



Dear colleagues,

On Wednesday, we held our first pop-up session at STARS for the Metro North Strategic Plan. Thank you to staff and members of the STARS Executive Team who came along to discuss the plan and provide feedback.

For those who would like to provide feedback there are two remaining pop-up session at STARS including:

Monday 17 February

7.45am – 8.15am
Ground Floor, Foyer
STARS

Monday 24 February

9.00am – 9.30am
Ground Floor, Foyer
STARS

If these face-to-face times are not suitable there is also the option of providing feedback on the [draft plan](#) via a [survey](#). The survey will be open until the end of February.





Strategic Plan feedback pop-up session at STARS.

Anniversary of the National Apology

Yesterday was the anniversary of the National Apology, where former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised to Australia's Indigenous peoples, particularly the Stolen Generations, on behalf of the nation. Between 1910 and 1970 thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were forcibly removed from their families and communities.

During the Yarning Circle, STARS Indigenous Health Liaison Officer Lynette Bell reflected on being in the remote desert community of Balgo in the East Kimberley of Western Australia at the time, watching the National Apology on a black and white TV.

She also recalled how a glass coolamon made by artist Bai Bai Napangardi, from the Balgo community, was presented to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Leader of the Opposition, Brendan Nelson.

The coolamon contained a message which I would like to include here as it reflects how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people viewed the National Apology day, hoping for a better relationship with non-Indigenous people and a better future for their children.

“On behalf of our people, thank you for saying sorry. In return we give you this gift on behalf of us affected by being taken away from our families. This is our way of saying thank you. The gift is a glass coolamon, fragile yet strong. Coolamons have carried our children. The gift is a symbol of the hope we place in the new relationship you wish to forge with our people. A relationship that itself is fragile yet strong. We have a new covenant between our peoples, that we will do all we can to make sure our children are carried forward, loved and nurtured and able to live a full life.”

You can find out more about the National Apology Anniversary [here](#). I also encourage you to watch the [video](#) mentioned in the Chief Executive and Executive Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Apology message. This video showcases the journey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander well-being and the ongoing impacts from the Stolen Generation.

Yarning Circle

On Thursday we held our second Yarning Circle at STARS, this time in the airconditioned comfort of our meeting rooms on Level 1. The day held special significance, being the anniversary of the National Apology for the Stolen Generations.

The focus for this Yarning Circle was eye health with Team Leader, Advanced Orthoptist Paula Freijah and surgeon Dr Mark Loane discussing the process of having surgery for cataracts and pterygiums. Paula spoke about how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience much higher rates of cataracts than non-Indigenous people, before providing a step-by-step guide to what is involved in having eye surgery at STARS.

Lynette Bell provided an update on the monthly culturally sensitive endoscopy and colonoscopy clinics being run by the Gastroenterology department.

The Elders spoke about how transport to and from hospital for appointments and procedures was still a barrier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Yarning Circle provided a valuable opportunity to hear from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people directly about their health care experiences and what we can do to improve our services so it they are culturally appropriate and accessible.

Short notice accreditation

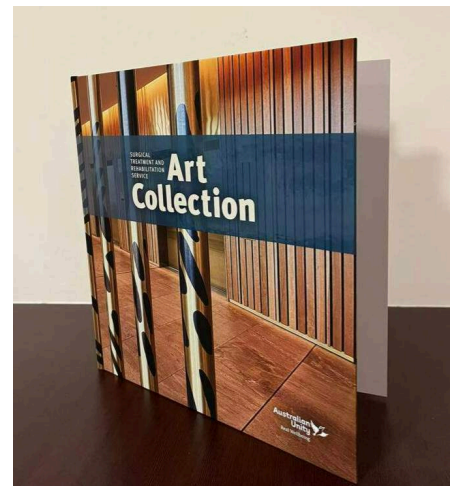
We are expecting to receive notification of our Short Notice Assessment any week now. Accreditation can feel a bit daunting for staff, but rest assured we are well prepared and look forward to welcoming the assessors to our facility.

If you would like to find out more about the accreditation process you can view the [STARS accreditation QHEPS page](#), the [NSQHS Standards page](#) or contact STARS Safety and Quality Unit via stars_squ@health.qld.gov.au or 3647 7401.

STARS artwork

You may have noticed displayed around STARS, a beautiful coffee table book of the STARS art collection, produced by Australian Unity. The book features all the artwork that is displayed across the STARS building, as well as an introduction about how the artwork was curated and information about the previous site of the Royal Children's Hospital. A selection of the artwork was also recently featured on [Metro North's Facebook page](#).

We are very lucky to have such a beautiful art collection in our hospital for the enjoyment of patients, staff and visitors and we will be looking to promote it further in the near future.



Royal Foundation Grant Round 4

The RBWH Foundation's Grant Round 4, supporting extraordinary opportunities for patient care and life-saving research, will be open for submissions from 1 March to 31 March 2025.

We've had some wonderful research and patient care projects funded in the past through the RBWH Foundation Grants including our Dignity at STARS clothing program and co-designed nutrition videos.

If you have an idea or project that requires funding support, I encourage you to consider applying for a grant. With up to \$350,000 allocated to research and up to \$150,000 allocated to patient care, it really is a wonderful opportunity.

If you would like more information, see the [RBWH Foundation Grant Round 4](#) webpage, including the guidelines and a sample application form. The Foundation are also holding an applicant information session on 5 March at 10am.

Patient story

Last Monday, one of our patients Murray received a very special recognition for his service during the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy. Hannah Axford from the RSL and Ray Sandford from the Navy Association of Australia were on hand to present Murray with a 50th Anniversary coin to commemorate first responders, volunteers and those involved in rebuilding Darwin following the cyclone. Murray was part of

the Royal Australian Navy's largest peacetime disaster relief operation, involving 13 ships, 11 aircraft and approximately 3,000 personnel.

Congratulations to Murray and thank you to the RSL and the Navy Association of Australia for ensuring Murray received his commemorative coin.



Murray being presented with his commemorative coin.

Staff Shout Out

Congratulations to the following staff who received a Staff Shout Out in the month of January:

Shelby Peters, Benjamin Frost, Juan Sebastian Lopera Alvarez, Angela Williamson, Adele Hackett, Sinead Murphy, Jessica Siedlecki, Morgan-Leigh Taylor, Tarni Crabbe, Julie-Anne Hallam, Jordan Nelson, STARS OPD, 5A Social Work team and STARS PSO team. A particular mention of both Julie-Anne and Jordan who received three nominations from patients for the outstanding care received. Well done to everyone.

If you would like to give a Shout Out to someone for the month of February you can do so [here](#).

Patient compliment

This week I'd like to draw attention to the wonderful work being done by staff at the Oral Health Centre. There are not too many of us that like going to the dentist, but staff at the Centre do a wonderful job at putting dental patients at ease.

"I was attended to by WC and he assessed the problem that I had and discussed treatment with his Supervisor and included myself in these discussions. He did a very good job at repairing my tooth. Both he and the Supervisor were very thorough and made me feel very relaxed and well looked after throughout the 'ordeal' - I don't do procedures well. Also, the lady on the Reception called N did a wonderful job and had a great customer service manner. She encouraged me to sign up for future check-ups. Overall, a really good experience for someone who doesn't enjoy going to medical or dental appointments."

Kind regards

Dale Dally-Watkins