



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
Year in Review
2025



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

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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 communications 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 area 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

Metro North Health's commitment to achieving health equity ensures cultural safety and awareness are embedded at the heart of our service delivery.

At many of our engagements throughout 2025, I am constantly reminded of how Metro North Health is leading the way on our health equity journey. Community, stakeholders and partnership organisations across the State look towards us to share learnings, support and as a best practice model for improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Our successes are built upon the foundations of listening, co-design and collaboration. ***Better Together – Our Health, Our Way!***

In July, we proudly launched the next phase of our Metro North Health Equity Strategy 2025-2028. 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 us over the next three years as we strive to achieve health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

There are so many areas to celebrate and be proud of, including the HOPE and UROC clinics achieving 100 per cent attendance rates, Deadly Feet expansion to Bundaberg, and the 28 inspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students who have successfully completed the Deadly Start School-Based Traineeship program.

Achieving health equity is a shared responsibility, and it requires the dedication of every staff member at all levels across the health service. We need to ensure that we continue this important work, walking alongside our community and creating services that genuinely reflect their needs, priorities, and voices.

In September, our yarning sessions focused on two key priorities identified during our April consultation - Improving the healthcare journey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in correctional settings and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

These themes reflect areas where community insight, lived experience, and cultural knowledge are essential to driving real and lasting change. The feedback gathered will be instrumental in identifying service gaps, strengthening culturally safe care pathways, and ensuring our strategy continues to align with the needs, aspirations, and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The new Metro North Health Anti-Racism campaign and policy were also launched this year 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.

As Queensland's largest hospital and health service, we're proud to have launched this powerful new campaign – Stop Racism. It Starts with Me – to address racism in healthcare and promote cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The campaign 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. The campaign is supported by a newly developed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anti-Racism Policy and reporting mechanism for incidents of racism, aimed to directly address unconscious bias and institutionalised racism in the health system.



We are building a health service that is culturally competent and inclusive. The introduction of mandatory Cultural Practice Program and Indigenous Accurate Identification training for all health staff is an important step forward.

In September, Chief Executive of Metro North Health, Jackie Hanson announced her retirement after 47 years of service. At many of our gatherings over the past three years, Jackie has sat beside community to listen to stories and lived experiences in genuine co-design. We recognise her leadership and commitment to creating meaningful change and a legacy that we can all be proud of. In her parting message to our 26,000 staff, Jackie shared the following:

“My final message is that Metro North’s health equity journey is a critical one to continue, and the recent launch of the anti-racism campaign is a critical priority. Racism and all unacceptable behaviours—don’t walk past, call it out! No sticks and stones, just be kind, be respectful.”

This speaks volumes to who Jackie was as a person and her commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

I would like to reassure you as we continue this journey together, we have the full support of the Metro North Health Board and interim CEO Nick Steele.

Thank you to the Metro North Board, Executive Leaders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team, staff and colleagues, respected Elders and community members for a wonderful year in 2025.

Take a moment to reflect on the updates and stories shared within this annual year in review report. I will formally launch this at the November showcase, and I look forward to celebrating alongside you and continuing our work in 2026!

Until next time, stay safe and deadly.

Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel

Executive Director

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Executive Directors Footprints

JANUARY

- **6-8 JANUARY** – The Australian Institute of Company Directors



FEBRUARY

- **7 February** - Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Oversight Committee
- **20-21 February** – Hardy Group Adelaide
- **24 February** – Elders Yarns with Sherry



- **26 February** – A&TSILT Building Day
- **27 February** – Allied Health First Nations Showcase



MARCH

- **20 March** – Elders Yarns with Sherry
- **20 March** – Presented at Allied Health Leadership Intensive Forum



APRIL

- **2 April** – Yarns with Sherry at Redcliffe Hospital
- **4 April** – Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Oversight Committee



- **10 April** – Health Equity Community Consultation
- **28 April** – TPCH All Staff Orientation Executive Welcome
- **29 April** – First Nations Health Leads Forum
- **30 April** – Health Equity Staff Consultation



MAY

- **15-16 May** - Hardy Group Cairns
- **26 May** - Elders Yarns with Sherry
- **30 May** - Launch of the Treaty, Truth Telling and Healing research



JULY

- **1 July** - Metro North Health Equity Strategy and Anti-racism Campaign Launch
- **8 July** - NAIDOC Week Celebration at Redcliffe Hospital
- **9 July** - NAIDOC Week Celebration at STARS
- **10 July** - Childrens Health Queensland Health Equity Strategy Launch
- **29 July** - First Nations Health Leads Forum



JUNE

- **2 June** - Kabi Kabi Traditional Owner Meet and Greet
- **3 June** - Mabo Day Celebration
- **4 June** - Wisdom Council for Indigenous Knowledges Launch Event
- **5 June** - Yarns with Sherry at STARS
- **6 June** - Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Oversight Committee
- **11 June** - Caboolture Hospital Dhoeri Headdress Unveiling
- **16-19 June** - Lowitja Institute Conference



AUGUST

- **6-8 August** - Hardy Group Melbourne
- **20-22 August** - Close the Gap on Indigenous Health Conference
- **25 August** - Elders Yarns with Sherry





SEPTEMBER

- **10 September** – UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health Symposium 10 year celebration
- **11 September** – Health Equity Community Consultation
- **30 September** – Her Excellency, Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland Caboolture Hospital Visit

OCTOBER

- **1 October** – Deadly Start School Based Traineeship Graduation Day
- **2 October** – Yarns with Sherry at TPCB
- **2 October** – TPCB Staff Forum
- **3 October** – Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Oversight Committee
- **23–24 October** – SEQ First Nations Health Equity in Action Conference 2025
- **27 October** – Elders Yarns with Sherry
- **31 October** – Corporate Business Services Awards





NOVEMBER

- **5-7 November** – Hardy Group Sydney
- **13 November** – Anti-racism campaign Vidcast to staff
- **19 November** – Health Equity Showcase Expo
- **28 November** – Metro North Health Staff Excellence Awards



DECEMBER

- **4 December** – Yarns with Sherry at RBWH
- **8 December** – Elders Yarns with Sherry Christmas Lunch
- **11 December** – Better Together Staff Gathering and Deadly Awards



Key Highlights from 2025

WORKFORCE

As of June 2025, the headcount of Metro North staff who have identified themselves via the EEO survey as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is **503** representing

1.96% of the total staff headcount of

25,667

This marks a **8.2%** increase in headcount from June 2023, where the count was **465** (1.91% of total Metro North staff).

ACTIVITY

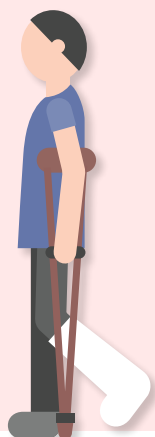
Number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients accessing Metro North Health (FY 24-25)

OUTPATIENTS

(From QNHAPDC. Excluding Source: BSQ, All Facilities Including Satellite Health Centres)

101,789

(86,920 in FY23-24)



MOTHERS and BABIES

(FY 24-25 Metro North Facilities)

526

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Women who gave birth in Metro North facilities.



(Born Alive, Single and Multiple Births, All Gestation Weeks).

766

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

(Born Alive, Single and Multiple Births, All Gestation Weeks).



525

to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Mothers

241

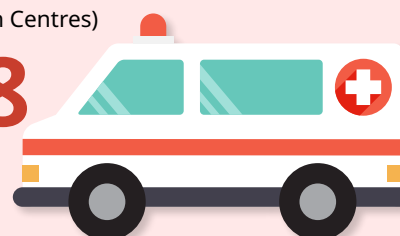
to Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Mothers

EMERGENCY

(Excluding Satellite Health Centres)

24,478

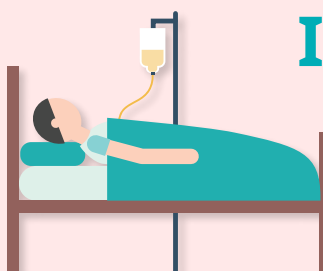
(22,578 in FY23-24)



INPATIENT

22,422

(19,756 in FY 23-24)



Health Equity report card



Health Outcomes



The **Discharge Against Medical Advice (DAMA)** rate for FY 2024/25 was at 3.09% which was slightly higher than previous FY rate (Data until Apr25).



The **Failure to Attend (FTA)/ Missed Opportunity to Treat (MOTT)** Rate for FY 2024/25 was 9.8%, which has seen a slight improvement from the previous FY 2023/24 rate of 10.0% - demonstrating improved patient engagement and accessibility of services.



The **Did Not Wait (DNW)** rate in EDs was in line with previous year at 4.6% (FY24/25 Data until Apr25 Excluding Satellite Health Centres).



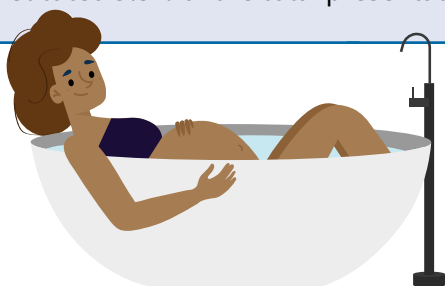
The **Left After Treatment Commenced (LATC)** rate in EDs was in line with previous year at 9.9% (FY24/25 Data until Apr25 Excluding Satellite Health Centres).



The **Total Potentially Preventable Hospitalisations (PPH) Separations** percent for FY 2024/25 was 11.1% (Improvement from 11.4% same period last year) whereas PPH Separations for Diabetes Complications was 2.1% (Improvement from 2.6% same period last year) (Data until Mar 25).



Caboolture, Kallangur and Bribie Island Satellite Health Centres collectively had 6,405 Minor Injury and Illness Clinic (MIIC) presentations from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members in FY 2024/25 (Data until May 25). They constituted 9.5% of the total presentations.



Eliminate Racism



Metro North Health Equity Strategy 2025-2028 launched July 1, 2025.

Metro North Health Equity Strategy 2022-2025 - As at March 2025, 74.4% of all actions (96 out of 129 actions) reported to be 'on track', 15% 'Completed', 2.3% 'Delayed', 0% 'At Risk of Delay', 4.7% 'Not yet Commenced' and 3.1% 'Ceased/Changed'. All actions indicated as 'Delayed', 'Ceased/Changed', or 'Not Yet Commenced' have been transitioned directly into 2025-2028 Health Equity Strategy or further refined to better align with future timelines and strategic direction.

Metro North Health have now launched the **Metro North Anti-Racism Policy (010028)** and **The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anti-Racism Policy (010568)**.

Respect@Work has been identified as the platform for reporting discrimination and racism complaints. An intake process is being developed, with a focus on ensuring cultural safety for those making complaints.

Metro North Health launched a bold campaign **Stop Racism. It Starts with Me.** The campaign, unveiled at the launch of the second phase of the Metro North Health Equity Strategy, is designed to address unconscious bias and institutionalised racism in healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The campaign 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. There are 47 Ambassadors supporting staff throughout this campaign. These ambassadors will be responsible for championing our anti-racism agenda across the directorates, providing awareness and leading brave conversations. They will not be responsible for managing and responding to incidents.



Eliminate Racism continued...

People and Culture Programs collaborated with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Leadership Team to enhance the content of the BPA (Have Your Say) survey to benchmark and assess cultural integrity of Metro North biannually. The survey was released to staff in May 2025.

Across Metro North Health, multiple Executive Directors have successfully developed and implemented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural events calendars tailored to their service areas. These calendars are shared broadly with staff via QHEPS pages, staff bulletins, meeting invites, and local communications channels to ensure widespread awareness and participation.

Commemorated NAIDOC Week celebrations, National Close the Gap Day, and Mabo Day with several Community events aimed at reconnecting and celebrating with our Elders, Community Members and staff, highlighting efforts to achieve health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

QAS representation is now an active member on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Oversight Committee.

Our Journey Towards Health Equity Funding Program, supported implementation of five projects, with these projects three HWF4, one AO8, one AO6 and one NG11 were employed permanently. The five projects were:

- 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.



Metro North Health's Accurate Identification Training was developed and launched in the TMS system, with 1,125 staff members having completed the training.

Metro North Health works with key partners including the University of Queensland, QUT, Griffith University, CSIRO, and Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service. Through the RAUGH partnership with UQ's Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, we are currently supporting eight active research projects focused on improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Access and Engagement

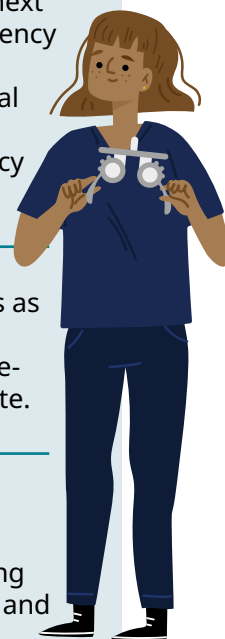
Nujum Jawa Crisis Stabilisation Unit

doors opened in March 2025, located next to The Prince Charles 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.

UROC and HOPE Clinics now business as usual with 262 patients seen in UROC clinics, 422 in HOPE clinics, and 511 tele-cardiac investigations completed to date.

Women's Business Shared Pathway

operates in multiple locations across Metro North Health catchment including Morayfield, Deception Bay, Pine Rivers and Nundah. Since 2020, 852 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women have accessed the service.



The **Deadly Feet** program continues to engage community members through outreach at 34 community events. 321 individuals participated in foot health screening and 116 self-referred for formal review, representing 18% of all referrals.

Mental Health, assertive community follow-up 7 days/week for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. Hospital in the Home (HITH) providing acute care at home. Referral pathways to Wayback support services established. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Worker roles visible and operational.

STARS have been running a First Nations Gastroenterology list since 2024.

Redcliffe Hospital, **Healthy Ageing Clinic** launched which is led by Geriatrician.

Redcliffe Hospital secured \$4.1M in funding secured over five years through the Growing Deadly Families initiative to support the **Redcliffe Ngarrama MGP**. Ngarrama Community and Consumer Advisory Group established to support governance and co-design.

Perinatal and Infant Mental Health team now has two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and one Community Engagement Officer. Community Engagement Officer works closely with maternity services, especially with the pilot of the Baby Coming You Ready program.

The Better Together Health Van is helping bring culturally safe care to communities that are hard to reach. Clinics have run in places like Kilcoy and Cherbourg, with services like Deadly Feet and dental checks now happening regularly. The van also supports health education and screenings at community events like the Murri Carnival and NAIDOC Community Days. Partnerships with local organisations have helped set up ongoing clinics and connect with families, children, and Elders.

The **Medicine Stream** is helping make palliative care more culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They've hired two staff focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander care, worked with community teams to improve services, and helped design a grief and bereavement model. Regular meetings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders help guide improvements, and practical items like Kam Biman blankets and mobile screens are being added to support culturally respectful care.

Caboolture Hospital ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families receive comprehensive support through referrals to the Child Protection Unit (CPU) and the Ngarrama Social Worker.

Cultural Support Plans are now being utilised across the organisation to support patient care.

The **Healthy Ageing Clinic (HAC)** model of care was co-designed with IUIH and MATSICHS. This model incorporates a family-centred approach, including care for older family members and access to family support services such as respite care.



Workforce Development

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 1.97% of the workforce, with 503 individuals self-identifying.

28 Deadly Start trainees graduated in 2025.

20 Cadets commenced in 2025 - supported across Nursing, Midwifery, and Allied Health.

"Empower Pathways" Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment Principles endorsed.



Increase in Identified Leadership positions, welcoming Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Director, Redcliffe Hospital Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services.

New governance structure to support the recruitment and hiring of all Identified roles across the organisation.

Talent Portal established to simply enter and connect candidates with culturally capable staff.

60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff attended Better Together Staff Gathering in February 2025.

Metro North Staff Excellence Awards 2025, two categories dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health – First Nations Staff and Improving First Nations Health.

1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member is currently a Shadow Senior Executive Team member.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing Programs completed 92 occasions of service and 96 site visits, supporting staff across multiple locations.

Middle Managers Program, 17 sessions delivered to equip managers with skills to provide culturally safe leadership and supervision.

12 Virtual Courageous Conversation About Race sessions, 293 Metro North staff participating completed the sessions.

23,499 Metro North staff completing the Cultural Practice Program Orientation.

2,353 Metro North staff completing the Cultural Practice Program 4 hours face to face.

MN Allied Health and Nursing PDP Templates have been updated to include cultural capability and racial equity training.



Community Partnerships and Engagement

Metro North Health facilities have made significant progress in establishing and facilitating Yarning Circles and culturally safe community engagement platforms across their respective services.

Incorporation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the design of new facilities across multiple sites. Engagement with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities has guided planning, co-design, and cultural enhancements, including healing gardens, cultural artwork, and environmental audits. Facilities such as RBWH, Caboolture, Kilcoy, Woodford, Redcliffe, TPCH, STARS, Mental Health, and Community and Oral Health.

The **Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community and Consumer Engagement Framework** and **Working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Practical Guide** provides a culturally grounded, strengths-based approach to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It recognises the importance of self-determination, cultural identity, and community leadership in shaping health services that are safe, respectful, and responsive.

A total of 315 people attended the Health Equity Community Consultations held in September 2024 and April 2025.

4 Talk-About Newsletters released in 2025.

Joint Regional Needs Assessment (JRNA) conducted through a comprehensive survey and targeted engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, resulting in a total of 169 respondents.

Ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners continues to strengthen relationships and cultural understanding, with dedicated efforts to connect senior executives directly with community leaders.



Messages in a Coolamon

At each health equity community consultation, Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel, walks the room to collect handwritten messages in a coolamon.

These messages are shared as a powerful reflection on our journey towards health equity and to inform service improvements and co-design.

Below are some of the messages shared over the past 12 months.

"Really good collaboration in engagement, yarning and direction, keep it going!"

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

"Keep bringing the community and Metro North Health services together. Continue sharing the information about the services across the sector."

"Every patient is different/unique, keep consulting, listening."

"Thank you Metro North for inspiring us and showing us what is possible in the delivering and driving of health equity in Mackay. You guys are awesome."

"The shift in engagement, trust and culture from the forum 2 years ago is amazing. I feel proud to be an ally and to be part of the journey."

"Better Health, Better Community, Better Education, Our Mob, Our Way."

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

"Change is possible. Change is up to all of us."

"The momentum is impressive."

"Voices remain strong. Do not water it down please."

"Actively listening to our patients' feedback and seeking suggestions. Thank you for inviting mob from all different areas of health to add input towards our Health Equity Strategy."

"Thank you for allowing community Elders the time to speak and have staff listen to their experiences."

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

Health Equity Strategy

Metro North Hospital and Health Service is committed to providing equity of access to high quality health care services, building relationships based on inclusion with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities, and remains committed to achieving life expectancy parity for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples by 2031.



Metro North Health's objective is to build and support empowered communities to achieve equity of health outcomes, access, and experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples based on the social, cultural and economic determinants of health.

The Metro North Health Equity Strategy 2025-2028 is the second strategy in a series of three from 2022 to 2031. It builds on Metro North Health's ongoing commitments to health equity and aligns with the Metro North Strategic Plan 2024-2028, Southeast Queensland (SEQ) regional plan 2024 and key State and national frameworks, including the Hospital and Health Boards (Health Equity Strategies) Amendments Regulations 2021 and Closing the Gap initiatives. It also supports other Hospital and Health Service's Health Equity Strategies as per regulation 2012, section 13A (c).

The Health Equity Strategy 2025-2028 is structured around four (4) strategic priorities:

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

While Key Performance Areas (KPAs), Actively Eliminate Racism, Increase Access, Culturally Safe and Responsive Care, Cultural and Social Determinants and Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, remain relevant, they are now embedded within all 14 strategic objectives and the 49 strategic actions to ensure a coordinated and holistic response to achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This alignment enhances accountability and advocates for a system-wide impact across all actions.

The strategy emphasises the importance of co-design, community-led decision-making, and accountability as key drivers for meaningful long-lasting change.

The strategy can be accessed 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 contact the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team.





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.

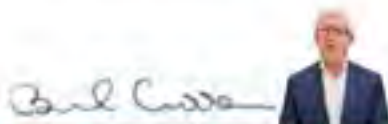
This statement of commitment is aligned to the 2025 – 2028 phase of the Metro North Health Equity Strategy and the Metro North Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028. In each phase of the health equity journey, we will share our direction and commitment with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities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

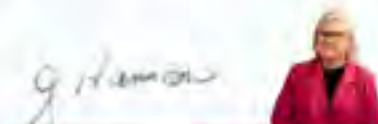
Metro North Health commits to:

- 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



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



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

BreastScreen Queensland enhances Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women through Group Bookings and Sistas Shawl initiative

BreastScreen Queensland (BSQ) Brisbane Northside Service, in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Services (ATSICHS), has implemented a series of culturally safe group bookings to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in attending breast screening appointments.

These group bookings provide a supportive environment, allowing women to attend with confidence, knowing they are not undertaking the process alone. Between June and October 2025, four group bookings successfully facilitated 15 women attending for a breast screen, including five women participating in their first-ever screening, demonstrating the impact and comfort of a group setting.

In addition to the group bookings, BSQ Brisbane Northside Service has collaborated closely with ATSICHS to schedule appointments for clients accessing their services and through community engagement activities, such as NAIDOC Week events.

To further enhance cultural safety and comfort, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attending a breast screen are provided with a complimentary Sistas Shawl. Designed by Aboriginal artist Sharon McAvoy, the shawl serves as a modesty garment and has encouraged greater participation in screening.

Feedback from women attending the service highlights the positive impact of the group bookings and Sistas Shawl initiative:

"I think it's a lovely idea [Sistas Shawl]; especially if the person is uncomfortable with having no top on".

"The shawl is a great idea and shows respect to First Nations Women to preserve their modesty".

"Such a beautiful gesture and kind thought to make our mob feel comfortable while doing the breast screening thank you - the staff are friendly and go out of their way to make me feel comfortable. Thank you for the work you do it's greatly appreciated".

BSQ Brisbane Northside Service Health Promotion Officer, Rachael Bagnell, explained that the group bookings have helped overcome barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to access breast screening.

"The group bookings may include transport assistance, health worker support and morning teas. They help address some of the barriers to screening such as the logistics of knowing where the service location is and organising transport," said Rachael.

Since the introduction of the Sistas Shawl and strengthened partnership with local ATSICHS, screening rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have increased.

"The Sistas Shawl addresses the barriers of feeling embarrassment or shame at being undressed in front of a stranger, and lack of culturally appropriate services. The availability of the Sistas Shawls has increased interest in breast screening and group bookings have increased as a result," Rachael added.

Breast screens are free for all women aged 40 and over but is most effective for those aged 50-74. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women screening at a BreastScreen Queensland Brisbane Northside Service clinic will receive a free Sistas Shawl at the time of their screen. To book an appointment call 13 20 50, or visit <https://www.breastscreen.qld.gov.au/>.

Aunties proudly wearing their Sistas Shawl after attending the September 2025 group booking.



"It felt culturally appropriate. I could feel the connection to my sisters and reminded me that with women's business we are not alone, and they will walk with me if that is my path".



Health Worker, Ry Abel (right) with Cynthia.



Deadly Feet conducting foot screening with Aboriginal community member.



Screening at Sandbag.



Culturally Safe Foot Health Outreach Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

Deadly Feet is a specialist outreach service providing culturally safe care closer to home for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people diagnosed with or at risk of foot conditions related to diabetes and/or peripheral vascular disease.

Deadly Feet was established in April 2022 and includes 5 established service delivery sites in Queensland:

- Redcliffe Hospital,
- Kallangur Satellite Health Centre (Kalangoor),
- Caboolture MATSICHs,
- Cherbourg CRAICCHS, and;
- Hervey Bay Galangoor Duwalami.

The Deadly Feet team have attended 20 events during the year. This included Reconciliation Day, Mabo days, family days, yarning circles, garden openings and yarns at satellite centres, flu shot pop ups, community days, markets, men's group and NAIDOC events. 137 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were screened during events, with 43 referred into clinic for formal review.

Deadly Feet is increasing access for community that previously did not access any services. The Deadly Feet team has engaged with not for profits including 4 Voices, Encircle and other homelessness community supports to provide Foot Scrapes (foot care kits). These kits are given out to community along with education and foot assessments.

Based on feedback from community and partners, the service has transitioned to Kallangur Satellite Health Centre (Kalangoor) to further strengthen alignment with care provided at community

sites. This move reflects ongoing commitment to delivering services that are guided by community voice and better integrated with existing supports.

The program has expansion plans towards Bundaberg, with a continued commitment to deliver four clinics a year at Cherbourg and Hervey Bay.

Aboriginal Administration Officer, Ry Abel, has also completed training as a Health Worker and commenced inpatient screening as a regular promotion of the service.

Partnerships continue with Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, Moreton ATSICHs, Metro North Leadership teams and satellite centre cultural teams.



Deadly Feet team at Kallangur Satellite Health Centre (Kalangoor).

Highlights

During the 2024-25 Financial Year there were:



Virtual Emergency Care Services Connecting Care on Country

Virtual Emergency Care Services (VECS) is delivering care on Country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the State.

A high number of patients are choosing to opt-in to the service from the comfort of their home, with 14.8 per cent of all presentations identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Virtual Healthcare Services, Nursing Director, Lisa Harvey, said they see an average of 105-125 patients per day and 91.7% were treated and discharged, avoiding unnecessary trips to an emergency department. Young people were especially accessing VECS with a median age of 29.

"VECS is about making sure every Queensland, no matter where they live, get safe, timely emergency care when they need it most".

"We're really proud of the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients already using VECS, and we want to see this number continue to grow as more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities feel confident choosing this service as a trusted option.

"We are committed to health equity and creating a safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. One of the greatest benefits of virtual emergency care is that patients can be treated on Country, staying close to family, culture, and community while still receiving expert emergency support," said Lisa.

Respected Brisbane Elder, Aunty Florence 'Floss' Ash, recently accessed the service while she was unwell with covid. After being bedridden for 4 days, Aunty was lucky to have her phone nearby to access VECS. The service was able to prescribe medication that was picked up by a family member.

"I put my trust in them – I was too sick to worry about anything. I think more of our mob should use the service."

Aunty Floss said the service would also really help remote and discreet communities.

"It would be so much easier for our rural communities as transport is a big issue and this is one way of dealing with it. There is no need to be afraid of anything."



You can access Virtual Emergency Care (VECS) through the [*Service Finder](#) or the [Healthdirect Symptom Checker](#). These tools can help you decide whether virtual emergency care is right for you, or if you should visit a health clinic or your GP instead. You can also speak with a nurse by calling **13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)** for further advice.

**https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22711651437&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIuf375sfPjwMV2KtmAh2uYCC9EAAAYASAAEgLEevD_BwE*

Aunty Florence 'Floss' Ash recently accessed Virtual Emergency Care Services and had a positive experience. She encourages other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access the service.





Metro North Health Deepens Connection to Country Through Kabi Kabi Engagement

Metro North Health is committed to fostering strong, respectful relationships with Traditional Owners through meaningful cultural engagement and deep connection to Country, recognising their vital role in shaping the places where services and facilities are located on Brisbane northside.

Traditional Owners hold deep cultural knowledge and enduring connections to Country that are vital to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Their leadership and guidance are essential in shaping healthcare services that are culturally safe, respectful, and responsive to needs.

Recognising this, Metro North Health hosted an inaugural meet and greet event with Kabi Kabi Traditional Owners on the Sunshine Coast. The gathering welcomed Elders and representatives from the Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (KKPAC) and the Kabi Kabi Housing Corporation, who joined Metro North Health Senior Executives and staff in an informal setting designed to foster genuine connection, collaboration and shared understanding.

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

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



appreciation for the opportunity to connect with the Kabi Kabi community.

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

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

Community and Engagement Officer Rayna Cowburn reflected on the success of the event, noting the positive response from attendees.

"The Traditional Owners shared that they're looking forward to the next opportunity to come together," Ms Cowburn said.

By embedding Traditional Owner perspectives into healthcare planning and decision-making, Metro North Health can foster trust, strengthen partnerships, and improve access to culturally safe care – reflecting the ongoing commitment to partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Strong partnership ensures that services are aligned with community values and priorities, while also playing a critical role in advancing health equity and creating more inclusive, responsive health systems.



Strengthening Community Connections in Kilcoy



CKW staff pictured at Kilcoy Hospital Yarning Table event.

Earlier this year Kilcoy Hospital welcomed staff and community members to a special Yarning Table event, hosted by Metro North's Satellite Health Centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Engagement Officers Chris Ewin, Thomas Casey and Joey Ellison.

The Yarning Table - supported by Parker Michaels, Manager of Consumer and Community Engagement, Annette Tones, Kilcoy Hospital Nurse Unit Manager and Jess Peele, Acting Facility Coordinator - created a culturally safe and inclusive space for open dialogue, where attendees were encouraged to share their experiences with the hospital's services. The event aimed to gather firsthand feedback from those who access care at Kilcoy Hospital, offering a platform for community voices to be heard and valued.

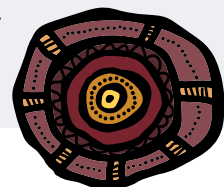
Participants were invited to speak freely about their healthcare journeys, raise concerns, and suggest improvements. This collaborative approach not only fostered trust but also highlighted the

importance of community-led feedback in shaping responsive and culturally appropriate healthcare services.

In addition to the rich discussions, the event served as a bridge between hospital staff and the broader community, reinforcing relationships and mutual understanding. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, underscoring the value of respectful engagement and shared decision-making in healthcare delivery.

As a gesture of hospitality and continued collaboration, Annette Tones provided a guided tour of the hospital and extended an invitation to the Kilcoy Hospital Auxiliary Fete—further strengthening community ties.

The success of the Yarning Table stands as a testament to the power of listening, learning, and working together. It marks a meaningful step forward in ensuring Kilcoy Hospital remains a place where every voice matters.



Health Prevention Programs

Deadly Smiles making Healthy Smiles

Young jarjums (children) at Koobara Kindergarten and Pre-Prep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation are receiving vital dental care and education thanks to the Metro North Health Deadly Smiles program — a culturally responsive initiative designed to improve oral health outcomes and lay the foundation for lifelong wellbeing.

Jarjum pictured at the Koobara Kindy Deadly Smiles screening day.



Each school term, the Deadly Smiles team visits Koobara to deliver free dental check-ups, oral hygiene education, and preventive care packs to children and their families. The initiative is part of Metro North Health's broader commitment to health equity and early intervention, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"Being able to join the kids and families at Koobara is an important part of our health equity journey," said Lina Hunter, Business Planning and Improvement Manager, Metro North Oral Health Service.

"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 dental screenings. Children receive healthy snacks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and engaging lessons on brushing techniques, nutrition, and oral hygiene. For those requiring further care, a direct referral pathway connects families to public oral health services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children experience significantly higher rates of dental disease compared to non-Indigenous children.

By intervening early, the Deadly Smiles program helps prevent these complications, supporting not only oral health but broader physical, emotional, and developmental outcomes.

"By being out in community and delivering care early, we're helping prevent tooth decay and improve long-term oral health outcomes," Ms Hunter 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 program is designed to be culturally safe and welcoming, empowering families to make informed health choices and engage confidently with healthcare services.

With regular visits scheduled every school term, Deadly Smiles is helping to close the gap in oral health outcomes and ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up with healthy smiles — and strong futures.





Caboolture Health Check Yarn Clinic Builds Trust and Connection Through Culturally Safe Care

In late August, the Caboolture Satellite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team welcomed community members and Elders for a Health Check Yarn Clinic—a culturally safe and welcoming initiative designed to promote health awareness, build relationships, and improve access to care.

The clinic offered on-the-spot health checks and personalised support, led by the Senior Health Worker and Nurse Navigator, while health education was delivered by specialists from Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Services (ATODs) and a Dietitian. The event created a relaxed and respectful space for community members to yarn about their health, ask questions, and receive practical advice tailored to their needs.

Importantly, the clinic also helped familiarise attendees with the Caboolture Satellite Health Centre (Kabul), encouraging greater comfort and confidence in accessing services provided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Team.

Feedback from the day was overwhelmingly positive. Community members shared heartfelt reflections, saying they “feel like they know

themselves better,” and asked, “can we do this every Friday?” Others expressed appreciation for the practical advice, noting they “enjoyed the sessions and can take some advice from the dietitian to improve their diet.”

The success of the Health Check Yarn Clinic highlights the importance of culturally responsive care and community-led engagement. By creating safe spaces for open conversation and connection, Metro North Health continues to strengthen trust and improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Caboolture Satellite Health Centre (Kabul) staff, Elders and Community joining together in the Health Check Yarn Clinic.



Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in their health journey

In response to a growing community need for culturally safe spaces to discuss and support Women's Business, Metro North Community and Oral Health (COH) Directorate proudly hosted a Women's Health Expo—a vibrant and empowering event designed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women on their health journeys.



The Women's Health Expo, held in Brighton on Brisbane's northside, was proudly led by Deearne Dodd, COH Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Liaison Worker, in collaboration with the Women's Business Shared Pathway team. The event was born from meaningful conversations within the COH Women's Business Yarning Circle, a group made up of Elders and community members who identified a strong need for a culturally safe space dedicated to discussing Women's Health Business.

In response to this feedback, the Expo was designed to create a welcoming and empowering environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women could access health education, participate in screenings, and connect with services in a way that respects cultural values and community voices.

Held in a culturally respectful and family-friendly setting, the Expo encouraged women to bring along their families, fostering a sense of support and togetherness. The day featured opportunistic health screenings, interactive education sessions, and fun family activities, all aimed at promoting health awareness and strengthening community bonds.

"The Women's Health Expo is more than just an event—it's a space where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women can feel empowered, informed, and supported in their health decisions," said Deearne Dodd. "It's about meeting women where they are, listening to their needs, and walking alongside them."

Beyond individual health benefits, the Expo also served as a platform to strengthen partnerships

across Metro North Health and with external service providers. By bringing together a range of organisations committed to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, the event fostered collaboration, care coordination, and ongoing engagement.

The success of the Women's Health Expo highlights the power of community-led initiatives in driving meaningful change and creating culturally safe pathways to care. It's a reminder that when health services are designed with community voices at the centre, the outcomes are stronger, more inclusive, and more impactful.

Above: Elders pictured enjoying the Women's Business Health Expo.
Below: Stallholders engaging with Elders and sharing health promotion material.



Redcliffe Hospital appoints new 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 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.

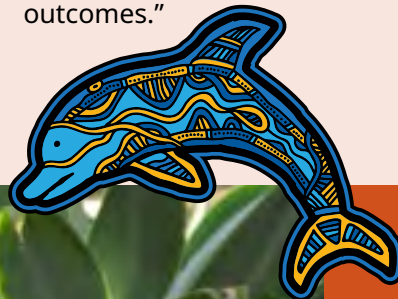
"The role is important to advocate and have a voice for our people so that we can provide culturally respectful and responsive health care. This ensures health services are sustainable and reflective of the communities we serve and to better support the needs of our community."

Raelene began her career as a medical typist in radiology clinics, and joins Redcliffe Hospital from the Department of Health, where she was the Manager, Training and Support with Finance Solutions, Finance Branch.

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.

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."

Rae White



TPCH unveils Gathering Garden to enhance Cultural Safety and Community Connection

New outdoor Gathering Garden at TPCH.



The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) has opened a new outdoor Gathering Garden, providing a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, families, and communities to rest, reflect and connect while receiving care at the hospital.

The space was formally opened in May during National Reconciliation Week with a traditional Smoking Ceremony led by Aboriginal Elder, Auntie Kathryn Fisher, representing the Turrbal People of Brisbane. The event was attended by TPCH staff, Elders, and community members, reaffirming the hospital's commitment to reconciliation, cultural safety, and the delivery of holistic, patient-centred care.

Delivered as part of the TPCH Expansion Project, the Gathering Garden was developed in collaboration with landscape architects, Elders, staff, and community members through a series of cultural considerations workshops. This inclusive design process ensured Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices were embedded throughout the project, reinforcing TPCH's commitment to culturally appropriate care environments.

Beyond its visual appeal, the garden was intentionally designed as a space for cultural practices and ceremonies, including Sorry Business, Sad News, and bereavement. The co-design process enabled the Expansion Project team and TPCH staff to engage with cultural knowledge holders, gaining deeper insight into how the built environment can strengthen connection to Country and improve health outcomes.

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.

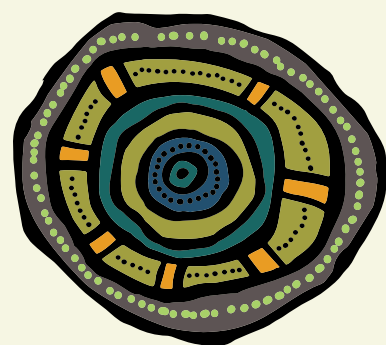
"The garden offers a safe outdoor space for patients to reflect and connect, beyond their treatments," said Nicola.

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

Visitors are reminded to approach the space with respect for cultural practices, acknowledging its role in supporting healing, reflection, and connection.

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 commitment to reconciliation, cultural safety, and community connection.



Caboolture Hospital Unveils Torres Strait Islander Dhoeri Headdress in Powerful Cultural Ceremony

Caboolture Hospital has taken a meaningful step in its cultural journey with the unveiling of a traditional Torres Strait Islander Dhoeri Headdress — a powerful symbol of identity, resilience, and welcome.

The ceremony, held in the hospital's main foyer, brought together Elders, staff, and community members from across south-east Queensland in a shared moment of reflection and celebration. The event highlighted the hospital's ongoing commitment to fostering a culturally safe and inclusive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Dhoeri Headdress was crafted by renowned Torres Strait Islander artist Thomas Pedro, whose work is known for its uniqueness and cultural depth. First displayed at the Cairns Art Gallery in 2022 to mark the 30th anniversary of the Mabo Decision, the headdress now finds a permanent home at Caboolture Hospital — a proud addition to its growing collection of culturally significant artifacts.

Cultural Capability Officer Janita Adams said the presence of such pieces within the hospital plays a vital role in shaping a welcoming and respectful space.

(L-R) Torres Strait Islander Elders Uncle George Elarde and Aunty Patricia Elarde pictured with the new Dhoeri Headdress at Caboolture Hospital.

"Artworks like the Dhoeri are more than decorative — they carry meaning, history, and a message of belonging," Janita said.

"They help us create an environment that values empathy, diversity, and cultural respect."

Executive Director Karlene Willcocks reflected on the strong community support shown during the unveiling.

"It was heartening to see so many people come together for this special occasion," Karlene said.

"The headdress stands as a visual reminder of our commitment to reconciliation and cultural safety. It invites everyone who enters our hospital to pause, reflect, and engage with the stories and traditions of First Nations peoples."

The Dhoeri now stands proudly near the hospital's main entrance, accompanied by other artworks that honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The initiative was supported by the Caboolture Hospital Redevelopment Project team.

Visitors and staff are encouraged to view the headdress and consider its deeper significance — not just as a piece of art, but as a symbol of connection, culture, history and community.



Sharing the Voices of our Patients

Bribie Island Satellite Health Centre (Yarun) welcomed by respected Elder

Aunty Hazel Cowburn has lived on Bribie Island for 47 years.

She is a proud Wakka Wakka Elder with connections to Kabi Kabi, Goreng Goreng and Butchulla tribes. As a Bribie Island local, Aunty Hazel has expressed her excitement at having a dedicated Satellite Health Clinic on the Island.

"A lot of us locals don't like travelling so if we can stay this side of the bridge, it's good."

The Bribie Island Satellite Health Centre (Yarun) offers a range of services based on the health needs of the community and incorporates outpatient community-based healthcare services and the Minor Injury and Illness Clinic.

Aunty Hazel's family has engaged with the service and found both experiences to be positive. Each time, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker has been out to greet them.

"Belinda spotted us in the waiting area, sat down with us and asked what she can do to help. We need this, especially for our young ones, black faces to help," Aunty Hazel said.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Hub at Bribie Island Satellite Health Centre (Yarun) provides services to people of all ages who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin and their immediate families (including babies, children and non-Aboriginal or non-Torres Strait Islander partners) who reside within the Metro North Health region.

The hub is led by nurse navigators and caters for people who have complex health conditions.

The service also includes Ngarrama Maternal Health, which is a community-based home midwifery group practice offering outpatient care delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander maternal and infant health care workers. Additionally, it provides perinatal mental health support, a nurse-led community service that focuses on the emotional health and well-being of individuals and their families during the perinatal period, from conception to one year after the birth of a baby.



Aunty Hazel

Bribie Island Satellite Health Centre (Yarun) is centrally located next to Bribie Island State school (103 First Avenue, Bongaree).

The Minor Injuries and Illness Clinic is open 7 days a week (8am – 10pm) while other services and outpatient clinics are available Monday to Friday (8am – 4.30pm). Referrals and walk-ins are accepted. Phone: 3410 2800.

Elders share wisdom with jarjums

The COH Yarning Circle, established in partnership with the Community and Oral Health (COH) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Team, has formed a partnership with Sesame Lane Childcare Centres throughout Metro North.

Aunty Brenda supporting jarjums at Sesame Lane Childcare.



The aim of the partnership is to adopt an Elder to become a regular cultural advisor to individual centres close to their homes. Sesame Lane has 14 Centres throughout Metro North.

Director of COH Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Paul Drahm, said to date 10 Elders have committed to commence engagement at the centres from February 2024 and the number is continuing to grow.

"Elders who are partnered with centres will be considered honourable staff members and will be supplied with staff uniforms and added to the staff photo hall.

"Aunty Brenda commenced her journey with Kippa Ring Sesame Lane in September 2023, she continued her monthly visits throughout 2024 and is still going strong visiting the centre in 2025.

"We are committed to maintaining regular contact with the resident Elders, ensuring that they feel consistently supported and valued within our community. This ongoing interaction fosters trust, respect, and a deeper connection. We have built open and transparent relationships with all Elders, encouraging open yarns and feedback. This approach not only helps to develop a sense of belonging but also ensures that we can address their needs and concerns in a timely manner."

In an effort to further strengthen this partnership and broaden the community's reach and impact, COH plans to extend the relationships beyond the immediate environment.

"We have been engaging with Canopy and other related centres to build a larger network of support and collaboration.

"As part of this expansion, Aunty Floss and some other Elders are already involved in creating artwork for display and use at the sesame lane centres. Their contributions and presence will enrich the collective experience for all involved, especially the Jarjums."

COH plans to strengthen partnerships, as well as building others, to ensure the sustainability of these relationships and also enhance the well-being and involvement of both the Elders and children.

"This approach will provide the Elders with more opportunities to express themselves and share their cultural knowledge and skills. At the same time, it will create enriching experiences for the children, allowing them to engage with and learn from the wisdom and traditions of their Elders. By fostering these connections, we will promote a deeper sense of community and belonging, where both generations can thrive together.

"We cannot wait to continue this partnership in 2026 and for the years to come!"



Disclaimer: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are respectfully warned this article contains details of a deceased person. Permission has been granted by the family to share this story.

"I respectfully acknowledge my client Colleen Wilson and pay my respects to her family for allowing me to share her journey to Sorry Business.

This patient story is a condensed overview of her journey within Community and Oral Health (COH). While words can never fully capture her strength and resilience, this story highlights her courage in face of palliative and end of life challenges, as well as the importance of culturally safe, holistic care."

"I also respectfully acknowledge the care team at COH – Nursing Director at Cooina, Director of Social Work, Senior Social Worker Indigenous Health, Senior Social Worker (Cooinda House), A/Nurse Unit Manager Cooina House, Nurse Practitioner CPS Home Hospital and Allied Health (CPC OT and Cooina Physio)."

- Deearne Dodd, COH Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Liaison Worker

Connecting Country to Culture: supporting Colleen's final wishes

Colleen Wilson was diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2023; in December this was found to have spread to widespread bone metastases. Colleen was admitted to Cooina House in April 2024 with a post neck of femur fracture.

Pictured: Deearne Dodd, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Liaison Worker.



COH Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Liaison Worker, Deearne Dodd, supported her health journey providing culturally responsive care and support up until her passing in March 2025.

It was a journey that surpassed the medical model of care and supported Colleen to reconnect with country and her identity as a proud Aboriginal woman.

From her admission to Cooina House through to 24 March 2025, Dee and the Community and Oral Health (COH) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team maintained regular weekly visits, providing culturally safe and responsive support, ensuring Colleen felt socially, and emotionally supported.

"As an Indigenous Community Liaison worker for COH, I had built a strong rapport with my client through storytelling and yarns about our spiritual connection with the land, country, water, family, and community.

"Over time, I had connected with my client and her family, acknowledging her Indigenous history and the importance of her owning her identity. My client had a traumatic history and connection to their Aboriginal culture, as her ancestors had to hide their identity to avoid racism and inequities living in Australia. As a result, my client and her family were raised not being connected to country, family and community and had a lack of identity.

“Supporting her in reclaiming and expressing her identity became central to her care,” Dee said.

Dee took a holistic approach to care, and this was key in maintaining Colleen’s trust and building a strong relationship.

“I communicated in layman’s term, ensuring Colleen understood the processes of her care and acknowledged her non-verbal/physical cues. I was fortunate to support my client on palliative care outings; where she was able to openly yarn about her story lines and cultural history.”

In December 2024, Colleen expressed a wish to return to country on her remaining journey to sorry business. Due to the limited services and appropriate accommodation to support this wish, Dee was able to work on an alternative option with the COH multi-disciplinary team to help fulfill Colleen’s wish through a daytrip to her country in February 2025.

In recognition of the importance and emotional support, Dee was granted permission to be on call 24 hours a day during Colleen’s final days. This ensured that both she and her family felt culturally, spiritually and emotionally always supported.

“On 24th March 2025 at 6.00am Colleen Wilson passed away peacefully at Cooina House. I was privileged to be present, providing cultural and emotional support to her and her family during this most difficult time.

“Before passing, Colleen embraced her Aboriginal heritage and reclaimed her cultural identity, something she had been unable to fully express for much of her life. Though she was not able to pass away on country, she was reassured and comforted by the trip we facilitated in February, which fulfilled her wish to reconnect to land.

“I feel deeply honoured to have supported Colleen and her family on this journey. As a Gunggari woman, I am proud to have been able to uphold cultural, spiritual and traditional practices that respected her story, heritage and identity.”

Colleen’s family later shared their deepest appreciation to Dee for the support provided on her journey.

“Hello Dee,

I just wanted to touch base with you to express my sincere gratitude for being such a support to my daughter, Colleen. She often spoke of her high regard for you, and I thank you for your kindness in her last days. I value that so much.

“As you’re probably aware, Coll didn’t want a funeral. We had a family gathering today at my home in Toowoomba to celebrate her life and recall happy times as well as some more poignant memories. We all miss her dreadfully but are glad she’s free from pain. Cancer sucks eh!

Thank you, Dee,

Kind regards

Suzanne Wilson”

“Your help with mum, and with me & Loz has been so appreciated Dee. Honestly don’t even think I’d have held it together as much as I have without you. You are an absolute angel and I’m so glad mum had you for support, she really did think so highly of you. We all do, and I won’t ever forget how great you have been xxx”

Lizzy & Lauren Wilson

This story highlights the importance of Sorry Business Pathways to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in palliative care settings. Congratulations to Dee and the COH team for providing such exceptional and meaningful palliative care.



Celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Nursing and Midwifery

Metro North Health proudly celebrates four dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members who have completed the inaugural Tjurtu First Nations Nursing and Midwifery Leadership Program — a transformative initiative focused on cultural revival, leadership, and healing within the healthcare system.

Brydon, Melissa, Suzy, and Kat are among the first cohort of participants in the program, walking forward as cultural leaders grounded in their heritage, connection to Country, and commitment to strengthening healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Their journeys reflect personal and professional growth, and highlight the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, and leading in health.

The Tjurtu program, developed and led by First Nations Nursing and Midwifery Consulting (FNNMC), is rooted in Kalkadunga knowledge systems and interactive leadership practices. The name Tjurtu — meaning coolamon in the Kalkadunga language — symbolises the cultural tools, responsibilities, and wisdom carried by participants into their workplaces and communities.

(L-R) Brydon, Suzy, Kat and Melissa attending the Tjurtu First Nations Nursing and Midwifery Leadership Program.

Drawing on four generations of Aboriginal nurses and healers, Professor Roianne West, a Kalkadunga and Djakunde woman and Queensland's first Aboriginal Professor of Nursing, designed the program to nurture Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led leadership and restore cultural governance models in healthcare.

The program provides a culturally safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives to lead on their own terms — reshaping systems, advocating for cultural safety, and embedding Indigenous knowledge into healthcare practice.

“Our staff are not only growing as professionals, but as cultural leaders who bring strength, insight, and deep care to the communities they serve,” said Sherry Holzapfel, Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

“Their leadership is helping shape the future of healthcare across our region and inspiring the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals.”

Metro North Health remains deeply committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led initiatives that promote equity, cultural safety, and community empowerment. The success of Brydon, Melissa, Suzy, and Kat is a testament to the power of culturally responsive leadership and the organisation's dedication to meaningful change.



Deadly Start Graduates Shine Bright: 28 Students Celebrate Success and Step into Health Careers

2025 Deadly Start Graduates pictured with Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel, Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.



Metro North Health proudly celebrated the achievements of 28 inspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students who have successfully completed the Deadly Start School-Based Traineeship - a program empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to kickstart careers in health while still at school. The graduation marks a major milestone in building a stronger, culturally safe health workforce, led by the next generation of changemakers.

Commencing their traineeship in year 11, the 2024/2025 Deadly Start students gained hands-on workplace experience in a Metro North Health hospital setting, along with earning a Certificate II and III qualification in their chosen field, whether it be nursing, allied health, patient support services, administration or dental.

Metro North Health's Acting Chief People and Culture Officer, Brett Bourke, captured the heart of the Deadly Start program during the graduation ceremony, reflecting on its deeper purpose beyond education and training:

"The Deadly Start traineeship is much more than a traineeship. It's about opening doors, building skills and creating pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in health careers. It's about showing you what is possible and walking beside the students as they begin their journey." Mr Bourke said.

"As Chief People and Culture Officer, one of my greatest priorities is making sure our workforce reflects the communities we serve. Strengthening our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce is essential to delivering culturally safe, responsive care, and programs like Deadly Start are central to achieving this."

Since the commencement of Deadly Start in 2019, the program has seen many successes, including trainees continuing further study at university and

ongoing employment upon successful completion of their traineeship. In 2024 11 students commenced ongoing employment in Metro North Health.

2025 Deadly Start Graduate, Tiffany Colley who recently completed her traineeship in nursing, has now gained her qualification as Assistant in Nursing, providing a pathway for further studies at university.

"I didn't think I was going to get the grades I needed to get into university to study nursing, so the Deadly Start program has given me some relief. I not only now have the requisites to further study nursing, but I have already been accepted as early entry into university because of my traineeship," Tiffany shared.

Metro North Health Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Adjunct Professor Sherry Holzapfel, praises the program and reinforces the organisations commitment to building a strong and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, creating a legacy for the future to come.

"We have an organisational commitment to grow our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce. The students participating in the Deadly Start program are our future leaders in health. They will be who advocate and support change that will deliver improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

"We must continue to grow and nurture our young ones and provide every opportunity for them. I want to see our people in every facet of the organisation - at every level, from Executive to engineering, doctors, research, administration, gardeners. The possibilities in Metro North Health are endless," said Ms Holzapfel.

As the 2024/2025 Deadly Start graduates take their next steps toward bright futures, Metro North Health has proudly welcomed 36 new Year 11 students into the program—marking the beginning of the 2025/2026 cohort's journey into the school-based traineeship across the hospital and health service on Brisbane's northside.



Strong Starts and Bright Futures for our 2025 Cadets

Earlier this year, Metro North Health proudly welcomed 20 new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students beginning their cadetship journey across the hospital and health services in Allied Health, Nursing, and Midwifery – representing an 80% increase in cadet placements since the program began in 2023.

In February, a Cadetship Welcome Day was held at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Education Centre, bringing together new cadets, experienced professionals, and leaders from across Queensland Health. The event was a celebration of connection, learning, and culture – setting a strong foundation for the cadets as they step into their roles in health care.

The day created a warm and culturally safe space, where cadets were able to connect with peers, mentors, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals who shared their experiences and wisdom. Representatives from the organisations Midwifery, Nursing, Allied Health, and Corporate Services streams attended, showcasing the diversity of opportunities within Metro North Health.

Highlights included a panel discussion featuring past and present cadets, supervisors, and Program Manager of the First Nations Training Pathway Program, Lauren Williams, who shared inspiring stories and practical advice. Yarning circles provided cadets the chance to connect with health professionals, ask questions, and gain encouragement from those who've walked the path before them.

"Days like the Welcome Day are so important for me to connect with our next cohort of students, listen to their triumphs and struggles and to hear how we will be able to best support them. I walk away from days like that reinvigorated from all these new students who are breaking systemic barriers to be here, some are the first from their families to study at university and it's important to be grounded as to why this program is so important," said Lauren Williams.

The First Nations Cadetship Program offers much more than work experience – it provides a network of cultural, financial, and professional support to help cadets thrive both academically and personally.

The First Nations Cadetship Program offers ongoing support, including:

- Cultural support – mentoring, awareness sessions, and monthly peer yarning circles
- Financial support – fortnightly Queensland Health wages and up to \$13,000 study allowance
- Placement support – supervised clinical experience and 456 hours of additional placement time

Bernard Curran, Metro North Health Board Chair, reinforced the organisation's commitment to employing cadets once they complete their studies and achieve their professional qualifications and registrations – a reflection of Metro North's dedication to Health Equity and increasing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

The 2025 cadets have now settled into their placements across Metro North Health, bringing energy, curiosity, and a deep commitment to their studies and communities. Their journey is supported by a strong network of mentors and leaders dedicated to helping them succeed.

The First Nations Cadetship Program continues to play a vital role in nurturing the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals – ensuring the future of health care is grounded in culture, compassion, and community.

Metro North Health's Cadets coming together for the 2025 Welcome Day.





Jed Faulkner

Project Support
Officer
A&TSILT

Mob: Darkinjung/
Ngarigu



Meet some of our new staff who joined Metro North Health in 2025:

Veronica Bayles

Senior Health
Worker, RBWH

Mob: Yuwi



Kaydi Enoch

Senior Social Worker, Ngarrama
Caboolture Hospital

Mob: Noonuccal/Nughi



Alison Iselin

Cultural Capability
Officer
Metro North
Mental Health

Mob: Wiradjuri



Raelene White

Director, Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
Health

Redcliffe Hospital

Mob: Mununjali



Temiah Bond

Social and Emotional
Wellbeing Officer, A&TSILT

Mob: Juru



Scott Trindall

Cultural Capability
Officer, RBWH

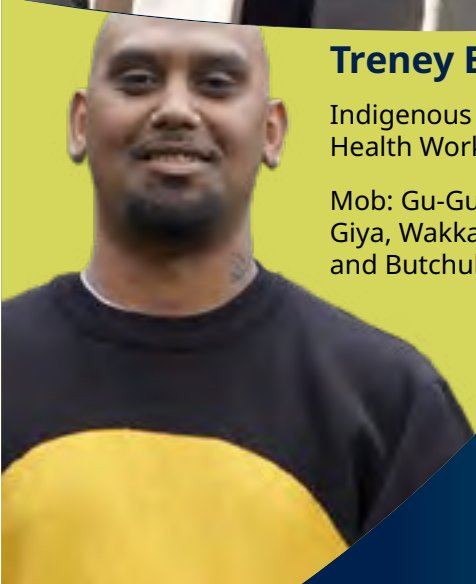
Mob: Gomeroi



Treney Brady

Indigenous Mental
Health Worker

Mob: Gu-Gu Yalanji,
Giya, Wakka Wakka
and Butchulla



Kat Hooper

Nurse Practitioner/CNC,
First Nations Clinical
Models, A&TSILT

Mob: Woromi, Kabi Kabi
and Coconut Island



Staff spotlight



Meet Teresa Onorato Championing Culture and Care in Health

Teresa Onorato brings heart, heritage and a wealth of experience to her new role as Senior Health Worker with Ngarrama Maternity at Redcliffe Hospital. Originally from South Australia, Teresa is a Ngarrindjeri and Narrunga woman, part of the Butterfish, Pelican mob. She moved to Brisbane two years ago to be closer to her daughter, but her connection to Country remains strong.

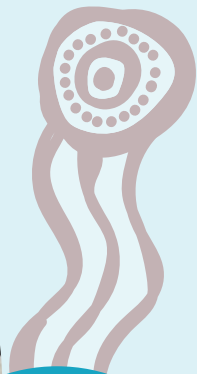
"When I go home, I love heading back to the station, fishing and collecting periwinkles off the rocks," she shares. "Cooking butterfish on the coals with damper – that's my favourite."

"I also love eating wild turtle from Darwin—cooked lightly and quickly fried so it stays tender. They use the turtle blood as a dipping sauce, sometimes with soy sauce and eaten with rice."

With a broad nursing background covering burns, surgical wards, emergency, palliative care, and now birthing, Teresa's current focus is ensuring cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mums. "I work closely with mums and want to make sure their cultural needs are respected," Teresa explains.

"Education and good communication are key — midwives and staff working with our families need to understand our practices and talk to health workers. We need to work together."

Teresa recently completed her Diploma of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Healthcare Management, a two-year course she impressively finished early.



Meet Maliah, a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman with cultural ties to Saibai Island, Boigu Island, Warrgamay and Girramay country, who has been making a meaningful impact at Metro North Health for the past four years.

"I started in recruitment at the Caboolture Riverside Hub, doing interviews and onboarding new staff, setting up their profiles. It was a short 3-4 months, but it opened the door for me into Metro North Health."

From this role, she had the opportunity to join the team at Redcliffe Hospital to be an Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer. Maliah's journey has been shaped by her passion for people and her deep cultural connection. She loved the community bonds she made in this role and especially loved working with the dementia patients.

"Growing up with my old people and watching them go through dementia made it personal. You learn to communicate differently. It takes patience, but it feels good to help our Elders."

She has loved working alongside Nurse Navigator, Leicha Wone and former Cultural Capability Officer, Elwyn Henaway, in a diverse team, older-younger, male and female, building strong relationships with patients and staff alike.

Maliah has now started working in an acting role within the Ngarrama team at Redcliffe Hospital.

Maliah encourages other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to explore all opportunities that Metro North Health offers.

"Try everything and don't stick to just one job. Build good relationships – they make a big difference when you need to vent or debrief. Get involved in community and staff events – it helps you feel part of the team."

Meet Maliah Bamaga Leading with heart and cultural strength



Mandatory cultural training for all staff

In September, Metro North Health released an updated Mandatory Training Policy with both the Cultural Practice Program and Accurate Indigenous Identification courses listed as mandatory for all staff.

Metro North Health staff attending training at Brighton Health Campus.



The Cultural Practice Program is a strategy from Queensland Health's overarching Indigenous health policy framework, [Making Tracks to Close the Gap](#) in health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders by 2033.

As the main provider of health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, it is critical that Queensland Health build a culturally capable workforce to address these changes.

The mandatory training program is facilitated across Metro North Health by facility Cultural Capability Officers. Throughout this engaging and interactive training program, staff will be provided with practical advice, tools and resources to embed the four guiding principles of the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework 2010-2033*](#). These principles are Respect and Recognition, Communication, Relationships and Partnerships and Capacity Building.

The Accurate Indigenous Identification training supports the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in health data sets. This information is obtained by asking the patient, (or other person if the patient is unable to answer) the question, "Are you [is the person] of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin?" This question is asked verbally or in paper form.

The training supports staff to confidently ask the question and support their understanding on why the question is needed.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Executive Director, Adjunct Professor Sherry Holzapfel said accurate identification is important as there are still gaps in health status and life

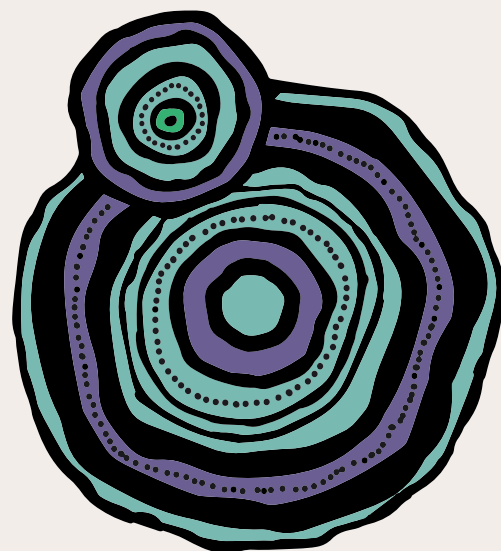
expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and non-Indigenous Australians.

"To know if these gaps are closing and if we are providing services in the right way, we need to ask the question. We also need to know in order to provide culturally appropriate health care.

"These tools have been created to give staff the confidence and knowledge that is authentic, to improve the cultural capabilities in frontline service delivery to ensure the service can provide both clinically capable, culturally safe, and deliver responsive care."

The training is an important step and part of Metro North Health's commitment to the *Health Equity Strategy 2025-2028*. New staff members will have 90 days to complete.

*https://www.careers.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/188342/cultural_capability.pdf



Beyond Diversity

The Virtual Courageous Conversations of Race training has moved to a face-to-face training option for Metro North Health staff, now called Beyond Diversity training.

Training facilitators pictured at the inaugural Metro North Health Beyond Diversity training session.



Beyond Diversity is Courageous Conversation South Pacific Institute's foundation in-person programme. It is a powerful, personally transforming, two-day workshop that helps participants understand the impact of race on their lives, their work, and the communities they serve.

Metro North Health has committed to delivering four sessions over the next 12 months to further strengthen efforts aligned to the anti-racism campaign and policy.

With the release of the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anti-racism policy and Stop Racism. It Starts with Me campaign, the partnership with Courageous Conversations plays a pivotal role in raising awareness around unconscious bias within the workforce, having difficult conversations, providing the tools for self-reflection and laying that foundation to achieving genuine equity and inclusion in healthcare.

Acting Capacity Development Manager, Andrew Williams said the training is awakening, impactful and reflective.

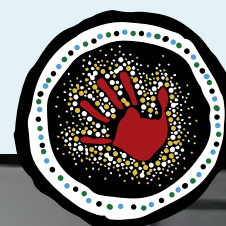
"Through genuine collaboration and meaningful partnership, we are actively shaping a workforce

and organisation that not only embraces but champions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

"Our commitment to this training is a vital part of the journey—empowering staff to recognise and challenge ingrained assumptions, foster respectful relationships, and create culturally safe environments. By embedding cultural awareness into our everyday practices, we are building a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive healthcare service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

The workshop is facilitated in partnership with the South Pacific Institute to support Metro North Health's Health Equity Strategy's key performance action 1.2A - Develop and implement a suite of mandatory training including CPP (Cultural Practice Program), Unconscious Bias training and Racial Equity training. The training will be uniform across all of Metro North Health and take as long as required, with managers ensuring compliance for all staff.

Metro North Health staff attending the face to face Beyond Diversity training.





Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership staff pictured at the launch of the new 'Stop Racism. It Starts with Me' campaign.

STOP RACISM. IT STARTS WITH ME.

Metro North Health has launched its new anti-racism campaign Stop Racism. It Starts with Me.

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.

Principal Culture, Engagement and Wellbeing Advisor Nikita King is one of 47 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>



STOP RACISM

It Starts with Me

Racism has no place at Metro North Health

Reporting Options:

You can report racism through one of three pathways:

1. RiskMan (staff entry)

The main system for reporting all incidents, including racism.

2. Respect@Work (direct contact)

Respect@Work adopts a trauma-informed, person-centred model to address racism complaints.

3. Yarning hub (informal or anonymous feedback)

An online reporting tool to share your experience. All complaints, even anonymous ones, will be taken seriously.

Search 'stop racism' on qheps for how to guides.



What happens after I report racism:

**Handled Confidentially.
Investigated Fairly.**

Possible outcomes:

- Mediation
- Staff education
- Disciplinary Action
- System-wide Improvements



Support is available:

You are not alone, help is here:

- 13YARN – 13 92 76
(24/7 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders)
- Line Manager
- HR / People and Culture
- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue – Beyondblue.org.au
- Black Dog Institute – blackdoginstitute.org.au
- Mob link – 1800 254 354
- Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program*
- Peer Responder Program*

*Staff only support



**STOP
RACISM**
It Starts with Me

Metro North
Health



Queensland
Government

Keeping Community Engaged

Better Together – Our Health, Our Way social media platforms

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team (A&TSILT) Communication Service continues to nurture and grow the Better Together – Our Health, Our Way social media platforms, which serves as a two-way communication channel connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in real-time.

This year the communication platforms have continued to play a vital role in keeping community informed and connected with accurate, reliable, and culturally relevant health information.

Across our three platforms – Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn – the team has shared more than 150 posts to each platform, helping to keep community updated and engaged on what matters most. From health and wellbeing messages, job opportunities, upcoming community events, to staff profiles and important health alerts, the Better Together – Our Health, Our Way channels are a trusted source of information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the region.

Together, the Better Together platforms continue to play a vital role in sharing progress on the Metro North Health Equity Strategy, celebrating our people, sharing stories of success, and promoting the culturally safe and responsive care available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



**Top performing
Facebook post**

**Aunty Sandra's retirement:
Honouring a trailblazer in health**

Post reach: 10,153

Interactions: 361

Comments: 42

across Metro North Health, supporting the health, wellbeing, and empowerment of our communities.

By continuing to deliver timely and accurate updates, the Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communications Team are proud to help ensure community members have the information they need to stay healthy, safe, and connected.

Follow us on our journey towards health equity: Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

FACEBOOK:
BETTER TOGETHER –
OUR HEALTH, OUR WAY



Current followers: 4,376
Page views: 438,314
Content interactions: 11,876
New yearly page followers: 368

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



INSTAGRAM: @
OURHEALTHOURWAY



Current followers: 497
Page views: 28,826
Page interactions: 1,343
New yearly page followers: 122

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



LINKEDIN:
BETTER TOGETHER –
OUR HEALTH, OUR WAY



Current followers: 722
Yearly Reach: 60,660
Yearly Engagement: 2,411
New yearly page followers: 237

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



Metro North Health Key Calendar Highlights

FEBRUARY



13 February - Better Together Staff Gathering / National Apology Day



18 February - Cadetship Welcome Day

MARCH



20 March - National Close the Gap Day Celebrations

APRIL



10 April - Health Equity Community Consultation Event



30 April - Health Equity Staff Consultation Event

MAY



26 May - National Sorry Day



27 May - 3 June - Reconciliation Week at Metro North Health

28 May - TPCB Gathering Garden Smoking Ceremony





JUNE



2 June – Kabi Kabi Traditional Owner Meet and Greet



3 June – Mabo Day Celebration



11 June – Caboolture Hospital Dhoeri Headdress Unveiling

JULY



1 July – Metro North Health Equity Strategy Launch



1 July – Metro North Health Anti-racism Campaign Launch



4 July – Buranga Widjunga NAIDOC Event



4 July – Deadly Start Welcome Day



JULY



8 July – Redcliffe Hospital NAIDOC Event



9 July – STARS NAIDOC Event



9 July – Caboolture Hospital NAIDOC Event



10 July – Northside NAIDOC Family Fun Day

AUGUST



7 August – Better Together Staff Gathering

SEPTEMBER



11 September – Health Equity Community Consultation Event

OCTOBER



1 October – Deadly Start Graduation Event

NOVEMBER

19 November – Health Equity Showcase Event

28 November – Metro North Staff Excellence Awards

DECEMBER

11 December – Better Together Staff Gathering and Deadly Awards Ceremony

Better Together Health Van 2025 Roadmap



January

- 10th – Kurbingui back to school community day
- 17th – Deadly Feet Screening - St Vincent de Paul The Park Hotel in Spring Hill
- 30th – Bribie Island Yarun

April

- 8th – Bribie Big Arvo Bribie Island
- 9th – Deadly Smiles screening - Jabiru Park Play Zillmere
- 30th – Deadly Feet Health Promotion - Kurbingui

June

- 3rd – Deadly Feet and Diabetes Health Promotion pop up stall - MABO Day Event at Sandgate Town Hall
- 18th – GoHealth Careers Expo Brisbane Entertainment Centre
- 19th – Deadly Feet and Connecting Care to Country - Homeless Connect Expo RNA Showgrounds

October

- 7th – Mental Health pop up stall at TPCB Gathering Garden
- 8th – Mental Health pop up stall at Centenary Lakes Park
- 9th – Telehealth at Redcliffe Library Seniors Wellbeing Day Redcliffe

February

- 25th – Deadly Smiles - Koobara Kindy
- 27th – Deadly Feet - Yarns Brighton Health Hub
- 28th – Deadly Feet Screening - St Vincent de Paul The Park Hotel in Spring Hill.

May

- 21st – Deadly Feet screening - Sandbag Community Event Sandgate
- 29th – Deadly Feet screening - COH Reconciliation Bowls Brighton

July

- 10th – Deadly Feet and Deadly Smiles health promotion - Koobara NAIDOC
- 11th – Connecting Care to Country health promotion - Musgrave Park NAIDOC
- 24th – Health Promotion pop up stall - Brisbane North Connecting Disability Health Forum at Brighton Health Campus

September

- 14-17th – Deadly Feet screening - Bundaberg/ Gayndah
- 18th – Strathpine State School Wellbeing Festival

November

- 7th – Public Health Unit running immunisations health promotions - Homeless Connect Event RNA Showgrounds



Plans for 2026

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team will guide efforts, and implementation plans across Metro North Health for the 2025-2028 Health Equity Strategy.

Phase two of the health equity strategy will focus on key priorities in mental health and women's, children, and families. The key priorities and actions for the year ahead include, but not limited to:

- Map, co-design and pilot an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led team by 2026-2027 to provide culturally safe holistic care to support young people in the areas of mental health, ATODS and sexual health.
- Support and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's voices by establishing a Youth Alliance or Community of Practice with a focus on target engagement.
- Strengthen early childhood health, development and education outcomes across the First 2000 Days through integrated care.
- Expand Ngarrama Maternity Services to meet the growing demand. Support holistic, culturally safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, babies and families at Caboolture, Redcliffe and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.
- Co-design and implement the Metro North Health wellbeing program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff that supports connection to culture and includes a consistent, organisation-wide plan to provide ongoing support and resources to manage cultural load.
- Develop and implement a three-year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce plan, that prioritises cultural support.
- Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners to work to their full scope within a structured clinical governance framework and strengthen their cultural and clinical capabilities through tailored professional development, leadership opportunities, and mentorship programs.
- Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and researchers to identify systemic barriers, cultural and social determinants, and co-design practical, evidence-based tools, and strategies to improve healthcare access and outcomes.
- Pilot models of care that consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional medicine and healing practices to offer patient choice of care.
- Develop integrated models of care to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people interacting with health, mental health, justice and community services, focusing on early intervention and continuity of care.
- Develop and implement culturally responsive, holistic models of care of mental health care across Metro North that integrate social and emotional wellbeing, are strength-based and trauma-informed, and are accessible through all services.
- Implement the anti-racism campaign and establish a transparent process to monitor and report incidents of racism and discrimination experienced by staff and patients.
- Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who identify as LGBTQIA+ Sistergirl and Brotherboys to co-design inclusive programs and initiatives that reflect their lived experience.
- Deliver targeted campaigns to increase community awareness of health services (what and where is available), including service locations, operating times and culturally appropriate safe care options.

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



metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van/