

Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service

Quality of Care Report

2025-2026

Queensland Government

Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service
Quality of Care Report 2025-2026

Version control
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Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and water on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders and leaders past and present.

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Introduction



What is the Quality of Care Report?

The *Quality of Care Report 2025-2026* (Quality of Care Report) is an annual document reporting on the quality of services delivered by Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (WBHHS). The report's aim is to increase public awareness of health service performance, as well as to enhance accountability and drive quality improvement. The *Quality of Care Report* demonstrates our commitment to providing the best possible outcomes for the patients and communities we serve.

What does the Quality of Care Report tell you?

The report has been designed to demonstrate our commitment to the strategic directions laid out in our *WBHHS Strategic Plan 2022-2037, Care, connection, compassion for all.*

The report provides performance indicators and describes how we are using these measures to improve and make a difference for the community and delivery of quality health services. Data sources are from the WBHHS annual report, Power BI, BreastScreen, MOSAIC and Oral Health Information System unless otherwise stipulated.

Why are we producing a report?

WBHHS is committed to the transparent voluntary disclosure of quality indicators of performance. The report allows the community to reflect on and analyse the care we are providing. We are proud to have voluntarily produced a report since 2014-2015.

In December 2019, the *Health Transparency Act 2019* was passed by the Queensland Government. The purpose of this Act is to improve the transparency of the quality and safety of health services and to help consumers make better informed decisions about their health care. *The Quality of Care Report* meets the legislated requirements under the Act and ensures our community is fully informed about all aspects of the quality of our health service.

The *Quality of Care Report* supplements the *Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service Annual Report 2025-2026*, which can be found on our website at: www.widebay.health.qld.gov.au/about-us/publications-and-reports/annual-reports

Providing feedback on this report

We welcome your feedback on this year's report. Partnering with our community ensures that we provide information that is valuable to you as well as structuring the report to meet your needs.

To share your thoughts on this year's report, please email: WBHHS-QUALITY@health.qld.gov.au

Statement from the Chief Executive



Debbie Carroll
Chief Executive, Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service

As we reflect on the year, we do so with pride in what our people have achieved in the face of sustained demand and workforce attraction pressures. Across our region, staff continued to show extraordinary commitment to delivering safe, compassionate and high-quality care for the Wide Bay community.

This year was also one of important transition and forward planning. The approval of the updated Wide Bay Service Plan 2022-2037 marked a significant milestone, providing a clear long-term direction for how we will meet the needs of our growing and changing population. Shaped through extensive consultation with staff, consumers, partners and the community, the plan positions us well for the next stage of growth, with a strong focus on equity, access, innovation, workforce sustainability and care closer to home.

We made significant progress in responding to service demand and improving patient flow across the health service. While pressures in our emergency departments and inpatient areas remained significant, targeted initiatives helped improve access to care, reduce delays and better support patients to move through the system safely and efficiently. The opening of the Bundaberg Palm Lake short-stay transition unit was a standout example of innovation in action, creating a more appropriate care setting for older people awaiting longer-term arrangements while easing pressure on hospital capacity.

We were also pleased to achieve our elective surgery waitlist target, reflecting the sustained effort of teams across the service.

Clinical improvement remained a strong theme throughout the year. Advances in stroke care, including tele-stroke capability, demonstrated the value of technology-enabled models in improving timely access to specialist care across our region. More broadly, we continued to embed new ways of working that support better outcomes for patients and a more connected, responsive health service.

This was also a year of visible progress in infrastructure. Major projects across the region continued to advance, including the new Bundaberg Hospital, the Hervey Bay Hospital expansion and planning for future facilities and services. These developments are critical to ensuring our facilities remain fit for purpose as the region grows.

At the same time, we remained focused on strengthening our foundations. We took practical steps to improve financial sustainability, reduce reliance on high-cost workforce models and make the best use of available capacity and resources. We also continued to invest in our staff, recognising that our future depends on attracting, developing and supporting skilled and compassionate people.

During the year, we welcomed new Board members who have brought valuable experience, fresh perspective and renewed energy to the organisation. Their contribution alongside the dedication of our existing Board members has strengthened the Board's oversight and supports the continued maturity of our governance and strategic direction.

This year has shown that WBHHS is moving forward with purpose, confidence and a clear vision for the future. We thank our staff, consumers, volunteers, partners and community for their ongoing support as we continue building a health service that is ready for the next stage of growth.

Activity snapshot 2025-2026

134,553



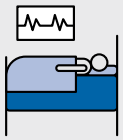
Emergency department presentations (↘1%)

22 minutes



Median wait time for treatment in emergency departments (↗1%)

36,123



Patient admissions from the emergency department (↘9%)

85%



Specialist outpatients (Cat 1) seen within clinically recommended time (>98%)

94%



Elective surgery patients (Cat 1) seen within clinically recommended time (>98%)

28 days



Median wait time for elective surgery (↘10%)

5.6%



Re-admissions to acute psychiatric care within 28 days of discharge (<12%)

14,322



BreastScreen scans (↗3%)

11,895



Telehealth outpatient service events (target 8,940)

1,620



Babies born (↗2%)

NB: Numbers in parentheses represent change from 2024/25 data unless otherwise stipulated.

Care, connection, compassion for all

The *Quality of Care Report* is based on the *WBHHS Strategic Plan 2022-2026, Care, connection, compassion for all.*



Our vision

Care, connection, compassion for all.

Our purpose

To compassionately care and connect with the Wide Bay community and our staff to provide excellence in regional health services.

The central pillars of care, connection, compassion for all are:

- Optimise and transform
- Foster partnerships
- Equity and access
- Nurture and future-proof workforce
- Embed technology

We are committed to providing quality health services for the Wide Bay community. We recognise the challenges and also the great opportunities to make this happen.

Our purpose is to compassionately care and connect with the Wide Bay community and our staff to provide excellence in regional health services.

We respect, protect, and promote human rights in everything we do.

WBHHS values of Collaboration, Accountability, Respect and Excellence (C.A.R.E) Through Patients' Eyes reflect the public service values of Customers first, Ideas into action, Unleash potential, Be courageous, and Empower people, and the supporting behaviours are embedded in our *Strategic Plan 2022-2026*.

Collaboration
Collaborative teamwork

Accountability
Act with integrity

Respect
Value diversity

Excellence
Be proud of all that we do

Through patients' eyes

Optimise and transform

Enhance and transform health services to improve patient outcomes

The strategic direction of 'Optimise and transform' focuses on increasing coordination and agility across the WBHHS network of services to grow self-sufficiency, capacity and capability to meet the community needs and demand.

Emergency services



Emergency departments (ED) across WBHHS had 134, 553 presentations for the year. The percentage of patients seen within recommended times based on clinical urgency is listed below.

WBHHS implemented a range of measurable, evidence-based improvement strategies during 2025-2026 to optimise and transform health services and improve patient outcomes through better patient flow.

WBHHS implemented a range of initiatives to reduce the number of patients remaining in the emergency department for more than 24 hours and improve patient flow across the system. Hervey Bay Hospital introduced a dedicated Emergency Medicine pharmacy service.

The embedded pharmacists support early medication reconciliation, optimise medication management to facilitate timely access to critical medicines and resolved medication-related issues that may otherwise delay clinical decision-making or patient disposition.

Bundaberg Hospital emergency department implemented targeted changes to staffing and the model of care within the Early Treatment Zone during 2025-2026. These improvements were designed to address ambulance ramping, front-of-house pressures and delays in clinical care for patients in the waiting room, with a focus on reducing Patient Off Stretcher Time, lost Queensland Ambulance Service minutes and Emergency Length of Stay. Over the last four months of the reporting period, 80 per cent of category 2 patients were consistently seen within the recommended timeframe, representing a significant improvement on previous performance.

In 2025-2026, 3,072 patients were receiving care in the emergency department for longer than 24 hours. In 2024-2025, this number was 4,344 patients, a 29 per cent decrease in emergency department long stays.

	Triage waiting times	% of attendances who depart within 4 hours of their arrival
Triage Category	**WBHHS Performance (Benchmark)**	**WBHHS Performance (Benchmark)**
1 (seen within 2 minutes)	100% (100%)	52% (>80%)
2 (seen within 10 minutes)	79% (80%)	
3 (seen within 30 minutes)	47% (75%)	
4 (seen within 60 minutes)	61% (70%)	
5 (seen within 120 minutes)	92% (70%)	



Culturally responsive care reduces DAMA rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients

A recent initiative at Hervey Bay Hospital is helping to better understand and address the factors contributing to patients leaving the Emergency Department (ED) before completing their care. The focus has been on strengthening cultural safety and improving support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, with promising results.

The project, led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Hospital Liaison Officer, explores the broader social, emotional, and cultural influences that can contribute to Discharge Against Medical Advice (DAMA) decisions.

Choosing to leave early isn't about rejecting care, it's about balancing competing responsibilities such as needing to collect children from school, not having essential items at home, or not feeling culturally or emotionally safe in a clinical setting.

Themes emerging from the research included long wait times, family and community responsibilities, and emotional distress. Parents arriving with children, particularly those with additional needs, may experience added stress in crowded or unfamiliar environments. Having an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker present, not just in the Emergency Department but across the entire hospital helps reduce anxiety, build trust, and support culturally appropriate communication throughout the patient journey.

The project data showed a clear reduction in DAMA rates during shifts when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers were on duty, highlighting their vital role in supporting patient engagement. The project team hopes these findings will support ongoing investment in culturally safe care models and further recognition of the frontline role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers play in improving patient outcomes.



Short-stay transition unit meets community needs

A dedicated 34-bed short-stay transition unit at Palm Lake Care Bargara is supporting older people awaiting admission to a residential aged care facility.

The partnership between Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (WBHHS) and Palm Lake Care Bargara will support the delivery of short-term care for older people who don't require hospital care and are waiting for permanent residential aged care or transition back to their home. The partnership is a positive step for both the health service and the community as it will free up more hospital beds for those who need acute care.

Wide Bay is a popular area with a fast-growing population, and the health service is working hard to meet that increased need. The mutually beneficial collaboration with Palm Lake Care Bargara ensures there is dedicated service support to provide a safe and suitable environment for short-term residents.

The transfer of patients was extremely well planned and executed by the entire team including operational, administration and nursing staff. Other departments involved in the transition included information management, communications technology, staffing, building and maintenance services, and the contracts and finance teams.

Short stay residents receive ongoing care during a four-week turn-around period along with discharge planning for placement in a permanent residential aged care facility, or back to their home. The unit is quieter than a hospital and the residents benefit from having access to a diversional therapist to maintain cognitive and psychosocial wellbeing and staying in a more home-like environment which prepares them for permanent nursing home placement.

The model of care has established an ongoing working relationship with Palm Lake Care Bargara, it is also serving to strengthen networks with nursing homes and helping older people to access much-needed residential aged care beds.



Elective surgery and specialist outpatient department services

	Elective Surgery (ES) treated within clinically recommended time)	ES number of patients treated within clinically recommended times	Spedialist Outpatients (SOPD) waiting within clinically recommended time	SOPD seen within clinically recommended times
Category	**WBHHS Performance (Benchmark)**	**WBHHS Performance (Benchmark)**	**WBHHS Performance (Benchmark)**	**WBHHS Performance (Benchmark)**
1 (within 30 days)	94% (>98%)	1994 (2163)	47% (>98%)	85% (>98%)
2 (within 90 days)	82% (>95%)	1149 (1,742)	43%	46%
3 (within 365 days)	84% (>95%)	496 (766)	71%	67%

During 2025-2026, the Orthopaedic Physiotherapy Screening Clinics at Bundaberg and Fraser Coast supported improved access to elective surgery by enabling patients with musculoskeletal conditions to be assessed by advanced physiotherapists before referral to an orthopaedic surgeon.

Patients who could be effectively managed conservatively received timely physiotherapy intervention, while those requiring surgery were prioritised for specialist review. This model reduced unnecessary orthopaedic specialist appointments, improved referral quality and ensured surgical clinics were better focused on patients with operative needs.

As a result, the clinic helped reduce orthopaedic waitlists, improve access to specialist care and support treatment within clinically recommended timeframes.

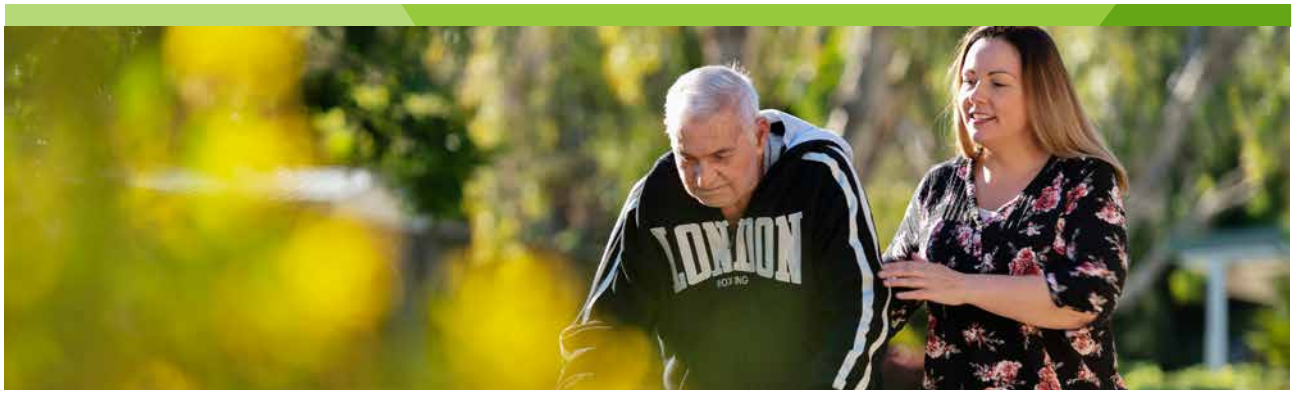
During 2025-2026, WBHHS implemented a range of initiatives to improve access to specialist outpatient services and increase the percentage of patients treated within clinically recommended times. While specialist outpatient waiting lists remain significant and performance is currently below target, WBHHS has continued to prioritise practical service improvements to increase capacity, strengthen triage and provide earlier access to care for patients waiting for assessment and treatment.

A key initiative was the introduction of First Contact Hand Therapy models at Bundaberg Hospital and Fraser Coast, enabling patients with hand and upper limb conditions to be assessed and managed early by advanced occupational therapy clinicians. This model supported timely assessment, conservative management and appropriate triage, reducing unnecessary specialist outpatient appointments and ensuring patients requiring surgical review were identified sooner. At Fraser Coast, the allied health-led Primary Contact Hand Therapy Service, established through Rapid Response Funding, further improved access for orthopaedic waitlist patients and emergency department referrals by providing evidence-based upper limb assessment and early intervention. Since commencing in February 2026, all patients on the Category 3 orthopaedic upper limb waitlist were triaged, 348 occasions of service were delivered, and patients demonstrated clinically significant improvements in function and symptoms based on standardised outcome measures.

In the 2025-2026 reporting period, there were 14,627 patients on the wait list for specialist outpatients' appointments. Of those, 6,233 were waiting longer than their clinically recommended time.

Equity and access

Services delivered are equitable and accessible to the community



Accreditation

WBHHS accreditation status	**Fully accredited**

From 1 July 2023, all public and private hospitals and day procedure services undergoing assessment to the National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards (NSQHS), and the National Clinical Trials Governance Framework (NCTGF) will be assessed at short notice. WBHHS has been informing the development of short notice accreditation from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare (ACSQHC) since 2017 when we first participated through piloting of short notice accreditation surveys.

Health service organisations implementing the National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards, or the National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards, are generally assessed with an announced visit, unless it is a requirement of licensing or funding contracts, or they choose to be assessed at short notice. WBHHS is currently undertaking an analysis against the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care sustainability and resilience module. The Healthcare Sustainability and Resilience Module supports organisations to address healthcare impacts on the environment and the climate risks affecting health outcomes and access to care.

WBHHS's accreditation status is 'Met' until March 2029, and we are committed to ensuring the NSQHS standards are embedded into everyday practice.

Hospital in the Home

Our Integrated Care team operates the Hospital in the Home (HITH) service seven days a week, providing care in the patient's residence (including Residential Aged Care Facilities) or clinic settings according to patient preference. This is a quality and cost-efficient alternative to inpatient hospital admitted care.

HITH activity is measured as a percentage of separations or discharges from the service compared to the overall number of admitted separations.

HITH separations for WBHHS remain well above the Queensland state average of 1.4 per cent, with Hervey Bay achieving 4.4 per cent and Bundaberg 3.8 per cent.

Facility	% increase in HITH utilisation	Total bed days saved	% HITH separations
Bundaberg Hospital	20%	7,947	3.8%
Hervey Bay Hospital	27%	9,817	4.4%

NB: All calculations are for both Day/Overnight and Overnight only separations



Wide Bay's Innovative Aged Care Model shines at Clinical Showcase

Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service was proudly represented at the Clinical Excellence Queensland Showcase, held at the Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre recently. Hervey Bay Hospital staff from the Integrated Care team presented a pioneering model of care for older people. The presentation, Empowering the Elderly through Integrated Care, was co-delivered by the Nurse Unit Manager and Project Lead.

The presentation detailed the newly launched GEM/GEMR HITH Geriatric Evaluation and Management / Rehabilitation Hospital in the Home service operating on the Fraser Coast since March. The innovative 10-bed service is reshaping aged care delivery by offering subacute care in patients' homes rather than a traditional hospital setting.

Delivering care in the home reduces avoidable hospital admissions and gives patients more choice about where and how they receive care. The GEM/GEMR HITH service supports patients experiencing physical, functional or cognitive decline due to frailty and offers either 10 days of subacute care or up to 28 days of rehabilitation.

The multidisciplinary team which includes a geriatrician, nursing staff, and allied health professionals works closely together to deliver holistic, person-centred care that supports wellbeing, independence, and dignity. The GEM/GEMR HITH service is a great example of how collaboration, enablement and equity can improve outcomes for older people. The service expansion is part of Wide Bay's commitment to delivering the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

Partnering with consumers remained a key focus for WBHHS in 2025-2026, supporting compliance with NSQHS Standard 2 and the delivery of equitable, person-centred care. Consumers and carers were engaged through advisory groups, surveys, co-design activities and shared decision-making to help ensure services were responsive to community needs.



Community spirit shines one conversation at a time

Balancing a busy work schedule with a commitment to helping others, a WBHHS trainee hospital chaplain Elizabeth Bester is dedicating three afternoons each week to supporting patients and their families. When asked what inspired her to start volunteering, the Elizabeth said she enjoys being with people and believes it's a meaningful way of contributing to her community.

Elizabeth is currently halfway through the 12-month Clinical Pastoral Education course, conducted through the Queensland Institute of Clinical Practice Education. The course involves two-day face-to-face training sessions once a month over 10 months by a Clinical Pastoral Supervisor. The trainees spend 200 placement hours volunteering in the hospital with the support of monthly one-on-one supervision.

Elizabeth will spend her placement hours welcoming patients and their loved ones into conversation and offering a safe and supportive presence during what can often be challenging or emotional times. Whether it's a patient facing uncertainty or a family member seeking comfort, the chaplaincy volunteer is there simply to listen.

The impact of such work extends beyond individual interactions. In healthcare settings, emotional and spiritual support is increasingly recognised as an important part of holistic care. Chaplain volunteers play a vital role in bridging gaps and ensuring patients don't feel alone in their experiences and provide spiritual support.



Volunteers help shape healing spaces

In the lead-up to National Volunteers Week, a group of volunteers joined a talented local artist for a creative workshop, exploring ideas for artwork to brighten a new ward at Hervey Bay Hospital. Opening in March last year, Medical Ward 3 is continuing to evolve, with this project helping to create a warmer, more welcoming environment for patients, families and staff.

WBHHS Arts in Health Consultant said the artwork initiative would help bring comfort and connection into the clinical spaces and it was great to involve local volunteers. Our volunteers also spend so much time hearing stories and supporting people across the service, so they're in a unique position to share those perspectives."

A Wide Bay local contemporary artist said the creative collage workshop was a meaningful way to bring local identity and flavor through decals that encompass the experience of living on the Fraser Coast – whether it be in Hervey Bay, Maryborough or more broadly in the region.

A volunteer noted that it's wonderful to have this sort of event in my hometown, and I'm very appreciative of Queensland Health because I've spent a lot of time in the hospital system myself. "It means a lot to be able to participate and give back in this way, and it's lovely for the volunteers, who are here every day, to have input into the design and celebrate the beauty of our natural area."

In 2025-2026, WBHHS increased patient and carer engagement in maintaining health through targeted education, community outreach and self-management support. Reflections Health Topic Talks and Community Update events held across Bundaberg, Hervey Bay and Maryborough improved health literacy and access to information on services, including outpatient care, the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, emergency department presentations, and men's and women's health. Developed in response to consumer feedback, these initiatives supported stronger community understanding and participation in health care.

Embed technology

Increase access to virtual care through embedded technology



WBHHS delivered 11,895 outpatient consultations, treatments, or services via telehealth across the 2025- 2026 year. This was an 18% increase on our target of 8,940. WBHHS has also seen an expansion in gastroenterology, endocrinology and rheumatology through increased utilisation of the Telecare model, enabling more patients to be treated closer to home for these specialties.

	2025-2026 Episodes	Target Episodes	% of target
WBHHS	11,895	8,940	33%

In 2025-2026, WBHHS increased the number of services informed by co-design with consumers and community partners.

Consumer input was incorporated into capital planning for Hervey Bay Hospital's ICU light box panels and future MRI service environments at Hervey Bay and the new Bundaberg Hospital.

Consultation with patients, carers and community members captured feedback on comfort, accessibility, communication, cultural safety and environmental design, helping ensure new clinical spaces better reflect consumer needs and improve the patient experience.



MRI service to be offered in Wide Bay public hospital for first time

Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (WBHHS) has welcomed the Queensland Government's announcement that Hervey Bay Hospital will soon be home to a state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine, offering this service within a Wide Bay public hospital for the first time.

MRI machines produce detailed images of the body, helping to diagnose a variety of conditions including tumours, infections, strokes, organ diseases, and traumatic injuries. The investment will strengthen the public health system, giving clinicians access to the latest in imaging technology to deliver high-quality care with confidence.

This year alone, Fraser Coast patients have been referred for around 2,000 MRI examinations, performed by the private sector or other Queensland Health facilities outside of our region. Having an MRI service onsite means patients, especially our most vulnerable, can get the scans they need without the risks and delays of being transferred or referred elsewhere offsite.

Health Infrastructure Queensland (HIQ) has already undertaken preliminary work to identify a potentially suitable site, and following the recent announcement, we're excited to continue our work with HIQ as we move into the next phase of detailed planning and stakeholder engagement."

The Fraser Coast Director of Medical Imaging said the medical imaging team was thrilled by the announcement of Hervey Bay Hospital's first MRI service, describing it as a long-awaited milestone they had hoped for and worked towards for many years. MRI is widely regarded as the gold standard for investigating a range of complex conditions.

The investment in technology is also an investment in our people – empowering teams, supporting learning, strengthening workforce capability, and creating a workplace where people want to stay and grow.

Progress toward expanded digital clinical systems remained a key enabler of virtual care across WBHHS in 2025-2026. The Bilateral ieMR Capacity Expansion Program Planning Project (BiCEPPP) continued through the first half of the year and concluded on 31 December 2025, supporting discovery, analysis and planning activities that informed a revised ieMR Business Case for implementation funding consideration. This work strengthened readiness for future ieMR expansion and supported more integrated, technology-enabled models of care.

Digital enablement through the WBHHS Digital Development Hub continued to strengthen the technology foundations needed to support virtual care and contemporary service delivery. Key initiatives included rollout of the Prison Electronic Medical Record, improving access to digital clinical information and supporting more connected care in correctional health settings. A trial of an AI ambient scribing solution was also implemented within the Bundaberg Paediatric Specialist Outpatient Department to explore opportunities to improve clinical efficiency and reduce administrative burden, with analysis of benefits and clinical efficiencies underway.



Gone like the wind: Enhanced tube system to speed up pathology testing at new hospital

A key feature of the new Bundaberg Hospital will be an enhanced pneumatic tube system, which will speed up pathology testing and help people get the right treatment in the fastest possible manner. Pathology Queensland Supervising Scientist said pneumatic tube systems played an essential role in hospitals.

The system is best described using the analogy of a train network, the system uses compressed air (engines) to send cylindrical containers (trains) that contain blood and pathology samples from our clinical wards (stations) to the laboratory. The pneumatic tube system operates 24/7 and enables the hospital to move specimens and blood products between departments and the lab within minutes.

The system's technology allows more urgent samples from areas such as the intensive care unit or emergency department to receive priority sorting and improve the overall turnaround time of results. Our pharmacy team also uses the system to transfer some pharmaceutical supplies to our hospital wards.



First year of digital wound care innovation

More than 500 wounds have been assessed on the Fraser Coast since the launch of an innovative digital wound care platform, marking a major milestone in improving patient access, monitoring, and outcomes. The Tissue Analytics Proof-of-Concept project, introduced by Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service in August 2024 at Hervey Bay Hospital, has integrated advanced smartphone-based image analysis into High-Risk Foot and Complex Wound Care clinics.

The telehealth technology has been transformative for both patients and clinicians with more than 500 wounds assessed and almost 200 healed or discharged. Powered by artificial intelligence, the platform analyses wound images to calculate size, depth, and area, tracking progress over time to detect improvement or deterioration. The technology standardises wound documentation, enhances telehealth capability, and allows clinicians to generate electronic records and printable reports quickly and accurately.

Between August 2024 and September 2025, clinicians used the platform to complete 5,697 image-based assessments, providing valuable clinical data and insights. Feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive, with 100% reporting high-quality images and improved ability to track wound progress. Seventy-five per cent of staff said it enhanced documentation and information-sharing, while half observed higher patient engagement.

Foster partnerships

Partner with diverse stakeholders to better serve the community

Early detection and prevention services

BreastScreen Wide Bay delivered 14,322 screening services during 2025-2026 an increase from 14,000 in 2024-2025 and close to the target of 14,750. WBHHS collaborated with BreastScreen Australia and the Wayarang Organisation to create dignity shawls, featuring Indigenous artwork for First Nations clients to encourage First Nations clients to access the free breast screening.

Within clinical services, smoking status recording in Oral Health reached 83 per cent in June 2026, exceeding the 80 per cent benchmark KPI, while 89 per cent of identified smokers had a completed smoking cessation clinical pathway.



Worldwide clinical research study shows promise for high-risk skin cancer patients

As Queensland battles the highest skin cancer rates in Australia, the Wide Bay region was a highly relevant setting for an international study advancing new treatments for squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). Through its public, private partnership (PPP) Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service and Genesis Care delivered treatment to patients who agreed to take part in this trial in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay.

Managed through the Wide Bay Oncology Trials and Research Steering Group (WBOTRSG) a total of 22 participants from the Wide Bay region were recruited. Both local lead investigators were among the authors for the initial findings of the study, recently published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The lead investigator said that the results of this International Phase III trial known as C-POST for the first time, showed that offering immunotherapy after surgery and radiation therapy can stop skin cancer from returning in high-risk patients. The trial results showed 87% of patients were disease free for two years after using the immunotherapy drug in combination with usual treatments.

Immunotherapy is a rapidly evolving field of cancer treatment and research is exploring more ways to use immunotherapy in different types of cancer, at different stages, both alone and in combination with other cancer treatments.

The local research group had been involved in the trial since its early days in 2019 all the way through to 2024, when enrolment to the trial closed. Overall, throughout the study, more than 400 trial patients received regular intravenous infusions of the immunotherapy drug (cemiplimab) or placebo over a 12-month period and continue to attend long-term follow-up appointments with the research team.



Soaring above addiction: Tokoko takes flight

Staff, consumers and community came together to celebrate an important milestone – the first birthday of Bundaberg's residential rehabilitation facility operated by Lives Lived Well. The celebration coincided with the announcement of a new name 'Tokoko', meaning sea eagle which represents rising above drug and alcohol issues and symbolises respect, honour, and courage.

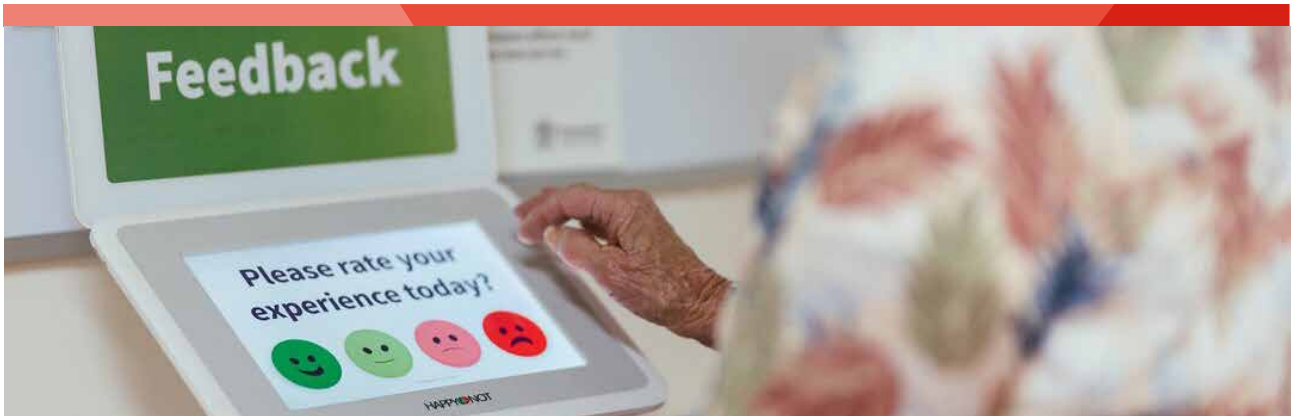
The name Tokoko was decided after consultation with various stakeholders including Queensland Health, Lives Lived Well and a strong Indigenous representation from local groups – Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang, Bunda and Gurang.

Since opening more than 1,000 inquiries were received, and more than 290 clients have entered the residential rehabilitation and withdrawal programs. The partnership with Lives Lived Well has shown how the expansion of this vital support service within the region has made a positive impact.

The name Tokoko has a strong and powerful meaning and aptly represents the respect shown by staff while providing support, and the strength of courage shown by those who walk through these doors as they strive to improve their lives. It's also a reminder of the importance of continuing to ensure the environment within this facility is culturally safe and welcoming for First Nations people while supporting them with community integration and recovery.

The 20-bed residential rehabilitation facility and eight-bed detox service has prioritised care for people in the Wide Bay region aged 18 and over. During the last 12 months, over 150 clients have entered the withdrawal program with more than a 70% successful completion rate and over 140 clients have entered residential rehabilitation with more than 50% successful completion. The six-week residential program is delivered in a safe, alcohol-free, drug-free and smoke-free environment.

Partnerships were also strengthened through joint planning and coordinated care for vulnerable consumers. The Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Service worked with Country to Coast through Zero Fraser Coast Care Coordination to improve linkages to housing and support services across multiple agencies. This collaboration has also informed the joint regional plan for mental health, alcohol and other drugs services, with homelessness identified as a priority area for focused action.



Complaints, compliments and feedback

WBHHS is committed to understanding the needs of our patients and consumers. Feedback from our community is important to us. It enables us to respond appropriately and to provide the best possible consumer experience. Your feedback helps us understand where we need to improve.

Compliments

Understanding what we are doing well is important. In 2025-26, we received 1,054 compliments regarding provided care. This is a decrease from the previous year where 1,482 compliments were logged.

Complaints

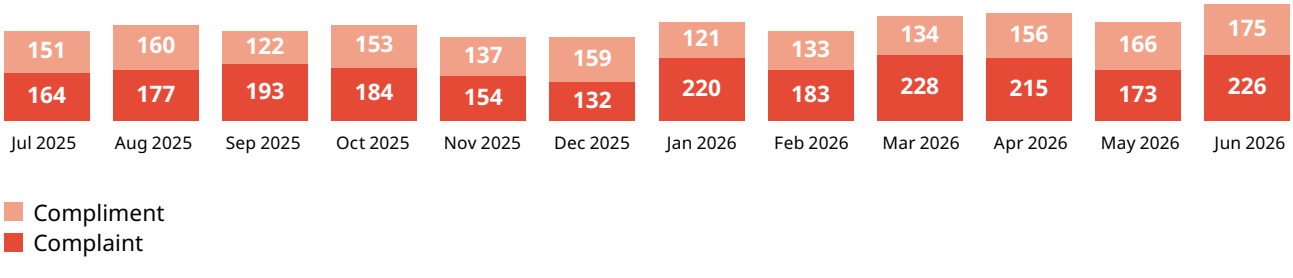
In the 2025-26 financial year, WBHHS received 2,170 complaints this is a rise of approximately 10 per cent on last year. 99.84 per cent of these were acknowledged within five days and 80.3 per cent were closed with the 35 day Key Performance Indicator (KPI), achieving the 80% benchmark.

Despite the increase in complaint numbers the average days that a complaint remained open was 26 days which is below the 35 day KPI. WBHHS has seen a decline in the number of complaints closed at front line from 30% to 19%.

Between July 2025 and June 2026 there were two patient complaints identifying relevance to the Human Rights Act. All were resolved locally. An additional three formal complaints were received from staff. One was withdrawn by the applicant; one closed due to the applicant choosing not to refer the matter and one referred to the Queensland Human Rights Commission and remains ongoing. There were no Charter of Victims' Rights related complaints identified during 2025-26.

How can you provide a complaint, compliment or feedback?

- In person to the staff member who is providing your service, or the person in charge of the area.
- Call the Clinical Governance Support Unit on 07 4338 8989.
- Complete a feedback form or letter and hand it to a staff member, or send to Clinical Governance Support Unit, PO Box 592, Hervey Bay Qld 4655.
- Email us at WBHHS-CGSU@health.qld.gov.au
- Complete our online form at www.health.qld.gov.au/widebay/consumer_feedback



Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs)

The Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) survey asks patients and parents/ carers about their recent experience with the care they/their child received at the hospital.

Patient feedback collected through Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) throughout 2025-2026 demonstrates strong and improving experiences across the health service.

- Emergency Department: Overall experience ratings also improved, with 'very good', 'good' and 'adequate' responses increasing from 91 per cent in September 2025 to 95 per cent in June 2026.
- Inpatient/ Hospital in the Home: Results from December 2025 to June 2026 show 86 per cent of respondents rated their overall experience as 'very good' or 'good'. Communication results were similarly positive, with 97 per cent of respondents consistently indicating that healthcare professionals explained things in a way they could understand.
- Outpatients: Results from February to June 2026 indicate an overall 97 per cent positive experience rating, with 'poor/very poor' responses decreasing from 6 per cent to 4 per cent over the five-month period. Respect and dignity remained particularly strong at 99 per cent positive, despite a small decrease across the five-month comparison period.
- Endoscopy: The Endoscopy PREMs survey became live in August 2026. As the survey has only recently commenced, there are no results to report at this stage. Results will be monitored as responses are received and incorporated into future reporting.

In 2025-2026, WBHHS improved patient experience through service and environment enhancements designed to better meet the needs of children, women and families. At Hervey Bay Hospital, themed wall wraps were installed throughout the Children's Ward following consultation with paediatric patients and families. Feedback informed the design of seven themed rooms, creating a more welcoming and child-friendly environment that helps reduce anxiety, supports wellbeing and improves the hospital experience for children and their families.

Patient experience was also improved through maternity service enhancements. The establishment of a dedicated assessment and outpatient room created a fit-for-purpose space for maternity assessments and appointments, increasing clinical capacity, improving patient flow and reducing competition for clinical rooms. This provided a more accessible and efficient service for women and families and supported a better care experience overall.



Nurture and future-proof workforce

Strengthen our workforce to ensure care, connection, compassion for all

Our staff in numbers

5,449

Number of staff by headcount

4,295

Full-time equivalent staff

93%

Frontline staff

726

Culturally and linguistically diverse employees

148

Staff identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

1120

Staff identifying as having a disability

69%

Women in senior executive leadership service positions

NB: Numbers in parentheses represent change from 2024/25 data unless otherwise stipulated.



First Nations Cadetship nurtures next generation of healthcare workers

A nursing student from University of the Sunshine Coast is taking her first steps into the healthcare workforce, bringing both passion and purpose to her cadetship at the Hervey Bay Hospital. The cadet a proud Yonta Yonta woman with strong cultural ties to Albury in New South Wales is a second-year Bachelor of Nursing student. Kiarah Dutoit has joined the hospital's clinical team through a First Nations Cadetship program designed to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in healthcare.

Working alongside clinicians, she is gaining valuable hands-on experience and a deeper understanding of what her future career will involve, which is something she describes as both rewarding and inspiring. The cadetship program not only supports Kiarah's professional development but also plays an important role in building a more culturally diverse and inclusive healthcare workforce. Kiarah is grateful for the opportunity and excited to continue learning as she works toward her goal of becoming a registered nurse. She has discovered that her uniform isn't just workwear but is a conversation starter. It's a strong bridge between her role and her identity, turning everyday moments into opportunities to connect while caring for patients.

The First Nations Cadetship program recognises the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to support culturally safe engagement and create opportunities for current and future cadets.

The First Nations Cadetship program is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying their first full-time undergraduate degree. It's a paid employment position for up to 12 months and offers skills development and mentoring along with a strong pathway into graduate roles.



Permanent Medical Superintendent for Biggenden Hospital

Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service is delighted to announce the appointment of a permanent Medical Superintendent at Biggenden Hospital. Dr Clay Rowe is returning to Biggenden Hospital in this important senior clinical role that provides both acute care in the hospital, and primary and preventive care through the general practice at Biggenden Family Medical.

WBHHS had experienced some challenges with finding permanent staff for rural hospitals in the past, so this is a great result for the people of Biggenden and the surrounding communities. The appointment of the Medical Superintendent means that Biggenden residents will be able to receive continuity of care from a consistent and familiar medical team, led by a doctor who has a genuine commitment to the region.

We extend our appreciation to Rural Health Group who have been integral in providing primary care for the Biggenden community for more than seven years. They play a vital role in supporting rural general practice, and we thank them for their work.

After working in other rural hospitals, Dr Rowe is now ready to settle permanently in the community he loves. The Medical Superintendent has worked in several Wide Bay rural facilities and each has its strengths, but Biggenden has always stood out. The patients are wonderful, the hospital is welcoming, the staff are highly experienced, and the general practice team is exceptional.

The Medical Superintendent role allows for the ability to provide comprehensive care to patients. General practice supports families with everyday health concerns and provides an opportunity to work closely with patients to help them manage their conditions such as diabetes and cardiac disease. It's a privilege to be involved in people's care at every stage of life.

The Medical Superintendent role also assists in helping build a strong, local workforce of doctors, nurses, and operational staff who can continue delivering high quality care to the Biggenden and wider community.



Intern intake marks another milestone in workforce growth

The second cohort of medical interns for 2026 stepped into the corridors of the Bundaberg Hospital, it marked another milestone in the growth of a thriving training program for young clinicians. Fourteen new interns recruited through the Commonwealth Private Hospital Stream (PHS) joined the Bundaberg Hospital in April, building on the 13 Queensland Health interns who commenced earlier in January. The PHS interns studied at Monash University, most through the Monash University Malaysia program, and completed their clinical placements in Australia.

The Principal Medical Education Officer said while they don't have any prior connections to Bundaberg, these interns have expressed interest in working within regional Queensland in the future. The Interns drew their inspiration to study medicine from encounters they experienced earlier in life. There were some surprises as they adjusted to their new role, from interacting directly with patients to making clinical decisions, but strong guidance and support from senior colleagues and supervisors made the transition far more reassuring.

For further information please contact:

Clinical Governance Support Unit
Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service
WBHHS-CGSU@health.qld.gov.au

www.widebay.health.qld.gov.au

Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service

Queensland Government