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IMPACT

MAGAZINE



CHECKUP

Our Vision, Purpose & Values



Vision

Better health for people and communities that need it most.

Purpose

To create healthier communities and reduce health inequities.

Values



Collaboration

We are proactive in building long term, mutual and respectful partnerships with external organisations.



Excellence

We are solutions focussed and results driven to meet the needs of our customers.



Innovation

We are forward thinking; we embrace change and seize opportunity.



Integrity

We are transparent and honest in our actions and invest in socially responsible solutions.



Compassion

We act with care and consideration in all our interactions; everyone matters.

PUBLICATION DETAILS

CheckUP is a public company that is limited by guarantee.

CheckUP is registered with the Australian Charities Not-for-profits Commission.

IMPACT was prepared by CheckUP's Engagement team and contributed to be various staff members.

Please note that this document may contain images of deceased persons.



The image on the front cover was taken by the winner of the CheckUP Annual Photo Competition; Barbra Kurkowski. Follow Barbra on Instagram @ourlifeontop.

Title: Sunset with his best mate by the Hughenden Lake

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Welcome to the eighth edition of IMPACT. IMPACT is designed to showcase the positive difference that CheckUP, along with our partners, programs, services, projects and initiatives, are making to our communities and their people. While the ongoing global pandemic has presented uncertainty and challenges for CheckUP and all of those we work with and for, there have also been new opportunities and some great achievements.

IMPACT reminds us of the power of collaboration and partnerships. We have continued to achieve our vision of "better health for people and communities that need it most" by working together with like-minded and committed individuals, members, partners, stakeholders, and service providers. Together, we have been able to not only improve access to much needed services closer to home for regional, rural, and remote Queenslanders, but also commence work that demonstrates real impact. Our schools based allied health programs, outreach patient satisfaction, experience and outcomes measurement and social prescribing projects all involve evaluation, allowing us to measure our performance and outcomes from the patient and client perspective. Although other, newer initiatives, such as Access for All (disability training), Queensland Mental Health Week, and our workforce programs may not always seem directly related, they play an integral part in the bigger picture, by ensuring equity and quality of access, promoting the importance of health and wellbeing and supporting a highly skilled and distributed workforce, now and into the future.

Our ever increasing range of focus and coverage would not be possible without our strong cross-sector collaborations with the mental health, disability, philanthropic, business and education sectors, as well as health consumers and the broader community. Creating healthier communities and reducing health inequities is at the heart of all that CheckUP does. The content of IMPACT, together with our companion 2020/21 FY Annual Report demonstrates how our programs ensure communities, particularly our most vulnerable, continue to receive much-needed access to quality healthcare.

In spite of the challenges posed by COVID-19, and in true partnership with our service providers and host facilities, we reached 206 towns and communities, with over 62% of all outreach health service appointments being accessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We ensured ongoing access by converting planned face-to-face visits to telehealth services, equivalent to \$250,000 in funding and over 3000 hours of service delivery. Our patients travelled an average of just 18.5km to their appointments with our providers, many of them taking place in rural, remote and very remote locations. 99% of our patients indicated very high and high levels of satisfaction and more than half felt they would not have been able to receive access to the same or similar service if CheckUP's wasn't available. While we are passionate and committed to providing timely, affordable, accessible and quality-based outreach healthcare across our state, we are also aware of the need to build a strong, sustainable, and resilient health workforce. Through our new funding from Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT), CheckUP is very pleased to be playing a key role in identifying priority areas for health workforce skills and development and some of our early work is highlighted in this IMPACT. We look forward to its' ongoing development and to working closely with the sector to fully understand and build sustainable solutions.

On a final note, I would like to acknowledge and thank the impressive CheckUP team. Despite the many challenges, they have remained committed to our vision and purpose, worked hard and supported one another to achieve our key business priorities, as well as a whole lot more. I continue to be proud of our achievements and hope you enjoy this edition of IMPACT.

Anne Maree Liddy

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



CheckUP staff and board respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to the land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and future leaders.

Photograph by Barbra Kurkowski - @ourlifeontop
Title: Porcupine Gorge looking sizzling

CLEARER VISION IN WOORABINDA

Patients at the Woorabinda Multipurpose Health Service now have access to first class optometry equipment thanks to generous donations from the BHP Benefiting My Community program and CheckUP.

A consultative needs assessment conducted by CheckUP's Indigenous Eye Health Coordinator, Tony Coburn, revealed that new optometry equipment was urgently required to enable the Woorabinda service to meet minimum best practice standards.

BHP's Benefiting My Community Program supports initiatives that will create immediate impact for the community and contribute to its overall liveability. This includes activities that improve health and wellbeing through better access to health services and resources; activities that improve access to essential community services and increase participation by marginalised and vulnerable groups; or activities that enhance community cohesion.

BHP Benefiting My Community program donated almost \$10,000 to the new equipment, and CheckUP, through funding from the Australian Government Department of Health, contributed \$24,000.



Outreach provider and optometrist, Russell at Woorabinda Multipurpose Health Service with a patient and WMHS staff member.

"The new items were unveiled in May 2021 at a launch at the Woorabinda Multipurpose Health Service attended by staff from the service, representatives from CheckUP and the visiting optometrist Russell Cooper."

The new eye equipment includes a tonometer which helps determine whether a patient may be at risk of developing glaucoma, a digital acuity chart with remote control, a full aperture trial lens set, a universal type trial frame, a refractor head, and a new chair for patients.

The equipment has the potential to significantly enhance the range and quality of services that this centre can offer to local community members accessing the Visiting Optometrists Scheme. In a typical year, 100-150 patients could be expected to benefit from this project on an annual basis.



Acting Director of Nursing - Robert Akbar, Russell Cooper; and representing CheckUP - Tony Coburn, and Karen Hale-Robertson.

Farewell Tony!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION TO CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES



After a lifetime of working in the health sector, Tony Coburn is ready to start his well-deserved retirement.

Working as CheckUP's Statewide Indigenous Eye Health Coordinator since 2017, Tony's role has involved improving access to quality eye health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

"A lot of the role is around coordination and working out solutions," he said.

"You need to be able to sit down and engage with people, as well as respond to people in a timely manner."

Passionate about Closing the Gap and with a wealth of knowledge in relation to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the

primary healthcare system, Tony's sage advice and ability to break-down silos in the system will be missed by many, especially since there's few people he doesn't know.

Tony has been involved in many facets of the health landscape throughout his career. Prior to his current role, Tony worked for QAIHC as one of CheckUP's Regional Coordinators and was the Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Coordinator for Queensland. His other career highlights include running two medical centres for 15 years for the Queensland Aids Council (QuAC), working as the Indigenous HIV / STI Coordinator for Queensland through the 2 Spirits program within QuAC, and coordinating the Deadly Sex Congress for 13 years.

"It has involved a lot of travel

across Queensland, and I've loved travelling out to remote communities," he said.

It's travel, one of Tony's passions, that he hopes to be able to spend more time doing in retirement.

"I plan on travelling overseas when COVID-19 is over," he said. "I'm also looking forward to kicking back, relaxing, and catching up with friends, and then after some quiet time will see if I can get involved in volunteer work."

As for the future of eye health, Tony's advice is that getting equipment out to rural and remote communities is key.

"Being able to get equipment out there is important as a lot of optometrists don't have portable eye equipment," he said.

Tony came into the eye healthcare space with some hesitancy at first but his vast experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, coupled with his commitment to improving services to the community soon translated into providing the blueprint for jurisdictional coordination of Indigenous eye care. The team at Indigenous Eye Health based at the University of Melbourne have thoroughly enjoyed Tony's wisdom, his humour and his dedication to Close the Gap for vision. We have an appreciation of his work and impact

which was recognised by winning a Leaky Pipe Award in 2019 as an unsung hero.

Tony we will truly miss you – you have been part of the eye team and a wonderful colleague. All the best for your retirement and we hope that soon enough you will be able to achieve your dream of travelling the world!

A tribute from Indigenous Eye Health at the University of Melbourne.





Dr. Robinson, Rockhampton Hospital Eye Clinic

CLOSING THE GAP ON EYE HEALTH

The vision of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients is now clearer and brighter thanks to monthly visits to Central Queensland from ophthalmologist Dr Louise Robinson.

Dr Robinson, who is based on the Gold Coast, has visited Rockhampton Public Hospital multiple times in 2021 to help improve care and fast track access to surgery thanks to funding from CheckUP's Eye and Ear Surgical Support program and the Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program.

By the end of June, Dr Robinson had performed 58 sight-restoring surgeries, predominantly cataract operations.

Her visits to the region have had a significant impact on wait times. In January 2020, the Rockhampton Hospital Eye Clinic had 102 adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients on their waitlist. This has now been reduced to just five patients.

"The patients I see with blurred vision have ranged from 18 to 103 years old in age and the main reason for their blurry vision is cataracts," Dr Robinson said.

"Many of the patients are unable to drive due to their vision. This can be very isolating in the remote

areas they live in, as they then become dependent upon others for even simple trips to the shops. It is great to be able to improve these patients' vision and hence their quality of life."

When asked what attracts Dr Robinson to this type of work she said, "not only is it the challenging surgical nature of their presentations, but also, it is meeting the patients and their families and hearing their stories, which makes the work so much more enjoyable, remarkable, and satisfying."

Dr Robinson said some of the comments from her patients have included that "the TV is clearer", "colours are brighter," and "I can see the faces of my children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren".

"We know that cataracts are the leading cause of blindness in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and accessing this surgery is potentially life changing, as it will allow people to continue to live independently in their communities."

NEW GP SERVICE FOR JULIA CREEK

Julia Creek is a small rural town situated in north-west Queensland with a permanent population of approximately 400 locals. With limited health services available to the community, every service is highly valued. In June 2021, the town lost its only regular doctor; however, thanks to funding made available through CheckUP's outreach programs and in collaboration with Dr Clements' GP practice in Townsville, a replacement GP was found for the community.

Dr Emma Rossato made the commitment to travel to Julia Creek and provide her services to the community. This was Dr Rossato's first experience providing outreach clinics to

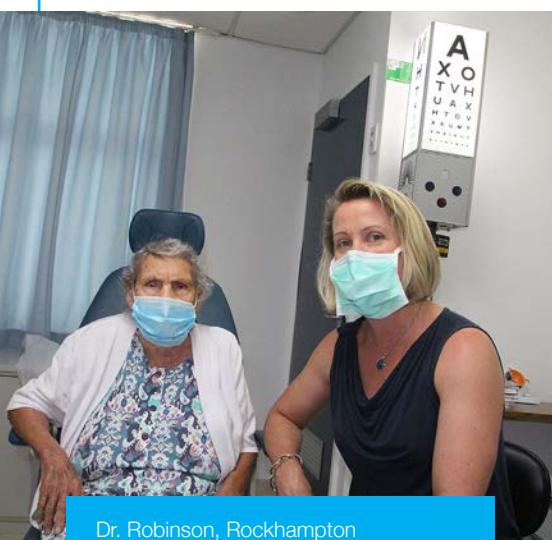
Julia Creek, and she combined both face-to-face clinics with telehealth appointments.

Dr Rossato says "A couple hours in a small plane delivered us to the local medical practice which neighbours the hospital. Rural medicine always has its share of challenges - how to access allied health services, where can patients get an urgent ultrasound? Luckily the practice has wonderful nursing and reception staff who helped enormously with logistics, as well as coordinating the service when there aren't any doctors on site. Teamwork at its finest."

While working with the team in Julia Creek, Dr Rossato also managed the roll out of

COVID-19 vaccinations across the town. Patients were also able to have some continuity of care with telehealth appointments available during the week. Although seeing patients face-to-face is invaluable, between the Townsville team and Julia Creek support staff, patients were able to stay in touch with medical professionals.

When asked about Dr Rossato's experience at Julia Creek she said, "personally it was very satisfying to be able to help out a community. It gave me great insight into the challenges and benefits of rural life and meet most of the town!"



Dr. Robinson, Rockhampton Hospital Eye Clinic



New GP service for Julia Creek. Julia Creek is a small rural town situated in Northwest Queensland

FIGHTING TYPE 2 DIABETES... ONE PATIENT AT A TIME

Each year, CheckUP undertakes a needs assessment of regions throughout Queensland to identify any healthcare gaps within communities. In late 2019, we identified a need for a diabetes educator in the town of Gordonvale.

Gordonvale is a small, rural sugar-growing town, situated south of Cairns. Chris Messina, founder of Green Jelly Bean Diabetes was identified as a local provider. Chris is a qualified pharmacist and credentialed diabetes educator. Chris assists people to self-manage their diabetes and adopt a lifestyle that can achieve Type 2 diabetes remission.

monitoring, and home medicines reviews.

Through funding provided by CheckUP, Green Jelly Bean Diabetes is able to provide diabetes education and home medicines review services to residents in the Gordonvale region with the hope to expand services to surrounding townships as the need grows.

significant lifestyle changes. Mick also engaged the services of Chris. Together with Chris, Mick worked collaboratively with other healthcare professionals to provide personalised care and support. Under the guidance and supervision of Chris, Mick followed a low carbohydrate diet and gave up alcohol and smoking. With the support of his wife Gail, Mick's results were incredible.

The months that followed saw Mick lose 16kgs, and his sleep apnoea was also cured. Obstructive sleep apnoea has been linked to a host of medical conditions including heart attacks, stroke, and coronary artery disease.

Thanks to the services provided by Chris at Green Jelly Bean Diabetes, Mick can now look forward to many more years of happiness with Gail.



It has always been my vision to expand the services of Green Jelly Bean Diabetes to offer a truly comprehensive type 2 diabetes education and management service which targets and supports the major aspects of diabetes management

- Chris Messina

Green Jelly Bean Diabetes is a mobile service operating from the Gordonvale Family Medical Centre. Services offered include education for those newly diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, insulin initiation and nutrition support, provision of fact sheets and tools to assist with diabetes self management, health coaching and goal setting, support with continuous glucose

One patient who has benefited from the services provided by Chris is Mick Gautrey (pictured right). Mick was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes in June 2020 and was determined to manage his diabetes.

To begin his journey back to wellness, Mick took his prescribed medication and began making



Mick Gautrey

5 minutes with...

RORY DOWDALL

Brisbane-based provider Rory Dowdall delivers outreach optometry services to remote locations across Queensland as part of the Visiting Optometrists Scheme (VOS).



Rory regularly travels to Tara, Chinchilla, St George, Blackwater, and Agnes Water to set up temporary full scope practices including visual field analysis, OCT scanning, fundus imaging, and contact lens fitting. More recently, he also travelled to Birdsville, Bedourie, and Boulia (26 hours west of Brisbane) by car. Without initiatives like VOS and the support of providers like Rory, residents in these towns would have little to no access to eyecare – the alternative being to travel long distances, deterring many.

What attracted you to working with CheckUP Outreach programs?

While I was a student, I was incredibly lucky to be chosen to do outreach work in regional Queensland and I loved the experience. I was then selected for placement for a two-week clinic in Hyderabad in India working alongside optometrists and ophthalmologists in the world renown LV Prasad Eye Institute. Although LV Prasad was based in a major city, there was a big focus on treating everyone with the same degree of care in the order that they arrived, regardless of wealth. The wealthier paid more so that the less fortunate could access world class services too. Being raised by an ICU nurse (my Mum) and a bulk billing GP (my Dad) we were always taught that quality healthcare was a fundamental right regardless of your background or socioeconomic status.

Had you spent much time in these locations prior to becoming an Outreach provider?

I had spent some time as a locum in regional Queensland and New South Wales but had mostly worked in a metro clinic in Brisbane. I hadn't visited any of the locations prior to starting. Driving into a new town with no idea

of where you are going or who you will see is daunting at first, but now I look forward to every new location and see it as a challenge!

What's the favourite part of your job?

The appreciation from local communities who desperately need access to regular services, as they value the amount of work I put in to ensure each clinic has the same level of access to services as you'd expect in a metro setting.

One of my favourite stories is from Tara in the Western Downs. I arrived not knowing much about the area other than it being an hour outside Dalby with a pub and a cafe as the dining options. I had a two-day stint at the local hospital in a room that was 2x2m and a real struggle to setup. Once I arrived, I had the local GP Dr Tim Lloyd-Morgan waiting for me at 7am, as he was excited at the prospect of an optometrist coming to town. After the first day of clinic, the clinic manager Sam Purcell gave me the grand tour of the CWA building (now Tara Total Health) and also the old bank (which Dr Tim had set-up as a three GP bulk billing clinic), and you could see how all the staff and Dr Tim genuinely cared for the local community and did their best to ensure no one in town was left out with regards to healthcare services. My clinic regularly sees over 60 patients over four days.

Can you share a message with other health professionals that might be considering joining as an Outreach provider?

While it might not be for everyone with the traveling lifestyle, the personal satisfaction of bringing services to those who truly need it, and also the gratitude

shown by those receiving the care really makes it a joy showing up to work every day. Many people in optometry in metro settings often find themselves falling in a rut, mostly doing non-stop scripts and not much variance within their scope of care. With practicing in a rural setting, you never know what challenge is likely to come through the door, and it requires all of your knowledge, skills and phone-a-friend colleagues to make things work sometimes, but there's never a dull moment!

Are there any other comments you want to make about your work or the future of healthcare?

My newest project in the pipeline is underway. I recently purchased an ex-ambulance with the idea of eventually purchasing a small fleet and setting them up as a truly mobile full scope clinic that can reach any area that has a road! I've formed a company with my sister and a friend and we're investing in new equipment and opportunities to expand the areas we can cover, and also to offer all practicing optometrists a new and novel way to deliver services which differs from their usual life in metro practice work.

You have a spare week to do anything you want. What would you do?

Go back to Nepal and trek through the Himalayas or take the week to spend time with my family on holiday in the USA. I really miss traveling but my regional work has made me realise we have some amazing destinations right on our doorstep in Queensland.

MAINTAINING ACCESS TO OUTREACH SERVICES THROUGH COVID-19

The Outreach programs are designed to address the high need for health services in areas of need, particularly in regional, rural, and remote Australia, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Outreach programs facilitate this by reducing the financial disincentives faced by health professionals who provide these services through the reimbursement of expenses such as travel, meals, accommodation, and other administrative costs.

The coordination of large-scale Outreach service delivery into rural and remote locations presents unique challenges, and as the jurisdictional fundholder of the Australian Government Department of Health's Outreach Programs in Queensland, CheckUP saw new barriers emerge last year alongside COVID-19.

Outreach service delivery is planned and monitored by the CheckUP team using the Outreach Management System (OMS), in collaboration with communities, facilities, service providers, and other key stakeholders. This approach enabled CheckUP to quickly observe the pandemic was causing a reduction in allied health and medical specialist service delivery compared with the same period in 2019.

Feedback collated from service providers helped highlight the reasons why this had occurred. The key

themes identified included:

- Travel restrictions and inconsistent decisions within communities around what defined an essential service.
- Reduced availability of flights
- Increased consultation times required to fulfill COVID-safe practices.
- Reduced facility capacity to provide support such as patient transport, bookings, room availability.
- Unwillingness of patients to leave home to attend appointments.
- Clinician inability to continue Outreach due to financial impact to home practice.
- Clinician unwillingness to travel due to risk of unknowingly transmitting COVID-19 to vulnerable communities or due to concerns about their own health.

To address these challenges, CheckUP worked closely with communities

and service providers to design and implement tailored solutions.

"With credit to both our team and our Outreach service providers, we were able to quickly mobilise Outreach funding to re-design service delivery models and maintain access to essential visiting services for rural and remote communities," Outreach Business Lead Aidan Hobbs explained.

"Over the last 12 months, Outreach providers have consistently demonstrated that they are both willing and able to adapt their services to overcome barriers and meet community needs if they are appropriately supported to do so.

"Our decentralised office structure, with staff based in Brisbane, Cairns, and Townsville, significantly enhanced our ability to respond to the challenges presented by COVID-19 that differed across geographical areas."

Between July 2020 and February 2021, more than 1200 Outreach service variations were issued in response to changing situations to maintain access to essential health services. This included a significant shift towards telehealth with over \$250,000 of funding allocated to support 3170 hours of Outreach telehealth services.



OUTREACH HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY

2020/2021

EESS

Eyes and Ears Surgical Support

76

EAR SURGERIES



211

EYE SURGERIES



OUTREACH

All outreach health services

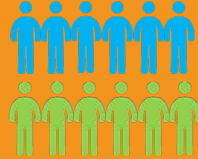
SERVICE DELIVERY 2020/2021

CheckUP is the jurisdictional fundholder for the Commonwealth funded Rural Health Outreach Fund, Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program, Healthy Ears - Better Hearing, Better Listening, Visiting Optometry Scheme and Eye and Ear Surgical Support initiatives in Queensland.

170,856

OCCASIONS OF SERVICE

occasions of service, or appointments, were delivered through all outreach health services in 2020/2021



ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER PATIENTS

107,296

of all outreach health services were accessed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.



18,080

VISITS

visits were undertaken by our team of outreach health providers.



LOCATIONS

206

towns and communities were provided with outreach health services over the 12 month period.



MOICDP

Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program

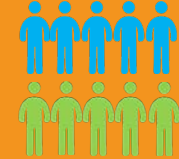
SERVICE DELIVERY 2020/2021

The aim of the MOICDP is to increase access to a range of health services, including expanded primary health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the treatment and management of chronic disease.

80,201

OCCASIONS OF SERVICE

occasions of service, or appointments, were delivered through the MOICDP program in 2020/2021



ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER PATIENTS

63,512

of all MOICDP services were accessed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.



9,448

VISITS

visits were undertaken by our team of outreach health providers.



LOCATIONS

107

towns and communities were provided with MOICDP services over the 12 month period.



RHOF

Rural Health Outreach Fund

SERVICE DELIVERY 2020/2021

The aim of the RHOF is to improve health outcomes for people living in regional, rural and remote locations by supporting the delivery of outreach health services.

59,326

OCCASIONS OF SERVICE

occasions of service, or appointments, were delivered through the RHOF program in 2020/2021



ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER PATIENTS

21,723

of all RHOF services were accessed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.



5,397

VISITS

visits were undertaken by our team of outreach health providers.



LOCATIONS

138

towns and communities were provided with RHOF services over the 12 month period.



HEALTHY EARS

Healthy Ears - Better Hearing, Better Listening

SERVICE DELIVERY 2020/2021

The aim of the Healthy Ears - Better Hearing, Better Listening program is to increase access to a range of health services including expanded primary health for Indigenous children and youth (0-21 years) for the diagnosis, treatment and management of ear and hearing health.

15,366

OCCASIONS OF SERVICE

occasions of service, or appointments, were delivered through the Healthy Ears program in 2020/2021



ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER PATIENTS

13,834

of all Healthy Ears services were accessed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.



2,307

VISITS

visits were undertaken by our team of outreach health providers.



LOCATIONS

64

towns and communities were provided with Healthy Ears services over the 12 month period.



VOS

Visiting Optometrists Scheme

SERVICE DELIVERY 2020/2021

The aim of the Visiting Optometrist Scheme is to deliver outreach optometric services to people living in regional, rural and remote locations, who do not have ready access to primary eye care services.

15,963

OCCASIONS OF SERVICE

occasions of service, or appointments, were delivered through the VOS program in 2020/2021



ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER PATIENTS

8,227

of all VOS services were accessed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.



928

VISITS

visits were undertaken by our team of outreach health providers.



LOCATIONS

110

towns and communities were provided with VOS services over the 12 month period.



Very happy with the service for my daughter. Treatment and recommendation was excellent and everything was explained well.

”

IMPROVING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Improving quality, service, and patient outcomes is an important focus for healthcare. Providers should aim to ensure that care is patient-centred and meets the needs and values of patients. In Australia, a patient-centred approach is supported by the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights and the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards. Patient feedback can be used to improve quality by providing a measure of patients' experience and is sometimes referred to as patient-reported experience measures (PREMs). PREMs gather information on patients' views of their experience while receiving care. Collecting and responding to feedback means patients are more likely to have a positive experience of care, which in turn leads to positive outcomes.

The optimal approach to gathering patient feedback includes using various ways of increasing response rates which are considerate of individual's differences in health literacy, cultural background, access to technology, time, resources and preferences.

At CheckUP, a new strategy for patient feedback was adopted and implemented in 2020 providing contracted service providers with a number of options to facilitate the opportunity of gathering feedback at outreach clinics. A range of methods included taking into consideration locations and possible internet access, feedback preferences (online or hardcopy), cultural appropriateness, anonymity, and the cost and convenience for both patients and health professionals.

During 2020-21 financial year CheckUP had received 259 responses to our patient feedback measure from 37 different locations across Queensland. Our findings included:

- 16 different health professional types were seen.
- The most visited services were dermatology, optometry, podiatry, psychology, and diabetes education.
- 63% of patients identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (from 123 who responded to this question).
- The average distance travelled to an outreach appointment was 18.5 km.
- 99% of responses indicated they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the service.
- 55% of respondents stated that they would not be able to access a similar service if this service was not available.

Congratulations David

This year GPs across the country were acknowledged for their dedication to medicine, with 16 appearing in the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours List. One of these GPs was one of CheckUP's Board Directors, Dr David Rowlands.

CheckUP would like to acknowledge and congratulate Dr Rowlands for being recognised for his hard work and dedication to medicine and for receiving an Order of Australia in the General Division.

David has been a general practitioner on the Gold Coast for 30 years. He is a Queensland graduate who served as a Medical Officer in the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, prior to working in Accident and Emergency in the United Kingdom. David has served on a number of boards throughout his career and is a valued member of the CheckUP board.



Dr. David Rowlands
Order of Australia in
the General Division



COLLABORATING TO LET CHILDREN HEAR

CheckUP was pleased to join HAPEE Hearing Australia and Starlight Children's Foundation Australia in the Torres Strait Islands in March for Deadly Ears clinics.

The Deadly Ears team saw 57 children across four days and three different islands!

CheckUP's Eye and Ear Surgical Support Senior Business Coordinator Jacqui Hawgood also went to Thursday Island, alongside Denise Newman from Hearing Australia, to tour Thursday Island Hospital and Thursday Island Primary Health Care Centre and discuss hearing health services. The team who travel regularly to the Torres Strait Islands to deliver clinics as part of the Hearing Assessment Program for Early Ears (HAPEE), saw this joint trip as an exciting opportunity to collaborate with other stakeholders in hearing health to raise awareness and promote our strong partnerships. As there are many different ear and hearing services who visit the communities, there is often some confusion at a local level regarding what each service provides and how they all fit together. This was a great opportunity to demonstrate how we work closely and collaboratively towards shared goals and outcomes for the children we see.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children currently have one of the highest rates of otitis media—or middle ear disease—in the world.

The high rates of ear disease and hearing loss among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children result in deep structural disadvantage with profound lifetime consequences. That's why CheckUP is committed to continue working with partner organisations to Close the Gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ear and hearing health.



Did you know?

The Deadly Ears Program leads Queensland Health's response to reducing the rates and impact of middle ear disease and conductive hearing loss for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across Queensland.

CHECKUP – PARTNERING TO IMPROVING CHILD EAR AND HEARING HEALTH

Deadly Kids, Deadly Futures (DKDF) 2016-2026 is the second Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child ear and hearing health framework for Queensland.



CheckUP is represented by Deputy CEO, Karen Hale-Robertson, on a multi-sector steering committee which is responsible for implementing the framework across the health, early childhood, and education sectors.

This collaborative approach allows for the dissemination and sharing of ear health information and what other agencies are working on across the state. Members can identify opportunities for further collaboration, new projects, and for replicating initiatives that have been shown to be effective.

This approach also provides a collective voice and leverage at an Executive level to promote or advocate for changes to policies and practices. Karen says, "the partnership between CheckUP, DKDF and other members of the steering group is invaluable. The meetings provide a platform for CheckUP and others to share the work we are undertaking within communities throughout

Queensland and to learn from other's experiences. I look forward to this partnership continuing." The way the Committee operates has changed recently, due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19. Instead of face-to-face meetings three times a year, the committee now meets virtually, more frequently and for shorter periods. This new model has allowed more organisations to participate, and membership has grown from 15 to 25 representatives. The online model encourages greater member participation, and the increased membership means that more people are engaged in the conversation about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ear health.

Feedback provided to DKDF suggests that meeting virtually makes it easier to engage with the ear health sector in Queensland by providing a structure that encourages communication and collaboration.

We call that a win!



NEW TRAINING TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO MAINSTREAM HEALTH SERVICES

With one in five people living with a disability in Australia, reducing the barriers to accessing mainstream health services is a priority for reducing health inequities.

In an exciting step forward in encouraging practice change in the delivery of mainstream health services in regional, rural and remote Queensland, CheckUP launched Access for All: Disability Awareness for Mainstream Health Providers in June at the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland Conference on the Gold Coast.

Access for All is a three-year project, funded under the NDIA's Information Linkages and Capacity Building - Mainstream Capacity Building Program, providing online training and quality improvement resources to address barriers experienced by people with disabilities when accessing mainstream healthcare.

CheckUP worked collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders to develop the training and ensure the content was relevant.

"We consulted with consumers with lived experience of disability, service providers, health professionals, disability networks and advocates to identify the common issues and challenges experienced by people with disabilities and how we can build a more accessible and inclusive healthcare system," CheckUP CEO Ann Maree Liddy said.

"While most health professionals and clinics are well meaning, many are inadvertently creating barriers including making assumptions about a person's disability, which can lead to treatment errors or a reluctance for patients to seek treatment."

Ms Liddy said for some health professionals and practices, the training will reinforce the steps they are already taking, but for others it may prompt a transformation process for their organisation or service to become more accessible.

Dr Dinesh Palipana advises as inaugural chair.

Following a wonderful response from the CheckUP expression of interest, an advisory group was established

last year with 14 individuals from diverse backgrounds to inform the project. The program is coordinated by CheckUP's Senior Business Coordinator, Alison Berigan.

Representation within the group comprises key healthcare stakeholders, disability advocacy organisations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a disability, consumers with a disability, health professionals with a disability, and carers of people with a disability.

Dr Dinesh Palipana agreed to Chair the group for the first 12 months of the project.

Dr Palipana is a senior resident doctor at Gold Coast University Hospital, and a qualified lawyer. He became the first quadriplegic medical graduate and medical intern in Queensland and has worked with the Australian Medical Association to create first-of-kind national policies for inclusivity in medical education and employment.

Dr Palipana has also contributed significantly to scientific advances in treating spinal cord injury and restoring function to people with paralysis, while his national and global impact has been recognised with numerous awards, including Junior Doctor of the Year, the Order of Australia, and Queensland's Australian of the Year for 2021.

Dr Palipana said educating healthcare providers was crucial to raise awareness of the access barriers to mainstream healthcare services experienced by people with disabilities.



Self register now!

The Access for All training consists of seven modules and will take approximately 2 to 2.5 hours to complete, or can be done in shorter 15-20 minute module sittings. A certificate of completion and continuing professional development points are available for most professions.

To sign up to the training, visit accessforall-checkup.talentlms.com.

"The reason I got involved with this project is because in my own journey as a doctor with a spinal cord injury and quadriplegia, I realised a lot of the barriers that people face when accessing the healthcare system," said Dr Palipana. "I've had instances where life threatening issues have nearly been missed, where I've had difficulty physically accessing healthcare environments, and experienced complications in the healthcare system due to my social circumstances.

"It's important that healthcare providers understand that the ways they may have traditionally approached a person with a disability don't always work and they need to be treated as individuals."



CheckUP CEO, Ann Maree Liddy with Dr Dinesh Palipana and Hon Yvette D'Ath, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING TRIAL SUPPORTING REGIONAL COMMUNITIES TO BEAT THE BULGE

CheckUP has formed a partnership with, Larter Consulting and Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network (DDWMPHN) to provide general practices with tools and an IT platform to encourage the uptake of social prescribing in practice populations.

DDWMPHN have identified through chronic disease data and their Health Needs Assessment that in their region there are high levels of risk behaviours and premature death rates related to chronic conditions, especially diabetes. Only one in four adults in the DDWM region are meeting adequate physical activity levels, nearly three in four are overweight or obese, and one quarter have high blood pressure.

The project aims to:

- assist general practices to educate and connect patients to local place-based health initiatives and health information; and
- improve health outcomes, increase consumer participation, engagement, and health ownership.

This project proposes to trial and evaluate the use of social prescribing, the tools previously developed, and address the barriers and enablers perceived by the patients in participating in lifestyle modification programs.

This pilot project has followed the recommendations from the Better Access to Physical Activity and Nutrition' project, which was initiated by CheckUP in 2018/19 to address the disparity in physical activity and nutrition status of people living in regional and rural communities, compared to those living in metropolitan and urban areas of south-east Queensland. The project was conducted within the DDWMPHN catchment and included extensive consultation with health professionals who provided insights to the barriers and enablers of referring patients to lifestyle modification programs. In early 2020, into North Queensland.

WHAT IS SOCIAL PRESCRIBING?

Social prescribing is a practice where health professionals, including general practitioners, nurses, and other primary care professionals, have the resources and infrastructure to link patients with social services – or even social groups – in a bid to address the determinants contributing to poor health.

NETWORKS

The CheckUP team conscientiously work to ensure the QPHCN supports collaboration through information sharing and networking. Our organisation has been delighted to participate and engage with other members over a number of years.

Bennet Aladin, QIP/AGPAL - Foundation Member

CHECKUP'S QUEENSLAND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE NETWORK

The Queensland Primary Health Care Network (QPHCN) is a group of primary health and community care related organisations, who have come together with a common interest – to network, share information, and gain a collective understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing healthcare in Queensland.

The Network has evolved since its inception in 2010, and has expanded its reach to include members from all corners of our great state. Thanks to the latest boom in virtual events, CheckUP attracted a record number of participants to our first quarterly QPHCN event for 2021 which was held via Zoom on 24 February. The topic of growing your own health workforce was covered with presentations from Jobs Queensland, Health Workforce Queensland, Mackay Hospital and Health Service, Bentley Park College and CheckUP. This was a great opportunity to introduce the network to CheckUP's workforce programs – Choose Your Own Health Career and Gateway to Industry Schools Program.

CheckUP recognised the importance of National

Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week at our QPHCN event on 26 May. We were pleased to engage Steven Coghill Senior who performed the Welcome to Country, and we heard from QAIHC's newly appointed CEO, Cleveland Fagan along with Haylene Grogan from Queensland Health, as they discussed the current priorities of the Health Equity Framework. Healing Foundation CEO, Donna Burns, also provided a powerful presentation on intergenerational trauma and how we can all help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to heal.

In the leadup to this year's Queensland Mental Health Week (19-17 October) the network zoomed into our Take Time for Mental Health webinar on Thursday 26 August, with presentations from the Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Ivan Frkovic, Queensland Alliance for Mental Health CEO Jennifer Black, Larter Consulting's Jo Grzelinska, and CheckUP's Queensland Mental Health Week Coordinator Lisa Maynard.

All sessions were recorded and can be viewed via the CheckUP website.

LIFE SUCCESS, HEALTH, AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

The Be Well Learn Well (BWLW) program, funded by the Department of Education, delivers multi-disciplinary allied health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in a school-based setting. Eight remote Queensland State Schools currently receive BWLW support across the Cape and Gulf region. One of these schools, is Kowanyama State School.

Kowanyama means the “place of many waters” in the Yir Yoront language and clans in the community include the Kokoberra, Yir Yoront, and Kunjen people.

Kowanyama State School receives support from the Apunipima BWLW team, including an occupational therapist, speech therapist, psychologist, and clinical psychologist. The BWLW team visits twice per term and provides telehealth discussion and therapy options in between visits.

To highlight and provide perspective on the impact of the program on the community, CheckUP reached out to Steven Blomdale, Head of Special Education Services(HOSE), and Claire Anstey, BWLW Occupational Therapist.

Why is the BWLW program important to Kowanyama, and what impact has it had on the students?

Steven

The program supports the whole school community. The BWLW team implement a holistic and collaborative approach that ensures students are receiving the most appropriate support to meet their learning needs. BWLW is one of our students most important support services.

The team assists the school by:

- Providing support to referred students through 'one-on-one' and group intensive therapy or holistic class support.

- Supporting teaching and school staff through telehealth discussions, mental health check-ins, professional development, and teaching resources.
- Supporting the HOSE to establish whole-of-school intervention strategies to improve student wellbeing

Claire

Kowanyama has a large cohort of students requiring additional support for learning and development. No other allied health service regularly visits to provide support to school aged children, so BWLW's involvement is critical.

The BWLW team acts as a 'bridge' between education and health. By linking in with the local Apunipima health clinic, the team support children to be seen by clinic staff and visiting specialists. This works particularly well in Kowanyama. The BWLW program offers this flexibility with strong links to other health professionals and community members.

The biggest impact in 2021 was rolling out 'Zones of Regulation' in the school. The BWLW team provided training and upskilling to all teaching staff at Kowanyama to implement the program. Zones of Regulation has given students skills in self-regulation so they can focus and participate in learning activities.

Would you recommend BWLW to other schools?

Steven

I would recommend BWLW to any school, especially remote schools. They provide a service that many of our remote schools are unable to access ensuring that no student gets left behind. Fostering a productive relationship between the school and the BWLW team gives students the opportunity to receive support that addresses their learning and life needs within the school community. My wish for the program, is that

we can access more BWLW services (i.e. longer visits and more visiting disciplines) and also provide opportunities to showcase the BWLW program at other schools to demonstrate its value.

What do you like most about providing BWLW services in Kowanyama?

Claire

The people! The local community including children and clinic staff are so welcoming and supportive. Kowanyama teachers often make the effort to help us feel at home. They invite the team for home cooked dinners, adventures to local waterholes, and fishing spots. It is these experiences that we all cherish.

On the ground, the school staff and students are great to work with. They are willing to share their knowledge and skills but approach supporting their students with an open mind. It's also special to return to Kowanyama and have students greet you with a hug and an update on what they have been up to since you were last there.

CheckUP's commitment to the Program

CheckUP, in partnership with Apunipima and Gidgee Healing, is committed to reducing the barriers that prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from accessing vital services. This is of particular importance to the program as the weight of evidence supports investing into a child's early years education, environment and health to support their life success, health, and emotional wellbeing.

Collectively, CheckUP, Apunipima and Gidgee represent the most capable and experienced entities with the community-based profile to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who live in the Lower Gulf and Cape York regions.

Data collected over four school terms:



179 students screened



44 therapy session



119 support party discussions*

*Support Party Discussion: occurs between a member of the BWLW team and school staff, parents and/or caregivers to promote the strategies and interventions that build capacity to respond to a student's learning and development needs.



“ Having this program come out here is a step forward because there is limited access to these types of services.

Yuendumu based government service employee

PATCHES STAFF VISITED THE SMALL ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY OF PAPUNYA

CheckUP's Allied Health in Remote Schools Project (AHRSP), funded by the Australian Government, aims to improve school attendance, learning outcomes, and engagement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. PATCHES Therapy Services have been contracted to deliver into both Papunya and Yuendumu, two remote NT communities.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Deliver therapy services to students in the school, home, and community environment.
- Develop a shared understanding of student therapy with parents, guardians, and family so they are able to support students.
- Strengthen the knowledge and capacity of the teaching and school support staff.

Service delivery into Papunya began in 2021 despite interruptions that included COVID-19 lockdowns and weather deterioration. Over five visits the PATCHES AHRSP therapy team facilitated 36 referrals to the project and 69 therapy sessions consisting of student assessments and therapy support.

In June 2021, CheckUP undertook a community consultation visit to Yuendumu in partnership with PwC Indigenous Consulting and PATCHES Therapy Services. The purpose of the visit was to undertake targeted community and stakeholder consultation using a culturally informed and respectful process. This consultation identified a high-level of need for the service in Yuendumu, that culturally informed service delivery is critical, and that there is limited workforce in local community organisations to assist the project. The outcome from this visit has put CheckUP in a good position to prepare for service delivery into Yuendumu.

“A lot of children have never been assessed, many have speech issues, which affects their behaviour,” said a teacher at the school. The impact of providing these much needed services to remote communities such as Yuendumu will have lasting effects. Through services funded by CheckUP and delivered by PATCHES, the childrens ability to communicate effectively will improve their classroom experience, enabling them to successfully navigate the education system.



PROVIDING ADVICE ON A POWERHOUSE INDUSTRY FOR QUEENSLAND

The healthcare and social assistance industry is the largest employer in Queensland, representing approximately 15 percent of the state's total workforce, with demand expected to continue to grow exponentially for this industry.

Existing in every community throughout Queensland, the industry provides services across the population, often focussing on meeting the needs of the sick, frail, vulnerable, and at-risk members of the community. As such, a strong, sustainable, and resilient workforce is at the core of Queensland's health system and the wellbeing and economic prosperity of our regions.

CheckUP has been engaged by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training as the Industry Skills Advisor for Health (ISA). Vicky Meyer joined the CheckUP team as the Health ISA in early 2020. Vicky engages with employers, small business, and industry stakeholders to provide high-quality, evidence-based industry advice and intelligence about current and emerging industry directions, regional skill needs,

training solutions, and employment opportunities.

The commencement of the Health ISA in March 2020 occurred during a time of workforce disruption and major service delivery impacts on the health industry. Despite this, Vicky was able to establish the Healthy Industry Skills Advisor Industry Reference Group (IRG) and undertake numerous consultations with industry regarding workforce skills needs.

The IRG consists of content experts and leaders enabling representation across a broad range of relevant industry and education sectors spanning government, non-government, and private sectors. It acts as a proactive and strategic health workforce advisory group to influence and enable collaborative and sustainable health workforce skilling solutions.

To date, Vicky has conducted over 150 targeted industry engagement activities; in addition to business-as-usual meetings and ad hoc discussions. The consultation activities have allowed the Vicky to provide advice on the following:

- Rapid Skilling Responses required as a direct result of COVID-19 (e.g., mental health, digital literacy).
- Ongoing skill needs and shortages exacerbated as a result of COVID-19.
- Quality of VET training and accessibility, particularly thin markets to meet industry demand (e.g., Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce, rural and remote workforce).
- Queensland Priority Skills List review in May 2021.

Undertaking many activities virtually due to the impact of the pandemic, the Health ISA was able to host a forum in May. The Bounce Back Better Breakfast discussed initiatives to address the needs of local health businesses and social enterprises in Far North Queensland. Participants were given the opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities for business and social enterprise as we plan our economic recovery from the pandemic.

STAY UP TO DATE

The ISA regularly distributes information on Queensland Government investment programs, Federal Government skills reforms and funding opportunities to industry via email communications. To learn more about the ISA role or to receive updates from the ISA regarding the latest industry skilling news and events please contact Vicky Meyer at vmeyer@checkup.org.au.



GATEWAY TO A HEALTH CAREER

The full impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic upon both the existing and future health workforce will not be fully understood for some time. Perhaps what is appreciated more now than ever before, however, is the critical need for skilled workers at all levels within health, in entry level to senior positions and from clinical to non-clinical support roles such as business administration and technology, health services operations and personal care and support.

The need to promote a sustainable 'grow your own', skilled health workforce has been recognised by the Queensland government with the provision of funding to CheckUP for the Health Education to Employment Project (HEEP) and more recently the Gateway to Industry Skills program for the health industry (Health Gateway).

The Health Gateway project is focused upon building the future health workforce in Queensland - working with schools and students to promote a greater understanding of the broad range of career opportunities available to those interested in working in the health sector. This includes both vocational education and training (VET) and tertiary pathways, for both clinical and non-clinical roles.

The Health Gateway program works with teachers and VET coordinators to connect schools with the health industry so that students have a real-world experience, particularly for those students who are

undertaking a health qualification while still at school and/or pursuing further tertiary study in a health discipline post-school. The program also offers professional development to school VET Officers and other teaching staff, as well as support resources to assist schools.

Thirty schools have joined the Gateway program so far, through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with CheckUP. From Bentley Park College, Cairns in the north to St Michael's College, Merrimac in the south, the thirty Health Gateway schools are providing their students with valuable real-world learning and experiences in their onsite health hubs and through their partners in the health industry (see photos on facing page).

Addressing workforce and skills shortages within the health industry also provides opportunities to tackle some of the key socio-economic determinants of health - education and employment. This is particularly relevant for disadvantaged groups including youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

By introducing students to education, training and employment opportunities in the health sector, initiatives like the HEEP and Gateway projects will not only strengthen the health workforce but will also improve health outcomes for those who are already experiencing disadvantage.

Our 30 Health Gateway Schools

- Bentley Park College, Cairns
- Bundaberg State High School,
- Carmel College, Thornlands
- Deception Bay Flexible Learning Centre,
- Faith Lutheran College, Plainlands
- Gympie Flexible Learning Centre
- Hemmant Flexible Learning Centre
- Ipswich State High School
- Kawana Waters State College
- Kelvin Grove State College
- Kenmore State High School
- Kirwan State High School
- Loganlea State High School
- MacGregor State High School
- Mary Mackillop College, Nundah
- McAuley College, Beaudesert
- Runcorn State High School
- Ryan Catholic College, Townsville
- St Augustine's College, Augustine Heights
- St Columban's College, Caboolture
- St James College, Spring Hill
- St Michael's College, Ashgrove
- St Patrick's College, Mackay
- St Patrick's College, Shorncliffe
- St Saviour's College, Toowoomba
- St Ursula's College, Yeppoon
- Sunnybank State High School
- Tec-NQ, Townsville
- The Cathedral College, Rockhampton
- Trinity College, Beenleigh
- Unity College, Caloundra.



COLLABORATION KEY TO MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

CheckUP commissioned Townville artist Jesse James to create the artwork 'Take time – for mental health', which informed the visual identity for QMHW in 2021.

Queensland Mental Health Week (QMHW) is an initiative that CheckUP is extremely proud to coordinate, and after the impact of COVID-19 on community mental wellbeing, taking time to reflect and focus on mental health has never been more important.

Funded by the Queensland Mental Health Commission, QMHW is held each October, and the theme for 2020 and 2021 was 'Take time for mental health'.

"Mental Health Week aims to shine a spotlight on what all of us can do to look after our mental health and celebrate the contributions of the mental health and community sectors," stated Ivan Frkovic, Queensland Mental Health Commissioner.

"Importantly, the week helps tackle stigma surrounding mental ill-health and prompts healthy conversations about topics that are often considered taboo.

"CheckUP has organised QMHW on the Commission's behalf for the past three years and continues to do so in 2021. The beauty of this process lies in broad collaboration. The QMHW 2021 working group, chaired and facilitated by CheckUP, encompasses organisations representing groups and individuals from all corners of Queensland."

CheckUP strongly values this collaboration, working closely with representatives from across

different sectors who contribute to the planning, governance, and delivery of QMHW each year.

Phil Janz is Principal Advisor – Mental Health, Queensland Department of Education, and an active member of the working group. He commented that the biggest strength of the group has been the synergy towards the common goal of supporting all Queenslanders to take time for their mental health.

"Each member of the working group contributes to the group, bringing their own unique views and abilities, ensuring QMHW continues to go from strength to strength," he said.

"The number of schools participating and registering events has significantly increased in recent years and this is due to the support provided by the working group. The Department expects school participation in QMHW to grow and is excited with the partnerships that have been developed to support this continued growth."

Since CheckUP took over the coordination of QMHW there has been a continued increase in the profile of the week, as shown through not only school participation, but digital reach, media coverage and event registrations.

CheckUP worked closely with

our partners to increase event numbers each year, with 305 events registered in 2020 and 371 registered in 2021.

One of the flagship events held each QMHW is the Walk for Awareness, hosted by the Mental Awareness Foundation.

"The Working group I was part of showed enthusiasm and CheckUP worked with the members of the group to strengthen and promote engagement, which led to very positive outcomes and goals being exceeded," stated Raewyn Bailey, CEO of the Mental Awareness Foundation.

"Walk for Awareness has grown since its inception, over 10-years ago. The growth of the event is a strong indicator that we as a community are more open about talking about mental illness and willing to be involved and participate in initiatives to help make a difference, essentially to save lives."

In 2020 nearly 1000 people participated in the Walk for Awareness in Brisbane, with over 500 virtual participants around the country. In 2021, there was close to 2,500 participants who walked the 9km to raise awareness for mental health and frontline services.

To learn more about QMHW and the initiative's partners and events, visit: www.qldmentalhealthweek.org.au.

Pictured is Queensland Mental health Commissioner Ivan Frkovic (right) and Mental Awareness Foundation Co-Founder Tudor Vasile (left) at the media launch for QMHW 2021.

For 24/7 crisis support call Lifeline on 13 11 14. If it's an emergency situation, call triple zero (000) immediately.

CHECKUP.ORG.AU



COMMUNITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN COLLABORATION WITH HAND HEART POCKET

CheckUP continues its close partnership with Hand Heart Pocket the Charity of Freemasons Queensland, in delivering their Men's Health Matters initiative, targeted at Queensland men and their partners. Following on from a successful campaign in 2019-20, that saw 13 workshops across the state (three additional workshops were planned but could not proceed due to the impact COVID-19), Hand Heart Pocket approached CheckUP to deliver a series of events this year.

A number of changes were introduced for the 2021 series to meet the impacts of the pandemic and increase campaign effectiveness, namely a reduced number of face-to-face events and the introduction of six interactive webinars that focused on specific health topics.

The seven in-person workshops covered a range of topics including physical health, mental health, nutrition, and relationships and provided strategies to improve their quality of life. Sessions also included the opportunity to share stories, inspire open discussions in a safe environment, and offer resources to anyone seeking further support.

Freemason Ted Gibbons reported close to 50 people attended the workshop in Miles in April 2021.

"We had a very successful evening with attendees from as far as Roma, Injune, Chinchilla, Tara, Paroo and St George, which is three hours away. Clinical psychologist, Dr Gavin Brown guided an excellent discussion, and we would have enjoyed staying longer; to hear more about men's health in general, particularly because many of us had driven so far to be there so it would have been good to make a bigger night of it. This was an opportunity for us (the Freemasons) to get out in the community and have the community see the value in what we do."

Workshop evaluations demonstrated an increase in attendees' understanding of where to seek help, their confidence in supporting themselves and others and their ability to take control of their own health and wellbeing.

The Hand Heart Pocket Team acknowledged the value of the collaboration with CheckUP, stating: "Improving men's mental and physical health is part of Hand Heart Pocket's charitable focus. The Men's Health Matters community health campaign provided an opportunity for members and their partners to get together, learn practical ways to improve their overall wellbeing and to engage with their community".

Event locations

Seven face-to-face workshops were held in the following locations:

- Brisbane North
- Brisbane South
- Miles
- Townsville
- Cairns
- Toowoomba
- Gympie

"With their expertise in running health programs across Queensland, CheckUP were able to put together events that were relatable and informative to the everyday person. They were flexible, co-developed the program with us and took on board our ideas. Importantly they listened to Members and attendees during the sessions to be responsive and relevant."

Vale Noel Muller

CheckUP acknowledges the life and contribution of Noel Muller, who sadly passed away on 20 April 2021.

Noel was a leading advocate and influencer across the many significant reforms that have impacted the disability and mental health sectors in Queensland, nationally and internationally over the last 20 plus years, including the NDIS and state and national mental health plans. He worked closely with CheckUP staff on various committees for many years.

A loving husband, father, grandad and mental health advocate, Noel will be missed by many, and our thoughts are with his wife Kim, his family, and friends.
Vale, Noel Muller.

CheckUP Deputy CEO, Karen Hale Robertson paid a moving tribute to Noel; "I had the pleasure of knowing and working with Noel since commencing employment as a Mental Health Program Officer with the Queensland Divisions of General Practice in 1999. Over 20 years, we worked together on several mental health projects and then went on to stay in touch at various meetings, functions, and events. Noel made an enormous contribution over decades to progressing the human rights of, and services and supports for, people with disability and people living with mental illness."

The Queensland Mental Health Commissioner, Ivan Krkovic; "With sadness I acknowledge the passing of Mr Noel Muller and pay tribute to the enormous contribution Noel has made, over many years, to the mental health sector in Queensland and Australia.

Noel was active in the establishment of state and national organisations that provide a voice for those living with mental illness such as the National Mental Health Consumer Carer Forum, Mental Health Australia's National Register of Consumer and Carer representatives, and Queensland Voice for Mental Health.

Noel undoubtedly contributed to improving the lives of many people living with mental illness. His ongoing championing of lived experience will be missed. To Noel's family and friends my condolences. May he rest in peace."

“ I will remember Noel with great admiration, not only as a determined and passionate advocate, but as a person of humility and good humour. He will be greatly missed. May he rest in peace.

Karen Hale-Robertson
CheckUP Deputy CEO





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Photograph by Penny Gorman
Title: Reflections on the bonnet - Sunset