Chief Allied Health Officer’s foreword

The diversity of skills and expertise which the allied health professions bring to Queensland Health is significant, as is the potential they have for realising tangible improvements to service delivery and patient outcomes. This has been highlighted throughout the extensive research and consultation undertaken for the Ministerial Taskforce on health practitioner expanded scope of practice.

Allied health professionals contribute daily to optimising outcomes for patients across Queensland. They provide high quality, safe and efficient models of care which are based on solid evidence and proven results. This final report of the Ministerial Taskforce highlights opportunities to better use this great allied health resource.

The Ministerial Taskforce found that in Queensland Health:

- allied health professionals are educated to competently undertake a greater range of tasks and responsibilities than are often used
- opportunities exist to extend the scope of practice of some allied health professionals inline with reforms in other Australian states and internationally to improve patient satisfaction, clinical outcomes and reduce waiting times
- the support workforce can be used more effectively to enable allied health professionals to work to their full scope of practice
- many of the current hours of operation do not align with the needs of patients and a number of barriers exist to realising the full capacity of this workforce.

The Ministerial Taskforce’s recommendations call for a radical transformation of the way healthcare is delivered to the community. Queensland’s allied health professionals are renowned for their skill, expertise and innovation. I believe they have the ability to tackle this difficult task and to lead their colleagues through this change. In doing so, allied health professionals can make a greater contribution to improving health services for the community in a more cost-effective manner, including:

- improving patient access to services
- reducing waiting times in emergency departments and for specialist and surgical appointments
- improving patient flow.

This report outlines a number of evidence-based models of care that expand the scope of practice of allied health professionals to address these community needs.

There are opportunities to do things differently and to do things better. We must not settle for continuing to provide health services in the same ways we have always done when we know there is a better way. I look forward to working with you as we implement the recommendations of the Ministerial Taskforce.

Julie Hulcombe
Chief Allied Health Officer

Ministerial Taskforce on health practitioner expanded scope of practice — implementation plan

The Queensland Government is committed to delivering a healthcare system that will meet the health needs of Queenslanders for generations to come. The Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland, released in February 2013, sets out the structural and cultural improvements needed to establish Queensland as the leader in Australian healthcare. With this in mind, I commissioned the Ministerial Taskforce on health practitioner expanded scope of practice in March 2013 to investigate the role that allied health professionals play in Queensland Health, and how this role might be optimised to meet the strategic objectives set out in the Blueprint.

Allied health professionals play an essential role in ensuring Queenslanders have access to the best healthcare in Australia. The work of the Ministerial Taskforce has shown significant improvements can be made to the effectiveness and efficiency of the system if the scope of practice for allied health professionals is expanded.

Many exciting and innovative models of service delivery which optimise the skills and expertise of allied health professionals and improve access for the community exist in pockets across our Hospital and Health Services. For reasons of culture and history, these innovations have not been implemented broadly across Queensland Health. Long-held traditions mean that tasks that are regularly performed by an allied health professional in the private sector cannot be performed by their colleagues in the public sector. This needs to stop to ensure that Queenslanders across the state receive the best care and the best value for money when it comes to public healthcare.

I thank the Ministerial Taskforce for their efforts and contribution in preparing this report and entrust the Allied Health Professions’ Office of Queensland with the important task of guiding the allied health professions in the implementation of the recommendations of the report.

I encourage staff from all Hospital and Health Services to take note of the many opportunities outlined in this report for improving the system for our patients, our workforce and Queensland Health.

Lawrence Springborg
Minister for Health
### Ministerial Taskforce on health practitioner expanded scope of practice — implementation plan

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<td><strong>Hospital and Health Boards (HHSs)</strong> to lead the implementation of models of care that include allied health professionals expanding their scope of practice.</td>
<td><strong>Allied Health Professions’ Office of Queensland (AHPOQ) to showcase to HHSs, the Queensland Clinical Senate and clinical networks opportunities to enhance patient experiences and provide cost-effective services through allied health professionals expanding their scope of practice.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Department of Health to support redesign of models of care to improve the patient journey and deliver cost-effective services in outpatient clinics, emergency departments and mental health services by allied health professionals expanding their scope of practice.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Department of Health to address barriers to allied health professionals expanding their scope of practice by:</strong></td>
<td><strong>AHPOQ, in partnership with education providers, accreditation bodies and professional associations, to develop and facilitate access to education, training and tools to support allied health professionals to expand their scope of practice.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>1.1 Minister to launch the Ministerial Taskforce report and distribute to HHSs.</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.1 Work with HHB chairs and the Healthcare Purchasing, Funding and Performance Branch to include expanded allied health scope of practice in service agreements between the Department of Health and HHSs.</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.1 Distribute the Ministerial Taskforce report and implementation plan to all stakeholders.</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.1 Collaborate with the Clinical Access and Redesign Unit, HHSs and relevant statewide clinical networks to develop a plan for targeted implementation of allied health expanded scope of practice, targeting emergency departments and outpatient services, particularly for musculoskeletal and ear, nose and throat needs.</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.1 Work with the Healthcare Purchasing, Funding and Performance Branch and HHSs to address funding barriers to models of care changes.</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.1 Work with accreditation bodies and professional associations to influence training courses so the professions are capable of meeting future workforce needs.</strong></td>
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### Strategies

**1.1 Minister to launch the Ministerial Taskforce report and distribute to HHSs.**

- **1.2 Present at the meeting of HHB chairs on the background, purpose and benefits of allied health professionals expanding their scope of practice.**
- **2.1 Work with HHB chairs and the Healthcare Purchasing, Funding and Performance Branch to include expanded allied health scope of practice in service agreements between the Department of Health and HHSs.**
- **2.2 Develop key performance indicators reflecting outcomes achieved through expanding allied health scope of practice for inclusion in service agreements between the Department of Health and HHSs.**
- **3.1 Distribute the Ministerial Taskforce report and implementation plan to all stakeholders.**
- **3.2 Present the Ministerial Taskforce report at the meeting of health service chief executives, the Queensland Clinical Senate and to relevant statewide clinical networks.**
- **3.3 Collaborate with HHS allied health professionals to undertake a roadshow focussed on allied health expanded scope of practice. Include local HHBs, health service chief executives, medical, nursing, allied health professionals, and allied health assistants.**
- **4.1 Collaborate with the Clinical Access and Redesign Unit, HHSs and relevant statewide clinical networks to develop a plan for targeted implementation of allied health expanded scope of practice, targeting emergency departments and outpatient services, particularly for musculoskeletal and ear, nose and throat needs.**
- **4.2 Work with HHSs and relevant statewide clinical networks to implement allied health professional expanded scope roles.**
- **4.3 Work with and report through the Rural and Remote Statewide Clinical Network and national stakeholders (including Health Workforce Australia and Greater Northern Australia Regional Training Network) to oversee implementation of rural and remote allied health generalist roles, and Telehealth and support worker models.**
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- **5.1 Work with the Healthcare Purchasing, Funding and Performance Branch and HHSs to address funding barriers to models of care changes.**
- **5.2 Partner with HHSs and Medicare Locals to investigate funding and service delivery models to improve access to allied health services in the community.**
- **5.3 Liaise with the Australian Government Department of Health to advocate for and investigate funding models to support access to allied health services in the community.**
- **5.4 Work with the Regulatory Instruments Unit and the Chief Health Officer to progress changes in legislation relating to prescribing by podiatrists and requesting of X-rays by physiotherapists and podiatrists.**
- **5.5 Work with Human Resource Services and unions to implement flexible healthcare assistant roles.**
- **5.6 Promote the Health Service Directive on Credentialing and defining the scope of clinical practice and the Allied health clinical governance framework in Queensland Health.**
- **5.7 Address policy and legislative issues impacting on allied health professional scope of practice including home modifications, ordering of equipment and supplies and WorkCover Queensland.**
- **5.8 Target research grant allocation to further evaluate models of care incorporating expanded scope of practice.**

### Expanded scope of practice

Facilitating change towards optimising the scope of practice of allied health professionals is dependent on redefining organisational policies and processes, reviewing team roles and functions, further education and training where necessary, and supporting changes in team culture.

Queensland Health’s allied health professionals have the opportunity to lead this change to the benefit of patients and the Queensland community.

Patient-centred care, clinical service productivity and sustainability can be optimised through allied health professionals:

- working to full scope of practice
- undertaking extended scope tasks in appropriate contexts
- delegating relevant tasks to the support workforce.

Expanding the scope of practice and optimising the role of allied health professionals can:

- improve access to services
- address outpatient, emergency department and surgical waiting times
- improve patient flow.

Queensland community.