

Talk-About

The official newsletter for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit

October 2018

Metro North Hospital and Health Service *Putting people first*



Lighthouse Project Clinical Nurse Consultant Darsha Beetson, Aboriginal artist Carl Simpson, Facility Services Director Amarney Gould, Director of Nursing Cherie Franks, Metro North Deputy Board Chair Dr Kim Forrester and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Health Unit Director Paul Drahm, unveil the new Marrumba healing garden and mural. The space will provide a calm healing space for patients and families to enjoy.

New healing garden for hospital

A new garden at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) will provide a calm healing space for patients and families.

TPCH Director of Nursing Cherie Franks said the new Healing Garden was designed to make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families visiting the hospital feel welcome and comfortable during their stay.

“Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients who visit the hospital come from rural and remote areas throughout Queensland, and have never set foot in a large city hospital,” Ms Franks said.

“This can make some patients feel quite anxious about their treatment.

“The healing garden provides a dedicated area where patients can come and sit and enjoy a peaceful outdoor environment away from the busy hospital ward.”

“For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in particular, the natural environment is an important part of their culture and heritage, and helps them feel more relaxed and at home.”

The Healing Garden includes Indigenous totem poles, a yarnning circle, edible plants and wall mural created by a local Aboriginal artist.

Landscape Architect from Sod Design Stuart Bull, who designed the garden in extensive collaboration with the hospital, Indigenous elders, Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit, and the wider Indigenous community, said that the garden aimed to create a culturally appropriate place for retreat and privacy.

“We wanted the garden to contain physical and spiritual elements that were meaningful to the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,” Stuart said.

Story continues next page



Give us feedback

Talk-About

We welcome your feedback, contributions, story ideas and details on any upcoming events. Please contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit Communications Manager Renee Simon at Renee.Simon@health.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 3139 3231.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit

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

Mail to:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit, Building 26, Chermide Community Health Centre, 490 Hamilton Road, Chermide QLD 4032.

Email to:

A_TSIHU_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au

Alternatively, call and ask for our Safety and Quality Officer on 3647 9531.

Contact information

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 3646 4154 or 3646 1696
Indigenous Patient Journey Officer	Ph: 3646 5612 or 0428 861 888
Team Leader	Ph: 3647 4183 or 0408 472 385

The Prince Charles Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 3139 5165 or 3139 5062
Indigenous Patient Journey Officer	Ph: 3139 6622 or 0409 583 967
Team Leader	Ph: 3139 6300 or 0439 082 908

Redcliffe Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 3049 6791
Team Leader	Ph: 3139 6300 or 0439 082 908

Caboolture Hospital

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 5433 8249 or 5433 8708
Team Leader	Ph: 3139 6300 or 0439 082 908

After Hours Team

Friday and Monday 12pm to 8.30pm

Saturday and Sunday 10am to 6:30pm	Ph: 5433 8249
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer	Ph: 3647 4183
Indigenous Patient Journey Officer	Ph: 0409 583 967

Indigenous Acute and Primary Care / Sexual Health Team

Manager: Robyn Chilcott	Ph: 3492 1823
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A&TSIHU Safety & Quality – Pine Rivers CHC

Tracy Grant – Indigenous Safety & Quality Coordinator	Ph: 3492 1818 or Mob: 0417 027 642
Caley Malezer – Project Officer Safety & Quality	Ph: 3492 1820 or Mob: 0417 270 854

Continued from previous page

“We used various natural and raw materials such as sandstone blocks and deco granite flooring, which offer an important physical connection to the earth. We also used the colours from both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

“All plants included in the design are edible and many of these offer traditional healing qualities.”

Ms Franks said that the healing garden was a way for the hospital to show its continued commitment to improving the health journey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families.

“It’s a great way to connect culture and healthcare,” she said.

The healing garden has been funded by The Lighthouse Project, a joint initiative of the Heart Foundation and the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Associations, aimed at reducing the incidence and impact of discharge against medical advice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with acute coronary syndrome.

TPCH is one of 18 hospitals nationwide funded to be part of the Lighthouse Hospital Project.



Torres Strait Islander Dance Group Jaran pictured with the Lighthouse Hospital Project Committee



Above: Henry Nona, Selena Woods, Uncle Alex Davidson, Carl Simpson, Christina Ross, Aleacha Hopkins and Aunty Maroochy Barambah

A word from the Director



Paul Drahm

Acting Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit

This month I had the opportunity to meet with the Ambassadors for our Metro North Staff Yarns Network. The network is designed to provide cultural connection and support to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working across Metro North. I am pleased to see such a broad group of ambassadors were nominated and supporting this important initiative:

- Redcliffe Hospital - Clinical Nurse, Peter Fallon
- Metro North Corporate & Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital - Debra Devers, Administration Officer
- Community and Oral Health – Enrolled Nurse, Stella Wake and Physiotherapist, Joshua Riggs
- Caboolture Hospital – Yvonne Williams, Indigenous Health Worker, Ngarrama Maternity
- The Prince Charles Hospital – Mark Budd, Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer
- The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital - Sonita Giudice, Midwife, Ngarrama Maternity Service

The network forms part of our broader Metro North Indigenous Workforce Strategy and links with improving diversity identification rates across the health service. Updating your diversity data is an important step for Queensland Health to identify the strategies and programs needed to build more diverse and inclusive workplaces. All you have to do is simply log on to Streamline and update and record your EEO status.

Over the next few months we will be developing a Metro North Close the Gap Plan - Danalgau Kuik Aimai (the starting of

life / health). The plan, to be launched in November, will cover our core commitments;

- Metro North Statement of Commitment Towards Reconciliation
- Metro North Indigenous Workforce Plan
- Values in Action
- Economic Development
- Indigenous Health Data Needs Analysis
- Efficient Services

I recently met with the Executive Director of Redcliffe Hospital, Louise Oriti, to discuss plans for their localised Reconciliation Action Plan. Louise has shown a real commitment and drive to establish a RAP as soon as possible.

Finally, I was privileged to meet two respected community members from Aurukun, Aunty Phyllis Yunkaporta and Aunty Sandra Bowenda, as part of the 27th Annual RBWH Symposium. They shared their culture, family traditions and insights to health for an audience of over 100 guests. I thank them both for travelling to Brisbane and sharing their culture with us. I encourage you to read their story on page 12.

It was also great to attend the annual Brighton Healthy Ageing Expo and see the new wellbeing garden unveiled and meet some of the students from Sandgate High School who contributed their time with painting the gazebo poles. Thank you to Gannet House resident, Uncle George Wano, for supporting the project and for providing cultural support to the students.

Paul Drahm

Acting Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit



Community and Oral Health Enrolled Nurse in Diabetes Service at North Lakes Staff Yarns Ambassador Stella Wake.

Stella has been in the role for 10 years and absolutely loves her job. Stella wants to get more Indigenous nurses to North Lakes. "I would be there to support them on their journey, I am a proud Murri woman."



Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer, Mark Budd is the Staff Yarning Ambassador at The Prince Charles Hospital

Mark's reason for taking on the role of Staff Yarning Ambassador is to meet new staff and help address any issues.

"It is important for all staff to know about our culture."



Indigenous Health Worker, Ngarrama Maternity, Yvonne Williams is the Staff Yarning Ambassador at Caboolture Hospital.

"Being open to conversation, to start yarning, start learning our cultures, where we are going, where we have been."

Yvonne states "I'd like to encourage all to join our yarns, get involved so that we all become culturally happy!"

What's inside

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Indigenous Hospital Liaison

Over the past couple of months, we have been working to improve our referral pathways, with the development of one generic email for all referrals to the service. This email will replace the [IHLO_Referrals_MNHHS](#) and [Improving_the_Patient_Journey](#) emails. For all Indigenous Hospital Liaison enquiries please contact Indigenous_Hospital_Liaison_Services_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au.

We had the pleasure of meeting Amelia and Lynnika from Barcaldine State High School to undertake some school based work placement within the team. Amelia and Lynnika are both interested in working with their mob and we hope they both understand what career path they want to follow when they complete high school and wish them all the best on their journey.

We have been conducting a reviewing data from July 2017 to June 2018 to help inform service delivery and gain a better perspective on where our mob are accessing services.

Transport

We have been experiencing an increase in request for transport before 7am and after 4:30pm. Although we aid with transport to patients traveling from Regional, Rural and Remote, we would like to advise that transport assistance is not always possible before and after these times. We also have guidelines outlining where we can and cannot provide transport to and from.

If you are organising travel for yourself and/or a patient please complete a referral form and contact the team. Completing a referral form will assist the team with coordinating support required by the patient and/or their escort.

Our referral form can be found on the Metro North Hospital and Health Services website under Refer your patient or you can contact the team at Indigenous_Hospital_Liaison_Services_MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au.

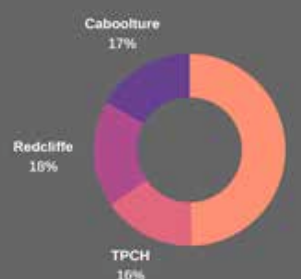
Please Note: We do not provide transport for patients travelling to Lady Cilento Children's Hospital as this is out of our service areas. They have Indigenous Hospital Liaison that can provide further assistance please contact them on 0411 654 079.

Cultural Capability

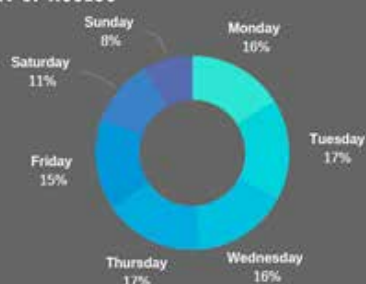
Our Cultural Capability Officers will be very busy over the next couple of months conducting a series of Cultural Audits throughout Metro North. These audits will help identify areas of improvement in addressing the barriers experienced by our community when accessing services for example welcoming environments, staff cultural competence, workplace policies and practices. Once the Audits are completed they will be reported back to the services area with recommendations on how they can improve.

The team have also created a generic email for staff inquiries regarding Cultural Practice Program, In-services and Mentoring and can be contacted via ATSCulturalCapabilityMNHHS@health.qld.gov.au.

ADMISSIONS

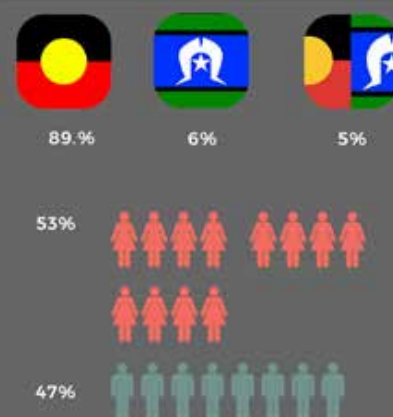


DAY OF ACCESS



SOURCE: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DATA ATLAS

DEMOGRAPHICS



IN THE NEWS

Ochre Day celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male health

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male health is too often framed in a negative light, according to the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation. Federal Minister for Indigenous Health Ken Wyatt said he believes transforming the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men is possible.

<https://www.racgp.org.au/newsGP/Professional/Ochre-Day-celebrates-Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait>

Being born in a remote leprosy institution just the beginning of life's challenges for health pioneer

She was born in an isolated Kimberley leprosarium and taken from her mother at just three days old, but Kathy Watson's childhood gave her the strength and passion for a lifetime of helping others.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-28/health-pioneers-journey-from-leprosarium/10162018>

The dental divide – and the decay of public dental services

The noisy public debate about patients' out-of-pocket costs and their consequences reaches a crescendo when it comes to oral health and dental care.

Nowhere are the growing inequalities in health between poor and rich, rural and urban, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, highlighted more than in dental health.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-21/dental-divide-and-the-decay-of-public-dental-services-medicare/10138870>

Major Grant To Fund Research Into Indigenous LGBTIQ Mental Health

A major grant received by the Telethon Kids Institute will be used to fund research into the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ).

<https://www.qnews.com.au/major-grant-funds-research-into-indigenous-lgbtq-youth-mental-health/>

Stolen Generations sicker, poorer than other Indigenous Australians

Thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are living with poorer health and social outcomes than other Indigenous Australians, according to figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/nitv-news/article/2018/08/15/stolen-generations-sicker-poorer-other-indigenous-australians>

Protocol aims to close cancer gap

When Melanie Lane was diagnosed with cancer six years ago, she became part of a grim and growing statistic: the rising number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders afflicted by the disease, with a 40 per cent greater likelihood of dying from it than non-Indigenous Australians.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/protocol-aims-to-close-cancer-gap/news-story/04e31019ad702bdaa12ef42e35a62f84>

You can't learn if you can't hear - focus on ear health

Nine out of every 10 Aboriginal children under the age of three in the NT suffer from an ear disease. This ear disease often leads to hearing loss and ultimately stops these children from learning and realising their full potential. As a result, the Federal and NT governments have partnered with a philanthropic group to launch a \$7.9 million new program to fix the problem. Dozens of local Ear Health Project Officers will spearhead the program to fight hearing loss among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the NT.

<https://www.katherinetimes.com.au/story/5585049/push-for-better-ear-health/>

Health and self-determination on International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is commemorated on August 9 around the world as a recognition of the first meeting of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva in 1982. To mark this occasion, newsGP spoke with Karl Briscoe, Chief Executive Officer of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association (NATSIWHA), about his visit earlier this year to attend the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples (the Forum) in New York.

<https://www.racgp.org.au/newsGP/Professional/Talking-health-and-self-determination-on-Internati>

SW Health funds scholarships for Indigenous doctors in training

New scholarships funded by Western NSW Local Health District will help Indigenous students study medicine at UNSW and then return to the west of the state for internships.

<https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/health/nsw-health-funds-scholarships-indigenous-doctors-training>

Peter Macdonald, heart transplant pioneer, helping close the Indigenous life-expectancy gap

Cardiologist Peter Macdonald is world renowned as a pioneer of the life-changing heart in a box. The revolutionary technique means donor hearts that have stopped beating can be reactivated on a machine for up to 12 hours and transplanted into a patient. Despite his high profile and international reputation, Professor Macdonald is also working quietly to improve the health of Australia's Indigenous population.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-01/peter-macdonald-doctor-condobolin-heart-indigenous/10056992>

TV dishes up health messages

A new Aboriginal Health TV network is to deliver health and well-being messages across Australia. Federal Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt said \$3.4million would be spent over the next three years to develop the network which will operate through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

<https://nit.com.au/tv-dishes-up-health-messages/>

Indigenous Sexual Health

Program for Homeless in Brisbane's North

Stand Up, Step Out (SUSO) is an exciting new program which was launched in May 2018. The program consists of staff, volunteers and an old council bus that has been refurbished to provide showers, laundry and other specialist services to the homeless in Brisbane's north.

Brisbane's disadvantaged and homeless population have been provided with access to a variety of support services, hot showers, and clean fresh clothes thanks to SUSO. This program is working in partnership with Footprints in Brisbane, Sandbag Community Service, and One Voice from Melbourne. They are extremely keyed up to provide this service to those who need it most in Brisbane.

SUSO is also equipped with professional friendly staff and volunteers with highly skilled knowledge and compassionate about offering care and supports to socially isolated and financially disadvantaged people as well as the elderly locals, people with a disability, people with a mental illness, and those who are experiencing

any hardship, homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless and or in need of housing supports.

To date SUSO is currently offering services to the Brisbane's northern region, to local Organizations and communities such as Mitchelton, Aspley, Zillmere, Lawnton, Redcliffe, and Sandgate. The Indigenous Sexual Health Team visits SUSO every so often. We network with staff and community members to assist with community development and resource delivery. We believe that having on hand support and services like these around will only benefit the surrounding people and communities.

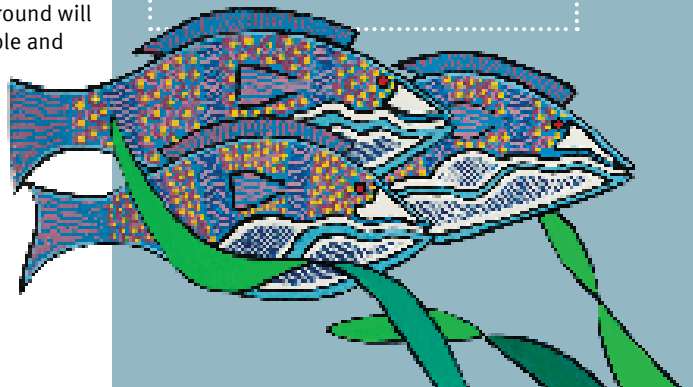
SUSO is always looking for volunteers!

So, if you are interested
contact Footprints on 07 3252 3488.

Word of
the Month:

“Marrumba”

The name of the new Prince Charles Hospital Healing Garden is ‘marrumba’ meaning good, good in spirit in Turubal language.



Walk a mile in my thongs initiative to help rural and remote patients

As part of its annual 'Kindness in July' initiative Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals set out to collect 250 pairs of thongs to help rural and remote patients access care through the 'Walk a mile in my thongs' program.

Caboolture Hospital Change Manager Suzanne Michaels said donations came in from individuals and teams across Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals.

"These kind contributions will help 515 men, women and children travel from rural and remote areas to access care," Suzanne said.

"Showing true community spirit, donations were also received from Kmart Morayfield, QSuper and First Choice Care."

'Walk a mile in my thongs' was established by Nurse Navigator Nikia Goldsmith, who was shocked to hear that some rural and remote patients could not board planes to visit tertiary healthcare centres because they don't own shoes.



Caboolture Hospital's Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer Stella Laidlaw

She was motivated to help patients who had a significant disadvantage, because they lacked a basic clothing item.

"It means that people can board a plane and get the health care they need, no matter where they live," Nikia said.

Ngarrama celebrates National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

Midwives, health workers and child health nurses gathered at Zillmere Community Centre in on August 4 to celebrate National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.

The annual celebration, coordinated by SNAICC – National Voice for our Children - is a time for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to celebrate the strengths and culture of their children.

The day is an opportunity for all Australians to show their support for Aboriginal children, as well as learn about the crucial impact that community, culture and family play in the life of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child.

The Ngarrama maternity service at The Royal and Brisbane Women's Hospital and Family service hosted the morning tea with clients of the service, providing health education and awareness around breast feeding, sleeping and child development milestones.



Peter and Tashina Moore with their son Caleb



Ngarrama Midwives Rynae Ruddell and Karen Bennett with Advanced Indigenous Health Worker Janet Dunn.



Right: Ngarrama RBWH maternity team with clients

Healthy Ageing Expo

North Brisbane's biggest and best Healthy Ageing Expo is supporting people to live and age well as part of Seniors Week.

Community and Oral Health Executive Director Tami Photinos said the third annual Brighton Healthy Ageing Expo drew up to a thousand people of all ages and backgrounds from across the Moreton Bay and North Brisbane area.

"It was great to see as many people as possible take full advantage of the activities on offer, from Tai Chi to a Heart Foundation walking group, to hearing and blood pressure checks and gardening workshops, to fun social games and activities," Ms Photinos said.

"The Expo is all about helping people live the best life they can as they grow older. By bringing the community and health service providers together in one place, we hope we are inspiring people to make good choices about their own health."

As part of the Expo, around 50 different health organisations and community groups were on hand to offer free health checks, and important health information for people interested in ways to age well and remain active, physically, mentally and socially.

The Expo included the opening of a new Wellbeing Garden at the Brighton Health Campus.

The garden will support residents, patients and their carers to more easily access the waterfront and healing nature of the ocean. This has created another added benefit of



Wellness garden group with Uncle George Wano (centre)

the community and specifically young families being part of the campus in the café and fenced children's play area, reflecting important intergenerational benefits.

"The garden was funded and supported by many people and organisations across the local community, involving Sandbag Incorporated through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program," Ms Photinos said.



Nerresa, Chloe, Hayley, Pam and Caley from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit took part as a stallholder at the event

"The project gave 15 local people some invaluable employable skills while undertaking on-the-job training and experience. It also provides a great area for our patients and residents to enjoy the beautiful foreshore."



Wellness garden students Liam Potter, Janine Smith and Uncle George Wano



Deadly Award for Volunteers

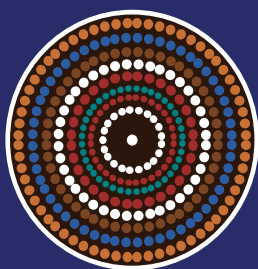
A group of volunteers from Community and Oral Health were recently presented with a Deadly Award from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit.

They were recognised for their dedication and commitment at the NAIDOC Week Family fun day, assisting with patients travelling to the event. The volunteers also went above and beyond, helping the event coordinators with the health stalls

JOIN US



ATSIDNQ welcomes all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, their family and carers in Queensland.



ATSIDNQ

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
Disability Network of Queensland

www.atsidnq.com.au

1800 718 969

info@atsidnq.com.au



Child Protection Week

Staff from across Community and Oral Health took part in trivia sessions during National Child Protection Week (2-8 September 2018).

The sessions, coordinated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit and Social Work teams, were designed to raise awareness about child protection and highlight the message “Protecting children is everybody’s business”.

The idea to hold the trivia sessions was initiated from Ngarrama Family Social Worker Madeline Mitchell and COH Director of Social Work, Louise Lynch.

“It was an important event to remind all of our staff that we have a role to play in protecting children. The week is usually celebrated throughout our hospitals and we thought it was important to also mark the week through events held with our community services.

“I really enjoyed meeting all of our different staff and answering their questions in regards to child protection, particularly from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective,” Madeline Mitchell said.

“I’d like to thank Renee Simon, Caley Malezer, Vaughan Travers, Chloe Marshall, our Ngarrama Family team and all of our social workers for organising and facilitating the successful events.”

Ngarrama Family funded the morning tea for staff and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit supplied the prizes.



Director of Social Work, Louise Lynch, with social worker Rheannan and student nurse Alexandra, and Ngarrama Family Social Worker Madeline Mitchell for recording the highest score.



David Webber, Russell Troughton, Kim Wedel at Redcliffe Community health Centre



Mom Chau, Morgan Dowling and Gayle Hocking at Caboolture Community Health Centre



Tim McMillan, Glenys Mulcahy, (Social Worker) and Meredith Davis (Physio) with Ian Scott in the background at Halwyn



Ronald Abala, Karen Burce, Yogith Yalamanchili, Jaqueline Brown at Pine Rivers Community Health Centre.



Nundah (L-R): Beth Williamson, Michaela Brunner, Wendy Valmadre, Stella Field, Nick Pouchkareff, Kim Wedel, Front: Adriana Schulz



Gene Blow and Henry Nona with Caley Malezer and Kim Wedel from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit at Chermide Community Health Centre

IN FOCUS

Indigenous staff network provides cultural connectivity in workplace

A new online network is providing a cultural connection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across Metro North.

The network, called Metro North Staff Yarns, aims to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander together through an online portal.

In a large organisation like Metro North, Staff Yarns provides an opportunity for Indigenous staff to connect and collaborate on ways to improve services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit Paul Drahm said the success of the network comes down to the membership of the group.

"I encourage our mob to join Metro North Staff Yarns and connect with other Indigenous staff in our organisation," Paul said.

"The online portal hosts a wealth of information, resources and contacts for members within the network."

"Members signing up will receive a welcome pack including a drink bottle, lanyard and flag pin," Paul said.

To join the network search 'Metro North Staff Yarns' on QHEPS.



Staff YARNS

Join up today!

An online community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at Metro North Hospital and Health Service.

Join the online discussion and the cultural connection within the workplace. Search 'Metro North Staff Yarns' on QHEPS to join.

All new members signing up before November 30 2018 will receive a welcome pack including a t-shirt, drink bottle, lanyard and flag pin.

For further information email MNstaffyarns@health.qld.gov.au

Supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit, Metro North Hospital and Health Service

Come join my circle at Metro North Staff Yarns

Meet our Metro North Staff Yarns Ambassador, Debra Devers

Tell us about your role at Metro North

I've worked at RBWH for 5 years mainly in the finance area as administration support but before joining Queensland Health I worked for Australia Post for 25 years as an Administration Officer within the Security & Investigations area at the GPO in the city.

I currently sit in the Business Advisory Corporate Services area as administration support to the Business Managers but also provide helpful support to a lot of other staff members.



Why are you proud to identify as Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander?

I'm proud to identify as "Yanyuwa" family of Borroloola situated 1000k south east of Darwin in the south west of Gulf of Carpentaria.

My family were moved to Brisbane along with other Darwin people via ships just after Darwin was bombed, lost an Uncle in that bombing. Camps were setup at Kalinga Park, Shaw Road, Wooloowin and waited until Housing Commission provided

a house in Chermside where my sisters and brothers and myself grew up. A few family members returned into the Territory and lived out their lives.

Unfortunately all elders in my family have passed when I was young but I'm looking at making the journey back and to yarn with the present day elders for any knowledge/ cultural background on my family. I could go on and on but I'm so proud of my Indigenous background.

Why did you join as an Ambassador of Metro North Staff Yarns and what you hope to achieve at your hospital / facility?

When I first started I found that communication was lacking so I reached out to the Indigenous Health Unit staff and would have a yarn to them for some guidance, didn't realise then but this was a yarning circle.

I hope to achieve being in this role that all staff are most welcome to have a yarning circle with me and I can give back some knowledge and understanding of the ways of learning with having a lengthy working life so far of 45 years.

Aurukun community leaders share cultural enrichment

Respected community members from Aurukun, Aunty Phyllis and Aunty Sandra, shared their culture and family lessons to guests at the recent 27th Annual RBWH Healthcare Symposium.



Aunty Phyllis and Aunty Sandra, pictured with Cultural Capability Officer Horace Nona.

The Close the Gap: Improving Indigenous Health Outcomes session, at the education centre at Herston, featured the special yarning circle for guests.

Aurukun is situated in the Western Region of Cape York. It is one of the larger communities in the Cape with approximately 1300 people of which almost 1200 are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people belonging to twenty families from 13 tribal groups.

“Aurukun” was derived from an Aboriginal word associated with a large lagoon on the Watson River, south of the town.

Aunty Phyllis has 3 children and 2 grandchildren. Aunty Sandra had 6 children (one passed), 15 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. Both were born in Aurukun and are extremely proud of their community, culture and language.

“Our role is to be there for our children, to talk with the dad, the mum, uncle or cousin raising them up. To always be the role model. Aurukun women are very strong,” Aunty Sandra said.

“We say to our children don’t smack your children, it will make them go silly. Best to talk firm words so he or she will listen and understand.

“In Aurukun we want the children growing up to understand who they are, their identity and be a strong man and strong woman. Like our great-great-grandparents! They used to be strong and not have the bad habits in the past. In the early days you see our people were strong, tall people.”

Culture and language was at the forefront of the presentation, with both Elders, proud of their Wik language. Children living in Aurukun are taught English within schools but with the help of the Deputy Principal, who is also a Wik language person, the language is being linked into the Australian curriculum.

“Aurukun is the only Aboriginal community with language speaking people, babies and children grow up speaking their tongue being their first language at home. When they go to school they have an understanding of the other language, English,” Aunty Phyllis said.

“By next term we will be introducing the Wik-mungkan language into the classroom from prep to year 2, concentrating on them first. It’s the first time now they’ve introduced the language in written form, allowing our youngsters a much more powerful understanding of the grammar. We want these next generation to grow up as linguists so they have a good understanding to express to other people outside of their Aboriginality.”

Aunty Sandra said people from Aurukun are friendly and they want the outside world to know it is a good place.

“There are five clan groups in Aurukun, Wik-waya, Puch, Apalech, Wynchanam and Wanam. When we dance everyone sticks to their own paint, we don’t steal the other clan’s paint, we respect each other.

“We want our children to listen to the Elders so the knowledge can be passed on. If we

want them to have knowledge of culture, tradition and language, then today is the day to start listening. The attributes will build up in time, when you have understanding of the outside world. Aurukun still has the tradition and culture passed on, their identity.”

Bush medicine is still commonly used in Aurukun, and both Elders hope one day it will be recognised in more mainstream health services.

“Medication costs money but our traditional bush medicine is readily available to us. We are hoping one day we will be recognised for traditional healing as well,” Aunty Sandra said.

“To be healthy in our community, we really need shop prices to come down, especially if we are to lessen diabetes and heart problems. I have cholesterol issues and a heart condition. I take hundreds of medications a day! But the good thing is two weeks ago I took up Crossfit, my family said a little bit at a time,” Aunty Phyllis said.

Birthing on country was a big theme for the yarning circle, with a push to deliver babies on their traditional lands.

“It’s best to have our pregnant woman back home. We need to introduce those services back into Apunipima, the birthing and bush medicine. The old ladies in the bush delivered the babies in the bush; there wasn’t any anaesthesia to calm the mother down. The baby was fine and survived as healthy and strong.

“My mum birthed me in Aurukun and, look at us - we are healthy. We are proof you can survive; we were delivered in those days when there weren’t proper doctors. It was the old people that delivered us.”

“Genuiness and authenticity is very important. If the younger generation grow up with the awareness of Wik children, they will be much more powerful than I am. They will sit and communicate better,” Aunty Phyllis said.



Aunty Phyllis Yunkaporta and Aunty Sandra Bowenda

Barcaldine students learn all about health

Two high school students from Barcaldine had a unique opportunity to shadow the Indigenous Health Workers at Metro North Hospital and Health Service for a week in September, learning all about health and closing the gap priorities.

Amelia White and Linnika Ahfat are both in year 11 and the study tour was organised for the students to gain insight into different workplaces and areas of interest after they finish school.

Senior Project Officer from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit, Rayna Cowburn, mentored the students during the week and organised for them to shadow the Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers at both The Prince Charles Hospital and The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

"Amelia and Linnika were able to shadow our staff to see firsthand the care they deliver on a daily basis and how they support our Indigenous patients within the hospital environment," Rayna said.

"They had the opportunity to meet with a resident of Gannet House, Torres Strait Islander patient Uncle George Wano, and hear his powerful patient experience story."

The students were also taken on a local cultural tour with Cultural Capability Officer, Elwyn Henaway, and participated in 'a day in the life' interview with one of our senior Indigenous nurses from Redcliffe Hospital.

Amelia said both hospitals were very big compared to her hometown of Balcadine, which is located 520 kilometres by road west of the city of Rockhampton.

"Balcadine is a small town with under 2,000 people. It's very dry and the people are friendly, everyone knows each other," Amelia said.

Both students would like to work in their local community, with Amelia currently studying to become an Aboriginal Health Worker.

"We've learnt heaps this week about how everybody works with each other. It was great to shadow the health workers, communicate with patients and learn more about health. I've gained a lot of resources here. I just want to help my people at home and also the people here," Amelia said.

Linnika has her sights set on working with child protection and helping Indigenous children.

"I really want to work in child safety as there is a lot of Indigenous kids taken away from their parents. They need an Indigenous worker to support and comfort them when their family is not around," Linnika said.

Senior Project Officer Rayna Cowburn with Amelia White and Linnika Ahfat



Going Home – Clay Loft's Story

As told to Gai-Maree Cain

I am Clay and I am a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander man. Please understand, I can hear what you say and can comprehend; I see what is going on around me.

Please don't ignore me. When you walk into the room say hello. Look at me when you speak to me; I love to chat and I will let you know how I am. If I am happy or agree I will smile and laugh. If I don't agree or don't want to talk I will frown or not respond. I love having a laugh and a joke.

To celebrate Reconciliation Week this year we had a morning tea at the Halwyn Centre. Brothers from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit came and we had a trivia event focused on Indigenous culture and facts. I love anything social, so I was there!

Everyone got into teams. Gai-Maree the Nursing Director asked to be on my team because she thought I'd know the answers. I knew what she was up to!

The questions started and Gai-Maree would ask me the answer. I said 'yes', 'no', 'cricket' and with each question I could see her excitement grow! Then time for answers, the quizmaster says: 'no cheating'. Gai-Maree looked smug!

Question 1

– The answer was 'yes'... we wrote 'no'

Question 2

– The answer was 'no'... we wrote 'yes'

Question 3

– The answer was 'football'... we wrote 'cricket'.

I look over, Gai-Maree is frowning. I start to laugh. She knows she has been caught out. Ian won the quiz 16 questions right out of 20 and our team scored 2. I'm a very proud Aboriginal man and I knew all the answers, but the opportunity for a joke was there, I had to take it!

I love watching sport, especially NRL and will never miss a Cowboys or Broncos match! It is even better when I get to go to a game.

For me there is nothing better than going out with my friends and I play the drums with a group every weekend at New Farm park and I sing. I've even performed at Queensland Performing Arts Centre through the 'Today I am' program. I love music- 70s and 80s – and I can use a head switch to turn on my stereo.

My mum is Lynelle, and I have a sister Anntiga who lives at Calamvale. I first came to the Halwyn Centre on respite, but in 2016 I became a resident as Mum was unable to

care for me at home. Mum has always wanted me to live closer to the family home as it was difficult for her to travel to Halwyn. I missed Mum terribly, I am usually a very happy person but some days I felt down.

I had my name on a waiting list for a home for years and last year I was offered the opportunity to move to a brand new home! Mum was so happy and we started the countdown to the move. In May this year, Lorna came to me and let me know I would be moving in late June.

We had a date and I was so excited! Lorna worked really closely with me and mum... I never knew how exciting it was to have a brand new home. 'Move' I would say to everyone who stopped to talk to me.

On the day before my move, Lorna came to talk to me: 'Clay, I have some news... the move has been delayed.'

Lorna sat with me, I was upset not just for me but Mum. The following day was my birthday. Over the next few weeks I wasn't myself, I smiled but those who knew me best looked into my eyes and knew the twinkle had gone... I was afraid that someone would tell me my home was no longer there.

I tried to keep positive, and my Halwyn friends had a huge celebration morning tea for me. There were lots of laughs and a few tears but every day I was waiting for someone to say the home was not there.



*This
is the story of
Clay Loft as told to Gai-Maree Cain.*

The day had come! On Monday 16 July I moved to my new home! It is at Logan, not far from Mum's – the traditional owners of the land are the YuGum Bear people. I have my own unit in a house shared with three others.

On 14 August we had a big house warming celebration. Mum came and I invited my friends from Halwyn – Roseanne, Pam and Lorna.

They brought beautiful flowers for my unit and I gave the place a vacuum so it didn't look like a bachelor pad. We had a huge morning tea and speeches. I even had a second piece of cake!

As Lorna was leaving she asked me: 'Clay, are you happy?'. I said 'yes'. 'Do you miss us?' I said 'No... home'. Lorna knew I was home.

Everyone at the Halwyn Centre and across Metro North wish you the happiest times, Clay, in your new home.



A Day in the Life of Peter Fallon

Clinical Nurse, Redcliffe Hospital
Emergency Department

1. What does your role involve?

As a clinical nurse at Redcliffe Hospital Emergency Department, it involves a lot of shift management and coordination with the team of nurses and doctors. You might have up to 15 doctors and 15 nurses to manage, as well as taking over responsibility for the patient care they are delivering. As shift coordinator I still get to enjoy patient interaction and pursue / ensure quality care.

I also work in rests bays and triage and enjoy these areas to lead and educate other staff.

2. How many patients on average do you see in the emergency department?

When I first started in Redcliffe 15 years ago, the department was built to cope with 90 patients per day and we were seeing an average of 120-30 patients. On my busiest day, we saw 200 patients.

We now have a new department, it was built to deal with 130 per day but we can see between 170-200 patients per day. The pressure on us is enormous; you are also planning to be one step ahead with what might happen.

3. What would be the most common presentations?

Generally, it's across the board. We've tried to break it up, we have the resuscitation bay and an ambulatory care bay for people that can walk in. That takes a lot of pressure off the acute beds within our department and short stay area for a lower acuity, freeing up other beds for acute patients to help improve patient flow.

We try to keep within a four hour rule of when someone presents we have a decision of what they are doing within four hours. Most hospitals are doing fantastic with meeting this timeframe.

4. Did you always want to work in health?

When I first left school I had my own cleaning business. It was great money, but working from 4 in the afternoon to 4 in the morning was not great socially.

I then met a woman at the time; she was finishing her nursing training. We used to sit down at the beach to study when she was finishing exams, I'd always ask her questions from her books. It became an interest and I thought it would be a pretty cool career path. When we talked about getting married, I thought the cleaning business was not ideal with the hours, so



I went into nursing. I moved to Melbourne to study as an enrolled nurse, probably 6 months into the training, I realised I had more potential and decided to study the full degree. I didn't look back. That marriage fell apart and I took off overseas for a couple of years, I worked at a hospital in London doing heart and lung transplant nursing, that was great, I also got into education and plastic surgery. But I've always been drawn back to working in the emergency department. It's where I feel most comfortable.

5. Who inspires you at work?

The patients do. When I'm allocated to work on the floor and work with patients, I love it. I've also got a keen interest in mental health nursing, I'm not mental health trained but I've done lots of courses. I love giving back and educating staff on how to deal with patients coming in who need help.

My goal in the last 3 or 4 years has been to educate triage nurses if someone presents with suicidal tendencies, bring them straight in, sit them down, engage and give them a good 20 minutes of your time. You get someone to take your place at triage, you then follow that person through to make sure they have a cup of tea, sandwiches, they are fed, and warm and they feel valued. It's so easy to engage and give them care and for them to know they are valued.

That's what I'm hoping to achieve with the ambassador role for Metro North Staff Yarns, to incorporate mental health and Indigenous mental health. I always keep my ear open with the clerks, if they ask the question and someone identifies as Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander, I always see it as an opportunity to engage and have something else to talk about.

6. Outside of work you enjoy painting; can you tell me about your artistic inspiration?

I started doing artwork the first day I arrived in London. I've never done artwork in my life, and the first thing I did when I arrived in London, I dropped off my bags and went down to the street to buy paper, art supplies,

black pens and pencils, and I started doing dot drawings. That first painting was a shape of Australia and the shape of England, my totem is a lizard (which is my only tattoo!), and I then had this lizard going from Australia to England. That was my first ever drawing.

I've now done a lot of drawings and sold some. At the moment I'm working on something I saw in Western Australia, there was an Indigenous nurse who collected all the caps off antibiotic bottles in different colours to create a mural. I've actually put a call out at the emergency department to save them and I've been overwhelmed, I'm now working on creating a mural for the department by Christmas.

I have painted my Uncle Henry 'Banjo' Clarke, known as the wisdom man down in Warrnambool Victoria. He was a bit of a hero for me. When I was cleaning I had a part time bar job in Warrnambool. I'd often take him home when he'd have a few too many drinks. Just the stories he'd tell me on the way home. He just stopped drinking one day and became a true Elder and role model for everybody, just a beautiful man. I guess I saw the beauty in him before others did.

When I paint it takes me to another place and I don't know why that developed. Perhaps it was the first time leaving Australia and what I know. I knew I was always Indigenous, it wasn't something new to me but the artwork was. I remember my grandmother when I was taken to hospital when I was three, I'd never seen her before but I still remember to this day this beautiful dark lady with bright lipstick and gorgeous eyes. I can still remember her touching my face a few days before she passed away.

7. What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I'm a hands on dad, with a 16 year old daughter and 17 year old son. I get up early at 6 to prepare their lunches and get off to work. I do an 8-hour shift to get home by 4 p.m. on day shifts. Hopefully my son is home 3 nights a week and we'll go to the gym together, it's our time together. I love to cook as well.

I like to chill out in the evenings watching Netflix with my wife. I also like the occasional red wine.

I play a poker night with the boys from work every two months. I don't particularly lead an exciting life! My wife and I like kayaking and sailing. We've also renovated a few houses and we have a quirky style, a bit outside the square.

My wife is French so we like to travel back to France every few years to see her family as well.

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Response to these questions will provide Queensland Health with a starting point to identify the strategies and programs needed to build more diverse and inclusive workplaces, including:

- ✓ to help understand the diversity of the workforce;
- ✓ to track progress in meeting the workforce diversity targets;
- ✓ to target diversity groups that are under-represented in the workforce;
- ✓ a starting point to identify new programs or approaches to increasing our workforce diversity.

Supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit, Metro North Hospital and Health Service



We welcome your feedback, contributions, story ideas and details on any upcoming events.

Please contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit Communications Manager Renee Simon at Renee.Simon@health.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 3139 3235.



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