



Northern Queensland Primary Health Network

Activity Work Plan

After Hours

2023/24 – 2027/28

Updated October 2025



NQPHN acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Nation Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of this land. We respect their continued connection to land and sea, country, kin, and community. We also pay our respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging as the custodians of knowledge and lore.



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Disclaimer

All activities captured in this Activity Work Plan are identified in the Joint Regional Needs Assessment conducted by Northern Queensland Primary Health Network and have been approved by the Department of Health, Disability, and Ageing.



AH-HAP – 1 – Primary Health Networks (IPHNs) Homelessness

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Population Health

Aim of activity

To improve access to general practice and healthcare continuity for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Cairns region. The program aims to provide comprehensive primary health care to people with complex needs who are at a high risk of presentations or admission to hospital.

Description of activity

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) aims to address these issues through ongoing commissioning of two organisations who have been identified as demonstrating the ability to provide primary care for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This activity sees the continuation of two key contracts ensuring general practice access for cohorts of vulnerable patients who would not otherwise have access to ongoing primary care services:

- Provision of primary care services to vulnerable and homeless population groups living in Cairns.
- Provision of primary care services to residents of the Cape and Torres with complex needs who are temporarily displaced to Cairns. Utilising both a mainstream and an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) service increases the reach and accessibility of services for this vulnerable population. As existing service providers, they also have established links to engage and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to maximise efficiency and streamline the patient journey.

The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Services (HHS) have developed pathways with these services and rely on them to keep people out of hospital or reduce their length of stay. Service providers operate GP-led clinics, and use models appropriate to engaging vulnerable communities, such as through a van that visits homeless shelters, caravan parks, food vans, and other designated locations. They also provide culturally safe comprehensive primary care for First Nations people.



AH-MAP – 1 – Multicultural Access Program

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Population Health

Aim of activity

To strengthen culturally responsive primary health care services across northern Queensland, with a particular focus on improving health outcomes for Australian South Sea Islander and other Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities through:

- commissioned services to close gaps in primary health care for CALD communities
- support service access and navigation where barriers exist for CALD individuals
- promotion of coordination among local service providers to ensure integrated, patient-centred care
- increased primary care access by leveraging PHN resources and partnerships
- engaging stakeholders to inform and support effective service delivery
- enhanced efficiency and navigability of primary care systems for CALD populations
- improved planning and coordination across the health system to deliver equitable, culturally responsive care.

Description of activity

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) will:

- Undertake an in-depth review of the Joint Regional Needs Assessment to identify health service gaps and the specific requirements of providers and consumers, particularly those from CALD backgrounds.
- Collaborate with multicultural agencies and community organisations across northern Queensland to understand primary care needs and inform targeted service delivery strategies.
- Ensure primary care providers have access to relevant resources, training, and development opportunities to deliver culturally appropriate and effective care.
- Tailor services to respect and incorporate the diverse values, beliefs, and practices of CALD communities.
- Co-design and deliver activities in collaboration with community stakeholders and cultural representatives.
- Tailor interventions specific to local population needs and contexts, avoiding one-size-fits-all solutions.
- Embed program evaluation and feedback mechanisms to support ongoing refinement and effectiveness.



AH – 2 – After Hours Primary Health Care funding

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority areas

Population Health

Aim of activity

Improving access to after hours primary care services across the whole of the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) region has been identified as a priority needed to prevent unnecessary and costly primary health care being sought from emergency departments.

The aim of this activity is to build upon work undertaken in 2022-23 and to continue regional after-hours planning, commissioning, and implementation of new models of care that address gaps in primary care after hours services.

Description of activity

This activity focuses on refinement and implementation of the North Queensland After Hours Primary Care Commissioning Strategy, developed in 2022-23.

Activities include use of the after-hours service data and service mapping to build service integration and collaboration between commissioned providers and enhance after hours service delivery to meet local service needs. NQPHN will continue to provide ongoing support for high quality delivery of services that are commissioned in 2022-23.

NQPHN supports a placed-based, integrated care approach, working with service providers and other stakeholders to explore innovative ways to address regional, rural and remote primary care workforce shortage issues and associated workforce barriers impacting on accessibility to primary care service, in order to address the afterhours burden on the hospital system.

NQPHN continues to support commissioned after hours service providers through providing ongoing education upskilling opportunities, to ensure the primary health care needs of the local communities are met.

