The Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service (DDHHS) is an independent statutory body, overseen by the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board (the Board). The DDHHS was established on 1 July 2012, in accordance with the National Health Reform Agreement and Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011.

The DDHHS provides public health services, as defined in a Service Agreement with the Department of Health as the System Manager, to a population of nearly 300,000 people covering a predominantly rural area. The DDHHS extends from the New South Wales border south of Stanthorpe to west of Goondiwindi, Taroom in the north, and east to Murgon, including the major regional centre of Toowoomba.

The Board is responsible for the oversight of health services within the DDHHS’s region which includes a major hospital at Toowoomba, eight regional hospitals, eight rural community hospitals, six residential aged care facilities, three multipurpose health services, and five community outpatient clinics.

The members of the Board have experience in governance, management, healthcare delivery and most importantly strong local knowledge.

There are board directors representing the four different regions within the hospital and health service area – Southern Downs, Western Downs, South Burnett and Toowoomba, and two directors with nursing experience. The Board meets monthly, with every second meeting being held in a rural location.

Board members also serve on sub committees of the Board, which include the Executive, Finance, Audit and Risk, and Safety and Quality Committees.
Board Chair

Mr Mike Horan AM
Chair, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board

Mike was the Member for Toowoomba South in the Queensland Parliament from 1991 to 2012. During his political career Mike served as the leader of the National Party, leader of the Opposition, Shadow Attorney-General and Shadow Minister for Police, Health, and Primary Industries respectively. Mike regards his time as Minister for Health (1996-1998) as a highlight of his political career.

Mike has considerable experience in the development and construction of small and large health facilities. More than 100 health construction projects varying from rural hospitals to major metropolitan hospitals occurred under his health ministry. During his time as Health Minister the Surgery on Time System was established, a ten year Mental Health Plan introduced, and targets for breast screening and children’s immunisation were set and achieved.

Mike was the general manager of The Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland (Toowoomba Showgrounds) from 1978-1991 and was a driving force in the sale of the old inner city Toowoomba Showgrounds and the development of the new Toowoomba Showgrounds on a 98 hectare site. Mike has also served as secretary of the Darling Downs sub-chamber of Agricultural Societies, a number of Breed Societies, Downs Harness Racing and Toowoomba Greyhound Racing Club.

In June 2013 Mike was awarded a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia for significant service to the Parliament of Queensland and to the community of the Darling Downs.

Mike was appointed as Chair of the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board in May 2012 and was the inaugural Chair of the Queensland Hospital and Health Board Chairs’ Forum.

Mike is currently Board Chair of Downs Rugby Ltd, covering rugby union from Gatton to St George, a board member of the Toowoomba Police Citizens Youth Club and a board member of the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation.

Mike is a great believer in working with the community to achieve results.

Chief Executive

Dr Peter Gillies
Chief Executive, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service
FRACMA, MBA, MBChB, GAICD

Dr Peter Gillies was appointed as the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service Chief Executive in May 2016.

For the previous five years Peter was Executive Director of Medical Services and General Manager of Toowoomba Hospital. In these roles he provided expert direction in improving patient care and meeting or exceeding clinical targets such as timely surgery, reduction of outpatient waiting lists, and improved emergency department access.

Peter came to Toowoomba in 2009 to take up the role of Director Medical Services following his employment as the Director of Medical Services for Hunter New England Health in Armidale, New South Wales.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators and has a Masters of Business Administration from Otago University. He is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Peter has a background in general management, previously working as the general manager of a health software company and as the regional manager for a non-for-profit private hospital group in Auckland, New Zealand.

He has been a doctor for nearly 25 years and has worked in South Africa and the United Kingdom in hospital and general practice roles before immigrating to New Zealand in 1995.
Board members

Dr Dennis Campbell
Deputy Chair, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board (Toowoomba)
PhD, MBA, FCHSM, FAIM, GAICD

Dr Dennis Campbell has been a Chief Executive Officer in both the public and private health sectors. During which time he held the positions of Assistant and Acting Regional Director in the Queensland Department of Health as well as CEO at St Vincent’s Hospital, Toowoomba for ten years. He also served as Corporate Director with Legal Aid, Queensland for ten years as well as other Executive positions within the Department of Education and Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement. In 2007, he was awarded an Australia Day Medallion for services to the Australian College of Health Service Executives. In 2008, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Leadership and Achievement in Health Services Management recognising his contribution and professional achievements in shaping health care policy at the institutional, state and national levels. He is involved in the colleges’ mentoring programme and on a number of national committees and is committed to making a contribution to the college and its members.

Dennis serves as a member of numerous Boards and Advisory Committees, representing both public and private health sectors and has legal and health qualifications and is involved in organisational health consulting. He is the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Heritage Bank. He also serves as a trustee of the Queensland Museum Foundation and as Chairperson of the Management Advisory Committee of the Cobb & Co Museum, Toowoomba.

Dennis is Deputy Chair of the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board, Chair of the Board Finance Committee and a member of the Board Executive and Board Audit and Risk Committees.

Cheryl Dalton
Board Member, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board (South Burnett)

Ms Cheryl Dalton has extensive governance experience gained in her sixteen years as a local government Councillor in the South Burnett as well as through a long standing membership on a Department of Natural Resources and Mines Panel. She is currently the Chief Executive of SBCare, a not for profit aged and disability service and works closely with and advocates for the community and social service sector. Cheryl has in excess of thirty years business management experience through her family agribusiness ventures where she is active as a Managing Director in a variety of agricultural enterprises and works primarily in the financial and quality assurance aspects of the business.

Cheryl’s community involvement has and continues to encompass a wide range of interests including water planning and management, the arts, disability employment, social service and advisory committee roles to government.

Cheryl is the Chair of the Board Audit and Risk Committee and a member of the Board Finance Committee.

Dr Ross Hetherington
Board Member, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board (Southern Downs)
MBBS, DRANZOG, FACCRM, PGDipPallMed, FAICD

Dr Ross Hetherington is a medical practitioner and a Designated Aviation Medical Examiner (DAME). Ross also co-founded the Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practitioners and holds a number of aviation and medical memberships.

Ross has extensive experience in rural medicine and has been in private practice as a General Practitioner (GP) in Warwick since 1996. He is a board member of Health Workforce Queensland, which supports the regional, rural and remote health workforce in Queensland. Ross is Board Chair of RHealth and was a foundation member of Regional Health Board, Longreach. He has held previous Directorships with Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) and the Australian Rural and Remote Workforce Agency Group. Ross is a member of the Aviation Medicine Society of Australia and New Zealand and was a foundation member of the Menopause Society of Australasia.

Ross is a member of the Board Executive and Board Safety and Quality Committees.

Marie Pietsch
Board Member, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board (Southern Downs)
MAICD

Ms Marie Pietsch is heavily involved on local committees and is a keen advocate for the sustainability of rural and remote communities. She has extensive healthcare experience across the Darling Downs region and has held positions on numerous councils and committees, including Chair of the Manager's Rural Health Advisory Council and Chair of the Southern Downs Health Community Council. Marie has a professional background working in the Darling Downs region and her work on agricultural and health related committees has given her strong exposure to local community needs.

Marie is a member of various health committees including being a member of Inglewood Multipurpose Health Service Management Committee and Chair of Inglewood Community Advisory Network.

Marie’s work in representing health consumers in her region earned her a 2003 Centenary Medal for distinguished service to the community. Marie also received an Australia Day Achievement Medallion for outstanding service to Queensland Health and in 2014 Marie was awarded Citizen of the Year by the Goondiwindi Regional Council for services to the community especially in health. She is a member of Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).

Marie is a member of the Board Quality and Safety, Board Finance and Board Audit and Risk Committees and is a representative on the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Services Consumer Council.
Trish Leddington-Hill
Board Member, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board (Western Downs)
BSc, LLB, GAICD
Ms Patricia (Trish) Leddington-Hill worked for more than 10 years with RHealth, a primary healthcare organisation servicing the Darling Downs and South West Queensland.
Trish grew up on a rural property near Millmerran, Queensland, and was educated in Millmerran, Toowoomba and Brisbane. She completed a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Laws at the University of Queensland in 2000.
Trish worked in the rural sector in a number of roles, before joining RHealth (then known as Southern Queensland Rural Division of General Practice) in 2002 where she coordinated and managed projects across the areas of allied health, mental health, aged care, quality use of medicines, health promotion and integration.
Trish’s work became focused on promoting improvements to the health and community services sectors through partnerships and workforce planning and development. She completed studies in the internationally recognised Partnership Brokering Accreditation Scheme (PBAS) and is an internationally accredited Partnership Broker.
Trish is a keen supporter of her local community and is heavily involved in various local committees.
Trish is the Chair of the Board Safety and Quality Committee and a member of the Board Audit and Risk Committee.

Megan O’Shannessy
Board Member, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board (Western Downs)
RN, MPH, MAICD
She was the District Manager of Southern Downs (2007/2008), leading the transition to the district structure. Megan was council member of the Queensland Nursing Council (2001–2005) and member of the Queensland Health Nursing Interest Based Bargaining Implementation Group in 2006.
Megan is the Chief Operations Officer of the Griffith University Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program on the Darling Downs with the local not-for-profit organisation, Queensland Rural Medical Education (QRME). She continues to practise clinically as a part time Practice Nurse at the Clifton Co-Operative Health Service.
Megan is a Senior Lecturer at the Griffith University Rural Clinical School, holds a Masters in Public Health (ICU) and a Bachelor of Nursing (USQ). Megan is a Member of the Medical Board Queensland.
Megan is a Member of the Board Safety and Quality Committee.

Dr Ruth Terwijn
Board Member, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board (Toowoomba)
RN, MNurs (Hons), PhD
Ruth Terwijn is a registered nurse and academic who started her nursing career at St Vincent’s Hospital, Toowoomba. Ruth worked with Family Planning Queensland (FPQ) in clinical, educational and managerial roles. During this time she completed an Advanced Practice Nursing in Sexual and Reproductive Health course and a Master of Nursing (Hons) through University of Southern Queensland (USQ).
After many years at FPQ, she changed her focus to become a lecturer of nursing at USQ. Her teaching priority during this time was introducing student nurses to the profession of nursing, post graduate rural and remote nursing courses, and part of the team that introduced flexible learning through online nursing courses. She received a Learning and Teaching Award for Excellence in Teaching.
Ruth worked closely with nursing students who held a Permanent Humanitarian Visa. In 2015, she completed her PhD with a critical research study of the experiences of English as an additional language (EAL) and international nursing students. Ruth maintains an adjunct lecturer position with the School of Nursing and Midwifery at USQ and continues to publish from her thesis.
Ruth is a member of the Board Safety and Quality and Board Executive Committees.

Professor Julie Cotter
Board Member, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board (Toowoomba)
PhD, BCom(Hons), FCPA, CA, GAICD
Professor Julie Cotter is a respected academic with a wealth of experience in business and governance. She is the Director of the Australian Centre for Sustainable Business and Development, a research centre of the University of Southern Queensland (USQ). Professor Cotter’s areas of expertise include finance, governance and agribusiness. Julie is a Chartered Accountant and a Fellow of CPA Australia.
Professor Cotter is the Chair of the Australian Institute of Company Director’s (AICD) Toowoomba Regional Committee and a member of Australian Agricultural Company’s (AACo) Scientific Advisory Board. Julie previously served as a member of the neighbouring West Moreton Hospital and Health Board between September 2012 and March 2015, where she also chaired the Audit and Risk Committee.
Other previous non-executive board roles include Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE), a membership based regional development organisation. Professor Cotter’s roles with the AICD, TSBE and USQ have allowed her to build strong relationships with the Toowoomba and Darling Downs business communities.
Professor Cotter has held senior management positions at USQ since 2006, including Head of School and Research Centre Director roles. In these positions she has been responsible for strategic and business management and leadership of large teams. During Julie’s time at USQ she has been a member of many university-wide management boards and committees contributing to strategic and operational management of the University.
Julie is a member of Board Finance and Board Audit and Risk Committees.