



Talk-About

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

November 2021

RBWH improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients' surgical journey



A new pre-surgery health and wellness check initiative is underway at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) producing significant improvements in surgery attendance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients across the State.

RBWH experienced high rates of surgical appointment cancellations, also known as Failure to Attend, on the day of surgery by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. Hospital staff worked together to investigate the barriers contributing to cancellations and developed the pre-surgery health and wellness check.

The program was trialled during a six-month period in mid-2020, resulting in a 45.5 per cent decrease in surgery cancellations compared to that time the previous year.

RBWH Nurse Navigator for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Yashni Kander, consults with each patient seven and three days prior to their scheduled surgery.

L-R RBWH Nurse Navigator for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Yashni Kander, patient Algon Naylor and RBWH Cultural Capability Officer Geoff Binge.

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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

After hours Ph: 3646 4154 / 3647 4183

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 Executive Director



Sherry Holzapfel
Executive Director,
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Health

Welcome to the November edition of Talk-About.

Since Queensland Parliament passed the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 back in August, Metro North Health has been working hard towards developing a local strategy within our Hospital and Health Service to achieve health equity and improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing outcomes across five priority areas including:

Eliminate Racism – Actively eliminating racial discrimination and institutional racism within the service.

Access – Increase access to healthcare services.

Culturally Safe and Responsive Systems – Delivering sustainable, culturally safe and responsive healthcare services.

Social Determinants of health – Influencing the social, cultural and economic determinants of health.

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations to design, deliver, monitor and review health services.

I look forward to working closely with Metro North Health staff and our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to develop a strategy that supports health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and eliminates avoidable, unjust, and unfair health inequities.

Keep an eye out on future editions of Talk-About for further updates as we progress to achieve our local Metro North Health Equity Strategy.

As we all start to wrap down and prepare for end of year celebrations and Christmas time with family and friends, it is more important than ever we all stay safe and healthy for ourselves, our family and our community, especially with easing of restrictions and the opening of our borders. It has been a challenging year for us all as we learn to live with COVID-19.

Our families and community are a vital part of our lives and our culture. We can all work together to keep each other safe. One way we can do this is by getting our COVID-19 vaccination. If you have not yet received your vaccination, I encourage you to please take the time and go get this done. Metro North Health now have walk-in clinics available for everyone 12 years and older to get their vaccination. You can visit www.metrnorth.health.qld.gov.au/coronavirus/vaccinations for a list of Metro North Health COVID-19 walk-in vaccination clinics near you.

As of October 2021, 53 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the Brisbane Metro North catchment have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and 41.1 per cent have received both doses. It's great to see these numbers rising and more mob making the choice to get the vaccine. Let's keep this great work going to protect each other, our families and our community.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all our staff and colleagues for their hard work and commitment caring for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and communities this year. Especially during these challenging times of COVID-19. It has been a big year for us all working in health and you have all done an amazing job to keep the community safe.

A big thank you to Jackie Hanson, Acting Chief Executive, and all of the Metro North Health Executive team for your continued support, leadership and guidance.

I would like to personally wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and New Year break with your loved ones. Don't forget to take time for yourself and do activities that make you happy and keep your mind, body and spirit strong. I look forward to spending time with my family and going back on country.

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

Sherry Holzapfel



Jackie Hanson
Metro North Health
Acting Chief Executive

A word from the Acting Chief Executive

We all have a role to play in making our hospital and health services accessible, free from racism and discrimination, culturally safe and responsive.

Queensland has until 2031 to Close the Gap and achieve life expectancy parity for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In order to accelerate effort and engage all aspects of the health system and broader community, Queensland Health has commenced an ambitious First Nations health equity reform agenda, underpinned by the most progressive legislation in Australia to deliver locally co-designed co-owned and co-implemented First Nations Health Equity Strategies.

The commencement of the new Hospital and Health Boards (Health Equity Strategies) Amendment Regulation 2021 has substantially changed the legal framework guiding the public health system in Queensland by prioritising First Nations health equity.

This is our opportunity to work together, deliver real outcomes and lasting change through a genuine partnership approach.

The Metro North Health Equity Strategy, which will be co-designed and co-developed with local Elders and community, native land title holders and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector by April 2022, will commit all of us to:

- Actively eliminating racial discrimination and institutional racism within the service
- Increasing access to healthcare services
- Delivering sustainable, culturally safe and responsive healthcare services
- Influencing the social, cultural and economic determinants of health
- Working with First Nations peoples, communities, and organisations to design, deliver, monitor and review health services.

I encourage you to take the opportunity to participate in developing the Health Equity Strategy for Metro North Health or your local hospital and health service.

Jackie Hanson

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“The pre-surgery health and wellness check strengthens cultural and clinical support for the patient during their surgical journey by addressing transport issues, language barriers, health literacy concerns and confirms the patient’s physical condition and ability to attend surgery.

“I am able to link patients with support services including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Hospital Liaison Service and attend surgical appointments with the patient if needed,” said Yashni.

One patient who benefitted from the pathway was Algon Naylor from Hope Vale in far north Queensland. He travelled over 2,000 kilometres to the RBWH for perioperative eye surgery. The long journey involved 24 hours of combined travel by car to Cooktown, a small plane flight to Cairns and onwards to a large commercial flight to Brisbane.

RBWH Cultural Capability Officer Geoffrey Binge said the Failure to Attend and Discharge Against Medical Advice rates often stem from the long distances required to travel for patients from rural and remote communities.

“Patients can experience a long journey and these travel obstacles to attend surgery appointments can result in patients deciding not to travel to RBWH at all. Their illness can manifest and become quite serious requiring urgent care and treatment.

“This is the main reason why the program is so successful. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Hospital Liaison and Nurse Navigator support the patient through their entire hospital journey,” Geoffrey said.

Algon said he was pleased with his experience and felt supported by the health and wellness check.

“It helped me a lot. The Nurse Navigator and Ophthalmologist were very good at arranging everything for me.”

He encouraged others to utilise the service, “Don’t be afraid to come down for surgery, the doctors and nurses are very good here,” Algon said.

To find out more watch the video [RBWH Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health & Wellness Checker](#) email Yashni.Kander@health.qld.gov.au



Identification: It's your right to a healthier life

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

Help us provide you with culturally appropriate care and support. We cannot rely on appearance.

- ✓ Be proud to identify
- ✓ 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

Why staff must ask the question

Metro North Hospital and Health Service have a commitment to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as part of the National Close the Gap campaign.

There is still an unacceptable gap in health status and life expectancy. To ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people receive services, cultural support and care the right way, we must ask the question.

Staff must ask the question every time you present to our health services unless coming regularly for a course of treatment such as dialysis. This is to ensure your records are accurate and that you receive the appropriate care.

Staff cannot rely on appearance and the only way to know is to ask.

How you will be asked

Staff will ask "Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin?" either verbally or on a form.

If you cannot answer due to being too ill to respond or under the age of 15, the question will be asked of the parent, guardian, carer or responsible accompanying adult.

Your Privacy

Please be assured that your personal information is protected and used appropriately by Metro North Hospital and Health Service Privacy Policy and Privacy laws.

Please be respectful of staff and understand that they have been directed to ask the question to ensure you receive the appropriate services, cultural support and care.

Further enquiries

If you have any feedback you can contact the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team via:

Email: A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au

Phone: (07) 3139 6621

Website: <http://www.metrnorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van>

Facebook: @BetterTogetherHealthVan

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 emerging and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the State.

Artwork by Ronald John Abala Wurra-ghantha – "little spirit man"

**Metro North
Health**



**Queensland
Government**

OUTandABOUT

Metro North Health strives for a culturally safe and welcoming environment

Hospitals and services across Metro North Health are continuing to create culturally safe and welcoming environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing healthcare services.

The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) recently celebrated the naming of their new Modular Endoscopy Unit with local Turrbal Elder and Songwoman Aunty Maroochy Barambah. TPCH staff collaborated with Aunty Maroochy to dedicate a special name for the new facility creating a safe space for staff, patients and visitors called 'kallanmuk' which means 'good energy' in local Turrbal language.

The Brighton Health Campus and TPCH uniquely transformed their facilities with a splash of colour showcasing their own dedicated artwork created by Aboriginal Artist Elaine Chambers-Hegarty throughout their facilities.

Below are some of the most recent ways in which artwork has been creatively incorporated within Metro North Health.



Songwoman Aunty Maroochy and Metro North Health staff celebrate TPCH Modular Endoscopy naming.



Shade'sail above Healing Garden, The Prince Charles Hospital



Signage at Brighton Health Campus, Community and Oral Health

Celebrating our local Elders

In celebration of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, the Better Together Health Van team recently attended a special luncheon in Caboolture hosted by Churches of Christ.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders play an important role in our communities sharing their wisdom, experiences, learnings and carrying on the traditional stories and history to future generations. To celebrate the Elders of North Brisbane, Churches of Christ held a celebration to acknowledge Aunties and Uncles who play a huge role caring for their community and all the important work they do to coincide with NAIDOC celebrations.

The day was celebrated with community members and local community organisations sharing in stories of the Elders life work and contributions, traditional Aboriginal dancing, children's activities, traditional Torres Strait Islander song and lots more.

North Brisbane Elders being acknowledged for their outstanding community contributions.

Better Together Medication Access, twelve months and counting

Since October 2020, the Better Together Medication Access (BTMA) program has provided discharge medications to 4,333 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people discharging from a Metro North Health hospital or facility, with no out-of-pocket expense to the patient.

Lisa-Marie, a Pharmacy Assistant at Redcliffe Hospital and a proud Kulkalgal woman from the Central Islands of the Torres Strait, has played a significant role in supporting the roll out of the BTMA program within Redcliffe Hospital since commencing in her role in December 2020. Lisa-Marie is passionate about educating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients about the importance of taking their medications to prolong their lives and stay healthy.

Knowing that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be too shy or shame to talk to non-Indigenous health workers, Lisa-Marie believes it's important, and encouraging for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients to see more mob working within hospitals when they attend their appointments.



Working as a pharmacy assistant in the rehabilitation and palliative care wards, Lisa-Marie proudly promotes the BTMA program within Redcliffe Hospital to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients discharging from the hospital are aware of the BTMA program.

"By wearing our beautiful BTMA shirts, they are a visible conversation point. I like to think that seeing pharmacy and multidisciplinary staff wearing the shirts in our hospitals creates a welcoming environment for patients and other staff members to ask what the program is all about," said Lisa-Marie.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients discharging from a Metro North Health hospital or facility will be asked on every occasion if they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, and if so, they will be asked if they would like to opt into the BTMA program, which will cover the expense of their discharge medications.

"I hope it encourages our mob to take their medications if they're able to access them at no out-of-pocket cost. I would hope this leads to lower readmissions and keeping themselves healthy, so our mob live longer. I believe offering a program like this helps build trust and better relationships with health care professionals, and it demonstrates that Metro North Health care about our mob," said Lisa-Marie.

The program is a first of its kind to be rolled out nationally and has so far proven to be a great success, having gained the interest and attention of other Hospital and Health Services across the country.

It was highly commended in the 2021 Premier's Awards for Excellence.

Improving Women's Business Pathways

The Metro North Health Women's Business Shared Pathway team recently held their second Women's Business Community Engagement Forum for the year. The successful day was attended by local Elders, staff of the Metro North Health Womens Business Shared Pathway, and new mums and mums-to-be of the Ngarrama Maternity Service, a free antenatal and birthing service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women, and women who are giving birth to a baby of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander heritage.



This event was an extension of the Ngarrama Maternity Service yarning circle held back in May. The aim of these community engagement sessions is to collaborate with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to co-design a service for women by women, giving them power to shape a service that meets their needs.

In partnership between Metro North Health and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH), the Women's Business Shared Pathway delivers culturally appropriate patient-centred care to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women accessing specialist gynaecologist consultations, gynaecology procedures and surgical treatment, physiotherapy care and treatment, as well as education and advice.

The day was filled with lots of activities including a yarning circle involving staff and community sharing their personal stories, participating in hand print artwork, group discussions and providing feedback to help shape the current model of care to support the needs and cultural considerations of the women who engage in the Pathway.

To learn more about the Women's Business Shared Pathway visit <https://bit.ly/3nqajm>

WORD OF THE MONTH

“Yuingin” (You-in-gin)
is Friend 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 the Greater Brisbane area, including neighbouring groups of Turubul, Yugambeh and Yugarabul.

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

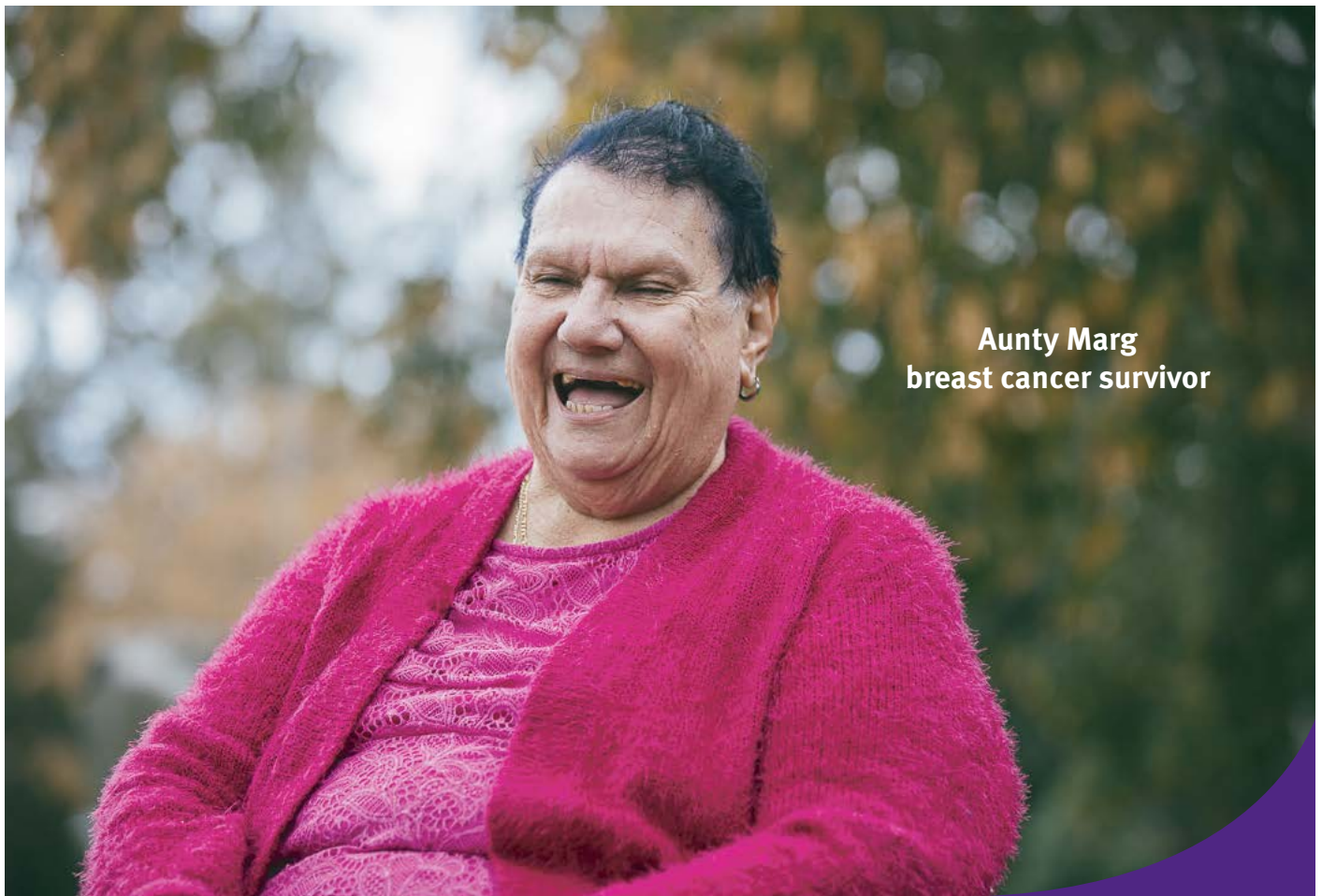
Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service
10-20 Walkers Road, Morayfield
Phone: (07) 5429 1000

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



**“Don't be worried. You just
need to know what's going on”
If you're over 40,
book your breast screen today**



Aunty Marg
breast cancer survivor

**Call 13 20 50 or visit
breastscreen.qld.gov.au**



**Queensland
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COVID-19 Vaccination matters



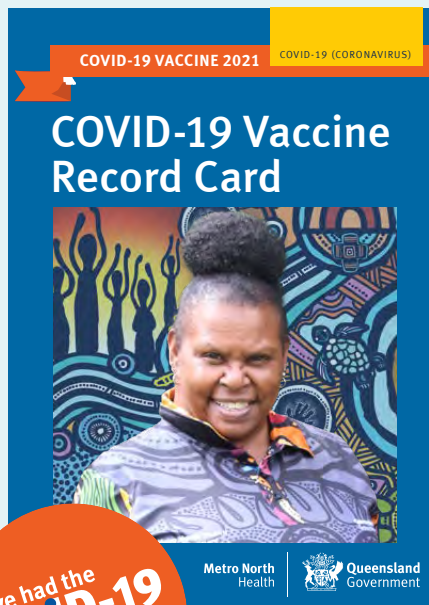
Edwina

Proud Palawa woman and physiotherapist Edwina has received the COVID-19 vaccine.

“I made the choice to get the COVID-19 vaccine so I could continue to provide physiotherapy care to pregnant and postnatal women in the safest way possible. I also wanted to make sure I did everything I could to assist in making our community safe, so that we can all be reunited with our mobs far and wide when the borders reopen.

I got the AstraZeneca vaccine. After my first jab, I felt a bit tired and under the weather, and my arm was a bit sore – but as my mum said, “that’s the strong immune response you want!” These symptoms only lasted for a day or so and then I was back to my chatty energetic self. The second dose was a walk in the park, and I didn’t feel anything out of the ordinary.

It can be scary getting any kind of vaccine, so don’t hesitate to ask questions to learn about what vaccine you’re getting and what side effects you might experience. All the nurses working at the vaccine clinics are more than happy to have a yarn and make sure you feel safe and confident in getting your vaccine.”



Stella

Proud Torres Strait Island woman descending from Sabai Island and Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Stella has received her COVID-19 vaccine.

“Working as an Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer at Caboolture Hospital, I chose to get the COVID-19 vaccine as I work with patients every day, and most importantly I got the vaccine to protect loved ones dear to my heart – my family and grandchildren.

My first day back at work after receiving my first AstraZeneca vaccine my arm was sore, and then a couple of days later I felt a bit under the weather. When I got my second AstraZeneca vaccine, I only had a sore arm.

As I have a chronic disease, I chose to get vaccinated to keep myself safe and to survive the pandemic. If your mob out there want to safeguard yourself, I encourage you to get the COVID-19 vaccine.”

To register for your free vaccine in the Metro North area:
<https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/coronavirus/vaccinations>

Metro North locations to get a COVID-19 test:
<https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/news/fever-clinics>

IN FOCUS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cadetship Program



Aylsha Duffill – I am a proud Wiradjuri woman from New South Wales who grew up in Innisfail, Queensland.

I am studying a Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics at Griffith University, which allows me to pursue my love of food, and passion of improving people's overall health status.

Working as a cadet dietitian at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, I am fortunate to be able to develop practical skills whilst completing my studies. In my role I support the Better Together program, working as a research assistant, then I will usually conduct mealtime monitoring after lunch, and support senior dietitians when visiting patients in the Maternity and Renal wards.

I am fortunate to be able to attend the Ngarrama Allied Health clinics each Friday, where we provide dietetic support and advice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have accessed the Ngarrama Maternity Program. A highlight for me was being given the opportunity to create a recipe book and provide fresh food hampers to the women who attended our open day earlier in the year.

If you're passionate about working with people, like I am, I highly recommend a career in health. It is an amazing feeling being able to make a difference in someone's life, and as an Aboriginal woman working in the health industry, I feel proud knowing that I am contributing to a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

Hannah Cain – My mob is Gamilaraay from Moree New South Wales.

I am studying occupational therapy at Griffith University. I pursued a career in health as I like helping people, and I want to be a part of a streamlined service that encourages the wellbeing of people.

In my role as an occupational therapist cadet, based at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, I assist by sewing interim garments for burns patients, conduct assessments on patients and I assist in the facilitation of programs run by the Occupational Therapy department.

Seeing the health and wellbeing of patients improve over time and being able to educate others in my workplace about the significance of cultural inclusivity, are the highlights for me in my cadetship.

My advice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are considering a career in health is to go for it! The health service is an area where at times there doesn't seem to be a lot of transparency for our mob, so by pursuing a career in health you will be helping to create a culturally safe place for mob and make them feel safe in accessing services they need.



Jonathon Gilkes – I'm a proud Wadi Wadi man originally from Wollongong, New South Wales, however I have been living in Brisbane now for over twenty years.

I am currently completing my Bachelor of Physiotherapy at Australian Catholic University, Brisbane. I love working directly with people, and I wanted to make a difference to the health and wellbeing of others in a meaningful way, so my mum and grandmother encouraged me to pursue physiotherapy as a career.

I am completing my cadetship at the North Lakes Health Precinct as a physiotherapist cadet, mainly within the cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation units. My cadetship has allowed me the opportunity to gain further knowledge in my field, participate in lots of practical experience and most importantly be involved in lots of direct contact with patients. Since commencing my cadetship, I have been provided with a lot of support and education and have enjoyed being able to participate in Yarning Circles, led by the Community and Oral Health team, and engaging with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders.

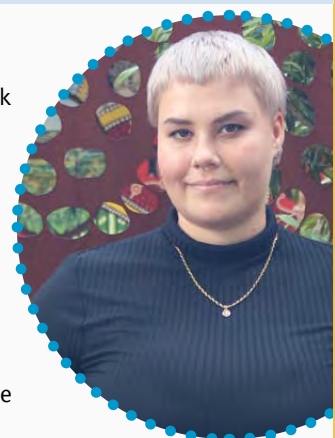
I have been fortunate to not only meet, but to learn from so many experienced and passionate colleagues. Completing a cadetship is a fantastic opportunity. It will provide you with invaluable experience and learning that will make you a better healthcare worker and being a better healthcare worker will allow you to help your family and community.

Tasmin Handsaker – My mob is Kamilaroi from Tamworth New South Wales.

I am completing my cadetship at the Inner North Brisbane Mental Health Service in Fortitude Valley as a social work cadet, whilst studying Social Work at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). It's been a great opportunity to apply practical skills to the knowledge I have been accruing at university, that I wouldn't have otherwise gotten the chance to without partaking in the Metro North Health Indigenous cadetship program.

Working in Disability Support is what inspired me to pursue a career in health. I've always been passionate about helping people, it's something that comes naturally to me, and something that I love doing. My social work cadetship has provided me with lots of learning, and an opportunity to learn new skills. I have been involved in conducting research on the specific mental health frameworks and interventions that Queensland Health uses, and then being able to put them into practice in the workplace. It has been great!

There are so many supports out there to pursue your dream career in health – all you have to do is reach out! Queensland Health needs a lot more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working with them, so I encourage you to apply for this great opportunity.





MAKE the CHOICE

**Get vaccinated against COVID-19,
for you and your community.**

www.makethechoice.com.au

IN FOCUS

Mob Making the Choice to Vaccinate

Metro North Health has seen a great turn out of mob attending the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander COVID-19 vaccination walk-in clinics at Redcliffe and Caboolture. These clinics were temporarily running on Saturdays during September and October and were supported by the Indigenous Hospital Services and staff.

Due to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people having a range of existing health inequities, chronic illnesses and poorer health outcomes they are at higher risk of developing serious illness from COVID-19. Just like the flu, it is important to get the COVID-19 vaccine to protect yourself, family, community and Elders against serious illness.

Even though we are seeing an increase of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Brisbane North receive their COVID-19 vaccination, there is still a way to go to ensure mob and community are safe. As of October 2021, 53 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the Brisbane Metro North catchment have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and 41.1 per cent have received both doses. Let's continue the great work to protect ourselves, our families and our community by making the choice to get vaccinated.

Nywaygi (Northern Queensland) and Erub (Torres Straits) woman Taita chose to get vaccinated to protect herself, family and community from COVID-19.

"I chose to get vaccinated because it means I can not only protect myself, but I can also create a safer space for my family, friends and the community that surrounds me. The well-being, health and safety of mob is crucial, so doing what I can to ensure that is a no brainer," Taita said.

If you are interested in hearing about any upcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander COVID-19 vaccination walk-in clinics visit our Better Together Health Van Facebook page at www.facebook.com/BetterTogetherHealthVan or register to vaccinate at a Queensland Health COVID-19 vaccination clinic here: <https://bit.ly/3pla4XA>.

Check out some of the deadly mob who have already made the choice to vaccinate.



MAKE the CHOICE

**Get vaccinated against COVID-19,
for you and your community.**

www.makethechoice.com.au







Kindness, care and community will keep you strong



@BetterTogetherHealthVan

Thank you for sharing with us how you keep your mind, body and spirit strong.



"Staying strong in culture, connecting to Country & being around my family."

"We talk, we look out for each other and we involve ourselves in matters that matter."



"I maintain connections with my family through phone calls, social media and face-to-face catch ups where possible."

"When facing life/work pressure I have found speaking to a psychologist/counsellor very beneficial."



"I love to sit by the ocean or be in it with my children, it restores my spirit every time. Running everyday with my dog helps to keep my mind and body strong and disciplined."



"we cook/eat our healthy traditional foods and we sing our happy traditional songs."

"For my mind I meditate and take breaks to breathe and relax. For my spirit I talk with my family and go back on Country when my spirit calls me home."



Stories of Strength

from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Members

STAFF FEATURE

A day in the life of Samuel Tochterman-Talbott: Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer, The Prince Charles Hospital



Q1. Tell me about your family history and where you come from?

I was born and raised in Brisbane, but my mob and connections are Gamilaraay, Gomeroi and Bigambul countries, northern NSW and southwest Queensland.

Q2. What made you apply for the Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer (IHLO) role?

I've worked in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health for nine years since leaving high school, and it's always been my passion working with mob in the Brisbane community. I've never worked in a hospital before, so I decided to challenge myself and apply for this role.

Q3. What does a typical day look like for you as an IHLO?

As an IHLO, two days are never the same. We meet every morning as a team to run through the list of patients in the hospital, and yarn about rural and remote patients who require transport assistance to and from the hospital. I visit patients in the hospital for a yarn to gather important information about their health, family and discharge planning. I also yarn to the nurses and doctors to make sure the patients' health needs are met and liaise with external services to support the patient.

Q4. What are some of the highlights in your role?

A highlight for me is being able to advocate for my mob when they attend our hospitals and letting them know they have someone like me who is there to support them. I also enjoy when patients or family of patients come to our building for a tea or coffee. It gives them a safe space and time away from the hospital. Another highlight is seeing patients from rural or remote communities access our health services and return home in better health.

Q5. Who inspires you at work?

The community and patients inspire me, and it's what makes me love my job.

Q6. What do you hope to achieve in your role over the next six months?

Over the next six months I hope that I am able to help someone in their hospital journey and make their experience a better one. I intend to continue educating hospital staff as much as I can about the importance of cultural awareness, to make sure our hospital is a culturally safe place for mob.

Q7. Why are you proud to identify?

I'm blessed to have a strong connection with my people and to my Country, even though I grew up in Brisbane. My dad, my mum and my family always reminded me of who I am when I was growing up, and to always be proud of who I am and where I'm from.



The Prince Charles Hospital

COVID-19 vaccines – Pfizer

Getting a Covid-19 vaccine is your choice it is free, safe and helps protect your mob from Covid-19.

There are three Covid-19 vaccines available in Australia:

- Cominaty (Pfizer)
- Vaxzervia (AstraZeneca)
- Spikevax (Moderna)

All the vaccines are safe and have passed lots of tests to prove they are.

You need two doses of a vaccine to be protected against Covid-19. Both doses of the vaccine should be the same.

Pfizer can be given to people aged 12 years and over. It works by teaching your body how to fight Covid-19 should you come into contact with the virus in the future.

Pfizer is an Messenger RNA vaccine or mRNA. This means that once the vaccine enters your body it uses the little piece of genetic code (RNA) as a message or recipe to create a non-active copy of the virus. This inactive copy virus tricks your body into building immunity against Covid-19.

mRNA are a new type of vaccine and has none of the things used in old vaccines such as:

- dead or live bits of any virus
- stem cells from old foetuses
- egg bits

The mRNA is active for about 4-5 days and then broken down by enzymes in our bodies. The RNA from the vaccine does not change or interact with our DNA in any way. You can receive your second dose of Pfizer 3 weeks after the first.

After the vaccine

You might experience these common side effects for a couple of days:

- A handful of people who receive the vaccine may develop a rare type of blood clot. It is serious is a very small risk. if you would like more information around this, yarn to your health team.
- feeling mildly sick, like you would after a flu shot
- sore arm
- headache.

Stay informed about your health

- Call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) and speak with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander registered nurse.
- Speak to your Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health worker, nurse or doctor.
- Visit www.makethechoice.com.au



This colourful artwork is courtesy of Jedess Hudson. It represents the complexities and challenges COVID-19 brings into our lives. Jedess Hudson is a descendant from the Ewamian and Western Yalanji people of North Queensland.

SC2100463



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 Health

Better Together Health Van

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

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

How to access the Van?

Visit our website for up-to-date locations of the Van
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.

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 6621 or email Bettertogetherhealthvan@health.qld.gov.au

The service is owned and operated by Metro North Health. The Better Together Health Van will be utilised as an extension of Metro North Health 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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