

# The evolution of a rural team - advancing individuals and our service utilising rural development positions

Lisa Baker<sup>1</sup>, Katheryn Farry<sup>2</sup>, Amy Gray<sup>3</sup>, Rachel Pennisi<sup>4</sup>

1 Wide Bay Hospital & Health Service, PO Box 41, Gayndah, Qld, 4625, [Lisa.Baker@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Lisa.Baker@health.qld.gov.au)

2 Wide Bay Hospital & Health Service, PO Box 41, Gayndah, Qld, 4625, [Katheryn.Farry@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Katheryn.Farry@health.qld.gov.au)

3 Wide Bay Hospital & Health Service, PO Box 41, Gayndah, Qld, 4625, [Amy.Gray@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Amy.Gray@health.qld.gov.au)

4 Wide Bay Hospital & Health Service, PO Box 41, Gayndah, Qld, 4625, [Rachel.Pennisi@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Rachel.Pennisi@health.qld.gov.au)

## Background:

This presentation shares the challenges and benefits -“the real story”- of how allied health in Gayndah Qld have utilised the opportunities from two rural development programs to lead generalist skill development, workforce redesign and enhance local services.

## Implementation:

The HP3-4 pathway – helping to develop skills when recruitment is tricky:

- Rural Development Pathway HR policy was used to recruit early career professionals (physiotherapist and speech pathologist) to senior allied health vacancies.
- Significant impacts of the individual’s starting point and team vacancies
- Funded development plans involved supervision and mentoring, clinical training, rural team networking and specifically developed rural learning modules and coordination.
- Current snapshot –skills have adapted with various projects including appointment of 7 AHAs, graduate training program development, rural backfill models, supervision skills, telehealth services, formal research projects and service evaluation.

Developing new grads out bush: making it happen

- The Department of Health Allied Health Rural Graduate Training Positions were similarly adopted:
- New graduate physiotherapist appointed with 0.2FTE training component. The development plan included basic generalist skills, rural practice issues and individual goals through formal education and senior support
- The position focused on telehealth, a rural rehab model and implementing an outreach based assistant workforce.
- Current snapshot: improved consumer access and new models of care supported by stronger relationships with regional team. Retention beyond the 12 month program has supported workforce sustainability and further service development –the reality of supported graduates.

## Discussion:

The development programs have triggered a more structured approach to governance, workforce and service planning, and have supported staff through drastic change and rapid learning. The programs have shown the very real benefits of recruiting motivated and enthusiastic early career professionals to benefit our clients now and into the future as our team transitions to a broader ‘Rural Generalist’ mindset and long term career path.