Message from the Chief Executive

I am delighted to have commenced as the Health Service Chief Executive. I am fortunate to have spent a number of years in nursing and managerial roles across the Torres and Cape region and am looking forward to leading the organisation as we continue to improve the way we deliver health care.

I am very proud of how our staff worked together across the health service to prepare for and manage Cyclone Nora. Preparations across the Eastern Cape were supported seamlessly by staff in the Western Cape, Thursday Island, Northern Peninsula Area and Cairns. One of our strengths is being able to support our most remote communities quickly and effectively whatever the challenge. Twenty-two patients and escorts were safely evacuated from Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama to the safety of Cairns which required a huge team effort. Congratulations to everyone involved.

Regards

Bev
Summary of Board meetings and activities

The annual review of the TCHHS Strategic Plan was conducted in a workshop with the TCHHS Executive Management Team and Board Members on 29 January.

The Strategic Plan was reviewed in line with Agency Planning Requirements and has been submitted to the Department of Premier and Cabinet before final submission to the Director-General in July 2018.

January 2018 - Cairns

The Board met on 30 January in Cairns.

The newly developed Governance, Performance and Accountability Framework was endorsed. A significant element of the Framework is the introduction of structured performance management processes supported by monthly performance meetings between the Chief Executive and each portfolio management team along with formalised annual performance agreements for each executive. The Framework will be aligned with the updated TCHHS Strategic Plan.

A comprehensive progress report on the Transition to Community Control Project was tabled along with a recommendation from the Transition to Community Control Steering Committee of the proposed next transition site.

The Board noted the monthly Finance, Performance and Infrastructure Reports.

The TCHHS Project Management Office presented the first Board Priority Reports which will allow the Board to oversee the board priorities and initiatives.

February 2018 - Thursday Island and NPA

The Board met on 20 February 2018 on Thursday Island.

The Board tabled the recently updated Tropical Australia Academic Health Care (TAAHC) Constitution and have committed to an initial one year membership. TAAHC was created to improve health through alliances between members to enhance collective capability in health care, health and medical research and workforce development.

The Board noted the monthly Finance, Performance and Infrastructure Reports.

In February the Board members visited Bamaga where they attended the Torres Strait Island Regional Council meeting. The Board also met with NPA Family and Community Services Corporation's Acting CEO and Board Directors and also attended the NPA Health Action Team meeting.

Board Members spent time at the Bamaga Primary Health Care Centre meeting staff and awarding the Continuous Quality Improvement Awards as selected by the Board Safety and Quality Committee.

The Board also visited Seisia PHCC, Injinoo PHCC and Umagico PHCC where they met staff and toured facilities. The Board concluded their trip with a staff BBQ hosted by the Thursday Island staff.
Quality Award winners
Margaret Whitehead and Bamaga PHCC

Above: Margaret Whitehead CNC Diabetes Coordinator.
Margaret Whitehead, CNC Diabetes Educator, has been awarded a Continuous Quality Improvement Award for her work towards improving chronic disease management.
Margaret was commended for establishing routine diabetes clinics in all five Northern Peninsula Area communities, coordinating the endocrinologist clinic, increasing patient attendance and compliance, increase in telehealth appointments and regular follow up care.

The Bamaga Primary Health Care Centre team has won an award for Improvement in Health Service Delivery for their outstanding improvements to the GP service. The team has recorded increased attendances, improved follow up care, improved client satisfaction, and culturally appropriate care (where the GPs work with health workers). The GP service has an improved comprehensive health service with the child health nurse, chronic disease nurse and diabetes educator all located in the the GP service. The award was accepted on behalf of the team by Karyn Sam, NPA Program Manager. Team members were Elizabeth Bond, Margaret Whitehead, Colina Reuben, Gisela Dena, Rowena Abednegro, Liteah Elu, Elizabeth Nish, Dr Zachhary Connelly and Dr Mark Adsett.

Farewell Dr Mel and Steve

Above: Farewell to Steve Wallin, Radiographer/Sonographer from Cooktown Hospital.
Above: Farewell to Dr Melania Scrace (left) pictured with Dr Tash Coventry.
Above: Karyn Sam accepting the quality award with Dr Scott Davis from the Board Quality and Safety Committee, and Lucy Pullen, Director of Nursing, Bamaga Hospital.

Steve and Mel have made huge a huge contribution to Cooktown MPHS and surrounding clinics: Mel in her capacity as a Medical Officer and Steve as the Radiographer/Sonographer both providing outreach services throughout their time in Cooktown. They will be sorely missed by all the staff in Cooktown MPHS, Wujal Wujal PHCC, Hopevale PHCC and Laura PHCC.
Above: Some of the team at the Kowanyama Primary Health Care Centre who, along with Pormpuraaw PHCC, opened for business the day after Cyclone Nora.

Above: Tree debris surrounded the Pormpuraaw clinic accommodation.

Above: View of falled powerlines from the Pormpuraaw Primary Health Care Centre

Above: The Premier had flying visits to both Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama. Pictured with Melanie Durden, Director of Nursing Pormpuraaw, and Councillor Tim Koo-Aga who is also an Operational Officer at the PHCC.

Above: Some of the Pormpuraaw staff outside the PHCC surrounded by debris from the cyclone.
Welcome Director of Pharmacy

Welcome to Joe Rosta who is the new Director of Pharmacy Services for Torres and Cape HHS. Joe was permanently appointed to the role in January. He will be working with our pharmacists at Thursday Island, Weipa and Cooktown.

Joe was previously the dispensary manager at Cairns Hospital.

Joe said he is looking forward to working with the pharmacists across the HHS.

“I’m hoping to standardise pharmacy processes and learn from what works best in each facility,” he said.

Joe can be reached on 4030 6116.

Profile: Valmay Fisher

Valmay Fisher has joined us as an Indigenous Public Health Officer in the southern public health team. We asked Valmay to tell us about her work.

What positions have you held in health?
I have been a health worker for 14 years. I worked in Public Health since 2007 as Indigenous Public Health Officer with the Tropical Public Health Unit, two years Northern Area Health Project Officer, 0-4 Health Check Development/North Queensland Workforce Unit, and two years at Wuchopperan Women’s Health Worker.

What are the challenges you find in this role?
Not enough hours in the day! It is fast paced. Heat has been a challenge – keeping vaccines and staff cool during outreach clinics.

Tell us about the Meningococcal vaccination campaign?
Currently our priority is the Meningococcal ACWY vaccine role out. We have had a great response from all communities on Cape York who have achieved as high as 100% coverage for their children aged one year to 19 years.

What other projects are you working on?
The 12-19 year old immunisation catch up program, including missed vaccines. I’m educating clinicians on VIVAS (Vaccine Information Database – Qld ) and AIR (Australian Immunisation Register- Commonwealth) access, Vaccine Fridge Audits and preparing for the Influenza vaccine role out in all southern Primary Health Care Centres.

Congrats Jim Guthrie

Congratulations to our long-term Senior Media Advisor, Jim Guthrie, who won a Queensland Health Australia Day award for “Putting customers first”.

Many of you will have spoken to Jim over the years as he’s helped you prepare stories for the newspapers, radio and TV. Jim manages media relations for the five rural and remote HHSs and does a fantastic job. Well done Jim!
Barbara Moffatt and Phillipa Smith from the Strategy, Planning and Performance team are reviewing Unit Record Numbers (URN) and the primary and secondary storage areas of each Primary Health Care facility within the Torres and Cape HHS.

Improving our patient records is part of an overall goal of improving patient health. It is important that each and every patient in our health service has accurate records of their health such as their medical history, test results and pre-existing health conditions so that clinicians have the information at hand to make the best decisions about what is best for the patient.

Barbara has a background in quality assurance with the iEMR (Integrated Electronic Medical Record) team in Cairns and Phillipa has come from the Cairns Hospital Clinical Coding team.

Barbara and Phillipa are cross-referencing and checking every individual medical record, temporary card, archived and deceased files using a master patient list. The information obtained is being used to identify any anomalies that require attention, the physical location of files and relevant information for future retention/ destruction purposes and preparing for the transition to the Regional eHealth solution.

To date they have visited Aurukun, Cooktown, Hope Vale, Kowanyama, Napranum, Pormpuraaw, Weipa and Wujal Wujal and looking forward to more.

Barbara and Phillipa describe their lives on the project as being a bit like a ‘box of chocolates’. They never really know who they are going to meet, where they are going to sleep or what they will find to eat!

“We have met magnificent people working towards a common goal with genuine love and care for their community,” said Phillipa.

“The landscapes and community spirit are different wherever we go,” said Phillipa.

Congratulations
We are officially accredited

If you haven’t received your certificate email tchhs-qsr@health.qld.gov.au
Send through your photos with your certificate to TCCHS-comms-media@health.qld.gov.au
Welcome new graduate nurses, Jennifer Turner and Sally Meyer and graduate midwife Vivien Nance, who began their careers at Thursday Island Hospital in March.

Acting Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery Sam Schefe said four more graduate nurses and one graduate midwife will join us in August.

Jennifer Turner is an Indigenous community member from Brisbane with family ties to the Torres Strait.

“For the past several years I have been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to join the workforce in Torres and Cape region of Northern Australia,” said Jennifer.

“I first came to the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service as a student nurse in 2016. As an Indigenous nurse, I wish to further expand my clinical skills and experience and look forward to serving and caring for other First Nations people in the region,” said Jennifer.

“My goal is to become a Remote Area Nurse to work across the Northern Australia.

“In addition to this, I am so excited to be working with local Torres Strait Islander nurses and health workers.

“I have previously worked in the Central Desert/Northern Territory as a mentor and literacy and numeracy trainer to Aboriginal Health Workers.

“It was from seeing the difficulties that Aboriginal Health Providers experienced while away from their communities in a learning situation that prompted me to be a Registered Nurse.

“I have been offered a Graduate Program in the Kimberley region. However, I jumped at the chance to work with Torres and Cape HHS as I have long been fascinated with the history of this part of Australia.”

Sally Meyer is a Cairns local who graduated from James Cook University, and Vivien Nance is coming to us from Everton Hills in Brisbane and has a passion for remote Indigenous midwifery practice.

“The five new graduate nurses will start their practices at Thursday Island, Cooktown and Weipa and will work in the clinical areas of acute medical, surgical, emergency and community and primary health,” said Sam.

Mr Schefe said the new nurses and midwives would undertake a 12-month graduate program that involved theoretical and practical assessments.

“Graduate nurses and midwives are provided support and mentorship by experienced staff to help make the transition from studying at university to life in the workforce.

“We hope their first year of practice in our diverse health service will open their eyes to the opportunities and diverse range of professional experiences in our region and they opt to continue their career with us in the future,” said Sam.
Chronic Conditions Manual editorial committee kicks off

Above back row: Dr Alister Keyser (TPHU), Dr Aaron Hollins (JCU), Dr Yvonne Dovreen (RFDS), Deb Grant (NWHHS), Paula Thomason (PHICCS*), Sonia Small (SWHHS), Caitlyn Fletcher (CQHHS), Dr Lea Merone (Apunipima), Dr Jacqueline Mein (Wuchopperen). Front row: Josslyn Tully (TCHHS), Mary King (RRCSU), Hylda Wapau (Apunipima/TCHHS), Liz Wheatley (TCHHS), Sean Booth (RRCSU). Not pictured Valmay Fisher (TCHHS) and Lisa Wells (CWHHS).

March marked the start of the production cycle for the second edition of the Chronic Conditions Manual; an ongoing state-wide collaborative resource produced by Queensland Health, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Apunipima Cape York Health Council supporting the rural and remote workforce to manage chronic conditions.

This second edition will involve an unprecedented number of peak national specialist organisations and experts. This allows the Chronic Conditions Manual to reflect nationally accepted, evidence-based guidance that the rural and remote health workforce can use with confidence.

This edition will mark a considerable leap in production reform with the use of innovative online collaboration tools using Microsoft 365. This will enable committee members to edit, review and approve content in real time while providing a single confidential portal to communicate, view governance documents and monitor timelines.

The Rural and Remote Clinical Support Unit (RRCSU) held an orientation day in Cairns for members of the Chronic Conditions Manual Editorial Committee with broad state-wide rural and remote representation. Health professionals from RFDS, Apunipima, JCU, Wuchopperen Health Services, North West HHS, Torres and Cape HHS, South West HHS, Central Queensland HHS and Central West HHS were given an outline of the editorial processes, expectations and systems to ensure the final publication continues to be a well governed and evidenced resource.

For further information feel free to contact chronic.conditions.manual@health.qld.gov.au

*Primary Health Care Information System and Support.

Don’t get out of your depth with floodwater

PREPARE FOR YOUR DECISION TO AFFECT OTHERS

Prepare for flood season

Watch real stories
‘Cluster Champions’ is an initiative through the Commonwealth funded Blood Borne Viruses (BBV), Sexually Transmitted Disease (STI) and Chronic Disease Project where nominated Indigenous health workers from each cluster are provided support to attend educational, networking and professional development opportunities.

In March, the BBV, STI and Chronic Disease Project and the Cluster Champions from Central and Top Western clusters attended the annual Deadly Sex Congress in Cairns, which provided education and the sharing of stories from a number of health services relating to the treatment and management of HIV, Hepatitis B and C and syphilis.

Mer Island residents have their say

Above: Mer (Murray Island) residents with Torres and Cape HHS staff at the consultation meeting.

Thank you to Mer (Murray Island) residents who came along to a consultation meeting in March about the new Mer Primary Health Care Centre building.

There was some great feedback and support to progress this exciting new building. The meeting on Mer is one of several happening across the health service. We are talking to residents about their ideas and getting input to add ‘cultural character’ to the building designs.

BBV, STI and Chronic Disease
‘Cluster Champions’

Above from left: McCauley (Max) Ghee (Clinical Nurse), Tracey Cuthbertson (Project Manager), Paula Marshall (CNC Coordinator), Miller Aki (Champion Health Worker – Central Cluster) Del Passi (Health Worker, Project), Rotona Martin (Champion Health Worker, Top Western Cluster).
Student dentists give oral health tips

Student dentists are helping deliver oral health services and information to local residents on Thursday Island.

Director of Oral Health Dr Yvonne Mangan said the Thursday Island dental clinic hosted two to three student dentists from James Cook University every semester.

“Recently, our two current students, Ida Vun and Shaiel Parikh, who have been with us for two months now, have been involved in delivering information to the local community on oral health and tips on prevention of dental problems,” Yvonne said.

“They have also staffed displays showing people the sugar content of a lot of common snack foodstuffs.

Student Ida Vun said she and her colleague Shaiel Parikh were settling in well to island life.

Ida, who is from Brisbane, has never previously been farther north than Cairns, where she is studying at the JCU Campus there.

“But I enjoy travelling to new places and going fishing,” she said.

“Last week, I went to Yam Island with the team and it was a wonderful experience,” said Ida.

Shaiel is originally from Toowoomba but has been living in Cairns the past four years while studying dentistry.

“In my spare time, I enjoy skateboarding, running and cooking.

“While doing my final year clinical placement here on Thursday Island, I am keen to meet as many people as I can and get as much experience as possible.”

Edward delivers Easter care

Our elderly clients in Cooktown were lucky enough to receive some freshly made Hot Cross Buns courtesy of Edward McConnell, a Home Care Worker in the Cooktown Community Care Programs.

The Community Care Programs provides weekly social activities at the Community Care Programs Activity Room during the week for our elderly clients. Keep up the excellent work Ed!
The new Torres and Cape HHS Clinical Council is now established.

The Council will provide a clear line of communication between clinicians on the ground and the TCHHS Executive,” said Dr Tash Coventry, Council Chair.

“The Clinical Council seeks to create a safe forum through which clinicians (MOs, RNs, Indigenous Health Workers, allied health and other health professionals) can voice concerns,” said Tash.

Priorities that have already been raised and addressed are:
- Improved screening and management of our patients with Hepatitis B across the HHS, with sharing of information with our hepatitis specialists in Cairns
- Better support and training for staff involved in child safety issues, and the acute response to child abuse situations
- Benchmarking, based on locally driven audits, to help identify primary health issues that need additional resourcing/support and inform a Primary Health Care Strategy across the TCHHS

The Council will not replace patient safety reporting or reporting through line managers.

“It will provide an alternative escalation pathway especially if clinicians have not had progress through alternative channels,” said Tash.

“The Council will also provide clinical input into HHS-wide planning. For example, we will be providing input and feedback to the EMT on the Clinical Services Plan and Strategy documents,” said Tash.

The Council is currently encouraging clinicians to provide comment and feedback via RiskMan on the Radiology Reporting contract to help inform an assessment of the current service.

The Clinical Council has two members representing the TCHHS at State level at the Queensland Clinical Senate Committee – Margaret Mau (Indigenous Health Worker Dauan Island) and Anne-Marie Scully (Director of Nursing Kowanyama). This is in addition to Dr Tony Brown (A/EDMS).

Visit the Clinical Council QHEPS page for the Council’s vision and purpose, members’ portfolios, terms of reference, referral forms and current action plan.

Please also feel free to ring a council member, or our Project Officer Justine Doran on 4226 5980, should you prefer to discuss an issue directly.

Nurse navigators helped more than 820 clients

Torres and Cape HHS now has ten nurse navigators, two Indigenous support officers and a project officer across the region. All are kept extremely busy helping patients to navigate the health system in their communities, in Cairns and further afield.

The nurse navigator team has looked after more than 820 clients across the region since they were established in March 2017.

Community members that travel to Cairns for specialist appointments will be able to get to them more easily with the acquisition of two lease cars.

Care includes complex care coordination, long stay coordination, travel/accommodation and appointment support. For more information email TCHHS-nurse-navigator-service@health.qld.gov.au.
Another fantastic collaborative effort in the Western Cape has resulted in very high vaccination and health check coverage for school students. Well over 350 consumers were notified of the programs in one form or another either by Family Health Unit staff with school visits, notes to take home, home visits, emails and phone calls. As a result the team have had excellent results:

- Yr 12 Young Person’s Health Checks (YPHC) - 94% coverage
- Yr 7 and Yr 10 School Immunisation Program (SIP) - 80% coverage
- Year 7 School Health Checks (SHC) - 90% coverage
- Menactra immunisation Prep to Year 4 - 78% coverage

Each program needed support from other TCHHS Weipa Teams and Western Cape College parents. There has been an excellent response from parents to all four programs. Prep to Yr 4 parents came to the school and supported their children while they were being vaccinated too.

The Weipa Corporate Services staff were kept busy ensuring client charts were available for all activities and were readily accessible.

The Family Health Unit, Community Services Team, Public Health South and Education Queensland staff collaborated together to ensure YPHC, SIP and Menactra immunisation activities were held at the Western Cape College Weipa with success.

The Year 7 school health checks were supported by the Family Health Unit, Community Services, Napranum Primary Health Care Clinic, Oral Health Program, Child Youth Mental Health, ATODS, Education Queensland staff, Apunipima Audiometrist and our Weipa Medical Officer.

The activity generated 95 referrals which are being actioned to enable young people to better their health. A HUGE thank you to all who participated. Well done once again!
Recognition for fire and emergency support

Donald MacMillan (Tuberculosis Control Unit) and Robbie Tapim (Building, Engineering and Maintenance Services - BEMS) and their managers, J’Belle Foster and Andrea Mann, were recognised at a Thursday Island Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) appreciation night in February for their ongoing support.

Both Donald and Robbie are supported by TCHHS to be released from their daily duties, as required, for call outs by QFES.

QFES gave TCHHS certificates of appreciation for enabling staff to provide a protection and services to the Torres Strait and Cape York Peninsula communities.

New birthing group in Cooktown

Above: Expecting mum Nathalie Binz and partner David Roberts chat with Positive Birthing Movement Cooktown co-facilitator Jenny Varley and new baby Opal.

A new birthing group has been established at Cooktown to promote birthing and parenthood and encourage mums in the region to take advantage of their local birthing service.

The new Positive Birthing Movement Cooktown group Cooktown Clinical Midwife Fiona Gillett said the new local group – of which she was facilitator with local resident Jenna Varley – was part of a global movement whose goal was to spread positivity about childbirth and parenting.

“Sometimes, for some people, the concept of birthing and parenthood can seem quite overwhelming,” Ms Gillett said.

“But in truth it’s a beautiful and joyous part of life that people should enjoy to the full.

“In addition, we have an excellent birthing service here at Cooktown which means women from our local region who are assessed as having a low-risk pregnancy can have their babies right here, close to family and friends, rather than having to travel to Cairns or elsewhere.”

(“Low-risk” is defined as applying to women who do not have a complex medical and obstetric history and who do not experience a complex antenatal period.)

For information phone 4043 0243.

Submissions

Please email submissions to: TCHHS-comms-media@health.qld.gov.au
Photos of people need to be accompanied by a signed photo consent form
Phone: Heather Robertson: 4226 5974