

Metro North Health

# Message from the Incident Controller

Dr Elizabeth Rushbrook



Dear colleagues

The Bureau of Meteorology predicts abnormally high tides, damaging wind gusts and heavy to locally intense rainfall which may lead to dangerous and life-threatening flash flooding as Tropical Cyclone Alfred approaches and crosses the coast late Thursday/early Friday this week. Strong winds are expected to be experienced from Wednesday evening.

## Essential health workers

As essential healthcare workers, we are all required to help our vulnerable patients and community during this time. Essential workers are those staff in patient facing services including clinical staff, but also clinical support staff and operational staff who are essential to running our hospitals and health centre facilities.

If you believe you are unable to attend work over the coming days, you must inform your line manager immediately to seek permission about taking leave and to make alternate arrangements. You may be eligible for [special flood, cyclone and storm leave](#) at the discretion of your line manager.

I want to reiterate that frontline and frontline support staff should look to attend work wherever possible, working from another facility if required. Staff are encouraged to bring essential medication and any additional supplies, such as a change of clothes, to be prepared in the event they are unable to travel home immediately following their shift.

Support is available at all of our facilities to access emergency accommodation, meals and snacks if you find you are stranded at work for a period of time to enable you to rest when not otherwise rostered.

Any non-frontline staff who can work from home, should consider work from home arrangements for Thursday and Friday, in consultation with your line manager.

## Postponement of non-essential services

All non-essential planned care, including surgery, outpatients and endoscopy has been postponed from Thursday 6 March and Friday 7 March. In addition, where possible, Wednesday planned care surgical services will be primarily day surgery (with all other planned care continuing as programmed).

Please prioritise discharging any patients whose care could be safely continued at home or consider utilising Virtual Ward or Hospital in the Home. We should maximise utilisation of virtual outpatient appointments where possible this week.

The Virtual Emergency Care Service will be increasing its capacity from 0800 Thursday

through to 2200 Monday to meet potential demand from those unable to physically attend the Emergency Department. However, our Emergency Departments remain open and ready to care for the community.

Any non-essential meetings and events should be cancelled at this time, while we are in STAND-UP phase.

### **Identification and support to vulnerable patients**

There has been a lot of work to identify and support vulnerable patients in our care to be prepared for this severe weather event, prioritising those known to reside in areas where weather impact is predicted to be the highest. I would like to thank all those that have worked to ensure our renal dialysis, cancer care, palliative care, transplant, HITH/PACS and pregnant patients have modified care plans in place where required.

We are working closely with the Department of Housing and Public Works to clarify support and placement of homeless patients into safe accommodation.

We are also working with Councils to ensure that when evacuation centres and / or places of refuges are opened there is public information in relation to the availability of power at those places. This will assist members of the public that are oxygen dependant to identify a centre that can support their need to access power if required.

### **Reminder about travel to work**

Please remain safe, take extreme care on the roads and under no circumstance cross flooded waterways.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services advises that people should:

- Never drive, walk or ride through flood waters. If it's flooded, forget it.
- Keep clear of creeks and storm drains.
- For emergency assistance contact the SES on 132 500.

### **Where can I stay up to date on information?**

We will continue to update staff via our IC Message each day. Clinical and frontline staff should be sure their personal details, including mobile number, are up to date in myHR in the event we need to send you an SMS.

A comprehensive list of resources is available on the staff extranet page: [Flooding & Storms - Staff Extranet \(health.qld.gov.au\)](#)

Weather updates and warnings are available from <http://www.bom.gov.au/qld/warnings/>

For road closures visit:

- [Moreton Bay Council area](#)
- [Somerset Council area](#)
- [Brisbane City Council](#)
- [Queensland Traffic](#)

The Queensland Government disaster webpage provides a range of information, including traffic updates and alerts, road and school closures, emergency alerts and emergency assistance. Visit <https://www.qld.gov.au/alerts>.

For school and early childcare centre closures visit: [Emergency education facility closures](#)

Thank you for all your work.

Regards,

Liz Rushbrook  
Metro North Health Incident Controller

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



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