

Executive Message

Metro North Health



Summary:

- Acknowledging Mental Health pressures
- Metro North Business Case for Change
- Care and Connect Caboolture Kids event
- National Week of Deaf People 2026.

Message feedback

Chief Executive Nick Steele



Audience: All staff



Read time: 5+ min



For: Information

Hi Everyone,

As we come out of the winter period, I would like to thank all staff across the health service for your commitment to providing high quality care to our community in the face of increasing demands on our services. I appreciate there is a lot happening within Metro North as we work together to elevate patient care services as One Metro North, while planning ahead to meet the future health needs of our community.



One of our major pressure areas is mental health, with an increasing number of patients with mental health concerns presenting to our emergency departments (ED). The complexity and vulnerability of these patients can make delivering care challenging for teams operating in a busy environment that is ideally designed for rapid assessment, stabilisation, discharge or transfer.

The practical reality is that daily high attendance rates through our EDs and bed pressures mean that some patients have to wait in emergency for prolonged periods, a situation that is not conducive for those requiring urgent mental health care. Many patients presenting

for mental health care may also require treatment for injury or physical illness, and people with diagnosed mental illness may visit an ED for unrelated physical health needs. Assessment can be complex because physical illness, injury or underlying conditions may co-exist with or worsen mental health crisis, increasing the time needed for safe care.

These complex cases can impact staff delivering care who balance their obligation of providing compassionate and respectful care with the challenges of supporting those with complex mental health issues.

This situation highlights the need to develop and invest in new models of mental health care and enhanced infrastructure that better support the needs of our patients, consumers and also our own staff. Over the last few years, Metro North has been allocated approximately \$67 million in recurrent Better Care Together funding across 61 initiatives spanning acute inpatient care, community treatment, priority populations, alcohol and other drugs services, and statewide programs, complemented by almost \$20 million to support improvements in mental health capital infrastructure.

This funding has already supported a number of improvements including the newly opened Mental Health Hospital in The Home service and Crisis Stabilisation Unit at TPCCH, extra Mental Health Intensive Care Unit beds at Caboolture Hospital, the Assertive Mobile Crisis Assessment and Response Team (long stay beds initiative), and additional dedicated emergency department mental health nurse navigator positions at Redcliffe and Caboolture Hospitals. We continuously maintain a strong focus on building services, service models and infrastructure which support and facilitate the delivery of best practice care for patients and consumers with mental health concerns.

Providing person-centred care that demonstrates our values, even when it's a challenge, is a vital part of what we do. How we represent ourselves as healthcare professionals through our technical clinical skills as well as through the personal delivery of those skills influences the patient experience. We know that patient experience can impact patient outcomes.

The importance of compassion and respect in the healthcare environment can never be underestimated.

Metro North Business Case for Change

This week I hosted a [vidcast](#) with the Chief Operating Officer Stephen Eaton and Chief People and Culture Officer Lorna Morton to discuss the Metro North Business Case for Change 2026. In August, consultation on the implementation plan closed and implementation will begin for the initial changes from 1 October. Changes to reporting lines will be completed by 26 October to minimise impact on routine operational activities.

Thank you to the 600 people who joined the vidcast. There were quite a few questions about the Clinical Networks which will replace Clinical Streams. Unlike Streams, the Networks are intended to be time limited. A Network would be set up to address specific clinical priorities or challenges across Metro North. Regardless of whether a specialty is part of a Clinical Stream or Network, I want to encourage work to progress collaboratively across Metro North.

Through the initial consultation process, it became clear that we needed a supplementary consultation process for some of the proposed changes under the COO to ensure we have

the best structure for Metro North's future. That supplementary consultation is open until 6 October.

We are working towards all approved changes made by the end of November.

Details of the implementation plan and the supplementary consultation are on the [BCFC extranet page](#).

BCFC on extranet

Watch the vidcast

Care and Connect Caboolture Kids event

Yesterday I attended Caboolture Hospital's first 'Care and Connect' event, which brought together families of Caboolture Hospital and local support and community services.

The event featured around 20 informational stalls, plus interactive activities and a sausage sizzle. It was great to have Board Chair Bernard Curran and CKW Executive Director Jamie Spencer in attendance and to engage with service providers, community members and staff.

The event was led by the Metro North and Brisbane North PHN Health Alliance, which established the overarching Caboolture Kids Collective. The Caboolture Kids Collective was originally formed to address community challenges for children with complex needs by connecting families with hospital and community care providers.

Congratulations to Caboolture Hospital on hosting such a successful community event. This is a great example of how we are supporting Metro North's strategic priority of a connected care system which focuses on creating services that put the needs of consumers and community at the centre.



Nick Steele Chief Executive, Bernard Curran Board Chair and Jamie Spencer CKW Executive Director at Caboolture Hospital's Care and Connect event

Executive update

You may be aware we are currently recruiting for the Executive Director roles for Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and The Prince Charles Hospital.

Tami Photinos is leaving Metro North in November after 41 years, including almost six years as Executive Director TPCCH. Louise Oriti is also leaving in November, after almost five years as Executive Director RBWH and a decade with Metro North.

Recruitment for the Executive Director Metro North Mental Health is in the interview phase.

Chief Operating Officer Stephen Eaton is currently on leave, and Tami Photinos will act in the COO role whilst Stephen is away.

And finally, go the Lions, in tomorrow's grand final!

Take care.
Nick

Chief Allied Health Practitioner

Michelle Stute



Audience: All staff



Read time: 2 min



For: Information

Dear team,

National Week of Deaf People 2026

This week, Metro North joins communities across Australia in recognising National Week of Deaf People (NWDP), celebrating the rich culture, language, history and contributions of Deaf Australians. The

2026 theme - *"Declaring Deaf People's Human Rights"* - highlights the importance of ensuring Deaf people can fully participate in all aspects of community life through equitable access to communication, information and services.



At Metro North, we are committed to creating a health service that is inclusive, accessible and responsive to the needs of people with disability. This commitment is reflected in our [Metro North Disability Services Action Plan 2024-2029](#), which outlines our ambition to improve access, experiences and outcomes for consumers, carers, employees and community members with disability.

As part of this year's recognition of NWDP, Metro North staff had the opportunity to participate in a highly interactive Auslan, Deaf Culture and Deaf Awareness Workshop hosted by CKW Consumer, Cody Skinner. The session provided valuable insights into Deaf culture, communication preferences and the importance of accessible interactions, while giving participants practical experience in using Auslan and understanding the lived experiences of Deaf people. We thank Cody for sharing his expertise, lived experience and passion for advancing awareness and inclusion across our organisation.

Opportunities such as these help build cultural capability, strengthen consumer-centred care and support our vision of delivering equitable healthcare for all Queenslanders.

As we recognise National Week of Deaf People, we encourage all staff to reflect on the role each of us plays in creating an environment where every person feels heard, respected and able to access the care and services they need.

Together, we can continue to advance inclusion and improve outcomes for people with disability across Metro North and the communities we serve.

Regards,
Michelle

Metro North Health



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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