

Building a medical workforce for your community: a success story

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Kingaroy in 2010, had three permanently employed medical officers, two GP VMOs supporting the obstetric service, and a range of either temporary appointments or locums. The permanent establishment was 6 full time equivalents.

Kingaroy Hospital is the hub hospital in the South Burnett region of Queensland servicing a community of approximately 35,000 people. It is also the busiest non specialist birthing service in Queensland with over 400 births each year. The community it services is of a low socio economic demographic with 60% in the lowest quintile, with Cherbourg only 40 minutes by road and a close relationship, delivering services which are culturally sensitive is also critical to the design of the service and workforce. At this time Kingaroy Hospital there was the Flying Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, a small amount of oral surgery and caesarean sections. The operating theatre was being utilised approximately 3 days per month.

Today, Kingaroy has a medical establishment of 9.3 FTE all permanently recruited to, there are long term temporary contracted staff who are now supporting backfill arrangements for maternity leave. Kingaroy Hospital is now a place medical officers now want to work. So how did we turn it around?

- The recruitment of a high profile medical leader.
- Link into the Rural Generalist Pathway
- Recruit an upcoming young enthusiastic Medical Superintendent with a passion for training and education.
- A medical workforce plan to support targeted recruitment and building a service. In producing this plan it supported the following:

increased service capability

engagement with GPs about service needs

joint appointments with GPs

training collaboration for registrars between Hospital and GPs

funding allocations

junior doctor training accreditation.

What has this meant for community? Four days of operating theatre per week (could be five by the time of conference).

From the plan Kingaroy Hospital has partnered with Private Hospital for intern rotations, and intern accreditation. Griffith University through Long Look program has six third year medical students on year long placement; in 2015 two of the students will remain for their fourth year placement.

Rural Generalist trainees who rotated in Kingaroy as junior medical officers are contacting the hospital to return once they have completed their advance skill. Three from the last two years.

Now we move onto the challenge of the rural nursing workforce and the advanced skills they require in areas such as midwifery, operating theatre and mental health.