

### What is a Multipurpose Health Service?

The joint Commonwealth government/state Multipurpose Service Program - in Queensland known as Multipurpose Health Services (MPHS) - aims to deliver a flexible and integrated health and aged care service for small rural and remote communities.

The MPHS model is generally suitable for small rural and remote communities where there is:

- an ageing population
- a lack of, or limited, residential aged care accommodation
- difficulty in sustaining stand-alone health, community and aged care services.

The MPHS Program provides the opportunity to 'pool' Commonwealth and state health and aged care funds allowing flexibility in the distribution of these funds across all health and aged care programs according to community need.

There are 32 MPHSs in Queensland. The first Queensland MPHS commenced on 1 October 1994 and raised considerable interest from many rural communities across the state. The Queensland MPHS model provides opportunities for small rural and remote communities to benefit from a more flexible, integrated model of care and an enhanced range of services that respond to local need.

Criteria to establish a MPHS include:

- local population of between 1,000 and 6,000 people
- Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas classification category of remote zone
- minimum average of three maintenance beds daily over the past three years based on Queensland Health monthly activity accrued maintenance patient days data
- fewer than 30 existing aged care beds in the local community.

### MPHS development process

The development process involves a high degree of community consultation to confirm the MPHS model established is tailored to meet the individual needs of each community as not all MPHSs are the same.

There are three stages involved in the MPHS approval process:

- Stage 1: Hospital and Health Service (HHS) identifies a potentially suitable site and submits an expression of interest to the Australian Government.
- Stage 2: Once the site is approved a broad funding and service plan is developed by the HHS in consultation with other service providers, community members and Commonwealth officers.

On approval of the funding and service plan the Australian Government provides provisional allocation of funds allowing commencement of further detailed planning.

- Stage 3: The HHS submits a three-year detailed service plan to the Australian Government.