

Executive Message

Metro North Health



Summary:

- Our achievements
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Message feedback

Chief Executive Nick Steele



Audience: All staff



Read time: 5+ min



For: Information

Hi Everyone,

As we kick off the new financial year, I would like to thank all staff across Metro North for their fantastic work and unwavering commitment over the last 12 months to ensuring the delivery of high-quality care to our patients each day. I'm really proud of what we have achieved and I'm confident we can continue to deliver in the future.



Our achievements

During 2025-26, Metro North had a very strong record of delivery across many areas. Through your efforts and expertise, we were able to support more patients to receive safe and timely care. This was especially the case through the areas of elective surgery, where we delivered significant growth, as well as patient flow and ambulance ramping which had notable improvements in the latter part of the year. An exceptional effort from all those involved in elective surgery, emergency departments and whole of hospital patient flow.

More broadly, Metro North facilities and directorates must be congratulated for achieving some excellent outcomes over the last 12 months. These include:

- Procedural Services at STARS has seen major improvements in efficiency and productivity, including a 10.2% increase in total theatre utilisation, 81.4% reduction in closed theatre sessions, 81.6% reduction of elective surgery long waits, and a 44% reduction in theatres late starts.
- RBWH experienced significant patient activity growth throughout 2026, with total presentations increasing by 5.17%, equating to an additional 41,237 patients compared with the previous year. The strongest growth occurred in Outpatient Services, which increased by 6.39%. Inpatient activity also continued to grow, increasing by 2.47%, while Emergency Department presentations increased by 1.28%. This translated into 5,643 QWAW being delivered across RBWH.
- Opening of new Clinical Trials Centre at TPCB, the State's first public hospital-based centre of its type with Phase 1 and mRNA capability, providing patients with serious health conditions with access to innovative next-generation therapies within an acute hospital setting.
- Substantial growth in COH's medical outpatient services with a 66% increase in accepted referrals and a 49% increase in the number of new patients seen to 7,758.
- Launch of new cancer care services at Caboolture Hospital, providing Moreton Bay residents with access to life-saving cancer treatment closer to home, and eliminating the need for lengthy travel to other health facilities.
- Redcliffe Hospital's whole of hospital plan to make every minute matter has resulted in improved utilisation of available clinical space to optimise access and flow including the delivery of a new outpatient space in the Moreton Bay Integrated Care Centre (MBICC), with eight new patient beds to open shortly.

These successes, among many others, have involved a tremendous amount of effort, focus and a shared willingness to be innovative and challenge how we do things in order to benefit the patients we care for. These factors will be important as we look ahead to the next 12 months.

Looking ahead to 2026-27

As we now start this next financial year, it's important that we maintain the momentum which we have built up. Our approach will be similar to that of the last year in that we will continue our overarching focus on delivering safe and high quality patient care to the residents of Metro North and beyond. This will include delivering further improvement in clinical governance and embedding the ethos and principles of the new National Model for Clinical Governance recently published by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

We must also continue our efforts to improve access to elective surgery and Gastrointestinal Endoscopy in addition to seeking further opportunities to improve the flow of patients through our hospital to reduce ambulance ramping. All this within an environment where we will need to maintain our financial performance.

To support this approach, we will need to refine our systems, models and processes in order to continue providing high quality, patient-centred care within our available resources. We will need new ways of thinking and operating, based on a One Metro North approach, which will allow us to provide high quality, more sustainable, accessible, equitable and responsible health care to our patients moving forward.

More specifically some of the key areas of focus will be:

Timely patient care

Elective surgery

Increasing our elective surgery rates to deliver reductions in our overall waiting list and long waits will remain a priority. We will look to increase elective surgery via the continuation of initiatives we have put in place over the last six months including increasing our theatre utilisation and expanding weekend operating sessions (including

for emergency surgery), fully utilising our Surgery Connect allocation, and continuing the SAFEST SurgiFLOW program. Further initiatives will also be needed to maintain our elective surgery access during ieMR go lives at RBWH and TPCH.

Patient flow

We will also continue to build on the excellent work that has been done to improve patient flow to help deliver reduced ambulance ramping including an emphasis on timely discharge. This will include a focus on reducing long stay patients via timely intervention at the front door, minimising low value care, and maximising out of hospital care for mental health patients, where clinically appropriate to do so, through Mental Health in the Home initiatives, continuation of the use of Belmont beds and looking at opportunities to bring on further growth in mental health capacity.

Waiting list management

Establishing a high-level consistent approach to waiting list management across the health service is essential to ensure timely provision of care. Our efforts will be invested into workflow redesign, timely and accurate categorisation, waiting list accuracy, correct booking and treatment order, and the rollout out of Patient Initiated Follow Up model. This model, developed by STARS, empowers patients to request a follow up outpatient specialist appointment when required, rather than attend a routine appointment unnecessarily.

Ensuring value from the funding we allocate

To underpin the delivery of safe and timely patient care, we need to ensure that we prioritise the funding at our disposal on activities that support high value care, minimise unnecessary waste and ensure we provide support to our front-line clinicians.

To do this, we will reinvigorate our efforts to deliver best in class procurement, evaluate the services we are commissioning, in conjunction with our partners, to ensure they are delivering optimal patient benefit, and look to ensure more time for front-line care by questioning our processes and procedures to ask if they are adding value.

Workforce and culture

I am committed to building a well-supported, well cared for workforce that is engaged in decision making. The voices of our frontline staff are critical when undertaking significant changes and will be particularly valuable as we transform clinical service delivery in line with our One Metro North approach.

The recent launch of Metro North's culture uplift plan, *Our Metro North - Stronger Teams, Better Care*, highlighted that challenging and removing unnecessary barriers in every day work that don't add value will enable staff to focus on frontline patient care activities and feel more satisfied at work. I will be working closely with our senior leaders to ensure that staff are encouraged and supported in their local areas to provide feedback about how work can be improved, with proper follow up.

Hospital Rescue Plan

With multiple infrastructure projects underway and in planning, we will prioritise proactive support and planning for the Hospital Rescue Plan including Redcliffe and TPCH expansions and Queensland Cancer Centre, and other critical capital initiatives including the RBWH PEC expansion, the expansions of TPCH and RBWH transit lounges, the Brighton medical imaging department, and maintenance and improvement works across Metro North.

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This year also represents an opportunity to make a big step forward in digitising Metro

North Health with the planned go lives at RBWH in October 2026 and then TPCH in May 2027. Considerable work has already taken place across RBWH and Digital Metro North, with staff already well into training and detailed planning taking place on the go live sequence and maintenance of operational capacity during this time. To support RBWH, and then TPCH, we will be looking at opportunities for other hospitals to support during the next 12 months as part of our One Metro North approach.

NAIDOC Week

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to attend the Northside NAIDOC Family Fun Day at the Koobara Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Kindergarden and Preschool, Zillmere. It was great to see so many staff and families coming together as a community to celebrate the occasion. I had the opportunity to yarn about some of the services we provide to our community and the opportunities to expand them with a particular reference to improving the health and wellbeing of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

This was just one of many activities held across Metro North throughout NAIDOC Week, and I thank everyone who participated and volunteered for the celebrations which included flag raisings, yarning circles and other community events. Your support is appreciated and has contributed to another successful NAIDOC week for Metro North.



Chief Executive Nick Steele and Executive Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Sherry Holzapfel at the Northside NAIDOC Family Fun Day

Deadly Start Program

Fittingly with NAIDOC Week, over the last fortnight, we've proudly welcomed 40 new Deadly Start students to Metro North—our largest cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students to participate in the Deadly Start program yet. The [Deadly Start traineeship](#) provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 11 students with culturally supported pathways into healthcare careers. Students spend 18 to 24 months, completing nationally recognised Certificate II and III qualifications while being employed as a temporary part-time member of the Metro North workforce — gaining invaluable on the job skills. The program continues to deliver strong employment outcomes, with 13 of our 2025 graduating Deadly Start students securing employment within Queensland Health.

This year also marks an exciting milestone with the launch of the Deadly Start Apprenticeship Program, offering two high school students plumbing apprenticeships within Metro North Health's Building, Engineering and Mechanical Services team.

The ongoing growth of Deadly Start reflects our commitment to empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people through meaningful employment, education, and cultural support. By investing in the next generation, the program is helping to build a workforce that delivers culturally safe, responsive, and inclusive care for the communities we serve.



Deadly start students at RBWH (left) and Caboolture (right)

Executive appointment

I am pleased to announce that Associate Professor Kellie Wren has been appointed to the Chief Medical Officer role for Metro North, following a comprehensive recruitment process.

Dr Wren, who is currently the Executive Director Medical Services at Princess Alexandra Hospital, brings more than 25 years of experience as a specialist medical administrator and anaesthetist within Queensland Health. Having held various executive roles throughout her career, including Executive Director Medical Services and Clinical Governance at Gold Coast Health prior to her current role, Kellie possesses well-honed skills in medical leadership, clinical governance, workforce development, and quality and safety systems, with demonstrated success in strengthening governance frameworks, organisational performance improvement and leading major clinical governance initiatives while maintaining a strong patient focus.

Kellie will commence in the CMO role on 22 July. We are excited to have her join our team at Metro North.

A **special farewell event** for outgoing CMO Dr Liz Rushbrook will be held on Tuesday 21 July, 7am to 8.30am in the RBWH Education Centre foyer. The event is open to all interested staff and I look forward to seeing many of you there. I will highlight some of Liz's professional contributions to Metro North in an upcoming message.

Take care.
Nick

Chief Operating Officer

Stephen Eaton



Audience: All staff



Read time: 2 min



For: Information

Dear colleagues,

Over the past few weeks, we've reflected on the Innovation Showcase and the work happening across Metro North.

What's been consistent is this: we have strong ideas, committed teams, and clear opportunities to improve how we deliver care.

We also have a good understanding of where things tend to slow down. Work can stall at key decision points. Teams can find themselves working in isolation. At times, the process itself makes progress more difficult than it should be.

That is the challenge. Metro North does not have an innovation problem. We have a translation and scaling challenge.

Addressing that requires action.

The **HELIX Innovation and Implementation Program** is now open, and this is the point to use it.

If you have identified a problem or opportunity in your area, I encourage you to submit an Expression of Interest.

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

The next round of assessment begins from **21 July**, with submissions required before **20 July** to be considered.

This is an opportunity to build on the thinking from the Showcase and apply it to the complex challenges still in front of us.

For more information, please visit the [HELIX Innovation and Implementation Program QHEPS page](#) or email HELIXHub@health.qld.gov.au.

Regards,
Stephen

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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