



CASE STUDY

Healthy Ageing in Coffs Harbour

Practice Name: Coffs Medical Centre • **Location:** Coffs Harbour, NSW • **MM:** 3

Context

Kayley Meredith (EEN) is a First Nations primary care nurse working in northern New South Wales. Kayley eagerly advocates for nurses and has willingly shared her knowledge and experience at key health forums, including an address to key decision makers at Parliament House. Her leadership has been recognised as a finalist in the Australian Government's 2024 Stronger Medicare Awards.

Healthy North Coast Primary Health Network predicts that there will be a greater proportion of residents aged over 65 in Kayley's region than in any other region in Australia: by 2030, 30% of the population is expected to be over 65 and the number of people over 85 will almost double in the next 20 years.

While working at Coffs Medical Centre, Kayley established a healthy ageing prevention clinic in partnership with APNA's Building Nurse Capacity program. Kayley wanted to do more to support the ageing community, while enhancing her skills in caring for older patients.

A clear plan

Building on her strong background in chronic disease management, the aim of Kayley's clinic was to improve the quality of over 75-year-old health assessments and ensure all nurses performing health assessments demonstrate consistent collaboration and structure.

Funding

Alongside funding from her participation in the Building Nurse Capacity Program (co-sponsored by Healthy North Coast Primary Health Network), Kayley utilised MBS item numbers 701, 703, 705, and 707. Coffs Medical Centre operates primarily on a bulk-billing basis for a significant portion of its patient based, with 90% of its GPs bulk-billing patients over the age of 65. This billing policy underscores a commitment to providing accessible care to the community.

Location and facilities

The Healthy Ageing Clinic is accessible for local patients, who can also choose to have a home visit if they cannot attend the clinic in-person due to mobility issues or other reasons. The value of seeing patients in their own

homes for health assessments is evident, as it allows the nurse to get a full picture of the patient's circumstances.

Staffing and HR

The Healthy Ageing Clinic is a core component of the practice's service delivery and used 29 dedicated nursing hours weekly – highlighting its strategic importance. Registered Nurses provided ongoing professional supervision to Kayley as per NMBA guidelines for Enrolled Nurses.

Best-practice care

The Healthy Ageing Clinic model is a proactive program designed to provide wrap-around care for the community's most vulnerable elderly patients. Kayley's clinic offers a structured, collaborative model and provides a patient-led pathway to care. This model includes a 75+ Health Assessment and Chronic Disease Management (CDM) planning, home visits or consultations within Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) on behalf of the GP, assisting patients and their families to navigate the My Aged Care system, and patient education and health promotion.



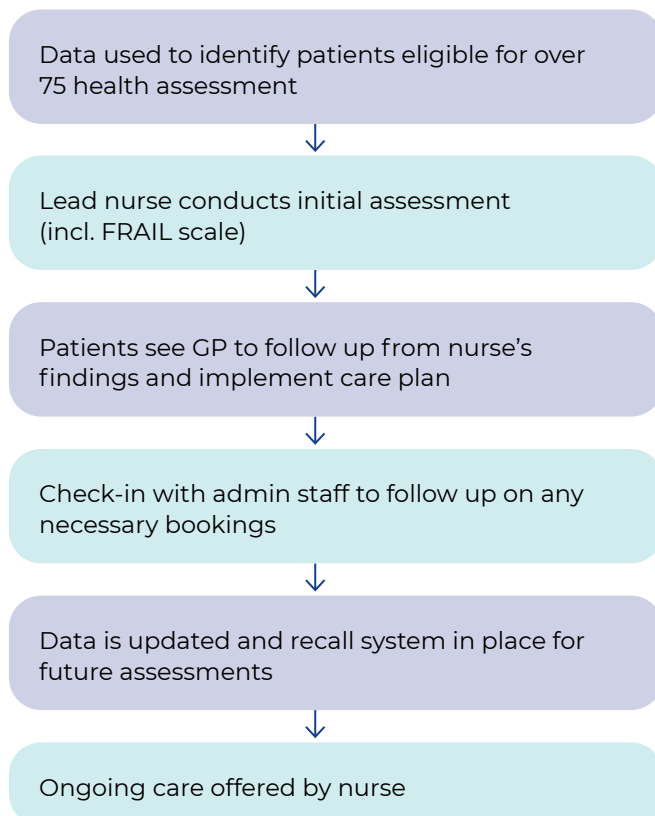
We acknowledge the Gumbaynggirr people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands featured in this story and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Patient engagement

The clinic takes a proactive, person-centred approach to patient care, adapting to suit patient needs while working towards greater health equity. Kayley provides home visits and expert guidance through the My Aged Care system, ensuring patients feel supported as they age, and improving patient outcomes. A patient's engagement with the clinic is a comprehensive experience that takes approximately 2.5 hours of coordinated team time.

This model's primary focus is on community-based patients, with an emphasis on reaching people who face barriers to accessing healthcare, including limited transport and/or mobility issues. This service also extends to patients in local Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs).

Supporting systems and processes



Evaluation and improvement

Since its inception in August 2024, Kayley's clinic has seen over 900 patients and provided the local ageing population with vital healthcare. The demand for this service is exceptionally high, with the service running eight sessions per week.

“Nurses are at the forefront, delivering holistic care that extends beyond traditional general practice, and the clinic's success demonstrates that innovative, nurse-led models can both meet urgent community health needs and ensure long-term financial sustainability.”

Kayley Meredith, Lead Nurse

APNA's Building Nurse Capacity Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing under the Nursing in Primary Health Care Program.