



**Townsville
Hospital
and Health
Service**

Clinician Engagement Strategy 2018 - 2023



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A middle-aged man with short dark hair and glasses is smiling at the camera. He is wearing dark blue medical scrubs. He is holding a large, light-colored, curved handle of a medical device, possibly a C-arm, which has several colored buttons (yellow, purple, black) on its side. The background is a clinical setting with white walls and some medical equipment.

Our Vision

Medical Imaging
National Radiologists Week
RADIOGRAPHER

World-class healthcare for
northern Queensland

About the Townsville Hospital and Health Service

The Townsville Hospital and Health Service (Townsville HHS) comprises 21 health facilities including hospitals, community health campuses, two residential aged care facilities and the Townsville Public Health Unit.

The Townsville HHS provides healthcare services across a region spanning Townsville north to Cardwell, south to Home Hill, west to Richmond, and east to Palm Island. This is an area of approximately 148,000 square kilometres with a population of more than 230,000 people.

The Townsville Hospital is the only tertiary-level hospital north of south-east Queensland and serves as the tertiary referral hospital for the whole of northern Queensland – a catchment of 670,000 people spanning Mackay to the Torres Strait and out to the Northern Territory border.

The Townsville HHS provides a large continuum of healthcare services, from advanced highly specialised tertiary-level healthcare at the Townsville Hospital, to secondary and primary-level hospital and community healthcare across the region.

In delivering this breadth of services, the Townsville HHS partners with a diverse, skilled clinical workforce of over 4,700 people, including more than 800 doctors, 3,000 nurses, and 750 allied health professionals.

The Townsville Hospital and Health Service is an independent statutory body, established through the provisions of the *Hospitals and Health Boards Act 2011*, and is governed by the Townsville Hospital and Health Board, which reports to the Queensland Minister for Health.



A woman wearing a green surgical cap, black-rimmed glasses, and a red mesh radiation protection vest over a light blue shirt. She is smiling and standing in a clinical or office environment with computer monitors and medical equipment in the background.

Our Values

Integrity

Compassion

Accountability

Respect

Engagement

Clinician Engagement

The provision of safe, high-quality, person-centred healthcare depends first and foremost on the skill and dedication of clinicians.

A clinician is any individual who provides diagnosis or treatment to patients as a professional medical practitioner, nurse, allied health practitioner or other health practitioner¹.

As the people on the frontline caring and treating patients every day, clinicians need the support of, and their issues and opinions understood by, the Townsville HHS. Likewise, it is important that clinicians are enabled to understand the broader economic, legislative, technological and other service delivery pressures impacting the Townsville HHS.

There are significant challenges as well as opportunities in delivering healthcare across northern Queensland. The challenges include an increasing demand for services, a growing burden of multi-morbidity and chronic disease, resource constraints, the emergence of new technologies and a vast area which patients call home.

The Townsville HHS recognises that clinicians, as the ones providing direct patient care, are best-placed to identify strategies to maintain and enhance service provision across the Townsville Hospital and Health Service. It is said that ‘everyone in healthcare really has two jobs when they

come to work each day: to do their work and to improve the system². An engaged clinician does just this.

Clinician engagement not only enhances service improvement and decision making but also promotes other outcomes that are mutually beneficial to clinicians and the organisation alike. An engaged clinical workforce will be more satisfied and more aligned to the Vision and Purpose of the Townsville HHS. Evidence demonstrates that where clinicians are measurably engaged, there can be increased patient satisfaction, lower patient mortality, decreased infection rates, and lower staff turnover and absenteeism³.

Working together with clinicians in service planning and decision-making is a vital course of continued action for Townsville HHS management, Executive and Board. It is also important that clinicians engage with other clinicians across units and disciplines to prevent siloed decision making and enable the provision of optimal patient care.

Clinician engagement is the manner in which clinicians are involved in the design, planning, decision making and evaluation of health services¹.

An engaged clinical workforce that understands and contributes to the operational and strategic goals of the Townsville HHS will enhance the care provided to patients.



Purpose of this Strategy

The Townsville HHS recognises that meaningful and active engagement with clinicians at both the operational and strategic level is not simply an added task, but an imperative component of successfully designing and managing healthcare services.

By engaging and working together with clinicians, the Townsville HHS can ensure that clinicians have the resources and support necessary to deliver integrated, responsive and effective healthcare that meets the needs of Townsville HHS patients and communities.

Meaningful and sustained engagement takes time and continued effort. This strategy documents existing clinician engagement activities within the Townsville HHS and outlines further strategies for the future –

encapsulating both what works well now and what needs to happen to improve clinician engagement further.

This Strategy outlines how the Townsville HHS will engage and work together with clinicians in the planning, design and delivery of services for the 2018-2023 period.

This Strategy will serve as a reference and guiding document for Townsville HHS clinicians, management and the Board.



Our Purpose
Great care every day

Strategic Context

Improving clinician engagement is a key element of the contemporary health reform agenda.

This engagement strategy was developed on the basis of National and State as well as local Townsville HHS strategies, policies, agreements and standards.

National Alignment

The National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA) contains a number of clauses (D3, D7C, D14E) which reference the need for clinician engagement, recognising that clinician engagement is an essential part of a well-integrated and functioning health system.

State Alignment

Clinician engagement is embedded within State legislation. A guiding principle of the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* is that there should be engagement with clinicians in planning, developing and delivering public sector health services. Pursuant to Section 40 of the Act, each Hospital and Health Service (HHS) must develop and publish a clinician engagement strategy to promote consultation with health professionals working in the service. The Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2012 prescribes the minimum requirements for this strategy.

Queensland Health facilitates clinician engagement at a State level through the establishment and funding of the Queensland Clinical Senate and a range of state-wide clinical networks.

Townsville HHS Alignment

One of the five core values of the Townsville Hospital and Health Service is engagement. The effective engagement of stakeholders is critical in shaping and informing the delivery of services. On this basis, the Townsville HHS has a number of audience-specific engagement strategies.

One such strategy is the Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy, which is aligned in principle with this Clinician Engagement Strategy. Together, these two strategies describe how the Townsville HHS engages both those providing care and those receiving care.

An engaged clinical workforce is cognisant of the Vision, Purpose, and Values of the Townsville HHS and as a corollary will enhance the engagement of patients, other healthcare consumers and the community.

Primary Health Alignment

The effective coordination and integration of services between hospital and primary healthcare providers is vital for improving service delivery and patient outcomes.

The Townsville HHS has in place a protocol for engagement with the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN). This protocol contains specific clinician engagement objectives:

Objective 9: *'Improve engagement and communication between Townsville HHS and primary healthcare providers and clinicians'*

Objective 12: *'Improve clinician and consumer consultation and participation in designing an improved health system'*

A key mechanism to achieve these objectives is the convening of various topic-specific working groups between the NQPHN and northern Queensland-based Hospital and Health Services. Many of these working groups have standing memberships of Townsville HHS clinicians.

The protocol for engagement with local primary healthcare complements and intersects with the Townsville HHS clinician engagement strategy.

Objectives

There are 5 key objectives of this engagement strategy:

01

Create and maintain formal and informal mechanisms for two-way communication between clinicians and between clinicians and managers, the Executive, and the Board.

02

Foster a culture of clinical engagement and collaboration that is embedded across the Townsville HHS organisation structure.

03

Ensure clinical participation in decision making and priority setting.

04

Encourage and develop clinical leadership.

05

Facilitate clinician awareness of the Townsville HHS performance, legislative and strategic context.



The Participation Model

To achieve the five objectives of this strategy, the Townsville HHS will inform, consult, involve, collaborate with and empower clinicians. These five elements of engagement are

in accordance with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework, and form an increasing continuum of engagement:



The following is a framework for clinical engagement within the Townsville Hospital and Health Service:

Element	Goal	Mechanism
Inform	Provide clinicians with balanced and objective information to assist with understanding problems, alternatives, solutions and opportunities.	One-way communication
Consult	Obtain clinician feedback on analysis, information and proposals.	Two-way communication
Involve	Work directly with clinicians throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	Direct input into decision making
Collaborate	Partner with clinicians in each aspect of decision making to discuss alternatives and identification of preferred solutions.	Shared decision-making
Empower	Enable and leverage clinician decision-making and autonomy.	Delegation of decision-making

Topics of Engagement

The Townsville HHS will engage clinicians regarding all aspects of health service delivery, including:

- **Strategy and innovation**
- **Planning**
- **Service design**
- **Clinical and corporate governance**
- **Service improvement**
- **Operations**
- **Resourcing**

Outcomes of Engagement

Implementation of this strategy and realisation of the five objectives will enable achievement of the following outcomes:

- **Engaged clinicians**
- **Clinical leadership**
- **Decision making aligned to the Townsville HHS values**
- **Quality improvement and innovation**
- **Improved clinical outcomes**
- **Patient and community satisfaction**

These outcomes will contribute directly to the achievement of the Townsville HHS vision to be the leader in health care, research and education for regional Australia and the Townsville HHS purpose to deliver excellent care, research and education to improve the health of the people and communities of northern Queensland.



Reporting and Evaluation

Evaluation will occur on the basis of a suite of performance indicators which are listed respectively against each element of the engagement framework. This will be reported via:

- **An annual progress report to the Townsville HHS Executive and Board**
- **An annual feedback report disseminated to the Townsville HHS workforce**
- **The Townsville HHS Annual Report**

Pursuant to Section 41 of the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* - this clinician engagement strategy will be reviewed within three years of publication and afterwards within three years after the previous review.

This strategy will evolve in light of ongoing feedback, input and developments.

Clinician Engagement Strategies

INFORM		
Strategy		Performance Indicator
1.1	Publish organisational values, purpose, vision and strategic plan as well as the structure identifying key personnel, roles and responsibilities.	Staff newsletter and website readership HSCE staff emails HSCE staff forum attendance
1.2	Publish policies, procedures and protocols to ensure easy and timely clinician accessibility.	
1.3	Provide accessible and relevant clinician orientation programs, mandatory training, and ongoing professional development to enable clinicians to deliver high quality, safe care and effectively manage people, activity, performance and resources.	
1.4	Ensure clinicians are aware of who their representatives are on key advisory groups and forums, as well as how they may contact them.	
1.5	Notify clinicians about organisation targets, expectations, requirements and performance.	
1.6	Ensure clinicians are aware of and have access to information related to patient safety and quality of care.	
1.7	Provide clinicians ongoing information regarding relevant Townsville HHS news and initiatives in highly accessible and engaging formats.	
1.8	Make available a summary of the key issues discussed and decisions made in each Board meeting to health professionals working in the Service	
1.9	Recognise and reward the contributions that clinicians make to the Townsville HHS and patients.	
CONSULT		
Strategy		Performance Indicator
2.1	Facilitate clinician feedback on policies, procedures and protocols.	

2.2	Facilitate clinician feedback on strategic and operational plans.	Employee Opinion Survey participation rate Number of rounding exercises undertaken by Executive and Senior Management
2.3	Gather clinician feedback via the annual employee opinion survey as well as other surveys and focus groups.	
2.4	Conduct executive and senior manager rounding across the organisation in clinical areas.	

INVOLVE

Strategy		Performance Indicator
3.1	Include clinicians in the development stage of Townsville HHS strategic and operational plans and initiatives.	Number of matters referred by the Executive and Board to the Townsville HHS Clinical Council for input
3.2	Ensure clinician membership on Townsville HHS committees, forums and working groups.	
3.3	Establish a Townsville HHS Clinical Council as an advisory body to facilitate representative clinician involvement in organisation decision-making.	Portion of formal working parties and project control groups with frontline clinician representation

COLLABORATE

Strategy		Performance Indicator
4.1	Ensure that clinicians are involved in the recruitment and selection of clinical as well as key non-clinical positions.	Townsville HHS Clinical Council Chair attendance rate at Board Stakeholder Engagement Committee
4.2	Canvass service challenges and opportunities directly with clinicians to generate solutions.	
4.3	Ensure that clinical projects and initiatives are clinician led.	Number of clinical related business cases which have documented clinician consultation
4.4	Ensure that the Chair of the Townsville HHS Clinical Council is a member of the Townsville HHS Board Stakeholder Engagement Committee.	

EMPOWER

Strategy		Performance Indicator
5.1	Encourage Townsville HHS clinicians to actively represent Townsville HHS at local, regional, state, national and international forums, conferences and other.	Employee Opinion Survey results
5.2	Devolve accountability to clinical managers for service management and continual evaluation and improvement.	

Enablers of Clinician Engagement

Clinician engagement at the Townsville Hospital and Health Service is underpinned by professional clinician leads at the Executive Director level – one each for Nursing and Midwifery Services, Medical Services and Allied Health. Each professional lead provides a single point of accountability for the professional management and engagement of clinicians within each respective stream across the Townsville HHS. As Executive Directors, these clinical leads provide a vital function in ensuring that all clinical streams are represented at the strategic level of the organisation.

Further to professional clinical leadership at the Executive level, clinicians across

the Townsville HHS are commonly line managed by other clinicians. For example: registered nurses are managed by Nurse Unit Managers, Medical Practitioners are managed by Medical Clinical Directors, and Health Practitioners are managed by respective professional Health Practitioner Directors. The general operating model of the Townsville HHS is clinicians engaging with and leading clinicians. This fosters and harnesses clinician engagement and its resultant benefits across the service.

Examples of current informal and formal mechanisms through which clinicians are engaged throughout the Townsville HHS are outlined below:

Level	Enabler
Health Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee Opinion Survey ▪ All staff forums ▪ Newsletter ▪ CEO staff emails ▪ Professional Forums (Medical Heads of Department Committee, Nursing and Midwifery Heads Committee, Allied Health Heads of Profession Committee) ▪ Engagement with Medical Staff Society ▪ Research Development Committee ▪ Clinical Ethics Committee ▪ Clinical Education Committee ▪ Clinical Governance Committee ▪ Credentialing and Scope of Practice Committee ▪ Clinical Incidents Review Committee ▪ Healthcare Standards Committee ▪ Blood Management Committee ▪ Clinical Handover Committee ▪ Falls Prevention, Nutrition & Pressure Injury Prevention Committee ▪ Infection Prevention and Control Committee ▪ Medication Management Committee ▪ Patient Identification, Procedure matching and Informed Consent Committee ▪ Recognition and Management of Deteriorating Patient Committee



Townsville HHS Clinical Council

In future, the pinnacle key enabler of clinician engagement at the Townsville HHS will be the Townsville HHS Clinical Council. This will be a formally appointed and recognised advisory committee to the Townsville HHS Executive and the Townsville HHS Board.

The Townsville HHS Clinical Council will enable clinician representatives to engage with Townsville HHS decision makers in a direct and meaningful way. The key role of the Clinical Council will be to consider and provide advice that is representative of Townsville HHS clinicians. The Council may propose matters to be referred to the Executive and the Board, and matters may be referred to the Council for comment and opinion from the Townsville HHS Executive and Board.

The Townsville HHS Clinical Council will comprise of ten members (the Chair and nine ordinary members). The ordinary membership will comprise nine Townsville HHS clinical staff as per the following membership criteria:

Stream	Number of Members
Medical	3
Nursing	3
Allied Health	3

To ensure representation and engagement of clinicians with a diverse range of skills and experience, the following conditions apply to the Townsville HHS Clinical Council membership base:

- All members must be current practicing clinicians

- The three members for each clinical stream are to be from different specialty areas and work units.
- One member must identify as Indigenous.
- One member must work within a rural health setting.
- One member must be a mental health clinician.

Appointments will occur via an Expression of Interest process. Appointments will be for a period of two years. Members will be permitted four hours of released work time per month (eight hours for the Chair) in addition to the meeting duration for Clinical Council related activities.

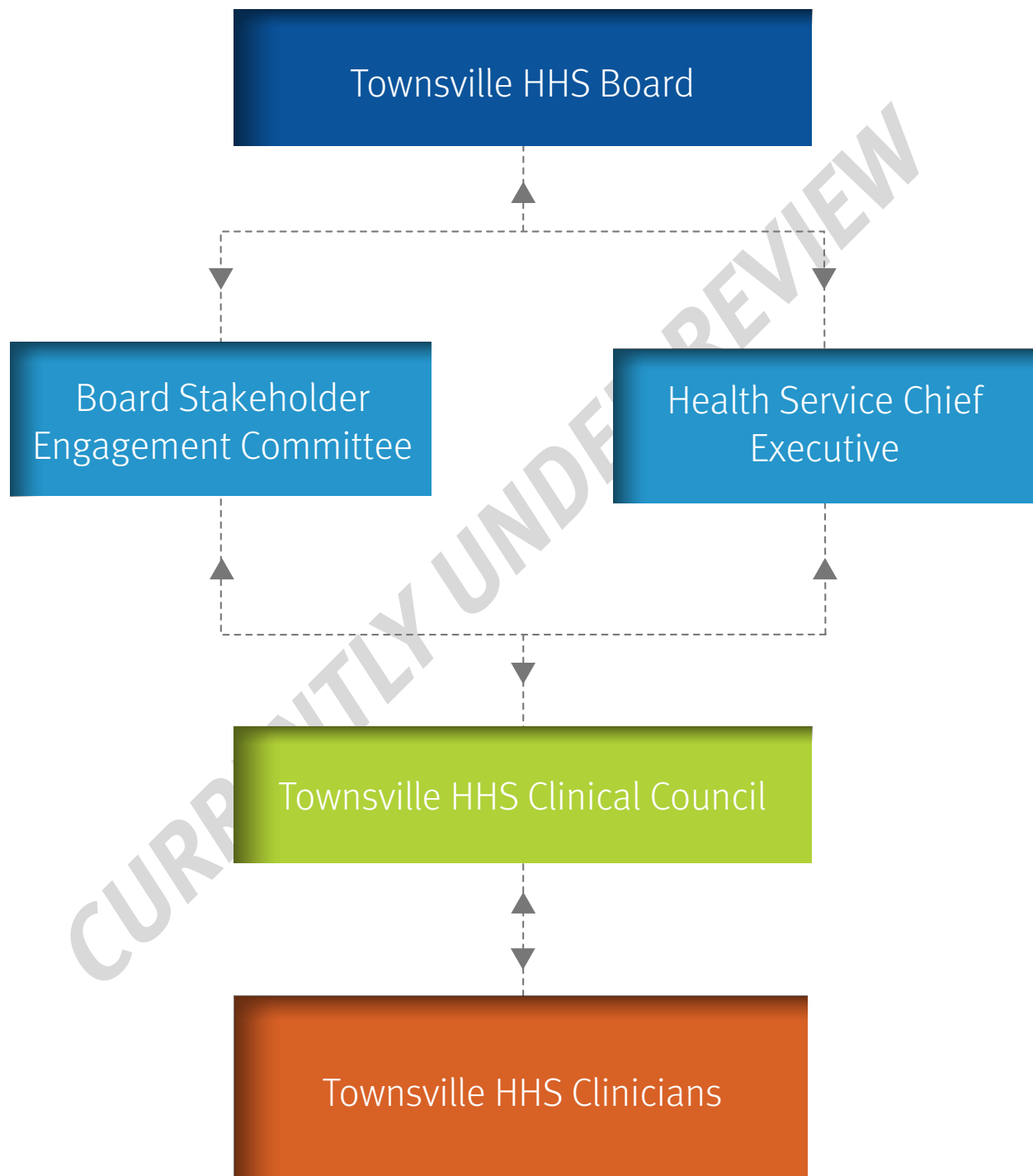
The Chair will be an ex-officio member of the Townsville HHS Board Stakeholder Engagement Committee.

In addition to the above membership base, each of the three Townsville HHS clinical Executive Directors (Medical Services, Allied Health, Nursing and Midwifery Services) will be ex-officio non-voting attendees of Clinical Council meetings.

One Townsville HHS Board member (as nominated by the Townsville HHS Board) will also be an ex-officio attendee.

The Council will meet bimonthly in alignment with the meeting calendar of the Townsville HHS Board Stakeholder Engagement Committee, and act in accordance with its Terms of Reference which will be published on QHEPS.

Diagram: Linkage of Townsville HHS Clinical Council within Townsville HHS Governance Structure



References

1. National Health Reform Lead Clinicians Group: Enhancing Clinical Engagement in the Australian Healthcare System 2011.
2. Batalden, P. & Davidoff, F. (2007). What is 'quality improvement' and how can it transform healthcare? *Quality and Safety in Health care*, 16(1), 2-3.
3. West, M. & Dawson, J. (2012). Employee engagement and NHS performance. *The King's Fund*: 123.

CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW

RECENTLY UNDER REVIEW

