

**Julia Creek MPHS
(Monthly Update No 4. March, 2021)**

Apologies this update is a couple of days late. Current interim arrangements will remain in place for the Julia Creek MPHS as a Level 1 facility. NWHHS continues to provide emergency care to the community 24/7 and GP services 2-3 days/week.

Broadly, work continues toward reinstating the facility to Level 2, reliant still on successful recruitment to a full complement of staff. In the first instance however, the HHS plans to transition back towards providing inpatient Aged Care beds as soon as we have finalised nursing recruitment.

On nursing recruitment, the recruitment process for the Director of Nursing (DoN) is now complete, and we are happy to announce that Jillian Fisher has been successful in her application for the position. Interviews commence on April 1 for a Clinical Nurse (CN). Encouragingly, there has been an increase in the number of applications for Registered Nurses (RN) and Enrolled Nurses (EN), with the RN applications closing April 6.

On March 26, in line with the end of March review as promised late last year, the NWHHS participated in a Julia Creek MPHS Roundtable discussion with a range of stakeholders including representatives from NWHHS, McKinlay Shire Council, RFDS, Julia Creek CAN, Office of Rural & Remote Health, WQPHN etc.

The objective of the Roundtable was the re-establishment of the McKinlay Shire MPHS as a Level 2 facility and to provide an update on progress and solutions. By most accounts it was a successful meeting, with helpful information sharing of both the challenges facing the community and the NWHHS, as well as Queensland Health more broadly.

Tamsyn Cullingford (Executive Director People, Culture & Planning) and Dianne Phillips (Director of Nursing, Remote Facilities) attended the Community Advisory Network meeting this month, and shared an update on recruitment progress, as well as reaffirming that continuing challenges in recruitment was the driver for the temporary downgrade of the Julia Creek Hospital. The community also voiced their fears and frustrations with the current situation.

On primary care, Dr Don Bowley (NWHHS Deputy Chair), Dr Ulrich Orda (Executive Director Medical Services), Michelle Garner (Executive Director Nursing and Midwifery) and Tamsyn Cullingford also met with private GP providers to work

through potential solutions to improve access to primary health care for Julia Creek and McKinlay Shire residents. A number of options are on the table, and factual updates will be provided once an agreed solution is determined.

Michelle Garner and Diane Phillips visited Julia Creek Hospital to meet with staff on March 31. They provided an update to staff on site, as well as offering their ongoing support.

Finally, as we all keep going through this, I encourage you to make maximum use of the Julia Creek Hospital, as well as the GP Clinic when a doctor is onsite. On the days where there is not a doctor onsite, please remember there are highly trained and competent professionals still inside the hospital and/or available 24/7.

Paul Woodhouse
NWHHS Board Chair