

primary focus

Frontline flu fight with
Professor Paul Griffin

page 7



what's inside

- + Earn CPD points with Mater
- + Pioneering paediatric surgery
- + The cost of endometriosis

In this issue

04

Upcoming GP
Education events

06

Mater marks 50 years
of craniofacial surgery

07

Fighting flu on
the frontline

09

Robotic-assisted
paediatric surgery

11

Breakthrough for
spinal patients

12

Maternity services
in Springfield

13

Diagnosing
endometriosis

15

Closing in on
ovarian cancer

16

Mater's network
of hospitals



**BRISBANE TO
GOLD COAST**
Cycle for Cancer

Save the date
Sunday 12 October



Scan to register
your interest



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

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.

Advertising queries to
marketing@mater.org.au

Welcome to the first edition of Primary Focus for 2025

Every year brings new challenges and opportunities for the healthcare sector, and 2025 is proving to be no exception.

There are predictions of a severe flu season this year, complicated by low influenza vaccination rates amongst Queenslanders and the ongoing presence of COVID-19 in our community.

GPs will play a vital role in encouraging patients to protect themselves against these viruses in the coming months.

The pages ahead provide GPs with updates and news on ground-breaking research at Mater set to change

treatment and outcomes for women with ovarian cancer, as well as pioneering surgery enabled by new technologies in Mater hospitals.

GPs are encouraged to register for Mater education events being held in the coming months, and to learn more about new, dedicated services for women post-pregnancy to reduce the risk of chronic hypertension, cardiac disease and diabetes.

Importantly for people living and working in Brisbane's western corridor, this year will see construction completion of the new public hospital at Springfield that will begin operations in early 2026. Read ahead for further information on services.

As always, we hope this issue sparks your interest and we look forward to continuing to collaborate with you in enhancing the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders across the state.



Robert Mackway-Jones



Presented by  QueenslandXRay

Help support breast cancer research at Mater, improving diagnosis and treatment options for women now and into the future.



Donate today



Continuing professional development *opportunities*

Join a multi-specialist GP education session on the management of pituitary pathology, featuring Mater neurosurgery, Ear Nose and Throat and endocrine specialists.

The session includes a case-based panel discussion to highlight diagnostic tips and pitfalls, provide updates on state-of-the-art treatment techniques and offer guidance on managing patients after their return to the community.

Attendance certificates and CPD points will be provided.

Date: Saturday 15 February

Time: 8.30am Registration

Location: W Hotel Brisbane, 81 North Quay, Brisbane (free parking available)

Mater Specialists: Neurosurgeon Dr Robert Campbell, Neurosurgeon Dr Jason Papacostas, Ear Nose and Throat specialist Dr Abigail Walker and Endocrinologist Dr Ben Sly



? More information

✉ trudy.braybrook@mater.org.au

☎ 0447 277 818

➔ [Register here](#)

Townsville GPs are invited to join leading specialists from Mater Private Hospital Townsville for an upcoming education evening.

Learn about the diagnosis and management of colorectal, gynaecological, and vascular conditions.

Date: Tuesday 11 February

Time: 6.15pm

Location: Rydges Conference Centre, 23 Palmer Street, Townsville

Mater Specialists: Obstetrician, Gynaecologist and Urogynaecologist, Dr Kurinji Kannan Colorectal and General Surgeon, A/Prof Shin Sakata and Vascular Surgeon Dr Ramesh Velu

Attendance certificates and CPD points will be provided.

? More information

✉ peta.carmody@mater.org.au

☎ 0400 184 840

➔ [Register here](#)

A shared care alignment

GPs wanting to provide maternity shared care with Mater Mothers' Hospital are invited to attend GP Maternity Shared Care Alignment Seminars.

This multidisciplinary program has a focus on best practice maternity care in the general practice setting.

Online registrations for seminars is essential.

Seminar 1:

Date: Saturday 24 February

Time: 8.30am

Venue: Mater South Brisbane, Whitty Building, Level One

Seminar 2:

Date: Saturday 10 May 2025

Time: 8.30am

Venue: Mater South Brisbane, Whitty Building, Level One

? More information

✉ GPL@mater.org.au

☎ 0466 205 710

➔ [Register here for Seminar 1](#)

➔ [Register here for Seminar 2](#)

Get sMater on maternal fetal *medicine*

A three-part Mater podcast series on maternal fetal medicine has been launched, focusing on in-utero surgery for spina bifida and Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS).



Director of the Mater Centre for Maternal Fetal Medicine Dr Glenn Gardener performed Australia's first in-utero spina bifida surgery in 2016. The South Brisbane centre remains the only site in Australia and New Zealand to provide the complex surgery.

Dr Gardener and the MFM team also specialise in TTTS procedures, required in some circumstances where embryos share the same placenta. TTTS carries the risk of fetal death if left untreated.

In the third and final episode, Dr Gardener looks to the next frontier of treatments for women with complex pregnancies, including an emerging treatment for Rhesus disease and the role of advancing technology in driving non-invasive procedures into the future.

IMPROVE

IMPROVE—Improving Perinatal Mortality Review and Outcomes Via Education—is a national hands-on, interactive training program designed to meet educational needs of practitioners involved in maternity and newborn care managing perinatal death.

Face-to-face workshops and an eLearning program are both available, consisting of six modules covering a range of topics including communication around autopsy and investigations, the audit and classification process, and providing respectful and compassionate bereavement care to families.

Date: Friday 14 March

Time: 8am – 12.30pm

Location: Mater Hospital Brisbane, Raymond Terrace, South Brisbane

Online course: learn.stillbirthcre.org.au

Attendance certificates and CPD points will be provided.



More information



improve@mater.uq.edu.au



[Register here](#)



Stillbirth CRE researcher Dr Siobhan Loughnan

Mater marks 50 years of craniofacial surgery

Debb Stevens' baby daughter Daisy, who was born with Apert Syndrome, has received craniofacial care at Mater.



This year marks half a century since surgeons at Mater Private Children's Hospital performed the first craniofacial surgery on a four-year-old baby boy born with severe facial disfigurement.

The pioneering operation, led by retired Professor Leigh Atkinson and involving a multi-specialist team, removed a tumour in the centre of the baby's face to enable the boy's eyes to be repositioned to the front of his head.

Fifty years later, Neurosurgeon Dr Robert Campbell said Mater and Queensland Children's Hospital (QCH) now performed an average of 40 complex craniofacial surgeries each year.

He said advances in technology over the past 50 years had vastly improved surgical and patient outcomes.

"These days there's 3D CT scans and 3D models, computer simulations and preplanned cutting guides as well as dissolvable plates and screws," Dr Campbell said.

"There's also been the introduction of diagnostic genetics, genetics imaging, computing operative tools and ultrasonic welding of bone."

Dr Campbell and Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon Dr Richard Theile have worked closely at Mater for the past 25 years, alongside colleagues at QCH, to provide craniofacial treatments for children

across Queensland and New South Wales, as well as from Papua New Guinea, Pacific Islands and elsewhere.

"Our aim is to complete surgery for patients under 12 months as a one stop solution (but some children require further surgery as they age," said Dr Campbell, a founding partner of Brisbane Clinical Neuroscience Centre.

"We are now seeing a few families with children of different ages affected, and even some multi-generational cases

of grandparents, parents and newborn children," said Dr Campbell.

"During COVID, we had a newly diagnosed baby in the waiting room sitting next to one of the first cases Richard and I had done together who was attending for his final visit as an adult. The parents connected, and it was a very powerful moment."

Mater's multi-specialist craniofacial team, 1985.
Credit: Mater Heritage and Archives Centre



? How to refer

Dr Robert Campbell

✉ admin@bcnc.com.au

☎ (07) 3163 3600

➔ [Referral information](#)

? How to refer

Dr Richard Theile

✉ jodie.richardtheile@gmail.com

☎ (07) 3839 8827

➔ [Referral information](#)

Fighting flu on the frontline

General Practitioners are being urged to encourage patients to take advantage of Queensland's free flu vaccination program.

The Queensland Government last month announced it would extend its free vaccination program into 2025, with funding starting on March 1.

Mater Director of Infectious Diseases Professor Paul Griffin welcomed the decision, but expressed concern at declining rates of vaccination for flu, as well as COVID and whooping cough.

Last year just 32 per cent of Queenslanders received the free flu shot—the lowest figure since the program began.

"That record low was a surprise and a concern," Prof Griffin said.

"We need to increase the numbers—and the higher the better. That will mean fewer people getting sick, fewer people in hospital and fewer people dying from this infection."

Prof Griffin said the highest risk groups included pregnant women, children and the elderly, although the vaccine should ideally be offered to everyone over six months of age.

Prof Griffin said the launch of new vaccines and scheduling changes had created a more complex vaccination 'landscape' for the public and that GPs had a key role to play in explaining the importance of vaccinations to patients.

"Misinformation is an issue in some cases, but most people are not opposed to vaccinations. They may, however, be confused that the changes that have occurred in recent years."



Professor Paul Griffin

Prof Griffin highlighted the recent surge in whooping cough cases in Queensland as an example of the serious consequences of declining vaccination rates.

"We had 334 whooping cough cases in Queensland in the first few weeks of January, which is eight times more than at the start of 2024," Prof Griffin said.

"These are big numbers and demonstrate the urgency of the task we face in improving our vaccination rates across communities and across these diseases."

Prof Griffin urged health professionals to access the latest clinical advice on all vaccines at: immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au.

How to refer

Prof Paul Griffin

✉ admin@bcnc.com.au

☎ (07) 3163 3600

➔ [Referral information](#)

AIVC recommended egg-based influenza vaccines for 2025 for Australia:

- an A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Croatia/10136RV/2023 (H3N2)-like virus; and
- a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus.

NCIRS vaccination coverage data for 2024 reveals Queensland has some of the lowest rates.

Snapshot of the latest 2024 influenza vaccination coverage* data in Australia

All people

	ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	AUS
6 mo - < 5 yrs	47.7	24.5	29.8	22.1	26.9	22.0	29.4	32.6	25.8
5 - < 15 yrs	21.8	13.1	15.0	13.9	14.5	13.1	14.0	13.3	14.0
15 - < 50 yrs	30.5	19.1	23.0	18.7	23.3	17.1	22.7	21.0	20.4
50 - < 65 yrs	42.6	30.8	34.6	32.6	37.1	29.2	39.6	25.2	32.7
≥ 65 yrs	65.2	58.4	61.8	60.8	66.5	58.5	67.7	33.9	60.5

Mater leads state's first intellectual disability centre of excellence

Mater Research has opened a new statewide centre of excellence to improve the health and care of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Queensland Government has invested \$6 million over three years to support the establishment of the **Queensland Centre of Excellence in Intellectual and Developmental Disability Mental Health** at Mater's South Brisbane campus.

The centre will build on the leading work of the Queensland Centre of Excellence in Autism and Intellectual Disability Health (QCEAIDH) in breaking down barriers for people with intellectual disability and autistic people in accessing high quality, equitable health care.

Approximately 80,000 Queenslanders live with an intellectual or developmental disability.

QCEAIDH Director, Dr Cathy Franklin said the new centre provided clinical leadership in intellectual and developmental disability mental health through capacity building of hospital and healthcare practitioners as well as primary care providers and the broader mental health sector.

"Mater is working with key stakeholders and people living with an intellectual or developmental disability and their support people to co-design a model of service," Dr Franklin said.

"The centre will also enable us to further build on our research, allowing us to identify and evaluate innovative ways to improve health outcomes."

Dr Franklin said health professionals often lacked the training and experience in providing high quality healthcare to people with intellectual disability and autistic people.

"This new funding and the establishment of this centre will enhance Mater's ongoing work around training health professionals," she said.

The centre operates on a consultation liaison model and accepts referrals for patients with intellectual disability and autism who have complex clinical concerns such as challenging behaviour, changes in mental state, unexplained symptoms or signs suggesting underlying disease.

? How to refer

Queensland Centre of Excellence in Intellectual and Developmental Disability Mental Health

✉ midas@mater.org.au

☎ (07) 3163 2412

➔ [Referral information](#)



The Queensland Centre of Excellence in Intellectual and Development Disability Mental Health team.

Mater makes history with paediatric robotic surgery

Paediatric surgeon Dr Janani Krishnan with pint-sized patient Kruze Bott at Mater Private Hospital Townsville.

A pioneering surgical team has performed Queensland's first robotic-assisted paediatric operation.

Kruze Bott, 8, was discharged from Mater Private Hospital Townsville less than 24 hours after he underwent a robotic-assisted pyeloplasty on two ureteropelvic junction obstructions.

Without intervention, the obstructions carried a high risk of urinary tract infections and irreversible kidney damage.

The pyeloplasty was performed by paediatric surgeon and urologist Dr Janani Krishnan, who was accredited by Mater after extensive training in paediatric robotic surgery at the University of Chicago.

"While paediatric robotic surgeries are being performed in large numbers around the world, they have not been performed widely in Australia until now," Dr Krishnan said.

"This procedure is a game-changer for paediatric surgery in our state. Kruze has made a great recovery and will be the first of many young Queenslanders to benefit from robotic-assisted surgery."

The surgery on the Charters Towers boy is the first of its kind to be performed on the east coast of Australia and is part of a partnership between Mater and Townsville University Hospital to develop the region into a leading centre for robotic surgery.

TUH Director of Paediatrics Dr Harry Stalewski and Cairns Urologist Dr Stefan Antoniou supported the operation which was performed using Mater's \$3.3 million da Vinci XI surgical system.

Using highly magnified, 3D high-definition views of the surgical area, surgeons are able to perform complex procedures with improved accuracy and through small incisions.

Kruze's mother, Jade, said her son had suffered weeks of abdominal pain before an ultrasound revealed one of his kidneys was double the size of the other, and he was diagnosed with ureteropelvic junction obstructions.

"Kruze was originally expected to have open surgery, which would have left him with a foot-long scar and a long recovery period," Ms Bott said.

"After the robotic operation, Kruze was out of hospital the next day—and a couple of days later you couldn't even tell he'd had surgery at all."

Mater Private Hospital Townsville General Manager Stephanie Barwick said close collaboration between Mater and TUH was delivering world-class care for North Queensland patients.

"Townsville has specialists and technology to rival Australia's capital cities and we hope to bring more expertise and funding to North Queensland in the future," Ms Barwick said.

? How to refer

Dr Janani Krishnan

✉ info@drjankrishnan.com.au

☎ (07) 4427 5817

➔ [Referral information](#)

Brisbane's bayside to benefit from non-invasive *Liver* checks

Technology improving the ability to gauge the degree of fibrosis in the liver is being made accessible to Redland patients thanks to Gastroenterologist and Hepatologist, Professor Darrell Crawford.

The FibroScan test is a non-invasive procedure to assess the health of the liver by measuring its stiffness, which can indicate the presence of liver fibrosis or scarring. The results are immediate.

Professor Crawford said a majority of adverse liver-related issues like liver failure, liver cancer or decompensation of liver function occur almost exclusively in patients with advanced fibrosis and cirrhosis.

"Knowing the degree of fibrosis allows the identification of patients at risk of liver diseases, especially those with significant and advanced fibrosis," Professor Crawford said.

"A lot of people who have chronic liver disease don't know they have it. Identifying these patients using a procedure like FibroScan means GPs and specialists can develop management strategies.

"Simple lifestyle changes like diet, reducing alcohol intake and exercise, along with

medication management can stabilise fibrosis or even reverse some of the effects."

Patients more at risk of advanced fibrosis and who should have their liver evaluated include those with Type 2 Diabetes and patients who present abnormal liver blood tests in association with increased BMI or body weight.

The non-invasive procedure takes five to ten minutes and is performed in the specialist's consulting rooms at the Mater Health Centre Redland, with minimal preparation required of the patient.



How to refer

Prof Darrell Crawford, Queensland Gastroenterology Redland

 Mater Health Centre Redland
Suite 14, Level 1
16 Weipin Street,
Cleveland, QLD 4163

 (07) 3324 1500

 info@qgastro.com.au

 [Referral information](#)

New neurosurgery services for Redlands residents

Brisbane Clinical Neurosciences Centre (BCNC) has expanded its services to Redlands, allowing bayside residents to access low-risk neuro procedures locally.

Specialists Dr Brendan Davis and Dr Anthony Chau are delivering procedures like spinal decompressions, discectomies and peripheral nerve surgeries at Mater Private Hospital Redland.

"It is great to have a local facility cater for the local community, providing equipment and theatres that match our inner city hospitals," Dr Davis said.

Dr Chau said Redlands people with more complex conditions can consult with their specialist locally and receive treatment at Mater Private Hospital Brisbane, providing continuity of care for patients and their loved ones.

Both specialists consult weekly at their Ormiston clinic, and a dedicated 24/7 BCNC hotline provides patients with an on-call neurosurgeon to urgent concerns.



How to refer

Dr Anthony Chau & Dr Brendan Davis

 Brisbane Clinical Neuroscience Centre-Ormiston
Hub 68-Redland Specialist Suites
Suite 1, 58-68 Delancey Street
Ormiston, 4160 QLD

 (07) 3163 3600

 (07) 3163 3601

 admin@bcnc.com.au

 [Referral information for Dr Anthony Chau](#)

 [Referral information for Dr Brendan Davis](#)



Cortisol is the key to joint ossification in spinal cord injuries

Right Dr Kylie Alexander

Below Mater Research Principal Research Fellow
Professor Jean-Pierre Levesque



Queensland researchers have solved the century-old mystery of why patients who suffer severe spinal cord and brain injuries develop debilitating bone growths around joints such as hips and shoulders.

Neurogenic heterotopic ossification (NHO) affects around 20 per cent of

patients with spinal cord injuries and was first fully documented during WWI when x-rays revealed masses of bones growing around the joints of soldiers who had survived traumatic spinal and brain injuries on the battlefield.

Now scientists at Mater Research and The University of Queensland have discovered why the condition occurs and identified existing drugs which can prevent it.

Prof Jean-Pierre Levesque said the stress hormone cortisol—which spikes following brain and spinal injuries—was the trigger for NHO.

"We found that a cortisol spike happens at the same time that a muscle injury occurs and the body's normal repair program is derailed," he said. "Instead of repairing the muscle tissue the body grows bone."

"The good news is that drugs which block cortisol receptors have been around for

decades and can effectively prevent ossification if administered soon after spinal and brain injuries occur."

Dr Kylie Alexander said most patients with the condition in Australia have typically been in a car or motorcycle crash, or sport and workplace accident.

"Long and delicate surgeries to cut away the bone growth is the only available treatment and sometimes the condition recurs after surgery," she said.

The research team hopes to initiate clinical trials of a treatment for NHO in the next three years, involving spinal cord units at hospitals in Australia, the US and Europe.

The study [Glucocorticoid spike derails muscle repair to heterotopic ossification after spinal cord injury](#) was published in *Cell Reports Medicine* in December 2024.

Orthopaedic spine surgeon joins Mater

Orthopaedic spine surgeon Dr Adam Parr has joined Mater Private Hospital Brisbane, bringing extensive expertise in treating scoliosis and other complex deformities in children and adults.

Dr Parr completed a spinal fellowship under the guidance of Dr Geoff Askin and is now taking referrals at Mater.

? How to refer

Dr Adam Parr

✉ admin@gabbaspineortho.com.au

☎ (07) 3397 9983

➔ [Referral information](#)



First Springfield *babies* expected soon

Mater expects the first babies will be born at the new public hospital at Springfield from March 2026 with construction of the nine-storey facility on track for a phased opening from early next year.

Mater Hospital Springfield, located alongside Mater Private Hospital Springfield, will also deliver an Intensive Care Unit from April 2026 followed by an Emergency Department and paediatric unit from May 2026.

Mater Hospital Springfield General Manager Suzanne Hawksley said the staged opening enabled lower complexity departments to begin operations first.

"We will build up to critical care areas to enable staff and specialists to adjust to systems and workflows incrementally, and ensure every patient receives the compassionate care that Mater is known for," Ms Hawksley said.

"We will be working closely with our local GPs so our medical community and patients are aware as services are brought online."

Mater has opened Expressions of Interest for a range of health practitioners seeking to work at the new hospital. Find more information on the careers page at mater.org.au.

Mater's Springfield hospitals are complemented by additional allied health, women's health and specialist consulting suites at the nearby education, health and wellbeing centre Mater Health Hub, Springfield.

Theatre capacity increases in Bundaberg

A contemporary perioperative suite has opened at Mater Private Hospital Bundaberg, increasing the theatre capacity and improving patient experience.

Mater Private Hospital Bundaberg General Manager Catherine Hackney led Member for Burnett Stephen Bennett on a tour of the renovated suites.

She said they increased the hospital's ability to accommodate more arthroplasty and joint replacement procedures as well as major orthopaedic surgeries.

"We perform more than 3,500 procedures annually and these numbers are growing," she said.

"This renovation ensures that Mater Private Hospital Bundaberg continues to meet the healthcare needs of our community.

"Our new theatres will allow two orthopaedic surgeons to operate concurrently and provide improved flow for both our patients and clinicians."



Burnett MP Stephen Bennett joined Mater Private Hospital Bundaberg General Manager Catherine Hackney at the newly renovated perioperative suites.



Endometriosis in the spotlight this March

Mater Private Hospital Mackay
specialist Dr Naguesh Gaunekar



Ultrasounds conducted by trained practitioners should be introduced for women with symptoms of endometriosis to reduce diagnoses times.

Mater Private Hospital Mackay Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Dr Naguesh Gaunekar said the average length of time for an endometriosis diagnosis is currently six and a half years.

"Women are used to a level of pain as part of their normal menstruation cycles," Dr Gaunekar said. "So, endometriosis often goes undiagnosed for some time.

"And subtle signs often go unnoticed in ultrasounds. We're seeing what look to be normal ovaries and a normal uterus, but it requires a further level of dynamic testing by an individual who is trained to look for those subtle signs."

Dr Gaunekar said laparoscopy remained the gold standard for diagnosing endometriosis but was not appropriate for every woman with symptoms.

"We need to look at it in an individualised and targeted manner—what are the symptoms and how much is it affecting quality of life," he said.

"While endometriosis is a benign condition, we need to recognise that it can emerge anytime between puberty and menopause—the entire reproductive lifespan of a woman.

"It robs women of their potential in many cases but it's only much later—after symptoms have been properly diagnosed—that we understand how school work may have been impacted in their teenager years, as well as their sex life, their fertility and more."

Dr Gaunekar said standard teaching advocated pregnancy as a cure for endometriosis because of the absence of ovulation.

"But, on the flip side, it's harder for women to become pregnant when they have endometriosis," he said.

"And while pregnancy and breast-feeding provide women with a long holiday from endometriosis, data reveals that the condition returns in 30 per cent of women."

The Australian Disease Expenditure Study found an estimated \$247 million was spent on endometriosis in the Australian health system in the 2020–2021 financial year.

"But the cost of the disease is not just financial, it also affects people's ability to work or do the activities they enjoy, leading to the total estimated economic burden of endometriosis in Australia to be \$9.7 billion," Dr Gaunekar said.

? How to refer

Dr Naguesh Gaunekar

 (07) 4942 1199

 admin@nggynehealth.com.au

 [Referral information](#)

New clinic for post-pregnancy health and wellbeing

A new post-pregnancy clinic has opened at Mater Mothers' hospitals in South Brisbane to assist women to manage their long-term health and wellbeing after the birth of a child.

Called the 4HER Clinic, the centre screens women for heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and other conditions that can emerge during pregnancy when the body is under stress.

Mater Mothers' hospitals General Manager Kerri Gane said the clinic also focused on prevention and education.

"This is an Australian-first program, and it's based on a successful Canadian model called The MoHERS program," Ms Gane said.

Integrated with Mater Research, an internationally-recognised medical research institute, the centre provides evidence-based health and wellbeing programs across nutrition, physical exercise and more.



Mater Hospital Brisbane wins gold for stroke care

Mater Hospital Brisbane's Centre for Neurosciences has achieved Gold Status in the prestigious World Stroke Organisation Angels Awards for delivering exceptional stroke care.

It is first time Mater has received the distinguished recognition, which has only been awarded to six other Australian hospitals.

The hospital was assessed over the last quarter of 2024, during which time the Mater Stroke Service successfully managed an unprecedented volume of time-critical cases, such as acute thrombolysis and endovascular clot retrieval, which required specialist intervention within 60 minutes.

The service also performed highly in its rates of swallow screening, CT and MRI imaging and prescription of antithrombotics at discharge.

Mater Hospital Brisbane's Clinical Director of Neurology Dr Andrew Swayne said the award was a significant achievement for the team and highlighted the close collaboration between multiple departments and teams within the hospital.

"It's a wonderful recognition of the high-quality, rapid and comprehensive treatment of our patients," Dr Swayne said.



How to refer

Dr Andrew Swayne

 MCFNadmin@mater.org.au

 (07) 3010 5700

 [Referral information](#)



First patient trial begins for seek-and-destroy *cancer therapy*



Mater Research Professor John Hooper.

The first patient trial of a new tracing agent that can pinpoint cancer cells is underway, led by Mater Research and The University of Queensland.

Around 45 ovarian and bladder cancer patients will participate in the trial of the cancer-seeking agent, which has been developed over the past 24 years by Professor John Hooper.

Professor Hooper's team is concurrently adapting the agent to carry a radioactive isotope that will enable it to both seek and destroy cancer cells.

Professor Hooper said the research promised to deliver a 'game-changing' therapy for ovarian and bladder cancer, as well as many other cancer types.

"We're hopeful that our first human trial will provide doctors with exceptionally accurate imaging of metastasising cancer," Prof Hooper said.

"With both ovarian and bladder cancer it is difficult to determine where the cancer has spread, so this imaging will be hugely beneficial for the treatment of the disease.

"But our ultimate goal is a theranostic treatment for cancer—a treatment that is simultaneously diagnostic and therapeutic.

"We're already working towards a second patient trial in 2026 in which this agent will be used to seek and kill cancerous cells with highly-targeted radiotherapy.

"If successful, we believe this will become the gold standard treatment for a wide range of metastatic ovary, bladder, pancreas, breast and lung cancers."

The agent being used in the trial is an anti-body that binds to CD133—a protein that occurs in the malignant cells in a number of common cancers, including ovarian and bladder cancer.

For cancer tracing, the agent is attached to a low-radiation chemical. Once the agent locks on to cancer cells, PET/CT scanning detects the radioactive substance in the body.

In the second trial, Prof Hooper's team will add a more powerful radioactive 'payload' to the agent, Lutetium 177, which will latch on to and then destroy cancer cells.

The research is being funded by the National Health and Medical Research

Council, the Medical Research Future Fund and Mater Foundation.

The agent will be tested by the nuclear medicine department at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

Ovarian cancer claims the lives of around 1,000 Australian women each year.

It is the deadliest gynaecological cancer, with a five-year survival rate of just 49 per cent.

Mater is the leading centre for ovarian cancer in Queensland, treating almost half of all women who are diagnosed with the disease in the state each year.

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

Karen Wade | General Manager
karen.wade@mater.org.au



Mater Private Hospital Rockhampton
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

Tracey Hutley | Acting General Manager
tracey.hutley@mater.org.au



Mater Private Hospital Springfield

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



Mater Hospital Brisbane

Luke Worth | General Manager
luke.worth@mater.org.au



Mater Private Hospital Redland

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

Get social with us

@MaterQLD
 @MaterQLD

@MaterQLD
 @Mater

@MaterTV