

Metro North Hospital and Health Service

# QUALITY OF CARE

2018–2019



Queensland  
Government

## VISION

Changing the face of healthcare through compassion, commitment, innovation and connection.

## PURPOSE

Create, connect and apply knowledge to deliver high quality health services.

## VALUES

RESPECT • TEAMWORK • COMPASSION • HIGH PERFORMANCE • INTEGRITY

# Community foreword

### English

The purpose of the Metro North Quality of Care report is to inform consumers, carers and our community about our quality and safety performance and what we are doing to improve our services.

### Arabic

ان غرض تقرير "جودة الرعاية بشمال العاصمة" هو إعلام المستهلكين ومقدمي الرعاية ومجتمعنا ككل بأدائنا المتميز بالجودة والسلامة، وما نقوم به لتحسين الخدمات التي نقدمها.

### Italian

Lo scopo del rapporto di Metro North Quality of Care è di informare gli utenti, i badanti e tutta la comunità sulle nostre prestazioni di qualità e di sicurezza e su ciò che facciamo per migliorare i nostri servizi.

### Chinese

Metro North 医院服务质量报告旨在让消费者、护理人和我们的社区了解医院在质量和安全方面的表现以及为改善服务正在采取的行动。

### Korean

Metro North Quality Care에서 발간한 보고서는 저희가 갖추고 있는 안전하고 질적인 서비스 수행 능력과 서비스를 향상시키기 위하여 저희가 어떤 일을 하고 있는지에 대해 소비자와 케어러 그리고 우리 지역사회에 알리고자 하는 데 그 목적이 있습니다.

### Persian

هدف از گزارش کیفیت مراقبت مترو نورث مطلع کردن مصرف کنندگان، مراقبت کنندگان و جامعه محلی از عملکرد کیفی و ایمنی ما و اقدامات ما برای بهبود خدمات می باشد.

### Burmese

Metro North စောင့်ရှောက်ရေး အရည်အသွေး အစီရင်ခံစာ၏ ရည်ရွယ်ချက်မှာ သုံးစွဲသူများ စောင့်ရှောက်သူများနှင့် ကျွန်ုပ်တို့၏ လူမှုအသိုင်းအဝိုင်းအား ကျွန်ုပ်တို့၏ အရည်အသွေးနှင့် သဘာဝကျင့်စဉ်များ ဆောင်ရွက်မှုနှင့်တကွ ကျွန်ုပ်တို့၏ ဝန်ဆောင်မှုများကို တိုးတက်အောင် ကျွန်ုပ်တို့ သာကိုဆောင်ရွက်နေသည် ဆိုသည့်အကြောင်းကို အသိပေးရန်ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

### Vietnamese

Mục đích của báo cáo Chất lượng Chăm sóc (Quality of Care) Metro North là để thông báo cho người sử dụng, người chăm sóc và cộng đồng chúng ta biết về chất lượng và hiệu năng an toàn của chúng tôi và những gì chúng tôi đang thực hiện để cải thiện dịch vụ của chúng tôi.

### Spanish

El propósito del informe de Calidad de Atención de Metro North es informar a los consumidores, los cuidadores y nuestra comunidad acerca de nuestro rendimiento de calidad y seguridad y lo que estamos haciendo para mejorar nuestros servicios.

# Welcome

On behalf of Metro North Hospital and Health Service, we are proud to present the Quality of Care report for 2018-19.

Metro North has a responsibility to provide compassionate, high quality and reliable care that responds to the needs of our growing community. By providing care that focuses on safety and quality, overcomes healthcare challenges and seizes opportunities, we can improve the lives of patients.

The Quality of Care report is our chance to show patients, partners, consumers and carers, a snapshot of our services and achievements. It features stories and initiatives that demonstrate how safe high-quality care improves lives. It also highlights our culture of cutting-edge innovation that is driving continual improvement to the way we deliver person-centred care.

The way we use our values in everyday situations also affects the quality of our care. With over one million local and state-wide patients in our catchment, our staff are committed to working with compassion, respect and integrity to deliver a positive healthcare experience and the best possible outcomes for every patient.

Quality and safety will always remain our priority. We are proud of how far we have come in the past year and are excited to see what the next year brings. We'd like to thank our many volunteers and partners in the community who enable us to deliver care that puts patients at the centre of everything we do.

We hope this report is informative and captures the many facets of our health service. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback on what you would like to see included in the future. Please contact us via [metronorthengage@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:metronorthengage@health.qld.gov.au).



Dr Robert Stable AM  
Chair, Metro North Hospital and Health Board

Jackie Hanson  
Acting Chief Executive  
Metro North Hospital and Health Service

## Tell us what you think

Our 2018–2019 Quality of Care Report is our commitment to you – patients, consumers, carers, families and community members – to keep you up-to-date with how we are doing at Metro North.

We have specifically covered the quality and safety of our services, and what we are doing to continuously improve the standard of care we provide. We have also highlighted some innovations that will make a difference to your care.

We would love to hear what you think of the report and of your experiences at Metro North.

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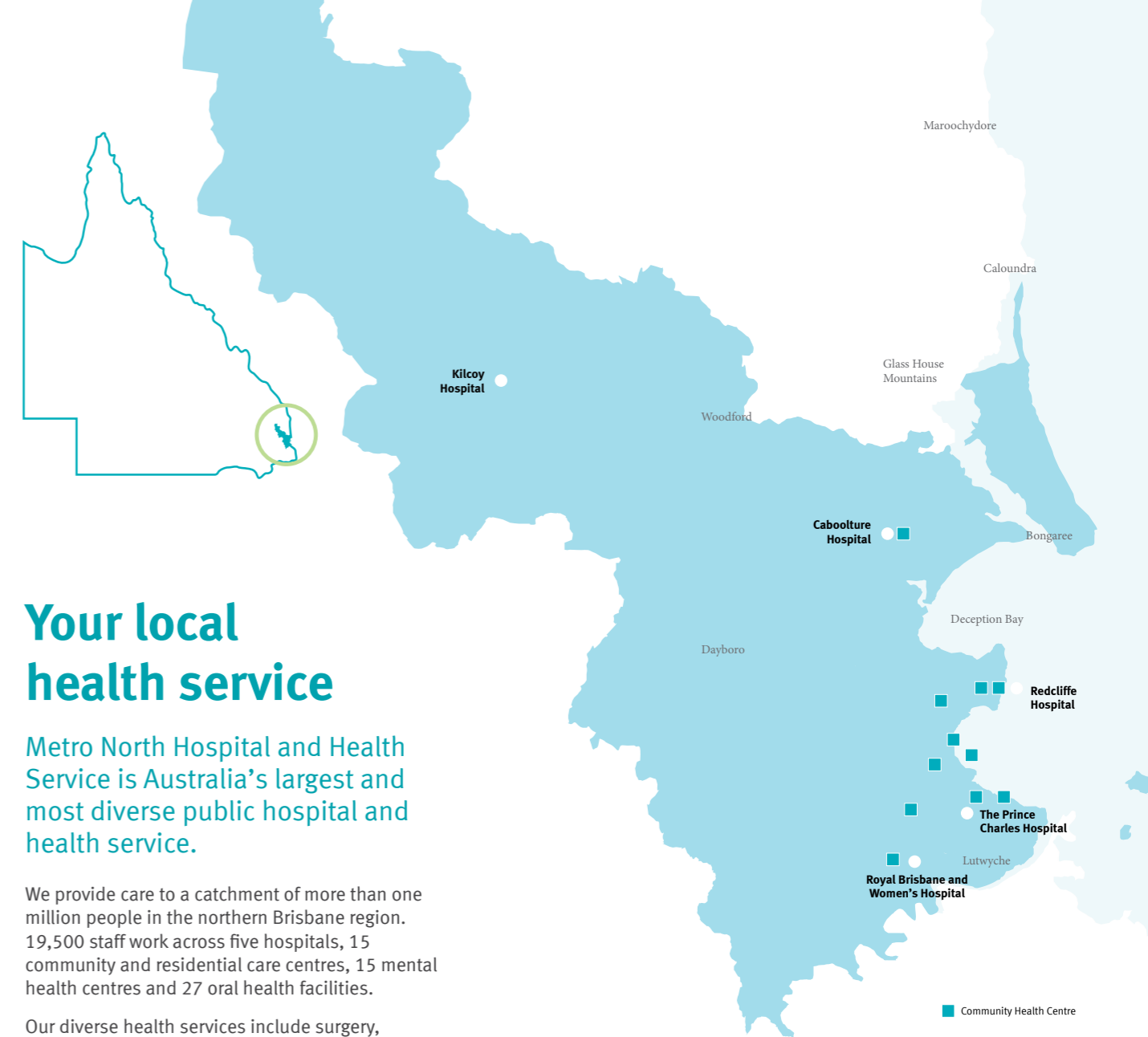
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## Your local health service

Metro North Hospital and Health Service is Australia’s largest and most diverse public hospital and health service.

We provide care to a catchment of more than one million people in the northern Brisbane region. 19,500 staff work across five hospitals, 15 community and residential care centres, 15 mental health centres and 27 oral health facilities.

Our diverse health services include surgery, cancer care, maternity, trauma, medicine, mental health and more than 30 subspecialties and superspecialties such as heart and lung transplantation and burns. We care for people at all stages of life.

The Quality of Care report is part of our commitment to continually improve our services and to provide high quality healthcare through compassion, commitment, innovation and connection.

Disclaimer: This publication is intended only as a general guide to services provided by Metro North Hospital and Health Service. It does not substitute health advice from an individual’s medical specialist, general practitioner or other health professional.

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- Metro North Hospital and Health Service

# About Metro North Hospital and Health Service

Metro North Hospital and Health Service is the public hospital and health service for the north side of Brisbane.



## Our services include:

### Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH)

The largest tertiary referral hospital in Queensland with a number of specialities including medicine, surgery, orthopaedics, psychiatry, oncology, trauma, and women's and newborn services. RBWH fulfils a significant teaching and research role with links to Queensland's major tertiary institutions.

### The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH)

The major tertiary level cardiothoracic referral hospital for Queensland, the largest such service in Australia, and one of the largest services of its type in the world. The hospital also provides emergency, general medical and surgical services, orthopaedics, and rehabilitation services, as well as outreach specialist services throughout Queensland.

### Redcliffe Hospital

Key facility servicing a fast-growing population. Services include emergency, medical, surgical, orthopaedics, maternity, paediatrics, rehabilitation, and specialised outpatient clinics.

### Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals and Woodford Corrections Health Service

Key facilities servicing fast-growing populations. Services include emergency, medical, surgical, orthopaedics, maternity, paediatrics, rehabilitation, and specialised outpatient clinics. Kilcoy is a rural hospital providing emergency, general medicine, and postnatal care.

### Mental Health

Provides services across the age spectrum from perinatal, child and adolescent, adult to older persons and including a range of specialist services such as consultation liaison, forensic, addiction, eating disorders, and community mental health including an inner city homelessness team.

### Community and Oral Health

Offers a broad range of quality community-based healthcare and support services to help people improve and maintain their wellbeing and independence, as well as specialised aged and residential care, Indigenous health, and services delivered from many sites including the Brighton Health Campus, and mobile service teams. One of the largest providers of public oral health services in Australia.

### Clinical Support Services

Providing state of the art medical imaging services for our hospitals as well as protective services, food services, portage, cleaning, and administration and compliance services.

As well as service delivery, Metro North is also committed to education and training. In particular, our focus on excellence ensures a thriving culture of research that delivers continuous service improvement and evidence-based care.

# Keeping safety and quality at the forefront

As Australia's largest public healthcare service, providing the safest and highest quality of care is the utmost priority for Metro North. Safety is embedded at all levels of the organisation from clinicians at the bedside to the Board.

The Board takes seriously its responsibility to provide governance and oversight of Metro North's clinical care, with the Board Safety and Quality Committee regularly meeting to receive updates on progress against each of the National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards. Board members with a range of experiences, including nursing and medicine, are recruited to ensure both good corporate and clinical governance.

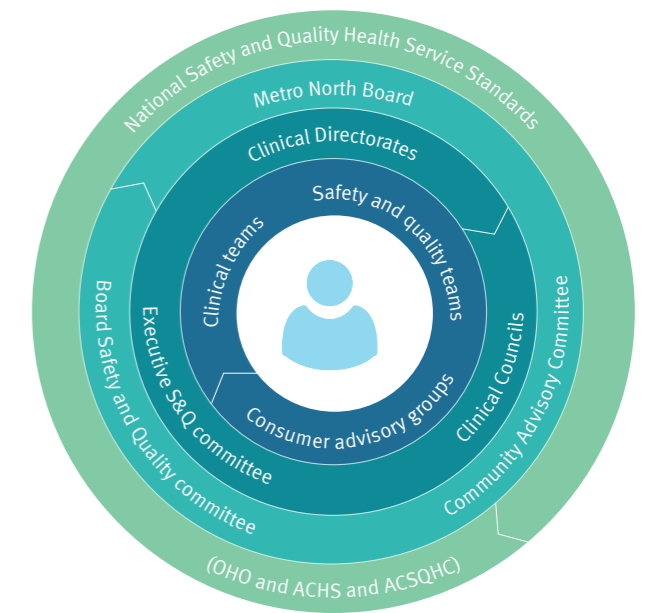
In each of our clinical wards and directorates there are dedicated safety and quality staff who work alongside clinical teams to champion excellence and educate around the national standards. Each directorate (including our hospitals, mental health, community and oral health, and clinical support services) has a senior staff member responsible for the safety and quality portfolio and maintaining clinical accreditation.

The Executive Safety and Quality Committee meets regularly to share information and receive updates on clinical governance and safety and quality. Metro North has an Executive Director for Safety and Quality, ensuring safety and quality is represented at the highest levels.

Importantly, patients and consumers are encouraged to provide feedback, both compliments and complaints, to ensure our care continues to meet the community expectations. Each clinical directorate has consumer advisors with lived experience of that directorate's care who can provide advice around improvements and better ways of communicating with patients.

During 2019, a new Community Advisory Committee was formed to provide advice directly to the Board on issues of concern to patients and the broader community who may access Metro North's healthcare services.

Additionally, patients and consumers are invited to participate in events such as the annual Safety and Quality Forum, and as judges for our Metro North Staff Excellence Awards. Consumers also take part in recruitment for some roles. Feedback is also sought through surveys, consumer forums, and less formally.



-  **Clinical Governance**
-  **Partnering with Consumers**
-  **Preventing and Controlling Healthcare-Associated Infection**
-  **Medication Safety**
-  **Comprehensive Care**
-  **Communicating for Safety**
-  **Blood Management**
-  **Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration**



## Our strategy for quality and safety

Metro North has a responsibility to deliver the highest standard of care and quality health services for our community. Underpinning every episode of care provided across our health service is Metro North’s vision for safety and quality as set out in the *Metro North Safety and Quality Strategy 2019 – 2023*.

Launched in December 2018, our Safety and Quality Strategy for next five years. The strategy was developed in consultation with consumers and staff and reflects the importance of working closely with consumers and the community we serve, to provide person-centred, safe and effective care.

Quality and safety will always remain our priority. At Metro North, we strive to do more than meet clinical standards. It is about including patients and their families and carers in shared decision making, striving for improvements through translational research and innovation and fostering a culture which embraces patient safety and quality.

We are committed to continuing to improve the outcomes of care, from both patient and the clinical perspectives. It matters to us that the people who use our services are involved in decisions about their healthcare, so we continue work closely with patients and consumers to both their plan care and receive feedback to shape care into the future.

We have also recommitted to our patient safety agenda by focusing on preventing harm through increasing the reliability of the way we work. We are doing this by using the science behind safety and reliability in healthcare. Patients and staff know the importance of good communication and through our strategy, we have identified focus areas so that our communication with patients and consumers, general practitioners and between staff, fits with our values of respect, integrity, compassion, high performance and teamwork and that care is safe before, during and after patients use our services.

The strategy outlines our commitment and approach to working with patients, partners and staff to continually elevate and improve the care we provide. Further, the strategy considers the sustainability of our healthcare system and prioritises the delivery of safe, quality care at the best possible value.

Most importantly, the strategy values the patient experience, putting the needs and expectations of patients at the top. Value, and in turn quality, is defined by the patient. Our strategy has been developed with consumers who are also purposefully embedded into improvement activities.

To achieve truly person-centred, safe and effective care, we draw on a range of enablers and influencers across Metro North and beyond, including our digital transformation and other strategies to prepare for the healthcare needs of the future. Four core strategies have been identified to guide us toward achieving our vision; improving outcomes of care, preventing harm and increasing reliability, communicating better and strengthening our patient safety and quality improvement culture.

Improvements are delivered collaboratively and assessed and monitored through the Board Safety and Quality Committee and the Executive Safety and Quality Committee, which are both supported by and work closely with the Community Advisory Committee and the Clinical Councils.

We believe that with the commitment and passion of our highly skilled staff we can achieve our vision for safe and high quality healthcare, whilst remaining true to our number one priority of providing person-centred care for every patient, every time.

It is important to acknowledge the determination of our staff who pursue research and education to deliver improvements from the ground up. Our safety and quality governance committees are truly proud to have the opportunity to support our staff and champion their work.

Our strategy for safety and quality is ambitious and requires a coordinated approach across facilities, streams and teams to deliver on the outcomes. Over the lifetime of the strategy, there will be considerable growth in our services and in the use of technology to transform care. Every member of our team is needed to make this strategy work and we will closely track and report on our progress.

We are working closely with our staff, including our leaders, so that everyone in Metro North understands how important our culture of patient safety and quality improvement is to always doing the best we can.

-  **Improve outcomes of care**
-  **Prevent harm and increase reliability of care**
-  **Communicate better**
-  **Strengthen our patient safety & quality improvement culture**



## Safety and Quality Strategy - Improve outcomes of care

The Metro North strategy for safety and quality outlines our approach for ensuring the outcomes of the care we provide continually improves over time and responds to the changing needs of our community and health system more broadly.

Crucial to improving outcomes of care is understanding the needs and wants of our patients. Quality of care is determined by our patients, and our strategic goals will measure and respond to not only clinical performance, but patient experience and outcomes as reported by the patient, to inform improvements.

Metro North promotes a culture where goals of care are consistent with evidence-based practice and informed by what matters most to patients. Through improved health literacy, patients and their families and carers are made part of the care team and shared decision making.

Our digital transformation to be implemented over the coming years will be leveraged to increase timely access to useful data to improve safety and quality for individual patients, and we will continue to champion and support the translation of research from bench to bedside.

Together with our whole of health service commitment to Closing the Gap in healthcare for Indigenous people and in partnership with consumers and healthcare agencies, we will strengthen the analysis of and response to health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Metro North.

We will measure our success through improved patient experiences, patient reported outcomes, and clinical outcomes.



## Queensland's first youth cancer centre for RBWH

When you're a teenager with cancer, maintaining a sense of normality isn't the easiest thing to do. But having an adult-free haven for you and other teens in the same boat to hang out with each other could certainly help.

For former Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) patient Anika Dean, the You Can Centre would have changed her experience considerably.

Anika was diagnosed with leukaemia while 20 weeks pregnant before enduring months of treatment.

The now 23-year-old Sony Foundation ambassador, who went on to deliver a healthy baby boy, said she would have loved having a place to escape and process things during her months of treatment.

"It was really hard having no one on the ward my age, but it was even harder because I had a young child who wasn't allowed on the ward with me," Ms Dean said.

Sitting atop Cancer Care Services is now the first youth cancer centre in Queensland which is also the largest of its kind in Australia.

RBWH Executive Director of Cancer Care Services Associate Professor Glen Kennedy said the centre is already

addressing a gap so often felt by those too old for children's services, but too young for adult services.

"This is creating life-changing experiences for RBWH patients, who can travel from all over Queensland to come here for treatment," Associate Professor Kennedy said.

"This is a massive step forwards and we are so incredibly proud of the dedication and work that has gone into making this a reality."

Complete with lounge and relaxation areas, study nooks, the latest Sony entertainment equipment, outdoor courtyard, kitchen with snacks, and even a yoga studio, it's been made possible thanks to a \$1.8 million donation from Sony Foundation, \$500,000 from Queensland Health, and almost \$500,000 from Metro North.

Sony Foundation CEO Sophie Ryan said that since its inception in 2010, the Foundation's You Can youth cancer program has donated more than \$8

million to fund initiatives including You Can Centres in Perth, Melbourne and Sydney, as well as youth cancer research and support services.

"If you are a young person facing cancer, we want you to know that you are not alone," Ms Ryan said.

"The You Can Centres are changing lives right around the country, and we are proud to work with incredible partners across government, health services and corporate Australia who share the vision of innovating the model of care for young people."

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**YOUNG CANCER PATIENTS AT RBWH EACH YEAR**



## Bone marrow transplants of the future



Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital's (RBWH) world-class researchers have been hard at work over the past year investigating how to make bone marrow transplants safer.

Around 700 Australians receive a bone marrow transplant each year, but there are many people who don't have a suitable donor. Dr Siok Tey at RBWH has used genetic engineering to test a new way of providing bone marrow transplants for people who don't have a perfectly matched donor.

Bone marrow transplant is a life-saving treatment for people with blood cancers such as some types of leukaemia. It involves taking immune cells from a healthy donor and transplanting them into a patient.

Like blood, bone marrow cells must be carefully matched between donor and patient to avoid dangerous complications caused by transplant rejection.

"The key to bone marrow transplantation is the immune cells. Immune cells are a double-edged sword – they are necessary for fighting cancer and infection, but they can also cause unwanted tissue damage, known as graft-versus-host disease," Dr Tey said.

**"IT'S EXCITING THAT THIS HUGE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IS HAPPENING HERE IN QUEENSLAND"**

"This is why we generally need to use fully-matched donors. In this clinical trial, for the first time in Australia, we used genetic engineering to make transplantation safer, so we could use donors who were only partially matched."

The process involves taking immune cells from partially matched donors and inserting a gene into the cells which enables them to be 'switched off' if they cause any complications such as graft-versus-host disease.

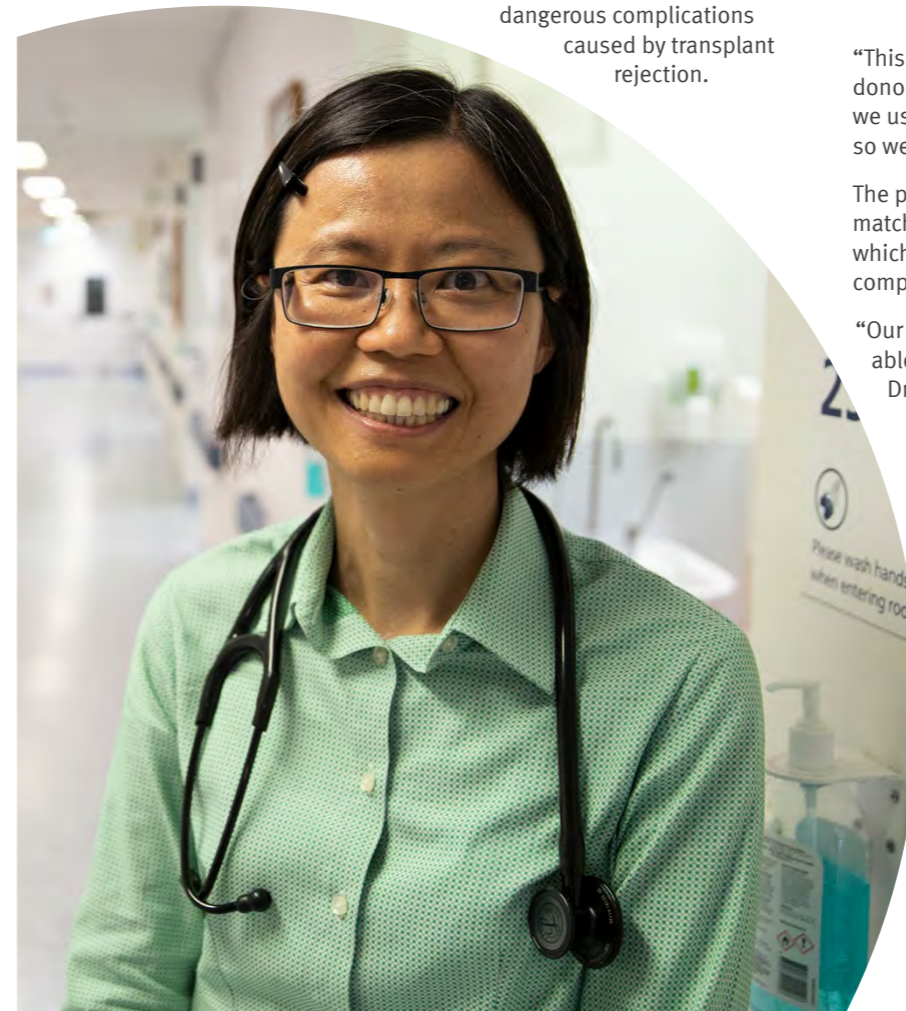
"Our trial gives hope to all the people who haven't been able to find a suitable bone marrow donor in the past," Dr Tey said.

"It's exciting that this huge technological development is happening here in Queensland, at QIMR Berghofer and the RBWH."

# 159

**BONE MARROW TRANSPLANTS**  
in 2018–19

◀ Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital's Haematologist Dr Siok Tey and her QIMR Berghofer research team are investigating how to make bone marrow transplants safer.





## Deep brain stimulation treatment for Parkinson's Disease

▲ Chris Harrison, second from left, has been given a new lease on life thanks to the Deep Brain Stimulation treatment he received at RBWH.



For Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital patient Chris Harrison, having the ability to go fishing, hiking and throw a ball around with his two sons has never been so sweet.

Chris was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 2013, at the age of 43. Following his diagnosis, Chris deteriorated from being an active family man with a successful career in accounting, to being unable to leave the house most days and struggling to perform basic tasks such as cooking a meal and dressing himself.

"I was starting to lose hope that I would ever live a normal life again. The medication prescribed to me was no longer working, and often gave me adverse side effects," Chris said.

"One of the medications I was taking caused the muscles in my feet to seize, which meant I could only walk backwards.

"I didn't want anyone to see me the way I was and rarely left the house. It took its toll on our entire family, mentally, physically and financially."

Chris was one of the first patients at RBWH to receive deep brain stimulation treatment for Parkinson's Disease, thanks to a new trial which has made the treatment accessible to Queenslanders through the public health system.

Deep brain stimulation is essentially a pacemaker for the brain and RBWH has successfully used this procedure on five patients since October 2018 as part of a trial.

Chris jumped at the chance when asked if he was interested.

He says the impact of the surgery was immediate and has given him his life back in a way he never thought was possible.

"I am now able to do every day things like throw a ball around with my two sons and go fishing. My family and I recently went on our first holiday in five years this month," he said.

**"THE RESULTS WE HAVE SEEN SO FAR HAVE BEEN PHENOMENAL"**

"I feel like we have our lives back. We're no longer suffering. That's the best part."

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital neurologist Dr Robert Adam said the Neurology team are thrilled to be able to offer the treatment to people like Chris through the Queensland public health system.

"The effects of Parkinson's Disease can be extremely debilitating, so being able to offer a new treatment to patients who have tried everything else is incredible. It's why we do what we do as medical professionals."

**3238**

**NEUROLOGY OUTPATIENT EPISODES OF CARE**

IN 2018-19



## TPCH cardiologists devise new procedure to save Brisbane grandfather

Toowong great-grandmother Eileen Maclean never expected another dance with her husband of almost 60 years. Malcolm spent the first half of 2019 battling severe breathing difficulties as his heart valve implantation slowly deteriorated.

But thanks to a pioneering new treatment for the previously fatal condition, devised by a team of specialists at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH), Eileen and Malcolm have returned to their beloved swing dancing, gardening, and spending time with their family and friends.

"Before the procedure, I could barely say half a dozen words without getting breathless and couldn't even answer the phone anymore," Mr Maclean said.

"The doctors told me I'd be unlikely to make it to Christmas, but even just a few hours after the procedure I already felt like a new man, and I'm getting stronger every day."

TPCH cardiologists Dr Karl Poon and Dr Dale Murdoch spent months consulting with specialists from across Europe and Northern America to modify a highly complex technique called BASILICA, in a bid to implant a new Transaortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) into a degenerating one, which hadn't been done before.

"People with a TAVI will tell you've they've been granted a second chance at life, so it's quite extraordinary to give them a third," Dr Poon said.

Dr Poon said Malcolm's four-hour procedure involved placing a TAVI inside his existing TAVI, and then using an electrical wire to make a precision tear in the new TAVI to restore blood flow.

"This was one of the most complex and delicate procedures we've ever performed, and required extensive planning



▲ Dr Karl Poon and Dr Dale Murdoch with TAVIs.

including echo 3D imaging to maximise our chances of success," Dr Poon said.

The non-invasive TAVI procedure has given patients like Malcolm, who couldn't have survived open-heart surgery, a new lease on life since it was introduced at The Prince Charles Hospital in 2008.

The artificial valve implanted into the aortic valve via a catheter to restore normal blood flow to the heart, potentially gifting patients as many as eight to 12 more years of healthy heart function.

"Thousands of patients across Australia who've been fitted with this device can be confident there is a viable treatment option for the future when their valves start to age and need replacing," Dr Poon said.

At 85 years old, Mr McLean was up walking within a day of his procedure, driving within five weeks and back on the dance floor within three months.

"The difference I felt when I woke up after the procedure was incredible – I could breathe again," Mr McLean said.

"This procedure has given me back my life. I am looking forward to many more years of great living – there is still so much I want to do."

**1,455** INTERVENTIONAL CARDIOLOGY PROCEDURES IN TOTAL FOR THE YEAR IN METRO NORTH

**137 TAVIs** DONE BY TPCH IN 2018-19



► TPCH's ECMO Retrieval team: L-R are Dr Kiran Shekar, Intensivist; Dr Maithri Siriwardena, Intensivist and Echocardiologist; Dr Jayshree Lavana, Intensivist; and Dr Charles McDonald, Perfusionist.



## Retrieval service delivers life-saving care

A clinical retrieval service is allowing critically ill patients, particularly in rural and remote areas of Queensland, to receive lifesaving treatment.

The Prince Charles Hospital Adult Intensive Care Services team play a vital role in transferring critically unwell patients from across Queensland to tertiary hospitals using lifesaving therapy as part of the ECMO retrieval service.

Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation, or ECMO therapy, is used for patients who have experienced severe lung dysfunction because of respiratory failure by taking the role of the lungs while they heal and can also provide support for the heart in carefully selected patients.

The ECMO retrieval team comprises two intensive care specialists, a perfusionist, intensive care nurse and an intensivist or cardiologist, who travel by road or air to bring seriously ill patients to the specialised care they need.

TPCH Intensive Care Unit Director Dr Jayshree Lavana said the ECMO retrieval service is crucial for those patients whose medical condition makes it clinically impossible to transfer via conventional means.

"Patients who require ECMO therapy are extremely unstable, and without access to this treatment, many patients would not survive," Dr Lavana said.

"The ECMO retrieval service is critical to ensuring patients throughout the state can have equitable access to this vital treatment."

"Thanks to this service, many patients have survived their illness, and have returned home to their families and communities," Dr Lavana said.

As the first Queensland hospital to introduce an ECMO program in 2009, TPCH is now one of three in the state to provide this service in conjunction with Retrieval Services Queensland, which coordinates the transport of all adult, neonatal and paediatric patients within Queensland.

**32** ECMO PATIENTS  
in 2018-19

**6** ECMO RETRIEVALS  
in 2018-19



## New tele-chemotherapy service saves Longreach patients 2400km round trips

The prospect of chemotherapy is daunting enough, but imagine having to travel 1200km to Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital regularly, for months on end, to do so.

That was the journey facing Longreach mum-of-two Sharon Rose, who found the journey had become almost unbearable and was taking an enormous physical, emotional and financial toll on her and her family.

"You don't realise until you're in that situation just how hard something like that could be, and what kind of a drain it will be on you. There were some days I just didn't know how I was going to get through it all," Ms Rose said.

As the first patient to access a new tele-chemotherapy partnership between Metro North and Central West Hospital and Health Services, Sharon has been having treatment at Longreach Hospital since December.

"Where it used to be four days away for a treatment that only takes half an hour to administer, it's now just a couple of hours out of my day, which

has been absolutely life-changing not just for me, but for my sons and my husband," she said.

"It's also meant that instead of taking time off work, I've actually been able to take on some extra work, which has made a huge difference for all of us."

The program supports nurses to administer cancer-fighting drugs locally, while being guided and advised via video link by medical oncologists and expert chemotherapy nurses from Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) and North Lakes Health Precinct.

RBWH Deputy Director of Medical Oncology Dr Melissa Eastgate said by the end of 2019 the service will have provided significant financial, emotional and psychological savings to around 20 eligible patients.

"One patient flew to Brisbane 17 times in 2017, spending \$17,000 in airfares and travel, with 40 nights away from home, away from loved ones when they need their support the most," Dr Eastgate said.

"To be able to maintain their normal routine and stay at home, it's enormously beneficial because they can focus on getting better."

The partnership is also improving continuity of care for patients, who are having treatment through staff who live and work within their own community.

**7,395**  
NEW PATIENTS EACH YEAR IN CANCER CARE SERVICES

▼ Patient Sharon Rose receives treatment from Longreach RN Shannon Bedford, under the video link guidance of North Lakes Cancer Services ANUM Kylie Hilford and RBWH Medical Oncologist Dr Melissa Eastgate with Telechemo Project Officer Irene Scott, Cancer Care/Palliative Care Coordinator Anouk Jaaniste and Acting Director of Community Health/Telehealth/ Specialist Outpatients Louise Poole looking on.





## Fewer needles in ED



A trip to the emergency department will mean patients have fewer needles, thanks to a project reducing unnecessary procedures.

The project is a partnership between the Value Based Healthcare Unit, the promoting value-based care in EDs (PROV-ED) project and researchers from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) Emergency and Trauma Centre.

"It is routine practice for emergency clinicians to insert a special type of needle, known as a peripheral intravenous cannula, when patients are admitted to an emergency department," said program leader Tracey Hawkins.

"The cannula allows us to quickly and easily give patients fluids, medications, blood or contrast and are very useful, but they aren't always needed."

The team at RBWH found that 30 per cent of cannulas were not being used, often putting patients through an unnecessary and painful procedure that's increasing their risk of contracting a serious infection.

In response, the RBWH team developed an educational program, known as CREDIT, outlining the costs and risks of inserting a cannula and promoting clinicians to stop and think about whether they were 80 per cent sure they would use a cannula before they inserted it.

Following a three-month trial of the program, the number of cannulas inserted was reduced to three out of 10 emergency patients, with cannulas that were inserted used in 83 per cent of cases.

**THE TEAM HAVE FOUND 30% OF CANNULAS WEREN'T USED**



## Healthy Spine Service aligns with patient needs

As many as 27 per cent of middle aged Queenslanders now live with back pain, but Metro North's Healthy Spine Service is helping many of them get back on their feet sooner and pain free.

In its first six months the Healthy Spine Service, coupled with Back School education sessions and a range of other supports, has helped more than 4500 patients.

The service focuses on patients currently referred (urgent and non-urgent) to Metro North neurosurgery and orthopaedic specialist outpatient services and starts with a thorough assessment by a multidisciplinary team. The program aims to ensure patients are given the right referral right from the start so they get the right treatment.

As a result, referrals which require categorisation by an orthopaedic or neurosurgeon have been reduced by 80 per cent, with unnecessary referrals dropping from 26 to three per cent.

Healthy Spine Service coordinator Clinical Nurse Consultant Dyann Craven said almost 70 per cent of patients were able to transfer back to primary care or their general practitioner, and up to 500 patients did not require specialist treatment.

**THE PROGRAM HAS HELPED REDUCE WAITING TIMES BY UP TO 45 DAYS.**

By helping patients who don't need surgery reduce their back pain in other ways, the program has also created capacity for orthopaedic and neurosurgery departments to see patients faster and further reduce waiting times.

The Healthy Spine Service has now moved from a trial into business as usual, ensuring many more people can access care for back pain.

**MORE THAN 4500 PATIENTS HELPED BY HEALTHY SPINE SERVICE**



## Improving access to good oral hygiene and treatment

Disadvantaged adults and children now have better access to dental care thanks to two innovative programs being delivered by Metro North Oral Health.

Metro North Oral Health Director Operations Sarah Asmussen said we are delivering screening and fluoride varnish programs to disadvantaged people in homeless shelters in the inner city and to children in state schools across Moreton Bay.

"People from disadvantaged backgrounds are clearly at an increased risk of suffering tooth decay," Sarah said.

"It is important that we create a greater awareness of socio-economic causes of tooth decay but also deliver preventative programs that support increased oral hygiene."

In partnership with The University of Queensland (UQ) School of Dentistry, Metro North has created a Priority Access Program to help disadvantaged adults receive free dental care.

The program is seeing dental screening being provided at community organisations in Brisbane's inner city.

"It is important that we provide access to high quality dental care to everyone across the community no matter what their circumstance," Sarah said.

**"IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE PROVIDE ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY DENTAL CARE TO EVERYONE ACROSS THE COMMUNITY NO MATTER WHAT THEIR CIRCUMSTANCE."**

Under the Priority Access Program, oral health screening days are delivered with volunteer dental professionals, a Metro North representative and University of Queensland dental students.

In 2018, more than 66 adults participated in the program and were referred to Metro North Oral Health Services facilities for teeth cleaning, fillings or other dental treatment.



## Hope for the best, prepare for the rest



Planning for a rainy day is sensible when we're thinking about our finances or weather, but when it comes to dying it's not a topic everyone feels comfortable addressing.

But a project challenging our fear of talking about death is educating healthcare staff in ways to approach the topic with sensitivity to improve the holistic care of patients at risk of deteriorating or dying from a progressive, life-limiting illness.

Cancer Care Nurse Researcher Elise Button said the project was about preparing staff to identify a moment in the patient journey when a conversation about planning for end-of-life care would be most effective.

"The rainy day metaphor is to take an umbrella with you when you leave the house if there is a high chance of rain," Elise said.

"With that idea in mind, through this project we've focused on how we can best help patients to make plans and identify what is most important to them, while still maintaining hope."

"The primary aim was to develop healthcare professionals to identify patients in a timely manner at risk of dying, so care could be better planned and aligned with the wishes of the patient and their family," Elise said.

"Staff consistently articulated that this is an aspect of care they want to provide but don't feel adequately trained to confidently deliver."

Staff were educated on the steps to take when a patient is identified as at risk of dying and encouraged to create their own processes to integrate into their usual clinical activities.

### "TAKE AN UMBRELLA WITH YOU WHEN YOU LEAVE THE HOUSE IF THERE IS A HIGH CHANCE OF RAIN"

"Although sometimes uncomfortable, research tells us that awareness of potential death does not always decrease quality of life; in fact, some people find they enjoy some aspects of life more because they know time is limited. They find they can focus on what matters most," Elise said.

"Through this project we've empowered staff to feel confident to talk about end-of-life care and help link patients to other services they may need and implement their wishes.

"Staff are committed to providing holistic patient-centred care and with continued education and improved awareness, we know staff will be able to play an important role in improving not just quantity of life, but quality of life for our patients."

## Fracture clinic brings care closer to home

► **Care closer to home:** Redcliffe teenager Aykan Sertli prepares to have his cast removed by Orthopaedic Technologist Scott Coventry at the Paediatric Fracture Clinic.



A paediatric outreach fracture clinic at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) is enabling more northside families to access care closer to where they live.

The clinic is a collaboration between The Prince Charles Hospital and Queensland Children's Hospital and allows children who require follow up care for a fracture to be seen at TPCH.

Each week TPCH sees around 35 children who present with a fracture, primarily broken arms and legs. Ninety per cent of these children live in the hospital's local catchment area.

TPCH's Acting Clinical Director Children's Emergency Services Dr Dave Wood said that previously these children would be required to travel to the Queensland Children's Hospital for follow up care and treatment, with some children needing multiple follow up appointments.

"Follow up is essential to ensure fractures are healing properly without complication.

It also provides more definitive splinting of the fracture, as emergency department splinting is usually only temporary," Dr Wood said.

"At this stage if a child requires an operation, this will still occur at the Queensland Children's Hospital. However, a significant proportion of patients do not require surgery.



**3,852**  
KIDS THROUGH THE  
**OUTPATIENT  
FRACTURE CLINIC**  
SINCE 2016



### "THE CONVENIENCE OF HAVING THE RIGHT HEALTH CARE SERVICES CLOSE TO HOME MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE TO MANY FAMILIES."

"The outreach clinic at TPCH means that many families can access all of their child's fracture care from one central location - from the point of presenting to TPCH's emergency department with the child's initial fracture, right through to the follow up care and discharge.

"The convenience of having the right health care services close to home makes a big difference to many families."

The clinic at TPCH is supported by a multidisciplinary team consisting of two orthopaedic surgeons, two orthopaedic technicians, and a paediatric radiologist from the Queensland Children's Hospital, and medical, nursing, administration and allied health staff from TPCH.



## ‘Kangaroo care’ benefits preemie babies

Skin-to-skin contact with a new baby is not only pleasant for new parents, it’s proven to help improve the lives of premature babies.

Known as kangaroo care, the method has a range of benefits for babies including physiologic stability, brain development, improved immune system function, weight gain, better sleep and greater bonding.

In 2018 the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Special Care Nursery Units at Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (RBWH) logged more than 250 hours of kangaroo care holding.

Kevin and Lauren O’Connor welcomed their twin baby boys Ellis and Sullivan into the world at the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital on Anzac Day this year. The twins were born at 32 weeks, eight weeks early, with Ellis weighing 1.9kg and Sullivan weighing 1.86kg.

Lauren was experiencing labour-like pains a week before they were born which turned out to be a kidney stone. Soon after doctors found the kidney stone, Lauren went into labour and the twins were born.

The O’Connors also have a five-year-old son, who spent some time in the NICU when he was first born.

Given they’ve spent so much time in NICU/Special Care at RBWH between their three sons, they know a lot about kangaroo care. Kevin said holding the twins skin-to-skin has visible benefits and they immediately seem happier and more content.

“As a dad, holding your babies is a way of saying ‘even though you were birthed by mum, I’m still here and I love you,’” he said.

“It’s so surreal and humbling to feel your baby’s heart beat against yours. There’s nothing like it.”



▲ Wamuran Mum Kerri Larter with twins William and Christian enjoying kangaroo care.

The Special Care Nursery at Caboolture Hospital gave out free stuffed kangaroos to families during the annual ‘Kangaroo-a-thon’ celebrations in May.

Wamuran Mum Kerri Larter – who gave birth to twin sons William and Christian – was one of the first to receive one of the free kangaroos.

**“IT’S SO SURREAL AND HUMBLING TO FEEL YOUR BABY’S HEART BEAT AGAINST YOURS. THERE’S NOTHING LIKE IT.”**



**8,308**  
**BABIES BORN**  
IN OUR HOSPITALS  
in 2018–19



## Redbook gives Indigenous babies a head start

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents will be able to track their baby’s first year of healthcare in a special book.

Queensland parents are provided with a personal health record for every child born in Queensland. The book records immunisations, developmental checks and health milestones.

The Indigenous personal health record has been designed with a dedicated cover which prompts healthcare providers to offer enhanced screening, additional immunisations and referral pathways within the community for children whose parents identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The cover artwork was designed by artist Ronald Abala (Wulukantha – little spirit man) especially for infants born within the Ngarrama maternity services across Metro North Health Hospital and Health Service.

Midwife and nurse Kelly Smith said there were a total of 659 Indigenous babies born in Metro North in 2018 and the new cover would be used to assist accurate identification.

**“THE ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PATIENTS IN OUR DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS HELP US TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED HEALTH OUTCOMES”**

“Over 1,000 copies will be provided to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children over the next 12 months as a trial to support access to culturally and clinically responsive care for families,” Kelly said.

“Our aim is for the covers to be used as a visual prompt for health professionals to the identification of the child at a regular antenatal and postnatal appointments.

Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit Paul Drahm said Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are under-identified in many health-related data collections.



▲ Baby Teddy pictured with the new Red Health Book. Teddy’s mum, Nicole Moller, is a proud descendant of the Bundjalung people in northern New South Wales.

“The accurate identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in our data collection systems help us to achieve improved health outcomes by supporting the measurements of the Indigenous health status and the effectiveness of intervention programs,” Paul said.

“Our focus on a strong start to life is to work with families to co-design services that improve continuity of care models, supporting timely interventions for Indigenous women, babies and children that reinforces cultural knowledge and pride.”

The covers are part of a broader campaign initiated in 2016 to improve the health outcomes of Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

The initiative is part of the new Metro North Hospital and Health Service Better Together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2019-2022.



**659**  
**INDIGENOUS**  
**BABIES**  
BORN IN OUR HOSPITALS  
in 2018–19



## Menu choices for Kilcoy

Patients at Kilcoy Hospital can now choose what they want to eat from a new electronic menu.

Kilcoy Hospital Dietetics and Food Services lead Michelle Suter said a patient's diet affected their ability to heal well and quickly.

"It can be tricky to know which foods contain allergens and which are suitable for different texture modified diets," Michelle said.

"Our new electronic system, Delegate, gives real-time updates on a patient's condition and takes the guess work away for our cooks and operational staff."

Michelle said food service staff collect menu orders each morning for lunch, dinner and breakfast the next day using a computer workstation on wheels.

The software checks orders against other real-time patient information systems to ensure that the menu information was up-to-date in real time, rather than relying on manual cross-checking and updating paper menus.

"Kilcoy Hospital kitchen staff prepare about 30,000 meals for patients, staff, visitors and the community each year from the on-site kitchen," Michelle said.

"The hospital has a wonderful reputation for delicious freshly cooked meals and flexibility in choice that larger facilities often can't provide—none of that has changed.

"However, the new system can lay claim to several clinical benefits, including the ability to track menu orders, calculate nutritional intakes and supplement compliance.

"It also means the dietetic team at Caboolture Hospital can more easily support the Kilcoy kitchen staff with menus and any tricky special dietary requests."

In addition, dietitians also work closely with patients and other services across the hospital to make sure the patient's eating plan matches their healthcare and dietary needs.

### Why nutrition matters

Good nutrition is vital to good health, especially for people recovering from illness and injury. People in hospital are often very unwell and may be at risk of malnutrition due to being in a different environment, not feeling like eating, and not eating the food they enjoy.



▲ Caboolture Hospital Nutrition and Food Services Manager Michelle Suter.

# 3,071,423

## MEALS PREPARED

IN 2018-19 ACROSS METRO NORTH



## Recovery focused care a step up for mental health

Mental health consumer Alana is a strong advocate for Nundah House, crediting the community-based recovery centre with not only helping her manage her illness but also getting her life back together.

"It really is a step up for mental health," she said.

Opened in March last year, Nundah House offers short-term recovery-focused residential support to help people who may need additional support to manage a change in their mental health or transition back to living in the community after being discharged from hospital.

Alana, who has had several hospital admissions over the past few years, has benefited from two short stays at Nundah House—initially transitioning out of hospital into the community and later stepping up for early intervention and treatment.

"It was so much better than being in hospital," Alana said of her experiences at Nundah House.

"It's a supportive and nurturing environment tailoring treatment to suit the needs of the individual.



"I can't express how grateful I am for the help and peer group support I received and the way they have organised the program for people like myself. I was able to find out more about my illness and how to manage it.

"I've become more aware of my health and am able to see my illness in a more realistic way. I understand now that I need to take my medication.

"It's been a godsend for me and has helped me out the pieces of my life back together, so I can move forward."

NUNDAH HOUSE HAS BEEN REGULARLY USED OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS WITH MORE THAN

# 150 CONSUMERS ACCESSING THE SERVICE

ON AVERAGE, CONSUMERS STAY **14 DAYS**

**30% OF REFERRALS ARE STEP UP**  
(PEOPLE DETERIORATING IN THE COMMUNITY COMING TO NUNDAH HOUSE TO POTENTIALLY NEGATE THE NEED FOR A HOSPITALISATION)

## New adolescent service for Caboolture

Youth mental health services in the Moreton Bay region are being boosted with construction underway on a Step Up Step Down facility at Caboolture.

The six-bed facility will provide a local recovery service in a safe home-like environment for vulnerable young people, aged from 16 to 21, who require sub-acute mental health services. It will focus on a young person's rehabilitation and social interaction, complemented by 24-hour support.

The King Street facility is due to commence service in 2020.

The Step Up Step Down model will complement the existing service system and enhance the suite of mental health treatment and rehabilitation services for young people in Queensland.

## Room service improves patient meal times

 A new mealtime model at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) is giving patients greater flexibility and choice with hospital food.

The new room service model allows patients to order meals anytime between 6.30am and 7pm through their bedside phones.

TPCH Dietitian Team Leader Food Services Bianca Neaves said that the new model provides patients with greater flexibility and choice with meals.

“Patients are able to choose what they want to eat, when they want to eat it. Flexibility and choice are important as many patients lose their appetite during their hospital stay,” Bianca said.

“Patients, or family members on their behalf, are able to plan their meal times better around clinical treatment or tests. This means that patients are more likely to complete their meals and therefore meet their nutritional requirements.”

Supporting the new model is a newly-renovated commercial kitchen, featuring induction cooktops, turbo chef ovens, state-of-the-art griddle plates, cappuccino machines, and a cold larder station to prepare sandwich combinations at each patient’s request.

Bianca Neaves said the kitchen has even incorporated induction charging bases to keep meals hot until they reach the patient’s bedside.

“Food is an integral part of each patient’s clinical care and recovery, so we are excited to have a model that improves nutritional outcomes, helps patients recover better and get home sooner,” Bianca said.

The new model has also seen the expansion of the variety of food on offer, incorporating a much

greater food selection for patients with specific dietary requirements, allergies or restrictions. Patients have access to a range of popular food choices previously not available including all-day hot breakfasts, burgers, stir fries and pancakes.

TPCH Executive Director Michele Gardner said that the introduction of room service model was an example of how TPCH is leading the way in providing patient-centred care.

“Delivering individualised food choices at the convenience of the patient means that we are improving our patients’ overall experiences and hospital journey,” Michele said.

TPCH is Queensland’s first public hospital to introduce the room service initiative.

**“DELIVERING INDIVIDUALISED FOOD CHOICES AT THE CONVENIENCE OF THE PATIENT MEANS THAT WE ARE IMPROVING OUR PATIENTS’ OVERALL EXPERIENCES AND HOSPITAL JOURNEY.”**

**152,000  
MEALS  
DELIVERED  
SINCE SEPT 2018**



## Ambassador role a first for resident care

▲ Cooinda resident Scotty enjoys spending time with the new Residential Aged Care Ambassador, Ash.

## Residents of Cooinda House are happier thanks to the introduction of a unique role helping to calm the care environment.

Community and Oral Health Executive Director Tami Photinos said the Residential Aged Care Ambassador is highly specialised and has been hailed as an international first in the aged care sector.

“The ambassador is an integral part of the care team in our aged care facilities, and is a great companion, listener and calming influence for our frail and older residents, especially those with cognitive impairments such as dementia,” Tami said.

“The ambassador is highly trained and skilled in de-escalating emerging situations, and diffusing and distracting aggressive behaviours through calm, non-threatening communication and interactions.

“The role builds on the successful work being done in other Queensland hospital’s and Canada where ambassadors provide interventions and de-escalate possible incidents in emergency departments.”

The permanent Aged Care Ambassador follows a highly successful trial, which was supported by Queensland Health’s Occupational Violence Implementation Committee.

“The ambassador trial which ran in 2018 saw a six-fold reduction in the number of incidents at the aged care facility,” Tami said.

“Safety concerns also fell from an average of 52 per month to now an average of two per month following the trial period.

“Staff, care recipients and families report feelings of increased safety, reduced anxiety and an enhanced environment with the ambassador in the facility.”

Residential Aged Care Ambassador Ashleigh Lloyd said it was important that everyone felt safe and that they were at home and comfortable in their own environment.

“I hope to provide another companion for them to talk to about everyday life,” he said.

Tami said as healthcare providers it was vital that we strived to provide the best possible care at all times.

“We aim to exceed the required standards to ensure a high quality and safe residential environment for our residents, their families and our staff members,” she said.

The Ambassador role is one of many improvements implemented that have led to Cooinda House now being reaccredited until 2021 as a residential aged care provider by the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency.

## NDIS provides choice and control for people with a disability

With more than 250,000 Australians now receiving disability supports through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Metro North care teams are also doing their bit to help people with a disability access these life changing opportunities.

Since the NDIS became available in the Brisbane City Local Government Areas from 1 July 2018 and in Moreton Bay from 1 January 2019, Metro North has supported hundreds of patients and families to understand and access disability supports.

Patients who have received help and support from our care teams are living more independent, safer and fulfilling lives.



### Bringing Mario closer to home and his family

▲ Living closer to his family is now a reality for Mario Albutt after spending nearly two decades at the Jacana Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Centre.

After nearly two decades of specialist care following a debilitating brain injury, Mario Albutt is now living in his new home on the Gold Coast.

Thanks to funding through the NDIS and support from the social workers at Community and Oral Health, Mario has moved to his own apartment at Bundall on the Gold Coast.

“I am closer to my family,” Mario said. “Closer to my sister, dad and uncle. I am enjoying independent living and having my own shower.”

Mario wasn’t expected to survive when he suffered a brain haemorrhage in the early 2000s, but with the support of family and rehabilitation he regained some function. He is wheelchair dependent and requires assistance with his general care needs and spent 16 years living at the Jacana Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Centre (now the Brighton Brain Injury Service).

Mario now is living in his own individual unit with support workers visiting him to attend to his care needs and provide access to activities in the community. He even has his daughter visit him in his new home.

## Creating a safe world for Robbie

Being able to go to work, visit your friends and play sport are some of the things that most of us can enjoy.

For Robbie Van Allen, it hasn’t always been that easy, but thanks to the NDIS and persistence from his care team at Metro North he is now able to enjoy life to the fullest and do more of the things he loves.

Registered Nurse Eva Kinross said obtaining 24-hour support with a disability support worker was very important for Robbie and had made a big difference to the quality of his life.

“Robbie is now living a more independent, confident and happy life of his choosing,” Eva said.

For Robbie’s mum Pippa Wiles, access to 24-hour support has given her a greater piece of mind that Robbie was not only enjoying his life but was a lot safer when he was out and about.

“Having someone there to encourage him and watch out for him makes it a lot safer for Robbie,” Pippa said.

“He is also more settled and happy. Robbie particularly loves going to the library and saying hello to the librarians. He spreads his own bit of happiness with the people he meets.”

When asked, Robbie happily tells you his favourite thing to do—to be part of the cheer squad at a Brisbane Lions’ game.

Eva said the extra disability support helped Robbie to live independently and stay on track with his daily tasks such as cooking for himself (and the family), cleaning, eating healthy and looking after himself.

At the same time, Robbie has been working as a kitchenhand at the Hog’s Breath Café for the past seven years to help pay the bills and live in his own apartment.

Importantly, Robbie can more easily get to work, football practice and to the Lions’ games regularly.



▲ Life has become a lot happier, safer and fulfilling for Robbie Van Allen thanks to opportunities that have opened up to him as a result of the persistence of his care team and funding through the NDIS.

ROBBIE’S FAVOURITE THING TO DO—TO BE PART OF THE CHEER SQUAD AT A BRISBANE LIONS GAME.



## Safety and Quality Strategy - Preventing harm and increasing reliability of care

Metro North recognises that to prevent harm and increase the reliability of care, we must improve the way we communicate with our colleagues, patients, their families and carers.

Our main priority is to ensure patients are not at risk of harm when in our care. In line with our strategy for safety and quality, Metro North promotes co-design, digital workflows, decision support and evidence-based practice to achieve safe and highly reliable care.

We continually strive to prevent and learn from harm and seek feedback from our consumers and patients to ensure we improve when harm has occurred. Through co-designing our care with consumers and staff, we will aim to increase the safety of the people who access our care and the people who deliver it.

Our clinicians and consumers are engaged in our value-based healthcare program to deliver care that patients value and to reduce unnecessary procedures and tests for patients. We are committed to reducing this low-value care to improve the experience for patients.

We will measure success by providing high-value, tracking our progress towards become a recognised high reliability organisation, and driving our safety and quality improvement using high quality data.



## Blue Zone reduces waiting times for sick kids



Members of the Children's Emergency Department team, Maria Pyle, Registered Nurse; Andrea Hetherington, Nurse Practitioner and Dr Dave Wood, Acting Clinical Director, treat five-year old Noah Bailey in the new Blue Zone.

APPROXIMATELY  
**15,000**   
 PRESENTATIONS AT OUR  
**EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS**  
**17 YEARS AND YOUNGER**  
 EACH YEAR



A new fast track area in The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) Children's Emergency Department is allowing less seriously ill or injured patients to be treated sooner.



The Blue Zone is designed to facilitate the timely care of children who present with less complex illnesses and injuries but who still require emergency care.

It incorporates two consultation rooms and a treatment room within the main children's emergency department and is staffed by a multidisciplinary team consisting of a registered nurse, registrar or nurse practitioner and an emergency physiotherapy practitioner who treat children with musculoskeletal injuries.

The Blue Zone was initiated following the 2017 winter period which saw a

significant increase in the number of patients seen through the Children's Emergency Department. A large proportion of the presentations seen during this period were children presenting to the ED during this period didn't need to be treated in a bed.

Use of the Blue Zone resulted in significant reductions in waiting periods for patients and families, and subsequently reduced congestion in the department.

Acting Clinical Director Children's Emergency Services Dr Dave Wood said that the Blue Zone provides a dedicated area where staff can

treat patients who do not require a bed space to be treated in a more timely way.

"This helps reduce waiting times, length of stay in the department and improves the experience of the child and their family," Dr Wood said.

"Even children with less serious illnesses or injuries such as sprains, simple lacerations, coughs and colds can be quite distressed and anxious when they come to the department.

"Being able to assess and treat these children in a more timely way allows them to get home sooner."

Since the introduction of the Blue Zone last year, the department has improved both the time to be seen and the length of stay for patients.

## Continuing care for sick and premature babies



Baby Lincoln and his parents were the first to visit the new service.



Parents of premature babies now have greater support when they go home from hospital with a new Neonatal Nurse Clinic at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.



The clinic, which was launched in 2019 at the Grantley Stable Neonatal Unit, provides care for families for a short time after they take their baby home from hospital for the first time.

Neonatal Nurse and Discharge Coordinator Angela Hyland said the nurse-led clinic assists parents with the transition to home and aims to bridge the gap between hospital and community care.

"Continuity of care for our patients and their families is very important to us, and we know for some parents going home with a newborn who has had a long-stay in hospital or experienced other complications or vulnerabilities can be challenging," Angela said.

"Our goal is to provide a step of care between the hospital and community, and to provide parents with as much information about what other healthcare services exist and help connect them to those services."

**58** FACE TO FACE APPOINTMENTS  
**9** FOLLOW UP CALLS  
**6** BABIES REVIEWED BY LACTATION CONSULTANT

First-time parents Kristy and Lachlan Black were the first to be welcomed into the new service in May following a five week stay in the neonatal unit for baby Lincoln.

"Lincoln arrived much sooner than expected when I began suffering from Preclampsia during my pregnancy, and he was cared for round-the-clock for five weeks in hospital before we were able to take him home for the first time," Kristy said.

### THE GRANTLEY STABLE NEONATAL UNIT TREATS 1600 SICK AND PREMATURE BABIES EACH YEAR.

"The staff at the Grantley Stable Neonatal Unit were exceptional and we got to know them very well, and it's really heart-warming for us to be able to come back here one week after going home to be checked on by the people we trust."

Each year more than 1600 sick and premature babies and their families are cared for in the Grantley Stable Neonatal Unit at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.



## Robots strengthen medication safety and quality

Twin state-of-the-art robots installed at Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (RBWH) are allowing pharmacists to spend more time talking with patients about safe medication use.

While the robots in no way replace the vital work done by the pharmacy staff at RBWH, they have already been proven to greatly improve safety, quality and efficiency of medication supply by providing the correct medication in the correct strength and quantities.

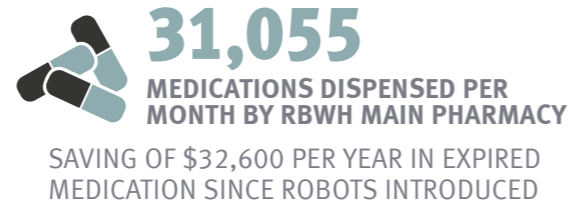
The RBWH robots are the first of their kind in Australia to be approved to hold and distribute controlled drugs, which are highly regulated medications and can cause harm if not used safely and appropriately.

The new technology is expected to create savings of more than \$100,000 per year with its ability to track expiry dates and assist with stock flow.

Over the past year, Caboolture Hospital has also been the focus for a range of projects from the Metro North Electronic Medication Management (EMM) Program.

Automated medication distribution systems called Pyxis MedStations have been rolled out to medical and surgical wards and the Emergency Department. Additionally, new software to help with prescribing has been implemented in medical, surgical and mental health wards to further strengthen medication safety.

Projects like these help to manage medication ordering and stock, reduce medication errors and give staff more time to talk to patients about safe medication use.



▲ Mental Health Nurse Natalie Colburn with Electronic Medication Management Program Clinical Nurse Hayley Barram during the rollout of MedChart in Caboolture’s Mental Health wards.



## Tackling opioid dependency from the ground up

For some patients, pain medication such as opioids can be a safe and effective treatment for moderate or severe pain such as after surgery or an injury, but for others, it can lead to long-lasting addiction with serious health, social and economic impacts.

Quality Use of Medicines Pharmacist Champika Pattullo is leading opioid stewardship efforts at Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (RBWH) to turn the tide, by focusing on changing prescribing culture from the ground up.

Using the research opportunities afforded by the Metro North Graduate Certificate in Health Science (Health Services Innovation), Ms Pattullo worked with a team of motivated frontline clinicians to develop and implement the opioid prescribing toolkit.

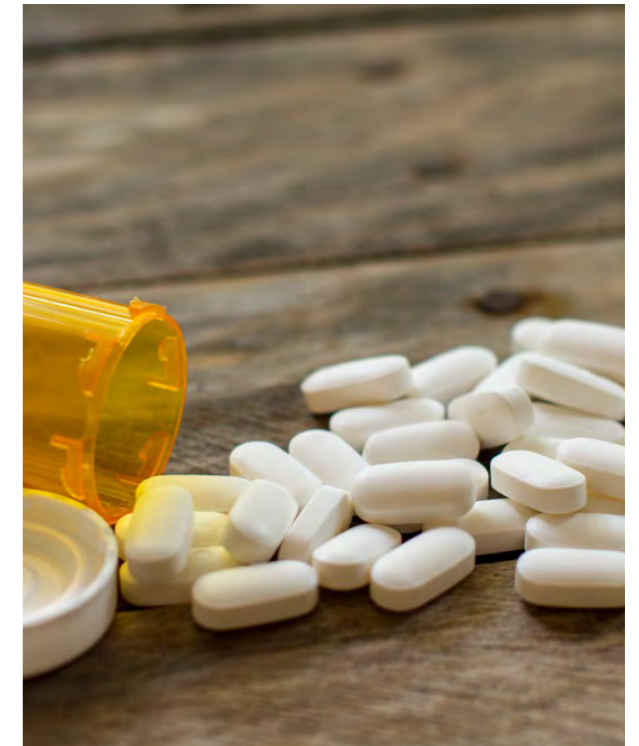
“Pain is not unique to any one area of medicine or group of patients—it is universal, so having a good understanding of approaches to pain management, including discussing non-pharmaceutical methods with patients, is vital,” she said.

The team designed a comprehensive toolkit for a systematic, patient-centred approach for acute care settings, which was piloted with frontline clinicians in the Emergency and Surgery Departments at RBWH.

**3 DEATHS, 14 ED PRESENTATIONS & 150 HOSPITALISATIONS OCCUR EACH DAY IN AUSTRALIA DUE TO PRESCRIPTION OPIOID USE.**

“The results were promising, showing a significant reduction in patients discharged on oxycodone, a reduction in the quantity per prescription, as well as improved quality of medical handover to GPs,” Ms Pattullo said.

A recent AIHW report suggests as many as three deaths, 14 emergency department presentations and 150 hospitalisations occur each day in Australia due to prescription opioid use.



**“THE AIM IS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF UNINTENDED HARM, WHILE MANAGING PAIN APPROPRIATELY.”**

For patients whose first exposure to opioids is in a hospital setting, there is evidence the risk of unintended harms increase if prescribed for longer than five days of therapy.

“The aim is to reduce the risk of unintended harm, while managing pain appropriately,” she said.

“If we want to empower pharmacists across Metro North to take ownership of the program and run it independently, we have to address their unique needs, investigate the culture and build a local implementation team that will champion and drive change.”

The toolkit has been endorsed by the Queensland Clinical Senate and is now being expanded to other sites in Metro North, and across Queensland including Bundaberg, Mackay and Townsville, and is being piloted in general practice.

Combined with the resources to appropriately monitor, evaluate and re-evaluate along the way, the project is on track to become a sustainable model that can be applied to other clinical settings across Australia.

## Banking on experience and flexibility

Metro North has expanded its Nurse Bank in the past 12 months to ensure that additional skilled and experienced staff are on hand to care for patients in busy times.

Metro North led the way in Queensland to establish a health service wide Nurse Bank and today almost 50 nurses choose to be part of this initiative to ensure nursing staff availability across the health service.

Since its introduction in January 2018, it has provided the health service with a bank of experienced nurses to work on a casual basis across general and specialty areas such as emergency departments, intensive care, coronary care and medical and surgical services.

The Nurse Bank gives Metro North the flexibility to safely manage short term periods of peak demand, such as influenza season, or cover emergent leave; and ensures specialised nursing resources can be deployed across the health service where needed to ensure continuity of quality patient care.

Over the past 12 months, the Nurse Bank has provided more than 500 acute shifts and more than 150 sub-acute shifts to support demand for service.

Nurses who choose to work in the Nurse Bank also have an opportunity to be part of a larger, cohesive team. Working across Metro North sites creates opportunity for nurses to further develop their clinical and communication skills while bringing their expertise to their speciality department and its patients.

Nurse Bank nurses are experienced and dedicated professionals who are willing to work at any site across the hospital and health service and they are most valued and highly regarded by their peers.

**“METRO NORTH’S NURSE BANK GIVES THE HEALTH SERVICE THE FLEXIBILITY TO SAFELY MANAGE SHORT TERM PERIODS OF PEAK DEMAND.”**

## Unit upgrade brings patients peace of mind

A physical upgrade of The Prince Charles Hospital’s (TPCH) Adult Cystic Fibrosis Centre is giving patients more peace of mind during their hospital stay.

The upgrade, which includes the construction of six additional bathrooms, and the full refurbishment of all patient areas within the 14-bed unit, means that patients can receive their care in safer, more modern facilities which better support their clinical needs.

Patients now have access to their own individual bathroom during their hospital admission, which is a significant safety improvement for all patients who previously had a shared bathroom during their hospital admission.

**“AS A PATIENT OF THE CF UNIT FOR ALMOST THREE DECADES, I HAVE RECEIVED NOTHING BUT EXCELLENT CARE FROM THE ENTIRE CF TEAM.”**

“In a hospital setting, the opportunity for patient-to-patient contact and infection naturally increases, particularly if the individual is in hospital for a prolonged period. Patients with CF can have up to four admissions each year, with many admissions lasting 14 days or more.”

Other improvements that have enhanced safety within the unit include a major upgrade of the air conditioning system to enhance air quality for patients within the unit, new electrical and nurse call systems using the latest technology, and additional hand washing basins in each patient room.

“While the CF Unit employs strict infection control practices and protocols, enforcing this can be challenging, particularly if patients are sharing facilities like bathrooms,” Dr Reid said.

“Having improved facilities and accommodation specifically designed to support CF patients will allow us to continue to deliver the best possible and safest care to them.”



▲ Patient Sue Hayes with Clinical Nurse, Margaret Lysaught in The Prince Charles Hospital's newly upgraded Adult Cystic Fibrosis Centre.

Darren Bullock, who is one of the 300 patients cared for by TPCH’s Adult CF Service is excited about the improved facilities, particularly the extra bathrooms.

“Having access to our own bathrooms is a fantastic improvement for patients of this Unit,” Darren said.

“As a patient of the CF Unit for almost three decades, I have received nothing but excellent care from the entire CF team.

“But knowing I will have my own bathroom during my hospital admission, gives me further reassurance that I am receiving the best treatment possible.”

**“PATIENTS WITH CF CAN HAVE UP TO FOUR ADMISSIONS EACH YEAR, WITH MANY ADMISSIONS LASTING 14 DAYS OR MORE.”**

TPCH’s Director Adult Cystic Fibrosis Centre Dr David Reid said that patients with cystic fibrosis (CF) have very special clinical requirements due to the nature of their condition.

“Cystic fibrosis is a genetic condition resulting in chronic lung disease, poor nutrition and reduced life expectancy, although survival is increasing significantly and will continue to do so,” Dr Reid said.

“Patients with CF are susceptible to bacterial infections and there is also the risk of cross-infection occurring between patients.



**350**  
PATIENTS  
CARED FOR BY THE UNIT

**1,860**  
PATIENT TREATMENTS  
INCLUDING...  
**495** INPATIENT  
TREATMENTS  
IN 2018-19



## Scorecard keeps colonoscopy care standards high

A new performance scorecard is supporting the early detection of bowel cancer, and ensuring that patients who have a colonoscopy at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) are receiving the best and safest care possible.

The scorecard, which is based on internationally recognised key performance indicators, highlights specific criteria that should be addressed by TPCH gastroenterologists to ensure high quality care.

Director of TPCH's Gastroenterology, Dr Tony Rahman said that high quality colonoscopy is critical to early detection and treatment of bowel cancer.

"It is also important to help minimise the risk of complications associated with the procedure," he said.

"We know that 90 per cent of bowel cancers can be treated if detected early, however, this is only if the colonoscopy is performed by an appropriately trained specialist."

International experience shows the quality of colonoscopies can vary significantly depending on

▲ The quality of colonoscopy procedures offered at The Prince Charles Hospital are comparable with international standards.

**"90% OF BOWEL CANCERS CAN BE TREATED IF DETECTED EARLY"**

the processes in place regarding patient selection, preparation and skill level of the treating clinician.

The establishment of the new scorecard within TPCH's Gastroenterology Service has seen the team work together to maintain a consistently high quality and patient focused colonoscopy process, through all stages of care.

"Our clinicians are monitored and scored on their performance of each individual colonoscopy procedure to ensure they are consistently meeting the necessary standards. If we identify there is an issue, we can investigate to see if it is a system issue or an operator related concern.

"This can then lead to prompt actions, facilitating excellent care and safety for the patient at all times," Dr Rahman said.

"The quality of processes and key performance indicators offered at TPCH have been presented nationally and internationally and are comparable with some of the best centres in Australia and the world."

The service has also adopted a unique approach to its reporting and follow up processes, through the introduction of 30-day post procedure follow up system whereby patients receive a phone call from a gastroenterology nurse to discuss any concerns or problems they may be having.

"This approach is unique to TPCH and firmly puts the patient at the centre of our processes, helping us to respond to patient feedback and primarily manage the care and safety of patients, even after their procedure," Dr Rahman said.

"It reassures our patients that the quality of the colonoscopy they are receiving is excellent."

The Gastroenterology Service will soon launch an online education program which gives patients round-the-clock access to information about their colonoscopy procedure including preparation, consent processes, and the hospital.

The platform, developed by TPCH, will enable patients to revisit the information as many times as they want, from the comfort of their own home, with their family or carers, in the GP surgery, or at the local library.

"It means that patients will be better informed and feel more comfortable about the overall procedure," Dr Rahman said.

The platform has also been developed with TPCH's Indigenous Hospital Liaison team to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families are well supported.

## Blue Room transforming gastroenterology care



Two years since they opened, the blue surgical rooms at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital's Gastroenterology Department have contributed to significant improvements in patient care.

The blue rooms have allowed RBWH to perform an additional 2,500 endoscopy procedures per year and save more Queensland lives faster. They also boast the latest endoscopy medical equipment and operating room technologies, with video streaming and external broadcasting capabilities.

The rooms feature blue walls and furniture which provide an important visual contrast while the surgeons are working.

RBWH Director of Gastroenterology Dr Mark Appleyard said the increased resources and state-of-the-art technology has allowed them to cut procedure waiting times with no patients currently waiting longer than clinically recommended.

"Our capacity to provide complex interventional procedures for local and regional areas has increased significantly, allowing us to assist those who need to travel for treatment better than ever before," Mark said.

"Our team culture has greatly improved thanks to the state-of-the-art environment we are lucky enough to work in every day."

The high-tech equipment has also allowed the Gastroenterology Department to run live training workshops where they can pass on their knowledge to other clinicians across Australia. A large international workshop is planned for 2020.

**29,982**  
**COLONOSCOPIES** AND  
**ENDOSCOPIES**  
in 2018-19

A **COLONOSCOPY** is a procedure to examine the bowel using a camera attached to a flexible tube.

An **ENDOSCOPY** is a procedure that lets doctors examine the inside of your body without surgery, using a camera on a long tube.

## Extending mental healthcare into the home

A new service is allowing patients to be treated safely in their own homes for acute mental health conditions traditionally cared for in hospital.

The Home-based Acute Care Service provides care that is a step up from community-based care and a step down from inpatient care for up to five patients at a time.

Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Subramanian Purushothaman said the new service carefully identifies patients who will benefit from being at home during their treatment.

“There are a variety of reasons why some patients will benefit from being at home, some patients are very well supported at home and benefit from a less restrictive environment and from being able to continue with their usual activities,” Subramanian said.

“While for some patients a stay in hospital can be quite daunting and can have a negative impact on their treatment.”

Patients are visited daily by the Home-based Acute Care team for two to three weeks before safely transitioning to community-based mental healthcare.

“So far, patients have been receptive to the idea of being cared for in their homes and the initial outcomes for the patients involved have been positive,” he said.

“The aim of the service is to reduce the length of stay for patients in hospital and for some it might mean avoiding admission altogether.”

Among other positive benefits for the broader health service, Home-based Acute Care reduces the need for inpatient beds, leaving more available for those who need it most.

“Mental health staff in the Acute Care team will rotate into the home-based service which provides an excellent opportunity for our staff to gain more experience,” Subramanian said.

“We are very happy to be meeting an unmet need in our health service and the short-term indicators are extremely positive, so we are hopeful the service will continue to grow over time.”

### Around 20%

OF AUSTRALIANS HAVE A MILD TO SEVERE MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER



## Better Together for health outcomes

A plan dedicated to improving the health of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people with culturally responsive support is being rolled out across Australia’s largest public health service.

The Metro North Hospital and Health Service Better Together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2019-2022 focuses on addressing inequalities in health services in line with the Close the Gap agenda.

Metro North Acting Chief Executive Jackie Hanson said patients, community groups and partnership organisations helped contribute to the plan.

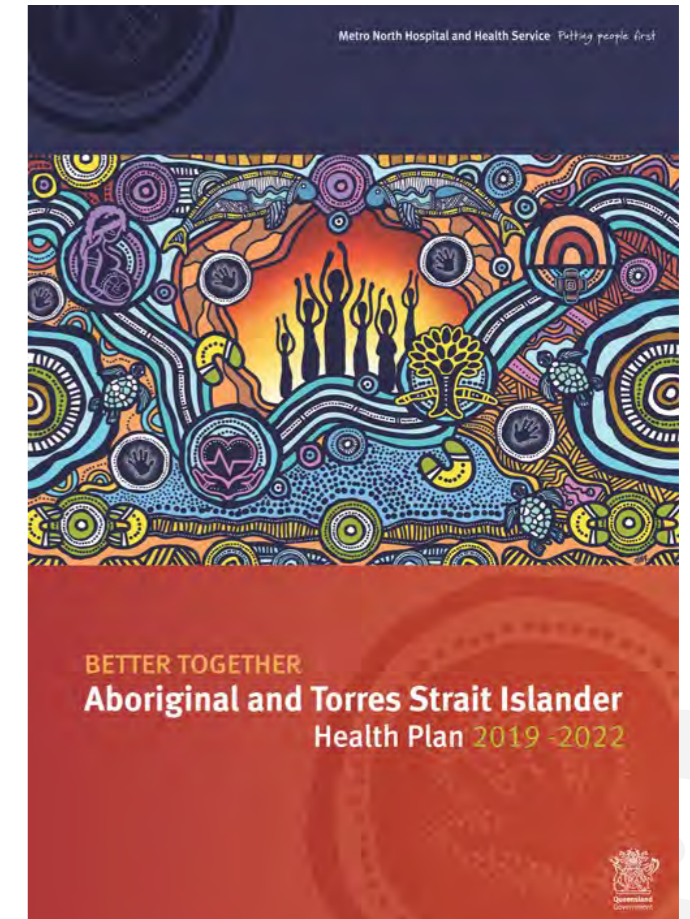
“We received over 600 pieces of individual feedback for our plan and held a consultation event on National Close the Gap day for our valued Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, staff and patients,” Jackie said.

“I am proud to unveil a plan that will guide our organisation over the next three years to achieve meaningful change and ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing Metro North receive high quality person centred care that is culturally responsive, empowers self-care and choice, and is designed to improve health and wellbeing services.”

The plan includes a focus on four clinical priority areas:

- Strong start to life for maternal and child health
- Reducing the burden of disease in relation to cancer screening
- Crisis and complex care for support and advocacy within the emergency department, and
- Living well, living longer to trial new approaches to improving connectivity to care.

Currently, there is a gap of 10 years between the life expectancy of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. Enriching health services with culturally appropriate support, community sourced feedback and a strategic plan will help close the life expectancy gap and offer Indigenous men, women and children an improved quality of life.



METRO NORTH POPULATION:  
**1,003,517**  
(1/5 OF QLD POP)

**2.3%**  
ABORIGINAL AND  
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
PEOPLE





## Leading the way in infection control



Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (RBWH) cleaning staff are leading the way to reduce the risk of hospital-associated infections as part of a world-first trial at 11 Australian hospitals.



To help keep patients safe while in hospital, Patient Support Officers participated in the Researching Effective Approaches to Cleaning in Hospitals (REACH) trial to test the effectiveness of improved cleaning practices.



RBWH infectious diseases specialist Dr Krispin Hajkowicz said the study has led to a significant reduction in healthcare-associated infections for patients.

“Maintaining a clean hospital environment is essential in stopping the spread of healthcare infections,” Krispin said.

“The study led to a significant reduction in VRE infection, a serious bacterial infection associated with contamination of the patient environment, and audits of cleaning practices showed a 20 per cent improvement in patient areas.”

The trial focused on the best cleaning techniques, product use, staff training and communication, and used special fluorescent marker dots not visible to the naked eye to audit the quality of cleaning.

“We have to thank and acknowledge our Patient Support Officers (PSOs) who were instrumental in this trial,” Krispin said.

“Our PSOs do exceptional work everyday to ensure our hospital environment is clean and make a real difference to our patients by preventing healthcare infection.”

**165,000**  
HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED  
**INFECTIONS**  
ARE RECORDED ANNUALLY IN AUSTRALIA



## Best care on the RADAR



Frail older people in aged care homes are receiving specialised care within the comfort of familiar surroundings thanks to care partnerships between residential aged care facilities (RACF) and the Metro North Residential Aged Care District Assessment and Referral (RADAR) program.



The RADAR program includes geriatricians, emergency physicians, pharmacists, allied health and nursing teams and are adaptations of the already established and successful services formally known as Older Persons Acute Assessment Service and Hospital in the Nursing Home at RBWH, Residential Care Liaison Service at Redcliffe Hospital, Geriatric Outreach Assessment Service at TPCB and adds an outreach component to the Geriatric Emergency Department Intervention Service at Caboolture Hospital.

The 7-day RADAR central coordination Nurse Navigator phone service is available to RACF GPs, nurses and practice managers and is focused on the provision of best patient pathways and clinically appropriate alternatives for residents who would otherwise have presented or returned to the emergency department or been admitted to hospital.

Clinical Services Program Manager Gaenor Cross said where necessary, medical teams from Metro North hospitals visit RACFs and provide advice and support to clinical teams in the facilities in order to best manage their patient at home.

“The program is a collaboration between Metro North clinicians, primary care providers in the RACFs and the Queensland Ambulance Service and is a wonderful demonstration of clinician collaboration focused on the best care for their customers.

“We are achieving this through aligned care and a focus on providing a linked service across Metro North with the same best outcome for all RACF residents.”

**4500** RADAR PHONE CALLS OR VISITS TO RACFS IN PAST 9 MONTHS

**29%** OF CALLS OR VISITS RESULTED IN ALTERNATIVES TO EMERGENCY VISITS

**25%** OF RADAR PATIENTS PROVIDED ALTERNATIVE CARE TO HOSPITAL ADMISSION

▼ RADAR RBWH team





## Safety and Quality Strategy - Communicate better

We recognise that clear and effective communication underpins the success of our strategy for safety and quality and is critical to delivering the best possible outcomes for our patients. Poor communication between healthcare staff and between staff and patients can result in incorrect approaches to care and a lack of understanding about what outcomes truly matter to patients.

Metro North promotes communication which consistently reflects our values. We are committed to engaging with consumers in ways that respect and promote their rights, dignity, cultural diversity, levels of health literacy and health information needs.

To achieve our goals for high quality care and safety, Metro North will continue to foster a culture of shared decision making by engaging with consumers to understand what is important to them. By communicating directly with patients and their families and cares, we will facilitate transparency and better understand their care goals and desired outcomes.

Communication of timely and relevant information throughout and across episodes of care, particularly at care transition points, is vital to achieving the best possible outcomes for our patients. For staff, we will increase access to meaningful safety and quality data and analysis and promote participation in communication skills development training.

We will improve effectiveness of handover of care within our services and with care partners including primary care providers to improve the overall care and reduce the likelihood of complications relating to poor communication.

Our success will be measured through increased staff participation in communication skills training, improved transfer of care to partners, and better access to safety and quality information for staff and consumers.



## Young mothers program delivers new approach to midwifery services

An innovative new model of care is providing at-risk young women with access to maternity care in the community, giving them the best chance possible of a happy and healthy pregnancy.

Caboolture Young Mothers for Young Women Program (CYMYW) is a joint initiative between Caboolture Hospital and community-based, not-for-profit organisation MICAH Projects, funded by the Department of Communities.

The CYMYW outreach centre is in a central and easily accessible location on the busy Morayfield Road corridor in Caboolture South, about four kilometres from the hospital.

Nursing and Midwifery Director Anne Clayton said the traditional hospital antenatal care model was often not a realistic option for some young women, many of whom had already faced significant challenges in life.

“Young women who have accessed the service have been homeless, sexually assaulted, and other serious concerns that make traditional hospital models of care unlikely to succeed,” Anne said.



**1,756**  
**BABIES BORN**

IN CABOOLTURE HOSPITAL  
IN 2018–19



▲ Pieter Walker from the Health Roundtable (top left) meets staff from the Caboolture Young Mothers for Young Women program, including midwife Debbi Sutherland (seated).

“CYMYW staff meet young mothers where they are in the community and assist them to access health and other care available appropriate to their circumstances.”

The team includes a midwife, two social workers and a peer worker who often assist with access to other services, helping them to build confidence as a parent.

Anne said CYMYW was a breakthrough, new approach to delivering health and midwifery services with 30 young women aged 20 years and younger using the service since it opened in May 2018.

“To date, the average age of young women participating in the program is 17.8 years,” Anne said.

“The majority of participants have been involved with the program for more than four months, suggesting it is successful in retaining young women and their families beyond the first contact.

“Once the team has built up trust and rapport, it has also enabled transition of some women to other services earlier and their follow-up to GP care afterwards is faster.”

CYMYW Team Leader Kylie Bolland said the program was helping young women who would otherwise not access antenatal care and health services.

“It’s great to have the opportunity to partner with Caboolture Hospital, which is willing to try something new and demonstrate real innovation and push the boundaries,” Kylie said.



## Medication assistance for Mums-to-be



Pregnant women with medical conditions, including mental health, now have access to better advice around their medications and supplements with a new pharmacy-led clinic at Redcliffe Hospital.

Through a combination of patient engagement and evidence-based decision making, Redcliffe Hospital’s Antenatal Pharmacy clinic is improving patient wellbeing and clinical outcomes for pregnant women and their babies.

Redcliffe Hospital’s Director of Pharmacy Geoff Grima said it was not uncommon for women to stop taking their prescribed medications when they found out they were pregnant, for fear of harming their unborn child.

“Our Antenatal Pharmacist Clinic was born out of the common fears and anxieties experienced by local mothers during pregnancy and breastfeeding,” Mr Grima said.

“Our clinic helps to relieve those fears and anxieties.

“In an outpatient setting, our antenatal pharmacist reviews the woman’s current medications and develops a medication management plan that takes into account how pregnancy will impact their underlying condition, illness or medications.

“This engagement with a pharmacist gives women the confidence to make the right decision about taking the

medications that are keeping them healthy and their underlying conditions under control.”

The clinic was established last year with the help of Metro North SEED Funding and is the latest in a string of innovations by the Redcliffe Hospital Pharmacy Department designed to improve patient safety.

Consumers, general practitioners and hospital staff have embraced the new service and consider it to be vital to the care of pregnant women.

The clinic helps to also contribute to vital research into medications in pregnancy, as well as educating staff and consumers on this topic.

**420**

**WOMEN SUPPORTED THROUGH THE CLINIC**

IN 2018–19





▲ Metro North is being proactive in preventing tooth decay for students at 19 state schools in Moreton Bay, including Banksia Beach at Bribie Island.

## Fluoride Varnish Program, helping to reduce tooth decay

School students across Moreton Bay are learning how to care for their teeth and prevent tooth decay through Metro North’s Fluoride Varnish Program.

Oral Health Therapist Consultant Alison Dickinson said that since the Fluoride Varnish Program began in 2015 it had grown from one school to 19 state and special schools in the Caboolture and Redcliffe areas.

“The program targets children from low socioeconomic areas who have limited access to preventative oral care and are at risk of poor dental behaviours,” Alison said.

“Evidence shows that a community-based fluoride varnish program is a cost effective preventative measure that can reduce decay rates in children by up to 37 per cent, and in the last year hundreds of students have now have received varnish treatment.

“The Caboolture and Redcliffe areas are among the most socially disadvantaged in Australia.

“We know that by the time they reach school age, young children living here have over three times the odds of experiencing dental decay than children living in more advantaged areas,” Alison said.

The program involves a multidisciplinary team of dental therapists, oral health therapists and dental assistants visiting children at their school rather than requiring them to attend a dental clinic to chat with kids about simple preventative dental treatment and provide fluoride varnish treatment.

The Metro North Oral Health School Varnish Program provides a dental referral pathway to public sector oral health care facilities and other children in the family are welcome to attend with their sibling.



## Cecilia gets a Deadly Start on university journey



For one day a week, Cecilia Anson arrives at Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital at 7.30am for a shift on Maternity and Newborn Services.



But the early alarm and two bus rides are worth it for the 18-year-old York Islander, who’s dreamed about working with new mums and babies for as long as she can remember.

“It’s definitely harder than I expected but I love it so much because it’s all about working together as a team and making sure you’re all helping each other,” Cecilia said.

Cecilia is one of the inaugural participants in the Deadly Start education2employment program. The group of around 20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will complete 375 hours each of paid training at either Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital, Community and Oral Health or The Prince Charles Hospital, to complete a Certificate III in Health Support in either nursing, allied health or dental.

The team behind the program is aiming to recruit hundreds of students over the coming years, with a long-term focus on creating a sustainable Indigenous workforce who can deliver culturally-appropriate care to patients, and to improve health, education and career outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Indigenous Midwife Sonita Giudice couldn’t wait to become involved with the new program to provide essential guidance and mentorship to students like Cecilia.

“My own journey into health was guided and shaped by elders who taught me valuable lessons on our cultural history, and this is something I now take into my own work at the Ngarrama Midwifery Group Practice,” Ms Giudice said.

The Deadly Start partnership program between Metro North, Brisbane North West Trade Training Centre, Mater Education and OSMAC has caught the attention of several other health services keen to replicate the model. The program was highly commended in the 2019 Queensland Reconciliation Awards for its contribution to Closing the Gap.

“Understanding this shared culture is crucial when it comes to caring for our Indigenous

patients, so this program is two-fold. It gives young Indigenous kids much greater opportunities to have careers in the health sector, while helping us build the workforce we need to provide culturally-appropriate care for our Indigenous patients,” Ms Giudice said.

For Cecilia, the program is the first step toward a university degree in nursing, so she can gain the skills and experience to one day take back to her home community in the Torres Strait.

“I know that my community would be really proud of me to get all of these qualifications and come back to the island and practice,” Cecilia said.



▲ Deadly Start student Cecilia Anson at RBWH.

## Helping ease parking costs



The costs at privately owned and operated car parks can be an additional stress on patients and their carers, particularly those who need regular or long-term treatment.

To help ease this financial burden, the State Government's Car Parking Concessions Scheme offers support to access discounted parking costs.

In the past year, Metro North has expanded the eligibility criteria and streamlined the application process for discounted parking at commercial car parks, enabling more vulnerable patients and their primary carers to access the concessional rates.

Between 1 July 2018 and 30 April 2019, approximately \$270,000 has been invested in concessional parking tickets and more than 15,500

concessional parking tickets have been issued at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) and The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) where commercial car parking fees apply.

Since the expanded criteria were introduced, parking concessions have grown at RBWH, from 547 concession tickets issued in July 2018 to 1,284 issued in April 2019. The number of concessions issued at TPCH averages to around 670 each month.

Full details on car parking concessions and eligibility criteria can be found on the Metro North website.

Concessions may apply to patients or carers in the following categories:

- Those experiencing financial hardship (which may include government concession card holders)
- Those needing to attend hospital for an extended time
- Those required to attend hospital frequently
- Those with special needs who require assistance.

## Honing skills through experience



Good communication helps our staff deliver excellent patient care and Metro North staff are encouraged to keep their skills up to date.

When communication between healthcare staff, or between staff and patients, isn't good, it can lead to bad outcomes or poor experiences for patients. Communicating well is more than just speaking to each other. It's also about listening and asking questions to ensure everyone involved fully understands the situation and can make informed decisions about treatment.

Communication, Respect, Accountability equals Safe Healthcare (CRASH) workshops delivered at Caboolture Hospital are based on the principle that many people learn best by experience and taking time to reflect – how we felt, reacted, what was good, what was bad, what we could do differently and how this knowledge can be translated into the workplace.

Redcliffe and Caboolture Hospitals' Learning and Development Manager David Liddy said about 50 people per month participated in a CRASH workshop.

"The program uses game and simulation-based activities in a fun, safe environment to support groups and individual learning," David said.

"It appeals to staff who enjoy being involved in their own learning and builds on personal experience and the experience of others in a non-threatening environment to provide a meaningful learning experience."

CRASH builds on ideas and concepts explored in Communication and Patient Safety training, which also focuses on communication awareness and practical tools to improve the safety and efficiency of communication in healthcare.

As a member of the Clinical Skills Development Service (CSDS) Pocket Centre network, staff at Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals and Woodford Corrections Health have

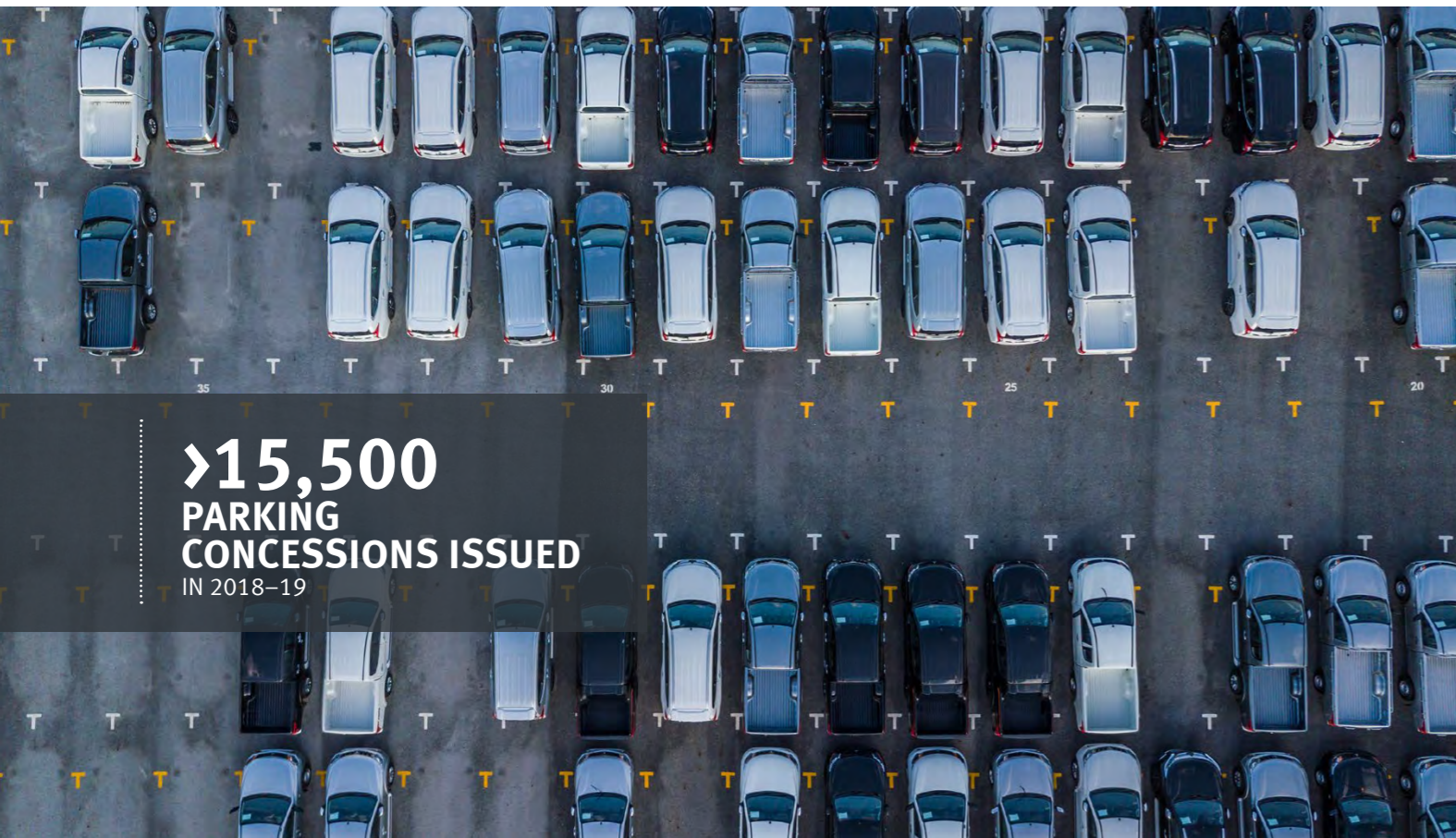
access to state-of-the-art simulation equipment and targeted training.

Purpose-built simulation rooms in the Caboolture Hospital Skills Development Centre enables high-level multidisciplinary clinical training for all specialties (maternity, theatres, emergency and paediatrics) and in-situ simulations in work units.

One of the key education priorities for Caboolture, Kilcoy and Woodford is evolving the current simulation environment towards establishment of a dedicated simulation service structured to support all education staff, in delivering high-quality simulation-based education programs.

In addition to local access to education and training, staff are also able to attend training in person at the CSDS Innovation Hub, based at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

Clinicians have access a flexible space filled with the latest state of the art technology, which enables them to interact with real-time data and collaborate with colleagues across Queensland.





## Speech Pathology telehealth brings the hospital closer to home

Patients with swallowing and communication disorders in regional areas can now receive care more conveniently and closer to home through telehealth speech pathology.

Thanks to the successful trial and roll out by Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital Speech Pathologist Dr Clare Burns, regional patients who would otherwise have to travel to clinic appointments for their rehabilitation can be treated anywhere.

Dr Burns said patients with swallowing disorders will benefit from two new models of care that are improving access to assessment and rehabilitation services by allowing them to connect with their clinician using computer or mobile devices.

**“THE NEW PERSONALISED TELEHEALTH MODEL WILL GUIDE PATIENTS THROUGH THEIR THERAPY AT A TIME AND PLACE THAT IS CONVENIENT TO THEM, WHILE RECEIVING REMOTE MONITORING AND SUPPORT FROM THEIR SPEECH PATHOLOGIST.”**

“For the first model, we are developing an integrated telehealth service to improve access to rehabilitation for patients with swallowing difficulties,” said Dr Burns.

“We will be using live videoconferencing and a software application accessed via the patient’s mobile device to connect with patients wherever they are and provide and individualised therapy program.

“Traditionally to access rehabilitation, patients come into a speech pathology clinic or the clinician travels to their home.

“The new personalised telehealth model will guide patients through their therapy at a time and place that is convenient to them, while receiving remote monitoring and support from their speech pathologist.”



▲ Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital Speech Pathologist Dr Clare Burns.

The second telehealth model will improve access to Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES), which uses a small camera to observe and evaluate swallowing function.

“We hope this telehealth model will enable patients to access this assessment more efficiently and enhance the delivery of FEES services across our district,” she said.

**17,492**  
**TELEHEALTH SERVICES**  
DELIVERED BY  
METRO NORTH IN 2018-19

### What is speech pathology?

Speech pathologists are specialists in diagnosing and treating communication disorders and problems with swallowing food and drink safely. Speech pathologists work with people who have experienced health issues such as stroke, brain injury, cerebral palsy, dementia, hearing loss, developmental delays, learning disabilities and problems using voice.



## Older people at the heart of The Ageing Well Initiative

A new program established through an alliance between Metro North and the Brisbane North Primary Health Network (PHN), is putting the care of older people first by working with The Prince Charles Hospital to improve outcomes.

Known as The Ageing Well Initiative, the program is engaging consumers, clinicians and service providers to inform how, where and when services should be delivered, and is ensuring any new service addresses what matters most to the older person.

Discussions with more than 200 stakeholders in the past year have led to a comprehensive view of the health journey for older people, with hospital specialists agreeing that more emphasis needs to be placed on living well in all aspects of life.

Clinical leaders have also worked with health and aged care service providers to design interventions across all settings, including hospital, general practice, ambulance services, residential aged care facilities, at home and in the community.



## Caring Together Community Advisory Council

A key new advisory group is ensuring that the community continues to have a strong voice in how current and future health services are rolled out at Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals.

Executive Director Dr Lance Le Ray said the Caring Together Community Advisory Council was established to provide strategic advice and feedback to the organisation and to create stronger links with the community.

“Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals already have a very active health consumer network, but I wanted to ensure the community had direct input into the decision-making process about services available at their local hospital today and in future,” Dr Le Ray said.

“It provides the community with a strong voice towards improving the health of the community.”

Dr Le Ray said group members must be affiliated and endorsed by a local organisation or recognised community group.

“The Council meets four times per year with members who reflect the strong diversity of views and backgrounds within our community encouraged to have their say,” Dr Le Ray said.

“Members represent groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, older residents, people living with a disability, rural communities and school children.

“Meetings focus on improvements to current services and future planning to ensure the hospital can adapt to our changing community.”

While still in its infancy, the Caring Together Community Advisory Council is will continue to grow and will become an additional way of ensuring the health of the community stays at the forefront of the decision-making process.





## Caring for our diverse community

With almost a quarter of Metro North's community born overseas and originating from non-English speaking countries, we recognise that one model of healthcare doesn't fit all.



▲ Harmony Day.

To ensure we provide appropriate care for patients from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, Metro North aims to limit any barriers which may be experienced or perceived by patients in accessing our services, including language or practical barriers, or lack of knowledge or understanding of the services available.

Access to healthcare for CALD patients may also be limited by concerns regarding care or services being culturally inappropriate, or a reluctance to engage because of fears they will not be understood.

Metro North is committed to providing accessible care for all and in response has created a Cultural Diversity Coordinator role and established a Health Equity Advisory and Liaison group,

### What is health equity?

Health equity means that all people can reach their full potential and should not be disadvantaged from attaining it because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, social class, socioeconomic status or other socially determined circumstance.

Most common overseas places people in Metro North are born:

- China
- India
- England
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Canada
- United States of America
- Scotland
- Ireland
- Philippines
- Italy
- Malaysia
- Fiji
- Singapore
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Papua New Guinea
- Taiwan

comprising community partners and leaders to advise on the strategic direction of multicultural healthcare in Metro North.

In the past year, we have collated and developed an online hub of resources for staff to improve awareness and understanding of health equity. These include translated health resources by topic, translation and interpreter support, and communication tools to assist staff caring for people from diverse backgrounds.

More than ten per cent of people in our community speak a language other than English at home. To ensure all patients receive appropriate care, our patient experience survey was trialled in Arabic and Simplified Chinese with more language trials planned for the future.

Work has started on Welcome to Hospital videos with the option of nine languages other than English in audio and subtitles, and a translated appointment reminder tool which will translate appointment letters into 39 languages.

We have also conducted a needs assessment which identified the most common potentially preventable healthcare admissions across Metro North for CALD patients, and a breast health program was designed and delivered with CALD women on Brisbane's northside.

Metro North's first three-year Multicultural Action Plan was also drafted through consultation in the past year. The plan will outline a framework to collaborate and coordinate activities to improve health outcomes for some of the most vulnerable CALD individuals, families and communities in the Brisbane North region. The final plan will be launched later in 2019 following further consultation.

**23.5%**  
OF PEOPLE IN METRO NORTH WERE BORN OVERSEAS (QLD 21.6%)

**12.3%**  
SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME



## Technology support for translation



For an inpatient who doesn't speak English, something as simple as sourcing a phone charger can be a challenge.



But imagine what it's like as an inpatient trying to communicate urgently to a ward nurse that you are in pain, or having to relay embarrassing personal information to your gynaecologist via your son-in-law?

While in-person and phone interpreter services are essential in many medical settings, the reality is they're not always available in the moment they're needed.

Travis Pearson, Acting Operations Manager of Internal Medicine Services at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH), leads a team that's developed a proof of concept for a Universal Health Translator app that could fill the gap for both clinicians and patients.

While the prototype will be trialled with six common languages, the team has another 60–80 in its sights, which has attracted the attention of some of the biggest names in the tech business.

**“THE UHT IS ABOUT SPEEDING UP ACCESS TO CARE, IMPROVING PATIENTS' EXPERIENCES AND ALLOWING STAFF TO USE MACHINE TRANSLATION MORE SAFELY, WITHOUT COMPROMISING PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY”**

“For the medical industry, ready-made applications such as Google Translate are not sanctioned because of major issues around patient privacy and confidentiality and the risk of mistranslation,” Travis said.

“Even in its best languages, machine translation accuracy lags far behind our gold standard—an accredited human interpreter—and the consequences of mistranslation in a medical setting can be severe.

“However, what we are doing is leveraging what can work from some of these available services to build our own niche Universal Health Translator (UHT), that reaches our high safety, quality and privacy standards to augment existing human interpreter and translator services, to improve patient outcomes.”

The UHT is just one component in a global shift toward technology-enabled care, which combines health technology, digital media and mobile devices to provide cost-effective solutions for ever-stretched health services, improve patient care and meet changing consumer expectations.

“While machine translation quality is constantly improving, no tech could take the place of an accredited human interpreter because it could never interpret crucial nuances, body language and emotional cues,” Travis said.

“However, we believe this could be a life-saving value-add when an interpreter can't be sourced in time.”

The team developed the application based heavily on experiences from clinicians, consumer advocacy representatives and patient stories as well as policy makers to understand the challenges a successful solution would need to deliver.

Positive early results from the prototype's testing suggests a fully-functional app could be rolled out in as few as two years.

The team is also committed to reducing confidentiality breaches that can occur from relying on family or community members to translate.

“The UHT is about speeding up access to care, improving patients' experiences and allowing staff to use machine translation more safely, without compromising patient confidentiality,” Travis said.

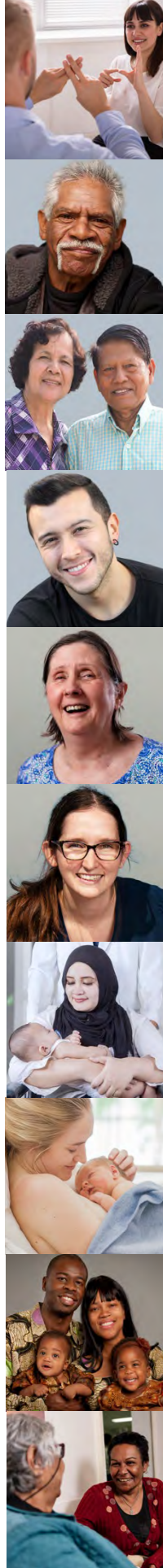
As the future of health switches from biological to computer science, the app is destined to join the ranks of other technologies already revolutionising patient care such as virtual and augmented reality, and robotics and automation, as demand for services soars.

### TOP 5

LANGUAGES REQUESTED AND NO. OF REQUESTS INCLUDE:



Arabic	4072
Mandarin	2428
Cantonese	1426
Auslan	1243
Persian Farsi	1226



## Partnering with consumers

Consumers, patients and family members provide vital feedback and advice to help us continually improve our healthcare services and the way we communicate with patients and each other.

Metro North has more than 100 registered consumer representatives who have been partnering with us since 2017.

Consumers participate in many ways including as members of advisory groups, committees, and consumer networks, on project working groups, and as part of staff recruitment processes. Consumers are also invited to help co-design services such as the Mental Health consumer engagement model.

This year Metro North has introduced a new Patient Participation Panel at Redcliffe Hospital and reviewed the role of the Community Board Advisory Group.

### Consumer advisory groups or panels

- RBWH Consumer Advisory Group
- Redcliffe Hospital Patient Participation Panel

### Consumer advisory networks

- TPCB Consumer Engagement Network
- Caboolture Caring Together Consumer Network

### Individual consumers and carers involved in:

- Clinical streams (Cancer Care, Medicine, Women's and Children's, Heart and Lung)
- The Health Alliance
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander projects (eg TPCB Lighthouse Project)
- NDIS transition
- Health literacy project
- Safety and Quality Committees
- Research Grants Committee
- RBWH diversity working group
- Oral Health executive
- RBWH executive
- Staff Excellence Awards

### Community of interest engagement models

- Alcohol and Drug Services Client Advisory Committee
- Health Equity and Advisory Liaison Group
- Heart Health Consumer Advisory Group with Statewide remit
- Mental Health Services new model of engagement

### Metro North stakeholder registers:

- Consumer register
- Community partner register
- Community of interest register for individuals

### Annual community events and expos with engagement:

- Close the Gap Forum and NAIDOC Celebration
- Mental Health Expo
- Brighton Healthy Ageing Expo

### How can you get involved?

There are a range of opportunities and platforms to connect and engage which ensure consumers who have recently experienced our services have a voice in Metro North and in all aspects of service development, design and delivery.

For more information and to get involved, visit <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/get-involved>



## Preserving precious antibiotics

Antibiotic or antimicrobial resistance is becoming increasingly prevalent across the world, with overuse of antimicrobial medications contributing to patient harm.

A team of infectious diseases, infection control, nursing and pharmacy staff at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital are on a mission to educate clinicians and consumers on the negative effects of antibiotic resistance.

Patients who develop a resistance to medication can experience a range of negative outcomes including ineffective treatment, recurring infection, delayed recovery or even death. Protecting the effectiveness of the antibiotics we currently have available to us means they will be effective when patients need them most.

Dr Krispin Hajkowicz, head of RBWH Infectious Diseases, said the program, which commenced in 2013 has grown to become intrinsically linked to the way antimicrobials are prescribed both at RBWH and across the Metro North health service.

"We've set a range of guidelines and approval processes for clinicians as part of our antimicrobial stewardship strategies to promote optimal prescribing and have a strong focus on providing education to them, as well as consumers," Krispin said.

### What is antimicrobial resistance?

Microbes are germs like bacteria, fungus and viruses that cause infections. Over time, microbes can become immune to certain antimicrobial treatments such as antibiotics, antivirals and antifungal medicine. This can lead to treatment not being successful which can be extremely serious if no alternative medicines are available.

"We have seen a number of noticeable improvements as a result of the program, including a decrease in total antibiotic use, greater awareness of the issue among clinicians and increased consumer engagement.

"We're starting to see patients questioning whether they need to be taking antibiotics, which is one of our aims. Education is key."

The significance of the antimicrobial stewardship is only set to grow as antimicrobial resistance becomes more prevalent.



▲ RBWH AMS Pharmacist Christopher Accornero and Senior Medical Officer Hugh Wright are key advocates of the antimicrobial stewardship.





## Safety and Quality Strategy - Strengthen our patient safety and quality improvement culture

At Metro North, we believe that with the skills and passion of our staff, underpinned by our values and strategic direction, we can achieve the highest standard of care and outcomes for our patients. It is our responsibility to foster an organisational culture which promotes quality and supports the pursuit of improvement.

To deliver on our strategy for safety and quality, Metro North promotes a culture of organisational wide learning and leadership that is self-reflective, just and transparent. We are proud to be a values-based organisation and strive to put our values into action to develop a workplace where staff feel supported to challenge the status quo and innovate. Our successes are opportunities to learn and we will strengthen our systems for staff to share and learn from experiences of harm.

Metro North will continue to build capability and resilience by implementing contemporary programs which are co-designed with clinicians and consumers. We support staff and consumer engagement and encourage participation in education and training to strengthen our culture of leading for patient safety and quality improvement.

We will measure our culture of patient safety and quality improvement through increased participation in relevant education and training, and through the roll out of our digital strategy.



## Relieving pain faster

▲ Director of Physiotherapy Mark Cruickshank, participating physiotherapists Janelle Heine and Venkat Acholi and Dr David Kramer.



With more than 1500 patients recruited and no prescriber errors reported to date, a physiotherapist prescribing trial led by Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (RBWH) is increasing access to timely and safe pain relief for patients in emergency.



The trial has examined the safety and quality of Physiotherapists autonomously prescribing medications in the emergency department to manage pain associated with musculoskeletal conditions and minor fractures.

Director of Physiotherapy Mark Cruickshank said the trial had proven real benefits in the RBWH Emergency and Trauma Centre, including minimising length of stay for patients.

“The preliminary results have been overwhelmingly positive and suggest that Physiotherapist prescribing can be implemented safely and with high levels of patient satisfaction,” Mark said.

“In addition to safe and high-quality care, it’s important that patients feel confident in their prescriber, particularly with a new service.”

Eight physiotherapists at five sites, including two at RBWH, are currently participating in the trial which allows them

to prescribe both simple pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen as well as a limited amount of stronger opioid medications.

“Physios have a range of techniques and skills in their toolkit to manage musculoskeletal conditions and injuries holistically, and the addition of pain relief really aids the complete management for the patient.”

The physiotherapists involved completed 250 hours of formal training and learning in practice to ensure patient safety.

A comprehensive process is undertaken to follow-up with patients and track any potential prescriber related incidents and seek feedback on the patient’s experience.

“With regards to safety, the majority of pain relief prescribed to patients throughout the trial is administered whilst in the emergency department environment,” Mark said.

The trial commenced at RBWH in July 2017 and includes an additional four emergency departments throughout the state.

“We are interested in the results of this study because we know that ultimately, more prescribers mean quicker and better access to effective medications for patients. This is not only beneficial for patients in busy metropolitan centres but also for those in regional areas.”



## Safety and Quality Forum 2018

Patient safety was in the spotlight at the annual Safety and Quality Forum aimed at increasing awareness and highlighting excellence within Metro North.

Over 200 attendees gathered at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre to hear Dr Stephen Duckett from the Grattan Institute open the forum with his compelling view of the challenges and opportunities for safety and quality in a digital world.

Key Metro North innovation projects were also profiled including the Dental Online Voucher Exchange (DOVE), Closed Loop Electronic Medication Management (CLEMM), Values Based Healthcare and the Deadly Start education2employment programs.

Metro North’s Executive Director of Clinical Governance, Safety, Quality and Risk, Noelle Cridland said the forum brings people together to share their knowledge about improving patient care.

“One of the main features of the day was the engaging panel discussion brought to life by Dr David Rosengren featuring some of our key speakers debating whether digital health is or friend or foe,” Noelle said.

“The day is a wonderful opportunity for staff across the health service to connect, collaborate and share ideas on how we are improving safety and quality.”



## Focus on flow improves patient experience

Ensuring patients get the right treatment at the right place at the right time is the focus of a project looking at patient flow across Caboolture Hospital.

The project looked at the barriers and roadblocks over a 12-week period which affected efficient patient flow through the hospital.

Recommendations from the project included improving staff empowerment, engagement and messaging to promote ownership of the issue, and ensuring people take individual and collaborative accountability for the need to improve.

The project report, written by Dr Sean Keogh from the Emergency Department and Rebecca Hitchcock from the Safety and Quality unit, identified potential issues and focused on actions to mitigate risks and improve flow.

Among the recommendations was the need to establish a Medical Assessment Unit and Transit Lounge, and for staff to actively consider whether patients could continue their treatment at nearby Kilcoy Hospital.

A new Nurse Navigator Hospital Interface position at Caboolture Hospital is providing an important liaison service between the two facilities and assists to identify suitable patients.

However, many of the other recommendations have been implemented by changing work practices and implemented at little or no cost. This includes a re-design of the Caboolture Hospital Patient Flow Unit, which includes a senior nurse with appropriate leadership skills heading-up bed management with regular rounding every two hours.

The redevelopment of Caboolture Hospital over the next few years will create 130 new beds along with new and expanded services. Getting the hospital’s flow right now will make the transition to the new services easier and faster.

With a continued patient flow focus, Caboolture Hospital has an opportunity to achieve improved outcomes for patients and prevent harm through the reduction of unnecessary delays throughout their journey.

### What is patient flow?

Patient flow is the way patients move through the hospital or healthcare facility. In the simplest terms, it’s about managing our resources such as beds, staff, systems and clinical spaces efficiently to ensure all patients get the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

**1500+**

PATIENTS RECEIVED PAIN MEDICATION FROM A PHYSIOTHERAPIST

**250**

HOURS OF TRAINING FOR PARTICIPATING PHYSIOTHERAPIST

**97%**

OF PATIENTS IN THE TRIAL ARE CONFIDENT TO RECEIVE PAIN MEDICATION FROM A PHYSIOTHERAPIST

## ✓ Planning for wellbeing

Consumers have played a key role in shaping a plan to improve mental health, suicide prevention, and alcohol and other drug treatment services in North Brisbane and Moreton Bay.

Planning for Wellbeing (2018–2023) is sponsored by Metro North and Brisbane North PHN, and establishes future directions for the region, and was developed in partnership with healthcare providers and

practitioners, people with a lived experience and carers.

The plan presents both organisations with the opportunity not only to lead work on ensuring those needing

healthcare can access the right services at the right time in the right place, but to engage stakeholders in identifying shared objectives for the future.

Planning for Wellbeing was launched at the Brisbane Mental Health Expo hosted by Metro North and Metro South, Brisbane North PHN and Brisbane South PHN, during Queensland Mental Health Week in October 2018.

The expo aims to reduce stigma surrounding mental health and create community connections that open opportunities for engagement, partnerships and conversation about mental health and wellbeing.

▼ The Brisbane Mental Health Expo is a key event during Queensland Mental Health Week in October.



## Sharing patient stories to improve hand hygiene



In healthcare, our hands are healers, but they also pose one of the biggest threats to patients.



RBWH Cancer Care Nursing Research, together with Metro North Consumer Representatives and QUT Creative Industries, have developed an education program for staff which brings real patient stories to the forefront, in a bid to improve hand hygiene compliance.

With this targeted and emotive education program, the project achieved excellent results, including RBWH Cancer Care Services meeting the 100 percent compliance rate immediately after the completion of the project.

Cancer Care Nurse Researcher Nicole Gavin said the project was focused on engaging with stakeholders to design an impactful key message strategy for staff education to drive improved hand hygiene practices.

“By collaborating with consumers and a multidisciplinary group of healthcare professionals, we learnt about why hand hygiene is important to everyone,” Nicole said.

“Ultimately, we are all consumers of healthcare, and we agreed that good hand hygiene is important because it protects not only our patients, but ourselves and our colleagues.”

“We learnt that patients find it respectful when healthcare workers wash their hands, and that patients would not feel comfortable asking a healthcare professional to do so. Patients have very real concerns that we don’t often consider when we are healthy.”

The project team embedded these key messages and the personal voices and stories of two consumers in staff education sessions to enhance existing hand hygiene tools, such as the Five Moments of Hand Hygiene.

“As healthcare professionals, we know that hand hygiene is the foundation of all infection prevention and control programs.”

“What we found through this project is that the personal stories of patients genuinely resonated with staff and had a big impact on improving hand hygiene, and that is a very important lesson for future projects.”



HAND HYGIENE RATES **HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL TARGET**



**81.9%**

COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL TARGET OF 80% IN 2018–19

### Five moments for hand hygiene:

1. Before touching a patient
2. Before a procedure
3. After a procedure or exposure to body fluids (eg blood, urine, sneezes)
4. After touching a patient
5. After touching a patient’s surroundings



# Our safety and quality data

## Why complaints MATTER

Compliments and complaints help us continually improve our services. By providing feedback about your experiences with our care, you can help us identify what we're doing well and where we can do better. If you believe there is a problem, making a complaint makes sure we're aware of it and can take steps to prevent it happening again.

## How to give FEEDBACK

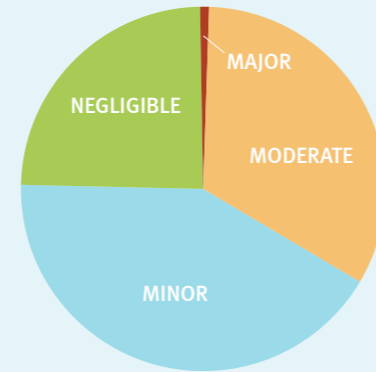
If you are not comfortable giving feedback directly at the time of your treatment, you can provide feedback through our website at <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/contact-us> or by emailing or phoning your hospital and asking to speak to the Patient or Consumer Liaison service directly.

## Complaints by SEVERITY

The Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) is Queensland's health service complaints agency and is another avenue consumers have available to them should they wish to make a healthcare complaint.

The OHO is an independent statutory body and the place Queenslanders should go if they have a complaint about a health service provider or a health service provided to them, a family member or someone in their care that they are unable to resolve with the service provider directly. Complaints can be made to the OHO about both registered and unregistered health service providers or health service organisations.

The opposite table represents the 2018-19 total number of Metro North-related complaints received by the OHO.



Complaints received	437
1. Assessment	98
2. Take no further action	63
3. Local resolution	218
4. Conciliation	19
5. Investigation	20
6. Referral to another organisation i.e. AHPRA	19
7. Referral to the Director of Proceedings or Conduct of an inquiry	0

- 1. Take no further action:** Some complaints will not be taken further for a number of reasons.
- 2. Assessment:** The assessment process will gather all relevant information needed from the complainant, the health service provider and any relevant experts to enable the OHO to make the right decision on how best to manage the complaint.
- 3. Local resolution:** OHO works with the complainant and Metro North to facilitate meetings and other communication to resolve the complaint informally.
- 4. Conciliation:** When complaints are more complex, conciliation is an informal, confidential meeting process run by independent skilled conciliators.
- 5. Investigation:** Investigation involves a detailed examination of

- a complaint including gathering evidence and analysing the cause/s of an adverse health incident or healthcare issue.
- 6. Referral to another organisation:** A complaint can be referred to another organisation if the issue falls within another jurisdiction, better suited to managing the complaint.
- 7. Referral to the Director of Proceedings or Conduct of an inquiry:** The Health Ombudsman can refer a complaint to the Director of Proceedings. Generally, this is for serious complaints that may require legal review or referral to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT). The Director of Proceedings is a statutory position within the Office of the Health Ombudsman, responsible for independently assessing complaints and other matters from a legal standpoint and deciding whether to take them before the QCAT.

### Our safety and quality data

METRO NORTH RECEIVED ALMOST **7,000 COMPLIMENTS** in the financial year 2018/19

**91%** OF COMPLAINTS RESOLVED WITHIN **35 DAYS** in the financial year 2018/19

METRO NORTH RECEIVED **3.8% MORE COMPLAINTS** in the financial year 2018/19 compared to the previous year.

### Our safety and quality data (continued)

**16%** REDUCTION IN FALLS RESULTING IN HARM IN 2018-19

**13,822** STAFF INFLUENZA VACCINES IN 2018-19

**HOSPITAL ACQUIRED PRESSURE INJURIES\*** HAVE REDUCED BY **41%** IN 2018-19

\*INCREASED STAGE 3, STAGE 4 AND UNSTAGEABLE HOSPITAL ACQUIRED PRESSURE INJURIES.

## Blood products

Blood products are a vital and precious resource. Metro North is committed to using blood efficiently and reducing the amount of blood products discarded.

### BLOOD PRODUCTS USED

In 2018-19, across our hospitals we used:

**25,355** units of fresh blood products transfused

### DISCARDED BLOOD PRODUCTS

RED CELLS	PLATELETS
Metro North 0.7%	Metro North 6.6%
Queensland 2.0%	Queensland 11.9%
National 1.9%	National 12.1%

**METRO NORTH RECEIVED 3,486** units of red blood cells from other Queensland facilities to be recycled or to reduce discards through expiry



## Freezing blood loss

A blood platelet transfusion can mean the difference between life and death for a trauma patient, but in remote areas it's not always available when needed.

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital intensive care specialist Professor Michael Reade is leading the way in researching how to freeze blood platelets to extend their shelf life.

Blood platelets are cells made in the bone marrow which help to improve clotting and sealing wounds. Unfortunately, with a shelf life of only five to seven days, up to a third of collected platelets end up going to waste.

Professor Reade is collaborating with the Australian Red Cross Blood Service and The University of Queensland on the

project with the aim of preserving platelets as long as two to four years which would improve their use in remote areas and even on the battlefield.

As a Brigadier in the Australian Army and the only Australian Defence Force full-time clinical academic focused on trauma, Professor Reade has seen first-hand the catastrophic impacts these barriers can also have on those wounded in action.

Currently platelets are stored at 20-24 degrees, but Prof Reade's research is trialling whether they are safe to use if stored at -80 degrees.

"This could greatly reduce wastage of this precious resource and significantly improve the outcomes for patients affected by location or logistical barriers," Prof Reade said.

## ✓ Intern audits highlight quality improvements

Medical interns at Redcliffe Hospital are conducting research audits into quality improvement activities as part of their training.

Those research audits are now delivering practical quality improvements in hospital's busy Emergency Department.

Redcliffe Hospital Emergency Department Research Manager Dr Catherine Forristal said the research audits are delivering practical quality improvements in the busy department.

The Emergency Department treats more than 60,000 patients each year, including around 15,000 children. Each year, the hospital takes on more than two dozen medical interns, who are required to complete a six-week rotation through the Emergency Department as part of their first year as doctors.

**“AS A RESULT OF THIS AUDIT, COMPLIANCE WITH THE MOST CURRENT GUIDELINES HAS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED IN OUR EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT.”**

“Our Emergency Audit Initiative was designed to introduce these junior doctors to research techniques and the importance of quality assurance in the care that they are providing,” Dr Forristal said.

“So far, 43 interns have completed a research audit, with seven more currently underway. At least four of these audits have, in particular, led to significant quality improvement for patients and two more have been developed into larger multidisciplinary research projects.”

Dr Chantel Sabbadin was one of the first interns to undertake a research audit, choosing to investigate how patients were being treated and how often the most recent treatment guidelines were being applied. She looked at preschool wheeze, a condition that affects up to a third of children before their third birthday.



▲ Redcliffe Hospital ED Research Manager Dr Catherine Forristal.

“As a result of this audit, compliance with the most current guidelines for that condition has significantly improved in our Emergency Department,” Dr Forristal said.

“We know this because of another intern re-audited compliance with the guidelines later in the year and found it had grown to over 92%.”

Febrile neutropenia is a common complication of the treatment of cancer, and the risk of life-threatening infection in these patients means that timely initiation of antimicrobial therapy is crucial. Dr Forristal said that an audit by intern highlighted how important his was.

“When re-audited later in the year, patients were receiving antibiotics significantly quicker, and compliance with recommended antibiotics reached 100%,” she said.

Dr Forristal said that in both cases, the initial audit's findings had promoted changes to the way clinicians were treating patients and had been the catalyst for quality improvements.

## 📈 Garden gives healing appeal for patients

✓ An Indigenous garden is providing patients of The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) a calm healing space during their hospital admission.

🗨️ The “Murrumba” garden was designed to make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families feel welcome and comfortable during their hospital stay.

Clinical Nurse Consultant Darsha Beetson said that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients who visit the hospital feel anxious about their care and overwhelmed.

“Patients may come from rural and remote areas throughout Queensland, and have never been to a large city hospital,” Darsha said.

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

“It is important to create an environment that is meaningful and accepting to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as it helps them feel more comfortable.”

The ‘Murrumba’ garden which means good or good spirit in the Turrbal language, includes Indigenous totem poles, a yarning circle, edible Indigenous plants and wall mural created by a local Aboriginal artist. It also features colours from both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in its plan.

Designed in extensive collaboration with the hospital, Indigenous elders, Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit, and the wider Indigenous community, the garden aims to create a culturally appropriate place for gathering and connection.

It contains physical and traditional elements that are meaningful to the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well

as various natural raw materials such as sandstone blocks, deco granite flooring and Indigenous medicinal plants.

“We have received letters from patients of many diverse backgrounds, telling us how meaningful the garden was to them and their families,” Darsha said.

“For our Indigenous patients in particular, it gives them a sense of comfort and peace during their hospital stay.”

The healing garden is an initiative of The Lighthouse Project, a partnership 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.

▼ **Partners in healing:** Cherie Franks, Director of Nursing TPCH; Anthea Burns, Lighthouse Project Coordinator and Darsha Beetson, Lighthouse Project Clinical Nurse Consultant at the launch of The Prince Charles Hospital Indigenous healing garden.



