

# Executive Message

## Metro North Health



### Acting Chief Operating Officer Stephen Eaton

Dear colleagues,

I've been in Metro North for three months now and I've very much enjoyed meeting staff and getting to know the organisation. Coming from north Queensland I genuinely didn't expect that my experience with cyclones would come in handy in Metro North though!

We're heading into another long weekend, and I wanted to reflect on Labour Day. Held on the first Monday of May in Queensland each year, Labour Day recognises workers' contributions towards the nation's economy and in supporting the community as well as the importance of staff having fair and decent work conditions.

Metro North employs approximately 25,000 staff who each play a role in supporting the delivery of high-quality health care to patients within Australia's largest health service. We recognise that working in healthcare can be challenging at times, and we are committed to providing all our workforce with fair, inclusive, and safe conditions.

While Labour Day is a public holiday for many staff within our organisation, there are also many staff who will be working to ensure our patients can continue to receive the care they need. Thank you to all staff across Metro North for your ongoing commitment.



### Access to Care

With the recent Easter and Anzac Day long weekends, our emergency departments have been very busy. Keeping patients flowing in and out of EDs to ensure people get the care

they need involves a whole of system approach to our hospitals and the HHS. Patient flow is a priority of the government and of the Metro North Operational Leadership Team. We acknowledge the efforts of all staff and in the last few months, we have seen a significant reduction in the number of patients who have waited over 24 hours in our Emergency Departments and a corresponding improvement in our patient off-stretcher time (POST).

Some of the work underway to improve flow includes strategies such as increasing our emergency surgery sessions, a focus on weekend discharges, and community provision for aged care and NDIS needs. There has been the introduction of a new dashboard for monitoring and intervention, along with a more formalised process to escalate patients who are experiencing long stays across our facilities. As we work together on these broader initiatives, I will keep you updated on the progress being made.

Reducing elective surgery waitlists are another key priority and, while we are still recovering from reduced services due to the recent cyclone, we have seen a stabilisation of our total waitlist. We are working on both increasing our internal capacity to provide more sessions across our facilities and also external capacity through the Surgery Connect program. Thank you to everyone who is working on this important provision of care across Metro North Heath.

We are currently working through our next service agreement with the Department of Health and advocating on your behalf to reach an agreement. The new agreement is likely to have fewer key performance indicators, down to around 10, which will help us focus our energy on the priorities of the Director-General and the government.

## Flu vaccination

As of today, 3,835 Metro North staff have received their vaccination which equates to 16 per cent of our workforce. This year, we are aiming to achieve an 85 per cent vaccination rate to ensure we are well protected this winter, especially with an expected rise in flu cases across our community.

Our Staff Influenza Vaccination program is now underway across the HHS and I encourage staff to take the necessary steps to protect themselves as we move into the cooler weather.

[Find out when flu vaccinations are happening in your area.](#)

## Have Your Say survey

The Metro North Have Your Say staff survey kicks off in just over a week, on 12 May and there is plenty of planning going on behind the scenes to enable all staff to be able to complete the survey. Have Your Say hubs will pop up across facilities with tablets for staff without access to a computer to take part, and if you're a manager, I'd encourage you to start scheduling time now for your team to do the survey during one of their shifts between 12 to 30 May.

For the past few months, we have been communicating some of the great work that is a result of your feedback in the 2023 Have Your Say survey. Take a look at the infographic below which showcases just some of the impressive statistics and initiatives that have been implemented at a Metro North level (click the image for a closer look).



## COH SET forum

Yesterday the Metro North Senior Executive Team (SET) met at Brighton Health Campus. It was great to chat with staff at the forum and get a better understanding of the issues that matter to you.

Some of the things we discussed were the development of our anti-racism campaign, the Respect@Work framework, the Have Your Say survey, onboarding nurses and graduates, and strengthening our health equity agenda. Thank you to everyone who attended.

## Administration Professionals Day

Today is Administration Professionals Day. As a health service, our focus is on clinical services and providing the best care for our community. That wouldn't be possible without the support of administration staff across the health service. Some of the many things our administration streams do to support clinical staff include being the front face of our clinics, booking patients for appointments, looking after our finances, providing legal and HR advice, celebrating our achievements through positive stories, answering thousands of patient phone calls and emails each week, coordinating development opportunities, and

supporting leaders and teams with day-to-day administration tasks.

So, an enormous thank you to all our administration professionals and administration streams across Metro North.

Monday is also International Day of the Midwife. I would like to acknowledge midwives across Metro North and thank you for your work and dedication to caring for parents and babies every day.

Kind regards,  
Stephen

Acting Executive Director, Clinical Services  
**Dr Jason Jenkins**



### Innovation Showcase

Healthcare Excellence and Innovation (HEI) and the HELIX Hub are excited to present the 2025 Metro North Innovation Showcase on Friday 13 June.

We received an impressive 55 abstracts, showcasing inspiring ideas that will make this event a fantastic opportunity to highlight Metro North's innovative thinking and practices.

The full program is available on [QHEPS](#); however, I am pleased to share a few program highlights that are sure to captivate attendees and make this event truly memorable.

Our keynote speaker, Professor Victoria Brazil, emergency physician and medical educator, is a Professor of Emergency Medicine and Medical Director of the Simulation Service at the Gold Coast Health Service. She also leads the Bond University Translational Simulation Collaborative. Professor Brazil will share her expert insights about translational simulation in healthcare and its intersection with innovation.

[Simulcast](#) podcaster Jesse Spur will join Professor Brazil, a co-producer, for a live podcast recording featuring a dynamic conversation on "Innovation – Technique, not Technology. The Art and Science of Problem Discovery."

With six weeks to go, the program is packed with engaging speakers, lightning presentations, interactive sessions and mini design sprints running concurrently.

Registrations are filling up fast, and tickets are available from [Eventbrite](#). For more information about this event visit [QHEPS](#).



Regards,  
Jason

Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer  
**Adj. Prof. Alanna Geary**



**Mental Health (MH) and Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Nursing - Strength with Immersion (SwIM)**

I am pleased to announce that Metro North Health is hosting the statewide MH and AOD Nursing SwIM program, funded through the Office of the Chief Nurse Officer (OCNO). This is a fantastic opportunity to support early and mid-career nurses and/or midwives to develop skills in the specialty of MH and/or AOD nursing.

The MH and AOD SwIM offers a structured program to upskill nurses/midwives by providing a clinical MH/AOD placement (immersion) within tertiary level mental health and/or alcohol and other drug services across any of the Metro North Mental Health sites/services.

Listening to staff across Metro North, there can be challenges and complexities in caring for patients who have a mental illness and/or a drug and/or alcohol concern, especially when clinicians feel ill-equipped to provide care or interventions in a non-mental health setting. The MH/AOD SwIM program is an excellent opportunity for nurses and/or midwives to be exposed and develop some foundational skills to support this vulnerable cohort of patients.

I would really like to see strong uptake and support from all MNH sites and directorates to the MH/AOD Nursing SwIM, so that we are investing in our staff to provide the best possible contemporary care to the patients from our community.

Please discuss with your line manager. This is a valuable program that will help us build capacity and capability on our nursing and/or midwifery workforce.

[Strength with Immersion Model Programs - Expression of Interest | Queensland Health](#)

Warm regards,  
Alanna

Acting Chief Allied Health Practitioner

**Michelle Stute**



Dear team,

### Translating research into practice

A new four-part *Creating Sustainable Clinical Change Education Series* commenced this week with our partners from the Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer Clinical Excellence Queensland, and Metro South. Over 50 Metro North allied health staff have registered for this series which runs for one hour fortnightly via Teams. Over the series we will be covering topics including: *Finding the Right Evidence*, *Thinking Like A Change Agent*, *Measuring What Matters* and *Translating Research into Practice in the Real World*. Recordings of each session will be made available to registrants. It's not too late to join in: [Click here to register](#).

Collaborative *Metro North AH-TRIP x HELIX Evidence Implementation Start Up Grants* will be launched in August 2025. We will be offering two short workshops after the launch to get your idea ready for applications which will open October 2025. The office of the Chief Allied Health Practitioner, Metro North will be funding four grants of up to \$10,000 to support project planning, implementation or disinvestment, and evaluation. Successful applicants will also receive monthly check-ins with a panel of experts and fortnightly mentoring.

If you're a Metro North allied health professional with a clinical problem, idea for a knowledge translation, innovation project (including co-design), or you're interested in learning more about the opportunities above, please reach out to Hannah Olufson, Workforce Development Officer – Knowledge Translation via email: [AHTRIP\\_MN@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:AHTRIP_MN@health.qld.gov.au) to chat more.

### Statewide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander training programs

Metro North Allied Health hosts the statewide First Nations Training Pathways Programs, Deadly Start and the Cadetship Program.

The expansion of the Deadly Start Program has seen 243 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students enrolled in the Certificate II in Health Support Services. Hospital and Health Services are now engaging in interviews and placement planning, with many students stepping into health facilities for the first time through organised excursions. Regional training delivery is also underway, with block training being delivered in remote communities such as Woorabinda, Cooktown and Charleville. In addition, work is progressing to support trainees who wish to transition into six-month, one-day per week employment opportunities following the completion of their traineeship in June. This important pathway will help trainees continue building their skills and experience within Queensland Health.

We are also seeing significant momentum across the **First Nations Cadetship Program**, where strong interest has led to the funding of an additional 57 positions for 2025 by the First Nations Health Office, resulting in 117 cadets participating in the program this year. Recently Wide Bay HHS has come onboard the program, which means all 16 HHSs are hosting cadets in this second year of operation. The Queensland Health cadetship program is the largest nationally, contributing significantly to our strategic priorities to grow our workforce and improve health equity. Cadets are enrolled in a diverse range of courses preparing them for careers in nursing and core allied health disciplines, and also public health, pharmacy, finance and accounting. Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all of these fields is critical for us to improve health outcomes and address service gaps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Across both initiatives, we have now entered the critical monitoring phase, ensuring our cadets and trainees are progressing with their clinical hours, placement experiences, and future employment planning.

A special highlight this month was the Cherbourg visit by Brett Appo and Jamie-Lee Black, members of the First Nations Training Pathways Program team, who met with local Elders. This early engagement is part of the pre-planning for the 2026 intake across both the Deadly Start and Cadetship programs. Building strong community partnerships through engagement with Elders is key to supporting successful future intakes.



*Visit with Cherbourg Elders*

## Patient handling

Metro North Allied Health hosts the Metro North Patient Handling Coordination Unit. An effective patient handling program has the ability to improve safety culture and the wellbeing and skills of staff, as well as reduce staff injuries and patient falls, skin tears, pressure injuries and length of stay.

The patient handling work practices audit schedule is changing from annually to quarterly so we can provide more regular feedback to workers, line managers and Directorate Patient Handling Leads. The audits involve short notice observations of patient handling in action. If you are a Patient Handling Coach or Lead Trainer and are able to assist with conducting audits in May, August or November this year, please [get in touch](#). Full training is provided.

Patient Handling professional development workshops, designed for Patient Handling Lead Trainers and Coaches, are provided virtually and face to face and can be booked through [TMS](#). While they are an annual requirement for Lead Trainers and Coaches, they are open to anyone with an interest in improving patient handling practices. If you can't find a session at a convenient time or a relevant topic, there is a library of recorded past virtual workshops available [here](#). If you view a recorded workshop, please then complete this [form](#) so that your TMS can be updated.

Do you have an interest in improving patient handling practices across your organisation? In order to create a multidisciplinary patient handling program, we need both allied health and nursing staff to take up this train-the-trainer role. Interested? Complete this [Am I eligible to become a Patient Handling Lead Trainer](#) questionnaire to find out more. For more information about patient handling contact Zoe Moss, Patient Handling Coordinator Metro North at [metronorthpatienthandling@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:metronorthpatienthandling@health.qld.gov.au).

Regards,  
Michelle

Chief Information Officer  
**Damien O'Rourke**



Dear colleagues,

Earlier this week, eHealth Cyber Security became aware of a vulnerability in Apple products which could allow cyber criminals to potentially gain access to devices. If you are using Apple products, including iPhone, iPad, and Mac, you should install the latest product upgrades to ensure your devices are protected against this vulnerability. By upgrading your device, you will protect it and any connected networks from cyber criminals who might otherwise get access to your device via malicious links or attachments in messages or emails.

This is also a good reminder for us all to make sure we are cyber safe with our personal and work devices. You can improve your cyber resilience and help prevent cyber attacks by following these simple steps:

1. Avoid clicking suspicious links or attachments in messages and emails
2. Set up multifactor authentication where possible
3. Use unique, complex passphrases to secure accounts
4. Be cautious of sharing personal information on social media.

You can report suspicious emails in Microsoft Outlook by clicking the Report Message button. For tips and tricks on spotting phishing attempts, check out the [eHealth Cyber Security QHEPS site](#).



If you need to report a cyber security breach, please log an [information security incident](#) with the eHealth Cyber Security Group. For any questions regarding this incident, please contact [cybersecurity@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:cybersecurity@health.qld.gov.au).

Regards,  
Damien

**Metro North Health**



We uphold our commitment to health equity through our Values in Action  
Respect | Integrity | Compassion | High performance | Teamwork

Metro North Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Land upon which we live, work and walk, and pay our respects to Elders both past and present.



**Queensland  
Government**

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