed.

“I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge Emma Humphreys, Manager of the Health and Clinical Information Team,” Dr Brown said.

“As Chair of the South West HHS Administration Network Forum, Emma’s tireless advocacy and support for administrative professionals is commendable.

On behalf of everyone who relies on you, thank you to all our administrative staff for your dedication and hard work. Your contributions make South West HHS a better place each and every day.



Lisa Colley and Megan Allwood



Quilpie administration team



Emma Humphreys

A special note from Lisa McArdle, Nursing Director of Quality and Safety

It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the many administrative officer roles within the Safety and Quality team. These unsung heroes are essential to our operations. From data collection and reporting to system management and consumer feedback, their efforts ensure clinicians have access to vital systems, enabling quality patient care. Without their support, I couldn’t fulfill my duties effectively. A heartfelt thank you to my team, and all administrative staff.



—Administrative Professionals Day celebrations in Roma



SOUTH WEST HHS PATIENT SAFETY STAFF SURVEY 2024

Patient safety is a top priority for the South West HHS, so that:

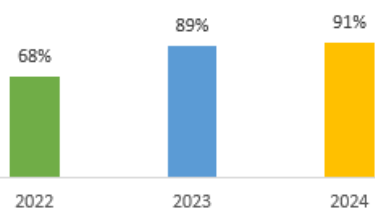
- We actively identify and mitigate potential errors to significantly improve patient outcomes.
- Employees feel valued as the health services most important resource.
- Consumers have a greater trust in a health service that prioritise patient safety.

Patient Safety measurements drill deeper into the health service and highlight the strengths and weaknesses within different units.

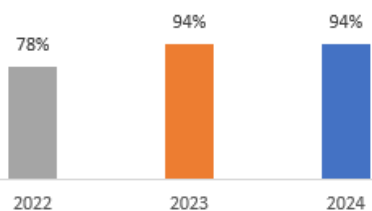
Surveying staff about patient safety is an important part of a comprehensive measurement and improvement system and is also a mandatory requirement in accordance with the 2nd edition of the National Safety and Quality Healthcare Service (NSQHS) Clinical Governance Standard 1.

Our annual survey was conducted between the 3 June 2024 to 28 June 2024 with a total of 134 responses received, demonstrating continued pleasing increases in findings:

Would you rate your unit / work area as good/very good on patient safety?



I would recommend a friend or relative to be treated in this unit / work area



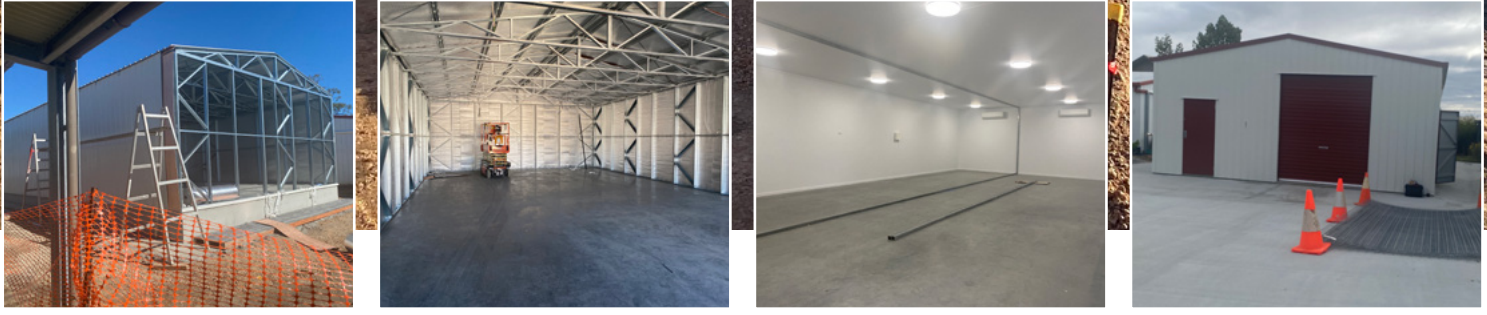
Further notable improvements in 2024 Patient Safety Culture results include:

- ✓ **91%** of staff rated Patient Safety in their unit/work area as good/very good compared to 89% from last survey.
- ✓ **94%** of staff responded that they would recommend a friend or relative to be treated in their unit/work area which is equal to last survey.
- ✓ **95%** of staff stated that they worked together as an effective team compared to 90% from last survey.
- ✓ **93%** of staff stated during busy times they help each other compared to 89% from last survey.
- ✓ **88%** of staff stated that their unit regularly reviews processes to determine if changes are needed related to patient safety compared with 84% from last survey.
- ✓ **81%** of staff disagreed that mistakes are held against them compared to 73% of staff from last survey.
- ✓ **95%** of staff stated their supervisor seriously considers suggestions for improving patient safety compared to 90% from last survey.
- ✓ **96%** of staff stated their manager took action to address patient safety concerns compared to 90% from last survey.
- ✓ **92%** of staff stated hospital management provide adequate resources to improve patient safety compared to 88% from last survey.
- ✓ **93%** of staff stated staff speak up when something negatively impacts patient safety compared with 78% from last survey.
- ✓ **83%** of staff stated that they would speak up regardless of if the person had more authority compared to 74% from last survey.





OUR RESOURCES



PALLIATIVE CARE OPTIMISATION PROJECT

Between 13 February 2024 and 30 June 2024, South West HHS embarked on a transformative journey through the Palliative Care Optimisation Project.

This initiative was designed to bolster the Palliative Care Team's engagement with the broader South West HHS team, introduce new district wide specialist positions, and co-develop an expanded Model of Care (MoC) for palliative care services.

The project was spearheaded by the Service Director of Primary Care and Integration Louisa Dufty, with the Palliative Care Optimisation Officer, Jen Burton's support.

Louisa said historically the South West HHS delivered palliative care through frontline staff across its facilities, supplemented by three palliative care nursing positions based in Roma, St George, and Charleville.

"With the aid of Palliative Care Reform funding, four additional full-time specialist positions—a Nurse Practitioner, Senior Occupational Therapist, Advanced Health Worker, and Administration Officer—were integrated into the service, enhancing the overall care model," Louisa said.

"An innovative aspect of this project was redirecting unspent labour funds to construct a climate-controlled shed on the Roma Hospital campus for storing Palliative Care Equipment Program (PCEP) equipment.

"This facility was completed swiftly by 28 June 2024, ensuring compliance with the financial year's funding requirements."

Louisa said the project also leveraged the Australian Government's *Better Quality of Care* initiative, which allocated \$300,000 from 1 September 2020 to 30 June 2024 to improve access to specialist palliative care in Residential Aged Care Facilities through the SPACE Project.

"The primary aim was to shift from a crisis-based care model to one that actively engages with patients' care goals, supporting their palliative and end-of-life journeys," she said.

"A key planning workshop on 21 February 2024, featuring presentations by external experts, set the stage for embedding new positions into routine operations and promoting early referrals to palliative care.

"The project involved extensive consultations and workshops with frontline teams to identify best practices, challenges, and opportunities in palliative care. Workshops held in Roma, St George, and Charleville saw 66 team members collaboratively design the MoC. Additional sessions in June 2024 further engaged stakeholders unable to attend earlier workshops.

"The workshops revealed several challenges, including initiating palliative care conversations, ensuring consistent referrals, providing culturally safe care, and overcoming limited health literacy.

"Opportunities highlighted included fostering early referrals, enhancing community education, improving interdisciplinary collaboration, and increasing cultural capability."

The project has significantly impacted the palliative care service, fostering strong relationships, enhancing referrals, and setting the groundwork for continuous improvement.



State Budget Outcomes for the South West HHS

The Queensland Budget 2024-25 was released on 11 June 2024 and provides much needed additional opportunities to support a healthy population.

“In total, Queensland Health was allocated \$28.9 billion – which is almost 30% of the entire State Budget. For comparison, the next highest allocation was to Education, at 23.4%” – said Executive Director Finance Infrastructure and Corporate Support, Linda Patmore.

“Within this overall investment, there will be a range of statewide funding commitments which will further flow through to benefit South West communities, including for First Nations people, promoting a healthy start for life and wider supports for mental health, chronic health conditions, maternity care, and sexual and reproductive health. And there is also welcome plans to support existing, and attract new, staff to the frontline for the years ahead – so you can be sure that we will do all we can to ensure the South West gets its fair share of these opportunities”.

Overall, South West HHS will receive an initial \$218 million in funding for Financial Year 2024-2025, which is a welcome increase of approximately \$20 million from the last State Budget announcement.

“It’s also worthwhile considering just how far we have come as an organisation since establishment on 1 July 2012, when our first budget was set at \$108 million – which means we have effectively doubled in this time”, added Linda.

Each year, the Queensland government also sets a range of challenging statewide performance measures including specific targets relating to Emergency Department access, Elective Surgery waits and other services.

“South West HHS generally performs strongly against these measures through the hard work of our staff and teams – particularly over the last couple of years when we had the added complexity of COVID-19.

“This has not gone unnoticed, and has been much appreciated and acknowledged during formal meetings with the department in relation to our overall performance, and from these firm foundations we look forward to continuing to advocate for further resources to support the local needs of our communities.”



Facility catch-up meetings: **WORKING TOGETHER TO UPLIFT OUTCOMES**

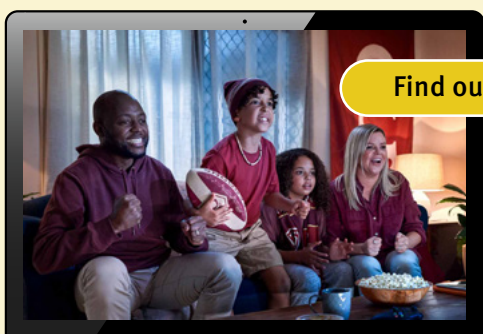
To draw a link between our system wide service commitments and our direct service to local communities, a schedule of facility ‘catch up meetings’ are routinely held between the South West Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and our facilities, primary and community care teams, GP clinics, residential aged care facilities and our Oral Health and Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs teams.

These collegiate sessions, held over three separate days, provide opportunities in a supportive environment to discuss emergent challenges, key achievements and wider partnership working opportunities.

“The Executive Leadership Team remain humbled and grateful to the efforts of all our facilities and teams who work tirelessly to make for safe, effective and sustainable services for their communities, and each other. We are also appreciative of the preparations that are required to inform our meetings – these are always inspiring and great opportunities to get a true feel about what’s happening on the ground as well as key themes and trends the organisation,” Health Service Chief Executive Dr Anthony Brown said.

Normally held three to four times per year, for the year ahead, the ELT is currently in the process of reviewing the catch up process – including underpinning performance metrics – to develop a more meaningful and sustainable approach that best reflects the realities of local service provision whilst reducing reporting burden and maximising time for meaningful conversations that support the front line.

“I’d also like to encourage all sites to remain at an accreditation ready everyday posture by paying particular attention to staying focused on mandatory training and working through any audit recommendations, including occupational health and safety. Through close attention to these important measures, and through these scheduled meetings, we will ensure our service continues to evolve and adapt to local community need and future funding and service opportunities,” Dr Brown said.



[Find out more →](#)



Think green: SOUTH WEST HHS'S CLIMATE STRATEGY

Informed by staff, partners, and community input, South West HHS's first Climate Sustainability Plan was published in May 2024 and maps out how South West HHS will contribute towards the Queensland government's 2030 renewable energy and emission reduction goals and 2050 zero net emission target.

South West HHS Executive Director Governance, Strategy and Performance Leigh Burton said this was a landmark publication for the South West HHS.

"It comes off the back of us being the first HHS across Queensland to undertake a detailed risk assessment workshop facilitated by Queensland Health into the particular climate risks we face as a wider community," Leigh said.

As one of the largest employers in the region, and with health care being a significant contributor towards existing climate impacts, we all have a key social responsibility for future generations – and that's particularly apparent when, potentially, we could have different areas of our service grappling with fire, floods and drought all at the same time.

"But we are also realistic that taking pragmatic steps in the years to come is the best approach to identify and address practical measures that will make the biggest difference in the years ahead."

You can find the strategies and our latest updates online.

Leigh said the strategy essentially has three key principles:

- **Learning it** – We continually build expertise and improve our understanding of the implications of a changing climate on the delivery of safe and high quality health care.
- **Leading it** – We understand our role as a community leader and commit to collaborating and engaging with the South West HHS partners and community to promote and maintain a cohesive view of environmental sustainability.
- **Living it** – We invest in and act on opportunities to transition to a zero carbon future, adapt to a changing climate in a fiscally sustainable matter and embedding climate considerations into all that we do.

"For example – and supplementing our first electric vehicle which was delivered to Roma Hospital and installation of onsite solar powered chargers early this year – further chargers are planned for Charleville and St George, allowing the health service to incorporate additional EVs into our fleet, and therefore contribute towards the wider roll out of Queensland's Electric Superhighway infrastructure," he said.

"There will be lots of inspiring opportunities for staff and local communities to get involved on our journey and suggest ideas from the ground up to further inform the embed climate and sustainability thinking in all that we do – it's an exciting time to think green as we adapt our services for the future and changing climate ahead."

Climate Strategy

[Read Strategy →](#)

Sustainability Action Plan

[Read Plan →](#)

South West Hospital and Health Service Climate Strategy 2024-2030

Our commitment:
To build a culture of environmental sustainability across the South West HHS, taking advantage of opportunities to transition to a zero-carbon future and adapting our services to a changing climate.

Our principles:
Learning it – We continually build expertise and improve our understanding of the implications of a changing climate on the delivery of safe and high quality health care.
Leading it – We understand our role as a community leader and commit to collaborating and engaging with the South West HHS partners and community to promote and maintain a cohesive view of environmental sustainability.
Living it – We invest in and act on opportunities to transition to a zero carbon future, adapt to a changing climate in a fiscally sustainable matter and embedding climate considerations into all that we do.

Our approach
South West HHS accepts that the journey to achieving our strategy involves risk which is continually assessed and managed through our governance and risk frameworks and processes, and sustainable financial and resource investment, ensuring that the delivery of safe and high quality healthcare is always at the forefront of what we do.

Risks and opportunities

Policy and legal
Technology
Market and procurement
Reputation and resilience

TRANSITION

Across and Infrastructure
Supply chain
Community and workforce
Healthcare services

OLD GOVERNMENT TARGETS
The South West Hospital and Health Service actions progressively align with the Queensland Government targets of:

- 50% renewable energy by 2030
- 30% interim emissions reduction target of at least 30% below 2005 levels by 2030
- Zero net emissions by 2050

Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2024-2027

The HHS has set ambitious and measurable targets in accordance with Queensland Government and Queensland Health climate risk strategies. Its preparation for a transition to a net zero emission future by 2050, and improving the sustainability of system wide healthcare delivery.

We are
Throughout the period of this plan the South West HHS is:
• Actively implementing controls for climate change adaptation and transition risks within our rural and remote context
• Building expertise in matters relating to climate change across the Queensland Health system and wider sector
• Investing and proactively seeking further opportunities to introduce renewable energy and storage solutions across our facilities, offices and residential accommodation, including:
– Electric vehicle infrastructure
– Solar panels
– Battery power
– Transition away from gas and petrol where possible
• Further embed sustainability considerations into routine processes and factor these considerations into future planning
• Through our actions, and working alongside our partners, encourage a measurable reduction in direct and indirect carbon impacts.

We will
Our initial strategy will best position us to make further long term changes by allowing us to:
• Better understand and measure our waste and emission footprint – including for clinical services
• Build resilient and carbon neutral infrastructure whenever possible
• Work with community partners to build markets, experience and support for sustainable activity, drive broader community action
• Embed climate considerations into business as usual
• Continue to join and contribute to local, state, national and global sustainability networks, including the Global Green and Healthy Hospitals
• Establish and empower working groups and enable staff champions.

Our focus areas
Across the horizon of this first strategy, South West HHS will primarily focus on the following key drivers:
➔ **Infrastructure:** Retrofitting existing infrastructure where possible, and ensuring that new infrastructure is built according to green principles and incorporates renewable energy systems
➔ **Process Improvement:** Identifying opportunities to improve internal processes to reduce waste and emissions
➔ **Data generation:** To inform initial benchmarks and assist in determining and measuring appropriate targets



New South West Digital Strategy: 2024 and beyond

Recently published, the new *South West Digital Strategy | 2024 and Beyond* – sets out an ambitious yet realistic roadmap that builds on previous foundations, and opportunities for accelerated progression, for the years ahead.

“When I think about what the South West HHS must have been like prior to the establishment of the previous strategy, back in 2018, I’m amazed at what has been achieved in such a short space of time which is a credit to all of our staff, teams and partners,” said Health Service Chief Executive Dr Anthony Brown.

“While we’ve stretched ourselves to meet the technology demands, and subsequent opportunities, of the COVID-19 pandemic it’s been pleasing that we also refined the previous strategy annually to maintain its continued relevance to us and our community, and I am heartened by the continuous focus our previous strategy gave to guide investment, strengthen our direction and make way for further innovation and change.

“Our new document therefore puts us in a strong position to continue to leverage forward opportunities to ensure a more seamless and connected South West.”

The new digital strategy has had many hands in its development, with the first workshop held more than 12 months ago, and many have contributed ideas, aspirations, and realistic thinking to the final product.

Through our new strategy we have a new beacon for our digital future, enabling us to adjust based on lessons learned but also to embrace new technologies on the horizon.

However, we are not finished there, as we will continue to refresh it annually, reporting our progress to our internal Executive Digital Transformation Committee and through to the HHS Board and wider community.

“I’m excited that this strategy aims to drive the future of care delivery by leveraging technology and that, together, we can aim to provide an improved healthcare experience in the South West closer to home,” added South West HHS’s Chief Information Officer Rural and Remote, Helen Murray.

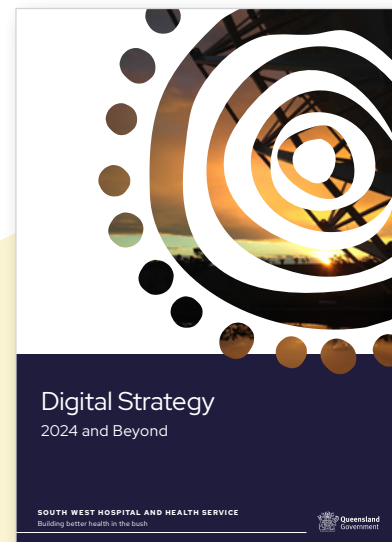
“I’d like to thank all staff, members of the community and our valued partners for their guidance in informing our new strategy, and also our dedicated Western Digital Health Team – and eHealth Queensland partners – who do so much to support our service each and every day.

“For those who have contributed, your vision of leveraging technology to support care closer to home has been much appreciated and we can look forward to collaboratively providing the care our rural people need and deserve, as we embed sustainable and digitally enabled care.”



You can access our new digital strategy online.

[Read Strategy →](#)



Our digital Principles

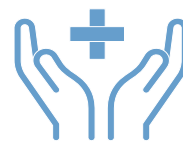
The best outcome for people and their wellbeing is at the heart of our digital future

We are trusted to deliver the best digital experience for our people

Partnership and collaboration are critical to delivering value through investment in digital

Digital technologies will have a place to incubate and thrive

Investment in digital technologies delivers value for our people



OUR SERVICES

PROMOTING DIGNITY IN CARE – AGED CARE REFORM DISCUSSIONS

The Australian Government has previously released a Governing for reform aged care training package for the use of Executives and Board members across the national health and aged care sector comprising a suite of discussion papers to inform aged care corporate and clinical governance issues across a range of key topics.

Starting in late 2023, the South West HHS Executive Leadership Team – alongside Directors of Nursing, Primary and Community Care Service Directors and other colleagues – embarked on a series of discussions reflecting a range of considerations to be kept front and centre of future planning.

“Given the increasing emphasis and profile of aged care provision in South West HHS’s service mix, it’s important to ensure our thinking as a wider team fully reflects and always includes the needs of our ageing populations,” said Catherine Ole, currently serving as Acting Executive Director Nursing and Midwifery Services.

“In my day to day role as Nursing Director Aged Care, it’s a true privilege to work across our residential facilities at Westhaven in Roma, and Waroona in Charleville, in addition to our Multipurpose Health Service teams at Augathella, Cunnamulla, Dirranbandi, Injune, Mitchell, Mungindi, Quilpie, and Surat. No matter where you are, everybody should expect their personal needs will be respected – and their dignity maintained – as we move into, and enjoy, our later years.

Within the context of an ageing population, this is particularly important when you consider that approximately 60% of South West HHS’s admitted beds currently provide residential aged care services, alongside additional services that support people living independently at home.

“The aged care landscape remains particularly dynamic, and we await progression of future national legislation that will provide us with further opportunities to enhance our service offering and ensure the delivery of best practice and person-centred services, where our consumers and residents are informed and supported to make decisions of their choosing to enhance quality of life,” said Catherine.

Key selected insights from sessions held during August, September and November 2023, and June 2024, included:

- The importance of promoting compassionate, home-like environments and independence wherever we provide care and respecting the wishes of our residents on an informed risk approach.
- Seeking to identify local themes into wider trends, such as the importance of wider inclusivity and needs of our older generations.
- Looking for further opportunities to share knowledge and insights across our service to support continued improvements.
- The challenges of workforce attraction, recruitment and retention – alongside the rewarding nature and valuable life experiences which can be experienced.
- Ensuring our facilities and services evolve and incorporate future needs and requirements of the aged care sector.
- Appreciating the dedication and specialist skills of our staff, particularly in MPHS facilities – given their role in juggling the needs of residents, but also always being on hand to treat patients presenting to Emergency Departments and requiring other routine treatments.

“Working in aged care can sometimes be challenging – however it’s also personally rewarding in so many ways and through these modules and group discussions, we have navigated a range of important discussions around several key topics, to help us further shape the direction of our services.”

Catherine Ole, Acting Executive Director Nursing and Midwifery Services



SOUTH WEST HHS OPERATIONAL PLAN – WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

As we move into a new financial year, South West HHS has recently closed out another successful year of operational achievements in support of our Hospital and Health Board's overarching Strategic Plan.

“An Operational Plan is essentially an annual statement of key projects and initiatives to be delivered over a 12 month timeframe that contributes towards the Board's four year strategic direction,” said Leigh Burton, Executive Director Governance, Strategy and Performance.

“In effect we are setting out how we will look to progressively uplift the organisation, sustainably growing the services we provide and enhancing our business intelligence functions year by year, in addition to progressing our business as usual and supporting efforts.”

Through the collective efforts of all staff and teams, there were many significant achievements delivered during the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 which have been shared in previous editions of the Pulse, and will be formally reported to State Parliament in the forthcoming South West HHS Annual Report.

These include:

- ➔ Introduction of First Nations Health Equity governance arrangements.
- ➔ Commencement of the first cohort of 36 Darling Downs-South West HHS Medical Pathway students, to grow our rural and remote medical workforce of the future.
- ➔ Development of new three year strategies to address Digital, Safety and Quality and Climate Sustainability.
- ➔ Ongoing staff and community engagement to inform new medical models of care addressing local requirements in a sustainable manner.
- ➔ Progression of key infrastructure and other priority capital projects.
- ➔ Continuing to meet key Service Agreement and financial sustainability obligations.

And within our ever complex landscape of service delivery, all staff and teams across the South West will continue to play a vital role in how we further support the continued evolution of our services, and how we serve our communities and your expressed needs.

“A total of 44 strategic deliverables, underpinned by a wider number of supporting key steps that will help us achieve our goals, are intended to be further progressed in the months ahead,” added Leigh.

We look forward to further co-design opportunities and sharing progress as we go but, in the meantime, here are a just a couple of big ticket items being progressed against the Board's key areas of focus:



Our Communities:

- Development of a Joint Needs Health Assessment with Western Queensland Primary Health Network and other partners.
- Continuing HOPE, Healthy Communities and other locally based health promotion services.
- First Nations Health Equity implementation commitments.



Our Teams:

- Optimisation of internal project management methodologies.
- Progression of new Quality and Safety Strategy commitments.



Our resources:

- Executing asset and infrastructure plans that meet current, emerging, and projected community needs.
- Delivery of Horizon 1 Climate Sustainability and Digital Strategy commitments.
- Meeting State and Commonwealth performance commitments for South West communities.



Our services:

- Review and address data sharing barriers with our partners.
- 3 Seeds / Better Care Together mental health service implementation.



May 2024 #swSpirit

Congratulations to Rode Cowling – our South West Spirit for May 2024!

Rode, from Surat MPHS has been awarded the South West Spirit Award for her outstanding demonstration of our organisation's values of adaptability, accountability, engagement, compassion, and quality.

Rode joined the Surat team just over a year ago, as a graduate nurse, and her dedication and passion have been evident from the start.

Throughout her time, she has consistently displayed a remarkable level of enthusiasm, drive, and willingness to learn, making her an invaluable asset to the Surat team.

In particular, Rode's recent commitment to the sentencing of charts for the Surat facility is a testament to her exceptional dedication and determination. Over the past six months, she has tirelessly worked to ensure the completion of this challenging task, demonstrating her unwavering commitment to excellence and going above and beyond her role.

One of her colleagues, Kasha Murray, said Rode's efforts have not only significantly contributed to the efficiency of our operations but have also set a shining example for her colleagues.

"She truly embodies the spirit of our South West values, and we are incredibly proud to have her as a member of our team," Kasha said.

Surat's Director of Nursing and Facility Manager, Skye Williams also praised Rode's work ethic since joining the team.

"I would also like to extend my gratitude to Kasha Murray – and also Belinda Sparkles, and Ailish Wallace, for their invaluable support and assistance in ensuring the timely completion of this project," Skye said.

"Their teamwork and dedication have been instrumental in achieving this milestone."



Congratulations Rode on this well-deserved recognition.

Your contributions have made a lasting impact on your colleagues in Surat. We are fortunate to have you as part of the South West family.



SWHHS FTA team from left – Nina Jordan, Janell Lobb, Nicole Pamerter and Mikaela Parlett

June 2024 #swSpirit

Congratulations to our First Nations Fail to Attend Teams – Nina and Janell in Cunnamulla, Mikaela and Nikki in Charleville, and also Stewart at Toowoomba Hospital!

Across the South West, there are significantly high rates of complex, chronic conditions – including cancer, heart disease and diabetes – and these issues are particularly intensified in First Nations people.

But for those not attending appointments, especially for people living in the community with chronic conditions, ‘Fail to attends’ (FTA) can have a significant impact on quality of life and may also delay waiting times for other people in need.

Reasons behind FTA are often complex, and can include miscommunication, difficulties in travelling, distrust of services – particularly those provided away from home – and other factors.

To support people who need to travel to larger hospitals outside of the South West, one of our Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation partners – the Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health – previously asked South West to look into better arrangements to assist people needing to travel over 650KM each way to Toowoomba for treatment.

Working together – by bridging communication gaps and advocating for the needs of First Nations patients and their families, and in an entirely non-judgemental way – Nina, Janell, Mikaela, Nikki and, in Toowoomba, Stewart are demonstrating South West’s core values of accountability, adaptability, compassion, engagement and quality by building trust, forming strong relationships, and ensuring improved access to healthcare services across remote Cunnamulla, Charleville and surrounding communities.

When the original opportunity arose, our dynamic duo of Indigenous Liaison Officer Nina and Nurse Navigator Janell were keen to meet with Stewart, Toowoomba Hospital’s CNC of Health Equity Service Redesign, to develop an end to end process to support patients needing to travel.

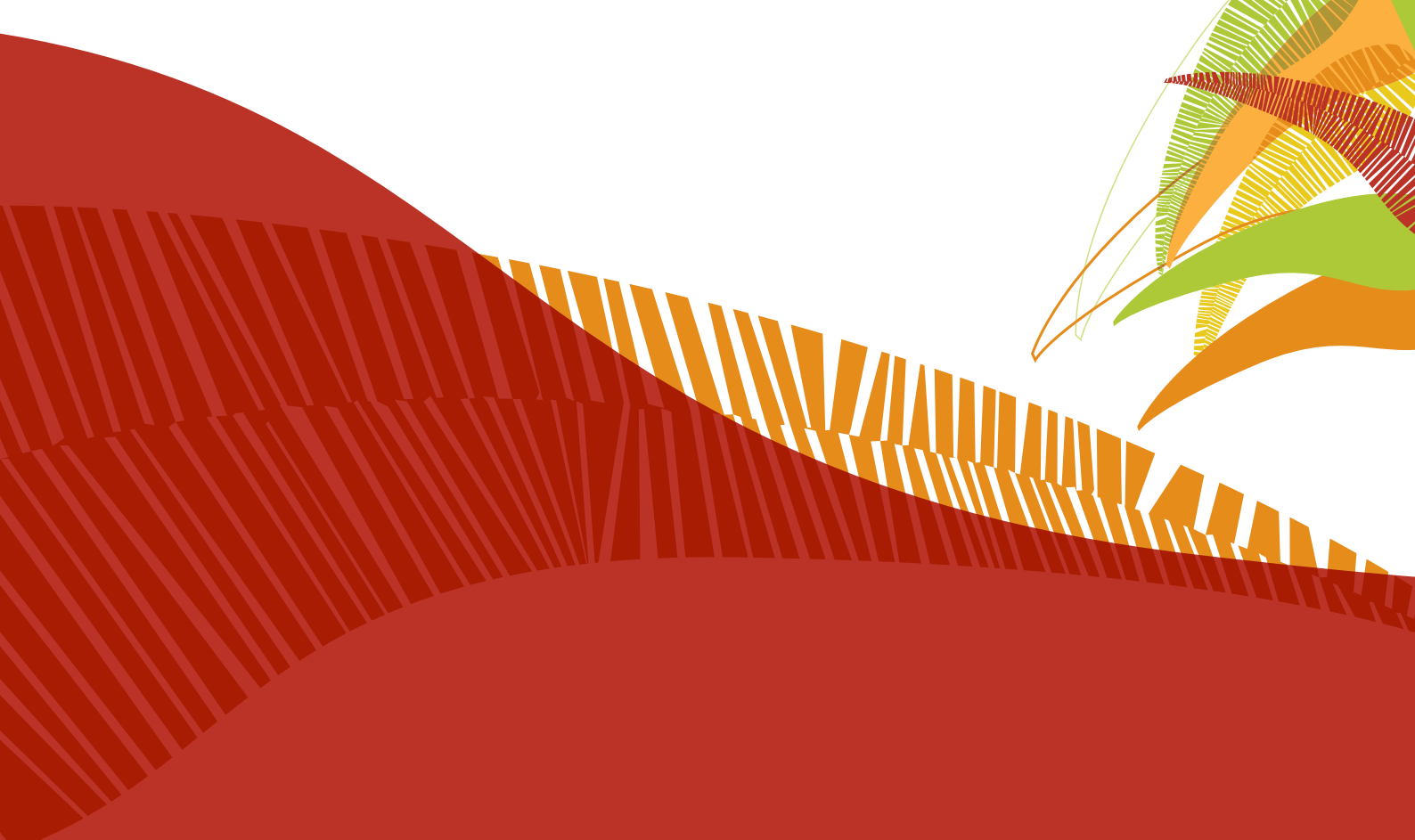
Weekly collaborative meetings were set up to ensure client needs and preferences were understood by clinicians, and to make sure people were supported to travel to and from appointments and knew what to expect and how to access travel subsidies.

These meetings also serve as a great way to share feedback and improvement suggestions and has resulted in a truly impressive outcome of community FTA rates falling by half from Cunnamulla and surrounds since March 2023, with equally impressive rates being seen from Charleville and wider communities since July 2023 through Mikaela and Nikki.

And where future appointments are converted to telehealth, our teams are also making sure patients continue to get great local support and encouragement to keep up their appointments.

In recognition of their fantastic efforts, the team were recently shortlisted for a Queensland Health Awards for Excellence within the Partnering with Consumers Category – with Nina, Janell and Stewart also invited to provide a well received presentation at the Clinical Excellence Queensland Showcase during May.

Despite sharing a wonderful evening, the team were ultimately pipped at the post for an award but we thought making them June’s South West Spirit demonstrates just how much we truly appreciate all that they do for their local communities, through partnership working, to encourage and support people access the care they need.



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