

Joint Regional Needs Assessment

Key themes

*The numbers represent the total number of health or service needs, which are outlined on the following pages. Click on a theme to learn more or view the next page.



Access

The ability of individuals to obtain necessary health services, which may include availability, affordability, proximity, and the quality of care.



Maternal and Child Health

This refers to the health and wellbeing of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, as well as the health of their children from infancy through adolescence. It covers services like prenatal care, immunisations, and nutrition.



First Nations Health

This focuses on the unique health challenges and opportunities faced by Indigenous populations. It includes addressing cultural, social, and environmental determinants of health, as well as improving access to culturally appropriate healthcare services.



Older Persons Health

This refers to the health care services and policies designed to support the elderly population, typically those over 65. It includes managing age-related diseases, promoting healthy aging, long-term care, and palliative care.



Mental health and wellbeing

Enhance knowledge of and access to supports that promote mental health and wellbeing within our community, with a particular emphasis on vulnerable priority groups. The Joint Regional Wellbeing Plan for northern Queensland serves as a vital resource for a deeper understanding of the needs and priorities in this area.



Preventative Health

This refers to measures aimed at preventing disease or injury before it occurs, through actions like vaccination, healthy lifestyle promotion, and early detection screenings (e.g., cancer screenings).



Equity

In healthcare, equity means providing care that does not vary in quality because of personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, geographic location, or socioeconomic status. It aims for fairness in access, treatment, and health outcomes.



Workforce

The healthcare workforce refers to all people engaged in actions whose primary intent is to enhance health. This includes doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, support staff, and administrators.



Healthy Living

These are actions that increase the likelihood of negative health outcomes. Examples include smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, poor diet, physical inactivity, and unsafe sexual practices.



Chronic Conditions

Long-lasting conditions that can be controlled but not cured. Examples include diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, asthma, cancer, and mental health conditions like depression. Managing these conditions often requires ongoing medical care and lifestyle changes.

The Joint Regional Needs Assessment (JRNA) is a collaboration between:



Torres and Cape
Hospital and Health Service

Cairns and Hinterland
Hospital and Health Service

Mackay
Hospital and Health Service





Access

The ability of individuals to obtain necessary health services, which may include availability, affordability, proximity, and the quality of care.

Description	Health need	Service need
Access to specialists is limited due to long waiting times across our region.	Tier 1	
Limited access to general practice services across the region due to various drivers such as transport, cost, and availability.		Tier 1
Lack of availability of palliative care services across our rural regions.		Tier 2
Diagnostic imaging services across rural and remote regions is inadequate.		Tier 2
Community support services are limited across our region for young and older people.		Tier 2

Definitions

Health needs are identified following the triangulation and validation process. Within the framework, health needs incorporates both healthcare needs and health needs. Healthcare needs are those that can benefit from health care (health education, disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, terminal care), while health needs incorporate the wider social and environmental determinants of health, such as deprivation, housing, diet, education, and employment (Wright, J., Williams, R., & Wilkinson, J. R., 1998). This wider definition enables inclusion of the wider influences on health beyond the confines of the medical model based on health services.

Service needs are identified following the triangulation and validation process. They refer to the identified mismatch or gap between health needs and demand, and the service capability and supply, both now and into the future.

Tier 1 is the highest priority health or service need.

Tier 2 is moderate priority health or service need.

Tier 3 is an emergent or lowest priority health or service need.



Maternal and Child Health

This refers to the health and wellbeing of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, as well as the health of their children from infancy through adolescence. It covers services like prenatal care, immunisations, and nutrition.

Description	Health need	Service need
Across our region, prevalence of developmental delays among children is high while identification is inadequate.	Tier 1	
Obesity rates are high among children aged 5-11 years across THHS region.	Tier 2	
Immunisation rates among 2 year olds has declined in our region.	Tier 2	
In our rural and remote regions, low birth weight is highly prevalent.	Tier 2	
Antenatal care among mothers in rural and remote regions is inadequate.		Tier 1

Definitions

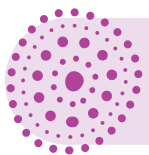
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First Nations Health

This focuses on the unique health challenges and opportunities faced by Indigenous populations. It includes addressing cultural, social, and environmental determinants of health, as well as improving access to culturally appropriate healthcare services.

Description	Health need	Service need
In our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people's communities, diabetes is highly prevalent.	Tier 1	
Chronic disease management is limited for our regions Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people's community.	Tier 1	
Rheumatic Heart Disease and Rheumatic Heart Fever are prevalent among our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people's communities across our region.	Tier 1	
Cardiac conditions are highly prevalent among our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people's communities.	Tier 1	

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Older Persons Health

This refers to the health care services and policies designed to support the elderly population, typically those over 65. It includes managing age-related diseases, promoting healthy aging, long-term care, and palliative care.

Description	Health need	Service need
Long waiting times for aged care assessments across our region.		Tier 1
Dementia related care and support services are extremely limited for our aging population.		Tier 1
Limited availability of support services and residential aged care homes for our aging population.		Tier 1
Limited access to podiatrists in rural and remote regions for our aging population.		Tier 2

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Mental health and wellbeing

Enhance knowledge of and access to supports that promote mental health and wellbeing within our community, with a particular emphasis on vulnerable priority groups. The Joint Regional Wellbeing Plan for northern Queensland serves as a vital resource for a deeper understanding of the needs and priorities in this area.

Description	Health need	Service need
Suicide ideation and intent among youth are an emerging need across our region.	Tier 1	
Mental health conditions (anxiety and depression) are highly prevalent among all age groups across our region.	Tier 1	
Poor mental health wellbeing among LGBTIQ+ community identified as an emerging need.	Tier 3	
Limited knowledge among service providers around management of veteran's health.	Tier 3	
Limited or no access to psychiatric services across our region.		Tier 1

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Preventative Health

This refers to measures aimed at preventing disease or injury before it occurs, through actions like vaccination, healthy lifestyle promotion, and early detection screenings (e.g., cancer screenings).

Description	Health need	Service need
Low levels of health literacy across our community.		Tier 1
Community engagement around preventative health conditions is inadequate across our region.		Tier 1

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Description	Health need	Service need
Limited housing access in our region leading to poor health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.	Tier 1	
Diabetes is highly prevalent amongst Australian South Sea Islander people.	Tier 2	
A proportion of our population have a profound or severe disability that impacts their access to health services across the region.	Tier 2	
Skin conditions such as scabies is common across our region.	Tier 3	
Lack of understanding among service providers around management of victims of domestic and family violence.		Tier 1
Limited cultural awareness in management of refugees and asylum seekers among service providers.		Tier 3

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Description	Health need	Service need
Maldistribution of general practitioners and shortage of general practices across our rural and remote areas.		Tier 1
Workforce shortage of Indigenous Health Workers across our remote regions.		Tier 1
Workforce shortage of clinical staff such as nurses across our region.		Tier 1
Workforce shortage of support services staff.		Tier 1
Workforce shortage of midwives in our rural areas.		Tier 1
Workforce shortage of diabetic educators across our rural areas.		Tier 1
Cultural awareness among service providers across our region is limited.		Tier 1

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Healthy Living

These are actions that increase the likelihood of negative health outcomes. Examples include smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, poor diet, physical inactivity, and unsafe sexual practices.

Description	Health need	Service need
Risky alcohol consumption rates are high among adult population for our region.	Tier 1	
For our region, daily smoking rates are relatively high among adults 18 years and older.	Tier 1	
Sexually transmitted infections are significantly high among adults across our region.	Tier 1	
Prevalence of smoking during pregnancy are extremely high across most of our region.	Tier 1	
Substance use among our region's adults is high.	Tier 2	

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Chronic Conditions

Long-lasting conditions that can be controlled but not cured. Examples include diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, asthma, cancer, and mental health conditions like depression. Managing these conditions often requires ongoing medical care and lifestyle changes.

Description	Health need	Service need
High prevalence of chronic conditions across our region among adults.	Tier 1	

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