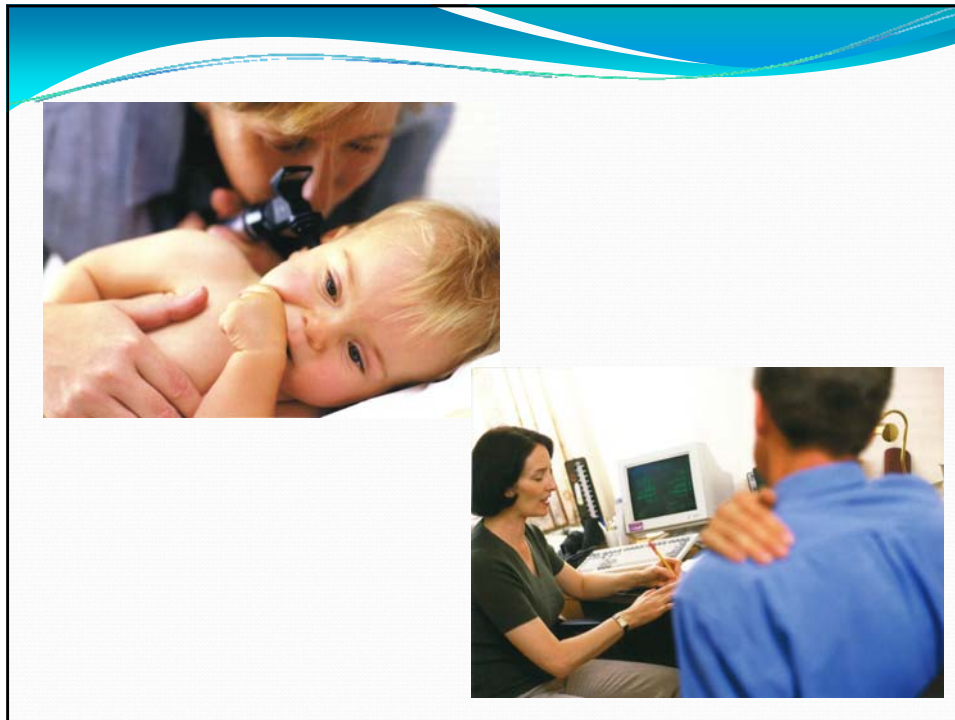


The role of Divisions of General Practice: providing leadership in primary healthcare in Australia

Graeme Kershaw
Chief Executive Officer
North West Slopes Division of General Practice
Tamworth NSW

Australians and their GPs

- In June 2008 the estimated population of Australia was 21.4 million people
- General Practitioners are the first point of contact in the health system
- Payment is on a fee for service system with no patient lists or registration
- The Medical Benefits Scheme is a universal government funded medical insurance scheme costing about \$A4.4B annually
- The government also contributes to pharmaceutical costs



Australians and their GPs

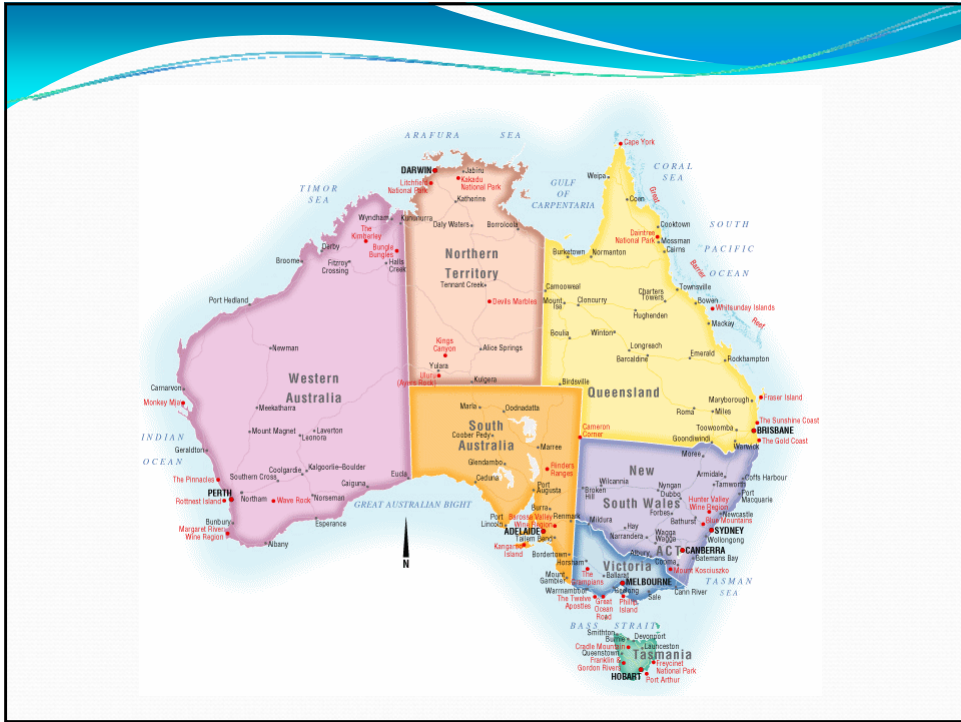
- 88% of Australians have a health visit annually with a GP
- The reasons why Australians see GPs is changing: less acute presentations and less encounters with children and more encounters for services – check ups and prescriptions and more management of chronic conditions
- Australians are more likely to find other practitioners in nursing and allied health at their General Practitioner's rooms than they would have 10 years ago

Divisions of General Practice and their GPs

- In 1989 General Practice was recognised as distinct medical discipline
- In the early 1990's two main issues were identified as problems for GPs: an increasing sense of isolation felt by GPs and an increasing exclusion of general practice from the overall health care system
- "The Future of General Practice: a strategy for the nineties and beyond". (1992)
- 1992/93 Federal budget the Divisions and Projects Grants Program was established
- 110 Divisions of General Practice cover all of Australia

Aims of Divisions of General Practice

- Enable GPs to network and communicate with each other
- Enable individuals and groups to contact local GPs
- Enable GPs to work more closely with other health professionals, health care providers, community groups and community members in the local area
- Enable GPs to be more responsive to local health needs in the community
- Enhance GPs involvement in health promotion
- Address the professional development and education needs of GPs



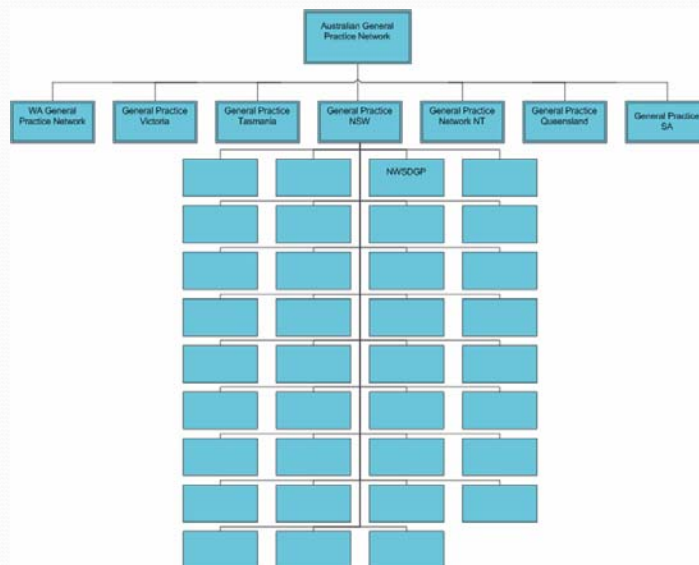
Divisions in 2009

- “The value of the Divisions network is in achieving systemic improvements in local primary care that cannot be achieved by individual GPs working alone.”

Australian Government Dept. of Health and Ageing 2009

- 95% of GPs are members of their local Division of General Practice

The Network of Divisions

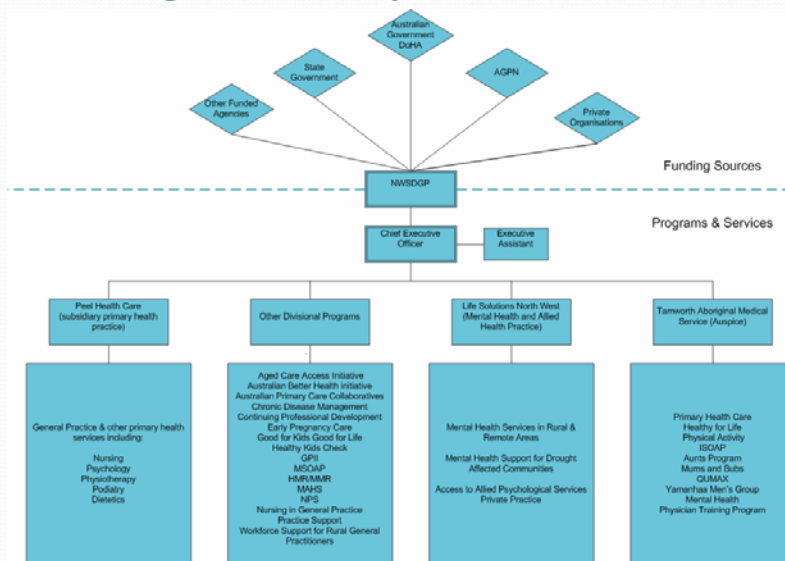


What Divisions do

- Programs

- Immunisation
- eHealth
- Chronic Disease Mgt
- Medicines Programs
- Nursing
- Workforce Support
- Education and Training
- Mental Health
- Allied Health Services
- Medical Specialists
- Quality Improvement
- Accreditation
- General Practice
- Indigenous Health
- Aged care initiatives
- Refugee Health
- Health Promotion

Leading Primary Health Care



Examples Of Division Leadership

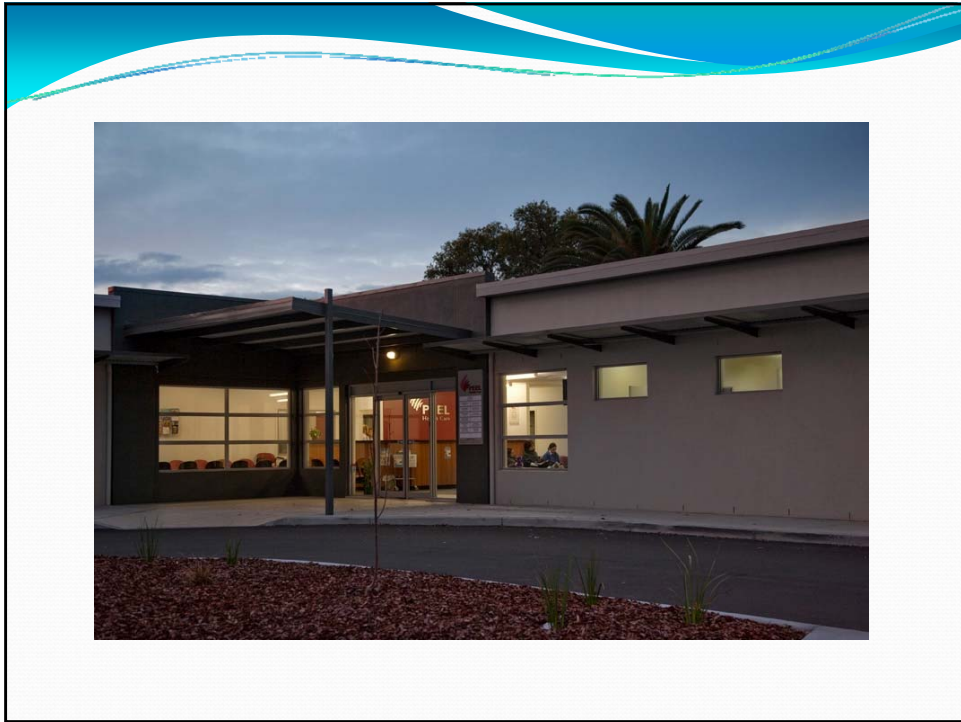
Increasing access to primary health care

- North West Slopes Division opened a primary healthcare practice in a regional centre in New South Wales – Peel Health Care
- Employs nurses and administrative staff and contracts with GPs and Allied Health Practitioners
- Operating as a not for profit healthcare practice since 2005
- Has 8 GPs, 4 Allied Health (podiatrist, psychologist, dietitian, physiotherapist) and 5 nurses

Increasing access to primary health care

- Involved a partnership with the local Regional Council, University of Newcastle School of Rural Health and the local community
- In its first week of operation, 58 people had GP consultations in Peel Health Care.
- In a typical week in September 2009, 910 people had GP consultations in Peel Health Care.







Brokering Aboriginal Access to Mainstream Services

- Indigenous health disadvantage is an enormous problem in Australia with significant health disparities in asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, renal disease and substance abuse and mental health disorders
- Sunshine Coast Division and North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Aboriginal Health
- Collects de-identified health information and arranges no-cost health care for the indigenous patient
- 43% increase in the number of health services provided

Increasing cervical screening rates in rural NSW

- Riverina Division of General Practice and Primary Health
- Aim to:
 - increase cervical screening rates in the region
 - support trained Practice Nurses
- GP supported Routine Cervical Screening Service – a fee paying evening clinic operating from the Division's own premises
- Increased confidence and competence for nurses
- 100% satisfaction for patients

Local assistance for Indigenous health care

- North West Slopes Division auspices the local Aboriginal Medical Service
- Financially and operationally manages the service which provides primary health care, health promotion and community development services
- In 2007 the service had 7 Staff and provided 3,985 healthcare services to 1,341
- In 2009 the service has 14 staff and provides 5,342 health care services to 1,716 people



The aim is to work with the local Aboriginal Community so that they can have independent control to their own Aboriginal Health Service



The leadership position of Divisions of General Practice

- Single national network
- Centred on general practice and primary health care
- Local and regional infrastructure
- Ability to interpret and respond to local needs
- Flexibility
- Broad reach
- Established track record
- Innovation and inventiveness

Thank you from
the



The North West Slopes Division of General Practice is funded by
the Australian Department of Health and Ageing

Home