Nurses to combat soaring demand

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Our Vision
To be the leader in health care, research and education for regional Australia.

Our Values
- Integrity
- Compassion
- Accountability
- Respect
- Engagement

Our Purpose
To deliver excellent care, research and education to improve the health of the people and communities of northern Queensland.

Message from the Chair

Much has happened since our last edition; some of which I’d like to share with you.

The Townsville Hospital and Health Service ended the 2017-2018 financial year with a surplus of $12.8 million which will be reinvested to enhance our already world-class care.

We launched the Strategic Plan 2018-2022, heralding a new era for our health service which is projected to experience unprecedented growth requiring an additional 400 beds and associated services by 2036.

An extensive health service master planning process is already underway to guide the roll out of the physical and clinical infrastructure to deliver these additional beds. I look forward to continuing this work and forging ahead to improve health outcomes for North Queenslanders.

Another recent highlight saw the Townsville Hospital and Health Board fund over $600,000 for 19 local research projects. These will make significant headway in advancing healthcare to improve and develop better treatments for patients in our region and beyond.

It has been wonderful to reflect on all of these great achievements and as we are now well into the second half of the calendar year, I am excited to see what new and innovations are in the future to enhance health care to our community.

Tony Mooney AM
Chair
Townsville Hospital and Health Board

We value your feedback

Townsville Hospital and Health Service welcomes your feedback, contributions and suggestions. To submit your feedback please contact the Patient Feedback Service:

- (07) 4433 1074
- THHS-Feedback@health.qld.gov.au
- Patient Feedback Service, Townsville Hospital
  PO Box 670, Townsville Q 4810

Acknowledgment to Traditional Owners

The Townsville Hospital and Health Service respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians both past and present of the land and sea which we service and declare the Townsville Hospital and Health Service commitment to reducing inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health outcomes in line with the Australian Government’s Closing the Gap initiative.
The Townsville Hospital and Health Service is leading a state-wide charge to utilise senior, specially trained nurses to keep up with soaring national demand for endoscopy procedures.

In April, two nurse practitioners, Kylie Ashley and Grace Magnani, began delivering endoscopy procedures at The Townsville Hospital (TTH).

It marked a major milestone for the two nurses who have completed masters-level post-graduate training with a focus on performing colonoscopy procedures.

Kylie said she undertook extensive education and training to become a qualified nurse practitioner.

“To qualify, we reached the same nationally recognised credentialing level for colonoscopy procedures as a doctor,” Kylie said.

“Working within a team and in collaboration with medical and nursing staff we are now able to do colonoscopy procedures for less complex patients, which frees up our doctors to treat more complex cases.

“It is exciting because I am expanding my scope of practice as a nurse and will also help to ensure we can continue to see our patients in a timely way.”

Fellow nurse practitioner Grace Magnani said the training had been extensive.

“We received training here at The Townsville Hospital from local doctors as well from doctors in the UK,” Grace said.

“Our work is regularly reviewed to ensure that we are providing the highest level of care.”

Driving demand for services is the Commonwealth Government’s National Bowel Cancer Screening program which is introducing biennial screening for Australians aged over 50.

Demand for this program will be absorbed by the public system and nurses like Kylie and Grace will build up to performing up to 1,000 endoscopy procedures each year to help keep up with the additional demand.

In Queensland, two other Hospital and Health Services have nurse practitioner endoscopists but Townsville HHS is the first to have two employed full-time.

The Townsville HHS is currently completing a $5.9 million expansion of the endoscopy unit. The expansion of endoscopy will double the floor space and create two additional procedure rooms.
Sharing stories

Allied health staff had an opportunity to hear directly from patients and carers at their August forum. Robyn, Damir and Katrina shared personal stories with staff about their journeys as patients and carers at Townsville HHS. Staff always appreciate hearing from patients and carers and learning more about how patient experiences can be improved to better meet community needs.

Person-centred communication

Community members provided their perspective and assisted in the development of a plan for the introduction of person-centred communication initiatives. The plan will incorporate tools for both staff and patients to support effective communication in healthcare, which is compassionate, easy to understand and enables patients to be involved in health decisions.

Attendance at committees and meetings

To ensure our community is involved in planning and designing local healthcare, community representatives are included as members of various Townsville HHS committees and meetings. This enables us to have community input embedded in the day-to-day business of healthcare delivery. Committees with community representatives include the Research Development Committee, Infection Control Committee, Healthcare Standards Committee and the Carpark User Group.
Wi-Fi a boost for patients and families

The Townsville Hospital is making it easier for patients to stay connected with their loved ones with free Wi-Fi now available.

Townsville Hospital and Health Service Board Chair Tony Mooney said Wi-Fi made a huge difference to patients.

“A stay in hospital can be really hard and isolating for patients so anything we can do to make that stay easier is worthwhile,” he said.

“It is free to use and we’ve tried to make the network as simple as possible for our patients to connect.”

Townsville mum Peta Phillips and her daughter Hayley are regular visitors to The Townsville Hospital and said the Wi-Fi had been handy to make treatment time go faster.

“We bring in an iPad on her treatment days so she can play around on YouTube or ABC kids and it keeps her calm and doesn’t make it feel like such a long day,” she said.

The free service will work on any Wi-Fi enabled device, does not require a password to connect and will stay connected for up to 12 hours.

The speed of the network is capped to 512 kilobytes a second and will vary depending on the number of people using the system.
Managing your medicines

Most people take medication at some point during their life - whether medicines are taken occasionally or every day, it helps to understand them, what they do, how they should be taken and their possible side-effects.

NPS MedicineWise is an independent, not-for-profit and evidence-based organisation that works to improve the way medicines are prescribed and used with reliable and consumer-specific information. Visit their website for more information: www.nps.org.au/medical-info/consumer-info

Keeping a medications list

Over time, changes may be made to your medications which may make it difficult to remember important information about them. A medicines list can be a useful way to keep all the information about your medicines together.

Keeping a medicines list will:

- help you to know more about your medicines
- remind you how and when to take your medicines
- ensure everyone involved in your healthcare knows which medicines you use
- help your doctor and pharmacist check and review your medicines
- provide vital information about your medicines in an emergency.

Knowing as much as you can about your medicines will help you to:

- get better results from the medicines you use
- get the most out of a consultation with your doctor or pharmacist
- help to prevent side effect and interactions
- enjoy better health.

You can keep a medicine list in a number of ways which may be include in a paper-based list, online health record or by using a app on a smartphone. The NPS MedicineWise service has resources to assist with keeping both a paper-based list (are also available from reception at Townsville Hospital Pharmacy) and a free smartphone MedicineWise app.
The Townsville Hospital and Health Service has elected its first clinical council creating a forum for medical, nursing and allied health professionals to influence patient care and system change.

Townsville Hospital and Health Service Board member and urogynaecologist Professor Ajay Rane, who chaired the selection panel, said the calibre of applicants was staggering.

“This process showed us that there is great passion among our doctors, nurses and allied health staff for patient advocacy, system improvement and positive change,” he said.

Professor Rane said the clinical council would be the conduit for the organisation’s 4000-strong clinical workforce to share their views on how patient care could be improved.

“The creation of the council is based on the simple premise that we can always do better,” he said.

“The outstanding record of this health service speaks for itself but it doesn’t mean that we can’t, and shouldn’t, look for what we can do better.

“Frontline clinicians who work every day with patients at the bedside, in clinics and in the community, have pole position and we need to hear and heed their voices,” he said.

Board Chair Tony Mooney said he was delighted to hear the clinical council announced.

“Engagement with our staff, consumers and community is key to our new strategic plan and the creation of this council is a vital step, inviting those who have a vested interest, to influence the direction of our health service and guide us, as a Board and an organisation, in our models and delivery of care.”

Professor Rane said the number and calibre of the applicants convinced the panel to select 11 members instead of the intended nine.

“This decision also recognised that we have a broad and diverse clinical workforce and we wanted to see that diversity represented on the council,” he said.

“The council includes a mental health clinician, Indigenous clinician and rural clinician to ensure that the unique experiences and circumstances of all our patients and communities are understood.”
Hospitals don’t use the traditional ‘first come first served’ approach when it comes to treating patients.

Hospitals triage, or sort, patients based on how urgently they need to be seen.

This means patients with immediate or life-threatening illness or injury will be seen before patients with less serious problems.

Triage is used in the emergency department, patient clinics and when scheduling a surgery.

A nurse will assess your symptoms and assign a level or category based on those symptoms.

In our emergency department, most of our most serious patients in need of urgent care arrive by ambulance or helicopter. They will enter the hospital through a different entrance to the public waiting room.

Though you may not see more people in the waiting room our staff may be responding to a major incident. For this reason it can be difficult for our staff to give you an exact waiting time.

If you feel that your condition is getting worse or has changed during your wait in the emergency department you should speak to the nurse at the triage desk again so they can re-assess your health care requirements.

Similarly, there are clinically recommended wait times for patients requiring surgery. This is also done using a triage process. The Townsville HHS also provides emergency, life-saving surgery which is prioritised over elective cases.

Your wait time for surgery depends on what category you have been allocated based on your symptoms, and how many other people in the same category need to be seen.

**What is triage?**

In Australia, there are 3 national categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>URGENT</td>
<td>Within 30 days of being added to the wait list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEMI-URGENT</td>
<td>Within 90 days of being added to the wait list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-URGENT</td>
<td>Within 365 days of being added to the wait list</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our staff are continuously working hard to see all patients as quickly as possible.
Doctors and nurses are sewing and drawing for a cause, thanks to a new initiative that encourages theatre staff to include their first names on scrub caps.

Nurse unit manager Tanya Schafer and clinical nurse consultant Tracey Jones started the project earlier this year to avoid confusion and improve patient experiences.

“We started it as a patient safety initiative following some comments from patients who didn’t know the difference between doctors and nurses,” Tanya said.

“It also helps in emergency situations in theatre, where there are a large number of staff members who may not know each other.

“Not knowing the name and role of a colleague in an emergency situation can lead to delays in efficient and effective patient care and we wanted to find a way to solve that problem.”

Tanya said that while there was a requirement on the Surgical Safety Checklist that all staff in the operating theatre introduce themselves prior to surgery, small changes like this help to reassure patients.

“Knowing the names of staff and what role they play is hugely reassuring for patients who are going into theatre.

“The names on the hats have also increased morale in the unit as staff know who each other are.

“This patient safety initiative is a simple and cheap initiative with great benefits to patients and staff.”
Poor health has kept Allan Bennion off the road but telehealth appointments at Charters Towers Health Service means he isn’t missing out on expert care.

Mr Bennion is a type two diabetic who accesses telehealth services fortnightly to manage his condition.

“I live just down the road from the hospital, about one kilometre,” he said.

“Being able to talk to doctors with real specialist expertise without having to run off to Townsville has been so handy.

“Access to health care is important and technology has meant that I’ve been able to get specialist care in my home town.”

Rural Hospitals Service Group acting director Ivy Jones said a range of telehealth options were available at Charters Towers.

Regular sessions are delivered from Level 1 of the hospital and include consultations across: oncology, neurology, gerontology, endocrinology, surgery, physiotherapy, orthopaedics and cardiac specialties.

Respiratory telehealth services will begin from Charters Towers in September.

Ms Jones said telehealth appointments could be negotiated with doctors during the initial consultation.

“Your first appointment with your specialist will always be in person,” she said.

“If people from any of our rural hospitals, including Charters Towers, feel they could benefit from utilising telehealth they should ask their doctor.

“Ultimately, our doctors make the final call if telehealth is appropriate for the individual patient.”

Ms Jones said in 2017-2018 the Townsville Hospital and Health Service delivered 7072 telehealth appointments. Of those appointments, 216 were delivered in Charters Towers.

“What we know is the people who are using these services in Charters Towers greatly appreciate the service,” she said.

“I’d urge all Charters Towers residents to ask their specialist in if telehealth is an option for them.”
Rural, remote or emergency diabetics requiring urgent eye scans now have technology on their side, thanks to more than $20,000 worth of new camera equipment donated by the Townsville Rotary Club.

The cameras allow doctors to see the back of their patient’s eye, which helps identify early blindness in patients suffering from diabetic eye disease.

Director of diabetes and endocrinology Dr Kunwarjit Sangla said the cameras were a welcome addition to The Townsville Hospital’s diabetes and endocrine centre; however, they shouldn’t replace regular appointments at the optometrist.

“We encourage patients to get examined by an optometrist on a yearly basis as it’s an essential healthcare check and almost all places bulk bill,” Kunwarjit said.

“At the diabetes centre, we want to use these specialist cameras for emergencies and urgent patients who haven’t had the ability to get checks done in the required timeframes.

“It’s a truly welcome donation but we don’t want to replace the essential work that optometrists do in the community.”

Staff specialist Dr Usman Malabu said that the new equipment would help facilitate research in the area and also provide patients with a new level of care.

“The camera detects and monitors diabetic eye disease, which can lead to blindness if left untreated,” Usman said.

“By getting a complete photograph of the patient’s eye, we are able to provide an instant report for review at the clinic appointment.

“This report helps us to detect eye disease early and act quickly, it will also help facilitate research in the area by providing more reports and cases.”

Brendan Porter from Townsville Rotary Club said the club was very proud to be able to support The Townsville Hospital.

“The Rotary Club recognised that this was a great cause and took the opportunity to help patients at The Townsville Hospital,” Brendan said.

“We were very proud to be able to raise the money and donate the cameras.”
Wear a Bear Day 2018

Host your own Morning Tea!

All proceeds remain 100% local!

Friday 19th October

Get yours now!
Bandi Bear Ears $5
Bandi Bears only $10

Call 4433 1337 to reserve yours or to make a donation that will make a difference!