

2026 Impact Report

Giving Strength

Together, we advance healthcare for all Queenslanders



Giving Strength

At the RBWH Foundation, we see strength every day.

Each donation, every partnership, and all the acts of kindness fuel the collective strength that extends our hospitals' capabilities and research efforts.

- It's what allows us to move from challenges to discoveries with confidence and clarity.
- It's in the new programs that make healthcare more human.
- In the research that uncovers tomorrow's cures.
- In the moment when courage is tested and hope is restored.

This is what defines the RBWH Foundation community. People standing together, advancing care for all Queenslanders.

**When we give strength,
we create it.**

Front cover:

Professor Owen Ung
Comprehensive Breast Cancer Institute (CBCI)
Director
Story page 14

Acknowledgement of Country

The RBWH Foundation would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our services are located. We pay our respects to the Elders both past and present and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the State.

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2025 Impact in numbers

Since 1985:

\$87.8m
distributed

In FY25:

\$3.5m
distributed

Total: \$3,512,370



Research grants
\$1,899,449



Patient care
\$822,609



Youth injury prevention
\$660,312



Wellness for medical staff
\$130,000

In 2025:

7,900
therapy dog interactions

356
critically ill babies given
specialist transport

63,458
people helped by volunteers

60,225
family members supported
in ICU

141
hospital teams provided
wellbeing workshops



Our Purpose

Saving lives through the extraordinary power of giving



Our Mission

Together, we advance patient care and life-saving research



Our Impact

We create opportunities to connect givers to great causes



RBWH Foundation

Advancing patient care and life-saving research

From

YFG SHOPPING CENTRES

Date 11 Jun

The sum of

TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS.

10,000

Memo

Signature

⑈88592⑆ ⑆06⑆958 ⑆002786⑆237398 0⑆ 37⑆4⑆



You give strength to healthcare

Since 1985, thanks to you - our incredible community, we've turned ideas into discoveries, and discoveries into second chances. We've proven, time and time again, that generosity saves lives.

When the RBWH Foundation was first established, no-one could have imagined what giving in action would achieve - four decades of lives saved, lives transformed and hope restored.

Throughout 2025, we celebrated 40 Years Strong and dedicated the year to you, our partners in philanthropy: committed donors, dedicated medical researchers and passionate health innovators.

Each year, more than 600,000 patients are cared for across the Herston Health Precinct. Thanks to your generosity, the outlook for premature babies, patients with colorectal cancers, burns survivors, women with gynaecological cancers, sepsis patients and many more, has been transformed.

You have supported early-career researchers to break new ground, paved the way for nurses to shape as well as deliver care, and funded patient services and practical necessities that make a difficult time easier to bear.

It was a year for remembering old friends and forging new partnerships. A year for paying tribute to research pioneers and launching the careers of those following in their footsteps. And it was through our artist-in-residence project, *Lady Lamington's Trowel & other stories*, by best-selling Brisbane author Nick Earls, that we told just some of those incredible stories.

Thanks to your support, the RBWH Foundation has been – and will continue to be – a catalyst for research excellence and transformative patient care.

Thank you for giving so much and making a difference to so many – then, now and into the future.

With deepest appreciation,

Kristin Devitt
Board Chair

Simone Garske
Chief Executive Officer

Heartfelt anthem to hope and healing

When tube-fed triathlete and dedicated health advocate Juliette McAleer took to the stage at the RBWH Foundation's 40th anniversary Ruby Gala Ball, her performance became an anthem for the four decades of hope and healing made possible by our extraordinary community of supporters.

Earning an emotional standing ovation, Juliette's self-penned ballad, 'Just One Life', was a moving testament to the transformative power of exceptional care.

*The work of healing never ends
It lives in hands, in halls, in friends
Forty years strong
Our stories carry on*

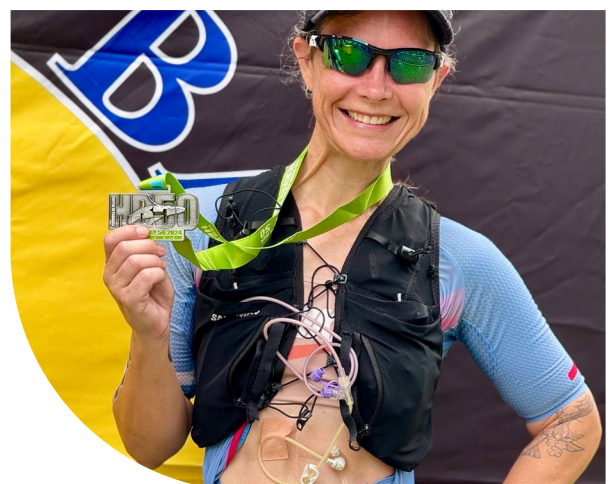
"'Just One Life' is the first song I've ever written," said Juliette, "and it seems fitting to me that it's about the Foundation that supports the hospital that saved my life."

Back in 2020, there were no guarantees that Juliette would survive the twisted bowel that brought her to RBWH. She underwent multiple surgeries, lost almost four-fifths of her small bowel and now receives most of her nutrition through a tube, directly into her stomach.

Five years later, and against all odds, she shared her story with an enthralled audience that included Dr Ben Dodd – the man responsible for leading the surgical team that saved her life.

"The line 'skilled hands give all and then give more' will always remind me of the reasons those words were never just lyrics. They described the essence of what Dr Dodd and his team gave me: just a little more time to live this little life of mine with my loved ones, and to contribute to the world in whatever way I still can," said Juliette.

Juliette's experience is one of many propelling the RBWH Foundation towards its next ambitious goal - Foundation House - a purpose-built facility for patients and families travelling long distances for treatment.



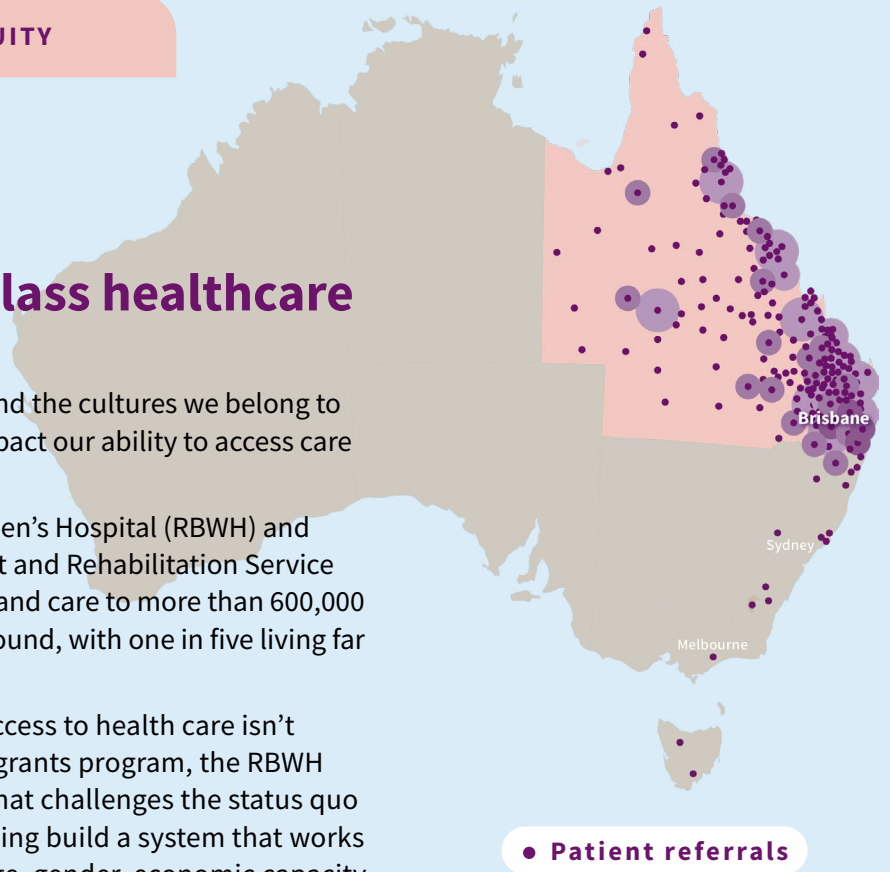


The reach of world-class healthcare

Where we live, the resources we have and the cultures we belong to are just some of the factors that can impact our ability to access care and achieve good health.

Each year, the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) and its sister facility, the Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS), deliver world-class treatment and care to more than 600,000 patients from every imaginable background, with one in five living far from Metropolitan Brisbane.

These realities and more, mean that access to health care isn't equal. That's why, through a strategic grants program, the RBWH Foundation is supporting innovation that challenges the status quo – overcoming barriers to care and helping build a system that works for everyone, regardless of location, age, gender, economic capacity or cultural identity.



Transforming burn recovery for regional survivors

While discharge from hospital is a significant milestone following a major burns injury, for many survivors the recovery journey is only just beginning. That's the rationale behind a powerful peer support program, run by the RBWH Professor Stuart Pegg Adult Burns Centre.

“For patients in regional and remote areas, where specialised psychological support is often scarce, SOAR (Survivors Offering Assistance in Recovery) is a lifeline,” said Dr Andre Bauer, Clinical Psychologist.

“By utilising telehealth, the program ensures that isolation does not hinder healing. It is envisioned that the program will continue to grow, expanding its network so every survivor - regardless of postcode - has access to a mentor.”

The RBWH Burns Centre is the first in Australia and New Zealand to integrate this internationally renowned peer support program, funded by the RBWH Foundation via a donation from Anglo American Australian Mining.

“Peer burns support provides a unique opportunity to address issues such as loneliness, isolation and fears for the future that a burns injury often evokes,” said the program's clinical mentor, Burn Psychologist Dr Lynne Heyes.

“It meets a critical psychosocial need that health professionals cannot provide and delivers an intangible, powerful experience for all involved.”



Care that respects culture

STARS Gastroenterology is breaking down barriers to life-saving screening by trialling Men’s Business and Women’s Business endoscopy lists for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The program, co-designed with an Elders Yarning Circle, assigns male patients to a male-only health team and female patients to a female-only health team.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience lower participation rates in colorectal cancer screening programs and higher rates of late-stage diagnoses, leading to poorer outcomes and survival rates,” explained STARS Gastroenterology Director Dr Enoka Gonsalkorala.

“This quality improvement initiative explores how tailored, culturally safe services can address barriers to colorectal cancer screening and reduce Missed Opportunity To Treat rates.”



From bystander to lifesaver in three simple steps

Since the early 1970s, just three letters - CPR - have saved hundreds of thousands of lives - no medical degree required.

Jamieson Trauma Institute (JTI), with the assistance of the RBWH Foundation, is on a mission to replicate the extraordinary public education campaign with a new program, STOP THE BLEED®, targetting life-threatening bleeding.

STOP THE BLEED® was developed in response to a tragic United States school shooting which claimed the lives of 20 children and eight adults. Trauma experts believe some of the fatalities could have been prevented with targeted first-aid intervention.

“The most tragic death is a preventable death,” said JTI’s Co-lead of Education and RBWH Trauma Surgeon, Professor Michael Muller.

“A life-threatening bleeding injury can happen anywhere, and the person next to a victim may very well be the one most likely to prevent fatal bleeding. STOP THE BLEED® can empower that person to go from bystander to lifesaver.”

In Queensland, the Australian Cotton Collective and Central Queensland’s Jellinbah Mine are among the first industry leaders to support the not-for-profit rollout.

Our diverse community of supporters

A legacy to love

Just six months after losing her beloved husband of 28 years, Colin, Hervey Bay schoolteacher Elsy Barron found herself fighting for her own life.

Numbness in her toes had worked its way up her leg, making it difficult to walk.

Finally, in November 2025, a scan revealed a frightening scenario. Elsy had a tumour in her spinal cord. Within hours, she was airlifted to RBWH for emergency surgery.

“They were amazing doctors, they took the tumour out and it was benign,” said Elsy. “And the care I got from the Royal and STARS, I can’t describe, I can’t thank them enough!

Elsy’s delicate spinal surgery was followed by eight weeks of extensive rehabilitation at STARS. Through it all, letters from the “amazing kids” from St Patrick’s Primary School, Macksville, (NSW), where Elsy previously taught for 13 years, have kept her motivated.

“They said they will keep praying for me and they’re looking forward to seeing me walking into the school, and I am nearly there,” said Elsy.

Before Elsy left hospital, she made a donation to the RBWH Foundation in her husband Colin’s name, continuing his lifelong legacy and commitment to supporting important causes.

Thanks a million!

Australians have once again opened their hearts for Giving Day, donating a historic \$1 million for world-class patient care initiatives and life-saving research.

Thanks to our matching partners, every dollar donated was doubled from the moment Giving Day phone lines opened for the annual Seven Sunrise launch.

The crowd favourite was an Australian Defence Force (ADF) mobile battlefield operating theatre and Bushmaster ambulance, demonstrating the strong connection between ADF and RBWH. Not only does RBWH have a considerable number of employees serving in ADF Reserves, military research has been funded by the Foundation for more than a decade.

“This isn’t just fundraising, it’s hope in action: The good we can do starts with you,” said RBWH Foundation CEO Simone Garske.

The power of giving, together

Australian Paralympian and former RBWH patient Curtis McGrath was guest speaker at the 2025 Women in Insolvency and Restructuring Queensland (WIRQ) Lunch, helping raise a remarkable \$42,000.

Curtis was a combat engineer with the ADF, clearing landmines in Afghanistan in 2012, when he stepped on an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and lost both legs at the knee. He received emergency treatment in a NATO hospital before being airlifted to RBWH.

“It was not a given that I was going to become a Paralympian but, at the same time, it [RBWH] set me up to have that opportunity and I’m very grateful for that team.”

Curtis has since competed at three Paralympic Games, bringing home four gold medals in singles 200m kayak events.

The panel discussion included his RBWH Trauma Surgeon, Dr Daryl Wall AM.

Asian community generosity

The RBWH Foundation’s Asian community of supporters has reunited to celebrate thirty years of extraordinary giving and a shared commitment to shaping a brighter future for all.

Since the mid-1990s, the community and its leaders have raised in excess of \$1million to fund premature baby research and support a longitudinal study into women’s health as they age.

In recent years, our Asian community donors have raised funds for youth mental health, prostate cancer research, new-generation CAR T cell cancer therapy and the RBWH Foundation grants program.



Making the impossible possible takes an extraordinary partnership of like-minded change makers.

Thank you to our community of supporters for sharing our vision of transformative healthcare through unconditional giving.



Each and every contribution, whether of your time, your funds or gifts in kind, plays a critical role in giving strength to healthcare.



Together, we are the RBWH Foundation, advancing patient care innovation and life-saving research.





A helping hand through the cancer journey

For the Hornery family, generosity is rooted in lived experience - love, loss and a deep understanding of what families facing cancer endure. And now, through their support, cancer patients from the Caboolture area can access free transport to receive treatment at RBWH.

“The experience of talking to people on the ward and in the beds next to you – those connections and the emotion of it all is hard to explain,” Que Hornery said.

“If our help means that they have one less worry and can get back to their home and their support network, and experience ‘normal’ life as much as possible, then we’re achieving what we set out to do.”

It was his brother Lachlan’s diagnosis and two-year battle, which sadly ended in 2008, that began the Bowen Basin family’s relationship with the RBWH Foundation.

“No matter how small, it all counts.”

Que Hornery, Hornery Family.

“Loc and his family relocated for treatment. Our ability to make that happen was down to mum and dad’s hard work and sacrifices. We certainly don’t take that for granted.”

Those experiences sowed the seeds of an incredible relationship, culminating in the donation of a shuttle bus, described by patient Catherine Riding as a ‘lifeline’.

“For five weeks of radiation therapy, those people were my family,” Catherine said. “It was incredible to have people to talk to about that shared experience. It meant the world.”

The specially fitted-out bus gave her ‘peace of mind’ through the rigours of treatment and eased worries over the cost and coordination of transport.

“It was a huge relief in every way,” Catherine said; “An absolute blessing”.

For the Hornery Foundation, though, “you don’t have to give a bus to make a difference,” Que said. “If everybody does a little bit – gives a little bit – we can help each other through.”



The RBWH Foundation Board

An extraordinary partnership in philanthropy

A desire more than 30 years ago to improve the quality of life of our youngest and most vulnerable babies has grown into a lasting commitment by YFG Shopping Centres to partner with the RBWH Foundation in advancing health and medical care across all stages of life.

YFG's decades of support have been recognised with the Foundation's inaugural Lifetime Fellow Award, presented during a reception hosted by Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner and Lady Mayoress Nina Schrinner.

The Lifetime Fellow celebrates an extraordinary philanthropic partnership which goes above and beyond financial support. For the past decade, YFG representatives have served in a voluntary capacity on the RBWH Foundation Board, offering corporate guidance and advocacy.

Through a connection which began more than three decades ago, YFG's support has improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of Australians.

Thank you, YFG Shopping Centres, for **giving strength** to healthcare.

COVER STORY:

Seed funding the ideas that transform healthcare

In a career spanning more than forty years, Professor Owen Ung has seen firsthand how a bright mind or a single idea can, with the right support, transform the future for patients.

Medicine, he says, is a ‘team sport’ and the RBWH Foundation is a key player.

Known today as the surgeon behind a world-first clinical breast scaffold trial and Director of the Comprehensive Breast Cancer Institute (CBCI), Professor Ung trained at RBWH before working in Sydney and the UK. He returned home to RBWH in 2009.

“At that time, it struck me that there was a lot of good work happening across the hospital. While I knew of the Foundation, and saw its potential, I felt that a lot of the people doing that good [medical] work weren’t visible or weren’t familiar with the research space, so weren’t getting access to the Foundation’s support,” Professor Ung said.

Recognising the power of philanthropy to unlock new ideas, he joined the RBWH Foundation Board with a clear vision. While major research programs were vital, early-career researchers and clinicians with promising ideas, but little experience, also deserved an opportunity.

“As a clinical representative, I was able to give the Board a new perspective. We didn’t yet have a lot of disposable income, but by encouraging early career researchers to apply for those smaller grants, we gave them a stepping stone – the building blocks they needed – to gain the experience and attract the funding needed for larger trials.”

Today, that vision has come full circle. Partnering with Herston Biofabrication Institute – an innovation hub launched with a \$5 million Foundation contribution - Professor Ung has embarked on groundbreaking clinic trials for next generation breast reconstruction.

“You don’t always know where research is going to take you,” Professor Ung said. “You’re trying to answer a question, you’re trying to find a solution, but underneath all of that is the drive to get an outcome for a patient.”

“Care can’t be delivered well, and progress can’t be achieved, without collaboration. That’s why the Foundation has become such an integral part of our health service.”

Professor Owen Ung, CBCI Director.







Grants with real impact

Across the Herston Health Precinct, Australia's brightest minds are unlocking hope and healing through the extraordinary power of giving.

The RBWH Foundation's grant strategy is the cornerstone of this work, empowering clinicians, researchers and healthcare teams to deliver transformative patient care and advance life-saving medical research. Many of these grant recipients are at the very beginning of their research careers.

Our twice-yearly grants enable these health innovators to respond quickly - launching programs, testing new models of care and purchasing advanced equipment. They offer a unique opportunity to gather data and results that can lead to larger, even multi-million dollar nationally funded, clinical trials.

Thanks to the unconditional generosity of our donors, clinicians can focus on what matters most - patients and their families - while driving innovations that have the potential to revolutionise healthcare delivery.

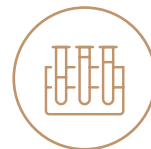
RBWH Foundation's impact on patient care and life-saving research, thanks to the extraordinary power of giving:



Since 2020:

\$7.25M

funding for patient care projects and life-saving research



171

projects funded



34

nursing and midwifery awards

Medical and health research

Evaluating group art therapy for adolescent cancer social support.

Why it matters: Adolescents and young adults undergoing cancer treatment can experience social isolation that impacts their mental health, emotional well-being and engagement with clinical care. Through group art therapy, they will have the opportunity to build friendships, share experiences and reduce feelings of loneliness.

Taneal Barber

Adolescent Mental Health Nurse, RBWH.

CollaborativeEd: co-designing digital learning for enhanced consumer involvement in healthcare.

Why it matters: There is a recognised gap in healthcare staff training and resources when it comes to involving consumers (patients and their families) in all levels of research. This project will develop a learning package and upskill staff with consumer involvement training, using digital microlearning. Microlearning breaks down complex information into single-concept modules, providing flexible and easily accessible learning for busy healthcare professionals.

Dr Kimberley Baxter

Research Consumer Engagement Project Officer, STARS

LiverMAP-Q: mapping and allocation planning for hospitalised cirrhosis patients in Queensland.

Why it matters: In Queensland, hospital admissions for liver cirrhosis have risen sharply, with approximately 7,000 hospitalisations annually. This project will use state-wide data to learn where resources are needed most and what factors lead to higher use of transfers to metropolitan hospitals, such as the RBWH, for specialist care.

Dr Therese Bittermann

Hepatology Lead, Gastroenterology and Hepatology Department, RBWH

Co-design of a virtual reality supermarket (VRSupermarket) for multidisciplinary rehabilitation.

Why it matters: This project uses Virtual Reality (VR) along with conventional therapy for patients with traumatic brain injuries or stroke. The design of a VRSupermarket will provide real-life context to rehabilitation, enabling patients to immerse themselves in simulated environments, with the support of their clinician, to practice skills and activities relevant to their rehabilitation goals supported by their clinician.

Dr Clare Burns

Advanced Speech Pathologist and Research Coordinator, RBWH

Identifying harm from dialysis catheters in intensive care and setting future research priorities.

Why it matters: Critically ill patients often depend on dialysis catheters to survive, yet these devices have the highest malfunction rates in intensive care – leading to treatment delays, repeat procedures and increased risk of harm. This project addresses a critical gap in research by identifying how post-insertion care can be improved to enhance patient safety, reduce complications and ultimately save lives.

Dr Amanda Corley

Research Fellow, Research and Implementation, RBWH

A new, evidence-based service model for people with Parkinson's disease.

Why it matters: While cognitive problems are common in people living with Parkinson's disease, patients are not routinely referred for neuropsychology evaluation. This project funds a dedicated neuropsychologist to help patients and families better understand symptoms, plan ahead, and access appropriate supports at a stage when interventions can still meaningfully preserve function and autonomy.

Dr Ada Lo

Advanced Clinical Neuropsychologist, RBWH

Capturing healthcare utilisation of different subspecialty patient cohorts.

Why it matters: Often patients will receive the same allocated appointment time in clinics, regardless of the complexity of their healthcare needs. This project seeks to evaluate the average complexity of patients seen by each speciality, drawing on national data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, to identify if changes to health policy are needed to ensure each patient has their full healthcare needs met.

Dr Robert Ellis

Nephrology Advanced Trainee, RBWH



“Improving the pain relief and recovery of patients after surgery is one of our key goals as anaesthetists.”

Dr Angela Tognolini,
Senior Specialist Anaesthetist.

Evaluating an optimised intraoperative lidocaine infusion in patients with obesity.

Why it matters: Patients with obesity face higher risks during surgery, yet current approaches to pain relief may be less effective due to inconsistent dosing of commonly used medications like lidocaine. This study aims to optimise dosing to improve pain control, enhance recovery and deliver safer, more effective care for people in larger bodies.

Dr Angela Tognolini

Senior Specialist Anaesthetist, RBWH

Reducing the risk of anaesthesia for patients in larger bodies

The field of anaesthetics is both an art and science, delicately balancing intimate knowledge of human biology with drugs and medication. Complications are rare but risks are ever present for all cohorts of patients.

RBWH Staff Specialist Anaesthetist Dr Angela Tognolini is an emerging researcher with a focus on patients with larger bodies. Her work, supported by a 2025 RBWH Foundation project grant, could one day change international practice in the safe and effective delivery of intraoperative lidocaine infusions.

“However, there is a lack of data and guidance on the dosing, particularly in patients with obesity,” said Dr Tognolini.

Inconsistencies in dosing regimens risk either underdosing with inadequate clinical effect or overdosing and toxicity. Other complications include respiratory issues, and nausea and vomiting after surgery.

If safe and effective, the proposed regimen would be evaluated in a future randomised controlled trial, revolutionising dosing practice not only at RBWH but potentially in many other national and international institutions.

Medical and health research

Evaluating the clinical impact of targeted sequencing for the diagnosis of infection.

Why it matters: There is an urgent need to improve diagnosis of pathogens causing complex infections, to effectively plan treatment. This project will improve clinicians' ability to diagnose the cause of infections through advanced technologies (Next Gen sequencing).

Dr Bianca Graves

Infectious Diseases Specialist, RBWH

Detecting subclinical brain hypoxia: proteomic biomarkers and machine learning.

Why it matters: Millions of Australians live with conditions which starve the brain of oxygen, such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA), threatening cognitive function. Current screening and diagnostics are imprecise. This project will study blood samples previously collected from volunteers during a planned high-altitude mountain climb (a safe and natural way to stress the brain) to find a small set of proteins in blood that rises or falls when the brain is at risk. If successful, this could help doctors monitor at-risk patients to protect cognition, improving care in intensive care units and respiratory clinics.

Dr Hervey Lau

Director of Thoracic Medicine, Internal Medicine and Emergency Services, RBWH

Consumers shaping our future workforce through interprofessional simulation.

Why it matters: Many Australian healthcare students are taught person-centred care skills but may struggle putting them into practice in real-world settings. This project will partner with consumers (members of the public with lived experience of our healthcare services) to role-play the patient during simulation training sessions, rather than relying on staff colleagues to play the role of patient. This project will enhance the quality of teaching for the healthcare workforce.

Geerthika Galister

Interprofessional Practice Coordinator, STARS

IgAN-PREDICT: prognostic risk evaluation for disease-induced complications and treatment of IgA nephropathy.

Why it matters: IgA nephropathy (IgAN) is a chronic autoimmune kidney disease with no targeted cure. It is the most common inflammatory kidney disease in Australia. This study will develop an early prognostic test that will distinguish patients with non-progressive disease from those likely to progress to kidney failure, providing clinicians with the very first tool for personalised management of IgAN.

Dr Shaun Chandler

Staff Specialist Nephrologist, Kidney Health Service, RBWH

Medical and health research

A multi-centre prospective cohort study of VTE prophylaxis prescribing practices in the Australian trauma ICU population.

Why it matters: Following traumatic injury, approximately 12% of patients admitted to RBWH ICU will develop substantial blood clots, known as venous thromboembolisms (VTE), which can lead to serious complications including death. To reduce the risk, medications to thin the blood are given to trauma patients, however the best type of blood thinner, dose, and timing of administration is not well understood. This study will collect data from intensive care units (ICU) across Australia, about which blood thinners are routinely used, along with their dose and timing.

Dr Elissa Milford

Staff Specialist, Intensive Care Services, RBWH

Automated task-free brain mapping for safer epilepsy surgery.

Why it matters: For patients with drug-resistant Temporal Lobe Epilepsy, anterior temporal resection (removal of a section of the brain) can be a life-changing cure. To prevent damaging critical brain regions, surgeons need a precise map of 'eloquent' areas that support language and vision. Currently, mapping the brain before surgery requires patients to perform complex tasks inside a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner, which not all patients are able to do. This project will create and test an automated mapping tool that uses data collected while the patient rests in the scanner without needing to perform a task.

Professor David Reutens

Senior Medical Officer and Director, Comprehensive Epilepsy Program, Neurology, RBWH

Revolutionising burn recovery: wearable technology for precise energy expenditure monitoring.

Why it matters: Patients with severe burn injuries can expend 150-200% more energy than normal as the body fights to repair itself. This pioneering study aims to evaluate non-invasive wearable technology to improve personalised nutrition care for patients by measuring real-time total energy expenditure and activity levels.

Bronwyn Segon

Dietitian, Dietetics and Food Services, RBWH

Time is health: early diagnosis of ventriculitis using new diagnostic biomarker D-lactate in cerebrospinal fluid.

Why it matters: Ventriculitis is an inflammation of the lining of the ventricles (ependymal lining) of the brain, where cerebrospinal fluid is produced and flows. This type of infection can cause irreversible brain damage and usually results in long stays in hospital and the Intensive Care Unit. D-lactate is produced only by bacteria, making it an effective and rapid diagnostic marker of infection, supporting clinicians to make treatment decisions quickly.

Professor Andrej Trampuz

Chair of Device-Related Infection Management, Jamieson Trauma Institute



“Ultimately, this work advocates for care that not only adds years to life, but life to years - ensuring older adults receive care that is coordinated, dignified and aligned with their goals.”

Dr Andrea Taylor,
Nurse Manager Researcher.

Optimising nurse-led perioperative care for older adults in Australia (OPal).

Older adults undergoing surgery often have complex healthcare needs that require specialised care. This project will evaluate the role of a dedicated Advanced Practice Nurse to specifically respond to the needs of older patients.

Why it matters: Bringing together older patients and clinicians to hear and understand their hospital experiences and identify areas of improvement will support genuine informed and integrated care for our older patients.

Dr Andrea Taylor

Nurse Manager Researcher, RBWH

Closing the age gap with a continuum of care approach

Australians are not only living longer but those of us aged 65 and older also account for an increasing share of the population. For health services that means adapting to the complex challenges of frailty and deteriorating health.

RBWH Surgical and Perioperative Services has become one of the first in Australia to design a new nurse-led model of care for frail older people. The goal is to reduce their increased risk of postoperative complications, prolonged hospital stays and functional decline, which significantly impact recovery and quality of life.

Project lead and Nurse Manager Researcher, Andrea Taylor, says RBWH Foundation funding has ensured the voice of older people is central to project outcomes.

“Over and over again, you’ll hear that communication is lacking in our health system, particularly from this population group,” said Andrea.

“Foundation funding will ensure we make the invisible, visible.”

Her new surgical model, due to be trialled in early 2026, will see an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) work with patients, families and clinicians ahead of surgery, identifying risk factors such as cognitive impairment and multimorbidity.

Discharge planning will ensure patients transition smoothly to rehabilitation or home with appropriate support, reducing the risk of readmission.

RBWH Foundation grants in action

When donors give unconditionally, you're not just funding medicine – you're funding possibility. You're holding a beacon for patients and families walking unknown pathways through complex medical care and recovery.

For burns and trauma patient, Glen Bennett, the generosity of our community enabled his amazing teams at RBWH and STARS to deliver treatments that were smarter, kinder and more compassionate.

In 2020, the former long-haul semitrailer driver was horrifically injured in a Central Queensland multi-vehicle highway explosion. Glen escaped with burns to 70% of his body. He was airlifted to RBWH, where he spent the next six months – the first 24 days of which he was in a coma. When Glen finally woke, he had lost both his legs.

While Glen's journey demonstrates how quickly life can change, it's also a testament to the human spirit. Thanks to unconditional giving, the RBWH Foundation grants strategy helps pave the road to recovery for patients like Glen.



INTENSIVE CARE GRANTS

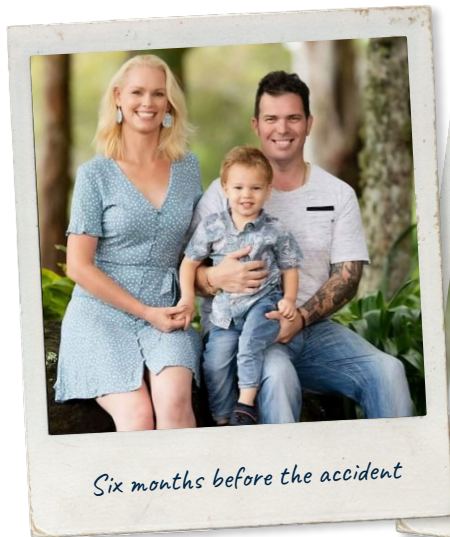
- New antibiotic guidelines for critically ill patients to prevent sepsis
- Reduction in catheter-related complications
 - Inhaled pain relief for burns patients
 - WeCU family care program
- 24-hour family communications portal
- Support program for ICU Survivors

NUTRITION GRANTS

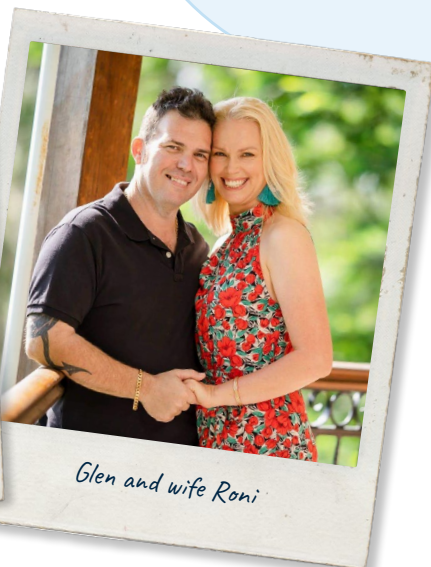
- Patient feedback app to improve meal quality
- Wearable technology to support nutritional needs of burns patients
- Educational nutrition videos

PROSTHETICS GRANT

- Hydrocasting for prosthetic legs



Six months before the accident



Glen and wife Roni





BIOFABRICATION GRANTS

- Rapid laboratory grown skin
- Custom 3D printed compression mask



PHYSIOTHERAPY GRANTS

- Trauma-informed service model
- Virtual reality to reduce fear of movement and pain
- Educational rehabilitation videos
- Level 7 gym refurbishment

REHABILITATION GRANTS

- Robotics for upper limb rehabilitation
- Trauma survivors' peer support







The science is ready - now it needs you

When a medical or health innovation promises to create transformational impact on clinical care or the patient experience, the RBWH Foundation understands it requires funding that demonstrates both flexibility and foresight.

Our support of one of Australia's largest cancer-fighting clinical trials, in partnership with BDO Australia, opened treatment to blood cancer patients who had run out of options. It proved that the life-saving treatment, usually manufactured offshore at huge cost, can be successfully engineered and administered at RBWH.

RBWH Haematologist and Lead Investigator Dr Siok Tey said the trial's success opens up the possibility for better, more accessible CAR T cell therapy.

"But there is still room for improvement in terms of effectiveness and side effects," said Dr Tey.

CAR T cell therapy reprograms a patient's immune cells, called T cells, to recognise and attack specific cancer cells. The cells are then grown to large numbers and infused back into the patient's bloodstream.

"CAR T cell therapy has the potential to cure patients who have otherwise incurable cancer."

Dr Siok Tey, RBWH Haematologist.

Treatment is publicly funded for certain types of blood cancer, but many patients who could benefit from treatment do not meet the funding criteria. The RBWH clinical trial, in collaboration with QIMR Berghofer, has treated 28 patients, none of whom were eligible for publicly funded CAR T cell therapy.

While Dr Tey's team are continuing to work on new CAR designs that could potentially be less toxic, more effective and eventually treat a broader range of cancers, future Brisbane-based clinical trials are in doubt due to a lack of funding.

"We are ready. We have people, knowledge and passion. We just don't have the funding," Dr Tey said. "If we lose our critical mass and knowledge base, it will be very difficult to rebuild. When I think about how far we have come and what is on the horizon - it is hard to just walk away."

Expert care informed by research gives even the tiniest patients a fighting chance

When first-time mother Jahmiel was diagnosed with an ‘incompetent cervix’ at 21 weeks pregnant, the race was on to hold off labour for as long as possible.

Despite targeted treatment at RBWH, Hunter was born at 25 weeks, weighing 910 gms and with his eyes still fused shut.

Unable to breathe independently, Hunter was intubated and spent the next 118 days in the RBWH Grantley Stable Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), receiving a blood transfusion and being treated for chronic lung disease and a bilateral hernia.

His complex care was informed by 30 years of research innovation, led by the RBWH Perinatal Research Centre. Established through years of RBWH Foundation fundraising, it is now considered Australia’s premier research centre for pre-term births.

Almost four months after he was born, Hunter made it home.

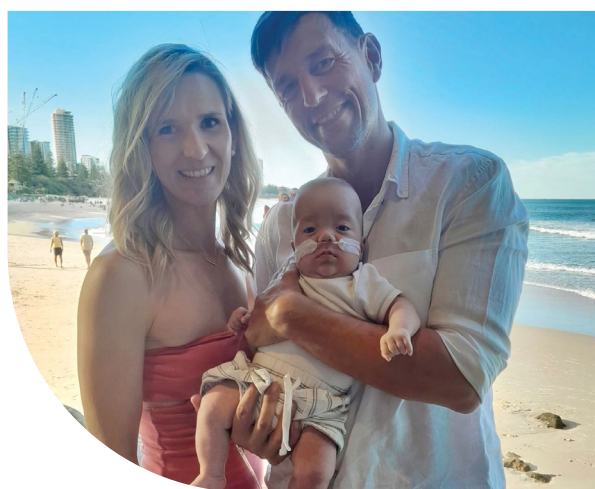
Today, despite every challenge, Hunter is thriving.

“His eyes are perfect, his hearing’s great and he’s meeting all his milestones,” dad, Jamin, said.

Their gratitude for medical research and philanthropy was further cemented when Jamin also became ill.

“I developed a condition that wasn’t even recognised ten years ago; an extremely rare autoimmune disorder that causes the immune system to attack and kill healthy muscle,” Jamin said.

For Jahmiel, the two men in her life are nothing short of ‘miracles’. “Without research, amazing medical professionals and the organisations that support them,” she said, “I wouldn’t have either”.







Donation gives space for fun – even during a hospital stay

With one simple act of generosity, early childhood education provider Sesame Lane Care & Kindergarten has given Redcliffe Hospital’s youngest visitors an uplifting new space to relax and recover.

Thanks to their incredible \$10,000 Raise It for Redcliffe Hospital Giving Day donation, the Paediatric Unit’s once tired parents lounge and playroom has been transformed into a welcoming and engaging space that brings a little more fun and ‘normality’ into the lives of children receiving care and the loved ones at their bedside.

For local families, the impact has been immediate and deeply felt.

“Our son was born at Redcliffe Hospital and because of his condition, we visited regularly,” said grateful parent Julia Mika, mother of Lewis. Lewis is one of only 40 people in the world living with KCNK9 Imprinting Syndrome, a rare condition affecting muscle tone, speech and motor skills.

“Any hospital stay - whether short or long-term - can be stressful for the entire family. Having access to thoughtfully upgraded spaces such as this offers small

but meaningful touches of home within an otherwise clinical environment,” Julia said.

“These seemingly small comforts can mean the world to families already navigating the emotional and physical strain of a hospital stay with their child.”

The upgraded parents lounge and playroom now features new play equipment, cabinetry, toys, soft furnishings and beanbags.

For Sesame Lane, the donation is a tangible expression of their enduring commitment to the North Brisbane community.

“As an organisation dedicated to early learning and childhood development, we saw an opportunity to make a meaningful impact,” said Kerri Smith, Head of Sesame Lane.

“Raise it for Redcliffe Hospital Giving Day gave us the opportunity to support a project that brings comfort, happiness and hope to families and children when they need it most.”



RAISE IT FOR REDCLIFFE HOSPITAL

To date:

\$1.3m raised

80+ hospital projects funded

This year:

7 Wishlist Grants to help patients of all ages across the hospital

8 Special Grants to help babies, children and families

3 Wellbeing Grants to support nurses, doctors and other hospital staff

3 Palliative Care refurbishment projects completed

2 Research Grants to advance research internships and find better ways to support families



Compassionate patient care

Patient-centred therapy dog program.

Why it matters: Therapy dog programs in hospitals, aged care, mental health and disability services provide meaningful, person-centred activity benefiting patients, carers and staff. This program will benefit over 10,000 people across five mental health and 13 hospital wards and outpatient areas, promoting holistic health and improved wellbeing.

Liana De Michele

Occupational Therapist and Eat Walk Engage Program Facilitator, RBWH

Comfortable upright birthing: supporting upright birthing positions without epidurals.

Why it matters: Recent research shows that lying flat or in semi-recumbent positions while giving birth carries an increased risk of maternal injuries and reduces feelings of autonomy. Clinical guidelines recommend upright birthing positions to reduce pain and length of labour. To achieve this, four inflatable U-shaped birthing support devices will be purchased.

Lisa Garland

Acting Midwifery Unit Manager, Midwifery Group Practice and Birth Centre, RBWH

STARS endoscopy pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Why it matters: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face lower colonoscopy screening participation and have higher failure-to-attend rates, leading to delayed diagnoses and poorer outcomes. This pathway will offer culturally safe, dedicated endoscopy services with Indigenous Health Liaison Officer support and gender-matched staff to improve screening uptake, reduce failure-to-attend rates and provide culturally responsive care.

Dr Enoka Gonsalkorala

Deputy Director, Gastroenterology, STARS

Step back in time: environmental improvements to promote patient activity.

Why it matters: At RBWH, many patients in medical wards walk fewer than 450 steps a day—often because they have nowhere appealing or purposeful to go. This project, co-designed with clinicians, consumers, the RBWH Cultural Capability Officer and a Museum of Nursing representative, will boost physical activity and cognitive engagement by creating a 67-metre-long photographic display along the corridor outside wards 9BN and 9BS. This initiative aims to enrich hospital experiences, support recovery and improve well-being for older patients by evoking memories and promoting movement and conversation.

Associate Professor Karin Lust

Director of Internal Medicine and Aged Care, and Obstetric Physician, RBWH

Pelvic floor support for radical prostatectomy patients.

Why it matters: Radical prostatectomy (surgical removal of the prostate gland) is the most common treatment for localised prostate cancer, with urinary incontinence and poor pelvic muscle health among the surgical risks. RBWH and STARS do not provide a physiotherapy-led male pelvic floor exercise service, which means patients rely on written resources or self-fund physiotherapy. This funding will purchase an ultrasound machine and trial a clinic that will assist hundreds of men every year.

Ariane McKinnon

Prostate cancer specialist nurse, Urology, Internal Medicine and Emergency Services, RBWH



Queensland Youth Cancer Service patient engagement video: supporting young people aged 15–25 who have been diagnosed with cancer.

Why it matters: Adolescent and young adult (AYA) patients undergoing cancer treatment face not only the challenge of diagnosis and treatment but also the often difficult transition from paediatric care into the adult hospital system. This video will explain who the Youth Cancer Services team are, what support is available and include a tour of key spaces like the Sony You Can Centre – a dedicated area for young cancer patients.

Amanda Mellow

Senior Social Worker, Youth Cancer Services, RBWH

Real stories, real support for young cancer patients

There's never a good time for a cancer diagnosis, but in adolescence and young adulthood it can pose particular challenges for education, careers, relationships and mental health, says Amanda Mellow, Senior Social Worker at the Youth Cancer Centre.

“Gaps in information, emotional support and engagement with ongoing care needs are common challenges for patients in that 15-25 age bracket – gaps that can have a significant impact on long-term health and wellbeing,” Amanda said.

Thanks to RBWH Foundation funding, the centre's psychosocial care team will collaborate with young cancer patients to create a video that lifts the veil on treatment and life with cancer, to connect new patients with the supports they need – and the real-life experiences of people just like them - during this crucial period.

“By making this information more accessible, and in a relatable format, we can empower patients to take an active role in their care, reduce anxiety, and improve their overall patient experience,” Amanda said.

Compassionate patient care

'It just makes' SENSE: restoring touch, feeling and purpose for people with sensory impairment after stroke.

Why it matters: Every year, around 1,500 people living within the Metro North Health district experience a stroke. More than half are left with impaired sensation in their arms or hands. SENSE is a proven Australian therapy that helps stroke survivors regain touch and body awareness, leading to long-lasting improvements. As clinicians qualified to deliver this therapy are limited, this grant will fund training for an additional 12 Occupational Therapists.

Tamsin Mahoney

Occupational Therapy Director, STARS

Enriching end of life care in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) through improving cultural safety and identity.

Why it matters: ICU can be a daunting and overwhelming experience for any family, but particularly for those who have to travel long distances to Brisbane, separated from extended family and community. The project team is working with the RBWH Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit to co-design the support with Turrbal Traditional Custodians, Elders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health liaison officers, and with consumer (family) representatives. Benefits will be transferable to all patients and cultures.

Lisa Mewburn

Registered Nurse, Intensive Care Services, RBWH

Bringing patients to the table: enhancing the meal experience.

Why it matters: Redesign of a laminated placemat for patient tray tables expands on initiatives previously funded by the RBWH Foundation. The placemat serves as a reminder to keep space free on the tables for meal trays, increasing patients ease of access to meals. The placemats include a QR code link to the hospital's mobile meal ordering app. This simple initiative supports patient choice, improves nutrition, eases staff workload and connects patients and families to the Foundation.

Evelyn Nicholl

Dietitian, RBWH

Dialysis lifelines: mastering vascular access for safer patient care.

Why it matters: The Kidney Health Service has expanded rapidly with new sites at Kallangur and Bribie Island, increasing training demands across five satellite haemodialysis units. The purchase of a simulation haemodialysis training arm provides over 150 nursing staff the opportunity to train and practice cannulation, enhancing patient safety and reducing complication rates.

Claire Scoles

Kidney Health Service Nurse Educator, RBWH

Reducing anxiety: buggy transport from carparks to hospital entries.

Why it matters: Navigating a large hospital campus can be daunting, especially for those with limited mobility, dynamic disabilities or cognitive challenges. By offering a safe, reliable and inclusive transport option, this project will promote more positive patient experiences and encourage timely engagement with care.

Lisa Sparks

Assistant Facilities Director, Facility and Support Services, RBWH



“This project highlights the critical importance of emotional, psychological and spiritual care, particularly during life-limiting illness.

Jennifer Walker,
Clinical Nurse Consultant.

Legacy keepsakes: preserving precious family moments.

Why it matters: This memory-making initiative will create fingerprints, preserve locks of hair and produce recordings of heartbeats (ECG) during a patient’s final days, to give therapeutic comfort and improve the emotional wellbeing of both patients and their families. The initiative also includes sending condolence cards to honour the patient’s loss and acknowledge the family’s sorrow.

Jennifer Walker

Clinical Nurse Consultant, Palliative and Supportive Care Service, RBWH

The healing power of memory-making

For Jennifer Walker, Clinical Nurse Consultant in Palliative and Supportive Care, ensuring that bereaved families have physical keepsakes from their loved one’s final moments is about much more than sentiment – it’s about creating an ‘emotional anchor’ for both patient and family.

“Memory-making - creating keepsakes such as fingerprints, locks of hair or ECG heartbeat mementos - offers a compassionate, tangible way for patients to express love and for families to preserve cherished memories,” Jennifer said.

Thanks to the support of the RBWH Foundation, Jennifer and her fellow members of a specialised bereavement team at RBWH, can now integrate meaningful memory-making activities into routine palliative care.

“Traditionally, healthcare often focuses on physical symptoms and medical interventions,” Jennifer said.

“For those left behind, these personalised mementos provide comfort and solace that cannot be measured in clinical terms but have a lasting impact on emotional healing and grief.”

Compassionate patient care

Optimising patient access to medicines outside of pharmacy business hours.

Why it matters: RBWH Pharmacy runs an outpatient dispensing service for patients requiring specialised medicines not typically available through community pharmacies. Attending RBWH during standard business hours can be challenging for many patients, with audits showing up to 35 dispensed medications go uncollected every month. This project will fund a patient medication locker system, allowing patients to access their medicines at a time convenient to them.

Brett Sweeney

Assistant Director of Pharmacy - Systems and Support, RBWH

Point-of-care faecal calprotectin testing for RBWH IBD Flare Clinic.

Why it matters: More than 179,000 Australians live with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), encompassing Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. It is a chronic, relapsing condition marked by unpredictable flares of gastrointestinal inflammation leading to debilitating symptoms such as abdominal pain, diarrhoea, rectal bleeding, weight loss and fatigue. This purchase of a Buhlmann Quantum Blue 3rd Generation bench-side reader ensures point-of-care faecal calprotectin testing in the weekly RBWH IBD Flare Clinic.

Associate Professor Gareth Walker

Clinical Lead for Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) and Research, Gastroenterology and Hepatology Department, RBWH

STARS Trauma Survivors Network: survive, connect, rebuild.

Why it matters: In 2024, the RBWH Trauma Service managed 2,583 major trauma patients, with over 1,600 requiring in-patient care. Trauma survivors and their families have expressed a strong desire for greater follow-up, structured peer support and opportunities to connect with others who share lived experience. This project will develop a Trauma Survivors Network, embedding it into routine trauma service care and meeting the needs of patients and families across the diverse and vast geography of Queensland.

Dr Rebekah Young

Trauma Surgery Fellow, RBWH and Jamieson Trauma Institute

RBWH and STARS Digital Surgery School: improving patient surgical preparedness, wellbeing and satisfaction by delivering co-designed, interactive digital education.

Why it matters: During surgical healthcare journeys, patients can feel overwhelmed and at times poorly supported by the amount of paper-based resources and information. This project will explore with consumers what information formats and supports are most needed to ensure accessibility and equity. Surveys from earlier work have shown 93% of patients have smartphones and prefer digital and visual formats for information.

Dr Cory Williams

Clinical Nurse Consultant, Service Improvement and Innovation, Surgical and Perioperative Services, RBWH

Co-design and implementation of a head and neck cancer radiation therapy consumer education pathway.

Why it matters: Each year, over 130 RBWH patients receive radiation therapy for head and neck cancer. The unfortunate side effects of radiation therapy include mouth ulcers, trouble swallowing and jaw stiffness, making it difficult to eat and drink. This pathway will develop tools and resources to help patients and carers feel more prepared and supported throughout treatment. These tools will be made available online and embedded into routine cancer care at RBWH.

Sarah Wilson

Speech Pathologist, RBWH



“I feel so proud of this project and understand fully the difference it will make to our RBWH patients. It’s saying, ‘I see you, I hear you and you matter!’”

Jennifer Gillies, RBWH Dietetic Assistant.

Care that continues – nutrition that heals

Imagine spending weeks in hospital and then returning home to find empty cupboards. Sadly, that’s the case for many of our patients, says RBWH Dietetic Assistant, Jennifer Gillies.

“It’s not uncommon to find out that patients who are discharging, particularly after a long stay in our care, are going home alone to no food - often they don’t have anyone they can contact to help or simply don’t have the funds,” said Jennifer.

This stark reality, coupled with the team’s commitment to holistic, patient-centred care, was the driving force behind Jennifer’s grant application to the RBWH Foundation.

“Thanks to this funding, we can ensure that when patients are discharged, they’re supported not just with medication and allied health referrals, but with the necessary nutritional support - non-perishable dinner and breakfast food parcels.”

It was through compassionate conversations over her 40-year Queensland Health career, that Jennifer recognised how easily successful rehabilitation can be undone by poor discharge planning and took steps to identify and implement a meaningful solution.



Our lives depend on health professionals. How well are we looking after them?

“Our community is sicker than ever and the pressures on our healthcare teams are greater than ever,” says Staff Wellbeing Specialist Dr Liz Crowe.

“Thinking about the people who are delivering your healthcare, how physically and mentally well would you like them to be? And how can we all contribute to their wellbeing?”

Funded by the RBWH Foundation, Dr Crowe’s role is to deliver the support healthcare teams need to stay well, resilient and able to deliver their best care every day.

“Just because you work in health doesn’t mean you don’t have problems of your own. Every day we have staff members trying to get pregnant, losing babies, caring for children of their own with life-limiting conditions, grieving partners and parents. My role is to help keep them in a space where they can do their jobs well,” Dr Crowe said.

“That means resourcing leaders, creating opportunities for connection – like book clubs, walking clubs and a collaboration forum once a month, delivering team debriefings and providing individual counselling,” Dr Crowe said. “This is not a one-size-fits-all situation.”

While her role was established during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr Crowe says the pressure on health teams is only growing.

“Back then, people were coming out at seven o’clock to clap for our staff. The clapping stopped, but the caring hasn’t.

“If people want to support healthcare professionals, they can do that in two ways - one, by donating to the RBWH Foundation, and two, just by recognising that healthcare staff are working as hard as they possibly can. These are compassionate people working within an incredibly challenging system – we need to care for them too.”



In 2025:

117

crisis counselling sessions

32

facilitated team debriefs

156

coaching sessions

141

team/departmental talks

37

interdisciplinary workshops

87

staff trained in critical incident debriefing

Celebrating 15 years of life after a cancer diagnosis

Celebrating 15 years of precious life since a devastating cancer diagnosis, Strathpine woman Gay Castle said ‘giving back’ to the medical community is now an important part of moving forward.

“Receiving a cancer diagnosis was horrific but, because of the Royal, I got through it.”

Faced with the uncertainties of her condition, Gay knew one thing for sure – she would donate her tissue to the Brisbane Breast Bank, a previous RBWH Foundation grant recipient.

“Doing that made me feel so empowered; knowing that I could be the reason that people get better treatment, better outcomes, a longer life. Because research today will determine the outcomes for people like me in 15, 20 years’ time.”

Throughout arduous treatment, Gay said teams across the hospital didn’t just help her survive physically but buoyed her up mentally and emotionally.

“Great care isn’t just clinical, it’s the sense that they’re going to look after every aspect of you, physically, mentally, emotionally. And they did – at every point and as though I was their only patient.”

Now an enthusiastic RBWH Foundation donor and volunteer at her local hospital, Gay is determined to enjoy this ‘unpredictable, precious life’.

“I was born at the Royal, my children were born at the Royal, one grandchild was born at the Royal, my father died at the Royal 35 years ago - with more dignity and care than I could ever have hoped or imagined - and then they saved my life.”

Gay Castle, RBWH patient.



(L-R) RBWH McGrath Cancer Care Nurse Joanna Clark, Gay Castle, husband Ray Castle and RBWH Medical Oncologist Aneta Suder



A new era in volunteering

The Royal Hearts

2026 is International Volunteer Year and although the Royal Hearts may have swapped Foundation ruby for Metro North blue, supporting this vital volunteer service is as important to the RBWH Foundation as ever.

In a health precinct the same size and population of a small town, the Royal Hearts are renowned for delivering compassion and care.

Meet volunteer John Mekke who delights patients in the RBWH Discharge Transit Lounge by memorising their regular tea and coffee orders.



7,872
hours gifted



63,458
people helped



1,696
patient laundry loads



7,560
cups of tea/coffee

I am 72 years old and I'm originally from Scotland. I moved to Australia in 1980 at the age of 26. I retired about 12 years ago after a lifelong career in maintenance management for heavy earthmoving, marine, and mining equipment, which allowed me to live and work not only in Australia but also across Africa, India, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

Why did you choose to gift your spare time to RBWH?

After experiencing the high standard of advanced medical care in Australian hospitals - both personally and through members of my family - I was inspired by that excellence to pursue volunteering in a hospital when the opportunity arose.

What's been your most rewarding interaction?

So far, I have worked only in the Discharge Transit Centre, but it has been fascinating. Many patients come in several times a week for extended outpatient treatments, so I've come to know many of them by name - and even memorised some of their tea or coffee preferences - but one elderly lady in particular, a regular patient, called me over one day and pressed a small handful of sweets into my hand as a thank-you for the help I'd given her during her visits. I found it to be a large reward for a small service.

Why is volunteering important to you?

Volunteering in the RBWH not only helps me - by keeping me active (last Thursday I walked nearly 12,000 steps in the Transit Centre), introducing me to new people, fostering friendships, and keeping me engaged with the community - but it also benefits patients and hospital staff thereby making it a genuine win-win-win situation.



When the world went dark, Michael turned up the music

Through countless treatments, surgeries and now undergoing kidney dialysis three times a week, Michael Connolly's love of music has brought him much needed comfort and connection. In 2025, he and his community choir jumped at the opportunity to share that experience with fellow hospital patients and staff, as one of the RBWH Foundation's '40 Moments of Joy'.

"It's not that we're fantastic, by any means, but we do it for the sheer joy of singing," Michael said.

Diagnosed with a heart condition, which then revealed kidney disease, Michael moved to Brisbane from Rockhampton in 2023.

It's that support through bleak times that inspired Michael to bring the joy of music to the hospital.

"The only thing that kept me from going too far down was knowing that I had support from the people at the Royal - they're always there to listen."

Michael Connolly, Community chorist.

"The choir's performance at RBWH came about because I was in for surgery and couldn't attend practice. I felt I was missing out so - with clearance from the hospital - I asked the choir to bring practice to me, and they did.

"Before we knew it, we were singing in the atrium of the hospital."

For Michael, the experience has been a 'win' all round - an uplifting experience for the choir and a way to share their joy with a hospital that has given him so much.

Contact the RBWH Foundation

Location: Ground Floor, Ned Hanlon Building
(opposite Admissions)
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital
Butterfield Street
HERSTON QLD 4006

Postal: PO Box 94
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital
HERSTON QLD 4029

Phone: 1300 363 786

Email: info@rbwhfoundation.com.au



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rbwhfoundation.com.au

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