

Metro North Health

Message from the Incident Controller

Dr Elizabeth Rushbrook



Dear colleagues

First and foremost, I have been asked to pass on to all Metro North Health staff a heartfelt and hearty thankyou from the Board Chair, Board Deputy Chair, the Board and the Metro North Senior Executive Team for your hard work and diligence in preparing our services for this rare cyclone event. Your efforts are noticed and appreciated.

The Bureau of Meteorology advises that TC Alfred is continuing to move westwards toward the South East Queensland coast. It is currently expected to cross the coast early on Saturday morning.

Forecasting continues to predict very high tides, damaging wind gusts and heavy to intense rainfall which may lead to dangerous and life-threatening flash flooding.

Many services across South East Queensland, including supermarkets, have now closed ahead of the expected severe weather tomorrow and on the weekend. Some petrol stations may also close at the height of the cyclone, please take the time now to ensure your vehicle has sufficient fuel to get to work over a few days.

As an essential service, our emergency departments and hospitals will remain open and available to provide care throughout the weather event.

To support staff attendance at work, car parking is free for staff at all Metro North facilities until Sunday 9 March. Only staff members, patients and/or their carers should utilise facility car parks.

TC Alfred Vidcast

With TC Alfred now expected to cross the coast late Friday night or early Saturday morning, together with the Chief Operating Officer, Stephen Eaton, I will be hosting a Vidcast tomorrow at 12.30pm where we will provide the latest information and answer questions. I look forward to seeing you then.

Facility preparations and updates

Facility and BEMS teams have secured our infrastructure in preparation for the cyclone crossing the coast, including sandbagging, removing loose items and ensuring all generators are operational. Secured items are not to be used until further notice.

Those facilities with expansion or other construction underway have had these sites secured.

Facility fact sheets are available on the [staff extranet](#) and are updated regularly. Please check these for information on staff accommodation, car parking and more.

Essential health workers

As a reminder, essential workers are those in patient facing roles, including clinical staff. Clinical support and operational staff who are essential to the running of the hospital are also essential. Even if your clinical area is not operating, you may be asked to work in other areas of the hospital that needs additional resources.

Essential workers should attend work as rostered during the weather event. If you are rostered but are isolated from work, please contact your supervisor to make arrangements to attend another facility if required.

If you believe you are a non-essential worker, please speak to your line manager to confirm this and your work arrangements for the coming days.

There is a risk that you may become isolated in the workplace temporarily after a shift. All major facilities have plans in place to support staff to shelter in place if this occurs. Where possible, please consider bringing essential items you may need to work. For example, essential medication, a change of clothes, toiletries and/or a 'swag' / pillow / sleeping bag. While facilities have some equipment and supplies, these may be limited in some circumstances.

Our primary concern during this weather event is the health, safety and wellbeing of all our people. If the severe weather event impacts your ability to attend work as rostered, you must inform your line manager immediately to discuss options including work from home or leave. You may be eligible for [special flood, cyclone and storm leave](#) at the discretion of your line manager. More information will be provided in the short term on the Emergency and Disaster response [intranet](#) site.

Please make every effort to get to work where it is safe to do so. Your attendance at work plays an important role in caring for our vulnerable patients and community at this time.

Staff shelter in place

If you need to remain on site to shelter in place before, after or between shifts there are provisions in place at all facilities to provide access to 'austere' places for you to stay. It is not mandatory for you to stay.

In limited circumstances, it may be mutually agreed for you to be available to provide additional services during this time. This is not to be automatically assumed, nor is it mandatory.

- If you are **not** requested and/or **do not agree** to be available during your non-rostered time to provide additional work during this time, you will not be paid whilst sheltering in place at work.
- If you are requested **and** agree to be available during your non-rostered time to be 'on call' to provide additional work during this time, you will receive an on-call allowance in accordance with your respective award conditions. Your AVAC will need to be approved via your Incident Management Team. Additionally, you will be paid overtime for any additional work you are recalled to do.

In short, you should discuss your circumstance with the staff supporting the on site accommodation arrangements to clarify if you are 'on call or not when accessing this emergency safe shelter arrangements.

At all times however, I urge you to be mindful of taking adequate rest between shifts to

manage the risks of fatigue.

Postponement of non-essential services

Non-essential planned care for Thursday 6 March and Friday 7 March has been postponed, including surgery, outpatients and endoscopy.

Please prioritise making alternate arrangements for any patients whose care can be safely continued at home by considering utilising Virtual Ward or Hospital in the Home. We should maximise utilisation of virtual outpatient appointments were possible this week.

Information about discharge considerations during this weather event is available in the facility factsheets on the [staff extranet](#).

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.

Non-essential activities

All non-essential activities across our facilities must now be cancelled. This includes training, education and meetings. Please speak to your line manager if you are unsure what is considered non-essential.

Identification and support to vulnerable patients

There has been a lot of work to identify and support vulnerable patients in our catchment 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.

Updated lists of places of refuge and evacuation centres with power for medical requirements have been established by councils, details are available at the below links:

Brisbane City Council: [Emergency dashboard | Brisbane City Council](#)

City of Moreton Bay: [Evacuation centres and places of refuge - City of Moreton Bay](#)

Somerset Regional Council: [Disaster Emergency Dashboard](#)

People experiencing homelessness who present at our facilities who do not require our care should be referred to the closest place of refuge.

Brighton Health Campus

You may have seen some media reporting that Brighton is one of the suburbs in our catchment that may be affected by flooding.

I would like to confirm there are no plans to evacuate the Brighton Health Campus. The campus is not expected to flood and is safe for both staff and patients.

Staff who work at the campus should present for work as rostered where it is safe to do so. Please contact your line manager if you are not able to attend a shift.

I will be joining a Staff Forum for Brighton staff tomorrow morning at 9.30am to discuss these arrangements further and answer questions from staff.

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.

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>.

Please take care of yourselves and ensure you follow all warnings and advisories.

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.



**Metro North
Health**



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