

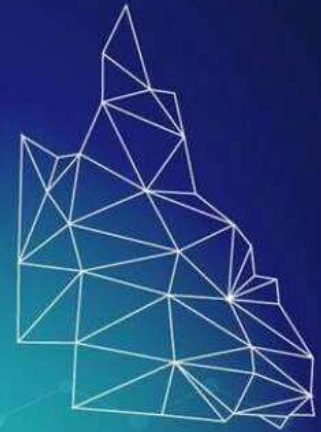
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Queensland Health

Queensland Clinical Networks



Queensland Trauma Clinical Network

DECEMBER 2024

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Message from the Network Co-Chairs

Welcome to the final edition of the Queensland Trauma Clinical Network (QTCN) newsletter for 2024, and my final one as QTCN Co-Chair. Another year of many activities and network highlights have been experienced and achieved with thanks to the numerous trauma-interested health professionals from across the state and beyond. Thank you to the members of the QTCN and the many frontline clinicians, educators, volunteers and trauma survivors, who have all made a real difference to thousands of lives.

One of the big highlights recently was the Australian and New Zealand Trauma Society 2024 Conference in Brisbane, which showcased trauma care activities from around the two countries. The Queensland contribution was outstanding. Thank you all, and congratulations to everyone who made this conference a huge success!

We would also like to take the opportunity to introduce Dr David Lockwood as new Clinical Co-Chair of the QTCN, who will work alongside Dr Alistair Hamilton to lead the QTCN. Dr Lockwood is a senior general, trauma and transplant surgeon, appointed as Director of Trauma at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, bringing extensive clinical and leadership experience from many years of working in the field of

trauma care to our committees and network. Welcome Dr Lockwood.

I wish you all a safe festive season, merry Christmas and a fantastic start into 2025!

Professor Martin Wullschleger
Co-Chair, QTCN

Dr Alistair Hamilton
Co-Chair, QTCN

Network updates

Membership

The current two-year membership term of the QTCN Steering Committee concludes in 2024, with a recent recruitment process being finalised. Clinical Excellence Queensland would like to thank any members stepping down from the committee and acknowledge the significant input to the many projects and working groups within the QTCN. The next two-year membership term commences in January 2025.

Clinical guidelines

The [Trauma in older adults](#) clinical practice framework was released in September by the Queensland Dementia, Ageing and Frailty Clinical Network in collaboration with the Queensland Trauma Clinical Network. This guideline was developed to outline core principles and considerations in the management of older persons trauma, in response to an increasing population over 65 presenting to emergency departments with traumatic injuries.

The QTCN has also recently released the [Blunt splenic injury](#) guideline, which features a decision-making flowchart, assessment, management and special considerations when managing patients presenting with splenic injuries. The QTCN wishes to acknowledge the significant contribution of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Trauma Service and the multidisciplinary clinical guideline leads.

All clinical guidelines can be found on the [QTCN/Clinical Excellence Queensland website](#).

Review of trauma activation criteria

All Queensland trauma activation criteria have been collated and reviewed against the best available evidence and interstate trauma protocols. A draft of the Queensland consensus document, which aims to provide a set of recommendations, is expected to be presented for endorsement by the QTCN Steering Committee in the first quarter of 2025.

Regional trauma site visits

A team of clinical experts from the QTCN visited Cairns on 3-4 October 2024 to meet with senior leadership staff and frontline clinicians across the trauma patient journey at Cairns Hospital. Recommendations to assist with service development, quality improvement, patient flow, infrastructure planning and service delivery were provided by the review team, in preparation for local hospital expansion. The regional visit is the second this year and aligns with the network's commitment to support regional and rural areas.



Photo: Emergency Consultant Dr Nickolas Bennett with QTCN review team



Data

Queensland Trauma Data Collection (QTDC)

The QTDC commenced as a feasibility project that uses automated technology to screen every Queensland Health Emergency Department presentation and interhospital transfer related to traumatic injury. Major trauma data is then further explored to allow collation of data points that align with the Australian and New Zealand Trauma Registry (ANZTR) binational minimum data set. The QTDC was established in 2021 and scaled up to successfully reach the milestone of a statewide capture in 2022.

To date, the QTDC's work has been guided by an external review of the Queensland trauma system, which provided three key data-related recommendations, all now implemented by the QTDC:

- Development of a Statewide, measurable trauma definition: Establishing a uniform, measurable definition of trauma for consistent data collection.
- A Statewide reporting framework: Developing a standardised approach to collecting, reporting, and utilising trauma data across the state.
- Establishment of trauma care performance targets: Reporting on trauma care performance against agreed targets at the HHS level.

Key achievements in 2024 include the release of the inaugural statewide traumatic injury report for 2022 and 2023, as well as several localised Health and Hospital Service (HHS) reports. Recently, the ANZTR invited additional Queensland sites to participate in the binational registry, including Mount Isa, Mackay, Cairns, Rockhampton, Ipswich, and Toowoomba. These sites are supported by or through direct data collection efforts of the QTDC.

The QTDC has also launched a dedicated [QH Intranet site](#), offering information on its activities, educational resources, and updates. In 2024, the QTDC also contributed to research in collaboration with Retrieval Services Queensland and several clinical trials, along with local quality improvement projects.

Looking ahead to 2025, the QTDC aims to ensure that all sites can access and review the data collected, along with a real-time reporting tool that allows sites to monitor their own performance and benchmarking targets on an ongoing basis. For further information, please email trust.qtdc@health.qld.gov.au.

Education

Queensland Trauma Forum

The annual Queensland Trauma Clinical Network Forum 'Older persons trauma' was held at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH) on 11 July 2024. Around 110 clinicians attended in person, with over 150 joining online to hear valuable insights from experts across the patient journey. This included a showcase of the 'Silver Trauma Pathway' developed at SCUH, and a special presentation from two trauma survivors. Thank you to the Sunshine Coast Health Institute and SCUH Trauma Service for supporting the QTCN to deliver this event. The recordings from the day can be found [here](#).



Photo: Speakers from session one at the Queensland Trauma Forum

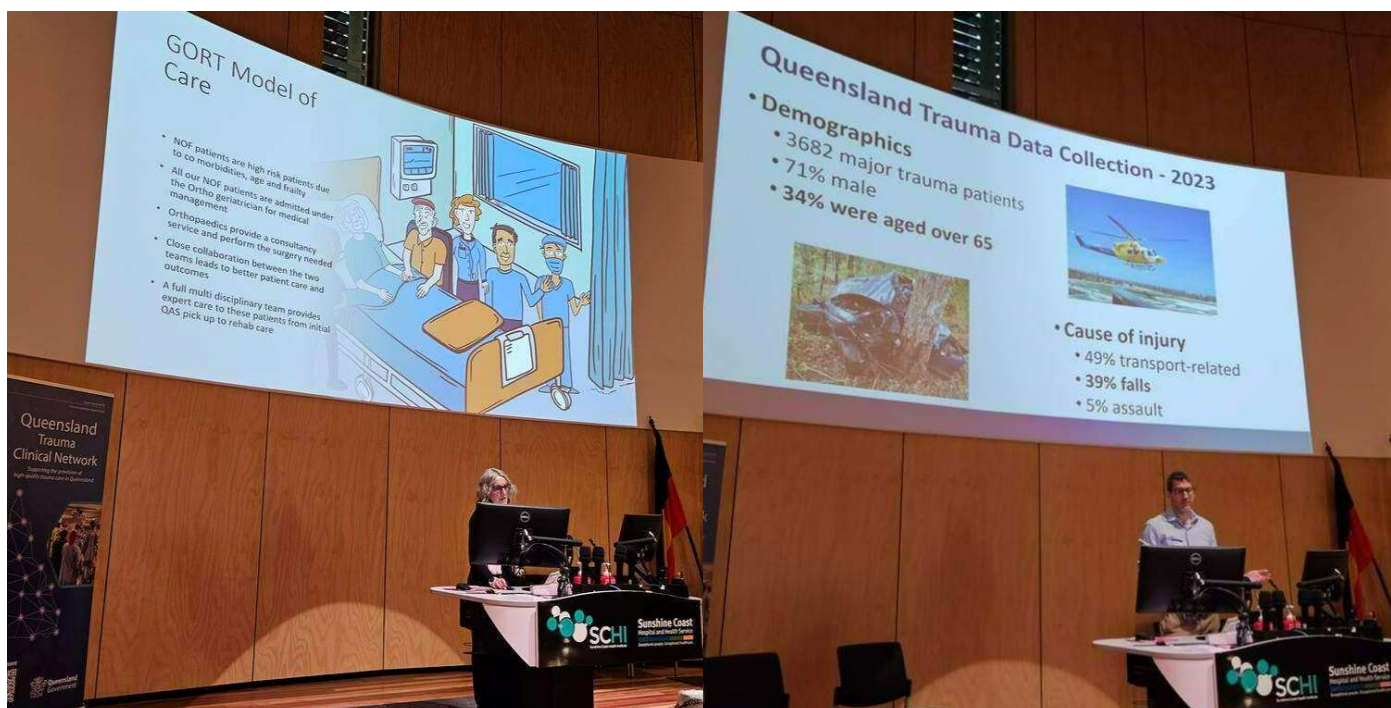


Photo: Nicol Lightbody and Dr Alistair Hamilton presenting at the Queensland Trauma Forum

Queensland Trauma Education (QTE)

The QTE team have had another fantastic year delivering trauma education across the state, including Toowoomba, Hervey Bay, Atherton and Cairns. In addition, the team provided a nursing workshop at SCUH to coincide with the trauma forum and ran many face-to-face courses at the Clinical Skills Development Service.

A recent train-the-trainer course was delivered at SCUH, with all having a great day learning with peers and developing a deeper understanding for the trauma system across their own Hospital and Health Service (HHS) - well done all! The train-the-trainer model will support local teams to deliver QTE courses onsite.

The new QTE website was launched in September, with even more resources now available. There has been great uptake of the platform including over 11,000 website visits and 1,200 resource downloads in the past three months! Please see below link for access to educational resources, webinars and forums and Queensland trauma guidelines.

The team hope to see you in 2025, reach out if you would like more information on courses or have an idea for new resources!

- Face-to-face courses: [Queensland Trauma Education Course \(QTEC\)](#)
- Trauma resources: [Queensland Trauma Education website](#)



Photos: Participants at the Queensland Trauma Education Course at SCUH

Feedback - Referral pathways guideline

Perspectives from a rural Senior Medical Officer

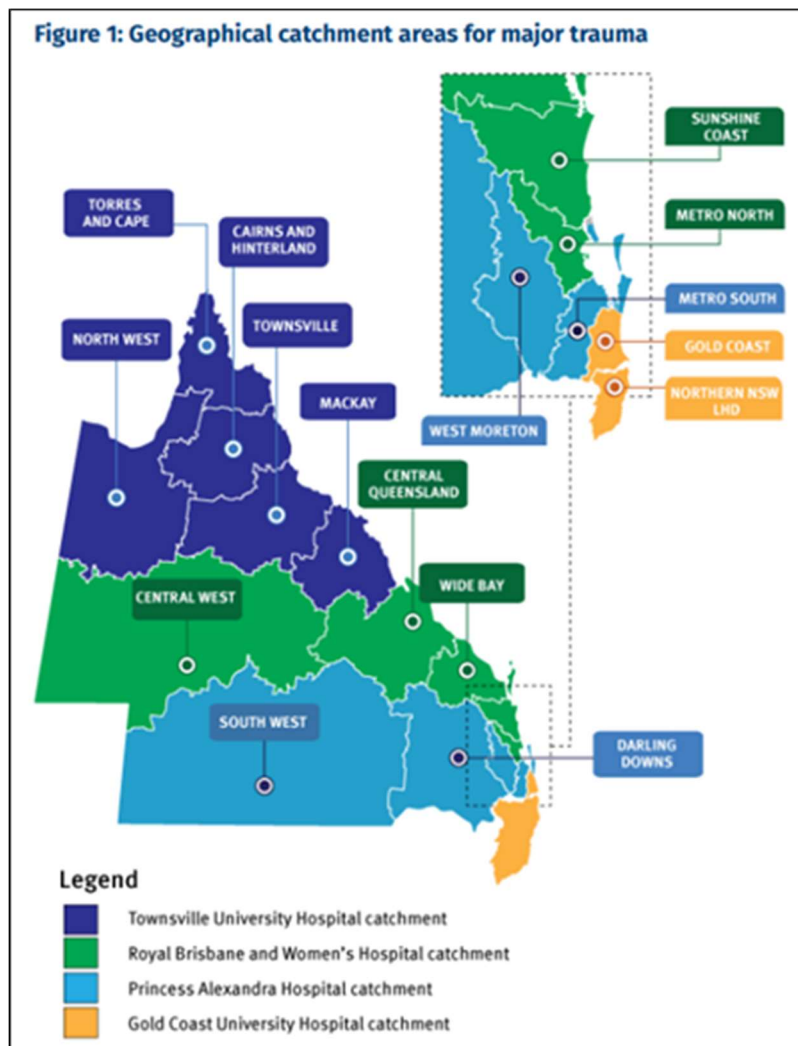
In early 2024, I was the team leader in a major trauma case that presented to our rural hospital. Unlike previous traumas that I had been involved in, the patients' injuries did not initially require an interhospital transfer to a major trauma centre for tertiary care (these get immediately discussed with Retrieval Services Queensland). Only after the CT results were returned (delay due to after-hours reporting) was I unsure of the destination for this patient – larger regional hospital or tertiary trauma hospital.

I had the pleasure of discussing this case with an Emergency Consultant at the larger regional hospital that night and was advised this patient would be better managed in a tertiary facility, referring to the single point of contact in the [Referral pathways: Major trauma \(adult\)](#) guideline.

This was a **huge** help. I cannot stress the amount of time that this saved, as this patient had orthopaedic, spinal and general surgical injuries. My previous experience is that that handover to each speciality separately would take over 1-2 hours (waiting for tertiary switch, waiting to speak to the registrar who is scrubbed, explaining the patient history multiple times, etc). I had the handover completed in under 20 minutes and was able to continue to manage the other patients in the local emergency department.

The policy was **very** easy to find, via a simple Google search on major trauma single point of contact - first one on the list) and the table at the bottom was great. One suggestion for review is to embed the single point of contact table at the beginning of the document for quick reference, and possibly advertise the guideline further.

Again, thank you to the team who have implemented this and continued to ensure that it remains a policy that Queensland will uphold.



Research

Health related outcomes of patients with serious traumatic injury: Results of a longitudinal follow up program delivered by trauma clinicians.

The Trauma Service Follow Up (TSFU) program at the Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) is a longitudinal clinical follow up program delivered by Trauma Case Managers and utilises the EQ-5D-5L and WHODAS 2.0 to measure quality of life and function/disability of patients after suffering serious traumatic injuries. This program was implemented in 2019 (Wake et al 2022). This paper reports the findings of the TSFU program from the first two years (2019-2020).

To be eligible for the TSFU program, participants must be aged 18 years or above at time of injury, have an Injury Severity Score (ISS) ≥ 12 and were managed by the GCUH trauma service. There were 508 eligible patients, with 413 follow up calls completed at 6m (81%). At 12 months, 471 remained eligible and 384 (81%) completed follow up calls. Reasons for non-completion include mortality, lost to follow up/inability to contact and patient declining or withdrawing.

Results demonstrated ongoing, long term impacts to quality of life and disability in participants, across a range of domains. Although both health related quality of life and functional ability scores demonstrated

improvements between 6 and 12 months, subgroups with specific features different to this trend were identified. These included participants that sustained a penetrating injury having higher rates of psychological health issues, and those with lower limb injuries +/- surgery having a higher likelihood of persistent pain.

This program continues and helps to inform local quality improvement practices at a clinical and health service level. Future development of the program includes a service evaluation, establishment of local referral pathways for psychological and emotional health support and further development of partnerships with primary care.

Limitations to this study include the single centre design, small sample size within the moderate trauma category and responder bias with participant surveys.

Dale, K., Winkleman, C., Hughes, I., Heathcote, K., Wake, E. Health related outcomes of patients with serious traumatic injury: Results of a longitudinal follow up program delivered by trauma clinicians. *Injury*. 2024; 55(12):112012

Wake, E., Brandenburg, C., Heathcote, K., Dale, K., Campbell, D., Cardona, M. Follow-up of severely injured patients can be embedded in routine hospital care: Results from a feasibility study. *Hospital Practice*. 2022;50(2):138-150

Upcoming events

- 6-7 March 2025: Surgical and Perioperative Innovation Collaborative Australasia, Brisbane
- 14 March 2025: Surgical stabilisation of rib fractures workshop, Brisbane
- 28-29 March 2025: SWAN Trauma Conference, Sydney
- 2-4 June 2025: DSTC/DATC/DPNTC, Brisbane
- October 2025: Australian and New Zealand Trauma Society Conference, Wellington, New Zealand

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.

Clinical Excellence Queensland

a division of Queensland Health

Queensland Government

15 Butterfield Street, Herston QLD 4006

QldTraumaNetwork@health.qld.gov.au



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