

# Talk-About

The official newsletter for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Leadership Team

October / November 2020

Metro North Hospital and Health Service *Putting people first*

## Metro North's Better Together Medication Access enhancing transition of care from hospital to community

On 1 October 2020, Metro North Hospital and Health Service launched Better Together Medication Access to cover all out of pocket expenses for prescribed discharge medication to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

*Continued page 5 >*





### Better Together Medication Access Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Origin?

Better Together Medication Access will cover all out of pocket expenses for prescribed discharge medication for all self-identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people discharging from a Metro North Hospital and Health Service.


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

#### How it works

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

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

 Better Together Medication Access is Metro North Hospital and Health Service wide and will be available from 1 October 2020.

 Talk to Staff caring for you for more information.

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

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

Metro North Hospital and Health Service | Queensland Government



Queensland Government



## Give us feedback

We welcome your feedback, contributions, story ideas and details on any upcoming events. Please contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team at [A\\_TSIHU\\_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au) or phone (07) 3139 3231.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team

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

#### Mail to:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team, Building 26, Chermshire Community Health Centre, 490 Hamilton Road, Chermshire QLD 4032.

#### Email to:

[A\\_TSIHU\\_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au)  
Alternatively, call and ask for our Safety and Quality Officer on 3647 9531.

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

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

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

## Contact information

### Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Ph: 3646 4154 / 0408 472 385

After hours Ph: 3646 5106 / 0408 472 385

### The Prince Charles Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Ph: 3139 5165 / 0436 690 306

After Hours Ph: 3139 6429 / 0429 897 982

### Redcliffe Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Ph: 3049 6791

After Hours Ph: 3049 9734

### Caboolture/Kilcoy Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Ph: 5433 8249

After Hours Ph: 5316 5481

### Community Indigenous Primary Health Team

Manager Ph: 3360 4758 / 0419 856 253

### Indigenous Sexual Health Team

Clinical Nurse Consultant Ph: 3360 4753

### Indigenous Mental Health

Professional Lead Ph: 3646 2695

### Ngarrama Maternity Services

Caboolture Ph: 0439 732 970

Redcliffe Ph: 0407 251 890

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Ph: 0428 404 875

### Forensic Mental Health Service, Indigenous Mental Health Intervention Program

Forensic Mental Health Team Ph: 3234 0800



Follow us @BetterTogetherHealthVan

## What's inside October/November 2020

Contact information.....	2
<b>COVID-19 TESTING INFORMATION POSTER</b> .....	3
A word from the Director.....	4
Better Together Medication Access .....	5
<b>OUT AND ABOUT</b>	
Community and Oral Health Staff Excellence Awards 2020.....	6
Congratulations to Bernadette Bird for ten years of service .....	6
Better Together Health Van and Boss Boxing working to promote health education .....	7
Board Members and Executive staff wearing the artwork with pride.....	7
Deadly artwork on display at Redcliffe Hospital .....	8
RBWH Mental Health Workers take time to talk about mental health .....	9
Yarning with former Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Temiah Henaway about GIVIT.....	10

### IN FOCUS

The Healthcare Journey of Madeline: Senior Social Worker, Brighton Health Campus .....	11
October is Australia's Breast Cancer Awareness Month .....	12
Why is it important to do your bowel screening test? .....	12
Closing the Gap in Indigenous maternity care .....	13
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainee of the Year – South-East region .....	14

**WORD OF THE MONTH** .....

**BETTER TOGETHER MEDICATION ACCESS** .....

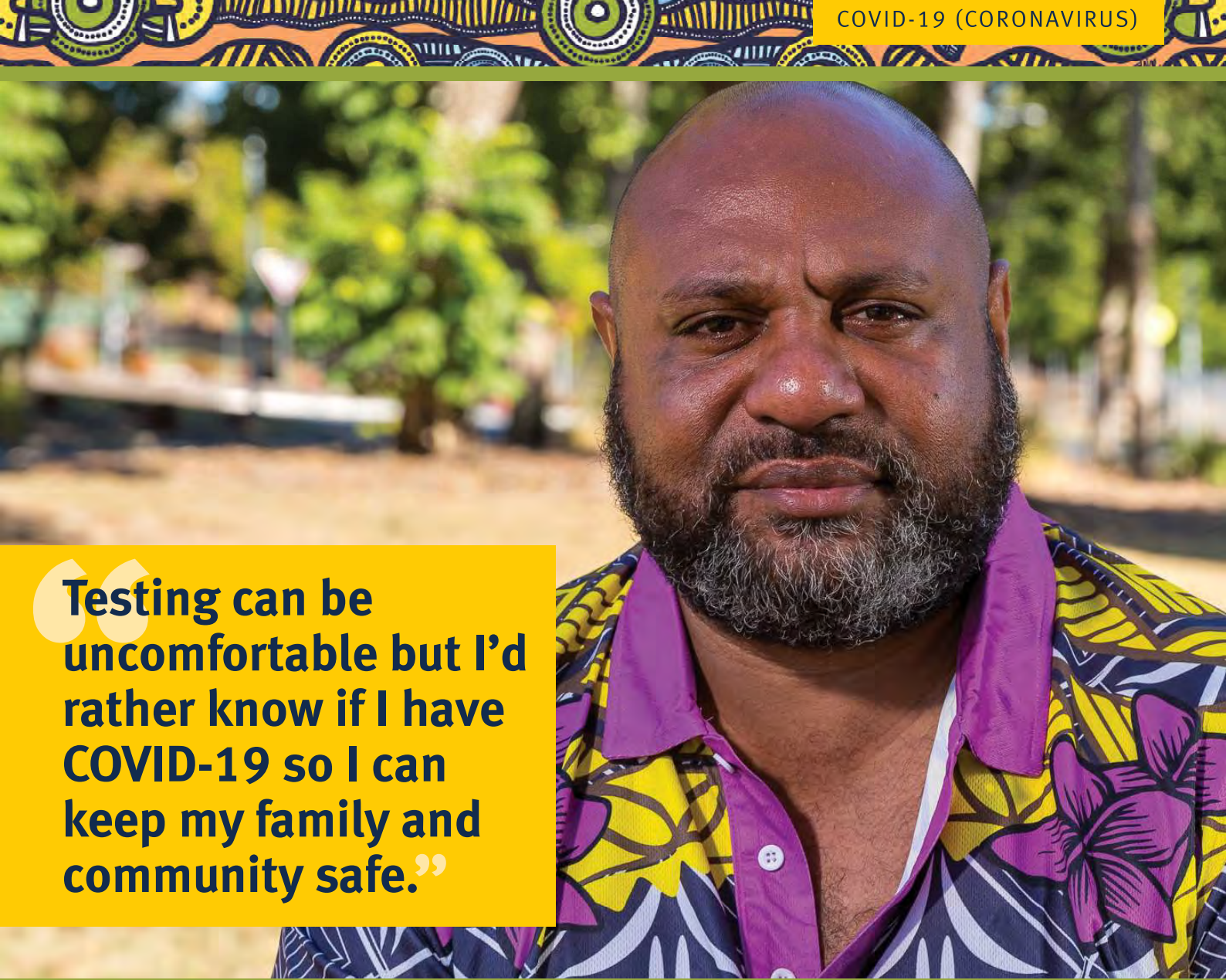
**IN THE NEWS** .....

**STAFF FEATURE**.....

**PREPARING FOR A COVID-19 TEST**.....

**STAFF YARNS**.....

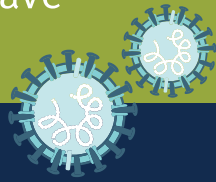
**BETTER TOGETHER HEALTH VAN**.....



“Testing can be uncomfortable but I’d rather know if I have COVID-19 so I can keep my family and community safe.”

We know it may be uncomfortable but it’s important to know who has the virus to keep mob safe.

Do your part to keep community safe and get tested if you are sick or have been around anyone who has been sick.



Metro North Hospital and Health Service is conducting COVID-19 screening at fever clinics and community assessment clinics at a range of locations. To find the latest testing centre information, visit the Queensland Health website at <https://bit.ly/3319PLu>



Keep updated by following the Metro North Hospital and Health Service Better Together Health Van Facebook Page [@BetterTogetherHealthVan](#) [#keepmobsafe](#) [#keeppamlesafe](#) [#bettertogether](#)



# A word from the Director



**Sherry Holzapfel**  
Director, Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander Health  
Leadership Team

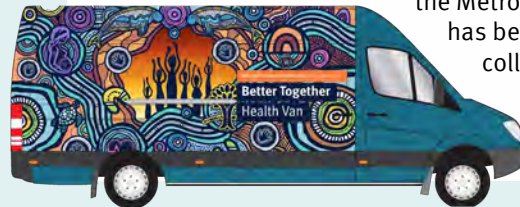
Welcome to the final edition of Talk About for 2020. We could never have imagined the significant challenges we would experience this year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am so proud of the strength of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and working together to keep each other safe. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, this has been a successful year for the Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team (A&TSILT).

## 2020 Highlights

- **COVID-19 First Nations response:** We developed specific resources distributed across the Metro North Hospital and Health Service and worked in partnership with external providers to respond to locally identified needs.



- **Better Together Health Van:** launched in March 2020. We found ways to operate the van in a 'COVID-safe' way so that important health promotion messages could be shared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members within the Metro North catchment. I am delighted that the van has been a conduit for service linkages and project collaborations, facilitating 33 presentations and community engagement workshops this year to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



- **Better Together Health Van Facebook page:** This has transformed into an important platform for sharing our messages and maintaining connections with you. You can like or follow us on [Facebook at @BetterTogetherHealthVan](#).

- **Strong start to life:** Various service enhancements and resources have been implemented for families and clinicians within Ngarrama services to support improved access to services, education and experience of care. Our efforts have seen improved rates of early antenatal attendance, reduction of smoking during pregnancy and positive feedback of birthing resources by mothers. Metro North is again leading the way, with other Hospital and Health Services across Queensland now requesting to implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Personal Health red book cover that aims to improve timely, culturally appropriate care for Indigenous children.



- **Deadly Opportunities:** Supporting the soon-to-be launched Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS) in Closing the Gap by providing recruitment, workforce and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I am pleased to see a commitment by STARS to have 40 identified positions within the facility.

- **Reducing Burden of Disease:** Great progress has been made with the First Nation Women's Gynaecology pathway that aims to increase access to the delivery of culturally appropriate care within a shared service model that has been developed and implemented in partnership with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) and Metro North. The proposed model of care includes outreach clinics with specialist clinicians with prioritised referral and surgical pathways to Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.



*Continued from page 1 >*

Better Together Medication Access is the first program of its kind and is available only through Metro North Pharmacy Services from 1 October 2020.

By providing discharge medication at no cost to patients, Metro North is supporting the healthcare journey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their return to community.

The program was made possible thanks to a collaboration between the Redcliffe Hospital Pharmacy team and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team.

Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team Sherry Holzapfel said implementation of the program was fast-tracked in response to the current COVID-19 crisis and community need.

“The increased restrictions associated with COVID-19 have brought about an unprecedented effect on our community. The pandemic has potential to further isolate and financially disadvantage the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community for appropriate access to discharge medication during this time,” Ms Holzapfel said.

“Better Together Medication Access will further support our commitment to enhanced care and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients during COVID-19. This is another demonstration of Metro North’s commitment to improving the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as part of the national Closing the Gap campaign and the Better Together Health Plan.”

Patients who self-identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin while they are in Metro North hospitals are eligible for Better Together Medication Access. Metro North staff must ask everyone the question, ‘Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Origin?’.

“I encourage you to identify so you can receive Better Together Medication Access and other culturally appropriate care, support and access to services. It’s your right to a healthier life,” Ms Holzapfel said.

- Better Together Grants: awarded to eight key projects designed to improve health outcomes and service enhancement across the MNHHS for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. Spanning various healthcare streams, the projects were highlighted in the August/September edition of Talk About (<https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/community/healthcare-services/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-health/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health>). I look forward to seeing real outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from these projects.



NAIDOC Week: celebrated with a virtual program, highlighting our commitment to finding new ways to connect with you during COVID-19. If you missed the films launched during NAIDOC week, you can find these on our website (<https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van>).

- Better Together Medication Access: I am incredibly proud to wrap up this year with the launch of Better Together Medication Access on 1 October 2020. This program will provide access to prescribed discharge medication from a Metro North pharmacy with no out of pocket expenses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. I am pleased that we were able to fast-track implementation of the program as part of our COVID-19 response. Redcliffe Hospital’s Pharmacy team have been pivotal in implementing this initiative. My personal thanks go to the Redcliffe Pharmacy leadership team, particularly Geoff Grima, Peter Coomber, Ann Whitaker and Edwin Cheung for working alongside us to implement Better Together Medication Access.

## Looking ahead

Next year is set to be another busy year for the A&TSLT. Core initiatives we will work on in 2021 include, but are not limited to:



- Monitoring, planning and supporting the COVID-19 First Nations response, ensuring the delivery of culturally appropriate care and communications to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Supporting implementation plans to embed the priorities of the Metro North Better Together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2019-2022.
- Providing strategic oversight and support to all Metro North directorates and clinical streams to improve service delivery.
- Developing workforce strategies, identifying positions to support service enhancement across Metro North.
- Community engagement strategies to facilitate better connected care pathways and outreach to vulnerable people across Metro North.
- Building on the strength of the Ngarrama services through a collaborative partnership with the Birthing In Our Community program. This partnership between Ngarrama services and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health will combine the strengths of both services to achieving equity in birth outcomes, health status, longevity and quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
- Supporting Metro North’s collaborative approach to research.
- Establishing phase two of our enhanced data capture dashboards to improve visibility of First Nations key performance indicators that support timely response to changes in care delivery required.
- Implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team 2020-21 communication plan.

As we approach the end of 2020, I take the opportunity to thank all our staff and colleagues for rising to the challenges, and their commitment to caring for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and communities. On behalf of the team, I thank Jackie Hanson, Chief Operating Officer, and Shaun Drummond, Chief Executive, for their continued leadership and guidance.

I wish everyone a very safe and happy festive season and look forward to working with everyone in 2021.

## Community and Oral Health Staff Excellence Awards 2020



Paul Drahm, Manager of Indigenous Health, with COH Executive Director Tami Photinos.

In August, Metro North Community and Oral Health (COH) held its annual Staff Excellence Awards, which showcase and celebrate staff across the health service for their hard work, dedication and commitment to our values.

Congratulations to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services across COH for receiving one of the Executive Director's Awards in recognition of their cultural advice and cultural leadership to the Executive Director and the Executive Leadership Team.

"I was honoured to accept the award on behalf of all of our workforce in recognition of the efforts made," said Paul Drahm, Manager of Indigenous Health.

"This award acknowledges the sincere commitment and dedication within our executive and COH service to work better together in Closing the Gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

Well done to all the nominees in this year's Staff Excellence Awards. We are incredibly proud that Community and Oral Health is leading Metro North in Closing the Gap in health care outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Congratulations to Bernadette for ten years of service

Metro North recently acknowledged Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer (IHLO), Bernadette's ten years of service. Bernadette is an Aboriginal and South Sea Islander woman working as an IHLO at Queensland's largest hospital, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. She is Butchulla from her mother's side and Juru on her father's side.

Bernadette started her career in Metro North working in the Indigenous Community Health Team formerly located at Chermide Community Health Centre.

"After I studied Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, I was fortunate to start my career at Indigenous Community Health," Bernadette said.

Now working as an Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer, Bernadette works to engage and advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"I am focused, committed and proud to go that extra mile. Always flexible to make sure the job gets done right and straight away for our mob in the community or in hospital," Bernadette said.

During her ten years of service, Bernadette has lent her knowledge and experience to Closing the Gap initiatives on patient health outcomes and provided cultural and holistic education to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and consumers to help them live healthy lifestyles.

As an IHLO, Bernadette focuses on supporting patients and their families to understand their journey of recovery at the hospital and following up on referrals to community organisations once patients are discharged.

"Throughout my years I have worked hard to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with culturally appropriate and professional support," Bernadette said.

Outside of work Bernadette likes to cook, spend time with family, go to the markets, visit the beach, and travel to see different places in Australia.

Congratulations on your ten years of service, Bernadette!

(L-R): Pat, Team Leader of RBWH Indigenous Hospital Services, Bernadette, RBWH IHLO, Mark, A/Executive Director of Indigenous Hospital Liaison Service Allied Health Professions



# OUTandABOUT

## Better Together Health Van and Boss Boxing working to promote health education

Earlier this year, Acting Cultural Capability and Stakeholder Engagement Manager Natasha and Senior Project Officer William met with Sammy from Boss Boxing to discuss how the Better Together Health Van can promote healthy lifestyles to local community.

Boss Boxing is a community program that was developed to respond to the needs of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the broader community of Brisbane's northside. This program provides a culturally safe space to foster healthy relationships and improved fitness. It also offers mentoring and pathways to support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members of the Brisbane North region.

"Through our program we aim to get youth off the streets and into the gym. We currently work with many young people and marginalised groups from within the community, young offenders, child safety and other government service referrals," Sammy said.

The Boss Boxing program was developed from Pass on the Fire Ministry which was started by respected local community Elder Aunty Aileen Sandy in 2015. Pass on the Fire Ministry grew from a small community based independent church in Zillmere, Brisbane. To learn more visit [bit.ly/thebossboxing](http://bit.ly/thebossboxing).

Establishing and building relationships with local organisations like Boss Boxing allows Metro North Hospital and Health Service to find new ways we can work together to provide health promotion and education.



(L-R): Sammy from Boss Boxing with Natasha, A/Manager Cultural Capability and Stakeholder Engagement

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team will continue to engage with community organisations to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We look forward to making the Better Together Health Van accessible to local community groups to share important health promotion messages out in community.

"We are excited to engage with organisations like Boss Boxing who have strong connections to community. This will help us create safe spaces to yarn about health care experiences, planning and collaborations for future activities with local community groups, families and individuals," William said.

The Better Together Health Van is a free community service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on the northside of Brisbane. To learn more about the Better Together Health Van and Metro North's commitment to improving the health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people please visit <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van/>.

## Board Members and Executive staff wearing the artwork with pride



(L-R): Metro North Chief Executive Shaun Drummond and Board Chair Jim McGowan

Metro North's Senior Executive Team and Board Members are sporting scarves and ties showcasing the Better Together artwork created by esteemed artist Elaine Chambers-Hegarty.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership team gifted the colourful pieces of attire to thank Senior Executive staff and Board members for their continued support and commitment to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.

The scarves and ties were initially intended to be worn throughout Metro North facilities during NAIDOC week as part of fostering a culturally safe and welcoming environment for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. As face-to-face NAIDOC week celebrations were not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Executives and Board members took the opportunity to wear the scarves and ties at the Board meeting held on 22 September 2020.

# OUTandABOUT

## Deadly Artwork on display at Redcliffe Hospital

If you have recently visited Redcliffe Hospital you may have noticed the unique artwork created exclusively for Redcliffe Hospital by Elaine Chambers-Hegarty on display throughout the facility.

Elaine Chambers-Hegarty is a renowned Aboriginal artist with cultural links to the Koa and Kuku Yalanji people. The vibrant artwork depicts Redcliffe Hospital as the main meeting place. Circles down the side and the lines connecting represent community groups surrounding the area. Animals of the sea and land, such as the sea turtle, dugong, fish, pelican and the dolphin represent the Redcliffe area. The pelican is a prominent bird on the artwork and is placed in the centre because he can also be seen in the waterways close by that run off the Moreton Bay area.

The central red area represents the red cliffs of the area, mainly at Woody Point and Scarborough areas. Markings on these cliffs represent nature and some erosion, which shows we need to protect this country. The green area represents the nature surrounding with the artist's connection to country and waterways amongst the region.



You can view the artwork on the concrete pillars at the main hospital entrance welcoming visitors of the Hospital, surrounding the Indigenous Hospital Liaison consumer phone booth, on walls of the carpark, inside one of the main lifts and in the hospital healing garden in the courtyard.

“The unique artwork is now hanging in some of the hospital’s busiest areas for staff, patients and visitors to enjoy. It is another way that Redcliffe Hospital is continuing to strengthen, build trust and connection with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community,” Sherry Holzapfel, Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team said.

The artwork is also on display at the Moreton Bay Integrated Care Centre in both the Outpatients and Emergency Departments and several floors of the hospital’s main building.



# OUTandABOUT

## RBWH Mental Health Workers take time to talk about mental health



Workers from Metro North Mental Health put on a BBQ (L-R): Lisa, Director of Recovery, and Recovery Assistants Ryan and Shaharia.

Metro North Mental Health workers put on a BBQ with staff and consumers at Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital to acknowledge Queensland Mental Health Week on 14 October.

Studies show that one in five Australians experience a mental health condition every year and one in two Australians will experience a mental health condition in a lifetime. Queensland Mental Health Week, celebrated annually in October, promotes the importance of mental health and wellbeing and aims to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

Advanced Indigenous Mental Health Worker Stephan hopes that coordinating events like this will encourage regular, culturally safe and sensitive conversations about mental health.

“Mental Health Week is another opportunity for us to help promote mental health for our people in our community. There is no shame in talking about it, we want mob to know there are Indigenous support services out there to support them,” Stephan said.

In the spirit of the 2020 Queensland Mental Health Week theme, take time to protect your mental health. Simple activities such as observing a leaf for five minutes or colouring in can help reduce stress and anxiety and allow you to feel more present.

We encourage you to prioritise your mental health, not only during Queensland Mental Health Week, but all year round.

**Who to contact if you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed:**



**Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636**

**Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800**

**Lifeline – 131 114**

**MensLine – 1800 811 811**

**GriefLine – 1300 845 745**

**Suicide Call Back – 1300 659 467**

**1300 MH Call – 1300 642 255**

**GP or councillor**

**eMNprac – [ehmprac.org.au](http://ehmprac.org.au)**

## Yarning with former Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Temiah about GIVIT

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team recently had a yarn with Temiah about GIVIT and the great work they are doing within community.

Temiah previously worked as an Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer (IHLO) within Metro North Hospital and Health Service advocating and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients accessing Metro North's health services.

In her current role as an Engagement Officer at GIVIT, Temiah primarily supports local charities, community groups and relevant agencies to channel the generosity of the general public and organisations to best meet the material needs of communities within Queensland.

Metro North IHLOs often link with organisations like GIVIT to help with transition back to community and provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in need.

"For me, the ultimate goal is to support Indigenous families and communities by giving them a hand up to break their cycle of poverty," Temiah said.

"Working in this role allows me to help provide this support and co-ordinate the items that are needed. The end goal being that individuals and families experiencing hardships will no longer be reliant on charity support and will be able to pay the kindness forward and help others."

GIVIT is a national online charity connecting those who have with those who need by the simple act of giving.



"Working with more than 3,600 support organisations, we ensure people get what they need when they need it most – whether recovering from a disaster event, or experiencing hardship due to circumstances such as drought, domestic and family violence, homelessness, disability, and mental health," Temiah said.

Through GIVIT's National Indigenous Support Program, Engagement Officers have been focusing on supporting Indigenous organisations and services who support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This charity organisation also has an Indigenous Support appeal which allows people to donate funds to purchase essential items specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities in need.

Temiah shared that the transition from working as an IHLO to community-led work was fairly easy.

"Thanks to my role in Metro North, I was already well connected with many services across the state. Moving into my new role, I am still able to work alongside these services, just offering a different type of support," Temiah said.

The Indigenous Hospital Service at The Prince Charles Hospital has been engaging with Temiah to discuss opportunities of support for disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients accessing our health care services.

We asked Temiah to share lessons she has learnt that could assist us in improving our service delivery within the health service.

"If you are working with agencies and have a strong relationship with case workers from across the state it will strengthen your community connections which will make mob feel safer when they have to come to hospital – especially if they are leaving country," she said.

Having a holistic approach to improving health and wellbeing will assist towards Closing the Gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"With people struggling day-to-day and facing various hardships, your donation is the support that someone needs to keep going. Your donation of a bed could mean that a mother has a proper night's sleep so is able to get up and get her kids ready for school. Your work boots could be the one item that a father needs to secure his new job to provide for his family. By helping families get back on their feet and functioning, you are helping to break the cycle of broken families. Keeping a family functional contributes to keeping families and communities strong," Temiah said.

## The Healthcare Journey of Madeline: Senior Social Worker, Brighton Health Campus

Proud to call the Kullilee people from Western Queensland her people, Senior Social Worker Madeline shares her journey as a healthcare worker.



*Madeline, Senior Social Worker*

“My people were removed from their traditional country as part of early Australian legislation. Some were sent to Purga Mission situated in the Ipswich area west of Brisbane and others were sent to missions across Queensland. My mother’s family are the Davidson family who were integral in developing services such as Indigenous medical, legal and housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within the Brisbane area. My father’s people are the Appo family from the Bundaberg region,” Madeline said.

While Madeline is the Senior Social Worker for Indigenous Health at Brighton Health Campus, she also works across the social work teams within Community and Oral Health (COH). She is impressed by the level of cultural awareness and responsiveness of the social work teams in COH.

“I am the only practicing Indigenous Social Worker for COH. My work is wide-ranging and diverse. I am fortunate to work in a specialised role where I can work with the amazing staff across the organisation, and their clients, who need additional cultural support from a social work perspective,” Madeline said.

Madeline also has clinical caseload responsibilities, primarily working with individuals and families experiencing domestic and family violence or difficulties with child protection issues.

“Helping people in these circumstances is what motivated me to become a social worker,” Madeline said.

When she was studying social work at university, Madeline was a single mother raising three children. She was given the opportunity to enter a cadetship program, funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to work within the Department of Child Safety from 2005 until she graduated in 2008.

The cadetship provided her with the opportunity to be guided by experienced social workers while receiving indispensable financial support. It also provided her with experience that would shape her future career in social work.

The cadetship led to Madeline securing a temporary full-time position within the Department of Child Safety. During this time, she was balancing full-time studies, full-time work and raising her three children.

“Though it was very busy, and I was left with little free time for myself, I am forever grateful to have been given the chance to gain valuable experience which enhanced my current social work practice,” Madeline said.

Madeline viewed this as an opportunity to show her young children that it was possible to make changes to the direction of your life path, and to enact positive change for herself, her family and potentially someone else’s life.

Through her work experience at the Department of Child Safety, Madeline’s interest in working in child protection continued to grow. She now oversees the Child Protection portfolio at COH and is a current member of the Child Protection Community of Practice.

Madeline also delivers training and education to COH staff, including seminars to COH social work students on working with Indigenous people, and educating incoming COH clinical staff on the experience of domestic and family violence for Indigenous people.

She is working as part of the COH SaFE Child Protection Training project, which was recently awarded one of the Better Together Funding grants.

“My advice to cadets is to make opportunities work for you. Let opportunities help you to make good career choices that will keep you connected and passionate about the profession you have chosen. I very much appreciate my time as a cadet as it shaped my practice framework and led me to the immeasurable job satisfaction I have in my current role,” Madeline said.



## October is Australia's Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Did you know that if you are 40 years or older, you can attend BreastScreen Queensland for a free breast screen every two years?

Breast screening can find breast cancer early, before you or your doctor can feel or see anything. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people currently participate in cancer screening programs at a lower rate than the general population. This means cancers are diagnosed later and are more challenging to treat successfully.

Breast awareness is important for all women, even if you are having regular breast screens. There is no special technique for checking your breasts - simply take the time to get to know their normal look and feel. This will help you detect any new breast or nipple changes. Most breast changes are not due to cancer, but it's important to see your doctor or health worker to make sure.

One in seven Queensland women will be diagnosed with breast cancer before they are 85 years old. Early detection can increase treatment options and save lives.

Look after your breast health by being breast aware. If you are 40 years or older, you can book your appointment by calling 13 20 50 or visiting the BreastScreen Queensland website ([www.breastscreen.qld.gov.au](http://www.breastscreen.qld.gov.au)).



**DON'T DELAY**  
do a bowel test today

## Why is it important to do your bowel screening test?

Bowel cancer is one of the most common cancers in Australia.

It can often develop without any symptoms, meaning you might not feel or see anything different. The bowel screening test reduces sickness and death from bowel cancer by helping to detect early signs of the disease using a free and simple test that can be done in your own home.

If you are between 50 and 74 years old, you will get a home test kit in the mail with instructions on how to do the test. Once you've done the test, send the samples in the reply-paid envelope provided. The samples are processed, and the result is sent to you or your doctor within two weeks.

Currently, only two out of ten Indigenous Australians return their bowel screening kit. Poor rates of screening lead to poorer outcomes, like sickness and death.

Some people think doing a bowel screening test is shameful or embarrassing. The real shame is if you don't do the test and then later, you're not around for your friends or family.

If you need information about bowel screening, you can call 1800 627 701 or visit the Australian Department of Health website (<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-bowel-cancer-screening-program>).

## Closing the Gap in Indigenous maternity care

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital's (RBWH) Ngarrama Royal Midwifery Group are achieving incredible outcomes in Closing the Gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mums and their babies.

The small team of dedicated midwives and healthcare workers provide tailored care and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their families throughout and after the journey of pregnancy. Since the service began at RBWH in 2011, higher numbers of women are attending regular appointments and more babies are being born at a healthier birth weight.

"The latest figures show that 100 per cent of women are attending more than five antenatal appointments during their pregnancy and only two per cent of babies are born underweight," said Janine, Midwifery Unit Manager.

"Before Ngarrama began, more than 10 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies were born at a low birth weight."

Janine said the team's collective dedication to providing culturally safe maternity care and the service's continuity of care model is the driving force behind these outcomes.

"In 2014, we moved to a Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) model which means women are supported by the same midwives throughout their entire pregnancy.

*Midwives and healthcare workers from the Ngarrama Royal Midwifery Group*

"This is important because it provides us with the opportunity to build safe and trusting relationships with our patients.

"Beyond the specialised advice and care we provide, it's the relationships and connections we form that matter most. Over the course of a woman's pregnancy, we get to know them very well, and they get to know us too.

"That's what keeps so many women coming back to have their second or third babies through Ngarrama," Janine said.

Nicole works as the Clinical Midwife/Case Manager in the Ngarrama Service, where she manages all incoming patient referrals and transfers and becomes a familiar face for the families who come through the service.

Nicole said that supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women through pregnancy has always been something she has wanted to do.

"I identify as Aboriginal so I am passionate about Closing the Gap and providing continuity of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

"We're so proud of the results we have achieved in the Ngarrama Maternity Service at RBWH since we moved to a Midwifery Group Practice model," Nicole said.

The RBWH Ngarrama Royal Midwifery Group supported more than 210 women through the service last year, many of who were repeat patients or family of other women previously supported through the service.

You can access Ngarrama Royal MGP if you identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander woman or you are having a child with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background. To learn more about the Ngarrama maternity service, visit the Metro North website (<https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/healthcare-services/maternity-services/choosing-an-option-for-maternity-care>).



## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainee of the Year – South-East region

Congratulations to Emilie, one of the 2019 Deadly Start school-based trainee graduates, on being awarded the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainee of the Year award for the South-East region. Emilie is a proud descendant of the Ugarapul people and acknowledges her Nanna as her motivation to pursue a career in health.

“I have wanted to work in the health industry since I was 11 years old. It was at this time my Nanna had become sick with bone cancer. During her sickness I helped her shower, walk, eat and would dress and do her hair,” said Emilie.

Emilie commenced her school-based traineeship with Metro North in December 2018, based at the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital in the Occupational Therapy department. Despite nursing being Emilie’s preferred career pathway, she was grateful to be offered a Deadly Start traineeship as a trainee Occupational Therapy Assistant.

“I knew that the skills and knowledge I would acquire through the traineeship would help me to work towards my dream nursing career,” said Emilie.

From a young age, Emilie has struggled through many challenging times. When she was 13 years old Emilie was bullied at her previous high school. She suffered from depression and developed an eating disorder and high levels of anxiety.

“As a family we decided that I should move in with my grandparents and start at a new school. Through counselling and focussing on my studies, I overcame my eating disorder and my depression. I took time out to understand who I was as a person and began seeing improvements which made me want to go further in life. I started believing in myself again and started writing music and performing,” Emilie said.



Emilie’s passion for music and performing allows her to express her emotions and share her story with her peers.

“In 2019, I performed a rap about my life struggles as part of Beenleigh’s Got Talent at my school and was awarded second place. I am currently involved in a music production workshop, recording my music and writing songs to inspire those who are struggling with self-doubt, anxiety, or depression,” Emilie said.

Emilie’s participation within the Deadly Start school-based traineeship program built excitement for her future. Emilie’s academic grades improved, her school attendance increased to above 90 per cent and Emilie now seeks out leadership opportunities within her school and her community.

“Through my success within Deadly Start, I know that I can be just like my Nan - strong and resilient. I can proudly look to the future, know that I have already had success, and that there is more to come. I look forward to the day that I become a nurse and can assist those who come under my care,” Emilie said.

Congratulations to Emilie on being awarded the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainee of the Year for the South-East region. We wish you all the best in achieving your career goals.

## WORD OF THE MONTH

“**Mirragin (Meer-a-gin)**” is “Stars” in Yugara language

Yugara is the name of one of the languages spoken in the Brisbane area west to Ipswich and the Lockyer Valley. The language was spoken and understood by Aboriginal groups in and neighbouring the Greater Brisbane area, including Turubul, Yugambeh and Yugarabul.



# Better Together Medication Access

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

The Better Together Medication Access will cover all out of pocket expenses for prescribed discharge medication for all self-identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people discharging from a Metro North Hospital and Health Service.

### How it works



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



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



Better Together Medication Access is Metro North Hospital and Health Service wide and will be available from 1 October 2020.



Talk to Staff caring for you for more information.

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

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

# IN THE NEWS

---

## **How Aboriginal health experts acted first and led the fight against the coronavirus**

Aboriginal health leaders have been praised for their quick response to COVID-19.

When the alarm bells began to sound in early March, Dr Mark Wenitong, a Kabi Kabi doctor and long-time public health officer in Cape York, was quick off the mark.

» <https://bit.ly/30YnxHO>

---

## **Indigenous health leadership and the pandemic**

One of the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic is that the wider health system has much to learn from the successes of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) sector and Indigenous health leadership, writes Dr Janine Mohamed, CEO of the Lowitja Institute.

Precarious working conditions, poverty and inadequate incomes, and racial and social injustices are among some of the determinants of health that are influencing our ability to control the pandemic, while also increasing the risks for some groups of people.

» <https://bit.ly/3dmBF2z>

---

## **Towels for \$30: How price gouging costs remote communities their health**

Australia is the only developed country in the world where trachoma is still prevalent, with the contagious eye disease found in 120 remote Aboriginal communities where residents pay exorbitant prices for basic cleaning and hygiene products, a Senate committee has been told.

Melbourne University's Indigenous eye health institute told the committee "the heavy burden of serious infections" such as trachoma was borne disproportionately by Aboriginal children who live in poverty and overcrowded housing.

» <https://bit.ly/3j25A1z>

---

## **State Government donates digital thermometers to NSW Aboriginal community organisations**

Aboriginal communities in NSW are set to benefit from a share of the state Government's donation of more than 700 digital thermometers to help them monitor and slow the spread of COVID-19.

Hawkesbury MP Robyn Preston said Transport for NSW donated the thermometers to support the work being carried out by several organisations who have a lead role in Aboriginal community health and other essential services.

» <https://bit.ly/3iSFayY>

---

## **\$2.5 million to improve health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families**

A program that is already showing unprecedented success in improving the health and employment outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families has been awarded \$2.5 million in funding through the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Led by the team at Charles Darwin University's Molly Wardaguga Research Centre at the College of Nursing and Midwifery, the project is focused on providing the Best Start to Life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, babies and families and has been awarded a Centres of Research Excellence (CRE) grant.

» <https://bit.ly/3jSljBu>

---

## **World Mental Health Day 2020: NACCHO emphasises support needed to Close Mental Health Gap**

NACCHO is emphasising that the commitment in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap needs continued funding support to close the mental health gap.

In Australia, the rate of suicide in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities continues to grow.

"Our people experience very high levels of trauma at nearly three times the rate of other Australians and recent statistics point out that we are twice as likely to commit suicide," NACCHO Chair Donnella Mills said.

» <https://bit.ly/2GSebqn>

---

## **Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative: Grants for mental health first aid and cultural camps to help Indigenous youth**

The Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative has been reaching out online during the pandemic to stay in touch with Indigenous young people and make sure they are supported.

The organisation received a \$10,000 grant from Australia Post this week, which will help fund mental health first aid training, from Ballarat's Mirriyu Cultural Consulting, and a camp during the summer holidays.

» <https://bit.ly/34QKePB>

---



# A day in the Life of Tamika: Acting Project Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team



## What does your current role involve?

I'm currently working as an acting Project Officer in the Communications Team, within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team. I work alongside the Manager of Communications and the Communications Officer to provide culturally appropriate information and resources to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, as well as our Indigenous staff and consumers across Metro North. We also work on event management activities throughout the year to acknowledge and highlight significant cultural events within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

## You joined Metro North to help establish the Deadly Start program, can you tell us about the program?

The Deadly Start school-based traineeship program is an initiative aimed at increasing Metro North's Indigenous workforce. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students located in Metro North's catchment can undertake a school-based traineeship in the areas of nursing, allied health, dental, patient support services and administration. Deadly Start is a great way for high school students to gain points towards their Queensland Certificate of

Education, gain workplace exposure and experience. They also get paid for all the hours they work, which is an added incentive!

## How many students have completed the program, and have they continued on with further studies in health?

Of the first Deadly Start trainee cohorts to come through the program, 15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completed their school-based traineeship. Most of the trainees who graduated are now mid-way through their Year 12 studies, with many intending to further their studies at TAFE and/or University once they graduate high school.

## What have been some of the success stories that have stuck with you from students completing the program?

There are so many success stories that come to mind when thinking of our young people who have come through our program while I was part of it. In July 2020, it was announced that two of our 2019 Deadly Start graduates had been listed as regional finalists for the Queensland Training Awards, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the year award. These two young women were successful in making the top three within their regions, chosen from a pool of 700 applicants. One of our 2019 graduates took out the title for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainee of the Year award for the South-East region which is an amazing achievement.

## What advice do you give to those starting their career within health?

Working in the health sector can be overwhelming at times, especially if you have grown up having no immediate family members working in this space like I have, so building a strong support network definitely helps. Always try and look for the positives in the negative situations and be willing to step outside your comfort zone in order to grow professionally and personally.

## Tell us about your former role as a Field Officer – Aboriginal Employment Strategy (Group Training Organisation)?

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) is a specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service that is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into careers. I worked as a Field Officer in the Group Training Organisation space, which was

fairly similar to my role as the Project Officer for the Deadly Start program. As an AES Field Officer, I promoted school-based traineeship opportunities across different industries to high school students. I then mentored and supported them for two years once they had commenced their traineeship. I serviced a larger region when I was at the AES. I had trainees located as far as Dalby, Stanthorpe, Warwick, Gympie, Kingaroy, Murgon and Hervey Bay. Lucky I enjoy driving so I didn't mind getting out of the office to visit my trainees at their workplace!

## As you are now working within the Communications Team for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership team working specifically on the COVID-19 response, what have you learnt so far and what's your goals?

In my short time being a part of the Communications Team, I have come to learn just how vital the communications service is and how much coordination takes place. Coming onboard during COVID-19, my first few weeks have been heavily focused on ensuring our staff are provided with the appropriate information and resources needed to provide optimal care to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, and wider community. My goal is to learn as much as I can from my team and continue to build on my professional skills.

## Can you share your family history and where you come from?

I'm Aboriginal on my mother's side, and Māori on my father's side. My Mum was adopted when she was a baby so we're still on a journey of hopefully one day finding her family. I have grown up and have lived in South Brisbane all my life and don't see myself living anywhere else anytime soon.

## Finally, what do you like doing outside of work?

Outside of work I like to spend time with my family and my friends. I enjoy taking photographs, mainly of wildlife, so I usually head down to the local lake, or parklands around Brisbane in hope to see some animals out and about. If anyone knows of some great spots to take photos of wildlife around Brisbane, I would love to know – thanks!

# Better Together Health Van



## Preparing for a COVID-19 test

Things you need to know to help your testing journey run as smooth as possible.

- ✓ Always ring your local health clinic/GP and let them know you want to get tested.
- ✓ Be ready when they ask about your symptoms.
- ✓ Ask what will happen when I arrive at the clinic.
- ✓ Let them know if you need support on arrival with walking or wheelchair or if you need a carer/family member to come along.
- ✓ If you are waiting on a test result, the people you live with and other close contacts do not need to be in quarantine unless the local public health unit tells them to.

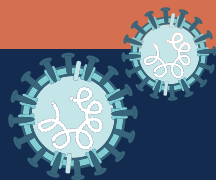
### STEPS IN THE TEST:

1. The doctor or nurse will take you to a testing room/area.
2. The doctor or nurse will ask about your symptoms and ask some questions about where and who you've been around.
3. Make sure you tell the doctor or nurse if you have any particular concerns around your family or where you work.
4. Ask your doctor or nurse if they will be testing for any other viruses.
5. The doctor or nurse will collect a nasal (inside your nose) or throat swabs, or they may ask another staff member to do this.
6. The doctor or nurse will give you some instructions about what to do next.

### AFTER THE TEST YOU:

- Might be told to isolate for a few days until you get the result back from your doctor.
- Should reduce contact with family members or going out in public spaces.
- Maintain physical distancing of 1.5m or 2 arms-length away.
- Keep up with good hygiene practices.
- Should follow up with your health clinic if you haven't received your test results within 48 hours or your symptoms are getting worse.

Metro North Hospital and Health Service is conducting COVID-19 screening at fever clinics and community assessment clinics at a range of locations. To find the latest testing centre information, visit the Queensland Health website at <https://bit.ly/33I9PLu>



Keep updated by following the Metro North Hospital and Health Service Better Together Health Van Facebook Page @BetterTogetherHealthVan #keepmobsafe #keppamlesafe #bettertogether



*Join up today!*

**An online community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at Metro North Hospital and Health Service.**

Join the online discussion and the cultural connection within the workplace. Search 'Metro North Staff Yarns' on QHEPS to join.

All new members signing up before November 30 2018 will receive a welcome pack including a t-shirt, drink bottle, lanyard and flag pin.

For further information email [MNstaffyarns@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MNstaffyarns@health.qld.gov.au)

Supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team, Metro North Hospital and Health Service



Metro North Hospital and Health Service Putting people first

**Better Together  
Health Van**

Metro North Hospital and Health Service Putting people first



# Better Together Health Van

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

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

## How to access the Van?

Visit our website to learn more [metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van](http://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van)

Follow our Facebook Page @BetterTogetherHealthVan for information on locations, up coming events, important health information and community stories.

## Make a booking

If you would like to request the Van visits your community or event, contact the Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team to make a booking on (07) 3139 3235 or email [Bettersogetherhealthvan@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Bettersogetherhealthvan@health.qld.gov.au)

The service is owned and operated by Metro North Hospital and Health Service (MNHHS). The Better Together Health Van will be utilised as an extension of MNHHS in creating engagement activities and developing partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, families and community organisations.

Over the next 12 months (March 2020 – March 2021) the Van will be gathering community feedback, assessing service demand and evaluating clinical service needs.

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

Please contact the Manager, Communications at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team on [A\\_TSIHU\\_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au) or phone (07) 3139 3235.

