

Executive Message

Metro North Health



Summary:

- Staff flu vaccination clinics
- Nursing and midwifery feedback sessions
- Symphony project
- Outpatient redesign
- Anzac Day
- Nursing and midwifery scholarships
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health update
- Metro North Compassionate Care Principles
- Lifting of SmartSalary suspension.

Message feedback

Chief Executive Nick Steele



Audience: All staff



Read time: 4 min



For: Information

Hi Everyone,

As we head towards winter, protecting our health against influenza and other respiratory illnesses becomes increasingly important, especially as staff members of Queensland's largest health service.

This week, I rolled up my sleeve at STARS to get my flu vaccination along with some members of the Senior Executive Team and Metro North Board. A big thank you to all of our Infection Control teams who are expertly managing our staff flu vaccination clinics which have now commenced at most major sites across Metro North.



Staff can access their flu vaccination at any staff clinic. Details of these clinics are [available on the extranet](#).



Nursing and midwifery feedback sessions

During the last couple of weeks, Metro North's Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Alanna Geary and I have been undertaking sessions with a representative group of Grade 7 nursing and midwifery staff to understand some of the issues that confront nursing and midwifery staff each day and the health service more broadly.

To date, we have spoken to around 100 staff with the view to speak another 200 staff in the coming weeks. It's been excellent having the opportunity to speak so informally with our frontline managers, and I thank them for their honesty and transparency in sharing their insights. All feedback is valuable and helps us drive positive change to assist staff with their day-to-day work.

For those staff who have been unable to attend these sessions, we will be hosting similar forums for all professional groups in the coming months. I look forward to these discussions and learning more about how we can work together to improve Metro North.

Symphony project

Last week I said I would share an update on the Digital Metro North team's progress in building *Symphony*, a new, digital care coordination platform designed to bring together all the information, tasks and communications needed to coordinate patient care in real time.

At its core, Symphony acts as a 'digital conductor', ensuring each part of the patient's care journey, from clinic appointments to follow-up tasks and communication, happens in harmony. Instead of relying on manual processes, spreadsheets and phone calls, Symphony automatically integrates information from multiple clinical and administrative systems, creating a single, real-time picture of what needs to be done and by whom.

Symphony works by intelligently automating care coordination and task management. Using robotic process automation, the platform allocates tasks, schedules appointments, and captures activity reducing delays and freeing up clinical and administrative time. It introduces secure multimodal communication tools, supporting phone, video, and chat functions so patients can interact with their care team seamlessly and will enable new

models of care.

This work is critical to Metro North Health's goal of delivering efficient, high-quality care. By replacing disconnected and manual processes with real-time automation, Symphony will help prevent missed appointments, delayed procedures, and unnecessary administrative workload. Clinicians will spend more time caring for patients and less time chasing information, while patients will enjoy smoother, more transparent communication.

The Digital Metro North team is seeing early support for Symphony coming from clinical areas including Queensland Telestroke Service, the Older Persons Emergency Network, and Outpatients services commencing with waitlist audit management. Subacute care, Virtual Care, and Peri-procedural services are also on the roadmap. We look forward to sharing updates about Symphony as implementation progresses. If you would like to find out more about Symphony email DigitalMetroNorth@health.qld.gov.au.

Outpatient redesign

Improving access to specialist care is one of our priorities for the next 18 months. Currently waiting lists for elective surgery and specialist outpatient clinics are managed at a directorate-by-directorate level, which means some patients wait longer to access care at their local facility than others.



Since February this year, Health Excellence and Innovation (HEI) has been developing a system-wide specialist Outpatient Redesign Program using a structured staged design approach. This includes engaging with 166 participants across all facilities, including executives, clinicians, operational and administrative staff, consumers and primary care partners.

HEI has identified, through targeted workshops and staff feedback, the primary drivers of delay and variation occur early in the outpatient pathway, particularly at referral creation, intake, categorisation and waitlist management. The problems are largely process and system based.

Insights, ideas and opportunities gathered across stakeholder groups will inform priorities. Some opportunities identified include:

- HHS wide pooled waitlists
- front door simplification
- automation and AI enablement
- improved digital integration and interoperability
- equity first access
- strengthened GP/specialist communication
- expanded shared care and alternative models of care
- clinical preparation teams
- two-way patient communication
- robust safety nets for transfer of care back to primary care.

HEI is on track to develop a plan by June 2026.

Tomorrow, Saturday 25 April is Anzac Day when we honour all of the brave people who served our country and who still serve today.

To commemorate this important day, the Last Post will be played across our Metro North facilities in the morning followed by one minute silence. Some of our facilities are also hosting and supporting special Anzac Day services which all staff, patients and visitors are welcome to attend. Details of these are below:

RBWH

8am, Saturday 25 April
Level 1 Atrium

TPCH

10.45am, Saturday 25 April
Multi-Faith Centre, Ground Floor, Main Acute Building

COH

10.30am, Saturday 25 April
Cooina House

Redcliffe (community event with hospital representation)

9.40am march off followed by 10.30am service, Saturday 25 April
Mon Komo Roundabout, cnr Marine Parade and Anzac Avenue.

Lest we forget.

Nick



Audience: All staff



For: Information

Dear team,

I am pleased to share an exciting opportunity for Metro North nurses and midwives. The Women and Girls' Health Improvement Program supports women and girls to more readily navigate the healthcare system and receive timely, effective care. It also supports patient flow through the hospital system, through the provision of lower acuity care in the community, preventing or delaying the need for hospital-based care and enabling the broader clinical workforce to maximise the scope of care they can deliver through training.

Under this program, up to 20 scholarship opportunities are available annually for Queensland Health nurses and midwives to undertake courses from the Australian College of Nursing. This scholarship program will provide capability uplift to improve pelvic health care for women and girls over a 4-year period.

This is a fantastic opportunity for nurses and midwives to grow professionally, advance your career, collaborate and share knowledge, and promote health equity.

More information including eligibility criteria, the online application form and FAQs, are available on QHEPS [here](#).

Applications close at 5pm, Friday 8 May 2026.

Warm regards,
Alanna

Executive Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel



Audience: All staff



Read time: 3 min



For: Information

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to share that the new [Sad News and Sorry Business \(Bereavement and Grief\) Leave Guideline](#) has now been launched.

I would like to sincerely acknowledge the significant work undertaken in the creation of this new guideline and thank everyone involved for their continued commitment and collaboration.

The new guideline recognises the cultural obligations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees experiencing bereavement and grief, and provides clearer guidance to support culturally respectful and responsive practices across our facilities.

Exciting initiatives like this continue to take place across our hospital and health services, strengthening cultural capability, connection and equity throughout Metro North Health.

During March and April, we saw strong engagement across several key workforce initiatives, including the Yarns with Sherry session held at Caboolture Hospital. I continue to greatly value these Yarns with Sherry sessions, which provide meaningful opportunities to connect with staff on the ground and listen to your experiences and stories. My next Yarns with Sherry session will be held on Thursday 7 May, from 9.00am to 11.00am, at STARS, Level 3, food court seating area. I look forward to yarning with staff then.

This week, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team hosted the inaugural International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination event, bringing together staff and community to acknowledge this important day observed globally each year. The event provided a timely opportunity to reflect on racism in all its forms and reaffirm Metro North Health's commitment to dignity, equity and respect for all.

Attendees heard from guest speaker Race Discrimination Commissioner, Giridharan Sivaraman, and participated in workshops that shared valuable insights to help shape practical and system-level change.

Another significant event held this week was the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Staff Day, which focused on creating space to strengthen connections, build relationships and explore what social and emotional wellbeing means

for individuals, teams, workplaces and community. It was wonderful to see such strong attendance and engagement.

Sherry with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Staff Day.

Our recent Beyond Diversity workshops reached a record number of participants, with approximately 70 staff attending the two-day sessions. It was encouraging to see representation from across directorates and streams, including colleagues from QAS and Darling Downs HHS. As one past participant reflected:

“Across the two days, I gained practical tools that helped me finally see where racism shows up in my everyday work — often in places I’d never noticed before, and sometimes in ways that were deeply confronting.”

I encourage staff at all levels and across all streams within Metro North Health to consider attending this insightful and transformative workshop. The June sessions will be available for registration on TMS soon.

Kind regards,
Sherry

Executive Director, Clinical Governance

Grant Carey-ide



Audience: All staff



For: Information

Dear colleagues,

As part of our ongoing commitment to embedding the [Metro North Compassionate Care Principles](#) into everyday practice, we are pleased to share the latest [video](#) in the Compassionate Care series, highlighting the principle and transformative impact of **Co-Designed Care**.

This story, centred on the development of the Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) kidney outpatient clinic, demonstrates what becomes possible when consumers and clinicians design care together. Through authentic partnership, the team identified a gap in support for young people navigating complex kidney journeys, then worked hand-in-hand with consumers to shape a model of care that truly reflects their lived experiences, preferences, and needs.

The video captures the voices of young consumers who contributed to the project—sharing how co-design gave them a platform to influence decisions, build confidence, and improve the care experience for others. Clinicians likewise reflect on how listening deeply, adapting flexibly, and honouring consumer expertise strengthened relationships, enriched professional practice, and ultimately improved outcomes.

This powerful example reminds us that co-designed care is not just about engagement—it is about shared purpose, equity, and meaningful partnership. It reinforces that compassionate care is achieved not by designing services for people, but by designing them with those we serve.

I encourage all staff across Metro North to view the video, reflect on the insights, and consider how codesign can strengthen compassionate, person-centred care in your own service and across Metro North services.

Regards,
Grant



Audience: All staff



For: Information

Dear colleagues,

Lifting of suspension of SmartSalary - Salary Packaging Administration Standing Offer Arrangement QPG0065-21

Queensland Government Procurement (QGP) has advised the suspension of SmartSalary from the Salary Packaging Administration Standing Offer Arrangement (SOA) QGP0065-21 has now been lifted, with effect from 22 April 2026.

During the suspension period, QGP has worked with Smartsalary to review their internal systems and processes. QGP is satisfied that SmartSalary has successfully complied with the required remedial measures and implemented several process and system improvements, and as such, is meeting the requirements of the SOA.

Key points:

- Eligible employees may now re-engage with Smartsalary for salary packaging administration services under SOA QGP0065-21.
- All restrictions have now been lifted. Smartsalary is permitted to:
 - Enter new contracts with eligible employees.

- Sign new Salary Packaging Participation Agreements with employees.
- Accept new Salary Packaging Application Forms or Participation Agreements from employees.
- Accept Salary Packaging Transition Forms for employees wishing to transitioning from other providers (these will be processed during the usual transition window).

Employees who were already salary packaging with SmartSalary were able to continue to do so during the suspension period and have not been disadvantaged.

SmartSalary's participation in the Novated Leasing SOA QGP0066-23 as an approved provider was not impacted by the suspension. SmartSalary can now again provide both novated leasing services and administer the salary packaging administration of new leases for employees.

The Department of Health's Salary Sacrificing QHEPS page is in the process of being updated.

Your wellbeing

As we head towards the busy winter flu season, it's important to make time for yourself and prioritise your health and wellbeing. With rising costs of living and lots of bad news in the media, it's easy to become overwhelmed. If you're struggling, please reach out to your line manager or take advantage of the variety of wellbeing initiatives available to you at Metro North Health. More information is available on the [Metro North Staff Extranet](#)

Please remember, we're all in this together and I'm always here for a chat if you feel like you need one.

Warm regards,
Lorna



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