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Metro North Health

## Message from the Executive Director Caboolture, Kilcoy and Woodford

Karlene Willcocks



We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which our facilities are built. We also pay respect and acknowledge Elders past, present and the future.

Kia Ora CKW team,

This week has certainly come with its own set of challenges, but as always, I am so impressed at how we have all come together to tackle what was thrown our way. As our weather temperatures and humidity rose this week, so did our demand for care through the emergency department and within our inpatient teams.

This was, however, made only more challenging when we had air-conditioning issues in the Clinical Services Building on Wednesday night, seeing us step into a Code Yellow. The air-conditioning issues were resolved by Thursday morning. The Code Yellow did result in the need to reschedule surgeries and procedures to ensure patient safety, while we checked all our sterile stock to ensure its integrity had not been breached and did environmental checks to ensure any further risks were managed.

As we step down from the Code Yellow this morning, we have identified the issue and are in the process of putting a second fail-safe fix in place to prevent any future air-conditioning failures, with the BEMs team onsite monitoring the air-conditioning system at all times.

I want to thank all the staff who were working at the time of this event and subsequently for their professionalism, as we have moved through this situation. Members of the Incident Management Team commented on how as a site we all leant in and how solutions focused we were as a team. For this I am sincerely proud and thankful to you all.

Meanwhile, patients continued to present, the weather continued to be challenging and cause heat related illness or exacerbation of illness, while we were also having to advise patients about delays. Through it all, it's obvious that the team at CKW leant in to support our community and each other. Thank you.

We continue to see high demand through emergency, with high numbers of very complex and unwell patients presenting via Queensland Ambulance Service and a lot of staff illness as well. I want to thank the entire team, as each and every one of you contribute to patient care for our community and your commitment during these challenging times, is so evident.

As you see me or the other executives out and about, please talk to us. We love to hear about you, your ideas, thoughts, opportunities, and challenges. Remember, you can send these to me via email at [ASK KARLENE](mailto:ASK.KARLENE).

## Welcome CKW medical interns 2025



This week, it was my pleasure to start Monday by welcoming our new medical interns to CKW. Unfortunately, I could not meet the team in person, however, it is always my joy to welcome our new doctors and our future medical workforce. As I always do, I have asked them to join our culture of saying hello to everyone and treating our patients and community, as visitors in our work home, filled with kindness in the work we do, even when it is busy or overwhelming.

The Medical Education Unit alongside our Director of Medical Services, led the welcome of what has been our biggest January intake of interns to Caboolture Hospital. With 20 new intern doctors commencing this week, and an additional five to join us between now and June.

It has been a busy week for the team as they orientate to Metro North and work life at Caboolture Hospital. The team have participated in sessions including entire days of ALS, ieMR training, a fantastic four-hour workshop on safe prescribing, and many other areas of the hospital and Metro North Health working with the interns to help support with their transition from medical school.

Our new doctors are excited to join the medicine, emergency department, surgery, obstetrics & gynaecology and paediatrics teams this coming Monday for their first rotation. If you see them on the campus, please say hello and make them feel welcome to CKW.

## CKW school-based traineeship program

This year is the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the School Based Traineeship Program run within CKW Directorate. In 2025, CKW are hosting 23 School Based Trainees who will complete various qualifications across administration, hospitality, nursing & horticulture. 11 of these trainees are returning to complete their final term this April.

We also welcome 12 new trainees which will commence on 17 February 2025. If you happen to come across a School Based Trainee in your areas, I hope that you all will welcome, foster and support these students as they grow and develop throughout the program. I will be showcasing

our new and past students in future messages, so we can get an insight into their journey so far.

## Kilcoy visit and Auxiliary meeting



On Tuesday this week, I had the joy of visiting Kilcoy hospital. As I often mention, it is a site that really epitomises healing, that is facilitated by the homely and beautiful environment and supported by the amazing team. There was a [Metro North CKW post](#) on Facebook this week about a patient named Arthur, and as I walked in, there was Arthur sitting in the courtyard, beaming and saying hello. This environment cannot be replicated as easily at our other sites, it is wonderful to observe.

As patient presentations increase at CKW and across Metro North, Kilcoy is also seeing increased demand for their beds. With it being summer, they are seeing the holiday maker presentations through the emergency department mixed with their normal community presentations.

While I was there, I had the privilege of attending the Kilcoy Auxiliary meeting. The Kilcoy Auxiliary provide support to the Kilcoy Hospital and patients. They are a committed group who have begun planning for the Kilcoy fete, which this year will take place on 24 May, to raise funds for the hospital. If you fancy a scenic drive to a beautiful place, it is an event worth a visit. The homemade treats available are amazing, including country style baking and homemade relishes and jams. There are many other interesting stall holders and so many beautiful places to stop and visit on the way if you want a fun day out.

## Audiology visit



On Wednesday, it was a true privilege to visit Kelly and our Audiology team. Wow!

This team works out of the Allied Health Outpatients department. They see patients aged 0 to 16 years of age and on average receive around 1,550 referrals per year, but this is growing. They service not only the CKW region, but from Chermiside to the boarder of the Sunshine Coast as they are part of a Statewide service provided at CHQ, SCUH and Caboolture for SEQ.

As most of you know, hearing or the identification of hearing deficits, are essential to development in those first 2,000 days (a reminder that we are celebrating and focusing on the year of the Child, Adolescent and Young Adult here at Metro North).

The team do an amazing job in a very small environment with two retrofitted hearing booths which are really interesting to look at. While we have two small rooms, we undertake three different tests in the rooms that all have different equipment requirements. While the team manage with the existing small space and do a great job, the rooms are not ideal.

It is exciting that we are in the planning to expand the service space to meet this demand in the new Paediatric Specialist Outpatient Department. What an amazing team and service.

## **Officially the Clinical Governance Unit**



The Clinical Governance Unit, formally known as Safety & Quality, celebrated its official name change on Monday 13 January 2025, with cake and a reflection on all their achievements from the past year.

Following on from the business case for change, the team have undergone a lot of change with new roles and new ways of working being implemented. As we enter the final stages, many of the team are moving into new portfolios and their ways of working are being streamlined. This is a big adjustment for the team and the clinical directorate. Please bare this in mind as the team settles into these new roles and workspaces. Please check in with them with kindness and interest in the change, so that we can all work together for the best outcomes and support.

Congratulations to you all and I wish you all the best as you move forward as the Clinical Governance Unit.

## The Common Good



In December, I was excited to hear from Steve Francia Chief Executive of The Common Good (also known as The Prince Charles Foundation), that they had identified a number of initiatives they would be funding at Caboolture Hospital. At Christmas we highlighted the delivery of:

- **40 kids Christmas Gifts** with support of Harvey Norman Aspley and Rotary.
- **80 Toiletry kits for mental health patients.**

Additional to this, Steve has advised that The Common Good will fund in 2025:

- **Therapy Dogs:** Two therapy dogs doing fortnightly visits to Caboolture for a 12-month period.
- **2 Replica Ovalia Egg Chairs:** The chairs help neurodiverse children manage anxieties and stress they may experience in a hospital setting. The Chairs will be used in our paediatric services.
- **SmileyScope for Paediatric ED:** This is a virtual reality headset that children can wear as a means of distraction when feeling overwhelmed when a medical procedure is taking place.
- **Child Life Therapist (CLT):** This role helps works with children to minimise the stress, fear and anxiety hospitalised children might experience and improve their coping strategies, which not only benefit young patients and their families, but also their treating teams. This role will work across paediatric services.

Alongside this, the team continue to provide significant support to our research here at CKW which I will showcase in future emails. Many thanks to Steve and The Common Good team for their ongoing support.

The Common Good are a wonderful charity that donate back 100% of their donations to the beneficiaries. If you wish to support them, the easiest way is to buy a coffee, drink, snack or lunch from our café. Additionally, they run (literally) fundraising campaigns with major sporting events. If you want to do a [long cycle](#) or nominate The Common Good as your charity for the Bridge to Brisbane, or you can donate [here](#).

## Patient compliment

I am so proud of the professionalism and kindness of our teams, and we recently received a lovely patient compliment, from a husband and wife highlighting this. Paul and Judy needed assistance to document their advanced care directives, and our Advanced Care Planning Facilitator Desre Arnold helped them with this.

*“Paul and I want to thank you most sincerely for arranging a visit from Desre Arnold. Her assistance with completing the Enduring Power of Attorney and Advanced Health Directive documents was invaluable. I don’t think on our own we would have achieved such good documentation. Her gentle approach and sensitivity were much appreciated - and we were able to have a giggle as well!”*

*Your personal help and care cannot be overestimated, it has meant a great deal to us and our family is grateful too.”*

Thank you Desre for your invaluable service to our community. I look forward to showcasing you and your important role in future messages.

## Have your say survey 2025



Around April, Metro North will again conduct the Have Your Say staff survey. This survey is undertaken every two years, and was previously done in 2019, 2021 and most recently 2023.

The survey helps us to identify areas of excellence, find out what’s working, and understand how our employees and teams are feeling about working for Metro North and things that need our attention.

This year will be the first survey at MN since I commenced at CKW along with many of our Executive, and we look forward to hearing from as many of you as possible. We want to hear about your experience at CKW, what you think we do well and should **keep doing**, what you think we should **start doing**, and what you propose we should **stop doing**.

There has been a great amount of work done in response to what you told us in the 2023 survey. Not just at CKW directorate level, but also at the Metro North level, and at the team or department levels. I've used my weekly ED message to communicate the CKW have your say actions to you, and to showcase the wonderful work being done across the directorate.

Chief Executive Jackie Hanson and various Metro North executives often publish have your say updates in their newsletters too, and Jackie recently provided this update in the [Message from the Chief Executive and Executive team](#):

*"The culture at Metro North is paramount to our success and there has been a great deal of work going on behind the scenes since the 2023 survey, in response to what you told us. Quite a few new initiatives are about to launch that came out of the Metro North Have Your Say action groups, such as resources to help manage unplanned leave, a revised Values in Action framework, and an improved PDP process."*

## Key appointments and recruitment

The beginning of the year is an exciting time and while no key appointments this week, we are in the final stages of confirming the Director of Clinical Governance role. We will also be advertising for a Medical Director Paediatrics within the next few weeks.

[Workforce Development Officer](#): This is an exceptionally important role in supporting our Allied Health workforce and it closes today. I hope you have got your applications in, if not you need to focus quickly!

There are also a number of administration, allied health and nursing jobs advertised on [SmartJobs](#). Please encourage your friends and previous colleagues to apply to come and work for our amazing team.



**What's your name:** Eileen Moore.

**Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander:** Aboriginal.

**Where is your Mob from:** Gooreng Gooreng Country (North of the Burnett River Bundaberg, Gin Gin and Gladstone regions)

**Where did you work before joining CKW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services:** Brisbane North Aged Care Assessment Organisation, formerly 'The Aged Care Assessment Team'.

**What is the name of your role:** Nurse Navigator, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health Services.

**Which site will you be working at:** Caboolture Satellite Hospital 'Kabul'

**What do you enjoy/look forward to in your role:** Here at Caboolture Satellite Hospital we see our mob that present and would like cultural support. We follow up with them after their visit and provide any clinical guidance and link them with support that they may require. I look forward to sharing my knowledge with the team, building on my knowledge and resources in this space, growing our connection to country and elders in the area and continue our journey to health equity.





## Reflection

Well, I know many of you will be working over the weekend to care for our community, as I head towards my weekend, I am reflecting on a very pressured week across Metro North services including all our CKW sites while also thinking about our weather.

Many of you who have spoken to me will know that my mother lives in NZ alone. This year, it was a blessing that she was able to join me and our family in Brisbane for the first time in five years, following an accident during COVID that has taken a long time for her to be able to travel again. Mum has always stated it could never be too **hot**. Well, I had to laugh, as on about day three of her stay, she declared that this was just ridiculous and far too hot! My family here being ex-Townsville residents, laughed, but Mum truly suffered with the heat. I was relieved as I escorted mum to her plane on Wednesday, that we avoided the need for any form of medical assistance, due to exacerbation of her previous conditions, though it was evident that some of the side effects were most definitely heightened!

We are currently seeing an increase of patients presenting with illnesses due to the humidity and heat that we have been experiencing. It is a timely reminder for us all and our patients to quite literally, keep cool! This means staying hydrated, limit time in the sun, wear sun protection when outside, and try not to overexert yourself if you're out in this very hot sun.

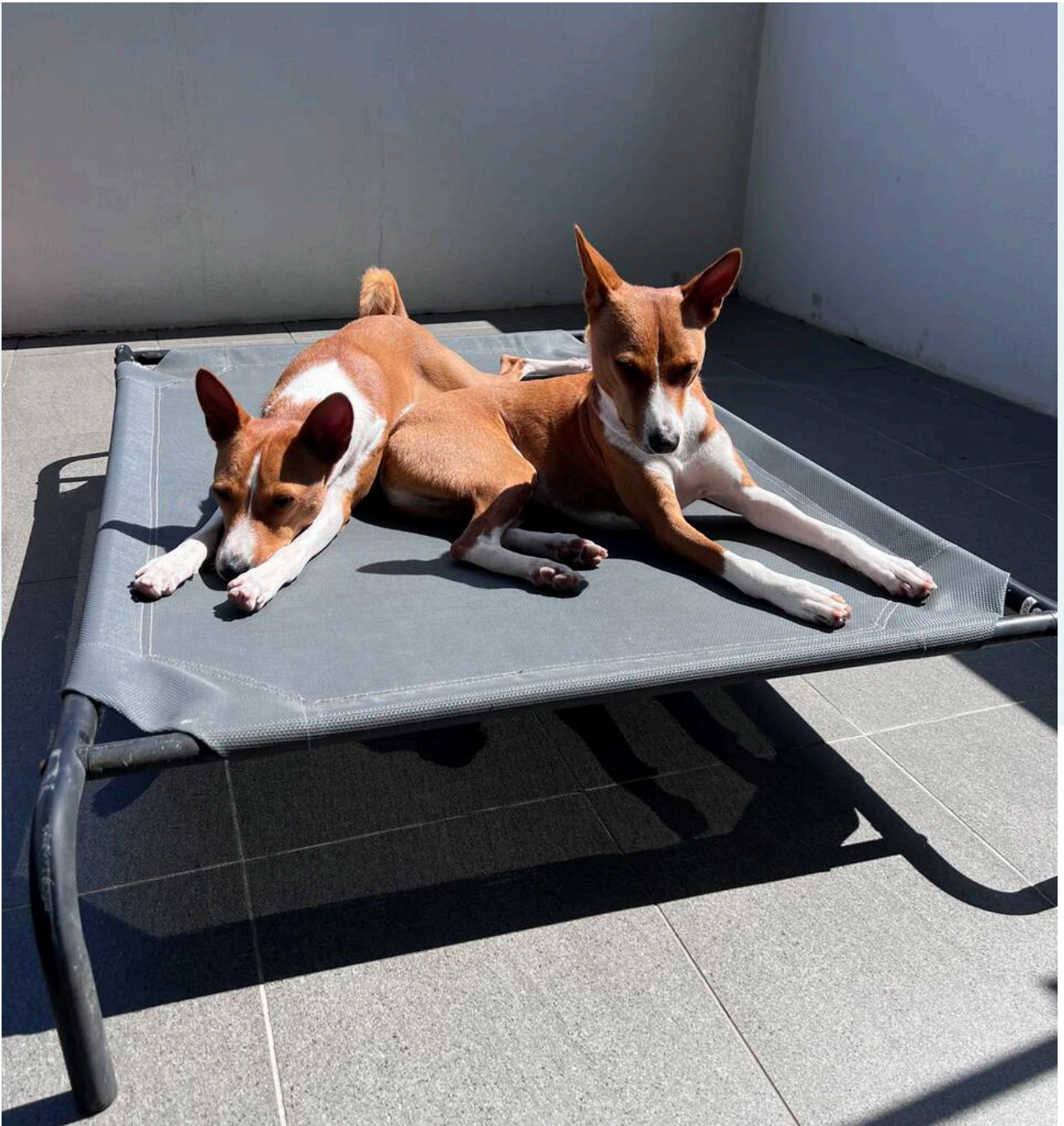
What a fabulous week in amongst all the demand and code yellow. I got to meet some amazing staff and visit some of our fabulous services – we are so lucky at CKW to have this group of colleagues.

As always, I'd like to extend a huge thank you from me to you all, for all that you do, but particularly in the last challenging week. Please look after yourselves as your community/we need you!

## Quote of the day

*“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress and working together is success”*  
Henry Ford





**Got a question  
or suggestion for the  
CKW Executive Director?**

**EMAIL ASK KARLENE**



Kind regards,

**Karlene Willcocks**

Executive Director,

Caboolture, Kilcoy and Woodford

**Metro North**  
Health



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