



Rural and regional activities

Providing health care in a State as geographically dispersed as Queensland has always been a challenge. Queensland Health is, however, committed to improving the quality of life for people living in rural and remote areas.

Rural Health Policy Sub-Committee

Queensland Health is represented on the National Rural Health Policy Sub-Committee of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council.

improves access to health and aged care in rural and remote communities

Through the sub-committee, Queensland Health was involved during 2003-04 in the development of a discussion paper on providing specialist health services to rural and remote communities. National consultations were held and a report is being prepared for the Health Reform Agenda Working Group.

Multi-purpose Health Services

The joint State-Commonwealth Multi-purpose Health Services (MPHS) Program, improves access to health and aged care in rural and remote communities. It integrates services relating to hospitals, community health, residential aged care and home and community care.

In 2003-04, Queensland Health:

- officially opened the \$2.1 million redevelopment of the Texas Multi-purpose Health Service which incorporated a dedicated 12-bed aged care unit, separate from the acute care hospital beds. The redevelopment includes new bathroom and shower facilities;
- opened the \$2.3 million redevelopment of the Inglewood Multi-purpose Health Service, a project funded by Queensland Health;
- added the Winton Multi-purpose Health Services (MPHS) to its 13 existing MPHSs;
- was active in developing three-year service plans for eight MPHSs whose current contracts with the Department of Health and Ageing lapsed at the end of the 2003-04 financial year; and
- finalised a new funding head of agreement for MPHS with the Department of Health and Ageing to streamline contract reporting requirements.

Regional Health Services (RHS)

The Regional Health Services is an Australian Government health and ageing-funded program providing primary health care to rural and remote communities.

Queensland Health has six regional health services at Bauhinia Shire, Clermont, Theodore, Douglas Shire, Cooktown and Collinsville. In addition, the Western Public Health Services located at Longreach, Charleville, and Mt Isa were program managed through Public Health Services.

In 2003-04, Queensland Health signed four-year contracts to renew funding agreements with the Department of Health and Ageing for these services.

Zonal initiatives

During 2003-04, Queensland Health and North West Queensland Allied Health Services provided outreach services to Richmond and Hughenden in social work, speech pathology, school oral health, podiatry, dietetic services, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychology, diabetes education, and community mental health.

Voluntary early retirements

A total of 17 people retired voluntarily from Queensland Health during 2003-04, resulting in a total of \$882,459 in severance and incentive payments. This was part of Queensland Health's standard voluntary early retirement (VER) process.

There were no VER packages during this financial year given under the whole-of-government Workforce Renewal Program.

Funded organisations

Some 781 organisations received grants that totalled over \$508 million during 2003-04. This funding was integral to the provision of health services. Full details of the funding and the organisations involved can be found at www.health.qld.gov.au

Queensland Health staff made a total of 498 overseas trip during 2003-04, including travel for clinical staff who have an award-based entitlement.