

Aboriginal
and Torres Strait
Islander Health

Year in Review

2026

Metro North Health

Queensland Government

Acknowledgement of Country

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team pays respect to the Kabi Kabi, Jagera/Yagara/Ugarapul, Jinibara and Turrbal people of Metro North Hospital and Health Service area, on who's lands we walk, work, talk and live. We also acknowledge and pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders both past and present.

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



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

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A copy of this document can be found here: https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/ourhealthourway

Artwork throughout publication: Better Together artwork by Elaine Chambers-Hegarty

THE BETTER TOGETHER ARTWORK STORY

A better lifestyle through our health carers

BY ELAINE CHAMBERS-HEGARTY



My design has the inspiration of the Moreton Bay region, and concentrates on the Better Together Plan and what it delivers for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community and the positive outcome it brings to the health and wellbeing of our mob.

Four icons that flow across the artwork, shows a timeline from the care and strong start to life when a child is born, then onto a healthy heartbeat and hands to embrace showing the care of our people to influence a healthy lifestyle to reduce the burden of disease. The next icon shows the tree and represents growth and complex care of those in need. There are two message stick symbols that represent the communication with cultural awareness given from the staff during times of crisis. Whilst the last icon which has the medical cross and the shape above of a gunya to represent care at home or elsewhere, and living longer with the care provided, taking into account the social, emotional, and mental wellbeing of clients and their families.

Circle markings represent the gathering areas and the coming together in community. The crosshatching in my artwork represents the structure and support of the policies established amongst the plan – similar to the crosshatchings on a weaving and how it all holds together. Whilst the middle image of the people show them as enjoying the healthy outcomes. I have added the two animals that are relevant to this area, and was a food source for the people many years ago.

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Executive Director's Foreword



Achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remains one of Metro North Health's highest priorities. Guided by our Metro North Health Strategic Plan and Health Equity Strategy, we are committed to creating a healthcare system where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can access culturally safe, equitable and high-quality care, and where improved health outcomes are achieved through genuine partnership, respect and self-determination.



As I reflect on 2026, I am proud of the progress we have made together to strengthen culturally safe healthcare, grow our workforce and deepen partnerships with community. Through stronger collaboration with Hospital and Health Services, Community Controlled Health Organisations and local community partners, we have worked collectively to improve coordination of care, share knowledge and create more connected, culturally responsive health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Throughout the year, we have continued to embed the principles of our *Metro North Health Equity Strategy*, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices remain central to the planning, design and delivery of healthcare services. The achievements highlighted throughout this report demonstrate what is possible when we listen, collaborate and work together towards meaningful and lasting change.

A significant focus in 2026 has been advancing our commitment to becoming an actively anti-racist health service. Building on the foundations established through Metro North Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anti-Racism Policy and *Stop Racism. It Starts with Me Campaign*, we have continued to strengthen accountability, increase cultural capability and create safer environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and staff. Achieving health equity requires more than improving

Metro North Health Equity Strategy

https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/mn-health-equity-strategy.pdf



access to healthcare. It requires addressing the systemic barriers and experiences of racism that continue to impact health outcomes and wellbeing.

Partnership has also been a defining theme throughout the year. Metro North Health has strengthened its partnership with Children's Health Queensland, working together to improve health outcomes and healthcare experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families. Through this collaboration, we are building stronger connections across services and creating more culturally safe, coordinated and family-centred care pathways that support children and families throughout every stage of their health journey.

Investing in and supporting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce remains fundamental to achieving health equity and creating sustainable change across our health service. In 2026, we proudly launched the second round of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program, bringing together emerging leaders, mentors, Elders and senior executives to strengthen leadership capability, cultural identity and career pathways across Metro North Health.

We also celebrated our largest cohort of school-based Deadly Start trainees commencing the program, providing more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with meaningful pathways into healthcare careers while gaining valuable workplace experience and skills for the future.

Across our hospitals, community services and outreach programs, we have continued to deliver innovative models of care and strengthen relationships with Elders, Traditional Owners, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and community partners. These partnerships remain critical to ensuring services are designed with community, for community and reflect local needs, priorities and aspirations.

What continues to inspire me most is the passion, resilience and dedication of our staff, community members and partners. Every story in this report reflects individuals and teams making a difference through exceptional care, cultural leadership, advocacy, mentorship and a shared commitment to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I would like to sincerely thank the Metro North Health Board, Chief Executive Nick Steele, Executive Health Team, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team, trusted partners, Elders, community members and staff for their unwavering support and commitment throughout the year. Your leadership and collaboration continue to drive our health equity journey forward.

As you read this Year in Review report, I encourage you to reflect on the stories, achievements and partnerships that have shaped 2026. While there is still much work ahead, these accomplishments remind us that meaningful change is achieved when we listen, learn and walk together.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Until next time, stay safe and deadly.

Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel
Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
Metro North Health

Executive Director's Footprints

JANUARY

27-28 January – UQ "Yarning for Success" retreat on Minjerribah





FEBRUARY

9 February – Elders Yarns with Sherry

10 February - Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Team Building Day (above)



MARCH

5 March – Women's Health Round Table Dinner at Customs House

5 March – Yarns with Sherry, Caboolture Hospital

6 March – Women's Health Round Table, Victoria Park, hosted by UQ Thelma Parker (ALSWH)

11 March – Metro North Staff Expo, RBWH

18 March – Health Equity Community Consultation, Hope Centre (below)



APRIL

15-16 April – Beyond Diversity Workshop

20 April – Elders Yarns with Sherry

21 April – SET Immersion in Rehab Engineering, STARS (below)

22 April – Social and Emotional Wellbeing Day, Zillmere (right)

23 April – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, TPCH









JUNE

8 June – Elders Yarns with Sherry

16 June – Executive Leaders Program Graduation, City Hall (above)

MAY

7 May – Yarns with Sherry, STARS

7 May – Reconciliation Queensland Gala Dinner, STARS Casino (above)

11 May – Elders yarns with Sherry

19 May – OCATSIHWO – Open Yarning Circle with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers

19 May – Thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Childrens Initiative (TATSICI) Strategy Launch, Cannon Hill (QATSICPP)

20 May – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program pre-workshop event

28 May – Health Equity Community Showcase (right)



Executive Director's Footprints





JULY

2 July – Yarns with Sherry, RBWH

6 July – TPCH NAIDOC Bushtucker BBQ (above)

7 July – NAIDOC Markets and Food trucks, RBWH (below)

7 July – 2026 QPS NAIDOC Flag Raising, Oxley (top right)

8 July – NAIDOC Celebration at STARS

8 July – UQ NAIDOC Breakfast, Herston Campus

9 July – Northside NAIDOC Family Fun Day, Zillmere

13 July – Executive Welcome, Redcliffe Hospital

14 July – Site Visit at Staying Deadly Hub, Deception Bay

30 July – 2026 Metro North Research Excellence Awards, BCEC







AUGUST

25 August – RBWH, RAP Launch (above)

27 August – Health Equity Engagement Forum (below)





SEPTEMBER

9 September – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program Graduation, RBWH (above)

14 September – Elders Yarns with Sherry

14 September – Metro North All Staff Orientation, TPCH

15 September – Yarns with Sherry, Green Square

OCTOBER

12 October – Executive Welcome, RBWH (below)

12 October – Elders Yarns with Sherry





NOVEMBER

13 November – Metro North Staff Excellence Awards

17 November – Health Equity Community Showcase (above)

24 November – Better Together Staff Gathering and Deadly Awards (below)

30 November – Elders Yarns with Sherry, End of Year Celebration





DECEMBER

3 December – Yarns with Sherry, Redcliffe Community Health Centre (above)

7 December – Executive Welcome, RBWH

Key Highlights From 2026

Workforce



541

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Staff at Metro North

7.7%
INCREASE

- As of June 2026, the headcount of Metro North Health staff who have identified themselves as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander through the EEO survey is **541** representing **2.04%** of the total staff headcount of **26,538**.
- This marks a **7.7%** increase in headcount from June 2025, where the count was **503** (**1.96%** of the total Metro North staff headcount).
- **28** Students Graduate the Deadly Start Program.
- **10** Indigenous Cadetship participants were supported across Metro North, with **5** completing their cadetships during the year.

Mothers and Babies FY 25-26 - Metro North Facilities



- **833** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Babies born in Metro North Health facilities (Born Alive, Single and Multiple Births, All Gestation Weeks).
  - **548** to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mothers
  - **285** to Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Mothers
- **547** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women gave birth in Metro North Health facilities. (Born Alive, Single and Multiple Births, All Gestation Weeks).
- The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital reported a **22%** increase in Ngarrama utilisation over the previous two financial years.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander obstetric Failure to Attend rates at Redcliffe Hospital reduced by a further **3%**.

833

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Babies born in Metro North Health facilities

FY 25-26

Anti-Racism



- Metro North delivered 4 Beyond Diversity programs, with **177** staff participating.
- 1 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination event held.
- **Anti-Racism Statement** embedded within the Values in Action (VIA) framework.

Workforce Capability



- **8,236** staff have completed the Cultural Practice Program.
- **618** orientation completions were recorded through the Cultural Practice Program orientation component.
- **16,294** staff have completed Accurate Indigenous Identification Training.

FY 25-26

Patient Activity

Number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients accessing Metro North Health - **FY 25-26**



113,317
Outpatients
11.5% INCREASE

22,862
Inpatients
2.8% INCREASE

33,830
Emergency
7.2% INCREASE

- Outpatients (From QNHAPDC. Excluding Source: BSQ, All Facilities *Including Satellite Health Centres*) – **113,317** (101,607 in FY24-25).
- Emergency Department (*Including Satellite Health Centres*) – **33,830** (31,543 in FY24-25).
- Inpatient – **22,862** (22,242 in FY 24-25).
- Discharge Against Medical Advice (DAMA) rate for inpatient services was **3.04%** in 2025–26, slightly lower than **3.12%** in 2024–25.
- Failure To Attend (FTA / Missed Opportunity To Treat (MOTT) rate for outpatient services was **12.0%** in 2025–26, slightly lower than **12.1%** in 2024–25.
- The Did Not Wait (DNW) rate for emergency departments, including Satellite Health Centres, was **5.10%** in 2025–26, an increase from **3.98%** in 2024–25.
- Left After Treatment Commenced (LATC) rate for emergency departments, including Satellite Health Centres, was **8.54%** in 2025–26, slightly lower than **8.59%** in 2024–25.
- Potentially Preventable Hospitalisations (PPH) separation rate* was **55.1%** per 1,000 population in 2025–26, compared with **54.1%** in 2024–25. Within this total, the rate for diabetes complications increased from **4.0%** to **4.6%** per 1,000 population.
- In 2025–26, the Minor Injury and Illness Clinics (MIICs) at Caboolture, Kallangur and Bribie Island Satellite Health Centres collectively recorded **7,093** presentations by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. These accounted for **9.8%** of all MIIC presentations.

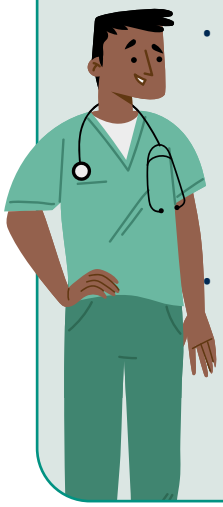
FY 25-26

Health Equity Strategy Progress



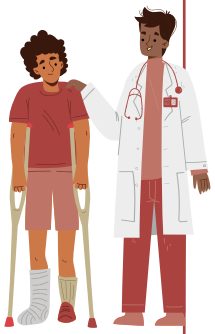
- **39** out of **44** (**88.6%**) strategy actions were reported as 'Performing'.
- **4** out of **44** (**9.1%**) strategy actions were reported as 'Performance Flag'.
- **1** out of **44** (**2.3%**) strategy actions were reported as 'Not Performing'.

Improving Access



- Healthy Ageing Clinic grew to approximately **20** new patients per month and supported around **90** active review patients.
- Metro North's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outpatient Failure to Attend rates reduced from **12.1%** to **11.9%**.

Care Close To Home



- The Better Together Health Van supported **448** community members to participate in opportunistic health screening activities. **82** specialist referrals were made.
- Deadly Feet Program delivered **36** community clinics, resulting in **450** appointments booked, **331** patients receiving care, and **152** review appointments completed.

Data current as of July 2026

Messages in a Coolamon

At each Health Equity Event, Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel, walks around the room to collect handwritten messages in a coolamon.

These messages are shared as a powerful reflection on our journey towards health equity and to inform service improvements and co-design.

Below are some of the messages shared over the past 12 months.



Graphic artwork created by Rachel Apelt

"A great opportunity to see 2 HHS coming together. Need more yarns like this."

"We need more cross-sectoral coordinated community led care drawing on community wisdom."

"Thank you for the opportunity to listen to what matters to community. Now let's make a positive difference."

"Navigation of our services is key."

"Partnerships at all levels are the key to health outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families & children."

"Thank you for opening your minds to change in our communities."

"Connecting and learning about services/ how we can make a 'direction' has been fantastic."

"Thank you for creating this great opportunity for collaboration and growth."

"Systems need to let culture lead. Listening to families, building pride, and understanding Aboriginal knowledge is powerful."

"Thank you for your ongoing dedication to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids, people, families. Long road ahead but it does not go unnoticed."

"Keep this conversation going, keep the fire burning. Need genuine partnership to keep driving 'real' change."

"We do better together. Great outcomes for kids and families means partnership within and beyond health."

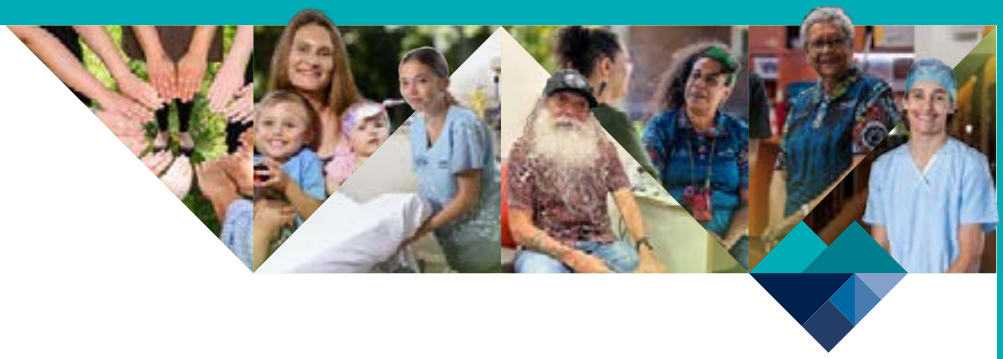
"It's time for all the services to come together and work as one for better outcomes."

"Thank you for bringing us together to yarn and connect. I cherish the voices of all, especially our Elders. Thank you for paving the way."

"Connection, togetherness, healing for family, for our young ones."

"I feel that there is definitive proof that the yarns are ensuring that people are being heard, which is a start in the journey for Health Equity."

"Thank you for caring about voices that matter. There is always a way – lead us there."



Statement of Commitment

Our Journey Towards Health Equity

"Health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders will bring healing for all Australia."

"Welcoming our voices being heard and action put into place that sees outcomes for our young and Elders moving forward."

"Respect – acceptance, Faith – for life, Hope – future. Continue our Health equity journey."

"Unity, unite, working for each other and community."

"Stand together with us, walk the journey with us."

"Beginning to see some positive changes. Still a way to go."

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members

Metro North Health respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our hospitals and services are located, the Jinibara, Kabi Kabi, Turrbal and Yugara peoples.

This statement of commitment is aligned to the 2025 – 2028 phase of the Metro North Health Equity Strategy and the Metro North Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028. In each phase of the health equity journey, we will share our direction and commitment with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we serve.

Our objective is to build and support empowered communities to achieve equity of health outcomes, access, and experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Metro North Health commits to:

- Ensuring a healthy and strong start to life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, creating a profound impact on positive health outcomes and reducing the life expectancy gap for the next generation.
- Providing family centred care to acknowledge and strengthen the role of families in health and wellbeing.
- Achieve zero-tolerance to racism towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and consumers and create a health service where cultural knowledge and experience is valued and respected.
- Increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to 5% by 2031, with a focus on the Deadly Start and First Nations Cadetship Programs as a clear pathway to employment and allowing us to grow and nurture our next generation of healthcare professionals.
- Addressing the root causes of health inequities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by advocating for systemic change, strengthening community-led initiatives, and fostering cross-sector partnerships.
- A focus on Mental Health and Alcohol & Other Drugs (MHAOD) to review and embed a strength-based trauma informed framework in all models of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Improving equity and ease of access to healthcare services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people based on the social, cultural, and economic determinants of health.
- Strengthen cultural awareness and support ensuring the way we deliver services reflects the needs of the diverse community that we care for.



Bernard Curran
Board Chair
Metro North Health



Nick Steele
Chief Executive
Metro North Health



Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel
Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
Metro North Health

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One Year of Action Towards Eliminating Racism

Metro North Health marked their first *International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD)* event, bringing staff together to reflect on progress, listen to lived experiences and strengthen collective action towards a health service free from racism and discrimination.

The event also marked an important milestone, coinciding with the first anniversary of Metro North Health's Anti-Racism Policy and *Stop Racism. It Starts with Me Campaign*, launched in 2025 to address racism, bias and inequity across the organisation. Over the past year, Metro North Health has continued to build on this foundation, working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, consumers, communities and allies to strengthen cultural safety, accountability and inclusion across all services.

Guest speakers, including Race Discrimination Commissioner Giridharan Sivaraman and respected Aboriginal Elder, Aunty Denise Proud, shared powerful reflections on the ongoing impacts of racism and the importance of leadership, courage and collective responsibility in creating meaningful change.

A key feature of the event was a series of yarning circles and workshops that provided staff with a culturally safe space to discuss the realities of racism within healthcare settings and explore opportunities for improvement. The conversations reinforced that achieving health equity requires more than policies alone. It requires ongoing action, accountability and a commitment to listening and learning from lived experience.

Feedback gathered throughout the day identified several priorities for continued improvement, including strengthening accountability, improving culturally safe reporting pathways, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, embedding anti-racism within clinical governance and building workforce capability to recognise and respond to racism when it occurs.

The insights shared during the event have already helped inform Metro North Health's ongoing anti-racism work, including the integration of anti-racism into the organisation's Values in Action framework and broader Health Equity priorities.

More than a single event, the IDERD gathering demonstrated the importance of creating spaces for honest conversations, truth-telling and shared learning. It reinforced Metro North Health's commitment to creating a workplace and healthcare system where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel safe, respected and valued.

As Metro North Health continues its anti-racism journey, the first anniversary of the Anti-Racism Policy and Campaign serves as a reminder that meaningful change happens through partnership, accountability and everyday actions. Together, staff, leaders and communities are helping to build a more culturally safe, inclusive and equitable health service for all.

Stop Racism. It Starts with Me Campaign

https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/ourhealthourway/campaigns/stop-racism



Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Sherry Holzapfel pictured with Race Discrimination Commissioner Giridharan Sivaraman at IDERD event.

Aunty Denise sharing her story at IDERD event.



Trent receiving support through the Persistent Pain Service.

Walking Alongside Community Through Persistent Pain

Persistent pain affects every aspect of a person's life, influencing physical health, emotional wellbeing, family relationships and participation in work and community. Through a partnership between Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (MATSICHS) and Metro North Health's Tess Cramond Pain and Research Centre, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Brisbane Northside region are accessing specialist pain care delivered closer to home.

The Persistent Pain Service provides culturally safe, coordinated support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with ongoing pain. The service recognises that persistent pain is complex and often requires more than a single treatment approach. Instead, patients are supported by a team of specialists, nurses and allied health professionals who work together to understand each person's circumstances and develop care plans tailored to their individual needs.

In 2026, the service strengthened its model of care through the implementation of a redesigned patient journey. The enhanced approach provides support from the point of referral, through specialist treatment and education, and back to community-based care with a patient's regular GP. Regular care planning meetings ensure care is coordinated, connected and responsive, helping patients navigate the health system and access the support they need.

The service also places a strong focus on self-management, empowering patients with practical strategies, education and ongoing support to better understand and manage their pain. By combining specialist expertise with culturally responsive care, the program aims to improve quality of life and help people stay connected to family, culture and community.

Between January and August 2026, the service supported 125 individual patients, including 71 new patients, and delivered 118 multidisciplinary case conferences. Since the first clinic was established in October 2023, 272 patients have attended at least one appointment.

By bringing together the strengths of hospital and community healthcare, the Persistent Pain Service is improving access to specialist support and helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people receive care that considers the physical, emotional, social and cultural impacts of living with persistent pain.

To access the Persistent Pain Service, yarn with your GP about a referral. For more information, call MATSICHS on (07) 5428 5876.

Growing Strong Kids and Walking Together for Health Equity



(L-R) Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel, Metro North Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health; Uncle Roger Knox, Aunty Phillipa Cole, Senior Project Officer Metro North, Wyomie Robertson, CHQ Health Equity Program Manager, Brendan Hoad CHQ COO and Jasmyn Adams, CHQ Health Equity, Manager.

In 2026, Metro North Health and Children's Health Queensland strengthened their partnership to create a more connected, culturally safe and equitable healthcare journey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Together, the two health services committed to listening to community, building stronger connections across the healthcare system and working in partnership to shape meaningful change.

This commitment came to life through the Connecting the Journey: Growing Strong Kids initiative, a series of consultation, engagement and showcase events that brought together Elders, families, community members, service providers and healthcare staff to help shape the future of children's health services.

The journey began in March with the *Connecting the Journey: Growing Strong Kids Community Consultation*, where approximately 175 participants shared their experiences and aspirations through a series of yarning circles. Community members identified key priorities for change, including easier pathways to care, earlier support and intervention, stronger coordination between services, and continued action to address racism within healthcare settings.

These conversations informed the *Connecting the Journey: Growing Strong Kids Health Equity Showcase* in May, which highlighted innovative programs and partnerships improving access, experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The event also strengthened collaboration between health services, community organisations and key stakeholders committed to improving child and family wellbeing.

In August, 147 representatives from community and sector partners came together for the *Connecting the Journey: Growing Strong Kids Engagement Forum*, transforming community feedback into practical actions. Participants focused on three priority areas identified by community: children's social and emotional wellbeing, child development, and child safety and protection. The forum reinforced a shared commitment to delivering more coordinated, accessible and culturally responsive care for children and families.

Together, these events formed a structured co-design process, ensuring community voices directly informed planning, decision-making and future priorities across both health services.

This collaborative work will contribute to the development of a joint two-year Action Plan and Memorandum of Understanding, to be launched at end of 2026. Shaped by extensive consultation and engagement, the Action Plan outlines shared priorities and practical actions that Metro North Health and Children's Health Queensland will deliver together to improve health outcomes and experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Importantly, the initiative has established an ongoing framework for partnership, engagement and accountability. Through a continued cycle of consultation, collaboration and reporting, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, particularly Elders, will remain central to shaping priorities, guiding action and monitoring progress.

As Metro North Health and Children's Health Queensland move into the implementation phase, the partnership demonstrates the power of working alongside community to create lasting change and a stronger future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.



Shaping the Future of Men's Health Together

More than 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men from across Brisbane's north came together at Brighton Health Campus for the *Strong Men, Deadly Men Business Yarn*, creating a powerful space for connection, culture and community-led conversations about men's health and wellbeing.

Hosted by Metro North Community and Oral Health Service, the gathering brought together community members, service providers and health professionals to share experiences, strengthen relationships and explore opportunities to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

The event supports the *Metro North Health Equity Strategy* priority to strengthen connections between services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, ensuring their voices and experiences help shape future health initiatives and programs.

Throughout the day, participants heard from a range of organisations, including the Valley Men's Group, Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service and Metro North Public Health Unit. The Deadly Feet team also provided foot health checks and education, offering practical health support alongside meaningful conversations and connection.

A key focus of the gathering was a community workshop exploring a simple but important question: What would Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men like to see in a future Men's Health Clinic?

The response was clear. Participants identified five key priorities that would support stronger engagement and better health outcomes:

- Access to holistic and responsive healthcare services.
- Greater focus on social and emotional wellbeing.
- Strong cultural connection and identity.
- Support for families and younger generations.
- Reducing barriers and creating culturally safe environments where men feel comfortable seeking care.

The discussions reinforced the importance of designing services with community, for community. Participants highlighted the need for healthcare spaces that combine clinical services with opportunities for cultural connection, peer support and community activities.

Ideas included integrating activities such as bush walks, yarning circles, social gatherings and community events alongside preventative health checks and health education. The vision was a welcoming environment where men feel supported to prioritise their health while strengthening connections to culture, community and one another.

Community and Oral Health Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Paul Drahm, said the gathering highlighted the value of listening directly to community members and ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men help shape future healthcare services.

The *Strong Men, Deadly Men Men's Business Yarn* demonstrated the power of culturally safe community engagement and the importance of creating spaces where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men can come together, share knowledge and contribute to solutions that support stronger health and wellbeing outcomes.

Most importantly, the event reinforced that improving men's health begins with connection, trust and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men to lead the conversations about what matters most to them, their families and their communities.

Metro North Health Equity Strategy

https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/mn-health-equity-strategy.pdf



Participants heard from a range of organisations to share learnings and experiences.



Men from across Brisbane's north came together at Brighton Health Campus for the *Strong Men, Deadly Men Business Yarn*.

New Ngarrama Service Brings Culturally Safe Maternity Care to Moreton Bay Families





Officially launched on 2 October, the new Redcliffe Hospital Ngarrama Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) marks a significant milestone for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families across Brisbane's north.

Building on the proven success of Ngarrama services at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and Caboolture Hospital, the service provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families with greater access to culturally safe, relationship-based maternity care closer to home.

Developed in response to extensive community feedback, the new model offers continuity of care throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period by connecting women and families with a known and trusted midwife and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker. Community members consistently called for greater choice, stronger cultural support, better integration between hospital and community services, and opportunities to build trusted relationships with healthcare professionals who understand their cultural needs and experiences.

The Ngarrama Redcliffe service delivers a Midwifery Group Practice model, widely recognised as the gold standard in maternity care, where women receive care from a small, dedicated team throughout their pregnancy journey. Research and local Metro North Health data show that continuity of care models improve engagement with antenatal services, reduce preterm birth rates and support better outcomes for mothers and babies.

Tara Denaro, Metro North Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nursing and Midwifery Director, said expanding access to Ngarrama was an important step towards improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

“Ngarrama is proven to work. Culturally safe, relationship-based care helps women feel supported, stay engaged throughout pregnancy and achieve better outcomes for themselves and their babies.

“With Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families still experiencing poorer maternal and infant health outcomes, expanding access to continuity of care models like Ngarrama is critical to closing the gap and giving every child the healthiest possible start to life.”

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, the benefits extend beyond clinical care. Ngarrama places culture, family and community at the centre of care, ensuring women feel safe, respected and empowered to make decisions about their healthcare. Guided by the principles of self-determination, cultural safety, continuity of relationships and family-centred care, the service has been shaped by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices from the very beginning.

Mother of four, Destiny Alberts, joined the launch celebrations after experiencing firsthand the impact of Ngarrama throughout her pregnancies and the births of all four of her children.

"Navigating the health system as a young mum was overwhelming, but Ngarrama made me feel supported every step of the way. The care and guidance I received from the team gave me confidence as a mother and made a challenging time so much easier."

The launch of the Redcliffe Midwifery Group Practice is an important step towards addressing health inequities. The service aligns with both the *Metro North Health Equity Strategy* and the Queensland Government's *Growing Deadly Families Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Maternity Services Strategy 2019–2025*, which identify culturally safe maternity care as a key priority for improving maternal and infant health outcomes.

In addition to maternity care, the service will strengthen partnerships with community



Ngarrama families attending the launch of the new Redcliffe Ngarrama MGP.

organisations and health providers, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Children's Health Queensland, helping families remain connected to support services throughout pregnancy, birth and early childhood. These partnerships will create more seamless care pathways and stronger links between hospital, community and primary healthcare services.

"Ngarrama is more than a maternity service. It is a commitment to walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, providing culturally safe, relationship-based care that supports healthy pregnancies, healthy babies and strong families. We are incredibly proud to bring this model of care to the Redcliffe community," Tara said.

For Destiny, the expansion of the service to Redcliffe means more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families will have access to the same trusted, culturally safe support that helped shape her own experience.

"I've seen firsthand the difference this model of care makes for families, and it's wonderful to know more women will now be able to access that same support closer to home."

The new service reflects Metro North Health's vision that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman, baby and family should have access to culturally safe, high-quality healthcare that supports strong starts to life and thriving futures.

As families begin accessing the new Redcliffe service, the launch represents more than the introduction of a new model of care. It is the result of years of community feedback, collaboration and partnership to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families have access to maternity care that is culturally grounded, relationship-based and designed with community, for community.

Growing Deadly Families Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Maternity Services Strategy 2019–2025



Connecting Community Voices Through the Community and Oral Health Yarning Circle

The Community and Oral Health (COH) Yarning Circle continued to bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, community members and stakeholders to share knowledge, strengthen connections and shape healthcare delivery across Metro North Health.

Established by local Elders and facilitated by the COH Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team, the Yarning Circle remains the longest-running and most established Yarning Circle within Metro North Health.

Grounded in cultural respect, truth-telling and community-led discussion, the Yarning Circle provides a safe environment where participants can share their healthcare experiences, discuss community priorities, learn about available services and help shape the future of healthcare delivery. The forum plays a vital role in ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices remain central to service planning, policy development and health equity initiatives.

Throughout the year, nine Yarning Circle sessions were held, attracting regular participation from more than 20 Elders, community members, Metro North Health staff and partner organisations. Together, participants explored a broad range of topics including healthy ageing, bowel screening, diabetes services, rehabilitation programs, bereavement support, anti-racism initiatives, women's health, palliative care, telehealth and community wellbeing.

Through more than 30 presentations, information sessions and engagement activities delivered throughout the year, the Yarning Circle strengthened connections between community members, health services and partner organisations. Presenters from across the hospital and health service and external organisations shared information, gathered feedback and worked with participants to better understand community needs and priorities.

Importantly, the impact of the Yarning Circle extends well beyond its monthly gatherings. Community representatives continue to play an active role on Community and Oral Health's Health Equity Committee, contributing directly to discussions with the Executive Leadership Team and helping guide the implementation of health equity initiatives. Community feedback has directly informed service redesign, policy development, cultural initiatives and new models of care, helping ensure services better reflect the needs and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The success of the COH Yarning Circle has also influenced broader change across Metro North Health. As a recognised example of best practice in consumer engagement and co-design, it has inspired other directorates and services to establish their own Yarning Circles, embedding culturally safe engagement approaches across the health service.

The ongoing success of the Yarning Circle is driven by Elders and community members who generously share their knowledge, lived experience and cultural perspectives to guide service improvement. Their contributions continue to guide service improvement, strengthen cultural safety and create meaningful opportunities for partnership between community and health services.

The COH Yarning Circle demonstrates how genuine partnership with community can drive meaningful change, strengthen cultural safety and improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For more information about the COH Yarning Circle, please visit https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/ourhealthourway/keep-connected/coh-elders-yarning-circle.



COH Yarning Circle Elders enjoying a community connection activity, reinforcing the importance of culture, wellbeing and social connection.

COH Yarning Circle Elders gathering to guide service improvement and health equity initiatives across Community and Oral Health.



Community Elders and Metro North Health staff collaborate to co-design culturally safe care pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Transforming Care Through Community-Led Design

The Connection and Kinship Project continues to drive improvements in paediatric outpatient care at The Prince Charles Hospital by working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, Elders and staff to co-design a more culturally safe, accessible and responsive model of care.

Established to address inequities in access and engagement with paediatric outpatient services, the project brings together Community Elders, consumer researchers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, clinicians and healthcare leaders to redesign care pathways that better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Through yarning circles and one-on-one conversations, families shared their experiences navigating the health system and identified barriers to care, including transport, cost, fragmented service pathways, institutional bias and cultural safety concerns.

Community feedback has directly informed the development of a culturally responsive paediatric outpatient model of care, including an identified health worker role focused on advocacy, care navigation and continuity of care. The project is also progressing towards the implementation of a co-designed care pathway that will provide culturally safe support throughout a child's healthcare journey, helping families navigate services, improve engagement and strengthen continuity of care.

Key achievements in 2026 included the development of a co-designed project protocol, ethics approval, recruitment of an identified project officer, extensive co-design activities with Elders, consumers and staff, and the collection of baseline service and consumer data. Together, these milestones have laid a strong foundation for implementation and future service improvement.

Importantly, the project embeds community leadership and shared decision-making at every stage, ensuring cultural authority and lived experience remain central to the design and delivery of care. Success will be measured through an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lens using the Ngaa-bi-nya Evaluation Framework, with a focus on attendance and engagement, health outcomes, consumer and family experience, cultural safety and long-term equity outcomes.

By placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, Elders and community knowledge at the heart of service design, Connection and Kinship is helping create a more equitable healthcare experience for children and families while providing a blueprint for culturally safe, community-led healthcare across Metro North and beyond.



TPCH staff celebrate receiving the 2025 Improving First Nations Health Award at the TPCH Staff Excellence Awards for their contribution to the Connection and Kinship Project.



Children's books donated by Redcliffe Hospital staff on display at Koobara Kindy

Redcliffe Hospital shares the joy of reading with Koobara Kindy

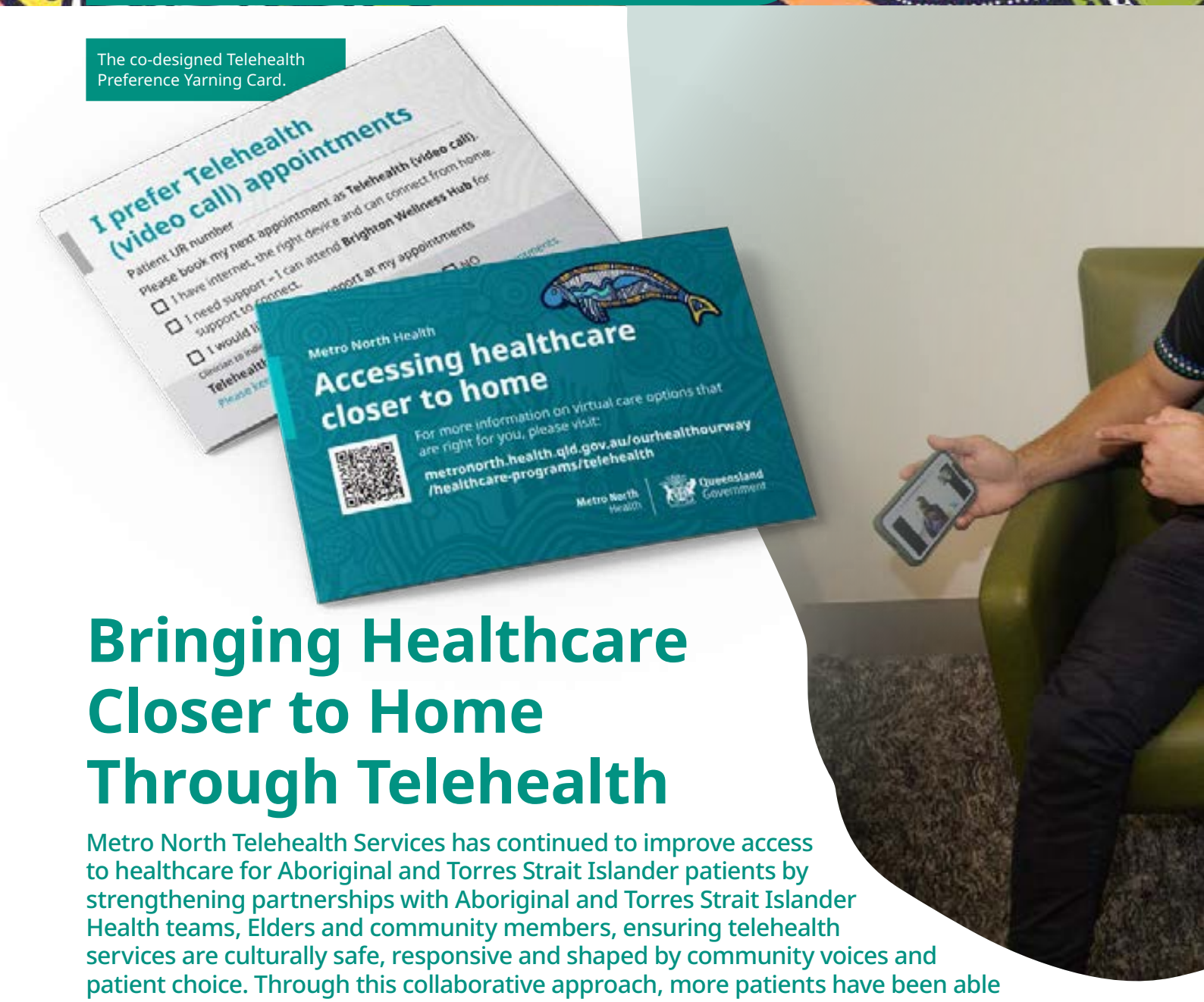
For Indigenous Literacy Day, Redcliffe Hospital staff came together to help put more books into the hands of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The hospital's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team and Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group invited staff to donate new or pre-loved books for children aged up to five. The response filled six boxes, which were delivered to Koobara Kindergarten and Pre-prep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation in Taigum.

"Our team is proud to support Koobara Kindy through this donation. Putting smiles on our jarjums' faces and helping foster a love of reading through the generosity of our staff is something we deeply value,t" shared Will Muckan, Cultural Capability Officer at Redcliffe Hospital.

The donation drive provided staff with a practical way to support early childhood literacy while celebrating the stories, cultures and languages at the heart of Indigenous Literacy Day.

Staff were also encouraged to explore the Indigenous Literacy Foundation's livestream and educational resources. Through the generosity of Redcliffe Hospital staff and its partnership with Koobara Kindy, the donated books will help support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to develop a lifelong love of reading, learning and storytelling.



The co-designed Telehealth Preference Yarning Card.

Bringing Healthcare Closer to Home Through Telehealth

Metro North Telehealth Services has continued to improve access to healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients by strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health teams, Elders and community members, ensuring telehealth services are culturally safe, responsive and shaped by community voices and patient choice. Through this collaborative approach, more patients have been able to access care closer to home while remaining connected to the support that matters most to them.

Over the past year, the Telehealth team has worked closely with Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health teams, service leaders, Elders and community members to better understand how virtual care can support patients throughout their healthcare journey.

Through community yarning opportunities and ongoing engagement, the team identified the importance of providing greater choice and flexibility in how care is accessed, while ensuring culturally appropriate support is available when needed. These insights have helped shape a more culturally responsive approach to telehealth and highlighted its potential to reduce barriers to care, improve access to services and strengthen the healthcare experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A key outcome of this engagement was the co-design of the *Telehealth Preference Yarning Card*, a practical tool developed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients discuss how they would like to receive their outpatient care. The card allows patients to indicate their preference for telehealth appointments and request cultural support, helping to create more personalised and culturally responsive healthcare experiences.

The initiative also strengthened partnerships across Metro North Health. Collaboration between Caboolture, Kilcoy and Woodford Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team and the Telehealth Virtual Clinic helped support patients to connect to appointments from home or from



Metro North Community Engagement Officer Thomas supports a patient to access a telehealth appointment.

locations closer to home, reducing travel and improving access to specialist care. Cultural support was also provided during appointments where requested.

Through various collaboration initiatives, the impact has been significant. Between January and August 2026, more than 5,100 telehealth video appointments were delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients across Metro North, representing more than 9% growth compared with the same period in 2025. By reducing the need for travel and increasing flexibility, telehealth is helping more patients access specialist care closer to home and at a time that suits their needs.

By listening to community, building trusted partnerships and promoting patient choice, Metro North Telehealth Services is creating more accessible, culturally responsive healthcare pathways that support improved health outcomes and ensure care is available closer to home for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families.

For more information on virtual care and telehealth appointments, visit https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/ourhealthourway/healthcare-programs/telehealth.



Empowering Women Through Health and Wellbeing

The annual *Community and Oral Health Women's Health Expo* continued to provide a culturally safe and welcoming space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families to connect, yarn and engage with health and wellbeing services across Metro North Health and Brisbane Northside.

Established in response to community feedback, the expo brought together health, community and support services in one accessible location, creating opportunities for health education, opportunistic screening, information sharing and connection to culturally appropriate care. In 2026, approximately 180 community members attended the event alongside 21 health and community service providers, highlighting the ongoing value of community-led health initiatives.

The expo provided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women with an opportunity to access health information, discuss their wellbeing, learn about available services and connect directly with healthcare professionals in a supportive and culturally safe environment. By encouraging women to take an active role in their health, the event also supported the early identification of potential health concerns and helped create pathways to ongoing care and support.

A key strength of the expo is its focus on family and community. Women were encouraged to attend with family members, creating opportunities for shared learning and open conversations. The event fostered connection, strengthened community relationships and provided a space where culture and wellbeing could be celebrated together.

The expo also strengthened partnerships across Metro North Health and the broader community. Bringing together a diverse range of organisations created valuable opportunities for staff and service providers to collaborate, share knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of the needs and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families.

By connecting women and families with multiple services in one welcoming setting, the *Women's Health Expo* helped reduce barriers to accessing care and strengthened pathways to ongoing support. Most importantly, the continued strong community response demonstrates the importance of listening to community voices and working in partnership to deliver culturally responsive initiatives that improve health outcomes and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Expo provides opportunity for women to connect with health and wellbeing services.



Redcliffe Hospital Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health team pictured with Outpatient Service staff.

Redcliffe Hospital Improving the Outpatient Journey Through Early Support

Redcliffe Hospital has introduced a new appointment management process to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients access specialist outpatient care with support that begins before they arrive.

As part of the process, patients with upcoming appointments are contacted by SMS approximately two weeks in advance and offered support from an Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer (IHLO) ahead of their appointment. This provides an opportunity to ask questions, discuss individual circumstances and learn about the assistance available.

For patients navigating an unfamiliar service, an early conversation can help reduce uncertainty and address potential barriers to care. Patients may be offered appointment options that better suit their circumstances, along with cultural support to help them feel more prepared for their visit.

The process enables outpatient administration teams, IHLOs, Nurse Navigators and clinicians to work together to identify and respond to patient needs early. By reaching out before appointments, the team can provide timely assistance and help patients navigate services with greater confidence.

Introduced across Redcliffe Hospital's outpatient services in 2026, the initiative is strengthening access to specialist care by providing more coordinated, culturally responsive support and helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families engage with services from the outset of their healthcare journey.

Community-Led Palliative Care

A strong focus on cultural safety, education and partnership has helped advance palliative care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Metro North Health in 2026. Led by Clinical Nurse Consultant and proud Worimi, Kabi Kabi and Coconut Island woman, Kat Hooper, this work has strengthened workforce capability, fostered community partnerships and supported the development of innovative, culturally responsive approaches to care.



Clinical Nurse Consultant Kat Hooper continues to deliver education and training programs sharing knowledge on the importance of culturally appropriate palliative care.

Recognising that palliative care must reflect the unique needs, values and cultural beliefs of individuals and families, these initiatives have focused on creating community-led models of care that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through serious illness, grief, loss and end-of-life care. Through extensive collaboration with community members, Elders, clinicians and organisations across Australia, care is increasingly being guided by culture, connection and what matters most to patients and their families.

A key achievement in 2026 was the development and delivery of education and training programs reaching more than 8,000 participants from government and community-controlled health services, general practice, allied health, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and healthcare organisations across Queensland. The education focused on culturally safe palliative care, communication, grief and loss, and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through serious illness and end-of-life care.

Statewide yarning circles also brought together community members and clinicians to share experiences, strengthen understanding and inform future approaches to care. Separate clinical yarning circles created safe learning environments for healthcare workers to explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander case studies and discuss evidence-based approaches to culturally responsive care.

Community knowledge and lived experience also informed the development of culturally informed grief and loss stories designed to support children, families and healthcare workers navigating bereavement. Using storytelling and traditional flora and fauna, these resources help explain the seasons and emotions of grief in ways that are meaningful and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Insights gathered through the statewide yarning circles further contributed to the development of a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Palliative Care Model of Care. Drawing on Aunty Pat Dudgeon's Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework and internationally recognised healthcare access frameworks, the model uses storytelling to support clinicians in delivering culturally safe, person-centred care.

Gaining national and international recognition in 2026, Kat contributed as co-author to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focused chapter in the International Oxford Palliative Care Textbook and presented at major conferences including Harvard Medical School in the United States and Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.

Ongoing collaboration with community survivorship groups and organisations including Cancer Council Queensland, Dementia Australia, Heart Foundation, Kidney Health Australia and Grief Australia has strengthened support pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living with chronic and life-limiting illnesses, contributing to more coordinated, culturally responsive care.

By bringing together community voices, cultural knowledge, education and evidence-based practice, this work is helping create better experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and families across Queensland.

Strengthening Connections in Correctional and Community Settings



Improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in custody requires more than healthcare delivery alone. It requires genuine partnerships, culturally safe engagement and a commitment to ensuring people remain connected to care throughout their healthcare journey. In support of the Metro North Health Equity Strategy priority to improve the prisoner healthcare journey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, staff strengthened partnerships across correctional and community settings throughout 2026, creating opportunities to hear lived experiences, identify barriers to care and explore ways to improve access to healthcare, health promotion and support services.

Through a range of outreach, partnership and health promotion initiatives, Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health staff engaged with men and women across correctional facilities and community corrections settings to better understand their healthcare experiences and priorities. These discussions strengthened partnerships with Queensland Corrective Services and informed the expansion of outreach initiatives through the Better Together Health Van, creating new opportunities to deliver culturally responsive health promotion, health screening and education activities, while supporting stronger continuity of care between custody and community.

During *NAIDOC Week*, staff attended celebrations at Helana Jones Centre, providing an opportunity to connect with women in custody, celebrate culture and learn directly from their experiences. This engagement led to the commencement of regular Better Together Health Van visits to the centre, delivering health promotion, health literacy and education activities in partnership with Queensland Health and community organisations. The first visit included the Deadly Feet team, who conducted nine foot health checks and facilitated a yarning circle with participating women. Feedback gathered during the session provided valuable insight into key health concerns, preferred screening programs and the types of health information women would find most beneficial both during custody and upon their return to community. The initiative is helping create culturally safe opportunities for early intervention, preventative health screening and stronger pathways back into community healthcare services.

The team also visited Woodford Correctional Centre in partnership with Caboolture Hospital to strengthen relationships with correctional staff, healthcare providers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in custody, while exploring opportunities to improve healthcare access and continuity of care following release. A yarning circle involving the men, correctional officers and clinical staff provided valuable insights into healthcare experiences within the correctional system, including challenges associated with accessing hospital outpatient services. Discussions identified opportunities to co-design new models of care, deliver targeted health promotion and health literacy initiatives, and introduce outreach screening services through regular Better Together Health Van visits. Stakeholders also expressed strong support for a future pop-up clinic model, recognising its potential to improve health outcomes through earlier intervention, increased health education and stronger referral pathways for people transitioning back into the community.

Reflecting on the engagement sessions, Aboriginal



Metro North Health staff yarning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in custody.

and Torres Strait Islander Innovation Officer, Aleacha Hopkins, said the opportunity to work alongside community in these settings has been particularly meaningful.

“Being able to give back to community through this work is incredibly rewarding. It’s a privilege to listen to people’s stories, build genuine connections and support better health outcomes through culturally safe health education and awareness. Knowing that these conversations can help empower people to make informed decisions about their health makes this work truly meaningful.”

Engagement extended beyond correctional facilities through a visit to the North Brisbane Community Corrections Office, where staff attended an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander yarning group. The session provided an opportunity to share information about Metro North Health services and discuss ways to support the health and wellbeing of people reintegrating into the community. Participants actively engaged in discussions about available healthcare services and welcomed the opportunity to connect with healthcare representatives in a culturally safe environment. The visit also established a new partnership with Community Corrections, creating opportunities for future collaboration, health promotion initiatives and improved pathways to care.

Through these partnerships and outreach activities, Metro North Health aims to strengthen connections with priority populations, improve access to culturally responsive healthcare information and services, and support better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in the justice system.

Strengthening Meaningful Engagement at Caboolture, Bribie, Kilcoy and Woodford



Strong partnerships, meaningful engagement and culturally safe community programs have continued to strengthen connections between Metro North Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Caboolture, Kilcoy, Bribie and Woodford throughout 2026.

The Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals and Woodford Corrections (CKW) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team has played a vital role in bringing people together through a range of initiatives designed to promote health, wellbeing and cultural connection. Through Women's Yarning Groups, Healing Hands Women's Group, Men's Groups, Walking Groups and Women's Collective Gatherings, community members have been provided with safe and welcoming spaces to connect, share experiences and access support.

School-based programs have also delivered significant impact, engaging young people through cultural education, health promotion and community connection activities. Partnerships with local schools continue to grow, creating new opportunities to connect with the next generation and support positive health outcomes.

One standout achievement was the *Traditional Games Day* at Kilcoy State School, which brought together approximately 250 students to celebrate culture, connection and physical activity.

The team's commitment to community engagement was on display during *NAIDOC Week*, participating in more than nine community and cultural events across the region. These events provided valuable opportunities to celebrate culture, strengthen relationships and raise awareness of available health services.

Throughout the year, Community Engagement Officers hosted yarning tables and community morning teas across Caboolture, Bribie, Kilcoy and Woodford, creating spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to share their experiences and have their voices heard. Feedback gathered through initiatives such as the *Deadly Steps Emergency Department Walk Through* has informed service improvements and helped ensure community perspectives remain central to healthcare planning.

Partnerships with local organisations including Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service, Headspace, Youth Justice services and community groups, have supported collaborative approaches to health promotion and wellbeing. New opportunities have also emerged through youth-focused initiatives, including culturally informed *Sexual Health Education Programs* delivered alongside School-Based Youth Health Nurses.



Caboolture, Bribie, Kilcoy and Woodford Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health team pictured during celebrations.



Listening, Learning and Improving Through Community Voices

Strong partnerships with Elders and community continue to play an important role in shaping culturally safe care at Surgical Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS).

Throughout 2026, STARS hosted monthly Yarning Circles led by Cultural Capability Officer, Henry Nona, bringing together Elders, community members and healthcare teams to share insights, build relationships and strengthen services.

The Yarning Circles provided valuable opportunities for community members to engage directly with a range of STARS and Metro North Health teams, including Infection Control, Orthopaedics, Anaesthetics, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Pain Services and the Metro North Psychological Wellbeing Team.

These conversations have helped services better understand community perspectives, identify opportunities for improvement and ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices remain central to service planning and delivery.

By creating a safe space for listening, learning and collaboration, the STARS Yarning Circle continues to strengthen cultural safety, foster trust and support more responsive healthcare experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and communities.

Across the region, outreach activities have strengthened connections between community members and healthcare services. Initiatives such as the Better Together Health Van attending community events and locations including Bribie Headspace, have improved access to trusted information, programs and support while increasing the visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health services.

Strong attendance and participation across community groups, events and outreach activities throughout the year reflects the trust that continues to grow between communities and health services. By showing up, listening and creating opportunities for genuine partnership, the team has strengthened relationships, improved service visibility and supported better health equity outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the Moreton Bay region.



Metro North Health staff pictured with Better Together Health Van at Homeless Connect Expo.

Working Together for Better Health

The annual *Homeless Connect Expo* continued to make a meaningful difference in 2026, bringing together health, housing and community services to support people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness across Brisbane's north.

Designed to reduce barriers to accessing essential services, the expo provides a welcoming space where community members can connect with a range of organisations in one location, access practical support and learn about services available to them. More than just an information event, Homeless Connect creates opportunities for people to build relationships, seek support and reconnect with services in a safe and respectful environment.

Metro North Health proudly supported this year's event alongside a broad network of community partners, with the Better Together Health Van providing a culturally safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to yarn with staff, access health information and connect with support services.

Throughout the day, Metro North Health staff engaged with community members to discuss health concerns, provide education and strengthen links to healthcare services. The event created valuable opportunities to connect people with ongoing support while encouraging greater engagement with preventative healthcare.

The Deadly Feet team were also on hand providing foot health checks and education, helping raise awareness of diabetes-related complications and the importance of early intervention. Staff shared information on kidney health, chronic disease prevention and healthy lifestyle choices, empowering community members with knowledge to support their health and wellbeing.

Importantly, the event also provided an opportunity for staff to listen and learn from the lived experiences of people facing housing insecurity and other challenges. These conversations reinforced the importance of culturally safe, compassionate and person-centred care, while helping shape future approaches to service delivery and community engagement.

By bringing services and community together in an accessible and welcoming environment, Homeless Connect continues to strengthen pathways to care, foster trust and improve access to support for some of the community's most vulnerable people.

The event highlights the power of collaboration in addressing health and social inequities and reflects Metro North Health's commitment to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through connection, prevention and culturally responsive care.

Deadly Feet Expands Specialist Care to Bundaberg



Deadly Feet team pictured out and about.

The *Deadly Feet Program* has expanded to Bundaberg, bringing foot and vascular care closer to home for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Wide Bay region.

The new clinic at the Bundaberg Indigenous Wellbeing Centre (IWC) is the program's fifth outreach location. Its opening in 2026 followed a year of planning and relationship-building with IWC, Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service, and local community members and services.

"During our community engagement and first clinics in Bundaberg, there was a lot of excitement about having Deadly Feet in the area. People told us they were grateful to have the program closer to home," shared Courtney Finch, Clinical Nurse Consultant for Deadly Feet .

Deadly Feet brings specialist care together in one clinic. Community members can access foot health assessments, podiatry and vascular care, including ultrasound assessments when needed. The team can then arrange follow-up care or referrals for people who need further treatment.

Across all Deadly Feet locations in 2025–26, the program delivered 36 outreach clinics and reviewed 331 clients. The team also connected with more than 530 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members through screening and health promotion activities. Of those screened at community events, 91 people were referred directly into a clinic. Twelve clients were referred for elective vascular surgery.

Alongside the Bundaberg expansion, the team established a yarning network across participating hospital and health services. It gives partners a regular way to share feedback, coordinate care and help shape how the program works in their communities.

The Bundaberg clinic shows what can be achieved when specialist services work with local partners to make care easier to reach and more responsive to community needs.

For more information on Deadly Feet, visit https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/ourhealthourway/healthcare-programs/deadly-feet.



Metro North Health staff pictured with Better Together health Van at the Homeless Reconnect Event.

Supporting Community Connections at the Reconnect 2026 Homelessness Event

Metro North Health's Better Together Health Van, Deadly Smiles and BreastScreen Queensland teams joined the *Reconnect 2026 Homelessness Event* in August, helping connect people experiencing homelessness and hardship with healthcare information, support and referrals.

Hosted by Moreton Bay Housing and Homelessness Network, the event brought together a wide range of services and community organisations at Peninsula Support Hub in Redcliffe, creating a one-stop location where people could access practical support, health information and community services in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Throughout the day, Metro North Health staff engaged with approximately 200 community members, providing health information, conversations about available healthcare services and referrals to ongoing support where needed. The Better Together Health Van created a space where people felt comfortable stopping to yarn, ask questions and learn more about services available to them.

The event highlighted the importance of accessible and community-focused service delivery. Through respectful conversations and relationship-building, Metro North staff were able to better understand the experiences and challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness while helping connect them with practical support and healthcare services.

One story shared during the event left a lasting impression on staff, illustrating the profound bond between people and their pets during difficult times. Another highlighted the impact of community kindness, with a participant sharing how support received following personal tragedy helped them begin rebuilding their life.

These stories reinforced the importance of homelessness events not only in connecting people with essential services, but also in creating opportunities for people to feel heard, valued and supported.

The event was made possible through collaboration between healthcare providers, housing organisations, community groups and volunteers. Metro North acknowledged the support of the Peninsula Support Hub, Moreton Bay Housing and Homelessness Network and local community partners who helped create a safe and welcoming environment for attendees.

By bringing services together in one location, the *Reconnect 2026 Homelessness Event* helped reduce barriers to access and strengthened connections between vulnerable community members and the organisations dedicated to supporting their health, wellbeing and housing needs.

For more information on the Better Together Health Van visit https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/ourhealthourway/healthcare-programs.



The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Helath Team hosting an information stall at the Homeless Reconnect event.



Revolutionising Lung Cancer Screening for Rural and Remote Communities

A major milestone in 2026 was the launch of the *Lung Screening Centre of Excellence (LUSCE) Mobile Facility*, a purpose-built service helping bring lung cancer screening directly to regional, rural and remote communities across Queensland.

Funded by the Australian Cancer Research Foundation, the mobile facility is improving access to early detection by reducing travel barriers and bringing screening closer to where people live. The initiative is particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who experience higher rates of lung cancer and are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage of disease.

The mobile facility supports delivery of the Australian Lung Cancer Screening Trial, which aims to identify lung cancer before symptoms develop, when treatment is most effective and outcomes can be significantly improved.

"Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer-related death in Australia and has a disproportionate impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," said Rachel Bailey, Research Coordinator for Australian Lung Screening Trial at The Prince Charles Hospital.

"For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, lung cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis and is often detected at a later stage, contributing to poorer outcomes. The trial is helping address these disparities by providing access to free screening through culturally safe and community-informed approaches."

The trial is open to eligible people aged 50 years and over who currently smoke or have previously smoked. Participants complete a simple eligibility assessment before being referred for a low-dose CT scan, a quick and painless test capable of detecting early signs of lung cancer. Participants who smoke can also access culturally appropriate quit-smoking support, recognising the broader factors that influence long-term health and wellbeing.

The trial also recognises the broader factors that influence health and wellbeing. Participants who smoke can choose to access culturally appropriate quit-smoking support services alongside screening, providing an additional opportunity to improve long-term health outcomes.

Developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, healthcare workers and key stakeholders, both the trial and mobile facility have been designed to ensure services are culturally safe, respectful and responsive to community needs. The facility also features bright artwork by talented Aboriginal artist Craig Carson, creating a welcoming environment that reflects the program's commitment to culture and community.

The *Lung Screening Centre of Excellence (LUSCE) Mobile Facility* project works alongside Lung Foundation Australia and Professor Gail Garvey from the First Nations Cancer and Wellbeing Research Program to support culturally responsive engagement and improve access to screening for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

International evidence shows lung cancer screening can significantly reduce lung cancer deaths through earlier detection and intervention. Beyond improving access to screening today, the Australian Lung Cancer Screening Trial is also helping shape Australia's future National Lung Cancer Screening Program, ensuring future services are accessible, equitable and culturally responsive.

By bringing innovative screening technology directly to communities, the LUSCE Mobile Facility is helping more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples access potentially lifesaving screening, supporting earlier diagnosis and creating better health outcomes across Queensland.

For more information about the Australian Lung Cancer Screening Trial, visit: https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/tpch/australianlungscreentrial.



The new Lung Screening Centre of Excellence (LUSCE) Mobile Facility is bringing advanced lung cancer screening technology directly to rural and remote communities.



The custom-built Lung Screening Centre of Excellence (LUSCE) Mobile Facility features artwork by Aboriginal artist Craig Carson.



Ngarrama mums and dads pictured together with their babies at a Ngarrama Yarns session.

Ngarrama Yarns Brings Families Together Through Pregnancy and Beyond

Pregnancy, birth and caring for a new baby can bring plenty of questions. Through *Ngarrama Yarns*, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families have access to a welcoming and culturally safe space to connect, share experiences and access trusted support throughout their parenting journey.

In 2026, Metro North Health's Ngarrama and Strong Start to Life teams delivered regular yarning sessions at Yourtown Deception Bay and Nundah Community Health Centre. Across the year, 15 sessions were planned at each location during school terms, creating ongoing opportunities for families to come together, build connections and learn from one another in a relaxed and supportive environment.

Midwives, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and other health professionals attended each session to provide information and support on pregnancy, birth, parenting, infant health and family wellbeing. Families could ask questions, share experiences or simply listen, with the smaller group setting helping to foster trust, connection and ongoing peer support.

The yarns form part of Strong Start to Life's broader commitment to delivering culturally safe, connected care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, babies and families. They also provide an opportunity for staff to identify additional support needs and connect families with appropriate services and pathways when required.

At the heart of the program is a shared belief that women, children and families should feel heard, respected and supported throughout their healthcare journey. As Strong Start to Life Director, Tara Denaro, said, "Women, children and families need to have their voices, their wants and needs, heard and respected."

By bringing together culture, community and care, *Ngarrama Yarns* is helping families build confidence, strengthen connections and create healthier starts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Sista Shawls Supporting Women to Screen with Confidence

The *Sistas Shawl Project* is helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women access potentially life-saving breast cancer screening.



Sistas Shawl Project continues to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women during Breast Screening appointments.

In 2025–26, 684 women attended BreastScreen Queensland Brisbane Northside Service for a breast screen, including 129 first-time participants, representing a 20.6 per cent increase compared with the previous year. The continued success of the *Sistas Shawl Project* has played an important role in supporting women throughout their screening journey and encouraging participation.

Co-designed in partnership with Metro North Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team in 2022 and now guided by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Reference Group, the project was developed in response to feedback from women who identified feelings of embarrassment and vulnerability during breast screening as a barrier to participation. Women attending appointments are offered a Sistas Shawl to wear as a modesty garment, helping create a more comfortable, culturally safe and respectful experience.

The artwork, *A Woman's Dreaming*, by Aboriginal artist Sharon McAvoy, features on the Sistas Shawls, screening room murals and staff shirts, helping create a welcoming environment that reflects culture, connection and community.

Women's feedback highlights the positive impact these changes can have during what can be a very personal health appointment.

"I felt calm during and after the whole breast screening experience and it was a lovely surprise to receive the Sistas Shawl. The material of the shawl is so deliciously soft and after reading the congratulatory/shawl information letter and learning about Sharon McAvoy's painting and the reasoning behind the patterns and colours, it gave me a deep insight into why the painting was chosen to be placed on a shawl," a BreastScreen client shared.

Through the *Sistas Shawl Project*, women's voices continue to shape a breast screening experience that respects their comfort, culture and choices, helping more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women feel supported to prioritise their health and wellbeing.

For more information on the with BreastScreen Queensland *Sistas Shawl Project*, visit https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/ourhealthourway/healthcare-programs/sistas-shawl.



The Pepi-Pod pilot supports safer sleeping practices for babies while keeping families connected during their hospital stay.

Redcliffe Hospital's Pepi-Pod Initiative Supporting Safer Sleep for Babies

Redcliffe Hospital has launched the *First Day Pepi-Pod (FDPP) Pilot Project*, an innovative initiative designed to support safe infant sleeping practices while promoting culturally responsive, family-centred care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

The project was developed in recognition of the importance of culturally safe approaches to infant care. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, co-sleeping is a common cultural practice. The Pepi-Pod model provides a safer sleeping option that allows babies to remain close to their mothers while reducing the risks associated with unsafe sleep environments and supporting safe sleep education.

A key strength of the initiative has been the strong engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders throughout the planning and development phases. Consultation with health workers from the Ngarrama Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) ensured the project was informed by cultural perspectives and aligned with the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers, babies and families. Ngarrama MGP provides a culturally safe continuity of care model that supports families through pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.

Central to the project's development was the contribution of Teresa Onorato, Senior



(L-R) Metro North staff members Teresa Onorato and Elizabeth Gordon with Maddison Stace and baby Huxley Stace, celebrating the introduction of the First Day Pepi-Pod Pilot Project at Redcliffe Hospital.

Health Worker with Ngarrama MGP and an accredited Pepi-Pod trainer. Through ongoing consultation, community engagement and cultural guidance, Teresa helped ensure the Pepi-Pod model reflected community values and family-centred approaches to infant care. Discussions highlighted the importance of keeping babies close to their mothers, supporting bonding, breastfeeding, responsive caregiving and infant wellbeing while maintaining a safe sleeping environment.

The initiative has also supported workforce capability, with Pepi-Pod education and training delivered to nurses and midwives on the maternity ward to ensure staff are equipped to provide safe sleep education and support families using the pods.

Since commencing in August 2026, four families have been supported through the pilot, with Pepi-Pods sourced through the Department of Health and child health services in Deception Bay. Currently, the pods are used while mothers and babies are admitted to the ward, providing a safe sleeping space while families receive education and support around safer sleep practices.

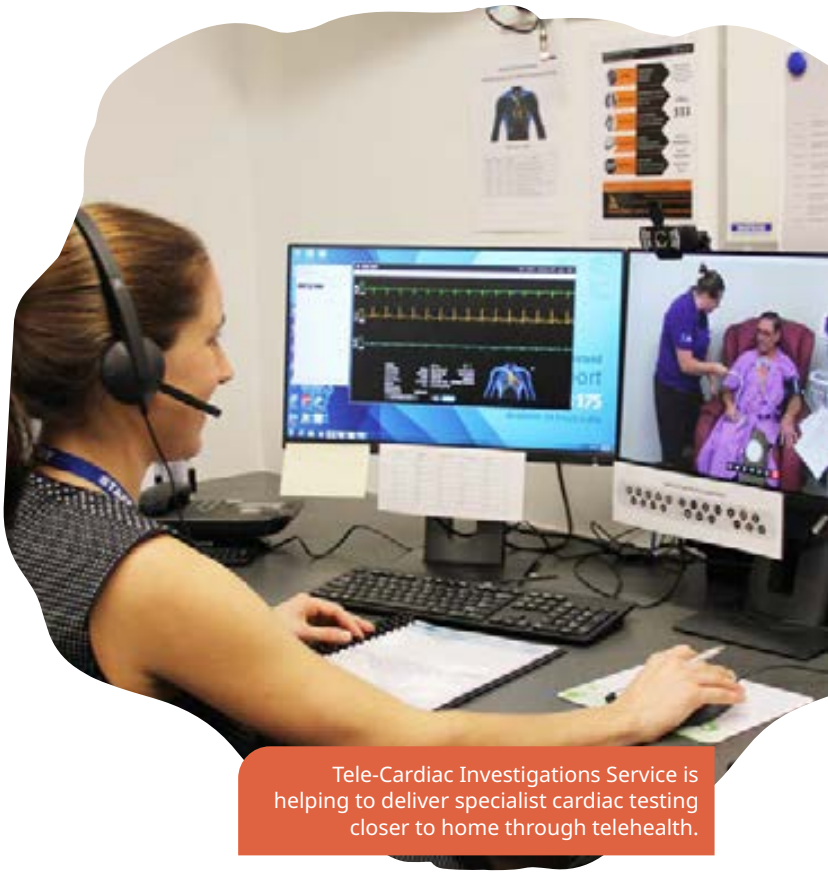
Feedback from participating families has been positive, with mothers reporting that the Pepi-Pod allows them to keep their babies close in a way that aligns with their cultural preferences while supporting safe sleep messaging. Families have highlighted the value of a model that respects cultural practices while prioritising infant safety.

Looking ahead, the project team hopes to expand the initiative and explore opportunities to provide Pepi-Pods to mothers on discharge, enabling families to continue using the safe sleep environment at home.

The Pepi-Pod initiative reflects Redcliffe Hospital's commitment to health equity, cultural safety and partnership with community. Through continued engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and healthcare professionals, the project is helping create safer sleep environments while supporting positive health outcomes for babies and their families.

Bringing Heart Health Care Closer to Home

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, accessing specialist heart health services can mean travelling long distances, spending time away from family and community, and facing delays in care. The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) Tele-Cardiac Investigations (T-CI) Service is helping change that by delivering specialist cardiac testing closer to home through telehealth and partnerships with local health services across Queensland.



Tele-Cardiac Investigations Service is helping to deliver specialist cardiac testing closer to home through telehealth.

Since launching in 2017, the service has expanded to 32 sites across Queensland, including some of the state's most remote communities. By connecting local healthcare teams with specialists at the RBWH, patients can access important heart health tests locally, receive faster results and, if required, be referred for further treatment sooner.

The service plays an important role in improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who continue to experience a higher burden of cardiovascular disease and greater barriers to accessing specialist care. By reducing the need to travel and providing care closer to home, patients can remain connected to family, community and support networks while receiving timely healthcare.

A key feature of the program is its partnership with The Prince Charles Hospital, the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) and Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (MATSICHS) through the Heart Outreach Program for Health Equity (HOPE). The partnership enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients to access heart health investigations at local MATSICHS clinics in Caboolture, Margate and Strathpine in culturally safe and familiar environments.

In 2025, more than 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients accessed the service for cardiac investigations. Importantly, patients were able to access testing sooner, receive same-day or rapid reporting of results, and be connected to follow-up care when needed. The service also identified significant heart health concerns in many patients, allowing earlier intervention and improved ongoing care.

Adam Scott, Director of Cardiac Sciences and founder of the Tele-Cardiac Investigations Service, said improving access to specialist care remains central to the program's success.

"Everyone deserves access to quality healthcare, regardless of where they live. By bringing specialist cardiac services closer to home, we're helping people access testing sooner, stay connected to their support networks and receive the care they need when they need it."

The *Heart Outreach Program for Health Equity* was recognised with a Metro North Staff Excellence Award for Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health in 2025, reflecting the strong collaboration between health services and community partners to deliver culturally safe, timely and accessible care.

Through innovation, partnership and a commitment to health equity, the Tele-Cardiac Investigations Service is improving access to specialist heart care and supporting better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland.



Redcliffe Hospital staff completed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid training.

Redcliffe Hospital takes a Cultural Approach to Mental Health First Aid

10 Redcliffe Hospital staff completed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid training, strengthening their ability to recognise when someone may be experiencing a mental health crisis, respond appropriately and connect them with the support they need.

The course explores mental health through a cultural lens, recognising that wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is influenced by connection to family, community, Country, culture and spirituality. Clinicians, social workers and an Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer were among those who took part.

The training is helping staff provide culturally safe initial support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people requiring mental health support. By combining mental health first aid skills with a deeper understanding of culture, trauma, racism and social and emotional wellbeing, participants are better equipped to recognise distress, respond respectfully, have supportive conversations and connect people with appropriate care. This helps create a safer and more person-centred experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and community members when seeking help for their mental health.

The training reinforces that effective mental health support extends beyond responding to immediate symptoms and includes understanding a person's strengths, circumstances and support networks.

The training followed a successful grant submission by Redcliffe Hospital's Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Raelene White, which secured funding for approximately 45 training places. It supports Metro North Health's commitment to increasing mental health first aid and trauma-informed training for frontline staff and strengthening culturally responsive care across the health service.

Dr Charley Greentree said the training brought mental health knowledge and cultural understanding together.

“We had the blessing of an awesome group of participants led by an expert facilitator that led to connection and reflection. The learning is applicable to our patients, our colleagues and our community.”

Another participant described the course as a “safe space to yarn and share experiences with other participants” and valued the cultural considerations the trainer brought into the discussion.

By building workforce capability in both mental health first aid and cultural responsiveness, the training is helping Redcliffe Hospital staff provide safer, more inclusive and culturally informed support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families, colleagues and community members.



Honouring Country Through Cultural Heritage Protection at Redcliffe Hospital

Redcliffe Hospital and Metro North Health Sustainable Assets and Infrastructure (SAI) have demonstrated their commitment to protecting and respecting Aboriginal cultural heritage through initiatives undertaken as part of the hospital expansion project.

Working closely with the Traditional Owners, Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (KKPAC), SAI and Redcliffe Hospital have reinforced the importance of preserving cultural heritage, strengthening connections to Country and ensuring Aboriginal perspectives remain central to the planning, design and development of healthcare environments.

A significant milestone was the remediation and preservation of a culturally modified tree, commonly known as a scar tree, located on the hospital site. Scar trees hold important cultural significance as tangible links to Aboriginal history, cultural practices and connection to Country. The remediation works demonstrated how infrastructure development and cultural heritage protection can work together, ensuring this important cultural asset is preserved for future generations.

“Protecting cultural heritage is about recognising the stories, traditions and knowledge that have connected us to this Country for generations and ensuring they continue to be respected into the future,” says Will Muckan, Cultural Capability Officer at Redcliffe Hospital.

Through partnership with Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, Cultural Heritage Inductions were delivered on-site for project staff, contractors, Executive Leadership Team members and key stakeholders. The inductions deepened understanding of local Aboriginal history, the cultural significance of the site and the importance of protecting and respecting cultural heritage throughout all stages of construction and development.

Kabi Kabi cultural heritage representatives delivered sessions about Country, local cultural heritage and the processes required should cultural artefacts or heritage items be identified during works. Participants also had the opportunity to learn about artefacts from across Kabi Kabi Country, creating a deeper appreciation of the region’s rich cultural history and ongoing connection to place.

These initiatives have helped strengthen trust and engagement with local Aboriginal communities while increasing workforce and onsite building contractors awareness of cultural heritage responsibilities. Together, the preservation of the scar tree and the delivery of Cultural Heritage Inductions demonstrate SAI and Redcliffe Hospital’s commitment to embedding respect for Aboriginal cultural heritage throughout both its physical environment and organisational culture.

Importantly, the lessons learned through this work are helping inform future development projects by ensuring cultural heritage, cultural safety and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are considered from the earliest stages of planning and design.

By protecting cultural heritage and working in partnership with Traditional Owners, Redcliffe Hospital is creating a legacy that honours Country, respects Aboriginal cultural knowledge and helps ensure healthcare spaces remain welcoming, inclusive and connected to the rich history of the land.

“Protecting cultural heritage is about recognising the stories, traditions and knowledge that have connected us to this Country for generations…”

Will Muckan, Cultural Capability Officer at Redcliffe Hospital



The Redcliffe Hospital Expansion Project team took part in Cultural Heritage Inductions delivered by the Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation.

A culturally significant scar tree preserved on the Redcliffe Hospital campus.

Celebrating Culture, Creativity and Connection Through Art at The Prince Charles Hospital

Two vibrant artworks created by children from The Prince Charles Hospital Early Education Centre have found a permanent home within The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH), helping create a welcoming and culturally rich environment for patients, families, staff and visitors.

The artworks were generously donated to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service and are now proudly displayed near the Children's Emergency Department and Children's Ward. More than colourful displays, the pieces represent a shared commitment to cultural learning, storytelling and reconciliation.

The artworks were developed as part of the *Acknowledging Culture Through Art and Storytelling Project*, an initiative designed to introduce children to Aboriginal culture through storytelling, creativity and hands-on learning experiences. Guided by Wiradjuri artist Tia Williamson, children explored Dreamtime stories, Aboriginal art techniques and the importance of culture, Country and community.

Inspired by stories including *The Bees and the Flies* and *Who Saw Turtle?*, the young artists developed a deeper understanding of Aboriginal traditions and perspectives while creating works that celebrate connection to land, animals and storytelling.

The project provided a unique opportunity for children to engage with Aboriginal culture in a meaningful and respectful way. Through art and conversation, they learned about the significance of symbols, colours and patterns used in Aboriginal artwork and developed a greater appreciation for the world's oldest continuous living cultures.

The colours featured throughout the artworks also carry important cultural meaning:

- Black represents the night sky, creation, rebirth and renewal.
- White symbolises spiritual connection, sacredness and purity.
- Red represents blood, family ties and all living beings.
- Yellow symbolises light, warmth, spiritual energy and the life-giving power of the sun.
- Dots are used to share stories while protecting sacred knowledge, messages and ceremonial teachings.

Now displayed near the Children's Emergency Department and Children's Ward, the artworks help create welcoming and culturally responsive environments for children and families visiting the hospital. They also serve as a visible reminder of Metro North Health's commitment to reconciliation, cultural respect and creating healthcare spaces where culture is celebrated and valued.

The collaboration between the TPCH Early Education Centre, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service and artist Tia Williamson demonstrates how shared learning experiences can strengthen connections, foster cultural understanding and contribute to more inclusive healthcare environments.

By bringing children's creativity and Aboriginal storytelling together, the project has created a legacy that celebrates culture, learning and community within TPCH.

"...The artworks help create welcoming and culturally responsive environments for children and families visiting the hospital."



Assistant Director of TPCH Early Education Centre, Narelle, stands beside the artworks on display within TPCH.



Mack Muckan performing a Welcome to Country to open Caboolture Hospital's new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service's space.

A New Safe Space for Community at Caboolture Hospital

Caboolture Hospital strengthened its support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and community members with the opening of a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services Safe Space.

Designed with wellbeing, connection and cultural safety at its core, the new space provides a welcoming environment where patients and families can gather, connect and feel supported throughout their healthcare journey. The space includes a peaceful outdoor garden featuring native plants, areas for quiet reflection, a kitchenette that encourages conversation and connection over a cuppa, and access to telehealth facilities to help support continuity of care.

The opening was marked by a Welcome to Country delivered by Mack Muckan, a proud Kabi Kabi, Yuru and South Sea Islander man from Undumbi Culture, who shared the importance of creating spaces that foster inclusion, belonging and cultural connection.

More than a physical space, the facility represents an ongoing commitment to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel welcomed, respected and culturally safe when accessing healthcare services. It complements the existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services at Caboolture Hospital and provides another avenue for patients and families to access support, guidance and connection during times when it is needed most.

The new space also creates opportunities for stronger engagement between staff, patients and community, helping to build trust, strengthen relationships and support more culturally responsive healthcare experiences.

By investing in environments that promote healing, cultural connection and wellbeing, Caboolture Hospital continues to advance its health equity journey and improve healthcare experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The opening of the Safe Space is an important step towards creating a health service where culture is recognised as a source of strength and where community feels connected, supported and empowered throughout every stage of care.



Redcliffe Hospital Improving Patient Experiences Through Cultural Safety

Creating culturally safe healthcare requires ongoing reflection, learning and action. In 2026, Redcliffe Hospital strengthened its approach to cultural capability through its annual Cultural Capability Audit, helping identify opportunities to enhance services, support staff development and improve healthcare experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families.

The audit plays an important role in identifying strengths, opportunities for improvement and practical actions that enhance culturally safe care across the hospital. It also helps measure progress against key initiatives, including Health Equity Strategies, Reconciliation Action Plans, Closing the Gap commitments and Anti-Racism actions.

The audit assessed seven key areas:

1. Leadership and organisational commitment
2. Communication
3. Engagement and partnerships
4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce
5. Patient identification
6. Healthcare delivery
7. Culturally welcoming environments.

Service leaders worked closely with Cultural Capability Officer, Will Muckan, to review practices, identify achievements and develop actions to strengthen future performance. The process not only provided valuable insights into current practices but also reinforced a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Following completion of the audit, results were analysed and incorporated into a new Power BI dashboard, providing greater visibility of outcomes and helping teams track progress across the organisation.

Importantly, the audit has helped strengthen Redcliffe Hospital's ability to provide culturally responsive care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families. By increasing cultural awareness, promoting inclusive practices and encouraging service-wide reflection, the initiative has enhanced engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, patients, families and Kabi Kabi Traditional Owners.

These efforts are contributing to more equitable healthcare experiences and outcomes, while fostering a stronger culture of respect, inclusion and partnership across the hospital. The audit has also helped identify opportunities for workforce development and service improvements that will continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples accessing care at Redcliffe Hospital.

A standout result from this year's audit was the achievement of Redcliffe Hospital Facility Services, which received a perfect score of 100 per cent, demonstrating a strong commitment to creating a culturally welcoming and inclusive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, visitors and staff.

Through initiatives such as the Cultural Capability Audit, Redcliffe Hospital continues to strengthen its commitment to cultural safety, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are welcomed, respected and supported throughout their healthcare journey.

Community and Oral Health Strengthens Commitment to Reconciliation



Metro North Community and Oral Health launch their second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

Metro North Community and Oral Health (COH) service marked an important milestone with the launch of their second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), reaffirming their commitment to reconciliation, cultural safety and improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The new RAP builds on the foundation established through COH's first plan and provides a clear roadmap for strengthening relationships, enhancing cultural capability and embedding reconciliation across the service.

As one of Metro North Health's largest community-based services, COH delivers care across north Brisbane in homes, oral health clinics, community facilities, mobile dental vans and residential and bedded services. The RAP reflects a commitment to ensuring these services are welcoming, culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and communities.

Creating the new RAP was a collaborative effort led by the COH RAP Working Group and informed by ongoing engagement with staff, Elders and community members. The plan outlines practical actions to strengthen partnerships, encourage learning and reflection, and ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices continue to influence service delivery and decision-making.

Reflecting on the significance of the new plan, COH Director of Nursing and RAP Co-Chair Tanya said reconciliation is a shared responsibility.

"Reconciliation is not just an aspiration, it is a responsibility we all share. Through this RAP, we are reaffirming our commitment to creating meaningful change and building a healthcare system that values and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

The launch also provided an opportunity to celebrate the significant achievements delivered under COH's first Reconciliation Action Plan. Of the 62 actions identified, 56 were successfully completed, helping to advance reconciliation across the service. Key achievements included implementing a locally tailored Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Capability Program, strengthening governance and reporting processes, and continuing regular Yarning Circles with local Elders and community members.

COH Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and RAP Co-Chair Paul said the new RAP builds on this strong foundation and will continue to drive meaningful change.

"Our RAP is more than a framework. It is a commitment to creating inclusive systems and services that reflect the voices, experiences and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By strengthening cultural capability and community partnerships, we can continue improving both experiences and outcomes for our community."

Over the next two years, COH will focus on enhancing cultural capability across its workforce, deepening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and embedding reconciliation into everyday practice. Success will be measured not only through completed actions, but through tangible improvements in attitudes, behaviours and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing services.

The launch of the second Innovate RAP demonstrates Community and Oral Health's ongoing commitment to walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, creating culturally safe services and contributing to Metro North Health's broader health equity journey. Through continued partnership, learning and action, COH is helping ensure reconciliation remains a lived reality for both staff and community.



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

Celebrating Culture Through Art at North Lakes Dialysis Unit

Patients, families and staff at the North Lakes Dialysis Unit were welcomed into a more culturally inclusive environment following the installation of nine pieces of Metro North Health's Better Together Aboriginal artwork collection.

Created by renowned Aboriginal artist Elaine Chambers-Hegarty, the artworks share stories of Country, culture, healing and connection across Metro North Health's hospitals and health services. Developed in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, each piece reflects the unique landscapes, traditional countries and health journeys that shape the communities Metro North Health serves.

The installation has transformed the dialysis unit's waiting area into a vibrant and welcoming space that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities. More than artwork, the collection provides an important visual reminder of the connection between culture, wellbeing and healthcare, helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families feel recognised, valued and represented when accessing care.

The initiative was driven by a shared vision to create a healthcare environment that better reflects the community it serves. Working in partnership, staff from the North Lakes Dialysis Unit and Metro North Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health team identified an opportunity to strengthen cultural safety through the inclusion of culturally meaningful artwork.

The result is a welcoming space that promotes a sense of belonging and connection for patients, visitors and staff alike. By incorporating Aboriginal artwork into the healthcare environment, the project reinforces the importance of culture in supporting healing, wellbeing and positive healthcare experiences.

The installation also reflects Metro North Health's ongoing focus on creating culturally safe spaces across its services, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel respected and supported throughout their healthcare journey.

Through collaboration, cultural leadership and a commitment to inclusion, the North Lakes Dialysis Unit has created a lasting legacy that celebrates culture, strengthens connection and contributes to more welcoming healthcare experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following article contains the name of a deceased person.

Family and RBWH staff recently gathered to honour Maureen Kirk.

Honouring the Legacy of Cancer Care Pioneer Maureen Kirk

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) honoured the life and legacy of pioneering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cancer support worker, Maureen Kirk, with the unveiling of a memorial plaque at the hospital's Cancer Care Services. The tribute recognised Maureen's remarkable contribution to improving cancer care and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and celebrated the enduring impact of her advocacy on healthcare services today.

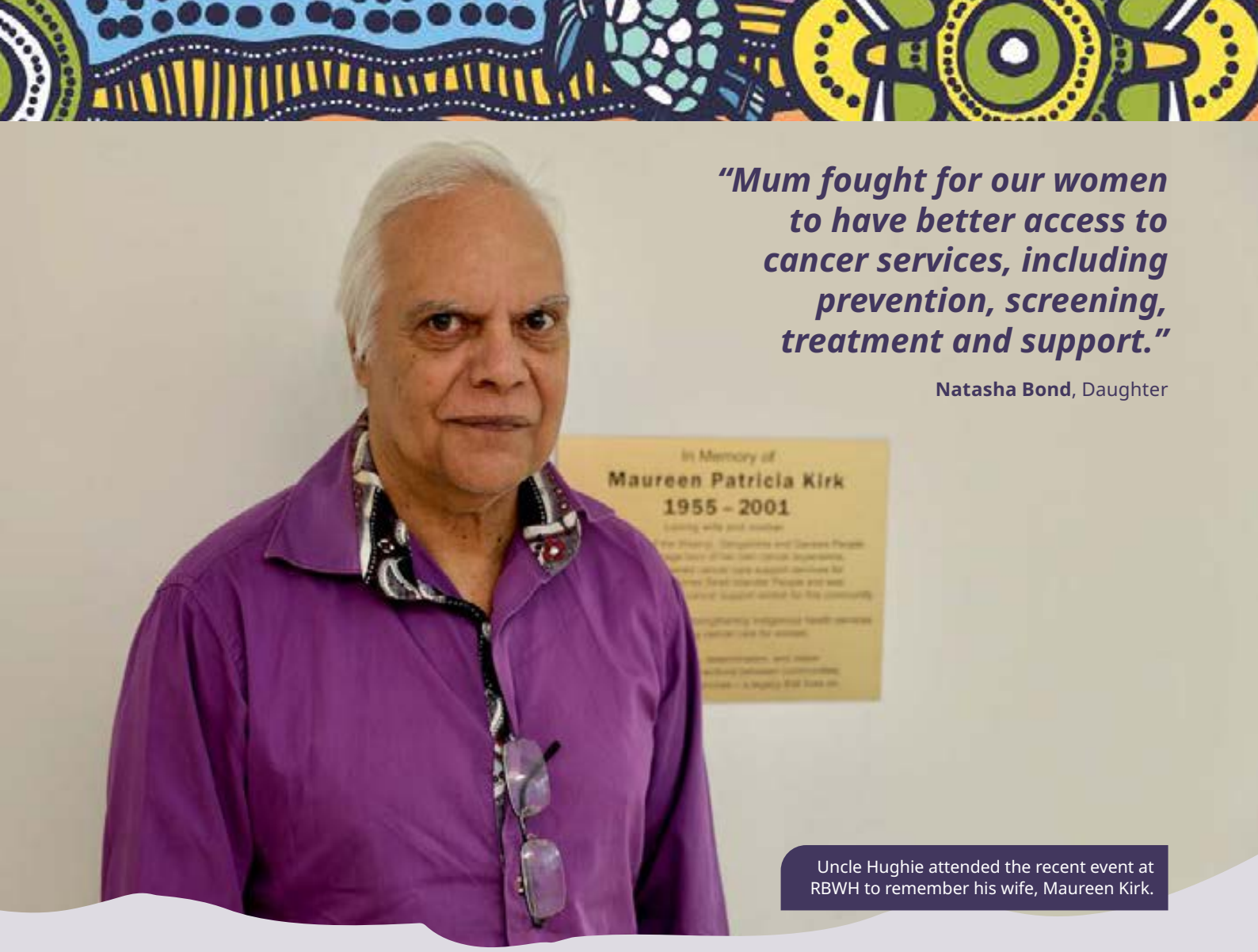
Maureen's journey began following her own breast cancer diagnosis at the age of 31, an experience that highlighted the lack of culturally appropriate care available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the mainstream health system.

Reflecting on her mother's legacy, Maureen's daughter Natasha Bond said the experience became the driving force behind her lifelong commitment to supporting others.

"Mum was first diagnosed with breast cancer at age 31. At the time, there was a lack of culturally appropriate care available for mob in the mainstream health system. This experience motivated her to turn her battle into a determination to improve cancer care for other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women."

Rather than allowing her diagnosis to define her, Maureen dedicated herself to helping others navigate cancer prevention, screening, treatment and support. Her passion for improving outcomes for community saw her become Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cancer support worker, breaking new ground in culturally responsive healthcare.

Throughout her career, Maureen worked tirelessly to improve access to cancer services for Aboriginal



> ***"Mum fought for our women to have better access to cancer services, including prevention, screening, treatment and support."***
>
> **Natasha Bond**, Daughter

Uncle Hughie attended the recent event at RBWH to remember his wife, Maureen Kirk.

and Torres Strait Islander peoples, building strong partnerships across Queensland Health, cancer screening services, universities and communities.

Natasha said her mother never stopped advocating for better care and support.

"Mum fought for our women to have better access to cancer services, including prevention, screening, treatment and support."

Maureen's leadership and advocacy were widely recognised, earning her a Queensland Health Outstanding Achievement Award in 2000 for her contribution to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Sadly, following a second cancer diagnosis, she passed away in 2001 at just 45 years of age.

More than two decades later, her influence continues to be felt across Queensland's healthcare system. Many of the culturally responsive cancer care pathways, support services and community engagement approaches available today have been built on the foundations she helped establish.

To commemorate her remarkable contribution, RBWH staff joined Maureen's family, including her husband Uncle Hughie, to unveil a memorial plaque marking the 25th anniversary of her passing. The event provided an opportunity to reflect on her achievements and celebrate the lasting legacy she leaves for future generations.

Roslyn Boland, Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health at RBWH, said Maureen's impact continues to shape how healthcare services support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"Much of what has been achieved in improving access to cancer care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today can be traced back to Maureen's advocacy, determination and vision. Her legacy continues to inspire us to create more culturally safe and accessible healthcare services for our community."

The memorial now stands as a lasting reminder of Maureen's commitment to health equity and the difference one person can make in creating positive and enduring change. Her story continues to inspire healthcare workers, patients and communities alike, reinforcing the importance of culturally safe care and the ongoing journey towards better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Staff pictured at the special Domo Boys yarning session.

Domo Boys Share Their Stories at Redcliffe Hospital

When Uncle Michael Wragge, Uncle Marshall Saunders and Uncle Robert West visited Redcliffe Hospital in 2026, they gave staff and community members an opportunity to hear the history of the Cherbourg Boys Dormitory from men who lived it.

The three Elders shared powerful personal stories of growing up in the dormitory, providing attendees with a deeper understanding of the challenges, resilience and lived experiences of Aboriginal children during this period in history. Their stories were further brought to life through a screening of the short film *Domo Boys*, which offered a moving insight into the experiences of boys separated from their families and the lasting impacts of the dormitory system.

Cherbourg was established as a government-controlled Aboriginal settlement. Its dormitory system separated children from family and community, and the former Boys Dormitory remains part of the Ration Shed Museum today. Hearing from the Domo Boys brought that history into the room through their own voices and memories.

Around 25 Elders attended the Redcliffe gathering alongside hospital staff and other community members. Together they listened, yarned and reflected on the strength of those who lived through the dormitory system and the lasting effects of forced separation on families.

For staff, the gathering was a chance to understand more of the history that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families may carry into healthcare settings. It also gave the hospital an opportunity to build relationships through listening to community members who chose to share their stories.



(L-R) Domo Boys Uncle Marshall Saunders, Uncle Robert West and Uncle Michael Wragge pictured with Redcliffe Hospital Cultural Capability Officer Will Muckan.

Cardiology Art Program Grows from Fundraiser to Legacy

An art program initiated by the Director of Cardiac Sciences and the Cardiology Team at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) expanded in 2026 to include six local schools, giving more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students the opportunity to share their creativity, culture and stories through artwork displayed across the hospital.



Acting Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Paul Drahm stands with Pine Rivers State High School Student and Artist, Ruth Roma.

The *Cardiology Art Program* began in 2025 when RBWH staff held a Foodie Day to raise money for artwork that would make the Cardiology Department more welcoming. They raised $710 for canvases and supplies, and Heart Outreach Program for Health Equity (HOPE) Administration Officer and artist Mel Denny connected the team with Pine Rivers State High School's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art program.

Students created works for patient-facing areas of the Cardiology Department. One young artist, Grace, drew on her Kalkadoon family's connection to Country in her work. After it was displayed in the department, the artwork was selected for the July 2026 cover of the international Heart Rhythm journal.

The partnership inspired a second Foodie Day in 2026. Teams from across RBWH raised more than $1,300, helping expand the program to Pine Rivers, Beerwah, Bray Park, Narangba and Morayfield State High Schools along with Bounty Boulevard State School.

On 9 October, students unveiled their latest artworks at an exhibition held at RBWH, celebrating their creativity, culture and connection to community. Following the exhibition, students joined staff and visitors to create the Tree of Connection, a collaborative mural in the patient waiting area between Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology. Students painted participants' hands, inviting them to leave a handprint on the mural as a symbolic leaf, creating a lasting artwork that reflects connection, belonging and shared community.



Acting Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Paul Drahm, Mel Denny, HOPE Program Administration Officer and artist, and Adam Scott, Director of Cardiac Sciences, stand in front of the 'Tree of Connection' created by students, staff and attendees at the Art Exhibition on 9 October.

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

What began with a fundraiser has become a continuing partnership that celebrates young artists and brings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into the spaces where patients receive care.





Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following article contains the name of a deceased person.

RBWH's Journey to Reconciliation and Health Equity

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) took an important step forward in their reconciliation journey with the launch of the second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2026-2028.

Endorsed by Reconciliation Australia, the new RAP outlines a clear vision for strengthening cultural safety, deepening community partnerships and creating meaningful opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the hospital and broader healthcare system.

As Queensland's largest hospital, RBWH provides care to people from across the state and recognises its responsibility to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families, staff and communities feel respected, valued and culturally safe when accessing healthcare services.

Building on the foundations of its inaugural RAP, the new plan focuses on driving meaningful action through stronger relationships with community, increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce participation and leadership, embedding anti-racism initiatives, enhancing cultural capability across the workforce, and creating more inclusive and culturally responsive systems of care.

The RAP also reinforces RBWH's commitment to partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the design and delivery of services. Through continued engagement with Elders, Traditional Owners, consumers and community organisations, the hospital is working to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices remain central to decision-making and service improvement.

Roslyn Boland, Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health at RBWH, said the RAP reflects a shared commitment to turning intention into action.



Baringa Barambah (centre) performed Welcome to Country at the RBWH RAP launch. Pictured with Metro North Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Sherry Holzapfel (left) and RBWH Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Roslyn Boland (right).

"Meaningful reconciliation requires more than words. It requires sustained action and a willingness to listen and learn. Our new RAP sets out practical steps that will help guide our journey towards achieving health equity and creating lasting, positive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

Over the next two years, a key focus will be advancing initiatives that improve health outcomes and experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families, while continuing to foster a culturally capable workforce that understands its role in reconciliation.

The launch event also provided an opportunity to honour the outstanding contribution of respected Turrbal Elder, Songwoman Aunty Maroochy Barambah, whose guidance and advocacy played a significant role in strengthening relationships between RBWH and the Turrbal community.

Aunty Maroochy was a long-standing supporter of the hospital and a passionate advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through her leadership, RBWH strengthened its relationships with Turrbal Elders and community members, helping to improve cultural understanding, healthcare experiences and health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Staff gathered to reflect on her legacy, while her daughter, Baringa Barambah, delivered a heartfelt Welcome to Country in honour of her mother and their family's enduring connection to Country.

Reflecting on her impact, Roslyn said Aunty Maroochy's influence continues to guide the hospital's reconciliation journey.

"Aunty Maroochy was a highly respected advocate and a longstanding supporter of RBWH who played a significant role in helping us improve healthcare experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

Her generosity, leadership and unwavering commitment to community helped shape many of the relationships and initiatives RBWH continues to build on today.

The launch of the new RAP marks the beginning of the next chapter in RBWH's reconciliation journey. Through continued action, accountability and partnership, the hospital remains committed to creating better experiences and improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, while helping build a more equitable and culturally safe healthcare system for future generations.



RBWH Foundation Research Grant recipients celebrate funding that will drive innovation, improve care and advance health outcomes.

Advancing Health Equity Through Research at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

In 2026, researchers from across the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) were awarded funding through the RBWH Foundation's inaugural *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grants Program*, marking an important milestone in the hospital's ongoing commitment to health equity and culturally responsive care. The grants support a new generation of researchers working to address systemic barriers to healthcare and improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Announced as part of the Foundation's latest grant round, the funding supports 19 projects aimed at improving health outcomes and patient experiences for Queenslanders. Several projects focus specifically on issues impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including improving patient experiences in emergency departments and cancer care services, while others explore innovative approaches to early disease detection and diagnosis.

The grants recognise the importance of ensuring research is grounded in the experiences, voices and priorities of the communities it seeks to support. By investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led and focused research initiatives, the program is helping create meaningful solutions to the complex challenges that can affect patient safety, healthcare experiences and continuity of care.

For Roslyn Boland, Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health at RBWH, the initiative represents an opportunity to empower talented researchers to contribute to lasting change.

"There are many talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers on the Herston Campus and beyond. I'm looking forward to learning more about their work on these project initiatives as it progresses.

"While there has been some improvement in recent years, there is still work to be done to Close the Health Gap. We are grateful to the RBWH Foundation for working with us to bring these grants to life to support the RBWH community."

The funding also supports emerging researchers and clinicians whose ideas have the potential to transform healthcare. By fostering innovation and encouraging new ways of thinking, the grants will help generate evidence, strengthen culturally safe models of care and support better healthcare experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Importantly, the initiative reflects a broader commitment to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented throughout the research process, from identifying priorities to designing solutions and evaluating outcomes. Through investment in research, collaboration and community-informed approaches, RBWH continues to take meaningful steps towards achieving health equity and improving outcomes for future generations.

Celebrating Culture Through Food at STARS

NAIDOC Week provided a wonderful opportunity for staff, patients and visitors at the Surgical Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS) to come together and celebrate the rich cultures, histories and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

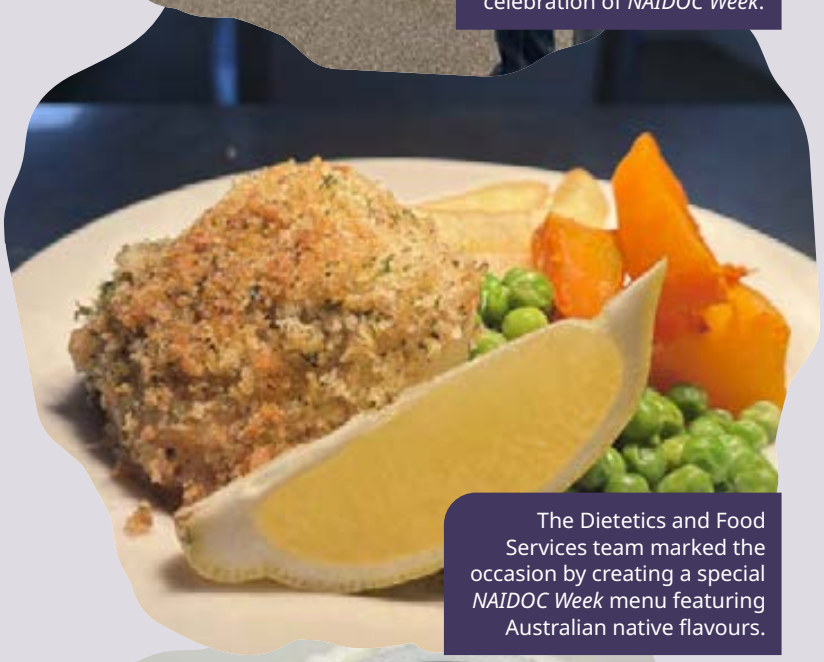
Teams across the hospital embraced the spirit of the week through a range of activities that promoted cultural awareness, connection and celebration. The Dietetics and Food Services team marked the occasion by creating a special *NAIDOC Week* menu featuring Australian native flavours. Patients enjoyed a Macadamia and Lemon Myrtle Crusted Fish chef's special, while themed cupcakes were served throughout the week. The initiative was warmly received and sparked conversations about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions and the significance of *NAIDOC Week*.

The celebrations extended beyond the wards, with The Botanist Café hosting its annual *NAIDOC Week* event showcasing local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, products and food. Staff, patients and visitors had the opportunity to connect with local businesses, support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprise and learn more about the communities and cultures represented across the region.

These activities not only celebrated culture but also helped create welcoming and inclusive spaces where patients, families and staff could come together, share stories and strengthen connections. Through events such as *NAIDOC Week*, STARS continues to recognise the importance of culture in health and wellbeing while fostering greater understanding, respect and connection across the hospital community.



Cultural Capability Officer, Henry Nona, shared a didgeridoo performance in celebration of *NAIDOC Week*.



The Dietetics and Food Services team marked the occasion by creating a special *NAIDOC Week* menu featuring Australian native flavours.



A NAIDOC-themed cupcake added a sweet touch to the celebration at STARS.



Cultural Capability Officer, Will Muckan, leads a discussion on eliminating institutional racism, providing staff with an opportunity to reflect, learn and strengthen their understanding of culturally safe healthcare.



Embedding Culture at the Heart of Redcliffe Hospital

Redcliffe Hospital's commitment to reconciliation, cultural safety and health equity was brought to life in 2026 through a series of meaningful cultural events and engagement activities that connected staff, patients, families and community. Led by the Redcliffe Hospital Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group, these initiatives created opportunities for learning, reflection and connection while celebrating the rich histories, cultures and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The year commenced with recognition of *National Close the Gap Day*, where staff participated in a Yarning Circle focused on the importance of achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The event provided a culturally safe space for listening, learning and discussing the collective actions needed to improve health outcomes and reduce inequities.

Redcliffe Hospital also proudly acknowledged the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women through participation in the local *ANZAC Day* march and wreath-laying ceremony. The event recognised the service and sacrifice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia's military history and encouraged reflection on their often-overlooked contributions.

Through a series of Yarning Circles and engagement activities, staff were encouraged to come together to learn, share experiences and participate in meaningful conversations about reconciliation, cultural safety and health equity. Topics included institutional racism, maternity services, culturally responsive care and strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The celebrations continued with *Mabo Day*, where staff were invited to participate in an educational experience that featured screenings of *This Is Mabo Land*, information displays and dedicated reflection spaces. The event honoured the legacy of Eddie Koiki Mabo and strengthened understanding of the significance of Native Title, truth-telling and the enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.

"From marching together at ANZAC Day commemorations to coming together for National Reconciliation Week, Close the Gap Day, and Mabo Day, it has been inspiring to see our staff and RAP Committee members actively participate in these important events. These moments not only celebrate culture and history but also strengthen connections across our hospital community, supporting Redcliffe Hospital's commitment to reconciliation and culturally safe care," says Will Muckan, Cultural Capability Officer at Redcliffe Hospital.



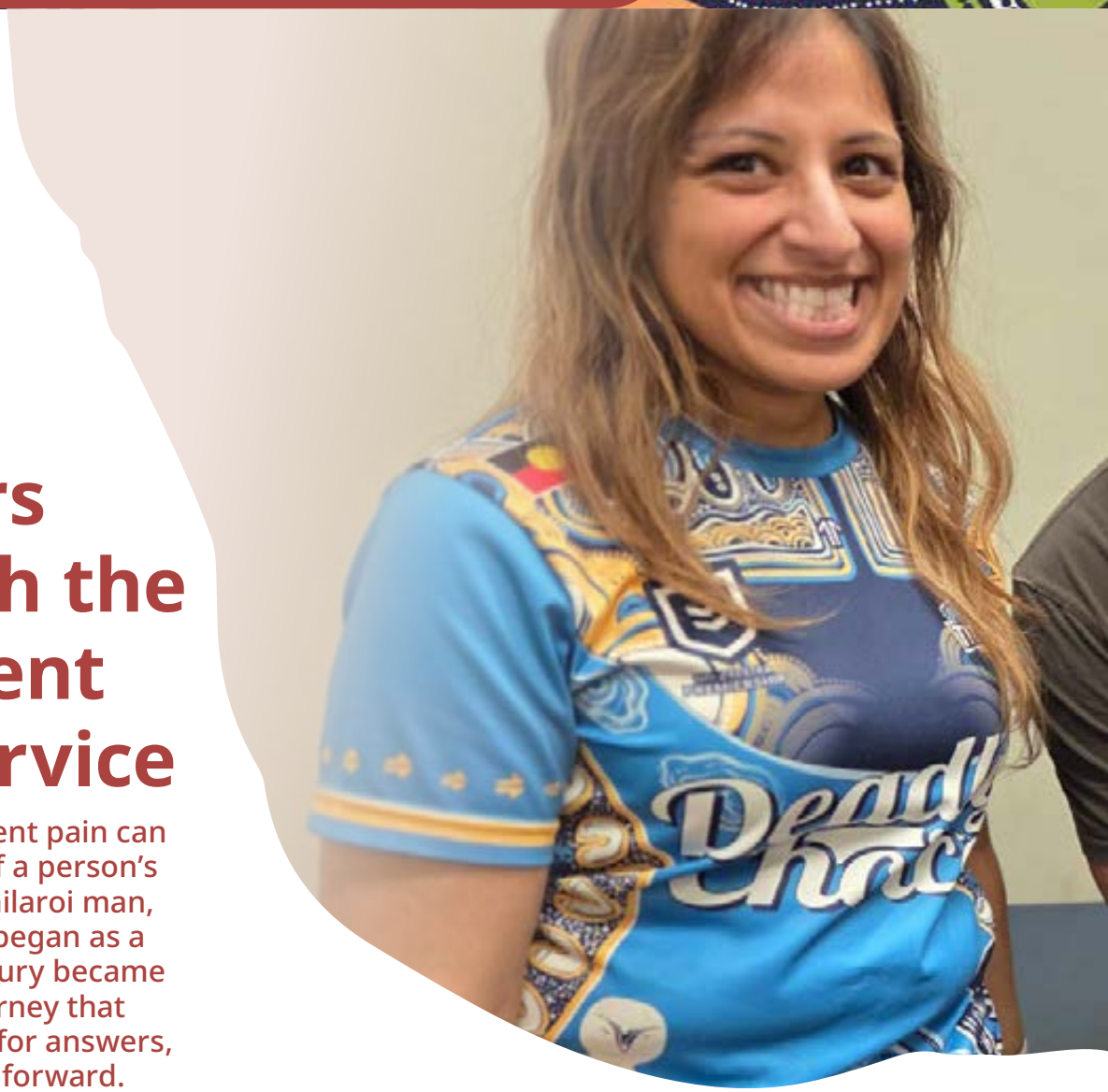
Community members and Redcliffe Hospital staff participate in the local ANZAC Day march.

These activities created opportunities for meaningful engagement, learning and reflection across the hospital. Staff reported increased understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contemporary experiences, helping foster a more culturally responsive healthcare environment. The Yarning Circle format also encouraged open dialogue and relationship-building, supporting staff to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and communities with greater confidence and cultural awareness.

Importantly, the initiatives strengthened relationships between Redcliffe Hospital, local Elders, community representatives and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. By embedding cultural learning and community engagement throughout the year, Redcliffe Hospital continues to demonstrate that culture is not confined to a single week or event but is an ongoing commitment that helps create safer, more welcoming and inclusive healthcare environments for all.



Staff participate in “Mabo: An Immersive Reflection” at Redcliffe Hospital, recognising the legacy of Eddie Koiki Mabo.



Finding Answers Through the Persistent Pain Service

Living with persistent pain can affect every part of a person's life. For proud Kamilaroi man, Trent Colley, what began as a workplace knee injury became a life-changing journey that left him searching for answers, support and a way forward.

After months of medical appointments, investigations and treatments, Trent was still experiencing significant pain with no clear explanation.

"I felt lost. 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 ongoing uncertainty affected not only Trent's physical health but also his confidence, wellbeing and plans for the future.

Everything changed when he was referred to the Persistent Pain Service, a partnership between Metro North Health and Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (MATSICHS). Designed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families, the service provides culturally responsive support for people living with ongoing pain.

For Trent, receiving a diagnosis was the first step towards regaining a sense of control.

"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."

The service brings together a multi-disciplinary team of healthcare professionals, including pain specialists, nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and pharmacists, providing coordinated care in one location. This integrated approach makes it easier for patients to access the support they need while reducing the burden of attending multiple appointments across different services.

Beyond clinical care, the program focuses on supporting the whole person. Through individual support and group-based yarning sessions, participants are encouraged to share experiences, learn practical strategies and build connections with others living with persistent pain.

For Trent, these connections became one of the most valuable aspects of the program.



Trent receiving support through the Persistent Pain Service.

"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 opportunity to yarn with others facing similar challenges helped him better understand his condition while providing reassurance, encouragement and a sense of community.

Persistent Pain Service for Mob Service Coordinator Caroline Zanussi said the service recognises that pain affects far more than physical health.

"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."

The service is helping improve access to culturally safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing persistent pain, ensuring patients receive holistic support closer to home and in an environment where they feel understood and supported.

While Trent continues to navigate the challenges of living with persistent pain, the support he has received has provided greater understanding, confidence and practical tools to help manage his condition.

"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 providing culturally responsive care, meaningful connections and access to specialist support, the Persistent Pain Service is helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people better manage persistent pain and improve their quality of life. For people like Trent, it's not just about managing symptoms, it's about finding answers, building resilience and knowing they don't have to face the journey alone.



Aunty Lorian yarning with Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Rhonda Kunde.

Aunty Lorian's Journey Shows What Connected Care Can Mean

Aunty Lorian's experience at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) highlights the importance of coordinated, culturally responsive care in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients who need treatment away from home.

After becoming unwell in Barcaldine, Aunty received care at her local hospital before the Indigenous Cardiac Outreach Program (ICOP) helped coordinate specialist heart care at TPCH. The program played a key role in connecting her local healthcare team with specialists in Brisbane, helping ensure continuity of care throughout her treatment journey.

For Aunty, feeling heard and understood was just as important as the treatment itself.

"The nurse sat down and had a yarn with me. He explained everything in a way I could understand," she said.

While she was in hospital, Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Rhonda Kunde wrote "Aunty Lorian" on her ward nameboard. Other staff quickly followed her lead by addressing her as Aunty throughout her hospital stay. Aunty Lorian said being acknowledged with respect for who she is helped her feel recognised, valued and connected while receiving care away from Country.

A proud Iningai woman, Aunty also shared her own knowledge and experiences with staff through stories of family, art and community advocacy.

"People have to remember there's a story behind everyone," she said.

Her journey demonstrates that quality healthcare is about more than clinical treatment alone. Through coordinated care, clear communication and respect for culture and identity, health services can help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients feel safe, supported and connected throughout their healthcare journey.

Building Trust Through Culturally Safe Care

At the Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS), improving access to care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is about more than delivering clinical services. It is about understanding each person's circumstances, building trust and ensuring patients feel supported throughout their healthcare journey.



Cultural Capability Officer, Henry Nona, working towards creating culturally safe care at STARS.

This year, the *Increasing Participation Program* demonstrated the powerful impact of person-centred care through the experience of a woman who had repeatedly missed important colonoscopy surveillance appointments.

When staff took the time to better understand her situation, they learned she was living with agoraphobia and carrying significant grief following the loss of both her parents. As a breast cancer survivor, she had also experienced previous traumatic interactions within the health system, creating understandable anxiety about returning to hospital.

Rather than viewing missed appointments as a barrier, the care team worked alongside the patient, her family and neighbours to provide the support she needed to feel safe and confident accessing care. Staff helped coordinate her preparation for the procedure, maintained regular contact leading up to her appointment and provided reassurance throughout her journey to the hospital and during her visit.

When it became clear that additional preparation was required on the day of the procedure, the team worked closely with the patient to reschedule and provide ongoing support. A few days later, she successfully completed her colonoscopy, which showed no adverse findings and meant she would not require further surveillance for another five years.

Most importantly, the experience helped rebuild her trust in healthcare services.

The story highlights the importance of culturally responsive, compassionate care and demonstrates how taking time to understand each person's unique circumstances can improve engagement, access and health outcomes.

Alongside individual patient support, STARS continues to provide dedicated monthly Endoscopy Pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, including separate men's and women's procedure lists that recognise and respect cultural considerations and healthcare preferences.

By creating culturally safe environments and delivering care that places people at the centre, STARS is helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients feel supported, respected and empowered to access the healthcare they need.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following article contains the name and image of a deceased person.

A Life-Changing Reminder About the Power of Early Detection

As Chief Executive Officer of Bidgerdii Community Health Service, proud Barada Kabalbara woman, Marissa Smith, has dedicated her career to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This year, her own health journey became a powerful reminder of why regular health checks and early screening can save lives.



What began as an unrelated hospital admission quickly led to an unexpected diagnosis. During her stay, nurses identified unusually high blood pressure, prompting Marissa to follow up with her GP. While she was experiencing only mild symptoms, including a slight cough and shortness of breath, further investigations revealed something far more serious.

After a series of tests and referrals, Marissa was diagnosed with Stage 1B lung cancer.

The diagnosis came as a shock.

"I honestly thought the results would come back benign because other than those mild symptoms, there was no sign of a cancerous tumour in my body."

Following her diagnosis, Marissa was referred to specialist teams at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and later underwent surgery at The Prince Charles Hospital. Thanks to early detection and timely treatment, surgeons were able to successfully remove the tumour before it had spread.

Reflecting on her experience, Marissa said she felt fortunate that her cancer was identified early.

"When I got my diagnosis, I was in a state of shock, but I was thankful at the same time that it had been detected early so that I could be treated."

Throughout her treatment and recovery, Marissa received support from clinical teams and Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers (IHLO), whose care extended beyond the patient to support her family and loved ones during a challenging time.

While her journey has changed her perspective on health, it has also strengthened her passion for prevention and early intervention.

Knowing she had few symptoms before her diagnosis, Marissa is now encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make their health a priority and take advantage of available screening programs.

"Don't wait until you develop symptoms. Those preventative services are available now, and they are life-changing."

Marissa's story highlights the importance of early detection, particularly for conditions such as lung cancer, where symptoms may not appear until the disease has progressed. Through regular health checks and screening, people have a greater opportunity to access treatment earlier and achieve better health outcomes.

As a strong advocate for preventative health, Marissa has also become a passionate supporter of the National Lung Cancer Screening Program, helping raise awareness through community about the importance of regular screening and early diagnosis.

"Doing these screenings, and taking charge of your health, is not just about looking after you, but also doing it for your mob and for your family."

For Marissa, improving health outcomes starts with encouraging people to have conversations about their health and take proactive steps before illness develops.

"If we can get our mob diagnosed early, we are more likely to see a successful outcome. I hope in some way I can make a difference, even if I can encourage one or two community members through the door for a screen, and then they can share their story with others."

Her story serves as a powerful reminder that early detection can save lives. By prioritising regular health checks and screening, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can improve their chances of early diagnosis, better treatment outcomes and healthier futures for themselves, their families and their communities.



(L-R) The late Amy (Marissa's mum), and Marissa Smith supported by TPCH IHLO Michelle.



Deadly Start trainees and staff at the Redcliffe Hospital orientation.

Record Deadly Start Trainee Cohort Commencing in Metro North Health

Metro North Health welcomed 41 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 11 students to *Deadly Start* in 2026, the largest intake in the program's history. Among them were Metro North Health's first two school-based plumbing apprentices, marking a new pathway for young people interested in the trades.

The students began with a Certificate II in Health Support Services through Connect 'n' Grow before moving into practical placements across Metro North Health. Over the duration of their placement, they can gain up to 375 hours of paid workplace experience while working towards a Certificate III qualification in their chosen field.

Placements span nursing, administration, dental, allied health, patient support services, and building and engineering, providing students with valuable exposure to a diverse range of career pathways within healthcare. The introduction of Metro North Health's first two school-based plumbing apprentices has further expanded these opportunities, allowing students to gain hands-on experience in the essential infrastructure and maintenance work that supports hospital operations. Together, the program is helping young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people explore future career options, build practical skills and confidence, and establish pathways into meaningful employment within the health sector and beyond.

"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," said Alicia Grantham, Deadly Start Senior Project Officer.

Delivered with Connect 'n' Grow and MAS National, the program is building pathways from school into the workforce. Thirteen graduates moved directly into paid Queensland Health roles in 2025. The record 2026 cohort gives more young people the opportunity to begin that journey.



Deadly Start Trainees and staff at the Caboolture Hospital Orientation.



Deadly Start trainees and staff at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Orientation Day.

Supporting the Next Generation Through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Pathways

Metro North Health continues to invest in the future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce through the *First Nations Cadetship Program*, supporting students to gain valuable clinical experience, cultural mentoring and career development opportunities while completing their studies.



First Nations Cadet Taytum Wiggs at Metro North Health's First Nations Cadetship Welcome Day.

This year, Metro North Health welcomed a new cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cadets at its annual *First Nations Cadetship Welcome Day*, marking an important milestone in their journey into the health workforce. Held at The Prince Charles Hospital, the event brought together students, mentors and cultural support teams, providing an opportunity to connect, learn and build relationships as participants commenced their placements across the organisation.

The *First Nations Cadetship Program* supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying health-related disciplines by combining paid employment with hands-on clinical experience and culturally safe mentorship. The program plays a vital role in growing a strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce while helping students build confidence, skills and professional networks throughout their studies.

Among the cadets welcomed this year were sisters Maddison and Taytum Wiggs, whose shared passion for healthcare has been shaped by family, culture and lived experience. Maddison began her Physiotherapy cadetship at Caboolture Hospital, while Taytum commenced a Midwifery cadetship at Redcliffe Hospital.

Their pathway into healthcare began through Metro North Health's *Deadly Start Traineeship Program*, which provided early exposure to healthcare workplaces and helped shape their decision to pursue careers in health. Through the cadetship program, they are now gaining practical experience in clinical environments while receiving support from mentors, cultural guidance and workplace learning opportunities.

The impact of the program extends beyond individual career development. By increasing representation across the health workforce, the program is helping ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, experiences and knowledge continue to shape healthcare delivery across Hospital and Health Services.

The program also provides students with opportunities to connect with peers and mentors who understand the importance of culture, identity and community. These connections help create a supportive environment that enables students to succeed throughout their studies and into their professional careers.

As Metro North Health continues its commitment to growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, programs such as the *First Nations Cadetship Program* are helping build future leaders who will make a meaningful contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities across Queensland.



First Nations Cadet Maddison Wiggs at Metro North Health's First Nations Cadetship Welcome Day.



First Nations Cadets participate in Metro North Health's Welcome Day.



Welcoming Metro North Health's First Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Professions

A significant workforce milestone was achieved in 2026 with the appointment of Kimina Andersen as Metro North Health's first Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Professions. As the inaugural role of its kind within the organisation, the position represents an important investment in strengthening professional leadership, governance and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, Health Practitioners and Liaison Officers.

Since commencing in October, Kimina has led efforts to strengthen workforce capability, professional development, education and clinical and cultural governance, while increasing the visibility, recognition and influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Professions across Metro North Health.

The establishment of this groundbreaking role recognises the vital contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, Health Practitioners and Liaison Officers make in improving healthcare experiences, strengthening cultural safety and achieving better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Kimina brings almost 30 years of experience across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and health equity. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman with connections to the Wuthathi, Erub (Darnley Island) and Wakka Wakka peoples, she has held senior leadership positions across Queensland Health and is widely recognised for her work advancing health equity, cultural safety and anti-racism initiatives.

Kimina said she is excited to take on the role and contribute to the continued growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Professions. Having started her career as a senior mental health worker because there were no identified social work roles available to support her community, she understands the importance of creating meaningful career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, Health Practitioners and Liaison Officers play a critical role in supporting our communities and improving healthcare experiences and outcomes. I am proud to help strengthen and elevate these professions while supporting a workforce that is culturally strong, valued and empowered to lead."

A key focus of the position is creating greater opportunities for professional growth, leadership development and workforce sustainability, while supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals to work to their full scope of practice.

"This is about creating clear career pathways, nurturing future leaders and ensuring our



Kimina Andersen, Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Professions.

workforce is recognised for the unique skills, knowledge and cultural expertise they bring to healthcare every day."

The role also supports Metro North Health's broader Health Equity agenda by strengthening professional governance and fostering collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations, education providers and community stakeholders.

Looking to the future, Kimina sees the position as an opportunity to build a stronger, more sustainable future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Professions across Metro North Health.

"Strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and workforce representation are essential to achieving health equity. I look forward to working alongside our workforce, communities and partners to help create a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Professions continue to grow, thrive and influence positive change across the health system.

My goal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Professions at Metro North Health is for the profession to have the recognition, support and protections afforded to other health professions.

Success would mean a workforce operating within clearly defined roles and scopes of practice, where cultural knowledge, lived experience and professional expertise are recognised, respected and valued within multidisciplinary teams. Staff would be supported and empowered to shape culturally safe care and improve health outcomes for our communities.

Ultimately, I want Metro North Health to be an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This would be reflected in stronger recruitment and retention, meaningful career progression, and staff telling us they feel culturally safe, respected and supported to succeed."

Kimina's appointment marks an exciting new chapter for Metro North Health and reinforces the organisation's commitment to building a culturally strong workforce capable of delivering safe, responsive and person-centred care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Growing the Next Generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leaders

Metro North Health took an important step in strengthening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce in 2026 with the launch of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program.*

Bringing together emerging leaders from across the organisation, the program was designed to nurture leadership capability, strengthen cultural identity and create opportunities for staff to grow their confidence and influence within the health service. The initiative forms part of Metro North Health's ongoing commitment to developing a strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and supporting future leaders to help shape healthcare for community.

The program commenced with a special launch event attended by participants, mentors and senior leaders, marking the beginning of a leadership journey focused on personal growth, professional development and cultural empowerment.

"The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program is an important initiative designed to nurture, develop and strengthen our workforce, supporting both current and emerging leaders to grow with confidence, capability and cultural integrity. By investing in our people, we are helping shape a culturally strong workforce equipped to lead positive change across Metro North Health," says Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel, Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Open to staff from a range of professions and disciplines, the program provides participants with opportunities to build leadership skills, strengthen professional networks and explore career pathways while remaining connected to culture, community and identity. Through workshops, mentoring and ongoing development activities, participants are supported to develop the confidence and capability required to take the next step in their careers.

A key component of the program is mentoring. Participants are paired with experienced mentors who provide guidance, support and encouragement throughout the program. More than professional development, these mentoring relationships create culturally safe spaces where participants can learn from the experiences of others, explore leadership in ways that align with their values and build confidence in their own leadership journey.

The program also recognises that leadership is not limited to formal management positions. Instead, it encourages participants to understand leadership as influence, advocacy and service to community. By helping staff identify their strengths and leadership potential, the program supports participants to lead in ways that are authentic to who they are and grounded in culture.

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program* reflects Metro North Health's commitment to growing a workforce that is culturally strong, confident and empowered to influence change. By investing in people and creating pathways for leadership development, the program is helping build the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders who will contribute to better health outcomes and stronger communities across Queensland.

As participants continue their leadership journey throughout 2026, they are developing not only new skills and knowledge, but also stronger connections with peers, mentors and community, creating a foundation for future leadership across Metro North Health.

"By investing in our people, we are helping shape a culturally strong workforce equipped to lead positive change across Metro North Health."

Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel, Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health



Participants and mentors celebrate graduating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program.



Metro North Health Acting Chief Executive, Naomi Hebson, addresses participants, mentors and leaders at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program Graduation.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from across Metro North Health came together for the Staff Wellbeing Day.



Strengthening Connection Through Wellbeing

Metro North Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Wellbeing Day created an opportunity for staff to come together in a culturally safe environment to connect, reflect and support one another. The event celebrated the significant contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff while recognising the importance of nurturing the wellbeing of those who play a vital role in improving health outcomes for community.

The continued growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce highlights the importance of initiatives that support staff wellbeing, connection and career success.

Hosted by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) team during *National Reconciliation Week*, the wellbeing day brought together 69 Metro North Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The event provided an opportunity to step away from regular duties and focus on social and emotional wellbeing while connecting with colleagues from different teams, professions and facilities.

Through a range of interactive activities, yarning opportunities and team-building experiences, participants were encouraged to connect with one another, share experiences and strengthen professional relationships across Metro North Health. Staff also had the opportunity to engage with a variety of wellbeing services and supports, with representatives from six providers attending throughout the day, including Telus Health, Staff Psychology, RemServ, Peer Responders, Zumba and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Program.

The wellbeing day acknowledged that a strong workforce is essential to strong communities. By creating space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to come together, Metro North Health continued its commitment to supporting staff both personally and professionally, recognising that wellbeing plays an important role in workforce sustainability, cultural safety and positive workplace experiences.

A key theme emerging from the day was the value of connection. Feedback highlighted that staff appreciated the opportunity to meet colleagues from across the organisation, learn about available wellbeing supports and spend time in a culturally safe environment focused on connection, culture and self-care.

Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Adj. Prof. Sherry Holzapfel said the wellbeing day reflected Metro North Health's commitment to supporting and investing in its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

"Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce makes an invaluable contribution to the health and wellbeing of our communities. Creating opportunities for staff to connect, reflect



Staff took part in a range of wellbeing activities throughout the day, supporting social and emotional wellbeing.

and prioritise their own wellbeing helps foster a strong, supported and culturally safe workforce that can continue to make a positive difference for patients, families and communities across Metro North."

The event served as a reminder of the value of community, culture and belonging. Staff were encouraged to reflect on their contributions, celebrate their achievements and acknowledge the importance of supporting one another throughout their careers.

Importantly, a supported workforce contributes to better outcomes not only for staff, but also for patients, families and communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff play a crucial role in delivering culturally safe care, strengthening trust and improving healthcare experiences across Metro North.

As Metro North Health continues its journey towards health equity, initiatives such as the Staff Wellbeing Day demonstrate the importance of investing in people, fostering connection and ensuring culture remains central to workplace wellbeing and success.



Meet Morgan Cattanach, Metro North Health's New Health Equity Manager

Morgan Cattanach joined Metro North Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team as Manager of Health Equity in 2026, bringing a focus on listening to community and turning that understanding into change across health services.

Morgan's connection to the Northern Kaanju people comes through her father, whose family is from the Coen and Lockhart River region. She grew up in Toowoomba and returned to Queensland in 2023 after a decade in Victoria.

In her new role, Morgan leads the scoping, planning and coordination of the *Metro North Health Equity Strategy*. She wants to understand the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing Metro North Hospital and Health Services, recognise progress and keep adapting as community needs change.

"Ultimately, I hope to contribute to a lasting legacy where mob feel connected, heard and acknowledged every time they access our services," Morgan said.

Becoming a mother has strengthened her commitment to this work. Morgan hopes her two sons will grow up seeing the progress their community has made and the change still being built.

Before applying, Morgan followed Better Together – Our Health, Our Way and saw Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff being celebrated. She encourages others considering a career in health to give it a go: "If you don't give it a go, you'll never know what could have been."



2026 Deadly Start Graduation painting done by trainee Ruth Roma to celebrate all graduates.



Celebrating the 2026 Deadly Start Graduates

28 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students have graduated from Metro North Health's *Deadly Start School-Based Traineeship Program*, marking an important milestone in their journey towards careers in healthcare.

Family members, friends, mentors and Metro North Health staff gathered at the Brighton Health Campus to celebrate the graduates' achievements and recognise the hard work, dedication and growth each student demonstrated throughout the program.

The graduation represents more than the completion of a traineeship. It celebrates the next generation of potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare professionals and leaders who are helping shape the future of healthcare across Queensland.

Designed to create meaningful pathways into the health workforce, the *Deadly Start Program* provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students with paid employment, nationally recognised qualifications, on-the-job training and cultural support while they complete their senior schooling. The program enables students to gain hands-on experience in real healthcare settings while exploring future career opportunities.

Throughout their traineeships, students worked across a variety of professional streams, including nursing, allied health, administration, health support services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health roles. This practical experience allowed participants to build valuable skills, confidence and insight into the many rewarding careers available within the health sector.

The program continues to be a key pathway for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to transition into employment and further education, with many graduates progressing into university studies and employment opportunities across Metro North Health and the broader health system.

The success of the program is made possible through strong partnerships between Metro North Health, Connect ‘n’ Grow, SEED Foundation Australia and MAS National, all of whom play a vital role in supporting students throughout their traineeship journey. Together, the partners provide education, mentoring, cultural support and employment pathways that help students thrive both personally and professionally.

Since its inception, Deadly Start has continued to strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce pipeline, supporting students to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence required to pursue a career in healthcare. The program reflects



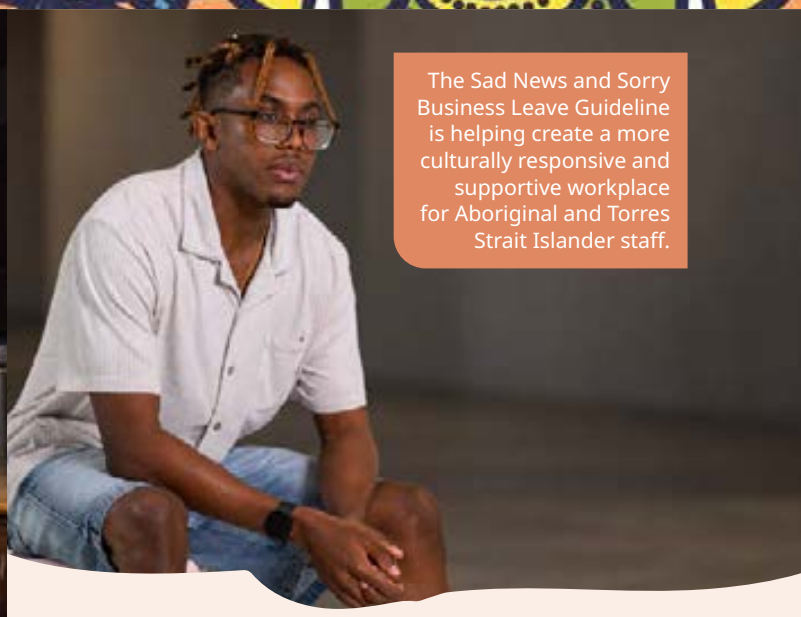
Metro North Health 2026 Deadly Start Graduates.

Metro North Health's commitment to growing a workforce that is representative of the communities it serves and ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices remain central to the future of healthcare delivery.

For many graduates, the traineeship has provided not only practical workplace experience but also helped to build confidence and a clearer vision for their future. Through mentorship, cultural support and exposure to a wide range of health professions, students have been empowered to explore career pathways that may have once seemed out of reach.

As the 2026 graduates celebrated their achievements alongside family, community and colleagues, the occasion highlighted the power of investing in young people and creating opportunities for future generations.

The success of this year's cohort is a testament to their determination, resilience and commitment to learning. As they take the next step in their education and career journeys, they carry with them the knowledge, skills and experiences gained through Deadly Start, helping build a stronger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and healthier communities for years to come.



The Sad News and Sorry Business Leave Guideline is helping create a more culturally responsive and supportive workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Supporting Staff Through Sad News and Sorry Business

Metro North Health introduced a Sad News and Sorry Business Leave Guideline in 2026 to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to meet cultural responsibilities during times of grief and loss.

Developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and key stakeholders, the guideline recognises that Sorry Business and Sad News can involve travel to Country, funerals, ceremonies, and caring for family and community. It also acknowledges that kinship responsibilities may extend beyond standard workplace definitions of family.

The guideline gives employees and managers a clearer basis for discussing suitable leave and flexible work arrangements. It recognises that responsibilities may continue beyond a funeral and that staff may need support over time.

For managers, it provides practical guidance on responding with compassion and understanding each employee's circumstances. For staff, it is an important step towards being able to meet cultural obligations while feeling respected and supported at work.

The guideline puts the *Metro North Health Equity Strategy* into practice by making cultural understanding part of everyday workplace decisions.



Urapun Clinical School Growing the Next Generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Professionals

Metro North Health has proudly celebrated the launch of the *Urapun Clinical School*, a collaborative partnership between Redcliffe Hospital, Community and Oral Health and TAFE Queensland, creating new pathways for students pursuing careers in healthcare.

The name Urapun, meaning *'One'* in the Torres Strait Kala Lagaw Ya language of the Western and Central Islands, symbolises the coming together of health services, education providers, students and community with a shared purpose. The name was identified by Henry Nona, Cultural Capability Officer for Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Services, as a reflection of the partnership's commitment to unity, collaboration and culturally responsive care.

The launch marked a significant milestone for Metro North Health and the future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, with Aboriginal students Tenielle Roebig, Kaitlyn Glidden and Zoe Shiels commencing their first clinical placements as Registered Nursing students at Redcliffe Hospital and Community and Oral Health. Through the partnership, students rotate across services, gaining valuable clinical experience while building professional networks and developing the skills required for a successful healthcare career.

More than a clinical placement program, Urapun reflects a commitment to growing and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals within Metro North Health. The initiative provides students with opportunities to learn within culturally safe environments while experiencing firsthand the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals play in delivering healthcare to community.

"The Urapun Clinical School represents an important investment in the future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare. By creating culturally safe learning environments and strong partnerships between education and health services, we are supporting students to succeed while building a workforce that reflects and understands the communities we serve. These students are the future of healthcare, and we are proud to walk alongside them on their journey," says Paul Drahm, Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team at Community and Oral Health.

The partnership also demonstrates the value of collaboration between education and healthcare providers. By bringing together TAFE Queensland,



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Directors, Raelene White and Paul Drahm with students from the inaugural Urapun Clinical School cohort celebrate the launch of the innovative education and clinical placement partnership.

Community and Oral Health and Redcliffe Hospital, the Clinical School is creating stronger pathways from study to employment and helping build a sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce for the future.

Importantly, the initiative supports Metro North Health's broader commitment to workforce development, cultural safety and health equity. By investing in students today, the Urapun Clinical School is helping ensure future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals are equipped to deliver culturally responsive care and improve health outcomes within their communities.

The *Urapun Clinical School* stands as a strong example of what can be achieved when education, health services and cultural leadership come together with a shared vision. Through partnership, mentorship and a commitment to growing the workforce, the initiative is helping build a stronger future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare across the hospital and health service.



Redcliffe Hospital's Cultural Capability Officer, Will Muckan.

Redcliffe Hospital Staff Take Part in Cultural Learning

Redcliffe Hospital reached a milestone in 2026 when their Cultural Practice Program recorded over 1,000 staff attendances across 44 sessions. Cultural Capability Officer and Kabi Kabi Traditional Owner, Will Muckan, led the training, helping staff bring greater cultural understanding into their everyday work.

The program explores Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, perspectives and cultural practices through storytelling, yarning and discussion. Staff consider how respect, communication and relationships can shape the care people experience at the hospital.

Redcliffe Hospital's Executive Leadership Team took part together in March. Their session included a yarning circle, visual storytelling and a historical timeline, giving leaders dedicated time to reflect on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their role in shaping a more welcoming service.

Across clinical and non-clinical teams, participant feedback praised Will's knowledge and the personal stories he shared. One staff member called it "the best cultural practice program I have done in 20 years with Queensland Health".

"Cultural capability is a continuous learning journey, not a destination," Will shared.

The milestone reflects sustained participation across Redcliffe Hospital and a continuing commitment to learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices.

New Staff Members



Morgan Cattanach

MANAGER HEALTH EQUITY, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team

Northern Kaanju



Deon Bird

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OFFICER, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team

Wakka Wakka, with Nguburinji and Wakaya connections



Beccy Blair

PROJECT SUPPORT OFFICER, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team

Kamilaroi



Joshua O'Neil

STAFF PSYCHOLOGIST, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team

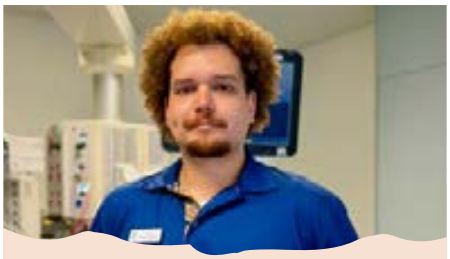
Arrernte and Kaytetye



Talayah Stubbs

ADMINISTRATION OFFICER, Deadly Feet

Wiradjuri, Kamilaroi and Cook Island connections



Kuiyam Sturrman

PATIENT SUPPORT OFFICER, ICU and Theatres - Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Iman and Wukki Wulli with connections to Erub and Daru islands



Jenna Marr

ADMISSIONS OFFICER, Surgical Treatment and Rehabilitation Services

Iningai



Dr Luke David

INTERN MEDICAL OFFICER, Mental Health Ward - Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Kulkalgal Nation; family from Iama (Yam) Island



Dr Ella Ceolin

ANAESTHETIC PRINCIPAL HOUSE OFFICER, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Family ties to Yirrganydji and Wulgurukaba Country



Ruben Lampton

INDIGENOUS HOSPITAL LIAISON OFFICER, Redcliffe Hospital

Juru, from the Burdekin



Tyson Cigobia

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HOSPITAL LIAISON OFFICER (Ambulatory Care Outpatients), Surgical Treatment and Rehabilitation Services

Larrakia connections and family ties to Mataranka



Tanika Idai

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER (Women's Business), Bribie Island Satellite Health Centre

Saibai Island

2026



Brett Appo

INDIGENOUS HOSPITAL LIAISON OFFICER, Redcliffe Hospital

Arabana Traditional Owner, with ties to Larrakia Nation



Nathan Morgan

SENIOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER, Kallangur Satellite Health Centre

Kabi Kabi Traditional Owner



Alysha Jackson

SENIOR HEALTH WORKER, Kidney Dialysis Unit

Wakka Wakka, with connections to Gayndah



Marcus Cummins

SENIOR HEALTH WORKER, Kidney Dialysis Unit

Ngugi man of the Quandamooka people, from Moorgumpin



Kimina Andersen

DIRECTOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH PROFESSIONS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team

Connections to the Wuthathi people of Cape York, Erub (Darnley) Island in the Torres Strait, and the Wakka Wakka people of the South Burnett region.



Courtney Hala

CLINICAL NURSE CONSULTANT, Strong Start to Life, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team

Connections to Wiradjuri and Ngarrindjeri



Joshua Mallet

ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT OFFICER, Community and Oral Health

Gumbaynggirr and Dunghutti



Saroma Monday

SENIOR HEALTH WORKER (Diabetes), Community and Oral Health

Meriam from Murray Island, Gunggandji from Yarrabah, Yuwibara from Mackay, and South Sea Islander connections to Vanuatu



Justin Roby

CULTURAL CAPABILITY OFFICER, Community and Oral Health

Wiradjuri



Kenneth Torres

TRAINING PATHWAYS COORDINATOR, First Nations Training Pathway

Yawuru, Karajarri and Bunuba through his mother; Bardi, Jabbir-Jabbir and Arrernte through his father



Will Muckan

CULTURAL CAPABILITY OFFICER, Redcliffe Hospital

Kabi Kabi Traditional Owner



Yvonne O'Neil

CULTURAL CAPABILITY OFFICER, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Yuwaalaraay and Murrawarri through her mother; Noonghaburra through her father

Embedding Anti-racism into Metro North Health's Values in Action



Metro North Health has taken an important step forward in the anti-racism journey by embedding Eliminating Racism as a core overarching principle within the organisation's Values in Action (ViA) framework.

Built around the values of Respect, Integrity, Compassion, Teamwork and High Performance, the Values in Action framework guides how staff work, lead and deliver care across the organisation. By embedding anti-racism within these values, Metro North Health has reinforced that creating a culturally safe and equitable health service is everyone's responsibility.

The initiative was developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, consumers and communitya members, ensuring the Anti-Racism Statement was shaped by lived experience and cultural insight. Through consultation, participants emphasised that anti-racism must be reflected in everyday behaviours, decision-making and leadership, not simply policy or intent.

The resulting statement establishes a clear organisation-wide position that racism has no place in how Metro North Health works, leads or delivers care. It promotes accountability, supports culturally safe practice and aligns Metro North Health's values with practical actions that foster inclusion, respect and equity.

The work supports the *Metro North Health Equity Strategy* and broader efforts to improve healthcare experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It also reflects a commitment to creating a workplace where every person feels safe, respected and valued.

By embedding anti-racism into its Values in Action, Metro North Health is strengthening the foundations for culturally safe care, inclusive leadership and health equity. Most importantly, it reinforces that meaningful change happens when values are not only spoken about but demonstrated through everyday actions.

Values in Action Anti-racism Statement

We stand against racism and all forms of discrimination

At Metro North Health, racism has no place in how we work, lead or care.

Eliminating racism is core to our Values in Action (ViA) – Respect, Integrity, Compassion, Teamwork and High Performance – and essential to creating a safe health system for every person.

We recognise that racism is systemic and are committed to actively identifying, addressing and overcoming racism to create a safe and equitable health system for all people. We acknowledge our shared responsibility to listen, learn, reflect and act with humility as we work together to challenge inequity and drive positive change. Our commitment is demonstrated through everyday behaviours, accountable leadership, continuous learning and safe, trusted processes that support speaking up and responding to concerns.

A safe workplace is one where living our values in action means:

- Respect guides every interaction, and diversity is recognised, valued and celebrated.
- Integrity means calling out racism, bias and systemic inequities, and taking responsibility for repair when harm occurs.
- Compassion ensures voices with lived experiences are heard, respected and responded to with care and humility.
- Teamwork builds belonging through shared responsibility for safety and protects psychological safety for all.
- High Performance drives measurable action, continuous learning, and accountability.

This statement is our shared promise to act, listen and lead positive change together.

While this statement sets out our commitment to anti-racism through our values in action, it does not sit alone. Staff are encouraged to use supporting policies, pathways and resources that bring this commitment to life in practice.

Our Health, Our Way

Discover Metro North Health's dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health website.

Our Health, Our Way has been developed to improve access to health information, services, resources and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, families and communities, including:

- Health services and programs
- Community initiatives and partnerships
- Events and opportunities
- Health Equity activities
- Workforce and cultural capability initiatives
- Resources to support health and wellbeing



Visit the website

Scan the QR code or visit:
metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/ourhealthourway/

Metro North Health | Queensland Government

Better Together – Our Health, Our Way Social Media Platforms

The Better Together – Our Health, Our Way social media platforms continued to grow in 2026, sharing health information, community events and stories celebrating our people across **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **LinkedIn**.

From January to the beginning of October, Facebook content was viewed approximately 1.6 million times, with around 24,300 reactions, comments and shares. Around 1,400 people started following the page, helping our stories and health messages reach more people.

Instagram recorded approximately 46,000 views and 2,500 reactions, comments and shares.

On LinkedIn, posts were displayed 85,305 times, sharing our work with colleagues, partners and the wider health community. LinkedIn's followers grew to 948, approximately 31% higher than the total recorded in 2025.

Our most viewed stories celebrated staff connecting with community, careers in health and Elders sharing their experiences. These stories sit alongside practical health advice and updates on Metro North Health's progress towards health equity.

Thank you to everyone who followed, shared a story or joined a conversation. Your support helps keep community informed and connected.



Top Performing Posts



FACEBOOK

Community Engagement Officers at Woodford Correctional Centre

Post Views:
171,700

Post Engagement:
1,600



INSTAGRAM

NAIDOC Week Recap

Post views:
1,510

Post Engagement:
75



LINKEDIN

Farewell to Adrian Carson AM

Post views:
6,730

Post Engagement:
168

Follow us on our journey towards health equity

FACEBOOK

Current followers:	**5,766**	Content interactions:	**24,300**
Content views:	**1,600,000**	New yearly page followers:	**1,400**

www.facebook.com/bettertogetherourhealthourway

INSTAGRAM

Current followers:	**482**	Content interactions:	**2,500**
Content views:	**46,000**	New yearly page followers:	**156**

www.instagram.com/ourhealthourway

LINKEDIN

Current followers:	**948**	Content interactions:	**2,197**
Content views:	**85,305**	New yearly page followers:	**226**

www.linkedin.com/company/better-together-our-health-our-way

Facebook and Instagram activity figures cover 1 January–1 October 2026. LinkedIn activity figures cover 1 January–29 September 2026. Follower totals are current as at 1 October 2026. Some figures are rounded.

Metro North Health Key Calendar Highlights

FEBRUARY

13 February – National Apology Day (below)

23 February – Metro North Cadetship Welcome Day (right)









MARCH

4 March – Better Together Staff Gathering (above)

5 March – Yarns with Sherry at Caboolture Hospital

18 March – Health Equity Community Consultation (right)

19 March – National Close the Gap Day Celebrations

31 March – COH RAP Launch





APRIL

22 April – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Wellbeing Day (left)

23 April – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Event (right)





MAY

7 May – Yarns with Sherry at STARS

26 May – National Sorry Day

27 May – 3 June – Reconciliation Week at Metro North Health (above)

28 May – Health Equity Community Showcase (below)

JUNE

3 June – Mabo Day

5 June – Mabo Day Event Celebrations (below)

24 June - Women's Yarning Circle - Menopause at Brighton









JULY

1 July – Coming of the Light

2 July – Yarns with Sherry at RBWH

3 July – Buranga Widjung NAIDOC Event (above)

5 – 12 July – *NAIDOC Week* at Metro North Health

9 July – Northside NAIDOC Family Fun Day (left)

Metro North Health Key Calendar Highlights 2027





AUGUST

5 August - Kallangor Women's Yarning Circle, Kallangur Satellite Health Centre

14 August – Men's Cultural Gathering Day

25 August - Women's Yarning Circle - Caboolture Satellite Health Centre (above)

25 August - RBWH RAP Launch

28 August – Health Equity Engagement Forum (below)







SEPTEMBER

4 September – COH Women's Health Expo (above)

9 September – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Program Graduation (top right)

15 September – Yarns with Sherry at Green Square

25 September – Women's Cultural Gathering Day

28 September – Deadly Start Graduation (left)



OCTOBER

2 October – Ngarrama Redcliffe MGP Opening and Baby Blessing (below)

9 October – RBWH Cardiac Art Expo (above)

13 October – Sunshine Coast Sistas Shawl Launch

23 October - Brighton Medical Imaging Deptartment Community Consultation



NOVEMBER

13 November – Metro North Staff Excellence Awards (above)

17 November – Health Equity Showcase and Expo

24 November – Better Together Staff Gathering

30 November – Elders Yarns with Sherry Christmas Celebration





DECEMBER

3 December – Yarns with Sherry at Brighton (above)

2026 Roadmap

FEBRUARY

24th Pop up Promotion, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Interagency – Youth, Deception Bay Community Hall

MARCH

3rd Deadly Smiles Screening and Health Promotion – Koobara Kindy

27th Career and Health Expo Pop Up – Bray Park State High School

MAY

13th Deadly Feet, Kidney Health and Diabetes Health Promotion – Homeless Connect Event, Royal Brisbane Showgrounds

JULY

1st Deadly Feet health promotion – Metro North Mental Health NAIDOC Day, Caboolture Mental Health Building

3rd Deadly Feet and Diabetes Health Promotion – Caboolture Flag Raising NAIDOC event

6th Sexual Health Promotion and Immunisations with the Public Health Unit – QLD Berry Farms

AUGUST

6th Reconnect Homeless Event Health Promotion – The Peninsula Support Hub Redcliffe

21st Careers Day – Deception Bay State High School

24th Sexual Health Promotion and Immunisations with the Public Health Unit – QLD Berry Farms

26th Sexual Health Promotion and Immunisations with the Public Health Unit – QLD Berry Farms

SEPTEMBER

4th Immunisations with the Public Health Unit – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women and Families Health Expo, Brighton Health Campus

10th Deadly Feet Screening – Helena Jones Women's Correction Centre, Albion



JUNE

2nd Kallangur Reconciliation Morning Tea – Kallangur Satellite Hospital

15th Sexual Health Promotion and Immunisations with the Public Health Unit – QLD Berry Farms

26th Sexual Health Promotion and Immunisations with the Public Health Unit – QLD Berry Farms

9th Deadly Feet and Diabetes Health Promotion – Northside NAIDOC Community Fun Day, Koobara Kindergarten Grounds

20th Sexual Health Promotion and Immunisations with the Public Health Unit – QLD Berry Farms

27th Sexual Health Promotion and Immunisations with the Public Health Unit – QLD Berry Farms

29th Sexual Health Promotion and Immunisations with the Public Health Unit – QLD Berry Farms

30th Community Engagement Officers Health Promotion – Bribie NAIDOC Day, Bribie Island Headspace

OCTOBER

2nd Ngarrama Blessing Health Promotion – Yourtown Deception Bay

8th Pop up Promotion – Mental Health Yarns, Caboolture State High School

8th Deadly Feet, Diabetes, Kidney Health, Health Promotion – Caboolture Community Mental Health Day

DECEMBER

8th Deadly Smiles Screening Health Promotion – Koobara Kindy

10th Deadly Smiles Screening Health Promotion – Koobara Kindy

Plans for 2027

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team will guide efforts, and implementation plans across Metro North Health for the 2025-2028 *Health Equity Strategy.*



Phase two of the Health Equity Strategy focuses on key priorities in mental health and women's, children, and families. The key priorities and actions for the year ahead include, but are not limited to:

- Evaluate the 2025–2028 *Metro North Health Equity Strategy* to inform the development of Phase 3 of the Health Equity Strategy (2028–2031).
- Strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in decision-making through targeted engagement, partnership and co-design.
- Drive system-wide improvements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families through the joint implementation plan with Children's Health Queensland.
- Implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Plan 2026–2031 to grow, support and strengthen the workforce through leadership, career development and employment pathways.
- Build on the successful implementation of the Anti-Racism Policy and Campaign by further embedding anti-racist practices, strengthening reporting and response mechanisms, and driving continuous improvement through the monitoring and management of racism and discrimination incidents.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners to work to their full scope of practice within a strong clinical and cultural governance framework.
- Develop integrated models of care that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across their healthcare journey, with a focus on early intervention, continuity of care and care closer to home.
- Develop and implement culturally responsive, holistic mental health models of care that integrate social and emotional wellbeing, are strengths-based and trauma-informed, and are accessible across all Metro North Health services.
- Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+, Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities to co-design inclusive programs and initiatives that reflect lived experience and support equitable health outcomes.
- Strengthen culturally safe and holistic care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, babies and families across Caboolture, Redcliffe and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospitals.
- Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and researchers to identify systemic barriers, understand cultural and social determinants of health, and co-design practical, evidence-based solutions to improve healthcare access and outcomes.
- Strengthen the prisoner healthcare journey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by partnering with correctional, community and health services to improve access to culturally responsive healthcare, early intervention, and continuity of care during custody and upon release.

If you have any feedback, requests for support or would like to collaborate on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health program, please contact our team on MNHHS_CA_TSIH@health.qld.gov.au.

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