

Metro North Health

Message from the

Executive Director STARS

Dale Dally-Watkins



Summary:

- Walk in Your Shoes
- Have Your Say update
- Metro North Staff Excellence Award finalists
- Taiwanese delegation visit to VECS
- Food Services and Dietetics success
- Staff profile

Message feedback

Audience: Staff

Read time: 5 min

For: Information

Dear Colleagues,

Last month was our busiest on record for procedural services with 1,885 patients through level 2 in October. Of this number, 1,029 were surgical patients, our highest ever number and the first time we broke the 1,000-patient mark. These numbers are making a significant contribution to reducing wait time for patients. Thank you to all our teams in procedural services for all the work you do.

It is only fitting then that this week we are also celebrating Perioperative Nurses Week, recognising all our nurses who ensure that procedures go seamlessly and who provide patients and their families with reassurance and compassion at what is often a stressful time.

You can read more about two of our perioperative nurses in this fortnight's staff profile.

Walk in Your Shoes

Last week, I was invited by Justine Wells to spend some time in the Level 2 procedural space. I spoke to staff in endoscopy about the success of the culturally safe pathway and the different reasons why patients may not have had adequate preparation for their procedure. When asked what was one of



the best things about working at STARS, staff highlighted the wonderful culture at STARS and the people they work with.

Thank you to all the staff and patients who took time to speak with me during their busy morning.

If you would like to nominate your area for 'Walk in Your Shoes', email me on Stars_Execdir@health.qld.gov.au with your name, unit and a suitable day and time.



Have Your Say survey update

As identified by Level 2 staff, we have a wonderful team culture here at STARS. A good team culture is not only associated with improved performance and staff retention but also encourages collaboration, problem-solving and creativity. There is, however, always room for improvement.

I've sent a friendly reminder to managers this week about the importance of team discussions around local Have Your Say results and the expectation that all teams, whether they received a Have Your Say report or not, set two goals decided on as a group on how to improve culture in their own area.

Leaders are also required to set a personal goal to improve the way they lead and then input

all goals into the [Have Your Say goal setting form](#)—so there is more visibility over action taken off the back of the survey.

Have Your Say action is driven by our leaders, but it is the responsibility of all team members to be actively involved in change. If you haven't seen your local Have Your Say results, please reach out to your line manager.

There are some great [resources](#) available on QHEPS to assist managers with team discussions and goal setting.

At a directorate level, Director of Nursing Ben Ballard is working closely with me on what Have Your Say action will look like at STARS, and we are finalising an action plan with the leadership team. I look forward to sharing this with you in the coming months.

Metro North Staff Excellence Award finalists

I am very pleased to see that STARS have a number of finalists in this year's Metro North Staff Excellence Awards.

Congratulations to :

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff
Lynette Bell

Excellence in Performance
Dietetics and Food Services

Emerging Leaders
Peter Hancock

Excellence in Training and Education
STARS Interprofessional Collaborative Practice Team

Leadership in Action
Mick Collins

People Focus
Team 6A
Wade Shaw

RBWH Foundation Impact Award
Haylee Kajewski
Raj Singh

If you haven't yet got your tickets to the event, to be held on Friday 28 November, there is still time with [tickets on sale](#) until 9am next Friday 21 November.

I hear this year's gala dinner event will be bigger and better with a four-hour food and drinks package, live band, photo booth and a 360 degrees video booth. The tickets are \$100 per person or \$800 for a table of eight.



Spinal services update

There have been several recent meetings recently with the Department regarding future plans for spinal cord injury services in Queensland. The Department are now putting together a submission for Treasury. As you will be aware, we submitted our business case in December 2024. I'll continue to keep you updated on any developments in this area.

Taiwanese delegate visit to VECS

On Tuesday, a delegation from the Taiwan Society of Home Health Care visited Metro North to learn more about the Virtual Emergency Care Service (VECS). The delegation visited the 'engine room' to see first-hand where our emergency doctors and nurses take the calls.

Nursing Director Lisa Harvey presented to the group on how VECS works in practice, the impact it's having across Queensland, and how it's shaping the future of emergency care. The delegation asked questions about how the service is funded, patient eligibility and recruitment/retention of staff.

Thank you to Rajni Nair for facilitating the delegation visit and showcasing VECS.



Are you impacted by occupation violence? Help co-design local solutions

The Metro North Clinical Council has been asked by Acting Chief Executive, Nick Steele to identify quick actions we can take as an organisation to reduce the impact of occupation violence and support our staff when it occurs.

Expressions of interest to attend a one-day OV workshop are now open and will close this coming Wednesday, 19 November. Managers are encouraged to find time for staff and themselves to attend where possible, especially those staff working in high-risk areas. This is an important issue we need to address and one that came through loud and clear in the Have Your Say results.

Date: Thursday 4 December

Time: 8.15am to 3pm

Location: Brighton Health Hub campus

Experts from Legal, Clinical Governance, QPS, Health and Safety, and your peers with lived experience will discuss *"when can you legally and ethically refuse patient care"* and answer your tough questions. If you can't make the workshop but would like to submit a question for discussion, you can do so through your Clinical Council Chairs [here](#).

[Express your interest now](#), spots are limited.

Food Services and Dietetics success

A big congratulations to Steph Park and Rajesh Pundir who were this year's winners at the annual Hospitality in Healthcare Culinary competition. The annual competition saw four finalist teams compete against the clock, with chef and TV/radio presenter Alastair McLeod MCing the event. Steph and Rajesh won with their standout dish, crispy duck breast with citrus pumpkin, cocoa granola, beetroot and a spiced gastrique. It is wonderful to see the culinary skills of our food services staff recognised.



November progress

A number of our staff are once again taking part in Movember this year which raises awareness and funding for men's health including mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer.

At the half-way mark there are some very impressive moustaches around at STARS. You can monitor the team members progress and make a donation to the [cause here](#).



Trans Awareness Week

A reminder that Trans Awareness Week runs from 13-19 November, to help raise awareness of transgender, gender diverse and non-binary people, the issues facing these communities, and the ways people can get involved as allies to improve lives and create a more fair and equal world for everyone.

To celebrate the week there are a number of activities at the Herston campus including:

- Sit & Knit Club | 1pm - 2pm | 18 November - Seminar Room 1, Education Centre
- Picnic | 12pm - 1pm | 19 November - grass area near the Education Centre
- Lived Experience Session | 10:30am - 11:30am | 20 November - Education Centre Auditorium and on [Teams](#).

By learning more about trans experiences and amplifying trans voices, we can all help build a more inclusive and affirming environment here at STARS and Metro North.

Staff profile

This fortnight we are profiling two of our perioperative nurses, Bree and Kalyca. Fittingly, the theme for the 2025 Perioperative Nurses Week is S.T.A.R.S, recognising all the essential roles of the perioperative community - **Scrub/scout, Technicians, Anaesthetics, Recovery and Support**.

Bree and Kalyca share some insights into STARS, which supports approximately 250 surgical patients a week on average.

"It truly takes a village, albeit a sterile, highly organised and exceptionally well-trained village to ensure each procedure is a success," explained Bree.

"Each procedure requires at least ten team members, with many more if the procedure is complex, and we often hear how much the patients appreciate this new facility."

"The team here at STARS are a great village to be a part of!"



Patient compliment

This fortnight's patient feedback is from a recent procedural patient who was very impressed with the overall level of service provided to her, from preop through to our PODSS service. For patients who are anxious about their upcoming surgery, the calm and reassuring presence of staff can make all the difference.

I would just like to express my gratitude for the wonderful care I received during my recent ENT surgery. From admission through to discharge, everyone I encountered provided such kind, professional, and attentive care.

Although I was very anxious initially, the preop nurse and student nurse immediately put me at ease with their calm and warm energy. The anaesthetic and theatre team were equally lovely - efficient, reassuring, and compassionate throughout. I'd like to especially thank the wonderful recovery nurse whose gentle presence and kindness helped to calm me as I woke up from anaesthetic and the excellent ward staff who checked in regularly, making sure I was comfortable. Even after discharge, when I contacted the PODSS team with a few questions, the nurse I spoke to, Rebecca, was so patient, kind, and reassuring.

What could have been a very stressful experience was made smooth and comforting thanks to such an amazing team. I'm incredibly grateful to everyone at STARS for their amazing care and compassion. Thank you all so much!

Kind Regards

Dale Dally-Watkins
Executive Director
STARS



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.

Metro North Health's vision

Creating healthier futures together—where innovation and research meets compassionate care and community voices shape our services.



**Queensland
Government**

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