

# Executive Message

## Metro North Health



### Summary:

- Connecting with our teams
- Metro North Business Case for Change
- Metro North Innovation Showcase wrap up and next steps
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health update.

Message feedback

## Chief Executive Nick Steele



**Audience:** All staff



**Read time:** 4 min



**For:** Information

Hi Everyone,

It's good to be back in the office after being away last week. Thank you to Stephen Eaton, who provided coverage in my absence.

### Connecting with our teams

#### *RBWH Operating Theatres visit*

Earlier this week, Stephen and I were taken on a tour of RBWH's operating theatres, visiting the Surgical Day Care Unit and Post Anaesthetic Care Unit on level 4 of the Ned Hanlon Building as well as the unit's specialised hybrid and robotic surgical theatres. The tour was hosted by senior leaders of the Surgery and Perioperative Services including Executive Director Dr Barry O'Loughlin, Assistant Nursing Midwifery Director Perioperative Services Elizabeth Strathdee, Director Anaesthetics, Dr Makarla Stead, Director Maxillofacial Unit, Dr Martin Batstone and Nurse Unit Manager Nicole Dunne who spoke to us about current activity and priorities, pressure points, and various initiatives implemented by the service to improve patient flow and access.

A large focus of our discussion was on how we can create additional theatre capacity and space to manage growing demand for elective and emergency surgical services into the



future. This issue is common to all our facilities and highlights the need for greater load sharing and infrastructure planning across the health service to ensure we can continue to provide patients across Metro North with equitable access to high-quality surgical services moving forward.

I would like to thank Barry and the many members of his team who took the time to speak with us and share their ideas and suggestions. Barry will start a period of leave at the end of this month before retiring after a remarkable 38-year career at RBWH, having served as a Staff Specialist General Surgeon, Director of Surgery since 1994, and Executive Director since 2006. He has made an exceptional contribution to surgery, patient outcomes, education and leadership at RBWH, earning him the respect of staff and leaders across the organisation, and the broader medical community.



### *Homeless Health Outreach Team visit*

On Wednesday, I accompanied Board Chair Bernard Curran on a visit to the Spring Hill Community Mental Health Centre, where we met with the Homeless Health Outreach Team (HHOT). This team provides specialised mental health assessment and case management for people experiencing primary and secondary homelessness—people living on the streets or in crisis accommodation.

They endorse an assertive outreach approach whereby staff actively engage with individuals in the community, commencing outreach early in the morning and continuing into the evening to connect with people who may otherwise have very limited access to healthcare services.

We were interested to learn that the team supports both Metro North and Metro South regions, with demands on the service having risen significantly as a result of ongoing housing pressures and the growing number of people experiencing homelessness for the first time.

During the visit, the team spoke about the various challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness who are also living with enduring mental health conditions, particularly their difficulty accessing primary healthcare, stable accommodation, and broader support services. Many individuals supported by HHOT are not linked with other health or non-government services, which reinforces the critical role that HHOT plays within our health system in supporting people living under extremely disadvantaged circumstances.

I thank members of HHOT for providing us with a very eye-opening discussion about the vital services you provide to our community.



## Business Case for Change

This week, we had a vidcast to discuss the feedback so far for the Metro North Business Case for Change (BCFC). Thanks to the 700 people who joined us. I appreciate the new process of registering is an extra step, but we are working with the technology available to us, and I prefer this model to the old style vidcasts, where we couldn't have a proper discussion with each other.

If you missed the vidcast, the [recording is online](#).

So far, we've received over 300 pieces of feedback. Thank you to everyone who has provided your feedback. I also want to point out that the feedback doesn't have to be specifically about the proposed changes. If you have another suggestion that will help us achieve our goal of being in the best position to deliver Future Metro North, please share it.

I also met with the Clinical Governance and Corporate and Business Services teams to hear their feedback and answer questions related to those proposed changes.

We have extended the deadline for the BCFC feedback to COB Wednesday 24 June, so I encourage more staff to take this opportunity to submit their feedback.

Details of the Business Case for Change, including how to provide feedback, are [available online](#).

Given we've already got so much feedback, we will likely extend the period for reviewing the feedback after consultation closes as well to allow for it all to be properly considered.

## Executive Appointment

I am pleased to announce that Paula Foley will commence as the Chief Redesign Specialist on Monday, 22 June 2026 on a temporary basis. Paula is an accomplished healthcare executive, transformation leader, and trusted strategic advisor with extensive experience leading large-scale health systems, organisational reform, and complex service transformation across public and private sectors. Paula was most recently the Chief Operating Officer at Metro South Health. Paula will work closely with directorate executives and clinical leads to drive transformational change in line with our ambitions for the future.

Take care.  
Nick

Chief Operating Officer

**Stephen Eaton**



**Audience:** All staff



**Read time:** 3 min



**For:** Information

Dear colleagues,

Last Friday we welcomed over 200 attendees to the Metro North Innovation Showcase hosted by HELIX Hub and Healthcare Excellence and Innovation.

With more than 35 oral presentations and a strong showing of posters, the day highlighted something we should be confident about:

There is no shortage of ideas, capability or commitment across Metro North.

Congratulations to all presenters on the day, with the following presenters taking away prizes for their work:

**The Voice of Innovation** award for Best Oral Presentation: **Dr Adrienne Young** - *"Bringing Lived and Professional Experience Together to Develop Quality Indicators for Hospital Nutrition and Food Services"*.

**The Flash of Brilliance** award for Best Lightning Presentation: **Julie Bunting** (presented by Leah Thompson) - *"Designing Out Delay: Co-Creating the Delayed Discharge Extended Stay Patient Prototype"*.

**The Emerging Change Maker** award for Best New Presenter: **Sarah Featherston** - *"Listening to our Community: Advancing Health Equity in Physiotherapy"* and *"Redefining Fracture Management: A Physiotherapy-led Clinic"*.

**The Head-Turner** award for Best Poster: **Sarah Bold** - *"The Older Persons Emergency Network's Pre-Hospital Hip Pain Pathway: An Innovation Model of Care"*.

We saw practical solutions, thoughtful problem-solving, and examples of care already improving. But as I reflect on the day, what matters most is not what happens in the room - it is what happens next.

The gap between a good idea and a changed experience for a patient is where many ideas quietly fall away. Not because they are wrong, but because the system does not always catch them when they are ready to move forward.

That is the challenge in front of us.

To help address this, we are launching the next round of the **HELIX Innovation and Implementation Program**, designed to support teams to take the next step.

For some, that might mean stepping back to define the problem more clearly. For others, it may be progressing an idea that has stalled or working through how to implement something more broadly.

You do not need a fully developed proposal to get started. A clear problem and a willingness to explore it is enough.

Expressions of Interest are open year-round, with the first round of assessment commencing from **21 July**. To be considered in this round, submissions should be in before **20 July**.

If you left the Showcase with something in mind, I encourage you to act on it while it is still fresh.

If you weren't able to come along, here is what you missed on a short [video](#) developed by CSDS.

For more information about the **HELIX Innovation and Implementation Program** and **EOI Process**, please go to our QHEPS Page [HELIX Innovation and Implementation Program | Queensland Health Intranet](#).

If you are not a member of the HELIX Hub Community, or for more information, please email [HELIXHub@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:HELIXHub@health.qld.gov.au)



*Metro North Innovation Showcase Oral Abstract Presenters*

Regards,  
Stephen

Executive Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

**Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel**



**Audience:** All staff



**Read time:** 3 min



**For:** Information

Dear team,

As we move through June, I have been reflecting on the many opportunities we have had recently to come together, strengthen connections and continue progressing our shared commitment to health equity across Metro North Health.

Listening to and learning from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce remains a key priority for our organisation. We are committed to creating ongoing opportunities for staff to share their experiences, perspectives and aspirations, ensuring their voices meaningfully inform how we grow and improve as a workplace.

We recently released an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Career Development [survey](#). This short survey is designed to provide insights into staff progress across career pathways, identify which supports are delivering the greatest value, and highlight areas where additional opportunities may be needed. Responses are anonymous and will directly inform future workforce development initiatives, programs, and support mechanisms. I encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues to complete this survey and share your feedback.

To help us better honour the incredible contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

staff and services make, both individually and as teams, we are inviting you to share your voice through a short Staff Recognition survey. Your insights will guide us in shaping meaningful ways to recognise achievements across our services, ensuring our celebrations reflect what matters most to you.

My next Yarns with Sherry session will be held on Thursday 2 July, 9.00am–11.00am at the Pulse Café, Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (next to the Education Centre). I warmly invite staff to drop in for an informal conversation—an opportunity to connect, share ideas, and have a yarn in a relaxed setting.

I am happy to share that we are currently recruiting to a [Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Professions](#). This new role will provide dedicated professional leadership and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners, Health Workers and Liaison Officers across Metro North Health. This role represents an important step forward in supporting workforce development, professional pathways and the ongoing growth of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

Congratulations to all the participants who are currently completing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program. This program is a great reflection on creating meaningful pathways and initiatives to empower, nurture, develop and strengthen our workforce into leaders that will influence positive change and shape the future of our services and the care we provide to our communities, while drawing strength from culture and lived experiences.

Thank you for your continued dedication, leadership and commitment to improving outcomes for our communities.

Kind regards,  
Sherry

**Metro North Health**



We uphold our commitment to health equity through our Values in Action



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