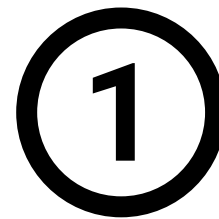


CARDWELL FAMILY PRACTICE WORKING GROUP UPDATE



Issue 2

November 2023

Working together for GP services in Cardwell

The **Cardwell Family Practice Working Group** has been established to ensure GP services are maintained in Cardwell and to determine a sustainable model for the future. The operational working group consists of representatives from local key organisations, including Townsville Hospital and Health Service (THHS), Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN), Cassowary Coast Regional Council (CCRC), the local practice, and other key local health stakeholders.

Continued support for practice

Cassowary Coast Regional Council will continue its support for Cardwell Family Practice with \$20,000 in funding towards locum accommodation costs.

The funding agreement with Townsville Hospital and Health Service (THHS) will support the ongoing provision of primary health care services for Cardwell and its surrounding community.

Mayor Mark Nolan explained how Council is stepping up to ensure the community's immediate health services are met while efforts continue in keeping this issue on the State and Federal government agenda.



SUPPORT: Cardwell Family Practice

"Since the clinic's planned closure in September there has been a whole of community response to keep it open," said Mayor Nolan.

"Council has played an important role in this response which has enabled the clinic to remain open with the support of State and Federal Governments and agencies.

"Direct contribution and involvement in primary health care has not traditionally been within the remit of Council in the past. However, access to health services was one of the top priorities in the 2022 Community Scorecard, and we're committed to delivering innovative and collaborative solutions that meet our community's needs.

"We extend our appreciation and thanks to Townsville Hospital and Health Service, the team at Cardwell Family Practice and all stakeholders who are contributing to seeking long term primary health care solutions in Cardwell for the Cardwell community."

THHS purchased the Cardwell Family Practice in September this year, with a commitment to continue operating the clinic in the short term. As providing GP services is not the normal remit or responsibility of THHS, they requested financial support from Council for locum accommodation costs for a minimum period of six months. Under the arrangement Council will not have any responsibility for direct lease arrangements but will assist with locating a suitable property in Cardwell for the locum, and provide local liaison and/or facilitation if required.

Cardwell Family Practice



CARDWELL FAMILY PRACTICE WORKING GROUP UPDATE



Issue 2

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Locum support continues into 2024

Townsville Hospital and Health Service is continuing to secure locum GPs to provide care to the Cardwell community from the Cardwell Family Practice.

While we have a short period in December without a locum secured at this time, we are confident we will fill this small gap in coverage. Locums have otherwise been secured up until February 2024.

We are also excited to confirm we have been able to secure rental housing for locum GPs providing care in Cardwell for the next six months, with an option to extend the lease as needed.

We committed to being here until the community can access a GP locally and we meant it. We're now looking beyond February to ensure there is locum support for the community until a long-term solution is found.

But until this time, our health service will be here for you because the health of north Queenslanders is important to us.

Townsville Hospital and Health Service

Clinicians webinar held to discuss Cardwell future

Earlier this month, Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) hosted a Clinicians Webinar to discuss the future of primary care in Cardwell and regional North Queensland.

The webinar provided GPs and primary care clinicians from across the region with an opportunity to hear key updates regarding Cardwell Family Practice and to share their views on challenges and potential solutions.

Key points for discussion included:

- Current work underway to support the sustainability of Cardwell Family Practice
- An update on the national work currently progressing around 'thin markets' (where there is a gap between the needs of a community and the services available)
- Workshop and feedback on models currently under consideration.

NQPHN outlined several initiatives it is currently working on in relation to primary care in Cardwell and in other regional areas.

These included:

- Partnering with Health Workforce Queensland supporting primary care providers to relocate to North Queensland
- Linking metropolitan-based GPs to link with rural practices for face-to-face visits and virtual support
- Launching a program to support new and existing primary care professionals to address skills shortages and gaps
- Finalising 'thin market' consultation and collaborating with Federal Government on a framework of support.

Cardwell Family Practice

