Queensland Health

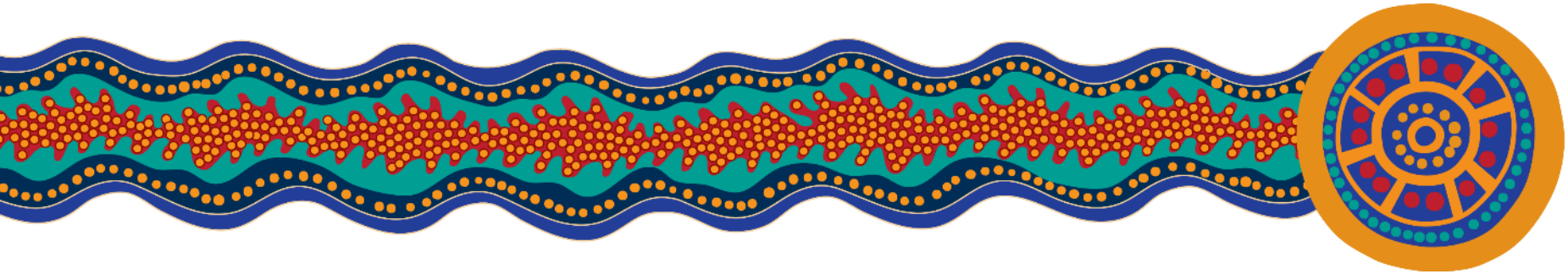
Rehabilitation Engineering – Contributions to AT

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme

6 August 2026

DELIVERING FOR QUEENSLAND

Queensland Government



The Queensland Government respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional and Cultural Custodians of the lands on which we live and work to deliver healthcare to all Queenslanders and recognises the continuation of First Nations peoples' cultures and connection to the lands, waters and communities across Queensland.

Session Outline

Stephanie Fountain – Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS)

Oliver Mason – Rehabilitation Engineering Centre (REC)

Alejandro Melendez-Calderon – Jamieson Trauma Institute

DELIVERING FOR QUEENSLAND | Queensland Government



Queensland Health

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme

Community and Oral Health
Metro South Health

Rehabilitation Engineering

DELIVERING FOR QUEENSLAND

Queensland Government

MASS and MASS-administered schemes



MASS

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme: Assist people to live in their home environment (e.g. mobility and daily living aids, continence and oxygen consumables etc.)



SSS

Spectacle Supply Scheme: Access to basic prescription spectacles



QALS

Queensland Artificial Limbs Service: Access to definitive prosthetic limbs for day-to-day use (over 65s)



PCEP

Palliative Care Equipment Program: Support people to remain at home at end-of-life

Medical equipment, devices & consumables



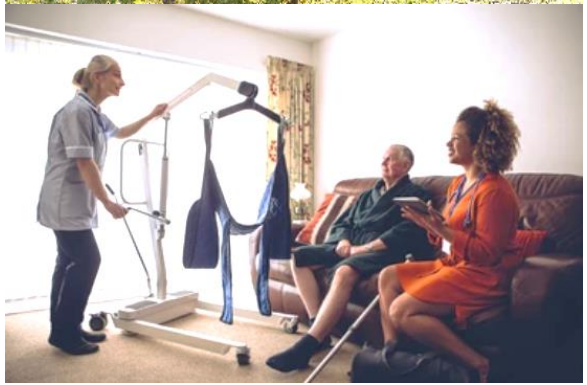




















Image from Manwinwin with permission: www.manwinwin.com/asset-lifecycle-management

Rehabilitation Engineer's role in ASSETS LIFECYCLE

MANAGEMENT

ACQUISITION

EFFICIENCY

MONITORING

MAINTENANCE

RENEWAL

LONGEVITY

INVESTMENT

- ✓ SOA (Contract) Acceptance
  - ✓ Regulatory compliance
  - ✓ Standards testing
- ✓ Non-SOA equipment inspections



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- ✓ Risk-benefit analysis
- ✓ Contribute to workflows

- ✓ Incident Investigations
- ✓ Data Analysis
- ✓ Market Actions

- ✓ Technical (& Clinical) Support
- ✓ PM Schedules (PWC, hoists)

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RENEWAL

LONGEVITY

- ✓ Stock reallocation (testing & refurbishment)
- ✓ Repair / Retire (clinical impact, $, obsolescence)

INVESTMENT

- ✓ Maximise Lifespan (storage, care, maintenance)
- ✓ Disposal & Donations

Rehabilitation Engineer's role in ASSETS LIFECYCLE

- ✓ Risk management
- ✓ Service Compliance
- ✓ Cost-benefit analysis

MANAGEMENT

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INVESTMENT

Example 1/3

Non-SOA Request:

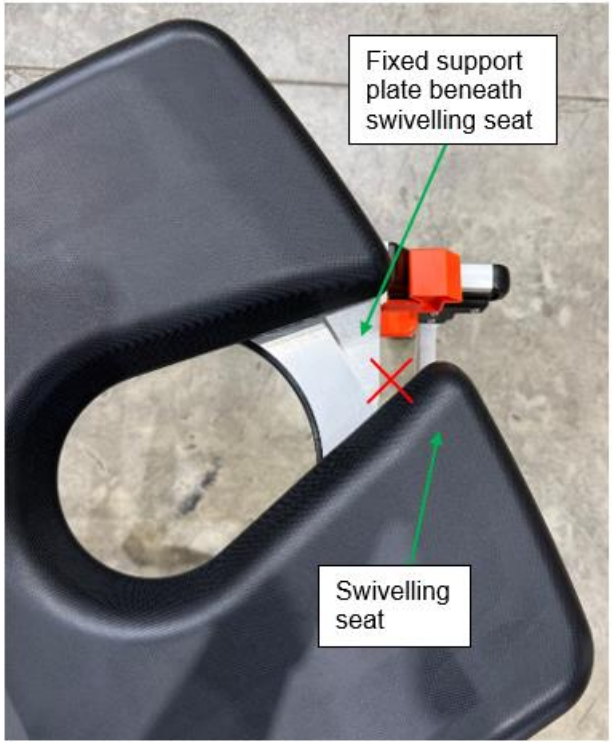
Client requires a slide/swivel bath transfer bench that is not on our SOA (Standing Offer Arrangement).

Engineer Actions:

1. Receive request: MASS clinician refers to engineer after confirming nil SOA equivalent, nil past approvals.
2. Liaise with supplier: confirmed ARTG listed + user manual available, but nil standards testing (new product).
3. Physical inspection: push springs zinc plated (not stainless steel as claimed); identified pinch point.
4. Assess & confer with MASS clinicians: consider risk / benefit for this client and for future clients.

Outcomes:

- Approved for client (springs replaced with s.steel).
- Report + add to internal register for future requests.



Example 2/3

Incident Investigation

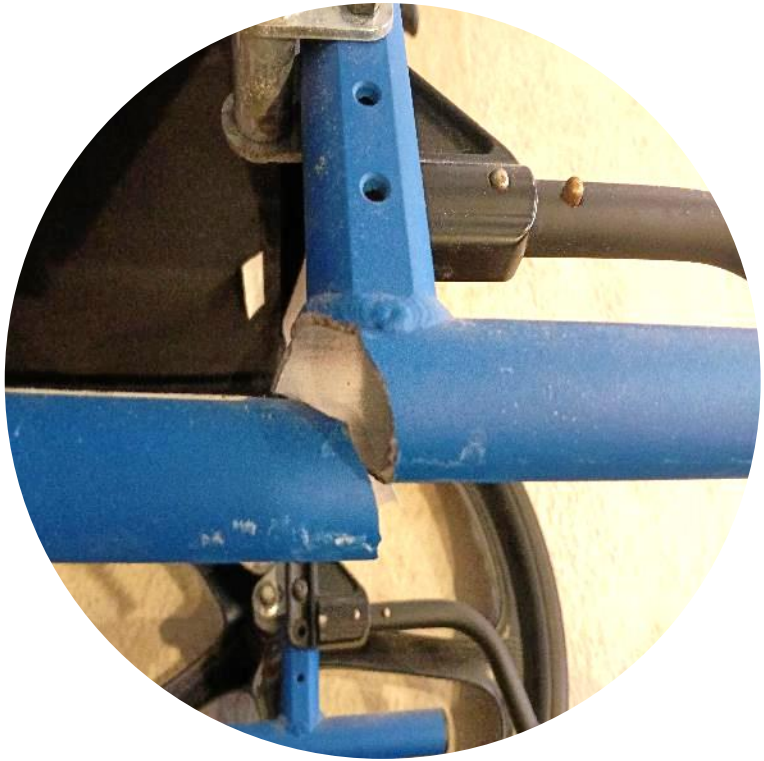
Client sat on his wheelchair and heard a loud crack. The frame snapped, the client is going to use duct tape…

Engineer Actions:

1. Support Client: safety advice + warranty replacement.
2. Analysis: failure at weld point, nil misuse, weight < SWL. Flag near-miss incident / query product fault.
3. Liaise with supplier: aware of 2 affected units.
4. Review MASS data: found 9 affected units, issue unique to brand, only 2 flagged as “incidents”.
5. Report: internally + external report to TGA.

Outcomes:

- Client supported / TGA notified.
- Reviewing MASS incident reporting process.



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Example 3/3

Electrical Safety Testing:

Domestic Equipment: WorkSafe/EESS advises electrical safety testing prior to use, but notes medical equipment is out of scope.

Hospital / Homecare Equipment: AS/NZS 3551 & AS/NZS 3003 recommends high threshold RCD installations for homecare settings & annual testing.

Engineer Actions:

1. Research / Assess: current practice / equipment, regulations, standards, MSH policies, consult local teams (MASS, REC, BTS, BEMS, contractor)
2. Consult with regulator (Qld Electrical Safety Office).

Outcomes (ongoing):

- Established link with regulator.
- Specify requirements per equipment type.
- Integrate into MASS (e.g. workflows, resources, training).

Domestic use





Active Air 8 from Aidacare (with permission)

Hospital & Homecare





Recorded Webinars

[Deep Dive into AT Product Standards, 2023]





[Fit for Purpose, Safe and Reliable, 2021]



Surgical, Treatment, & Rehabilitation Services

Rehabilitation Engineering Centre (REC)

Metro North Health's vision
Creating healthier futures together—where innovation and research meets compassionate care and community voices shape our services.

Metro North Health | Queensland Government



Metro North Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we live, work and walk, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Metro North Health | Queensland Government

What is Rehabilitation Engineering?

- “Rehabilitation engineering is the systematic application of engineering sciences to design, develop, adapt, test, evaluate, apply, and distribute technological solutions to problems confronted by individuals with disabilities in functional areas, such as mobility, communications, hearing, vision, and cognition, and in activities associated with employment, independent living, education, and integration into the community.” - US Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Amended 1998 – quoted by Engineers Australia
- Rehabilitation Engineering is the application of engineering principles to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities.
- Rehabilitation Engineering Centre (REC) is an internationally recognised term for a professional rehabilitation engineering service



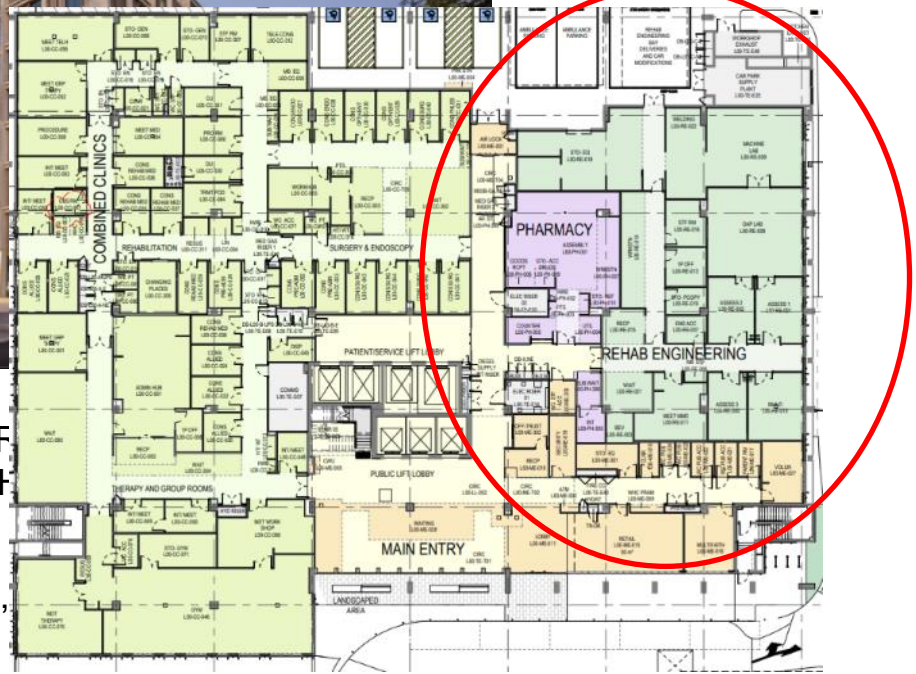
History

- The service has operated at the Herston Campus in Brisbane since 1979
- Focus on seating for people with complex needs
- The Rehabilitation Engineering Centre at STARS is the only service in Queensland operating under the format recognised by Engineers Australia as an REC.
- Part of Public Hospital system
- Historically ~ 90% of services delivered to out-patients but increasing inpatient work in STARS
- Provide services to approximately 900 client per year, approximately 400 are complex postural seating clients
- The service is part of the STARS Allied Health Professions
  - Rehab Engineers are considered AHP in Qld.
  - The Rehab Engineers are the primary treating clinicians for this service.



Surgical, Treatment, & Rehabilitation Services (STARS)





Surgical Treatment and R
(STARS) H

- 100 Rehab Beds
- Low complexity, elective,
  surgical procedure beds

Skillmix, Training & Registration

- Team of 8
  - 7.3 FTE – 8 Staff
    - 1 Director
    - 1 Team Leader
    - 2 Rehabilitation Engineers, Advanced
    - 1 Rehabilitation Engineer
    - 1 Rehabilitation Engineering Technician, Advanced
    - 1 Rehabilitation Engineering Technician
    - 1 Administration Officer
- Training
  - Bachelors of Engineering (Medical, Honours) – 4-year degree (eligibility EA Biomed)
  - Masters
  - PhD
  - On the job learning – shadowing, clinical supervision, peer supervision, group supervision
- Board of Professional Engineers Queensland (BPEQ)
  - Registered Professional Engineer Queensland (RPEQ)
- Blue Cards – Working with Children Check
  - Not AHPRA registered clinicians
- Disability Worker Screening Queensland

BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS OF QUEENSLAND





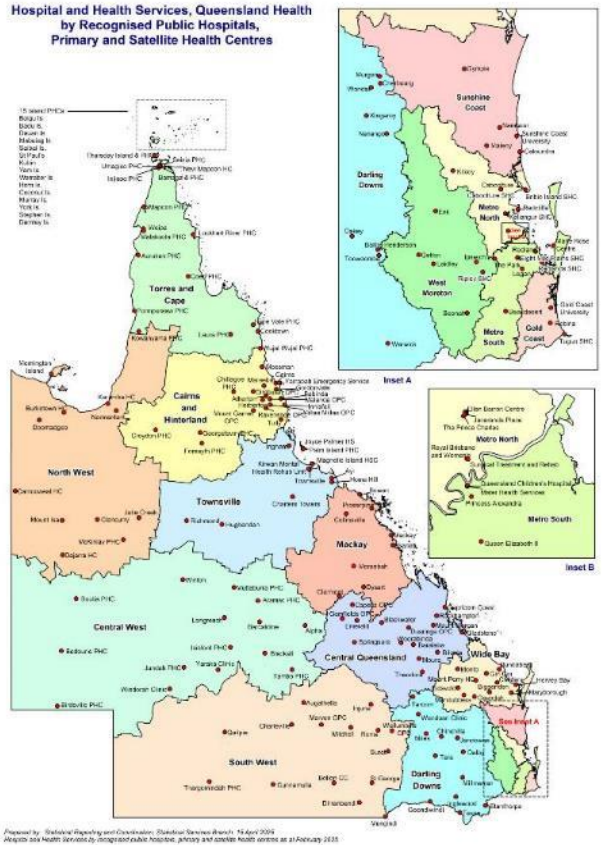
Referrals

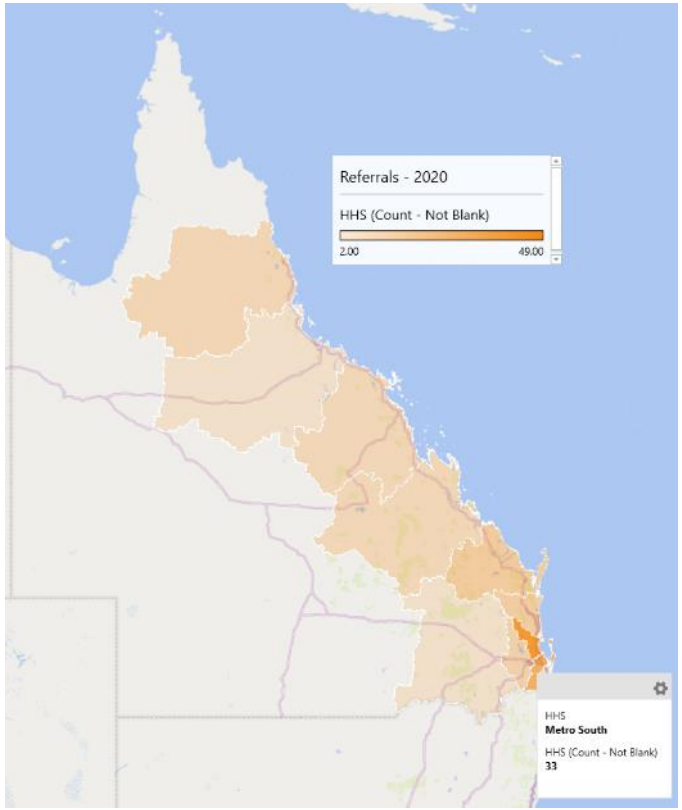
- Referral Eligibility
  - Any age
  - Any diagnosis
  - State-wide service
  - Medicare Eligible
  - NDIS Provider
- Outpatients
  - Face to face clinic
  - Telehealth option – triage
  - Remote travel rare
  - Patient Transit Subsidy Scheme (PTSS) specialist service
- Inpatients
  - Surgical, Treatment, & Rehabilitation Services (STARS)
    - Integrated Electronic Medical Record (ieMR) referrals
- In-reach
  - Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital (RBWH)
  - Queensland Children's Hospital (QCH)
  - Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH)



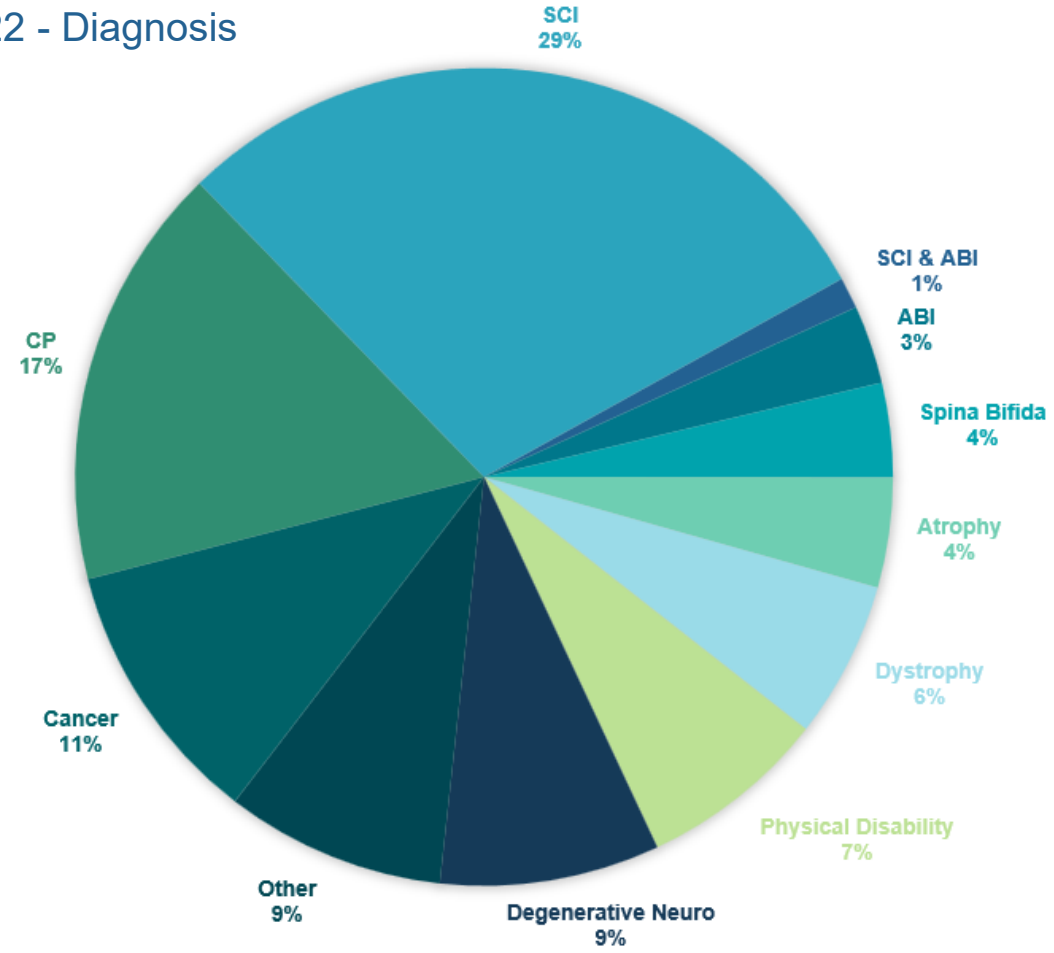


Referrals


Hospital and Health Services, Queensland Health
by Recognised Public Hospitals,
Primary and Satellite Health Centres
Sunshine Coast
Darling Downs
Metro North
West Moreton
Metro South
Gold Coast
Inset A
Torres and Cape
Cairns and Hinterland
North West
Townsville
Mackay
Central West
Central Queensland
Wide Bay
South West
Darling Downs
Metro North
Metro South
Inset B
See Inset A


Referrals - 2020
HHS (Count - Not Blank)
2.00
49.00
HHS
Metro South
HHS (Count - Not Blank)
33

Referrals: 2021 & 2022 - Diagnosis



Funding Model

- Publicly funded health service
  - State Health Service
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) – federal funding
- National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland (NIISQ) – state funding
- Other insurance or funding sources
  - Private insurance
  - Foreign government – for foreign students and reciprocal health agreements
  - Private trusts – compensation
  - Other state-based insurance schemes – iCare, etc.

medicare

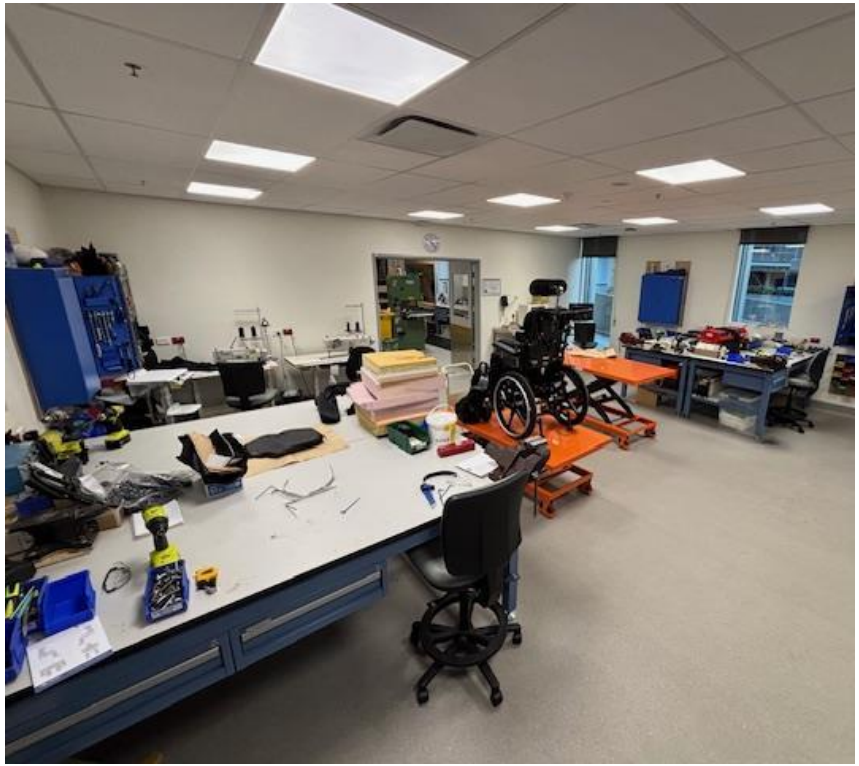
I ♥ ndis REGISTERED NDIS PROVIDER

NIISQ

Clinic Rooms



Workshop



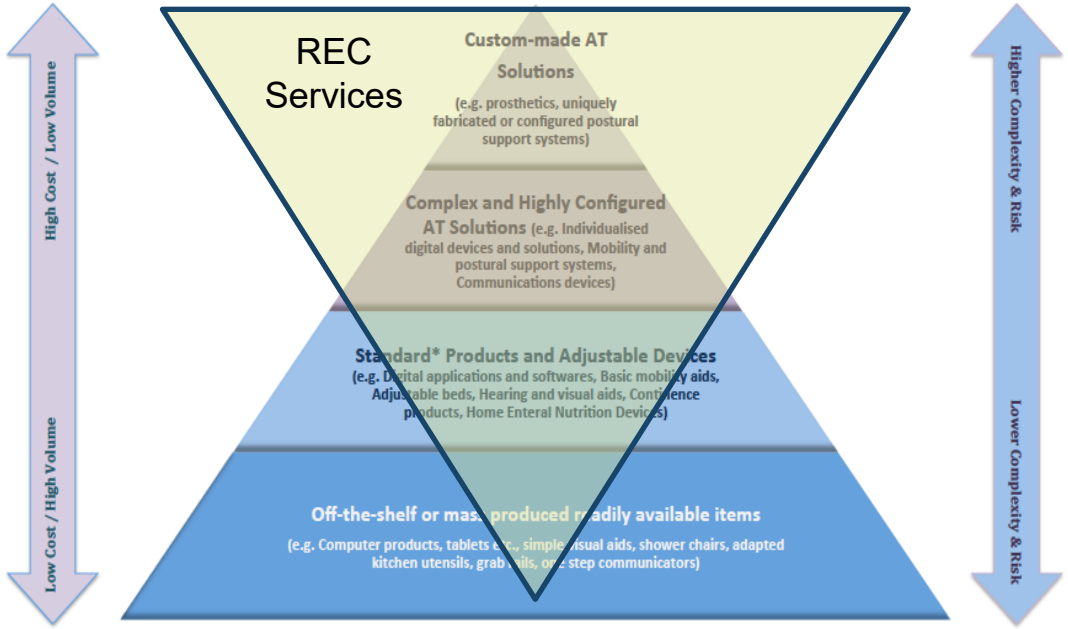


Workshop





Why Complex Needs?



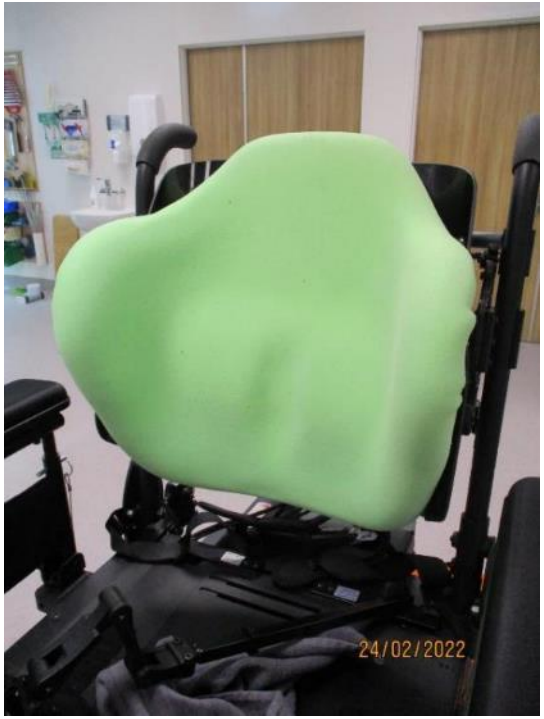
Postural Seating



Postural Seating – New through to adaption



Blanks for custom pads

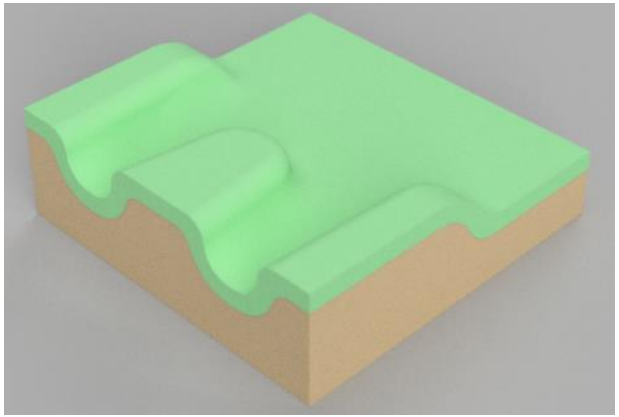


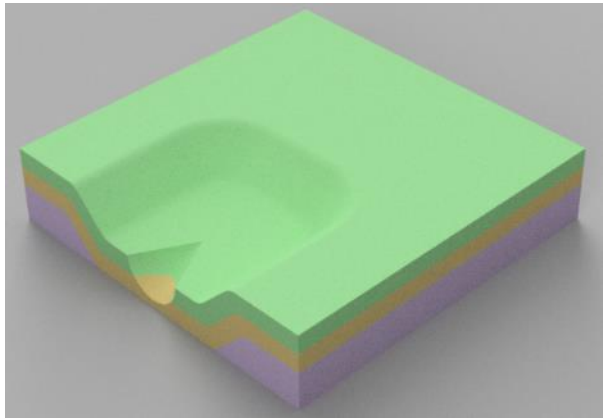
Custom wheelchair backrest

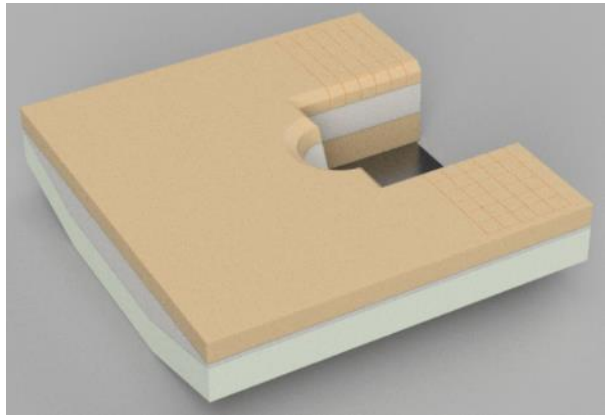


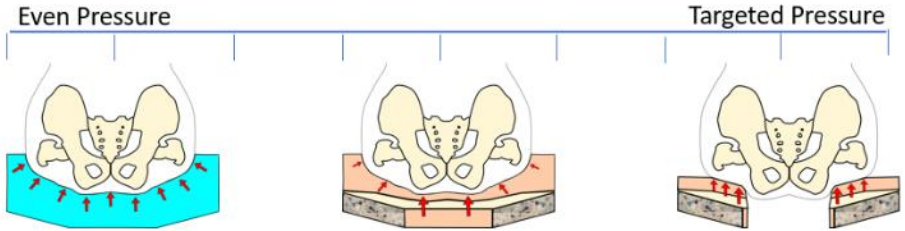
Custom highchair insert

Custom Cushions – Postural or Pressure management

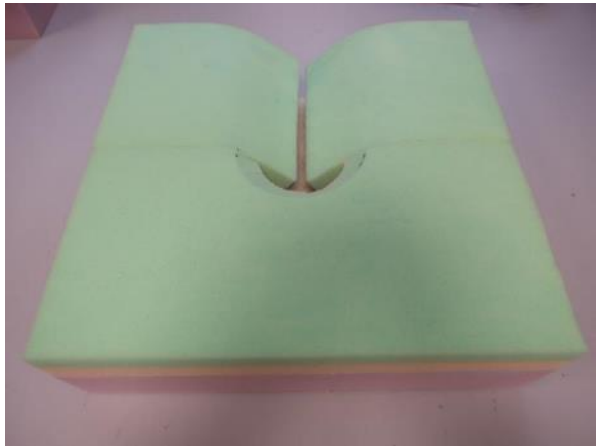


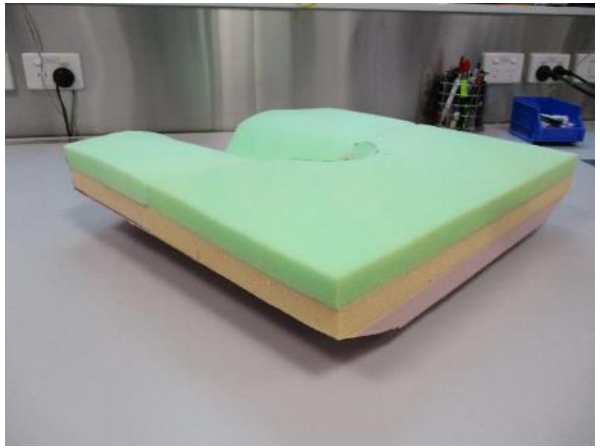


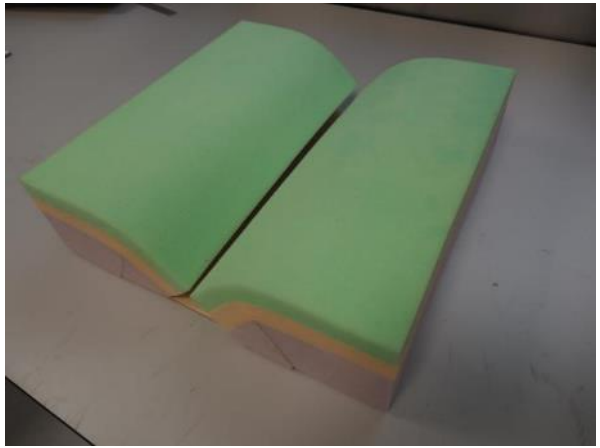


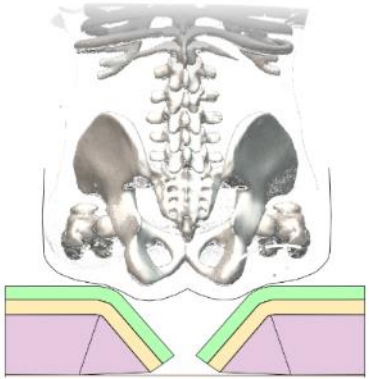


Post-surgical cushions – Pain management



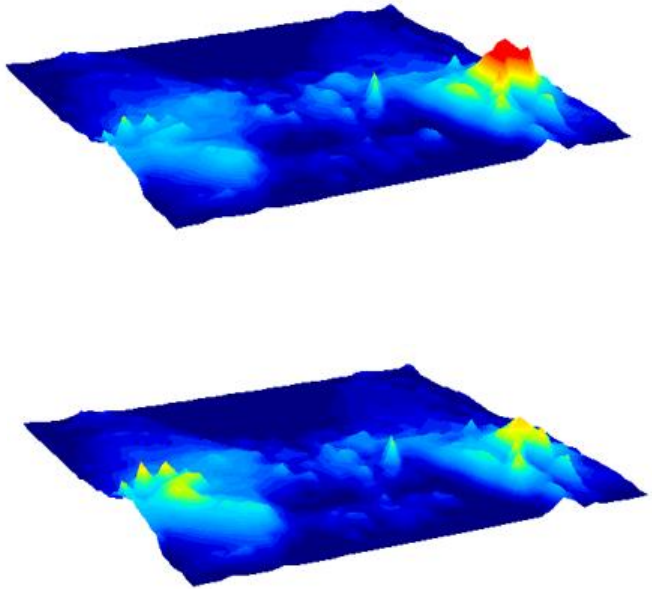






Pressure Mapping – Xsensor Foresite SS





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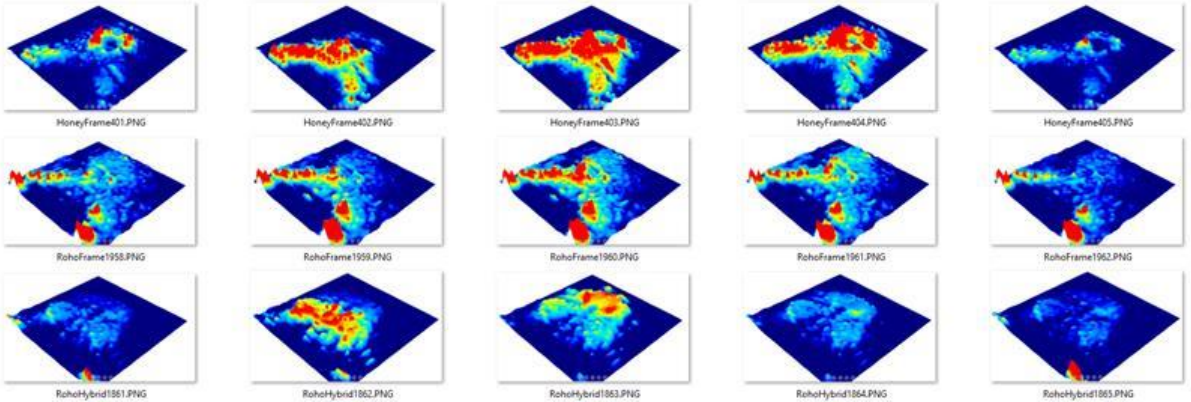


Therapist support





Assistive Technology





Assistive Technology





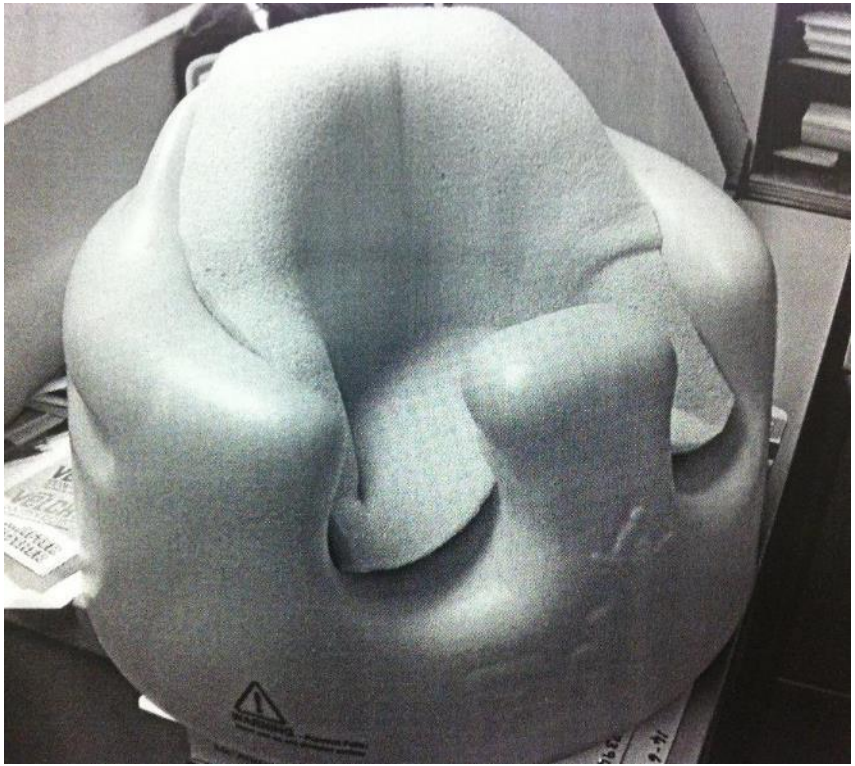
Assistive Technology





Assistive Technology





Assistive Technology











Assistive Technology



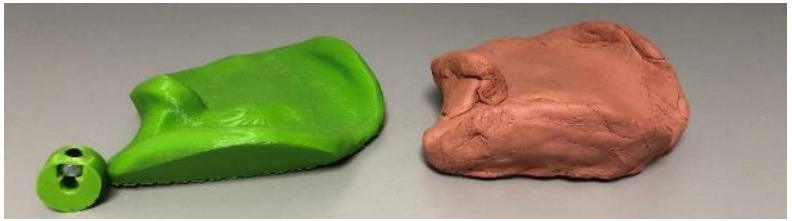


Assistive Technology



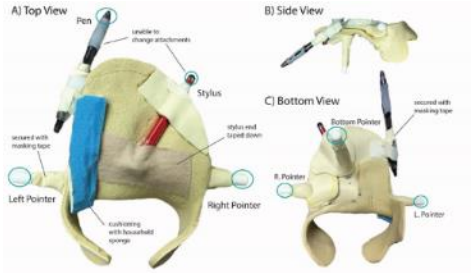








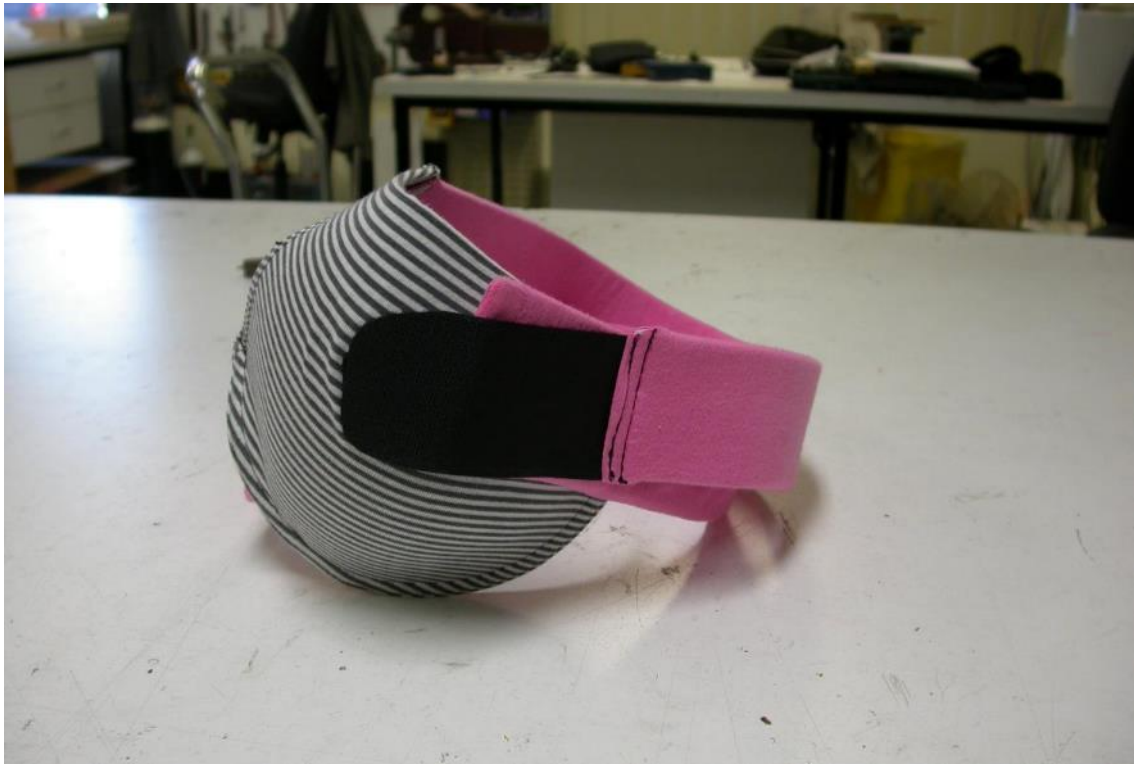






Assistive Technology

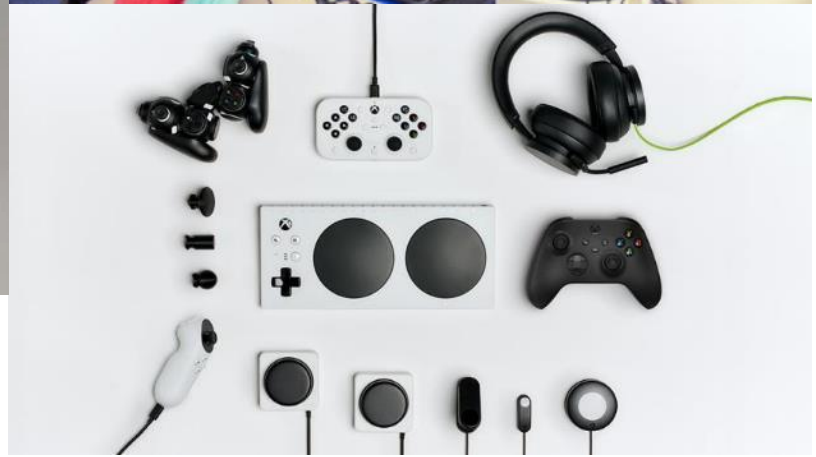




Assistive Technology - Gaming







Continuous Laryngoscopy Headgear





Collaborations & Contributions

JAMIESON TRAUMA INSTITUTE



arata
participation through technology

HERSTON
BIOFABRICATION
INSTITUTE

THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA

MAiC
Motor Accident
Insurance Commission

NIISQ

QUT Queensland
University
of Technology

Children's Health Queensland
Hospital and Health Service

Queensland
Government

The Hopkins Centre
Research for Rehabilitation and Resilience

Collaborations & Contributions

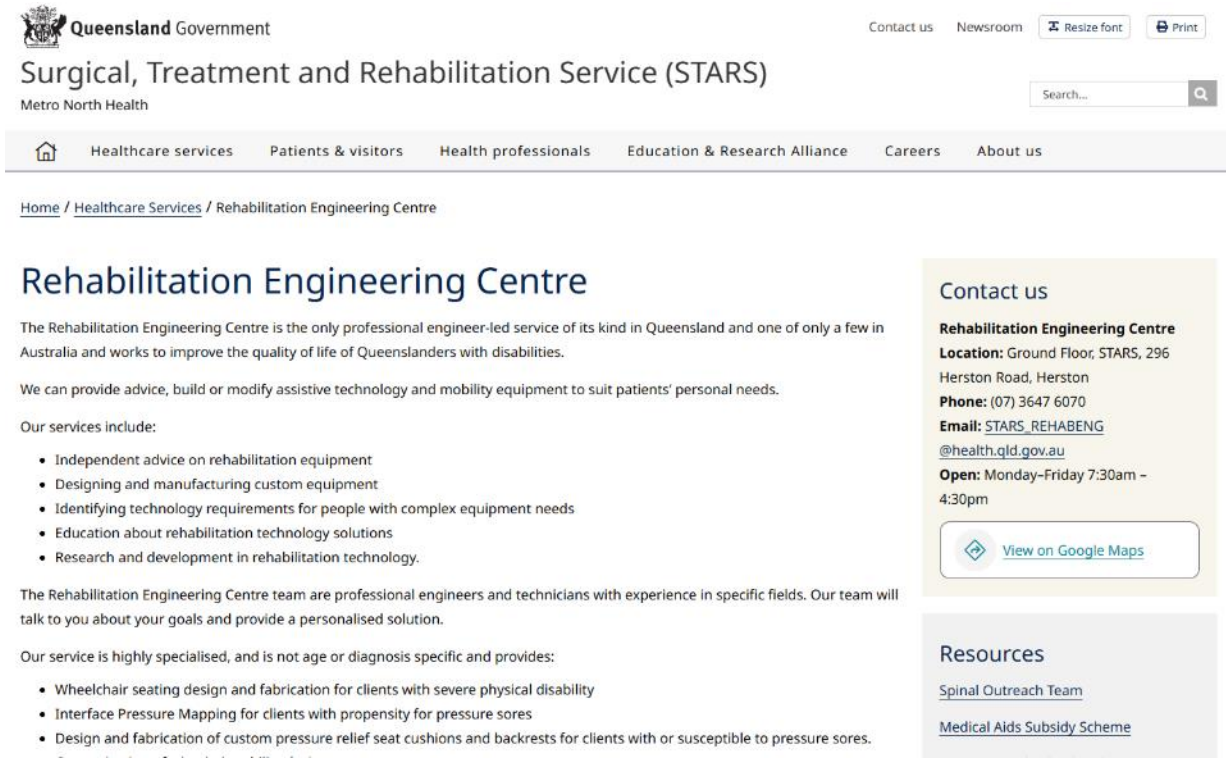
- Medical Engineering Course – University of Queensland & Queensland University of Technology
  - Work Integrated Learning (WIL) placements
  - Medical Engineering Design course lecturing and course project
  - Final year thesis projects
- Education sessions for internal and external therapists
- TGA feedback sessions
- Metro North Regulatory Compliance Officer support,
- Peer supervision of other Rehabilitation Engineers not in dept.
- National Committee on Rehabilitation Engineering (NCRE), Engineers Australia
  - Member







So How Do You Refer?



Queensland Government

Contact us Newsroom Resize font Print

Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS)

Metro North Health

Search...

Healthcare services Patients & visitors Health professionals Education & Research Alliance Careers About us

Home / Healthcare Services / Rehabilitation Engineering Centre

Rehabilitation Engineering Centre

The Rehabilitation Engineering Centre is the only professional engineer-led service of its kind in Queensland and one of only a few in Australia and works to improve the quality of life of Queenslanders with disabilities.

We can provide advice, build or modify assistive technology and mobility equipment to suit patients' personal needs.

Our services include:

- Independent advice on rehabilitation equipment
- Designing and manufacturing custom equipment
- Identifying technology requirements for people with complex equipment needs
- Education about rehabilitation technology solutions
- Research and development in rehabilitation technology.

The Rehabilitation Engineering Centre team are professional engineers and technicians with experience in specific fields. Our team will talk to you about your goals and provide a personalised solution.

Our service is highly specialised, and is not age or diagnosis specific and provides:

- Wheelchair seating design and fabrication for clients with severe physical disability
- Interface Pressure Mapping for clients with propensity for pressure sores
- Design and fabrication of custom pressure relief seat cushions and backrests for clients with or susceptible to pressure sores.

Contact us

Rehabilitation Engineering Centre
Location: Ground Floor, STARS, 296 Herston Road, Herston
Phone: (07) 3647 6070
Email: STARS_REHABENG @health.qld.gov.au
Open: Monday–Friday 7:30am – 4:30pm

View on Google Maps

Resources

Spinal Outreach Team

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme

So How Do You Refer?

- Outpatient Referral & Patient Registration forms
- Inpatient (external to STARS) also available with billing to the referring service.
- Triaged against the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Function (ICF)
- Estimate generated based upon the referral
- Service agreement accompanies the estimate back to referrer
- Participant clinically waitlisted
- Require confirmation of estimate acceptance prior to booking of appointment
- Participant billed once first appointment booked


Rehabilitation Engineering Outpatient Custom Seating Referral

CONTACT DETAILS

TRIAGE - MOBILITY DEVICE

REHABILITATION ENGINEERING OUTPATIENT CUSTOM SEATING REFERRAL


Patient Registration

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

PATIENT REGISTRATION

Metro North Health

Oliver Mason, **RPEQ, MIEAust, CPEng** (He/Him)
Director
Rehabilitation Engineering Centre

P 36476070
E STARS_RehabEng@health.qld.gov.au
W metronorth.health.qld.gov.au
A Ground Floor, 296 Herston Rd
Surgical, Treatment, & Rehabilitation Services (STARS)
Herston QLD 4029

Metro North Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Land upon which we live, work and walk, and pay our respects to Elders both past and present.



RiTA Rehabilitation Innovation & Technology Assessment

Leveraging rehabilitation engineering to deliver therapy: towards a new model of care

A/Prof. Alejandro Melendez-Calderon[1,2]

on behalf of the RITA team

[1]Principal Research Fellow, Theme co-lead Rehabilitation & Outcomes, Jamieson Trauma Institute, Metro North Health

[2] Honorary Associate Professor, School of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences, The University of Queensland

Primary funding partner: MAIC Motor Accident Insurance Commission

A collaborative partnership across Research Institutes, Universities, and Hospital & Health Services

JAMIESON TRAUMA INSTITUTE | Metro North Health | Metro South Health | Queensland Government | Queensland Health | GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY | QUT Queensland University of Technology | The University Of Queensland AUSTRALIA

Rehabilitation gyms in the 1960s



Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, West Orange, NJ

Our rehabilitation gyms in 2026



STARS, Metro North Health

… despite rehabilitation technologies being more available than ever!



Source: Hocoma



Source: Honda



Source: Hocoma



Source: neofect



Source: tyromotion



Source: MindMotion



Source: ReWalk



Source: Hocoma

Efficient use of technology could alleviate pressures in workforce & the rehabilitation of complex cases

Shortage of AH staff

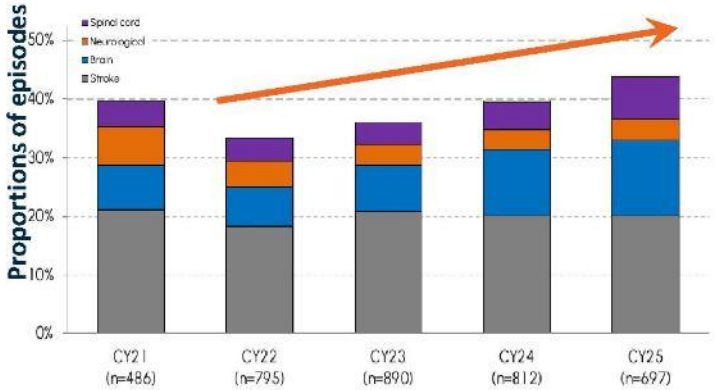
Australian Government | Jobs and Skills Australia

		AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
252511	Physiotherapist	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
252411	Occupational Therapist	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S

*2025 report

S Shortage
M Metropolitan Shortage
R Regional Shortage
NS No Shortage

Increase in complex neuro. patients



STARS

*AROC report 2025

Therapy deficit



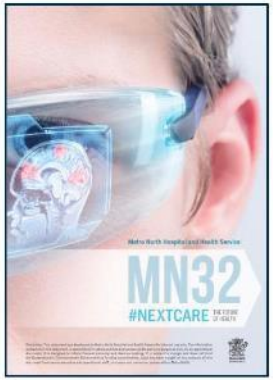
*based on OBSPA study, STARS

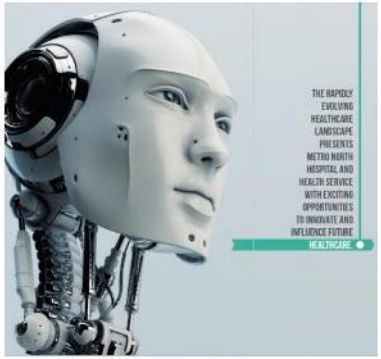
Great strategic visions! But how do we get there?

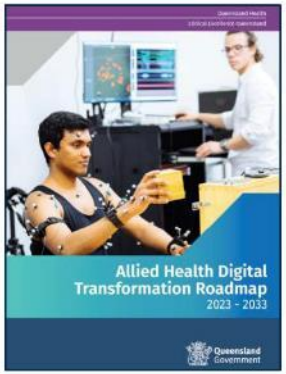


"**Embrace new technologies** and treatments <u>to ensure that best care is delivered</u>"

"**Leverage real time data, machine learning and artificial intelligence** ….[to] <u>generate better patient outcomes</u>."







By 2027: "**Robotics** will be a **driver in workforce change** through <u>improving diagnosis and treatment</u>"

"…more user-friendly health apps… [and]…connected **wearable devices** that collect a person's real-time health data…"

"**Digital health technologies** are integrated into routine…"

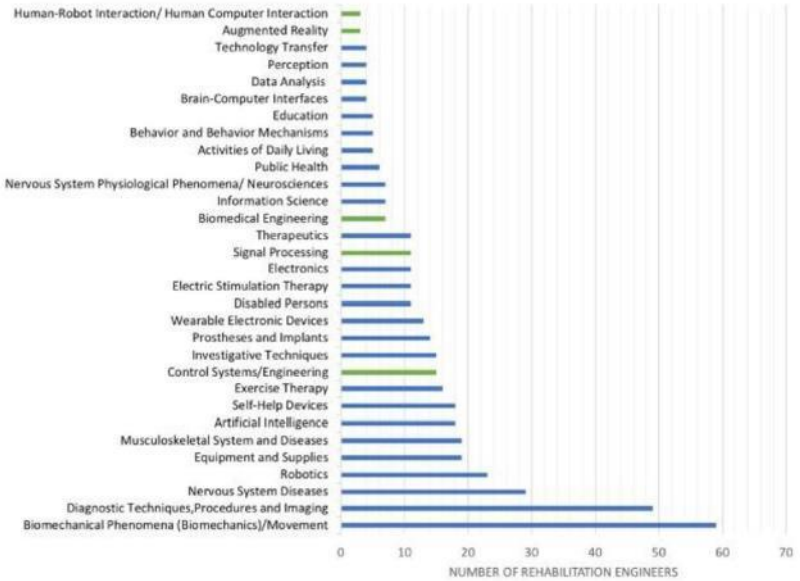
Why aren't we leveraging Rehabilitation Engineering?

"Rehabilitation engineering is **the use of engineering principles applied to rehabilitation**, disability, and independent living...

REs **develop systems, devices, therapies, and tools** that have an impact on the daily lives of populations and communities.

... **areas of practice of REs can vary widely** and may include fundamental research, invention, manufacturing, **innovation, and clinical practice**"

Areas of research identified from the highest cited publications of the most cited Rehabilitation Engineers



S. Satpute, et al. Mini-review: Rehabilitation engineering: Research priorities and trends. Neuroscience letters, 2021

Just in Brisbane, we graduate >70 biomedical engineers per year! Can they become REs?

RiTA Rehabilitation Innovation & Technology Assessment

Engineering better patient outcomes, sustainable workloads, and rehabilitation service efficiency

RITA aims to address a long-standing challenge in rehabilitation: the gap between the potential of existing/emerging technologies and their practical, sustainable integration into everyday rehab care

Latest Research & Innovations



evidence & frameworks

RiTA services

- Fill gap in Rehabilitation Engineering (RE) & Biomedical Technology services
- Expand scope of rehabilitation engineering practice (robotics, wearables, VR, AI, …)
- Integration of engineers within clinical teams

co-design & implementation

Established services

Queensland Health

MNHHS

STARS

MSHHS

PAH

MAIC Motor Accident Insurance Commission | Jamieson Trauma Institute | Metro North Health | Metro South Health | Queensland Government | Queensland Health | Griffith University | QUT Queensland University of Technology | The University of Queensland



Illustrative example generated with Gemini AI



Illustrative example generated with Gemini AI



Illustrative example generated with Gemini AI

Establishing feasibility: MAIC-funded project



ongoing **Seed grant**

(Mar 2025 – **Feb 2027**)

$970k AUD

+ $570k in-kind
(research partners)

Three main goals:

(1) **Preliminary establishment of a RITA service** to facilitate collaborative research in rehabilitation technology and innovation in models of care

(2) **Investigate the impact of technology-aided movement practice**, facilitated by interprofessional teams (incl. rehabilitation engineers)

(3) **Identify rehabilitation technology needs** during hospitalization to improve discharge readiness and further promote post-discharge recovery (include the exploration of co-designing technology solutions for selected cases)

Activities to date (07/2026)



Pragmatic feasibility study

>100 patients screened

PAH

17 observation | 5 intervention

STARS

10 observation | 5 intervention

Iterative service co-design

>100 devices catalogued across PAH and STARS

Identification of barries & facilitators to use of existing tech

PAH

8 inservice presentations

6 co-design workshops

STARS

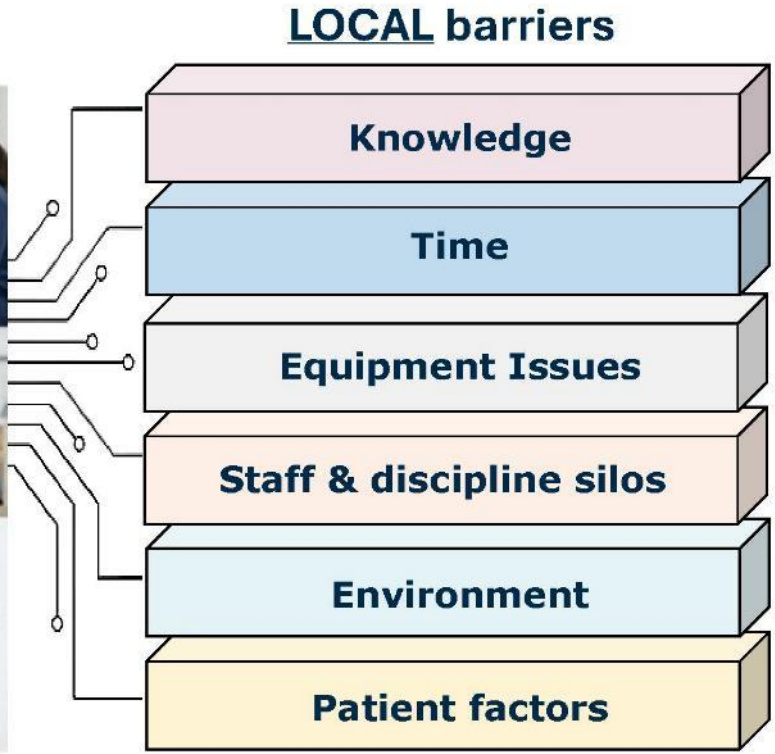
2 inservice presentations

2 co-design workshops

Technologies can scale therapy, but requires change in MOC

Outputs from RITA co-design workshops







Improving our Model of Care

ARM 1



Engineer-supported, technology-enabled practice

Increase patient physical activity by more efficient use of available technological resources

ARM 2



Bespoke Solutions

Leverage engineering and technology to address patient and therapy needs locally

ARM 3



Staff Education

Regular training and in-house support on rehabilitation technologies

Engineer-supported, technology-enabled practice

Examples

Example of RITA-supported session



We leverage sensor & digital technologies to measure changes in physical activity

Wearable sensors on leg + both arms



Bed occupancy & position sensor



Video-based movement analysis



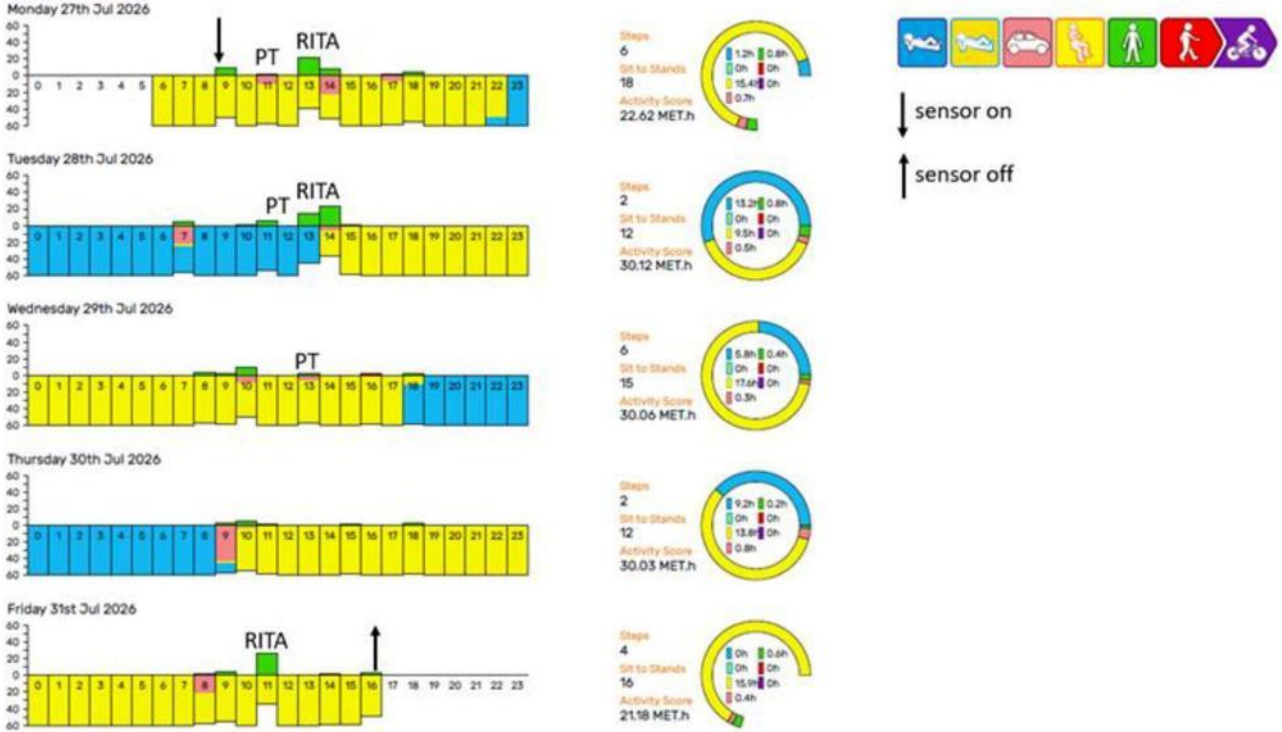
Therapist-reported logs



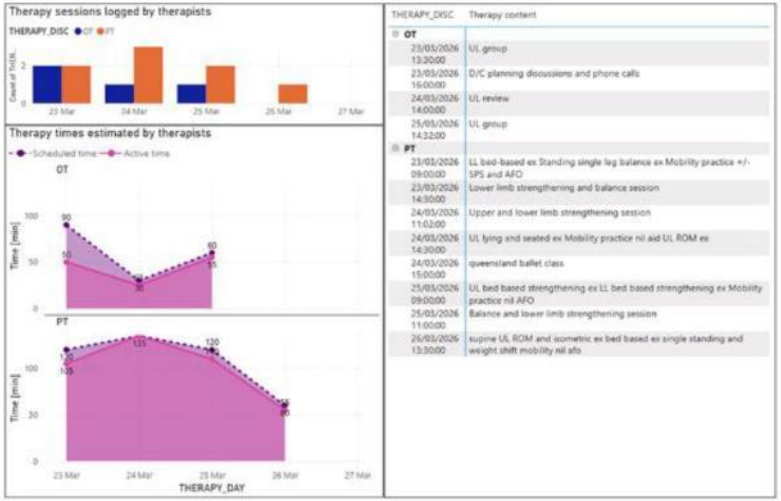


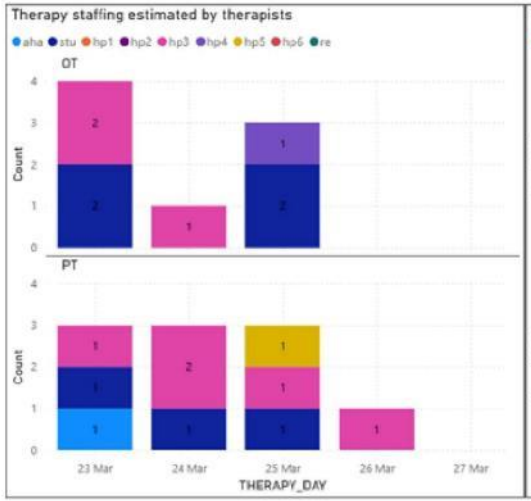
Sensors let us appreciate how we are affecting physical activity

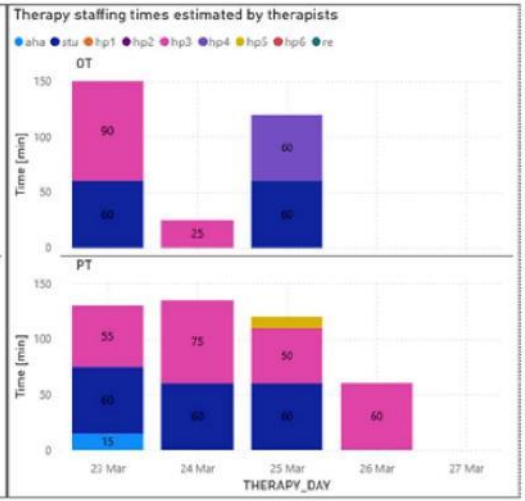
Example



Weekly activity reports let us engage with clinicians, and iterate on the usefulness of digital dashboards



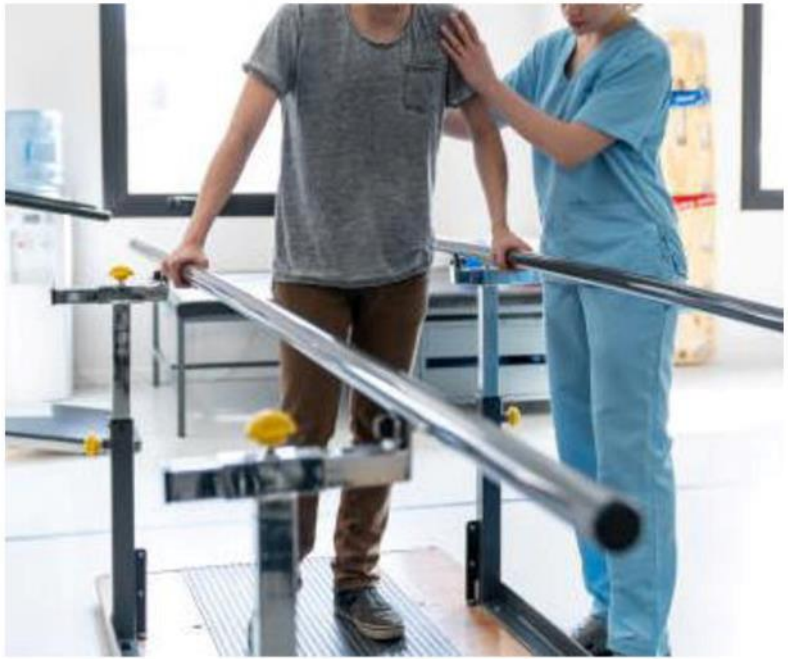




Bespoke solutions

Examples

Conventional physio training



Technology lying around

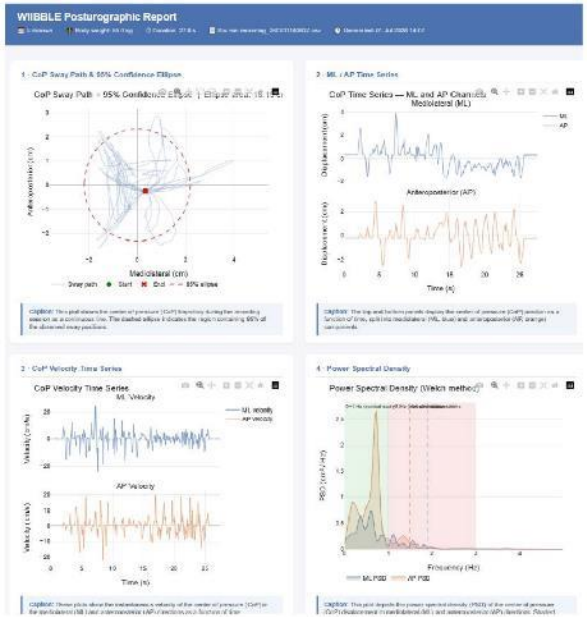


*only Wii boards – there is no Wii; unrealistic to buy consoles

The physio team asks our RITA team if there is something that can be done

Wiibble – An open-source platform using Wii boards





We have an ever-increasing list of requests for bespoke solutions

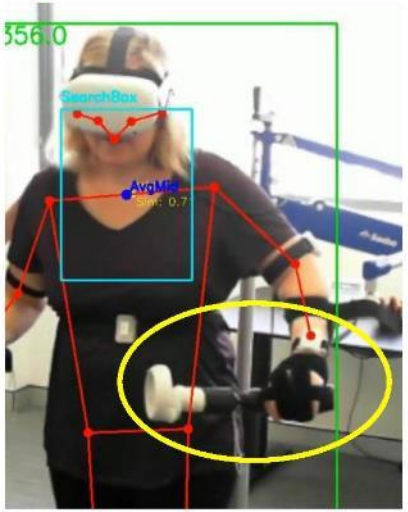
Examples

Device for plantar/dorsiflexion exercises



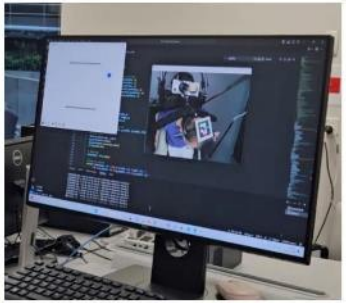


Adaptive interfaces for VR use



Body interfaces for wheelchair navigation





Embedding rehabilitation engineers alongside therapists nurtures local innovation!

Staff Education

Examples

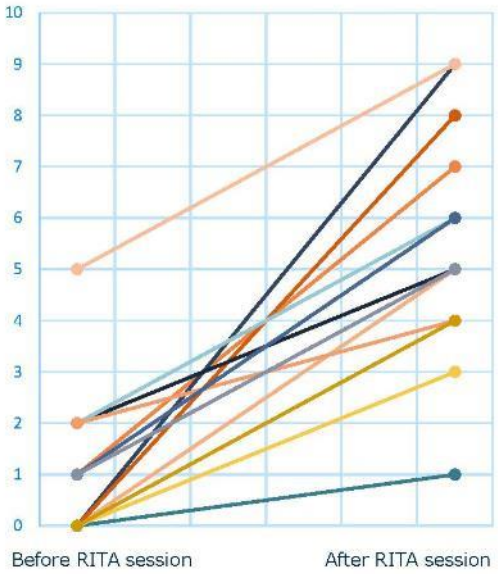
Technology Education Sessions: VR



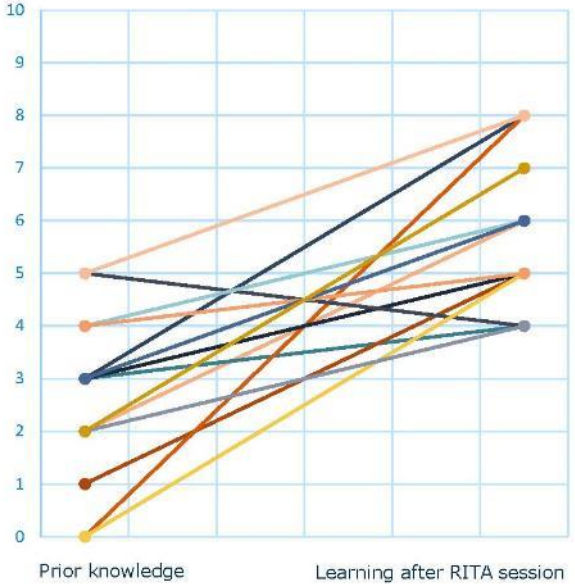


Our education sessions have a positive impact on staff

How likely were you to use VR with your patients before and after today's session?



How much did you know about VR before today's session? VS How much did you learn about VR in today's session?



RITA: Summary of current status



New Approach

Integrate rehab engineers into clinical teams and leverage technology



Main Project Goal

Increase physical activity through use of technology and interprofessional practice



Co-design Service

With future scalability in mind



Gathering data

Ongoing feasibility study (early to draw conclusions) – keep an eye out for updates from our team!

Keep an eye on future updates!

RiTA Rehabilitation Innovation & Technology Assessment

Chief Investigators:

- **A/Prof. Alejandro Melendez-Calderon**, Principal Research Fellow, Jamieson Trauma Institute, Metro North Health (alej.melendez@health.qld.gov.au)
- Dr. Camila Shirota, Senior Research Fellow, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Metro South Health | Senior Rehabilitation Engineer, STARS, Metro North Health
- Haylee Kajewski, Director of Physiotherapy, Surgical Treatment and Rehabilitation Services (STARS), Metro North Health
- Oliver Mason, Director of Rehabilitation Engineering, STARS, Metro North Health
- Tamsin Mahoney, A/Director of Allied Health, STARS, Metro North Health
- Jacquelin Donovan, Advanced Physiotherapist, Geriatric and Rehabilitation Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Metro South Health
- Catherine Cave, Advanced Physiotherapist, Brain Injury Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Metro South Health
- Leanne Passier, Team Lead Physiotherapist, Geriatric and Rehabilitation Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Metro South Health
- Dr. Vince Moug, Senior Lecturer, Queensland College of Art and Design (QCAD), Griffith University
- Dr. Clifford Afoakwah, Senior Research Fellow, Queensland University of Technology
- Champika Patullo, Assistant Director of Innovation and Implementation, Metro North Health
- Tim Cudmore, Consumer representative, lived experience of TBI & SCI
- Prof. Sandy Brauer, Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Science, The University of Queensland

Associate investigators:

- Prof. Cate Cameron, Principal Research Fellow, Jamieson Trauma Institute
- Dr Tanya Smyth, Research Fellow, Jamieson Trauma Institute
- Jace Warren, Senior Biostatistician, Jamieson Trauma Institute
- Mick Collins, Team Lead of Rehabilitation Engineering, STARS, Metro North Health
- Soo Oh, Team Lead Occupational Therapy, Spinal Injury Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Metro South Health
- Emilie Gollan, Manager Specialist Services, National Injury Insurance Scheme, Queensland (NIISQ)

Other RITA staff (as of 04/08/2026):

- Dr. Lucas Cardoso, Rehabilitation Engineer, Jamieson Trauma Institute, Metro North Health
- Sami Kaab, Rehabilitation Engineer, Jamieson Trauma Institute, Metro North Health
- Jaden Wendell, Rehabilitation Engineer Technician, STARS, Metro North Health
- Saskia Gilmour, Rehabilitation Engineer Technician (cadet), STARS, Metro North Health
- Charlie Lopes, Graphic designer, Griffith University
- April Williamson, Senior Physiotherapist, STARS, Metro North Health
- Lucy Grigg, Physiotherapist, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Metro South Health

A collaborative partnership across Research Institutes, Universities, and Hospital & Health Services

The Motor Accident Insurance Commission provided funding for the RITA project to conduct research activities with aim to improve the treatment and rehabilitation of people injured in motor vehicle crashes

The time is now to invest in future-proofing our rehabilitation services

Questions, Expressions of Interest, Collaboration opportunities – please reach out!

RITA@health.qld.gov.au

RiTA Rehabilitation Innovation & Technology Assessment

MAIC Motor Accident Insurance Commission
JAMIESON TRAUMA INSTITUTE
Metro North Health
Metro South Health
Queensland Government
Queensland Health
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
QUT Queensland University of Technology
The University Of Queensland AUSTRALIA

Certificate of Attendance

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Thank you!



MASS-Education@health.qld.gov.au