

HOME GROWN QUALITY

Emma Hawker began her career in health in 2012, when she commenced an Enrolled Nursing Traineeship at West Wimmera Health Service. Her nursing journey has taken a number of unexpected turns that have lead her to being a Quality Manager, a role she thoroughly enjoys.

Emma reflects back to her time in Kaniva, where she completed her Traineeship. **"This opportunity allowed me to gain hands on experience and earn a wage, all while completing my Diploma of Nursing."**

Emma's interest in the nursing field grew, and she soon completed a further 18 months of study to attain her Bachelor of Nursing, while continuing to work at WWHS.

Emma then moved to Warrnambool in 2016 and completed a Registered Nurse graduate year with South West Health - rotating through Theatre, Surgical, Medical and Rehabilitation wards. But she couldn't keep away from the Wimmera, returning once again with a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Having settled back working as a nurse for WWHS, it wasn't long before Emma was grasping every opportunity that presented. She worked across multiple sites and divisions including short stints in Intake, District Nursing, as an Associate Nurse Unit Manager, and in the role of Acting Director of Nursing. It was during this time that Emma realised her passion for rural health and with the support of WWHS, she completed a Graduate Certificate in Agricultural Health and Medicine via the National Centre for Farmer Health and Deakin University.

"WWHS has been extremely supportive in my career development. The opportunity to work across sites and divisions was valuable and allowed me to identify what I enjoyed and the direction of my career in health. I am greatly appreciative of the focus on career development at WWHS and for assisting in improving my knowledge and skills."



The opportunities didn't stop knocking, and soon Emma put her hat in the ring for the Quality Manager role. This role nicely suited Emma's passion for improving the health care experience for both staff and consumers. It also meant she put her head back in the books part time, and has just recently completed a Master of Health and Human Services Management, specialising in Public Health.

Emma has found the Quality Manager role eye opening and rewarding. "It's reassuring to know that the data we capture is for a real purpose; it helps to drive improvements right across the board, from staff workflow to consumer experiences. It's exciting to be a part of it all."

"If any one is thinking of progressing their career or looking to start a career in health, WWHS is a supportive workplace that encourages career development and provides endless opportunities."

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FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION

Kerry is an Activities Coordinator at Iona Nursing Home. This is her inspiring career journey at West Wimmera Health Service.

Kerry began her career in health as a General Service Assistant in 2015. She was in that role for 3-4 years and enjoyed her time in this position. Her role involved working across multiple departments in Nhill. Kerry's experience working in Iona and developing relationships with residents sparked her interest in a career in health care and drive to provide engaging, quality care.

This interest led Kerry to volunteer her time providing a Saturday exercise class to the Iona residents. Kerry expressed her interest in growing her career in this area to a fellow staff member, who put her in contact with Jess Pilgrim, the Service's Training Officer & Careers Advisor.

Kerry openly advised Jess of her struggles with reading and writing, but she did not let this hold her back. With the support of Jess and her own determination, Kerry commenced a Certificate III in Individual Support.

Kerry felt supported the entire time she was completing her studies. Jess and other staff members would assist Kerry in her assignments by reading the questions aloud and transcribing her responses.

"The support I received was fantastic and allowed me to do a job I love." Through Kerry's further education she now gets to enjoy supporting the residents who first sparked her interest in her dream career.

"I am a very hands on person and love working with the residents. I like seeing the residents smile, if they are happy I am happy."

Don't let your fears hold you back!



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CHEF TO CONTRACT MANAGER – AN EVOLUTION

Darren Jeffrey has had a dynamic career trajectory, which has taken him from cooking up a storm for patients and residents, to managing contracts and purchasing for the entire health service.

In 2016 Darren took up an opportunity to lead our catering and hospitality teams, joining West Wimmera Health Service as Chef in Charge.

Prior to starting in the Nhill Kitchen, Darren had been studying a Bachelor Degree part time, following a dream to one day make a career change. Darren continued his studies, and with the support of the organisation he completed a Bachelor Degree in Business Management – with dual study in Human Resources and Finance.

Darren shares, ***“From the moment I started, I was always given the opportunity to both utilise my previous skills base but also develop. Support from all levels of the organisation has helped me to build on my knowledge.”***

“I have been able to not only develop my understanding of the entire organisation's scope and service, but also grow my experience.”

In 2020 a dream opportunity opened up for Darren, and he was appointed as the new Contracts and Procurement Officer.

“Timing in life is a great thing – after completing my bachelor studies, the position was advertised and after submitting my application was successful.”

“Without sounding corny - I believe West Wimmera Health Service is the best employer I have ever worked for - and believe me I have worked for some good and bad ones over the past 35 years in hospitality!”



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TRAILBLAZING WOMAN

Since joining West Wimmera Health Service, Hannah Newton's passion for learning has seen her career advance from Allied Health Receptionist to studying for a Bachelor of Health Information Management.

Hannah joined the health service in 2015, before moving from reception to health information services. At the time, a large portion of her role was related to data submissions, and reporting, so it became a focus to explore the areas for improvement in terms of data integrity.

Hannah took on the role of health information Data Analyst, supporting the clinical, aged care, community and quality teams.

In 2018, Hannah undertook a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management, and in 2020 she went on to complete an Advanced Diploma of Leadership and Management. She has now almost completed a Bachelor of Health Information Management, due to be completed in October 2025. ***"I'm so grateful for the opportunity to further my studies while continuing to work. The flexibility to progress in both my career and personal goals has been incredible. It's allowed me to grow professionally without compromising what matters most to me personally."***

Hannah's studies have been assisted by the ongoing education support from West Wimmera Health Service - in early 2022, she successfully applied for a bursary scholarship to pursue her dream of learning more about health information management and expanding her career. ***"West Wimmera Health Service has been supportive and encouraging every step of the way"***

"The leadership and management courses I took part in were run by the health service and a registered training organisation. Our classwork was completed during designated paid days. "Now for my Bachelor degree, I am supported with a bursary".

"I'd encourage everyone to use the awesome education and career progression opportunities WWHS offers"



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