



Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander

# COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY

2022

**phn**  
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND,  
WIDE BAY, SUNSHINE COAST

An Australian Government Initiative



## Acknowledgment

Sunshine Coast Health Network Ltd acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to Elders past, present and emerging.

The PHN pays respects to LGBTIQ leaders, elders and trailblazers who have worked to support the improved health and wellbeing of their communities. We celebrate the extraordinary diversity of people's bodies, genders, sexualities, and relationships that they represent.



# BACKGROUND

## PHN Health Needs Assessment

Every three years, all Primary Health Networks (PHNs) undertake a systematic assessment of the regional population's health assets and needs, and local health care services.

The needs assessment draws on a comprehensive analysis of the latest health and wellbeing, population data, and consultations with community and service providers to identify service gaps, key issues, and set the regional priorities.

In 2021, Central Queensland Wide Bay Sunshine Coast PHN used surveys to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the region to gain an understanding of perceived health needs and assets, health service gaps, issues and opportunities to inform the Health Needs Assessment.

## Our region

There are 25 Traditional Owner groups within our region which reaches south to the Glasshouse Mountains, stretches north of Yeppoon, west beyond Emerald, and encompasses Rockhampton, Hervey Bay, Maryborough, the Sunshine Coast Hinterland, Gayndah, Gladstone and Bundaberg.

Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN is an independent not for profit commissioning agency funded by the Australian Government Department of Health to improve health outcomes across the region.

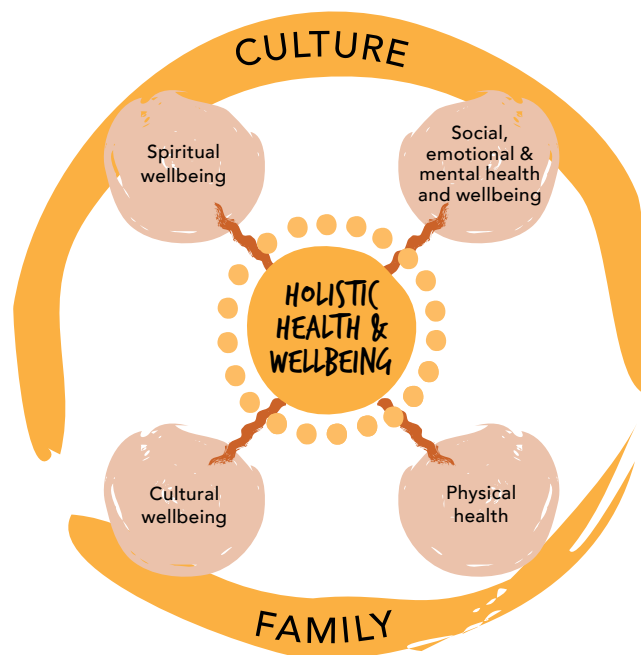
We are committed to working together with our communities, partners and stakeholders to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to access and receive the right care in the right place at the right time.



# ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing is holistic, encompassing physical, mental, cultural and spiritual health<sup>1,2</sup> and recognises this harmony and their interrelated nature.

*Culture is central to who we are – strong connections to culture, land, kinship and family are vital for good health and wellbeing.<sup>3</sup>*



## Disclaimer

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Survey* provides insight into the strengths, key health concerns, and access to health care services. However, care needs to be taken when interpreting these findings.

Survey participants were recruited using non-randomised methods which may have resulted in a biased sample not representative of the broader population.

While the data provides a brief insight to people's perceptions of the community's health and wellbeing, not all views are necessarily represented.

Further exploration with community is needed to understand why barriers exist and how they could be overcome to identify effective solutions.

This document provides a summary of the technical report which is available on request.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health and Ageing, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra

<sup>2</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023, Commonwealth of Australia

<sup>3</sup> Community Door (managed by QCOSS)



# THE SURVEY

## Purpose

The purpose of the survey was to inform the PHN's Health Needs Assessment by understanding:

1. Our communities' strengths
2. The health issues of most concern
3. Access to health care and services, including:
  - Service gaps or issues (awareness, availability, accessibility)
  - Barriers to accessing services
  - Cultural safety of services.

## Methodology

### Data collected

November 2020 -  
January 2021

### Face-to-face surveys

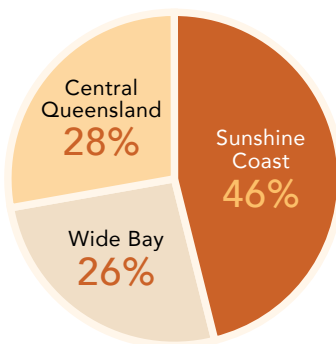
At stalls in community  
areas such as local parks  
or central places

### Online surveys

Promoted through  
key organisations

## Survey participants | 603 adults

### Location



### Gender

7 out of 10  
were female



### Ethnicity

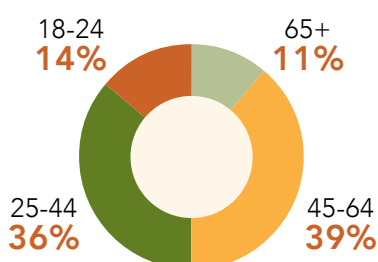
**80%** identified as Aboriginal

**11%** South Sea Islander

**8%** Torres Strait Islander

**13%** spoke a traditional  
language

### Age



### Concession

**3 out of 10** had a health card  
**4 out of 10** had a pension card  
**1 out of 10** had a disability card  
**1 out of 10** had private health  
insurance

### Self-rated health



# KEY FINDINGS

## Community strengths

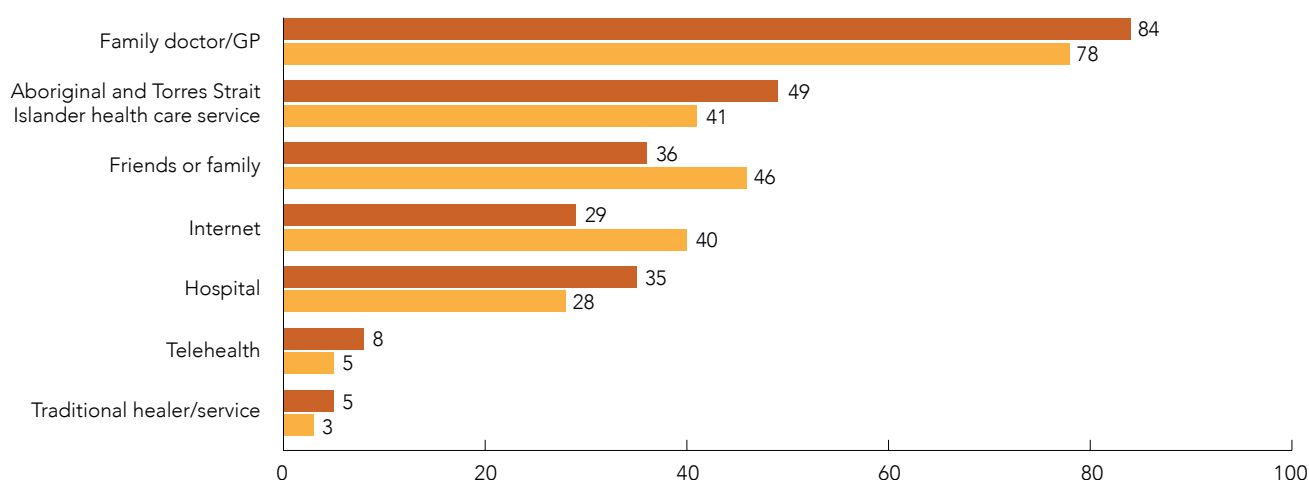
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND	WIDE BAY	SUNSHINE COAST
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accepting of all cultures</li> <li>2. We look after each other</li> <li>3. Community facilities</li> <li>4. Resilience and coming together</li> <li>5. Cultural and recreational facilities</li> <li>6. Attractive public spaces, parks and natural areas</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community facilities</li> <li>2. Attractive public spaces, parks and natural areas</li> <li>3. Resilience and coming together</li> <li>4. Accepting of all cultures</li> <li>5. Cultural and recreational facilities</li> <li>6. We look after each other</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attractive public spaces, parks and natural areas</li> <li>2. Quality of environment</li> <li>3. Community facilities</li> <li>4. Accepting of all cultures</li> <li>5. Feel safe when out alone</li> <li>6. Available public transport</li> </ol>

## Urgent health concerns

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND	WIDE BAY	SUNSHINE COAST
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mental health</li> <li>2. Domestic/family violence</li> <li>3. Alcohol and other drugs</li> <li>4. Chronic health conditions</li> <li>5. Smoking</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mental health</li> <li>2. Alcohol and other drugs</li> <li>3. Chronic health conditions</li> <li>4. Smoking</li> <li>5. Domestic/family violence</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mental health</li> <li>2. Alcohol and other drugs</li> <li>3. Chronic health conditions</li> <li>4. Domestic/family violence</li> <li>5. Social factors*</li> </ol>

\* Income, education, employment, housing, transport options, feeling safe

## Sources of health information



## Would use traditional medicine or healer if offered in the community

75% Yes

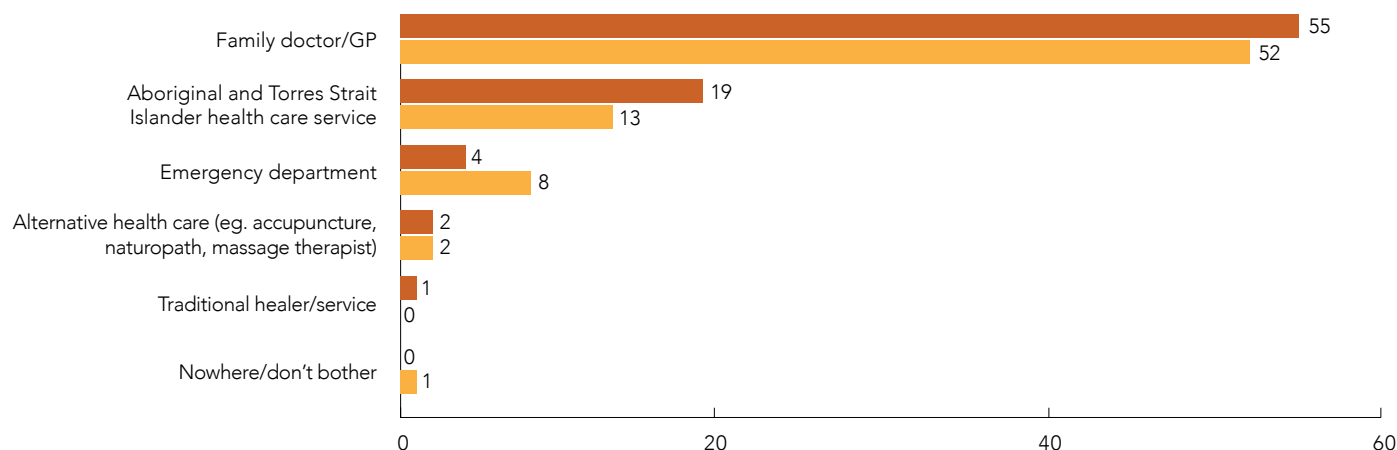
19% Don't know

6% No





## Usual place of health care



## Barriers to accessing health care



## Alternative to GP when not available

- ✓ Pharmacist
- ✓ Hospital emergency department/ outpatients
- ✓ No other
- ✓ Aboriginal Medical Service/ Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- ✓ 13HEALTH
- ✓ Home doctor service



## Management of chronic conditions

**1 in 2** participants reported having a chronic condition

**2 in 3** received support to manage their condition

### Most common services used

- GP
- Close the Gap
- Allied health
- Hospital/community health

### Top reasons for not seeking support

- Not knowing what support services were available
- Personally too busy

## Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific programs/services

**30-40%**

Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS)

**20-40%**

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Team at the hospital

**10-45%**

Deadly Choices

**< 10%**

Deadly Ears, Indigenous Cardiac Outreach Program, Indigenous Respiratory Outreach Care

**1 in 2** participants reported having an Aboriginal Health Check (715) in the last 12 months. The main reason for not having the check was **not knowing about it**.

## Access to Integrated Team Care (ITC) Program

**1 in 2** Central Queensland participants with a chronic condition reported knowing about the program

**1 in 10** used it

**3 in 5** Wide Bay participants with a chronic condition reported knowing about the program

**1 in 4** used it

*\*In the Sunshine Coast area, the ITC program has another name and data were not available for this service.*

## Telehealth

**1 in 2** participants reported using telehealth in the last 12 months for:

- GP appointments
- Specialist
- Mental health professional

**2 in 3** participants who used telehealth rated their experience as **very good or excellent**

**1 in 10** rated their experience as fair or poor due to:

- Preferring face-to-face appointments
- Having barriers with technology
- Feeling visual observations were required

## Cultural safety of services

**7 in 10** participants reported feeling in general that their health care providers were **always or mostly culturally safe**

Participants identified a broad range of services as places they did not feel comfortable attending when prompted





## Recommendations

1. Synthesise the survey data with PHN provider survey and other Health Needs Assessment data sources to prioritise regional needs.
2. Engage with other specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sub-populations such as young people, older people, women and parents to understand their health needs.
3. Work with communities to build on identified community strengths to develop health action to health priorities and community aspirations for their health and wellbeing.
4. Further engage with communities to understand in more depth identified perceived health concerns identified in the survey – mental health, alcohol and other drugs, chronic conditions, and domestic violence.
5. Support Aboriginal Medical Services and general practices to:
  - Manage workforce, supply and demand issues.
  - Build practitioner capacity to meet clients' holistic needs.
  - Establish community referral pathways for services that meet priority needs.
  - Establish innovative and culturally appropriate ways to support telehealth.
  - Improve awareness, uptake and access to health checks and available services.
6. Explore models and ways to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's mental health and wellbeing across communities, and access to care.
7. Continue to invest in child health services, especially in the Wide Bay and Central Queensland areas.
8. Explore models and ways to support people with chronic diseases to manage their conditions and access support.
9. Explore the use of traditional healing/medicine as acceptable health care solutions for communities and cultural connection.
10. Establish health literacy strategies, including the promotion and navigation of services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access services of need.
11. Continue to support and improve cultural safety in the primary health system.
12. Ensure that in all health actions, we work and co-design services with the community as a partner to understand their needs and devise acceptable solutions.



## CONTACT US

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