

primary focus



Queensland's
newest hospital
officially opens

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Sri Lankan mission to restore sight



A learning community by clinicians for clinicians

In this episode, cardiologist and interventional specialist Dr Nick Aroney discusses how modern cardiac care has evolved—from rapid, minimally invasive coronary interventions to advanced valve therapies that have patients moving the next day. He highlights the pivotal role of GPs in early detection and timely referral, the value of CT calcium scoring, and the emerging technologies set to reshape heart care.

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

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Growing with *purpose*

Across Queensland, Mater continues to grow and evolve in an economic environment that remains challenging for both for-purpose and private hospitals. Our mission to deliver high-quality, accessible care remains at the heart of all we do.

Over the past year, we have taken important steps to strengthen that mission. Mater's acquisition of Gold Coast Private Hospital will expand Mater's services to support one of Australia's fastest-growing regions, creating new opportunities for clinical collaboration and improving access to specialist care.

In Brisbane's western corridor, Mater Hospital Springfield has commenced its phased opening, with the Emergency Department and paediatric ward to follow on 25 May—strengthening our partnership with the Queensland Government to deliver a contemporary, integrated health service for this rapidly growing community.

Our regional network is also evolving, with new maternity services and an expanded renal unit now open at Mater Private Hospital Townsville, ensuring North Queensland families can access the care they need close to home.

These developments reflect our ongoing commitment to addressing unmet healthcare needs—made possible by the dedication of Mater People and the trust of our community.

That spirit of community was powerfully demonstrated at the Nine Telethon supporting Mater Little Miracles on 18 April, when \$12.4 million was raised for our nation-leading Neonatal Critical Care Unit. This generosity ensures we can continue delivering world-class care to Queensland's tiniest and most vulnerable patients.

Thank you for your continued partnership.



Julia Strickland-Bellamy

Mater *expands* to Gold Coast

Mater has acquired Gold Coast Private Hospital from Healthscope in a significant move that expands healthcare services for people living in the Gold Coast region.

The purchase of Gold Coast Private Hospital ensures the continuation of high-quality private healthcare services and provides long-term security for the hospital's 1,400 employees.

"Gold Coast Private Hospital's many clinical and surgical specialities—including maternity and obstetrics, cardiac surgery, intensive care and emergency services—align closely with services delivered at Mater hospitals," said Mater Board Chair Patrick Brady.

"Importantly, adding Gold Coast Private Hospital to the Mater group guarantees the future of private maternity services at the Southport hospital, at a time when many private maternity services were facing sustainability challenges."

Mater Mothers' is Australia's largest maternity services provider with more than 11,000 births every year. The acquisition of Gold Coast Private Hospital will provide

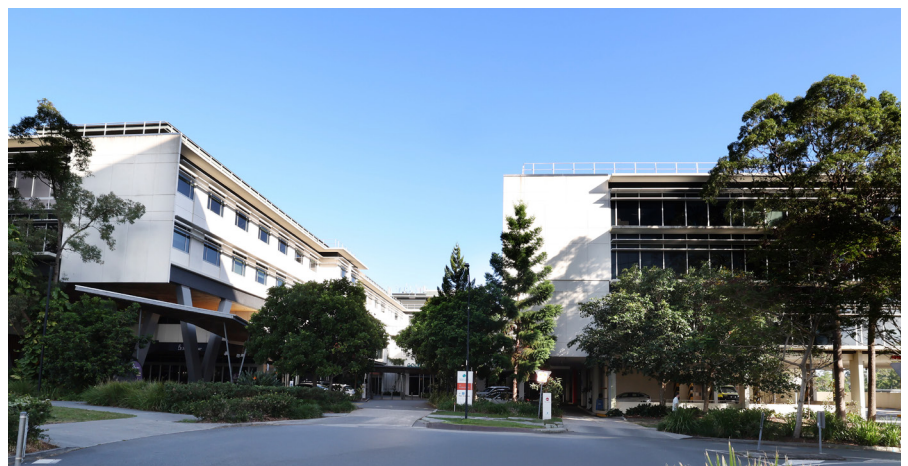
Gold Coast clinicians and families with access to Mater's globally recognised maternity and neonatal expertise.

Mater is working in partnership with Healthscope to ensure a smooth transfer of Gold Coast Private Hospital and its workforce, a process which is expected to be finalised mid-2026.

In the meantime, the hospital remains under Healthscope ownership, and all hospital operations continue as normal.

Mater Group Chief Executive Julia Strickland-Bellamy said the expansion to the Gold Coast would provide GPs with a referral network to specialists across South-East Queensland in Brisbane, Springfield, Redland and Southport.

"We are looking forward to engaging with GPs across the region in the coming weeks and months to ensure referral pathways are seamless and patients continue to receive safe, timely and expert care," Ms Strickland-Bellamy said.



Mater Private Hospital Gold Coast

Upcoming GP Education events



Orthopaedics with Dr David Wheatley

Rockhampton

Date: Saturday 30 May
Time: 9am–11am (brunch)
Venue: Salt Yeppoon, 32–34 Anzac Parade, Yeppoon
CPD: Self-record via RACGP App



Orthopaedics with Dr Levi Morse

Townsville

Date: 10 June 2026
Time: 6:30pm
Venue: Levanti Restaurant, Palmer Street Townsville
CPD: Self-record via RACGP App



General Surgery Masterclass

Rockhampton

Date: Tuesday 28 July
Time: 6pm
Venue: CocoBrew Rockhampton, 114 William St, Rockhampton
CPD: Self-record via RACGP App



Haematology and Oncology Services for General Practice

Redland

Date: Wednesday 17 June
Venue: Farmhouse Restaurant, 2/623 Main Rd, Wellington Point
CPD: Self-record via RACGP App



Urology Masterclass

Brisbane

Save the date: Wednesday 17 June



GP Maternity Shared Care Alignment—Seminar 3

For GPs wishing to provide shared maternity care with Mater Mothers' Hospital and have completed Seminar 1. This program focuses on perinatal mental health and medical and obstetric complications in pregnancy.

Brisbane

Date: Saturday 20 June
Time: 8am–1pm
Venue: Corbett Room, Level 1, Whitty Building, Annerley Road, South Brisbane



CQ GP Conference

Rockhampton

Date: Saturday 22 August–Sunday 23 August
Venue: Rockhampton Leagues Club, Cambridge Street, Rockhampton

GP Pulse

Keeping track of resources for GP specialists

Mater launched an innovative service in recent years, connecting Queensland GP Specialists with specialist colleagues—and it's one worth knowing about.

After more than 20 years as a GP specialist, I often joke that I'd be rich if I had a dollar for every piece of correspondence that lands in my inbox. Between emails, newsletters, journals, social media updates and the steady stream of evolving guidelines, new medications, CPD requirements, results and referrals, it's no surprise that genuinely useful clinical services can be easy to miss.

Working in North Brisbane—and previously in Mackay—I've often found it challenging to stay across services outside my immediate region. That's one reason I've valued co-hosting the sMater podcast—it has broadened my understanding of Mater Health services available to patients across Queensland.

One standout is the [Mater Queensland eConsultant](#) service. This Request for Advice (RFA) platform allows GP specialists to seek input from a range of disciplines including cardiology, dermatology, endocrinology, haematology, nephrology, neurology, obstetric medicine, and respiratory and sleep medicine. Responses typically arrive within three business days, and the service is available statewide.

My colleagues and I have found it highly practical, timely and clinically valuable.

Importantly, the eConsultant service was designed, piloted and implemented by a collaborative group of GP and non-GP specialists, including Mater researchers Dr Caroline Nicholson, Professor Claire Jackson and Emeritus Professor David McIntyre.

It's a reminder that, amid the constant information overload, occasionally something truly useful appears—and is worth sharing!



Dr Maria Boulton

Mater Specialists

Meet our new *specialists*

 South Brisbane



**Dr Myo Thidar
(Mona) Lwin**
Cardiology

07 3016 1111



Dr Maggie He
Interventional
Cardiology

07 3016 1111



Dr Stephen Torbey
Orthopaedic Surgery:
Foot and Ankle

07 3010 5773



**Dr Margaret-Louise
Scanlon**
Gynaecologist

07 3844 9932

 Redland



Dr Ali Kalhor
Orthopaedic Surgery

07 3010 5760

 Springfield



Dr Chris Oosthuizen
Ear, Nose & Throat Surgery

07 3202 4636



Dr Sam Davies
Urology

07 3255 0311



Dr Imran Butt
Endocrinology,
General Medicine

07 3050 4907

 Mackay



Dr Guy Hingston
General Surgery

07 4843 3322



Dr Kurinji Kannan
Urogynaecology

07 4771 6677

 Rockhampton



Dr Cameron Cooke
Orthopaedic Surgery:
Lower Limb

1300 236 348

 Townsville



Dr Nathaniel Chandra
Rehabilitation Medicine

07 4727 4659



Dr Paul Tuckett
Orthopaedic Surgeon

07 4410 9528



Dr Prasanth Nair
Cardiothoracic Surgeon

07 4725 2833

 mater | uncancer.

BNE to GC | Cycle for Cancer



Registrations
now open!



From Brisbane's South Bank to the Gold Coast waterfront, a 100km cycle challenge supporting cancer research and care at Mater.

Sunday 23 August 2026

 mater
foundation

**It's hard to
leave your life
behind to fight for it.
It's not hard to help.**

Your tax-deductible gift by 30 June can help fund supportive care so people like Louise aren't left to navigate the hardest moments of cancer alone.

Learn more and donate



Robotic telesurgery— the *future* of urological care

Urologist, Dr Sam Davies

The patient was in Gibraltar. The surgeon was in London. The outcome was a seamless, state-of-the-art prostatectomy for a 62-year-old man with prostate cancer—delivered entirely through remote robotic surgery.

On 4 March at St Bernard's Hospital in Gibraltar, a state-of-the-art robot fitted with a 3D camera was set up to operate on patient Paul Buxton. But the surgeon guiding it wasn't in the room.

Instead, world-leading urologist Professor Prokar Dasgupta was operating from 2,400 kilometres away, supported by a secure, high-performance network including a dedicated fibre-optic link with 5G backup and an extraordinary 0.06-second time lag—effectively enabling real-time surgery across continents.

Mater Urologist Dr Sam Davies—who had recently completed a robotic surgery fellowship under Professor Dasgupta—was in the Gibraltar operating theatre ready to provide expert support, ensure patient safety, and take over the operation immediately if required. Though the connection held flawlessly, and the procedure was able to progress as planned.

The option to have a prostatectomy via telesurgery meant Mr Buxton was able to avoid the expense and inconvenience of international travel, lengthy public hospital waits, and weeks away from his family. He was feeling "fantastic" within days, and proud to be part of medical history with this UK-first procedure.

The success of the case led to a second remote prostatectomy, this time performed live in front of 20,000 surgeons at the European Association of Urology congress,

demonstrating how robotic surgery can safely extend specialist expertise across borders.

Dr Davies said robotic surgery has already reshaped the management of prostate, kidney, and bladder disease by providing greater precision, reduced trauma, and earlier patient discharges.

"We are seeing better erectile function outcomes and better continence outcomes for patients who have undergone robotic procedures," he said.

Looking to the future, Dr Davies expects to see a significant shift towards remote robotic surgery for the treatment of urological conditions, using telesurgery and teleproctoring to share expertise and improve access for patients in regional and remote areas of Australia.

? How to refer

Dr Sam Davies

 Referrals via Medical Objects

 (07) 3255 0311

 reception@uomed.com.au

Save the date—Urology Masterclass

Wednesday 17 June

Join Dr Sam Davies together with leading Mater specialists for a Urology GP Education evening.

For enquiries or further information, please contact:

A *new era* in blood cancer care: Mater launches private stem cell transplant service

Allogeneic stem cell transplantation—one of the most complex and potentially curative treatments for high-risk blood cancers—has traditionally been confined to the public system.

Mater Private Hospital Brisbane is reshaping that model, becoming only the second private hospital in Australia to offer this life-saving therapy.

Mater’s new Cellular Therapy Program represents a major expansion in private cancer care, giving eligible patients access to advanced treatments that harness the immune system to target and eliminate malignant cells.

Mater Haematology specialist Associate Professor James Morton says cellular therapies are rapidly transforming modern oncology.

“Allogeneic transplantation is the most established form of cellular therapy. By replacing a patient’s immune system with that of a donor, we can trigger a powerful

response that seeks out and destroys leukaemia cells,” said A/Prof Morton.

Through a close partnership with Icon Cancer Care South Brisbane, Mater now delivers fully integrated haematology care supported by a specialist team experienced in both autologous (self-donor) and allogeneic (donor) stem cell transplantation.

This expanded capability not only improves access for privately insured patients but also helps ease pressure on public waiting lists—allowing suitable patients to proceed to transplant sooner, when timing can be critical.

Meet *Ivor*

Seventy-year-old Ivor Timmins became the first patient to undergo an allogeneic transplant at Mater Private Hospital Brisbane in February.

Initially presenting with minor blood abnormalities in 2014, Ivor was later diagnosed with Chronic Myelomonocytic Leukaemia (CMML), a rare myeloid cancer. His condition was monitored for more than a decade before transforming towards Acute Myeloid Leukaemia—a significant

escalation that often requires urgent intervention. Once stabilised with treatment, A/Prof Morton and the team were able to move Ivor quickly to transplant.

“I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to undergo the transplant privately,” Mr Timmins says. “My brother was a perfect donor match, and the care at Mater has been exceptional—professional, compassionate, and with staff who are genuinely invested in my progress and recovery.”

Refer to Mater for comprehensive care

Mater offers the most comprehensive blood cancer service in Queensland. Privately insured patients benefit from:

- Seamless continuity of care
- A single, integrated treatment team
- Consistent nursing support throughout the entire cancer journey



Transplant patient Ivor Timmins with A/Prof James Morton

Governor *opens* Mater Hospital Springfield

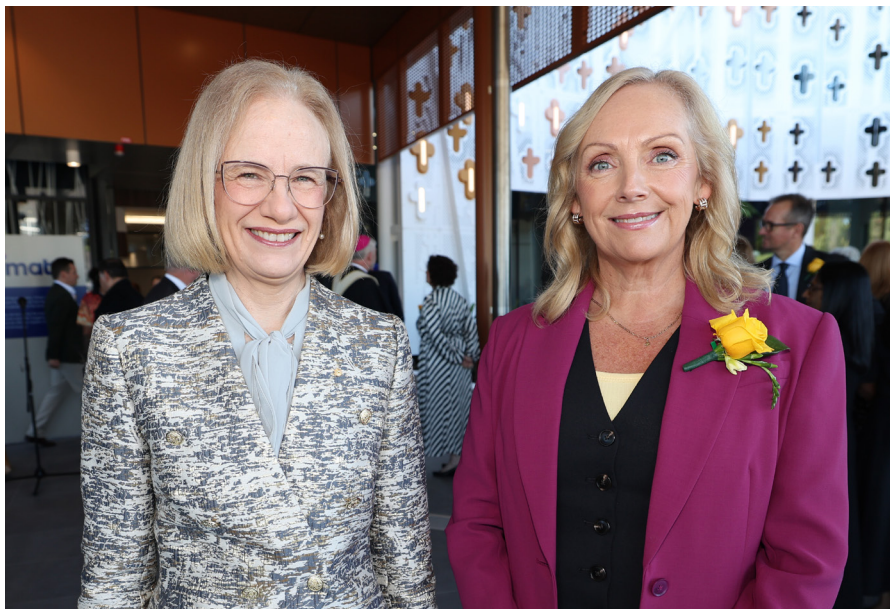
The Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM has officially opened the state's newest hospital at Springfield.

Premier David Crisafulli and Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Tim Nicholls also attended the opening ceremony for Mater Hospital Springfield amongst more than 60 business, community and healthcare leaders.

Mater Board Chair Patrick Brady said the opening of the new 186-bed hospital was the result of a landmark agreement between Mater and the Queensland Government to improve access to healthcare services for people living in the rapidly growing Greater Springfield region.

"Maternity, emergency, paediatric and other critical healthcare services are being offered locally to the Springfield community for the first time," Mr Brady said.

"The official opening of Mater Hospital Springfield marks a major milestone for Mater, which has a 120-year legacy of delivering healthcare services to Queenslanders, and for the Greater Springfield community."



Governor of Queensland Hon Dr Jeannette Young with Mater Group Chief Executive Julia Strickland-Bellamy



David Crisafulli MP and Tim Nicholls MP celebrate with Mater staff

Mater Hospital Springfield at a glance



186
public beds



54
private beds



10
theatres



9
ICU beds



54
Emergency
Department bays



16
maternity
inpatient beds



Mums-to-be Sarah Teng and Caitlyn Warren with Minister Tim Nicholls and Group Chief Executive Julia Strickland-Bellamy.

Specialists put through paces before opening

New teams at Mater Hospital Springfield have been using simulation training to prepare for the delivery of healthcare services in one of Australia's fastest growing cities.

Health and Ambulance Services Minister Tim Nicholls visited new staff at the new hospital last month as they participated in maternity training exercises, with Mater Mothers' Springfield set to welcome its first baby in late April.

"An estimated 1,700 babies a year will be delivered at Mater Hospital Springfield," Mr Nicholls said.

"As well as providing high-quality maternity services, Mater will deliver, in partnership with the Queensland Government, the healthcare services this growing region needs."

Mater Group Chief Executive Julia Strickland-Bellamy said Mater was a for-purpose hospital and healthcare provider, driven to address unmet healthcare needs in the community.

"The new hospital complements the healthcare services that Mater Private Hospital Springfield has been delivering in the region for the past decade," she said.

"New services like Mater Mothers' Springfield, an Emergency Department and a paediatric unit will enhance access to a comprehensive range of services and care for all people living in the Greater Springfield region."

First procedures *completed* in Springfield's new theatres

It was a photo finish on the first day of operating theatres opening at Mater Hospital Springfield, as Gastroenterologist Dr Sylvia Vigh and Gynaecologist Dr Ivana Rizzuto completed their first procedures simultaneously.

Six new theatres—four general, one obstetric and one emergency—are included in the new hospital, adding to the existing four theatres at the adjoining Mater Private Hospital Springfield.

Chair of the Springfield Medical Advisory Committee, Dr Vigh said the additional

theatres would also include advanced technology to support all patients in the western corridor.

"Once fully operational, Mater's private and public specialists will have access to 10 operating theatres all co-located across the one level of the hospital," Dr Vigh said.

"Our clinical team has been preparing for this day for a long time, and it was fantastic to get in there today and to see everything run according to plan.

Mater Hospital Springfield General Manager Suzanne Hawksley said the adjoining private theatres would undergo refurbishment as the new theatres were brought online.

"A key stage of our planning for the new hospital's opening was ensuring we were able to upgrade services within Mater Private Hospital Springfield—so we are now upgrading technology and equipment to ensure all ten theatres are fit-for-purpose for clinicians," Ms Hawksley said.

"We are expecting all theatres to be online by the end of August, allowing for expanded lists to be completed locally and more theatre access for our Springfield specialists."

Tiny puffs make a *big impact* in care for fragile newborns

Critically ill and premature babies at Mater Mothers' Neonatal Critical Care Unit (NCCU) are now benefiting from state-of-the-art jet ventilators—highly specialised technology used in only four neonatal services nationwide.

Delivering rapid, tiny puffs of air, the ventilators reach the most fragile areas of a newborn's lungs, helping to remove trapped air and secretions while encouraging the baby's own breathing efforts.

Each ventilator, with supporting equipment and specialised training, costs in excess of \$150,000 and has been funded with community donations to Nine Telethon supporting Mater Little Miracles.



Baby Arlo

This year, the community raised a total of \$12.3 million for the Nine Telethon, ensuring the continuation of advanced, specialist care for more than 1,700 premature and critically ill babies admitted to Mater Mothers' Neonatal Critical Care Unit (NCCU) each year.

Little Arlo, born at 24 weeks and weighing 655g, was one of the first Queensland babies to receive jet ventilation. This world-class ventilation technology has already made a difference for Arlo and is expected to become an essential tool in neonatal care at Mater.

Donations to the Nine Telethon supporting Mater Little Miracles are invested in improving care for babies across Mater Mothers' hospitals in Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Brisbane and Springfield.



Director of Neonatology Dr Pita Birch with baby Arlo

Mater clinic sets benchmark in *perinatal* care

A specialist service helping Queensland's smallest and most vulnerable babies to survive is now expanding to more hospitals after achieving remarkable results at Mater Mothers' Hospital.

Mater's Fetal Growth Clinic, established in 2021, provides intensive monitoring for the lowest 10 per cent of fetal growth-restricted babies—a group at significantly increased risk of stillbirth and long term complications. Nationally, stillbirth rates for these babies sit at 12.4 per cent. At Mater, the rate is just 0.56 per cent—more than 22 times lower.

The model is now being adopted at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and Logan Hospital.

For first time parents Margaux Charbonniere and Chris Walsh, the clinic proved lifesaving.

Referred at 20 weeks when their baby measured in the first percentile for growth, Margaux underwent close surveillance for severe growth restriction and later developed a rare placental clot known as a Breus' mole. Daily monitoring detected early placental failure, prompting an emergency caesarean.

Baby Oscar was born weighing just 711 grams. After 71 days in Mater's Neonatal Critical Care Unit, he went home thriving at more than 8kg and will celebrate his first birthday this month.

"We can't thank the Fetal Growth Clinic and NCCU teams enough," Ms Charbonniere said. "Oscar has hit all his developmental milestones and is always talking and smiling."

Supported by the Nine Telethon and Mater Little Miracles, the clinic monitors around 300 women each year, combining expert sonography, maternal health assessment and carefully timed delivery planning.

As Professor Sailesh Kumar, Mater's Maternal Fetal Medicine Senior Specialist notes, "Each extra day in utero helps growth-restricted babies grow stronger and reduces complications after birth."



Baby Oscar

Service Expansion

Dedicated precinct *transforms* private cardiac care

Mater's cardiac care team

Mater Private Hospital Brisbane has significantly expanded its cardiology services following major investment in new infrastructure, advanced imaging, and contemporary models of care.

Co-designed with clinicians, the redevelopment enhances the standard of private cardiac care and delivers a more streamlined experience for patients and referring GPs.

Mater's new cardiac precinct on Level 7 brings together an integrated suite of interventional, diagnostic, and acute cardiac services within a purpose-built environment.

Two new Siemens bi-plane and single-plane catheterisation laboratories sit adjacent to the 10-bed Coronary Care Unit, enabling rapid access for time-critical procedures. The precinct also features PIC 4 telemetry, which provides wireless, campus-wide cardiac monitoring and allows clinicians to detect deterioration early and tailor care in real time, strengthening patient safety and improving patient outcomes.

Cardiac services delivered *onsite*

Core procedures include:

- Coronary angiography and percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI)
- Structural heart interventions (ASD/PFO closure)
- Electrophysiology studies and ablation
- Pacemaker and ICD implantation
- Peripheral vascular interventions
- Cerebral angiograms

Now delivering Electrophysiology

Mater welcomes Dr Robert Perel, Electrophysiologist, who provides comprehensive assessment and management of heart rhythm disorders including palpitations, dizziness, syncope, atrial fibrillation, cardiomyopathies and inherited rhythm conditions.

Services include:

- Catheter ablation for atrial fibrillation, supraventricular tachycardia, atrial flutter, and ventricular ectopy
- Pacemaker, ICD and CRT implantation, and ongoing device management

Dr Perel offers **Pulsed Field Ablation (PFA)** for atrial fibrillation—an innovative, non-thermal technique that uses precise electrical pulses to target abnormal tissue while preserving surrounding structures. PFA offers a safer and faster procedure that is typically completed in less than two hours, with most patients discharged the same day.

When to refer:

Refer public or private patients with suspected arrhythmia, unexplained palpitations or syncope, or abnormal wearable device tracings. Encouraging patients to use ECG-enabled smartwatches can assist in capturing symptomatic episodes and support timely diagnosis.

? How to refer

- Dr Robert Perel**
- ☎ (07) 3016 1111
 - ☎ (07) 3831 2853
 - ✉ bookings@qcg.com.au

Mater *expands* healthcare training to Wide Bay

Mater Education will expand healthcare training in the Wide Bay region with the opening of a new education hub at Mater Private Hospital Bundaberg in June.

The purpose-built facility will give clinicians and students access to high-quality training close to home, helping to grow the region's healthcare workforce and improving professional development options for local GPs.

The hub includes modern simulation training bays where students and clinicians can practise real-world scenarios in a safe, clinical environment. It will also offer CPR training for GPs, allowing specialists to complete mandatory training without the need to travel. Flexible, tailored training options will be available for individual practices and organisations.

"Healthcare is one of the region's fastest-growing industries, and Mater is continually looking for ways to support Bundaberg's healthcare workforce needs," Mater Education Executive Director Sean Hunter said.



Mater Education offers CPR training for GPs

Other courses to be delivered include Mater Mothers' First Aid for Babies, designed to help new parents, carers and grandparents respond to common infant emergencies.

The first course being offered is the Certificate III in Health Services Assistance, preparing graduates for roles as Assistants in Nursing across hospitals, aged care and community health services.

For further information contact:

Peta Sullivan

(07) 3163 4372

CPD@mater.org.au

Specialist urogynaecology care in *Mackay*

Women in the Mackay region now have improved access to specialist care for pelvic floor disorders, with urogynaecologist Dr Kurinji Kannan recommencing regular consulting and surgical services at Mater Private Hospital Mackay.



Dr Kannan, who has long served women across both public and private sectors, says the need in regional Queensland is significant.

"Pelvic organ prolapse and urinary incontinence affects up to one in three women, particularly after childbirth. These conditions can have a profound impact on daily life, yet access to subspecialty care outside major centres is often limited," she said.

Urogynaecological conditions are often complex, and a highly specialised skillset may be required to provide overlapping urology and colorectal care.

Dr Kannan brings advanced diagnostic and surgical expertise, saving women a trip to Townsville or Brisbane for comprehensive assessment and treatment.

Dr Kannan believes urogynaecological care is best delivered through a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach, with GPs, physiotherapists and specialist nurses playing central roles.

"When surgery is required, collaboration with urology and colorectal specialists is essential, and this model—which we have used successfully in Townsville—will be applied in Mackay to ensure seamless, continuous care," Dr Kannan said.

How to refer

Dr Kurinji Kannan

Referrals via Healthlink EDI

(07) 4771 6677

(07) 4771 6699

admin@urogynaecclinic.com.au

Gut microbiome *link* to bowel cancer

Mater researchers have launched a new study investigating whether changes in the gut microbiome are contributing to the alarming rise in bowel cancer among younger Australians.

Once a little-known concept, the gut microbiome is now recognised as one of the most influential systems in the body, shaping gastrointestinal, neurological, metabolic and immune-related health. Research increasingly shows that diet and microbial composition play a critical role in disease development—including cancer.

Mater Research's Associate Professor Jakob Begun said that while national screening programs have helped reduce bowel cancer rates in people over 50, the number of younger adults being diagnosed continues to climb.

"Bowel cancer rates are two to three times higher among Australians born in the nineties compared to those born in the fifties," he said.

His new study examines how environmental and dietary factors may be altering the microbiome in ways that promote tumour development.

"Genetics haven't changed significantly in recent decades, so we're looking at environmental exposures—particularly the effect of diet," A/Prof Begun said.

"Ultra-processed foods, high meat consumption, low fibre intake and antibiotic use are all likely influencing the microbiome in ways that increase cancer risk."

The year-long Mater-funded study will involve around 20 volunteers and includes laboratory testing of how common food additives—such as artificial sweeteners and emulsifiers—affect gut bacteria and trigger inflammation, a known precursor to cancer.

"We're treating microbiome samples from healthy people with additives to see if they become more inflammatory. The next step is testing in preclinical models to see if these additives accelerate colorectal cancer progression."

For 39-year-old schoolteacher Aimee Geeves, the research offers hope for better prevention and earlier detection. Ms Geeves was diagnosed with bowel cancer in late 2024 despite having no symptoms or family history.

"I was feeling completely fine right up until the week I went to the emergency department with strong stomach pains and blood in my stool," she said.

A colonoscopy revealed a 5-centimetre tumour in the lower bowel.

She underwent chemotherapy at Mater Private Hospital Springfield, followed by surgery in mid-2025, and her ileostomy bag was removed later that year.

"The hardest part was the physical side effects, but I can't speak highly enough of my treatment at Mater."

A/Prof Begun hopes the study will expand into translational research using human tissue samples, in collaboration with QIMR Berghofer.



Bowel cancer patient
Aimee Geeves with her
daughter Airlie



Sri Lankan mission to *restore* sight

Dr Sunil Warriar

Performing 500 cataract surgeries in just six days is the high-intensity humanitarian mission ahead for Mater ophthalmologist Dr Sunil Warriar, who will travel to Sri Lanka in September to help address one of the world's largest backlogs of patients requiring sight-restoring surgery.

Sri Lanka's national cataract waitlist has grown to 1.5 million people, with public hospitals overwhelmed as the population ages and many patients cannot afford private care.

"They have very skilled surgeons, but they simply can't work seven days a week to catch up on such a huge backlog," says Dr Warriar. "Many of these patients

are legally blind and have no option but to wait. Restoring their sight will be life-changing."

For Dr Warriar, who has spent more than 20 years refining his surgical expertise, the mission reflects a deep commitment to using his skills where they are needed most.

"I feel privileged to help improve people's vision through my work at Mater Private Hospital Redland, but I also want to support communities that don't have the same resources. Sight is the sense people treasure most—and when cataracts are the cause of its loss, we are able to restore it."

Working from the Lions Golden Jubilee Eye Hospital outside Colombo, Dr Warriar and his team will bring additional equipment and consumables purchased through fundraising efforts. Local ophthalmologists and nursing staff will manage pre and postoperative care, ensuring continuity for patients after the visiting team departs.


Dr Warriar says his commitment to outreach—including 13 years of service in Longreach and ongoing work with First Nations communities—has been shaped by his decade of practice at Mater.

"Australia has one of the best healthcare systems in the world, and Mater is at the forefront. That inspires a strong sense of giving back."

How to refer

Dr Sunil Warriar

 Referrals via Medical Objects

 (07) 3488 0778

 eyeclinic@redlandseyedoctors.com.au

Advanced PET/CT imaging for *Rockhampton*



Rockhampton and the broader Central Queensland community can now access advanced diagnostic imaging close to home, with a PET/CT imaging service operating at Mater Private Hospital Rockhampton.

The service, delivered in partnership with I-MED Radiology, is a significant step forward for local healthcare, eliminating the need for patients to travel more than 300 kilometres to Mackay or Bundaberg for scans.

Since opening in October 2025, the PET/CT service has supported diagnosis and treatment planning for conditions such

as colorectal cancer, melanoma and lymphoma. It has also been an important tool in the assessment of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, enabling clinicians to make timely, informed decisions about patient care.

Mater Private Hospital Rockhampton Acting General Manager Catherine Hackney said the long-awaited arrival of PET/CT technology is already strengthening the region's care pathway.

"Patients can now be seen onsite at Mater rather than travel long distances for essential imaging, and importantly, it ensures they can remain connected to the clinicians who know them best," Ms Hackney said.

Expanded renal dialysis services at Mater Townsville

Mater Private Hospital Townsville has significantly expanded renal dialysis capacity at its Pimlico campus, improving access for patients living with chronic kidney disease or kidney failure.

The newly refurbished renal dialysis unit now accommodates 12 treatment chairs—a 50 per cent increase—allowing up to 144 dialysis sessions each week across morning and afternoon lists, six days a week.

Renal Nurse Unit Manager Maree Storey said the expansion ensures more North Queenslanders can receive high-quality dialysis closer to home.

"Patients requiring haemodialysis typically attend three times a week for four to five hours per session," Ms Storey said.

"Dialysis is a life-sustaining therapy, and increasing our capacity means we can support more people to maintain their health and independence."

Mater Townsville's renal service provides comprehensive haemodialysis care, including chronic maintenance dialysis, acute dialysis, new starts, and support for holidaying patients requiring temporary treatment during their stay in North Queensland.

"All our patients have direct access to Mater's full suite of specialists, which allows us to deliver coordinated, high-quality care whenever it's needed," Ms Storey said.

The expanded unit is part of Mater's \$40 million redevelopment of the Pimlico campus, which also included the opening of a new maternity unit earlier this year.

Accessing the service

Suitable for:

- Patients aged 16 years and over with chronic kidney disease or kidney failure
- International patients and holidaymakers requiring temporary dialysis

Referral pathway:

- GPs may refer patients for a tour of the unit (by appointment)
- Patients may contact the unit directly for general information
- Dialysis treatment referrals must be made by the patient's treating nephrologist

This ensures each patient's dialysis prescription, clinical history, and ongoing renal management plan are appropriately coordinated.

For further information contact:

 (07) 4759 5200

 dialysis-NQ@mater.org.au



Renal patient Norm Young receives dialysis care three days a week

Our Mater network

Operating the largest for-purpose network of public and private hospital and healthcare services in the state, Mater brings together collective expertise across health, education, and research—supported by Foundation—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

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Mater Private Hospital Mackay

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Mater Private Hospital Gold Coast

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