



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HEALTH

Year in Review

2024

Metro North
Health



Queensland
Government

Acknowledgement of Country

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team pays respect to the Dalungbara/Djoondaburri, Kabi Kabi, Jagera/Yuggera/ Ugarapul, Jinibara/Jiniburi, Ninghi, Turrbal and Undumbi people of Metro North Hospital and Health Service area, on who's lands we walk, work, talk and live. We also acknowledge and pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders both past and present.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that this publication may contain images or names of people who have passed away.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team

If you have any feedback regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team services, programs and initiatives, you can contact the following:

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On the front cover:

Better Together artwork by Elaine Chambers-Hegarty

BETTER TOGETHER

A BETTER LIFESTYLE THROUGH OUR HEALTH CARERS

BY ELAINE CHAMBERS-HEGARTY



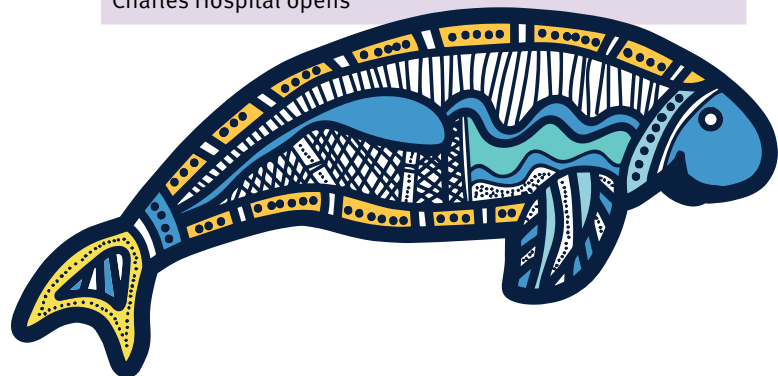
My design has the inspiration of the Moreton Bay region, and concentrates on the Closing the Gap Plan and what it delivers for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community and the positive outcome it brings to the health and wellbeing of our mob.

Four icons that flow across the artwork, shows a timeline from the care and strong start to life when a child is born, then onto a healthy heart beat and hands to embrace showing the care of our people to influence a healthy lifestyle to reduce the burden of disease. The next icon shows the tree and represents growth and complex care of those in need. There are two message stick symbols that represent the communication with cultural awareness given from the staff during times of crisis. Whilst the the last icon which has the medical cross and the shape above of a gunya to represent care at home or elsewhere, and living longer with the care provided, taking into account the social, emotional, and mental wellbeing of clients and their families.

Circle markings represent the gathering areas and the coming together in community. The crosshatching in my artwork represents the structure and support of the policies established amongst the plan - similar to the crosshatchings on a weaving and how it all holds combines together. Whilst the middle image of the people show them as enjoying the healthy outcomes. I have added the two animals that are relevant to this area, and was a food source for the people many years ago.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

Achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by 2031 is a key priority for Metro North Health.

We remain committed to actively eliminating racial discrimination within the service, improving access to healthcare services, influencing the social, cultural, and economic determinants of health, and partnering with consumers to co-design health services.

In 2024, several new services and programs have been introduced and already they are achieving exceptional outcomes for our community. These include the Deadly Feet program expansion, post-op rehabilitation services including heart and lung rehabilitation service, women's business shared pathways, HOPE and UROC programs.

Two community consultation sessions were held as part of the health equity journey and we have a clear roadmap on where more focus is required on our Failure to Attend rates for outpatient appointments, potentially preventable hospitalisations for non-diabetes related conditions and increase needed in antenatal appointments for the first trimester.

Building our workforce and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff has been key in 2024. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program was launched, and new governance introduced to ensure we are supporting the growth across all areas. We have welcomed pivotal leadership roles including the first Metro North Health Mental Health Director

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and a Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health at Queensland's largest tertiary hospital, The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. The Deadly Start Program and First Nations Cadetship Program (formerly known as the Indigenous Cadetship Program) continue to achieve amazing outcomes and provide a clear pathway to employment in health.

To achieve health equity Metro North Health continues to build and establish partnerships with community-controlled organisations to deliver opportunistic health outreach services and collaboration opportunities. This includes the Letter of Intent established with Koobara Kindy to deliver health prevention and early intervention programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families that supports strong start to life and focuses on holistic wellbeing.

Co-naming our Satellite Hospitals was an exciting first for our hospital and health service and is one step in the right direction to including Traditional Owners of the local land in the planning process of a health service facility, but also pays recognition to local culture and honours Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First People and their connection to the land. A lot of work is happening in this space for future infrastructure projects across Metro North Health.

A momentous and historic occasion took place at Redcliffe Hospital where Metro North Health formally acknowledged the history of using stolen wages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to build the hospital. The culturally significant event was an important moment for Metro North Health and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners, Elders, Community, and staff. We are one of the first Hospital and Health Services within the State to formally acknowledge and have a permanent apology plaque placed at the front of the hospital.

As we prepare for the next phase of the *Health Equity Strategy 2025–2028*, I would like to acknowledge the unwavering commitment from the Metro North Health Board, Chief Executive Jackie Hanson, Chief Operating Officer Jane Hancock, and Executive Leaders to support our vision and direction with health equity.

Thank you to Elders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, partnership organisations and staff who continue to walk this important journey alongside us and to co-design positive change with us.

This report will be formally launched at our final Health Equity Showcase for the year on 28 November. I look forward to thanking you in person and encourage you to take the time to reflect on the stories and voices of our community within this report.

Until next time, stay safe and deadly.

Sherry Holzapfel
Executive Director
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S FOOTPRINTS



JANUARY

- **22 January** – Elders Yarns with Sherry



MARCH

- **4 March** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team Health Equity Implementation Workshop
- **11 – 29 March** – Acting as Metro North Health Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer
- **15 March** – Metro North Close the Gap Day Event



FEBRUARY

- **15 – 16 February** – HardyGroup Executive Learning Course
- **26 February** – Executive Welcome at Redcliffe Hospital All Staff Orientation
- **26 February** – Elders Yarns with Sherry
- **27 February** – First Nations Health Leads Forum
- **28 February** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team Planning Day



APRIL

- **4 April** – Yarns with Sherry at The Prince Charles Hospital
- **17 April** – Health Equity Community Consultation – Session 1
- **18 – 19 April** – Senior Executive Team Relationship Building
- **22 April** – Executive Welcome at The Prince Charles Hospital All Staff Gathering
- **22 April** – Elders Yarns with Sherry – RBWH Robotic Demonstration





MAY

- **16 – 17 May** - HardyGroup Executive Learning Course
- **24 May** – Presenting at Queensland Ambulance Service Cultural Safety Forum
- **27 May** – Caboolture Hospital National Sorry Day and Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum & National Reconciliation Week Event
- **27 May** – Elders Yarns with Sherry
- **28 May** – First Nations Health Leads Forum
- **29 May** – Redcliffe Hospital Acknowledgement of Stolen Wages Plaque Unveiling Event
- **30 May** – Heart Outreach Program for Health Equity (HOPE) clinic launch and IUIH Contract Signing Event
- **31 May** – Unveiling of Bribie Island Satellite Hospital Co-Name (Yarun) and Community Yarning Circle



JUNE

- **6 June** – Yarns with Sherry at Caboolture Hospital
- **12 June** – Executive Presentation at Indigenous Cadetship Showcase
- **24 June** – Board First Nations Health Equity Committee
- **25 June** – First Nations Health Leads Forum
- **26 June** – Elders Yarns with Sherry
- **27 June** – Metro North Health Equity Showcase – Session 1





JULY

- **5 July** – NAIDOC Week Vidcast with Chief Executive
- **9 July** – Department of Health 2024 NAIDOC Breakfast
- **9 July** – The Prince Charles Hospital NAIDOC Week Community and Staff Gathering
- **9 July** – NAIDOC Palliative Care Premier Screening
- **9 July** – Celebrating Blak Excellence at UQ Poche NAIDOC Seminar
10 July – NAIDOC Week Breakfast Event with Faculty of Medicine at UQ
- **10 July** – Caboolture Hospital NAIDOC Week Celebration
- **11 July** – Metro North Health NAIDOC Elders Luncheon
15 July - Wisdom Council for Indigenous Knowledges Event with Faculty of Medicine at UQ
- **22 July** – Metro North Strong Start to Life and Koobara Kindy Signing of Intent
22 July – Elders Yarns with Sherry
- **30 July** – First Nations Leads Forum



AUGUST

- **5 – 6 August** – Director-General Joint First Nations Forum in Cairns
- **7 August** – Metro North Yarning with Doctors Event at The Prince Charles Hospital
- **15 – 16 August** – HardyGroup Executive Learning Course - Cairns
- **27 August** – First Nations Health Leads Forum



SEPTEMBER

- **4 September** – 2024 Herston Health Precinct Symposium
- **5 September** – 2024 Metro North Health Research Excellence Awards
- **9 September** – The Prince Charles Hospital Crisis Stabilisation Unit Cultural Event/Smoking Ceremony
- **16 September** – Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry Ceremonial Hearing
- **19 September** – Guest speaker on behalf of Indigenous Knowledge Council at 2024 Medical Conference
- **19 September** – Wisdom Council for Indigenous Knowledges Event with Faculty of Medicine at UQ
- **23 September** – Board First Nations Health Equity Committee
- **24 September** – First Nations Health Leads Forum
- **24 September** – Elders Yarns with Sherry



OCTOBER

- **3 October** – Yarns with Sherry at Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS)
- **28 October** – Elders Yarns with Sherry
- **29 October** – First Nations Health Leads Forum
- **29 – 31 October** – CATSINaM Conference - Perth



NOVEMBER

- **14 – 15 November** – HardyGroup Executive Learning Course
- **19 November** – Executive Leadership Program Graduation
- **22 November** – Metro North Health Staff Excellence Awards
- **26 November** – First Nations Health Leads Forum
- **28 November** – Metro North Health Equity Showcase – Session 2
- **29 November** – Elders Yarns with Sherry



DECEMBER

- **5 December** – Yarns with Sherry at Redcliffe Hospital
- **5 December** – Metro North Better Together Staff Gathering



KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

160 HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGES



shared via the Better Together - Our Health, Our Way social media platforms

36

STUDENTS GRADUATE THE DEADLY START PROGRAM

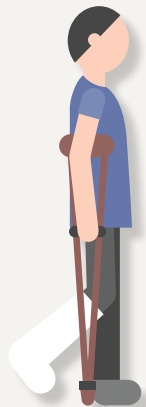
Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (MOHR) headcount, for 2023/2024 financial year has increased from

389 to 465



Number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients accessing Metro North Health (FY 23-24)

OUTPATIENTS 82,942



Birth rates FY 2023/24

494
Aboriginal and/or

Torres Strait Islander Women who gave birth in Metro North facilities

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Babies born in Metro North facilities

741



INPATIENT 19,756



EMERGENCY 22,578



HEALTH EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

Messages in a Coolamon

At the conclusion of each Health Equity Forum, Executive Director Sherry Holzapfel invites attendees to share a message in a coolamon.

This practice provides a culturally safe space for community to share their feedback openly and honestly on our efforts towards the health equity journey.

Enclosed is some of the feedback we have received via a coolamon in 2024.

“Fantastic Showcase, I really enjoyed everything about the event. Thank you for the work you are doing and the challenges you continue to implement. We still have a way to go but the future looks brighter.”

“Very informative, enjoyed listening and learning about what everyone at Metro North Health is doing with helping clients.”

“More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.”

“Thank you for a fantastic day. Always enjoy listening and learning. We need more people like Jackie Hanson who is very much committed to our continued health improvement.”

“Every patient is different /unique, keep consulting, keep listening.”

“Very impressive with the Health Equity report.”

“I feel assurance that taking care of and looking at the needs of mob is moving in a positive direction. I am grateful for what is happening in this space.”

“The momentum is impressive.”

“The commitment to our future kids is incredible. This is what fills our hearts.”

“Excited to see various collaboration with the community-controlled health service and I can’t wait to see more of them.”

“Love coming to Health Equity. Learn something every time.”

“Thank you for filling my cup, we still have a way to go but we can journey together.”

“Deadly Day, it just proves if we do health our way it works with a little sprinkle of white way.”

“Inspirational, what amazing things that are making mob healthy.”

Metro North Health Equity Outcomes Report 2022–23

Achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by 2031 is a key priority for Metro North Health. We are committed to keeping the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community informed and updated on our progression towards health equity.

This report card provides a visual summary on the key areas we are on track, those heading in the right direction and the measures needing further work. Please note, this is a summary report only and the full outcomes report can be downloaded from our website.

Measures on track

Action 2.1 A
Potentially Preventable Hospitalisations – First Nations peoples: Diabetes complications.

PREVENTABLE HOSPITALISATIONS – DIABETES COMPLICATIONS HAS DECREASED BY 0.2% TO 2.3%.

A FURTHER 0.2% DECREASE IS NEEDED TO REACH OUR TARGET OF 2.1%.



Action 2.9 E
Women pregnant with a First Nations baby, and First Nations women who delivered baby at full term.

BABIES DELIVERED AT FULL TERM HAVE INCREASED BY 1% TO 91.1%.

A FURTHER 1.8% INCREASE IS NEEDED TO REACH OUR TARGET OF 92.9%.



Action 2.1 A
Metro North Health aims to increase the % of completed general courses of oral health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers.

COMPLETED GENERAL COURSES OF ORAL HEALTH CARE HAVE INCREASED BY 7,099 OCCASIONS TO 22,872.

WE HAVE EXCEEDED OUR TARGET BY 6,941 OCCASIONS.



Action 2.9 E
Increased proportion of First Nations babies born to First Nations mothers and non-First Nations mothers with healthy birthweights.

HEALTHY BIRTHWEIGHTS HAVE INCREASED BY 2.5% TO 92%.

WE HAVE EXCEEDED OUR TARGET OF >91% BY 1%.



Action 4.3 F
Increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce across all workforce streams.

METRO NORTH HEALTH HAVE RECORDED A 25% INCREASE IN THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WORKFORCE.



THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WORKFORCE CURRENTLY SITS AT 1.88% (455 STAFF MEMBERS).

Metro North Health



Queensland Government

Measures heading in the right direction

Action 2.9 E
Metro North Health aims to increase the % of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women stopping smoking whilst pregnant.

15.7% OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN HAVE STOPPED SMOKING WHILST PREGNANT, REACHING 45.3%. 

A FURTHER 54.7% DECREASE IN SMOKING IS NEEDED TO REACH OUR TARGET OF 100%. 

Action 3.2 A
Decrease in number and proportion of “did not wait” in Emergency Department.



'DID NOT WAIT' OCCASIONS HAVE DECREASED BY 0.6% TO 5.5%.

A FURTHER 2.3% DECREASE IS NEEDED TO REACH OUR TARGET OF 3.2%. 

Measures not on track

Action 2.2 B, C and D
Reduced Failed to Attend (FTAs) outpatient appointment.

'FAILED TO ATTEND' RATES HAVE INCREASED BY 0.1% TO 10.3%.

A 1.3% DECREASE IS NEEDED TO REACH OUR TARGET OF 9%. 

Action 2.9 E
Women pregnant with First Nations baby and First Nations women, whose first antenatal visit is in the first trimester.

ANTENATAL VISITS WITHIN THE FIRST TRIMESTER HAVE INCREASED BY 0.1% TO 82.7%.

A FURTHER 17.3% INCREASE IS NEEDED TO REACH OUR TARGET OF 100%. 

Action 2.5 A
Potentially Preventable Hospitalisations (PPH) – non-diabetes related conditions.

PREVENTABLE HOSPITALISATIONS – NON-DIABETES RELATED CONDITIONS HAVE INCREASED BY 0.5% TO 8.9%.

A 1.5% DECREASE IS NEEDED TO REACH OUR TARGET OF 7.4%. 



The full copy of the Metro North Health Outcomes Report can be accessed via the following QR Code. If you have any questions regarding this report or require further information, contact the Health Equity Team:

HealthEquityMNH@health.qld.gov.au (07) 3139 3235.

<https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity>



SCAN HERE 

PARTNERSHIP AND MODELS OF CARE

Working together for our jarjums

An official partnership agreement has been formed between Metro North Hospital and Health Service (Metro North Health) and Koobara Kindergarten and Pre-prep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation to provide health prevention and early intervention programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

The agreement confirms a commitment between the organisations to provide opportunistic healthcare access that encompasses holistic wellbeing for jarjums (children) and their families.

Metro North Health Chief Executive, Jackie Hanson, Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Sherry Holzapfel, and Koobara Kindy Co-Director, Gloria Rankine met earlier this year to do an official signing of the Letter of Intent agreement. The Letter of Intent highlights both organisations commitment to work together and contribute positively to early health outcomes, reducing the burden of disease, reducing risk factors, and managing chronic disease in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The Metro North Health Strong Start to Life team were key instigators in the formation of this partnership, and continuously advocate for working with community and building strong and lasting relationships to co-design services that improve continuity of care models, supporting timely interventions for women, babies and children that reinforces cultural knowledge, and provide improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children, and their families.

“The Strong Start to Life team are excited about the partnership with Koobara Kindy. Koobara Kindy provides a culturally responsive space for our families to grow together in their child’s learning, and this partnership will provide health promotion and screening opportunities to ensure our kids have a strong start in their education journey,” said Tara Denaro, Clinical Nurse Consultant and Manager of the Strong Start to Life Team.

Amendments to the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* and the *Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2012* have created the strongest public health system legislation ever enacted in Queensland Health’s history by requiring Hospital and Health Services to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to design, deliver and monitor the delivery of healthcare in Queensland.



(L-R): Jackie Hanson, Metro North Health Chief Executive, Gloria Rankine, Koobara Kindy Co-Director and Sherry Holzapfel, Metro North Health Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health pictured with signed Letter of Intent.

In 2022 Metro North Health were the first hospital and health service to release their *Health Equity Strategy 2022 – 2025* that outlines their pledge to increase access to healthcare services and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and organisations to deliver health services that reflect the voices of their community.

“It is important that Metro North Health continues to build and establish partnerships between community led organisations and community to deliver opportunistic health outreach services and collaboration opportunities. This is one of the key ways we can achieve health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

“I am proud of the progress we continue to make as an organisation in building and strengthening relationships with our community partners and working towards improving health outcomes for our mob,” said Sherry Holzapfel, Executive Director of Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

In response to the established partnership, multiple screening clinics and health promotion activities were held at Koobara Kindy throughout 2024 in connection with Metro North Health’s Better Together Health Van and Strong Start to Life team. The Better Together Health Van provided ongoing support to the Metro North Health Deadly Smiles team and Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (UIH) audiologist to run fun and educational activities to jarjums in the Kindy classes and playgroup, while conducting health screening to support early health intervention and prevention.

Our Journey Towards Health Equity Funding Program

Several projects have been selected as part of the 'Our Journey Towards Health Equity Funding' program aimed at strengthening efforts towards achieving health parity by 2031 and prioritising actions to achieving equity in healthcare and service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The program was initiated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team to enable greater flexibility for direct funding to operationalise the health equity key performance actions, strengthen performance and reporting accountabilities, support service development through funding allocation and influence change and improvements within and across the health service.

The following successful projects will enhance efforts towards achieving health equity parity -

- Building capacity to address institutional racism and implement Cultural Capability Framework.
- Growing Community Connections – Diabetes Wellness.
- Provide accessible and culturally safe kidney care.
- Ngarrama Redcliffe Midwifery Group.
- Expansion of Health Workers in Emergency at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Executive Director, Sherry Holzapfel, said she was highly impressed by the calibre of the applications received, as well as the passion and dedication demonstrated in addressing service gaps to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within Metro North Health.

"The many innovative and value-based service improvement initiatives that aligned with the *Metro North Health Equity Strategy 2022–2025* made the shortlisting process particularly challenging.

"The key theme of Our Journey Towards Health Equity Funding Program includes co-designing and joint decision making with community. Shortlisted applicants were required to pitch their project or initiatives to members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Oversight Committee and community members.

"I'd like to acknowledge and thank Elders Aunty Denise Proud, Uncle George Elarde, Aunty Patricia Elarde, and Aunty Florence Ash, for their contributions to this process.

"I look forward to working with the successful applicants and to see the projects implemented to improve health outcomes," Sherry said.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMS:



Building capacity to address institutional racism and implement Cultural Capability Framework

The initiative aims to reform existing practices within Metro North Health to effectively confront institutional racism and elevate cultural respect and recognition.

The overall goal of the project is to create a more equitable and inclusive healthcare environment within Metro North Health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities.

The project will establish a dedicated team consisting of a Capacity Development Manager, two senior project officers and a support officer, with the aim to –

- Strengthen Cultural Respect and Recognition.
- Empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- Engage with our communities.
- Eliminate Institutional Racism.

The first phase of the project plan development will be engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities, Traditional Owners, and relevant stakeholders as a priority. This includes conducting consultations, focus groups, and workshops to gather insights and feedback.



Growing Community Connections – Diabetes Wellness

Diabetes is a significant and growing issue with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have 3x greater rates of diabetes, are 4x more likely to be hospitalised with diabetes related complications and are 5x more likely to suffer premature death related to this condition.

Effective diabetes management is vitally important to reduce the burden of disease and ensure positive long term health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The project will develop and implement a culturally appropriate healthcare pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes, featuring tailored outpatient appointments, processes, and consultations.

The model of care will incorporate Indigenous Health Workers (IHW) who possess a unique capacity to bridge the cultural divides often encountered in conventional healthcare delivery systems.

The goal is to deliver culturally appropriate comprehensive diabetes care closer to home and improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients through enhanced engagement with the Community and Oral Health diabetes service. The project aims to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander diabetes patients failing to engage with the diabetes service and therefore positively impact on their short and long-term health and wellbeing.



Provide accessible and culturally safe kidney care

Nationally there is significant health inequity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with kidney disease.

Over the last 12 months the Metro North Kidney Health Service cared for 5,463 individuals, with 253 of those patients identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

The Metro North Kidney Health Service 18-month project will:

- Develop, implement, and evaluate an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Kidney Service Health Worker model.
- Co-design accessible and culturally safe kidney care in Metro North Health and implement service improvements.
- Improve cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and staff.
- Increase the cultural capability of the Kidney Health workforce.
- The development of the Kidney Services Health Worker model will be founded on co-design and consultation, with two identified health worker positions.

The dedicated male and female positions for men's business and women's business will make a significant improvement in cultural safety for kidney patients and their communities.



Expansion of Health Workers in Emergency at RBWH

The initiative aims to significantly expand the First Nations Health Worker (FNHW) role within the Emergency & Trauma Centre (ETC) at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH).

The goal is to improve cultural safety and patient outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in the ETC by expanding the FNHW roles to cover more shifts, including evenings and weekends.

The project will also see the introduction of a Nurse Navigator to join the Working Together to Connect Care Team. This structured approach aims to reduce Did Not Wait's (DNW) and Left After Treatment Commenced (LATC) rates and builds a stronger, culturally aware health service that can better meet the needs of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.



Ngarrama Redcliffe Midwifery Group

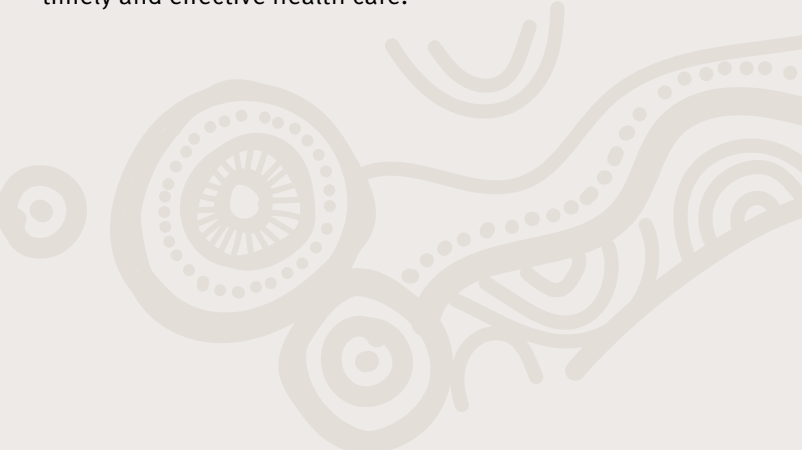
Evidence supports continuity of care as the gold standard in maternity care and is recognised in the Growing Deadly Families Strategy and Metro North Health Equity Strategy as being integral to providing cultural and clinical safety for mothers, babies, and families.

Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) working collaboratively with Advanced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, medical and allied health services is the main model of care which provides women with a known carer throughout pregnancy, birth and up to 6 weeks postnatal.

Within Metro North Health, access to MGP for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is currently limited to Ngarrama maternity services at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and Caboolture Hospital.

The project will establish an MGP for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families accessing Redcliffe Hospital for maternity care.

The project aims to provide a culturally safe model of care which supports and enables women to access timely and effective health care.





BreastScreen group bookings

BreastScreen Queensland (BSQ) Brisbane Northside Service continues to partner with the Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Strathpine clinic to facilitate group bookings.

Since commencing in October 2022, the Sistas Shawl initiative has seen breast screening rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women residing in Brisbane North steadily rise.

The ladies who recently attended the special group booking are proud to have their photo shared in the hopes that it will encourage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to prioritise their health and wellbeing and book in for a free and quick breast screen.

One of the ladies shared her experience afterwards via the Better Together – Our Health, Our Way social media platform:

“I have seen so many of our women pass away from cancer, some very close to me. So I have been focusing on my health lately getting all the checks, thankfully my results came back with all clear but many don’t, so I encourage everyone to get your checks it’s so important and remember prevention is better than cure always.”

“For me this was a special time to have a breast screen done. Because it was done in a safe way, morning tea was provided and we got these beautiful shawls, it was a space just us Murri yinarr can be ourselves! We joked and laughed about our experience it was so good in many ways.”

A breast screen is recommended every two years for those aged 50 – 74, with free screening also available for women in their 40s and those over 75 years.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attending for a breast screen.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services leading the way

Throughout 2024, Metro North Health commenced multiple key services in partnership with community health organisations to provide ease of access and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in their healthcare journey.

Use the QR codes or links below to watch some of the exciting new initiatives, as well as a couple of ongoing initiatives, that have been initiated as part of the health equity agenda.



**Our Health, Our Way:
Co-design and
collaboration success**

<https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity/stakeholders>



**Better Together
Medication Access
Program**

<https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van/btma>



HEALTH PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Satellite Hospitals co-named

Caboolture, Kallangur, and Bribie Island Satellite Hospitals have all been proudly co-named with the Kabi Kabi Traditional Owners as part of the Queensland Government's ongoing commitment to recognising Queensland's shared history with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The official endorsed names are as follows:

Caboolture Satellite Hospital (Kabul)



The name 'Kabulture' meaning place of the carpet snake in Turrbal dialect. 'Kabul' – meaning carpet snake, 'ture' – meaning place of.

Kallangur Satellite Hospital (Kalangoor)



The name Kalangoor originates from the Kabi Kabi – Undambi dialect 'Kalangoor' meaning a goodly or satisfactory place.

Bribie Island Satellite Hospital (Yarun)



The name Yarun originates from the Kabi Kabi and Djoondoburri people – Oondoo dialect 'Yarun' meaning crab or hunting ground.

Metro North Health Community and Engagement Officer, Rayna Cowburn led the consultation with the Kabi Kabi Traditional Owners and said the co-names provide respect to the Traditional Owners of which the Satellite Hospitals are located, providing a greater awareness and respect amongst the community.

“Our intention is to establish meaningful and respectful partnerships with Traditional Owners to ensure culturally appropriate service delivery, a respect for Country and land and a connection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and communities accessing our hospitals and facilities,” Rayna said.

“Adoption of the co-names will assist in the preservation and promotion of Aboriginal language and promotes a deeper understanding of the culture and history associated with the Kabi Kabi, Turrbal, and Undambi and Djoondoburri peoples’ dialects.”

The new co-names will appear on facility signage and across patient communication. The traditional names will complement artworks displayed within the three satellite hospitals commissioned with local Kabi Kabi Traditional Owner artists.



Member for Pumistone, Ali King, Kabi Kabi Traditional Owner, Aunty Leisha Krause, Metro North Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Sherry Holzappel, Metro North Caboolture/Kilcoy Hospital and Woodford Corrections (CKW) Executive Director, Karlene Willcocks and Manager of CKW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Tracy Grant, unveiling the Bribie Satellite Hospital Co-name.



Young visitors engaging with James Doyle's art at the Caboolture Satellite Hospital (Kabul).

Aboriginal Design and Cultural Safety go Hand-In-Hand

The walls, windows, paving and gardens of the three Metro North satellite hospitals are providing a unique canvas for cultural and physical healing.

Local Kabi Kabi Traditional Owner artists were commissioned to design a mural for each facility, with key design aspects of it weaving throughout building features like walls and windows.

Kallangur Satellite Hospital (Kalangoor) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services Nurse Navigator Trina Scott said that by incorporating artwork into the facility, it shows respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their communities, and their cultures.

"The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service is a new service unique to the three Metro North Satellite Hospitals which provides a culturally safe space for health services to conduct assessments, provide education and improve access to care," said Trina.

"By delivering our service in a culturally safe space, the community feels comfortable engaging with us and this helps to achieve better health outcomes."

About The Metro North Satellite Hospital Murals

Caboolture Satellite Hospital (Kabul) – A story of continuity and healing by artist James Doyle – Kabi Kabi descendant

Kallangur Satellite Hospital (Kalangoor) – A story of fire and healing by artist Brittney Bond – Kabi Kabi descendant

Bribie Island Satellite Hospital (Yarun) – A story of people and the sea by artist Melissa Bond – Kabi Kabi descendant

KABI KABI COUNTRY
(BRIBIE SITE)
MELISSA BOND



A story of people and the sea by artist Melissa Bond. The Sea connects us and is an abundance for food. The Cypress pine reminds us that the environment heals, Shell middens shows us that our people were here since the time immemorial, and remind us of the importance of healthy food for a healthy life.

KABI KABI COUNTRY
(KALLANGUR SITE)
BRITTNEY BOND



A story of fire and healing by artist Brittney Bond. This is a story of fire and healing, we find and collect the leaves of the Scribbly Gum for the fire sticks to carry the flames and light the way and let the smoke cleanse the land and heal our people.

KABI KABI COUNTRY
(CABOOLTURE SITE)
JAMES DOYLE



A story of continuity and healing by artist James Doyle. The name Caboolture comes from the language words Kabul-tur meaning place of the carpet snake. The snake winds like the Caboolture River that flows out and connects to Moreton Bay. The Moreton Bay Fig leaf has healing properties that have been used since time immemorial and the sun marks the beginning of the new day.

Ngarrama Yarns

Metro North Health have been providing continuity of maternity care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families for over 10 years.



Ngarrama, meaning Guardian Birth Spirit, is a maternity service dedicated to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families choosing to birth at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Caboolture Hospital and Redcliffe Hospital.

As part of the service, Metro North Health Strong Start to Life project team and Ngarrama Maternity Services have joined together to run antenatal and postnatal yarning sessions to provide wrap around support for families, talking about all things pregnancy, birthing and babies.

"Ngarrama Yarns provides a culturally safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families to meet with staff and other families to ask questions and seek support related to their pregnancy, birthing, and parenting journey.

"The yarns have evolved over time in response to feedback from families, that they wanted a more relaxed and flexible way of receiving health education that meet their specific needs. They wanted real stories that not only include education, but also embeds culture where there is no judgement, and everyone is an expert in their own lives. They wanted a space where women and families could build social connections and friendships," said Tara Denaro, Clinical Nurse Consultant of Strong Start to Life team.

In response to feedback received, the sessions address topics that are requested by the families in an open forum where everyone can provide support to one another. Ngarrama Yarns offers women and families a place to come and have a cuppa and a snack while doing weaving, painting rocks or onesies and making jewellery, while yarning similar to traditional ways.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, Midwives, Child Health Nurses and Social Workers attend to provide insight and guidance to families with other supports, such as dietetics and physiotherapy, attending when needed.

The yarning sessions, which are held once a fortnight during school terms in Nundah and Deception Bay, have provided a platform for new mothers and families to form special bonds and ongoing friendships.



"Several women have made friendships and connections and have gone on to create mothers' groups outside the yarns. Some women who had limited family support have found new friends and been welcomed into their families. There has been an increase in families engaging with Child Health in the yarns that include our Child health Nurse. Overall, families report that they have enjoyed the sessions with the opportunity to yarn about many topics, and to feel like they are being heard and that they are not alone in their experiences.

"Anyone can attend the yarns, whether they are currently pregnant or have had their baby. Partners and other support people are also welcome, as are children. We do recognise that we discuss Women's Business and we request families to let us know if it makes them uncomfortable, if so we will make alternative arrangement for them. We are also happy for community Elders to join as well and encourage this so that our new families can learn from their experiences," Tara said.

For more information about the Ngarrama Yarns sessions and how to access, families can contact their Ngarrama Health Worker or Midwife.

Contact us

Ngarrama Maternity Services:

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital: **0417 419 302**

Redcliffe Hospital: **0455 087 263**

Caboolture Hospital: **0447 307 411**



MENTAL HEALTH



Metro North Health's First Identified Mental Health Director

Metro North Health has welcomed the first Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health within the organisation.

Through high level cultural leadership and guidance, Aboriginal woman Penny Dale will lead the new role and drive enhancement initiatives relating to the improvement of social and emotional wellbeing, and mental health and alcohol and other drugs outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the hospital and health service.

“My vision is that Metro North Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Services are accessible, responsive and safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and where cultural values, strengths and differences are recognised. A focus is to work with consumers/patients, families, Elders and community to build culturally grounded, safe, and responsive mental health and alcohol and other drugs systems for safe and high-quality care, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional and mental health wellbeing journeys,” Penny said.

Penny has extensive experience in health, mental health and social justice fields at the local, statewide and national level with a passion for influencing social justice health outcomes and improving equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Since commencing in September, Penny has found the role to be exciting and challenging all at once, with a genuine opportunity to represent her community and provide community with a voice in the health sector. While in the role Penny will continue to advocate and ensure community are involved in the co-design and collaboration of services, and provide an opportunity to have a say in how healthcare is delivered.

Another key challenge Penny is eager to address is the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into the workforce. Metro North Mental Health is working hard at developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions to deliver sustainable, culturally safe and responsive healthcare services.

“I feel a weight of responsibility to get this right and to ensure we are directing funding and delivering culturally safe services where they are needed most.

“I see this role as a big challenge but an even greater opportunity,” Penny said.

Metro North Mental Health Leadership value and respect the need to improve mental health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The health service has a key focus and commitment on improving mental health and wellbeing, and equity of health outcomes.

“The mental health service is a large dynamic place with a number of really innovative work that is being co-designed and co-created with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This includes authentic yarning groups that are culturally safe for truth telling, ensuring that the voice of community is valued. There is a strong focus on embedding connection to culture in mental health care settings and services to promote healing and wellbeing.

“The opening of The Prince Charles Hospital Nujum Jawa Crisis Stabilisation Unit is such an exciting first for Metro North Mental Health. The service was informed and designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including the naming of the unit in traditional local language. The new service provides a safe place at a time of crisis. A responsive mental health service that is culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples means it is more likely that people will seek the help they need sooner and reduce the risk of harm, and the Nujum Jawa Crisis Stabilisation Unit will help us to do that,” shared Penny.



Nujum Jawa Crisis Stabilisation Unit at The Prince Charles Hospital opens

Nujum Jawa meaning

The name, Nujum Jawa (pronounced: Ujum Jarwa) Crisis Stabilisation Unit, was chosen in collaboration with Traditional Owners, Elders, consumers, carers, community members, and staff, and reflects the stories heard during community engagement.

Nujum meaning Spirit, reflects the deep spiritual and interconnected beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, emphasising the unity of all living things and their connection to land, sea, waterways, and ancestors. Jawa,” translating to “Tell, Talk, Say,” pays homage to the rich oral traditions and storytelling heritage intrinsic to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

A Turrbal Traditional Owner kindly gave permission for language to be used.

In September, Elders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, representatives from the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, and hospital and mental health staff attended a Smoking Ceremony performed by Uncle Allan and Community Open Day of the new Nujum Jawa Crisis Stabilisation Unit. Attendees had the opportunity to hear about the model of service and take a tour of the newly opened facility located at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH).

Mental health crisis touches the lives of many families and communities. The new short-stay mental healthcare unit at TPCH provides faster and more appropriate care for people experiencing a mental health crisis in a comfortable and safe setting.

The Nujum Jawa Crisis Stabilisation Unit, located next to the hospital’s emergency department, runs 24/7 so people can receive specialised and intensive mental health crisis care in a place that feels more culturally safe than the emergency department.

Aunty Rosemary Hill was one of the attendees at the opening event and shared the importance of the facility for her family.

“I have supported and advocated for my family for so long at this Emergency Department and I have lost family, hopefully this place gives them a chance,” said Aunty Rosemary.

Executive Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Sherry Holzapfel, said that this important service is much needed within our community and this is a key part of Metro North’s journey to improve health equity outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

“I am so pleased of the co-design and core principals of this service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This will be a safe space for community and their families seeking mental health crisis care in a less restrictive environment.”

The team at Nujum Jawa is made up of approximately 60 multidisciplinary staff, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health workers, medical, nursing, allied health professionals, and a lived experience workforce to provide specialised care.

Metro North Mental Health’s inaugural Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Penny Dale, said it is important to provide people in mental health crisis with a culturally safe, supportive, and welcoming environment.

“Emergency departments can be busy, noisy places at times and can be overwhelming for people in mental health distress,” said Penny.

“By having a responsive mental health service means it is more likely that people will seek the help they need sooner and reduce the risk of harm, and the Nujum Jawa Crisis Stabilisation Unit will help us to do that.



“The interior has been designed to look less clinical and the model of care was developed after yarning with consumers, staff, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, and also reflects the needs of those with a lived experience of mental illness to better support people in crisis.

“The short-stay unit and lounge space has been designed so family members, carers and support people can also be there.

“The connection to culture in mental health care settings is important to help promote healing and wellbeing,” said Penny.

Natural landscapes and culturally significant artwork are featured throughout the unit to create a welcoming and inclusive space for all who enter the service. The use of landscapes honours and respects connection to culture, the land, waterway and sea for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as being integral to health, wellbeing and belonging.

The Golden Wattle, known as dilgur, featured throughout the facility, symbolises unity, resilience and strength and has significance for Aboriginal people as it was used to create hunting tools, musical instruments, as well as medicine.

The \$14 million unit is part of the Queensland Government Better Care Together funding.

For more information about this referral service visit <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/tpch/healthcare-services/mental-health/csu>



HOSPITAL ENVIRONMENT

Redcliffe Hospital acknowledges stolen wages

Redcliffe Hospital has formally acknowledged the history of using stolen wages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to build the hospital.

A special gathering was held during National Reconciliation Week with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, community members and staff, as a formal apology was delivered by the Acting Chief Executive of Metro North Health.

The apology was an opportunity to commence the healing journey with Elders past and present, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community affected by past government policies.

Historical government records show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' wages and savings were regularly used by the Department of Native Affairs (and its successor agencies responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) to offset government and departmental revenue by providing debentured loans to other agencies and corporate bodies. In doing so, it also enabled the development of Queensland through the building of infrastructure across the state, particularly the establishment and expansion of hospitals.

Acting Chief Executive Jane Hancock said the event was a momentous and historic occasion at Redcliffe Hospital to formally acknowledge the history of using stolen wages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to build the hospital.

"Metro North Health is one of the first Hospital and Health Services within the state to formally acknowledge the use of stolen wages and have a permanent apology plaque placed at the front of the hospital," Ms Hancock said.

"I acknowledge the direct impact the stolen wages have had on many Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community members, and I am honoured to have taken part in the unveiling of this plaque at Redcliffe Hospital, an important permanent reminder of this history."

Proud Yidinji woman and Metro North Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Sherry Holzapfel said the event was a culturally significant day for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

"Many of us have direct connections within our families of those affected by stolen wages and past government policies. The hurt and pain this has caused is momentous and carried through the generations," Ms Holzapfel said.



Elders pictured with the new Stolen Wages Acknowledgement Plaque at Redcliffe Hospital.

"Today was our chance to publicly recognise the historical injustices associated with stolen wages. While we can't re-write this painful history, we can now walk alongside each other in healing and reconciliation."

Aunty Lesley Williams, an award-winning author ('Not Just Black and White') and an instigator of the Justice for Aboriginal Workers campaign, was proud to attend the gathering.

"My goodness! There isn't going to be enough words as to how much it acknowledges. Today was so special and so meaningful for me. I first saw all this information when I started my research back in 1991-92. To think that the old people are with us today, in spirit, to know that all the money they worked for withheld in trust went into build places like Redcliffe Hospital," Aunty Lesley said.

"I would love this to continue through with the other hospitals but what's so significant about this hospital is the amount of money, being 100,000 pounds, or convert that to dollars, which in today's terms would be a couple of million dollars in total that was held in trust. Our savings, held in trust. And I worked out it goes back four generations of people who had worked, for their money to be held in trust to have that amount of money kept in trust and used to build these hospitals.

"It's been a long time coming. A lot of hard work has gone into it, but at the end of the day it's happening, and it's happening in our lifetime, and I know the old people would be pleased looking down, and their spirits are with us today."

Redcliffe Hospital Executive Director Cang Dang said the plaque will be on permanent display at the front of the hospital and was initiated by the Redcliffe Hospital Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.

"The Working Group is responsible for partnering with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as part of the health equity journey and is committed to delivering safe and welcoming environments," Mr Dang said.

"Redcliffe Hospital pays tribute to the unique cultures, heritage, traditional knowledge and the significant contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made and continue to make to Redcliffe Hospital."

Connection to Country central to Metro North Hospital Design

Cultural safety in the built environment continues to be at the forefront of healthcare design for two of Metro North Hospital and Health Service's major hospital expansion projects.

In 2024, early works commenced on the \$1.14 billion Redcliffe Hospital Expansion Project and the \$360 million expansion of The Prince Charles Hospital located at Chermside.

From the outset of these projects, Metro North Health championed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, ensuring there were opportunities for Traditional Owners, Elders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, consumers and staff to share their knowledge and wisdom with the project team.

The intent was to empower the project team to strengthen their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design considerations and incorporate key elements that would ensure the expansion projects delivered culturally respectful and appropriate design for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, visitors and staff.

Throughout 2024, Metro North Health Project Teams led a series of Cultural Considerations workshops, focusing on key cultural design elements, including landscape design, façade design, dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spaces and more.

The workshops were driven by Metro North Health's commitment to health equity, including a commitment to build relationships and undertake meaningful consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities.

Going beyond just aesthetics, the workshops allowed the design team to engage directly with knowledge holders and learn from their local knowledge and wisdom and create spaces that connect people to place.

Elders generously shared stories about their culture and history, as well as their knowledge of local landscape and native plant species. This rich information has



helped to inform the selection of plants and has led to a landscape design that has dedicated spaces for Men's and Women's Business.

Construction works were also a key focus of the workshops, including tree removal activities, which led to the Redcliffe Hospital Expansion project team donating local hardwood timber to Kurbingui's North Brisbane Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men's Shed with the intent that it would be repurposed and used for carving and woodwork.

Another important outcome from these workshops was the identification of a culturally significant tree on the Redcliffe hospital campus. During one of the landscape workshops, an Elder raised the possibility of a Scarred Tree being situated at the front of the hospital.

Scarred trees are a rare find and provide Aboriginal people with an important link to their culture and their past. An exclusion zone was established around the Scarred Tree and the builder was formally advised that the tree must not be removed.

The Kabi Kabi People were immediately informed of the find and a cultural heritage and archaeological consulting firm was engaged to undertake an assessment of the tree, who later confirmed it is an Aboriginal Scarred Tree.

The Metro North Health Men's Cultural Gathering is set to take place in early 2025.

The discovery of this Scarred Tree, alongside the rich stories and feedback collected at these workshops, highlighted the importance of ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are part of the design team and process, to ensure that the design meets the needs of communities and is inclusive towards end users.

The same process was followed at The Prince Charles Hospital, with the Metro North Health Project Team also engaging an Aboriginal Elder to assess trees that were in scope for removal due to construction works. The Elder identified one potential Scarred Tree and again, an exclusion zone was established around the tree. The Turrbal People were informed of the find and an archaeological consulting firm was engaged, with an assessment of the tree currently underway.

Integrating connection to Country in the built environment remains a key commitment for Metro North Health. Culturally inclusive and safe hospital design is a key step towards ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families feel safe, comfortable, accepted, and confident that they will be respected and receive high-quality and timely healthcare.



Culturally significant Scarred Tree identified at Redcliffe Hospital.

Redcliffe Hospital Ngarrama Maternity program expands



Expectant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and women pregnant with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander baby accessing Redcliffe Hospital will soon have the choice of a continuity of care model across the antenatal, birthing, and postnatal period.

The new model, to be introduced in early 2025, will provide a continuity of care Midwifery Group Practice model covering the antenatal, birthing, and postnatal journey, initiated through the Growing Deadly Families Strategy funding of \$4.1 million for a period of 5 years.

Strong Start to Life Clinical Nurse Consultant and proud Mununjali woman, Tara Denaro and the Strong Start to Life team, have advocated for the model to be introduced in line with the successful Ngarrama programs at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and Caboolture Hospital.

"The initiative was in response to overwhelming community feedback that Ngarrama Redcliffe needed to provide continuity of carer across the whole pregnancy, birthing and postnatal period and that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be leading and working in the program.

"Continuity of care means that families have their care provided by the same person and team making it easier to build trust and understanding. This type of care has shown improved outcomes for women and their infants, including infants being born closer to their due date and at a healthy weight.

"We are really excited to be receiving Growing Deadly Families funding and to see Redcliffe Ngarrama expand to offer services in line with our other Ngarrama services," Tara said.

Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Executive Director, Sherry Holzapfel, said the program will be better able to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and graduate midwives to work in programs like Ngarrama.



Ngarrama Redcliffe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker, Angel Sellars, pictured with a newborn.

"By increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in the program, Ngarrama will be able to build better relationships with community programs and supports so that Ngarrama can offer a holistic service that includes and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing.

"We will be welcoming four Midwives, another Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker, and administration worker to the team. We encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for the roles once the recruitment begins in the coming months," Sherry said.

Ngarrama Redcliffe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker, Angel Sellars said community have shared great enthusiasm for the model.

"Having a dedicated team to walk beside our families in their journey is going to be amazing. One of our mums told me 'It would be great having Ngarrama at my birth, with Ngarrama knowing my birth plan and being able to feel secure and safe.'"

Ngarrama is a free antenatal, birthing, and postnatal service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who choose to birth at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Caboolture, and Redcliffe Hospitals. Any woman who is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or any woman whose baby is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander can use the service.

Consumers are also encouraged to join the Ngarrama program to share their experiences and to empower other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families accessing the service. Contact the Strong Start to Life team on how to become involved or for further information -

a_tsilt_strong_start_to_life@health.qld.gov.au



Better Together Medication Access Program leads the way to statewide co-payment medication subsidy

The success of the Metro North Health Better Together Medication Access (BTMA) program has paved the way for a new statewide medication co-payment subsidy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

From 25 January, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers of Queensland Health (QH) will now have access to medications dispensed by QH public hospital pharmacies.

Hospital and Health Service's (HHS's) will waive, in full, co-payments for all medicines prescribed by Queensland Health prescribers on hospital prescriptions, when dispensed by hospital pharmacies, to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients:



upon discharge, following an admitted episode of care, including presentation for emergency care; and



whilst under the care or treatment of a Queensland Health specialist outpatient service, where the patient cannot readily access their medicines from a community pharmacy.

The Metro North Health BTMA program was introduced in 2020, which initially covered discharge prescription medications, and has now expanded to include outpatient prescription medications.

The program has been associated with a 50 percent decrease in re-admission rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, at a minimal financial cost to the HHS.

Patients that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin upon admission to a Metro North Health hospital or facility are given the choice to opt-in to the BTMA program.

If they do so, their medication prescription can be taken to a Metro North Health pharmacy, where the medication is supplied with no-out-of-pocket cost to the patient.





New health navigation service supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Metro North and Moreton Bay

A new culturally safe health navigation service has begun in Metro North and Moreton Bay to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people better negotiate their health journey.

Community and Oral Health (COH) Nurse Navigator Suzy Warren (pictured above), said the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Nurse Navigation Service supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with complex chronic disease and medical conditions who need help navigating health and community services.

“As part of the new service, we advocate for and coordinate culturally appropriate care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families,” Suzy said.

“It is about having a yarn to the patients about what they need, then linking them to health services and home supports.

“We visit patients in their home, assist patients to attend health care appointments while other services are identified and put in place.

“We work in partnership with the patient, family/carers, allied health, nursing, and other treating teams to develop individualised care plans.

“These plans can encompass the physical, social, emotional, spiritual and cultural well-being of the individual and the whole of the community.”

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurse Navigation Service aims to improve health equity and address the challenges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have when accessing health services in comparison to other Australians.

“We link people to disability supports, ongoing therapies and health assessments, and home support after comprehensive health and social assessments,” Suzy said.

“We can also assist with My Aged Care and NDIS applications where appropriate, and health education where necessary.”

The new navigation service is also about addressing some of the barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people such as the lack of access and distance to healthcare services.

“Cultural understanding of services and staff can also impact the delivery of care,” Suzy said.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have lost some connection with country, community and kinship circles may also need extra help.”

Suzy, a Mitakoodi woman with family in Cloncurry, said the service also provided patients with links to GP services.

The new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Nurse Navigation Service is delivered by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurse Navigator and Advanced Health Worker Monday to Friday 8am to 4:30pm.

Suzy said Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Moreton Bay and North Brisbane can self-refer.

They can also ask any hospital, non-Government organisation or community health professional, Indigenous Health Liaison Officer or GP to refer them by emailing COH-IndigenousNavigation@health.qld.gov.au

To be eligible for the free service the patient must identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and be 18 years of age or over or transitioning from paediatric services.

Other eligibility criteria include having a complex medical and social concern, have high presentation rates to emergency departments and/or at a high risk of deterioration.

The service is delivered through face-to-face visits, through telehealth and/or over the phone.

Designing our facilities to connect community to Country to improve health outcomes

Open and meaningful engagement, yarns and stories that directly influence the planning and design of healthcare facilities to be culturally appropriate, inclusive and safe is a genuine priority for Metro North Health and is key to improving health equity outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Metro North's commitment to co-design engagement and practice is underpinned by the Queensland Health's First Nations Design Framework which outlines opportunities to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander considerations in planning, design, and construction.

At its core is a Country and Community-centred approach.

Representing connection to Country by embedding local storytelling into the built environment links Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their culture and offers a more welcoming environment through:

- architecture
- landscape architecture
- engineering
- interior design
- public art
- education and knowledge sharing, including co-naming.

Considering how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities may experience healthcare facilities, design and planning stages plays an important part in improving health equity, achieving better health outcomes and reducing barriers to accessing healthcare services.

Through co-design, clinicians, clinical planners, project managers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, consumers and users of our facilities and services work together, side-by-side to design our built environment.

With major expansions underway at The Prince Charles Hospital and Redcliffe Hospital, throughout this year Metro North Health held a number of cultural consideration workshops to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners, Elders, consumers and staff on proposed concept designs of these significant projects that will deliver more healthcare services for community.

Co-design shaped the new Nujum Jawa Crisis Stabilisation Unit at The Prince Charles Hospital. Connection to culture in mental health care settings is important to help promote healing, wellbeing and belonging, and was integral to how the Nujum Jawa facility looked and felt to make it a safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By creating a less restrictive environment and mental health service means it is more likely that people will seek the help they need sooner and reduce the risk of harm. Interior design features integrated culturally significant art throughout the unit which includes First Nations art pieces, nature decals on doors and walls, and landscape artworks in the entry and also the outdoor lounge space, delivering a natural looking and welcoming space, connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Country and providing a culturally safe space.



Above right: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health workers pictured in front of Australian landscape artwork at the Nujum Jawa Crisis Stabilisation Unit.



WORKFORCE



Rising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leaders to pave the way!

A new cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers recently graduated from the inaugural Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program.

The first round of the leadership program commenced earlier this year with 24 participants taking part on a two-day workshop tailored for the professional growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to build strong connections and explore leadership opportunities.

To support their ongoing leadership development, participants also had access to ongoing professional mentoring from leaders of various professions across the organisation. Mentors provided one-on-one support offering guidance and advice to each of their mentees during their leadership development journey.

“The workshop was a great chance for me to connect in with my Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers on the same journey as me, and provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my personal role within the organisation and how I can continue advocating for our people.

“It can be hard working within the public service health care space with so many barriers still in place, and at times can have you questioning yourself. Connecting with my peers and building leadership skills while sharing each other’s struggles during our career journey showed that I am not alone.

“From the program I have definitely built stronger relationships, as well as tools to help me on my career path, while still staying grounded to the cause on why I do what I do to support our people accessing our

health care service,” said Caley Colley, Communications Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team.

Since the two-day workshop commenced it was identified that further training and development opportunities were needed to continue nurturing and upskilling participants on their pathway into leadership roles, and provide a platform to continuously connect with each other and build upon established relationships. Each participant went on to undertake further learning opportunities by attending Professional Development Planning training sessions where they were provided with the tools and skills to assist in professional development discussions and goal settings.

Part of Metro North Health’s commitment to driving change within the health service and improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is the dedication to nurturing and supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce within the organisation.

In order to make change and achieve health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Metro North Health recognises that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce needs to be at the forefront and represented on every level of the health system.

Metro North Health is dedicated to making the organisation a first choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, which includes growing and retaining the workforce.

The first round of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program participants recently celebrated the completion of the program through a special graduation ceremony where they were awarded and recognised for their efforts and contribution to the program.

The ceremony included a special Welcome to Country and performance by Turrbal Songwoman Baringa, key Executive speeches by Chief People and Culture Officer, Brett Bourke, Chief Allied Health Practitioner, Mark Butterworth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Manager, Natasha White, as well as a certificate presentation and networking opportunity over light refreshments.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program will be an ongoing initiative available to the Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, with the next round due to commence early 2025.

First Nations Cadetship Program rolls out Statewide

The Queensland Health First Nations Cadetship Program (formerly known as the Indigenous Cadetship Program), which was first established in Metro North Health, grew significantly this year as it expanded across the State, attracting a record 68 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students across 14 of the 16 Hospital and Health Services in Queensland.

Through the development of the cadetship program and employing cadets, hospital and health services are committed to growing and investing in the future of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce. The cadetship program develops and trains Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders of the future by offering temporary part-time employment where cadets gain practical on the job skills development doing a clinical or corporate placement while completing their full-time tertiary studies for a bachelor's qualification in Queensland.

Metro North Health welcomed 10 cadets into their facilities this year, offering the cadets an invaluable opportunity to earn a wage while pursuing their studies, whilst working towards ensuring healthcare delivered at Metro North Health is culturally safe, responsive, and meets the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Over the calendar year, cadets are required to complete 60 days, or 12 weeks of paid work placement aligning to their studies, which is scheduled around the university timetable of each cadet. The First Nations Cadetship Program provides an opportunity for cadets to partake in the program during each year of their university studies, providing cadets with financial security and additional on-the-job experience they wouldn't otherwise receive.

Studies have shown that cadetships increase the likeliness for students to complete their qualifications, complete their qualification more quickly, gain employment in their chosen profession once graduated, and experience faster early-career progression, compared to non-cadets.



(L-R) Metro North Health cadets Kelly Hulett, Beauty Bowie, Amber Bourke, Britney Wright and Luke Woods).

This year the First Nations Cadetship Program have partnered with Group Training Organisation, AFL SportsReady, to provide support services to the cadets to assist them on their journey. To further support the cadets during their placement in Metro North Health, a Cultural Capability Officer has been employed to work closely alongside the cadets to co-design a cultural mentoring program to ensure the cadets are thriving in the workplace whilst undertaking their cadetship.

Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Sherry Holzapfel, announced in June this year that Metro North Health is committed to providing ongoing employment to cadets on successful completion of the program, which will have positive impacts and outcomes on the cultural capacity of the workforce.

To find out more about the First Nations Cadetship Program, visit <https://www.careers.health.qld.gov.au/working-for-us/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-careers/cadetship-program>

Connecting with culture aboard the Spray of the Coral Coast



Staff enjoying each other's company.

Metro North Health is dedicated to creating a wellbeing strategy that is shaped, designed, and implemented by our staff, honouring the diversity and important heritage protocols for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

To foster connections, build relationships, and remain connected to culture, each year the Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members to take part in an annual Cultural Gathering Day for women and men.

These events create a safe space for cultural engagement, education, and networking for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The goal is to support and strengthen our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff while fostering a culturally safe environment for connection, collaboration, and sharing of culture.

This year, a total of 28 staff attended a special women's gathering in Mooloolaba. The gathering included a 2-hour river cruise with Saltwater Eco Tours on the peaceful waterways in Mooloolaba on Kabi Kabi Country, aboard heritage-listed vessel, Spray of the Coral Coast.

During the 2-hour river cruise, staff had the opportunity to connect with other staff members from across Metro North Health, enjoy some delicious native foods, and learn about the Mooloolaba waterways from a cultural perspective led by tour guide Aunty Bridgette Chilli, with a focus on history, ecology, and sustainability.

Positive feedback received from staff indicates that the gatherings are valued, and are much needed to support staff, especially new staff, to feel culturally safe and comfortable when starting their journey with Metro North Health.

"More frequent gatherings than yearly would be amazing, but I enjoyed the day and very grateful of being included and having the opportunity to attend, especially being a new employee, was great to meet other women in our hubs!" said Lesharne Taylor, Administration Officer, Women's Business Shared Pathway.

The women's cultural gatherings held each year offer an exciting opportunity for Metro North Health staff to step away from their desks and ground themselves in culture. The gatherings have proven effective in boosting staff morale, increasing cultural safety, and creating a safe space for women to connect with one another and build new relationships to support them in their role.



The Metro North Health Men's Cultural Gathering is set to take place in early 2025.

Saltwater Eco Tours sharing sounds of the Didgeridoo to end the cruise.



Staff getting ready to board the Spray of the Coral Coast vessel.

New governance for Identified roles

A focus for health equity efforts has been to grow and retain the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

Metro North Health heard from community very clearly during consultations and planning for health equity that they want to 'see more mob in roles'.

One measure to support this is a new governance structure for the recruitment and hiring of all identified roles across the organisation in various professions.

The new process and governance will support hiring managers with the recruitment and retention of identified roles by ensuring all positions meet the mandatory requirements, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team has oversight ensuring hiring areas meet criteria before advertising, and to ensure all occupants of an identified position at Metro North Health hold a clear understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and protocols and support the implementation of culturally safe practices.

Having direct oversight to the governance of identified roles across Metro North Health is a positive step forward for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and to ensure Metro North Health are attracting highly knowledgeable and skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait people to support the agenda and meet community.

Meet some of our new staff members who have joined Metro North Health in 2024

Meghan O’Keeffe -
Quandamooka, Nughi woman

Nurse Navigator
The Prince Charles Hospital



Mark Dorante
Torres Strait
Islander man from Keriri
Island (Hammond) with
blood ties to Badu Island
and Murray Island

Senior Health Worker,
Connecting Care to Country
The Prince Charles Hospital



Roslyn Boland -
Mardigan and Kooma woman

**Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Health Services, Royal
Brisbane and Women’s Hospital**



Kieran Costigan -
Bundjalung man

**Manager, Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Health Services
The Prince Charles Hospital**

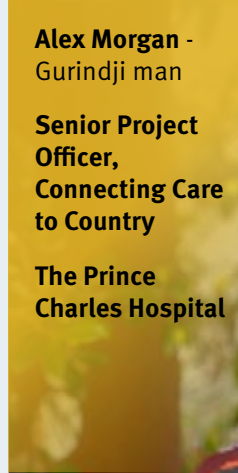




Joey Ellison -
Yuwibara and South
Sea Islander man

**Community
Engagement Officer
(Male)**

**Kallangur Satellite
Hospital (Kalangoor)**



Alex Morgan -
Gurindji man

**Senior Project
Officer,
Connecting Care
to Country**

**The Prince
Charles Hospital**

Abbey White -
Mununjali woman

Administration Officer

**Kallangur Satellite
Hospital (Kalangoor)**



Gemma Morthen -
Yindjibarndi and Yamatji woman

Clinical Nurse
Metro North Health

Christopher Ewin -
Gurindji man

**Community Engagement Officer
(Male)**
**Bribie Island Satellite Hospital
(Yarun)**



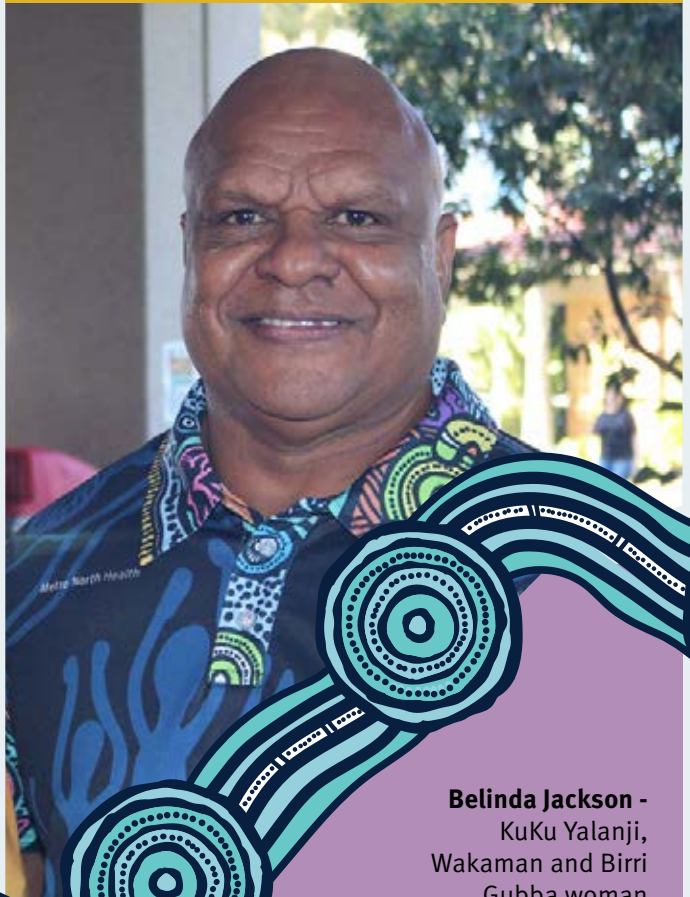
Whitney Hunt -
Ballardong, Whadjuk, Kamilaroi and
Barkindji woman

**A/Coordinator, Women's Business
Shared Pathway**
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital



Lesharne Taylor -
Wemba Wemba woman
**Administration Officer,
Women's Business
Shared Pathway
Royal Brisbane and
Women's Hospital**

Lloyd Savage -
Waluwarra/Wakaya and Badu Island man
**Health Worker
Metro North Health**



Belinda Jackson -
KuKu Yalanji,
Wakaman and Birri
Gubba woman
**Senior Health Worker
Bribie Island Satellite Hospital
(Yarun)**



Lynette Bell -
Wulgurukaba, Juru, Bindal and Wakka
Wakka woman
**Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer
Surgical, Treatment and
Rehabilitation Service**



Michelle Scobie -
Bundjalung woman
**Administration Support Officer
Bribie Island Satellite Hospital
(Yarun)**





Staff enjoying the day and showing off the SEWB resource pack.

Inaugural Staff Wellness Expo

Committed to providing a culturally safe and supportive working environment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce free from racism and discrimination, Metro North Health established the Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Program to lead the change required to deliver equitable, accessible, responsive, and culturally sensitive psychological care which respects and promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee's cultural integrity.

In an effort to increase information of, and access to support services, the Metro North Health SEWB team hosted for the first time a Staff Wellness Expo in March this year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Held in Deception Bay, the expo provided staff the opportunity to connect with internal and external support services and wellness providers, learning what supports are available to them during a time of need and/or crisis.

The SEWB team worked hard to coordinate the inaugural event, inviting 24 internal and external services to share important information with staff in relation to matters such as health, finance, legal support, fitness, gambling support and much more. The event provided flexibility for staff to attend the expo at a time that suited their busy work schedule, which enabled staff to receive information from support services they may not have otherwise had the chance to learn about.

The event provided an opportunity for the SEWB team to launch their Model of Care, a document outlining the support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and managers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, can

expect to receive when seeking support through the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program at Metro North Health.

To offer ongoing support and encouragement, all staff who attended the wellness expo received a social and emotional wellbeing pack filled with resources and activities to support staff wellbeing both whilst at home and in the workplace, including information and tips on how to keep the mind, body, and spirit strong.

Planning is currently underway to host the next Staff Wellness Expo in March 2025. If you are a service and/or organisation who is interested in coming along to share information with Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, express your interest via email: [A TSILT_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:TSILT_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au)



Staff engaging with services on the day.

SEWB Middle Manager Promotional In-service Training

The Metro North Health Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Program is committed to ensuring all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have access to holistic culturally safe and responsive person-centred care and are also committed to providing education and ongoing support to the managers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

The middle manager promotional in-service training, delivered by the SEWB Officers, aims to increase awareness of the SEWB program by encouraging managers to champion the program, ensuring all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees under their management know about the program, and feel supported in accessing it when needed.

To commence the roll out of this new training package across the hospital and health service, the SEWB Officers delivered the first lot of training to 25 staff members from the People and Culture team (HR), covering topics such as cultural safety, family and kinship structure, and cultural complexities when supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

The in-service training marked the beginning of an important relationship between the SEWB Officers and Metro North Health managers, to work in partnership to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce. Managers who attended the in-service training were equipped with the tools and knowledge to enable them to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the workplace, fostering a more inclusive and culturally safe environment.

The SEWB Officers will soon commence delivery of the in-service training to a further 1,600 middle managers across Metro North Health, followed by educational toolbox sessions to continue building awareness of this training package, and of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing program across the organisation.



SEWB Officers delivering the first middle manager promotional in-service training to the People and Culture Team.

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGED

Better Together – Our Health, Our Way social media platforms

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team (A&TSILT) communication service monitor the Better Together – Our Health, Our Way social media platforms which are used as a two-way communication channel to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in real-time.

Facebook, being the longest serving platform has grown a steady following since being launched in 2020 and has become a trusted source for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and families to seek accurate health information and updates, meet new staff, read good news story, view job opportunities, and stay up to date with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific events and initiatives taking place across Metro North Health.

Launching the Better Together Instagram and LinkedIn platforms last year in March has allowed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team to engage a wider audience, and a younger demographic not previously reached via Facebook.

The Better Together social media platforms have been pivotal in sharing progress updates of the Metro North Health Equity Strategy, and showcasing the culturally safe and responsive services Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members can access at Metro North Health.



**TOP PERFORMING
FACEBOOK POST**

**QAS Indigenous Paramedic
Program promotion**

Post reach: 23, 212

Link clicks: 326

FACEBOOK: BETTER TOGETHER – OUR HEALTH, OUR WAY

Current followers: 4,072

Yearly page reach: 76,411

Content interactions: 12,700

New yearly page followers: 474

<https://www.facebook.com/bettertogetherourhealthourway>

INSTAGRAM: @OURHEALTHOURWA

Current followers: 275

Page reach: 6,400

Page interactions: 2,300

<https://www.instagram.com/ourhealthourway>

LINKEDIN: BETTER TOGETHER – OUR HEALTH, OUR WAY

Current followers: 455

Yearly Impressions/reach: 50,037

Yearly Engagement activities on page: 2,044

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/better-together-our-health-our-way>

*Data above is from 1 January 2024 – 24 October 2024.

**FOLLOW
US ON OUR
JOURNEY
TOWARDS
HEALTH
EQUITY:
FACEBOOK,
INSTAGRAM
AND
LINKEDIN.**



10 YEARS OF TALK-ABOUT

– a look back over the years

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team’s flagship publication - Talk-About Newsletter - celebrates 10 years of keeping community up to date with the latest health initiatives across Metro North Health.

The first edition was published in late 2014 and looks very different to the 2024 edition. The newsletter was initially focused on Program Manager updates, out and about stories, language sharing, news articles and healthy recipes.

Over the 10 years, the newsletter has changed in the branding, style, and focus. But one thing remains is the commitment to share patient stories, a focus on the deadly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and to promote upcoming events.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team, Communications and Planning Manager, Renee Simon, was the founding editor of the publication and said the newsletter was the basis for creating an extensive communications strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

“We noticed a need beyond the traditional communication platforms at Metro North Health to create a newsletter that focused on the voices of staff and community.

“This has now grown to other platforms such as our Better Together – Our Health, Our Way – social media platforms and websites.”

Renee said they have advocated a long time for Talk-About to remain a lengthy newsletter providing community members and key stakeholders the opportunity to learn about the programs that impact them.

“Our feedback has always been from community that they love sitting and reading Talk-About with a warm cuppa and learning about our health updates but also staff they connect with when accessing our services.

“We are proud to have shared so many patient stories that have enacted positive system changes across Metro North Health and the State. The stories have been used to train non-Indigenous staff on cultural protocols, to advocate for funding initiatives and as a main reporting mechanism to key stakeholders.”

One thing that remains 10 years on is that Talk-About is here to stay and will still be printed in hard copies and posted in the mail to community members. Talk-About is also available within key touch points of Metro North Health such as the Indigenous Hospital Liaison offices for patients to enjoy.

To be added to the Talk-About Newsletter email or mailing list email the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team at A_TSILT_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au

“This is one of the best constructed, informative newsletters I have seen – I also love the way you show your interaction with patients, community, and stakeholders – I think the Chief Officer First Nations Office should make it mandatory for all districts within the state to share newsletters modelling of yours. Well done, the 15 Liaison Officers who I lead love it.

Michael Illin, Team Leader - Indigenous Liaison Unit, The Townsville University Hospital.

To view visit previous editions of the Talk-About Newsletter and see how it has changed over the years visit: <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van/talk-about-newsletter>





December 2014 / January 2015 edition

TALK-About

DIRECTOR MESSAGE

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit have been able to ensure credible frontline services that meet the needs of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. During the last year the staff within the unit have successfully commenced implementation of the Metro North Hospital and Health Service, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategic Plan 2013-18.

With the extension of our services to cater for the most vulnerable, we were able to implement a 7-day a week Indigenous Hospital Liaison Service and Support officers to assist in the Patient Journey of our Rural and Remote Consumers.

I am particularly proud of our collaboration and partnership with the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) and Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local. It has been rewarding to see that the gap in the patient journey between our Metro North Tertiary facilities to Primary Health Care providers through the IUIH Connect Service has decreased. These partnerships clearly demonstrate that with full collaboration

and mutual respect, Government can work in a productive and effective manner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled organisations.

2015 will be an exciting time for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit as we continue to strive for improved culturally and socially appropriate health care for our Indigenous peoples. Our initiatives that are imbedded in our Tertiary facilities will enable greater cultural capability, and reassurance to the consumers that their needs and care is our absolute priority.

In March 2015 we will also see the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services within the Pine Rivers Community Health Centre. Three teams will be moving into this facility - the Acute and Primary Care Team, Ngarrama Intensive Home Visiting Team and the Indigenous Sexual Health Team. This service will be utilised as a drop in centre and will be working continuously with Children's Health Queensland and the Strathpine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service.

Improvement to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health cannot be achieved by the unit alone. There is a saying that goes "it takes a village to raise a child". This could be said for the work that needs to be done to improve the health of our first nation peoples "it takes a diverse

range of people and services to raise the health outcome of our Indigenous people".

Working within Metro North Hospital and Health Service has been highly rewarding as all services are committed to improving health outcomes. This will continue into the future and the people will continue to receive the best health care possible.

As we now move into the holiday season I would like to congratulate all staff within the unit and MNHHS on the great work that has been done. Enjoy the festive season and stay safe.

Angela Scotney, Director
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health Unit



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13 February
Redcliffe Hospital
Apology Day Event



17 April
Health Equity Community
Consultation – Session 1



15 March
Metro North Health Close
the Gap Day morning-tea



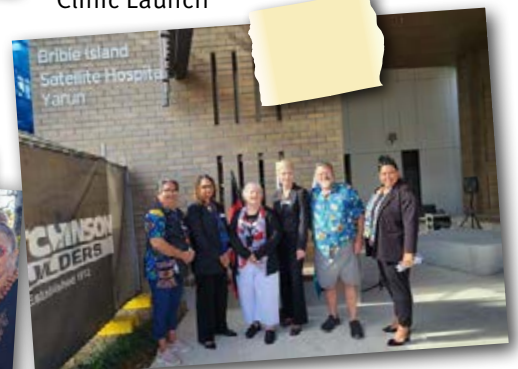
28 March
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Staff Wellness Expo



30 May
Heart Outreach Program for Health
Equity (HOPE) and Institute for
Urban Indigenous Health (UIH)
Clinic Launch



27 May – 3 JUNE
Reconciliation Week at
Metro North Health



31 May
Bribie Island Satellite Hospital (Yarun)
Co-naming Unveiling and Elders Tour



7 June
Mabo Day Event Celebration



27 June
Health Equity
Showcase – Session 1



1 July
Deadly Start Welcome Day



4 July
Northside NAIDOC
Family Fun Day



5 July
Buranga Widjung NAIDOC Flag Raising
Ceremony and Community Event

6 July
Mindle
Bygul
NAIDOC
Family Fun
Day



1 July
Metro North Health
NAIDOC Elders Luncheon

7 – 14 July
NAIDOC Week at Metro
North Health



9 September
New TPCB Crisis Stabilisation Smoking
Ceremony and Cultural Event



30 October
Women's Cultural
Gathering Day



11 September
Health Equity
Community
Consultation –
Session 2



8 November
Deadly Start School Based Traineeship Graduation

14 November
Murri Movember Men's Health Gathering

28 November
Health Equity Showcase – Session 2

BETTER TOGETHER HEALTH VAN OUT AND ABOUT

Better Together Health Van 2024 Roadmap

The Better Together Health Van (BTHV) partnered with services across Metro North Health to deliver opportunistic screening measures, health promotion and partnership support across a variety of community events and outreach clinics.

The BTHV is supported by a Content and Engagement Officer to culturally connect with community and provide engagement assistance to build relationships.

Throughout 2024 the BTHV was able to connect in with all ages, providing opportunistic screening and important health information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.



January 2024

Kurbingui Back to School event

March 2024

Deadly Feet and Diabetes Australia Cherbourg and Kilcoy clinics

June 2024

- Kurbingui Elders and Community attended a pre-screening and promotional day for the Deadly Feet, HOPE and UROC teams
- Jabiru Family Community Day at Fitzgibbon Hidden World Playground
- Kids Cultural Festival at Yourtown in Deception Bay

July 2024

- Northside NAIDOC at Koobara Kindy at Zillmere
- Buranga Widjung Justice Group held a NAIDOC day at Caboolture Town Square
- Bray Park High School NAIDOC Day

August 2024

- Koobara Kindergarten Zillmere screening days with the Deadly Smiles Program, Brisbane North PHN, Community and Oral Health and the Strong Start to Life team
- Satellite Hospital teams meeting local community at Valleys North Leagues Indigenous Rounds Football Day
- Deadly Feet program visits Cherbourg Community
- Kilcoy Hospital opportunistic screening with the Deadly Feet Program

September 2024

- Southeast QLD Health Expo Career and Health Expo Junior Murri Carnival at South Pine Sports Complex
- Wondai Markets at Cherbourg with the Deadly Feet Program

November 2024

- Deadly Feet homeless opportunistic screening clinics

October 2024

- Comprehensive Breast Cancer Institute Community Forum and Sistas Shawl presentation
- *Koobara Kindy and Deadly Smiles Program opportunistic screening

December 2024

- Deadly Feet Clinic in Cherbourg

SETTING OUR SIGHTS ON 2025

The year ahead will focus on the development of the next phase of the health equity journey, with the co-design and co-development of the 2025 – 2028 strategy to be launched by July 2025.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team will continue to support and guide the implementation plans across Metro North Health and lead the co-design efforts with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and partnership organisations.

The key priorities and actions for the year ahead include, but not limited to:

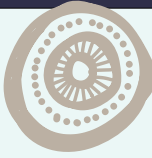
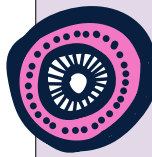
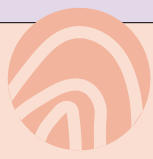
- Develop and implement community engagement and co-design initiatives in collaboration to ensure culturally appropriate programs and projects meet the diverse needs of our community.
- Develop clear policies and protocols for addressing cultural safety concerns within healthcare facilities, including mechanisms for reporting, and addressing instances of racism, discrimination or bias.
- Develop a Metro North Health anti-racism campaign.
- Influence the development of service model of care to address prisoner healthcare, that respects and honours the cultural identities and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners.
- Promote and integrate culturally appropriate screening tools, referral pathways, and community linkages in priority areas, ensuring accessibility for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals.
- Develop targeted outreach programs for hard-to-reach communities via the Better Together Health Van.
- Co-design and develop a training/orientation package and support guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumer representatives.
- Participate in advocacy efforts and collaborative partnerships to negotiate a state-wide agreement that specifically enables the waiver of Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS) gap payments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals accessing healthcare services.
- Support the successful implementation of projects as part of the 2024-2025 Our Journey Towards Health Equity Funding Program.
- Launch of the Ngarrama Redcliffe Hospital program to provide continuity of care Midwifery Group Practice model covering the antenatal, birthing, and postnatal journey, initiated through the Growing Deadly Families Strategy funding.

If you have any feedback, requests for support or would like to collaborate on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health program, please contact our team on A_TSILT_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team 2025 Calendar Events

*Please note: the below dates are subject to change

MONTH	EVENT	DATE
February 	A&TSILT Wellbeing and Planning Day (Internal)	Wednesday 26 February
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Gathering (Internal)	Thursday 13 February
	Anniversary of National Apology Day On 13 February 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered the National Apology to Australia's Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the injustices of past government policies, particularly to the Stolen Generations.	Thursday 13TH February
March 	Metro North Close the Gap Day Event (External)	Thursday 20 March
	SEWB Staff Wellness Expo (Internal)	Thursday 27 March
	National Close the Gap Day National Close the Gap Day, observed on the third Thursday in March, raises awareness and seeks to close the gap with respect to life expectancy, child mortality, educational and employment outcomes between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and non-Indigenous Australians.	Thursday 20 March
April	Health Equity Community Consultation – Session 1 (External)	Thursday 10 April
May 	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Gathering (Internal)	Thursday 8 May
	National Sorry Day National Sorry Day provides an opportunity for people to come together and share the journey towards healing for the Stolen Generations, their families and communities.	Monday 26 May
	1967 Referendum The 1967 Referendum was a landmark achievement following decades of activism by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people, where more than 90 percent of Australians voted in favour of amending two sections of the Australian Constitution.	Tuesday 27 May
	National Reconciliation Week National Reconciliation Week celebrations commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey-the anniversaries of the successful 1967 Referendum and the High Court Mabo Decision.	27 May – 3 June
June 	Mabo Day celebration event (External)	Tuesday 3 June
	Mabo Day On 3 June 1992, the High Court of Australia overturned the principle of “terra nullius” or “nobody’s land” as claimed by the British when they first arrived in this country. The decision has paved the way for Native Title legislation.	Tuesday 3 June

MONTH	EVENT	DATE
July 	NAIDOC Week and community events/celebrations	Sunday 6 July – Sunday 13 July
	Health Equity Showcase - Session 1 (External)	Tuesday 1 July
	Coming of the Light The Coming of the Light is celebrated annually by Torres Strait Islander peoples. It marks the adoption of Christianity through island communities during the late nineteenth century.	Tuesday 1 July
	NAIDOC Week NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia to celebrate history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	6 – 14 July
August 	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Gathering (Internal)	Thursday 7 August
	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about the crucial impact that community, culture and family play in the life of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child.	Monday 4 August
	International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples On this day, people from around the world are encouraged to spread the United Nation’s message on the protection and promotion of the rights of Indigenous peoples.	Saturday 9 August
September 	Health Equity Community Consultation - Session 2 (External)	Thursday 11 September
	Indigenous Literacy Day Indigenous Literacy Day is a national celebration of culture, stories, language and literacy. This day raises awareness of the disadvantages experienced in remote communities and advocates for more access to literacy resources.	Wednesday 3 September
	Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007.	Saturday 13 September
October 	Queensland Mental Health Week	5 – 13 October
	Women’s cultural gathering day (Internal)	Thursday 30 October
	Men’s cultural gathering day (Internal)	Thursday 23 October
November	Health Equity Showcase - Session 2 (External)	Thursday 20 November
	Men’s Health Gathering (Movember Day) (External)	TBC
December 	End of Year – Elders Luncheon (External)	Wednesday 3 December
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Gathering and Deadly Awards (Internal)	Thursday 11 December



BreastScreen Queensland

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Sistas Shawl

**Get your
free Sistas
Shawl!**

Stay healthy and strong for your Mob

BreastScreen Queensland Brisbane Northside Service would like to invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to book their free breast screen.

We offer breast screening to women aged 40 and over. Breast screening is most effective for women aged 50 to 74.

A Sistas Shawl will be given to women attending their breast screen, which can also be used as a privacy wrap. The Sistas Shawl aims to provide a sense of safety and comfort for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Brisbane Northside Locations:

- Chermside
- Brisbane City
- Indooroopilly
- Keperra
- Redcliffe
- North Lakes

To find out more or to make an appointment call us on **13 20 50** or go to **breastscreen.qld.gov.au**



**Queensland
Government**



Metro North Health

Better Together

Health Van

The Better Together Health Van is a free community service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on the North Side of Brisbane (from Brisbane River to Kilcoy), providing access to:

- Health promotion and education
- Opportunistic health screening
- An avenue to yarn with a health care provider to provide feedback on hospital experience and healthcare journey
- Opportunity to co-design healthcare services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and supporting health staff.

Follow us on social media

Follow us for information on locations, upcoming events, important health information and community stories.

 @bettertogetherourhealthourway



 @ourhealthourway



 @better-together-our-health-our-way



If you would like more information, or to request the Better Together Health Van visits your community or event, contact the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team to seek availability via phone 0439 475 437 or email Bettertogetherhealthvan@health.qld.gov.au

