

Gold Coast Health Nursing and Midwifery Annual Review 2023



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Nursing and Midwifery Annual Review 2023

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Chief Executive Message



Message from Ron Calvert

On behalf of Gold Coast Health, I am pleased to share with you the 2023 Nursing and Midwifery Review. This review highlights the exceptional care delivered by Gold Coast Health nurses and midwives and celebrates their achievements as individuals and as a profession.

In 2023, the population of South East Queensland grew by three per cent, and the impact of this has been felt across our hospitals and community services. Our frontline staff are faced with addressing these challenges directly yet demonstrate an unwavering commitment to caring for our community.

Nursing and Midwifery constitutes Gold Coast Health's largest cohort, with more than 6000 nurses and midwives across our health service. They bring our Always Care philosophy to life every day. This philosophy recognises that the simplest acts of compassion can have a significant impact for patients, staff, the Gold Coast community, and our partners in care delivery, and this is reflected in the actions of our staff.

This review showcases how our nurses and midwives put this philosophy into practice and embody Gold Coast Health's values of Compassion, Integrity, Empower, Excellence, Respect and Community First.

You'll also see the ways in which our nurses and midwives are expanding their scope to deliver improved services, bringing high quality care closer to home, and leaning into innovation to support staff and patient well-being. The addition of a dedicated Clinical Initiatives Nurse in the Emergency Department triage area is one way our nurses are prioritising comfort and care for patients and their families. We also opened the doors to the Neonatal Nurse Evaluation and Treatment (NeoNET) clinic in September, providing expert care to our tiniest patients and supporting families in a comfortable setting.

Our cohort leads the way in innovative staff training with initiatives such as virtual reality goggles, helping our nurses develop critical stress-management skills in a safe and immersive environment. The introduction of the SafeZone App also brings peace of mind to our community nurses and midwives, empowering staff to focus on their tasks and optimise patient care, knowing they have immediate support at hand in case of an emergency.

I would like to express my gratitude to all our nurses and midwives for the dedication and compassion you show in your role. Thank you for your commitment to caring for our community.

- Ron Calvert, Chief Executive
Gold Coast Health

"This review highlights the world-class care delivered by Gold Coast Health nurses and midwives, and celebrates their achievements as individuals and as professionals."

Welcome



"Nurses and midwives' willingness to embrace change and actively participate in shaping the future of healthcare is a testament to the unwavering commitment to their professions."

Message from Matthew Lunn

It is with immense pride that I present this year's Nursing and Midwifery Annual Review. Reflecting on the past 12 months, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude for the dedication and compassion displayed by our team of nurses and midwives.

This past year has presented significant challenges. The healthcare landscape continues to evolve and we have faced situations requiring substantial strength and adaptability. Our nurses and midwives have consistently met these challenges with unwavering commitment.

Our pursuit of Magnet Redesignation remains a cornerstone of our vision for excellence in person-centred care. The rigorous standards for this credential serve as a powerful motivator to continuously improve our practice environment, empower our staff and deliver the highest quality care to our community. Nurses and midwives have demonstrated active participation in this pursuit from the dedicated work of the Professional Governance councils to the countless examples of daily excellence exhibited at the bedside; this has been instrumental in our progress.

This year has seen numerous instances of nurses and midwives exceeding expectations from individual acts of care that significantly impacted patients and their families to leading the implementation of innovative programs that have improved patient outcomes.

We are witnessing a significant transformation in care delivery. The expansion of advanced practice roles is empowering highly skilled nurses and midwives to assume greater responsibilities while new models of care ensure that patients receive the most current and effective treatments. The willingness of nurses and midwives to embrace changes and actively shape the future of healthcare is a testament to their commitment to their professions.

None of this progress would be possible without the dedication from nurses and midwives demonstrated throughout the year. They have supported their colleagues, comforted patients, and consumers, and consistently prioritised the health of the community.

For all of this, I offer my deepest gratitude. The dedication of our nurses and midwives to patients and the community is the foundation upon which we build a healthier tomorrow.

I am optimistic about the possibilities ahead, together, we will continue to push the boundaries of excellence, embrace innovation, and deliver care that sets the standard. Thank you to all the nurses and midwives for being an integral part of delivering our strategic ambitions for Gold Coast Health.

**- Matthew Lunn, Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Patient Experience
Gold Coast Health**

Our year in numbers (as per the 2022–23 Gold Coast Health Annual Report)

6,017
nursing and
midwifery
staff



5,175
births at Gold Coast
University Hospital




Education

258
Newly Qualified
Nurses/Midwives

196 Registered nurses
30 Enrolled nurses
32 Midwives

\$5.95
million
in research grants
(July 22-June 23)



187,000
Emergency Department
2022 - 2023 presentations



466
Peer Reviewed
articles published
since July 2023



Nursing/Midwifery
student placement
weeks

9,757
8398 Registered nurses
1265 Enrolled nurses
94 Midwives



Your experience and expectations
Patient survey results conducted during 2023

95% Satisfied with overall quality of most recent visit

92% Most important expectations were consistently met.

98% Nurses/midwives treated me with courtesy and respect.

97% Nurses/midwives listened carefully to me.

98% Nurses/midwives demonstrated a caring and compassionate attitude.

98% Nurses/midwives acknowledged my cultural and individual values and beliefs.

Reward and Recognition



Nursing and Midwifery Professional Recognition Program

The following nursing and midwifery staff have completed their portfolios for the 2023 Nursing and Midwifery Professional Recognition Program. Congratulations to all on these achievements.

Expert Portfolio

Rista Van Rooyen

RN Portfolios

Andrew Miller
Ashlee Sheehan
Beatrice Church
Catherine Smith
Corey Adam
Danielle Kingsley
Dean Gannon

Galawech Sonboli
Kellie Vo
Kelsey Sharp
Phillis Laverty
Rachel Fredericks
Shalin Juthani
Shondel Lewis

Golden Gala Award Nominees

The Golden Gala Awards is the major reward and recognition event on Gold Coast Health's calendar each year, providing all staff with the opportunity to acknowledge the great work of their peers.

Chris Plasier

Compassion Award Nominee

Wendy Simpson

Respect Award Nominee

Nursing and Midwifery Excellence Awards

Congratulations to our 2023 Gold Coast Health Nursing and Midwifery Excellence Award recipients:

- Amanda Williams **Midwifery Award**
- Connie Cheng **Women's Newborn and Children's Services (WNCS) Award**
- Monica Mullins **Community Nursing Award**
- Julie Murphy **Community Nursing Award**
- Jacob Christensen **Mental Health Award**
- Nikki Stevenson **Education and Research Award**
- Vicki Piggott **Amy Enderlin Excellence Award – Registered Nurse**
- Rebecca Walker **Amy Enderlin Excellence Award – Enrolled Nurse**
- Rita Ruska **Amy Enderlin Excellence Award – Assistant in Nursing**



Nursing /Midwifery Scholarships

Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship recipients funded by the Gold Coast Hospital Foundation.

- Amy-Chantel Ryan
- Catherine Walker
- Chloe Geyer
- Ciranoush Aird
- Elizabeth Charleson
- Kayla Thomas
- Marlee Adams
- Michelle Prosser
- Nicholas McIntyre
- Rachael Margieson
- Rebecca Ward
- Sara Syme

Professional Practice Model

Our Professional Practice Model (PPM) depicts how nurses and midwives at Gold Coast Health collaborate, communicate, and develop professionally to provide safe, high quality, person-centred fundamental care. It aligns with Gold Coast Health's philosophy of Always Care, our values, and symbolises how we work. We always care for each other, our patients, their loved ones, and the communities we serve.

We strive to foster and advance interprofessional collaboration, diversity and inclusion, and safety for all. The PPM domains provide nurses and midwives with a framework to support advocacy and advancement within our professions.

The original PPM was developed in 2016 through inter-professional collaboration with input from over 500 staff. In 2023, the model was revised to contemporise the theoretical framework and professional practice domains to be reflective of current and future nursing and midwifery professional practice at Gold Coast Health.



Professional Practice Model

Magnet Recognition Program

In 2020, Gold Coast Health became the first whole health service in Australia to achieve Magnet Recognition®. The Magnet Recognition Program® is a four-yearly international credential based on more than 30 years of research, that recognises healthcare organisations for positive professional practice environments where staff can perform at their best, leading to improved outcomes for staff and for patients. It is a highly prestigious credential attained by only a small number of organisations worldwide and is the highest international honour for nursing and midwifery excellence.

Magnet hospitals demonstrate higher levels of nurse satisfaction, lower turnover, and a higher percentage of highly trained and qualified staff in comparison to non-Magnet hospitals. It is no wonder then that the Magnet Program is a key strategic objective for Gold Coast Health, and particularly, nursing and midwifery. As we enter a future landscape of projected workforce shortages, coupled with increases in services

and new builds, Magnet can assist us to position ourselves as a great place to work where we attract and retain the best people to deliver high quality care.

In 2023, our journey to Magnet Redesignation continued with the Professional Practice team working with teams across Gold Coast Health to gather evidence and identify examples to demonstrate how we meet 87 different criteria to be deemed a Magnet organisation. We reinvigorated 'That's Magnet' forums showcasing day-to-day examples of the work nurses and midwives do that show we are a Magnet organisation and that Magnet is what we do every day.

The extensive Magnet document will be submitted in December 2024 to the American Nurses Credentialing Centre for review by a team of Magnet appraisers. We anticipate hosting the appraisal team in late 2025 where we will once again demonstrate the exceptional services and care provided by our healthcare teams.

Magnet Ambassadors

Our Magnet Ambassadors are an integral part of our Magnet journey. Ambassadors attend regular 'That's Magnet' forums to hear about exciting changes and innovations occurring throughout the organisation. The Ambassadors then take this information back to their respective units to keep staff informed.

In 2023, we recruited many new ambassadors across Gold Coast Health who attended ambassador workshops to learn more about the Magnet Program, our Professional Practice Model and how it applies to everyday practice. Through these workshops, ambassadors begin to understand what their role entails and how they can help the organisation to achieve redesignation through sharing information, engaging with their team and helping their team to understand that Magnet is not additional work. It is recognition of the great work our teams do every day.



Robina Ambassador Workshop, May 2023



GCUH Ambassador Workshop, April 2023

Professional Governance



Empowering nurses and midwives with strong professional governance councils

Gold Coast Health is taking a leading role in empowering its nurses and midwives with the establishment of robust professional governance councils. These councils create a coordinated approach to building a sustainable, professional and highly capable nursing and midwifery workforce, ultimately leading to better patient care.

This innovative professional governance model provides a platform for nurses and midwives at all levels to actively contribute to achieving Gold Coast Health's vision and strategic objectives. By having a say in decision-making processes, nurses and midwives are more engaged and feel a greater sense of autonomy in their practice.

Ultimately, this model fosters a sense of ownership and pride leading to a more satisfied workforce which directly translates to safer and higher quality care for all consumers at Gold Coast Health.

1

NURSE PRACTICE COUNCIL

The Nursing Practice Council empowers nurses to maintain a collective voice in shaping practice, work environment, and professional development. Several pieces of work for this group include: a review of Dragon Medical 1 Dictation Program to explore how it can be utilised by nurses to maximise efficiency; development of a framework for managing difficult client behaviour, and a review of team nursing models to explore how this could benefit Gold Coast Health nurses.

2

EDUCATION COUNCIL

The Education Council ensures a unified and coordinated direction for developing and maintaining a highly skilled nursing and midwifery team. This team has been working on initiatives such as: reviewing the peer feedback form and peer feedback process, and developing a 'growing together' intranet campaign to enhance communication.

3

RESPECTFUL MATERNITY CARE

Respectful Maternity Care provides invaluable guidance, oversight, and leadership to elevate the profession of midwifery and set high standards for midwifery practice. Several initiatives have been actioned including: the publishing and embedding of the Warm Water Immersion Guideline; progression with the working group for induction of labour with strong consumer feedback, and development of care pathways for vaginal birth after caesarean.

4

WORKFORCE AND WELLBEING COUNCIL

The Workforce and Wellbeing Council takes a holistic approach by supporting and integrating activities that foster engagement, reward and recognition, and a safe and positive workplace culture for nurses and midwives. Some focus areas that the council has been working on include: flexible working arrangements and fatigue management processes with recommendations to the Nursing and Midwifery Executive Council; an exploration of opportunities to provide a positive and welcoming experience for casual and agency staff being deployed to inpatient units, and staff wellbeing upon return to work following injury caused by occupational violence.

Streamlining care for newborns and families

The Gold Coast is celebrating a triumph in professional nursing governance with the success of the Neonatal Nurse Evaluation and Treatment (NeoNET) clinic. This innovation was proposed and co-designed by neonatal nurses and is not only reducing stress for families of newborns, but also streamlining healthcare delivery.

Opened in September 2022, the NeoNET clinic provides a dedicated space for specialised neonatal nurses to address non-life-threatening concerns in newborns under four weeks old. From feeding difficulties to jaundice, NeoNET offers expert care in a calm and comfortable setting; a stark contrast to the busy emergency department environment.

"The results are truly inspiring," said Annaleza Goddard, Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC), who envisaged and facilitated the service development.

"NeoNET ensures newborns receive the appropriate level of care, freeing up emergency department resources for critical cases," she said.

The clinic offers support for families. Nurses provide education, equipment such as phototherapy lights and crucial follow-up appointments. Additionally, through a referral process, the nurses connect families with a

network of valuable resources including community clinics, lactation consultants, telehealth services, and midwife home visits. This comprehensive, holistic approach not only provides convenience but also reduces hospital readmissions and emergency department wait times.



Annaleza Goddard, CNC

*"The results are truly inspiring."
- Annaleza Goddard, CNC*

The remarkable success has led to a significant expansion. Due to high demand, the NeoNET clinic is open seven days a week, offering Gold Coast families with newborns unparalleled peace of mind and the support they need during this precious time. This innovative program is a wonderful example of how dedicated nurses can drive healthcare initiatives that benefit patients and the broader healthcare system and community.

Staff are improving workflow and safety - simple, effective, innovative

Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) is celebrating a brilliant initiative by Registered Nurse Jacob Allan (pictured) and Nurse Unit Manager Kate Harland that's boosting efficiency and patient safety in the Respiratory Higher Care Unit (RHCU), part of the Respiratory Inpatient Unit. It's a shining example of professional governance in action. Professional governance is a structure that empowers all nurses to contribute collaboratively as decision makers regarding the nursing practice environment.

Jacob and Kate implemented an innovative solution that involved placing QR codes directly on patient monitors, also known as WOWs. These codes, when scanned by a smartphone, instantly link nurses to the most relevant procedures for each patient's specific care needs.

Jacob, the lead behind this initiative, identified the eight most common procedures and resources used in the unit. This readily available information empowers nurses to provide the highest quality care with utmost confidence. The benefits include improved workflow,

enhanced efficiency, and ultimately, safer outcomes for patients.

"It's an excellent way to make sure those policies and procedures, pertinent to the patient's care, are easily accessible at the point of care delivery. It allows the nurse to quickly check their practice, give care confidently and ensure they are up to date. This is safer for everyone," Zena Marks, Nurse Navigator for Complex Care, said.

This innovative approach by the RHCU team is a testament to the dedication and resourcefulness of Gold Coast Health's nursing staff. Their commitment to leveraging technology for better patient care is inspirational.



Jacob Allan, RN

Leadership



New framework empowers nurses and midwives

A collaborative effort, led by our Gold Coast Health education team, has resulted in the development of the Supported Practice Framework (SPF) which offers a structured and supportive approach to empower nurses and midwives throughout their careers.

The SPF streamlines various performance processes, principles and activities under the umbrella of "supported practice" to foster a positive and consistent experience for nurses and midwives across the state.

The SPF articulates the roles and responsibilities of key nursing and midwifery positions including individuals, managers, educators, and senior leaders. This informs each individual what is expected of them and what should be done in the various performance support processes in which they may be involved. It provides guidance and support at every stage of their careers, from newly qualified nurses and midwives to experienced professionals.

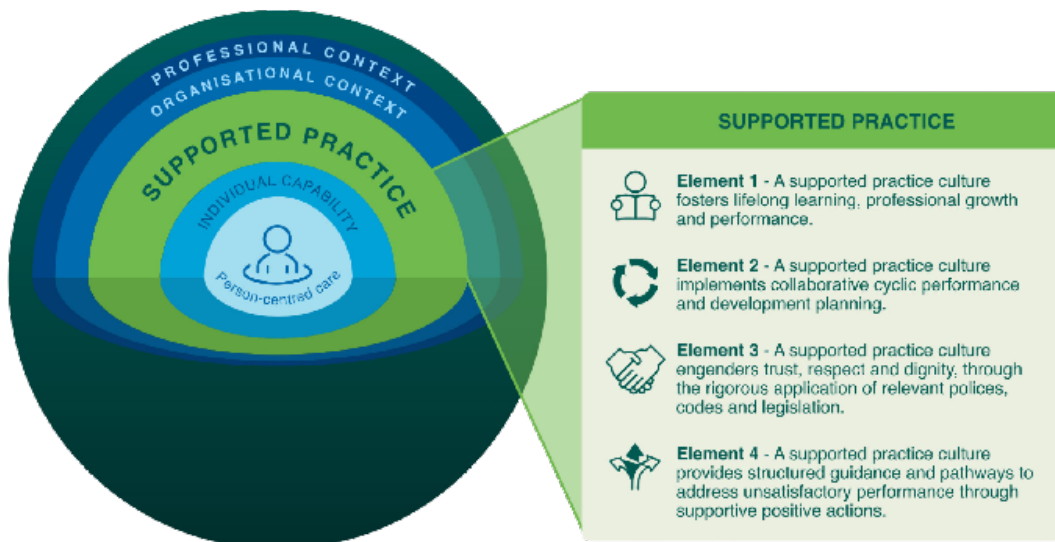
Recognising the evolving healthcare landscape and the need for a robust, consistent system, the Queensland Office of the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer (OCNMO) identified the SPF as a key priority. In 2022, Statewide Executive Directors of Nursing and Midwifery and the Directors of Nursing and Midwifery Education joined forces with OCNMO to prioritise this project.

The development process involved a dedicated team led by Gold Coast Health's Nursing and Midwifery Education and Research (NMERU) unit: Brenton Shanahan, Acting Director of Nursing, as project director and Anna Davey, Nurse Educator, as author and project manager. Anna led the consultation process and authored the document which includes the model, four key elements and the supplemental resource toolkit with exemplars and tools.

A project advisory group comprised of representatives from 11 hospital and health services across Queensland, provided valuable insights, including the expertise of Gold Coast Health's nurse educators Renay Erwin, Greer Stewart, Rista Vanrooyen and Lisa Wright.

The SPF has been met with enthusiasm, with reports from OCNMO, of high levels of enquiries and interest. Endorsed in July 2023, the framework is now available on the OCNMO and Clinical Excellence websites.

The SPF is not just a statewide initiative, it offers significant benefits for Gold Coast Health staff. The SPF empowers Gold Coast Health nurses and midwives to navigate their careers with confidence, ultimately leading to improved patient care and a stronger healthcare system.



Supported Practice Model

Excellence exemplified in nursing care

Linda Bradbury is truly a pioneer in nursing in Australia. In 2012, she became the first Rheumatology Nurse Practitioner (NP) to be endorsed and working in Australia. Only six Rheumatology NPs (including two Paediatric NPs) are currently working in Australia with an estimated 50 rheumatology nurses supporting the 1.7 million Australians with Inflammatory Arthritis. Linda diagnoses and treats people of all ages with a variety of acute or chronic health conditions.

Linda is active in her specialty, sharing her professional expertise with peers, interprofessional teams, and the community. She is a member of the Arthritis Australia Scientific Advisory Panel, providing expert advice to the Arthritis Australia Board. She has developed patient information about Ankylosing Spondylitis which has been published on the Arthritis Australia webpage. She advocates to government on behalf of consumers, and, in March 2023, was invited to Canberra to lobby for an increase in chronic disease visits for arthritis patients (currently limited to five per year).

Linda has developed education resources on 'Rheumatology' and 'Pharmacology in Rheumatology'

for the Australian College of NPs for Nurse Practitioners to undertake two Continuing Professional Development modules. She is the immediate past chair of the Rheumatology Health Professionals Special Interest Group of the Australian Rheumatology Association and was invited to present at the International Conference of Chinese Rheumatologists in Hong Kong in November 2023 on the role and responsibilities of Rheumatology Nurses in managing patients with Inflammatory Arthritis.

Linda truly exemplifies excellence in all she does. Her unwavering commitment, expertise and tireless advocacy make her a true exemplar of excellence in every aspect of her work. She is a beacon of hope for patients, a guiding light for her peers and a relentless champion for progress in Australian Rheumatology care.



Linda Bradbury, NP

Gold Coast Health's Trauma Service nurses shine at ANZTS awards

Gold Coast Health's Trauma Service is once again in the spotlight, this time for its exceptional nursing talent. At the 2023 Australia and New Zealand Trauma Society (ANZTS) Awards, Kate Dale, Trauma Service Nurse Practitioner, received prestigious Honours.

Kate's dedication to clinical excellence for the past 25 years was recognised with the Clinical Excellence Award. Notably, she expressed pride in receiving the award as a Nurse Practitioner, a role she has tirelessly built and championed for the past decade. Early in her career, Kate worked in remote area communities which inspired her interest in the Nurse Practitioner model-of-care.

"When I returned to the Emergency Department, the NP model was quite new which was exciting, so I decided to go down that route which then led me to the Trauma NP role," Kate explained.

"You get the best of both worlds as an NP. I get to provide holistic care to multi trauma patients from ED to outpatients but I also lead, educate, and conduct research," Kate said. Kate has a special interest in resuscitative and acute trauma care as well as nurse case management in both hospital and community settings. She has established the Trauma Connect Clinic which aims to continue the case management

model of nursing care following the patient's discharge, which has been recognised as a unique aspect of trauma care delivery at GCUH.

Kate believes that the Trauma Service has been successful because of Gold Coast Health's supportive culture that promotes multi-disciplinary and holistic care for trauma patients. "What sets us apart from others is the strength in the relationships between the specialties," Kate said, "and the drive to always want to do better and improve the service that we provide to the Gold Coast community."

Kate was incredibly humble in her acceptance speech, emphasising the dedication of the entire Trauma Service team. This collaborative spirit and focus on teamwork are hallmarks of Gold Coast Health's award-winning service.



Kate Dale, NP

Empowering nurses, building confidence, creating connections

Sally Latham, Clinical Facilitator in Robina's Intensive Care Unit (ICU), is on a mission, alongside Nurse Unit Manager, Kerin Walters, to build greater cohesion between GCUH and Robina. Sally and Kerin are doing this by sharing resources and encouraging staff to step out of their comfort zone to rotate between campuses.

"GCUH is very different to Robina. For example, there are trauma patients, patients on life-supporting extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, and cardiothoracic surgery patients. The experience staff can gain is immense," Sally said.

"It's a win-win. The health service gets a bigger pool of nurses who are comfortable working in both units to draw from, and the teams learn from each other. That creates a cohesive health service,"

Sally started her working career in publishing in the United Kingdom (UK), but then transitioned to nursing and moved to Australia. Sally divulged that she loves to help others re-write their own story.

"I love contributing to other people's success," Sally said.

I may be career driven, but my focus is on supporting our staff in their professional development."

- Sally Latham, CF

"I may be career-driven but my focus is on supporting our staff in their professional development."



Sally Latham, CF

Sally has worked with Gold Coast Health more than 17 years and divides her time between GCUH and Robina Hospital, ensuring ICU nursing staff are growing their skills, knowledge and are trained in the use of the latest equipment.

"Nursing education is more of an art than a job. You contribute to people's emotional intelligence and communication skills and help build confidence," Sally said.

Cross-campus learning and development offer ICU nurses a unique opportunity to expand their skillset and knowledge base. It also creates a network of contacts across the healthcare system.

Building relationships with colleagues from other units allows ICU nurses to consult more effectively and navigate complex cases with greater confidence.

Professional Excellence



Empowering Choice: Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) Program makes a difference

The Queensland Government's Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) program is providing a much-needed service for residents of the Gold Coast who are facing a terminal disease, illness or medical condition. Launched in January 2023, the program empowers eligible individuals to have a say in their end-of-life care.

Voluntary assisted dying is lawful in all Australian states and more recently, in the Australian Capital Territory. It is available in limited circumstances to people who meet the eligibility criteria. Public demand for VAD has grown alongside similar legislation in other states. Queensland responded with extensive stakeholder consultations, culminating in the passing of the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act* in September 2021. Notably, Queensland recognises the rights of both those seeking VAD and those who conscientiously object, ensuring respectful implementation.

Gold Coast Health Nurse Practitioners (NPs) play a critical role in the nurse-led VAD program which consists of two NPs and three medical officers. They

act as the primary point of contact, guiding individuals through the entire process from initial enquiries to assessments and eligibility confirmation. This personalised approach ensures each person receives the support they need. NPs share knowledge and experience, supporting the team in their roles. The nurses provide a seamless continuity of service.

The VAD NPs and doctors provide education to both public and private health facilities to improve knowledge and understanding and are active contributors to the committees and communities of practice for VAD at a local, state and national level. As well they present at Grand Rounds, the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia and other conferences. The NPs are actively involved with changes to process and upgrade/development of tools and forms to support the legislative process.

The program empowers patients with control over their final days. Locally, the program has seen a surge in demand, with referrals increasing from two to four per week to an average of eight to ten per week.

Nurses actively seek feedback to improve and ensure the service meets the needs of both patients and their families. This feedback loop allows for continuous improvement and ensures a compassionate experience. Feedback so far has been positive, with patients and families expressing gratitude for the program's support and respect for their wishes.

The program, however, is not without challenges. One barrier is around raising awareness. Legislation restricts advertising, making it crucial to educate healthcare professionals and the public about the program's existence. Another concern is late referrals, which can limit a patient's ability to access VAD. Additionally, some persons are told that they are 'not eligible' for the program however, eligibility can only be determined by an authorised VAD Practitioner. The team is working hard to dispel these misconceptions and to raise awareness of the program, within legislative boundaries.

The VAD program offers choice and control to terminally ill residents of the Gold Coast through the program's focus of empowerment and compassionate care.



Helping our youngest patients get home sooner

The Children's Inpatient Unit at GCUH is seeing a significant improvement in patient flow and discharge times thanks to a brilliant initiative led by Paediatric Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC), Tammy Wolffe.

"Our ward is often at capacity, and unlike adult patients who can be transferred to other wards, there's limited space for our young people. This new model is all about collaboration and optimising our resources," said Tammy.

The key to this success is a dedicated "transit-lounge" model staffed by a Clinical Nurse. This nurse acts as a central hub, working closely with the Children's Emergency Department (ED) and Children's Critical Care Unit, to ensure a smooth flow of patients.

"We have regular meetings throughout the day to discuss admissions, discharges, and alternative care options like Children's Hospital in the Home or outpatient clinics," Tammy said.

"This way, we can avoid unnecessary admissions and prevent readmissions through the ED."

The results speak for themselves. The new model has led to a decrease in bed blockages and a faster patient turnover, all without impacting the critical bedside care provided by nurses on the unit.

This is a fantastic example of nursing excellence and innovation. The vision and the dedication of the entire Paediatric team has led to young patients receiving the care they need, getting them back home to their families quicker than ever before.



Tammy Wolffe, CNC

Strengthening spinal cord injury care for Gold Coast patients

Gold Coast Health has launched a new Spinal Cord Injury Liaison Service within the Rehabilitation Response Team. This vital service, led by Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) Matthew Malt, is dedicated to supporting people with both new and existing spinal cord injuries.

Matthew, a Gold Coast local with extensive experience in spinal cord injury care, brings a wealth of knowledge and passion to this role. His background includes time spent at the prestigious Spinal Injuries Unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PA) and a rotation with the Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service Transitional Rehabilitation Program.

"The service provides expert advice to clinicians and hospital units where people with spinal cord injuries are admitted or receive outpatient and community services," Matthew said.

"We work collaboratively to ensure consistent messaging, and education is delivered by the entire multi-disciplinary team, empowering patients to manage their condition and begin their recovery journey."

The new service addresses a critical need on the Gold Coast as spinal cord injury rates rise across Queensland. In just the first two weeks of operation, the service received 19 referrals, highlighting the significant demand for expert spinal cord injury care.

"Spinal cord injuries can have a profound impact on a person's life, affecting everything from temperature control to bladder function to skin integrity and sexual health," Matthew said.

Empowering patients to manage their condition and begin their recovery journey."

- Matthew Malt, CNC

"Our goal is to support patients through this significant adjustment, which can take months or even years, depending on the severity of the injury."

Gold Coast Health Spinal Cord Injury Liaison Service is a federally funded initiative of the state-wide Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Project. This investment underlines the commitment to providing exceptional care for Queenslanders living with spinal cord injuries.

Matthew's dedication and expertise, combined with the support of the broader healthcare team, allows Gold Coast Health to deliver exceptional care for this vulnerable population.



Matthew Malt, CNC

Leading the way in immunisation with nurse training program

The Gold Coast Public Health Unit (GCPHU) is at the forefront of protecting residents from preventable diseases with a successful immunisation nurse training program that is boosting immunisation clinical practice and nurse immuniser confidence in General Practice.

This initiative addresses a gap in experience amongst graduate nurses working in GP clinics who are providing immunisations. By partnering with the Primary Health Network (PHN), the GCPHU has created a program that empowers nurses and strengthens the Gold Coast's immunisation efforts.

My time spent observing the team has given me some great insight, it was great experience to see how you run your clinic."
- feedback from participant

The program focuses on providing hands-on training for practice nurses and nurses from Gold Coast Health who are newly qualified immunisation program nurses (IPN). Participants shadow experienced immunisation nurses at GCPHU clinics, gaining invaluable experience in proper injection techniques, vaccine management and patient interaction. This training complements nurses' theoretical knowledge, fostering confidence in delivering immunisations.

The program goes beyond giving injections. Nurses receive in-depth training on the Queensland Immunisation Program schedule, communication

strategies for discussing immunisations with parents and proper use of essential resources like the Australian Immunisation Handbook. This comprehensive curriculum ensures nurses are equipped with the knowledge and tools to provide effective immunisation services.

By empowering practice nurses to deliver a range of immunisations, the program makes it easier for residents to stay up to date on their vaccinations. Through this program, nurses gain valuable knowledge administering and managing vaccines and providing parents with comprehensive information. This not only improves efficiency, but also empowers parents to make informed decisions about their children's health.

The program has been welcomed by enthusiastic nurse participants. Some feedback from program evaluations state, "My time spent observing the team has given me some great insight. It was a great experience to see how you run your clinic and ways of interacting with the parents as well as the children." as well as, "I gained so much information that I can take with me."

46 GP nurses have been supported through this partnership so far.

This innovative nurse training program is a local success story. The initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration between public health units and primary care providers. By investing in workforce development, the GCPHU is ensuring a healthier future for the Gold Coast community and is paving the way for potential adoption of similar programs across the country.



Leah Print, IPN and Sally Wallace, CN



Sarah Buckley, CN and Sally Wallace, CN

Healthy Environment



Haven for our teens

Gold Coast Health is providing excellence in teen healthcare with their innovative Adolescent and Young Adult Day Program. This program offers an alternative to inpatient stays for 14–18-year-olds focusing on creating a healthy and safe environment for both patients and staff.

This space is of vital importance. Teens have unique needs that can be overlooked in traditional hospital

settings. This program bridges the gap, providing specialised care for eating disorders, functional neurological disorders and chronic health conditions in a way that respects their development and independence. A space designed specifically for adolescents can help them feel more at ease and be more open with healthcare providers.

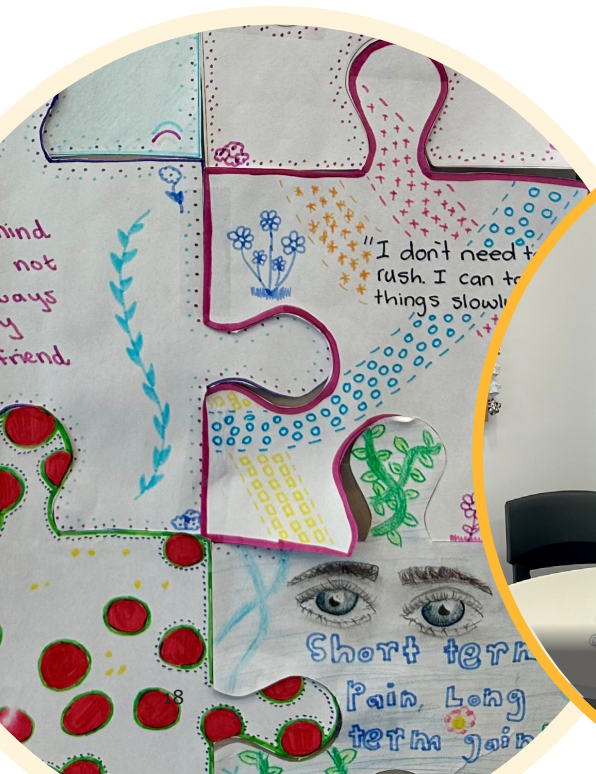
This space is designed for teens, with input from teens themselves. Comfortable furniture, artwork, and fun games create a welcoming atmosphere where relaxation and healing take priority. This dedicated space goes beyond just aesthetics – it fosters a sense of safety and security, crucial for young people navigating health challenges.

The benefits are clear. This space provides a haven for teens to unwind after meals and therapy sessions. It also allows for peer-to-peer socialisation, promoting a sense of community and support. This healthy environment contributes significantly to a positive healing journey.

Having a dedicated space specifically designed for teens is essential for the program's success. This translates directly to better care for young people. A young consumer of the service said, "I found the day program enjoyable. The environment was nice, I felt safe and was able to talk about my problems with the staff."

The program's success has been a whole of team effort. Funding for furniture came from Women's-Newborn and Children's services, while the Gold Coast Health Hospital Foundation donated games and other resources tailored to the specific needs and interests of adolescents. Teens themselves contributed to the artwork. This collaborative spirit highlights the importance of creating a safe space for young people.

Gold Coast Health's Adolescent and Young Adult Day Program is a wonderful example of the benefits of prioritising the well-being of both patients and staff. By creating a healthy and welcoming environment, Gold Coast Health is setting a new standard for teen healthcare to improve the patient experience leading to better health outcomes for young people.



Miriam Usher,
Clinical Nurse (CN)

Prioritising comfort for patients and families

A visit to the ED can be a scary time for anyone, especially for young children and their care givers. A new initiative at the GCUH Children's ED is making a big difference for families by creating a calmer and more reassuring environment.

The program features a dedicated Clinical Initiatives Nurse (CIN), who is present in the triage area 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This nurse acts as a bridge between patients, families and the ED's treatment teams.

"Our door is always open to parents," says Deepa Kuwar, CIN.

"We understand their concerns and are here to listen and validate them. When families are worried, they will be seen. That's our promise."

This focus on open communication extends beyond reassurance. The CIN can also take action to ease discomfort while patients wait. This includes administering pain relief, ordering x-rays, applying splints and bandages, and administering numbing cream for procedures.

"The GCUH Children's ED is one of the busiest in Australia. Sometimes, families will need to wait in triage. We appreciate how stressful this can be. The CIN model not only keeps the community safe but also begins the patient care journey from the moment they arrive," Lucie Scott said, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Children's ED.

The program has been met with praise from the community, being described as "such a great idea." Through this new model, patients will be seen as soon as possible, and assessments provided to ensure the best advice and treatment are given, reassuring care givers. By prioritising patient comfort, reducing stress for families, and initiating care as soon as possible, the program is ensuring a more positive experience for children and their loved ones during challenging times.



Deepa Kuwar, RN

SafeZone App: Peace of mind to workers

Gold Coast Health staff working in the community can now breathe a sigh of relief thanks to the SafeZone app. This application provides vital safety features for those who don't have the benefit of a traditional office environment.

Taya Oakley, a Nurse Navigator (NN) in the Integrated Multi-disciplinary Avoidance, Post-Acute and Complex Care Team (IMPACCT), spends her days connecting with community members who require support services.

"Being able to optimise our consumers' health and improving their quality of life at home is incredibly rewarding," Taya said.

"This app is a game changer, I highly recommend it to anyone working in the community."

- Taya Oakley, NN

However, working alone in the community can come with inherent risks, and SafeZone offers a solution.

"Having the app is crucial as we often visit people's homes. While we always conduct risk assessments, there's an element of unpredictability. SafeZone gives us peace of mind."

Taya recently experienced the application's effectiveness firsthand.

"While returning from a visit, a stranger became aggressive. I used the SafeZone duress button, and within 30 seconds, I received help. They confirmed my location and contacted the police. What surprised me was the app sending my GPS coordinates – it adds another layer of reassurance," Taya said.

"This app is a game-changer. I highly recommend it to anyone working in the community. It's invaluable and provides a sense of security that's worth its weight in gold."

SafeZone empowers community workers like Taya to focus on their important tasks knowing they have immediate support in the event of an emergency. This application is a welcome addition, promoting a safer and more positive work environment for all.



Taya Oakley, NN 19

Announcing the winners of annual safety and wellbeing awards

GCUH's Melaleuca Mental Health Unit and the Perioperative team have been recognised for their commitment to safety and wellbeing by their peers.

Both teams were voted winners of the annual Work Health and Safety (WHS) – Safety and Wellbeing Awards. Staff across Gold Coast Health cast their votes for the most impressive initiatives, with nearly 300 votes submitted.

Melaleuca unit Health and Safety Representatives take home top prize

The Melaleuca unit Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and clinical nurses, Donna Greenhalgh and Sara Lamoureux, were recognised for their innovative and informative HSR Safety Bulletin in the safety category of the Safety and Wellbeing Awards.

This monthly bulletin keeps Melaleuca staff informed of all aspects of work health and safety, from environmental concerns to self-care.

"We wanted to find a way to show our colleagues that health and safety is more than just consumer safety. It includes aggression risks, fatigue, staff morale and personal wellbeing," Sara and Donna said.

The Melaleuca bulletin has been a success, with staff becoming more comfortable reporting hazards and participating in safety initiatives.

"It's not just about statistics, it's what we can do with those stats to improve patient and staff safety," they said.

Sara and Donna hope their initiative will inspire staff throughout Gold Coast Health to take a proactive approach to safety and wellbeing.

Perioperative team wins big in wellbeing category

GCUH's Perioperative team is celebrating a win in the wellbeing category for its innovative Self Care Morning Tea initiative.

Angela Tracy, a Clinical Nurse (CN) in the Post Anaesthesia Care Unit (PACU), developed the initiative to prioritise the wellbeing of her fellow staff members. The morning tea brought together all 19 perioperative teams, including nursing, operational, administration, and medical personnel. It aimed to raise awareness of the various support systems available to them to promote self-care and express gratitude for their hard work.

"The team's mental and physical wellbeing is paramount to me. They tirelessly dedicate themselves to patient care, collaborating seamlessly across departments to deliver exceptional and safe healthcare," she said.

Angela emphasised the importance of recognising everyone's contribution, from cleaners and orderlies to administrators, nurses, and surgeons.

Angela highlighted the presence of the Executive Team, and various wellbeing support services, like Team Health, Peer Responders, the Debrief Team, Tea for the Soul, Spiritual Care and Chaplains.

"Their presence highlighted the importance of staff wellbeing and the support that is available to all staff. It's about acknowledging the daily efforts and dedication each member brings to the workplace. We deeply value and appreciate everyone's contributions in supporting the Gold Coast Health's vision," she said.



Sara Lamoureux, CN and Donna Greenhalgh, CN



GCUH Perioperative Team

Learning Culture



New training course improves teamwork and processes

The new Medical Emergency Team (MET) Call Training Course developed by the Clinical Response Unit (CRU) is leading Gold Coast Health in positive changes to improve care.

The Managing MET Calls Course provides nurses and trainee doctors with the skills and confidence to respond effectively during critical situations. Participants praised the chance to practice different roles in a safe, simulated environment, allowing them to build teamwork and communication skills.

It combines theory on topics including leadership, communication, role delegation and simulation of common MET call scenarios. This allows participants to put their knowledge into action.

"The course gave us an opportunity to learn in a safe and supportive environment," Kellie Evans said, a trauma nurse from C6 East, Trauma and Cardiothoracic Unit.

"When you hear the MET call buzzer in a real-life situation, it can be an anxiety-inducing situation. This training has really helped us with role allocation on our unit. Now everyone knows what to do in the event of a MET call, which saves valuable time during emergencies."

"The course gave us an opportunity to learn in a safe and supportive environment."
- Kellie Evans, RN

Stephanie Ede, a fellow nurse from C6 East, added, "We were able to work with Clinical Team Coordinators (CTC) in the simulations so it was an opportunity to grow our professional relationships with them outside of a real call."

The course has been successful in directly improving patient care on C6 East. Since the training, Kellie and Stephanie have implemented a new system, that involves assigning roles at the beginning of every shift, ensuring a smooth and coordinated response during MET calls.



Traineeship program breeds success

Gold Coast Health's innovative Infection Control Traineeship program is proving its worth. Two registered nurses, Christine Clausen and Rebecca Delacy, successfully completed the program in 2023, gaining valuable skills and knowledge that will directly benefit patient care.

The traineeship combines practical experience with a scholarship for a nationally recognised infection control course. Christine and Rebecca particularly appreciated the comprehensive manual, the program's supportive environment, and the chance to rotate through various hospital departments, gaining a well-rounded understanding of infection control practices.

"There were a lot of learning opportunities and support from the staff. The knowledge and skills I gained will allow me to become a resource for my department, Radiology," Christine said.

Rebecca echoed these sentiments, highlighting the opportunity to visit different areas of the health service and understand their unique infection control needs.

"The traineeship is a great way to explore the hospital and health service in a wider context. I have become a hand hygiene auditor on my unit, C2 East, through the skills I have acquired throughout the traineeship," Rebecca said.

Christine and Rebecca are enthusiastic about using their newfound expertise to improve patient safety. They encourage other Registered Nurses seeking professional development to apply for the program.

The Infection Control Traineeship program is a wonderful example of how investing in staff development can lead to better patient care, and enhance work satisfaction for employees.



Rebecca Delacy, RN and Christine Clausen, RN

Gynaecology Department welcomes another nurse colposcopist

Gold Coast Health's nurse-led colposcopy service has welcomed a third qualified nurse, significantly reducing wait times for this important procedure.

Clinical Nurse (CN), Kasey Calvert, is the first nurse in Australia to be certified through a new Queensland training program designed to expand access to colposcopy care. This program eliminates the need for nurses to travel overseas for qualifications, making it easier to provide timely care to women.

Colposcopy is a vital procedure for detecting cervical cancer after an abnormal pap smear.

The increased number of referrals since 2017, due to Australia's adoption of a more effective screening method, highlights the importance of this service.

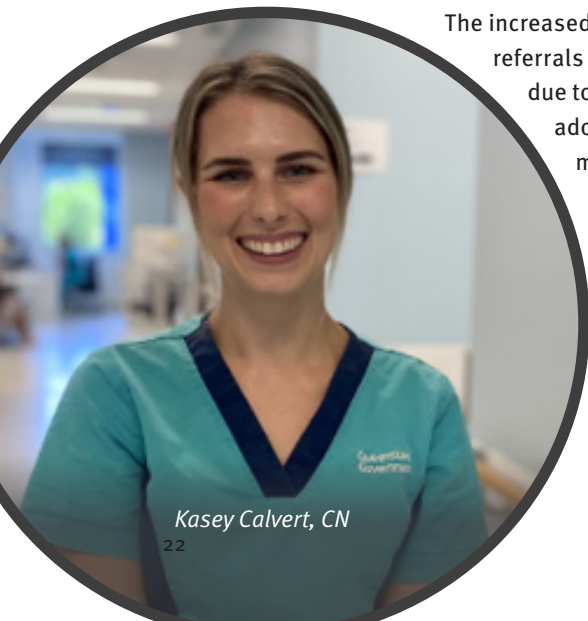
"Thanks to our three trained nurses, women on the Gold Coast can now be seen quicker for their colposcopy," Kasey said. Wait times have been reduced due to this additional resourcing.

Kasey's year-long training involved extensive experience including logging hundreds of hours, providing care to over 1000 patients, and performing biopsies and other procedures.

*"Our role is to make sure patients feel comfortable."
- Kasey Calvert, CN*

"Everybody who walks through the door does not want to be in this kind of environment having such an intimate procedure. Our role is to make sure patients feel comfortable. Continuity of care is a big part of that," she said.

Kasey's achievement paves the way for more nurses in Australia to become qualified nurse colposcopists, further improving access to this critical service.



Kasey Calvert, CN

Enhancing care for older people at Gold Coast Health

Gold Coast Health is forging new ground with a revamped Transition Support Program (TSP) designed specifically for nurses working with older adults in the acute care setting.

Australia's demographic is shifting, with the number of older people steadily increasing. This translates to a growing demand for specialised care within hospitals, as older people often have complex medical and social needs.

This TSP equips nurses with the knowledge and skills to navigate these complexities effectively. Nurses gain a comprehensive understanding of older peoples' physical, psychological, and social needs, allowing them to provide holistic and compassionate care. The program fosters a positive and supportive environment that empowers patients and their families.

*"Caring for older people is complex. This program recognises this and will provide nurses with the opportunity to build the knowledge and skills required to provide meaningful nursing care for older patients in hospital."
- Dr Laurie Grealish*

The 'Care of Older People in Acute Health Settings' program caters to both Registered Nurses (RNs) and Enrolled Nurses (ENs), with dedicated streams for each level of expertise and scope of practice. For RNs, it offers advanced standing into Graduate Certificate programs opening doors for career advancement.



Developed by Dr Laurie Grealish, a renowned expert in sub-acute care, and Sarah McLeod, a CNC in Orthogeriatrics, this program ensures nurses are equipped to address the specific needs of older patients. The program was finalised and endorsed for use in 2023 by a committee of state-wide nurse educators and has been offered to other health services in Queensland for their use.

The program will launch in July 2024, with new cohorts twice a year, guaranteeing a continuous stream of highly skilled nurses dedicated to exceptional older person's care.

Gold Coast Health has been strongly invested in the TSPs for nearly 20 years as part of the Grow Your Own workforce strategy. With the increasing population of older patients and the infrastructure build of 70 sub-acute beds commencing in 2024-25, it is anticipated that there will be a high need for nursing staff upskilling in this area of practice. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, Gold Coast Health ensures its nurses have the expertise and knowledge to provide exceptional care for the growing population of older people.

Research and Innovation



Virtual reality goggles taking training to new levels

Gold Coast Health is leading the way in innovative staff training with the introduction of virtual reality (VR) goggles for Mental Health staff. This exciting new program, spearheaded by Nurse Educator Sian James and supported by ADON Rosie Gallagher, is helping nurses develop critical skills in a safe and immersive environment.

The VR training tackles a major challenge faced by healthcare professionals worldwide – violence and aggression. The program specifically focuses on Trauma Informed Practice and Safe Wards Talk Down techniques, aiming to equip nurses with the knowledge and confidence to de-escalate potentially hostile situations.



Mental Health staff trialling VR goggles

This initiative arose from a 2022 review into Occupational Violence training as well as staff consultation, identifying a need for enhanced training in managing distressed patients. Sian's research led her to propose a partnership with the University of Newcastle, a concept that was readily embraced by the Mental Health Executive team after recognising its potential benefits.

The VR training offers a multitude of advantages:

- **Builds a skilled workforce:** Nurses and other staff gain a deeper understanding of emotional awareness and self-regulation, leading to improved patient interaction.
- **Reduces workplace risks:** By equipping staff with de-escalation skills, the program aims to minimise the number of Code Black incidents, protecting both staff and patients.
- **Transferable knowledge:** The training provides valuable skills applicable across various other service lines and divisions.

Feedback from workshops using the VR goggles has been overwhelmingly positive. Participants reported being able to effectively utilise the skills learned, leading to a stronger grasp of stress management techniques for everyday clinical practice.

Gold Coast Health's innovative VR training program is a shining example of how an idea, when supported and encouraged, can lead to harnessing technology to improve staff skill and ultimately deliver better patient care.

Nurses level up with innovative training program

Gold Coast Health is taking RNs to the next level with the Acute Care Transition Support Program (TSP). This exciting initiative offers nurses a supportive pathway to enhance their skills and knowledge.

The Acute Care TSP is a 12-month program that blends a theoretical approach with real-world clinical practice, ensuring nurses can immediately apply new knowledge and skills on the job. The program is designed to be self-directed, allowing participants to tailor their learning journey based on their interests and career goals through core and elective study units. The program consists of orientation, workshops, monthly huddles and 1:1 individualised support.

This program empowers nurses by providing them with:

- **Continuing professional development:** Nurses can earn valuable credits towards postgraduate qualifications, further boosting their expertise.
- **Supportive learning environment:** Nurse educators are available to provide ongoing guidance and mentorship throughout the program.

- **Access to contemporary education:** Participants gain exposure to the latest advancements in nursing practice, ensuring they deliver the best possible care to patients.

The program is open to all RNs working within Gold Coast Health's acute inpatient areas. This inclusive approach ensures a wider pool of nurses can benefit from this valuable training. The Acute Care TSP is a statewide program designed to address the ongoing need for professional development among nurses. Gold Coast Health's implementation offers a supportive and clinically relevant learning experience that caters to the specific needs of its nurses.

The first cohort of the program, launched in July 2023, is set to graduate in July 2024. These 12 nurses, selected through an Expression of Interest process, representing various units within Surgery and Critical Care, and Medicine, are exemplars of the program's effectiveness. Gold Coast Health is committed to fostering a highly skilled and qualified nursing workforce for the future.

Innovation beats stronger: faster cardiac care

Robina Hospital is pioneering a faster and more efficient way to address cardiac concerns with the launch of their new Cardiology Rapid Access Service. This innovative approach promises significant benefits for Gold Coast residents, offering access to cardiac care without the long waits often associated with ED.

The service allows patients with time-critical cardiac issues, such as certain types of chest pain, to receive comprehensive specialist care without the need for an extended stay in the ED or, in some cases, even hospital admission.

This frees up ED resources for the most critical cases while providing patients with a quicker path to diagnosis and treatment.

The team is made up of a multi-disciplinary team

including: Specialist Medical Officers, Clinical Measurement practitioners, Sonographers, a CNC and administrative staff.

The CNC plays a vital role in this team with many responsibilities and accountabilities including: liaising with relevant clinical teams, managing bookings of the clinic, review of referrals, performing key assessment procedures, documentation, and highly effective communication and interpersonal skills to work with patients and colleagues alike.

This innovative service marks a positive step forward for cardiac care on the Gold Coast. By offering faster access to specialised care and freeing up emergency department resources, it promises to benefit both patients and the healthcare system.



Robina Cardiology Rapid Access Team

Minor injuries clinic: a win-win for both patients and staff



Emergency Department Team, including Paula-Lee Wood, NP (far right)

GPUH's ED is leading the way with the innovative Minor Injuries and Illness Centre which is not only reducing wait times for patients, but also fostering exciting career development opportunities for nurses.

Since opening its doors, the centre has treated thousands of patients, with an impressive 93% seen within the recommended timeframe. This translates to faster care for those with minor injuries, freeing up the ED for more critical cases.

The benefits extend far beyond efficiency. The clinic has become a launchpad for a range of nurse-led programs, empowering nurses to utilise their advanced skills. NP Paula-Lee Wood explained that minor injuries, representing about 14% of emergency presentations, are a perfect fit for this model.

"Advanced nursing practices integrate seamlessly with emergency care," Paula said. "The success of this clinic has led to the creation of additional NP positions, further supporting the department's subacute area. We're also proud to deliver essential training programs for our entire ED team."

The centre fosters a collaborative multi-disciplinary environment with doctors, NPs, physiotherapists, and trainees working side-by-side. "We have specifically designed programs like the minor injuries program

and the nurse-initiated x-ray program to upskill our Registered Nurses," Paula explained. "Our focus is on providing high-quality education and training to expedite care and improve overall department flow."

Additionally, other initiatives like the NP Candidate program are paving the way for future generations of skilled practitioners.

We are proud to deliver essential training programs for our entire Emergency Department."
- Paula-Lee Wood, NP

Gold Coast Hospital's Minor Injuries and Illness Centre is a wonderful example of how Gold Coast Health is implementing innovative service delivery models to maximise the organisation's capacity to respond to healthcare demand. This innovation can improve patient experiences while simultaneously empowering healthcare professionals.

Diversity and Inclusion



Culturally inclusive cardiac care for First Nations Australians

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience a higher burden of cardiovascular disease than non-First Nations Australians. This significantly impacts mobility, overall wellbeing and life expectancy. To address this disparity, Gold Coast Health's Better Cardiac Care program is making waves in culturally inclusive healthcare, closing the gap in heart health.

Supported by CNC, Amy Tooley, the program brings together a dedicated team with expertise in clinical care, cultural sensitivity and community liaison. This ensures patients receive care that respects both their traditions and individual care needs and is a true example of diversity and inclusion in action.

The Better Cardiac Care program is a holistic approach going beyond the hospital walls. The team provides comprehensive support throughout a patient's journey, from hospital rounds and in-patient visits to outpatient appointments and medication management. They also work closely with GPs to ensure seamless care transitions.

Respecting cultural needs is paramount in the program's philosophy. Amy's experience working with First Nations communities in North Queensland has been instrumental in building trust and strong relationships. This allows for open communication and a collaborative approach to managing heart health. A dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health careworker promotes cultural sensitivity.

Patients report feeling "...empowered and supported within the healthcare system," as they gain a "clearer understanding of their conditions, treatment options, and medications."

The program extends beyond individual care. Amy actively participates in community events like Unity Day, raising awareness about heart disease risk factors within the First Nations community. This proactive approach to prevention empowers individuals to take charge of their own well-being.

The Better Cardiac Care program is a great example of how culturally inclusive practices can significantly improve health outcomes and empower First Nations Australians to live longer and healthier lives.



Better Cardiac Care Team (L-R) Allan Lockwood - Indigenous Health Liaison Officer (IHLO), Amy Tooley - CNC, Gemma Dornan - Pharmacist, Chantel King - IHLO and Jordan Scott - IHLO

CSU embraces diversity and inclusion

Robina Hospital's Crisis Stabilisation Unit (CSU), known as Yalburro' angabah, is taking a leading role in culturally sensitive care for First Nations people. This dedicated mental health facility is fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment through the power of art.

First Nations artist, Melony Gordon, has created stunning murals on the walls of CSU. This initiative was developed by Nursing Director (ND) ACMH, Heidy Van Engelen, in collaboration with the Creative Health Hub.

Melony's murals are doing far more than creating a beautiful space. She is providing a culturally safe and welcoming environment for First Nations consumers who are seeking critical mental health support. The artwork serves as a powerful symbol of respect and recognition, showcasing Gold Coast Health's commitment to cultural competency and inclusivity.

Cultural sensitivity in mental health nursing allows nurses to provide more effective, individualised care that respects the patient's background and beliefs. This is achieved through:

- understanding how mental health is viewed across different cultures
- fostering effective communication

- reducing judgment and stigma
- building trust through understanding and respect.

Ultimately, this enhanced approach leads to greater patient engagement in treatment and better overall client outcomes.

Since Melony began the murals at Robina Hospital's CSU, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Consumers report feeling "...a greater sense of safety and connection." Staff recognise the calming and respectful atmosphere the murals create, building stronger rapport and trust with First Nations consumers.

Melony's artistic vision is central to the project's success. Her work embodies the importance of visual and cultural representation in healthcare settings and is paving the way for a more inclusive and culturally sensitive future for Robina Hospital and beyond.



Melony Gordon, First Nations artist

New program to support young dads with cancer

Gold Coast Health cancer care nurses are creating special moments for dads battling metastatic stage four cancer. The initiative, developed by Genitourinary Nurse Navigator, Helen Anderson, and Youth Cancer Nurse Consultant and Cancer and Blood Disorders Nurse, Anita Cox, aims to address the gap in support services available for this specific group.

The program centres around 'Dad Packs', which include a teddy bear, vouchers, and a special book. This book serves as an integral part of the pack, providing a space for fathers and children

to create lasting memories, and a legacy together. Helen and Anita hope that with the help of the Dad Packs, men will feel supported to open up and have the difficult conversations about their disease.

In 2022, the Australian Government and Cancer Australia, reported that 28,022 men died from cancer. Men are at a higher risk (17%) than women (13%) of dying from cancer by the age of 85. Cancer of the prostate remains the most common cancer for males, followed by melanoma of the skin, colorectal cancer, and lung cancer.

"We recognised that there were many resources available for women undergoing cancer treatment, but not as many specifically designed for men," Helen said.

Dad Packs are our way of trying to bridge this gap and offer comfort and practical support to these dads and their families during such a challenging time," Helen said.

This program exemplifies Gold Coast Health's commitment to diversity and inclusion in patient care, ensuring that all individuals facing cancer have access to the support they need.



Helen Anderson and Anita Cox

Champions for inclusion with the Veterans Employee Network



Gold Coast Health is making strides towards a more diverse and inclusive workplace with the Veterans Employee Network. This employee-led initiative brings together veterans, and allies, to champion equality and accessibility within the health network.

This network is a wonderful example of commitment to its Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, specifically the Life Stages action plan. This plan fosters an environment where staff from various backgrounds, including veterans with valuable lived experience, can collaborate and drive positive change.

Clare Fanning, a Registered Nurse and Safety and Quality Coordinator, is a prime example of the network's impact. A proud veteran with 16 years of service in the British Armed Forces, Clare reflects on the sacrifices made by those who served.

"I am humbled to have served alongside such brave men and women. Their dedication deserves our unwavering gratitude," Clare said.

Clare's military journey included service in the Queen Alexandra Corps, where she received her nursing training. Operational tours in Iraq and Northern Ireland further shaped her experience. Following these deployments, her passion for mental health led Clare to specialise in supporting and treating soldiers. This dedication to veteran well-being continued after her military service.

After leaving the armed forces, Clare joined Combat Stress as a Community Mental Health Nurse and actively supported affiliated charities dedicated to helping injured service personnel and their families.

Clare moved to Australia and brought her expertise to Gold Coast Health.

"Discovering the Veteran's Employee Network at GCH was a wonderful surprise. It's fantastic to see a strong veteran community here, actively advocating for veterans and their families," she said.

It's fantastic to see a strong veteran community here, actively advocating for veterans and their families."

*- Clare Fanning,
Safety and Quality Coordinator*

The Gold Coast Health Veteran Employee Network fosters a sense of community and camaraderie, while promoting the values veterans bring to the healthcare environment. This initiative highlights Gold Coast Health's dedication to creating a workplace that embraces diversity and empowers all staff members to contribute their unique skills and experiences.

Volunteering



Nurse brings skilled care and professional knowledge to vulnerable communities

ICU nurse, Jessica Knight is making a big difference in the lives of others through her dedication to volunteer work. Jess, who works for the casual pool for Gold Coast Health and previously worked in ICU at GCUH, has a passion for using her skills to help those in need.

Driven by a desire to connect with her South African heritage, Jess embarked on a remarkable six-week volunteer trip to Kenya. Prior to her departure, Jess displayed incredible initiative by collecting a massive 63kgs of expired medical supplies from various GCH departments to donate to Kenyan hospitals. The ICU doctors at GCUH generously covered the shipping costs.

In Kenya, Jess worked side-by-side with local ICU teams, witnessing the daily challenges of patient care and resuscitation. Recognising a knowledge gap in the International Advanced Life Support (ALS) Guidelines, Jess created a user-friendly flow chart based on the

ALS algorithm. She then disseminated this information through posters and provided hands-on training to the ICU staff. Jess's efforts provided critical knowledge and resources to help improve patient outcomes.

Jess's volunteer work continued with a journey on board the Mercy Ships in West Africa. She worked in the ICU/Maxillofacial ward, assisting with life-changing treatment and reconstructive surgeries for adults and children with facial deformities. "There's a heartbreaking stigma here against people with facial deformities," Jess shared. "People are often ostracised because of a belief that their condition is a punishment for sin. One of my patients said that he just wants to make friends after his surgery, without being laughed at."

"I've learned so much from my patients, they've given me far more than I could ever give them."
- Jessica Knight, RN

Building relationships with her patients is the most rewarding aspect of volunteer work for Jess. Her dedication has left a lasting impact on everyone she encounters. "I've learned so much from my patients and the other caregivers," Jess reflected. "They've given me far more than I could ever give them."

Jess's tireless efforts and compassion are a shining example of the positive impact nursing can have on communities and colleagues, sharing knowledge for improved patient outcomes.



Jessica Knight, RN

Gold Coast nurse provides healthcare to save lives in Nepal

Gold Coast RN, Kirra Sutton selflessly dedicated her April holiday to providing critical healthcare to some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

Joining a team from TrekMedics, Kirra embarked on a four week challenging trek to remote villages in Nepal. There, the team offered much needed medical care, health education, and emergency aid to over 2033 presentations.

Based in Melbourne, Australia, TrekMedic is a non profit team of volunteer doctors, nurses and allied health professionals who have come together to help provide basic health care, education and emergency aid to under-privileged communities worldwide. It is hoped that the medical intervention provided will change the trajectories of the lives of these people.

It was a very humbling experience. The local Nepalise show so much appreciation for our help. They wait in line for hours with no complaint. I learnt patience and gratitude from these people."
- Kirra Sutton, RN

Kirra saw this as an incredible opportunity to see parts of Nepal, otherwise never seen. She also wanted to immerse herself in the culture, and to provide healthcare to under privileged communities.



Kirra Sutton, RN

This dedicated nurse is known for her fitness and had to significantly ramp up her training for the self-funded trip. Kirra's efforts had a major positive impact on the health of the communities she visited. Volunteering is not new to Kirra, also having volunteered in Tanzania. Kirra enjoyed the experiences so much and has said that she would love to go again.

Gold Coast Health applauds Kirra for her commitment to living the Gold Coast Health Values – both at work and during her personal time.



Professional Affiliations



Australian College of Nursing (ACN)

The ACN is the national leader of the nursing profession in Australia. It represents nurses and organises events and education services to advance nurse leadership. The ACN supports nurses to uphold the highest possible standards of integrity, clinical expertise, ethical conduct, and professionalism through six pillars of Education, Leadership, Community, Social Impact, Advocacy and Policy.

International Learning Collaborative (ILC)

The ILC is dedicated to creating practical resources to ensure that the Fundamentals of Care are visible and valued in every care setting globally. The ILC community shares a global vision that recognises the challenges of making fundamental care a valued and essential element in a person's self-care, health and wellbeing and a set of evidence-based behaviours and actions that inform every educational, clinical and care setting.



2023 Midwifery intake



2023 Midwifery Staffing Unit intake



2023 Mental Health intake



2023 Newly Qualified Nurses and Midwives intake

