



# Private Practice

*with purpose*





## *The Heart to Heal, The Strength to Grow.*

Our spirit is strong, it thrives as we embrace those whom we must always care for.

Our journey has been long and we will continue to flourish as we open our hearts to those who walk with us. **Always.**

The artwork concept and narrative was developed by David Williams. David is a proud Wakka Wakka artist at Gilimbaa.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

Mater acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work. We respect their historical and continuing spiritual connections to country and community and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. As health, education and research ministries, we commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.



# Introduction

Establishing a successful private practice is more than opening rooms and ordering business cards—it's a strategic decision that shapes the next chapter of your career. Whether you're at the beginning of your specialist journey, returning from overseas, or transitioning from public to private, there's a lot to navigate, and even more to gain.

At Mater, we've supported hundreds of doctors to make that transition with confidence. Backed by Queensland's largest not-for-profit healthcare network, a trusted brand built over a century, and a thriving referral ecosystem, we're here to help you stand out and succeed from day one.

This handbook outlines the essential steps you'll need to consider—from credentialing and patient pathways to marketing and building your referral base. More than a checklist, it's a guide to unlocking the full potential of private practice with the support of Mater behind you.

You'll have the backing of our commercially-minded General Managers at each of our hospital campuses—leaders who understand what it takes to build

and grow a thriving private practice and are committed to seeing you succeed. Their local insight, operational support, and strategic partnerships will help accelerate your practice growth.

In addition, you'll be supported by our industry-leading marketing, communications, media and engagement teams, experts at amplifying reputations and building visibility where it matters most. When you partner with Mater, you're not just starting a practice—you're building a brand, backed by one of the most trusted names in Australian healthcare.

**Ready to make your mark in private practice?** We're ready to help. Get in touch with our team today and let's grow your future, together.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

**Julia Strickland-Bellamy**  
Group Chief Executive

# Our network



**11 hospitals**



**1 553 beds**



**578 371**  
patients a year



**82 093**  
emergency attendances

**Townsville**

Bindal and Wulgurukaba Nations

**Mackay**

Yuwi Nation

**Rockhampton**

Darumbal Nation

**Bundaberg**

Taribelang Nation

**Mater Private Hospital Townsville**

     |  167

**Mater Private Hospital Mackay**

   |  105

**Mater Private Hospital Rockhampton**

   |  121

**Mater Private Hospital Bundaberg**

 |  59

Qandamooka Nation **Redlands**

Yuggera and Turrbul Nations **South Brisbane**

Jagera, Yuggera and Ugargpul People **Springfield**

**Mater Private Hospital Brisbane**     |  343

**Mater Mothers Private Hospital Brisbane**    |  90

**Mater Mothers Hospital Brisbane**    |  178

**Mater Hospital Brisbane**    |  337

**Mater Private Hospital Redland**  |  60

**Mater Private Hospital Springfield**  |  79

**Mater Hospital Springfield (opening 2026)**      |  186

 **ICU**

 **Emergency**

 **Maternity**

 **Mater Education**

 **Public Services**

 **Surgery connect**

# About us

Founded in 1906 by the Sisters of Mercy, Mater is Queensland's largest not-for-profit health network, delivering compassionate, expert care to Queenslanders for more than a century. With 11 hospitals and a range of community-based services across South East, Central, and North Queensland, Mater integrates health, education, and research to empower people to live better lives through improved health and wellbeing.

At the heart of Mater is a unique Mission—to bring God's mercy to our communities through compassionate, transforming, healing ministries. This mission underpins our approach to care: commercial in delivery, but deeply human in spirit. Our values—compassion, dignity, integrity, and a commitment to excellence—are lived daily by our people.

Through a combination of private and public hospital services, ground-breaking medical research, and nationally accredited healthcare education, Mater continues to innovate, grow, and respond to unmet community needs.

Mater is committed to appointing health practitioners who are suitably experienced, trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner as our partners in clinical excellence.

## Ethical and Professional Obligations

As a Catholic healthcare service, Mater adheres to the Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health Care Services in Australia and requires our Visiting Medical Practitioners (VMOs) to ensure all activities comply with these ethical and professional guidelines. For compliance requirements on Mater's position regarding terminations, fertility treatments and other care, please refer to the Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health Care Services in Australia by visiting: [mater.li/CodeofEthicalStandards-CHA](https://mater.li/CodeofEthicalStandards-CHA).

### Our Values

We are dedicated to providing healthcare services through a sincere commitment to our core values.

### Our Vision

We empower people to live better lives through improved health and wellbeing.

### Our Mission

We serve together to bring God's mercy to our communities through compassionate, transforming, healing ministries.





## Mater By-Laws

The Mater By-Laws were created in support of Mater's goal to provide the highest standards of clinical excellence, and in line with the organisation's Mission, Vision and Values.

The Mater By-laws apply to all Mater hospitals and any other health services established and operated by Mater in Queensland, including those established by Mater in the future. You can view a copy of Mater By-Laws here: [mater.li/clinical-governance](https://mater.li/clinical-governance)



# Private Practice for specialists

At Mater, we offer a unique opportunity for specialists to establish or grow their private practice within a values-led, mission-aligned environment.

## Key requirements to practise privately at Mater:

- Fellowship with an Australian specialty college and registration with the Medical Board of Australia.
- Credentialing to admit private patients or perform procedures at Mater facilities.
- A Medicare provider number specific to the location(s) of practice.
- Adequate medical indemnity insurance aligned with the scope of practice.

## Practice models supported:

- Consulting suites co-located within hospitals or medical precincts
- Sessional, shared, or solo private room to lease, with opportunities to purchase as practice grows
- Regional or metropolitan practice options
- Fly-In-Fly-Out (FIFO) opportunities to regional centres experiencing specialist shortages

## Here's what you need to know:

Making the move into private practice is an exciting step that opens up real opportunities to shape your career, income, and the way you care for patients. If you're starting out, transitioning from the public system, or returning to Australia, there are a few essential things to understand.

At Mater, specialists operate as independent practitioners. That means you generate income by setting your fees for consultations and procedures, with full access to Mater's hospitals and services. You're not employed by Mater—but you're fully supported by us every step of the way.

## To work as a private specialist in Australia, you'll need:

- **Fellowship** with an Australian specialty college, or equivalent recognition
- **Registration** with the Medical Board of Australia [ahpra.gov.au/Registration.aspx](http://ahpra.gov.au/Registration.aspx)
- **Clinical privileges** outlining your scope of practice, obtained through the Mater Credentialing Office
- **Recognition** as a specialist with Medicare
- A valid **Medicare provider number** for your practice location(s)
- Appropriate **indemnity insurance** to match your scope of practice

## For International Medical Graduates:

If you completed your medical degree overseas, you may need to meet additional criteria—including practising in a designated **District of Workforce Shortage (DWS)** area under Section 19AB of the Health Insurance Act 1973.

## You can find more detailed information at:

- Doctor Connect – Australian Department of Health
- Australian Medical Council





# Setting up for success:

## Key considerations for your practice

Establishing your private practice is an exciting milestone—and like any great venture, it begins with strong foundations. At Mater, we're here to support you with practical advice, proven pathways, and a network of people committed to your success. Whether you're just starting or refining your practice approach, the checklist below offers essential considerations to help you set up with clarity and confidence.

### Plan with Purpose

A simple, focused business plan is the best way to stay on track and aligned with your goals. It doesn't need to be long—just clear, realistic, and responsive to change.

- Set targets for 6, 12, 18 and 24 months
- Include a basic budget and resource plan
- Identify key opportunities and risks (a short SWOT is helpful)
- Consider building a relationship with Mater Emergency doctors and being on-call to build stakeholder relationships
- Consider what success looks like—and how you'll measure it.

### Get the Right Business Support

Your practice is your business. Obtaining the right advice early from trusted advisors such as accountants, solicitors, and financial professionals can save time, money, and stress later.

Key steps may include:

- Choosing the best structure for your business and finances
- Registering your trading name and securing a domain for your website and email
- Applying for an ABN and registering for GST (if applicable)
- Understanding your tax obligations (including BAS and PAYG)
- Setting up a business bank account and electronic payments system.

### Insurance Essentials

Medical indemnity insurance is mandatory for all doctors registered with AHPRA—and it's essential that your cover aligns with your scope of private practice. Evidence of your indemnity insurance will be required for credentialing at Mater.

You may also wish to consider:

- Income protection
- Public liability insurance
- Workers' compensation (if hiring staff)
- Building and contents insurance

### Choosing the Right Location

Where you choose to practise can influence everything—from your referral base to your work-life balance. Take time to reflect on the best location for your practice growth:

- What's the local market like, demographically and geographically?
- Who else is practising nearby in your specialty?
- How many referring GPs and health professionals are in the area?
- Is the location close to a private hospital for easy access to theatres or inpatient beds?
- Is there demand for your specialty, or saturation?
- Would a regional setting offer more opportunity and less competition?

**If you have any questions or would like support on setting up your practice please email** [marketing@mater.org.au](mailto:marketing@mater.org.au)





# Essentials to work as a specialist in private practice

## Provider number

Provider numbers are location specific, and you will require a different provider number for each location you intend to consult from, including the private hospital.

### There are 3 types of providers numbers:

- 1 Referring and Requesting (which you would have had issued for working in public hospitals and training)
- 2 Surgical Assisting
- 3 Provider number that attracts Medicare benefits – this is what you are eligible for once you have your Fellowship

Provider numbers are required prior to commencement with the hospital. Application processing can take up to 2 weeks from when the application is received.

Once you have Fellowship, you can apply to Medicare for Recognition as a Specialist.

This is a once only application and provides you with access to the item numbers in the MBS relevant to your specialty.

If you have previously applied for a provider number, you may be able to apply for your Medicare provider numbers online via the Department of Human Services using PRO DA – Provider Digital Access account. Register to set up your PRODA account to gain access to a range of health portals (NDIS, My Health Record Provider Portal etc) and HPOS – Health Professional Online Services.

*\*Overseas trained doctors and foreign graduates of accredited medical schools and specialist trainees are unable to use PRODA and need to complete an application for provider numbers.*

[www.servicesaustralia.gov.au](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au)

Search for 'Health professionals starting with Medicare'.

## Online Education Resources for Health Professionals

Medicare has developed digital claiming education resources and e-learning modules to help you and your practice staff understand their programs, such as:

- Medicare digital claiming
- ECLIPSE
- Medicare Easyclaim

[servicesaustralia.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/subjects/medicare-digital-claiming-education-health-professionals-goals](http://servicesaustralia.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/subjects/medicare-digital-claiming-education-health-professionals-goals)

Search for 'Medicare digital claiming education for health professionals'.

## Registering with Private Health Funds

If participating in the no gap scheme or known gap scheme, you need to register with all private health funds.

The no gap scheme allows the specialist to bill the health fund directly with the patient having no out-of-pocket expenses. Private health funds pay the practitioners a fee as per their individual schedule of fees. With known gap you can choose to charge the patient a fee (that is allowable by the specific health fund) and bill the health fund directly.



# Exploring the right fit for you – setting up your practice

When it comes to establishing your practice, one size doesn't fit all. Whether you're looking for flexibility, mentorship, independence or scale, there are a range of models available to suit your goals and lifestyle. Here's a quick guide to help you explore your options—and decide what's right for you.

## Room Options

### 1 Sessional Suites

Ideal for specialists starting out or seeking flexibility.

- Located onsite at Mater campuses or nearby medical precincts
- Pay a sessional fee for use of the rooms
- Administration team onsite to greet patients, manage bookings and process billing
- Minimal setup costs—get started without the overheads

### 2 Joining an Established Practice

A collaborative model with shared costs and support.

- Contribute to overheads, equipment use and consumables, as agreed
- Share administration and reception resources
- A great opportunity to learn the ropes and ease into private practice

**Just remember:** protect your brand and business interests. Ensure you have a clear agreement in place that outlines costs, responsibilities and entitlements—and we recommend setting up your own phone number from the outset, so it stays with you as your practice evolves.

### 3 Solo Practice

Full autonomy and control over your brand and operations.

- You'll manage everything—from staffing and billing software to leasing your space
- Plan for fit-out, tech setup and ongoing overheads
- Offers full creative and operational independence—perfect for specialists with a clear vision

### 4 Metro vs Regional Opportunities

Mater has private hospitals across Queensland, including in key regional centres. For doctors open to regional work, Fly-In-Fly-Out (FIFO) arrangements can offer an excellent income stream while you're establishing your permanent private practice—and you'll be making a real difference in communities where specialist care is needed most.

# Building your team:

## Finding the right Practice Manager

The right Practice Manager (PM) or Coordinator can make all the difference to how your practice runs day-to-day. Whether you're recruiting your first team member or looking to scale, consider the skills and background needed to match your practice style.

### How to find a PM:

- ✓ Advertise through the Australian Association of Practice Management (AAPM): [aapm.org.au](http://aapm.org.au)
- ✓ Use online platforms such as SEEK, LinkedIn or Indeed
- ✓ Leverage your networks—word of mouth is powerful
- ✓ Consider specialist recruitment agencies (but be aware of associated costs)

### What to look for:

- ✓ Strong organisational and communication skills
- ✓ Familiarity with practice management software and systems
- ✓ Knowledge of medical terminology, typing, and billing
- ✓ Flexibility to job-share or support during periods of leave







# Partnering with Mater: Setting you up for success

At Mater, we value the relationships we share with our specialists. We see our doctors as partners, and we're proud to support you in building a thriving private practice that reflects both your professional aspirations and your commitment to exceptional patient care.

Before getting started, we recommend connecting with the **General Manager** of the Mater facility you're interested in. Our General Managers are experienced, commercially aware and well-connected. They'll offer insight into the local landscape, help you explore opportunities, and guide you through the practical considerations for establishing your practice.

## Key questions to ask your General Manager:

- ✓ Is there current or emerging demand for your specialty?
- ✓ Are there upcoming changes in the medical workforce (including any retirements or service expansion)?
- ✓ What inpatient bed capacity and theatre availability exists?
- ✓ What are the on-call requirements and how many colleagues are on the roster?

## Credentialing at Mater

All specialists practising privately at Mater require credentialing to admit patients or undertake procedures at our hospitals. Once you've connected with the relevant General Manager, you'll be guided through our online credentialing process, including a request for references.

We recommend starting this process early and contacting your referees promptly to avoid delays.

**For more information, contact Shelly Stuart, Credentialling Coordinator**

📞 07 3163 2329

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

## Organising theatre access

If you require theatre access as part of your practice, it's crucial to begin scheduling sessions early, especially as these often shape your weekly structure. When you start, you may be assigned ad-hoc lists as your patient base expands.

You will also need to arrange:

- Anaesthetic cover (both elective and emergency)
- Surgical assistants

If needed, our team can provide a list of credentialed anaesthetists and surgical assistants to help you make connections. We also encourage you to be mindful of the fee structures your partners charge, as this contributes to the overall patient experience.

# Marketing your practice:

## Build your brand, grow your referrals

A well-branded and visible practice is crucial to building a strong referral network. Our experienced communications and marketing team can help you define and amplify your presence.

### Branding essentials:

- Practice name and logo
- Digital identity, including email signatures, website, business cards
- Professional bio and profile photography
- GP-facing referral guides, flyers, and patient education resources

Channels to consider:

- Website and Google Business Profile
- Social media presence – including LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook
- E-newsletters and GP updates
- Specialist directories
- Advertising in college journals, PHNs or AMA publications

### Engaging Your Referrers

Referrals are built on trust and connection. We encourage you to engage regularly with:

- GPs
- Allied Health providers
- Fellow specialists
- Rehabilitation providers
- Emergency and urgent care centres

Timely and detailed discharge letters to GPs are a great way to build your reputation and increase referrals.

Consider joining local or national professional groups and reflect on how your practice adds value to each referral relationship, whether it's through access, special interest areas, or patient support.

### Ask yourself:

- What's your point of difference?
- Do you speak other languages?
- Do you have subspecialty interests that could benefit patients and GPs?

### Practising in the digital world

In today's healthcare environment, your digital presence matters. It's a powerful way to shape your reputation, grow awareness and reach potential referrers and patients.

### Tips for building your online profile

- Stay familiar with AHPRA's Social Media and Advertising Guidelines
- Define your brand voice and be consistent in your tone, values, and content
- Share thoughtful, informative posts—aim for 2–3 times per week
- Include practice updates, specialty insights, and relevant news
- Cross-promote your website and social platforms for greater visibility
- Reuse and repackage content to extend your reach
- Use keywords your patients are likely to search for
- Engage with your audience—respond to comments, reviews, and questions
- Keep personal accounts private and carefully curated

**Follow other thought leaders, engage in meaningful conversations, and position yourself as an expert who is visible, approachable and informed.**











# A place where research and care go hand in hand

As a new Visiting Medical Officer at Mater, we welcome you to a health network where clinical care and research are deeply connected.

At Mater, research is not something separate; it's part of how we deliver better outcomes for our patients every day.

**Mater Research**, established in 1998, is a nationally recognised leader in translating science into real-world healthcare. Grounded in our Mission and our commitment to meeting the unmet needs of Queenslanders, our work follows a true bench-to-bedside philosophy, ensuring the latest innovations directly inform the care we provide.

We are proud of our strong affiliation with The University of Queensland through the Mater Research Institute – UQ (MRI-UQ), which brings access to world-class research infrastructure, academic collaboration, and teaching opportunities. As a founding partner of the Translational Research Institute (TRI), we collaborate with global leaders in health innovation to translate research discoveries into clinical practice.

There are many ways to get involved in research at Mater, from contributing to clinical trials to leading your own research initiatives. If you're interested in exploring how your clinical expertise could align with our research priorities in areas like Cancer, Neurosciences, Mother and Baby Health, Chronic and Integrated Care, or Healthcare Delivery and Innovation, we'd love to hear from you.



We encourage you to connect with Mater Research Executive Director, **Professor Allison Pettit**, who can provide more information on how to get involved and support you in starting your research journey with us.

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



Your clinical insights are invaluable, and we can make an even greater impact on the health of our community.



# The Mater Advantage: Your growth, supported

At Mater, you'll be supported by a network of people who want to see you succeed, from our hospital teams to our expert marketing, media and engagement specialists. We don't just give you a place to practice we offer a platform to grow.

## Our support includes:

- Strategic insights into local GP, specialist and referrer networks
- Direct engagement with GPs through events, education, and introductions
- Inclusion in specialist directories and promotional tools
- Assistance with room location and setup
- Access to site orientation and onboarding tailored to you
- Media and PR support for clinical innovation or community stories
- Access to patient postcode data to inform referral opportunities
- Flexible consulting options with administrative support (where available)
- A strong nursing and allied health workforce
- Complimentary on-site parking

## *Let's Grow Together*

Choosing to build your private practice with Mater means you're never on your own. From first conversation to first consult, we're here to guide you, support you and champion your growth—today, and into the future.

### Ready to take the next step?

Connect with our team today and discover how Mater can help bring your private practice vision to life.

Email us at [marketing@mater.org.au](mailto:marketing@mater.org.au).







