

TALK-ABOUT

August 2025



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RACISM**
It Starts with Me

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HEALTH SERVICE LAUNCHES
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**CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF
NAIDOC ACROSS METRO
NORTH HEALTH**



The official Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Newsletter

Metro North Health's vision

Creating healthier futures together—where innovation and research meets compassionate care and community voices shape our services.

**Metro North
Health**



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We welcome your feedback, contributions, story ideas and details on any upcoming events. Please contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team at: **A_TSILT_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au** or phone **07 3170 4460**.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team

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Mail to:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team
Level 4, Chermside Galleria, 831 Gympie Road, Chermside QLD 4032

Email to:

A_TSILT_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au

Metro North Health would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which our services are located.

We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and future and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

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

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A word from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Executive Director



I am proud to announce that we have launched our new Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anti-racism policy and ***Stop Racism. It Starts with Me.*** Campaign—to address racism and promote cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our hospital and health service.

The new campaign and policy were announced during our special ***Health Equity Strategy 2025 – 2028*** Launch event held with community on 1 July, marking a momentous occasion for not only Metro North Health, but for Queensland Health, being the first of its kind developed and implemented across the state's health system.

This body of work actively supports one of our health equity key priorities to eliminate institutional racism and unconscious bias from our hospital and health service. All incidents of racism—whether big or small, direct or indirect should be reported, and they will be addressed.

We have a strong commitment not only from our Board but from our Chief Executive, Chief People and Culture Officer and Senior Executive Team that Metro North Health has zero-tolerance towards racism.

I would like to thank our Board Chair Bernard Curran, Chief Executive Jackie Hanson, Chief Operating Officer Stephen Eaton, Chief People and Culture Officer Brett Bourke and our Senior Executive Team for your ongoing support and walking alongside us on our health equity journey.

Thank you to my dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team, People and Culture team, the Anti-racism Working Group, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and allies for working tirelessly in developing and launching the new policy and campaign.

Lastly, I would like to thank our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community who shared their voices and contributed to development of this important body of work. Without your shared knowledge and contribution, we wouldn't have succeeded in an authentic campaign that reflects our people.

You can learn more about the new policy and campaign within this edition of the Talk About Newsletter or visit <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van/stop-racism>.

I am also pleased to announce that during the Health Equity launch event on 1 July, we had the opportunity to release our new ***Metro North Health Equity Strategy 2025 – 2028*** which outlines our key health equity actions for the next three years.

This new strategy marks phase two of our journey and will guide us as we strive to achieve health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with a key focus in mental health and women's, children, and families. All key focus areas will be imbedded within the following four strategic priorities:

1. There is zero experience of racism within Metro North Health.
2. Creating safe hospital and healthcare services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
3. Develop and enhance culturally safe, co-designed innovative care models.
4. Sustain culturally safe, data-driven equity.

You can view the Metro North Health Equity Strategy 2025-2028 online here: <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity>.

Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel
Executive Director,
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Health

A word from Metro North Health Chief Executive



Metro North continues to make positive steps towards health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We are proud to be the first hospital and health service in Queensland to develop our Health Equity Strategy, recently launching the strategy's next phase which will guide activities for the next three years.

During this time, we will continue to build on the excellent progress we have made, which includes the introduction of several new services and programs—Deadly Feet program expansion, post-operative rehabilitation services including heart and lung rehabilitation service, women's business shared pathways, HOPE and UROC programs—all of which support improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Another key initiative supporting health equity across Metro North is the recent launch of our new anti-racism campaign—**Stop Racism. It Starts with Me.** Co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, patients, and community members, this campaign is part of our truth-telling journey, focusing on the real impacts of racism on people within our organisation. This campaign is designed to educate, to empower, and to mobilise our entire workforce to see racism, challenge it, and stop it.

The campaign is also backed by our newly established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander anti-racism policy and formal reporting mechanism to ensure incidents of racism are addressed, not ignored. All of these initiatives help build a safer, fairer and more inclusive health system for the people of Metro North.

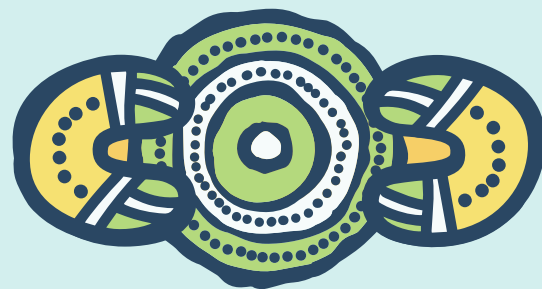
In the past month, we've had a lot of activities and events across our hospitals and services in celebration of NAIDOC Week including flag raising ceremonies, yarning sessions and special cultural days. I thank staff for the widespread participation in these important celebrations which support important knowledge sharing and cultural connections with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community across Metro North.

We recently welcomed our first intake of Deadly Start School Based trainees for the year, with 38 trainees joining Metro North as the program's seventh cohort. This initiative is an important step in helping create future career pathways for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as supporting us to deliver more culturally sensitive and connected care to patients. A great initiative! I look forward to sharing more about the program's success in the coming years.

We are seeing a lot of people with COVID-19, flu and RSV in our hospitals. If you haven't had your flu and COVID jabs, as well as any other important vaccinations this year, I strongly recommend the whole family gets them. A free RSV vaccine is also available for newborns to protect them from this nasty virus.

Kind regards,

Adj. Prof. Jackie Hanson
Chief Executive,
Metro North Health



STOP RACISM

It Starts with Me



Australia's largest health service launches anti-racism campaign

Metro North Health has launched its new anti-racism campaign **Stop Racism. It Starts with Me** in the lead up to NAIDOC Week celebrations, 6 to 13 July 2025.

The campaign is designed to address unconscious bias and institutionalised racism in healthcare against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It was co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, patients and community members as part of truth-telling and focusing on what racism looks like, sounds like and feels like.

Metro North Chief Executive Jackie Hanson said that Australia's largest health service has a responsibility to ensure that every person—whether patient, carer or staff member—feels safe, respected and valued within the health system.

"Metro North has zero tolerance towards racial discrimination within our hospitals and health services," said Jackie.

"Racism has no place in health care. Yet we know it exists — in the stories people have shared, and in the inequities, we continue to see, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other racialised communities.

"This work demands more than good intentions. It demands action — from leadership, from systems and from each of us, every day.

"That's why we're embedding anti-racism into the way we recruit, train, lead and deliver care. We're building a culture where cultural safety is expected."

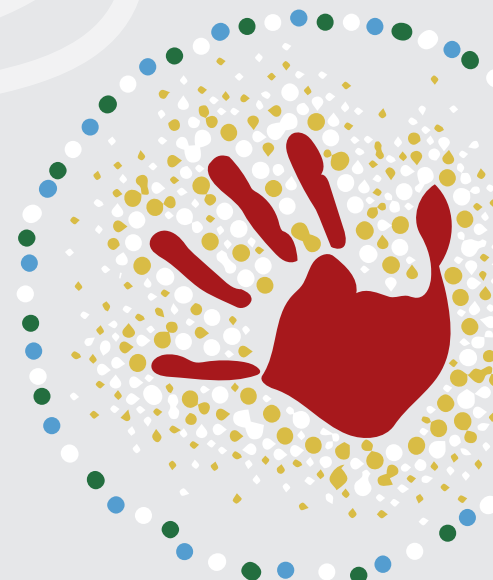
Principal Culture, Engagement and Wellbeing Advisor Nikita King is one of 31 campaign ambassadors recruited to support the campaign and to accompany the introduction of a new policy outlining the process to report incidents of racism across Metro North Health.

"I actively speak up against racist behaviour and call it out for what it is. I am driving equality by leaning on my colleagues and the Metro North Health Peer Responder network to walk beside us on this journey to close the gap and put a stop to racist behaviour," said Nikita.

"I feel very grateful to be in a space that allows me to walk as an active ally."

As part of the campaign, Metro North has also introduced a new policy outlining the process to report incidents of racism across Metro North.

View the campaign here <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van/stop-racism>.





Big Arvo brings Community together on Bribie for Youth Week

(L-R) Metro North Health staff Belinda Jackson, Joey Ellison and Christopher Ewin connecting with community at Big Arvo Event.

Bribie Island residents joined together in a spirit of connection and community at the Big Arvo event, held as part of Queensland Youth Week celebrations.

Bribie Island residents joined together in a spirit of connection and community at the Big Arvo event, held as part of Queensland Youth Week celebrations.

The event, presented by the Bribie Island Neighbourhood Centre, Moreton Bay City Council and other community partners, brought youth and families together to yarn, connect and learn more about various support services available. The event aimed at boosting young people's sense of belonging through easily accessible and affordable activities.

More than 60 people attended the day, with local organisations setting up stalls, sharing resources, and making sure community know where to go for support, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health team from the Bribie Island Satellite Health Centre (Yarun).

Metro North Health staff Christopher Ewin and Belinda Jackson from Bribie Island Satellite Health Centre (Yarun) and Joey Ellison from Kallangur Satellite Health Centre (Kalangoor) were joined by the Better Together Health Van service.

The team were proud to be there to connect with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and yarn about how they can support health and wellbeing in the area.

It was a great day for sharing stories, building relationships, and showing up strong for community. The team were especially proud to sit with Elders, yarn with families, and be part of such a positive community event.

The Bribie Island Satellite Health Centre team are also excited to let everyone know about a new group that has started up on Bribie Island — Deadly Walkers. It's a friendly walking group open to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. The group meet every Wednesday at 9 am, starting at the Kenilworth Bakery.



OUTandABOUT

Celebrating National Reconciliation Week 2025

Staff and Community enjoying National Reconciliation Week celebrations in the new TPCH Healing Garden

Metro North Health staff and services came together during National Reconciliation Week (NRW) 2025 (27 May – 3 June), embracing this year's inspiring theme 'Bridging Now to Next.' The theme encourages us to build strong connections between the present and the future, honouring our shared history while working together to create a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Throughout this significant week, Metro North Health hosted a wide range of activities across hospitals, clinics and community health services. These included cultural awareness yarning circles, gatherings, morning teas, and flag-raising events, celebrating the rich heritage and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Staff from all levels participated, deepening their understanding of the cultures and histories.

Staff and community enjoying NRW events across Redcliffe and Caboolture Hospitals, and Kallangur Satellite Health Centre (Kallangoor).



National Reconciliation Week reminds us that reconciliation is a continuous journey. Metro North Health is dedicated to bridging the gap from now to next – honouring the past, supporting the present, and working together towards a future where health equity and cultural respect are central for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The hospital and health service commits to continue fostering partnerships, promoting cultural safety, and supporting initiatives that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Together building a health system that truly honours the voices and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, creating a stronger, more inclusive future for all.





OUTandABOUT

Metro North Health Builds Connections with Kabi Kabi Traditional Owners

Metro North Health Executives and staff met with Kabi Kabi Traditional Owners.

A meaningful meet and greet event, hosted by Metro North Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team, was recently held with the Kabi Kabi Traditional Owners at the Maroochy River Golf Club.

The informal gathering brought together Elders and representatives from the Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (KKPAC) and the Kabi Kabi Housing Corporation with Metro North Health Senior Executives and staff.

Held in a spirit of respect and cultural exchange, the event was an opportunity to connect face-to-face, share stories, and foster mutual understanding in a warm and welcoming environment—strengthening relationships with the Traditional Owners of the lands where Metro North Health provides care including Caboolture, Kilcoy, Redcliffe, Kallangur and Bribie Island.

Metro North Health Chief Medical Officer Dr Liz Rushbrook was among the senior leaders who attended the gathering.

"It was a privilege to meet with the Kabi Kabi community and deepen our connection," Dr Rushbrook said.

"This is an important step in strengthening our partnerships with Traditional Owners and working together to ensure culturally safe healthcare for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities."

Community and Engagement Officer Rayna Cowburn reflected on the success of the day and said "The Traditional Owners said they are looking forward to the next time we can meet."

This event marked the first of its kind with the Kabi Kabi community, representing Metro North Health's ongoing commitment to partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Similar gatherings with other Traditional Owner groups are being planned for later in the year, continuing efforts to build genuine relationships and improve health outcomes through collaboration and cultural respect.





Celebrating courage, connection, and culture on Mabo Day

Sherry Holzappel, Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health with Uncle George Elarde and Aunty Tricia Elarde cutting the Mabo Day celebration cake.

OUTandABOUT

Metro North Health proudly marked Mabo Day with a powerful and heartfelt event on 3 June 2025 at the historic Sandgate Town Hall, bringing together staff and community in reflection, connection and celebration.

Mabo Day holds deep cultural and historical significance, commemorating the landmark 1992 High Court decision that overturned the concept of terra nullius—the false doctrine that Australia was land belonging to no one prior to colonisation. This victory, led by the late Uncle Eddie Koiki Mabo and supported by the tireless efforts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, changed the course of history and laid the foundation for Native Title recognition.

In honour of this milestone, Metro North Health's event paid tribute not only to Uncle Eddie Mabo's courage and persistence, but also to the strength of Elders, community leaders, and generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who continue to advocate for truth, justice and equity.

More than 50 attendees, including staff and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, gathered in solidarity to reflect on the legacy of Mabo and acknowledge the ongoing journey towards reconciliation. The event created a space for deep conversation and storytelling, as participants came together to share personal experiences, cultural knowledge, and collective hope for the future.

Throughout the day, the spirit of connection was profound. Speeches and reflections highlighted the importance of remembering our history and recognising the continued impact of systemic injustice, while also celebrating the rich cultural heritage that unites communities across the region.

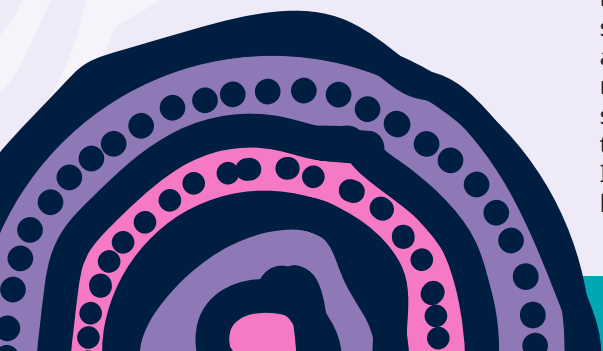
Metro North Health's commitment to reconciliation is grounded in respect, partnership and culturally-safe care. Events like this play a vital role in strengthening relationships between health services and community, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are at the heart of how care is delivered.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders enjoying the day.



Wagga Torres Strait Islander Dance Company sharing song and dance.





Caboolture Hospital Unveils Torres Strait Islander Dhoeri Headdress in tribute to culture and community

(L-R) Sherry Holzapfel, Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health with Tracy Grant, Manager of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Karlene Willcocks, Executive Director at Caboolture, Kilcoy and Woodford Directorate standing next to the new Dhoeri Headdress.

Caboolture Hospital has proudly unveiled a traditional Torres Strait Island Dhoeri Headdress in a moving ceremony that brought together staff, Elders and community members from across south-east Queensland.

The unveiling, held on 11 June in the hospital's main foyer, marked an important step forward in the hospital's ongoing journey toward cultural safety, inclusion and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Dhoeri Headdress, a striking and culturally significant piece, was created by renowned Torres Strait Islander artist, Thomas Pedro. Originally featured in the Cairns Art Gallery in 2022 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the landmark Mabo Decision, the headdress is a one-of-a-kind work. With no two of Thomas Pedro's headdresses alike, Caboolture Hospital is now the proud custodian of a powerful symbol of Torres Strait Islander culture and resilience.

Cultural Capability Officer Janita Adams spoke of the value that culturally meaningful artworks bring to the hospital environment.

"By having culturally meaningful artworks in place, our aim is to promote a service that welcomes diversity, empathy, compassion and respect," Janita said.

"The Dhoeri Headdress is more than just an artwork — it's a message of welcome and a symbol of belonging."

Executive Director Karlene Willcocks shared her appreciation for the overwhelming support from staff and community on the day.

"This was a very special occasion for Caboolture Hospital, which was reaffirmed through the many people who attended the unveiling," Karlene said.

"The headdress serves as a powerful reminder of our commitment to creating a culturally safe and inclusive environment for everyone — patients, staff, and visitors alike. It is also a call to action for all who enter our hospital to reflect, to learn, and to actively contribute to reconciliation."

The Dhoeri now stands on permanent display near the hospital's main entrance, accompanied by other artworks that represent and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Acknowledgements goes to the Caboolture Hospital Redevelopment Project team who supported the initiative. Staff and visitors are warmly encouraged to view the headdress and take a moment to reflect on its significance — not just as art, but as a symbol of connection, culture, and community.





Earlier this year, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and staff from across Metro North Health came together for special yarns at the Health Equity Community and Staff Consultation Forums.

Jackie Hanson, Chief Executive, and Sherry Holzapfel, Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health pictured with Elders and community at the Health Equity Community Consultation.

These gatherings were an important chance for community, staff and key stakeholders to share ideas and discuss ways to increase, improve, and expand initiatives and services that support the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Conversations focused strongly on two urgent key priorities areas—Mental Health and Families. The forums provided culturally safe spaces for community and staff to speak openly about the challenges they face within the hospital and health services, and enabled participants to collaborate and explore ways to provide better care, support, and culturally safe services that truly meet the needs of the community.

The insights, knowledge and experiences shared helped shape the renewed **Metro North Health Equity Strategy 2025-2028**, which was proudly launched on 1 July 2025.

This new strategy reflects the voices and stories of staff and community, and the priorities of Metro North Health. It aims to create real change, making sure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing health services will receive high-quality, person-centred care that is culturally responsive, empowers self-care and choice, and is designed to improve health and wellbeing.

To learn more about the new Metro North Health Equity Strategy read the launch article on page 16.



Insights being shared and captured at the Health Equity Staff Consultation Forum.





New Gathering Garden opens at TPCH to support healing and connection

A new outdoor garden space recently opened at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH), providing a culturally safe place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, families and communities to rest, connect and heal while at the hospital.

The new Gathering Garden formally opened during National Reconciliation Week with a traditional Smoking Ceremony performed by Aboriginal Elder, Aunty Kathryn Fisher, on behalf of the Turrbal People of Brisbane.

TPCH staff, Elders and community members attended the opening, reinforcing TPCH's commitment to caring, connecting and strengthening community, culture and Country, while also delivering holistic, culturally appropriate care to patients from across Queensland.

The Gathering Garden, delivered as part of TPCH Expansion Project, was developed in consultation with landscape architects, Elders, staff and community through a series of cultural considerations workshops.

TPCH's commitment to reconciliation and promoting cultural safety in hospital design ensured there were opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to be heard in the development of the garden.

Going beyond aesthetics, the cultural considerations workshops allowed TPCH Expansion Project team and TPCH staff to engage with cultural knowledge holders and learn what was needed to create spaces that connect people to place.

The Gathering Garden will serve as a place for cultural ceremonies and practices, including Sorry Business, Sad News and bereavement.

TPCH Indigenous Health Liaison Officers, Nicola Carkeet and Naomi Waigana, agree the new Gathering Garden provides a comfortable place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families away from clinical areas.

"The garden offers a safe outdoor space for patients to reflect and connect, beyond their treatments," said Nicola.

"It's about acknowledging and respecting culture, and coming together on Country," said Naomi.

All who visit the space are reminded to remain respectful of cultural practices and provide time and space for healing.

The new Gathering Garden shines a light on how the built environment can improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Located beside the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services building, the Gathering Garden stands as a lasting symbol of TPCH's ongoing work to support reconciliation, cultural safety and community connection.



IDENTIFICATION: IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO A HEALTHIER LIFE

BE PROUD TO IDENTIFY

**Are you of
Aboriginal and/
or Torres Strait
Islander origin?**

- ✓ Receive culturally appropriate care and support
- ✓ Receive the right health care and services
- ✓ Health Service staff must ask you the question
- ✓ Metro North Health are here to help with your health care journey

Further information visit our website
www.metrnorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van or



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OUTandABOUT

Celebrating 50 years of NAIDOC across Metro North Health

Metro North Health proudly celebrated the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC Week (July 6–13) across hospitals and health services and within local community, recognising the enduring culture, resilience and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This year's official theme, 'The Next Generation: Strength, Vision and Legacy', honours the achievements of the past while looking ahead to a bright future—one fuelled by the strength of emerging young leaders, guided by the vision of today's communities, and grounded in the enduring legacy of ancestors.

Across the hospitals and health services, Metro North Health marked the milestone with a week of culturally significant events. Highlights included Traditional Welcome to Country ceremonies, yarnning circles led by Elders, cultural dance performances, morning teas featuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and crafts, and health engagement stalls that brought community and culture together.

Beyond Metro North Health precincts, staff and services took part in major NAIDOC events across Brisbane's Northside, strengthening connections with local communities and organisations. Key events included the Caboolture Burunga Widjung NAIDOC Flag Raising Ceremony, the Northside NAIDOC Family Fun Day, and the Musgrave Park NAIDOC Family Fun Day.





Our Journey Towards Health Equity



IN FOCUS

Health Equity in Action: Strategy Launch Marks a New Chapter

Above: Jackie Hanson, Chief Executive and Sherry Holzapfel, Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health pictured with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders at the recent Health Equity Launch.

On July 1, Metro North Health launched the next phase of the Health Equity Strategy 2025 – 2028.

Over 300 guests attended the celebrations in Kallangur, learning about the strategic priorities over the next three years and enjoying culture sharing by the Undumbi Dancers and Wagga Torres Strait Islander Dance Group.

Elders, Uncle Russell Doctor and Aunty Denise Proud, acknowledged 50 years of NAIDOC Week and shared with the audience what the theme 'The Next Generation: Strength, Vision, and Legacy', means to them.

The day also acknowledged Coming of the Light, observed annually on July 1 to mark the arrival of Christianity to the Torres Strait Islands in 1871. While many Torres Strait Islander communities celebrate the occasion for its spiritual significance, others choose not to, viewing it as the beginning of cultural disruption and loss of traditional ways. The date continues to prompt important conversations about identity, resilience, and the lasting impacts of colonisation.

Positive feedback was received regarding the launch of the new Metro North Health anti-racism campaign, Stop Racism. It Starts with Me, a first of its kind in the State. The campaign highlighted Metro North Health's efforts of leading the way towards health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Below: Elders cutting the special celebration Health Equity Launch cake.



Mental health, women's, children, and families a focus in next phase of health equity journey

Phase two of the health equity strategy will focus on key priorities in mental health and women's, children, and families. This strategy is aligned with the Metro North Strategic Plan 2024-2028 and will guide the organisation over the next three years to strive to achieve health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Metro North Health Equity Strategic Priorities cover:

- There is zero experience of racism within Metro North Health.
- Creating safe hospital and healthcare services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Develop and enhance culturally safe, co-designed innovative care models.
- Sustain culturally safe, data driven equity.

Metro North Health Board Chair, Bernard Curran, said the Metro North Health strategic vision supports the health equity journey to creating healthier futures together— where innovation and research meet compassionate care and community voices shape our services.

"As Board Chair, I want to reinforce our commitment to strengthening relationships, listening to, and learning from the community we serve, and working towards health equity in true co-design, at all stages of health care services development and planning to ensure we are providing high-quality person centred care that is culturally responsive, empowers self-care and choice, and is designed to improve health and wellbeing," Bernard said.

The new plan was distributed to community members at the launch, as well as at community hosted NAIDOC Week celebrations on the Northside. You can access the plan online - <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/mn-health-equity-strategy.pdf>

If you would like a hard copy, please call the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team on Phone: (07) 3170 4460 or email HealthEquityMNH@health.qld.gov.au



New Metro North Health Equity Strategy 2025 – 2028 available for viewing



Statement of Commitment

Our Journey Towards Health Equity

"Health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders will bring healing for all Australia."

"Welcoming our voices being heard and action put into place that sees outcomes for our young and Elders moving forward."

"Respect – acceptance, Faith – for life, Hope – future. Continue our Health equity journey."

"Unity, unite, working for each other and community."

"Stand together with us, walk the journey with us."

"Beginning to see some positive changes. Still a way to go."

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members

Metro North Health respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our hospitals and services are located, the Jinibara, Kabi Kabi, Turrbal and Yagara peoples.

This statement of commitment is aligned to the 2025 – 2028 phase of the Metro North Health Equity Strategy and the Metro North Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028. In each phase of the health equity journey, we will share our direction and commitment with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we serve.

Our objective is to build and support empowered communities to achieve equity of health outcomes, access, and experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Metro North Health commits to:

- Ensuring a healthy and strong start to life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the first 2000 days, creating a profound impact on positive health outcomes and reducing the life expectancy gap for the next generation.
- Providing family centred care to acknowledge and strengthen the role of families in health and wellbeing.

- Achieve zero-tolerance to racism towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and consumers and create a health service where cultural knowledge and experience is valued and respected.
- Increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to 5% by 2031, with a focus on the Deadly Start and First Nations Cadetship Programs as a clear pathway to employment and allowing us to grow and nurture our next generation of healthcare professionals.
- Addressing the root causes of health inequities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by advocating for systemic change, strengthening community-led initiatives, and fostering cross-sector partnerships.
- A focus on Mental Health and Alcohol & Other Drugs (MHAOD) to review and embed a strength-based trauma informed framework in all models of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Improving equity and ease of access to healthcare services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people based on the social, cultural, and economic determinants of health.
- Strengthen cultural awareness and support ensuring the way we deliver services reflects the needs of the diverse community that we care for.



Bernard Curran
Board Chair
Metro North Health



Adj. Prof. Jackie Hanson
Chief Executive
Metro North Health

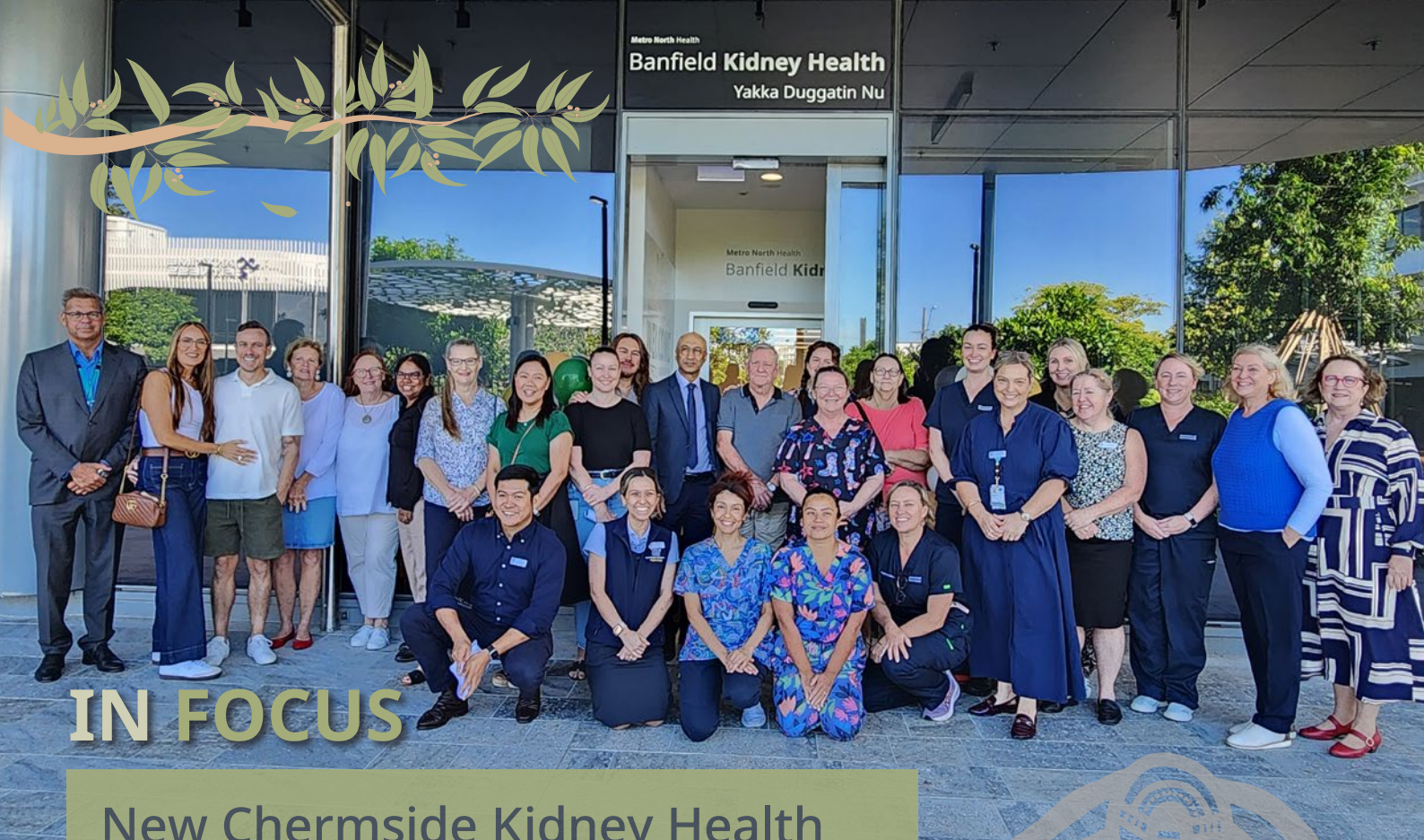


Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel
Executive Director
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

**Metro North
Health**



**Queensland
Government**



IN FOCUS

New Chermside Kidney Health Centre Opens with Community Focus and Cultural Recognition

Metro North Health has officially opened a new, purpose-built kidney health centre in Chermside, marking a major milestone for renal care in the region.

Under the leadership of Banfield Kidney Health Nurse Unit Manager Feldinar 'El' Tapay, the facility now serves as the new home of the Metro North Home, Independent Dialysis and Transition Service.

"Our new location is more than just a modern building — it represents a renewed commitment to our patients and the wider community," El said. "The larger, light-filled space allows us to better support over 300 patients, from early-stage chronic kidney disease through to those transitioning to home dialysis therapies."

With expanded services and a strong focus on independence and education, the new centre has been welcomed by both patients and staff.

"It's a much more comfortable and uplifting space for both treatment and work," El said.

"The open-plan design and natural light make a real difference to the experience of everyone who walks through our doors."

A meaningful moment in the opening of the centre came with the gifting of Traditional cultural naming by Turrbal Traditional Owner Songwoman Auntie Maroochy.

The centre is now proudly known as 'Yakka Duggatin Nu', which translates to 'Working for the People'.

"We are deeply honoured to receive this name," El said. "It captures the heart of our service — working alongside our patients, supporting their health journey, and providing culturally safe and respectful care, especially for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities."

In addition to serving patients across the Metro North Health region, including Chermside, Caboolture, and Redcliffe, the team will also extend support to renal patients on Norfolk Island and those receiving peritoneal dialysis.

The new Yakka Duggatin Nu centre stands as a symbol of innovation, compassion, and community connection — working for the people, every step of the way.





Metro North Celebrates Nurses Leading with Culture Through Tjurtu Program

Metro North Health celebrates four dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members who were part of the first Tjurtu First Nations Nursing and Midwifery Leadership Program — a powerful initiative centred on cultural revival, leadership, and healing within healthcare.

We honour and congratulate:

- **Brydon George** – *Wakka Wakka/ Mer/Erub* – Clinical Nurse Consultant, First Nations Health, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital
- **Melissa Walker** – *Quandamooka/ Palawa* – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurse Navigator for Outpatients Department, The Prince Charles Hospital
- **Suzy Warren** – *Mitakoodi* – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurse Navigator, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital
- **Kathryn Hooper** – *Woromi, Kabi Kabi, Coconut Island* – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurse Practitioner, Palliative Care

These committed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health champions are walking forward as leaders, grounded in their cultural knowledge, connection to Country, and commitment to strengthening healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Their journeys reflect not only personal and professional growth, but also highlights Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, and leading within the health system.

Developed and led by First Nations Nursing and Midwifery Consulting (FNNMC), the Tjurtu Leadership Program is embedded in Kalkadunga knowledge systems and interactive leadership.

The name Tjurtu, meaning coolamon in the Kalkadunga language, represents the cultural responsibilities, tools, and knowledge carried by participants into their workplaces and communities.

FNNMC is led by Professor Roianne West, a Kalkadunga and Djakundine woman and Queensland's first Aboriginal Professor of Nursing. Drawing on a rich legacy of four generations of Aboriginal nurses and healers, the program is designed to nurture and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led leadership and restoring cultural governance models in health.

The journey of the first cohort began in Brisbane, where participants gathered for a residential program grounded in cultural protocols, connection to Country, and collective yarning. The program was officially welcomed by the Office of the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer and was honoured by the presence and wisdom of Elder-in-Residence Aunty Professor Gracelyn Smallwood.

More than a traditional leadership program, Tjurtu is a space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives to lead on their own terms, reshape systems, and centre cultural safety and connection in healthcare.

Brydon, Melissa, Suzy and Kath continue to grow as cultural leaders, bringing strength, insight, and deep care to the communities they serve. Their leadership contributes to shaping the future of healthcare across the Metro North Health region and inspires the next generation of health professionals.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives participating in the Tjurtu First Nations Nursing and Midwifery Leadership Program.





IN FOCUS

Supporting deadly smiles at Koobara Kindy

Koobara Kindergarten students are learning important life lessons about taking care of their teeth with regular visits by the Metro North Health Deadly Smiles team.

Jarjums (children) are learning how to take care of their teeth thanks to regular visits from Metro North Health's Deadly Smiles team — a fun and family-friendly initiative helping to lay the foundations for lifelong oral health.

Each term, Deadly Smiles visits the Koobara Kindergarten and Pre-Prep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, offering free dental check-ups, education, and health packs to young children and their families.

Metro North Oral Health Service Business Planning and Improvement Manager Lina Hunter says the visits are a vital step toward improving health equity through prevention and early intervention.

"Being able to join the kids and families at Koobara is an important part of our health equity journey," Lina said.

"Each time we visit, we see families taking part in free screenings and education, and the children really engage with the experience."

The program provides more than just a dental check — children receive healthy snacks, a preventive dental pack, and education about brushing, diet, and oral hygiene. For those who need follow-up care, a direct referral pathway is offered to public oral health facilities.

"By being out in community and delivering care early, we're helping prevent tooth decay and improve long-term oral health outcomes," Lina said.

"This is a cost-effective way to increase access and build trust with families from a young age."

The Deadly Smiles team includes dental technicians, dentists, and oral hygiene specialists from Metro North Health's Child and Adolescent and General Practice Oral Health Services.

The initiative is one of many steps Metro North Health is taking to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people receive culturally responsive care that empowers self-care, supports informed choices, and promotes overall wellbeing.

With visits scheduled every school term, the Deadly Smiles program is set to keep young smiles shining bright for years to come.



Ambassadors taking a stand against racism in health

In support of the newly launched Metro North Health Anti-racism campaign, Stop Racism. It Starts with Me, various health care professionals from across the organisation have banded together to stand up against racism across the organisation's hospitals and health services.

The committed group of anti-racism ambassadors, representing a wide range of cultural and community backgrounds, are stepping up to lead meaningful change.

Standing in strong support of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander anti-racism agenda, these ambassadors are playing a vital role in challenging systemic racism and promoting cultural safety within healthcare.

Through education, advocacy and awareness-raising activities, they are driving conversations, confronting bias, and fostering inclusive environments where all patients, staff, and communities feel safe, respected and valued.

Their work reflects a shared commitment to equity, accountability, and healing — and a collective determination to ensure racism has no place in healthcare.

Meet some of our anti-racism ambassadors:
(more will be featured in coming editions).

Jelena Senic

Advanced Social Worker,
Royal Brisbane and Women's
Hospital

"It's the very least we can all do – a bare minimum starting point"



Kate Green

Clinical Implementation Manager,
Royal Brisbane and Women's
Hospital

"I commit to making a conscious effort to speak out against racism and the harm it causes"



Geoff Grima

Director of Operations,
The Prince Charles Hospital

"Being kind is key to eliminating racism and building a culture of true inclusion"



Megan O'Keeffe

Nurse Navigator (Identified),
The Prince Charles Hospital
Proud Nughi-Nunkul woman

"Open mindedness comes with new learnings. - Let's unlearn racism"



SEE IT. CHANGE IT. TOGETHER WE CAN STOP RACISM.



STOP RACISM

It Starts with Me

There is no place for racism
in our health service.

If you hear it or see it, speak
up and report it.

TOGETHER WE CAN STOP RACISM

Elizabeth Rushbrook

Chief Medical Officer,
Office of the Chief Executive



*"Working together to
eliminate racism"*

Luenne Zielke

Senior Staff Psychologist,
Royal Brisbane and Women's
Hospital



*"The anti-racism campaign in
Metro North Health is vital to
ensure every patient, regardless
of their background, receives
compassionate, equitable care and
the opportunity to thrive."*

Rajni Nair

Clinical Nurse Consultant,
Surgical, Treatment and
Rehabilitation Service



*"Anti-racism is foundational to
building a culture of belonging,
where respect, safety, and
opportunity are available for every
member of the workforce to bring
a sense of value and purpose".*

Jiville Latu

A/Nurse Unit Manager,
Redcliffe Hospital



*"A voice for fairness and
respect in healthcare"*

Tim Dunn

Director of Pharmacy Services,
Caboolture Hospital



*"Make a career
of humanity -
Martin Luther King"*

Ann Tanner

Clinical Nurse Consultant,
Royal Brisbane and Women's
Hospital



*"I stand up against
racism, together we can
make a difference"*

SEE IT. CHANGE IT. TOGETHER WE CAN STOP RACISM.

Brydon George

First Nations Clinical Nurse
Consultant, Royal Brisbane and
Women's Hospital

*Proud Wakka Wakka and Torres Strait
Islander (connections to Eastern
Islands, Mer and Erub) woman.*

*"Colour is a fact. Race is a social
construction - a tool designed
to dehumanise"*



Tom Gilbert

Nurse Unit Manager,
The Prince Charles Hospital

*"The time is always right
to do what is right –
Martin Luther King"*



Nadine Medwin

Patient Experience Manager,
Caboolture Hospital

*"Be brave, be authentic,
be human"*



Tegan Taylor

Aboriginal Advanced Peer Worker,
The Prince Charles Hospital
Proud Kuku Yalanji woman

*"The only way to undo
racism is to consistently
identify it, describe it, and
then dismantle it."
Ibram X. Kendi*



Allison Welch

Senior Culture and Wellbeing Staff
Psychologist, Surgical, Treatment
and Rehabilitation Service

*"As an ally, I strive to walk alongside,
learning from the wisdom, and
truth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander peoples who have shown
me what leadership and strength
looks like"*



Nikita King

Principal Culture, Engagement and
Wellbeing Advisor, Royal Brisbane
and Women's Hospital

*"Respect means calling out
racism. It is a core value of
Metro North and is non-
negotiable"*



Kirby Harwood

Support Officer,
Caboolture Hospital

*"To help create a positive
future where Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander people
are treated with the dignity
and respect they deserve"*



Stella Bamaga

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer,
Caboolture Hospital
*Proud Torres Strait Islander
woman with connections to
Erub and Saibai Island*

"YARN, TOK and LISTEN"



SEE IT. CHANGE IT. TOGETHER WE CAN STOP RACISM.



Redcliffe Hospital appoints Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

A new role has been created at Redcliffe Hospital to drive health equity efforts across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services.

Proud Mununjali Wangeriburra woman, from the Bundjalung/Yugembeh language group, Raelene White, has joined as the new Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

The foundational role is responsible for ensuring the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities in operational planning and workforce management strategies to achieve optimal access, experiences, and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers of Redcliffe Hospital.

"The role is important to advocate and have a voice for our people so that we can provide culturally respectful and responsive health care. This ensures health services are sustainable and reflective of the communities we serve and to better support the needs of our community."

Raelene begun her career as a medical typist in radiology clinics.

"I worked for radiology clinics as a medical typist for 20 years, typing MRI, Nuclear Medicine, CT, Ultrasound, and general x-ray reports and have worked at just about every private hospital in Brisbane as a medical typist!

"I have now been working in Queensland Health for approximately 22 years."

Raelene joins Redcliffe Hospital from the Department of Health, where she was the Manager, Training and Support with Finance Solutions, Finance Branch. Within this role she was responsible for three different teams and 11 direct reports. During this tenure, she received the Australia Day Award (2009) for change management in systems and a letter of acknowledgement from the Chief Health Officer (Dr Jeannette Young in 2019) for the coordination of a training program.

"I'm proud of building capability in teams, seeing staff potential and watching them grow. I was able to leave my team and go on secondments as I had built a team that was cross skilled, solution focussed and self-managed. I see this as an opportunity to leave a legacy behind and be remembered for the leader I had evolved into, assisting others to reach their true potential and to set a standard for when they become leaders themselves.

"I had been in this team for 18 years with actual work time being 15 years as I was on secondment for 3 years to various other departments as well as acting Director, Primary Health Care, Maternal and Child Health, Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service for 15 months (2022 – 2023).

"Working for Torres and Cape HHS was a very rewarding experience, understanding the geographical landscape, access to services in the region and working with the team to improve the rates and completion of Child Health Checks."

Since joining Redcliffe Hospital in June this year, Raelene is meeting with directors of service lines to understand access to services and if there are any deficits or areas of improvement. She is particularly focused on referral pathways, discharge with support, linking back to the community, processes for reducing the "Failure to Attend" for outpatient appointments, and "Did not wait" once treatment had commenced and improved reporting mechanisms for health equity.

"As the health equity strategy for 2025 – 2028 has been launched, I will also work closely with the directors of service lines to review and advance ongoing initiatives across the key performance areas and co-design with community for community led decision making for any new programs."

Long term, Raelene will be looking at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce representation, especially with the Redcliffe Hospital expansion and working closely to provide strategic advice to the Executive Director, Service Group Directors, and other senior practitioners.

"The work done by Metro North Health towards health equity to date is truly wonderful to see. To achieve health equity, we must co-design and work across sectors in partnership and collaboration and recognise the interrelationship between good health and the social determinants of health by supporting local and regional solutions for health outcomes.

"Health is not just a service we provide, it's a relationship we nurture. Walking alongside community and not in front of them, to listen deeply, respecting cultural knowledge and ensuring that care is safe and welcoming."

IN FOCUS



Advancing Inclusive, Culturally Relevant Healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with Disabilities

Metro North Health is proud to mark 12 months since the launch of the inaugural Disability Services Action Plan (DSAP). This landmark initiative demonstrates the commitment to providing accessible, inclusive healthcare for all, with a particular focus on supporting individuals with disabilities. DSAP also aims to grow the diversity of our workforce by recruiting and retaining more people with disabilities, ensuring the workforce reflects the community we serve.

The DSAP recognises the unique challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living with disabilities. Around 36% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience some form of disability, including physical, intellectual, neurological, sensory (vision or hearing), psychosocial, developmental, or neurodiverse conditions. Furthermore, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are twice as likely to experience severe or profound disabilities. Many also provide care for family members with disabilities.

One of the primary goals of engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is to ensure that people with disabilities in these groups have access to the support and services they need to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Throughout the first year of DSAP implementation, intersectionality has emerged as a central theme. Intersectionality highlights how various aspects of a person's identity—such as race, gender, ability, and sexuality—affect their experiences and shape opportunities.

These overlapping identities can often expose individuals to heightened discrimination and marginalization.

During Metro North Disability Service participation in the Northside NAIDOC Family Fun Day, valuable feedback was gathered from community members about their experiences living with disabilities. One key concern raised was the difficulty in accessing quality, culturally informed disability support services, and the need for more tailored solutions that meet specific needs, at the right time and in the right place.

Through the community consultation sessions, the insightful feedback showed:

- 1. Overall Satisfaction:** Many community members reported that Metro North Health services are accessible and inclusive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities.
- 2. Suggestions for Improvement:** Over 20 excellent suggestions were made to improve the current service offerings, including:

- Identified roles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities.
- Liaison services to help navigate health services for people with disabilities.
- Increased advertising and communication about disability services.
- Intellectual Disability Awareness Training, specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- More publications in Easy English for communities.

Additionally, the Disability Service team introduced the Julian's Key Health Passport, a communication tool designed to help healthcare staff provide better care by sharing important information about the patient's support and care needs. This tool empowers individuals with disabilities to control the information shared about them in healthcare settings, ensuring their unique needs are respected and met. To find out more or request a Julian's Key Health Passport, email JuliansKey@health.qld.gov.au or call 13 HEALTH.

If you have feedback or would like to learn more about the DSAP, contact the Metro North Health Disability Service team at MetroNorth-Disability@health.qld.gov.au.



Better Together Medication Access

Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Origin?

Better Together Medication Access will cover all out-of-pocket expenses for prescribed discharge and outpatient prescriptions, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seen by a Metro North Health service.

Better Together Medication Access is only available through Metro North Health Pharmacy Services.



How it works



You will be asked 'Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Origin?'. Health Service staff must ask you the question, we cannot assume upon appearance.



If you identify, regardless of age, you will be eligible for Better Together Medication Access.



If you decided to opt-in, your medication prescription can be taken to a Metro North Health pharmacy, where your medication is supplied with no out of pocket cost.



Talk to Staff caring for you for more information.

By identifying you will receive support from culturally appropriate services including our Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers to assist your healthcare journey and recovery back to community.

For further information, contact your local Metro North Health Pharmacy Team.

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **Healthy Ageing Clinic** (HAC)



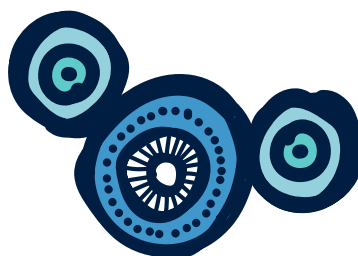
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healthy Ageing Clinic (HAC) provides specialist geriatrician services on Brisbane Northside for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 50 years of age.

The clinics are delivered at Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (MATSICHS) in collaboration with Metro North Health.

HAC provides specialised care in a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older persons with chronic or complex conditions relating to ageing, frailty, disability, and cognitive problems.

This includes:

- Cognitive and functional assessment
- Restorative care assessment
- Comprehensive geriatric assessment
- Dementia diagnosis and management
- Falls risk assessment and management
- Polypharmacy



Moreton
ATSICHS

**Metro North
Health**



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Who can access the service

- Patients 50 years of age and older who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- Immediate family members (even if the immediate family member does not identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander) defined as spouse, partner, sibling, parent or child of someone of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

How to access this service

Access to HAC can be by a referral from your GP through to a Metro North Hospital and Health Geriatric Service.

HAC clinics available every Tuesday from 9am – 4.30pm.

For further information contact Caboolture Satellite Hospital on (07) 3049 9755.

Clinic locations

Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (MATSICHS).

MATSICHS Caboolture
5 James Street, Caboolture
Phone: (07) 5428 5855.

MATSICHS Strathpine
496-498 Gympie Rd, Strathpine
Phone: (07) 3897 0500.



This initiative is supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team, Metro North Health

IN FOCUS

A special farewell to Auntie Sandra Blackman

A touching tribute was shared at the Health Equity Strategy Launch on July 1, with Auntie Sandra Blackman receiving a surprise bunch of flowers and praise from colleagues, Elders, and community members acknowledging her retirement.

Auntie was not expecting the recognition and was pleasantly surprised as MCs Layla Scott and Andrew Williams invited her to the stage. The special moment was captured on film and later shared on the Better Together – Our Health, Our Way social media pages with hundreds of likes received and personal well wishes shared truly highlighting the positive impact Auntie has had on many people.

Auntie Sandra officially retired from Metro North Health in May and finished her career as the Acting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurse Navigator at Redcliffe Hospital.

Nursing for over 42 years, Auntie Sandra has enjoyed a long and rewarding career. Her work across Queensland Health and community-controlled organisations has left a lasting legacy, inspiring the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses.

We wish her all the very best in her retirement and thank her for outstanding service.

Messages shared from the community:

"You are an inspiration to all Auntie Sandra." – Kim

"Such an awesome, passionate, funny and wonderful person!" – Parker



"A well-deserved tribute. Auntie Sandra congratulations, now rest up and enjoy yourself."
– Maleeta

"A superstar and an inspiring nurse – thanks Auntie for your care and compassion and being an awesome human." – Roses

"Amazing woman, auntie Sandra Blackman. I felt truly privileged to have worked with you. Our conversations, your views and values shaped how I practice and see all people but in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people." – Nyasha

"Lovely piccies – well deserved Auntie Sandra! Missing your wonderful laugh, energy and spirit. Enjoy this new adventure."
– Vanessa

"Well done sister and congratulations." – Marshall

"Reaping such a deadly reward after many years working for mob and community, well done."
– Robyn

WORD OF THE MONTH

"Bibunbay"

(Bib-un-bye) is Children in Djabugay language.

Djabugay is the name of one of the languages spoken in the Cairns region extending along the hinterland and ranges from Mt Molloy towards Atherton and along the Upper Barron River.

Linguistic research suggests there are several dialects in Djabugay including: Yirrgay, Guluy, Nyagali, Bulway and Djabugay (sources identify the term as a dialect as well as a language name). The Djabugay language was spoken and understood by Aboriginal groups in the region, including neighbouring groups of Yidinji, Gunggay, Dyirbal and Yalanji.

Djabugay is also written as Tjapukai, Tjapukandji, Djabuganjdji, Dyaabugay etc. AIATSIS have identified Djabugay as the standardised spelling.



STAFF PROFILE

A Day in the life of:

Alison Iselin

Cultural Capability Officer, Metro North Mental Health

Q1. Who is your mob and where are you from?

I am a Wiradjuri woman born and raised on Turrbal country. My family are from Nyngan NSW with ties back to Cunnamulla where my grandmother was born.

Q2. What is your role within Metro North Health and what does your role involve?

I'm a Cultural Capability Officer working within Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs (MHAOD) area here at Metro North. It's a new role aimed at ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are getting the right care and support when they come through the mental health services. It's about making sure our cultural needs are understood and respected.

Q3. What do you hope to achieve in your new role?

I'm all about connecting non-Indigenous workers and our people who are accessing mental health services. I want to guide, educate and support staff to connect with our culture and provide the best possible care, so that when our people walk through those doors, they feel respected and supported on their journey through the mental health system.

Q4. Why is Mental Health such an important agenda for our hospital and health service?

Mental health is on the rise, and it has a huge impact on our community. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, mental health is one of the leading causes of death due to suicide. Getting the right care and support is critical to changing that. If we all work together, we can make a real difference.

Q5. Where did you work prior to this new role?

Before coming to Queensland Health, I worked at Services Australia (Medicare) for 17 years, in a few different roles. I was a Medicare Liaison Officer, working with Aboriginal Medical Services across Queensland to make sure services had the support they needed with Medicare. I also worked in the Indigenous and Remote Servicing team, making sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of doing things were included in new projects and policies.

Q6. What does achieving Health Equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people mean to you?

To me, it means no more having to talk about the gap in life expectancy, health, education, and incarceration rates. It means seeing our people thrive – living the same, or better, than the rest of non-Indigenous Australia. Health equity is about us being equal and excelling in every area of life.

Q7. What do you like to do outside of work?

When I'm not working, you'll find me playing touch football, at the gym, or spending time with my family. Sport is a big part of my life, but family time is what really matters most to me. We do everything together – whether it's playing sport or just chilling out wherever we can.

Q8. Do you have anything you would like to share?

We're always growing and learning. Life can be tough but remember – those tough times can be the stepping stones to something better. Whatever you want to achieve, believe in yourself and know it's possible. Keep pushing forward, and you'll get there.



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We welcome your feedback, contributions, story ideas and details on any upcoming events.

Please contact the Manager, Communications at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team on A_TSILT_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 3170 4460



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