New health head committed to keeping people out of hospital

The Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service’s newest executive is committed to keeping people healthy and out of hospitals.

Thursday Island resident Vonda Moar-Malone took up her new appointment as the health service’s Executive Director of Primary Health Care on 1 July.

Torres and Cape HHS Chief Executive Dr Jill Newland said Ms Moar-Malone’s role would be to provide strategic advice on primary health initiatives, community engagement and community partnerships across both the Torres Strait and Cape York sectors of the health service.

“Ms Moar-Malone has 22 years’ experience with the Australian Government working in the Torres Strait and focusing on improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians,” Dr Newland said.

“As such, she will bring a wealth of unparalleled experience and insight to our health service.

“This is an exciting, newly created and innovative strategic position reporting to the Chief Executive and will complement the roles of the existing northern and southern directors of primary health care who are already in place.”

Ms Moar-Malone said she was looking forward to the challenge of her new role.

“As we all know, the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not as good as non-Indigenous Australians,” she said.

“I see my role as listening to and engaging with our various communities and, in partnership with them, helping develop and deliver culturally appropriate primary health services that will help close the gap in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

“Delivering effective, locally appropriate primary health care services and education can help people identify and pursue healthier lifestyles and avoid harmful behaviours that can lead to long-term chronic disease and hospitalisation.

“I want our communities to be healthy, well and out of hospital.”

Prior to joining the Torres and Cape HHS, Ms Moar-Malone was the Senior Manager for the Far North Qld Medicare Local (FNQML) based on Thursday Island.

In this role, which she took on in 2012, she established the presence of FNQML in the region, working closely with key stakeholders, including the Torres and Cape HHS, to deliver localised primary health care initiatives.
Before she joined FNQML, she was the Executive Manager of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Health Partnership with the Torres Strait Regional Authority.

She has also been a board member of the Islanders Industry Board of Service (IBIS) since 2012, a member of the Oxfam Australia Straight Talk Steering Committee, member of the Torres Strait Dementia Project and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

She was previously a consumer representative on the Torres and Cape HHS Clinical Safety and Quality Committee.

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