



## **A case study in transformation of a rural hospital: modelling, leadership and effecting change**

**Theodore Chamberlain, Nicole White**

Maleny Soldiers Memorial Hospital, QLD

This paper is an analysis of a project in transformation of a rural hospital and the health delivery of a community through developing a coherent vision and leadership over an extended period of time. Its focus is not on what was done but rather how it was done so as to draw applicable lessons and present a tool kit of approaches to identify and fulfil the health needs of the community by novel approaches. Its broader aim is to demonstrate how rural health care can be improved one community at a time.

By analysis and interpretation of this case it will be shown how complex problems like diminishing resources, poor health outcomes, lack of work force, the tyranny of distance and bureaucratic inertia can be overcome by appropriate modelling, vision, community involvement, strategic planning and the search for novel and innovative solutions.

The beginning of the transformation is a classic rural hospital, under resourced, under staffed, struggling to maintain workforce, bed numbers reduced and services removed.

The current situation is a vibrant rural hospital whose bed numbers have doubled with the development of a rehabilitation unit and palliative care unit to service the community. Novel programs have been introduced driven by the use of new technology like telehealth. Community outreach programs targeting specific problems are being run in partnership with the community. Novel public-private partnerships have been developed to address lack of resources and provide equitable affordable care to the community and value for money for the Health service.

This paper's aim is to not list these achievements but to provide an analysis of how this was achieved and the steps in the process. To draw lessons, suggest approaches and demonstrate how an individual can through appropriate analysis, vision and skilful techniques achieve meaningful, sustainable change through the mobilisation of the community and the building of sustainable teams.

The analysis will demonstrate that despite the complexities of the interactions and the many axes of change, that coherent vision and leadership can provide clarity and direction to each individual problem and integrate the solutions into an organic whole improving the health care of the complete community.