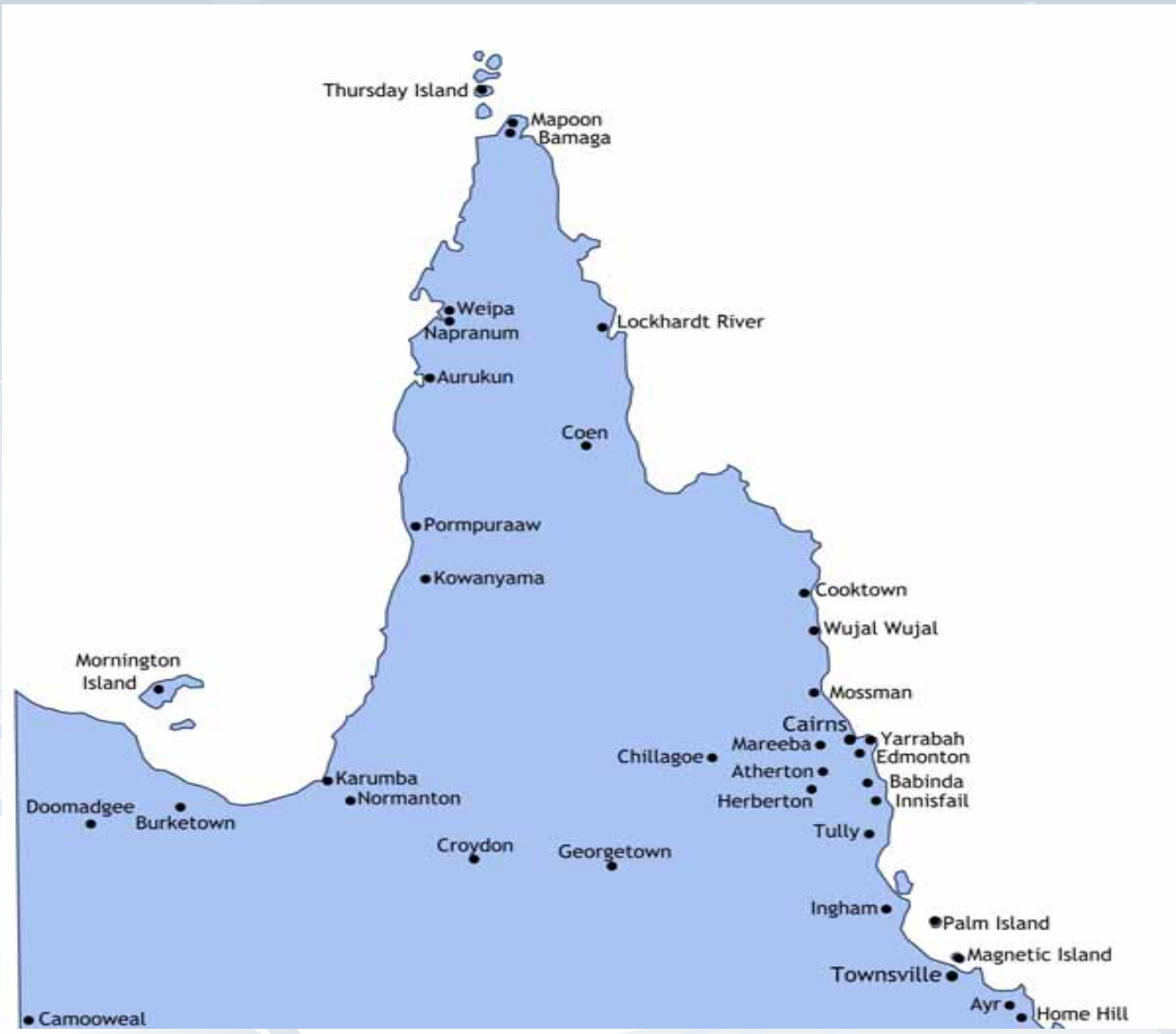


# **ENT Outreach in North Queensland**

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Coordinator**

# Outreach Services Focus

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Far North Queensland (Torres Strait, Nthn Peninsula, Cape York & Cairns) have one of the highest reported prevalence of preventable ENT Diseases
- Also high rates of middle ear disease eg otitis media with effusion and chronic otitis media
- The focus is a Hearing Health Surgical Outreach Service as part of the Northern Zone Hearing Health Program
- Initiatives are directly related to two Queensland Health strategic priorities:
  - Addressing the burden of disease
  - Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health



# Current Situation

- Services are available in these communities. Visits occur twice yearly.
- Previously patients were assessed and surgery was performed in either Cairns, Townsville or Brisbane.
- Waiting lists exist in Cairns for outpatient attendance and subsequent operations.
- ENT Outreach Service started in Cairns two years ago after the resignation of ENT Surgeon at Townsville.

# Services

- ENT outreach is a consultative service with minor procedures being performed in the Weipa, Cooktown and Thursday Island hospitals.
- When in these areas, ENT surgeon advises local GPs and hospital staff on particular cases and provides lectures, training and teaching to QH staff and education to patients.
- The service funded by Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program (MSOAP) a Commonwealth funded initiative is an important part of the total outreach service.
- All equipment is provided by MSOAP and Queensland Health Healthy Hearing Program.

# Pictures taken whilst on Outreach



# Resources & Training

- These locations require an Anaesthetist and Anaesthetic registrar
- All other locations are consultations and assessments therefore requiring only ENT Consultant and Surgical Registrar.
- Upskilling occurs through ‘on-the-job’ training and specific lectures on a case by case basis as required.



## Practical on site Teaching



# Staffing and Admin Costs

- Costs Include travel, accommodation, wages, clinical support and patient correspondence.
- Due to the current shortage of staff, the facilities are unable to provide nurses for these visits with specialist skills in Theatre, Recovery and Day surgery Admission and Discharge nurse so we have to source them from other QH facilities such as Townsville, Brisbane, Cairns etc, in order for this service to be viable.
- An Audiologist from North Queensland Hearing provides hearing tests.

# Effects on Patients

- In the past, patients from these remote areas would be delayed in seeing a specialist so they would have to travel the considerable distance to Cairns or Townsville.
- ENT patients now benefit by not having to travel to large based hospitals such as Cairns and are more likely to attend appointments etc if treated in their own community hospital.



## An ENT Specialist hard at work in the Outpatients Clinic

## **Figures from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006 to Present**

<b>Number of outreach trips</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Number of patients seen:</b>	<b>450</b>

98% of Patients attended for their scheduled surgery

78% of Patients attended their outpatient appointments

# Travel Requirements

- Equipment to the value of \$126,500 was supplied to Townsville hospital from MSOAP and QH funds.
- A charter flight is booked for each trip to carry staff and up to 250kg of equipment.
- This gives us the flexibility to work within our own timeframe eg returning in time to allow certain staff to connect with other flights to return home.

# The Charter



# Photos taken from Rural Hospital



# Equipment taken on Outreach Trips



# Unloading from Bus to Ferry Thursday Island



# Telehealth and ENT

- Telehealth and the ENT Outreach Team collaboratively developed a project plan to implement four Digital Imaging Oscopes
- The sites selected to review this equipment were Cooktown Hospital, Weipa Hospital and Thursday Island Hospital and the RFDS.
- The project commenced in July 2007 and Cooktown's (pilot site) implementation is complete.
- The ENT Outreach Team and Telehealth will be visiting Weipa Hospital in October and are aiming to complete implementation at Weipa Hospital by the end of this visit.
- Thursday Island and RFDS will be targeted and hopefully completed by the end of November.

# Testing the Otoscope



# Project Objectives

- To take digital images of patient tympanic membranes that can be reviewed remotely by the ENT specialist in Cairns.
- To improve the management of waiting lists
- To decrease patient and carer travel and associated travel costs.
- To increase patient attendance thus minimising patients who fail to attend.
- To upskill Rural and Remote Medical Officers in the area of ear disease management.

# Photos taken with the Digital Imaging Otoscope



# Future Enhancements

- In the near future, we are hoping to move towards performing patient review consultations using Real Time Video Conferencing.
- The method allows the ENT Specialist to view the images and conduct the review with the patient in real time.
- This will simplify the process by removing the need to forward and store images in patients' medical records.



# Never a Dull Moment in the North

