

Expression of interest

Section A INVITATION

FOR Clinicians to Deliver Specialist In-Reach Education in
Chronic and Complex Disease Management 2024-2026

Healthy North Coast acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands across our region and pays respect to the Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise these lands were never ceded and acknowledge the continuation of culture and connection to land, sky and sea. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and honour the rich diversity of the world's oldest living culture.

1. Introduction

1.1 Expression of Interest

Healthy North Coast Ltd (HNC), trading as North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN), is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from Medical Specialists and Allied Health Providers.

The Expression of Interest (EOI) documents are comprised of:

- i. Section A: Invitation (This document); and
- ii. Section B: Participant Return Schedules

1.2 Healthy North Coast

HNC works alongside community members, health professionals and social services to build a person-centred health system in which each member of the North Coast community, receives care that is integrated, high quality and easy to access. We aim to work together to transform the healthcare system to reduce health inequalities. Our work begins by gaining an understanding of the health care needs of the North Coast. This needs assessment involves our community, clinicians and service providers and is available for all to use (<https://hnc.org.au/needs-assessment>). We use this information to work with health professionals and community members to find gaps and facilitate local solutions.

HNC is a commissioner of services that best meet our community's needs. We have well-established and effective clinical and community councils across the region which guide our actions to improve the quality of health care.

HNC priorities are:

- i. Better mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- ii. Closing the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health;
- iii. Improving our population's health and wellbeing;
- iv. Building a highly skilled and capable health workforce;
- v. Improving the integration of health services through electronic and digital health platforms;
- vi. Improving the health and wellbeing of older people; and
- vii. Providing Alcohol and Other Drug prevention and treatment programs.

The HNC region covers 32,767 square kilometres from the Queensland border in the north, to Port Macquarie in the south. The population in the region is 541,496 with high rates of older people and disadvantage. Across the Healthy North Coast regions approximately 31, 633, or 5.5%, of the population identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ABS, 2021).

1.3 Background and context

The Healthy North Coast Health Needs Assessment 2022-2025 identified the North Coast region having per capita medical specialists below the state and national averages. Furthermore, the specialists were not evenly spread across the region, with 86% of medical specialists being located in the larger population centres of Tweed, Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Lismore. This results in reduced access to vital specialist care for much of the North Coast population.

By delivering specialist in-reach education to primary care, this program will support local practices to deliver high-level chronic disease management. A pilot program has been underway in the Port Macquarie region, with an endocrinologist and diabetes educator visiting practices to deliver education and facilitate case conferences. Practices have provided positive feedback on the program, with clinicians reporting higher confidence in managing complex diabetes patients.

This is an initiative of the Healthy North Coast Primary Care Impact program, which aims to provide a framework to advancing primary care outcomes across the region.

2. Service Requirements and Specification

2.1 Objectives

The objective of the specialist in-reach program into general practice for managing chronic disease is to enhance patient care in the primary care setting. Through in practice shared care appointments, individual case conferencing and case management consultations and structured learning presentations, general practice staff will gain new skills and methods of managing chronic and complex disease.

Key goals include

- **Improved Patient Outcomes:** Providing specialized knowledge and support to help general practitioners manage chronic diseases more effectively, leading to better health outcomes for patients.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** between specialists and general practitioners to ensure a cohesive approach to patient management and streamlined referrals.
- **Increased GP confidence** - in managing higher complexity chronic disease presentations in a primary care setting.
- **Address the mismatch between supply and demand** – by increasing GP workforce capability/scope in preference to increasing supply of specialist medical workforce.

2.2 Scope of Services and Responsibilities

The in-reach education is delivered by a local medical specialist attending a practice for the afternoon, along with supporting allied health staff or specialist nurse. A one-hour long education session is provided to all available practice staff, with catering arranged via Healthy North Coast to support attendance. One GP from the practice then completes five 45-minute case conferences with

patients from the clinic. The case conferences are 45 minutes in length as this provides the best value utilising MBS items for the practice, specialist and the attending allied health professionals, and allows the patient to be bulk-billed to remove cost barriers.

The specialist then returns to the practice after six months to follow up on the outcomes of the initial education session, and complete further case conferences with a different GP within the practice.

2.2.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for consideration, providers must have the capacity to:

- Provide a high quality one-hour education session for all practice staff on your area of specialisation.
- Engage in case conferences with a General Practitioner from the practice and associated allied health or nursing staff.
- Attend these half day events at regular intervals throughout the year, depending on your availability, to see multiple practices and return to previous practices to encourage continuous development.

2.3 Project Fees and Invoicing

The standard rate for delivery of the education component is \$300 for a medical specialist per session and \$200 for an allied health practitioner per session delivered. Travel costs can also be billed at the ATO rate.

The case conferences are to be billed to Medicare under the Multi-disciplinary Case Conferencing MBS items.

3. Conditions of Participation

3.1 Objectives

These Conditions of Participation set out the rules for participation in the Expression of Interest (EOI) Process. They apply to the EOI and any other information given, received or made available in connection with the EOI, the EOI Process, and any communications relating to the EOI or the EOI Process.

By participating in the EOI Process, each Participant is deemed to accept these Conditions of Participation.

3.2 General

3.2.1 Enquiries and Clarification

All enquiries, and requests for clarification or additional information from Participants shall be made in writing via commissioning@hnc.org.au. Enquiries must not be addressed to Staff or Board members of HNC.

3.3 Preparation of EOIs

3.3.1 Format and Contents

The Participant must ensure that its EOI contains the completed Section B: Participant Return Schedules, and all information requested in those Schedules

3.3.2 Information to be submitted with Expression of Interests

The following list details all essential information to be submitted with the EOI, and which is set out in Section B: Participant Return Schedules. Failure to submit such information may render EOI non-conforming.

Information to be Submitted with EOI	Section B: Participant Return Schedule
Applicant Details	Schedule 1
Insurances	Schedule 2
Proposal to deliver services specified in 2.1	Schedule 3
Conflict of Interest	Schedule 4
Acceptance and Declaration	Schedule 5

3.3.3 Conforming EOI

To submit a conforming EOI, the Participant must:

- i. Comply with all of the requirements contained in the EOI Documents; and
- ii. Complete and execute all the details in Section B: Participant Return Schedules, in the manner indicated.

3.3.4 Non-conforming EOI

A non-conforming EOI is a EOI that does not comply with all the requirements of Clause 3.3.2. Where a non-conforming EOI is submitted, the following applies:

- i. HNC may exclude a Participant from participation in the EOI Process if the Participant submits a non-conforming EOI;
- ii. HNC may at its sole discretion consider a non-conforming EOI; and
- iii. Participants submitting a non-conforming EOI shall fully detail any variance from the requirements of the EOI Documents.

3.3.5 Participants to be Fully Informed

Prior to submitting a EOI, Participants shall become acquainted with the nature and extent of the EOI Documents, and make all necessary examinations, investigations, inspections and deductions.

No claims arising from a failure to take any such actions will be considered and HNC does not accept any responsibility if a Participant fails to make its own enquiries, interpretations, deductions and conclusions when preparing its EOI.

The Participant shall satisfy itself that it has sufficient and complete information to prepare its EOI and no claims will be accepted that information is missing or incomplete once EOIs have been submitted.

Participants are required to familiarise themselves with all statutory requirements and to satisfy themselves that they are not participating in any anti-competitive, collusive, deceptive or misleading practices in structuring and submitting their EOI.

HNC will accept no responsibility for a Participants failure to make its own enquiries, interpretations and conclusions from information contained within the EOI Documents or otherwise.

3.3.6 Legal Effect of EOI

A EOI shall not be declared to be conditional on or subject to:

- i. Board or Executive approval of the Participant or a related party of the Participant;
- ii. obtaining any statutory or regulatory approval or consent;
- iii. obtaining the consent or approval of any third party;
- iv. the conduct of due diligence or any other form of enquiry or consent; or
- v. negotiation of commercial or contractual terms.

HNC, at its absolute discretion, reserves the right to exclude a Participant from participation in the EOI Process if its EOI is declared, or purports to be, subject to any of the above conditions.

3.3.7 Acknowledgement of Participants

In preparing and submitting a EOI, Participants acknowledge that:

- i. HNC makes no representations and offers no undertakings in issuing this Request for EOI;
- ii. HNC will not be liable to Participants for any claim arising out of or in any way connected with the EOI Documents including, without limitation, any claim at common law or equity under any statute or regulation;
- iii. Participants are to be fully informed as set out in Clause 3.3.5 of these Conditions of Participation;
- iv. All costs incurred by Participants with respect to the EOI will be their sole responsibility. All Participants are solely responsible for such costs and expenses irrespective of any action taken by HNC during the EOI Process;
- v. HNC is not bound to negotiate with, or accept any submission from, Participants;
- vi. HNC may elect to consider non-conforming EOIs;
- vii. HNC may require Participants to supply further information and/or attend a conference or interview.
- viii. HNC may issue addenda, supplement, vary, or clarify the EOI Documents as required;
- ix. EOIs become the property of HNC upon lodgement;
- x. EOIs shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the expiration of the date of the EOI Closing Time; and
- xi. The EOI Evaluation Panel and/or HNC may undertake due diligence checks, including but not limited to verifying references and/or referees, and undertaking company searches and credit checks.

3.3.8 Conduct of Participants

3.3.8.1 Confidentiality

HNC requires that all Participants maintain the confidentiality of all documents provided in connection with the EOI. Without limiting the nature of materials to be kept confidential HNC requires that all details of this EOI, and other information and materials provided in connection with the EOI be kept confidential.

Participants shall not disclose or use the EOI Documents or other information and materials provided in connection with the EOI except for the purpose of developing its EOI.

Participants must implement such reasonable security arrangements to prevent unauthorised access of all materials in connection with the EOI.

3.3.8.2 Collusion and Anti-Competitive Conduct

Participants shall not enter into any agreement with any other Participant concerning the preparation of a EOI unless for the expressed purpose of forming a partnership or consortium.

Except for the purpose of forming a partnership or consortium, Participants shall not seek to obtain knowledge of the participation of any other Participant, and shall not reveal its participation to any other Participant at any time prior to the EOI Closing Time.

In the event that a Participant becomes aware of or is approached by anyone on any matter which contravenes the foregoing or any statute, regulation, or authority under Commonwealth and/or State laws the Participant shall immediately give written notice to the HNC.

3.3.8.3 Unauthorised Contact

Participants shall not, and must ensure that its employees, consultants and agents do not attempt to contact or communicate with, or canvass or request support from, HNC Board Members or staff in respect of the EOI Process.

Participants found to have breached this clause may be excluded from the EOI Process.

3.3.8.4 Conflict of Interest

Participants declares that, at the time of the submission of its EOI, other than conflicts notified to HNC, no conflict of interest exists, or is likely to arise, which would affect the performance of its obligations if the Participant were to enter into a Contract with HNC

3.4 *Submission of EOIs*

3.4.1 Electronic Submissions

EOIs must be submitted electronically via the Specialist In-Reach Education Primary Care Impact page on the Healthy North Coast website [insert link](#)

3.5 *Evaluation of EOIs*

3.4.2 Evaluation Criteria

HNC will undertake an evaluation of EOIs, and if necessary, enter into negotiations with the preferred Participants. The following evaluation criteria will be applied:

3.4.3 Mandatory Evaluation Criteria

- i. Completion of all schedules in the *Section B: Participant Return Schedules*
- ii. Financial capacity;
- iii. Required insurances;
- iv. Conflict of Interest details; and
- v. Signed Acceptance and Declaration.

3.4.4 Weighted Evaluation Criteria

- i. The identified need in the community for improved management of chronic and complex disease in primary care;
- ii. Capacity to support solutions to address that need;

3.4.5 Evaluation Process

Evaluation will be undertaken on the information submitted in EOIs. HNC may elect to supplement the information submitted in a EOI by:

- i. undertaking investigations; and/or
- ii. seeking further information from a Participant for reasons of clarification, interpretation or to rectify omissions; and/or
- iii. requiring a Participant to attend an interview or a conference; and/or
- iv. undertaking due diligence checks, including but not limited to, verifying references, communicating with referees, and undertaking company searched and credit checks.

As part of the evaluation process, HNC may:

- v. commence negotiations with all Participants without shortlisting any Participants;
- vi. shortlist one or more Participants to proceed to further negotiations;
- vii. accept one or more of the EOIs;
- viii. reject any or all EOIs;
- ix. suspend or cease to proceed with the EOI Process

3.4.5.1 Negotiation

HNC may, during the Evaluation Process, elect to engage in detailed discussions and negotiations with any or all Participants. As part of the negotiation process, HNC may request a Participant to improve one or more aspects of its EOI, including any technical, financial, corporate or legal aspects.

HNC may also require any or all Participants to provide references, additional referees, or additional information and to make themselves available for an interview or to make a presentation. Failure of a Participant to provide supplementary information consequent to a request from HNC may lead to HNC excluding a EOI from further evaluation.

HNC is under no obligation to conduct any negotiations with Participants, to seek additional information from Participants, or to conduct interviews with or request presentations from Participants.

3.4.5.2 Best and Final Offers

HNC may, during the Evaluation Process, select to invite any all Participants to submit a best and final offer, which for the purpose of these EOI Documents would constitute a detailed Project Plan. Any invitation to Participants to submit a detailed Project Plan, would include the details required to be included in the Project Plan, including but not limited to Project:

- i. scope and objectives;
- ii. methodology and timeframe;
- iii. team;
- iv. outcomes;
- v. risks and risk mitigation approach;
- vi. milestones associated with deliverables and reporting;
- vii. performance evaluation criteria and monitoring process;
- viii. performance management process; and
- ix. project fee and payment milestones.

After receiving best and final offers, HNC may then conduct a final evaluation of EOIs, taking into account the best and final offers received.

3.4.5.3 Successful EOIs

As a result of the EOI Evaluation Process, HNC may accept one or more EOIs as being successful. HNC shall subsequently notify a/the successful Participant/s in writing of the acceptance of its/their EOI/s.

Acceptance of a EOI/s does not give rise to a contract. No legal relationship will exist between HNC and a successful Participant until such time as a binding contract is executed by both HNC and a successful Participant.

As a commissioning organisation, HNC also has an obligation to ensure its commissioned service providers are vaccinated against COVID-19 in accordance with any Public Health (COVID-19 Vaccination of Health Care Workers) Orders in place at the time.

If a binding contract is executed, HNC Providers (or their employees or contractors) are required to have at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. Prior to execution of a contract (if any), evidence of COVID-19 vaccination compliance must be provided to HNC to comply with the Policy. An exemption may be granted by the HNC CEO on a case-by-case basis where a contract does not require face-to-face patient contact.

HNC is obligated to take reasonable steps to ensure Workers and Providers comply with COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

3.4.5.4 Unsuccessful EOIs

Unsuccessful Participants shall be advised in writing at the earliest opportunity.

3.6 Formal Instrument of Contract

Successful Participants will be provided with two (2) copies of a Formal Instrument of Contract, which is to be executed by the successful Participant within fourteen (14) days of its receipt.

3.7 Participant Warranties

By submitting a EOI, the Participant warrants that:

- i. it did not rely on any express or implied statement, warranty or representation, whether oral, written made by or on behalf of HNC, its officers, employees, agents or advisors other than any statement, warranty or representation expressly contained in the EOI Documents;
- ii. it did not use the improper assistance of HNC's officers, employees, agents or advisors or information inappropriately obtained from HNC in compiling its EOI;
- iii. it has examined the EOI Documents and any other documents referred to or referenced herein, and any other information made available to Participants via Tenderlink at <https://www.tenderlink.com/ncphn/> for the purposes of submitting a EOI;
- iv. it has sought and examined all necessary information and advice which is obtainable by making prudent enquiries relevant to the risks and circumstances affecting its EOI;
- v. it is responsible for all costs and expenses related to the preparation and lodgement of its EOI, any subsequent negotiation and any future process related to the EOI Process;
- vi. it shall not hold HNC liable for any claim regarding any cost, expense, loss or damage whatsoever as a consequence of any matter relating to its participation in the EOI Process including if its EOI is unsuccessful;
- vii. it accepts and has and will comply with these Conditions of Participation;
- x. it will provide additional information in a timely manner as requested by HNC for reasons specified in Clause 3.5.2;
- xi. it will attend an interview or a conference in a timely manner as requested by HNC to discuss matters contained in its EOI;
- viii. it will participate productively in negotiations with HNC should it be called upon to do so pursuant to Clause 3.5.2.1;
- ix. it will submit a Best and Final Offer in a timely manner as requested by HNC should it be called upon to do so pursuant to Clause 3.5.2.2; and

it is satisfied as to the correctness and sufficiency of its EOI.

3.8 HNC's Rights

Without limiting its rights under these Conditions of Participation or under law, HNC reserves the right to:

- i. suspend or cease to proceed with the EOI Process;
- ii. alter the structure and content of the EOI Documents and/or the timing of the EOI or the EOI Process;
- iii. alter any time or date specified in the EOI Documents;
- iv. exclude any EOI received after the EOI Closing Time;

- v. exclude any EOI that doesn't comply with these Conditions of Participation;
 - vi. terminate the participation of any Participant in the EOI Process;
 - vii. require additional information or clarification from any Participant;
 - viii. commence negotiations with all Participants without shortlisting any Participants;
 - ix. shortlist one or more Participants to proceed to further negotiations;
 - x. negotiate with one or more Participants;
 - xi. accept one or more of the EOIs;
 - xii. reject any or all EOIs;
 - xiii. suspend or cease to proceed with the EOI Process; and
- call for new EOIs.