

# primary focus

**It's Breast Cancer  
Awareness Month**

page 4



## *what's inside*

- + Young adult health in the spotlight
- + Mater Health Hub, Springfield set to open
- + Mater stays up late to keep Ipswich healthy

## In this issue

03

Welcome

04

Breast Cancer  
Awareness Month

07

Pathology

08

Mater Mothers

10

Mater Health Hub,  
Springfield

11

Robots for Redland  
and Mackay

12

Young Adult Health

13

Mater Research

14

Mater at Home

16

Our Mater network



Meet our *super doctors* caring for women with breast cancer

Scan the QR code to find out more or visit [mater.org.au/breast-cancer-awareness-month](http://mater.org.au/breast-cancer-awareness-month)

Right: Dr Chris Pyke (Director of Medical Services and Breast Surgeon) and Dr Ben Lancashire (Breast Surgeon)

## Breast Cancer Awareness Month

In this issue, we highlight the remarkable work done in Breast Cancer treatment by Mater People across Queensland. The Mater team provides exceptional care to patients and their loved ones, and continues to drive innovation and research to improve treatments and outcomes.

### Reconciliation

In the spirit of reconciliation, Mater acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Learn more about our Reconciliation Action Plan at [mater.org.au/rap](http://mater.org.au/rap)

### Limitation of liability

Mater accepts no liability for any errors, omissions or consequences, including any loss or damage, arising from reliance on information in this publication.

We recommend obtaining professional medical advice from an accredited practitioner before relying on the information in this publication.

Printed on recycled paper.



# Welcome to a special Breast Cancer Awareness Month edition of Mater's quarterly magazine for Queensland's medical community.

**In this edition of Primary Focus, we feature stories on the Mater surgeons, nurses, clinicians and other healthcare practitioners delivering innovative treatment, care and support to Queensland patients with breast cancer.**

From BRCA gene detection services to groundbreaking clinical trials, Mater specialists and researchers are driving innovations and improvements in the care and outcomes for breast cancer patients and survivors, with one in every four women diagnosed with the disease receiving care at a Mater hospital.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and Mater has launched a national campaign to raise awareness about the disease and its impact, urging eligible women to take advantage of free breast cancer checks each year.

Data reveals only half of eligible Australian women take up the offer of free mammograms, despite early detection being the best possible protection.

Read on to learn insights, best practices and the latest advancements in breast cancer care to enable you to deliver the latest knowledge and resources to those in your care.

Beyond breast cancer, this edition also showcases Mater's services in people's homes and in the community, including Mater at Home Direct which is a partnership with the Queensland Ambulance Service to deliver non-urgent, unplanned care to those who need it.

Mater services for elder care and young adult mental health are also featured in this issue, along with new robotic surgery opportunities in regional Queensland, innovative women's health treatments and the establishment of Mater's first purpose-built health, education and wellbeing centre at Springfield.

Finally, as we approach the end of the year, I extend Mater's best wishes to you, your families and loved ones for a happy, healthy Christmas.

I look forward to continuing to work with you towards our common goal of improving the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders.



*Paul Darcy*

Executive Director  
Mater Health

**Mater specialists and researchers are driving innovations and improvements in the care and outcomes for breast cancer patients and survivors.**


## Mater at a glance



# Mater Breast Cancer *specialists*

## South Brisbane



**Dr Christopher Allan**  
Breast, Endocrine and  
General Surgery  
 07 3010 5760



**Dr Emma Clarkson**  
Breast, Endocrine  
and General Surgery  
 07 3180 9777



**Dr Simone Geere**  
Breast, Endocrine  
and General Surgery  
 07 3371 5377



**Dr Ben Lancashire**  
Breast, Endocrine  
and General Surgery  
 07 3054 0694



**Dr Carissa Phillips**  
Breast, Endocrine  
and General Surgery  
 07 3010 5780

## Springfield



**Prof Christopher Pyke**  
Breast, Endocrine  
and General Surgery  
 07 3255 1088



**Dr Sally Meade**  
Breast, Endocrine  
and General Surgery  
 07 3847 7594



**Dr Susan Bell**  
Breast, Endocrine  
and General Surgery  
 07 3709 4400



**Dr Ramesh Iyer**  
Breast, Endocrine  
and General Surgery  
 07 3154 5979



**Dr Geoff Muduioa**  
Breast, Endocrine  
and General Surgery  
 07 3010 5788

## Redland



**Dr Jason Lambley**  
Breast, Endocrine  
and General Surgery  
 07 3163 7366



**Dr Nita Bartlett**  
Breast and  
General Surgery  
 07 4727 4020



**Dr Jason Boldery**  
Breast and  
General Surgery  
 07 4725 2833



**Dr April Miu**  
Breast and  
General Surgery  
 07 4725 2833



**Dr Alec Winder**  
Breast and  
General Surgery  
 07 4725 2833

## Mackay



**Dr Adrian Westcott**  
Breast and  
General Surgery  
 07 4942 9588



**Dr Wendela Schimmer**  
Breast and  
General Surgery  
 07 4942 9588



**Dr Christian Connors**  
General Surgery  
 07 4942 6566



**Dr Andrew Russell**  
General Surgery  
 07 4922 8426



**Dr Nick Palmer**  
General Surgery  
 07 4923 7600

## Bundaberg



**Dr Johannes Stofberg**  
General Surgery  
 07 4155 5041

## Leading the battle

**This October Mater is taking the fight to breast cancer through a public awareness campaign—and world-leading treatment and research.**

Mater specialists are using Breast Cancer Awareness Month to increase participation in Australia's free breast screening program for women aged 50–74, with figures showing that only half (50.8 per cent) of eligible Queenslanders are taking up free mammograms.

Mater breast surgeon Dr Ben Lancashire said early detection was the best protection against a disease that claims the lives of more than 3,000 Australian women a year.

**"Early detection dramatically improves the chances of a patient beating breast cancer," Dr Lancashire said.**

"A mammogram only takes 10 minutes and we know they save lives."

The decline in screening has prompted Mater patient Karen Coningham—who was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer after she did not attend screening for five years—to issue an urgent plea to other women as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

"I used to go regularly for scans, but then life just seemed to get in the way," she said.

"I'd felt a lump in my breast but thought it was just a harmless cyst like I'd had before.

"When it became painful I went to get it checked and was eventually told I had advanced breast cancer—and that it had metastasised to my bones and lymph nodes.

"I know that if I had been screened earlier it would not have got to this point, so I want other women to not make the same mistake that I did.

**Image** Mater patient Karen Coningham urges women to participate in Australia's free breast screening program.

"When it's time for your mammogram make yourself accountable—and just do it."

GPs are being urged to spread the message too by encouraging patients to action their breast screen reminders and to regularly check their breasts.

Mater is Queensland's leader in breast cancer services and research, with a network of treatment centres stretching from Townsville to Springfield.

**One in every four Queensland women diagnosed with breast cancer will be treated by Mater specialists.**

One of Australia's most highly regarded breast and endocrine surgeons, Dr Christopher Pyke, leads the breast cancer care services at Mater.

Dr Pyke, who is also Director of Medical Services at Mater's private hospitals in Brisbane, Springfield and Redland, mentors a team of breast cancer specialists, including Dr Lancashire and Dr Emma Clarkson.

He also supports new specialists in South East Queensland such as Dr Sally Meade, who previously operated at Mater Private Hospital Townsville.

Mater's Breast Care Nurses provide expert, compassionate care, with further support available through the Mater Health and Wellness Clinic.

"Patients who come to Mater can expect to receive high-quality, nurturing care from the moment of diagnosis and throughout their surgical treatment and medical oncology," Dr Pyke said.

"They will be given exceptional support at every point—from specialists, nurses and our allied health team.

"We all work together to put our patients first."



## Clinical trials provide an extra care dimension

**The Mater Cancer Care Centre at South Brisbane is at the forefront of breast cancer research in Queensland.**

The centre provides haematology, medical oncology and palliative care services to more than 400 breast cancer patients each year—and also provides them access to a range of clinical trials.

Individual therapeutic plans frequently include access to clinical trials in immunotherapy, endocrine therapy, chemotherapy and agents targeting small molecule kinases, increasing patient therapeutic options.

**These Mater Research-led trials ensure that Mater patients (including those referred from Mater's Springfield and Redland Cancer Care Centres) can be offered more treatment options than any other cancer centre in Greater Brisbane.**

Current clinical trials include Ascent -03, BELLA, INAVO120 and VIKTORIA-1, and four new breast cancer trials are expected to be available to patients within the next six months.

The centre also offers early-phase clinical trials for patients who have exhausted most standard care therapies and can offer some genetic sequencing to help guide patient treatment options.

Mater Cancer Care Centre accepts both public and private patients.





## Mater boosts breast cancer *gene testing* for Queensland

**More Queensland women can access rapid and potentially life-saving breast cancer gene testing thanks to a major new investment in health technology at Mater.**



**Image** Mater Director of Anatomical Pathology Dr Rohan Lourie with the 3500 Series Genetic Analyser.

The 3500 Series Genetic Analyser has allowed Mater to launch a high-capacity breast cancer gene (BRCA) testing service, providing women with critical information about their future breast cancer risk.

Mater Director of Anatomical Pathology Dr Rohan Lourie said the genetic analyser enables doctors to establish if a woman's breast cancer is caused by pathogenic variants in one of seven core genes—of which the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes are the most likely to be affected.

"There's been a huge lack of testing capacity in Queensland, which has meant BRCA testing has to be done in Victoria and also overseas, including in California," Dr Lourie said.

"Mater's new genetic analyser means we are able to test women in Brisbane and get the results much more quickly.

"Increased and faster BRCA testing means we can offer more personalised and effective care for women with breast cancer—and that saves lives."

Oncologists modify treatment if a cancer is known to be caused by a gene defect in BRCA1 or BRCA2. They can also recommend the patient's family members are screened if there is a significant risk that they will have the same variant.

Women with the BRCA1 pathogenic variant have a 60–80 per cent risk of developing breast cancer before they turn 80, while the risk is around 40 per cent for those with the BRCA2 variant.

Medicare currently only funds testing for women with a high chance of carrying a variant in BRCA1 or BRCA2 (and the other five high risk genes), but Mater Foundation funds testing for dozens of women each year who do not qualify for a Medicare test and cannot afford private screening.

## Exercise lowers side effects and increases wellbeing for Mater breast cancer patients

**A six-week exercise program for Mater Private Hospital Brisbane breast cancer patients is delivering dramatic improvements in health and wellbeing, as well as reducing side-effects.**

Mater breast care nurse Ash Mondolo said the program was designed by clinicians in consultation with physiotherapists at the hospital.

"Mater and Active Rehabilitation Physiotherapy created a program based on the latest evidence that exercise during treatment for breast cancer lowers the chance of physical side effects like fatigue, neuropathy, lymphoedema, osteoporosis, and nausea," Ms Mondolo said.

"Specialised women's health physiotherapists developed the free program specifically for women recovering from breast cancer to improve mobility, strength and balance."

Mater breast and endocrine surgeon Dr Chris Pyke said exercise intervention studies were starting to reveal an increase in survival amongst cancer patients.

"At a bio-chemical level, exercise is the only intervention that has a proven ability to boost the immune system," he said.

Breast cancer patients Kerrie Hunter, Paula Leyden, Jennifer Dowery and Glenda FitzPatrick all opted to join the rehab class in 2022 after undergoing breast cancer treatment at Mater Private Hospital Brisbane.

They said it not only enhanced their recoveries—but also helped them forge an enduring 'bosom buddy' friendship.

"The classes helped us recover physically and helped us emotionally too," said Ms FitzPatrick.

"We can share our experiences and what's happening to our bodies with each other without judgement—and we had fun too!"

**Image** Glenda FitzPatrick, Paula Leyden, Jennifer Dowery and Kerrie Hunter met while taking part in Mater Private Hospital Brisbane's breast cancer rehab exercise program.



## Mater stays up late to keep Ipswich healthy

**Mater has launched a new after-hours medical testing service in Ipswich to help busy families and shift workers stay on top of their health.**

The Mater Pathology centre at Blackstone will provide Ipswich's only late-opening service for blood and other medical test collections.

Mater Pathology Customer Experience Manager, Robyn Bryant, said there was a growing demand in Ipswich for out-of-hours medical services.

"When GPs ask a patient to get a blood test they usually have to get to a pathology collection centre before 5pm—and often before 3pm," Ms Bryant said.

"While that's fine for most people, it doesn't work for others who might be very busy looking after their children or trying to leave work.

"However, the longer you have to wait to have your blood taken, the longer you wait for the results to come back—and the longer it is before you get the treatment you need."

**Image** Mater Pathology phlebotomist Justine Mani at the new Blackstone centre.

**"At Mater, we make patients our priority and so we are very proud to be opening the first late-night pathology collection service in Ipswich."**

The Blackstone Mater Pathology collection centre, adjoining the new QKampus private emergency centre, will be open from 6pm to 11pm Monday to Friday and from 10am to 10pm at weekends.

The service is bulk-billed and accepts all GP pathology request forms for blood and other tests. No appointments are necessary and free parking is available.

Mater Pathology already operates collection centres across the Ipswich region, including Karana Downs, Silkstone, Yamanto, Ripley, Redbank Plains, Brookwater and Springfield.



## Mater Pathology launches RACGP accredited Skin Cancer Audit Program

**Mater Pathology has a new Skin Cancer Surgical Audit program for doctors with an interest in skin cancers.**

GPs looking to enhance their understanding of suspect lesions will be able to evaluate diagnostic accuracy using dermatoscopy with historical diagnosis.

By participating in the program, practitioners will also receive reports that let them review their current individual practice and benchmark their results against a select group of peers.

Throughout the program, participants can also access Mater's expert team of specialists and resources in pathology, plastic surgery, infection control, dermatology, radiology and cancer care.

To meet the minimum requirements, clinicians must aim to submit 40 skin samples within three months.

Upon completion, participants will be eligible for up to 25 continuing professional development hours, accredited by RACGP.





## Mater revolutionises *hysterectomy surgery* for women

**A new hysterectomy procedure that leaves no scars and causes little pain has been performed at Mater Mothers' Hospital in Brisbane for the first time.**

The minimally invasive surgery, performed by Mater Gynaecologist Dr James McLaren (below), eliminates the need for surgical incisions in the patient's abdomen.

Each year in Australia, more than 32,000 hysterectomies are performed. The surgery involves the removal of the uterus and fallopian tubes.

The three most common ways to perform a hysterectomy include vaginal, laparoscopic or keyhole surgery and abdominal surgery which leaves the patient with a scar on their stomach, similar to that of a caesarean section.



Dr McLaren said the Vaginal Natural Orifice Transluminal Endoscopic Surgery (vNOTES) enabled surgeons to remove the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries through the vagina, with the use of specialised instruments.

The instruments are placed through the vagina into the pelvic cavity providing access to the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries without the need for abdominal skin incisions.

The Mater Mothers' Gynaecologist learned the technique while working at King's College Hospital in London. He is now one of a handful of surgeons qualified to perform vNOTES in Brisbane.

"Compared with an abdominal hysterectomy procedure, where recovery can take up to six weeks, minimally invasive approaches such as vNOTES provide obvious benefits such as quicker recovery, less post operative pain and decreased blood loss," Dr McLaren said.

"Unlike the standard vaginal approach, vNOTES allows for easy access to the fallopian tubes and ovaries. Removal of fallopian tubes at the time of hysterectomy has been shown to reduce the risk of ovarian cancer.

"Reduced operating times, shorter recovery in hospital and less post-operative pain medication is also a benefit of this procedure."

Patient Kimberley Smith, 38, of Kenmore in Brisbane's western suburbs, said her life changed dramatically after vNOTES and she was up and about straight after surgery and home the next day.

Since introducing the procedure at Mater Mothers' Hospital in Brisbane in March this year, Dr McLaren has performed 10 vNOTES hysterectomies and will soon be providing the surgery at Mater Private Hospital Brisbane and Mater Private Hospital Springfield.

### ? How to refer

**Dr James McLaren**

Specialty: Gynaecology

Mater Private Hospital Brisbane  
Mater Private Hospital Springfield

07 3145 0360

[Referral information](#)

## Wallabies wife Arnika Kefu's breast cancer battle

**After receiving a devastating stage 1 breast cancer diagnosis, Arnika Kefu's journey continues on a positive trajectory—thanks to treatment at Mater and the love of her family.**

The 41-year-old mum of three is married to Wallabies and Queensland Reds great Steve Kefu and is sharing her courageous story with other women for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Mrs Kefu was given the devastating news by doctors she had breast cancer, with a biopsy confirming a 2.5cm lump in her breast contained cancerous cells.

Following months of continuous—and successful—chemotherapy treatment at Mater's Cancer Care Centre at South Brisbane, a softly-spoken Mrs Kefu revealed how she "pulled herself together" for her young family including Laila, 14, Chloe, 12 and Jacob, 8.

"It all started with me getting an inverted nipple but I didn't give it the time of day. Then I started to get some sharp pain and thought 'this isn't right'," Mrs Kefu said.

"I knew if I let my mum and sister know, they would tell me to see my GP—and that's exactly what happened."

Mrs Kefu said her GP had found a lump in her breast and referred her for an immediate mammogram and ultrasound.

"Before I knew it, I was in having a biopsy," she said.

"If I went to the doctor early, it would have been picked up early."

Mater Cancer Care Centre Senior Medical Oncologist Dr Catherine Shannon advised other women who had any abnormalities in their breasts to see a doctor immediately.

"We know a lot of women have been put off their screenings due to COVID-19 and telehealth is not the best way of assessing a breast lump," Dr Shannon said.

While parts of her cancer treatment had been extremely challenging, Mrs Kefu said there was nothing her family couldn't deal with.

"It's really solidified us as a family unit, we can get through anything," she said.

"Steve has been a pillar of strength and the kids are just so resilient."





## Reducing the cost of private maternity

**An innovative service is reducing the cost of private maternity care—and delivering mothers a first-class birthing experience.**

More than half of Hatch Private Maternity’s consumers pay no out-of-pocket expenses at all and expenses are capped at a maximum of \$990 for all other Hatch mums.

The unique service is delivered by Mater Mothers’ hospitals.

Hatch’s lead obstetrician, Dr Kirstin Millard, said the service had been designed to allow as many families as possible to enjoy the benefits of private maternity care.

“Hatch is the answer for mothers who want high-quality but affordable care for themselves and their babies,” Dr Millard said.

Hatch’s antenatal care is shared between dedicated midwives and leading obstetricians.

The service’s endorsed midwives are able to write referrals, order blood tests and scans, and provide a Medicare rebate at each antenatal appointment.

The service provides 15 consultations over a full-term pregnancy, including a free no-obligation initial consultation and two postnatal visits.

Hatch clients deliver their babies at Mater Mothers’ Private Brisbane, with all births attended by Mater obstetricians.

All women currently insured with BUPA have no out-of-pocket expenses at Hatch, as well as those insured with participating Australian Health Service Alliance funds, which include ACA Health Benefits Fund, AIA Health, CBHS Health, Defence Health, Doctors Health Fund, GMHBA, HCl, Nurses & Midwives Health, Queensland Country Health Fund, Teachers Health, Territory Health Fund, TUH Health Fund, Uni Health and Union Health.

Image Sunshine Coast mum Danielle Colburn with miracle baby Matilda.



## Fetal heart ultrasounds *save* hundreds of babies like Matilda

**Hundreds of unborn babies with life-threatening heart conditions are being given a chance of survival thanks to a specialist cardiology team at the Mater Centre for Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) in South Brisbane.**

MFM sonographer Alison Lee-Tannock, who has worked at Mater for 25 years and has a PhD in fetal and paediatric echocardiography said Mater Mothers’ is Australia’s leading centre for fetal echocardiography.

**The team performs 300 fetal echocardiograms each year.**

Matilda, who was born at Mater Mothers’ Hospital in January this year, was just 10 days old when she underwent open heart surgery—after a fetal heart ultrasound identified she had a congenital heart defect that would have been fatal if left untreated.

Sunshine Coast parents Danielle Colburn, 28, and Jonty Guy, 29, said their daughter was a “miracle” and thanked the team at Mater for saving her life.

Ms Colburn said a 20-week pregnancy scan at MFM identified Matilda had a congenital heart defect (CHD) called Transposition of the Great Arteries (TGA)—a serious heart problem in which the two main arteries leaving the heart are reversed.

Dr Lee-Tannock said the advantages of diagnosing cardiac anomalies, particularly complex ones, include enabling families to better prepare for caring for their baby after birth, birthing in a hospital that offers neonatal intensive care and paediatric cardiac surgery and in some cases, preparing for palliative care.

“Patients are referred for fetal echocardiography for specific reasons. These include being at a high risk of having a baby with CHD, or having an obstetric scan which suspects a cardiac anomaly or one is found during routine imaging,” she said.

Dr Lee-Tannock said the team of specialised staff allow for holistic patient care and includes a paediatric cardiologist, MFM sonographer, cardiac nurse, MFM consultant, neonatologist and MFM midwife.



Image Maternal fetal medicine sonographer Alison Lee-Tannock.

# A new era of healthcare in Springfield

## Mater Health Hub, Springfield

Mater Health Hub, Springfield marks a new era in healthcare delivery. For the first time, Mater has delivered a purpose-built education, health and wellbeing centre to provide services in the community, outside a clinical setting. Mater Health Hub, Springfield offers specialist consultancy services, allied health services and Mater Education's popular Diploma of Nursing to grow the next generation of healthcare workers.

-  **Women's health services**
-  **Mother and baby services**
-  **Cancer care**
-  **Chronic disease management**
-  **Healthy ageing**
-  **Specialist care across orthopaedics, endocrinology, gynaecology and a range of other specialties**
-  **Home of Mater Education's diploma of nursing in October**

## Mater Pathology

Mater Pathology operates a state-of-the-art pathology laboratory staffed by medical, scientific and technical specialists. Mater Pathology in Blackstone provides 24-hour analytical and consultive services for Springfield patients and clinicians. All profits at Mater Pathology are reinvested into advancing treatment options and improving outcomes for patients.

-  **Blackstone**
-  **Brookwater**
-  **Springfield Orion**
-  **Springfield Metro**
-  **Mater Private Hospital Springfield**
-  **Mater Health Hub, Springfield**

## Mater Education

The Diploma of Nursing course is being offered in Springfield for the first time, along with a range of career-ready healthcare certifications and qualifications. All courses are delivered from state-of-the-art simulation laboratories and classrooms, located at Mater Health Hub, Springfield.

-  **Custom built education facility with state-of-the-art simulation laboratories and classrooms**
-  **Hands-on, in-hospital, practical learning opportunities**
-  **A range of career-ready healthcare certifications, qualifications and community programs**
-  **Growing the next generation of Springfield healthcare workers**



## Mater Private Hospital Springfield

Addressing unmet health needs is central to Mater's Mission and was the driving force behind Mater's decision to build the first hospital in the master-planned community of Springfield in 2015.

-  **79 private beds**
-  **4 digitally integrated operating theatres**
-  **State-of-the-art cancer care centre**
-  **Innovative and world-class healthcare facilities**





## Mater Hospital Springfield, Stage 2

Mater is partnering with State Government to expand Mater Private Hospital Springfield to deliver healthcare services to both public and private patients. The new, expanded hospital is expected to open in early 2026 and will deliver a range of new services to the community.

-  **228 hospital beds**
-  **Greater Springfield's first Emergency Department**
-  **Intensive Care Unit**
-  **More operating theatres and endoscopy procedural areas**
-  **Pandemic-safe design for future health and emergencies**

## Mater Mothers' Hospital Springfield

Mater Mothers' is part of Australia's largest maternity service. Each year, more than 12,000 babies are born at Mater Mothers' hospitals across Queensland. Mater Mothers' Hospital Springfield, set to open alongside Stage 2, will support families from preconception through pregnancy and birth into early motherhood with personalised care and support every step of the way.

-  **Pregnancy Assessment Centre (PAC)**
-  **Five public birthing suites**
-  **16 maternity beds**
-  **12 special care neonatal cots**

## Robotic masterpiece arrives at Mackay

**A ground-breaking robotic surgical system which will deliver state-of-the-art medical care to Central Queensland patients has arrived at Mater Private Hospital Mackay.**

The da Vinci X robotic system, which has been used to perform more than nine million urology, gynaecology, colorectal, cardiac, head, neck and thoracic surgeries worldwide, is now operating in Mackay.



**Image** Dr Kenny Rao with the da Vinci X robotic system.

Mater urologist Dr Kenny Rao said he had already performed more than 100 da Vinci procedures in Townsville, resulting in less pain and faster recoveries for patients.

"Until now, I have had to travel to Townsville to offer robotic-assisted urology procedures to Central Queenslanders," Dr Rao said.

**"Being able to offer this very advanced level of surgery in Mackay, where our patients can stay close to their loved ones, is really exciting."**

"Surgical robots do not replace the role of surgeons, but they enhance the surgical experience for both clinicians and patients as they enable smaller incisions, greater manoeuvrability and in many cases, shorter hospital stays, less pain and faster recovery times.

"For urology procedures in particular, robotic surgery allows for faster return of urinary continence and superior preservation of erectile function compared to open surgery."

Mater Private Hospital Mackay Acting General Manager Chris Junge said the arrival of the world-class system was a significant milestone for health care in Central Queensland.

"Robotic-assisted surgeries are becoming common in capital cities to improve patient outcomes, and it is exciting that the Mackay community is now able to benefit from these surgeries too," Mr Junge said.

"Robotic technology is the future of healthcare and Mater aims to be at the forefront of these advances to improve the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

"The da Vinci X surgical system was made possible by community fundraising conducted by our philanthropic arm, Mater Foundation, and I want to thank everyone who has donated to Mater for helping to bring this technology to regional Queensland."

### How to refer

**Dr Kenny Rao**

Specialty: Urology



Mater Private Hospital Mackay



07 4882 3111



[Referral information](#)

## New cutting-edge robot technology for Redland patients

**Mater Private Hospital Redland orthopaedic surgeon Dr David Ramsay performed the first full knee replacement surgery at the hospital using the ROSA Robot (Robotic Surgical Assistant).**

Dr Ramsay said the hospital was the first in the area to offer the cutting-edge technology.

He said the robot helped surgeons plan and perform personalised and highly precise cuts to bone, ensuring implants can be better fitted according to a patient's individual anatomy.

Dr Ramsay said the technique achieved faster recovery times, less pain and a more 'natural' feel in the knee joint—with patients typically back on their feet within days.

"The robot is an assistive technology for patients, usually in their 50s to 70s, requiring knee replacement surgery," he said.

"The surgeon still does the procedure, but it allows us to do much more controlled and subtle balancing of the ligaments and tendons around the knee during the surgery than previous systems could do.

"Using the robot helps make the new replacement feel more like a natural knee. This robot can also give us information about what the soft tissue is doing."

Wellington Point's 79-year-old Shirley Teua was the first person to have a knee replaced using the hospital's new ROSA Robot.

Ms Teua said since her surgery, she had recovered well and was now able to drive her car, use her sewing machine and walk around the supermarket unaided.

The ROSA Robot is also used at Mater Private Hospital Springfield, Mater Private Hospital South Brisbane and Mater Private Hospital Townsville.



**Image** Mater Private Hospital Redland orthopaedic surgeon Dr David Ramsay with the ROSA Robot.

### How to refer

**Dr David Ramsay**

Specialty: Orthopaedic Surgery:  
Lower Limb



Mater Private Hospital Redland



07 3163 7390



[Referral information](#)





**Image** Clarence Street Statewide Triage and Referral Coordinator Jamie Trye and Clarence Street Manager Amanda Tilse.

## Queensland's largest youth alcohol and other drug service helps to *overcome concerns* related to substance use

**A confidential service supporting young people to make changes with drug and alcohol use is transforming hundreds of lives across Queensland each year.**

Clarence Street is a service at South Brisbane's Mater Young Adult Health Centre aimed at supporting young people change their substance use in a safe, comfortable and youth-friendly environment.

The service's state-wide Triage and Referral Coordinator Jamie Trye manages the intake of young people referred to the service from across Brisbane, as well as regional areas throughout Queensland including Bundaberg, Cairns, Townsville, Toowoomba and Roma.

Ms Trye said Clarence Street was a voluntary program and young people, as well as General Practitioners, can call directly to find out more about the service.

"We also welcome calls from families, as well as health and education professionals, community youth services, and other agencies," Ms Trye said.

"The service aims to support young people around the state to make changes to their substance use, tailoring interventions to suit the individual needs of the young person.

"This includes careful consideration of the young person's level of motivation, as well as their personal goals, strengths, and support needs."

Clarence Street offers an on site vocational training program, therapeutic groups, recreational activities and support services (for young people aged 13 to 25 years).

A community team provides specialist youth work to young people aged 13 to 25 years in the Greater Brisbane area and a residential program supports young people aged 13 to 21 years to safely withdraw from substances.

Longer-term residential support is also available for young people aged 13 to 17 years.

## THREAD drug and alcohol withdrawal service

**Mater also provides a long-term residential program called THREAD for young people who have drug and alcohol related concerns to assist with their recovery and prevent relapse.**

THREAD is a program where young people can participate for up to three months in a voluntary residential program where young people aged 13-17 who have undergone the Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Service (ADAWS) can enter for further support.

Young people have the opportunity to engage in ongoing relapse prevention work.

**THREAD is a holistic program focusing on residents' emotional, psychological, physical, and social wellbeing.**

Treatment may involve individual and group therapy, medical assessments, recreational activities, support with education and training and life skills development.

At THREAD, young people participate in a three-phase program, where they are invited to provide feedback and review their progress and goals at the end of each phase (10-week maximum stay).

### How to refer

To refer to Clarence Street:



**07 3163 8400** between 8am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday



**[Referral information](#)**

## Mater Education's Introduction to Young Adult Health course

**Healthcare professionals are invited to attend Mater Education's one-day Introduction to Young Adult Health course in November.**

The course provides a highly practical foundation in young adult healthcare.

**Led by experts from Mater Young Adult Health Centre, the course will give participants an excellent grounding in tailored skills for engaging, assessing and responding to young adult patients.**

Key areas of learning include:

- identifying mental health issues in young people;
- communicating with young people around sensitive information;
- delivering youth friendly services that reduce access barriers for young people;
- unpacking and responding to complex needs; and
- easing the transition from paediatric care to adult care for young people.

The course is being held on 24 November.

The \$330 one-day course is relevant to all healthcare professionals working with young adults. This includes GPs, medical officers, nursing professionals, youth workers and allied health professionals.

Workshop topics include health and development of young people, mental health, substance abuse and integrated care of young people.

## Mater Researcher conferred title of *Emeritus Professor* alongside Lifetime Achievement Award

**Endocrinologist and Mater Researcher David McIntyre has been conferred the title of Emeritus Professor recognising his outstanding commitment and contribution to The University of Queensland.**

An endocrinologist for more than 30 years, Professor McIntyre has also been recognised by the Australian Diabetes Society with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his work dedicated to improving care in the field of women's health and diabetes, particularly during pregnancy.

Professor McIntyre said his most significant career achievement was the introduction of the DAFNE (Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating) program to Australia. DAFNE is an intensive five-day course that empowers people with type 1 diabetes to better understand the condition and take control of their lives. Since its introduction to Australia in 2005, over 2,000 Australians have completed the course.

Beginning as a resident medical officer at Mater Hospital Brisbane in 1982, he later completed endocrinology training in Queensland and Belgium.

In 1993, he returned to Mater as a specialist in endocrinology and internal medicine, where he established diabetes and endocrinology services within Mater Hospital Brisbane and Mater Mothers' Hospital in Brisbane.

He also founded the Queensland Diabetes Centre (QDC) in 1998, the first comprehensive diabetes care centre in Queensland and played a pivotal role in introducing insulin pump therapy for type 1 diabetes patients.

**Image** Recently conferred Emeritus Professor David McIntyre.

Professor McIntyre's dedication extended to obstetric medicine, where he led the Diabetes in Pregnancy Clinic and served as Director of Obstetric Medicine from 1999 to 2022. He mentored over 40 trainees who now hold senior clinical and academic positions, ensuring Mater Hospital Brisbane's reputation for advanced training in endocrinology and obstetric medicine continues.

**Passionate about succession planning for his life's work, Professor McIntyre emphasised the importance of specialists in endocrinology and obstetric medicine at Mater.**

His mentees, including Dr Jo Laurie and Associate Professor Shelley Wilkinson, praised his mentorship and advocacy for women in medicine. Professor McIntyre's primary focus throughout his career has been diabetes during pregnancy and he takes pride in developing a world-class service for women with diabetes, enabling successful pregnancies.

Currently serving as an Honorary Skou Professor and Danish Diabetes Academy Visiting Professor at Aarhus University in Denmark, Professor McIntyre remains active in research and clinical projects. While he isn't ready to retire, he is confident that his mentees will continue his legacy.

Professor McIntyre's enduring dedication to diabetes care and women's health has left an indelible mark on the field, making him a respected figure in the medical community.



**Image** Mater Director of Infectious Diseases Dr Paul Griffin.

## Lifesaving COVID medication to protect our most vulnerable

**The first Australian trial of a new COVID medication that is set to save the lives of vulnerable immunosuppressed patients has been launched in Brisbane by Mater.**

Supernova is a long-acting antibody combination designed to give instant protection to those with weakened immune systems—including those with solid organ or blood cancer, transplant recipients and people who are immuno-suppressed due to medications to treat autoimmune or inflammatory conditions.

Mater Research's Respiratory, Infectious Disease and Thoracic Oncology Unit launched the trial and is appealing for immuno-suppressed patients across South East Queensland to participate.

Mater Director of Infectious Diseases Dr Paul Griffin said it was critical to protect those who are unable to be vaccinated for COVID or for whom vaccines do not provide a strong immune response.

"Vaccines have made an extraordinary difference to how we manage COVID and protect the majority of the population," Dr Griffin said.

"Unfortunately, there is a subset of the population, around half-a-million Australians, that simply can't respond to vaccines due to inherent issues with their immune system or because they're on medicines that turn their immune systems down."

Supernova is expected to provide protection for at least six months and potentially even longer.

Participants must be 18+ to take part in the trial. Please call **07 3163 1369** for more information.







## Mater at Home Direct

**Mater at Home Direct is an innovative patient care service for non-critical, unplanned healthcare cases traditionally managed at hospital emergency departments.**

Instead of your patient heading to hospital, Mater at Home Direct offers timely, quality care to clinically stable patients in the comfort of their own homes.

They have access to a clinical team traditionally only found in a hospital, including doctors, specialist nurses and allied health professionals.

Clinical investigations and interventions brought to the patient include ECG, mobile imaging, pathology, pharmaceuticals (including intravenous), complex wound care, bladder scanner, catheter replacement equipment, mobility equipment and in person or telehealth medical reviews based on patient acuity.

Queensland Ambulance Service Digital Healthcare and Innovation Acting Director Alex Thompson said the partnership with Mater removed barriers to care for many vulnerable patients.

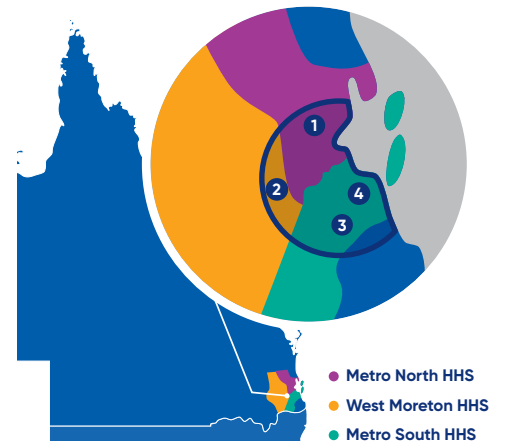
Mater at Home Direct Medical Lead Dr Jared Eisemann, said the service was delivering better outcomes for patients who have used the service in its first 12 months.

“A home visit will typically be arranged for the same day, with cases to date ranging from basic wound care to arranging full diagnostics for more complex cases like cellulitis and heart failure,” he said.

**“Approximately 80 per cent of patients were able to avoid an ambulance dispatch and transfer to emergency.”**

“With these results, Mater at Home Direct has the potential to transform the emergency health response and is already helping to alleviate pressure on the Queensland Ambulance Services and Hospitals.”

Mater at Home Direct is available to people aged 16 and over residing within the Mater at Home catchment (see map).



- 1 North to Burpengary
- 2 West to Ipswich
- 3 South to Jimboomba and Pimpama
- 4 East to the Bay

**Image** Mater at Home clinical nurse Teresa Yip with patient Ann Economos.





# Do you have a patient needing to transition to aged care?

**Mater offers a personalised aged care consulting and advisory program to assist people with transitioning into residential aged care.**

It's called Mater Aged Placement Service (MAPS) and it has no formal affiliation or agreements with any aged care facilities, allowing Mater to prioritise your patient and their families.

## Who are we?

The MAPS team has expertise across community health and aged care systems. They understand the admission processes and are experienced in facilitating the administration of the required paperwork.

They also appreciate how difficult this life transition can be. The team consists of social workers who are there to support your patient and their loved ones through the period of adjustment.



## How Mater can help

Our team is responsive and meets your patient at a location of their choice to assess their care requirements.

**We work with them to consider aged care offerings that suit their preferences and care needs.**

We help people complete the paperwork required by the aged care facility and make sure the right placement is found for the client.

## How to refer

Referrals are not required.

Patients wanting to learn more can contact us directly on:

☎ 07 3163 1760

📞 0409 626 708

✉ [maps@mater.org.au](mailto:maps@mater.org.au)

**Image** Patients Jeanette Neale and Patsy Beasley with Tiffany Clayton (Mater at Home Clinical Lead Social Work).

## Tapping into Mindfulness

**There's no denying 'mindfulness' is a buzzword in the world of health and wellbeing, but it does offer a host of benefits for patients.**

Mindfulness can contribute towards reducing both physical and psychological symptoms, as well as promoting positive changes in health, attitudes and behaviours.

**Mater at Home runs an evidence-based Mindfulness Group Therapy program, which aims to provide a safe space for participants to explore the benefits of mindfulness.**



**Mindfulness improves wellbeing,** encouraging participants to be present and enjoy life's pleasures, while also creating a greater capacity to deal with challenging events.



**Mindfulness improves physical health,** helping to relieve stress, lower blood pressure, manage chronic pain, improve sleep and alleviate gastrointestinal difficulties.



**Mindfulness improves mental health,** supporting the treatment of depression, substance abuse, anxiety, memory loss and early symptoms of dementia.

Mater's Mindfulness Group Therapy program involves six, one-hour sessions exploring foundational mindfulness techniques and themes.

This program is one of several group wellness and therapy classes offered by Mater at Home's allied health team, which also includes:

**Parkinson's Disease Wellness Group**—a multidisciplinary program to help improve quality of life for those living with the condition.

**Balance Well**—strength and balance exercises to support mobility and reduce the risk of falls.

**Aqua Therapy**—low load-bearing and low intensity exercises for balance and strength.

**Eat Well**—nutrition information to support immunity and gut health, blood sugar control, blood pressure and cholesterol, covering healthy cooking tips, hot topics in nutrition, understanding nutrition labels and more.

Fees apply, however in many circumstances, these programs are government subsidised.

## Our Mater Network

Operating the largest not-for-profit network of public and private hospital and healthcare services in the state, Mater brings together collective expertise across health, education, and research, with a shared vision of empowering people to live better lives through improved health and wellbeing.

**Mater Health** comprises all our hospitals and healthcare services across Queensland. These services combine to help Mater offer comprehensive healthcare which meets identified community need.

**Mater Education** is a nationally accredited, hospital-based independent Registered Training Organisation—the only one of its kind in Queensland. It offers a range of courses for students, through to highly experienced practising clinicians.

**Mater Research** is an internationally recognised leader in medical research, which connects its findings from bench to bedside—translating medical research into clinical practice to deliver better outcomes for our patients and the wider community.

**Mater Foundation** raises funds by engaging people and businesses to partner with Mater to improve health through a wide range of fundraising and philanthropy.



**Mater Private Hospital Townsville**

**Stephanie Barwick** | General Manager  
stephanie.barwick@mater.org.au



**Mater Private Hospital Mackay**

**Chris Junge** | Acting General Manager  
chris.junge@mater.org.au



**Mater Private Hospital Rockhampton**

**Alison Boyle** | General Manager  
alison.boyle@mater.org.au



**Mater Private Hospital Bundaberg**

**Catherine Hackney** | General Manager  
catherine.hackney@mater.org.au



**Mater Mothers' Private Hospital  
Mater Mothers' Hospital**

**Kerri Gane** | General Manager  
kerri.gane@mater.org.au



**Mater Private Hospital Brisbane  
Mater Hospital Brisbane**

**Jennifer Pitt** | General Manager  
jennifer.pitt@mater.org.au



**Mater Private Hospital Redland  
Mater Mothers' Private Redland**

**Drew Kear** | Acting General Manager  
drew.kear@mater.org.au



**Mater Private Hospital Springfield**

**Suzanne Hawksley** | General Manager  
suzanne.hawksley@mater.org.au



### Get social with us

@MaterQLD  
 @MaterQLD

@MaterQLD  
 @Mater

@MaterTV