Statement on government objectives for the community

Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service (Darling Downs Health) contributes to the following government objectives for the community as identified in Our Future State: Advancing Queensland’s Priorities:

- **Keep Queenslanders healthy:**
  by providing quality, evidence-based healthcare for our consumers, focusing on patient-centred care and collaborating with our partners to ensure we provide integrated care to the people of the Darling Downs region, while also investing in wellbeing initiatives to improve the health and wellness of our communities.

- **Give all our children a great start:**
  by providing excellent care in the antenatal period, including specified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander antenatal services, and in child health by providing a range of services across our region. Darling Downs Health promotes wellness activities and health literacy by providing healthier food and drinks in healthcare facilities and developing wellness education programs for students to give children in the Darling Downs a great start.

- **Creating jobs in a diverse economy:**
  Darling Downs Health continues to be one of the largest employers in the region, providing employment for 4,559 full time equivalent positions. (source: Service Delivery Statement 2018-19 estimated actual)
Darling Downs Health supports significant training, education and skills development to foster future workforce capability. In 2018-19, Darling Downs Health in conjunction with Southern Queensland Rural Health implemented allied health and nursing student resourced clinics to promote community wellness and prevent the development of chronic disease. This partnership builds on the significant clinical student training already established at our various facilities across the region.

Darling Downs Health’s contribution to My health, Queensland’s future: Advancing health 2026 is demonstrated through our vision ‘Caring for our Communities – Healthier Together’. The Darling Downs Health Strategic Plan 2016-20 provides detail on our priority initiatives for Darling Downs Health to be effective in delivering this vision with a focus on patient-centred care and embedding partnerships that enable the best care for the people of the Darling Downs. The following six strategic objectives establish the Darling Downs Health framework for delivering our vision of a healthier community:

- Deliver quality evidence-based healthcare for our patients and clients
- Engage, communicate and collaborate with our partners and communities to ensure we provide integrated, patient centred care
- Demonstrate a commitment to learning, research, innovation and education in rural and regional healthcare
- Ensure sustainable resources through attentive financial and asset administration
- Plan and maintain clear and focused processes to facilitate effective corporate and clinical governance
- Value, develop and engage our workforce to promote professional and personal wellbeing and to ensure dedicated delivery of services.
Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive

We are proud to present the seventh annual report of Darling Downs Health.

This year has seen a number of important milestones reached by our health service including the completion of the 10-year Health Service Plan which clearly articulates our vision over the next decade. We consistently deliver world-class health care to our communities and invest in the future of health for the Darling Downs Health region.

We have again this year maintained our high standard of service delivery – a result of managing wait lists, prudent financial management, and the quality of the care we provide. Darling Downs Health puts our patients, residents, and consumers at the centre of the work we do and this continues to deliver outstanding results.

Investing in our infrastructure to meet the demands of our community has also been a priority this year with several infrastructure projects being finalised. Some of these include upgrades to the emergency department in Warwick, a new roof for the Stanthorpe Hospital, improvements to the Dr EAF McDonald aged-care facility in Oakey, an innovative Renal Home Service opening at the Toowoomba Hospital, and works commencing on the new Kingaroy Hospital Redevelopment project.

This year the Changes in weight status of Children and Adults in Queensland and Australia report showed that the Darling Downs Health area had the lowest state average of adults with a healthy weight and the highest prevalence of obesity amongst children. This means the care we provide within our health service is often more complex and we have a strong focus on preventative health measures and promoting the health literacy of the people within our region. These projects have included removing sugary drinks from vending machines and cafes located in our hospitals, improving menu options for all patients, and improving access to low-cost health and wellness facilities such as the recently reopened Baillie Henderson Hospital pool and Wellness Centre.
The staff culture has also seen an improvement this year following the two-yearly Culture Check Up Survey distributed to staff within our health service. Our values of compassion, integrity, dignity, innovation, and courage strongly align with the five public service values of customers first, ideas in action, unleash potential, be courageous, and empower people. We’ve worked hard to further embed our values-based culture and we have seen a nine per cent improvement in employee satisfaction since the previous survey in 2017.

This year we also launched the Nursing and Midwifery Professional Practice Model which gives our nursing team a strong governance and leadership structure with person-centred care at its heart. The model focuses on professional excellence and has already seen a positive impact on collaborative practice across the health service.

Investing in our staff this year also saw Darling Downs Health further embed its prestigious partnership with the Cognitive Institute’s Promoting Professional Accountability Safer Together program. This new program makes safety everyone’s responsibility by providing the tools and training for staff to proactively speak up and improve our safety and reliability.

In 2018-19 our staff worked hard to deliver the best possible care to our communities and we look forward to seeing what we achieve into the future.
Highlights

20 hospitals
6 residential aged care facilities
1 primary health centre
1 community care unit
324 buildings
326 aged care beds including MPHSs

159,530 emergency department presentations

233,641 outpatient occasions of service

265,259 oral health treatments

2,915 babies born

7 birthing hospitals

6,907 elective surgeries

18,455 women having breastscreens

5,792 smoking cessation clinical pathways completed
About Us

Darling Downs Health is committed to strengthening the public health system by delivering services in alignment with Government objectives for the community.

Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service Strategic Plan 2016-2020 was reviewed and updated in July 2018 to ensure a continuation of our objectives for the period until 30 June 2020. Our six key strategic objectives (listed in Figure 2 below) contribute to achieving our vision of healthier communities as well as guide our annual priorities. Each of the strategic objectives is further defined through a number of key strategies for actioning through operational plans and health service planning with the engagement of the community and our healthcare partners.

Key activities undertaken throughout 2018-19 that contribute to our strategic objectives are outlined in the ‘Our Performance’ section of this report.

Our strategic risks and opportunities

Meeting the year on year increase in demand for efficient, high quality public healthcare services continues to be a significant challenge for the health service. An ageing population, increasing rates of chronic disease and high levels of disadvantage in the community all contribute to high demand for services in our region. The 2018 update of the Darling Downs Health Strategic Plan 2016-20 summarises our key strategic risks and opportunities:
Darling Downs Health Strategic Objectives

**HEALTHCARE**
Deliver quality evidence-based healthcare for our patients and clients

**ENGAGE**
Engage, communicate and collaborate with our partners and communities to ensure we provide integrated, patient-centred care

**LEARNING**
Demonstrate a commitment to learning, research, innovation and education in rural and regional healthcare

**RESOURCES**
Ensure sustainable resources through attentive financial and asset administration

**PLANNING**
Plan and maintain clear and focused processes to facilitate effective corporate and clinical governance

**WORKFORCE**
Value, develop and engage our workforce to promote professional and personal wellbeing and to ensure dedicated delivery of services

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**Risks**

- Maintaining our high standards of patient care and staff wellbeing in line with safety and quality obligations and national standards, in an environment of increased demand
- Maintaining a sustainable, high quality service in an environment of increased demand due to population growth and changing consumer health profiles, including an aged population and increasing incidence of chronic disease and obesity, while also meeting evolving community expectations
- Managing a balanced budget and sound financial position despite increased demand and potential funding model changes
- Aged and repurposed infrastructure, including information communication technology that requires significant capital investment to deliver contemporary care
- Recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce to ensure we can maintain and increase service activity to meet demand.

**Opportunities**

- Partnership with the Cognitive Institute and the Speaking Up For Safety program to embed a safety culture throughout our health service
- Continuing to strengthen our partnerships and relationships with primary healthcare partners and tertiary institutions
- Streamlining and adapting our financial management to take best advantage of funding models and to ensure a balanced fiscal position
- Nurturing and growing our workforce to provide patient centred care
- Implementing a digital strategy to streamline service delivery and enhance patient care
- Engaging the community through social media and other contemporary means to assist in improving health literacy.
Vision and Values

Our Vision

Caring for our Communities - Healthier Together

Figure 3:
Our Values

COMPASSION
We engage with others and demonstrate empathy, care, kindness, support and understanding

INTEGRITY
We are open, honest, approachable, equitable and consistent in everything we do

DIGNITY
We treat others with respect, display reasonableness and take pride in what we do

INNOVATION
We strive to know more, learn more and do better

COURAGE
We respectfully question for clarity, have the strength to act and embrace change for the better
Specialist Outpatient Strategy:
Improving the patient journey by 2020:
Darling Downs Health received funding in 2018-19 through our Service Agreement with the Department of Health to implement:

- Tele-ophthalmology
- Tele-remote chemotherapy
- Clinical Prioritisation Criteria
- Smart Referrals.

Priorities to support Queensland Government objectives for the community and My health, Queensland’s future: Advancing Health 2026 include:

Connecting Care to Recovery 2016-2021:
Darling Downs Health engaged Independent Patient Rights Advisers to provide advice to patients and their nominated support persons, family, carers of their rights under the Mental Health Act 2016.

Capital Investment Program:
Queensland Health’s funding allocation for building better hospitals in Darling Downs Health enabled progress of the following infrastructure priorities:

- Redevelopment of the Kingaroy Hospital to provide greater capacity for a range of services to ensure the community in the South Burnett region can access better healthcare facilities, closer to home
- Master planning for a new Toowoomba Hospital to meet continued increase in population growth and healthcare demand.

The Queensland Health Immunisation Strategy 2017-2022:
There were two main immunisation initiatives for Darling Downs Health this year. The first, 'Tackle Flu' focused on Indigenous influenza immunisation rates and the second, 'Be Wise, Immunise' aimed at improving the timeliness of vaccinations for children in the first year of life. The 2018-19 target for the Tackle Flu program was to vaccinate 1,500 people with 25 clinics held across the Darling Downs, South West, Southern Downs and South Burnett. In 2019, 1,393 Indigenous people were vaccinated in the Tackle Flu program. The 'Be Wise, Immunise' program evaluation results were unable to demonstrate a statistical improvement in vaccination rates due to the small numbers of children in the study. This was further impacted by participants leaving the study due to families moving away from the area prior to completion of the infant’s immunisation schedule. Overall the report concluded a likely marginal improvement in immunisation coverage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children based on State wide trends.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Darling Downs Health has nine initiatives funded under the *Making Tracks towards closing the gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders by 2033: Investment Strategy 2018-21* to deliver outcomes to meet the performance requirements issued by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Branch for the provision of services. The purpose of the nine initiatives are:

1. Indigenous Multidisciplinary Care Team Toowoomba Hospital - Deliver culturally and clinically effective dietetics, pharmacy and podiatry services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve the early detection, treatment and management of chronic diseases, and reduce the rate of potentially preventable hospitalisations and readmissions for chronic disease related conditions.

2. South Burnett Indigenous Hospital Liaison Services - Provide a range of hospital liaison support, case coordination and assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients accessing the Kingaroy and Cherbourg Hospitals, including their families and carers.

3. Indigenous Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATODs) Youth Program Cherbourg - Deliver alcohol, tobacco and substance misuse harm prevention, early intervention and treatment services to reduce the uptake and rates of harm caused by alcohol consumption, smoking and use of illicit substances and inhalants by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

4. South Burnett Renal Services Expansion - Increase access to specialist renal services and delay the onset of end stage renal disease by increasing the number of dialysis chairs available at Kingaroy and Cherbourg, and implementing a nurse practitioner model of care to improve the early detection, treatment and management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic kidney disease.

5. Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework 2010-2033 - Apply the framework’s overarching principles to deliver culturally effective and clinically responsive health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

6. Cherbourg Young Parent Support Service - Deliver comprehensive, culturally appropriate, and responsive community based antenatal, intrapartum, postnatal and early parenting care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young women to improve infant and child health outcomes.

7. Outreach Maternal and Infant Health Service - Provide comprehensive, culturally appropriate, and responsive community based antenatal, postnatal and infant care services to pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to reduce mortality in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants aged zero to six weeks.

8. Indigenous Health Liaison in Acute Mental Health Facilities - Provide mental health hospital liaison support, case coordination and assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients with mental illness accessing the hospital and hospital related services, including their families and carers.

9. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Management Structure - Implement a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health management structure to provide strategic direction and leadership to the Darling Downs Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and ensure the delivery of high quality health services and outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.
Our community based and hospital-based services

Overview

Darling Downs Health is the major provider of public hospital and health services in the Toowoomba, Western Downs, South Burnett and Southern Downs regions. Darling Downs Health is also a provider of specialist services to residents from surrounding areas, including South West Queensland, northern New South Wales and the Lockyer Valley regions.
Our region

The defined geographic region of Darling Downs Health is large and diverse covering approximately 90,000 square kilometres. The area covers the local government areas of the Toowoomba, Western Downs, Southern Downs, South Burnett and Goondiwindi regional councils, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council and the community of Taroom in the Banana Shire Council.

Our role

Darling Downs Health was established as an independent statutory authority on 1 July 2012 under the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. Darling Downs Health is governed by the Darling Downs Health Board (the Board), which is accountable to the local community and the Queensland Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services.

Darling Downs Health is one of 16 hospital and health services that together with the system manager (the Department of Health) make up the entity known as Queensland Health. The hospital and health services are the principal providers of public hospital and health services for the community within a defined geographical area. The Department of Health is responsible for the overall management of the Queensland public health system including state-wide planning and performance monitoring of all hospital and health services.

A formal service agreement is in place between the Department of Health and Darling Downs Health that identifies the services Darling Downs Health will provide, funding arrangements for those services and targets and performance indicators to ensure expected health deliverables and outcomes are achieved.

To support the services we provide, Darling Downs Health also has agreements in place with a range of private health providers for highly specialised services and at times patients may require transportation to Brisbane for specialist services only provided at tertiary facilities.
Our community

The region has a population of approximately 282,000 people is growing at rate of approximately one per cent annually and is expected to reach a population of 300,000 in five years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians make up five per cent of the Darling Downs population compared to four per cent across the state.

Within the region serviced by Darling Downs Health:

- 32 per cent of the population are in the lowest quintile for socioeconomic disadvantage
- 30 per cent of the population are obese
- 12 per cent of the population are aged 70 years or older.

Healthcare challenges for the region's population include health issues associated with ageing, obesity, chronic disease and low socioeconomic status. The leading causes of burden of disease in the Darling Downs are cancer, cardiovascular disease, mental health disorders and neurological disorders.

The size of the region and the need for some patients to travel significant distances to receive specialist healthcare continues to contribute to the numbers of claims administered by Darling Downs Health through the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme.

Despite these challenges, Darling Downs Health is well placed to provide the necessary public hospital and healthcare services to ensure all residents have access to timely, equitable and efficient healthcare that meets their needs.
Our services

As the major provider of public hospital and healthcare services in the region, Darling Downs Health provides a wide range of specialty services from various facilities. These services are delivered in line with our Service Agreement with the Department of Health. The Service Agreement is publicly available at www.publications.qld.gov.au

In 2018-19, services were provided from 28 facilities across the region, including one large regional referral hospital, one extended inpatient mental health service, three medium sized regional hub hospitals, 12 rural hospitals, three multipurpose health services, one community outpatient clinic, one community care unit and six residential aged care facilities.

The comprehensive range of services provided by Darling Downs Health throughout the region includes both specialist inpatient and outpatient services, such as:

- Allied health
- Cancer services
- Cardiac medicine
- Emergency medicine
- Intensive care
- Medical imaging
- Medicine and a range of medical subspecialties
- Mental health and addiction medicine
- Obstetrics and gynaecology
- Paediatrics
- Palliative care
- Rehabilitation
- Surgery and a range of surgical subspecialties.

Services delivered in the community include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island health programs
- BreastScreen Queensland
- Child and maternal health services
- Community care services including domestic assistance
- Community rehabilitation
- Infectious diseases
- Oral health
- Public health
- Residential aged care, aged care assessment and home care services
- Sexual health
- Refugee health.
Our facilities

Legend
- Hospital
- Outpatient clinic
- Multipurpose health service
- Aged care facility
- Image reference number

Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service 2018-2019 Annual Report
Targets and challenges

In 2018-19 Darling Downs Health maintained its high performance against the Queensland Health ‘Delivering a High Performing Health System for Queenslanders’ framework.

The framework utilises Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to capture information and covers aspects of performance across the following six areas of health service delivery:

- Safe
- Equitable
- Effective
- Patient-centred
- Timely
- Efficient.

Maintaining a high level of performance presents ongoing challenges. One of these challenges is performance against the Relative Stay Index (RSI) KPI for unplanned admissions. The RSI KPIs are a comparison of average length of stay for both planned and unplanned admissions against statewide benchmarks. In 2018-19 our overall RSI result was comparable with the state average, however our achievement for unplanned admissions could be improved. Challenges in reducing our length of stay include insufficient transport, accommodation and community care services in rural areas together with a high proportion of patients living with economic disadvantage who require support services to enable discharge from hospital. In response to this challenge, Darling Downs Health is in the process of establishing a health operation centre at Toowoomba Hospital to streamline patient flow management and assist with managing increasing demand.

The rate of adult obesity in the Darling Downs is 20 per cent higher compared to the Queensland average (QH: The Health of Queenslanders 2018). Promoting healthy habits to improve the weight status of the community to reduce the risk of chronic disease is a significant challenge for Darling Downs Health. Darling Downs Health developed a Health and Wellness Strategic Plan 2019-23 this year to guide future investment in initiatives resulting in measurable improvements for staff, community and patient wellbeing in partnership with community stakeholders. The plan is consistent with Queensland’s Health and Wellbeing Strategic Framework 2017 to 2026 and provides a prevention-focused pathway for the improving the health of our communities.

Darling Downs Health requires significant capital expenditure in the short to medium term to prevent continued deterioration of assets. Darling Downs Health manages an extremely decentralised and aging asset base providing ongoing challenges for demand capacity management, patient flow efficiencies, staff and patient security, and staff recruitment and retention:

- The condition of our building assets and the remoteness of some of our facilities does have a direct effect on our ability to recruit and maintain staff
- Many of our facilities were built in a time when the need for security infrastructure to protect our staff and patients was not a consideration. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case and consequently, the need for an injection of funding for security and nursing accommodation features highly in our numerous infrastructure priorities
- Toowoomba Hospital has been consistently over capacity since 2015 and the need for a new hospital is our highest priority other than the completion of the new Kingaroy Hospital
- Our facilities were built at a time when the population profile of our patients was very different and building standards were also significantly different. Adapting to these changes with the current building stock is not cost effective.