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This annual report is interactive!

Throughout NQPHN's 2018-19 Annual Report, you will see various QR codes.

These codes link sections of our annual report to additional information and other projects we have worked on throughout the year.



Download a free QR code scanner app, scan the codes, and you will be taken to the relevant video/webpage.

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network Annual Report 2018-19

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NQPHN acknowledges the financial and other support of the Australian Government Department of Health.

NQPHN encourages feedback on the annual report. We would love to hear from you at:

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Northern Queensland Primary Health Network acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we live and work, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.



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Message from the Chair and CEO

We are proud to introduce to you Northern Queensland Primary Health Network's (NQPHN's) fourth Annual Report.

In the 2018-19 financial year, NQPHN has undertaken a journey of immense change, growth, and progress, driven by the goal of providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time for our residents.

This report highlights projects and achievements in relation to the key health priority areas as determined by the PHN Program Performance and Quality Framework, and illustrates NQPHN's continued efforts to improve the wellbeing of North Queenslanders.

The organisation achieved an important milestone in the 2018-19 financial year by securing triennial funding from the Australian Government Department of Health. This is a significant step as we progress as an organisation and enables NQPHN to take a longer-term approach to our planning and investments inline with the priority health needs of our residents.

We started the financial year by implementing a new regionalised organisational structure, enabling NQPHN's offices across Cairns, Cape and Torres, Townsville, and Mackay to operate in multi-disciplinary teams. The restructure was intended to support a more holistic approach to commissioning services that are tailored to meet local health needs. The regionalised structure has also supported the organisation to build stronger partnerships with local consumers, providers, and system partners.

NQPHN's invigorated commitment to continuous improvement throughout the organisation has resulted in effective and efficient use of resources. During the year, NQPHN significantly increased its investments (actual expenditure) to the communities by \$8.2M compared to the prior year. This was complemented by cost reductions in the organisation's internal operations by \$2.5M. NQPHN continues to direct the greatest possible portion of its Department of Health funding to health reform.

New Clinical Councils were formed to the new regionalised structure and are now chaired by the operational Executive Director in each region. This new approach means the Clinical Councils are better placed to assist NQPHN to develop local strategies to improve the healthcare system for residents in their respective regions, to ultimately improve health outcomes for northern Queenslanders.



L-R: NQPHN CEO John Gregg, AHHA CEO Alison Verhoeven, and NQPHN Board Chair Dr Vlad Matic.

In September 2018, NQPHN made a significant step in our reconciliation journey by launching our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2018-19, our first ever RAP and a document which demonstrates our promise to building stronger relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous artist Luke Mallie was commissioned to design the artwork for the Reconciliation Australia-endorsed plan and reflects NQPHN's commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our region.

An important internal focus of the organisation this financial year was the improvement and streamlining of our systems and the way we work, through what we have called the Business Improvement Project (BIP). The aim of the BIP is to implement technology and tools that empower staff to perform their roles effectively and efficiently, inline with NQPHN's commissioning framework, and to ensure there is a transparent and single source of truth for information sharing. By implementing the right systems and processes, we are better placed to improve the overall health and wellbeing of northern Queensland communities.



Scan the QR code to read the General Purpose Financial Statements.

At the start of 2019, our region—especially in the North and South West—was tested with a severe flooding event which had devastating impacts on the lives and livelihoods of many of our residents. NQPHN worked collaboratively with providers to increase capacity and expand mental health and primary health care services for those within the affected regions. It was inspiring to see the community spirit and resilience displayed during and after this event, with residents coming together to support each other.

2018 was also the year that NQPHN pledged to ‘inspire our tribe’ and encourage our community to take control of their own health to address the prevalence of chronic disease in the region. We focused on integrated strategies including community health education and fitness programs to instill healthier eating habits in the everyday lives of our residents.

Finally, we express our sincere thanks to the Board, Executive Team, NQPHN staff, and stakeholders for their dedication, determination, and commitment to improving access to quality primary health care for northern Queenslanders.

As we head into our fifth year of operation, we very much look forward to powering into the 2019–20 financial year as an efficient, effective, and focused organisation helping northern Queenslanders live happier, healthier, longer lives.



Dr Vladislav Matic
MBBS (Syd) M. Bus (Mgmt)
FACRRM FRACGP FAICD
Chair
 NQPHN



John Gregg
Chief Executive Officer
 NQPHN



NQPHN Cairns staff celebrating NAIDOC week.



NQPHN Townsville staff celebrating Harmony Day.



NQPHN Mackay staff celebrating World Autism Awareness Day.

NQPHN Highlights 2018–19



256 contracts approved across the region

With total expenditure and commitments of **\$63,402,271**

209 eBlasts/ eNewsletters distributed

81 Media releases and responses

Mental Health

6,000+ referrals processed by Connect to Wellbeing across the region

1,200+ referrals to place-based and other funded mental health services

153 education and training events delivered to **2,681** participants

128 My Health Record consumer engagement events attended

1,400 face-to-face interactions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

29,346 Care Coordination services delivered
This number does not include the Supplementary or Clinical Services accessed.

11,229 Integrated Team Care (ITC) clients
Clients may be recorded more than once.

54 Indigenous outreach workers, Indigenous Health Project Officers and Care Coordinators employed in the ITC programs

Facebook

495 Posts

Total post reach **947,815**

Average reach per post **1,915**

3,187 Followers

***NQPHN has the most Facebook followers out of all PHNs**

\$12,700 spent on advertising

NQPHN is also on:

in Instagram Twitter YouTube

1,503 completed and live HealthPathways across the region

↑ 19% increase

Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD)

24 commissioned AOD services across the region

3,948 clients were provided an AOD service

Strategic Plan 2018–2023

Our vision

Northern Queenslanders live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Our purpose

Drive change within and support primary health care to improve individual and community wellbeing.

Our partners

Core to our purpose is developing our partnerships in a collaborative manner that drives improvement through working with our community and primary care system, and other key stakeholders.

Goals

To place individuals at the centre of their own health and wellbeing.

To work with communities to understand local needs, and design and implement solutions that improve local health and wellbeing.

To ensure an integrated approach to health and wellbeing.

To build local capacity to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

Outcomes

Patient experience of care:

- safe and effective care
- timely and equitable access.

Patient and family needs met:

- quality and population health
- improved health outcomes
- reduced disease burden
- improvement in individual behavioural and physical health.

Sustainable cost:

- efficiency and effectiveness of services
- increased resourcing to primary care
- cost savings and quality-adjusted life-years.

Provider satisfaction:

- increased clinician and staff satisfaction
- evidence of leadership and teamwork
- quality improvement culture in practices.

Foundations

- People
- Cultural competency
- Engagements
- Evidence and data
- Innovation
- Integrity

Our strategic objectives

Integrate information, data collection, and sharing.

Build workforce capacity and capability for the future.

Strengthen partnerships to maximise collective impact.

Commission effective and evidence-informed solutions to improve outcomes.

Provide collaborative and efficient health system leadership that drives progressive health system reform.



Scan the QR code to view the full Strategic Plan.

Reconciliation Action Plan Highlights

In late 2018, Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) proudly released its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The Reflect RAP describes NQPHN's commitment to embedding a shared vision for reconciliation by addressing key identified actions to foster mutually respectful, meaningful and inclusive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities.

The NQPHN RAP Working Group, championed by the Board and Chief Executive Officer, developed the Reflect RAP during 2018, ensuring full consultation and engagement of NQPHN staff and enabling greater insight into the barriers and opportunities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in North Queensland encounter.

NQPHN acknowledges that building relationships and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both internally and within communities, builds a better understanding of the importance of culture and heritage. Broadening the organisation's knowledge of customs, traditions, and values sets the precedent for internal sustainable change, thus redefining the way NQPHN plans, acts, and engages.

This Reflect RAP is the first step in NQPHN's reconciliation journey, and is a key starting point for the organisation to walk together to learn and grow on a continuous improvement path to build successive plans for the future.

To complement the RAP, NQPHN commissioned a specific artwork, produced by Luke Mallie, entitled 'The Indigenous Healing Mandala'. The work explores NQPHN's commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our region. Like the RAP, the artwork is now a part of NQPHN's identity and will be a constant in all that we do.

Looking forward

- » All NQPHN staff will participate in cultural safety training in the 2019–20 financial year.
- » Continued commitment and efforts to achieving the outcomes described in the NQPHN Reflect Rap.
- » The establishment of the next RAP Working Group, charged with leading the development of the NQPHN Innovate RAP, which is the next step in the organisation's reconciliation journey.
- » Continued education of staff regarding Indigenous community profiles, customs, and protocols, including Cultural Awareness training.
- » Review of standard form contracts to require similar levels of cultural safety training required to be undertaken by all NQPHN staff.
- » Review of NQPHN policies to ensure proper accommodation and representation of the need for cultural safety and cultural awareness.



The Indigenous Healing Mandala
by Luke Mallie



Scan the QR code
to read NQPHN's
Reflect RAP.

ANNUAL NQPHN YOUNG INDIGENOUS ART AWARDS 2019



About the awards

In 2018, the NQPHN Board of Directors achieved its vision of implementing the inaugural NQPHN Indigenous Youth Art Competition, a new initiative to recognise young, talented Indigenous artists across North Queensland.

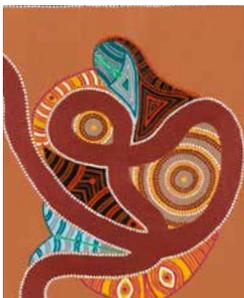
In 2019, the Board launched the second annual competition during National Reconciliation Week and announced the winners during NAIDOC Week as part of the organisation's commitment to support Indigenous youth, and a meaningful pathway towards inclusion of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The competition—based on the theme of 'mental health'—saw some inspirational artwork submitted by young and upcoming local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artists between the ages of 13–21 years.



Scan the QR code to view the 2018 and 2019 winning artworks.

2019 WINNERS



First place: Moniesha Wallace

Moniesha is a 19 year old Aboriginal artist from the Cairns region.

Artwork title: Boundaries



Second place: Tanisha Vincent

Tanisha is an 18 year old Aboriginal artist from the Herberton region.

Artwork title: Calling forward. Looking back.



Third place: Kashana Wallace

Kashana is a 17 year old Aboriginal artist from the Cairns region.

Artwork title: Unhinged



OUR REGION, *our people*

Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service

Going above and beyond to
provide quality primary health care

Through dedication to their patients, their local community, and to teamwork, Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service (TAIHS) has made some commendable achievements over the past year, all of which contribute to improving health outcomes for communities in the Townsville region.

TAIHS aims to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take control of their individual, family, and community health, which encompasses physical, social, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and economic wellbeing.

Their community has access to holistic primary health care that is culturally appropriate and incorporates prevention, promotion, and treatment.

In 2018, TAIHS was named Aboriginal Medical Service of the Year as part of Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited's (AGPAL's) Excellence Awards. The Excellence Awards recognise accredited practices, organisations, and services which consistently go above and beyond to implement and embed quality improvements, have teams that love to innovate, demonstrate a dedicated approach to patient and consumer services and/or care, and have a clear understanding of related industry standards.

TAIHS Chief Executive Officer Kathy Anderson was also featured on the front cover of Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council's (QAIHC's) Sector Leader magazine, highlighting her strong leadership and dedication to making sure TAIHS is more than a health service.

Dr Anderson said that the recent recognition of their achievements is a culmination of the principles and values of the TAIHS workforce.



TAIHS winning the Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited (AGPAL) Excellence Award.



NQPHN CEO John Gregg presenting TAIHS with a certificate of recognition at the myPHN Conference 2018.



TAIHS staff member consulting with mum and bub.

“All of our services are developed and based on the needs of the community to deliver health and wellbeing outcomes,” Dr Anderson said.

“Our approach to business is underpinned by principles of collaboration and sustainability, as we ensure we provide culturally appropriate service provision, enable client self-determination, deliver services that are evidence and needs-based, and provide non-discriminatory access to health care services and non-judgemental support.

“Our efforts are driven by community aspiration, empowerment, and self-determination, and we ensure our activities make a positive difference to primary health and social and emotional wellbeing.

“Our programs provide quality holistic care integrating local, cultural, and scientific knowledge, and it is important to us that our people maintain strong connections with community.”

TAIHS has been working closely with Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) on a number of projects providing maternal and child health support, youth psychology services, psychiatry services, increased access for chronic disease management, as well as contributing to the children in out-of-home care pathway development.

Dr Anderson said working together in partnership with other organisations is essential to delivering appropriate services to their community.

“TAIHS has built strong partnerships with NQPHN, the Department of Health, service agencies, community groups and members, and peak bodies with the aim to improve health outcomes for people within our community,” Dr Anderson said.

“Working together with other like-minded organisations is an important way that we can pool resources to develop and provide quality services and programs so our community can receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

“TAIHS is grateful to NQPHN for recognising the need for essential maternal and child health, youth, and psychology services to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in the Townsville region to live happier, healthier, longer lives.”



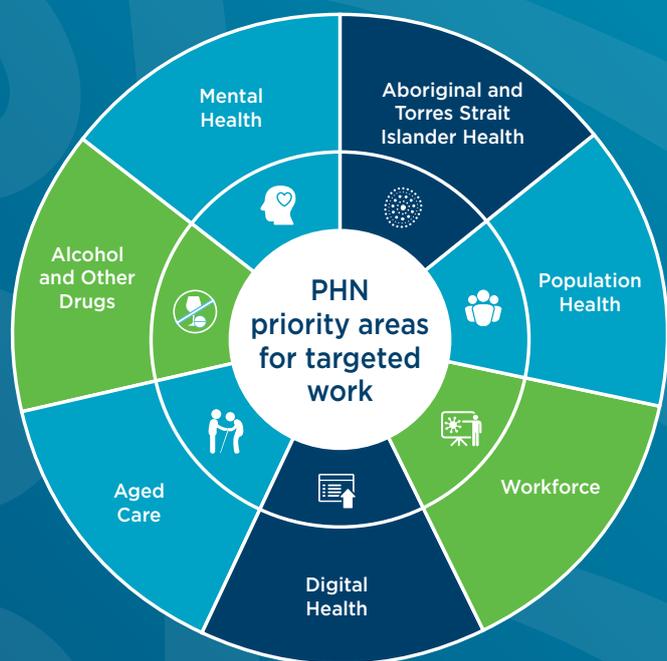
Scan the QR code to learn more about TAIHS.

Our health priority areas in 2018–19

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) aims to improve health outcomes for all by working with GPs, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, allied health professionals, secondary care providers, hospitals, and the wider community. NQPHN responds to the health needs of its region while being guided by the National PHN Performance and Quality Framework's seven priority areas (pictured right) for targeted work.

The main objectives within each of these priority areas is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary health services, and to improve coordination of care to ensure people receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

NQPHN responds to the health needs of its region while being guided by the priority areas for targeted work and national priorities, as decided by the Australian Government.



Scan the QR code to read the full framework document.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Key priority area overview

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health remained a key focus of Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) throughout the 2018–19 financial year. During 2018–19 there was an increased investment in service providers and workforce development, particularly in the areas of culturally safe mental health, maternal and child health, and health promotion and prevention.

Addressing the prevalence of chronic disease amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in the NQPHN region requires holistic primary health care interventions through culturally safe service models to provide comprehensive wrap-around support and access. NQPHN has partnered with acute and primary health sectors to address chronic disease in Indigenous populations in the region, and has invested in health literacy, health promotion, and prevention activities to empower residents to take control of their own health.

The objectives of NQPHN's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health programs are to:

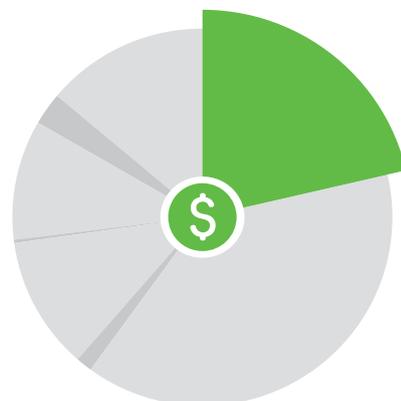
- » enhance mainstream service models to deliver culturally appropriate primary and preventative health care
- » improve access to primary health care particularly in rural and remote areas
- » evaluate and develop integrated, multi-disciplinary team approaches to chronic disease management
- » empower communities to advance localised approaches to delivering primary health care
- » grow organisational knowledge of the challenges to delivering high quality primary health care to rural and remote communities to develop innovative and responsive investment
- » continually nurture NQPHN's relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACHHOs) and key stakeholders in communities, including local councils
- » seek out partnerships with non-health agencies to support collaborative strategies that recognise social determinants of health as key variables to addressing quality of life.

Key outcomes

- ✔ Commenced the Integrated Team Care (ITC) assessment, evaluation, and co-design project to understand options for future commissioning to improve health outcomes for Indigenous communities in North Queensland.

- ✔ Increased access to culturally appropriate primary health care by:
 - partnering with Mulungu Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre in Kuranda to provide a Men's Health Hub service
 - supporting Torres Health Indigenous Corporation (THIC) to establish the first Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health service, based on Thursday Island
 - collaboration with Wakai Waian Healing to deliver timely and place-based psychological therapies to Torres Strait Islander residents presenting with moderate level mental illness.
- ✔ Empowered individuals to take control of their own health and prevent chronic disease and obesity by providing culturally appropriate health education and literacy through:
 - collaboration with Apunipima Cape York Health Council to educate pregnant women and new mothers about optimal infant nutrition
 - smoking cessation program in partnership with Northern Peninsula Area Family and Community Services (NPAFaCs)
 - collaboration with AFL Cape York to implement the On the Move with Deadly Foods project to address obesity
 - partnering with Active Physiotherapy Mackay to deliver Get Active exercise classes.
- ✔ Improved relationships and partnerships with community leaders and agencies to support culturally safe, holistic, and place-based approaches to quality primary health care.

Priority area expenditure \$12,359,255



OUR REGION, *our people*

Schools Up North Pilot Program

Teachers play a vital role in the lives of the students in their classroom, and it is through this influence that Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI) is making a difference to the mental health and wellbeing of young people in the Cape and Torres region.

YETI's Schools Up North (SUN) pilot program, funded by Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) and now in its second year, is a capacity building project facilitated at both Western Cape College in Weipa and Tagai State College on Thursday Island. The SUN program aims to support teachers and student support teams to respond to the mental health and social and emotional wellbeing of students.

For young people, disengagement from school is a major risk factor to their future wellbeing. At the same time, mental health vulnerability increases the chances of them having difficulties at school and exiting the educational system.

The SUN program focuses on up-skilling teachers to better recognise and understand the challenges presented by students with mental health difficulties in remote North Queensland schools, and provides them with skills to minimise the risk of those students disengaging from their education.

YETI Convenor Helen Travers said the program complements existing Education Queensland Programs that address school-based behaviour management and supports the social and emotional wellbeing of staff.

"The SUN program consists of a series of reflective workshops with secondary school teachers and uses strategies to facilitate discernment of resources to enhance new teacher retention in the rural environment and build capacity to respond appropriately to the needs of students with mental health vulnerabilities," Ms Travers said.



*Schools Up North (SUN)
Strategic Roundtable, Cairns.*



*Schools Up North (SUN) Strategic
Roundtable, Cairns.*

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people living in remote communities experience higher risk for poor mental health trajectories, the first signs of which are often emotional and behavioural disorders impacting on their school engagement.

“Considerable professional teacher capacity is required to implement supportive strategies when student behaviour is incongruous with school expectations. However new teachers, or teachers new to the remote area workforce, need to integrate educational practices in unfamiliar social and cultural environments, which can be quite stressful.

“The program creates an education platform that supports new teacher resilience and longevity in the remote school environment, establishes their role in supporting student wellbeing and resilience, and facilitates appropriate referral consistent with the stepped care model of mental health service provision.”

The SUN program also emphasises the importance of relationships, consistency, and trust in both supporting the mental wellbeing of students and in building the resilience capacity of teachers.

“The attitudes and actions of teachers deeply influence the quality of relationships with students, and good relationships can enable students at risk to remain at or return to school,” said Ms Travers.

“Teachers who took part in the pilot program said their classes often consist of multiple students with more complex needs and recognised that a better understanding of individual student needs and applied skills development would help them to make decisions in the classroom.

“The program builds confidence and capacity in participating teachers to recognise and utilise opportunities to engage with vulnerable students and is a major support to enabling emotional resilience.”

Evaluation of the SUN pilot has led to the program being funded for a second phase in 2019. The second phase involves the extension of the project to schools in Bamaga, Cooktown, and Kowanyama, expansion of the program in existing schools to develop previous teacher participants into mentors, and student capacity building, utilising peer support frameworks to enhance personal resilience skills.

The SUN program recognises that schools offer an ideal vehicle to improve health awareness, provide early intervention, and improve access to services for young people, especially those who are reluctant to seek help when they are struggling. NQPHN is proud to support YETI to deliver this program, helping northern Queenslanders live happier, healthier, longer lives.



*Scan the QR code
to learn more about
Schools Up North.*

Aged Care

Key priority area overview

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network's (NQPHN's) Aged Care priority area supports older Australians to lead healthier, more productive, and connected lives through a population health approach. This contributes to the capacity of older people to enjoy greater social and economic participation.

NQPHN draws information from a range of sources to identify and prioritise the needs of older Australians, assess current services, and develop innovative solutions to address identified gaps in primary care services.

The Aged Care priorities aim to provide older residents in the region with:

- » quality care to result in fewer preventable hospitalisations and ensure local health and other care providers are supported to deliver coordinated, effective, and appropriate care
- » support to access primary health care services that meet their needs, including self-care in the home
- » longer term support with local health care systems providing coordinated, quality care so they can enjoy a better quality of life.

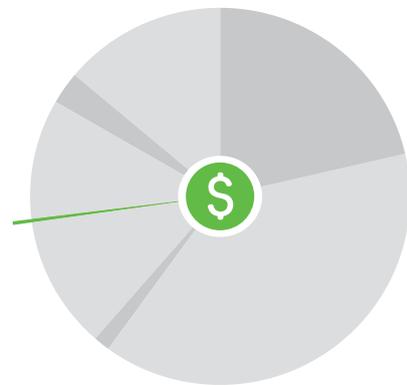
Key outcomes

- ✔ Reduced avoidable Emergency Department presentations of Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) residents by collaborating with Mackay Hospital and Health Service (MHHS) to develop the Emergency and Community Connect (ECC) telehealth project in the Mackay region.
- ✔ Increased access to after hours primary health care for RACF residents in the Mackay region by partnering with House Call Doctor to develop a new after-hours service called Telehealth Doctor NQ.
- ✔ Upskilled the aged care workforce across the region to provide residents with quality palliative care through a number of education events, which included working in collaboration with Palliative Care Queensland on the Connecting End of Life Care (CELC) project and CranaPlus.
- ✔ Improved care coordination in RACFs for residents through providing staff training in My Health Record, Advance Care Planning, and HealthPathways.

- ✔ Improved quality of life for older residents in the region through a collaboration with Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service (CHHHS) and Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service (TCHHS) to develop the Older Persons Enablement And Rehabilitation for Complex Health conditions (OPEN ARCH) model of care, using early intervention to enable older residents to continue living in the community for longer.

Expenditure

\$152,240



Palliative Care workshops—Cairns, Weipa, and Thursday Island.



Palliative Care workshops—Cairns, Weipa, and Thursday Island.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Key priority area overview

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) is committed to enhancing and establishing a range of evidence-based and culturally appropriate Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) treatment services which are accessible to all residents across North Queensland.

The primary objectives of the AOD priority area are to:

- » engage in ongoing collaboration with AOD networks, communities, services, and providers to better understand needs, inform planning, and identify opportunities to collaborate
- » increase and sustain a qualified and skilled workforce that is better able to support a diverse client base, including supporting general practitioners to identify and respond to the needs of clients presenting with AOD concerns
- » enhance service models through coordinated case management and care planning to increase access for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations across rural and remote communities
- » maintain outcome-based performance frameworks
- » enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce participation, service capacity, and sustainability
- » increase investment in AOD withdrawal and rehabilitation management and support services.

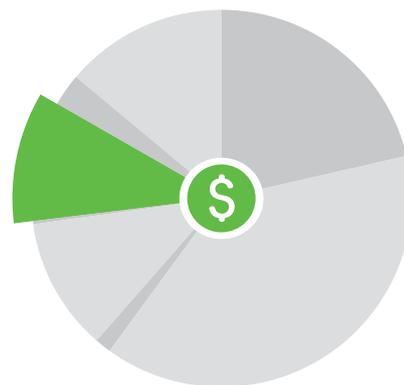
Key outcomes

- ✔ Increased access to clinical AOD services for young people across Cape York, Cooktown, Weipa, Thursday Island, and Bamaga through a sustained partnership with Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI) to further develop the Remote Alcohol and Drug Interventions and Outcomes (RADIO) 'hub and spoke' program.
- ✔ Increased access to evidence-based AOD detox and withdrawal support program for young people and adults across the NQPHN region through collaboration with the Salvation Army and Ozcare.
- ✔ Increased access to culturally appropriate, responsive, and integrated AOD treatment services for young people, including outreach services to youth detention centres through collaboration with Lives Lived Well.

- ✔ Invested in Lives Lived Well's withdrawal support program and rehabilitation day program to provide support for low to moderate risk adults affected by drug and alcohol use.
- ✔ Upskilled the region's AOD workforce by providing workers with access to AOD training, education, employment, and social support activities enabling them to deliver quality, culturally appropriate clinical interventions, therapeutic services, and support for disadvantaged and disengaged clients.
- ✔ Increased access for rural communities in Cooktown to AOD withdrawal treatment from a specialist general practitioner through collaboration with Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service (TCHHS).
- ✔ Partnered with Gindaja Treatment and Healing Centre located in Yarrabah to support development of an evaluation framework, clinical governance structures, and an AOD group program model in non-primary health care community service agencies.
- ✔ Developed a better understanding of the needs and challenges of AOD service delivery in the region through consultation with communities and providers to enable the design of responsive and appropriate models of care, particularly in rural and remote communities.

Expenditure

\$5,909,368



OUR REGION, *our people*

Connect to Wellbeing

Stepped care approach to mental health

For the past year, Neami National's Connect to Wellbeing service has been reshaping the provision of mental health care for North Queenslanders, providing residents with a single point of entry to mental health services across the Cairns, Townsville, and Mackay regions.

Connect to Wellbeing was funded by Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) to implement the new mental health Stepped Care approach as part of the Australian Government's mental health reform agenda.

Stepped care is an evidence-based, staged approach to the delivery of mental health services, comprising a hierarchy of interventions—from the least to the most intensive—matched to the individual's needs.

This approach is about ensuring that people can access the most appropriate services for their mental health needs at any given time—including the ability to step up and step down to different levels of care as they move through their recovery journey.

The Stepped Care model provides an approach to mental health support that is person-centred and supports people across the spectrum of needs.

The model aims to ensure that people have streamlined access to the right services for their needs over time and as their needs change. With the opportunity to link in with other supports as required, the Stepped Care model places an emphasis on integration and consumers not having to 're-tell' their story every time their support needs change.

Neami National Regional Manager - North Queensland Joe Petrucci said the Connect to Wellbeing Teams in Cairns, Townsville, and Mackay have had a positive and rewarding first year of operation, after services formally commenced on 6 June 2018.



Cairns launch of Connect to Wellbeing with Warren Entsch MP, Gillian Yearsley-NQPHN, Joe Petrucci-NEAMI National, and others.



L-R: Gillian Yearsley, NQPHN, Joe Petrucci, NEAMI National, and Karen Thomas, NEAMI National.



Mackay launch of Connect to Wellbeing with Joe Petrucci, Sandy Loveless, John Gregg, and Karen Thomas.

“The initial set up of the service involved recruitment, office set up, the establishment of IT systems, processes and procedure development and refinement, set up of the 1300 020 390 access number, and creation of the service website – www.connecttowellbeing.org.au,” Mr Petrucci said.

“Connect to Wellbeing has achieved many successes over the past 12 months, including supporting 6,000 individuals to access services that matched their mental health needs.

“Waitlists and demand management have also drastically improved, with referrals for support no longer waitlisted in the region, nor refused.”

Connect to Wellbeing also addressed identified gaps in the provision of suicide prevention services and mental health support for Indigenous residents and improved relationships with stakeholders to improve care pathways.

“The Connect to Wellbeing Team reviewed mental health capacity building needs in the region, and it was apparent that there were gaps in suicide prevention programs. We established a Suicide Prevention Service Capacity Development Strategy, provided via a training grant, to increase the number of providers undertaking suicide prevention program work, which in turn enables services to better support people seeking help,” said Mr Petrucci.

“We have also implemented an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Project Officer role which has positively influenced referral pathways to mental health services and better support the large Indigenous populations in North Queensland.

“Building partnerships with key stakeholders has been imperative to consolidating many clinical and non-clinical referral pathways, including the pathway to Psychological Therapies, and direct referrals from police who actively respond to situations involving people with mental health concerns.

“To improve access to mental health support for people in regional areas where on the ground services are limited, we’ve introduced the Medicare telehealth specialist service.”

The service has also been busy engaging key stakeholders working in local community mental health settings, including GPs, the local community, regional centres, and networks, to provide education via regional operational governance groups and formal GP education forums about the Stepped Care model and associated referral processes.

Connect to Wellbeing are looking forward to their second year of operation and further expanding their services to include group therapy provision to improve the mental health and wellbeing of North Queenslanders, helping them to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

“It has been a privilege to contribute positively towards establishing a Stepped Care approach in North Queensland, and the Connect to Wellbeing Teams look forward to their second-year journey ensuring referred individuals receive the right service, at the right place, at the right time.”



Scan the QR code to
learn more about
Connect to Wellbeing.

Digital Health

Key priority area overview

Systems integration, data collection, and information sharing enables primary health care providers in the region to better care for residents at the right place and at the right time.

In the 2018–19 financial year, Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) worked in collaboration with the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) and local Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) to grow the digital health literacy of service providers, laying the foundation so they can provide more efficient and coordinated care to North Queenslanders.

NQPHN's Digital Health priorities aim to provide northern Queensland residents with:

- » quality care by supporting health care providers to use digital health systems and data to improve patient care and communication
- » coordinated care by informing health care providers about digital health systems and technologies.

Key outcomes

✓ The national expansion of My Health Record opt-out commenced in July 2018. As the majority of North Queensland residents already had a My Health Record, NQPHN supported the national expansion project by undertaking activities focused around awareness and training for both health care providers and consumers. Key activities included:

- ongoing registration support for health care providers
- face-to-face training for health care providers and their teams
- community-focused information sessions.

- ✓ Improved patient care coordination by expanding key stakeholder registration groups for My Health Record to include pharmacy, allied health, specialists, and residential aged care facilities.
- ✓ Increased provider usage of the HealthPathways portals as a guide to local, credible clinical pathways has resulted in improved communication between primary and secondary health services in northern Queensland.
- ✓ Enabled health care providers to make better informed care and treatment decisions through support of the localisation of clinical HealthPathways in partnership with HHSs in the NQPHN region. This was achieved by:
 - updating pathways through the HHS-led state-wide clinical prioritisation criteria (CPC) project
 - focused development of HealthPathways for veterans in the Townsville region, which was co-designed in collaboration with the defence community and Operation Compass
 - focused promotion to build awareness and increase usage of the HealthPathways portals through face-to-face meetings and workforce education events.

Expenditure

\$1,569,858



Empowering frontline staff in digital age workshop, Mackay.



Scan the QR code to find out more about HealthPathways in the region.

Mental Health

Key priority area overview

A significant focus within the Mental Health key priority area in the 2018-19 financial year was the implementation of the new stepped care model of mental health service provision. The transition to a more coordinated and blended model of service delivery is a key mandate of the Australian Government Department of Health.

Existing Mental Health programs across the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) region transitioned into stepped care with consolidation of the newly-established 'Central Intake, Triage, Assessment, and Governance' model, delivered by Neami National's Connect to Wellbeing service.

The model of implementation was determined through a series of co-design workshops with a range of stakeholders, resulting in the implementation of a clinical intake, assessment, and triage model.

The clinical intake model is now being considered a best practice approach and the Department of Health is currently investing in research to inform national implementation of it.

Implementation of the National Psychosocial Support (NPS) Measure and related programs including NPS Transition and Continuity of Support programs expanded the responsibilities of NQPHN into psychosocial support, facilitating the transition of existing clients of former Commonwealth programs into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

NQPHN also continued community-based suicide prevention activities including Operation Compass, the national trial for ex-Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel in the Townsville region.

Key outcomes

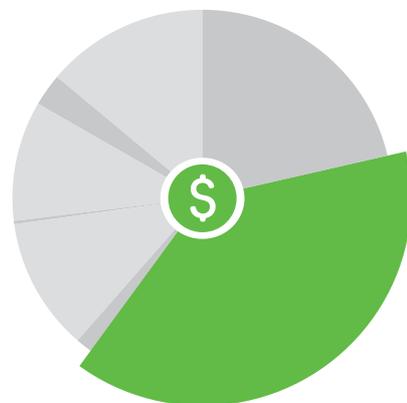
- ✔ Increased access to psychological therapies by contracting place-based services in:
 - the Townsville and Mackay regions
 - Croydon and Etheridge Shires, Torres Strait, and Cape York
 - Aboriginal Medical Services in Mareeba, Yarrabah, and Palm Island.
- ✔ Collaborated with Western Queensland Primary Health Network to provide an extension of existing telephone and digital psychological support provided by low intensity services from NQ Connect, facilitated by On the Line, in response to the severe flood event in North and West Queensland in February 2019.



- ✔ Taught resilience strategies in children and young people in six North Queensland schools through the implementation of the Resilience Project pilot in collaboration with NQ Cowboys House. The project is being expanded to include 60 schools across the region, commencing in August 2019.
- ✔ Implemented the Townsville Mentally Healthy City project in collaboration with Townsville City Council, Beyond Blue, Townsville Hospital and Health Service (THHS), and Bendigo Bank, which supports schools, workplaces, and the broader community to improve the mental wellbeing of residents.
- ✔ Initiated the development of regional Suicide Prevention Community Action Plans across Cairns, Townsville, and Mackay in collaboration with representatives from a range of health and community services, providing a whole of community approach to support people suffering from mental health issues, promote mental wellbeing, and prevent suicide.
- ✔ Connect to Wellbeing referrals are no longer waitlisted in the region, reducing to zero from 600 referrals in the Townsville and Mackay regions from the previous year.

Expenditure

\$22,255,650



Scan the QR code to find out more about The Resilience Project and NQ Cowboys House.

OUR REGION, *our people*

Operation Compass Suicide Prevention Project

Prevention through connection

As the only one of 12 federally funded National Suicide Prevention Trials focused on ex-Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families, the Operation Compass suicide prevention project is leading the way in mental health and wellbeing support for Australia's ex-serving men and women.

The project, facilitated by Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) in partnership with the Townsville Suicide Prevention Network, aims to reduce the rates of suicide and increase wellbeing within the ex-ADF community and their families and to ensure the sustainability of successful projects through integration into long-term local veteran support programs.

Townsville is Australia's largest garrison city, with approximately 20 per cent of residents belonging to the defence community as either currently serving ADF members or ex-ADF members and their families.

Operation Compass is based on the Black Dog Institute's LifeSpan model, an evidence-based approach to integrated suicide prevention. The LifeSpan model aims to build a safety net for the community by connecting and coordinating new and existing interventions and programs and builds the community capacity to better support people facing a suicide crisis.

The project is a community-led initiative and has a strong Steering Committee that is Chaired by Lieutenant General John Caligari AO, DSC (retired). Together with an experienced Community Advisory Group, Operation Compass developed six targeted campaigns. These include:

- » clinical support
- » enduring connections
- » data and evidence
- » innovative programs
- » community response
- » evidence-based programs.



NQPHN Operation Compass Team.
L-R: Leith Milton, Ray Martin, Susie Walker



Mindframe Plus training, Townsville.



BBQ breakfast to officially launch
#CheckYourMates, Townsville.

NQPHN ex-ADF Suicide Prevention Project Manager Ray Martin said Operation Compass developed a number of projects throughout the 2018-19 financial year which included commissioning and co-design, community action campaigns, education and training, and planning for the sustainability of Operation Compass initiatives.

“In late 2018, we launched the #CheckYourMates campaign, an awareness building community challenge for people to check in with five friends using the Connect, Yarn, and Motivate strategy that brings mental health out of the shadows and encourages candid discussions to help residents stay mentally healthy,” Mr Martin said.

“The campaign promotional videos have reached over 600,000 users on social media and has generated interest from Ex-Service Organisations and others to roll out the campaign nationally.

“#CheckYourMates will also form the theme of a mental health guide being developed by the Townsville Bulletin in collaboration with NQPHN, Townsville Hospital and Health Service (THHS), and Mackay Hospital and Health Service (MHHS), being distributed to community in July 2019.

“We worked collaboratively with Townsville Suicide Prevention Network and Open Arms to conduct a number of evidence-based suicide prevention training programs, including Mindframe Plus training for media and community stakeholders to support safe media reporting, portrayal, and communication about suicide, mental ill-health, and alcohol and other drugs.

“Another focus for the Operation Compass Team during the 2018-19 financial year was the investment in 10 community grants which were awarded to community and veteran groups to provide wellness and resilience projects to improve mental health outcomes for the Townsville ex-ADF community.

“These grants have enabled us to further engage with the ex-ADF community, resulting in us now being able to reach more veterans to get them involved in mental health and wellbeing projects, helping them to live happier, healthier, longer lives. A second round of community grants is currently underway.

“Moving forward, we are working with Open Arms to co-design a neurocognitive pilot program to support veterans and their families who have been identified with, or impacted by, acquired brain injuries (ABIs) and/or traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), and is scheduled to commence in late 2019.”

Planning is currently underway to ensure the sustainability of successful Operation Compass projects through integration into long-term veteran support through the Department of Health, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Open Arms, and The Oasis Townsville. The National Suicide Prevention Trial has been extended for all trial sites to 30 June 2020.



Oasis Farm Assist, one of the recipients of the Operation Compass Community Grant—round one.



Scan the QR code to learn more about the #checkyourmates campaign.

Population Health

Key priority area overview

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) works to improve people’s health and wellbeing throughout their lifespan, and focus on addressing both health and social determinants which lead to poor health outcomes. NQPHN works closely with local communities in a diverse and sparse geographic region to identify unique health needs and coordinate service providers to collaborate and identify suitable solutions.

The key population health priorities for NQPHN throughout the 2018-19 financial year included:

- » maternal and child health
- » chronic disease management and prevention
- » sexual health
- » healthy ageing
- » Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- » multicultural health.

Objectives of Population Health priorities are to:

- » address the needs of North Queensland communities to lower the number of preventable hospitalisations for people with chronic and vaccine preventable diseases
- » provide residents with quality care by supporting health care providers to address factors impacting population health
- » generate longer-term improvements to health outcomes for all population groups in the NQPHN region.

Key outcomes

- » During the 2018-19 financial year, 58 population health contracts were commissioned.
- » *My health for life* program achievements to date:
 - 16,839 health checks which assessed people’s risk of chronic disease
 - 771 program completions delivered by 28 facilitators from 18 provider organisations
 - 16 workplaces engaged in the program as a workplace health activity
 - 22 *My health for life* community events.



My health for life promotion at myPHN Conference 2018, Mackay.



Wheels of Wellness (WOW) official opening of a CBD-based medical clinic, Cairns.

- » Extended operating hours enabled Palm Island Pharmacy to build strong relationships with the community. The pharmacy is now recognised as a place where residents can go to seek help and health care advice. A total of 1,900 visits were made to the pharmacy in the after-hours period, which diverted potentially avoidable visits to the island’s hospital service. Community members report they are now able to recognise their symptoms, get the advice and assistance they need, and are better able to take control of their own health.

Expenditure

\$6,625,978



Scan the QR code to learn more about *My health for life*.

Workforce

Key priority area overview

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network's (NQPHN's) Workforce key priority area aims to support the North Queensland health workforce, building its capacity and capability to remain agile in a changing health system environment. NQPHN supports GPs and other primary health care providers and their teams to provide the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

Access to a flexible, skilled, and culturally competent workforce is paramount due to:

- » NQPHN's geographical diversity and remoteness
- » the health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- » chronic and complex disease burdens of older populations.

Professional development activities are designed and delivered locally, based on local need and informed by population health data.

These activities aim to:

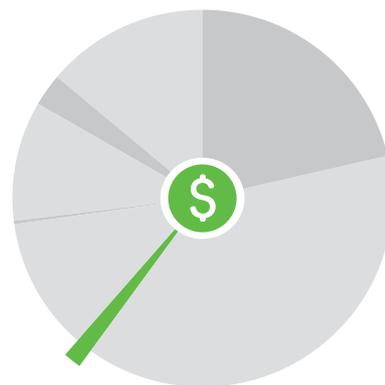
- » build capacity and skills that support continuous and coordinated care management of chronic and complex conditions
- » support general practice and other healthcare providers through workforce development and networking opportunities to maintain quality care and best practice in primary health care
- » provide opportunities to access high-quality education and training that supports the maintenance of qualifications, adoption of new models of care, and health reforms
- » encourage internal and external partnerships that facilitate performance accountability and quality improvement cultures
- » innovate service delivery to address impacts of workforce and skills shortages on vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations
- » inform career pathways and specialty skills aligned to industry need and service capability, including uptake of continuing professional development and postgraduate studies
- » ensure the local primary health workforce has suitable cultural and clinical skills to address the health needs of the NQPHN region

Key outcomes

- ✓ Built capacity and skills in the general practice workforce in Townsville to enable the provision of quality and appropriate care for refugees by facilitating the 'Navigating Refugee Health Care' education event. Education topics during the event included the settlement journey, refugee health assessments by GPs and nurses, clinical pathways for malaria, administration considerations, and mental health referral pathways.
- ✓ Upskilled Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) nursing staff in the Mackay region in the Ageing in Place model of care to increase quality of life for elderly residents by enabling them to live and age in the residence of choice.
- ✓ myPHN Conference 2018 was held at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre (MECC) on Saturday 1 – Sunday 2 September 2018. The theme of the conference was 'Connecting our healthcare together' with the aim of generating conversations that would enhance engagement and relationship building across health and social sectors. The four conference streams encouraged delegates to work together to:
 - establish a shared vision for community need
 - build workforce capacity and future capability
 - improve health systems and technology
 - deliver innovation, research, and reform.

Expenditure

\$795,473



Scan the QR code to view photos and presentations from myPHN Conference 2018.

OUR REGION, *our people*

Let's Shape Up: Inspire your tribe project

Obesity and type 2 diabetes are significant health issues across the Mackay, Whitsunday, and Isaac regions. To combat this growing population health issue, the Mackay Institute of Research and Innovation (MIRI) partnered with Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) to launch the *Let's Shape Up: Inspire your tribe* project.

The *Let's Shape Up* project was launched in 2018 in collaboration with Mackay Hospital and Health Service, Mackay Regional Council, CQUniversity, James Cook University, Diabetes Queensland (*My health for life*), and AMA Queensland to address the prevalence of chronic disease in the region.

The link between obesity and type 2 diabetes is strong, with both chronic diseases leading to long-term health issues affecting not only individuals, but also communities and the healthcare industry.

Let's Shape Up encourages and supports community leaders to make pledges on how they plan to shape up and inspire their tribes to make small and sustainable changes and healthier lifestyle choices at home and at work.

MIRI Executive Director Dr David Farlow said the project aims to educate and upskill community members at risk of developing obesity and type 2 diabetes so they can take control of their health and improve their overall wellbeing.

"The project asks leaders to make a pledge to improving wellness and to reduce the weight of the community, identify community members at risk of type 2 diabetes, and engage with leaders across the region to help drive healthy changes within their tribe," Dr Farlow said.

"The pledges you make don't need to be complicated as this is the first step in how you can help drive behaviour change, and can be made as a workplace, family, school, or community.



Jamie's Ministry of Food mobile kitchen cooking demonstration, Mackay.



Let's Shape Up campaign launch, Mackay.
L-R: Board Director John Nugent with NQPHN staff members Jennifer Burnham, Barbra Smith, and Brad Cox.



Jamie's Ministry of Food exhibitor stall at myPHN Conference 2018.

“Some simple ideas are to introduce walking/standing meetings in your workplace, swap screen time for more physical activities to get your family moving, introduce vegetable gardens at your school, or introduce the traffic light system in your community organisation’s canteen.”

Let’s Shape Up also encourages better nutrition through community cooking classes and motivational coaching to increase physical activity.

Jamie’s Ministry of Food mobile kitchen delivered three cycles of five-week cooking classes and nutrition education in Mackay. These classes taught participants about healthy lifestyle modifications, low-cost healthy cooking options, and food alternatives which can be implemented in their day to day lives.

“The mobile kitchen educated, empowered, and inspired the love of good food through sharing healthy tips and recipes which were easy, delicious, and cost effective,” Dr Farlow said.

“Jamie’s Ministry of food delivered 270 classes by 45 volunteers and staff to over 500 participants.”

Among other organisations and groups, NQPHN also pledged to ‘inspire our tribe’ and to deliver a comprehensive Diabetes and Obesity Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program across the region. The CQI program supported general practices to commit to a pivotal role in screening and delivering early interventions for obesity and diabetes.

Twenty general practices were recruited to the program and were given data optimisation strategies and monthly reports and reviews to monitor their progress.

Now in its second year, the *Let’s Shape Up: Inspire your tribe* logo and brand have been trademarked, and there are plans to extend the project more broadly across the region to help northern Queenslanders live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Dr Farlow said it is time for all of us to make a pledge on what we can do as leaders of our tribe to tackle obesity and type 2 diabetes and be part of meaningful change.

“When making your pledge, think of the people you influence and what bite-sized changes you can help them make to lead a healthier lifestyle,” he said.

“Changing bad habits to healthier ones can be a difficult task and it is the leaders in our workplaces, families, schools, and communities that can make the most influential impact.”

If you are a leader, make a pledge on what you can do to start the change in you tribe at miri.health.qld.gov.au/for-consumers/inspire-your-tribe



Scan the QR code to find out more and to Inspire Your Tribe.

Governance and Board

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) has a commitment to strong, effective governance. We are an independent not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. A membership-based organisation, NQPHN is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.

The NQPHN Board is a skills-based Board, which has four key committees:

Nomination and Remuneration

This committee makes recommendations to the Members for director appointments and re-elections, and assists the Board to fulfill its corporate governance responsibilities regarding performance, induction programs, and continuing professional development for directors and remuneration of directors.

People and Performance

This committee provides oversight of organisational culture and other aspects of Human Resources. The committee makes recommendations to the Board regarding Senior Executive succession planning, remuneration and performance evaluation, reviewing compliance with the Corporate Code of Ethical Conduct, and overseeing any investigation of improper conduct initiated under NQPHN's Protective Disclosure (Whistle-blower) Program.

Finance, Audit and Risk Management (FARM)

This committee assists the Board in fulfilling its responsibility to exercise due care, diligence, and skill in relation to budget planning process and monitoring of performance. It also focuses on financial investment strategy, contracting arrangements, the integrity of NQPHN's financial reports and statements, adequacy, and performance of NQPHN's internal control framework, external and internal audit processes, and the framework established by management to identify, assess, and manage risk.

Clinical Governance

This committee provides the Board with contemporary advice and recommendations on matters of clinical governance, commissioning (specifically, planning and design of services), stakeholder engagement, and continuing development and refinement of the Health Needs Assessment (HNA) and related strategic planning documents.

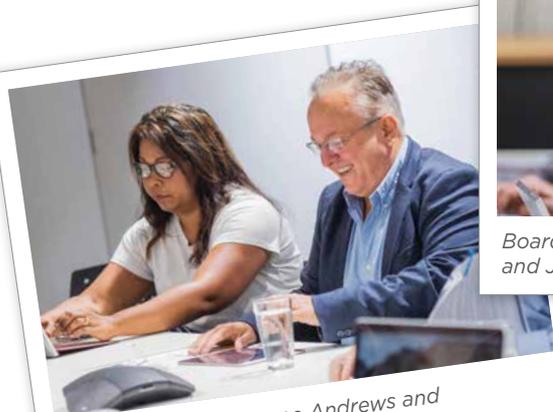
All committees have levels of delegated authority for core decision making.



Scan the QR code to read more about Governance structures and the NQPHN Board.



Board Directors Dr Rodney Catton and John Nugent.



Board Director Suzanne Andrews and Board Chair Dr Vlad Matic.



Board Directors Cate Whalan and Dr Richard Malone.

NQPHN Board meeting attendance 2018–19

This table provides details of Board meetings attendance and sub-committee meetings attendance in 2018–19 by Directors of the NQPHN Board.

Director	Scheduled Board Meetings		Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee		Nomination and Remuneration Committee		People and Performance Committee		Clinical Governance Committee		Represent NQPHN at events and meetings
	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Attended
Dr. Vladislav Matic (Chair)	10	10	6	4	NM		4	4	8	8	21
Mr. Luckbir Singh	10	10	NM		NM		4	4	NM		2
Ms. Ruth Faulkner ¹	9	9	6	6	NM		NM		NM		2
Dr. Richard Malone	10	9	NM		NM		4	4	8	8	6
Mr. Tony Mooney AM	10	9	NM		NM		4	4	NM		2
Mr. John Nugent	10	8	6	5	NM		NM		8	7	3
Dr. Rodney Catton	10	10	NM		NM		NM		8	8	3
Ms. Suzanne Andrews	10	7	NM		4	4	NM		NM		3
Ms. Catherine Whalan	10	9	NM		NM		NM		8	8	3
External appointees											
Mr. Ben Tooth ³	NM		6	6	NM		NM		NM		
Mr. John Rawnsley ⁴	NM		NM		4	4	NM		NM		
Mr. Tim Mulherin ⁵	NM		NM		4	4	NM		NM		
Ms Stacey Coburn ²	NM		NM		NM		4	4	NM		
Dr Alister Keyser ⁶	NM		NM		NM		NM		7	6	
	NM		NM		NM		NM		NM		

NM = Not a member

Held/attended = the number of meetings held and attended by each Director/other during the period 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019. Attendance includes teleconference/videoconference participation.

Represent NQPHN at events a meetings = Formally attending a Board-endorsed activity, event, meeting or forum as an NQPHN Board representative. External appointees are not required to attend events as NQPHN Board representatives.

Notes:

1. Term of appointment expired 21 May 2019.
2. Board-appointed external expert on People and Performance Committee.
3. Board-appointed external expert on Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee.
4. Independent External Chair of Nomination and Remuneration Committee. Appointed by NQPHN Members.
5. Member representative on Nomination and Remuneration Committee. Appointed by Members.
6. Board-appointed external expert on Clinical Governance Committee.

OUR REGION, *our people*

Torres Health Indigenous Corporation

The first Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Service

Communities in the Torres Strait will soon have increased access to primary health care through a new and innovative service in the region.

Torres Health Indigenous Corporation (THIC), funded by Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) is the first Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Service and will be based on Thursday Island.

The model is inspired by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), who have a proud history as sustainable, grass roots organisations that improve health outcomes by building community capacity and embracing culture and identity.

THIC was established in response to an identified need to develop and implement an appropriate model for primary health service delivery for the Torres Strait Islands that links with tertiary services.

THIC Chief Executive Officer Ms Paula Arnol said that the organisation is being established as a community-managed and community-based health service, aiming to provide communities in the Torres Strait with culturally safe, place-based care.

“THIC recognises the diversity of cultures in the Torres Strait and is committed to providing culturally safe and appropriate services that respect the rights, views, values, and expectations of our communities,” Ms Arnol said.

“Our current priorities are to develop a strong and sustainable organisation, have a skilled, capable, and confident workforce, help our communities to be healthy, and build success by working in partnership with other organisations.



Welcome banner made by the program's youth participants for the come and join day held at the centre.



Torres Health Indigenous Corporation Board members, including Ms Vonda Malone.

“We are committed to the principles of community management and actively listen to and engage our communities in the design of our services.”

THIC Chairperson Ms Vonda Malone said that THIC is still in its infancy as an organisation, and that it has been established to initially provide targeted, youth focused primary health services, with plans to expand to provide comprehensive and integrated primary health care in the region through developing strong partnerships.

“The first service THIC will deliver is the Remote Alcohol and Drug Interventions and Outcomes (RADIO) program, developed by Youth Empowered Toward Independence (YETI), providing young people in the region with information, advice, referrals, and alcohol and other drug (AOD) therapeutic case management,” said Ms Malone

“There is a long-term regional aspiration to establish a community-managed comprehensive primary health care service in the Torres Strait, and with support from organisations such as NQPHN and Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC), we plan to expand our services to develop a range of quality primary health care services in the region.

“The establishment of an organisation such as THIC to provide place-based primary health care is key to addressing Torres Strait Island communities’ health needs in a culturally safe and integrated manner.

“THIC recognises the importance of working with community and stakeholders to maximise opportunities that achieve positive health and wellbeing outcomes for our communities.”

Established in March 2017, THIC aims to increase local capacity to improve health and wellbeing outcomes in the region through stronger relationships and more effective advocacy, helping Torres Strait Islander people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.



Scan the QR code to learn more about the RADIO program.

Torres and Cape | Cairns | Townsville | Mackay

e: hello@nqphn.com.au

w: nqphn.com.au



Australian Government
Department of Health

phn
NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

An Australian Government Initiative