

First year of local Board overseeing more health services in the Darling Downs

The first year of the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service (DDHHS) has seen more and better healthcare services delivered to local communities.

The DDHHS Board, comprised of local representatives from all parts of the region, has been very clear in directing the health service to deliver excellence in rural and regional healthcare.

In 2012-13, the health service has had a strong focus on:

- providing better access to health services
- delivering more care locally

- supporting government commitments to revitalise frontline services for families and deliver better infrastructure
- enhancing engagement and developing closer working relationships with patients, families, community groups, GPs and other primary health providers.

This document presents a summary of the achievements in the first year of being established as an independent statutory authority, while setting the direction for the future of healthcare services across the Darling Downs.

In reflecting on the year's achievements, Board Chair Mike Horan said there were many successes to celebrate, but he was mindful of the challenges that were involved with delivering health services across a large region.

"All major activity that we are contracted to do under a service agreement with the Department of Health has been achieved," Mr Horan said.

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YEAR AT A GLANCE

Surgeries performed
7,040

Separations (discharges)
60,837

Bed days
263,773

Same day admissions
25,804

Emergency department presentations
145,073

Babies born
3,108

Number of outpatient attendances
181,504

Community health attendances
35,420

Xray and ultrasound attendances
112,554

Mental health consultations
240,416

Adult dental treatments
23,619

Child/school-based dental treatments
21,676

Breastscreens
17,682

Pharmacy items dispensed
45,270

Maternity accolades

Toowoomba Hospital's midwifery services won two prestigious accolades during the year.

Midwife Katy Fitzgibbon was named Queensland Midwife of the Year by the Australian College of Midwives, and Indigenous maternity service Boomagam Caring was named a finalist in the "addressing inequalities in midwifery care" category of the college's state awards.

Ms Fitzgibbon has been a midwife for nearly 40 years, many of them at Toowoomba Hospital.

The Boomagam Caring Service award was in the top three of 50 submissions.

Through the service, pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have home visits by a midwife and have a designated Aboriginal Health Worker to help with hospital appointments.

The name was requested by Mrs Lillian Colonel, a traditional landowner from the Jarroair tribe. Boomagam means 'woman' or 'aunt' in the Jarroair language.

➔ Boomagam Service Midwifery Consultant Linda Evans and Toowoomba Hospital midwife Katy Fitzgibbon at the awards ceremony.





The Horizon and Macro NEAT teams focused on clinical service redesign to improve emergency access times at Toowoomba Hospital. The Macro NEAT Project team, left to right: Ann Fullerton (Project Admin Officer), Lisa Hillis (Project Officer), Dr Luke Gaffney (Director of Medicine), Christopher Hombsch (Project Officer).

More people treated in their home community

During the year the DDHHS had a strong focus on providing more care locally to improve services to the communities of the Darling Downs.

Achievements included:

- Officially opening the Regional Cancer Centre at Toowoomba Hospital in July 2012. This 24-bed unit was complemented with the expansion of the Oncology Day Therapy Unit by four places. There were 998 admissions plus 11,416 non-admitted occasions of service, including chemotherapy, other oncology treatments/ consultations, and palliative care.
- Opening the Adolescent Mental Health Unit 'Yannanda' in August 2012 meant 222 young people were able to access inpatient treatment in Toowoomba, rather than in Brisbane.
- Sub-acute services were enhanced with the recruitment of a staff specialist geriatrician and the provision of geriatric outpatient clinics, stroke service, falls clinic and chronic disease clinics.
- Restarting general surgical services at Kingaroy Hospital meant 96 elective surgical procedures were performed locally - equal to the total number of procedures in the two previous years.
- Six more patients will be able to access renal dialysis three times a week in Kingaroy thanks to the plan to transfer dialysis places from Toowoomba. This will help address chronic kidney disease, a major health concern in the South Burnett.
- Toowoomba Hospital introduced an innovative new service called a 23-hour ward. It is an extended stay unit for patients who are ready to leave after a night of care and observation.

Service levels improved

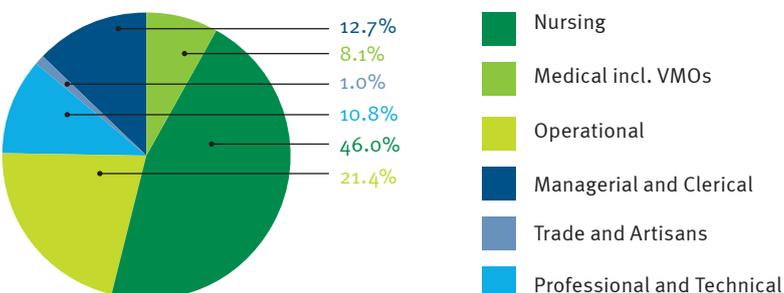
Thanks to the dedication of staff and a realignment of priorities, the DDHHS has made significant inroads to achieving a higher level of service in number of key areas.

Highlights included:

- Targets were exceeded for all categories of patients to be seen in our emergency departments within recommended timeframes.
- National Emergency Access Target (NEAT) performance at Toowoomba Hospital exceeded the target of 77 per cent to be discharged, transferred, or admitted within four hours.
- 17,682 breastscreens were delivered compared with 16,962 the previous year.
- Telehealth consultations increased to 1,531, up from 943 in the previous year.
- 186,040 Oral Health Weighted Occasions of Service (WOOS) were delivered compared with 167,752 in 2011-12.
- Endoscopy volume increased from 2,249 to 2,470 cases. A further 273 were outsourced as a result of the community dividend announced by the Board.
- As at the end of June 2013 there were no patients waiting longer than clinically recommended timeframes for category one (surgery in 30 days) and category two (surgery in 90 days) at Toowoomba Hospital.

DDHHS workforce by occupational stream (2012-13)

The following graph shows the occupational stream as a proportion for the 2012-13 financial year:





DDHHS Board Chair Mike Horan officially opens the new Cherbourg Community Health building with Cherbourg Community Council Mayor Ken Bone, Christine Stewart and Board Member Terry Fleischfresser.

Better infrastructure improves healthcare

This financial year a number of infrastructure and service improvements were achieved ensuring the enhancement of frontline services through the Darling Downs region.

Highlights included:

- The Cherbourg Community Health Service relocated to a newly renovated building located on the Cherbourg Hospital campus, which was opened in August 2012. The building was named after Ms Christine Stewart, a local community member in recognition of 37 years with Queensland public health services, particularly with the local indigenous community.
- The Griffith University teaching and student accommodation facilities opened in Stanthorpe, Kingaroy and Warwick co-located with our health services.
- The Inglewood Dental Facility - MacIntyre Dental Practice opened in May 2013. Engagement with private dentists will go a long way towards reducing the waiting lists for dental treatment and building a better oral health service for the Southern Downs.
- The Southern Downs Mental Health Service at Warwick Hospital has improved clinic and office space as a result of a \$120,000 donation from the Warwick Returned Services League (RSL).
- At Chinchilla Hospital \$900,000 of works was completed, including the upgrade of the staff accommodation, hospital roadway repairs, and replacement of floor coverings in outpatient areas.
- In May 2013 the Board announced community dividend funding of \$4 million. This includes the refurbishment of maternity services at Stanthorpe and the refurbishment of the palliative care suite at Goondiwindi Hospital, with planning for these two projects well underway, plus 200 extra endoscopies and up to \$3 million extra for Toowoomba Hospital to ensure that by the end of December 2013 no patients booked for routine (category 3) surgery wait in excess of the recommended time of one year.
- Construction of the Wandoan Primary Healthcare Centre in the Western Downs neared completion. The centre is being built in partnership with Xstrata Coal, and will be a great boost to healthcare in Wandoan.
- The Community Health Centre in Dalby is being rebuilt after a fire at a cost of approximately \$850,000.

Our communities



We provide a wide range of health services to approximately 300,000 people and are the largest employer in the region with 4,700 staff. We provide high-quality acute, sub-acute, palliative care, mental health, drug and alcohol, oral health, residential care, and community health services. Located across 90,000 square kilometres (around 1.5 times the size of Tasmania), we deliver care from 26 locations. We manage an annual budget of \$570 million.

GERIATRICIAN JOINS STAFF

A staff specialist geriatrician has joined the health service to help address the needs of an ageing population.

Dr Nisal Gange (pictured) and team established several important services including two weekly geriatrics outpatients clinics, stroke service, mini-stroke service, falls clinic and chronic disease clinic.

Demand for such services is increasing as over the next 30 years there will be double the current number of people aged over 65 years.





Back (left to right): Ms Marie Pietsch, Ms Patricia (Trish) Leddington-Hill, Ms Cheryl Dalton. Middle (left to right) Dr Jeffrey Prebble OAM, Ms Megan O'Shannessy, Dr Ian Keys. Front (left to right): Dr Ross Hetherington, Mr Terry Fleischfresser, Mr Mike Horan AM, Dr Dennis Campbell

Stakeholder engagement underpins direction

The establishment of the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service (DDHHS) as a statutory authority has provided more opportunity for engagement with local stakeholders to ensure our services are relevant and meet the top priorities for patients and communities.

The DDHHS has many established engagement processes through hospital auxiliaries, support groups, community meetings, volunteer involvement, advisory networks and partnerships with non-government organisations.

Planning started this year to undertake the inaugural Health Service Plan for 2013-23. The purpose of the plan is to provide the strategic service directions to inform future delivery of public health services.

Engagement activities in 2013-13 included:

- The DDHHS Board (pictured, above) held every second monthly meeting in a regional location so Board members could see first hand the work of the local health facilities, meet staff, and engage with local community stakeholders.
- The Board has also met formally with stakeholders at each Board meeting as well as through one-on-one meetings with members of parliament, regional councils, health interest groups and universities.

- A protocol was developed between the DDHHS and Darling Downs-South West Queensland Medicare Local. The protocol promotes cooperation in the planning and delivery of health services.
- Three clinical leaders' forums were held throughout the year, providing a valuable professional development and feedback platform for senior clinical staff.
- Each local health facility was encouraged to facilitate input from the local community through consultative committees or other avenues. Examples included engagement with a mothers' group in Stanthorpe to plan the refurbishment of the local maternity service.
- Mental health consumer advisory groups are now operating in Toowoomba, Dalby, Warwick and Kingaroy. These groups provide valuable insight and advice to the service in relation to carer concerns and issues.

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"In addition, the service has made considerable savings which are able to be delivered as a community dividend to fund additional elective surgery, endoscopy and capital improvements to a number of our hospitals."

In his report, Chief Executive Peter Bristow paid tribute to DDHHS staff.

"I believe the most important attribute of the service is its care. Our staff live in the communities of the Darling Downs and deliver great care across our many facilities, professionally providing healthcare services with heart, compassion and respect," Dr Bristow said.

"This year has presented new challenges, and I thank our staff for all their work and their professionalism in adapting to change and performing their duties for the public.

"One key tenet of the DDHHS is that care should be delivered safely and be of high quality. During 2012-13, the independent Australian Council on Healthcare Standards re-accredited the Toowoomba Hospital, Mental Health Service and our rural hospitals for the next four years."

In 2013-14, the DDHHS plans to identify more opportunities to provide increased services to the communities we serve.

Did you know?



Seventy-six per cent of our operating budget is for employee expenses - that's around \$437m that flows directly into local economies.



Kingaroy Hospital is one of the busiest non-specialist birthing services in the state, with **408 births** for 2012-13.



To read the full DDHHS Annual Report 2012-13 (including financial statements) go to:
www.health.qld.gov.au/darlingdowns



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