

## An engaged approach to workforce planning for a diverse, geographically dispersed workforce

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There are many drivers impacting on the Health and Community Services industry, influencing the way in which services will be delivered in coming years. In order to deliver competitive and appropriate services into the future, CentacareCQ needs to provide a diverse range of offerings that meet the changing needs of consumers, and an available, appropriately skilled workforce is key to meeting this challenge. This is especially challenging as CentacareCQ covers around 400 square kilometres of Queensland, from Bundaberg north to Mackay and west to the Northern Territory border. In 2013, CentacareCQ began a workforce planning process to identify the drivers and influences that will shape its future workforce. This process was supported by the Health and Community Services Workforce Council (the Workforce Council), and utilised its Workforce Planning Framework©.

To deliver this project, CentacareCQ and the Workforce Council co-facilitated a working group made up of frontline and management staff from across CentacareCQ's geography. The working group undertook research and broad engagement that identified a number of drivers that will influence the shape of the future workforce. The working group interrogated these issues using a number of approaches, including desktop research; staff feedback via annual gatherings; and focus groups within specific areas of CentacareCQ's business. In addition, CentacareCQ sought input from external stakeholders regarding the direction of the research.

Analysis of this information provided a picture of what services at CentacareCQ could look like in the future, enabling the working group to identify the roles required for CentacareCQ to deliver competitive and appropriate services as well as the range of attributes that CentacareCQ staff believe are vital in all of CentacareCQ's workforce to ensure the organisation can deliver on its mission. The resulting workforce plan is a strategic document that shows how CentacareCQ intends to engage a workforce that incorporates these identified attributes along with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the Central Queensland community.

This paper will unpack the application of the Workforce Council's Workforce Planning Framework, discuss the roles of CentacareCQ and the Workforce Council in delivering the plan, and provide insights into the challenges and rewards of the engaged approach used.