



SQRH
Southern Queensland
Rural Health

2019

YEAR IN REVIEW



A COLLABORATION BETWEEN:



Darling Downs
Health



South West
Hospital and Health Service



FOCUSSED ON RURAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

The Southern Queensland Rural Health (SQRH) team live and work across the Southern Queensland region and understand the numerous health challenges faced in regional, rural and remote communities. SQRH has introduced a range of

programs and practical results-orientated research to help prepare health staff to face these challenges; address the maldistribution of rural health professionals; and further promote rural health practice as a rewarding and enriching career.

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN:



Darling Downs
Health



South West
Hospital and Health Service

A UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF RURAL HEALTH

Southern Queensland Rural Health is a collaboration between The University of Queensland, the University of Southern Queensland, Darling Downs Health and South West Hospital and Health Service.

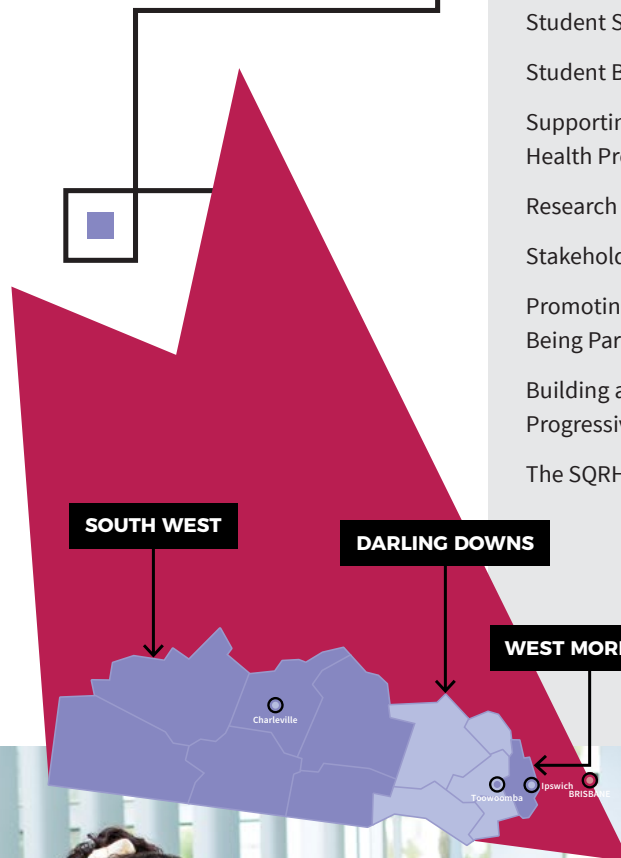
SQRH draws on the collective knowledge, skill and services of the consortium partners to smooth pathways for rural health professionals, build sustainability into the rural health workforce and raise the profile of rural healthcare.

Since its inception in late 2017, SQRH has expanded its programs across the Darling Downs and South West Queensland regions. With a full complement of clinical education, student support, research and administration staff, SQRH has implemented a raft of programs and activities to support nursing, midwifery and allied health students in their rural placements.

All SQRH programs and activities seek to demonstrate the diversity, innovation and creativity of rural practice and ultimately encourage students to consider a rural health career.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Derek Tuffield OAM

What an amazing twelve months Southern Queensland Rural Health has experienced during 2019.

We relocated from our temporary premises in Bellevue Street which served us well to our new state of the art refurbished offices at "Hill House" at Baillie Henderson which was officially opened on 24 September 2019.

Our Director Associate Professor Geoff Argus has provided outstanding leadership and commitment since the commencement of SQRH in November 2017. I am very proud and honoured to work with highly skilled and professional representatives from The University of Queensland, University of Southern Queensland, Darling Downs Health and South West Hospital and Health Service.

The SQRH Advisory Board maintains rural outreach to communities like Charleville on average every six months, so that important stakeholder engagement can continue, and it allows the Advisory Board to meet with our western staff and students.

We are delighted that construction of our new Charleville Clinical Training Facility will finally commence in March 2020. McNab Construction have been awarded



We are delighted that construction of our new Charleville Clinical Training Facility will finally commence in March 2020.

the contract with the build expected to be completed towards the latter part of 2020.

I wish to acknowledge the commitment of our staff across such a large coverage area and I thank them for their dedication to their work, goals and priorities of Southern Queensland Rural Health.



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Associate Professor Geoff Argus

In another highly successful year, 2019 saw a substantial increase in activity in rural health education across our region.

SQRH staff have worked tirelessly to provide quality rural training experiences for students, increase the number of student placements, and build capacity across the region in rural health education, practice and research. This work of course is made possible through the collaborative efforts of our four consortium organisations, the University of Queensland, University of Southern Queensland, Darling Downs Health and South West Hospital and Health.

Through our consortium, over 1300 students completed clinical placements across almost 7000 weeks of placement in our region. We are fortunate to have strong relationships with stakeholders across the public, private, primary health, not-for-profit and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sectors. The enthusiasm and commitment of stakeholders and placement providers across the region has ensured that the next generation of rural health professionals are well equipped to work in regional, rural and remote health.

At the National and State level, it is heartening to see the increased focus on rural health and the ever-growing voice for strengthening rural health training pathways to address the maldistribution of the health workforce. We welcomed the Commonwealth Department of Health's evaluation of the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program (RHMTMP) and were pleased to provide input to the evaluation team. The RHMTMP is critical to training the next generation of rural health professionals and we are looking forward to the release of the



“over 1300 students completed clinical placements across almost 7000 weeks of placement in our region”

evaluation report and the subsequent response by government. Professor Paul Worley, National Rural Health Commissioner sought feedback to inform his review of rural allied health evidence to inform policy development for addressing access, distribution and quality and we eagerly await the recommendations from his report. The establishment of the Office of Rural and Remote Health in Queensland will also bring immense benefits to rural communities across the state.

Our close involvement with the Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN), National Rural Health Alliance Council and Allied Health Professions Office of Queensland provides SQRH with the opportunity for input into policy and government decision making in rural

health training. We have made a very deliberate choice to position ourselves as influencers in this space and seek to work with other University Departments of Rural Health to bring more resources, tertiary education opportunities and research capability to rural Australia. When you read this document I hope you see there is enormous passion and resolve to improve healthcare delivery for regional, rural and remote communities across Southern Queensland.

BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS



PROFESSOR BRUCE ABERNETHY

As both one of the four core members of the Southern Queensland Rural Health (SQRH) consortium and as the holder of the University Department of Rural Health contract with the Commonwealth, the University of Queensland (UQ) is delighted with the progress SQRH has made throughout 2019 and delighted with the opportunities SQRH has created for our students and staff to gain exceptional rural and regional experience.

Throughout the course of the year UQ students in the professions of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, audiology, nursing, midwifery, dietetics, clinical exercise physiology, psychology, social work, and pharmacy have undertaken clinical placements in various parts of the Darling Downs and South West Hospital and Health Service footprints and had their eyes opened toward, and their skills sharpened for, future rural health careers.

...both the number and average duration of placements undertaken by UQ students in the region increase year-on-year...

Pleasingly we have seen both the number and average duration of placements undertaken by UQ students in the region increase year-on-year and this augurs well for progress toward SQRH's much-needed longer term objective of improving access to skilled nursing, midwifery and allied health services and staff in rural areas into the future.

UQ values enormously our partnerships forged within and through SQRH and we look forward to the continued development of these partnerships, and SQRH's activities, in 2020.



LINDA PATAT

The South West Hospital and Health Service greatly values our ongoing partnership with Southern Queensland Rural Health (SQRH) and congratulates you on yet another stellar year in providing highly innovative and flexible rural and remote training experiences of the highest quality.

We pride ourselves on being leaders and setting benchmarks for delivering quality rural and remote healthcare. A key part of that is growing our own workforce as well as ensuring excellent rural placements for students looking to 'go rural' and gain real life experiences in the bush.

The introduction of a dedicated student clinical placement co-ordinator position within Roma has proven to be an important additional local support mechanism for students, ensuring seamless integration into local communities for the duration of their placements.

The coming year looks to be an even more exciting time. Following the formal turning of the soil on site in March 2020, we are looking forward to a new SQRH student training facility at our Charleville Hospital campus, ensuring even more students will benefit from exposure to the many and varied opportunities available in rural practice.

We therefore look forward to continuing to work together in developing future generations of allied health, nursing and midwifery students and thank SQRH for their ongoing support in providing sustainable rural workforce recruitment and retention opportunities across the South West.

Linda is also an Adjunct Professor with the University of Queensland.



...we are looking forward to a new SQRH student training facility at our Charleville Hospital campus...



Darling Downs
Health

ANNETTE SCOTT

Darling Downs Health (DDH) staff have experienced a rich and rewarding year of working with SQRH and early plans have delivered great outcomes in the push to identify further opportunities for student placements and to help build sustainability in our allied health, nursing and midwifery workforce.



We very much valued the work of SQRH in developing interprofessional learning for allied health and nursing students via the Student Workshop in Interprofessional Education (SWIPE) sessions. These forums assist students to develop understanding and skills required for interprofessional clinical practice.

It was pleasing to see SQRH

and Darling Downs Health staff working together on a number of strategies to support student learning and rural practice. SQRH worked with the Cunningham Centre to support new University of Queensland dual degree nursing and midwifery rotational placements at maternity units within the region.

DDH staff also called on SQRH for assistance in the working group for implementing a student placement evaluation process. This resulted in the creation of a survey for students to complete at the end of their clinical placement.

Partnerships between SQRH and DDH stakeholders have also resulted in a number of research initiatives. SQRH, University of Queensland and Cunningham Centre staff have been involved in research to compare various student placement models for allied health staff. With the support of SQRH, Darling Downs Health nursing staff are engaging in research around extension of rural nursing as a preferred speciality.

DDH and SQRH have also worked together as key stakeholders in the Darling Downs Health Innovation and Research Collaborative (DDHIRC). This collaborative is a dynamic network of hospitals, health services, universities and primary care that aims to improve health within the Darling Downs region through collective capability in health and prevention, health and medical research and workforce development.

Annette is also an Adjunct Professor with the University of Queensland.



UNIVERSITY
OF SOUTHERN
QUEENSLAND

PROFESSOR GLEN COLEMAN

USQ has been very pleased with SQRH's progress during 2019 and is happy with the operation of the consortia over the course of the year.

There have been significant advances in tackling the incredibly complex area of providing rural placements for students in nursing, midwifery and allied health disciplines. It was pleasing to see the scope expanded to include paramedicine this year. This expansion provided great experiences for our paramedicine students as evidenced by the time some students spent with the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Charleville earlier this year.

USQ was proud to play a key role in the Phonological Awareness for Literary (PAL) clinic held at our Toowoomba campus in July. USQ worked with SQRH and UQ to deliver the clinic to Charleville district primary school students with reading and writing difficulties. Under supervision from SQRH and UQ clinical educators, a total of 12 University of Queensland speech pathology students and nine USQ psychology students conducted the clinic during one week of the mid-year school holidays. Again this demonstrated the pivotal role SQRH can play in skilling up health students in practical ways that also deliver health services to rural and remote communities.

The framework provided by SQRH has enabled greater clarity and more efficient processes around placement opportunities and their management, while also provided a more robust support structure around students who engage in these great learning activities. Thank you to the SQRH team for their commitment and

passion to the project. USQ is really pleased that SQRH is meeting its targets for growth in placements, but there is so much more work for us to do. We look forward to working with our colleagues in SQRH and the consortia partners over the coming year.



The framework provided by SQRH has enabled greater clarity and more efficient processes around placement opportunities and their management...

SQRH TOOWOOMBA TRAINING FACILITY - OPEN FOR LEARNING

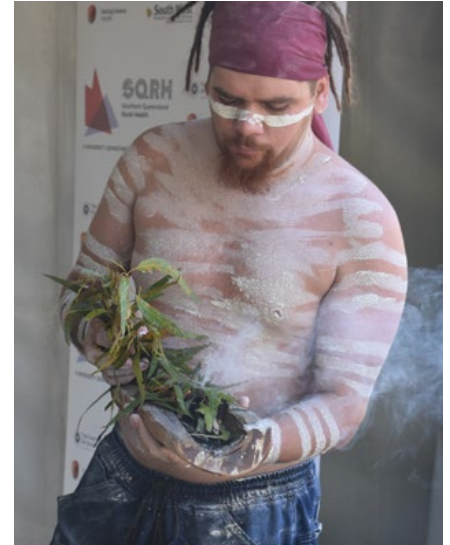
A major milestone for SQRH was the opening of the SQRH training facility at Baillie Henderson Hospital campus in Toowoomba, made possible thanks to \$1.3 million of Federal Government funding plus \$250,000 of funding from Darling Downs Health.

The facility includes training, tutorial, meeting rooms and telehealth studios, all fitted with state-of-the-art training equipment, as well as space for more than 20 clinical academic, research, professional and support staff.





Helping to officiate during the opening ceremony are (from left) South West Hospital and Health Service Board Member Ray Chandler, Darling Downs Health Board Chair Mike Horan AM, SQRH Board Chair Derek Tuffield OAM, the Hon. Mark Coulton MP, University of Queensland Provost Professor Aiden Byrne and University of Southern Queensland Chancellor John Dornbusch.



THE OFFICIAL OPENING

The SQRH Toowoomba Training Facility was officially opened on the 24th September 2019 by the Hon. Mark Coulton MP, Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government. Minister Coulton recognised the impact this facility would have in allowing rural students to train closer to home, while students from capital cities could experience rural placements.

More than 60 consortium representatives, stakeholders, health providers, SQRH staff and students attended the official

opening and celebrated as SQRH Board Chair Derek Tuffield OAM outlined the successes achieved in increasing the number of students taking up rural clinical placements.

Darling Downs Health Board Chair Mike Horan AM described SQRH as the “jewel in the crown” of health training for the region and looked forward to the growth of the University Department of Rural Health on the Baillie Henderson Hospital campus.



SQRH CHARLEVILLE TRAINING FACILITY - CONFIRMED

A total of \$2.5 million was committed for a permanent, state-of-the-art health training facility on the grounds of the Charleville Hospital on 8th March 2019.


The training facility will provide a focal point for health training and support for rural placement of nursing, midwifery and allied health students and will include clinical simulation areas, telehealth studios, tutorial rooms, lecture rooms, consulting rooms and offices to house SQRH staff members.

SQRH was pleased to welcome various stakeholders to the funding announcement including South West Hospital and Health Service (SWHHS), Western Queensland PHN (WQPHN), Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), Murweh Shire Council, Charleville and

Western Areas Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health (CWAATSICH) and local health students on placement. Attendees enjoyed a warm welcome from local Aboriginal elder Keelan Mailman.

Construction will commence in 2020.





It's been an incredible experience and has given me the best opportunity to put theory into practice. ”

Growing up in the Lockyer Valley, Kirsten Harm didn't realise that joining the Lockyer Valley Regional Council youth council would be a formative experience. Kirsten realised some parts of community were vulnerable and their voices weren't being heard so she and fellow youth council members worked with local government to influence policy around supports and services.

“When I was looking at a career I thought Social Work suited me as I love helping people and I like to take a holistic approach,” she said.

In 2019 Kirsten, who studied through The University of Queensland, took up an 18 week placement with Darling Downs Health, with the majority of her time at the Toowoomba-based Community Care Unit and then final weeks with Evolve Therapeutic Services (child and youth mental health services).

“I would one hundred percent recommend for other students to choose a rural placement. For me specifically, I gained experience in case management, learned about mental health care plans, saw the patient journey and how the whole health system works,” she said.

Kirsten was delighted to take up a Social Worker position with Darling Downs Health following her graduation and looks forward to furthering her career in regional and rural health.

KIRSTEN HARM
BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK

1,341
placements in 2019

6,962
placement weeks in 2019

952
students from
various universities

160
high school students attending
Aspire2Health workshops

41
number of rooms for student
accommodation across our region

138
students completed SWIPE
(Student Workshop in
Interprofessional Education)

53
clinicians participated in
Student Supervision workshops

1,263
occasions of service at the SQRH
Health and Wellness Clinic

25
student placements at SQRH
Health and Wellness Clinic

15
information sessions delivered to
UQ and USQ nursing, midwifery
and allied health students

100+
placement sites

9
research training workshops
↓
72
participants at research
training workshops



TOOWOOMBA HEALTH AND WELLNESS CLINIC

Established in July 2019 at the Baillie Henderson Hospital Health and Wellness Centre, the SQRH Health and Wellness Clinic (HaWC) is the first interprofessional student-led clinic for the region and has quickly gathered momentum with General Practitioner referrals and community interest.

Nursing and allied health students, under the supervision of SQRH Clinical Educators, have helped more than 50 people from the Toowoomba region to achieve their health goals, through over 1,000 occasions of service.



All participants have been identified as having low to rising risk of chronic disease and during a four month program, focus on addressing risk factors for chronic disease including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, low physical activity levels, obesity and other indicators for future health issues.

HaWC participants engage in tailored exercise programs at the pool and gym, learn about nutrition through cooking demonstrations and are assisted with their social wellbeing and mental health.

The students hail from a number of disciplines including physiotherapy, exercise physiology, dietetics, nursing, social work and psychology. They work interprofessionally and assist people to improve fitness, mobility, nutrition and mental wellbeing. The practical learning outcomes ensure the students' ability to work confidently in healthcare teams and help them to be work-ready at the time of their graduation.



DELIVERING STUDENT TRAINING

INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

The workshops help students improve their understanding of interprofessional practice through practical hands-on learning that focuses on the different roles of other professions in the healthcare team, skills in assertive communication, effective team functioning, managing interprofessional conflict and patient centred care.



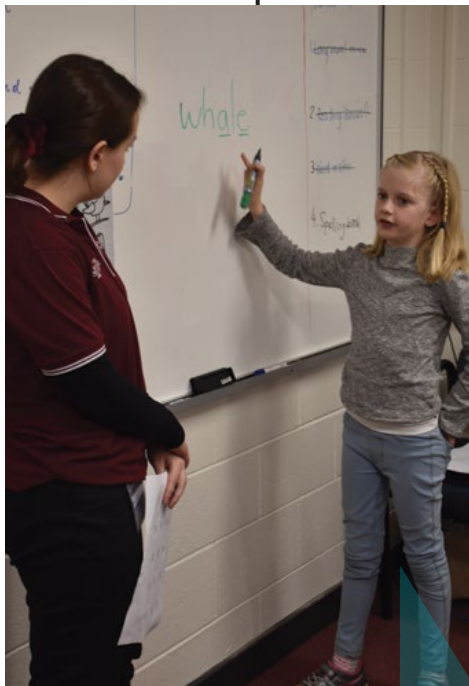
OBSERVATIONAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM

To broaden nursing students' understanding of their role across various rural settings, SQRH facilitated 5-day observational placement programs in Toowoomba and Charleville. The programs introduced students to various public and private health services, health-related community organisations, emergency services and social support services available in the region.



“WELCOME TO CHARLEVILLE” ORIENTATION PROGRAM

There’s increasing interest in rural placement and Charleville is proving a popular choice. Before students begin their placement, SQRH is doing its part to help students to settle in, offering a personalised ‘orientation tour’, including a tour of the town, local attractions, Charleville Hospital, Royal Flying Doctor Service base, the Charleville and Western Areas Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health and other local services.



SQRH, UQ AND USQ DELIVER SPECIALISED SPEECH PATHOLOGY CLINIC

12 University of Queensland speech pathology students and 9 USQ psychology students, supervised by SQRH and UQ Clinical Educators, conducted a specialised speech pathology clinic for Charleville district primary school students experiencing reading and writing difficulties.

The clinic, conducted at USQ Toowoomba campus during the July

school holidays, involved implementing a number of treatment strategies and included children gaining understanding in sound sequencing, use of short and long vowels, consonant clusters plus reading and writing skills. The Phonological Awareness for Literacy (PAL) program had previously been offered to rural and remote primary school students and was traditionally held in Brisbane.



GO RURAL DAY

SQRH clinical education staff teamed up with Health Workforce Queensland, to present the annual Go Rural Day on 23rd March in Toowoomba. More than 50 medical, nursing and allied health students participated in various health skills stations, viewed display stands from universities and student support organisations and engaged with experienced rural health professionals. Feedback from students was that the learning sessions were practical and provided a great opportunity to ask experienced rural health professionals targeted questions about rural and remote healthcare.



FAIRHOLME COLLEGE HEALTH HUB

During 2019, SQRH Clinical Education team members and nursing, midwifery and allied health students presented to Toowoomba Fairholme College Health Hub students about the different pathways toward a health career, organised skills stations and answered questions about the day to day work of a health professional.

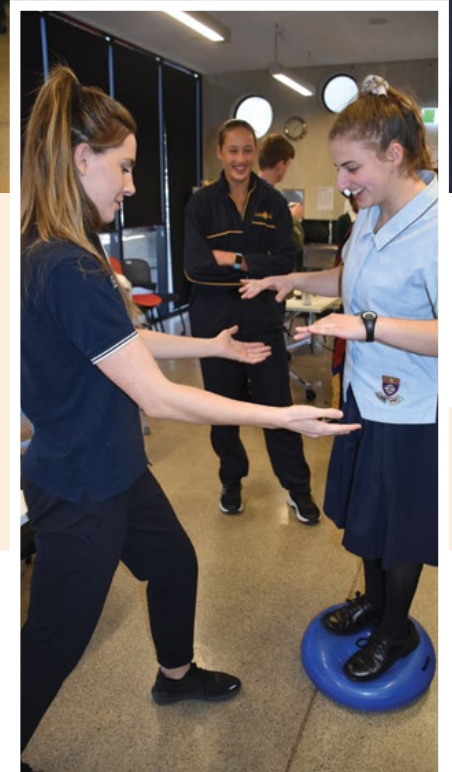


ASPIRE2HEALTH

Aspire2Health, is a single day program implemented at various high schools across the Darling Downs and South West to give students an overview of healthcare and inform their career choice.

Throughout 2019, 160 rural and remote high school students had the opportunity to experience some aspects of healthcare delivery through hands on practice in clinical skills stations featuring plastering, suturing, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and various allied health skills. Students also toured their local hospital, met local health professionals and took part in a hands-on session during a simulated scenario of patient care.

The Aspire2Health initiative is a collaboration between the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, Queensland Rural Medical Education (QRME), Griffith University, University of Queensland Rural Clinical School Toowoomba, University of Southern Queensland and Queensland Ambulance Service, SQRH and Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN.



STUDENT SUPPORT

SUPPORTED STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

A total of 146 students were housed in SQRH Supported Student Accommodation at Toowoomba, Kingaroy, Chinchilla, Roma and Charleville in 2019. All students received welcome packs and regular communication with SQRH Student Support Co-ordinators.

Occupancy rates at all SQRH Student Supported Accommodation were high with 99 students spending 537 weeks in the Darling Downs properties and 47 students spending 223 weeks in the South West properties. Subsidies supported eligible students to cover fuel or other travel expenses incurred during their placement.



CONFERENCES, FORUMS AND NETWORKING

Through an application process, SQRH Supported Students attended various forums and conferences including the Darling Downs West Moreton PHN 'Red Ant Roundup' Medical Conference in Kingaroy, the 15th National Rural Health Conference in Tasmania and the Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE) Women in Health forums in Toowoomba. Students reported that these networking and learning opportunities were an invaluable part of their rural placements and helped to clarify career choices and pathways.



Students with keynote speakers at the Women in Health network events.

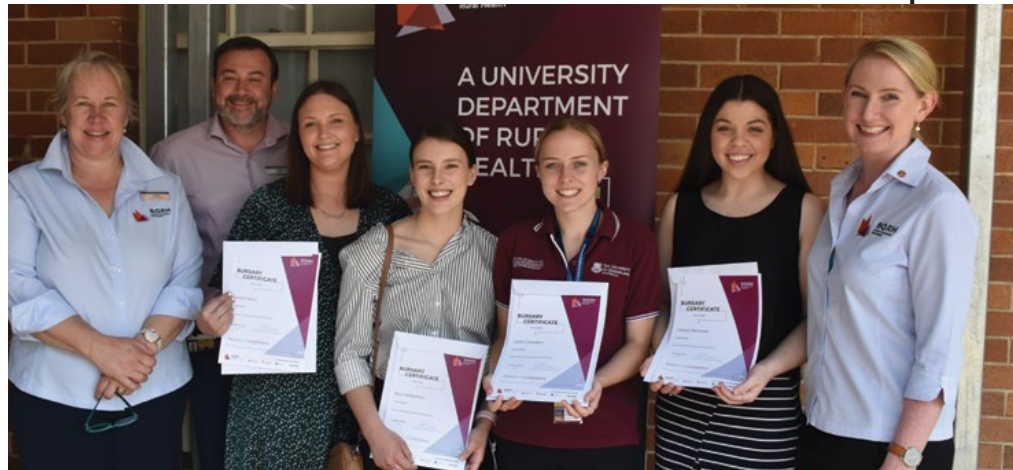


STUDENT BURSARIES

Some students face financial struggles when taking up rural placements away from part-time or casual work. SQRH has worked with the UQ Advancement team to establish bursaries to assist with everyday living expenses and support students who choose to 'go rural'.

ALLEN'S PHILANTHROPIC MENTAL HEALTH BURSARIES.

Allen's is a leading international law firm and has a long history of philanthropic efforts. Allen's philosophy is to work with inspirational organisations to support the wider community. In 2019, five UQ Social Work, Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology students were awarded an Allen's Philanthropic Mental Health Bursary of \$1,000 each.



AURIZON COMMUNITY FUND

Additional bursaries have now been established for mental health students with the Aurizon Community Fund and these will be distributed in 2020. Aurizon seeks to make a difference in various communities around Australia and supports both grass-roots groups and local organisations in the areas of health and wellbeing, community safety, environment and education.

SUPPORTING RURAL & REMOTE HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



SUPERCHARGE YOUR STUDENT SUPERVISION SKILLS

The SQRH team is always looking for opportunities to support rural health professionals in their practice and in the supervision of students.

SQRH Clinical Educators delivered numerous 'Supercharge Your Student Supervision Skills' workshops across the Darling Downs and South West to both public and private health professionals. Topics included facilitating clinical reasoning, difficult conversations, reflective practice, managing underperforming students, effective feedback, learning and teaching styles and student led projects.

Participant feedback showed the training was particularly beneficial for those supervising students for the first time as well as helping to enhance the field educator experience for health staff who regularly supervise students.

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER STUDENT PLACEMENTS

In April, SQRH partnered with Darling Downs West Moreton PHN and Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE) to deliver a very well attended workshop where private allied health providers were encouraged to incorporate student placements into their business models.

Workshop presenters discussed the advantages of student placements, increasing business opportunities with student involvement and recruitment and retention strategies. Private health providers that have hosted student placements over many years agreed that incorporating student learning is beneficial to their business, their profession overall and for patient care.

In a similar program, SQRH, the Darling Downs West Moreton PHN and Health Workforce Queensland partnered to deliver workshops at Warwick, Dalby, Kingaroy and Goondiwindi with good attendance from private allied health providers at each location.



INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Given the SQRH core principles of Interprofessional Education (IPE), Collaboration (IPC) and Practice (IPP), the team have dedicated themselves to creating an IPE Community of Practice.

An IPE Community of Practice is a learning group that shares and develops knowledge, builds peer support and promotes IPP as a concept in healthcare delivery. Launched in 2018, the Community of Practice held four meetings in 2019 drawing participants from public health services, private health providers and the tertiary sector in person and via videoconference. Keynote speakers included Professor Patrick Crookes from the University of Canberra who spoke about IPE and academic performance coaching and Executive Director Allied Health (Queensland Children's Hospital) Tania Hobson who spoke about transformative organisational change and best practice models of care.

The final meeting for the year combined with the Queensland Children's Hospital Community of Practice and saw SQRH Interprofessional Practice Co-ordinator Nicola Cotter give a keynote address on the major IPE initiatives developed for student rural placements by the SQRH clinical education team.

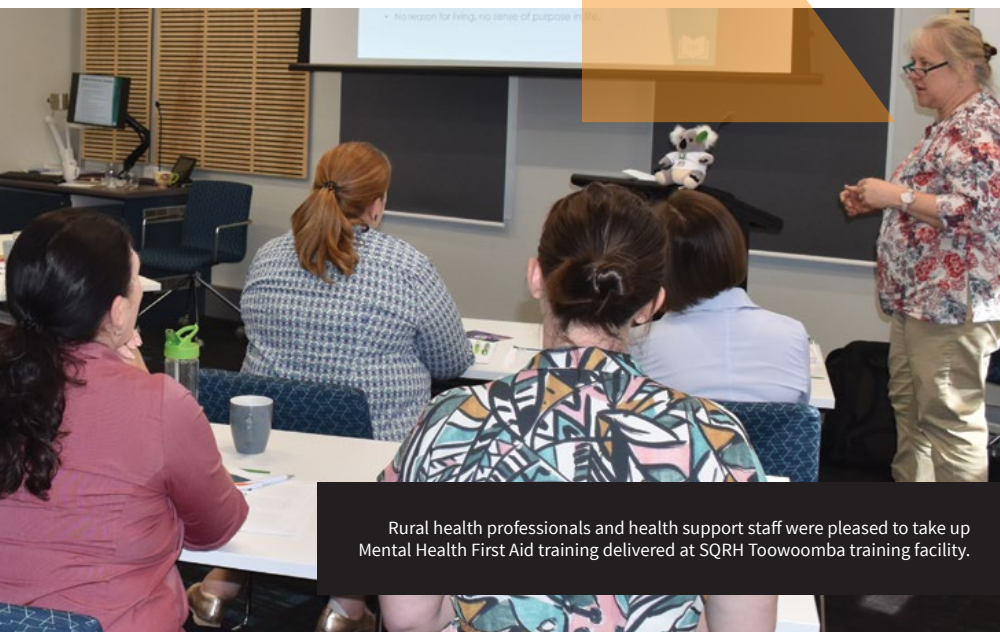


MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

SQRH helped Clinical Educator (Mental Health Nursing) Dayle Osborn to become a Mental Health First Aid facilitator and a University of Queensland Mental Health Champion ensuring that good mental health and wellbeing is proactively promoted throughout SQRH workplaces and stakeholder organisations.

Supporting this initiative is another Mental Health Champion Clinical Educator (Physiotherapy) Ginny Snoswell.

At the Charleville office, Clinical Educator (Allied Health) Jess Jungmann and Clinical Educator (Nursing) Dr Flora Rolf were also selected to be UQ Mental Health Champions and have worked with the South West team to develop practical workplace mental health strategies.



Rural health professionals and health support staff were pleased to take up Mental Health First Aid training delivered at SQRH Toowoomba training facility.

RESEARCH

SQRH research has a three-pronged approach:

- undertaking research in key SQRH priority research areas,
- building the research capacity of rural health professionals
- developing and maintaining research and research training collaborations with SQRH partners and external stakeholders.

These efforts combine to support rural health research throughout Southern Queensland.

UNDERTAKING RESEARCH

The research team has started to undertake longitudinal research into the long-term impact and workforce destination outcomes of health student rural placements undertaken in the SQRH catchment area.

The research team has been highly proactive in the areas of governance, data safeguarding and ethics and have been instrumental in establishing the SQRH Health and Wellness Clinic Research Steering Committee. The committee oversees all research activity accessing data from the clinic for research purposes.

During the year SQRH research findings were presented at local (e.g. DDHIRC Research Showcase) and national (e.g. CRANAPlus) conferences and symposiums. For a full list of conference presentations see page 29.





BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY

To encourage health professionals who are new to research to begin their journey, a series of research training workshops were held in the Darling Downs (in Toowoomba, with videoconferencing access for remote locations) and across the South West. The topics included:

- Getting started in research
- Pitching research
- Refining your research problem
- Ethical Implications of research vs quality assurance
- How to find and critically appraise the scientific literature

RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

In 2019, SQRH joined the Darling Downs Health Innovation and Research Collaborative (DDHIRC). DDHIRC is a dynamic network of hospitals, health services, universities and primary care working to deliver health outcomes to the Darling Downs region. Members of DDHIRC include - Darling Downs Health, USQ, SQRH, UQ Rural Clinical School, St Andrews Toowoomba Hospital, St Vincent's Hospital Toowoomba, Queensland Rural Medical Education and Darling Downs West Moreton PHN. The collaborative aims to improve health within the Darling Downs region through collective capability in health and prevention, health and medical research and workforce development.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



KEY COLLABORATIONS TO SUPPORT STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Tapping into the wealth of experience and knowledge of rural health providers is a priority for SQRH. One of the ways SQRH can ensure students have direct access to these rich learning environments is through our formalised relationships with the rural health sector.

WORKING TOGETHER

In 2019 SQRH signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) documents with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) (Charleville base), Charleville and Western Areas Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health (CWAATSICH) and the Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health (CACH).

The MOU documents set out a number of strategies including:

- Provide opportunities for rural health staff to be involved in SQRH facilitated training
- Allow access to training materials developed by SQRH as identified
- Provide access to SQRH training facilities for shared training activities
- Provide opportunities for student placements for nursing, midwifery and allied health
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in joint placements
- Provide opportunities for students to enhance cultural capability





PRIVATE HEALTH PROVIDERS

SQRH has identified that with the right encouragement and support, there is a huge opportunity for private health providers to increase the number of placement opportunities for students.

Throughout 2019, students gained valuable placement experience at My Midwives in Toowoomba and a number of allied health practices including Better Health Movement (Toowoomba and Dalby), Therapy Alliance Group (Toowoomba and Chinchilla) and Vision Exercise Physiology (Toowoomba).

SQRH worked with St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba, to extend student placement to allied health students (traditionally, St Vincent's Private Hospital had only placed nursing students.) The allied health students agreed placement in a regional private health facility built their knowledge and skills as well as providing time for more autonomy in the wards.

NATIONAL & STATE HEALTH POLICY ORGANISATIONS

SQRH is actively engaging with national and state health policy organisations including the National Rural Health Commissioner, the Allied Health Professions Office of Queensland (AHPOQ), The Office of the Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer (OCNMO) and the Statewide Rural and Remote Clinical Network (SRRCN). The SQRH Senior Leadership Team ensures this regular liaison promotes rural health at the highest levels and influences decision-making around career pathways for emerging rural health staff.



PROMOTING RURAL HEALTH AND BEING PART OF COMMUNITY

SQRH staff and SQRH supported students were proactive in supporting numerous community events in 2019.

An important part of being in a healthcare team is to understand the diverse communities across Southern Queensland. Students often describe community connection as a highlight of their rural placement and indicate they would elect to take further rural placements as well as eventual employment in regional, rural or remote areas as a result of their positive experiences.





SQRH KEEPING OUR AUDIENCES INFORMED

SQRH has steadily built audiences across all of its social media platforms by creating engaging content, promoting student experiences of rural communities and sharing relevant posts from our consortium members.

After establishing its social media channels in 2018, SQRH increased its reach across all platforms as indicated below.



420 to 1000
page likes




78 to 213
followers



39 to 123
followers



101 to 188
followers



We particularly focused on participant's daily activities like cooking, dressing and shopping...

”

Students taking up a rural placement have a world of opportunity to enjoy and that was evident for four University of Queensland Occupational Therapy students in October 2019.

During the project unit of their course, UQ Occupational Therapy students Fatima Amershi, Beatrice Ho, Jacqueline Nielsen and Oman-Mali Hansbauer decided to “go rural” and under the guidance of SQRH Clinical Educator Lin Wegener, the students were tasked with preparing the SQRH Health and Wellness Clinic for the incorporation of occupational therapy resources and education.

Coincidentally the project work occurred during Occupational Therapy Week.

The students created a comprehensive fact sheet for clinic participants to outline the role of occupational therapy in healthcare and also detailing the available supports and treatments at the clinic.

Fatima said the project was an excellent challenge and starting with a “clean slate” allowed her and fellow students to develop processes where occupational therapy fits into the various clinic wellness programs.

“We particularly focused on participant's daily activities like cooking, dressing and shopping and how these could be improved throughout the clinic program,” Beatrice said.

“We also devised strategies for when participants finish so that they can maintain and sustain good wellness habits,” Jacqueline said.

FATIMA, JACQUELINE AND BEATRICE, UQ OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS PICTURED WITH LIN WEGENER. OMAN-MALI WAS ABSENT.

BUILDING A COHESIVE PROGRESSIVE TEAM

SQRH reached its full complement of staff in 2019 bringing together a diverse and skilled team across the fields of clinical education, research, student support, specialised projects, management and administration.

Always aiming for quality improvement and to be a learning organisation, staff members have attended regional, state and national conferences, implementing new strategies and best practice ideas as a result of these forums.

SQRH promoted rural health with trade displays and information booths at local, state and national conferences. Conferences attended throughout 2019 included:

- Red Ant Roundup Medical Conference – Kingaroy
- Dalby Medical Harvest
- CRANAPlus conference – Hunter Valley
- National Allied Health Conference – Brisbane
- National Rural Health Conference – Hobart
- National Telehealth Conference – Brisbane
- Queensland Statewide Rural and Remote Clinical Network – Brisbane
- Australian College of Mental Health Nurses International Conference – Sydney
- Unity in Health Conference – Darwin
- National Association of Field Experience Administrators (NAFEA) Conference – Toowoomba
- Indigenous Allied Health National Conference - Darwin



Looking forward

SQRH team planning day in November, helping to cement the 2020 Activity Plan and devise new programs and projects to increase the length of rural placements, boost the number of placement sites and improve access to information about rural communities for students.

THE SQRH TEAM

Our staff are passionate about rural health and health outcomes for rural communities and are dedicated to building the rural health workforce in the communities we serve.



In 2019, SQRH employed 35 staff from a range of professional areas including: Clinical Academics in the disciplines of Nursing, Midwifery, Mental Health Nursing, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology, Psychology, Social Work, Dietetics, Exercise Physiology and Pharmacy; Research; Interprofessional Education and Practice; Student Support; Indigenous Health Education; Administration; Operations; Communications; Clinical Placement Co-ordination and Project work.



You are seeing a different aspect to healthcare and the emphasis on Interprofessional Education means we see each discipline helping each other and provide input for care needed.

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Having worked as an enrolled nurse at a busy metropolitan hospital in Brisbane, USQ nursing student Tara Hart has expanded her skills with the combined benefits of a rural placement in Toowoomba and being the first nursing student at SQRH Health and Wellness Clinic.

Tara, who took up her placement in September 2019, said she would definitely recommend choosing a rural placement to other students.

“I am really loving the rural experience and also the prevention measures of the wellness model,” Tara said.

“The Health and Wellness Clinic is a fantastic environment – the participants are really lovely and enjoy working with us. I think they realise we want to help them live healthier lives, we’re keen to listen and also encourage them in their wellness journey,” she said.

Tara said working with physiotherapy, exercise physiology, dietetics, psychology and social work students, as well as the SQRH Clinical Education team, meant she could see positive outcomes for clinic participants and better prepare herself for future work environments.

**TARA HART USQ NURSING STUDENT
PICTURED WITH CLINICAL EDUCATOR
(NURSING) RUTH DAVENPORT**

CHARLEVILLE



TOOWOOMBA



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A COLLABORATION BETWEEN:



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Health**

