

## **Partnership to help country kids thrive**

James Cook University is entering into a partnership with Thriving Queensland Kids Queensland, in a new collaboration designed to help children, young people, and families in rural, regional and remote Queensland.

JCU will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP) to formalise their partnership through the Thriving Queensland Kids Country Collaborative initiative.

The Director of the Cairns Institute, Distinguished Professor Stewart Lockie, said the MOU signifies an important step towards achieving JCU's vision for North Queensland.

“TQKP is working to bring together communities organisations, governments, higher education and philanthropies through practical, community and systems-level initiatives,” said Professor Lockie.

He said the new initiative is being delivered with support from The John Villiers Trust (JVT) and Tim Fairfax Family Foundation.

JVT CEO, Lea-Anne Bradley, said the organisation is delighted to partner with the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation to support the Thriving Queensland Kids Country Collaborative.

“Deep, positive change takes time. It takes strong connections and partnerships – with funders, local organisations, and most importantly, communities themselves,” said Ms Bradley.

TQKP Convenor Michael Hogan, said the organisation is excited to be working with JCU.

“The aim is to bring people together who are passionate about enabling country Queensland kids to thrive. There is plenty we can do to help our systems work well for kids and their caregivers and communities to flourish,” said Mr Hogan.

He said the new body will work with rural and regional leaders and organisations to support work to strengthen integrated child, family and youth services, enable place-based community-led efforts, build workforce capabilities, and develop and scale innovative services and supports for families and children in regional Queensland.

The MoU includes the Cairns Institute hosting of Partnership Officer Jacinta Perry, who leads the Country Collaborative, and Professor Allan Dale’s contribution as chair of the Country Collaborative Strategic Leadership Committee.

“This will create a stronger voice for our regional and rural communities about policies, programs and actions that will deliver better outcomes for our kids.

“This formal collaboration highlights the potential for further joint research and project-based initiatives to progress regional development in Queensland communities,” said Professor Dale.

The formal signing of the MoU will take place this Friday, November 10, 2023, at JCU’s Smithfield Campus in Cairns. Please see accompanying media alert if you wish to attend.

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