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# The Lower Gulf Strategy: Integrating Care, Improving Health Outcomes

Initiative Type

Redesign

Status

Deliver

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## Summary

The Lower Gulf Strategy brings together three partners (Gidgee Healing, Western Queensland Primary Health Network and North West Hospital and Health Service) who are working together to

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redesign and build comprehensive care services in the Lower Gulf communities. The project is shifting the focus of services from acute care to primary prevention care by developing primary care services where there have been none available. The project won the Regional, Rural and Remote Category at the 2018 Queensland Health Awards for Excellence.

#### Key dates

Jun 2018

#### Implementation sites

North West Hospital and Health Service

#### Partnerships

Healthcare Improvement Unit, Western Queensland Primary Health Network, Gidgee Healing, Preventive Health Branch.

## Key Contacts

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2020

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## Aim

- We aim to work together to use the shared resources of the state and the Commonwealth to greatest effect to improve health outcomes and provide best value to the communities of the Lower Gulf.

## Benefits

- cross-agency co-operation to establish resources and new models of integrated care
- engages with key General Practice (GP) workforce and training entities
- recruitment of GPs to operate the planned regional primary health care service for the Lower Gulf
- improve quality of health information and support greater health intelligence as an enabler for integrated care.

## Background

Health outcomes for Aboriginal communities of the Lower Gulf in North West Queensland are the poorest in the country with high rates of diabetes, renal disease and cardiovascular disease. People in these communities have one of the lowest median ages of death nationally, dying 20 to 30 years younger than people of south east Queensland. Historically, the majority of health services have been provided through the North West Hospital and Health Service (NWHHS), with very limited commonwealth funded primary care services available. This has meant those services have historically been acute care focused, with people accessing services as late presentations, with limited availability of health promotion, health prevention and early intervention in chronic disease. The communities experience very high levels of socio-economic disadvantage and recruitment and retention of the health workforce is an ongoing challenge due to the remoteness of the communities.

## Solutions Implemented

Gidgee Healing now have a presence in all three larger communities, co-locating with the HHS in two of the three communities and supporting a shift of the combined workforce's focus to prevention, early intervention and chronic disease management. We are still early in our journey of transition. The next step will be to define the models of care and work with communities to agree the service configuration for individual communities. We will then define the pathway to our future state of full

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integration.

## Further Reading

[Gidgee Healing \('Gidgee'\)](#)

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