



Talk-About

The official newsletter from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team

July 2021

Bowel cancer - screening for you and your mob



“Bowel screening is something that nobody wants to talk about, but it is a test that’s very safe and easy. Anyone can do it. You can do it yourself. Do this test not only for you, but for your family.”

Uncle George Wano.

Around 100 Australians die from bowel cancer each week. It’s the second deadliest cancer but also one of the most treatable cancers if found early.

While more common in people over 50, bowel cancer can affect men, women, young and old, regardless of race or culture. Seventy per cent of people diagnosed with bowel cancer have no family history of the disease.

Some of the things that can contribute to bowel cancer include genetics and family history, polyps, eating a lot of red meat, smoking, being overweight, drinking a lot of alcohol, inflammatory bowel diseases, and previous history of bowel cancer.

Screening for bowel cancer is easy – eligible people aged between 50 and 74 receive the free at home bowel cancer screening kit every two years from the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. You can do the test privately at home and send it back in the pre-paid envelope.

When found early, nine out of ten people with bowel cancer will have a positive outcome.

Unfortunately, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have low participation in bowel cancer screening which means the disease is less likely to be caught early enough for successful treatment.

“It is a silent killer and it is taking our people out. Do the test in time to save your life and prevent a lot of grieving. Do that for mob,” said Auntie Minnie Mace.

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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 or phone (07) 3139 6621.

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, Chermide Community Health Centre, 490 Hamilton Road, Chermide QLD 4032.

Email to:

A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au

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

Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS)

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Office Ph: 3647 6044

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



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A word from the Director



Sherry Holzapfel
Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team

Welcome to the July 2021 edition of Talk About.

In case you have missed the great news, Queensland Health in partnership with Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) have renewed a First Nations Health Equity reform agenda. This agenda will address the legacy of institutional racism, strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and implement new approaches to eliminate the avoidable, unjust and unfair health inequities experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I am proud that Metro North Health is joining the conversation and contributing to the Making Tracks towards health equity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: working together to achieve life expectancy parity by 2031 discussion paper, working to support our agenda of building an equitable and culturally safe healthcare service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Metro North Health recently held various events across our hospitals and health services as part of National Reconciliation Week. Community and Oral Health held one of the events to renew their Statement of Commitment towards Reconciliation to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and providing services which are culturally respectful, equitable and responsive to their needs.

We have also seen the new Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS) establish their Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working group. The group will be responsible for creating a RAP to help achieve reconciliation within the facility and community as well as building strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, patients and visitors.

COVID-19 has had significant impacts on the mental wellbeing and physical health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and community. It's been challenging for our mob so you may not be caring for your health as well as usual. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team (A&TSILT) launched the Kindness, Care and Community campaign in April designed to encourage mob to get back on track with caring for their mental and physical health by connecting with country and community, yarning with family, doing activities that make you feel happy and keeps your spirit strong.

One way we can heal and connect with community and culture is to join the NAIDOC 2021 festivities and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, achievements and culture. This year's NAIDOC theme is 'Heal Country!'. Country is so important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as we hold a spiritual, cultural, emotional and physical connection to country. It is not just a place, it is home, it is life, it is family, it is lore. We use country to heal and connect with our family and culture. Our country is sacred.

In these uncertain times, this year we decided to continue with our Metro North Health virtual NAIDOC celebration with an extended theme 'Heal Country, heal health' sharing a wide variety of videos showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, culture and activities.

Stay safe, stay healthy and keep looking out for each other.

2021 NAIDOC

VIRTUAL EVENT

Join us in a virtual celebration to celebrate National NAIDOC Week 2021 (4–11 July 2021) across Metro North.


Learn about the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through a diverse and exciting schedule of films with First Nation businesses and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders as we celebrate the national NAIDOC theme – Heal Country! and Metro North Health's NAIDOC theme - Heal Country, Heal Health.


NAIDOC 2021 invites the nation to embrace First Nations' cultural knowledge and understanding of Country as part of Australia's national heritage and equally respect the culture and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as they do the cultures and values of all Australians.



HOW TO ACCESS THE FILMS

The films will be published daily throughout NAIDOC Week for everyone to enjoy and accessible via our website and facebook page:

 metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/bettertogether-van

 www.facebook.com/BetterTogetherHealthVan



HEAL COUNTRY!
4-11 JULY 2021

Metro North Health



Queensland Government

Symptoms of bowel cancer include changes to the look and consistency of bowel movements, blood in the urine or stool, pain or lumps in the anus or rectum, abdominal pain, bloating or cramping, unexplained fatigue, or weight loss. If symptoms persist for more than two weeks, see your GP.

Other tests for bowel cancer include a blood test, colonoscopy, and medical imaging.

Bowel cancer can also occur without obvious symptoms which is why screening is important and can save lives.

When bowel cancer is found early, nine out of ten people your doctor will consider which treatment options are best for you. The most common treatment is surgery, but treatment can also include chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

“Bowel screening is something that nobody wants to talk about, but it is a test that’s very safe and easy. Anyone can do it. You can do it yourself. Do this test not only for you, but for your family,” said Uncle George Wano.

If you are aged between 50 to 74 years and have not received a bowel screening test kit in the mail, visit www.ncsr.gov.au for information. If you have any concerns about symptoms, please speak to your GP.

A word from the Chief Operating Officer



Jackie Hanson
Metro North Health
Chief Operating Officer

NAIDOC Week is an important event each year across Australia to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Due to COVID-19, we are holding virtual NAIDOC celebrations again this year.

The theme for NAIDOC 2021 is ‘Heal Country!’, which is especially important this year in light of the international health crisis. Country is more than the geography, its importance is physical, social, emotional, spiritual and cultural. I want to respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ spiritual connection to Country.

Through NAIDOC Week we can take the next steps to healing relationships and recognising the immense cultural knowledge and understanding of Country of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As part of Queensland Health, Metro North will co-develop First Nations health equity priorities to ensure we are providing culturally safe and responsive healthcare services.

I encourage you to participate in your local NAIDOC Week events where you can, and enjoy our Metro North virtual NAIDOC celebrations through the Better Together Van website: [2021 NAIDOC VIRTUAL EVENT - Better Together Van \(health.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van)

Regards,

Jackie Hanson

OUTandABOUT

Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service proudly showcasing new artwork

The new Indigenous Health Liaison phone booth in the Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS) main entry is hard to miss! Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and visitors can access support as soon as they arrive by picking up the phone located in the phone booth. STARS Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer John Corowa is the friendly, patient-facing connection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people coming into STARS and only one call away!

STARS offers a range of surgical procedures and rehabilitation services. Patients can be referred to STARS from other Metro North hospitals for specialist services and some surgical procedures.



STARS IHLO John at new phone booth

Making Smiles Deadly

It was all smiles at Metro North's first Deadly Smiles Oral Health Family Screening Day in April.

The well attended event included complimentary dental check-ups with x-rays and intraoral photos if needed, fluoride varnish and great giveaways like oral hygiene bags. There was even a barber providing free back-to-school haircuts for the kids.

"Oral Health staff really enjoyed the day. It was great to provide a service to families, not just children and to meet people in our local community," said Consultant Oral Health Therapist Alison Dickson.

The Deadly Smiles project is supported by Metro North Health 2020 Better Together Funding. The program will target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged up to 17 years old and their families in the Moreton Bay Region. It takes a holistic approach to oral health by providing early screenings, increased awareness of the importance for good oral hygiene in children and families, and increased oral health services.

In the National Oral Health Plan 2015 – 2024 it was identified that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is one of four priority groups that have poorer oral health than the rest of the population. The Deadly Smiles project aims to break down barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families by establishing a familiar and culturally appropriate dental hub, as well as increasing awareness and self-efficiency of good oral health hygiene, improving dental referral pathways and decreasing dental decay risk through a fluoride varnishing program.

Follow the Better Together Health Van Facebook page to be notified of future family screening days in the Moreton Bay region!



(L-R): Community enjoying Deadly Smiles Oral Health Family Screening Day

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health steering in the right direction

On Monday 8 March, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Liaison Service at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) held a morning tea, welcoming local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders to the hospital's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Steering Committee.



Two local Elders Aunty Merle Cashman and Uncle Alex Davidson are the newest members to sit on the Steering Committee alongside TPCH staff members, senior executive staff and the hospital Executive Director. Aunty Merle and Uncle Alex will meet monthly with members of the Steering Committee to provide their guidance and recommendations as to how TPCH can ensure the delivery of culturally safe

healthcare and a culturally welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending The Prince Charles Hospital.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Steering Committee is one of the many initiatives across TPCH focusing on closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and achieving equitable health outcomes, and is committed to working with community, for community.

(L-R): Indigenous Hospital Liaison Team Leader Neressa Johnston, Aunty Merle and Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Jarrod Parter

National Reconciliation Week celebrations across Metro North Health

National Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June) was celebrated across Metro North Health to encourage everyone to come together to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.



National Reconciliation Week highlights the importance of all Australians coming together and building respectful relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve reconciliation. This year's theme "More than a word. Reconciliation takes action" encourages everyone to be more determined than ever to achieve an equitable and reconciled Australia.

Facilities across Metro North Health hosted a wide variety of events, ranging from morning teas, education sessions, trivia and quiz competitions, sea of hands displays, bare foot bowls and more.



Community and Oral Health Service signing their new Statement of Commitment towards Reconciliation



Flag raising ceremony at Redcliffe Hospital



Sea of hands at STARS

Caboolture Hospital scoring goals to build relationships with community



Staff and community members enjoying Caboolture Hospital touch football carnival

Caboolture Hospital held their annual Indigenous mixed touch football community event in May bringing hospital staff and community together for a fun family friendly day. The event was created by Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers and staff from Caboolture Hospital to create better engagement with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, break down the barriers and build positive relationships between hospital staff and community members.

This year's event saw 10 teams participate in the mixed adult's competition with Morayfield taking 1st place and Coolool Drifters coming in at 2nd place.

There were lots of activities for the kids to enjoy including a jumping castle, climbing wall, a short cultural session and face painting by Cultural Capability Officer Elwyn Henaway who then taught the kids a wallaby dance and played the didgeridoo. Queensland Ambulance Service were also on site to run fun activities for the families.

"I think it was very successful, everyone I spoke to said they had a great day. I'd like to thank everyone that supported the event, especially Caboolture Touch and Queensland Ambulance Service for all their support," said Caboolture Hospital staff member Rachel Bailey.

Congratulations to all teams who participated in the event and thank you to the staff and community who attended the day.



Jarjums enjoying activities at the Caboolture Hospital Touch Football carnival

Women's Business Community Open Day

In May the Women's Business Shared Pathway held a women's business community open day to celebrate the new initiative designed to deliver culturally appropriate patient-centred care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. A partnership between Metro North Health, the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH), this initiative aims to support care closer to home with the option of outreach locations, cultural support and a clearer path for care with all things "women's business" within Metro North Health.



Tia and her bub Eli enjoying the women's business community open day



Attendees enjoying basket weaving activities

Women who identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander will be offered the pathway which includes access to outreach specialist clinics located at various Brisbane north locations in addition to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital clinics and treatment/surgery as required.

Clinical services available through the pathway include specialist gynaecologist consultations, gynaecology procedures and surgical treatment, physiotherapy care and treatment, education and advice.

The women's business community open day held at Nundah Community Health Centre had a fun-filled program which included basket weaving, live music, belly art, parenting information for mothers and fathers, breast and cervical screening information, information about how to live well throughout the different stages of womanhood from pregnancy and beyond plus lots more.

Allied Health Cadets gathering knowledge and opportunities

On Wednesday 12 May, staff from A&TSILT, Indigenous hospital services, mental health, allied health services and colleagues from Pathology Queensland gathered together for an afternoon tea to welcome the new round of 2021 allied health cadets.

Established in January 2020, the Metro North Indigenous Cadetship Program contributes to creating an equitable and culturally safe health workforce and service, providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students to gain work skills that align with their qualification and professional employment aspirations. The program provides an opportunity for cadets to affiliate themselves with the largest Hospital and Health Service in the country, Metro North Health, and have a positive impact on patients and consumers.



New 2021 allied health cadets in front with support staff in the back

The cadetship gathering provided an opportunity for the allied health cadets to build relationships with one another and connect with fellow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within Metro North Health.

Women's Business Shared Pathway



The Women's Business Shared Pathway will deliver culturally appropriate patient-centred care to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women, in partnership between Metro North Hospital and Health Service and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH).

This shared service model aims to support care closer to home for you with the option of outreach locations, cultural support and a clearer path for care for all things "women's business" within Metro North Hospital and Health Service.

All women who identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander will be offered the pathway which includes access to outreach specialist clinics located at various locations in addition to The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital clinics and treatment/surgery as required.

Clinical services available through the pathway include:

- Specialist gynaecologist consultations
- Gynaecology procedures and surgical treatment
- Physiotherapy care and treatment
- Education and advice.

How it works



Your GP will send a referral for gynaecology specialist care to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital or IUIH provider or contact us to discuss care and options on 0476 842 686.

If you choose care through this pathway you will be provided with a choice of clinic for your appointment. You can also ask for access to cultural support and transport through this pathway.

You will receive access to both hospital and community staff to assist in your healthcare journey.

Staff caring for you can provide more information about the pathway at any time.

Clinic Locations

Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service
10-20 Walkers Road, Morayfield
Phone: (07) 5429 1000

Nundah Community Health Centre
10 Nellie Street, Nundah
Phone: (07) 3146 2300

The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Gynaecology Outpatients
Corner Butterfield St and Bowen Bridge Rd, Herston
Phone: (07) 3646 1545

OUTandABOUT

Celebrating our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives

In May we celebrated all nurses and midwives, past and present, as part of International Nurses Day and International Day of the Midwife in recognition of their hard work and dedication. Nurses and midwives often work long hours providing patient-centred care for patients and their families.

Metro North Health has 119 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives providing care to patients accessing hospitals and services. We would like to acknowledge and congratulate all our First Nations nurses and midwives for their continued commitment of support and care for patients in Metro North Health.



Suzy Warren

Who is your mob? Mitakoodie, Cloncurry QLD.

What is your role in Metro North Health? Registered Nurse.

What hospital/ward to you work in? The Prince Charles Hospital.

How long have you been a nurse/midwife? 5 years.

Can you share one favourite memory/experience in your nursing/midwife role? I can't think of one particular memory, but I would say the thing I find most rewarding is seeing a long-stay patient go home after weeks or months in hospital. You get to know these patients. It's so gratifying knowing you have been part of their recovery and now they are on their way home.

What do you like to do outside of work / what hobbies do you enjoy? I love spending time with family, my dog and even do a bit of gardening from time to time.



Kiris Reis

Who is your mob? Ahmat Family, Wagadagam Badu Island

What is your role in Metro North Health? Clinical Nurse, Emergency and Trauma Centre. Clinical lead for TECS (Transforming Emergency Departments Toward Cultural Safety).

What hospital/ward to you work in? Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

How long have you been a nurse/midwife? 8 years.

Can you share one favourite memory/experience in your nursing/midwife role? Looking after an elderly dying patient and her husband who sat with her the whole night. He shared with me their life together and told me how they had spent more of their lives together than apart. He said that he promised her that he would be there until death do us part. He sat and held her hand all night. Once she had passed the family came to pick him up in the morning. They all left together and got to the exit when the man came back and said he had forgotten something. As I walked past the room and looked in, he had come for one last kiss. This almost made me cry writing this as it was the sweetest thing! I cried after it had happened.

What do you like to do outside of work / what hobbies do you enjoy? Spending time with family, (mostly my nephews!) running and baking.



Megan Sinclair

Who is your mob? I'm a proud Nyikina woman, my mob is from the Western Australia's Kimberly region

What is your role in Metro North Health? I'm a Clinical Nurse with a keen interest in improving Indigenous Health and the way we deliver care to our Indigenous community.

What hospital/ward to you work in? Caboolture Hospital, Emergency Department

How long have you been a nurse/midwife? I have been a nurse for 10 years. My entire career has proudly been spent working at Caboolture Hospital.

Can you share one favourite memory/experience in your nursing/midwife role? Each and every day I am proud of what I do and how I can make a difference to someone's most terrible of days. One day I won't forget is the night I got to support a local Indigenous family say goodbye to their loved one in their last hours. The room was filled with family, we did a blessing and took the time to give the patient all the love she deserved at the end of her life.

What do you like to do outside of work / what hobbies do you enjoy? I love to travel. Covid has put a pause in my world travels but now I get to enjoy exploring my own country.



STAY STRONGER

LIVE LONGER

DO YOUR BOWEL SCREEN TEST TODAY

GET IT

People aged 50 to 74 will receive a kit in the mail.

DO IT

The test is free and will take just a few minutes at different times. So don't put it off until later – get it done.

POST IT

Return the kit in the mail using the envelope provided. You don't need stamps or to pay for postage.

DONE

The results will be sent to you and your doctor within two weeks.

IN FOCUS

First identified pharmacist recruited to STARS

Proud Aboriginal woman Lillian Emery, a descendant of the Barunggam people, has been appointed the first identified pharmacist at Metro North's Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS).

Lillian joins the team at STARS after completing an intern training program with the University of Queensland which provided valuable experience in her new role.

After graduating high school, Lillian always knew she wanted to pursue a career in health. Throughout high school, Lillian worked in retail and discovered a passion for customer service. To Lillian, pharmacy felt like a perfect mix of both, as pharmacists are among the most accessible healthcare professionals.

Lillian finds her new role at STARS extremely rewarding, and she has been offered so much support from her colleagues in the pharmacy department transitioning into her new role. Lillian loves the fact that she not only gets to help people every day, but she also gets to work alongside people who inspire her. On a typical day, Lillian provides support and education to outpatients from clinics, checks and provides supplies to inpatients and prepares medication summaries for patients.



The highlight of Lillian's role so far is being able to directly facilitate the Better Together Medication Access initiative, providing prescribed medications to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients on discharge with no out-of-pocket expense. Lillian has also had the fantastic opportunity to sit as an observer on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee at STARS and as part of the STARS Reconciliation Action Plan working group.

We look forward to watching Lillian pave the way for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacists to join the team.

WORD OF THE MONTH

“Bali” (Bar-lee)

is Wallaby in Wulguru language.

Wulguru is an umbrella term to describe several languages or dialects spoken in the Townsville Region extending from Cleveland Bay to Rollingstone. There are several dialects or related languages across the language Nation including Wulgurugaba, Coonambella, Nhawalgaba, Gabilgara and Mulgu. Wulguru has a dialectic relationship to Nywaigi in the north; there are some shared words with Bindal and the Biri language to the south.





IDENTIFICATION:

IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO A

HEALTHIER LIFE

RECEIVE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CARE AND SUPPORT

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

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

Further information visit our website
www.metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van
or Facebook page @BetterTogetherHealthVan

Deadly Start EDUCATION 2 EMPLOYMENT (E2E)



Lili-Jade Malone

Who is your mob and where are you from?

My mobs are the Wakka Wakka and Goreng Goreng tribes, and I am from Inala.

What was your role in the Deadly Start program?

Certificate III in Dental Assisting through placement at the Herston Oral Health Centre.

Where are you now?

I now work as a dental assistant at the Herston Oral Health Centre, where I completed my traineeship. My usual day involves assisting clinicians and dental students with procedures.

What advice do you have for anyone thinking of a traineeship or career in health?

“Keep pushing through the hardships and ask for help when you’re stuck, even if you’re stuck on something small. I encourage you to work towards gaining your license as this opens up opportunities.”



Berniece Bowie

Who is your mob and where are you from?

I am a Torres Strait Islander from Badu Island, also a part of the Argun Tribe.

What was your role in the Deadly Start program?

I was a trainee Occupational Therapy Assistant, based at the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (RBWH). My role involved working with elderly patients who suffered from sensory, physical or cognitive disabilities. I would work alongside occupational therapists, who implemented treatment plans to assist patient recovery and improve their quality of life.

Where are you now?

I am currently working as a permanent full-time physiotherapy assistant at the Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS). I work with patients to increase their strength by assisting them to complete manual exercises outlined in their treatment plan, created by a physiotherapist.

What advice do you have for anyone thinking of a traineeship or career in health?

If you are starting a traineeship and going into a field of work where you don’t have much knowledge or experience, don’t worry! Don’t give up and just keep going. Challenging yourself will allow you to learn new things and increase your knowledge and skills. Always try your best and always work hard because it pays off in the end. Set yourself goals as this will help keep you motivated and moving in the right direction.

Most importantly, make your family proud. You are doing it for a reason, keep pushing, give it your best and aim for the top.

Cultural support emerging in the Emergency Department

Caboolture Hospital Emergency Department welcomed Brianna (Bri) Guy into a new Better Together research role that focuses on providing cultural support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Bri, who is a proud Mununjali woman, grew-up in Caboolture and previously worked as an Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer at both Caboolture and Redcliffe Hospitals.

In 2020, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team (A&TSILT) set out to provide funding support to services within Metro North Health for initiatives linked to the Better Together Health Plan 2019- 2022. Caboolture Hospital Emergency Department was one of the eight recipients awarded \$25,000 of Better Together Funding which brought about the new Better Together research role.

In her new position, Bri plays an important role in gathering information and data to help tackle health issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. She also helps to create a safe and welcoming environment by improving communication between clinicians and patients and works hard to build patient trust and increase understanding during their stay.

“Giving mob a familiar face when they present to the Emergency Department decreases the ‘Did not waits’ and ‘Discharge against medical advice’. I’m able to prevent that from happening. I make sure patients are fully aware and updated with their care plan when they are here, so they don’t feel like they don’t know what’s going on,” said Bri.

This small but meaningful change made by the Caboolture Hospital Emergency Department is an important step towards Closing the Gap.



Kindness, Care and Community will keep you strong



The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on the mental wellbeing and physical health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. Many of us were unable to connect with family and community in the usual way, may have had increased financial pressures and experienced several changes in a short period of time.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team (A&TSILT) recently launched the Kindness, Care and Community campaign to inspire conversations and action to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to continue navigating the pandemic and get back on track with caring for their mental and physical health.

“With all of the challenges we have gone through we recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may not be caring for their health as well as they used to,” said A&TSILT Director Sherry Holzapfel.

The campaign includes a series of short videos created with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members including children and parents, young people and Elders.

Storytelling has been an important part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years. This conversational campaign encourages community to yarn with each other and inspire the people around them to live healthy lifestyles.

The Kindness, Care and Community campaign acknowledges the holistic approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health including social, emotional, physical, cultural and spiritual wellbeing for both the individual and the community. It emphasises the connectedness between these factors and their impact on overall health.

“This is an important conversation piece. Our mob have a higher risk of developing serious health problems or may already be living with serious illnesses such as diabetes. We hope to empower our community to take accountability for getting back on track with their health by focussing on the basics including living a healthy lifestyle, taking their prescribed medications and looking after each other,” said Ms Holzapfel.

Watch the videos on our website <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van/kindness-care-community>

Get involved in the conversation. Tell us how you’re staying on track with your health on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/BetterTogetherHealthVan

SPECIAL STAFF FEATURE

STARS deadly workforce



Allira Schafer

"I was born and raised in Brisbane and my family mobs are Bundjalung and Mununjali.

I am working as a receptionist at the new STARS facility.

I work on the ground floor greeting and assisting patients as they first enter the building, and I also work on the directorate floor assisting internal staff and visitors.

Prior to STARS I worked for Defence Force Recruiting as a medical administration officer and provided administration support to the medical team recruiting to the Royal Australian Air Force and the Navy.

I hope to gain more experience working within a hospital setting as this is a new experience for me.

Outside of work I love spending time with my family, whether it's hiking, camping, adventuring or just driving to new places. I also enjoy martial arts and competing in Jujitsu."

Allira's message to readers:

Keep pushing towards your goals – perseverance and patience can get you anywhere in life. There is nothing wrong with small steps, just keep heading towards where you want to be.



Anastacia Chambers

"My tribes are Waka Waka, Kokowalandja and Jarowair.

I am working as a patient support officer at STARS which consists of me doing patient handling, patient transfers and cleaning.

Partaking in the Deadly Start school-based traineeship program last year allowed me to change my perspective on what really happens in a hospital, and trust me, it's not like what you see on TV!

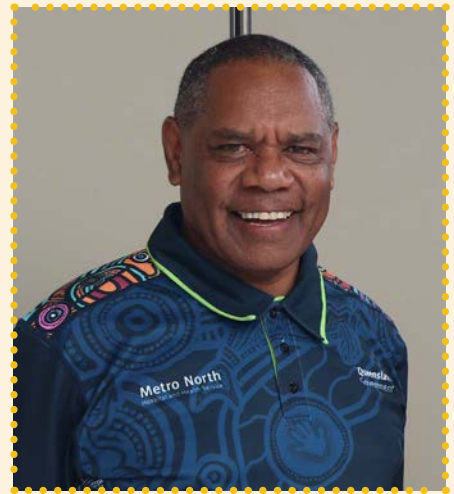
Having the opportunity to make patients smile/laugh, having a good chat with them or even reassuring them, knowing I'm making their day, makes me feel happy.

I'm always eager to try new things (especially food), and to learn about the ways my people survived many years ago.

Outside of work I have a strong desire to play rugby league/union. It has allowed me to travel to different parts of Australia and see what beautiful land we have."

Anastacia's message to readers:

Never give up on your goals in life because nothing worth having comes easy.



John Corowa

"My dad's mob are from Bundjalung from the Tweed area. I am of Aboriginal and South Sea Islander heritage.

I was born in Bowen, North Queensland. My career in Indigenous health started when I moved to Brisbane in 1994.

I am the Indigenous Health Liaison Officer (IHLO) for STARS. My role involves providing cultural support to patients who attend our facility, as well as providing cultural support to staff members.

I enjoy playing the guitar, catching up with family and travelling to see different places. Prior to working at STARS, I was working as a musician.

I applied for the role of IHLO as it was a wonderful opportunity to work in Indigenous Health, since moving from Hervey Bay.

I hope to continue to provide culturally appropriate support to patients and staff and to build networks back into the community for continuum of services."

John's message to readers:

Stay Deadly and keep healthy! Keep striving towards a better future but most importantly learn to look after your own health.

SPECIAL STAFF FEATURE



Kim Minniecon

"I am an Aboriginal and Torres Strait woman with South Sea Islander heritage.

Through my Aboriginal heritage I'm connected to Kabi Kabi and Goreng countries in the Gympie and Bundaberg regions. My Torres Strait Islander heritage is from the Mualgal and Erub people from the Western and Eastern Island groups.

My South Sea Islander heritage comes from my paternal great grandfather who was blackbirded from the island of Ambrym in Vanuatu in the late 1800s.

I am working as the Patient Experience Officer for STARS. This role handles all the complaints and compliments that are received. Previously I worked for Children's Hospital Queensland where I was the Senior Indigenous Health Coordinator.

I have worked for over 25 years doing what I love doing, and that is helping people! I hope to continue to learn, to grow, to evolve myself, to become more confident in this role and to help patients navigate their health journey feeling safe and supported."

Kim's message to readers:

How wonderful/blessed and rich it is being the oldest culture in the world – 65,000 thousand years. That is something to be so proud of!



Sandra Brown

"I'm from Darwin and I'm a proud descendant of Arrernte Central Alice Springs in the Northern Territory.

I'm currently working on the reception at STARS with a fantastic group of ladies. My role varies from ordering, room and meeting bookings and greeting patients upon arrival to STARS.

Prior to working at STARS, I was deployed to Howard Springs Quarantine Facility located in Darwin, as the Team Lead Administration Officer.

I worked alongside the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Care (NCCTRC) team and a team of medical staff to support the implementation of the COVID-19 drive through testing clinic and accommodation needs for residents requiring to isolate / quarantine.

My career goal is to sit my enrolled nursing / immunisation course and be able to support my people. I want to help raise immunisation awareness through identifying the barriers, teaching and advocacy within Aboriginal communities."

Sandra's message to readers:

Believe in yourself, you can be anything you set your mind to. Be proud of who you are, bring with you your culture and beliefs. There is a lot more help and support for our mob out there. Don't be afraid to ask.



Tracey Grant

"My dad's mob is from the Torres Strait Islands. My mum's mob is from Mackay/Sarina and Atherton Tableland (north of Cairns).

I work as the Cultural Capability Officer (CCO) for STARS. This role gives me the opportunity to culturally support and advocate for my people by working with all staff at STARS to ensure the delivery of culturally safe health care in a welcoming environment.

My previous role was working in the Indigenous Primary Health Team in Community and Oral Health as an Indigenous health worker coordinator.

My role as CCO for STARS has the potential to make a difference in regards to Closing the Gap for my mob as patients, and as work colleagues."

Tracy's message to readers:

Be safe, always have a big laugh and have 'me' time so you can enjoy and deal with anything on your journey in life. Never say never, or 'I can't'.

SPECIAL STAFF FEATURE

STARS deadly workforce



Tyler Cleary

“My mobs are Muninjali on my father’s side and Gubbi Gubbi on my mother’s side.

I am an outpatients nurse at STARS, assisting specialist consultants with the outpatient clinics (pre-admission, post admission, follow ups and so on).

I have worked in health care majority of my life. I started out in an aged care kitchen washing dishes and serving tea and coffee – eventually working my way up to cook.

I graduated my nursing degree five years ago and moved into community care. I have worked for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) Brisbane (clinics and Jimbelunga) and Kambu Aboriginal Medical Service, as a practice nurse.

I hope to broaden my already existing clinical knowledge and gain a better understanding of how Metro North Health operates.”

Tyler’s message to readers:

Keep being ya’ deadly selves!



Zoe Catley

“My Aboriginal background stems from my dad’s side of the family. My Grandma is an Elder of the Woopaburra tribe and we are descendants from Great Keppel Island.

I am currently working as a medical workforce support officer, providing support to the STARS Medical Workforce Unit. Our current focus is successfully onboarding all the doctors who will be working within STARS.

Prior to working at STARS, I was working as a medical receptionist at a GP practice. I applied for the role of medical workforce support officer as I enjoy working in the health industry and saw this as a great opportunity for career progression within the health industry.

Outside of work I like to spend time with my friends and family, and I enjoy going to the beach or eating out.”

Zoe’s message to readers:

My biggest advice is to apply for the opportunities that are offered to us. We should be proud to



Berniece Bowie

“I am a proud Torres Strait Islander woman, from Badu Island.

I was first introduced to the health industry through the Deadly Start program, completing a traineeship in 2019 as a trainee allied health assistant in the Occupational Therapy department.

Since graduating from the Deadly Start program, and high school, I have gained employment at STARS, working as a Physiotherapy Assistant. The change in role, environment and work expectations has been challenging, but it has allowed me to grow, expand on my knowledge and try something new.

Outside of work I like to spend time with my family creating memories with my loved ones. I love to sit with my grandfather and show him photos of his island home that are posted by family on social media, which often lead to hours long conversations of him sharing memories and stories of when he was younger.”

Berniece’s message to readers:

My advice would be to take every opportunity that comes your way. Aim high and set goals for yourself to achieve in the future. No matter how much knowledge you have, you can do whatever you set your mind to. Make your family proud and show them they have got a deadly son/daughter!



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 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

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



Making 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 Bettertogetherhealthvan@health.qld.gov.au

The service is owned and operated by Metro North Hospital and Health Service. 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.

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 or phone (07) 3139 3235.



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