

### Message from the Network Co-Chairs

Happy new year to everyone and welcome back for 2024. An exciting year ahead is planned with more networking opportunities and further building of the trauma system across Queensland to ensure the best care is provided to trauma patients. Thank you to everyone for their contributions to the Queensland Trauma Clinical Network in 2023.

In particular, we would like to acknowledge Dr Don Campbell, who served for many years in this network prior to retirement last November. Dr Campbell was a long-standing active committee member, led the Queensland Trauma Registry and Reference Group for many years and was involved in many other statewide initiatives. I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Dr Campbell for his amazing work and advocacy for trauma.

In 2024, the Statewide Trauma Forum will be held at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital in July and the Australian and New Zealand Trauma Society Conference in October in Brisbane, so make sure you reserve the dates in your diaries.

We wish you a great start into 2024, and are looking forward to connect with as many of you as possible throughout the year.

Dr Alistair Hamilton  
Co-Chair, QTCN

Professor Martin Wullschlegler  
Co-Chair, QTCN

### Network Updates

#### Clinical guidelines

Clinicians are continuing to progress the splenic trauma clinical guideline, inclusive of a flowchart on splenic injury management for both major trauma centres and regional and rural hospitals. The first draft is expected to be released for consultation in the first few months of 2024. The blunt chest trauma clinical guideline is also approaching the review period, and any feedback or suggestions can be emailed to: [QldTraumaNetwork@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:QldTraumaNetwork@health.qld.gov.au).

#### Review of trauma activation criteria

Collation of all trauma activation criteria in Queensland has now been completed. A comparison of content similarities and variation is underway with the goal of an expert, evidence-based consensus of recommendations for criteria to be released by the QTCN to support sites that may not have an existing trauma activation process or are looking to review outdated criteria.

#### Trauma Forum 2023

The 2023 Statewide Trauma Forum was hosted by the Cairns Hospital, with a clinical focus on traumatic brain injury. It featured expert local speakers along with a consumer and carer, who wrapped up the day with a powerful presentation. Thank you to the many speakers and attendees involved. Planning is underway for the 2024 Trauma Forum at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital with further details to be released in the coming weeks.

## Critical Care Flight Paramedics

Retrieval Services Queensland (RSQ) are a key branch within the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS). RSQ are responsible for clinical and logistical coordination of all aeromedical retrievals and transfers of patients, extending from parts of northern New South Wales, up to the Torres Strait Islands and Norfolk Island. The Queensland Emergency Helicopter Network (QEHN) consists of eleven traditional helicopter bases with an addition two bases that can surge into the QEHN. Of the eleven bases QAS provide flight paramedics to ten.

Critical Care Flight Paramedics (CCFPs) provide frontline out-of-hospital care and specialised retrieval services to severely ill or injured patients in acute, life-threatening emergencies. CCFPs undertake clinical interventions in line with QAS policies and procedures, under the direct clinical governance of the QAS Medical Director. CCFPs work with a team of helicopter rescue staff and provide support to flight physicians during complex retrieval operations. CCFPs are often the constant as retrieval physicians are either fractionated or are participating in a six-month teaching term.

To continue to extend patient centred care to the Queensland community, the QAS are expanding clinical credentialing to select CCFPs through an extended scope of practice (ESOP) role which will build upon the technical and non-technical skills of CCFPs. Expanding the clinicians clinical reasoning, leadership, and technical skills of focused abdominal sonography in trauma, finger thoracostomy, blood product administration and emergency anaesthesia. These enhancements will further complement the care of critically unwell trauma patients in the paramedic/physician model that is staffed within the QEHN as well as for patients suffering severe trauma or illness outside of the traditional High Acuity Response Unit footprint.

Building from the success and lessons learned from the High Acuity Response Unit, the CCFP ESOP will have tight clinical governance and support from the Office of the Medical Director. For further information, please contact Lachlan Parker, Director – QAS Specialist Programs via email: [Lachlan.parker@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:Lachlan.parker@ambulance.qld.gov.au).



*Photo: Elliot Rhodes-Bates, Critical Care Flight Paramedic.  
(Photo courtesy of Queensland Ambulance Service)*

## Spotlight on...

### Bundaberg Hospital – major incident simulation

On the 19 August, Bundaberg Hospital Emergency Department hosted a multiagency major incident simulation with LifeFlight, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Bundaberg Airport, University of Queensland Rural Medical School, Queensland Fire and Rescue, Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Police service.

The scenario commenced on notification of a pilot of a small 10-person aircraft being bitten by a snake, which caused a fiery crash landing at the airport. This resulted in three fatalities, three red and four green casualties. This exercise allowed hospital staff a rare chance to observe what happens on scene and increase our awareness of the challenges prehospital staff face. To aid with that this simulation was used to rollout the new Mass Casualty Incidents Clinical [Guidelines](#).

A major incident has significant implications in regional and rural settings where there is only one hospital, load sharing is impossible, resources and staffing are reduced, and the distances needed to travel to the scene or definitive care are extensive. These are rare but highly stressful situations that require regular training to ensure preparedness of the health service.

Key learnings include the importance of clear communication channels, early prehospital notification, and the benefits of regular mass casualty simulations and desktop exercises. The organisation of so many agencies and personnel was an incredible effort by all and the opportunities to connect and network has already proven invaluable to our community and patient care.



Photos and article courtesy of Emma Nugent, Bundaberg Hospital Emergency Department

## Trauma Service Re-verification

Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) was successful in maintaining its level-one trauma hospital rating after being reverified by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS). The two-day RACS accreditation places GCUH as one of handful of level one trauma centres, and recognises the hospital as a leading clinical, teaching and research facility.

All aspects of trauma care were audited against a set of standards for providing the full spectrum of care for the most critically injured patients, from initial reception and resuscitation through to rehabilitation and discharge. The post discharge services at GCUH received a special mention, including the Trauma Service Follow Up program, Trauma Connect clinic, and the Trauma Survivor Network program which is led by the trauma Nurse Navigator. In addition, the trauma data registry was commended, which is now utilised in a statewide model.

GCUH credits the talented and passionate workforce who always strive for improvement, have an ongoing commitment to excellence and improving patient outcomes. At the recent 2023 Australian and New Zealand Trauma Society Conference, Dr Don Campbell, former Medical Director of Trauma received the leadership award, and Kate Dale, Nurse Practitioner received the award for clinical excellence. Congratulations to all GCUH clinicians involved in the reverification.



Photo: L) GCUH Trauma team along with RACS accreditation team. R) Kate Dale and Don Campbell receiving awards.  
(photo courtesy of GCUH Media)

## Education

The Queensland Trauma Education (QTE) team have had another busy year delivering education across the state. Recently the team hosted clinicians from the Emergency Department at Logan Hospital at the Clinical Skills Development Service (CSDS) for an onsite trauma training course. Participants described the coursework as beneficial to increasing individual confidence and knowledge, helping to focus the team on development of trauma management systems and providing specific skill practice that could be shared with others. Some feedback included:

- “I now recognise the importance of preparation and following a system in trauma”.
- “Practice as you play, have a system and have your people”.

Another successful on the road program was delivered in Townsville, with the first train-the-trainer and licencing program included. The QTE team were excited to hand over the reins to a fantastic multi-disciplinary facilitator group with the creation of additional resources specific

for their sites. Participants took a lot away from the multidisciplinary training session, including the importance of effective communication, good team relationships, recapping clinical details, and knowledge of trauma systems.

Future plans for the QTE team will involve other departments including surgical and anaesthetic team members and delivery of the course in more remote locations. Since QTE courses were launched in April 2021, over 250 clinicians have participated in the face-to-face training across medical, nursing, paramedic and allied health. Over 64,000 website visits have occurred across 10 countries. The QTE team hope to explore further funding opportunities to get on the road for 2024 as well as continuing to deliver courses in centre at CSDS. Engagement with clinicians across Queensland to continue to develop resources and support learning opportunities in trauma care. For further information or if you have any suggestions for trauma education, please email the QTE team:

[CSDS-Trauma-Education@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:CSDS-Trauma-Education@health.qld.gov.au)



Photo: Participants at the Townsville QTE course delivery (photo courtesy of Clinical Skills Development Service)

## Brain and Spinal Cord Injury project (BaSCI)

The Commonwealth funded BaSCI Project will continue to implement initiatives to improve adult specialist rehabilitation services for people with acquired brain injuries (ABI) and spinal cord injuries (SCI) in Queensland to June 2025. The project is being delivered across five Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) in recognition of the need for networked models to better support Queenslanders access care. The HHSs involved are Metro South, Metro North, Townsville, Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast.

Activities over the first years of the project have been designed to improve access, outcomes and quality and safety. The interventions have been responsive to the needs of consumers and particular service and system challenges within the two highly specialised areas of care.

BaSCI investments in SCI services have seen a redesign of the Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service (QSCIS) to include a responsive statewide inreach team, **QuickStart**, to better support people with newly acquired SCI and their treating teams in the period while they await specialist rehabilitation. Early consultation, planning and education, including a new [website](#) for health and disability professionals, have improved patient safety and resulted in a growth in referrals to the service. The early impact of QuickStart has seen the pilot extended to June 2025. Additional specialist SCI portfolios have been created in each of the BaSCI partner sites. These roles work as SCI champions within their own HHS and link closely with QSCIS and the QuickStart team for better service coordination and decision making about care options and best pathways for care.

Achievements in ABI rehabilitation include the establishment and recurrent funding of 10 inpatient beds at the Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS) in Metro North and additional growth of service capability and capacity across all BaSCI sites through service pilots that have spanned the care continuum and have supported people with all severity of brain injury. Strengthening partnerships through BaSCI has led to a funded service pilot initiative to June 2025 that will enable this network of providers to deliver local **Brain Injury Community Integration Services (BICS)** linking to and building upon the work of the Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service (ABIOS) at Metro South HHS. The BICS will launch in early 2024 and will mean better access for consumers with a brain injury to specialist care closer to their homes and local communities. Developing a sustainable network of support and maximising community integration is particularly important for consumers following a brain injury.

For information about BaSCI including any of the service improvements mentioned please contact [basci@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:basci@health.qld.gov.au).



Photo: presenters from the recent BaSCI Forum: Ben Chen (GCHHS), Leah Vegh (MNHHS), Kate Edmonds (THHS) Emily Gibson (MSHHS), Cassandra McLennan (MNHHS), Ben Turner (MSHHS) Kerry Anderson Kay (MNHHS)

### Upcoming Events

- 21 March 2024: Jamieson Trauma Institute Annual Showcase, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Education Centre
- 5 April 2024: Surgical stabilisation of rib fractures workshop, Medical Engineering Research Facility (MERF), Chermside, Brisbane
- 10-12 April 2024: ANZICS/ACCCN Annual Scientific Meeting, Brisbane. Register [here](#).
- 11 July 2024: Statewide Trauma Forum, Sunshine Coast University Hospital
- 24-26 October 2024: ANZTS Conference, Brisbane Exhibition Centre

**Please ensure you have subscribed to the QTCN communications to receive all updates and links to online events. Any content, feedback or suggestions can be emailed to: [QldTraumaNetwork@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:QldTraumaNetwork@health.qld.gov.au).**