



Media Release 26 May 2017

EQIP creates a pathway to health!

EQIP HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

EQIP is proud to announce that we have introduced a new authentic workplace learning program for 2017 to support students interested in the health care and social services sector. This sector is currently the largest employing industry across Australia with employment in this sector predicted to grow by 16.4% by November 2020, which represents around 250,000 new jobs. The top 5 occupations in this growth area will be registered nurses, aged and disabled carers, child carers, nursing support and personal care workers, and receptionists (*Department of Employment, Australian Jobs 2016*).

There are 19 year 11 and 12 students from Toolooa, Tannum Sands and Gladstone State High Schools in the EQIP Health Support Services program. All students are enjoying the program so far and are interested in pathways toward nursing, radiology, medical officer, paramedic, psychologist, and social worker. Renae from Tannum Sands State High School said, "I wanted to join the EHSS program so that I may complete a certificate before leaving high school and so that I may have a taste as to the other industries within health." Shannon from Gladstone State High School joined the program, "To experience what it would be like to work in the hospital area." Many of the students in the program are planning on transitioning to university to study a bachelor degree. EQIP General Manager Melissa Dennis said that expanding knowledge within the field prior to undertaking a degree is going to benefit students in the long run. "A medical degree can take up to 6 years to complete plus many more years to specialise, so having an understanding of what is involved prior can set the student up for success. They can commit to long-term study and career pathways as they have the baseline knowledge."

The EQIP Health Support Services program focuses on a mix on theoretical learning through a Certificate II in Health Support Services and structured authentic workplace learning with local host employers. All students are excited to start their work experience at the end of June as this will give them the opportunity to apply the theory into practical experience in the field. SDS Trainer Jo McCaffery and EQIP Work Placement Officer Carlie Busby, are meeting with local host employers to go through the requirements of the structured work placement with a particular focus on the assessable tasks the student needs to complete. Local host employers include Mater Hospital, Nhulundu Health Service, Roseberry Community Services, Blue Care Gladstone Edenvale Aged Care Facility, Dr Adam Bush, Discount Drug Store Boyne Tannum, and the BITS Medical Centre. Local industry have onsite medical teams and Rio Tinto Yarwun and NRG Gladstone Power Station are offering the chance to see health care in an industrial environment. Ms Dennis is pleased to see the local community supporting this program. "These host employers are providing a valuable opportunity for students to get an insight into various occupations within the sector and to develop baseline knowledge and skills around day-to-day operations."

Ms Dennis highlighted the importance of this program for the Gladstone Region. "With the announcement in April this year of the partnership between Gladstone Regional Council, CQUniversity and MercyCQ, to deliver Australia's first intergenerational village in the Gladstone

area, it is important that local students have the opportunity to develop skills in this exciting growth area.” This ensures that in the long-term we are supporting the economic growth of our region.

EQIP has established a reputable and vital role as the link between local high schools, industry and the community. EQIP’s role in fostering collaboration between all parties is highly valued as it provides students with a one-stop-shop for development of employability skills, experience and knowledge. Ms Dennis said that this is another great example of EQIP and our partners identifying a skills gap and introducing a program aligned to employment needs.



Left to right: Logan Whitfield, Renae Keech, Alexia Guest, Riley Beckmann, Tenille Spencer, Kayla Hetherington, Hannah Clifford, Storm Petersen



*Left to right: Elizabeth Farbotko, Amber Randall, Stephanie Watson, Shannon Harrison, Amy Whiteley, Kaysha McMichael, Amy Veach
 (Students in the program, however, not in the photo include: Jaime-Lee Raphael, Kaitlin Burton, Madison Groundwater and Tia Williams)*

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