

South West Hospital and Health Service

# PULSE

NOV-DEC 2025 EDITION



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We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands across the South West. We also pay our respects to the current and future Elders, for they will inherit the responsibility of keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture alive, and for creating a better life for the generations to follow.

We believe the future happiness and wellbeing of all Australians and our future generations will be enhanced by valuing and taking pride in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples—the oldest living culture of humanity.

## SOUTH WEST TRADITIONAL OWNERS

- Augathella – Bidjara** (Bid-jara)
- Bollon – Kooma** (Coo-ma)
- Charleville – Bidjara** (Bid-jara)
- Cunnamulla – Kunja** (Koun-yah) with other interests
- Dirranbandi – Yuwaalaraay** (You-wal-a-ray)
- Eromanga – Boonthamurra** (Boon-tha-murra)
- Eulo – Budjiti** (Bud-ji-ti)
- Injune – Bidjara / Iman** (Bid-jara)
- Mitchell – Gunggari** (Gon-gari)
- Morven – Gunggari** (Gon-gari)
- Mungindi – Kamilaroi** (Car-milla-roy)
- Quilpie – Boonthamurra, Mardigan, Wongkumara** with other interests
- Roma – Mandandanji** (Mand-an-dand-gee)
- St George – Kamilaroi, Mandandanji, Bigambul and Gungarri** interests
- Surat – Mandandanji** (Mand-an-dand-gee)
- Thargomindah – Kullilli** (Coo-lee-lar)
- Wallumbilla – Mandandanji** (Mand-an-dand-gee)

This newsletter is produced by the South West Hospital and Health Service. All feedback and contributions are welcome. All published material has been approved by the Health Service Chief Executive.

Contact: SWHHS\_Communications@health.qld.gov.au

**Cover Image:** Charleville Community and Allied Health Service win this year's Christmas Cheer Challenge with the theme White Christmas.



**QUALITY**



**COMPASSION**



**ACCOUNTABILITY**



**ENGAGEMENT**



**ADAPTABILITY**

“ Christmas gives us the opportunity to pause and reflect on the important things around us. ”

David Cameron – Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 2010 to 2016

## From the Board Chair

In our vast, big sky country, where bottle trees, open plains, coffee-coloured rivers and red dirt vistas reign supreme, we inch slowly towards Christmas. Despite the extreme heat, the long summer days, the dust and the much-hoped-for wet season storms, there is a special festive ‘end of year’ spirit that permeates our days.

It is amidst this slower summer magic that the Board team would like to extend our year-end heartfelt gratitude to our staff – clinical, operational, administrative, and support teams. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to delivering safe, high-quality care to our South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) communities. Your professionalism, compassionate care and kindness make a profound difference to so many people, every single day. You are the backbone and the strength of our rural and remote HHS, and for this, the Board is deeply grateful.

Appreciation is also extended to our numerous healthcare partners who support our South West HHS teams in their work. Your dedication, collaboration and expertise does make a difference to the people we collectively care for. To the health consumers of the South West communities that we serve, we thank you for your ongoing support and trust. As we celebrate Christmas and welcome the new year, we hope you find time to rest, reconnect with loved ones, and enjoy the moments that matter most.

Our highest appreciation is extended to those who will be working throughout the festive season – your willingness to serve ensures our communities remain cared for throughout the festive season. We humbly thank you for your generous service.

The South West Hospital and Health Board team wishes you a safe, peaceful, and joyful Christmas, and a happy, healthy start to 2026.

Season greetings and warmest wishes,  
**Karen Tully and the South West Hospital and Health Board**



## Out and about with the Board





# From the Health Service Chief Executive

**As we close out 2025 with this final edition of Pulse, I want to take a moment to reflect on the year that has been, and to look ahead with optimism to what 2026 will bring.**

This year, Pulse has continued to showcase the incredible work happening across our facilities and teams, highlighting not only our achievements but also the spirit of collaboration and community that defines South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS). A special thank you to all facilities who contributed photos for our annual Christmas cheer. The theme of White Christmas brought joy and creativity across the service, with Charleville Allied Health and Community Clinic taking out the winner's spot (see pictures on the next few pages).

## Key Highlights of 2025

It has been a year of significant milestones and achievements, with far too many to mention across all of our facilities and teams. However some key highlights include:

- Dr Sally Street Wins 2025 Tasmanian Rural Generalist of the Year - Dr Sally Street has been honoured by ACRRM for her dedication to rural, remote, and First Nations healthcare. A Rural Generalist obstetrician, she has served some of Australia's most remote communities, championed the Rural Generalist model, and mentored future doctors. Recently relocating to Queensland, she continues her work in Roma while inspiring reform and excellence in rural medicine.
- Securing Putting Qld Kids First funding, which we will look to implement in the months ahead to positively support our younger generations at key life stages.
- The inaugural South West Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Forum, held on 25–26 November at the Charleville Racecourse, brought together community leaders, service providers, and health professionals in a powerful show of collaboration and commitment to ending DFV across the region.
- Expanding aged care services at Cunnamulla MPHS.
- Continued recognition of our HHS as a High Performing HHS
- A Queensland Government Election Commitment to install a CT scanner in Charleville, to be further progressed during the current term of government.
- Our Mental Health and Other Drugs (MHAOD) Team relocated to the brand new Maranoa Business Centre Building during the week of 8 December 2025. It provides our staff and consumers with a purpose-built space that will make daily work more enjoyable and collaborative. Most importantly, it will enable community mental health services to be delivered in partnership with consumers from a community setting.

These achievements reflect the dedication of our staff and the strength of our communities, and if you haven't seen this just yet I encourage you to check out our recent [Staff Awards special edition](#) for further inspirational recognition of our colleagues.

## Looking Forward

As we prepare for 2026, we have much to be excited about:

- Progressing a service model to introduce a much-needed renal dialysis service to the South West, starting with Roma Hospital.
- Continuing our journey through accreditation.
- Development of the Roma administration hub, including additional car parking spaces for staff, patients and visitors to the hospital and Westhaven.
- Launch of our new Strategic Plan.
- Implementation of the next three-year commitments within *Our Way – Together*, South West HHS's First Nations Health Equity Plan.
- Expansion of *Grow Our Own* workforce models into a true end-to-end pathways across all workstreams, securing a locally based and grown workforce for the future, in addition to continuing to support our current teams work to top of scope and professionally grow.

These initiatives will further strengthen our service, enhance care for our communities, and ensure we remain focused on equity, sustainability, and innovation.

## Safety first and thank you

As we celebrate the festive season, I encourage everyone to put safety first – whether at work, at home, or on the roads. Please take care of yourselves and each other during this busy time.

On behalf of the Board and Executive, I extend my heartfelt thanks for everything you do for our communities. Your commitment, resilience, and passion have made 2025 a year to remember.

I wish you and your families a safe, joyful, and restful Christmas and New Year – and all the very best for 2026.

**Dr Anthony Brown**  
Health Service Chief Executive

[Staff Awards edition →](#)



Health Equity Mungingi yarn



Uncle Brian McGrady (Traditional Owner – Mungindi) with Taneale Lawton and Megan Allwood

# FIRST NATIONS HEALTH EQUITY UPDATE

***Our Way – Together* is South West HHS, partners, key stakeholders, community and consumers ongoing commitment to improve real health outcomes for First Nations people within the South West.**

Shelley Lawton, Executive Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Engagement said the first three years of *Our Way – Together* laid the foundation and the next tranche 2025-2028 presents a powerful opportunity to genuinely progress and enhance these foundations.

“Closing the Gap in Health Equity requires sustained collaboration with our consumers, communities and partners,” Shelley said.

“We are committed to this continued shared journey of listening, learning and unlearning to drive real, meaningful improvements in culturally safe care and health outcomes for generations to come, *Our Way – Together*.”

“Yarning and consultation is critical to ensuring the strategy reflects genuine input.

“By embedding the voices of First Nations peoples, we can deliver meaningful change and better health outcomes for everyone in the South West.”

Shelley thanked everyone who took the opportunity to participate either in face-to-face meetings, virtual session or over the phone.

“Feedback from these sessions, followed by a collation of emerging themes, has informed the draft document, which will be available for review/comment on the 18 December 2025. Staff, community, consumers are encouraged to access the draft strategy and provide feedback before 18 January 2026.” she said.

Following this process the strategy will be finalised and progressed for South West HHS Board approval. An online launch event is planned for February 2026, marking the formal publication of the strategy and the beginning of new commitments.

“South West Hospital and Health Service and our partners are becoming champions in health equity reform and co-design services,” Shelley said.

“To ensure we provide accessible, culturally appropriate primary and secondary care to First Nations people that reside in our South West communities.”



Cunnamulla Health Equity consultation



Surat Health Equity conversation

**Thank you to all members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Engagement team, South West HHS staff and our partners for your continued commitment to advancing health equity and outcomes for our communities.**

**Together, we are making a difference.**

**Shelley Lawton**  
EDATSIHE



Charleville C&AH waiting room



Augathella elf

## CHARLEVILLE COMMUNITY AND ALLIED HEALTH SERVICE WINS 2025 CHRISTMAS CHEER CHALLENGE

**Christmas spirit has swept through South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) facilities this year, with teams embracing the White Christmas theme to transform spaces into festive wonderlands.**

From sparkling decorations to imaginative displays, staff worked together to bring joy to patients, families, and colleagues during the holiday season.

Health Service Chief Executive Dr Anthony Brown and Board Chair Karen Tully said this year's judging was very close with some beautiful adaptations to showcase the theme.

Together they chose the winner of the 2025 Christmas Cheer Challenge as the Charleville Community and Allied Health Clinic, whose breathtaking winter wonderland captured the essence of the season.

Special Mentions were awarded to:

- Health, Safety and Wellbeing and Learning Online – Bungil Street, Roma
- Augathella MPHS
- Oral Health, Roma Hospital

Both Karen and Anthony praised the creativity and commitment shown across all facilities, noting that these decorations do more than brighten spaces – they lift spirits and make a meaningful difference for those spending the holidays in care. This year's challenge highlighted the power of community and collaboration, reminding everyone that the simple act of celebration can bring warmth and joy to those who need it most.



Oral Health Roma



Health Safety and Wellbeing Bungil Street



Augathella



Augathella



Augathella



Charleville NUM Office



St George Hospital medical imaging

## FESTIVE DISPLAYS IN THE SOUTH WEST



Charleville Theatre CSD & Telehealth



Charleville C&AH Waiting Room



St George Hospital



Oral Health Roma



Roma Hospital Admin



Surat Medical Practice White-Christmas



Roma Hospital Admin



Grinch has to go to Charleville NUM Office



## KEEPING THE FESTIVE CHEER IN CHECK

**The festive season may not be a happy time for everyone, with many people experiencing additional pressure and stress. But the South West HHS has some timely advice.**

“Holiday periods like Christmas and New Year, when people are spending a lot of time together, can generate their own pressures and stresses.”

### **Alcohol and Other Drugs Service Nurse Manager Kelea Wyatt**

But there are strategies available to help you through the holiday season – and professionals you can turn to at any time of the day or night. Christmas can feel very isolating if you don't have family and friends nearby, she said.

“If this is the case, it's important to keep your routine as much as possible and do something you enjoy, such as go for a walk, watch a movie, do some gardening, or cook your favourite meal,” Kelea said.

“At the same time, Christmas time can also be overwhelming for some people with the pressure to buy presents, celebrate and spend time with family and friends. If you're feeling overwhelmed in the lead-up to Christmas, write a to do list to help you feel organised. If you can't spend money, do something meaningful or offer to help with preparing the meal, cleaning the house, or babysitting.

“It's OK to say no to things and it's important you spend time with people who are supportive. Remember, you don't have to go to every activity or get together. Take a day off from the celebrations, or even just a morning or afternoon, and enjoy some down time.


“If you're feeling overwhelmed, lonely, or anxious, you can reach out and talk to someone. You could reach out to a supportive relative or friend by sending a text or message on social media, inviting someone over for a coffee or making a phone call.”

Some simple things people can do to improve their mental wellbeing in general, whether it is the festive season or not, include:

- ✓ Aiming to do 30 minutes of physical activity each day and eating a well-balanced, nutritious diet
- ✓ Keeping mentally engaged with new ideas and experiences, such as doing a daily Sudoku or learning a new skill through an online tutorial
- ✓ Being kind to others by volunteering or helping a neighbour, or writing down something they are grateful for each day
- ✓ Making meaningful connections with people by, for example, spending time with supportive family and friends
- ✓ Embracing nature by taking a walk through local bushland, going for a picnic or doing some gardening.

**If you are concerned about your own or someone else's alcohol or other drug use, call Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS), a free, 24/7 anonymous and confidential telephone counselling and information service on 1800 177 833**

[Visit ADIS →](#)



Kelea said professional mental health support also was available 24/7 by phoning 1300 MH CALL (1300 64 2255). Any member of the community seeking a public mental health service anywhere in Queensland can dial this state-wide number.

“By contacting the 24-hour mental health call line, you will be put in contact immediately with an appropriate mental health service for advice and support. The 1300 MH CALL number helps us deliver the right care and support at the appropriate time which is important for people experiencing mental health stress,” she said.

However, Kelea stressed the 1300 MH CALL number was not a replacement for emergency services or support services.

“Mental health consumers and the wider community requiring emergency assistance should continue to use the 000 number in times of emergency.”

South West residents should also remember it is important to eat healthy and limit alcohol intake over the festive season.

“What we eat and drink is linked to our mood and both our physical and mental health. While many of us are guilty of overindulging over the festive season, it’s important to eat and drink alcohol in moderation as much as possible.”

## Some useful links and contacts:

- For mental health support 24/7  
Phone 1300 MH CALL (1300 64 2255).
- Dear Mind  
<https://mentalwellbeing.initiatives.qld.gov.au/>
- Lifeline on 13 11 14 or [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)
- 13 YARN (13 92 76) or [13yarn.org.au](http://13yarn.org.au)
- Kids Help Line 1800 551 800 or [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)
- QLife: 1800 184 527 or <https://qlife.org.au/>
- Beyond Blue 1300 22 46 36 or [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)
- Headspace: 1800 650 890 or [headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au)

[Further Resources →](#)

## SOUTH WEST PREPARES FOR LONGER HEATWAVES AND HIGH HUMIDITY

### Be prepared

- ✓ **KNOW THE RISKS:** understand how extended heat can affect your health.
- ✓ **STAY INFORMED:** keep an eye on weather updates and plan outdoor activities accordingly.
- ✓ **BE PREPARED:** make sure you have essential supplies and know who to contact in case of an emergency.
- ✓ **STAY HYDRATED:** drink plenty of water throughout the day.



Stay informed and stay cool. For more tips on staying safe in the heat this summer, visit [www.health.qld.gov.au/heatsafe](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/heatsafe).

### As Queenslanders, we're used to sunny and warm weather. But this summer, we can expect more than just the usual heat.

With longer heatwaves and high humidity coming, it's important to be prepared. Remember, extreme heat can affect not just your body but also your mental health, leading to poor sleep and irritability. While the elderly and very young are more at risk, anyone can suffer from heat-related illnesses.

Watch for symptoms like sweating, headaches, nausea, and muscle cramps, which can signal heat exhaustion. More severe symptoms like a rapid heartbeat, dizziness, confusion, and even loss of consciousness can indicate heat stroke.

If you or someone else shows these symptoms, act immediately: find shade, drink water, and use wet towels to cool off. If you suspect heat stroke, call Triple Zero (000) for help.

Keeping our community safe is everyone's responsibility. We can all help by staying indoors during the hottest parts of the day, using air-conditioned public places like libraries, and checking on vulnerable friends and neighbours.

Simple things like sipping cold water, applying cool towels, or using ice packs can really help.

[Find out more →](#)



# PUT SAFETY FIRST THIS FESTIVE SEASON

**Falls are a common cause for injury during the festive season and South West residents are being urged to stay safe.**

South West Hospital and Health Service Executive Director of Medical Services Dr Carl de Wet said many people did not realise the potential hazards that came about around Christmas and New Year time.

“They are often too busy or distracted to ensure they are keeping themselves safe. By taking note of potential risks and being aware of your environment, you can avoid injuring yourself or your loved ones this Christmas and New Year period,” he said.

South West Health recorded a total of 165 falls-related presentations to emergency departments across the region in the two-month period of December 2023 and January 2024. This number rose to 177 presentations for December 2024 and January 2025.

“While not all those presentations related directly to festive accidents, fall injuries are generally very common over the festive period. These include tripping over clutter, or falling from a ladder, table or whatever else is being used to decorate Christmas trees,” Dr de Wet said.

“So, remember to always use ladders correctly. It is important to make sure there is always someone else at home when using a ladder, and never have more than one person on a ladder at a time. Cables and decorations should be out of the way as they are potential trip hazards.

“These can be Christmas light cables, Christmas decorations, presents or anything else that clutters up a space, especially if there will be more people present in the space than usual.”

And while it is the season to be merry, locals are also being urged to drink responsibly and avoid doing physical activities while intoxicated.

“We often treat patients injured after alcohol has impaired their judgement. They do things they may not do in a more sober frame of mind and can end up injured,” Dr de Wet said.

He also encouraged parents to think carefully before attempting to use toys they had given their children.

“If it’s been a few years since you’ve attempted to ride a skate board, or another highly physical activity, it’s probably best avoided,” he said.



## Some top tips for staying safe and on your feet over the festive season:

- ➔ **Clear clutter:** Keep pathways clear of decorations, cords, and wrapping paper. Secure cords with tape or clips and route them along walls or in low-traffic areas.
- ➔ **Secure rugs:** Use non-slip mats or rug pads to keep rugs from sliding. Ensure carpets are firmly attached to the floor.
- ➔ **Improve lighting:** Make sure all rooms, hallways, and staircases are well-lit. Use nightlights or motion-sensor lights in key areas like bathrooms.
- ➔ **Secure stairs:** Check that handrails are secure and easy to grip. Make sure stairs have adequate lighting, with a light switch at both the top and bottom.
- ➔ **Use ladders safely:** Only use ladders on a firm, even surface. Have someone hold the ladder for you and never overreach.
- ➔ **Wear proper footwear:** Wear supportive, well-fitted shoes or slippers and avoid walking in socks or on slippery floors.
- ➔ **Watch out for pets and children:** Keep pets in control and their toys organized to avoid them becoming tripping hazards.
- ➔ **Stay hydrated:** Increase your water intake, especially if it's warm. Staying hydrated can help prevent dizziness.
- ➔ **Limit alcohol:** Reduce alcohol consumption to help maintain balance and coordination.
- ➔ **Take breaks:** Avoid overexertion by taking breaks and not rushing through tasks like decorating.
- ➔ **Ask for help:** Don't hesitate to ask for help with tasks like decorating or carrying heavy items.



# OUR COMMUNITIES

## ARCADIA VALLEY STATE SCHOOL **WINS** PICK OF THE CROP STATE PRIZE!

**Arcadia Valley State School's thriving garden didn't just bloom this year, it blossomed into a statewide success, taking out the Pick of the Crop state prize!**

The competition set out to find Queensland's most thriving school garden, and Arcadia Valley rose to the top out of 22 entries across the state.

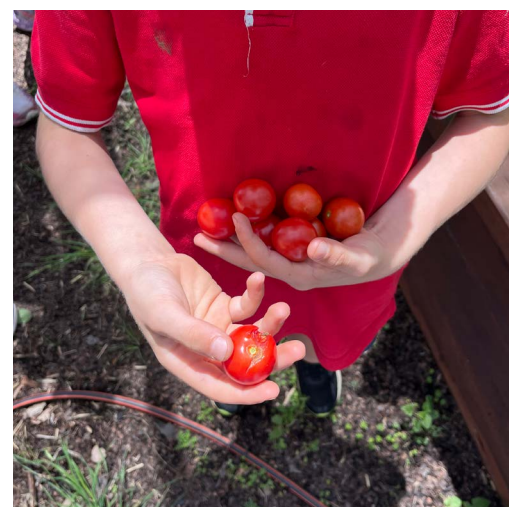
To celebrate the achievement, Tilly Byrne-Kirk, South West HHS Health Promotion Officer and Pick of the Crop Regional Coordinator, visited the school to admire the hard work and dedication behind this beautiful space.

"This garden is a wonderful example of how schools can connect children with fresh, healthy food while building resilience and community pride," Tilly said.

"Their garden is more than just a patch of greenery. It's a hub of fresh food, happy kids, and strong community spirit."

The Pick of the Crop program continues to encourage schools across Queensland to grow, nurture, and celebrate healthy food environments.

Arcadia Valley's win is a shining example of what can be achieved when communities come together with creativity and care.





# COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO HELP QUILPIE RESIDENT STAY AT HOME

**A Quilpie resident with mobility issues can remain in her own home and avoid a preventable hospital or aged care admission thanks to a collaborative effort.**

South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) Charleville Hospital-based Occupational Therapist Jackie Latchman said Quilpie resident Deborah Wood was having issues remaining in her home due to a lack of suitable showering facilities.

Jackie said Deb had needed to resort to washing in other ways as the only shower she had available was over a bath and she was no longer easily able to step in and out of the bath.

“With the exception of the shower, Deb has already had a number of modifications made, including an access ramp and other equipment to improve accessibility,” Jackie said.

“But her showering arrangement was unsuitable and, if we hadn’t been able to assist, she would have been at risk of early admission to hospital or aged care, which was otherwise entirely preventable.”

Deb said the new shower had changed her life.

“I have bad arthritis, and I had so much trouble getting in and out of the bath before whenever I tried to shower. If I get stuck in the bath and can’t get out, it is not good, as I live on my own. Now I can get in and out of the shower, I can reach things, I can walk in and out easily, it’s just amazing,” she said.

Jackie said the health service had lodged an application for funding to refurbish Deb’s home through Queensland Health’s Long-Stay Rapid Response program.

The program was established in April 2021 as an internal funding and escalation pathway for hospital and health services to safely support long-stay patients to leave hospital or avoid hospitalisation in the first place.

“Deb is still able to live at home independently, so we wanted to do whatever we could to let her live at home for as long as possible,” Jackie said.

“But securing funding to undertake the bathroom refurbishment was just one part of the equation. Getting building work done in rural locations like Quilpie can involve long waits, and this is where Stennett Builders really stepped up for us.

“When they were told of Deb’s situation, they immediately prioritised the work and got in there and did it quickly.

“Thanks to Stennett Builders, Deb is now able to remain in her own home and shower easily and safely. It’s such a great outcome and I’d like to thank Stennett Builders, the Long-Stay Rapid Response program and everyone involved in achieving this excellent outcome for Deb,” Jackie said.

Stennett Builders representative Heather Stennett said the company was very pleased to have been able to help Deb stay in her own home.

“As a builder in outback Queensland, we are well aware of the challenging circumstances community members may face in remote areas, especially when they have mobility issues, and we always aim to help in any way we can. When we heard about Deb’s situation, fortunately we were in a position we could give her bathroom modification works priority and we’re very happy with the outcome for her,” Heather said.

Deb said she could not praise Stennett Builders enough.

“They were such wonderful people that build my new bathroom,” she said.

“I’m also so very grateful to Jackie, who helped me so much, as well as Robin Tully, Clinical Nurse at Quilpie Hospital, and many other hospital staff. It’s just so much work that everyone has put it to help make things easier and better for me at home. It’s just been so amazing.”





# COMMUNITIES RALLY AROUND MENTAL HEALTH

## The Mental Health Consumer Advisory Committee held its last meeting for the year on 17 November 2025.

The meeting was advised of several initiatives within the mental health and alcohol and other drugs services, which will lead to service improvements. These included presentations on the Alcohol and Other Drugs Model of Care review, enhancement to the smart referrals system which allows real time tracking of referrals, upcoming planning for the Tackling Regional Adversity through Connected Care (TRACC).

An update to Mental Health staffing was also provided. The Acute Care Team (ACT) has grown in numbers, with clinicians now based in multiple locations, conducting regular outreach to rural communities. These changes will alleviate missed opportunity to treat and improve access and follow-up. Integrated, recovery-focused care remains a priority, with strengthened partnerships with community organisations such as Lifeline and Clean Slate.

Recent First National Health Equity Strategy development consultations have highlighted the growing prominence of mental health concerns across rural and remote communities. Health equity consultations indicate mental health remains a priority, underscoring the need for targeted support during recovery periods. Communities such as Quilpie Shire and Bulloo Shire remain in recovery mode, with mental health challenges expected to persist, making access to services and ongoing monitoring critical.

A draft Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) model of care was presented following extensive community consultations, which identified key service gaps and challenges:

- Difficulties accessing Toowoomba under the Queensland Opioid Treatment Program (QOTP) registration
- Limited AODS staffing in Cunnamulla
- Inconsistent communication during staff absences
- 80% of QOTP participants in the South West are First Nations people, highlighting the need for culturally appropriate care
- Concerns about individuals detoxifying in motels without adequate support.

Following consideration of all feedback, it is planned to finalise the model of care for implementation.

The Tackling Regional Adversity Through Connected Communities (TRACC) team introduced the 'Just a South West Farmer' project, designed to foster open conversations about mental health and resilience in farming communities. The initiative includes:

- Movie screening tour with panel discussions
- Photography competition exploring the theme 'What does just a farmer mean?'
- Creation of a mental health calendar featuring community images and service information.

**The project aims to reduce stigma, connect people to services, and support local groups in applying for community grants.**

**A review of the Mental Health Community Advisory Network's membership and terms of reference is planned for early 2026 to ensure broad representation. Anyone interested in being a member of the Mental Health Community Advisory Network is encouraged to contact Donna Burke, Board Governance Officer on 4505 1544 or email [SWHHS\\_Board@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:SWHHS_Board@health.qld.gov.au).**

[Email SWHHS Board →](mailto:SWHHS_Board@health.qld.gov.au)



## QCS delivering safer communities and supporting offender rehabilitation, **ONE BEANIE AT A TIME**

**Offenders on community service in the Roma region have been put to work making beanie hats for premature babies as they make their reparations to the community.**

The initiative is helping to reform offenders and deliver safer communities one stitch at a time.

Working under the guidance of Queensland Corrective Services' (QCS) Community Corrections officers, 14 beanies have been donated to Roma Hospital. Roma Hospital Director of Nursing Karlee Quin said the hospital was very pleased to accept the donation of crocheted items from Roma Community Corrections.

"An average of 140 births a year are recorded at Roma Hospital, so this donation will prove very useful, particularly as we move into the winter months next year," Karlee said.

"Here at Roma, average daily temperatures in winter can vary from the early 20s to 0 degrees centigrade at night, and sometimes lower.

"I'm sure some of our new mums next year will be more than happy to give their babies one of these lovely items. We can also find recipients for those designed for older children.

"I'd like to offer a big thanks to QCS and Roma Community Corrections for thinking of us when making and donating the beanies."



**Community Corrections offices throughout Queensland partner with not-for-profit organisations and local councils to supervise offenders performing community service work, including maintenance activities and graffiti removal, providing offenders the opportunity to develop life and vocational skills and contribute positively to society so that we have safer communities and fewer victims of crime.**



## SURAT MPHS SLEEPING BEAUTY PANTOMIME BRINGS CHRISTMAS CHEER

**Surat Multi-Purpose Health Service (MPHS) was alive with fun, laughter, and festive spirit as residents, staff, and community members came together to present the Sleeping Beauty Pantomime on Tuesday 2 December.**

Surat MPHS Director of Nursing / Facility Manager Skye Williams said after weeks of dedicated rehearsals, the cast delivered a joyful morning of entertainment that delighted the audience.

“Families, friends, and community members attended in great numbers, enjoying both the performance and a special Christmas morning tea that followed,” Skye said.

“The production was directed by Wendy McAlpine, whose creativity, enthusiasm, and commitment brought the show to life. Wendy ensured every actor – residents, staff, and community members alike – had a role suited to their abilities and interests. Her leadership created an inclusive and memorable experience for everyone involved.”

Skye said colourful costumes added to the magic and charm of the morning, while the pantomime itself highlighted the strong community spirit at Surat MPHS.

“The event showcased the joy, connection, and celebration that the festive season brings,” she said.

“The Sleeping Beauty Pantomime was a wonderful example of how our community comes together to celebrate the festive season. The laughter, creativity, and teamwork on display truly lifted spirits and we are incredibly proud of everyone who contributed to making this event such a success.”

Surat MPHS extends heartfelt thanks to all performers, volunteers, supporters, and families for their dedication and enthusiasm in bringing this year’s Christmas pantomime to life.



*Katrina and Tegan preparing Christmas wreath making*

## CHRISTMAS WREATH WORKSHOPS

**A series of Christmas wreath-making workshops were held across the western sector of the South West Hospital and Health Service region in December.**

The workshops were free and were facilitated by the Queensland Government’s Tackling Regional Adversity through Connected Communities (TRACC) program.

TRACC’s Charleville-based clinician and project lead, Tegan Russell, said the wreath-making workshops had been targeted at communities that had been affected by the severe flooding the region experienced earlier in the year.

“It was a way of bringing these communities together – of fostering social connection and wellbeing,” Tegan said.

Tegan attended each of the workshops to support participants who felt like talking about the adversity they had faced.

“Even months later, these communities were still in the process of fully recovering, and we hoped these workshops would help bring some welcome festive cheer. It was an opportunity for residents to reconnect and recover together,” she said.

The workshops took place at Thargomindah, Eromanga, Toompine, Adavale and Quilpie. Tegan said TRACC had engaged Katrina Lehmann from Charleville-based creative business Sandalwood & Sage to facilitate the workshops, and all materials had been provided free of charge to participants.

“No experience was needed – just creativity, festive spirit and, if people wished, drinks and nibbles to share,” she said.

The TRACC program continues to support community resilience-building strategies, projects and activities that help develop and promote community networks, build awareness of mental health issues, and encourage individuals to seek help if needed.



# WELLNESS MY WAY A HIT IN THE SOUTH WEST

South West Queensland residents showed strong interest in health and wellbeing at the recent Council Event, with Health and Wellbeing Queensland's (HWQld's) Wellness My Way program attracting significant engagement.

Executive Director Allied Health, Helen Wassman, said approximately 70 people visited the Wellness My Way stall, with 14 participants completing a health check on the spot – a 20% uptake.

“For those who didn’t scan on the day, our team guided them through the process and provided flyers so they could complete it later,” Helen said.

The data revealed strong participation among younger community members, with 36% of health checks completed by men – both priority populations HWQld has been working to reach.

“Wellness My Way is designed to connect people with personalised health support. It’s encouraging to see these numbers reflect our efforts to engage with groups who may not otherwise access these services,” Helen said.

“Wellness My Way Wellness My Way is a free entry point to health and wellbeing support available across South West Queensland. By completing a health check, participants are connected with a telephone coach who helps create a personalised plan and links them with local programs, services, and resources.

“The program supports individuals looking to eat well, move more, quit smoking, or improve their overall wellbeing.”

## How to Access

- ➔ Call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84) and ask for the Way to Wellness service (Monday – Friday, 8am to 8pm).
- ➔ Click the link below and complete the health check online anytime.

[Online Health Check →](#)





# COMMUNITY ADVISORY NETWORK ANNUAL FORUM STRENGTHENS LOCAL VOICES

**The Community Advisory Network (CAN) annual forum once again proved to be a cornerstone event for our communities, bringing together CAN Chairs, the Board, Executive, and senior leaders for robust discussion and collaboration.**

Held at the Southern Queensland Rural Health facility in Charleville, on Tuesday 28 October, the forum marked its 11th year as a vital platform for engagement, networking, and information-sharing across the health service community.

South West Hospital and Health Board Chair Karen Tully said the forum continues to play an important role in ensuring community voices are heard.

“The CAN annual forum is about listening to our communities and making sure their priorities shape the way we deliver health services,” Karen said.

“The passion and quality of the reports and presentations from CAN Chairs this year were outstanding, and they reflect the commitment of local representatives to improving health outcomes.”

Karen said each year, CAN Chairs contribute to the planning process, ensuring the program reflects their priorities.

“Initiatives such as the CAN Chair’s breakfast were introduced in response to participant feedback, highlighting the forum’s responsiveness to community needs,” she said.

This year’s agenda included strategic updates and preliminary feedback sessions on key initiatives, including the Strategic Plan, First Nations Health Equity Strategy, and Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy.

## **A 26% evaluation return rate provided valuable insights:**

- ✓ 100% agreed the forum was well-organised, communication was effective, and discussions were helpful.
- ✓ 90% agreed the timing, breaks, and facilities were appropriate.
- ✓ 100% felt comfortable asking questions, with discussions encouraged and expectations met.

She said guest presentations received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with suggestions to shorten some sessions and add more interactive elements.

“Our CAN Chairs are to be applauded for the passion and detail they bring to their reports,” she said.

“Their insights provide rich information that helps us focus on what matters most to communities across Southern Queensland.”

**Copies of all presentations and evaluation summaries have been distributed to local CANs, ensuring the information continues to inform community-level discussions.**



## **Participants highlighted the strengths of the forum, including:**

- Open and robust discussion
- Networking opportunities with CAN Chairs, Board, and staff
- Informative presentations and well-prepared reports
- Transparent engagement and safe space to raise issues.



# OUR TEAMS

## CULTURE COMPASS – A TOOL THAT HELPED START THE CONVERSATION

**Injune’s Director of Nursing and Facility Manager, Kirsty Doonan, says the Injune team has seen “a significant and very real shift” in how staff are connecting at the facility thanks to the South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) staff survey, Culture Compass.**

Kirsty said it was the result of steady teamwork, clearer communication, and a strong focus on empathy, compassion and collaboration.

“In small rural facilities, relationships and resources are everything. When people communicate openly, feel supported, and know they’re safe to do their jobs, culture naturally strengthens. Culture Compass provided a structured way to hear directly from staff and understand what mattered most to them,” she said.

“Their feedback helped us improve communication, share information more consistently, and create more opportunities for development across the team.”

Kirsty encourages all managers to view the Culture Compass results as a shared team outcome – not a personal scorecard.

“Managers should remember it isn’t a reflection of one individual; it captures the collective experiences of the whole team. Everyone contributes to the culture we create together.”

One of the most noticeable changes has been the increased collaboration across every role in the service.

“This place doesn’t run without everyone – administration, operational teams, nurses, medical officers, cleaners, cooks, gardeners. When we work together, the whole service lifts,” she said.



Ashlea Debnam, Donna Lamberth, Kirsty Doonan and Leanne Schmidt

Kirsty said the most meaningful part has been seeing staff reconnect.

“Watching the team laugh together over our 10 am cuppas and genuinely support one another – that means everything. I love seeing people grow,” she said.

She emphasised that while the Culture Compass was a useful tool, the mindset and attitude people choose to bring each day has an even stronger influence.

“When you choose to come to work with a positive attitude, it has a massive impact on your team. That energy spreads,” Kirsty said.

With the next Culture Compass cycle approaching, she says the team feels prepared but knows culture doesn’t stop at a survey, it continually evolves.

“I’m looking forward to seeing our results next year. It’s something we build every day, together. If we keep communicating, keep showing empathy, and keep listening, we’ll continue to strengthen our workplace,” she said.



## OUR NURSE PRACTITIONERS GROW FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

From 8–14 December 2025 we acknowledged Nurse Practitioner (NP) Week, a time to celebrate the invaluable contributions of NPs across Australia and within our own South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS).

This year is especially significant it marks 25 years of NP care in Australia and is celebrating with the theme *From Strength to Strength*.

South West HHS Chief Executive Dr Anthony Brown said from the first trailblazing NPs to the more than 3,100 Nurse Practitioners now leading the way across every corner of the health system, the profession continues to grow in strength, recognition, and impact.

“Here at South West HHS, we are proud to have 11 Nurse Practitioners working across our facilities and communities,” Anthony said.

“Their expertise, compassion, and leadership make a profound difference every day – delivering experienced, expert care and ensuring our patients and families receive the support they need, close to home.

“Our NPs are educators, innovators, and advocates who strengthen the communities they serve. Their work embodies the values of our health service – compassion, excellence, and commitment to improving lives.

“Your contributions are deeply valued, and your impact is felt across every patient interaction, every family supported, and every community strengthened.”

### Celebrating NP Week Together

Nurse Practitioner Week is a time to:

- ✓ **Celebrate achievements** – recognising the impact NPs have made in advancing healthcare.
- ✓ **Reflect on progress** – honouring the journey from the first pioneers to today’s leaders.
- ✓ **Look to the future** – advocating for continued growth, recognition, and leadership of the profession.

South West HHS proudly acknowledges the dedication and impact of our Nurse Practitioners. Their work continues to grow from strength to strength, shaping the future of healthcare for our communities.



## Spotlight on Our Nurse Practitioners

### Pauline Kehl

Director of Nursing/  
Facility Manager  
Credentialed NP,  
Wallumbilla



“Every day, I am reminded why I chose this path: the satisfaction of helping others, the trust patients place in us, and the opportunity to lead with compassion and expertise.

I can’t imagine a career that would bring me more fulfillment than this. Working as a Nurse Practitioner allows me to contribute to patient care in meaningful ways, whether in urgent retrieval services or in collaboration with colleagues across the health system.”

### Sharon Young

NP, Sexual and  
Reproductive Health/  
Women’s Health,  
Charleville



“As a dedicated Sexual and Reproductive Health NP, I provide free, confidential, compassionate, evidence-based care in contraception, STI screening, prevention and management, cervical screening, menopause support and pregnancy options counselling.

My deepest passion lies in serving rural and remote communities where access to specialised sexual and reproductive health services is often limited. I am committed to closing these gaps by delivering high-quality, non-judgemental, client-centred care directly to underserved populations, so they can exercise their reproductive rights with dignity and confidence.”

### Sonia Small

NP, Retrieval  
Services QLD



“Proud to be a Nurse Practitioner. I truly believe there is no more rewarding role than being part of a patient’s healthcare team. As a Nurse Practitioner, I am privileged to contribute meaningfully to the health service and make a real difference in people’s lives.

Authorised through AHPRA, Nurse Practitioners diagnose, treat, and manage a wide range of conditions, injuries, and illnesses. After 33 years in nursing, I take great joy in using my knowledge and skills to work both autonomously and collaboratively with my colleagues to achieve the best possible outcomes for our patients.”

### Anthony Wollaston

Rural Generalist NP,  
Quilpie



“I’m proud to work as a Nurse Practitioner in the remote South West community of Quilpie. Living locally means I really get to know my patients, their families, and the rhythm of the community. That connection allows me to deliver care that’s timely, personal, and responsive to what people need.

I love the variety of the rural generalist role: one minute it’s emergency care, the next it’s chronic disease management, primary care, or supporting someone through a challenging day. It’s demanding, but the systems of support and training in place make it achievable. It’s a great complementary model of care to lift service delivery capabilities to communities in the South West HHS.”



# OUR RESOURCES



## ROMA HOSPITAL CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AND CAR PARK

**South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) is excited to share that significant progress has been made on the new administration building and car park at the Roma Hospital Campus.**

South West HHS Executive Director Infrastructure and Corporate Services Linda Patmore thanked staff, patients, and the community for their patience as this important work continues.

“Construction of the new car park is now complete, with line marking finished and the site operationally ready,” Linda said.

“Only a small number of final steps remain before the car park can be opened and accessible to consumers and staff. We understand parking has been limited and are working hard to make the new spaces available as soon as possible.”

Linda said internal works were currently being finalised inside the new administration building, with South West HHS expected to take ownership early in the new year.

“Planning is underway to ensure the best use of this new space, including reviewing Roma-based office configurations and confirming team locations as part of the Business Case for Change,” she said.

Further timelines are being determined, with consultation scheduled in due course as plans progress. Updates will continue to be shared with staff, patients, and the community.

**Thank you for your ongoing patience and support as we deliver this innovative and sustainable project for Roma Hospital.**





# INAUGURAL SOUTH WEST DFV FORUM A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The inaugural South West Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Forum, held on 25–26 November at the Charleville Racecourse, brought together community leaders, service providers, and health professionals in a powerful show of collaboration and commitment to ending DFV across the region.



With more than 120 participants across two days, the forum created a safe and inclusive space for dialogue, learning, and shared action. Supported through funding sponsorships from WorkUP Qld, FRRR Grants, Aboriginal Family Legal Services Queensland (AFLSQ), Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health (CACH), and South West Hospital and Health Service (SWHHS), alongside in-kind support from Murweh Shire Council, the event was a true community effort.

South West HHS Executive Director Allied Health Helen Wassman said the forum demonstrated the power of collective action.

“The forum opened with a Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country by Keelen Mailman, setting a respectful and culturally grounded tone. Delegates were invited to contribute to a collaborative artwork led by Bidjara artist Alara Geebung, symbolising unity and shared responsibility in addressing DFV,” Helen said.

Helen said the keynote speaker Kathleen Wincen, CEO of Aboriginal Family Legal Services Queensland (AFLSQ), delivered a powerful address on culturally safe legal services and the importance of community-led solutions.

“Guest speaker Cheryl Ellery of Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health (CACH) shared her lived experience and decades of frontline work supporting families in Cunnamulla, reminding delegates of the strength and resilience within local communities.

“Workshops across both days explored critical themes including workforce development, collaborative safety planning, access to DFV services, and integrated service responses.

“Presentations from Queensland Police Service, Corrections, and community organisations highlighted innovative approaches already making a difference in rural and remote areas.”

Helen said the forum was about bringing people together – health, legal, community, and government – to share knowledge and strengthen our response to domestic and family violence.

“The level of engagement, the honesty of discussions, and the willingness to collaborate show that we are moving forward together. The smoking ceremony, artworks, the yarning circles, and the workshops all reflected the spirit of unity. It was inspiring to see delegates contribute their voices and ideas, knowing that every fingerprint on that collaborative artwork symbolises our shared commitment to change,” she said.

The forum concluded with a DFV Memorial Service led by Father Jim Cosgrove, honouring lives lost and reinforcing the importance of ongoing action. Helen said delegates left with renewed energy, strengthened networks, and a shared vision for safer communities.

“Post-forum surveys confirmed overwhelmingly positive feedback, with participants commending the open discussions, quality of presentations, and opportunities for networking,” she said.

“Suggestions for future forums included more interactive sessions and additional time for community dialogue – reflecting the appetite for continued collaboration.”

The inaugural South West DFV Forum has set a strong foundation for future gatherings, ensuring that voices from across the region are heard, respected, and acted upon.





# GROWING OUR OWN IN THE SOUTH WEST

**South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) is strengthening the future of rural and remote healthcare through its *Grow Our Own* program, a grassroots initiative designed to support local students and build a sustainable workforce.**

Executive Director People and Culture, Katie Eckersley, said the program was vital to ensuring health services remain connected to the communities they serve. What makes the South West region special is our people, our culture, our country and our strong sense of community,” Katie said.

“Life and work here are shaped by distance, resilience, and the realities of delivering care across vast country. These are things you can only truly understand by living here, and that’s exactly why *Grow Our Own* matters.”

Katie said *Grow Our Own*, part of South West HHS’s Organisational Development portfolio, helps high school students explore meaningful health careers close to home.

“Whether they study locally, away, or externally, the program provides hands-on experience that strengthens their connection to rural and remote care. The initiative also supports First Nations students through cadetships, offering workplace exposure and practical experience that builds confidence and provides a competitive edge for future employment,” she said.

Program Coordinator Rebecca (Beck) Glasby said the aim of *Grow our Own* was to grow our workforce from within.

“When local young people feel supported, they stay, and that creates a sustainable future for all of us. Most importantly, they understand our region and how to deliver the care our patients need. Rural and remote healthcare is unique, shaped by distance, isolation, and strong community ties. These are experiences young people can only learn on the ground,” Beck said.

Katie shared how a recent cadet described how *Grow our Own* made her feel seen and understood.

“One recent cadet, raised on a cattle station, struggled in a metropolitan practice but thrived in the South West. She felt understood, supported, and confident to pursue her career. A reminder that local people often excel when they can train and work in environments that reflect their lives and values,” she said.

Katie said investing in local talent ensured the health service was building a workforce that already understood the region.

## South west HHS Managers are encouraged to:

- ➔ explore our People and Culture SharePoint site to learn how to get involved
- ➔ host placements where possible
- ➔ connect with the program team early
- ➔ explore role pathways that match student interests.

Since its inception, *Grow Our Own* has achieved significant milestones:

- ➔ A student transitioned into a permanent position – an early indicator of workforce sustainability.
- ➔ Heidi, a First Nations student from Cunnamulla, achieved statewide recognition as an Assistant in Nursing.
- ➔ Elainia, a student at Roma Hospital, won a Lunchtime Logie and progressed towards onboarding.
- ➔ Two cadets were finalists in the Staff Excellence Awards.
- ➔ Twenty-one expressions of interest were received from communities where some year levels have only three students.

“By supporting our young people, we’re not just filling roles – we’re creating a future workforce that is deeply connected to the communities they serve,” she said.

For hiring managers, *Grow Our Own* offers a direct link to motivated and capable local talent. Hosting a trainee, cadet, or student placement strengthens team capability, enhances service capacity, and creates a strong workforce pipeline.

Katie said the program’s success demonstrated its value and potential.

“For a program that began as a simple idea, the level of engagement we’ve seen highlights just how important it is. By investing in our young people, we’re investing in the future of rural and remote healthcare, ensuring our communities continue to receive care from people who know them, value them, and choose to stay,” she said.



# OUR SERVICES

## PARTNERING FOR BETTER MEDICATION MANAGEMENT IN THE HOME

**South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) has successfully partnered with Choice Aged Care to provide Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs) to patients associated with our General Practices – at no cost to the patient thanks to funding by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.**

South West HHS Executive Director Dr Carl de Wet said HMRs were a collaborative effort involving the patient, their GP, and an accredited pharmacist.

“The aim is to optimise medication management for patients who meet eligibility criteria, particularly those taking five or more medications,” Carl said.

Here’s how the process works:

- ➔ Patients are referred by their GP to Choice Aged Care.
- ➔ An accredited pharmacist conducts a home visit, reviewing medications, checking storage and expiry dates, and providing education about safe use.
- ➔ A detailed report is then sent back to the GP, who can action recommendations to improve treatment and disease management.

“This service has already delivered excellent outcomes for patients and provides valuable support to our GPs,” Carl said.

“To date, around 80 patients have been referred through the South West HHS, with visits conducted in Surat, Injune, Mitchell and Dirranbandi. Importantly, the program also supports our General Practices financially, with billing available through MBS item number 900 once recommendations are actioned – creating an additional revenue stream.”

One patient advocate shared –

*“I was visited at my home to have my medications reviewed. It was very good as I learnt about side effects and that I was possibly on too high a dose of one of my medications. I learnt about checking expiry dates. The service was amazing and to have them visit me at home was even better. A big thank you to the medical practice for initiating this visit for me and I hope that this service continues.”*



Dr Talia Trigger

**Patients may be eligible for a Home Medicines Review if they:**

- Hold a current Medicare or Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) card
- Live in a community setting
- Are at risk of, or experiencing, medication misadventure
- Have a referring GP who confirms an identifiable clinical need for the service.

**For more information, visit the Pharmacy Programs Administrator – Home Medicines Review.**

[Find out more →](#)



# EARLY STEPS TOWARDS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF MEDICAL IMAGING IN THE SOUTH WEST

**A wave of transformation is revitalising the Medical Imaging team at South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS), led by a strong focus on workforce sustainability, local training, and equity of access for rural communities.**

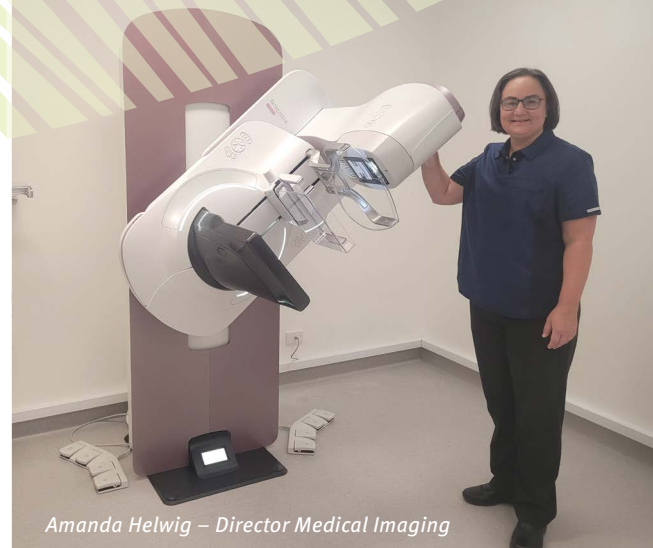
At the heart of this change is Director Amanda Helwig. With a clear understanding of the pressures faced in rural health, Amanda has been steadily working to expand and build the imaging workforce – guided by genuine care for staff wellbeing, long-term sustainability, and creating local career opportunities for young Australians.

“Our imaging staff are incredibly committed, but like many in rural health, they’ve been stretched,” Amanda said.

“We needed to act early to strengthen our workforce foundation and make roles more sustainable.”

As a way to celebrate our Medical Imaging team, we recognised them during **Radiographers Week (3 to 9 November)** – an annual celebration in Australia, officially called National Radiographers and Radiation Therapists' Week (NRRTW).

It coincides with **World Radiography Day on November 8** and recognises and celebrates the vital role of medical radiation professionals in healthcare. The 2025 theme is "Medical Radiation Practitioners – meet the person behind your care".



Amanda Helwig – Director Medical Imaging

## Building pathways for local people

A key part of Amanda’s approach is the ‘Grow Our Own’ strategy, designed to create local career pathways and entry-level opportunities in medical imaging.

The first high school-based trainee joined the Charleville imaging team in August and now works one day a week while attending Charleville State High School for the remainder of the week – gaining valuable, hands-on experience close to home.

Two HP1 trainees commenced their placements in Charleville and St George in September and are returning in December, joined by two additional junior HP1 trainees who will also start that month.

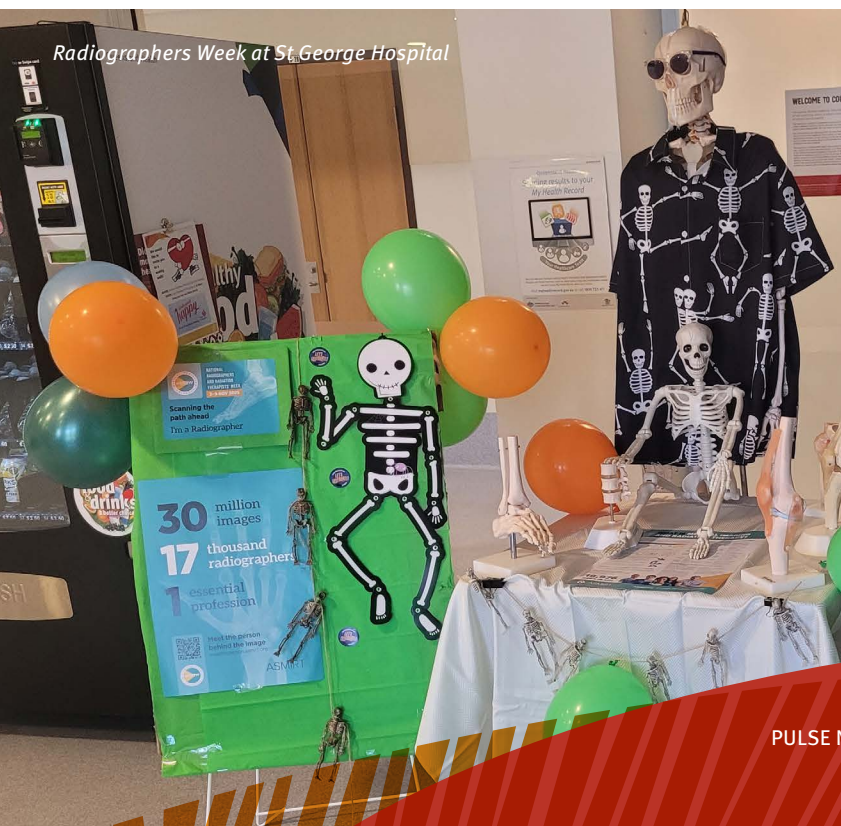
A Rural Development Pathway position has been offered to a new candidate, and the team is awaiting confirmation of acceptance. There’s also strong interest in a radiographer role in St George, with a candidate currently progressing through recruitment.

“This isn’t just about filling vacancies,” Amanda said. “It’s about creating opportunities for local people and building a sustainable workforce that understands the communities we serve.”

On top of this, three new casual radiographers have been onboarded, and SWHHS now has contacts with other casual imaging professionals across Queensland, improving flexibility and service continuity.

In January, the team will welcome a RIPPAH student from QUT, a local resident from Cunnamulla, who will undertake his placement at Charleville Hospital.

E-prescribing became available from Monday 23 October 2023. But it will only be activated if you agree to the service.



Radiographers Week at St George Hospital

## A culture of learning and innovation

On the ground, a culture of educational innovation continues to grow. Tamyka Canning – one of only four X-ray Operator Clinical Educators in Queensland – has supported the rollout of hands-on training tools, including the introduction of skeletons to enhance practical learning in remote areas.

“The staff have been having a lot of fun with them, as you can see,” Amanda said.

“It goes hand in hand with bringing on juniors. The next step is building a sustainable clinical education model. Creating a learning environment is essential – that’s my next plan.”

Recent milestones also include the reintroduction of ultrasound services in St George, led by a senior dual-qualified sonographer, the successful update of the Radiation Safety Plan, and progress on a CT scanner feasibility study for Charleville. Formal student placements in medical imaging are being introduced for the first time in the South West through partnerships with Southern Queensland Rural Health and the RIPPAH program.

“This work is about more than workforce,” Amanda said. “It’s about building a service our teams and communities can count on, now and into the future.”



## Interested in a career as an X-ray operator or radiographer?

### William Lieu

“Coming from the city, the South West has been a breath of fresh air – hands-on, supportive, and anchored by the strong South West HHS community I’ve appreciated most. In Charleville I’m applying broad radiography skills across acute and general imaging to deliver the highest quality imaging. It’s rewarding to work closely with patients and clinicians so decisions are timely and patients feel supported.”

If you’re curious about becoming part of this growing field, Amanda says, “It’s challenging work, but it’s meaningful, community-focused, and you get to work with some truly great people.”

**If you’d like to learn more, reach out via the Cunningham Centre or contact Amanda Helwig directly.**

[Find out more →](#)

[Contact Amanda →](#)

### Ryan Du

I chose to study radiography because of the combination of advanced technology and direct patient involvement. I have always been passionate about helping others, and this profession allows me to integrate technical skills with genuine compassion. It isn’t simply about making a diagnostic image. It is also about doing patient-centred care by ensuring good communication and reassurance with patients in vulnerable moments. This role allows me to be a crucial part of a patient’s healthcare journey.

I was particularly interested in working in a community like St George because I wanted a change from the monotony of large-city life and to have my valuable skills put to good use. The opportunity to become a familiar face and build lasting relationships within a close-knit community is incredibly appealing. I have been having a pleasant experience in St. George! There’s an overwhelming sense of connection here, and the wide-open spaces offer a wonderful sense of peace, making me feel like this is a place where I want to build a meaningful career.



## November 2025 #swSpirit

**It is with great pleasure that we recognise three outstanding members of the South West HHS team, Jodie Russell, Jodie Zohl and Clodagh Finnell (from l to r).**

Clodagh (Hub Leadership Support Co-ordinator Charleville), Jodie Russell (Hub Leadership Support Co-ordinator – Medical Services Charleville) and Jodie Zohl (Waroona Administration Officer and a valued member of the Charleville Administration Team) have been nominated for the November #swSpirit. Each of these remarkable women play a vital role in supporting our workforce and strengthening the operations of the South West HHS.

South West HHS Executive Director Medical Services and Clinical Governance Dr Carl de Wet said their efficiency, commitment, and attention to detail make them invaluable in the day-to-day operations that support our staff in delivering exceptional care to our communities.

“While each of these women excels in her formal role, their combined efforts truly shone through in the delivery of our HHS Staff Awards Celebration in Charleville at the end of October,” Carl said.

“With the assistance of the Staff Awards Working Group they went above and beyond in their creativity and dedication to creating a memorable experience for everyone involved.

“From the moment guests arrived on the red carpet, it was clear that this would be a special evening.

“The beautiful native floral arrangements and stunning backdrops set the scene for a classy, memorable event.

“The highlight for many was the delicious, homemade cake by Jodie. This was a true labour of love that reflected the personal touch and attention to detail they bring to everything they do.

“This celebration was memorable not only for its polish and beauty, but because it represented the care, teamwork, and dedication that Jodie Zohl, Jodie Russell, and Clodagh Finnell demonstrate every day.

“Their efforts enrich our workplace culture, uplift our teams, and exemplify the South West Spirit.”

Kylie Payne, Administration Team Leader at Charleville Hospital, said Jodie Zohl was a valued member of the Charleville Administration Team, who also contributes enormously to daily operations.

“Jodie (Zohl) is always willing to offer a hand, whether it is setting up or even offering to bake one of her delicious ‘goodies’ for various work functions,” Kylie said.

“Her commitment goes above and beyond and we are fortunate to have Jodie as part of our team!”

We are incredibly fortunate to have such committed, talented, and generous team members within our organisation.

**Please join in congratulating Jodie Zohl, Jodie Russell, and Clodagh Finnell for their outstanding contributions and for embodying the very best of who we are at South West HHS.**



## December 2025 #swSpirit

### Celebrating Heather Scriven's outstanding contribution

**South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) is proud to announce Senior Social Worker Advance Domestic and Family Violence (DFV Specialist Health Workforce) Heather Scriven as the #swSpirit recipient for December 2025 – and fittingly, the final awardee for this year.**

Heather has been recognised for her exceptional leadership and commitment in coordinating the annual South West Domestic and Family Violence Forum at the end of November, an event that was inclusive, survivor-centred, and deeply impactful for our communities.

South West HHS Executive Director Allied Health Helen Wassman said Heather consistently went above and beyond her role, managing complex logistics, engaging stakeholders, and delivering the forum with calmness, innovation, and a solutions-focused approach.

“Her work strengthened partnerships across local services, government agencies, community organisations, and regional stakeholders, fostering collaboration and enhancing community commitment,” Helen said.

“Heather embodies the values of quality, accountability, adaptability, compassion, and engagement in everything she does.

“Her transparent communication, trauma-informed practice, meticulous planning, and respectful approach to sensitive issues have set a remarkable standard for our organisation.”

Helen said Heather ensured the forum addressed real local needs, prioritised culturally safe practice, and amplified diverse community voices.

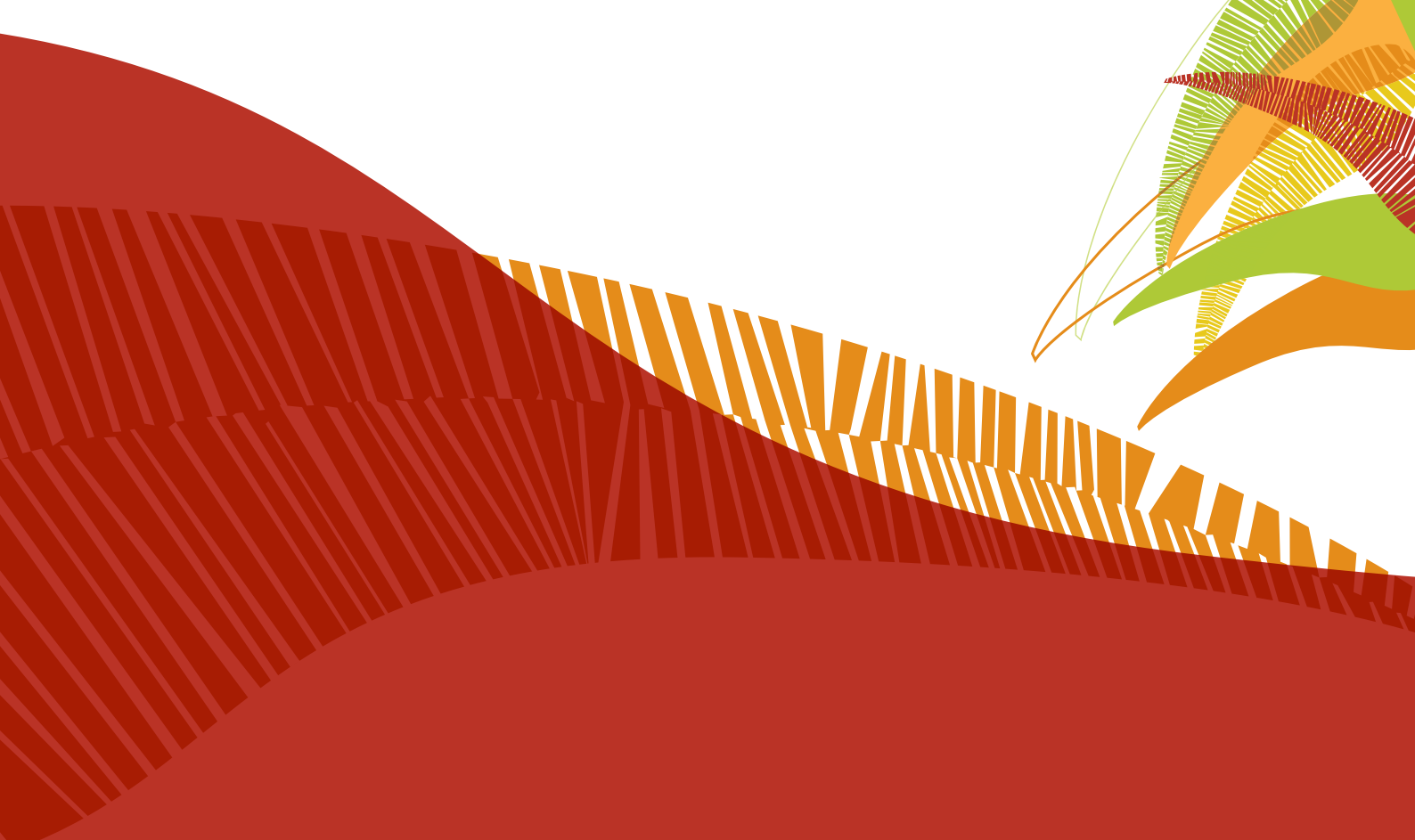
“She also identified opportunities to improve service integration and build stronger networks, contributing to long-term benefits for families experiencing domestic and family violence,” she said.

“Her professionalism, initiative, and willingness to support colleagues and partners beyond her formal responsibilities ensured the forum not only met but exceeded expectations. Heather serves as a role model within South West HHS, exemplifying passion, work ethic, and commitment to community wellbeing and safety.”

As the last South West Spirit recipient for 2025, Heather's recognition highlights the incredible dedication of our staff across the region. Her contribution has significantly strengthened the collective response to domestic and family violence and inspired others across the organisation.



**Congratulations Heather,  
your spirit shines brightly across  
South West HHS.**



[southwest.health.qld.gov.au](http://southwest.health.qld.gov.au)

