



Dear team,

We have been endeavouring to visit sites and check in with you following the extreme weather event and to thank each of you for working so well together to care for our patients and residents during the severe weather event.

It was an anxious time for people given the unknowns. Some staff had never been through a cyclone and did not know what to expect. Others have had previous experience of flooding events that increased their anxiety.

I am grateful to the many staff who came to work to ensure our patients and residents were safe despite juggling their own personal commitments including childcare and caring for elderly parents, as well as cyclone preparations. Many of you worked extra shifts or stayed overnight so all services had safe staffing levels. Thank you.

I was impressed by the stories from staff who safely navigated the many detours and challenging weather conditions to get to work. I also want to thank staff who came to work while managing family commitments at home without power over several days.

The planning work leading into the weekend was exceptional.

Administration staff rescheduled hundreds of appointments and clinicians case managed every patient in the home environment to ensure that they had appropriate plans for care as well as an ample supply of medications and medical supplies.

The palliative care team used innovative strategies they had learned from a previous extreme weather event to make sure that patients had adequate pain relief.

The extensive planning in bedded services ensured adequate supplies of linen and food for both patients and staff staying over as well as strategies to manage waste.

A big thanks to our BEMS team for their extensive work before, during and now after the severe weather event in preparing, securing and maintaining all of our oral health clinics and community sites.

Our thoughts continue to remain with any staff or their extended families who have been impacted by the cyclone, associated flooding and/or power outages.

Thank you for all of your inspiring efforts.

There are so many precious moments and stories. Below are just some of them from the past few weeks.

Care in the home

Caring for around 60 patients in their homes, was no small undertaking, especially given hospital in the home patients had a variety of medical conditions, medication requirements and were located across Brisbane North, Moreton Bay and Bribie Island.

Our Hospital in the Home team took it in their stride to individually case manage their patients and developed personalised care plans that encompassed medications, supplies, carer training, and phone and telehealth contact.



Commitment to our oral health patients

For oral health in particular, I want to thank the administration officers who worked to reschedule hundreds of non-urgent cases.

Thank you to the oral health teams who were flexible in their work locations to ensure that all emergency appointments were managed.

And, a very special mention to one Caboolture Satellite Health Centre dentist!

This person proactively made accommodation arrangements to stay at Caboolture so that he wouldn't get stranded and could treat his patients the next day.

Now, this person also lives on the southside which took the brunt of the cyclone. This truly inspirational and humble dentist deserves every accolade and praise - Well done!

Keeping our patients well fed

Electrical disruptions, coupled with one workable oven and no plating line didn't stop the food services staff at Brighton Health Campus from ensuring that hundreds of patients, residents and staff (who stayed overnight), were fed during the worst of the recent weather.

These brave food staff also took on the windy weather and safely moved food trolleys between the main facility and separate buildings including Gannet House.





Preparing for the worst

Our Community Palliative Care Team had to think creatively to ensure that our most vulnerable patients and their carers were supported at home.

Clinical Nurse Albert Beniga said:

"The most difficult challenge was the uncertainty and the magnitude of the cyclone, so we had to prepare for the worst, especially where we couldn't get to a patient's home to administer medications.

"Many of our palliative care patients require intravenous transfusions at home which we regularly change.

"As part of the planning we ensured that our patients switched to oral medications safely or we supported carers to safely administer transfusions.

"We identified which patients and carers would not be able to manage during the cyclone and made sure that they were transferred to hospital last week."



Mercy dash

It was all hands on deck for operational staff not only in the early hours of Saturday morning but through the end of last week.

Operational staff were at the forefront of ensuring bed linen and consumables were well stocked at a number of COH bedded services.

Brendan put up his hand late last week to dig out his truck licence and make a mercy dash to Zillmere, Brighton and Coinda House.

As a result, all of the residents and patients had enough material supply for the weekend.



BEMS clean up and pitching into support

Clean up across all of our oral health and community facilities is in safe hands with our BEMS teams, with the removal of half a dozen fallen and damaged trees at Brighton.

Fortunately, there was no major damage to our health facilities and oral health clinics, and the gardens and recreational areas will be back to looking amazing in the coming weeks.

I praise the work of all the BEMS staff who pitched in last week including the plumbers, electricians, plasters and carpenters who hand delivered and filled around 1,000 sandbags for many oral health school clinics and community facilities.

At the sametime, it was a worrying time for all our bedded services but all of our operational, security and clinical staff were on hand to ensure residents and staff were safe.

For Enrolled Nurse Lockie (below right) the biggest challenge was making sure the Gannet House residents were comfortable and kept calm through the weather.

For security guards like Glenn (below left) it was about addressing what landed in front of them such as securing doors and windows, answering alarms or just helping clean up.



A Final Shoutout - Free Flowers Alfred Recoveries - Tested to 100km!

Our new Executive Director of Happiness, Ross was handing out some lovingly-crafted wooden flowers recycled from their previous hanging spots in Brighton trees.

"It's all about giving a bit of happiness every day and after the events of the past week it was important to give away some of these flowers to bring a smile to people's faces - young and old."

"Unfortunately, we had to take them down last week before the cyclone arrived. They were going to be thrown away. So, I reconfigured and tidied them up so people could reuse them as part of the recovery effort."



The hanging flowers are handcrafted and painted by members of the Sandgate Men's Shed.

The Sandgate Men's Shed is an important part of the care, connections and supports provided at Brighton, especially the residents of the residential aged care facility - Gannet House.

Thank you all for your dedication, commitment and resilience over a few very challenging weeks.

Glynis Schultz
Executive Director
Community and Oral Health

Metro North Health acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, and pays respect to Elders, past, present and future.