

Executive Director STARS

Dale Dally-Watkins



Summary:

- The Coming of the Light
- NAIDOC Week celebrations
- Metro North SET Forum
- GARS Nursing Leadership Program
- STARS in the socials
- Patient compliment

Message feedback



Audience: All staff



Read time: 4 min



For: Information

Dear Colleagues,

Over the last fortnight we have commemorated two major events for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, The Coming of the Light and NAIDOC Week.

The Coming of the Light is celebrated annually by Torres Strait Islander peoples on July 1, marking the arrival of missionaries from the London Missionary Society in 1871. While the day commemorates the introduction of Christianity, it's also a recognition of the way Torres Strait Islander communities maintained their rich culture, languages and traditions. Across Metro North Health, we acknowledged and celebrated the strength, resilience and rich cultural heritage of Torres Strait Islander peoples.

STARS held its NAIDOC Week celebration on Wednesday on the Lady Lamington lawn. It was a very windy, cool morning and I thank those staff who provided blankets to both audience members and patients on the Level 5 balcony so they could be more comfortable for the event.

I spoke about how the impacts of colonisation, dispossession and racism continue to influence the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today and the need to create environments where patients, families and staff feel welcomed, respected, heard and safe.

Director of Allied Health Tamsin Mahony recognised the contributions of the Elders who attend our monthly yarning circles and of the STARS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team who continue to provide culturally safe care. Tamsin drew attention to the burden Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff face carrying the 'colonial load' and how it is everyone's responsibility to drive change.

Following the formalities we had the pleasure of listening to Elewyn Henaway's singing and guitar playing, followed by a performance from the Undumbi Dance group. Their dance depicting the native bee was particularly enjoyable. We were also entertained by traditional dances from the Torres Strait Islander Argan Bay Dance Team, which included some very young performers.

Thank you to Henry for his efforts organising the event, the Patient Support and Loading Dock Managers for the set up, Albert and Thalita Bowie for MCing and to all staff, patients and Elders from the Brisbane region who braved the cold.

As we celebrate NAIDOC Week together, I encourage each of us to take time to listen, to learn and reflect. Let us celebrate the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, acknowledge the truth of our shared history, and recommit ourselves to creating a more equitable future.



Botanist NAIDOC Week celebration

For the third consecutive year, the Botanist Cafe held a free morning tea to commemorate NAIDOC Week, with coffee and beautiful, freshly prepared goods with native flavours. Thanks to Cater Care for their ongoing support of NAIDOC Week at STARS.



Metro North SET Staff Forum

Last Thursday, STARS hosted a SET Forum for all staff. The SET Forums provide an opportunity for staff to come and talk to the Senior Executive Leadership Team, hear updates, ask questions and provide feedback.

Nick spoke about the Business Case for the Change and the large amount of feedback he has received which he will be working through. He also highlighted the great work that STARS have been doing in increasing theatre utilisation and elective surgery throughput, the ongoing success of PODSS, and the Patient Initiated Follow Up pilot, to name a few.

There were also discussions about workforce planning, Queensland's new Reportable Conduct Scheme under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), the Rehabilitation Engineering Centre's recent NDIS accreditation and Olympic preparations.

Thank you to those staff who attended, either in person or on Teams.

The next SET Forum will be held at **Caboolture, Thursday 6 August 11.30-12.30pm**. See the Metro North staff bulletin for more details.

GARS Nursing Leadership Program

I'm excited to announce we are launching a GARS Nursing Leadership Program. The program will provide a structured and supported pathway for early-career RNs to build capability, develop leadership skills, connect with mentors, explore research opportunities, and experience leadership roles.

Participants will receive mentorship from experienced clinicians and opportunities to work in an acute ward at the RBWH and act in a CN position.

STARS RNs (Grade 5.2-5.5, ≥ 0.7 FTE) who are motivated to develop clinical and leadership skills, are engaged in improvement initiatives and/or are completing or have completed TSP programs are encouraged to apply.

To express an interest email STARS_nursingrecruitment@health.qld.gov.au (check with your line manager for their support before applying). Applications are open until 31 July.

Rehabilitation Engineering Centre accreditation

I am please to announce that the Rehabilitation Engineering Centre (REC) recently passed their NDIS accreditation assessment with flying colours. REC received a 'conforming' rating to every action as well as wonderful feedback from consumers and families. Well done to the REC team. You can read more feedback about their service in this week's patient compliment.

STARS in the socials

To commemorate NAIDOC Week, Metro North's socials featured STARS patient Uncle Marshall. Uncle Marshall spoke about his upbringing and his work as an Elders Respite Social Worker. His post has been very popular with over 2.4K likes, 95 comments and 81 shares! You can [read it here](#).

Our wonderful Central Sterilising Unit were also showcased in a fun reel, demonstrating all the steps involved in sterilising equipment. It is great to see the work of some of our more 'hidden' teams being promoted more widely. You can [view the reel here](#) – it has already been watched over 14,000 times.

Revenue Officer Bronwyn (*pictured right*) was featured on LinkedIn's Monday Mantra, sharing how she created a space on Level 7 to decorate with a different theme each month. You can [see the post here](#).



Staff Shout Outs

Congratulations to the following staff and teams for receiving a Staff Shout Out in the month of June: Abby Hall, Claire Milliner, Derek Morgan, Kevin Lah, Gemma Newell, Joanne Sondergeld, Lucy McEniery, Matthew Salmon, Megan Lister, Nathan Lane, Nova Caruana, Trish O'Flaherty, Prashika Basnet, Sapphire Vaega, Tara Sims, Yuna Qi, Ambulatory Care Services Admin Team, Gastroenterology and Endoscopy Services Admin Team, Geriatrics and Rehabilitation Services Admin Team and Procedural Services Admin Team.

If you would like to give a Shout Out to a colleague or team for the month of July, you can do so here [\[add link\]](#).

Patient compliment

This week's compliment comes from patient Peter who is living with motor neuron disease (MND) and visited the Rehabilitation Engineering Centre for modifications to his wheelchair. Peter's comment is such a good example of how being truly 'seen' is so important for all patients, but particularly those living with chronic illnesses, disability or a progressive disease like MND.

"They listened carefully. They observed how I moved, how I drove, where I struggled, and what was changing in my body. Instead of offering a generic solution, they approached my situation with creativity, expertise and compassion."

"What sets this team apart is that they do not see equipment first, they see the person first. They are driven by a genuine desire to help people remain independent, comfortable and connected to life for as long as possible. They think outside the box. They innovate. They problem solve. And they do it with humility and care."

"I can say hand on heart that I am still able to drive my wheelchair today because of this team."

"For people living with progressive diseases like MND, their work is not just about modifications or machinery, it is about dignity, freedom and quality of life"

We know what a remarkable service the Rehabilitation Engineering Centre provides, but it is always lovely to see them receive such recognition.

You can [read Peter's full article](#) in Momentum, the official magazine of MND Australia.

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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