

# Talk-About

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

April 2022



Ricko Abednego and Professor Peter Hopkins

## Metro North Health launches Health Equity Starts with Me campaign

Metro North Health has unveiled a bold new campaign – *Health Equity Starts with Me* - to drive health equity and eliminate institutional racism across the health service.

The campaign features a commitment made by midwives, doctors, administration staff, health executives and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers.

Metro North Health Chief Executive Jackie Hanson said the campaign supports efforts to put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health front and centre to improve health outcomes and reduce the burden of disease gap.

“In Queensland we now have only nine years to close the health gap and achieve life expectancy parity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,” Ms Hanson said.

“For me, the simple explanation of health equity is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should have the same health outcomes and healthy lives and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies should be as healthy as non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies. It’s our responsibility to do the things within our control to make that possible.”

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**Metro North**  
Health



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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](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, Chermide Community Health Centre, 490 Hamilton Road, Chermide 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



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# A word from the Executive Director



**Sherry Holzapfel**

Executive Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

National Close the Gap Day on 17 March 2022 provided us the opportunity to pause and reflect on our journey towards health equity. As we are in the final development phase of our new Metro North Health Equity Strategy, I am extremely proud of the effort as a health service to achieve improved health outcomes and reduce the burden of disease for our mob.

With this bold commitment comes the need for even bolder and braver leadership to drive health equity and eliminate institutional racism across the public health system. I am pleased to report that since my last update Jackie Hanson has been appointed as the permanent Chief Executive of our health service. Jackie has shown great leadership over the past few years and a great commitment to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health agenda. We are in very safe hands as we move forward with our plans.

Last month, Jackie and I, along with our valued colleagues, joined together to make our own commitment to health

equity as part of the 'Health Equity Starts with Me' campaign. I encourage all of you to take a look at the film on our Health Equity website and make your own personal commitment to Closing the Gap. Visit our Health Equity website at <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity>.

Part of the co-design and co-development of the Metro North Health Equity Strategy has been to listen and learn from our valued Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, staff, community members and partnership organisations. We have developed a Yarning Hub as an informal way for you to provide us with feedback. You might like to share with us about your service experience, name a deadly staff member or program, what you think we should be doing to make our services more culturally safe and responsive or an area we should be looking at. No idea is too big or small, so share a yarn with us! Visit the hub today via <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity/yarning-hub>

Until next time, stay safe and deadly.

**Sherry Holzapfel**

Executive Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

*Continued from page 1 >*

Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Executive Director Sherry Holzapfel said the Health Equity strategy, to be finalised in April 2022, is being co-designed and developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, patients, community, Elders and partnership organisations.

"Our aim is to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing health services will receive high-quality person-centered care that is culturally responsive, empowers

self-care and choice, and is designed to improve health and wellbeing.

"The health equity strategy will build on the work we have started through the Better Together Health plan, such as boosting Ngarrama maternity, the Better Together Medication Access program, our Deadly Start and Indigenous Cadetship education to employment programs, and the many identified positions that have been created across our workforce," said Mrs Holzapfel.

First Nations midwife Sonita Guidice was proud to put her hand up for the campaign and said it was her commitment to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies had the best start to life.

***"I commit to ensuring our babies are born health and strong,"***

Sonita said.

To learn more about Metro North's Health Equity plans, visit - <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity>



# A word from the Chief Executive



**Jackie Hanson**  
Chief Executive  
Metro North Health

Health equity, for me, is about taking the steps we need to as a health service to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the same quality of life and quality of health as everyone else.

This means we need to eliminate institutional racism and unconscious bias that prevents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people receiving healthcare from our health services that meets their physical, mental, cultural and spiritual health needs.

We also need to create an environment where our staff are aware of and don't experience bias or racism.

If you are experiencing bias or racism when you come to one of our hospitals or healthcare services, please report it to someone who can take action, such as a consumer liaison officer or Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer. We are considering a restorative justice model to address racism in our services, which we can only do if we have the details of specific instances of institutional or direct racism.

You can find out more about what Metro North is doing to achieve health equity at [www.metrnorth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity](http://www.metrnorth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity)

We are still seeing quite high numbers of people with COVID-19 in our community. While masks are no longer required in the general community, they are still needed for all staff and visitors in our hospitals, aged care centres and disability accommodation services to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. There are still some limits to the number of visitors allowed at hospitals. Please check the Hospital Visitor Entry Direction on the Queensland Health website for any current restrictions.

Vaccination remains an important tool in fighting COVID-19 spread. Metro North has vaccination clinics for ages 5 and up at:

- Kippa-Ring Vaccination Location, 425 Elizabeth Avenue Kippa-Ring
- Doomben Racecourse, 75 Hampden St Ascot.

We are also running a series of pop up clinics at schools which includes adult and booster vaccination. You can find your nearest vaccination clinic at [www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/protect-yourself-others/covid-19-vaccine/get-vaccinated/vaccination-locations](http://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/protect-yourself-others/covid-19-vaccine/get-vaccinated/vaccination-locations)

I encourage you to make the choice to get vaccinated to protect yourself, your family and your community.

Jackie Hanson,  
Chief Executive  
Metro North Health

## BreastScreen service opens in Redcliffe

*BreastScreen Queensland has opened a new Redcliffe Clinic at 31 Anzac Ave, (across the road from Woolworths and the Bluewater Square Shopping Mall).*

Breast screening is most effective for women aged 50 to 74. You don't need a doctor's referral, appointments only take about 30 minutes, there is onsite parking and now after-hours appointments are available.

Call 13 20 50 or visit [breastscreen.qld.gov.au](http://breastscreen.qld.gov.au) to make an appointment.



# OUTandABOUT

## Helping patients be COVID ready

*Metro North Clinical Nurse Consultant Kitty Synot and her team have been working hard to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and patients to be 'COVID ready'.*

With the Omicron COVID-19 outbreak so rampant in community earlier this year, Kitty and her team wanted to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients across Metro North Health who were COVID positive or at risk by giving them COVID-19 support packs.

"We wanted to do our bit to ensure community were prepared and knew how to seek help if their health deteriorated. We also gave packs to staff as a small gesture to say thank you for putting community first.

We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a vulnerable group and at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. We want to ensure our mob felt supported by Metro North Health," said Kitty.

Within these packs, patients received items to help them through while feeling unwell including a thermometer, water bottle, symptom diary, toiletry pack, note pad, sanitiser and lots more.

Even though we are seeing COVID-19 vaccination rates slowly rise within community there is still a large number of unvaccinated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is important for everyone to remain aware and practice being safe while out and about, as the COVID-19 virus is still at large. One way to practice being safe for you and your family is by being 'COVID ready' and have a COVID family plan in place.

To see how you can create a family COVID-19 safe plan [visit: https://bit.ly/3Cs50Fz](https://bit.ly/3Cs50Fz).



*(L-R) Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Stella with Clinical Nurse Consultant Kitty*

## Jarjums making the choice to get the COVID-19 vaccination



**11 year old Barada Gabalburra jarjum Nahdu recently rolled up her sleeve and chose to get vaccinated against COVID-19.**

Having a Metro North Health Indigenous Health Worker as her mother meant that Nahdu was exposed to correct information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine.

"Well, my mum used to work in that area [COVID-19 testing clinic], so she would come home and tell me the positive and correct information about the jab, so I knew that it was completely safe," said Nahdu.

Knowing that Aboriginal people are at a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 and having younger twin sisters who were not eligible yet to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, Nahdu felt a sense of responsibility when making the choice to get vaccinated.

"I'm also doing this for my sisters, so they won't get sick nor come to harm with COVID that easily," said Nahdu.

Nahdu's experience receiving the COVID-19 vaccination was as pleasant as one could have hoped.

"I was confused because I expected it to hurt. I was waiting for the needle, not knowing it was already done. I didn't feel anything, it didn't even hurt," said Nahdu.

With the large amount of misinformation around the COVID-19 vaccine spreading online, Nahdu has chosen to stay off social media and get the information she needs from the right people. Great advice, Nahdu!

It is often that we look to our Elders to seek support, advice and guidance. In times of adversity and uncertainty, it is important we also listen to our jarjums, and emerging leaders, who too have stories of courage and bravery that can inspire many – just like Nahdu.



## Better Together Healing Garden

Brighton Health Campus will soon have a healing garden to celebrate the long connection to Country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Better Together Healing Garden will be situated at the Brighton Brain Injury Service on Brighton Health Campus and will foster cultural exchange in an outdoor space and raise awareness about the history of the area as it was prior to colonisation.

The healing garden, scheduled to be completed towards the end of May and launched to coincide with National Reconciliation Week 2022, will promote cultural safety, and help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families, volunteers and community feel visible, safe and connected.

The idea to create the garden came about through a conversation between a staff member and the family of a patient who is an avid gardener. The conversation quickly grew and more people got involved who were just as enthusiastic to create a safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, non-Indigenous patients and families to enjoy.

The garden will be home to an array of native Australian plants, with signage to acknowledge the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's knowledge of the flora, fauna and place, and the connection to Country that has spanned over 50,000 years.

Ideas and opinions on the design of the garden were sought from patients, visitors, staff, volunteers and community. Additional feedback from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and staff was sought through the Yarning Circle at the Brighton Wellness Hub.

Watch this space for the reveal of the completed Better Together Healing Garden in a future edition of Talk-About.



Check out the view from the new proposed Brighton Healing Garden site!

## A deadly finish after a *Deadly Start*



Catie Nugent

Deadly Start school-based trainee graduate and proud Gubbi Gubbi woman Catie Nugent recently graduated high school having received multiple awards acknowledging her commitment, hard work and determination. Catie graduated from her Deadly Start traineeship in 2021, after successfully completing a Certificate III in Health Services Assistance and 375 hours of paid work placement in the Caboolture Hospital Emergency Department.

To top off her already successful year Catie was awarded the CSIRO Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary STEM Achievement award. Catie also received runner up Dux from her school (Grace Lutheran College Caboolture) based on her ATAR awards and was also awarded a QATSIF Young Indigenous Leader Award.

Catie's aspiration is to study medicine. She is driven to improve understanding of culture as a part of identity and life, achieve cultural empowerment and address biases to create a better healthcare system.

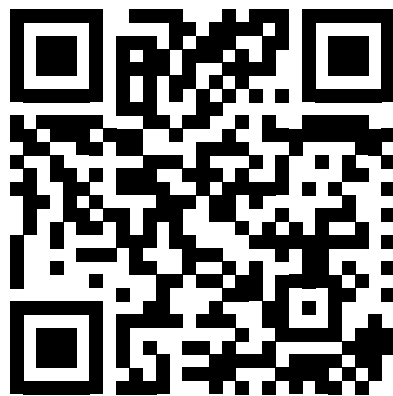
Both culturally and academically, Catie is a great role model, and demonstrated great resilience, persistence and gratitude during her time as a Deadly Start school-based trainee with Metro North Health.

Congratulations Catie. We are proud of all that you have achieved. We look forward to following you on your career journey.

# COVID CARE

**If you've tested positive to COVID-19  
or you've got symptoms visit the online  
COVID Care Self-Checker.**

**Access the COVID Care Self-Checker online  
as soon as you feel unwell—there's no need  
to wait for your test results to use it.**



**The COVID Care Self-Checker you  
will ask you questions and make care  
recommendations to help your recovery.**

**Visit [www.qld.gov.au/health/covid-self-checker](http://www.qld.gov.au/health/covid-self-checker)  
or call the National Coronavirus Helpline 24/7  
on 1800 020 080**

 **QAIHC**  
Queensland Aboriginal and  
Islander Health Council

**“We want to create health awareness regarding bowel cancer. There is a preventative measure by doing a bowel screening test.**

**Please do it. Do it for the mob.”**

**Aunty Minnie Mace**



## Don't be shame, complete a bowel test today!

Too many of our mob are getting very sick from bowel cancer when it's one of the most treatable types of cancer if found early.

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program aims to reduce deaths from bowel cancer by detecting the early signs of the disease. Eligible Australians from 50 to 74 years of age are sent a free, simple test that is done at home.

Participation by eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program is estimated at less than half that of other Australians (19.5% compared to 42.7%).

The Federal Government recently announced funding for a number of medical research projects to boost participation in cancer screening. This includes the Australian National University conducting research to understand why participation rates are lower than non-Indigenous Australians and how we can increase participation.

Metro North Health Cancer Stream Program Manager Peter McGuire said the barriers can be around taking the test.

“Some patients may prefer to talk about bowel screening with a non-Indigenous doctor or nurse because of the sensitivity of the subject. Others may want to talk with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander health professional. As with other sensitive matters, men may wish to talk to a male health professional and women may prefer to talk to a woman.

Bowel cancer can develop without any symptoms. But if found early, it can usually be treated successfully. The simple test can help find bowel changes early.” Peter said.

If you are aged between 50 to 74 and have not received a bowel screening test kit in the mail, contact the National Bowl Screening Program on 1800 119 868.

Some of our followers on the Better Together Health Van Facebook page shared their own views on the importance of bowel screening.

***“If people look after their own health it is a great start.” – Stan***

***“Get tested.” – Dallace***

***“Don't be afraid, it is only an inconvenience.” – Barbara***

***“Done mine!” – Valerie***





# STAY STRONGER

# LIVE LONGER

# DO YOUR BOWEL SCREEN TEST TODAY

## GET IT

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

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## 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.

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## POST IT

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

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## DONE

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



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



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## Metro North Health full of colour

If you have been to one of our Metro North Health hospitals or community health centres you may have very well seen some of our beautiful artwork by esteemed Aboriginal artist Elaine Chambers-Hegarty. Not only does each hospital have their own dedicated piece of artwork but Mental Health services and Community and Oral Health are also thrilled to have artwork created for them.

We would like to share with you each artwork and the story they tell of our hospitals and services.

But wait! There's more! You will be one of the first to see the beautiful new artwork by Elaine created exclusively for Maternity Services. See page 12 for this exciting reveal.



Metro North Health

This design has the inspiration of the Moreton Bay region, and concentrates on the Closing the Gap Plan and what it delivers for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community and the positive outcome it brings to the health and wellbeing of our mob. Four icons that flow across the artwork, shows a timeline from the care and strong start to life when a child is born, then onto a healthy heartbeat and hands to embrace showing the care of our people to influence a healthy lifestyle to reduce the burden of disease. The next icon shows the tree and represents growth and complex care of those in need. There are two message stick symbols that represent the communication with cultural awareness given from the staff during times of crisis. Whilst the last icon has the medical cross and the shape above of a gunya to represent care at home or elsewhere, and living longer with the care provided, taking into account the social, emotional, and mental wellbeing of clients and their families. Circle markings represent the gathering areas and the coming together in community. The crosshatching the artwork represents the structure and support of the policies established amongst the plan - similar to the crosshatchings on a weaving and how it all holds combines together. The middle image of the people show them as enjoying the healthy outcomes. The two animals added are relevant to this area, and was a food source for the people many years ago.



Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

This Central area represents the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital as the main meeting place. The top yellow ochre tones show the sun rising over the hospital, with the pale purple colours of the Jacaranda flowers hanging down. Those pale purple colours are also on the bottom of the artwork to represent the flowers that have fallen. The purple colours are commonly used to represent Women's Health along with the pink in the centre gathering circle. The women's symbols up the top have red added to the shapes to represent the women who worked at the hospital many years ago, who were recognised by their red capes. Dots and wavy lines down the side areas represent the ongoing developments in health whilst the boomerangs are there to represent the Aboriginal people who lived in the area before they were pushed to the outer suburbs from development. But as boomerangs come back they also symbolise the return to the area because the hospital hosts greater learning for those studying Health. Greens are for the vegetation and growth, whilst the blues represent waterways as well as the urban build up heading towards the hospital. You will notice the x cross that runs across the artwork in the blue area, this represents the helicopter wings, as this is often crucial transport for emergencies in remote areas. The wavy lines represent the fierce winds of the area during certain seasons. The circles represent tribes that gathered in the area for ceremonial dance, and the image of snakes dancing is in the shape of a stethoscope.





The Prince Charles Hospital

The central area of this artwork is The Prince Charles Hospital and is the main meeting place. Circles beside it represent people who visit from local Brisbane areas, and the other represents people who visit from afar. Parts of nature have been added to represent the area, and the snake to be a common animal from years ago, whilst the snake also represents the winding roads throughout the area, it is now in its urban state. Also added is blue running down each side to represent the small water areas, such as Kedron Brook and Cabbage Tree Creek, which both lead out towards the bay areas of Nudgee Beach, Nudgee Wetlands and Sandgate areas. Other markings represent the people from the Torres Strait that may visit, as well as people from other areas. Also used is the shield shape to represent protection against disease and protecting those organs that need care. The artwork is busy but flowing, just as the hospitals often are.



Redcliffe Hospital

The central area of the artwork represents the Redcliffe Hospital and is the main meeting place. Circles down the side and the lines connecting, represent community groups surrounding the area. Elaine has chosen some animals of the sea and land to represent the Redcliffe area. Animals such as the sea turtle, dugong, fish and the pelican, plus the main central animal being the dolphin. You can see the blues of the sea and the rays of the sun shining through. The central red area represents the red cliffs of the area, mainly at Woody Point and Scarborough. Markings on these cliffs represent nature and some erosion, which shows we need to protect this country. The pelican is a prominent bird on the artwork and he is placed in the centre area because he can also be seen in the waterways close by that run off the Moreton Bay area. The green area represents the nature surrounding with my connection to country and waterways amongst the region.



Caboolture Hospital

This artwork represents the lands around Caboolture and what it means to the people. Caboolture - the Carpet Snake are main images in the artwork, with the centre gathering circle being represented as the hospital, with people coming from north, south, east and west. The hospital being a place of healing, is highlighted by markings that are peaked with highs and lows and represented with soothing colours of the lands and waters. Other items are the Glasshouse Mountains represented along with the Bunya Trees that were a gathering place for our people to come together for traditional feasts. Family is important to our people, so the circles among the artwork represent waterholes to highlight places of gathering many years ago as well as places our people would find food. The sun and the moon are also prominent items on the artwork - with Caboolture being the gateway to the Sunshine Coast.



Kilcoy Hospital

This artwork represents the lands around Kilcoy Hospital and the people of the area. Kilcoy and the Brisbane River Valley is the region for the Jinibara people, which is traditionally made up of five clans. The Dugidau centred in the Kilcoy region and the junction of the Stanley and Brisbane Rivers, the Dala or Dallumbara clan inhabiting the Conondale Range west to the Brisbane River, the Gurumgar around the southern end of the D'Aguilar Range, the Nalbo along the Maleny-Mapleton escarpment and the Dungibara on the Upper Brisbane River. There are circles that lead to the main gathering circle in the centre to represent the hospital. Markings and symbols shown in the artwork are the kangaroo commonly seen in the area, as well as the bunya nuts, all that would have been part of the food source. Other markings are represented by the hilly area surrounding Kilcoy. The markings in the wood are bora rings close by.



Community and Oral Health

The warmth of our community. This artwork shows the top area as the sunset over the patients' lives, and also represents the workers bringing warmth the patients. Elaine has chosen the green in the background as part of the journey. Along the green area, you will notice many markings from the wavy lines of the ups and downs of health, through to footprints, dots and line art. This all show the walks of ones journey of better health. The circles represent the community health centres in the area, and can also be the homes of the patients. Different tones and styles represent different illnesses. The grey lines running between each circle, represents the roads or journey. The pathways show a connection to all facilities with different colours and markings.



Mental Health services

This artwork represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women and how our culture is important to our people and our community connection, and to acknowledge the fact that people do care and are here to help. The top section uses brighter colours to look to a brighter future and have the sun shine on those positives in our lives. Other areas show parts of our lives that are full of ups and downs, along the ever winding roads we travel during our journey, but shows that our people always have that connection to culture. From the deeper darker colours, to the brighter colours, this translates through life and one's mental wellbeing. Bright days and days we need that extra help to get back on track.



## First look at the new Strong Start to Life artwork

You have seen it here first! Introducing the new Metro North Health Strong Start to Life artwork, created by talented Aboriginal artist Elaine Chambers-Hegarty.

This artwork piece has been designed in collaboration with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, Ngarrama maternity service staff, and Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and pays respects to the Ngarrama ‘Guardian Birth Spirit’ story.

This special creation will support Metro North Health maternity services provide a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families during their pregnancy journey and add a beautiful touch of colour to the hospital maternity wards.



### Artwork description

The Strong Start to Life Artwork pays respect to the Ngarrama story using the imagery of the star constellations behind the centre tree. The tree shape represents the placenta and its importance to a ‘strong start to life’ as well as a reference to the tree of life. The linework across the artwork represents the ‘Country’ or three main hospital sites where maternity services and birthing suites are situated, Redcliffe Hospital, Royal Brisbane Hospital and Caboolture Hospital. There is a fourth linework element included to represent the site of the Prince Charles Hospital and its focus on children’s health and wellbeing. The gathering circle in the centre of the artwork represents the holistic support structures that are present throughout the whole health and wellbeing journey. The five artwork motifs represent the journey and stages of pregnancy. From Women’s Health to the conception and growth of a baby, to the health of the child right up until late adolescence. Also included is a men’s motif that depicts the significance of partners, fathers, donors or role models, supporting the women, babies and children in the journey of life. There are eight circular motifs throughout that depict the importance of connection to Country, connection to sea and waterways, connection to community and family, and connection to Culture. Water represents life and is depicted in a motif emphasising how it links people to place of saltwater people or freshwater people and weaves connections across the land.

# Leaders in Health Equity

Metro North Health has been focussed on creating the health equity strategy that will ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing health services will receive high-quality person-centred care that is culturally responsive, empowers self-care and choice, and is designed to improve health and wellbeing.

Meet some of the staff within Metro North Health who are leading thought-provoking conversations with staff and community members, to advocate for health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## **Richard (Ricko) Abednego**

(Cultural Capability Officer, Metro North – A&TSILT)

Health Equity lead for Key Priority Area

(KPA 1): Actively eliminating racial discrimination and institutional racism within the service



### **Why are you passionate about leading the discussion for KPA1?**

I am passionate about this because I hear the implicit bias out loud all the time in the community and here at work in Metro North. We all need to work together to combat racism. We may or may not have experienced it ourselves, but we shouldn't devalue its impact. Just brushing it aside is devaluing it. We need to support the courageous people who tell their stories and we as an organisation need to be adaptive, capable and strong enough to stop perpetrating behaviours from continuing. This also means taking the time to review our systems and making sure it's well equipped.

### **What does health equity mean to you?**

It means hope.

Hope that I can get the adequate support to absolutely work to my best abilities and to work in a team free of bias.

Health equity also means to me that we work tirelessly to raise our own consciousness, so we contribute wholeheartedly to our work, and leave our prejudices at the door when working with our community.

I have a responsibility with this, and so do you.

## **Natasha White**

(Manager, Systems and Performance – A&TSILT)

Health Equity lead for Key Priority Area (KPA 4):

Influencing the social, cultural and economic determinants of health



### **Why are you passionate about leading the discussion for KPA 4?**

I am passionate about leading this discussion as it is around creating the foundations for the rest of the key priority areas within the health equity strategy. All the KPAs within the health equity strategy are interwoven and interlocked, but if you think about KPA 4 - Influencing the social, cultural, and economic determinants of health – if we do not get the foundations right in this key priority area, then we are not, as an organisation, going to get a lot of traction for the other key priority areas.

### **What does health equity mean to you?**

For me health equity is not a new journey, our ancestors have been working toward health equity for a very long time. Our work towards health equity is about learning from and not repeating history. I think about our journey toward health equity as the health service working with mob to build a bridge that will help them cross croc infested water safely. If we don't build that bridge for our mob, they will be forced to swim across the croc infested water or go further upstream where it may be safe to cross. With these options, they face great challenges and difficulties whilst trying to get to the other side. The bridge in this analogy represents health equity, and equitable access to health care for our people.

## **Paul Drahm**

(Manager, Indigenous Health – COH)

Health Equity lead for Key Priority Area (KPA 5): Working with First Nations peoples, communities, and organisations to design, deliver, monitor and review health services



### **Why are you passionate about leading the discussion for KPA 5?**

Working with our mob in a culturally safe, respectful and capable way is essential to improving health outcomes. We need to be brave and bold in our approaches that also creates sustainable opportunities to hear and listen to the voices. I feel that I can positively contribute to this KPA through my knowledge and experiences gained from working in community and in government positions.

### **What does health equity mean to you?**

We need to challenge and remove the systemic, interpersonal, racist ideologies and practices that is unfair and unsafe. We must improve the way we engage, design, collaborate and deliver services that ensures we have access to equitable health care.





# Our work towards Health Equity

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

MNH's goal is to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing health services will receive high-quality person-centred care that is culturally responsive, empowers self-care and choice, and is designed to improve health and wellbeing.

The Metro North Health Equity Strategy, to be launched in late April 2022, describes our commitment 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

MNH's commitment to health equity is across the entire health system and we will be working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations and the Brisbane North Primary Health Network.



Join the conversation #ourhealthourway #forcommunity via the Better Together Health Van Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/BetterTogetherHealthVan>



For further information contact the Health Equity Project Team by phoning (07) 3139 6621 or email [HealthEquityMNH@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:HealthEquityMNH@health.qld.gov.au)

Metro North Health in partnership with



**Metro North  
Health**



**Queensland  
Government**



# IN FOCUS

## Hearing communities' voices

Metro North Health has been working hard co-designing a new Health Equity Strategy with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, community-controlled organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

During some recent health equity workshops, Metro North Health received a lot of amazing feedback and suggestions from community and we would like to share some of these with you:

*"We are at the table because we want to be part of the solution."*

*"Start where the pressure points are and engage mob who are experiencing the services."*

*"Plant trees of hope to bring all of us together – integrating ways of doing, being and knowing with existing systems. Working together."*

*"A good education comes from good listening and sharing."*

*"The system does not factor in the many roles and responsibilities the patient may have in their home and community, making it very challenging to attend at a set time."*

*"Trust and respect are important. Create opportunities for us to feel safe."*

*"Staff and services need to take the time to connect with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community – this will make people feel listened to."*

*"The most important thing is to build relationships and to develop trust."*

*"Allow input into own health."*

*"Work together to find solutions."*

*"Health care workers are the connection – need more of those."*

*"Until we are brave enough to deal with unconscious bias, then it's not the same for Indigenous people."*

*"Acknowledge and respect the stories of those who have come before us."*

*"We have Elders who have done this. Listen to them."*

*"Have courageous conversations."*

*"Metro North needs designated people who go out to community and meet community where they feel safe."*

*"Empower and value community members for their lived experience expertise."*

*"Sit at our table as truly equal humans working together."*

*"If cultural safety is to be done properly, it has to be cultural integrity on all levels... and everybody's got a level of responsibility and accountability."*

*"We can talk about things, but I'd like to see things moving too."*

*"Our Mob's spirituality is not being met, and that can only be met with another Indigenous person."*

*"The point is to listen quietly to our Elders and community members."*

If you would like to share with us your Metro North Health service experience, name a deadly staff member or program, tell us what you think we should be doing to make our services more culturally safe and responsive or an area we should be looking at, visit our yarning hub today and give us your feedback. No idea is too big or small, so share a yarn with us! Visit the hub here: <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity/yarning-hub>

## WORD OF THE MONTH

### "Kaur"

means "Island" in Miriam Mer language.

Meriam Mir (also written as Miriam Mer) is the Language of the Eastern Islands of the Torres Strait. Linguistically, it is connected to the Papuan languages of the Austronesian family of languages. There are two regional dialects:

- Mer dialect – Mer (Murray), Waier, Dauar.
- Erub dialect – Erub (Darnley) and Ugar (Stephen).

## New Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff proud to identify

The Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team (A&TSILT) has recently grown in numbers with many fresh faces coming on board.

The Metro North Health Identification Campaign aims to encourage staff and consumers to be proud to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander when attending Metro North Health facilities, and to feel safe and comfortable in doing so. By patients and visitors identifying, they will be able to receive culturally appropriate care when accessing our health care services.

Metro North Health staff who identify in the workplace will be connected in with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and receive invitations to attend cultural gatherings and events throughout the year, as an opportunity to build their networks and receive cultural support and connection from their peers.

Meet some of our new team members below and hear why they are proud to identify.



**Layla Scott,**  
Health Equity Program Manager A&TSILT, Mob: Tanganekald

**Why are you proud to identify?**

Since as long as I can remember my father always told us to be proud of our Aboriginal culture and this is something that I carry on and stand proud of.



**Tara Denaro,**  
Clinical Nurse Consultant Strong Start to Life A&TSILT, Mob: Mununjali

**Why are you proud to identify?**

I am proud because we have such a beautiful and rich culture that should be celebrated and respected. I am also proud to identify because of my beautiful family. My mother especially has been a big influence on who I am. I hope that one day I can be a positive role model for our young ones the same way others have been role models for me.



**Kathleen (Kitty) Synot,**  
Clinical Nurse Consultant First Nations Safety Quality and Risk A&TSILT, Mob: Wamba Wamba

**Why are you proud to identify?**

Why not?! I come from the oldest living culture in the world full of beautiful rich history!



**Sarah Gbewonyo,**  
Support Officer, Innovation and Strategy A&TSILT, Mob: Saisarem Tribe of Erub (Darnley Island) and the Dauareb Tribe of Mer (Murray Island) in the Torres Strait

**Why are you proud to identify?**

I was very fortunate to be raised with strong family connections and values, in a small, but strong island community with strong culture. Being proud to identify, connects me to my upbringing and my family's heritage.



# 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](http://www.metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van)  
or Facebook page @BetterTogetherHealthVan



# STAFF PROFILE

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## A Day in the Life of: Elwyn Henaway

### Cultural Capability Officer (Redcliffe, Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals)



#### Q1. Tell me a bit about yourself and your family history.

Both my parents are Aboriginal and South Sea Islander. My father's grandfather and my mother's grandmother were both stolen from Vanuatu and sold into slavery in Australia. They both married into Aboriginal families once in Australia. My father's father died cutting cane and my father died from a heart strain at 36 years old because he cut cane as a boy.

My father's Aboriginality is with the Juru people of the Burdekin, and my mother's with the Kojimal people of Shoal Water Bay.

I help with cultural business on Juru Country, and therefore identify that way. Cultural business may include traditional hunting, as well as song and dance in times of ceremony. The works I have done have earned me the Gungu Banbari, given to me by lore men and senior men of our area. Gungu is the sea turtle and Banbari is father spirit. I am father spirit for the sea turtle.

#### Q2. How long have you worked for Metro North Health?

I have worked as a Cultural Capability Officer for eight years. My first role was at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, then I moved to The Prince Charles Hospital and now I am at Redcliffe, Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals.

#### Q3. What does a typical week look like for you as a CCO?

Mostly I attend committees to help guide the works in our hospitals around the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, those both in and out of hospital. I support staff through difficult situations and decisions, and just being available to listen to staff in their struggles and achievements is a big component of my role. I also do community engagement and help build and strengthen partnerships with the hospitals.

#### Q4. What has been a highlight for you in your health career?

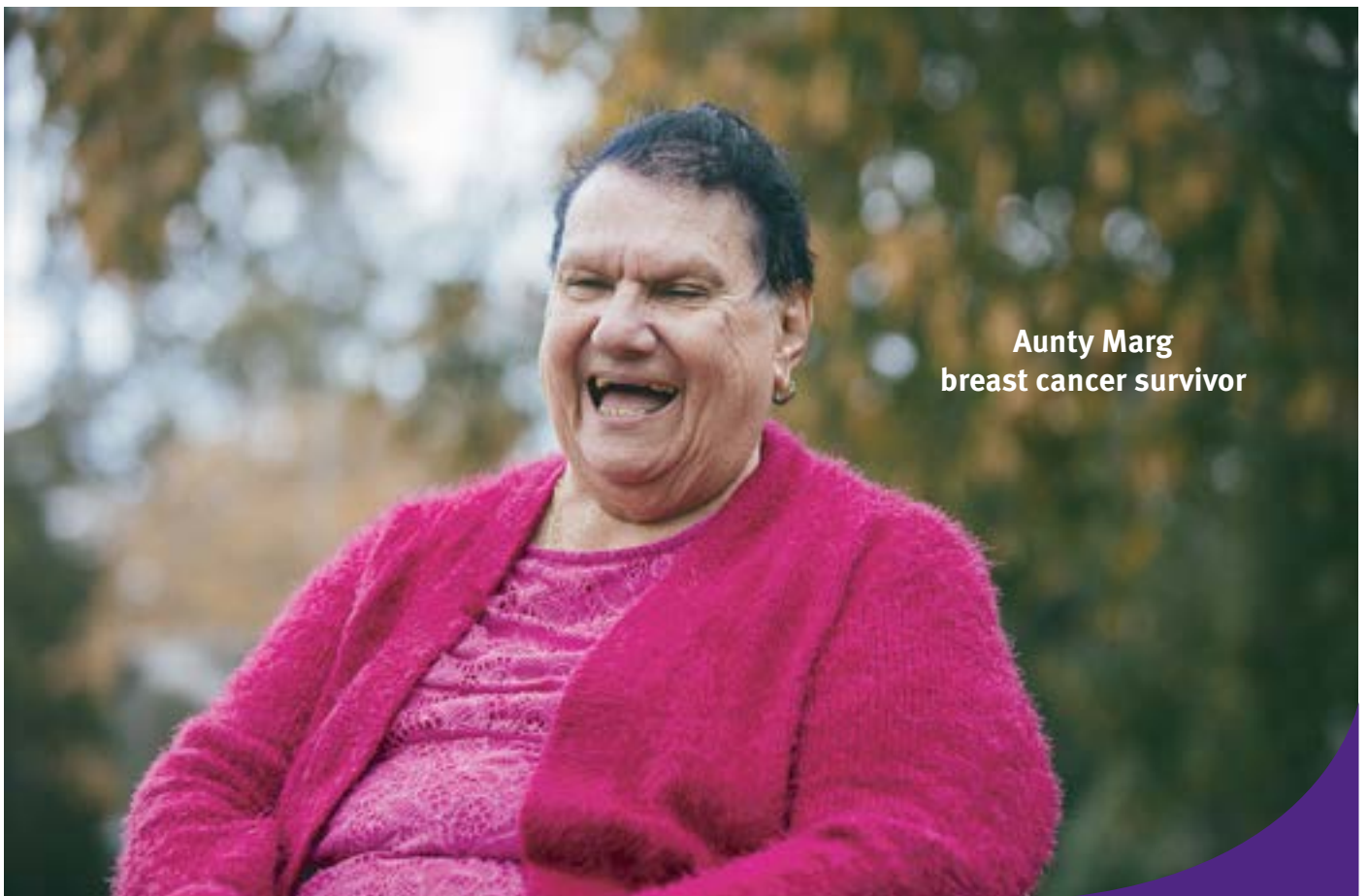
The highlight of working as a Cultural Capability Officer is that I get to help everyone within Metro North Health. I have learnt so much about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our stories. People tell me about where their mob comes from, the foods they eat, their history and their own personal stories. Life is so fascinating to me. I have journeyed with patients and staff. We have laughed together and we have shed tears together. We get up and walk forward together. I have also learnt a lot about international countries – their foods, songs, dances and personal stories. I get schooled every day.

#### Q5. Lastly, what do you like to do outside of work?

Outside of work I am a father of four, and grandfather of two. We value every bit of our time together so we have a lot of family gatherings. To keep fit I run half marathons and attend boxing training.



**“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](http://breastscreen.qld.gov.au)**



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**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](http://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 [Bettersogetherhealthvan@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Bettersogetherhealthvan@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](mailto:A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au) or phone (07) 3139 3235.



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