

September 2026

TALK-ABOUT



Starting Strong

Metro North Health welcomes largest-ever Deadly Start cohort

Deadly Start Trainee twins Arthur and Ashley from Caboolture Hospital.

11

Community and staff celebrate Mabo Day

16

Connecting Community to Care: Persistent Pain Service

20

Health Equity Showcase

The official Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Newsletter



Metro North Health's vision

Creating healthier futures together—where innovation and research meets compassionate care and community voices shape our services.

Metro North Health



Queensland Government

What's inside september 2026

Contact Information.....	2
A word from the Executive Director	4
A word from the Chief Executive.....	5

OUT AND ABOUT

Metro North Health welcomes largest-ever Deadly Start cohort.....	6
All In for National Reconciliation Week 2026	8
Aboriginal Artworks create welcoming space at North Lakes Dialysis Unit....	8
Deadly Start trainee recognised for nursing excellence	9
Reconnect 2026 Homelessness Event.....	10
Community and staff celebrate Mabo Day	11
NAIDOC Week celebrations and community connections.....	12

IN FOCUS

Aunty Maureen reflects on a lifetime in health.....	14
Connecting Community to Care: Persistent Pain Service	16
Deadly Start trainee Baylee Proctor wins at Queensland Training Awards..	18
Marking One Year of the Stop Racism. It Starts with Me Campaign	19
Health Equity Showcase highlights collaboration and innovation	20
Cardiology Art Program grows from fundraiser to legacy	22
New Sad News and Sorry Business Guidelines	23
Award-winning research gives fathers and non-birthing partners a voice	24
Team Spotlight: Caboolture Hospital and Satellite Health Centre (Kabul)	25
Staff Spotlight: Morgan Cattanaach	26
Elder Spotlight: Aunty Elaine	27



Give us feedback

We welcome your feedback, contributions, story ideas and details on any upcoming events. Please contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team at:

A_TSILTCOMMSMNH@health.qld.gov.au or phone **07 3170 4460**.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team

If you have any feedback regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team services, programs and initiatives, you can contact the following:

Mail to:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team
Level 4, Chermside Galleria, 831
Gympie Road, Chermside QLD 4032

Email to: A_TSILTCOMMSMNH@health.qld.gov.au

Metro North Health would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which our services are located.

We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and future and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that this publication may contain images or names of people who have passed away.

Contact information

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital	
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 3646 4154 / 0428 861 888
After Hours	Ph: 3647 4183 / 0428 861 888
The Prince Charles Hospital	
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 3139 5165 / 0429 897 982
After Hours	Ph: 3139 6622 / 0429 897 982
Redcliffe Hospital	
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 3049 6791
After Hours	Ph: 3049 9734
Caboolture/Kilcoy Hospital	
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Office	Ph: 5433 8249
After Hours	Ph: 5316 5157
Senior Health Workers	Ph: 5316 5390 / 5316 5258
Nurse Navigator	Ph: 0436 915 910
Caboolture Satellite Health Centre (Kabul):	
Nurse Navigator	Ph: 5433 7532
Senior Health Worker	Ph: 5433 7582
Community Engagement Officers (Men's and Women's Business)	Ph: 5433 7581 / 0474 098 096
Bribie Island Satellite Health Centre (Yarun):	
Nurse Navigator	Ph: 3410 2861
Senior Health Worker	Ph: 3410 2862
Community Engagement Officers (Men's and Women's Business)	Ph: 0417 973 665
Kallangur Satellite Health Centre (Kalangoor):	
Nurse Navigator	Ph: 3285 0057
Community Engagement Officers (Men's and Women's Business)	Ph: 3285 0000
Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS):	
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Office	Ph: 3647 6044
Community and Oral Health	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team	Ph: 3631 7379
Indigenous Mental Health	
Professional Lead	Ph: 3646 2695
Ngarrama Maternity Services	
Caboolture	Ph: 0439 732 970
Redcliffe	Ph: 0407 251 890
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital	Ph: 0428 404 875
Forensic Mental Health Service, Indigenous Mental Health Intervention Program	
Forensic Mental Health Team	Ph: 3234 0800

Follow us



@bettertogether
ourhealthourway



@ourhealth
ourway



@better-together-
our-health-our-way

**If you hear and
see racism,
speak up.
Report it.**

Together, we can
stop racism.

STOP
RACISM
It Starts with Me

THERE IS NO PLACE FOR RACISM IN OUR HEALTH SERVICE



Further information and instructions on how to report can be found by searching 'stop racism' on qheps.

If you are a patient and require help, ask to speak with your local Consumer Liaison Officer (CLO).

metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/better-together-van/stop-racism



This initiative is supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team, Metro North Health

**Metro North
Health**



**Queensland
Government**

A word from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health **Executive Director**

Adj.Prof. Sherry Holzapfel



As we move through another year of our *Health Equity* journey, I want to reflect on the progress we're making together and thank our communities, Elders, consumers, staff and partners who continue to walk alongside us.

We are seeing positive improvements across several key areas. More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients are receiving surgery within recommended timeframes, more people are accessing specialist care sooner, and fewer patients are leaving hospital before their treatment is complete. We are also seeing improvements in healthy birthweight outcomes and follow-up care after mental health hospital admissions.

Creating culturally safe healthcare remains a priority. In July, we celebrated the first anniversary of our *Stop Racism. It Starts with Me* campaign. Through this work, we continue to address racism, listen to community through Yarning Circles, work closely with Elders, and support Anti-Racism Ambassadors across Metro North Health. Together, these actions help create safer and more welcoming health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I'm proud to see our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce continue to grow, with more than 540 employees now working across Metro North Health. Their knowledge, culture and lived experience play an important role in helping us deliver better care for our communities.

Investing in future generations remains equally important. This year, we welcomed our largest cohort of Year 11 Deadly Start trainees since the program commenced in 2019, including our first two school-based apprentices. This milestone reflects the continued success of the program in creating meaningful education and employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. I thank everyone involved in delivering the program for their dedication and commitment. We also continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students through our statewide

Cadetship Program, helping build the next generation of healthcare professionals.

Improving access to care remains a key focus. Programs such as Virtual Emergency Care, Connecting Care to Country and Deadly Feet are helping people access healthcare in ways that are more accessible and culturally responsive. Community screening initiatives, including the Sistas Shawl Project, are also supporting more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to participate in important health checks.

Supporting the health and wellbeing of children and families continues to be another priority. We know that strong starts in life lead to better health outcomes, which is why we continue to invest in programs that support children, parents and carers. Through initiatives such as the Connection to Kinship Project at The Prince Charles Hospital, we are working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities to co-design services that are culturally safe, welcoming and responsive to their needs. By focusing on prevention, early intervention and family-centred care, we are helping build healthier futures for our young people and communities.

While we have made good progress, we do recognise there is still more work to do.

Thank you to our Elders, community members, consumers, partners and staff who continue to guide this work. Together, we are creating a healthier future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities.

Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel

Executive Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
Metro North Health

A word from

Chief Executive

Nick Steele



Metro North continues to prioritise creating greater health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We are committed to driving genuine improvements in how we deliver health care that makes a meaningful difference to health outcomes and experiences for this community.

A key focus of the revised Metro North's Health Equity Strategy, is enhancing the health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to help achieve the best start to life.

Strengthening initiatives that support families to access safe, high-quality and culturally appropriate health care opportunities within their community is essential in ensuring young people get the care they need to be and stay healthy.

These initiatives can only be informed by meaningful engagement and connection with community, to ensure that voices of those receiving the services are reflected in their design and delivery.

A great example of how Metro North is fostering these connections is through the Health Equity Engagement Forums, held in partnership with Children's Health Queensland, the third of which for this year was held last month. These forums bring together community, Elders, consumers, health leaders and health staff to share their insights, knowledge and lived experience. This collaboration supports a genuine co-design process that considers all the clinical and cultural elements needed to achieve better health outcomes for younger people.

Another way that Metro North is supporting younger members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is through education and training. Metro North's Deadly Start School-Based Program provides an opportunity for

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students in grade 11 to undertake an 18-month traineeship which combines formal qualifications with paid work experience within Metro North.

This year, the program has seen the largest intake of students since it started in 2019, demonstrating the program's rising success in providing positive employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. These trainees also bring their own unique strengths and perspectives that help support the delivery of more culturally safe and responsive health services for our communities.

For our staff, Metro North is committed to fostering a workplace where all individuals can be their best. Initiatives like our anti-racism campaign – Stop Racism. It Starts with Me, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander anti-racism policy and the many other initiatives that support staff from diverse backgrounds, actively challenge racism and help create a more equitable, inclusive and psychologically safe workplace for everyone.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our health equity journey.

Take care.

Nick Steele
Chief Executive,
Metro North Health

Metro North Health welcomes largest-ever Deadly Start cohort

41 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students have begun their Deadly Start traineeship and apprenticeship journey with Metro North Health, marking the largest intake in the program's history and signalling a growing interest in careers across healthcare and essential services.

The Year 11 students will spend up to 18 months building skills, confidence and career pathways through the award-winning school-based traineeship program, which combines formal qualifications with paid workplace experience across Metro North Health.

This year's intake is a significant milestone for the Deadly Start program and includes the first school-based plumbing apprenticeships.

Metro North Health Deadly Start Senior Project Officer, Alicia Grantham, said the record cohort reflects the program's growing success in creating meaningful employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

"This year we're excited to welcome our largest cohort of trainees to date, along with our first two school-based plumbing apprentices," Ms Grantham said.

"It's inspiring to see so many young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students choosing a career in healthcare and essential services. They bring unique strengths, lived experience and an important cultural

"Deadly Start is about more than employment. It's about creating opportunities, building confidence, fostering cultural pride and supporting young people to see themselves in rewarding careers that make a difference."

perspective that helps shape a more culturally safe and responsive health service for our communities.

"Deadly Start is about more than employment. It's about creating opportunities, building confidence, fostering cultural pride and supporting young people to see themselves in rewarding careers that make a difference."

Since commencing their traineeship journey at the start of 2026, students have already completed a Certificate II in Health Support Services through Registered Training Organisation, Connect 'n' Grow, as preparation for their practical placements within Metro North Health.

Throughout the program, trainees gain up to 375 hours of paid workplace experience while undertaking a Certificate III qualification in their chosen field. Students are placed across a broad range of clinical and non-clinical areas, including nursing, administration, dental, allied health, patient support services and, for the first time, building and engineering pathways.

The hands-on experience provides students with valuable workplace skills, industry knowledge and professional networks while still completing their secondary education. For many participants, the program serves as a stepping stone to future employment, apprenticeships, traineeships or further study.

Delivered in partnership with Connect 'n' Grow and employment and apprenticeship support provider





Deadly Start trainees ready to commence at Metro North Health.

MAS National, the Deadly Start program continues to create sustainable pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into healthcare careers and beyond.

The program was established as part of Metro North Health's commitment to Closing the Gap and has grown into a leading workforce pathway initiative, providing young people with the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications while developing real-world experience in one of Australia's largest health services.

The impact of the program is already being seen across the workforce. Last year, 13 Metro North Health Deadly Start graduates transitioned directly into paid employment within Queensland Health following the completion of their traineeships.

As Metro North Health celebrates this latest intake during NAIDOC Week, the record-breaking cohort stands as a powerful example of the organisation's ongoing commitment to investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and supporting the next generation of healthcare professionals, tradespeople and community leaders.

For the 41 students beginning their Deadly Start journey this year, the future is full of possibility, and Metro North Health is proud to walk alongside them every step of the way.



This year Metro North Health welcomes their first two school-based plumbing apprentices.



Staff, Elders and community members celebrating with cutting of the cake at the Reconciliation morning-tea.



Family members at the Kallangur Satellite Health Centre Reconciliation Morning Tea. Front row, from left, Aunty Claude, author Sharlene Allsopp and Identified Nurse Navigator Trina Scott; back row, Trina's daughter and son.

All In for National Reconciliation Week 2026

Metro North Health staff, community members and partners came together during National Reconciliation Week 2026 (27 May – 3 June), embracing this year's theme *All In*. The theme calls on all Australians to play their part in advancing reconciliation by strengthening relationships, fostering understanding and taking meaningful action to create a more equitable future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Throughout this significant week, Metro North Health hosted a range of activities that celebrated culture, strengthened community connections and encouraged reflection. At Kallangur Satellite Health Centre, community members, staff and local services gathered for a National Reconciliation Week Morning Tea, which featured a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony led by proud Kabi Kabi Traditional Owner and Senior Aboriginal Health Worker, Nathan Morgan.

The morning also included local yarns, health information stalls, opportunistic health checks and an inspiring presentation from proud Bundjalung woman and author Sharlene Allsopp, who shared the importance of truth-telling, memory and reconciliation.

Looking ahead, Metro North Health remains committed to strengthening relationships, promoting cultural safety, and supporting initiatives that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By embracing the *All In* approach, the organisation continues to contribute to a health system that values and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, cultures, and aspirations while creating meaningful and lasting change for generations to come.

Aboriginal Artwork creates welcoming space at North Lakes Dialysis Unit

Patients, families and staff at the North Lakes Dialysis Unit are now being welcomed by a vibrant collection of Metro North Health's Better Together Aboriginal artwork following the recent installation and unveiling of nine pieces.

Created by acclaimed Aboriginal artist Elaine Chambers-Hegarty, the collection brings to life the unique stories, landscapes and health journeys connected to each Metro North Health hospital and health service.

Drawing on insights shared during collaboration sessions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, Elaine carefully wove together stories of the local Traditional Countries and the important role hospitals and health services play in supporting healing, wellbeing and improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The artwork reflects a shared commitment to closing the gap and delivering culturally safe care across Metro North Health.

The addition of the artwork has transformed the waiting

Shayleigh Rudd smiling and holding the TPCH Outstanding Collegial Support Award.





North Lakes Dialysis Unit staff alongside Chief Executive, Nick Steele.

area into a space that celebrates culture, connection and community. More than decorative features, the artworks tell stories of Country, identity and belonging, helping create an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can see themselves reflected in the places where they receive care.

The project is a powerful example of partnership and allyship in action. Recognising an opportunity to make the waiting area more culturally safe and reflective of the community it serves, North Lakes Dialysis Unit's Nurse Unit Manager, Kylie, worked with Community and Oral Health's Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Paul Drahm, to explore how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork could be incorporated into the space.

The result is a welcoming and culturally rich environment that acknowledges the importance of culture in health and wellbeing while creating a stronger sense of connection for patients, visitors and staff.

The installation reflects Metro North Health's ongoing commitment to providing culturally safe healthcare environments and recognising the valuable contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

A special thank you goes to everyone involved in bringing the project to life. Through collaboration, shared vision and a commitment to inclusion, the North Lakes Dialysis Unit now features a lasting display that celebrates culture and helps ensure all community members feel welcome, respected and valued.

Deadly Start trainee recognised for nursing excellence

Congratulations to Shayleigh Rudd, a proud Wiradjuri woman and Metro North Health Deadly Start trainee, who has become the first Deadly Start trainee to receive a nursing award at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) Nursing Excellence Awards.

Shayleigh received the Outstanding Collegial Support Award, also known as the Cheryl Burns Award, which recognises nurses who consistently support their colleagues, foster teamwork and contribute to a positive workplace culture.

Receiving the award so early in her nursing career is a significant achievement and reflects the compassion, professionalism and commitment Shayleigh brings to her role every day.

Deadly Start Project Support Officer, Elfreda Tanna, said the recognition was an especially proud moment for the program.

"This was a particularly special achievement for the Deadly Start

program, as Shayleigh is the first Deadly Start trainee to be nominated for and win an award at the TPCH Nursing Awards.

"Her recognition demonstrates the positive contribution our trainees can make within their teams and workplaces while still completing their traineeships," Elfreda said.

The achievement is an exciting milestone for the Metro North Health Deadly Start Program, highlighting the impact of creating pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to gain experience, build their confidence and develop rewarding careers in healthcare.

For Shayleigh, the traineeship is just the beginning, with her sights set on

continuing her nursing career and becoming a Registered Nurse.

"Shayleigh has aspirations to become a Registered Nurse, and it has been wonderful to see her confidence, skills and passion for nursing continue to develop throughout her journey.

"Her achievement is something we are incredibly proud of and provides another great example for our current and future Deadly Start trainees of where this pathway can lead," Elfreda shared.

Congratulations, Shayleigh, on this well-deserved achievement and an important Deadly Start first. We look forward to seeing where your nursing journey takes you next.



Metro North staff pictured in front of the Better Together Health Van at the Reconnect 2026 Homelessness Event.

Supporting Community Connections at the Reconnect 2026 Homelessness Event

On 6 August, the Metro North Health Better Together Health Van, Deadly Smiles and BreastScreen Queensland teams joined the Reconnect 2026 Homelessness Event at the Peninsula Support Hub in Redcliffe, connecting with around 200 community members and providing health information, support and referrals.

The annual event, hosted by Moreton Bay Housing and Homelessness Network, brought together a wide range of service providers, community organisations and volunteers to create a welcoming space where people experiencing homelessness or hardship could access practical assistance, health services and community support in one location.

Throughout the day, the Metro North Health team provided food hampers, toiletries, water and pet food, while also taking the time to listen to community members and better understand their experiences accessing healthcare and other essential services. These conversations helped build trust and strengthened connections between health services and some of the community's most vulnerable members.

"It was a very humbling experience to see the community come together with all their resources to support those less fortunate than us. It was a privilege to be told stories of how people ended up homeless," shared Jodi Dyer, Metro North Health Senior Project Officer.

Among the many meaningful conversations throughout the day were stories that highlighted the resilience, strength and courage of people facing challenging circumstances. They served as a reminder that homelessness can affect anyone and that behind every person's situation is a unique story of loss, change and perseverance.

One story in particular left a lasting impression on Jodi, illustrating the profound bond between people and their pets, and the comfort companionship can provide during difficult times.

"One story really touched me, as I had the pleasure of paw-sitting a beautiful Aunty's fur baby named Pedro while his mum went to have a shower, get a haircut, and get new clothes. This Aunty lost her husband 3 years ago and the last thing he got her was Pedro. This Aunty lives in her dual-cab ute with Pedro due to losing her husband and not being able to afford the upkeep of their property," said Jodi.

Stories like these demonstrate the importance of community events that not only provide practical support, but also create opportunities for people to feel seen, heard and valued. For many attendees, access to everyday necessities, healthcare advice and a supportive conversation can make a significant difference.

A special acknowledgement goes to the Metro North Public Health team and Metro North Health's myHR, ieMR and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership teams who generously donated grocery items for the food hampers distributed at the event. Their contributions helped ensure community members could access additional support when they needed it most.

Metro North Health also extends its sincere thanks to the Peninsula Support Hub for the opportunity to be involved and for creating such a welcoming and inclusive environment for community members and service providers to connect. We look forward to continuing our partnership and working together to improve health, wellbeing and access to support across our local community.



Traditional song and dance performed by the Wagga Torres Strait Islander Dance Company.



Metro North Health staff connecting, learning and engaging through one of the activities of the day.



Uncle George Elarde, Uncle Roy Hodges, Aunty Tricia Elarde and Aunty Erica Girvan pictured cutting the celebration cake at the Mabo Day event.

Community and staff celebrate Mabo Day

Mabo Day was commemorated on Friday 5 June by community members, Metro North Health staff and partner community organisations, honouring the legacy of Eddie Koiki Mabo and the landmark High Court decision that recognised the traditional rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their lands.

The celebration brought together staff, community members and guests for a morning of reflection, learning and cultural connection.

The event began with an Acknowledgement of Country and welcome from Metro North Health Capacity Development Manager, Andrew Williams, who reflected on the significance of Mabo Day and the importance of truth-telling, respect and reconciliation. This was followed by an Opening Prayer delivered by proud Torres Strait Islander woman and The Prince Charles Hospital Liaison Officer, Naomi Waigana.

Attendees then took part in a range of engaging activities that encouraged connection, learning and a deeper understanding of Torres Strait Islander culture and history.

A highlight of the morning was a vibrant performance by the Wagga Torres Strait Islander Dance Company. Through Traditional Song and Dance, performers shared elements of Torres Strait Islander culture, captivating the audience and celebrating the strength and richness of cultural traditions that continue to thrive today.

The celebration also included the blessing of kai-kai, led by a Torres Strait Islander community member, Uncle George Elarde. This meaningful cultural practice provided an opportunity for attendees to pause, reflect and appreciate the importance of community, culture and shared experiences.

Guests then enjoyed a traditional Torres Strait Islander lunch, providing a chance to come together, build relationships and continue conversations in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

The Mabo Day celebration served as an important reminder of the enduring contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the significance of recognising and respecting the rights, cultures and histories of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Through events such as these, Metro North Health continues to strengthen understanding, foster connection and celebrate the diversity that enriches communities every day.



NAIDOC Week celebrations and community connections

Throughout NAIDOC Week (5-12 July), Metro North Health staff joined communities across the region to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a range of events, ceremonies and community gatherings.

Celebrating NAIDOC with this year's theme, '50 Years of Deadly', recognises a significant milestone, commemorating five decades of NAIDOC Week. It is both a celebration and a call to reflect on our nation's history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—the world's oldest living cultures, and on the stories, strength, knowledge, and leadership of past and present Elders and communities.

'50 Years of Deadly' acknowledges the enduring voices and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - their advocacy, cultural knowledge, deep connection to Country, and the strength that has carried generations forward. It also recognises the progress that has been achieved through the courage of those who refused to be silenced.

The week offered opportunities to learn, connect and celebrate, with staff attending the Buranga Widjung Flag Raising Ceremony in Caboolture, the Queensland Police Service Flag Raising Ceremony, the Flag Raising Ceremony at George Street, the Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital (RBWH) NAIDOC Markets, The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) NAIDOC event, the Surgical Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS) NAIDOC event, the Redcliffe NAIDOC event, Caboolture Hospital's NAIDOC celebrations, the Mental Health NAIDOC event and the Northside NAIDOC Family Fun Day celebrations at Koobara Kindy.

View some of the special highlighted moments captured from NAIDOC Week.







(L-R) Redcliffe Hospital Executive Director Cang Dang, Aunty Maureen Marsczak, Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Mellissa Malley and Uncle Jack.

Aunty Maureen reflects on a lifetime in health

One of South-East Queensland's pioneering Aboriginal Health Workers has shared her personal story with Redcliffe Hospital staff as part of National Day of Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners.

Aunty Maureen Marsczak began her career as an Aboriginal Health Worker at age 36 and went on to dedicate many years to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and communities.

Her career took her across several health services, including the Mater Hospital, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Redland Community Health and Redcliffe Community Health.

Aunty Maureen recalled travelling between health facilities and working alongside Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients during their hospital stays, helping ensure patients felt culturally safe, supported and connected.

She also reflected on working alongside respected community leaders, including Aunty Pam Mam, during the early days of the Aboriginal and Islander Community Health Service, and spoke proudly about helping establish Kambu Health Clinic in Ipswich.

For Aunty Maureen, the Redcliffe area also holds

strong personal connections. She grew up in the area where her family has a long history of living and working, and shared memories from her childhood – including swimming across the river on some mornings to get to school.

Her visit gave current staff an opportunity to hear firsthand about the experiences of the Aboriginal Health Workers who helped pave the way for today's workforce.

Redcliffe Hospital Executive Director, Cang Dang, Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer, Mellissa Malley and Uncle Jack joined Aunty Maureen for the occasion.

The National Day of Recognition is an opportunity to celebrate the vital contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners make to our health services and communities.

Thank you to Aunty Maureen for generously sharing her stories, knowledge and experiences and to the generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners who continue to strengthen culturally safe care for our communities.



Aunty Maureen (pictured with colleagues) during her time as an Aboriginal Health Worker.

Persistent Pain Service

A caring pathway for MOB

What is persistent pain?

Pain is often called persistent (or chronic) when it lasts for months, even years, or goes on longer than you expect. Chronic pain can be constant or come and go, and can really muck you up. It can affect your health, wellbeing, mood, sleep, work or everyday life. It can start from an illness, injury, surgery or sometimes there isn't an obvious reason.

Our services

The Persistent Pain Service provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 16 and over, and their immediate families, access to a culturally safe service to manage ongoing pain. Our deadly team will walk alongside you to look after your health, in your way. We listen without judgement; your story will be respected.

The Persistent Pain Service can support you with understanding your pain and how to best manage it.

Who we are

The Persistent Pain Service is a partnership between MATSICHS and the Tess Cramond Pain and Research Centre, based at the MATSICHS Specialist Hub in Caboolture.

Our deadly care team includes:

- pain medicine consultants
- nurse care coordinators
- psychologists
- occupational therapists
- physiotherapists
- social workers
- pharmacists.

You might see a combination of our team who will assess and support you to manage your pain.



What happens at the service?

Your care pathway will depend on what is going on for you.

During your time with the service, you might meet different team members who will help guide you through your time with the service. We also work with your GP so when its time to finish with us, there is a good plan to keep you moving in the right direction.

It's a welcoming place to share your experience and to feel safe, supported and connected.

Where to start

Have a yarn with your GP for a referral to the persistent pain service.

For further information, please contact



(07) 5428 5876



moretonatsichs.org.au/persistentpain

Connecting Community to Care: Trent's Experience with the Persistent Pain Service

For Trent Colley, proud Kamilaroi man raised in rural NSW, a workplace knee injury seemed like a temporary setback. He expected the pain to improve with time and life to return to normal.

Instead, it marked the beginning of a journey that would change everything.

What should have been a straightforward recovery became months of ongoing pain, uncertainty and unanswered questions. As he moved from one appointment to the next, undergoing countless investigations and treatments, Trent struggled to understand why he wasn't getting better.

"I felt lost," Trent said. "I went through so many medical appointments, investigations and different therapy options, but nobody could tell me why I was in so much pain."

The physical pain was only part of the challenge. Without answers, the emotional toll grew heavier, affecting every aspect of his life and leaving him uncertain about what the future might hold.

After previously recovering from another injury through surgery at the Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS), Trent had hoped this injury would follow a similar path. Instead, his pain continued long after his knee should have healed.

After months of searching for answers, Trent reconnected with his surgeon at STARS. During a follow-

up appointment, his surgeon suspected he may be experiencing Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), a chronic pain condition that can develop following an injury. The same concerns were later raised during an appointment at the Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (MATSICHs), leading to a referral to the Persistent Pain Service.

For the first time, Trent felt he was getting closer to an answer.

"When I got linked in with the Persistent Pain Service and finally received a diagnosis, I was just glad to get some answers," he said. "After everything I'd been through, somebody finally got what was going on."

Based in Caboolture, the Persistent Pain Service is a partnership between MATSICHs and Metro North Health, providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 16 years and over, and their immediate families, access to holistic and culturally responsive care for ongoing pain.

"Community members who attend our service experience persistent pain, which is pain that continues beyond the usual recovery time. Sometimes it happens after an illness, injury or surgery, or sometimes develops without an obvious cause," said Rebecca Coggins, Nurse Navigator for the Tess Cramond Pain and Research Centre.

For Trent, the service offered far more than a diagnosis.

Through a diverse team that includes pain specialists, nurse



"When I got linked in with the Persistent Pain Service and finally received a diagnosis, I was just glad to get some answers. After everything I'd been through, somebody finally got what was going on."



Many of the staff supporting Trent have a personal understanding of what living with pain is like through their own experience.



Trent Colley receiving care through the Persistent Pain Service.

care coordinators, psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and pharmacists, he was able to access tailored support designed to help him better manage his condition.

"I was glad I didn't have to travel to different places for every appointment. My physiotherapy, group yarning sessions and other services were all there at the one spot," Trent shared.

One of the most meaningful parts of Trent's journey was participating in the service's group program.

Living with persistent pain can be an isolating experience, but connecting with others facing similar challenges helped him realise he wasn't alone.

"I liked the group sessions because it helped me mentally. I didn't feel alone. It made me realise I wasn't the only person experiencing this."

The sessions gave participants an opportunity to yarn, share experiences and learn practical strategies for managing daily life with pain.

"You can talk with people who understand what you're going through, share advice and learn how to better manage your pain and know your limits," Trent said.

Trent's experience reflects the service's focus on addressing not only the physical impacts of pain, but also its social and emotional effects.

"We know that pain impacts on every aspect of physical, psychological, social and emotional wellbeing, and our service aims to spend time getting to know each client and understanding how pain impacts them individually, before working on a plan to help patients learn how they

could manage their pain in all aspects of their being," said Caroline Zanussi, Persistent Pain Service for Mob Service Co-ordinator for the Tess Cramond Pain and Research Centre.

While persistent pain continues to impact his life, Trent says the support he has received has helped him regain confidence, understanding and a sense of control.

Unable to return to the labouring work he once knew and had spent years training for, he continues to navigate a very different future.

"It's life changing. I've pretty much been told I shouldn't go back to labour work, which is all I've ever known. So, I have no idea what is going to happen in the future," he said.

Despite the challenges, Trent remains grateful for the support he has found.

"The staff are really friendly and understanding. Many of the staff supporting me have a personal understanding of what living with pain is like through their own experience, and that has been helpful."

By sharing his story, Trent hopes others living with ongoing pain know that help is available and that they don't have to face it alone.

If you are experiencing pain that has lasted longer than three months, speak to your GP about a referral to the Persistent Pain Service.

For Trent, the journey is far from over. But where there was once uncertainty, he has found some answers, support and a community that understands.

And sometimes, that can make all the difference.



From left, Deadly Start Project Support Officer Elfreda, trainee Amira, MNH Senior Project Officer Alicia, trainee Baylee and Deadly Start Project Support Officer Stephanie smiling together at the 2026 Queensland Training Awards Metropolitan regional final.

Deadly Start trainee Baylee Proctor wins at Queensland Training Awards

Deadly Start School Based Trainee, **Baylee Proctor**, has taken out the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year award at the Metropolitan regional final of the 2026 Queensland Training Awards.

Baylee was recognised alongside fellow Metro North Health Deadly Start trainee, Amira Ahmat, with both students named finalists in the category. This is an incredible achievement recognising their dedication to vocational education and training, their workplaces and their communities.

Both trainees are completing a Certificate III in Health Services Assistance through the Metro North Health's Deadly Start Program while balancing school and preparing for future careers in healthcare.

At Caboolture Hospital, proud Kaurareg man, Baylee, has embraced every opportunity that has come his way through Deadly Start.

Since joining the program, he has grown in confidence

and become an informal ambassador for Deadly Start, regularly stepping up to support other trainees and the wider community.

Deadly Start Project Support Officer, Stephanie Archibald, said Baylee's willingness to get involved was one of the many things that made the team proud.

"Baylee is a trainee we are extremely proud of. He is always ready to help out and assist with our events for new trainees," Stephanie said.

"At our recent orientation, he took on the MC role with absolutely no warning, and he also recently assisted the Redcliffe Hospital team with their NAIDOC celebrations."

Alongside his traineeship, Baylee has also achieved success as a bull riding finalist, demonstrating the same determination and resilience he brings to his work each day.

"Deadly Start gave me the confidence to step outside my comfort zone and showed me I could make a difference in healthcare," Baylee said.

For fellow finalist Amira, Deadly Start has also provided an opportunity to build the skills and experience she hopes to one day take back to community.

"Deadly Start gave me the confidence to step outside my comfort zone and showed me I could make a difference in healthcare."



Deadly Start trainees Amira and Baylee smiling together after the 2026 Queensland Training Awards Metropolitan regional final, where Baylee won Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year and Amira was a finalist in the same category.

A proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young woman with connections to the Birri Gubba, Mudburra and Wagadagam peoples, Amira is completing Year 12 while holding a Rugby League Excellence Scholarship that has seen her represent Samoa.

With aspirations of becoming a Remote Area Nurse, Amira hopes to use her healthcare career to support communities that need it most.

"My dream is to become a Remote Area Nurse and give back to the communities that need it most," Amira said.

Deadly Start Project Support Officer, Elfreda Tanna, who has supported and mentored Amira throughout her traineeship, said she had become a wonderful role model for other young people.

"Throughout the program, Amira has demonstrated dedication, resilience and a genuine passion for her future," Elfreda said.

"Following graduation, she hopes to return to community and use the skills and experience she has gained to give back and support others. She is a wonderful role model for our current trainees and for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people considering the Deadly Start pathway in the future."

Having two Metro North Health Deadly Start trainees recognised as finalists is a proud achievement for the program and reflects the growing confidence, leadership and skills of the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals.

For Baylee, his regional win marks another exciting step in his Deadly Start journey and will see him continue to represent the Metropolitan region at the 2026 Queensland Training Awards.

Congratulations Baylee on this deadly achievement and to Amira on an incredible result as a Metropolitan regional finalist. We can't wait to see where your journey takes you next.



Metro North Health staff celebrating the launch of the Anti-Racism Campaign.

Marking One Year of the Stop Racism. It Starts with Me Campaign.

This year marks one year since the launch of Metro North Health's *Stop Racism. It Starts with Me* campaign and Anti-Racism Policy, a significant milestone in the organisation's commitment to creating a safer, more inclusive and culturally responsive healthcare environment.

Launched in July 2025, the campaign and policy have played an important role in strengthening Metro North Health's efforts to ensure racism is recognised, addressed, actively challenged and eliminated across its services and workplaces.

Through awareness activities, staff engagement initiatives and ongoing communications, the campaign has encouraged meaningful conversations about respect, cultural safety, inclusion and accountability.

At its core, Stop Racism. It Starts with Me reinforces the shared responsibility of staff, leaders, patients, consumers and community members to foster safe, respectful and supportive environments for everyone.

The campaign has helped raise awareness of the impact of racism in healthcare, while encouraging individuals to reflect on the role they can play in creating positive change.

Over the past 12 months, the Anti-Racism Policy has provided a strong foundation for building a culture where concerns can be raised with confidence, incidents are addressed appropriately, and every person is treated with dignity, fairness and respect. The campaign has also helped increase understanding of the policy, ensuring staff are aware of its purpose and empowered to uphold its principles in their everyday interactions.

While this anniversary is an important opportunity to reflect on the progress made, Metro North Health recognises that eliminating racism is an ongoing journey. Achieving lasting change requires continued commitment, learning and action from all staff, leaders, patients and community members.

Together, Metro North Health remains committed to embedding the principles of the Anti-Racism Policy into everyday practice and continuing to build a health service and workplace where everyone feels respected, valued, culturally safe and free from racism and discrimination.



Metro North Health and CHQ Executive Team pictured with community members at the Health Equity Showcase.

Health Equity Showcase highlights collaboration and innovation

On 28 May 2026, Metro North Health and Children's Health Queensland came together to host the Health Equity Showcase, bringing healthcare professionals, Elders, community, community partners and leaders together to celebrate and share initiatives that are improving access, outcomes and experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The showcase provided an opportunity to share innovative programs, learn from one another and strengthen partnerships that are helping to address health inequities across Queensland.

The day commenced with an Acknowledgement of Country by the Bray Park State High School Dancers, setting a respectful and meaningful tone for the event.

Attendees heard from Metro North Health Chief Executive, Nick Steele, and Children's Health Queensland Chief Executive, Frank Tracey, who reinforced the importance of collaboration, culturally capable care and community-led approaches in achieving better health outcomes.

A diverse program showcased practical examples of health equity in action. Presentations highlighted initiatives including Children Health's Queensland MOB ED program, Metro North Health's telehealth innovations, and programs focused on connection and kinship, demonstrating how health services are adapting to meet the needs of communities in more accessible and culturally safe ways.

Attendees also heard about the Health Equity Report Card, which provided insights into progress, achievements and opportunities for continued improvement in delivering equitable healthcare services.

The afternoon sessions focused on child and family health initiatives, including Child Life Therapy and Julian's Key Health Passport. These presentations highlighted the importance of person-centred care and the value of supporting children and families across healthcare and education settings.

Throughout the day, networking opportunities enabled participants to build new connections, share experiences and explore opportunities for future collaboration. The enthusiasm and engagement demonstrated a shared commitment to reducing health disparities and ensuring all Queenslanders have access to high-quality healthcare.

The showcase concluded with closing remarks from Adjunct Professor Sherry Holzapfel, Metro North Health Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Jessica Oostenbroek, Children's Health Queensland Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement. Their reflections reinforced the collective responsibility of health services, partners and communities to continue advancing health equity and delivering meaningful change.

The Health Equity Showcase celebrated the significant work already underway across the health system while inspiring participants to continue working together to create a healthier and more equitable future for all.

Our Journey Towards Health Equity



Bray Park State High School dancers posing for a photo after performing the Acknowledgement of Country.



Attendees contributed their thoughts in real time as Sharna Dodd facilitated an interactive word cloud activity, capturing key themes and ideas from the audience.



Jessica Oostenbroek, Executive Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement CHQ delivered the closing speech at the showcase.

Cardiology Art Program grows from fundraiser to legacy



Director of Cardiac Sciences Adam Scott and HOPE Program Administration Officer and artist Mel Denny standing together in front of a student artwork created through the program.

What began as a simple fundraiser has grown into a collaborative program transforming hospital spaces, inspiring the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, and creating a more culturally welcoming experience for patients.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cardiology Art Program is the result of a shared vision between the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Cardiology team, local schools and the wider Metro North community, all working together to create meaningful change.

For Director of Cardiac Sciences, Adam Scott, the program reflects a belief that improving healthcare isn't always about large-scale initiatives.

"Sometimes it's about taking smaller, simpler steps that help people feel welcomed, respected and connected when they come through our doors," Adam said.

That thinking inspired the team to ask a simple question: how could they create a more culturally welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients?

Rather than waiting for funding, the Cardiology team took matters into their own hands.

In 2025, staff organised the first Cardiology Foodie Day, with colleagues cooking meals, baking treats and donating their time to raise funds for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork. The event not only brought staff together but raised \$710 to purchase canvases and art supplies for local students.

With HOPE Program Administration Officer and artist Mel Denny connecting the team with Pine Rivers State High School's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art program.

Students were invited to create original artworks that would become a permanent feature throughout the Cardiology department, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

patients could see culture reflected throughout their healthcare journey while giving young artists the opportunity to leave a legacy within one of Queensland's largest hospitals.

The partnership also opened doors beyond the canvas.

Students visited the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital to exhibit their work, meet clinicians and staff from across the department, and learn about the wide range of career opportunities available in healthcare—from administration and allied health to nursing, medicine and support services.

Among those students was emerging artist Grace, a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young woman whose Aboriginal family are Kalkadoon people from Northwest Queensland.

Inspired by her family's heritage, Grace's artwork explores connection to community and Country, drawing on the Kalkadoon tradition of marking territory with emu and crane footprints painted onto rocks and trees or carved into granite. For Grace, connection in all its forms sits at the heart of her artwork.

The project also held special meaning for Grace personally.

"Sometimes it's about taking smaller, simpler steps that help people feel welcomed, respected and connected when they come through our doors."

Having undergone open heart surgery as a baby she has spent much of her life accessing ongoing cardiac care. Seeing her artwork displayed in a Cardiology setting made the experience especially significant.

That significance soon reached an international audience.

Grace's artwork caught the attention of one of the department's cardiologists, who recognised its unique connection to the Cardiology team and submitted it to the internationally recognised Heart Rhythm journal. The artwork was selected for the publication's front cover, showcasing Grace's talent and the success of the Cardiology Art Program on the world stage.

The success of the first year inspired even more teams to get involved.

This year's Foodie Day expanded beyond Cardiology, with departments from across the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital joining together to support the initiative. Together they raised more than \$1,300, almost doubling the previous year's total and enabling the program to grow from one participating school to six.

The additional funding means more students, more artworks and more opportunities to strengthen connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, local schools and Metro North Health.

For Adam, that's what the program has always been about.

"Everyone has played a part—from the staff who fundraised, to Mel's leadership, the schools, students, families and every department that got behind the idea," he said.

"Together we've created something that helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel welcome while inspiring young people to see themselves as part of the future of healthcare."

What started as a simple fundraiser has become something far greater than artwork on hospital walls. It has become a shared commitment to cultural recognition, community partnership and creating spaces where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel seen, welcomed and connected - made possible by the collective efforts of staff, students, schools, families and community working together.

Metro North Health's new Sad News and Sorry Business Leave Guideline recognises the importance of culture, kinship and community, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees during times of grief and loss.



New Sad News and Sorry Business Guideline to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce

Metro North Health has taken an important step towards strengthening cultural safety and workplace inclusion with the release of the new Sad News and Sorry Business Leave Guideline. Developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and key stakeholders, the guideline provides clear support for employees who need time away from work during periods of grief and loss.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Sad News and Sorry Business are important cultural practices that may involve travelling to Country, attending funerals and ceremonies, supporting family and community, and taking part in periods of mourning. These responsibilities are an important part of culture, identity, connection and wellbeing.

The guideline recognises that cultural responsibilities and kinship relationships may extend beyond traditional workplace definitions of family. This means employees can have conversations about leave that better reflect their cultural obligations and circumstances.

The new guideline is also an example of the *Metro North Health Equity Strategy 2025-2028* in action. The strategy is focused on eliminating racism, creating culturally safe environments and improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees should feel respected, included and supported in the workplace.

Under the guideline, eligible employees can access a range of leave options to meet cultural and ceremonial obligations. It also recognises that Sad News and Sorry

Business can occur over an extended period, allowing leave to be used flexibly when needed. The guideline also provides practical advice for managers.

Leaders are encouraged to respond with compassion, build their understanding of Sad News and Sorry Business, undertake cultural capability training and work with employees to identify suitable supports, including flexible work arrangements where appropriate.

By building cultural understanding into workplace practices, Metro North Health is helping remove barriers that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff may face when meeting cultural obligations. The guideline supports workforce wellbeing, cultural safety and Metro North Health's ongoing commitment to anti-racism and health equity.

More than a workplace policy, the Sad News and Sorry Business Leave Guideline reflects Metro North Health's commitment to listening, learning and walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By recognising the importance of culture, kinship and community, Metro North Health is helping ensure staff feel supported during some of life's most challenging times.



Glen Quinn, Clinical Nurse Consultant with Metro North Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team.

Award-winning research gives fathers and non-birthing partners a voice

Improving support for fathers and partners following traumatic childbirth has earned a Partnering with Consumers Award at the recent 2026 Metro North Health Research Excellence Awards.

The award recognises the work of the Supporting Fathers and Partners in Traumatic Childbirth Research Team and Glen Quinn, Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) with Metro North Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team for their commitment to genuine collaboration with people who have lived experience.

By placing the voices and experiences of fathers and non-birthing partners at the heart of the research, the team has helped identify opportunities to improve the care, support and resources available to families following traumatic childbirth.

Glen contributed to the project as a consumer partner, drawing on his own experience as an Aboriginal man and father affected by traumatic childbirth. Alongside other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal fathers and partners with lived experience, he worked closely with researchers to better understand the challenges families face and explore ways health services can provide more inclusive, culturally safe and compassionate care during and after a traumatic birth experience.

A key part of the project involved a series of World Café discussions, where participants came together to openly share their experiences in a safe and supportive environment. For Glen, the conversations felt familiar.

"It was just like a yarning circle. That's what we do. We sit and we talk," shared Glen.

Throughout the project, Glen brought an important Aboriginal perspective to the research. He helped the team understand that cultural practices, including women's business and men's business, may influence

who is present during childbirth for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities. These insights encouraged researchers to think more broadly about the different ways families experience pregnancy, birth and trauma.

Glen also played an important role in ensuring the research recognised the experiences of non-birthing partners, advocating for language and approaches that reflected the diversity of modern families. His contribution helped expand the project's focus beyond fathers alone, ensuring gender-diverse parents and other support people were included in the development of best practice principles for perinatal services.

"Because we're a minority, we recognise the other minorities," said Glen.

Together, the research team and consumer partners developed four best practice principles to guide future care: compassionate and inclusive engagement, policy and legislative reform, education and learning opportunities, and mental health screening and support. These principles will help inform future improvements to ensure fathers and non-birthing partners receive the recognition, support and culturally responsive care they need following traumatic childbirth.

For Glen, one of the most meaningful outcomes of the project was knowing that participants' voices had been genuinely listened to and had shaped the research.

Congratulations to Glen and the entire research team on this well-deserved recognition and for their commitment to improving care through meaningful consumer partnerships.

TEAM SPOTLIGHT



Caboolture Hospital and Caboolture Satellite Health Centre (Kabul)



Helen Quelch
Nurse Navigator



Stella Bamaga
IHLO



Jerome Collins
After Hours IHLO



Hayley Renouf
Snr Health Worker



Caleb Meredith
Snr Health Worker



Mel Kielly
Snr Health Worker



Shaniqua Enoch
After Hours IHLO



Kathryn Button
Ngarrama Snr Health Worker



Sheree Strahan
Ngarrama Snr Health Worker

WORD OF THE MONTH

"Bokar"

"Bokar" (Bo-kah) is
Night in Gunggay
language.

Gunggay (aka Gunggandji & Koo-gun-ji) is a language group centred on the Yarrabah, Cape Grafton Peninsula region of Far North Queensland. The area includes the Yarrabah, and surrounding areas.





A DAY IN THE LIFE OF

Morgan Cattanach

Manager, Health Equity – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team



Q1. Which community, Island or Country are you from?

My connection is through my father to the Northern Kaanju mob from around the Coen and Lockhart River region in Far North Queensland. I grew up and completed my schooling in Toowoomba before spending 10 years in Victoria. I moved to Brisbane in 2023.

Q2. What is your current role and what does your role involve?

I am the Manager of Health Equity within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team. My role is responsible for leading the scoping, planning and coordination of the Health Equity Strategy and planning across Metro North Health, helping to drive meaningful change that improves outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Q3. What impact do you hope to make?

I hope to listen to and understand the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander peoples engaging with Metro North Health services. I want to celebrate the wins while encouraging ongoing growth and change as the needs of our communities evolve. Ultimately, I hope to contribute to a lasting legacy where mob feel connected, heard and acknowledged every time they access our services.

Q4. Why are you passionate about this work?

My passion comes from wanting to contribute to a future built on reconciliation and deep respect as we walk alongside our allies. Since becoming a mother this has become even more important to me. I want my children to grow up seeing the strengths of how far we've come and the positive change we're continuing to create, rather than having to fight the same battles for change in the future.

Q5. What do you enjoy outside of work?

Family time is incredibly important

to me. I have the privilege of being mum to two beautiful boys, and we love spending time caravanning and connecting with Country to recharge. My husband and I also enjoy playing Xbox together and tackling puzzles.

Q6. What advice would you give to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people considering a career in health?

Before applying for my role, I followed the Better Together – Our Health, Our Way social media pages and saw an organisation that genuinely celebrated its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and demonstrated a commitment to culturally safe care. That inspired me to apply. My advice is simple: if you don't give it a go, you'll never know what could have been. It could be the opportunity you've been looking for to make a meaningful impact for mob while being part of a health service committed to breaking down barriers.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders form an integral role in the success of Metro North Health's journey towards health equity. They guide discussions, provide their wisdom and valued input, voicing the needs of their community and advocating for positive health outcomes.

Each edition of Talk-About, a feature will be provided on the Elders who guide our journey and share with you their personal profile.

We acknowledge and thank the Elders for their ongoing support and commitment.

Aunty Elaine's Story

Aunty Elaine Dorman is a proud Darumbal woman from Rockhampton. In her family she was 1 of 10 children – 7 girls and 3 boys. Aunty Elaine completed school in Grade 8 at Berserker State School in North Rockhampton. Growing up she came home from school and would go down to the flats and play cricket and rounders. There was always a big mob of kids.

Some families had as many as 13 children, meaning there was always a ready-made team to play with. But when the streetlights came on at six o'clock, everyone knew it was time to head home and the games would come to an end.

Aunty Elaine's favourite food was stewed mango for breakfast and chow chow. She had a happy family life.

At just 14 years of age, Aunty began working as a housemaid and babysitter for a Japanese family who owned a local shop and restaurant. Years later, Aunty Elaine had 3 daughters and moved to Wilston,

Brisbane where they lived for 13 years. For 6 of those years Aunty worked at St Andrews Hospital, doing kitchen work and cleaning before moving on to work at the airport.

"That's when Trans Australian Airlines had planes. I worked in their Golden Wings, which was business class at that time, and stayed there for 6 years."

After all that, Aunty did her Cert III in Aged Care, working in the field for 10 years. She then completed her Cert III in Indigenous Health and became a Health Worker at the Chermide Community Health Centre for 12 months.

"I enjoyed working there, meeting a lot of aunties and uncles."

Today, Aunty Elaine is a member of Metro North Health's Community and Oral Health's Elders Yarning Circle and Elders Yarns with Adjunct Professor Sherry Holzapfel, Executive Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Talk About Newsletter available now!



Keep up to date with the latest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander news and activities from across Metro North Health.

What's inside

- A word from the Executive Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
- Good news stories
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives
- Staff profiles
- Health Promotions



To find our Talk About Newsletter, scan the QR code or visit: <https://bit.ly/4840YBu>

Want to be added to our email list?

If you would like to subscribe to receive our Talk About Newsletter regularly, please contact us via email: a_tsiltcommsmnh@health.qld.gov.au

Follow
us on
social
media



[@bettertogetherourhealthourway](https://www.facebook.com/bettertogetherourhealthourway)



[@ourhealthourway](https://www.instagram.com/ourhealthourway)



[@better-together-our-health-our-way](https://www.linkedin.com/company/better-together-our-health-our-way)



This initiative is supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team

**Metro North
Health**



**Queensland
Government**