The nurse practitioner service in the departments of emergency medicine continues to expand its service to the community of the Sunshine Coast:

- Nambour General Hospital
- Caloundra Health Service
- Gympie Health Service

The nurse practitioner role provides a new level of service for our community. A nurse practitioner has been endorsed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

The nurse practitioner role is grounded in the nursing profession’s values, knowledge, theories and practice, providing innovative and flexible health care delivery. QNC, 2005

Nurse practitioners work as key members of the healthcare team and collaborate with other nurses and healthcare professionals including GPs, medical and surgical specialists, physiotherapists, diéticians, occupational therapists and many others.

To find out more

- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

- Australian College of Nurse Practitioners

- Queensland Health
A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse who has completed both advanced university study at a masters degree level and extensive clinical training to expand upon the traditional role of the registered nurse.

They use extended skills, knowledge and experience in the assessment, planning, implementation, diagnosis and evaluation of care required.

Through their training and expertise, nurse practitioners are able to autonomously perform advanced physical assessments, order diagnostic tests, interpret the results of these tests, initiate referrals to relevant healthcare providers and prescribe appropriate medications and other therapies as needed.

The expanded role of the nurse practitioner is clearly defined by the scope of practice in which the nurse practitioner practices.

**Nurse practitioners may refer patients to:**

- physiotherapist
- outpatients clinics
- speech pathologist
- community services
- diabetes educators
- general practitioner
- specialists.

The nurse practitioners role has clear guidelines.

The nurse practitioner will see patients with less life threatening conditions, with a view to extending their practice in the future.

Emergency departments nurse practitioners are senior clinicians who can independently treat patients that present to the emergency department with episodic health complaints.

**The list below are some common presentations but this list is not exhaustive:**

- treat patients independently
- collaborate with senior medical staff when required
- treat children
- treat abdominal disorders
- treat eye, ear, nose and throat disorders
- treat chest infections
- treat urinary problems
- treat burns, bites and stings
- order pathology
- order radiology
- treat fractures
- treat and suture wounds
- order pain relief
- order/prescribe other pharmaceutical treatments
- refer to specialist
- issue medical certificate when appropriate
- communicate with your general practitioner.

**Why do we have nurse practitioners in our department of emergency medicine?**

- to improve patient waiting times
- to provide timely and quality care
- to improve continuity of care
- for help with retention of expert nurses in clinical practice
- to improve health promotion and patient education
- to provide extended service out of hours to improve access to patient care.