Introduction
Improving the quality of health services means working together for change. Managers are the key drivers of change in health services. Yet the pathway to manager often occurs by default, either being the ‘last man standing’ or through natural attrition. CRANAplus recognised the ‘churn’ of the remote workforce influences the unintended career pathway for many clinicians becoming operational managers. Consequently, operational managers often see themselves, first as a clinician and second as a manager. Thus, being inadequately prepared to meet the contextual challenges associated with their responsibilities in managing remote health services.

Background
The introduction of the mandatory National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards in 2013 was the impetus for CRANAplus to undertake a National Standards Project (2012-2013) that provided evidence to support CRANAplus viewpoint: • Lack of consistency and uniformity in the standard of care existed • Improvements were needed in all areas with a focus on the workforce

It is well recognised that clinical managers are the key drivers needed for health services to meet NSQHS Standards. In 2015, a Management workshop was held whereby skill deficits were identified by managers, and they advocated for a professional development short course for remote and isolated area managers.

Assumptions
• Improving management competence will improve the quality of healthcare • A national professional development program, contextualised for remote managers, will improve the consistency in the delivery of safe, quality health services • The transition from clinician to manager in remote health services is unplanned • New remote managers are vulnerable and need remote contextualised support • Managers are sufficiently self-aware to recognise the need for professional development

CQI Approach
• Targeting aspiring managers, managers, new managers • Customized to remote context • National Program based on NSQHS Standard #1 Clinical Governance

Program Design
• Broader understanding of their responsibilities for clinical governance and its application in the context of remote health • Improve management skill base • Building confidence and capability • Managing change processes in their workplace

Overview 2016-2018
44 remote managers from across Australia have enrolled in the Program
29 CQI projects have been implemented in remote workplaces based on NSQHS Standard #1

Evaluation of the Remote Management Program
Most Participants thought that a management development programs of this type can actually make a difference on the ground. The soft skills training and the CQI focus of the RMP were aspects that were beneficial for remote managers.

Experience of Participants
I feel more positive, confident on how to approach change (participant 2016) The 2 days were “interesting”. The modules and face-to-face sessions has given me a greater understanding of what it takes to be a successful leader/manager (participant July 2017) Thank you for a great workshop, learning experience, saturated with new ideas. Hopefully can unpack it all now and apply to my role (participant September 2018)

Related Research publications
Onnis, L., Hakendorf, M. and Tsey, K. How are continuous quality improvement (CQI) approaches used in evaluating management development programs?: A literature review. Asia Pacific Journal of Health Management 2018; 13(2)

For more information:
Marcia Hakendorf, Remote Management Coordinator, e: marcia@crana.org.au