

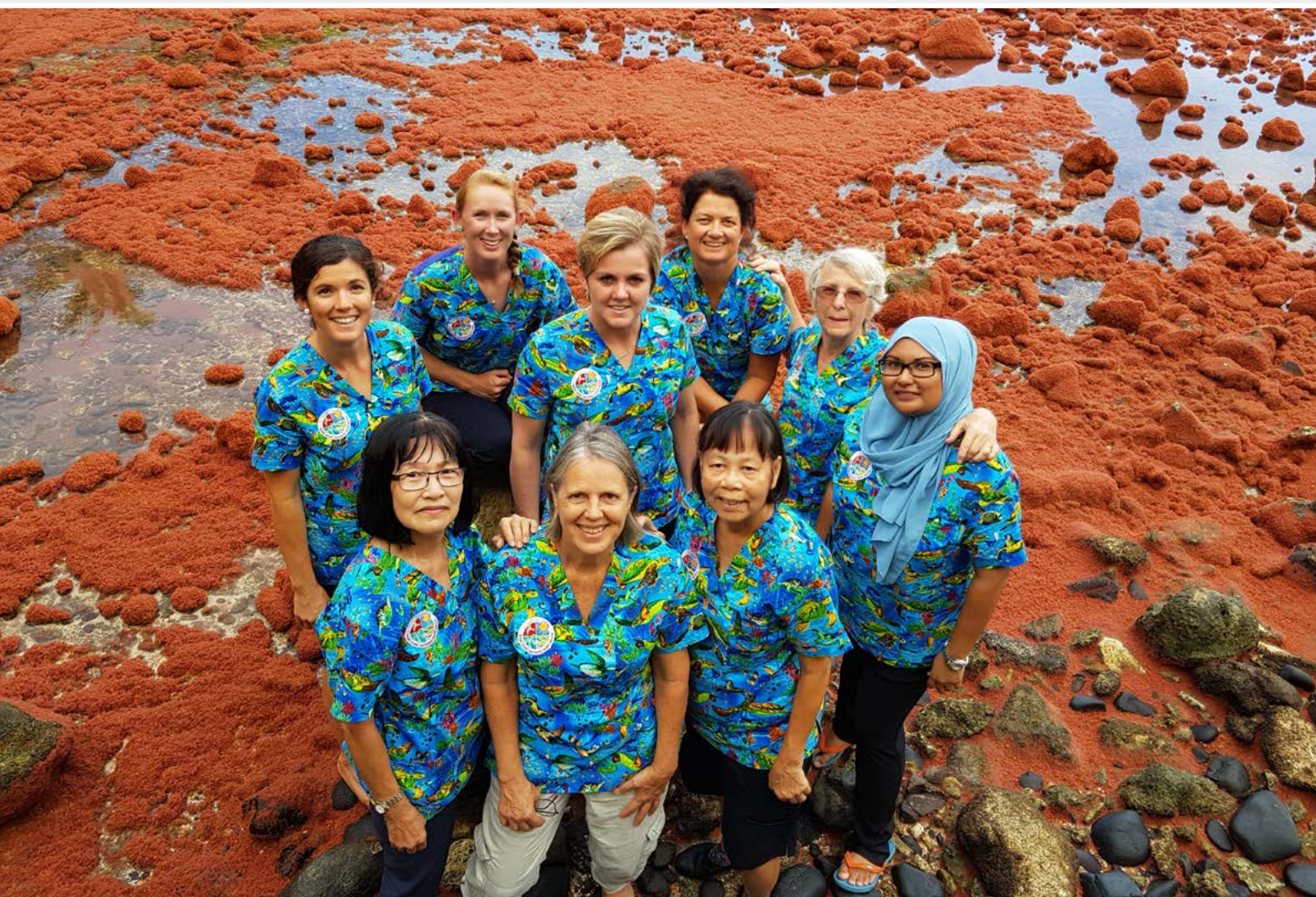


Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications**



Indian Ocean Territories Health Service



Delivering high-quality whole-of-life care to our community

Annual Report
2019–2020

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Introduction



Natasha Griggs

This 2019-20 Indian Ocean Territories Health Service (IOTHS) Annual Report highlights the incredible work done each and every day by the committed IOTHS team to provide high quality, targeted and contemporary health services.

2019-20 was an extremely challenging time for health service delivery due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The health service leadership team supported the local Emergency Management Committees with the response for the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) while also delivering business-as-usual services to the community. Following the implementation of border restrictions in March 2020, the IOTHS was able to effectively adapt and implement innovative solutions to offer high quality services to the community.

The IOTHS continues to perform to a high level and I am excited to be part of the initiatives planned for implementation in 2020-21 that include the publishing of the IOTHS Strategic Plan 2020-25, the development of an IOTHS Aged Care Services Plan 2020-25, the transition of IOT disability clients to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the establishment of an IOTHS Governance Advisory Council, the inaugural meeting of the IOTHS Community Advisory Committee and the assessment of the IOTHS against the National Standards for re-accreditation.

Providing high quality patient-centred health services to the community remains a priority for the Australian Government. Our goal is to deliver a holistic health service that supports individual and community physical, mental, social, spiritual health and wellbeing.

I would like to acknowledge the significant work that has been undertaken across the IOTHS in 2019-20 and look forward to continuing to work with the IOT community to deliver high quality services in 2020-21.

Natasha Griggs
Chair, IOTHS Health Advisory Group
Administrator, Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands



Appointments with primary care providers



14,743

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

5,949

COCOS KEELING ISLANDS

Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) trips



384

Indian Ocean
Territory
Health Service

Dental service appointments

991

Christmas Island

419

Cocos Keeling Islands



Telehealth appointments

372

Indian Ocean Territory
Health Service



In-home support hours delivered for seniors

3,456

Christmas Island

3,024

Cocos Keeling Islands



Vaccination rates 0-4 year old

98.7%

Christmas Island

97.7%

Cocos Keeling Islands



Disability support hours provided



2,100

Christmas Island

155

Cocos Keeling Islands



Health Service Overview

The Australian Government, through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, funds and operates the Indian Ocean Territories Health Service (IOTHS). A range of services are offered from facilities on Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, including:

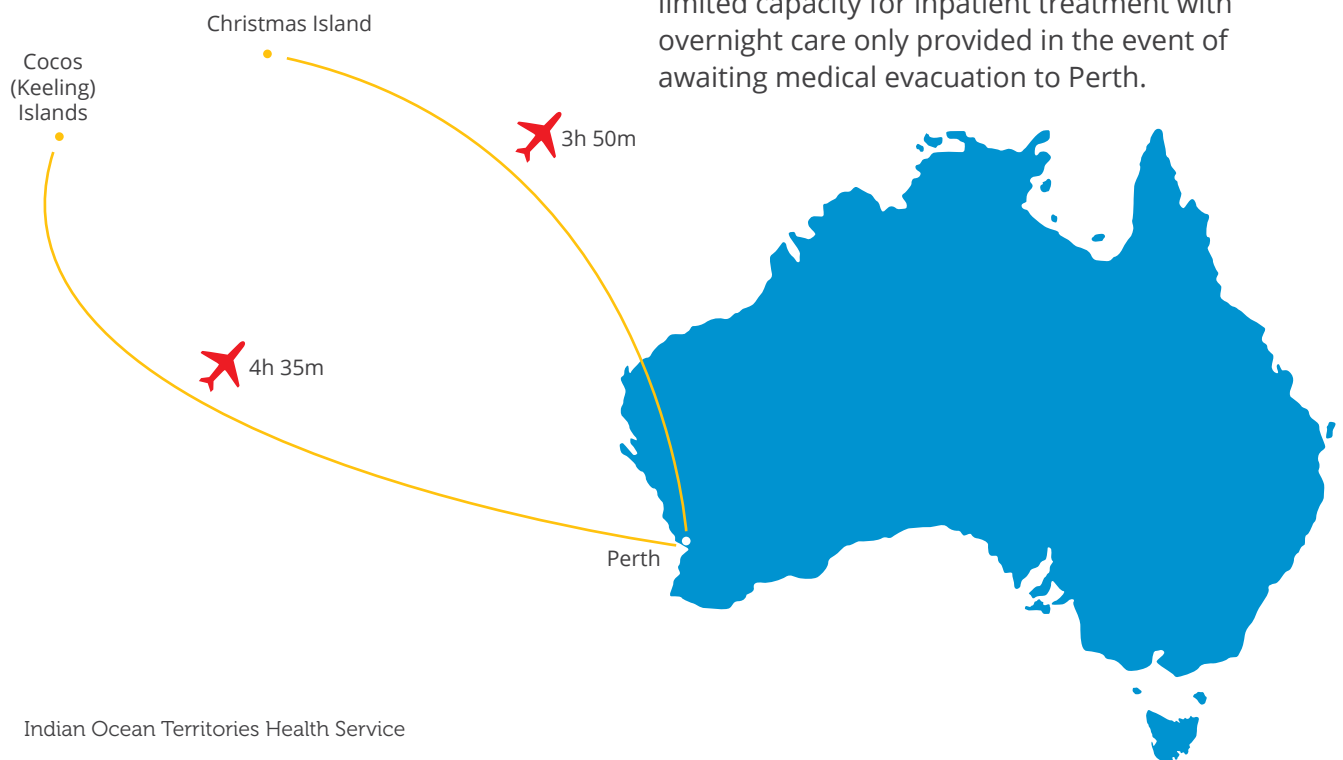
- primary healthcare, pathology, radiology, pharmacy and acute in-patient care
- public, community and child health programs, and antenatal services
- aged care, including home and community care
- disability services
- accident and emergency care, patient assisted travel and emergency medical evacuation
- oral healthcare, social work services
- telehealth and access to visiting specialist medical care and allied healthcare.

These services are supplemented through a Service Delivery Arrangement with the Western Australian Department of Health, which provides for:

- regulatory, policy, governance and specialist medical advice
- in-hospital services and care in Western Australia
- additional pathology services
- mammography screening and assessment services through BreastScreen WA.

The Christmas Island Health Centre is comprised of six general ward beds, two of which are currently being used for residential aged care and two emergency department beds. Services are provided by three General Practitioners and 12 nurses to deliver 24/7 acute care to the community.

On the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, services at the Home Island and West Island Clinics are provided by one GP and four nurses. Each of the clinics has one emergency bed and multiple consult rooms. There is limited capacity for inpatient treatment with overnight care only provided in the event of awaiting medical evacuation to Perth.





Patient-centred care

The IOTHS aims to deliver patient centered care to the community underpinned by core values:

Committed to providing a high quality service

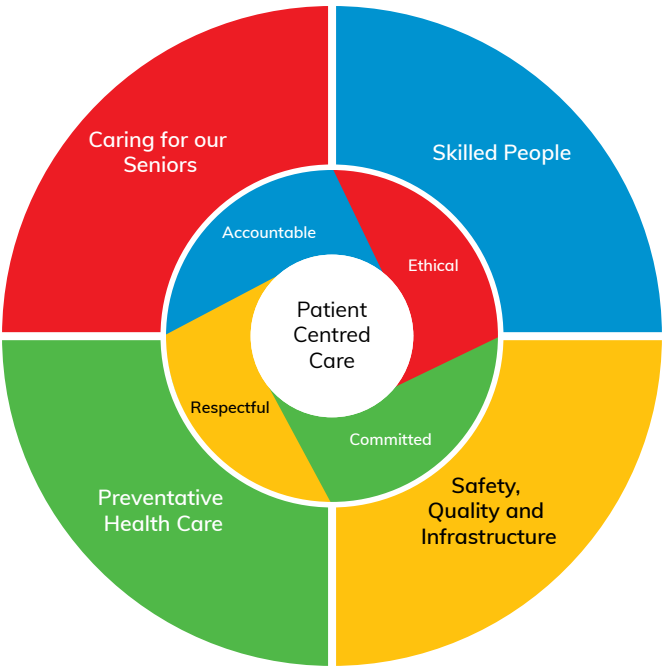
Accountable to the community

Respectful of all cultures and individuals

Ethical in all undertakings.

The IOTHS is focused on delivering on the four key priorities of the IOTHS Strategic Plan 2020-25:

- Preventative Health Care
- Safety, Quality and Infrastructure
- Caring for our Seniors
- Skilled People.



Preventative Health Care

The IOTHS has a strong focus on engaging our community to ensure high levels of preventative health care are maintained.

A number of milestones were achieved this year that demonstrate the commitment of the IOTHS to proactively managing community health and limiting the number of emergency presentations.

General Practitioners and nurses delivered 14,743 primary health consultations on Christmas Island and 5,949 consultations on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

For the first time, the IOTHS achieved a similar number of Patient Assisted Travel Scheme trips (384 trips) to telehealth interactions (372 consultations) across the IOTHS as outlined in Figure 1. While COVID-19 related travel restrictions from April to June had some impact, a big driver was the establishment of dedicated Telehealth equipment and rooms. Clear guidelines for PATS subsidies were developed with the IOTHS Health Advisory Group and distributed to the community in November 2019.

The number of specialist visits was reduced between March and June 2020 due to travel restrictions, however the majority of these consultations were rescheduled to telehealth appointments with on-island clinicians assisting with requests for pathology and clinical observations. In 2019-20, 15 medical and allied health specialists visited the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) to provide care closer to home.

The number of dental consultations were also reduced due to COVID restrictions on practice imposed nationally by the Australian Dental Association. Despite the reductions, 991 dental service consultations were delivered on Christmas Island and 419 on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

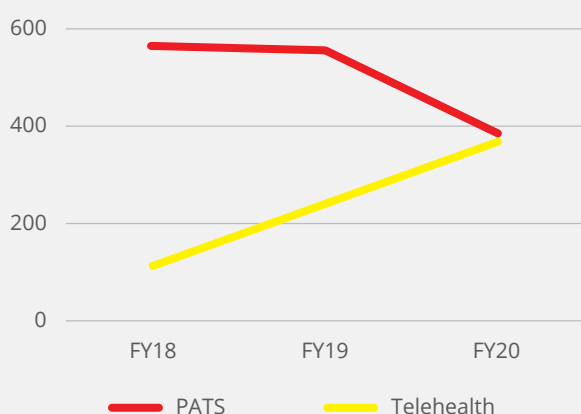
Child and maternal health services continued to be delivered across the IOT with high level of vaccinations achieved on Christmas Island (98.7%) and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands (97.7%) for children under four years old.

Sixteen IOT mothers (11 from Christmas Island and 5 from Cocos (Keeling) Islands) delivered babies on the mainland with support from the IOTHS.

The social worker and community service worker delivered high levels of mental health support across the IOT with more than 600 hours in counselling support, advocacy and community engagement.

The IOTHS is committed to delivering care to optimise and maintain the health of the IOT community through its work in disease prevention, treatment, promotion of healthy lifestyles and through supportive mental health programs.

Figure 1. PATS and Telehealth July 2017–June 2020



Safety, Quality and Infrastructure

To provide high levels of care it is imperative that the clinical governance practices, facilities, and equipment are current and aligned to national standards. During the year, IOTHS undertook a large body of work across all facilities to ensure that health care to the community is supported by policies, procedures, practices and infrastructure.

Clinical governance was strengthened through the development and implementation of the IOTHS Clinical Governance Framework and the IOTHS Clinical Services Capability Framework - enhancing risk, audit, incident and performance reporting and also shaping the IOTHS meeting, policy and issue escalation processes.

This year, the IOTHS developed an agreement with the Western Australian Country Health Service (WACHS) for the provision of WACHS policies, guidelines, forms and clinical audit tools. This enables closer alignment with WACHS operations and provides consistent levels of care through the use of standardised peer-reviewed documentation.



The IOTHS Operations Plan 2019-20 aligns to the National Standards on Safety and Quality in Healthcare. The majority of projects in the Operations Plan were delivered, encompassing clinical service delivery improvements, infrastructure maintenance, and equipment replacement. Projects of particular note included:

- Completion of the Christmas Island medical records storage project which aligns archiving and storage practices to national standards
- Implementation of the MyHealthRecord across the IOT which has demonstrated secure transfer of patient information, especially for returning residents from treatment in Perth
- Delivery of state of the art ultrasound machines for Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
- Establishment of an after-hours IT support line for clinicians to enable seamless clinical service delivery.
- Repurposing and remodeling of infrastructure to support changes in business operations as a result of COVID-19 infection control precautions.



Caring for our Seniors

The IOTHS provided high quality tailored care for senior residents through the delivery of in-home nursing and supportive services, residential care, respite care and palliative care.

The IOTHS provided 3,450 hours of in-home care to 30 clients on Christmas Island and more than 3,000 hours to 15 clients on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Aged care service use is expected to increase over the coming years in line with the ageing population across the IOT.

IOTHS health workers provided exemplary care in 2019-20 and their commitment to the health and welfare of IOT residents is commended. Health workers are vital to the delivery of services to IOT aged care residents through meal delivery or assistance with meal preparation, personal care, in-home care support, respite care and transport assistance in accessing essential services such as the supermarket and pharmacy.

There was a high uptake of flu vaccinations during the year for clients over the age of 65 with 79 per cent on Christmas Island and 89 per cent on Cocos (Keeling) Islands receiving an influenza vaccination through flu-vax clinic days at all facilities.

Services were co-delivered with the local Shires through weekly 'Stay on Your Feet' sessions for senior residents. Senior residents were also able to access diversional therapy through continued access to Seniors Centres on Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

A 10-week seniors program was delivered from July to September 2019 in collaboration with the Shire of Christmas Island, Christmas Island Arts and Culture, the Christmas Island Neighbourhood Centre, Legal Aid WA, the Christmas Island District High School and Christmas Island Phosphate Resources. The program brought seniors together in a friendly and interesting environment enabling socialisation, learning and engagement.

Skilled People

The IOTHS employs more than 60 staff across Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands to deliver comprehensive primary health care services to IOT residents. A breakdown of staffing numbers is provided in the organisational structure in Appendix 1.

A number of key initiatives were established during the year to support the training and development of IOTHS employees which included:

- establishment of the IOTHS Training Register
- implementation of the IOTHS clinical learning and development policy
- establishment of the IOTHS skills matrix
- monthly reporting of the Training Register and individual performance plan status
- establishment of the weekly clinical training schedule
- ongoing availability of training for all staff through the Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia online portal.

Staff undertook vocational training for courses including Certificate III individual support, Certificate III in cleaning operations, Certificate IV practice management and Certificate IV in dental assisting. Staff were supported to access courses and clinical placements on the mainland that included nurse X-ray operator's course, midwifery clinical placement, diabetes educator clinical placement, phlebotomy (taking blood) training course and women in leadership. A number of clinical staff also accessed online specialist training in pharmacotherapeutics and immunisation.



Acknowledging the importance of the provision of high quality services to national standards, the IOTHS established a new Safety, Quality and Risk Officer position. This position has been instrumental in various clinical and process improvements outlined in this report.

Due to the high level of primary health consultations provided across the IOTHS, it was determined that the IOTHS would benefit with the addition of a dedicated Practice Management role. A Practice Manager position was established and will continue to drive quality improvements and efficiencies in primary health care provision for the IOT community.

A new Health Services Manager was appointed in September 2019. This appointment resulted in a number of reforms and the implementation of nationally aligned systems and processes for health service management.



Community Engagement

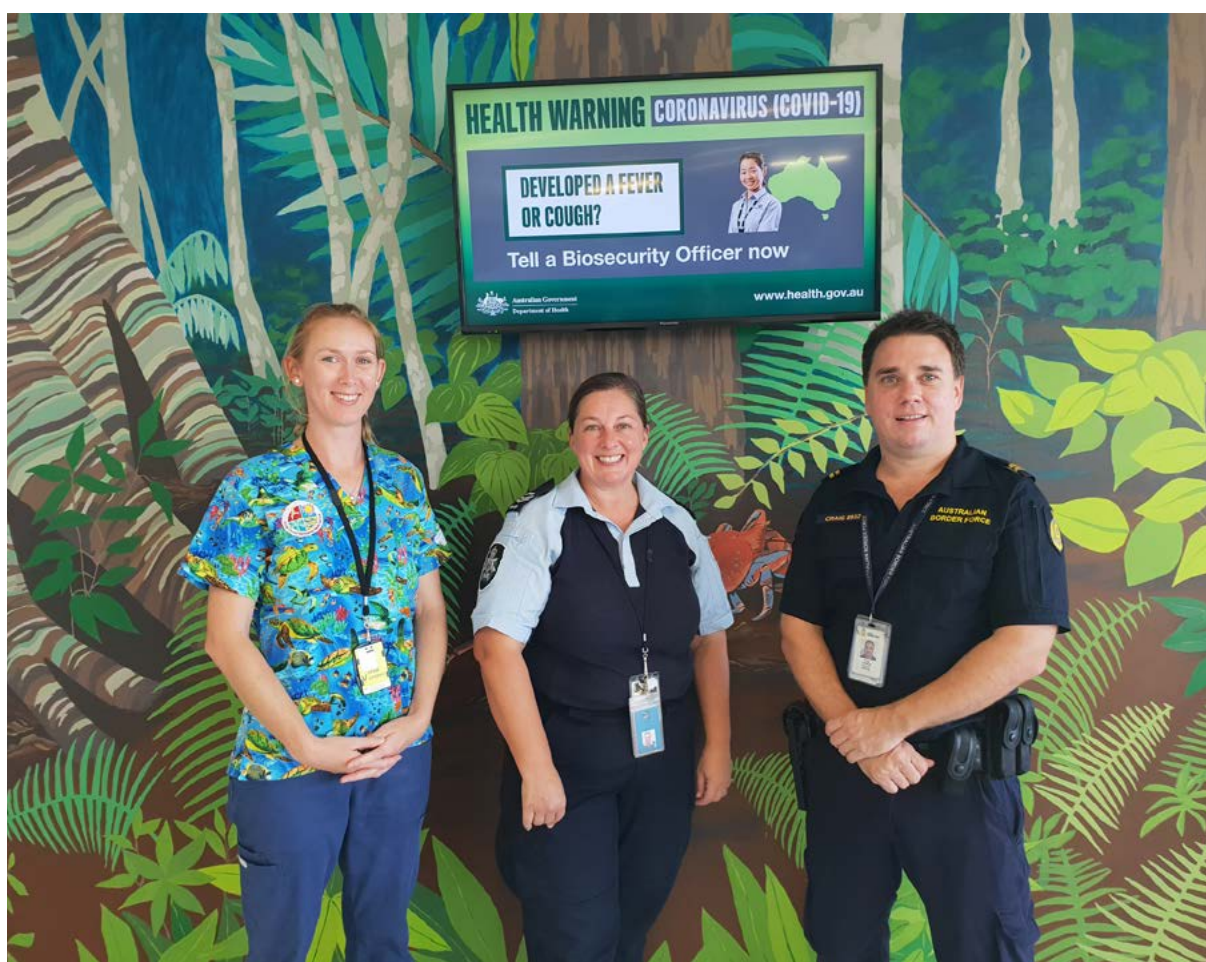
The IOTHS is committed to delivering the four key priorities through engaging with individuals and the community to provide holistic patient centered care. The IOTHS has achieved this through: facilitating the IOTHS Health Advisory Groups; inviting community members on recruitment panels; engaging consumers in policy and guideline development; co-designing and delivering community-based health promotion activities with other organisations; co-delivering programs targeted at seniors, co-locating and delivering services in schools; providing in-home care in collaboration with families; and workplace immunisation programs.

The IOTHS delivers a number of primary health-targeted programs to address community priority issues such as bowel cancer, mental health awareness, maternal and child health, and healthy lifestyle choices. A regularly attended program on Christmas Island is the Mums and Bubs program which provides a forum for new mothers to discuss social and health-related issues in a supportive environment led by the IOTHS Child and Maternal health nurse.

IOTHS also supports the engagement of St John's volunteers on Christmas Island through funding the provision of a quarterly visiting community paramedic from Perth and a home base for St John's volunteers at the Christmas Island Health Centre. This close collaboration also provides IOTHS clinicians with paramedic cross-training opportunities throughout the year.

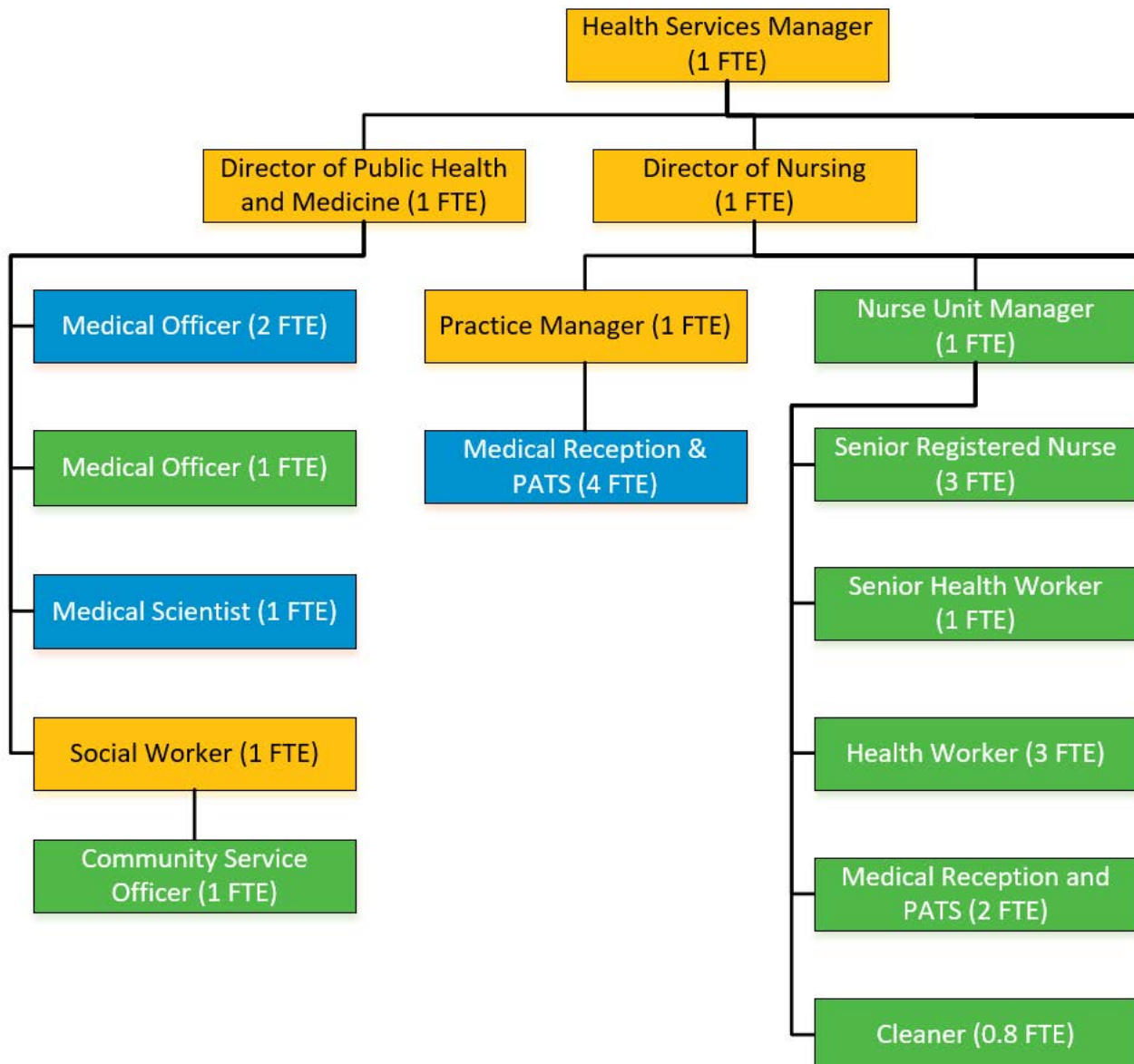
The IOTHS works closely with a number of partner organisations to deliver high quality health care to IOT residents. This includes the Shire councils, St John's Ambulance WA, the Indian Ocean Group Training Association, the WA Department of Education, the Australian Government Department of Health, the WA Department of Health, the National Insurance Disability Agency, the Australian Federal Police and the International Health and Medical Services.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IOTHS also worked closely with: the Australian Medical Assistance Team (AUSMAT), the Australian Border Force, the WA Public Health Emergency Operations Centre, the Office of the Australian Chief Medical Officer, TOLL airports and the Australian Defence Force.



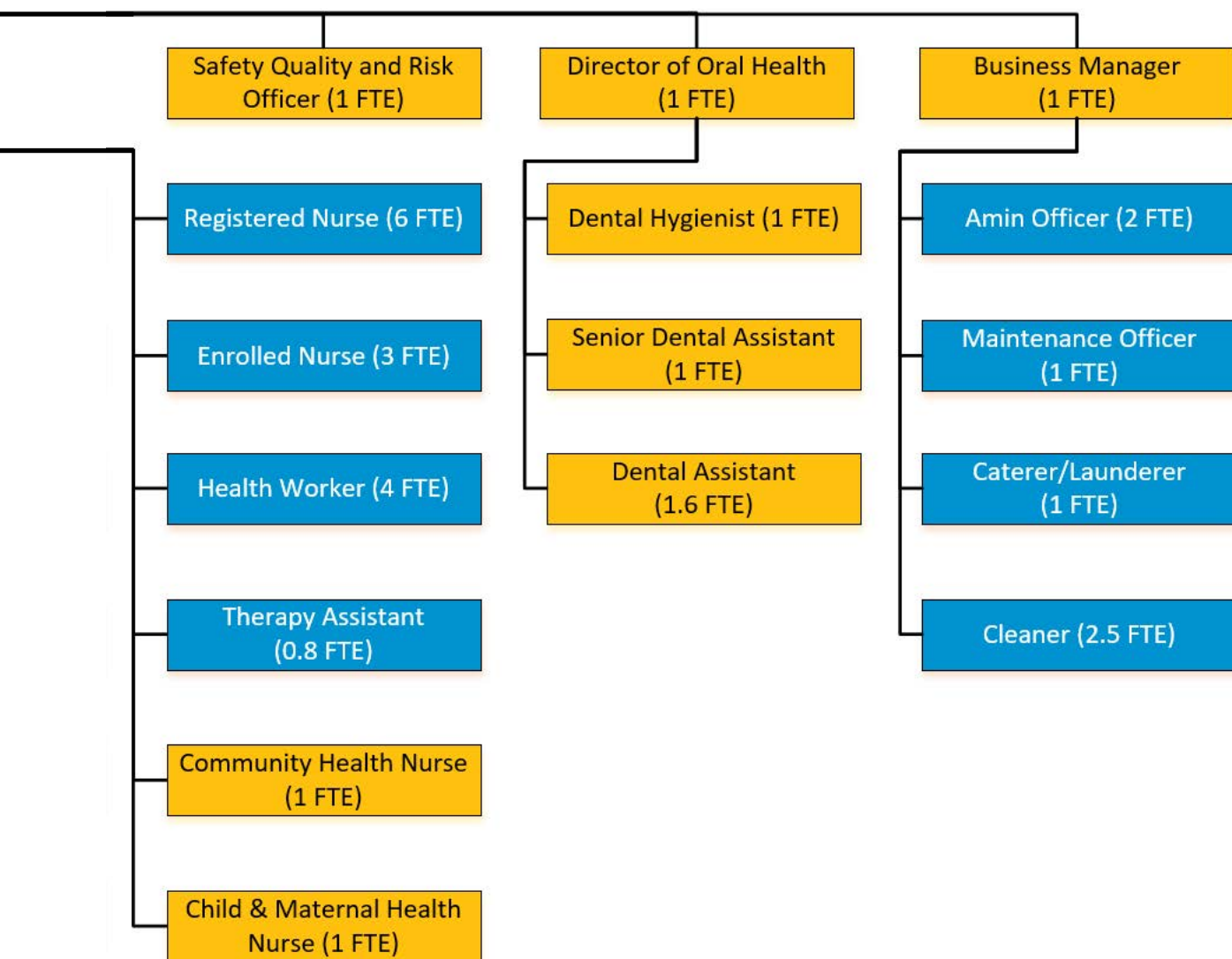
Appendix 1

IOTHS Organisational Structure



Christmas Island

Cocos (Keeling) Islands



Cocos (Keeling) Islands

Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands

