

# Executive Director STARS

Dale Dally-Watkins



## Summary:

- Staff Excellence Awards
- Research Showcase
- Consultation on *Future Metro North*
- R U OK? Day
- STARS in the socials
- Patient compliment

Message feedback



**Audience:** All staff



**Read time:** 4 min



**For:** Information

Dear Colleagues,

I would firstly like to thank Ben Ballard for acting in the Executive Director role while I was on leave. Ben provided great leadership during this time, particularly around the increased ward capacity within 6B/6C.

Thank you for your ongoing support of safe and timely care across Metro North.

Providing meaningful staff recognition is important and is reflected in feedback received in the biannual Have Your Say survey. In response, last year we initiated the inaugural Staff Excellence Awards for STARS, Oral Health Centre and VECS staff, providing the opportunity to acknowledge individuals and teams for their hard work and dedication.

Nominations for the 2026 awards closed on Wednesday. Thank you to everyone who nominated a colleague or team for one of the five awards. I can also report that we currently have over 50 nominations in the Metro North Staff Excellence Awards, which is a great result.

If you missed out on nominating for the STARS awards, the Metro North awards are open until 9am Monday 14 September. You can [submit a nomination here](#).

The STARS, Oral Health Centre and VECS Staff Excellence Awards will be presented on Monday October 12 at the Oral Health Centre Auditorium.

## STARS Research Showcase

On Monday, I had the pleasure of opening the Research Showcase in the Level 4 dining room. The Showcase offered an opportunity for staff to hear about the important research being undertaken at STARS.

The program featured ten local research projects, examining a broad range of topics including colorectal neoplasia, falls prevention, upper limb rehabilitation, malnutrition, communication

disabilities, peripheral vestibular dysfunction, consumer involvement, hospital-in-the-home and dysphagia.

These exciting projects are examples of how research at STARS is being translated into clinical practice to improve patient and health system outcomes.

Thank you to everyone involved in making the Research Showcase such a success.



*Showcase opening (left)*

*The STARS Education and Research Alliance team who organised the event (right)*

### Consultation on *Future Metro North*

*Future Metro North: Reimagining Healthcare 2027–2042* is the 15-year strategic roadmap to guide the future of healthcare delivery, inform investment decisions and drive service improvement across our service and beyond.

Metro North are now seeking feedback on the *Future Metro North* draft from staff, consumers, community members and partners.

Broad participation in the consultation will help ensure *Future Metro North* reflects the experiences, priorities and aspirations of the people we serve and will provide a strong foundation for the future.

You can find the draft report and survey link on the *Future Metro North* [extranet page](#).

There will be numerous opportunities for staff to provide feedback, including the survey, targeted consultation sessions and a Chief Executive-led vidcast.

Consultation is open until **Tuesday 6 October 2026**.



### STARS Education and Research Alliance (SERA) review update

In February, SERA was reviewed by an independent panel, who provided a written report with 13 recommendations across governance, education, research, workforce, culture, operations, vision, strategy and finance. Thank you again to all who contributed to the review.

A STARS working group has provided operational context for the recommendations, authoring a decision paper which has been submitted to Danny Liew from The University of Queensland and Metro North Chief Executive Nick Steele for consideration. We expect a reply next month.

In the meantime, the working group will start on the SERA 2026-2031 strategy, with wider consultation across STARS to follow later in the year. If you would like to learn more, please contact a member of the working group, including: Tamsin Mahoney, Ben Ballard/Ben Hackwood, Gail Robinson, Mika Hayward, Pip Logan or Susan Sullivan.

## R U OK? Day

Yesterday's R U OK? Day had a training focus across Metro North, providing staff with the skills to Ask, Listen, Encourage Action and Check-in. We are encouraging everyone to understand the signs that someone is experiencing distress or difficulty so they can ask "R U OK?" on any day.

You can find more resources about R U OK Day? on the Metro North [extranet page](#), including a video with our very own staff psychologist Allison Welch and R U OK? Ambassador Jo Hassan.



## STEPtember update

Our STEPtember campaign is off to an amazing start! We have 19 teams competing this year and they have already accumulated 9,570,873 steps. The top three teams are Exclusive 15K, The STEPtacular Five and Walkie Talkies. Our top three individual steppers are Kyle Gardiner, Alice Moreton and Suz Simon.

This year's best team name will be hard to choose with some very clever options including STEPtacular Five, The IV League, Que Sera Sera and Meals on Heels, just to name a few.

Well done to everyone who has been finding ways to get some extra exercise in their day. Small changes such as taking the stairs instead of the lifts, really do add up.

Best wishes to those staff who will be adding steps to their tally in the Bridge to Brisbane this weekend.

**Turn ideas into action!**

**RBWH Foundation Grants**  
Applications close 2 October

Apply today!



  
**RBWH**  
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## Staff Shout Out

Congratulations to Dr Susan Sullivan (*right*), Conjoint Senior Manager of SERA and Dr Julia McLeod (*left*), Staff Specialist GARS who last month competed in hockey's International Masters Cup in Rotterdam. Their Australian Spirits hockey team won bronze in their age group. What an achievement!



## STARS in the socials

Ally was recently featured on Metro North's LinkedIn page. As well as the wide range of tasks she performs in her Acting Senior Admin Officer, Ambulatory Care role, Ally also teaches at her dance studio at night and used to be a contortionist! There are no limits to the talents of our STARS staff. You can see Ally's post [here](#).

Monday Mantra, Ally, Acting Senior Admin Officer, STARS Ambulatory Care Services



You and 18 others

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## August Staff Shout Out

While our STARS, Oral Health Centre and VECS awards are a terrific way of acknowledging staff achievements, they only come around once a year. The monthly Staff Shout Outs are a great way to recognise the efforts of staff all year around.

Congratulations to those who received a Staff Shout Out in August: Alex Lipins, Brighid McMahon, Cheng Kwok, Crystal Seng, Dominique Thorpe, Jessa Mae Forbes, Jocelyn Xanthopoulos, Lina McCann, Megan Wallace, Mitchell Hennessy, Shreejana Rai, Smitha Prakash, Tenzing Bhutia, Zabrina Player, and STARS Level 1 Education Centre bookings team offices.

If you would like to give a staff or team a Staff Shout Out for September you can do so [here](#).

## Patient compliment

This week's compliments come from patients of the Virtual Emergency Care Service (VECS). They praised not only the level of care received but also the convenience of not having to wait in the emergency department. If you are unaware of VECS you can read more about it [here](#) - it provides a wonderful alternative to the emergency department.

*I am really pleased to say, the service was outstanding. Thank you to both nurses, admin and the Dr for their time and kindness during the care today. I know you were all really busy but you took the time to provide information and answer my questions with careful consideration.*

*The Doctor, Nurse and Admin were all very diligent and because of that I found it to be an excellent experience instead of possibly having to wait at a hospital emergency.*

*This was such a quick and easy service, offered me great help and peace of mind without having to go to an emergency department as my current location did not have any open GPs.*

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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