



Message from the BLMA President

Dr Hasthika Ellepola
MBBS MD FSLCOG
FRANZCOG

BLMA

2024 BLMA EDUCATION EVENING

Thursday 29 February 2024
6pm for 6.30pm Dinner

Queensland Cricketer's Club
Vulture Street,
East Brisbane

Managing Breast Cancer Risk
Guest Speaker: Dr Vince Andrijich
Sponsored by Lumus Imaging

Registration will open in January
2024, limited spots available

UPCOMING – Brisbane
Local Medical Association
(brisbanelma.org)



Welcome to the final issue of Synapse for 2023, what a great year it has been for the Brisbane Local Medical Association! We trust that our members had a fruitful year and enjoyed the high quality educational events and the camaraderie that we have generated as an LMA. All our events qualify for self registration in your CPD home by uploading your certificates of attendance that are issued to you after each meeting.

Our Education Evening in November was held at The Calile and was sponsored by City Fertility. It was great to see so many BLMA members, new and old, attending the event.

Sponsorship spots for the 2024 Educational Evenings and Doctors-In-Training Events are filling up quickly and we look forward to providing another year of networking and learning. If you are interested in sponsoring one of the evenings, please email any member of the Management Committee or contact us online as soon as possible.

SYNAPSE continues to grow with each edition. We would like to sincerely thank our article contributors who keep us informed of new programs, current developments and solutions to challenges in the rapidly advancing medical world. If you are interested in contributing to the newsletter by writing an article please let us know. SYNAPSE is a great place to advertise the services that you or your organisation provide. Feel free to contact our Secretariat on h.pena@amaq.com.au who will

negotiate very generous advertising rates for your services.

Our first 2024 BLMA Education Evening, which will incorporate the AGM, will be held on Thursday 29 February 2024 at the Queensland Cricketers Club, a venue where we will enjoy returning to and will be sure to be a sell out! Keep an eye out on our website in early January when registrations will open.

BLMA's success has been due to our growing membership base, which in turn leads to generation of more interest from partners and sponsors. My request to each of you as members is to introduce one further member, via our website, during 2024 to enable us to maintain our growth and momentum.

I am honored to have led the LMA for a second year during its exciting growth period, which wouldn't have been possible without the assistance of the hard-working Management Committee and Secretariat. I thank this hard working team which meets every month to plan our much sought after events. I also thank our partners and sponsors whose support is vital to the success of our organisation.

The BLMA Executive Management Committee and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support over the past year; I extend best wishes to you and your families for the festive season and for your health and happiness as we welcome the new year. I look forward to seeing you in 2024. Stay safe!



Keep up to date
with latest news
and BLMA events
at your fingertips!



Visit our
website
brisbanelma.org

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The Brisbane Local Medical Association welcomes contributions from members, especially **“Letters to the Editor”**.

Please address all correspondence to:

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Issue 10 | 2024 Newsletter

Content Deadline:

Friday 16 February 2024

- ▶ Would you like to comment or suggest articles to be published?
- ▶ What would you like to see in the newsletter?

Our circulation via email, online and by post, reaches medical practitioners all over Brisbane!

Contact: Dr Dilip Dhupelia
Email: dhupelia@bigpond.com



Are You a Member?

If you are not a member, please complete the application available on our website:



brisbanelma.org

Enquiries: Andrew Cronin
dr.andrew.cronin@gmail.com

Are you listed on the Members Only Directory on our website? Are your details correct?

Directory form is available on the website.

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BLMA is proudly supported by our partners:



Meet the BLMA Committee

Committee Member – Dr Andrew Cronin

Dr Andrew Cronin is an experienced Rural Generalist Doctor and current Occupational and Environmental Medicine Registrar. Andrew currently owns his own practice specialising in Military and Veterans’ Health. Andrew likes to watch AFL and cricket, and has two children currently based overseas.



Dr Andrew Cronin
BLMA Committee Member

Synapse: Newsletter Dates 2024

| Newsletter Month | Content Due | Distribution |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| March | Friday 16 February | Early-mid March |
| May | Wednesday 1 May | Mid-late May |
| July | Monday 1 July | Mid-late July |
| September | Monday 2 September | Mid-late September |
| November | Friday 1 November | Mid-late November |



Many thanks to QML Pathology couriers for distributing our newsletter throughout Brisbane.

Follow BLMA on:





Mater Mothers' Hospital Fetal Growth Assessment Clinic dedicates care to smallest patients

A Mater clinic dedicated to pregnant women with small babies is helping to prevent stillbirth and other newborn complications.

Mater Mothers' Hospital Fetal Growth Assessment Clinic, embedded within the Mater Centre for Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM), is the first of its kind in Queensland and has supported more than 450 women in the past year with suspected small babies (estimated fetal weight below the 10th percentile).

Mater Mothers' Hospital Senior Specialist in Maternal Fetal Medicine and Obstetrics, Professor Sailesh Kumar, who set up and leads the Fetal Growth Assessment Clinic, said small babies were at an increased risk of complications during pregnancy and after birth including stillbirth, neonatal death and brain injury.

"There is no other clinic like this in Queensland - it is a specialised clinic for women whose pregnancies have been identified as having fetal growth or placental issues," said Prof Kumar, who is also Group Leader of Genesis Maternal Fetal Medicine Research at Mater Research.



Professor Sailesh Kumar

Almost 20 per cent of pregnancies in Australia are complicated with some form of growth abnormality.

Prof Kumar said dedicated research, funded by community donations to Mater Foundation, enabled the world-leading maternal fetal specialists at Mater to develop new ways of identifying and treating babies at risk.

Brisbane mum Natasha, one of the first women to receive care at the Fetal Growth Assessment Clinic when it opened last year, experienced fetal growth issues with her first pregnancy.

"Our first baby, Adriaan, was born in November 2021 at 25-weeks' gestation after his placenta abrupted, and he passed away at just four days of age," she said.

"During my second pregnancy, when I was told I had Fetal Growth Restriction (FGR) at 19-weeks' gestation, I was referred to the Fetal Growth Assessment Clinic at Mater.

"They monitored me closely and, as my pregnancy got further along, they were able to figure out the best time for me to give birth."

Natasha and husband Quinlan, from Burpengary East, are now the proud parents of six-month-old daughter Amelia.

Prof Kumar said data on hormones and complex molecules released from the placenta enabled

specialists at the Fetal Growth Assessment Clinic to identify the likelihood of complications and to deliver treatments that improve baby outcomes.

"These issues can also be compounded if they are born too early. Through very detailed monitoring, we are able to advise obstetricians and midwives about the best time to deliver these babies and defer delivery until outcomes are better," he said.

"Almost every woman referred to our clinic participates in various research studies and clinical trials. This is an important aspect of the clinic, as there is good evidence to show that clinical outcomes tend to be better in research active institutions.

"I hope that a similar model can be rolled out to other centres in Queensland."

Women who require further monitoring of their baby via ultrasound are referred to via the usual pathway to Mater Mother's MFM. The Fetal Growth Assessment Clinic welcomes women from all models of care, this service is in addition to their current pregnancy care.

Prof Kumar recognises Mater Foundation and the National Health and Medical Research Council for the invaluable support they have provided Mater Mothers' Hospital Fetal Growth Clinic.



Support our Medical Student Scholarship

Christmas Appeal



Ryan Luck and Julie George
2023 Scholarship recipients

Donate now

AMA Queensland Foundation offers up to three Medical Student Scholarships each year and we need your support to continue this legacy!

The scholarships are designed to assist current medical students who are experiencing financial hardship and need a helping hand to allow them to continue studying medicine without the stress of finances.

Please donate by 31 December 2023, all donations over \$2 are tax-deductible. amaqfoundation.com.au/donation.



AMA Queensland Foundation
Medical Student Scholarships



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Applications close:
Wednesday 28 February 2024, 5pm (AEST)

Ryan Luck
2023 Scholarship recipient

Calling all medical students in Queensland. The AMA Queensland Foundation Medical Student Scholarships are open for applications.

These scholarships provide a unique opportunity to support your journey towards being a doctor. Do not miss out on this incredible chance to receive financial assistance.

Apply now and take a step close to achieving your dreams. For more details, visit amaqfoundation.com.au.



Are we doing enough for brain health?

By Dr Stella Lin – Specialist Geriatrician, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH). Queensland Dementia, Ageing and Frailty (QDAF) clinical network



Dr Stella Lin
Specialist Geriatrician, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH)
Queensland Dementia, Ageing and Frailty (QDAF) clinical network

The recently released Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report titled "Dementia in Australia" showed alarming prevalence of dementia and its burden of disease. In 2022, there were estimated 401,300 Australians living with dementia; equivalent to 15 people with dementia in every 1000 Australians, and 84 people with dementia per 1,000 Australians aged 65 and over. This number is projected to more than double by year 2058.

Dementia is now the leading cause of death in women and second leading cause of death in men in Australia. The rate of hospitalisation due to dementia has increased over the last 10 years with those hospitalised due to dementia having 5 times higher the average length of stay (14.8 days) compared with the average length of stay for all hospitalisations (2.7 days).

Despite rigorous efforts in dementia drug trials across the world, and the emergence of promising anti-amyloid monoclonal antibodies (FDA approved Aducanumab and Lecanumab) to remove amyloid plaques from the brain, dementia is far from curable. There are many practical limitations with these medications even if they are

to be approved by the TGA in the future – the high cost (\$26,500 USD per patient per year), the need for amyloid PET scans prior to prescribing to determine eligibility, and potential adverse effect of infusion related reaction, cerebral oedema and microhaemorrhages on imaging. The only cognitive enhancers available in Australia at the present time for Alzheimer's dementia are the cholinesterase inhibitors (Donepezil, Galantamine, Rivastigmine), which are well tolerated and affordable, however their efficacy is modest.

In the absence of effective medical treatment, how can we face this tsunami wave of people living with dementia? There are not enough geriatricians to manage all the dementia patients.

Firstly, all doctors regardless of the areas they practice in, need to be equipped with general knowledge and understanding of dementia. It is very likely that even when dementia is not the presenting complaint, dementia in the person you are treating (for example for chronic diseases management, a cardiac valve replacement, a joint replacement, or for cancer) will alter the way you manage and support the person while treating their other

health conditions.

Secondly, more emphasis needs to be given to dementia prevention. Similar to how we counsel our patients about their cardiovascular health, we should be talking about brain health and prevention of dementia more readily. Brain health should be discussed in the over 50s health checks as part of preventative health in primary care. Lifestyle interventions in midlife are effective at reducing dementia risk in later life. As we use risk calculators for heart disease and osteoporosis/fragility fractures, we should be evaluating our patients' risks of dementia in midlife and advising of lifestyle changes they can make to reduce their risks of developing dementia in later life.

Important lifestyle modification and strategies we can promote for brain health include:

1. Social engagement (at least twice a week) – meeting a family or friend over a meal or coffee, attending an event, performance or festival which involves social interactions.
2. Mental stimulation – reading books, keeping up with current affairs, learning a new skill or hobby, solving puzzles and brain games.

3. Sufficient and quality sleep
4. Maintaining good mental health and managing stress levels.
5. Physical exercise – a combination of aerobic exercises and resistance training, at least 30 minutes a day on most days of the week
6. Healthy and balanced diet – preferably the Mediterranean diet
7. Smoking cessation
8. Reducing alcohol consumption
9. Management of cardiovascular risk factors
10. Detection and treatment of OSA

These lifestyle interventions are not only powerful in reducing risks of dementia, but also become powerful interventions after a person is diagnosed with dementia. These healthy aging strategies help slow decline in cognition and function and reduce the severity of

behavioural symptoms of dementia. The intensity and form of the lifestyle interventions will need to be tailored to a person’s cognitive and physical ability, nevertheless the principles remain the same.

Despite dementia not being a focus in the medical school curriculum, doctors should up-skill themselves in dementia care, and familiarise themselves with their local community service providers and allied health professionals who can support patients living with dementia. Doctors play an important role in promoting dementia prevention and promoting living well with dignity and personhood in those with dementia.

Useful resources:

Dementia Australia ([About you | Dementia Australia](#))

Dementia Support Australia ([Nationwide, 24-hour carer support | Dementia Support Australia](#))

Dementia Training Australia ([Dementia Training Australia \(DTA\), Free online courses and resources](#))

Wicking Dementia and Education Centre run by the University of Tasmania ([Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre | Study Now | UTAS](#))

UQ Healthy Living [UQ Healthy Living - Health and Wellbeing for over 50](#)

Dementia Choir Brisbane [Sing Sing Sing | dementia choir brisbane | 1 Barramul Street, Bulimba QLD, Australia](#)

Art and Dementia Programme [QAGOMA Art and Dementia Program – Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art \(qagoma.qld.gov.au\)](#)

Please email any queries to Dr Stella Lin, stella.lin@health.qld.gov.au



HOW DO FOOT ORTHOSES HELP SOFT-TISSUE INJURIES?

PODIATRY @ SPORTS & SPINAL CAN ASSIST YOUR PATIENTS WITH ALL OF THEIR FOOT ORTHOSES AND SOFT TISSUE CONCERNS.

REFERRALS VIA MEDICAL OBJECTS, FAX OR PHONE.



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION

RESEARCH SHOWS:



Orthoses can help change the distribution and timing of forces acting under the foot in order to reduce the load on problematic soft tissues



Orthoses have been shown to alter movement and the forces acting on the lower limb during walking and running



A rehabilitation goal can be more easily achieved with Orthoses when used in conjunction with strength, conditioning, load modification, and footwear management



Your Call

A free, confidential, three-session telephone counselling program

➤ What is Your Call?

Your Call is a free, confidential, three-session telephone counselling program that is delivered by Adis 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Support.

Your Call is available to Queenslanders who want to make changes to their alcohol or drug use and are not already participating in alcohol or drug treatment.

Your Call is for people who

- Are motivated to make changes to their alcohol or drug use
- Would benefit from brief support
- Prefer phone support
- Do not require medical support (counsellors can assist you and discuss alternative options if this is required)

Please note: People who have current complex mental health concerns i.e. psychosis, high distress, or who do not have the capacity to understand and engage in a telephone session may not be suitable for the program.

➤ How can Your Call assist me?

- Gaining a better understanding of your alcohol or drug use
- Clarifying goals or changes you'd like to make
- Developing skills and strategies to help you cope with challenges
- Developing a relapse prevention plan
- Supporting your self-care

➤ What do Your Call sessions focus on?

Your Call is tailored to you. This means that the sessions will focus on your goals, needs and challenges. This could be stopping, reducing, or using more safely, to lower the risk of alcohol and drug related harms.

Typically, the sessions focus on:

Session 1: Understanding substance use cycles and exploring goals

Session 2: Craving management and coping skills

Session 3: Decision making and relapse prevention

➤ How does it work?

Each week an Adis counsellor will call you to check in on how you are going with taking steps to achieve your goals.

Don't worry if you have slipped up or haven't made as much progress as you would like. Adis counsellors are there to help. Adis counsellors will treat you with respect and won't judge you.

Appointments are approximately 45 minutes in length. We understand that life gets busy. That's why we offer appointments 7 days a week.

➤ How do I register?

To register for the Your Call program call Adis 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Support on 1800 177 833.

To make sure it's the right program for you an Adis counsellor will ask questions about your alcohol or drug use, mental health, and other social factors.

➤ What other type of support is available to me?

The Adis counsellor will talk with you about your needs and goals. This may include a referral and there are a range of specialist alcohol and other drug support options available in Queensland. Adis counsellors can help identify suitable options and services to meet your needs at a location convenient to you.

Adis can also provide free, anonymous, and confidential support for people in Queensland with alcohol and other drug concerns, their families and health professionals.

You can also access information and support on our website at <http://adis.health.qld.gov.au>

**Talk to us. Anytime, anywhere.
1800 177 833**



adis | 24/7 ALCOHOL AND DRUG SUPPORT | adis.health.qld.gov.au | 1800 177 833 (free call)



Free flu jabs will protect Queenslanders

By AMA Queensland, published 2 November 2023

Queensland is leading the nation in making the flu jab free for everyone. The influenza vaccine is safe and effective. Almost 5,000 Queenslanders were hospitalised with flu in 2023. Let's keep our EDs free from vaccine-preventable illnesses.



AMA Queensland applauds Health Minister Shannon Fentiman for her early announcement that flu jabs will be free for all Queenslanders in the 2024 influenza season.

“The influenza vaccine is a safe and effective way to prevent people getting seriously ill or dying,” AMA Queensland President Dr Maria Boulton said.

“Unfortunately, cost of living pressures can lead people to put off getting the vaccine, leading to more infections and illness in the community.

“For the past two years, the Queensland government has led the nation in making flu jabs free – but only once the flu season was well underway.

“We have worked with the Minister to bring certainty around this program and make flu jabs free from the start of the flu season, not halfway through.

“This means people will not put off getting their jab early in the hope of getting a free jab later.

“The Minister’s office has informed us that the process next year will be the same as this year. General practices will need to order their vaccines and will be reimbursed by Queensland Health.

“We will continue to advocate for the influenza vaccine to be made free for all Australians under the National Immunisation Program.

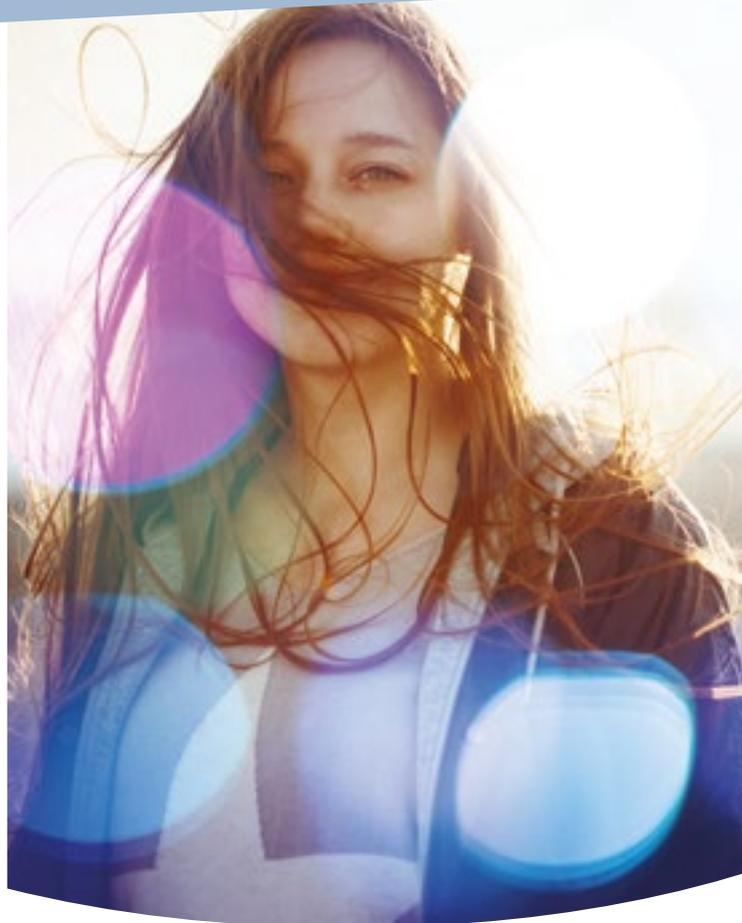
“In the interim, we call on all other state and territory governments to follow Queensland’s lead and make the flu jab free for everyone.”

Background

- ▶ Queensland reported 68,382 lab-confirmed influenza cases this year (1 January to 18 October) – almost three times the 5-year average
- ▶ This was the highest rate in the nation – 1,278 notifications per 100,000 population, followed by NSW (1,115 per 100,000 population)
- ▶ 4,910 Queenslanders were hospitalised with flu this year
- ▶ Queensland’s vaccination rate is below the national rate in every age group except over 65 years
- ▶ Only one in three Queenslanders had a flu vaccine in 2023

[ama.com.au/qld/news/
Free-flu-jabs-will-protect-
Queenslanders](https://ama.com.au/qld/news/Free-flu-jabs-will-protect-Queenslanders)





Belmont Private Hospital Focused on the mental health and wellbeing of young adults

Access our services as easy as 1,2,3

To arrange a private mental health admission:

1. Identify patient needs as specialist admission and provide a GP referral
2. Confirm patient has private health insurance, DVA, WorkCover or can self fund their admission
3. Call the Admissions and Assessment Teams who will conduct a health fund eligibility check, confirm their admission arrangements and allocate a psychiatrist.

Young adult mental health unit

We are proud to be one of a few private services in Australia that offer specialist treatment for young adults. Our new 10-bed young adult unit caters to addressing the mental health needs of adolescents aged 16 to 24 years.

Our young adult mental health unit provides specialised inpatient and day therapy treatment options for young adults struggling with significant and complex issues.

Inpatient program for young adults

This program is designed for young adults aged 16 to 24 experiencing mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, unstable mood states, post-traumatic stress disorder or self-harm.

Admissions to this program are planned and voluntary, typically for a 3 week period.

Program includes:

- Psychological therapy to enhance individual learning and coping strategies (e.g. cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) skills)

- Diversional therapy to work on a strengths based approach (e.g. art therapy, music therapy & exercise physiology)
- Academic support (assisting young people with ongoing school work demands)
- Individual and family sessions with an admitting psychiatrist
- Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), if appropriate

Day therapy programs for young adults

We offer an extensive range of tailored day therapy programs designed to improve quality of life for young adults. All programs are focused on best practice service delivery and evidence-based research.

Programs include:

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Creative Therapies
- Introduction to Dialectical Behavior (DBT) Therapy (12wks)
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (6mths)
- Managing Social Anxiety and Building Social Skills
- Managing ADHD
- Young Adult Follow-up
- Parent and Carer Education Course



Scan QR code for further information about our Young Adult Mental Health Services.
Email belmont.admissions@aurorahealth.com.au for referrals or visit belmontprivate.com.au

Aurora
Belmont
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Aurora Healthcare

We can provide immediate access to psychiatrists and mental health services as well as medical and rehabilitation services to help manage your patients' needs.

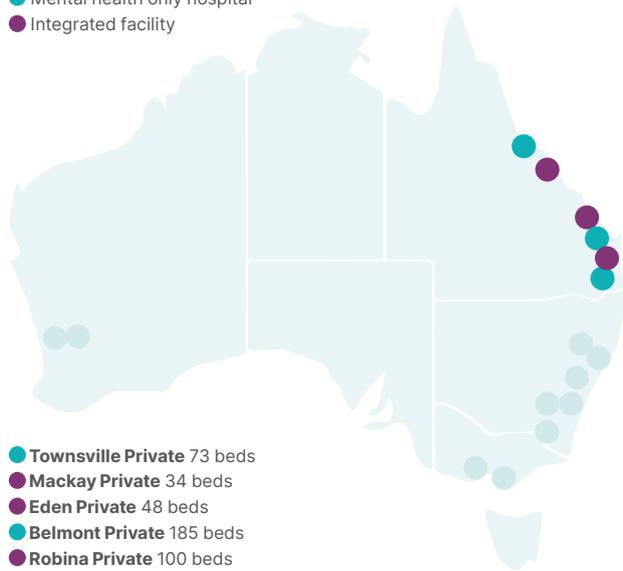


Aurora Healthcare is Australia's largest private specialty health care group focused on mental health, rehabilitation, specialty medical and community services in Australia's major cities and key regional areas.

We are the nation's leading provider of specialised mental health services. Our highly qualified teams of psychiatrists, medical, nursing and allied health professionals provide whole of life care, to manage and treat a wide range of mental health disorders.

We offer a holistic approach with evidence-based treatment provided in a safe, supportive environment for inpatients, day patients and outpatients, where patient safety is our first priority.

- Mental health only hospital
- Integrated facility



- Townsville Private 73 beds
- Mackay Private 34 beds
- Eden Private 48 beds
- Belmont Private 185 beds
- Robina Private 100 beds
- Currumbin Clinic 104 beds

-  **20,000** inpatient admissions nationwide
-  **17** hospitals and community care businesses in Australia
-  **1,450+** total licensed beds including **1,025+** mental health licensed beds
-  **3** greenfield sites
Townsville Private, Robina Private, Deakin Private
-  **3,000+** employees working in Aurora Healthcare's portfolio of businesses
-  **~550** Doctors
~300 Psychiatrists in Australia

How Aurora can help your patient

- Immediate psychiatry appointments
- Immediate admissions
 - hospital
 - day programs
 - community



September 2023

ASPIRE: a collaborative approach to safer medication management

“Improving medication safety at transitions of care is one of three flagship areas in Australia’s response to Medication Without Harm.”

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION’S THIRD GLOBAL PATIENT SAFETY CHALLENGE

Medication-related problems describe adverse reactions or issues with medication adherence or education that can interfere with a patient’s outcomes. The risk and incidence of medication-related problems can often increase during transitions of care. Complexity of or changes to a medication regime, particularly when a discharged patient is returning home, can be challenging for patients to understand and manage.

Medication-related problems result in a significant number of hospital admissions and emergency department visits each year and so medication safety has become both a national and PHN health priority.

ASPIRE to improve medication safety

The ASPIRE ([A Systems approach to enhancing community-based medication review](#)) Trial seeks to reduce incidence of these medication-related problems by improving the uptake and effectiveness of community-based home medication or medicines reviews (HMRs).

HMRs employ a person-centred approach to increase patient involvement in making informed

decisions about their medicines – they are funded by the Australian Government but are underutilised post-hospital discharge.

The trial will focus on the high-risk transition period from hospital to home, with Brisbane North PHN and the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (RBWH) working in partnership to improve communication and coordination between hospital and primary care settings for patients discharging from RBWH. It is posited that unplanned readmissions can be reduced by providing a GP-initiated HMR to those patients who are at higher risk of medication-related problems – typically older people, or those taking multiple medications (polypharmacy).

Discharging patients identified by the RBWH as likely to benefit from a timely HMR are enrolled into the program. The patient’s GP can initiate a referral to an accredited pharmacist or their community pharmacy, who will then perform an HMR in the patient’s home in collaboration with their GP. A dedicated Medication Safety Pharmacist at the PHN, funded through the trial, will support the process, GPs, pharmacists and patients.

This is an ideal opportunity to discuss the patient’s personal goals, concerns and preferences and see how they manage their medication at home. A HMR supports quality use of medication, and this in turn supports quality of life.

About the trial intervention in our region

Brisbane North PHN and RBWH, jointly, are one of four participating ASPIRE sites. Our iteration of the ASPIRE Trial will be the first site to transition to the active intervention phase, commencing October. The trial is scheduled to run until June 2025, pending further extensions.

Facilitating the ASPIRE Trial at Brisbane North PHN is Medication Safety Pharmacist Angela Smith whose role includes establishing communication channels between the PHN, RBWH, GPs and accredited pharmacists, supporting GPs in the coordination of a medication review service for their patient and gathering data for analysis by lead research agency the University of Sydney.

The ASPIRE trial is funded by the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) under the Australian Government’s MRFF 2020 Quality, Safety and Effectiveness of Medicine Use and Medicine Intervention by Pharmacists grant.

If you have questions about the ASPIRE Trial, please contact Angela via email at angela.smith@brisbanenorthphn.org.au.

Find out more about [WHO’s Medication Without Harm](#).

Celebrated 35 years

Dr Marie Burke OAM – Chief Medical Officer, GenesisCare Australia. Radiation Oncologist, GenesisCare Wesley

In June, GenesisCare celebrated 35 years of radiation oncology at The Wesley. Having practiced at The Wesley for 28 of these years, this milestone doubled as an opportunity to reflect on the incredible advancements in cancer care made over three decades, and in particular, the important role that we have served in delivering this care to the very first patients in Queensland.

The Wesley was the first provider of radiation oncology treatment in the private sector in Queensland, and under the leadership of practitioners like Professor Liz Kenny, who was one of the original Radiation Oncologists, and Dr David Schlect, who joined the team just two years

after we opened our doors, we have proudly achieved several other firsts for local patients since that time.

Our stereotactic radiosurgery program was the first of its kind in Queensland. A non-invasive alternative to surgery, it has the potential to improve our treatment of brain conditions, including malignant or benign tumours, by minimising damage to healthy tissue. Unlike surgery, stereotactic radiosurgery is delivered as an outpatient procedure and carries fewer risks of complications or side effects.

We were also the first provider of high dose rate brachytherapy for private patients in Queensland, and the first provider of volumetric modulated arc therapy in the southern hemisphere. Both forms of therapy aim to alleviate the treatment burden on patients by reducing the number of sessions to as few as one (for high dose rate brachytherapy) or shortening the duration of each session to about 10 minutes (for volumetric modulated arc therapy).¹ It has been a pleasure to witness the expansion of these

services outside of the southeast corner and into regional centres like Rockhampton, Bundaberg, and Hervey Bay.

From the very beginning, there was a commitment by our dedicated team of doctors to remain at the forefront of advancements in treatment techniques and technology. Most recently, these advancements have led us down the path of personalised medicine, as well as increasing our focus on community relations and survivorship.

This is one of the reasons why we continue to choose The Wesley as our professional home. There is a wealth of specialist talent on campus, whose expertise we engage in multidisciplinary team meetings across most tumour sites, as well as access to a range of allied health professionals who are equipped to support our patients in navigating life during and after treatment.

Visit the GenesisCare website [do we need to add website here? to find out more about our service offering at The Wesley.](https://www.genescare.com/au)
[genescare.com/au](https://www.genescare.com/au)

GenesisCare, The Wesley: Serving the community for more than 35 years

"I'm incredibly proud of our wonderful team at The Wesley and of the high-quality cancer care that we have been dedicated to offering to local and regional communities for more than 35 years."

Dr Marie Burke, OAM

Radiation Oncologist
Chief Medical Officer, GenesisCare Oncology Australia



We offer access to personalised, evidence-based cancer care services, using advanced techniques, precision medicine, and allied health support.



Experienced radiation oncologists



Multidisciplinary treatment team



Close to home



Personalised patient care

Contact us

GenesisCare, The Wesley
Ground Floor, Wesley Medical Centre
1/40 Chasely Street, Auchenflower, QLD 4066

[genescare.com](https://www.genescare.com)

Tel: (07) 3377 4200
Email: receptiononcologywesley@genescare.com



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Athens

GREECE

15 TO 21 SEPTEMBER 2024

Discover
ATHENS GREECE

Our AMA Queensland International Annual Conference has a long and proud history of bringing doctors together to discuss key issues facing the profession while immersed in unique tourism destinations. We are thrilled to hold our international 2024 event in Athens, Greece, with support from our corporate partner Orbit World Travel.

Athens, the historical capital of Europe, is located in Central Greece on the Attica Peninsula. The Greater Athens area features the longest coastline of any European capital, offering several beaches just 20 minutes from the historic centre.

With a recorded history dating back around 3,400 years, it is known as the birthplace of democracy, arts, science and philosophy of the western civilisation.

Athens is a gateway to so many pre or post conference travel extensions, with more than 6,000 islands and islets scattered in the nearby Greek Seas, not many of these uninhabited. Also on the historical doorstep of Greece is Türkiye, steeped in its own cultural and natural beauties.

Join us at this much-anticipated conference destination.

* For more details please visit our website ama.com.au/qld/events/annual-conference/athens

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Dr Maria Boulton
AMA Queensland President



Dr Brett Dale
AMA Queensland CEO



ama.com.au/qld

AMA Queensland

President and CEO update

It's been another busy few months, with submissions and correspondence to Queensland Health on the COVID-19 vaccine mandate repeal, the Queensland Health Workforce Strategy 2032, and its Women's and Girls Health Strategy. There has been intense media interest in the impending closure of private maternity services in Cairns, the opening of the latest urgent care clinics in Queensland, and changes to Medicare benefits from 1 November.

AMA Fees List

The latest AMA Fees list took effect from 1 November. You may have seen media coverage around the increase in the Level B (Item 23) GP consultation to \$102. This reflects the impact on general practice of long-running COVID, additional costs of PPE and training, increases in time for staff to perform functions, and changed business practices and patient time/complexity.

The AMA has published the Fees List since 1974 to provide costing assistance and guidance for members. The List took on a greater importance as Medicare rebates stopped keeping pace with the cost of providing medical care. It is a guide only and all members can adapt its recommendations to suit their individual practice needs.

The Medicare rebate for Item 23 also increased on 1 November – by 20 cents. The tripling of the bulk billing incentive for certain patients also began then. There has been some confusion in the community as to what this actually means, and some misrepresentations stating that it is the rebate and not the bulk billing incentive that is being tripled.

We have developed a suite of resources for practices to explain the changes to patients. Find them on our campaign page.

ama.com.au/qld/campaigns/bulk-billing-incentive-facts



Workforce incentives

It was a pleasure to stand beside Health Minister Shannon Fentiman as she announced a range of measures to boost the GP and healthcare workforce in our regions.

We had long called for the \$70,000 incentives for interstate and overseas healthcare workers to relocate to regional Queensland to be extended to GPs and other private specialists. This move will help address workforce shortages and maldistribution across the state.

Minister Fentiman also expanded from 20 to 50 the number of GPs who will receive financial support to train as GP Obstetricians or GP Anaesthetists. This will have a real impact on regional maternity services.

[Incentives to boost regional health workforce | Australian Medical Association \(ama.com.au\)](http://ama.com.au/qld/campaigns/regional-health-workforce)



Urgent care clinics and satellite hospitals

The eighth of Queensland's promised 11 federally-funded urgent care clinics has opened. During this time, the state government released initial figures about presentations at its two new satellite hospitals.

While we welcome all investments into primary care and efforts to ease the pressure on our public hospital emergency departments, we cannot see either of these projects having the desired effect.

At least two of the urgent care clinics are still not open for the full advertised extended hours, raising questions about workforce availability and whether extra Medicare funds

are best spent on a handful of clinics in a few areas or on improving access to GPs for all Queenslanders.

The satellite hospitals' openings have seen a drop in Category 4 and 5 presentations to nearby hospitals. However, our ED colleagues tell us that these low acuity presentations are not the reason EDs are overcrowded or ambulance ramping is occurring – it is because there are no ward beds to admit patients to.

As we head into an election year, we will be working closely with both sides of politics on real solutions to the challenges facing our healthcare system.

ama.com.au/qld/news/Transcript-4BC-AMA-Fees-List



ama.com.au/qld/news/Transcript-4BC-urgent-care-clinics-satellite-hospitals



Vaping and liquid nicotine

After continuously advocating for both levels of government to respond to the rise of vaping, particularly amongst children and adolescents, the state government has finally announced a crackdown.

From next year, it will be difficult to purchase a vape without a prescription from your doctor as a last resort method to help ease people off cigarette addiction.

It is important that liquid nicotine prescribing remains under medical oversight. Smoking cessation is one of the conditions listed for pharmacist prescribing under the North Queensland – now statewide – pilot.

However, no vaping product has been approved for use in Australia as a quit aid, and the federal government has made liquid nicotine a prescription-only medication.

State governments have the power to allow non-medical practitioners to prescribe certain scheduled medications, and it is relieving to see

them taking action on what has the potential to be a life-threatening issue.

GPs have no financial incentive to prescribe liquid nicotine, as they do not sell it. However, we have seen Big Tobacco offer lucrative incentives to pharmacists to stock their vaping products and “spotter’s fees” for referring customers to GPs for prescriptions.

The long-term effect of vaping on the lungs is still unclear and this decision to keep this highly addictive substance as one that can only be prescribed by a medical practitioner is a positive measure to ensure we are restricting growth in this new addiction.

ama.com.au/qld/news/Transcript-Nick-Yim-ABC-Wide-Bay-vaping-schoolchildren



ama.com.au/qld/news/Vaping-package-good-step-in-nicotine-control



Pharmacy prescribing

GPs may receive a letter from someone purporting to be your trusted pharmacist colleague about 60-day dispensing.

These letters are part of a campaign from a group called CAPS, which claims to be an independent pharmacy lobby group not associated with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

CAPS remains opposed to 60-day dispensing, while the Guild has shelved its campaign against this new program as it negotiates the eighth community pharmacy agreement with the federal government.

We encourage you to ignore any correspondence from CAPS. This group does not speak with any authority. Its decision to post photos online of patient prescriptions may be a breach of privacy. These actions have not been endorsed by any recognised pharmacy peak organisations.

Details of how 60-day prescribing works are available [here](#).

ama.com.au/qld/news/Letter-from-CAPS-ignore-it



Telehealth red tape

The AMA has received assurances from federal Health Minister Mark Butler that his department will address concerns about outdated regulations around patient consent for telehealth services.

Throughout the pandemic, the Department of Health and Services Australia allowed verbal consent for telehealth consults to be documented in a patient’s clinical notes. However, Services Australia has published fresh advice after concerns this practical approach did not meet the technical requirements of the Health Insurance Act.

Minister Butler issued the following statement on 6 October following a meeting with AMA Vice President Dr Danielle McMullen.

“I have asked my department to provide options to address concerns about the assignment of benefit for Medicare bulk billed claims, including legislative amendments. My department has advised me that until these changes are made, there are no plans to pursue any broad punitive actions on this issue unless it relates to fraudulent claims against Medicare.”

The AMA will keep members informed about work in this area, recognising the potential for the current interpretation to impact on access to care for patients and add unnecessary complexity to the day to day work of doctors.

ama.com.au/ama-rounds/6-october-2023/articles/ama-acts-telehealth-red-tape



Payroll tax

Expressions of interest for the Queensland Revenue Office's GP payroll tax amnesty closed Friday 10 November 2023.

The QRO also published an [updated payroll tax public ruling for medical centres](#) on 19 September 2023.



We are continuing to work with our federal and state colleagues as other jurisdictions also begin to implement this new interpretation of tax laws. Queensland was the first state to win an amnesty and a halt to retrospective audits for eligible general practices.

AMA Queensland hosted a [payroll tax webinar](#) on 24 October. If you could not attend, it is now available to members on our website.



All medical practices are urged to seek updated professional advice about how the ruling impacts their business. General practices who applied for the amnesty should also consult their advisors about beginning to plan and action business structure changes.



[Watch the payroll tax webinar](#)

Find out more about the [Queensland Revenue Office's payroll tax amnesty](#).



Maternity care

We have urged Health Minister Shannon Fentiman to urgently intervene to allow private specialists access to care for their patients in public hospitals.

The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service has rebuffed an offer by two private obstetricians to treat public patients in return for being able to birth their private

patients in public hospitals when the local private maternity unit closes on 1 November.

We have welcomed many of the moves Minister Fentiman has made towards resolving regional workforce shortages, including more training places for GP obstetricians and a digital passport to make it easier for doctors to work across different HHSs.

We have asked her to step in and stop individual HHSs from blocking private specialists from practising in public hospitals.

Metro North Health has effectively blocked private obstetricians from practising at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital since early 2022.

This must be considered as part of Queensland Health's Women and Girls Health Strategy. Women must be given real choice around birth models.

[ama.com.au/qld/news/Private-specialists-access-public-hospitals](#)



Vale Dr Russell Stitz AM RFD

It is with much sadness that we advise of the passing of AMA Queensland Past President, friend, and colleague, Dr Russell Stitz AM RFD.

Dr Stitz was AMA Queensland President from 2002-03 and a member for 52 years. He was farewelled in a private ceremony.

[ama.com.au/qld/russellstitz](#)



Renewals

It has been our honour and privilege to work hard for members over the past year.

Keep an eye out for your renewal notice, which you should have received via email.

We cannot do our work without your support and we thank you for your valuable and continuing contribution.

Renew now:

[ama.com.au/qld/renew](#)





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AMA Queensland Foundation Gala Dinner



By Dr Dilip Dhupelia
– Chair, AMA Queensland Foundation

Oh what a night, as the song goes!

The charitable arm of the AMA Queensland, the AMA Queensland Foundation, held its second Annual Gala Charity Event at Customs House on Saturday 18 November. The weather was perfect for pre-dinner drinks and networking on the terrace overlooking the Story Bridge. Attendees all looked terrific and in keeping with the theme of Black Tie with a touch of green (the Foundation colours!). It was a huge night of auctions, inspiring stories and entertainment.

We heard from the two of the recipients of the Foundation’s 2023 medical student scholarships, and what this meant to them. The Foundation has now gifted over \$500,000 dollars to 31 Doctors who may not have completed their training due to unforeseen hardship.

This year was also exciting, thanks to the legacy left behind by General Practice Training Queensland and the funds they provided to the Foundation. Four recipients were announced and received the inaugural GPTQ Research and Training bursaries with each recipient receiving \$20,000.

The highlight of the night was to hear from the Founder of Beddown, Norm Mcilivray. Beddown was the Charity of Choice for this year’s fund-raising activities, end of financial year and the Charity Gala Auction. Beddown transforms underused or empty spaces into accommodation for people experiencing homelessness.

The prizes for this year’s charity auction were amazing and we thank BLMA Members who attended the evening and who purchased these, and hope you enjoy the experiences you purchased.

The AMA Queensland Foundation will soon be able to announce its donation to Beddown once all the calculations have been done from this year’s activities.

BLMA members may wish to make a tax deductible donation to the Foundations Christmas Appeal by reading about the activities of the Foundation and by clicking [here](#).





Full house at BLMA'S Educational Dinner at the Calile Hotel!

By Dr Dilip Dhupelia – BLMA Newsletter Editor:

On Tuesday 21st November, thanks to the generous sponsorship of City Fertility, Mater Health and q4 Financial Services, the Brisbane Medical Association held one of their largest Educational Events for members to a capacity crowd.

The evening began with a lovely network session with pre-dinner drinks on the mezzanine floor, where members were able to mingle with each other and with our generous sponsors.

The first speaker of the night was Dr Meghan Stafford from the City Fertility Group. Meghan brought us up to date with the suggested sequence of how one should investigate infertility and the steps GPs should take with both partners. She provided a sound pathway of the investigations, talked about the value or otherwise of some tests, the counselling that is required and how and when to refer for appropriate Specialist Services. This subject was obviously of great interest to members judging by the number of questions raised. We thank Meghan and City Fertility for an interesting presentation and the update.

The presentation sponsored by Mater Health was an innovative one. The topic was *"The Queensland eConsultant Partnership Program: reducing OPD demand by linking GPs and consultants via secure messaging."* This is the sign of the times when we are moving from e-secure messaging, e-appointment making, e-scripts and now an eConsultant Program!

Professor Claire Jackson, Professor David McIntyre and Dr Caroline Nicholson briefed us on the eConsultant program- what it is, how to use it and some of the early successes of the program. The Centre for Health System Reform and Integration at UQ/Mater Research Institute are conducting the research of this service model and looking at outcomes of the program, providers' experiences, patients' experiences and the healthcare cost savings. I am sure we are going to hear a lot more about this model of care going forward.

Our final speaker for the night was AMA Queensland President and BLMA Member, Dr Maria Bolton, who brilliantly articulated the challenges and the advocacy she was undertaking, together with a list of impressive wins as a result of her efforts especially around payroll tax exemptions, the \$70,000 Queensland Health Financial incentive to interstate and international doctors who move to regional Queensland, assurances regarding telehealth consult consents, the advocacy to correct the current maternity crisis in Queensland and the submission that AMA Queensland will prepare for the next State Budget. BLMA members congratulate Maria and the AMA Queensland for a very productive year.

It was terrific to also welcome quite a few new members. Welcome to the BLMA family and we hope you will enjoy the benefits of your membership during 2024.

BLMA Newsletter *Synapse* Advertising Kit 2024

- ▶ The Brisbane Local Medical Association's Newsletter *Synapse* is a bi-monthly publication.
- ▶ All newsletters are uploaded to our website: brisbanelma.org which attracts strong traffic.
- ▶ The newsletter has a circulation all over Brisbane, including private and public non- GP Specialists, Specialist General Practitioners, Doctors in Training, GP Registrars, Medical Administrators and retired doctors.
- ▶ The newsletter is printed. The email version of the newsletter is also full colour and an increasing number of members are choosing to receive their newsletter via email.
- ▶ The newsletter size is between 20 to 28 pages.
- ▶ The newsletter is usually distributed the second week of each second month. This is by post or email where requested.
- ▶ The cut-off date for advertisements and advertorials is the 1st of the month for that month's newsletter (see Newsletter Frequency).
- ▶ The distribution area covers the Greater Brisbane Region
- ▶ All content has to be approved by the Newsletter Editor.
- ▶ Please note that advertising guidelines apply.

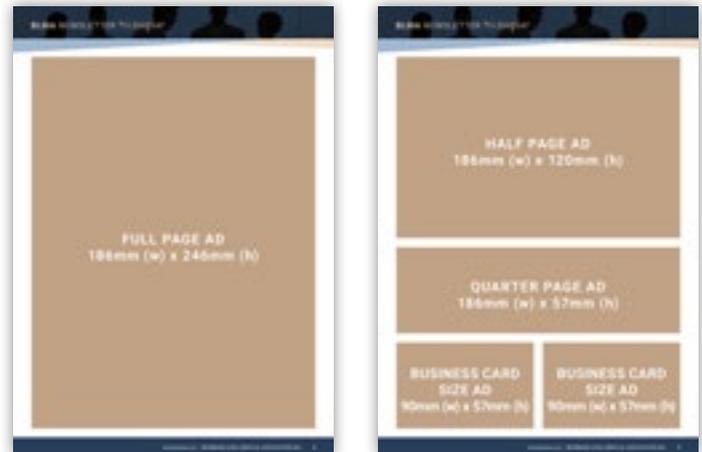
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- ▶ 10% discount for 3 or more placements.
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CLASSIFIEDS

All classifieds are subject to the Editor's discretion.

- ▶ No charge to current BLMA members. Non-members: \$100.
- ▶ Word count no more than 120 words.