
About us

Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service (Gold Coast Health) was established as a statutory body on 1 July 2012 under the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*. Gold Coast Health is governed by the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Board and delivers a broad range of secondary and tertiary health services from three hospital sites (Gold Coast University Hospital, Robina Hospital and Varsity Lakes Day Hospital), two major allied health precincts (Southport and Robina), and 13 community-located facilities.

Gold Coast Health employs approximately 8945 full-time equivalent staff, making it the city's largest employer. The health service had a final annual operating budget of \$1.825 billion for 2020–2021. This was an increase of \$130 million (7.12 per cent) from the initial 2020–2021 operating budget of \$1.695 billion, published in the June 2020 Service Delivery Statement.

Our *Always Care* philosophy is central to our strategic direction. We recognise that the simplest acts of compassion can have significant impact – for patients, staff, the Gold Coast community and our partners in care delivery. This, combined with our world-class infrastructure, a highly talented and committed workforce, and strong partnerships with universities, Gold Coast Primary Health Network and the private and non-government sector, creates a culture of innovation in healthcare delivery.

The Gold Coast Hospital and Health Board currently comprises Chair Mr Ian Langdon and eight members. The Board represents local community needs and expectations in addition to its governance role within the wider Queensland Health federated system.

A Consumer Advisory Group of community representatives also works with Gold Coast Health to improve our local health system, by providing advice, feedback and guidance in relation to service delivery and quality, and helping to ensure our *Always Care* philosophy is embedded into day-to-day operations.

Across our campuses, we have a reputation as one of Australia's leading teaching hospitals, committed to training the next generation of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. Working under the supervision of senior clinicians, nursing students become nurses, medical students become doctors, and doctors become specialists at Gold Coast Health's facilities.

Strategic direction

The *Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2020–2024* articulates Gold Coast Health's three key strategic objectives:

- Deliver world-class care *always*
- Make the best use of our resources
- Drive future-focused change.

Underpinning these priorities is our *Always Care* philosophy, which recognises that the simplest acts of compassion can have a significant impact – for patients, staff, the Gold Coast community and our partners in care delivery.

The *Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2020–2024*:

- recognises the challenges our health service will face as the local population continues to grow at a very rapid rate
- aims to embrace the opportunities of the future as knowledge, technology and partnerships rapidly develop
- commits us to continue our journey towards world-class care
- recognises the need to work seamlessly with partners across the health care continuum in order to meet our vision.

The *Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2020–2024* also supports the whole-of-health-service master planning direction, which is now being used to drive planning of future new and expanded services to support growth, particularly in the northern Gold Coast.

Vision, purpose and values

Our vision

We will have the best health outcomes in Australia.

Our purpose

To be a leader in compassionate, sustainable, highly reliable healthcare.

Our values

Our work is driven by our six core values:

Integrity

To be open and accountable to the people we serve.

Community first

To have the patient's and the community's best interest at heart.

Respect

To listen, value and acknowledge each other.

Excellence

To strive for outstanding performance and outcomes.

Compassion

To treat others with understanding and sensitivity.

Empower

To take ownership and enable each other to achieve more.

Priorities

Gold Coast Health strives for a transformational culture that encourages agility, innovation and rapid knowledge translation to ensure high-reliability healthcare delivery that meets community needs and ensures patient safety.

We prioritise and balance financial resources as healthcare demand grows and we respond to emerging or unforeseen local or global challenges so we can provide equitable healthcare that maintains and improves health outcomes.

Our performance is in alignment with the Queensland Government's objectives under *Unite and Recover – Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan* by:

Backing our frontline services by delivering highly reliable, equitable, world-class care – always

Focus areas included planning for and securing resources for the future, as well as supporting our staff to build a culturally safe, healthy and inspirational workforce. Examples of our work towards these areas include:

Infrastructure planning and delivery

To assist Gold Coast Health secure resources in the future, Gold Coast Health has received funding for several infrastructure planning and delivery opportunities and is progressing these through the relevant stages. This includes business case planning for the Coomera Hospital and Health Precinct and interim demand measures within Gold Coast University Hospital. It also includes progressing towards delivery of a second CT scanner at Robina Hospital, the Secure Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit at Gold Coast University Hospital and a satellite medical facility in Tugun.

A positive environment for staff

Gold Coast Health's employee networks are voluntary groups of staff that come together based on shared identity, interests and life experiences. These groups provide support, arrange events, discuss issues, raise awareness and advocate for change to build an inclusive work environment. Gold Coast Health has established employee networks across the following diversity groups:

- Women's Network (Gender)
- Multicultural Network
- Veteran Employee Network
- LGBTIQ+ Network

We also commenced planning for the launch of a new Abilities (Disability) Network.

In partnership with Job Access, the Federal Government Disability Employment Program, we implemented changes to our recruitment practices, from recommendations following the Inclusive Recruitment Review undertaken in the previous reporting period. Changes were made to role descriptions, placement of diversity statements on our external website and amendments to the reasonable adjustment policy.

Staff were further supported through various initiatives, including Pride Week, Socks for Docs Day, the Family and Community Expo at Robina Hospital, the Perks Financial Health Pop-up, RUOK? Day and the creation of a new Wellness Hub.

Professionalism Programs

Gold Coast Health introduced new starter education on the Promoting Professional Accountability (PPA) and Always There Peer Support programs into orientation sessions. The PPA program provides staff with a way to report unprofessional behaviour anonymously without impacting a staff member's HR

record. Always There provides peer support to staff experiencing an adverse reaction due to a difficult workplace event or repeated exposure.

During 2020–2021, the organisation introduced wellbeing sessions for the newly qualified nurses' study days to help build their resilience. Sessions highlight the adverse responses people can experience in the workplace and what increases susceptibility, how to connect with support, the psychology of forming new habits, and techniques they can use in 60 seconds or less to reduce their stress levels.

Healthier food and drink choices

Gold Coast Health is leading by example by serving food of high nutritional value to staff and visitors at all facilities. The intention is to create an environment that makes healthy food choices easier by improving the range, availability and promotion of healthy foods and drinks while limiting the availability of less healthy options. Vending machines within our facilities now stock healthier food and meals, and vendors within our facilities are encouraged to provide healthier drinks, more vegetables with meals and foods with higher nutritional value.

Workforce Reform Program

A Workforce Reform Program (the Program) commenced during 2020–2021 to respond to current and forecasted growth and demand. The Program focused on aligning our organisational structure to better support effective models of care while delivering increased efficiency. The reporting period saw us undertake extensive workforce engagement and finalise an improved management structure, with subsequent phases underway in our administrative support and corporate services areas.

Professional governance councils

Gold Coast Health launched a new initiative to increase engagement, promote professional development and increase professional profiles for frontline nursing and midwifery staff. Four professional governance councils were established as part of Gold Coast Health's commitment to listening to the voices of our nurses and midwives, which was a key part of Gold Coast Health becoming Australia's first Magnet Recognised health service in April 2020. The councils invite direct care staff to be involved in decision-making processes that promote ownership of practice and shared accountability and allow staff to deliver high-quality person-centred healthcare.

Safeguarding our health by staying pandemic-ready

In line with Queensland Government's Objective to safeguard our health by maximising our capacity to respond to growing demand and staying pandemic-ready, and Gold Coast Health's strategic plan measure to increase in home and/or community-based service delivery, Gold Coast Health has prioritised delivery of services in home or telehealth settings. Areas of focus include:

Maternity Hospital in the Home

After the success of a pilot program which commenced last year as part of our COVID-19 response, Gold Coast Health has continued the Maternity Hospital in the Home service. During the 2020–2021 financial year, 196 women accessed the service, being cared for at home and via telehealth rather than being admitted to hospital or being seen at the Maternity Assessment Centre.

The service was recognised internationally as an outstanding program, receiving the 2021 Health Round Table Maternity Innovation Award.

Specialist Rural and Remote Palliative Telehealth

Gold Coast Health established a new specialist palliative care service to support approximately 840,000 people who previously had limited or no access to specialist palliative care. Receiving around 150 referrals a month, patients are reviewed online with their local healthcare practitioner, using telehealth systems to connect with a palliative care specialist, allied health practitioner or nurse based on the Gold

Coast (or another regional centre). The service, which is managed by Gold Coast Health, supports all areas of regional Queensland and has been funded for a further two years.

Transformation agenda to redesign healthcare delivery

The organisation made a commitment this year to introduce a Transformation agenda that could help to redesign the way we deliver healthcare, with a focus on preserving the momentum of change and responding to rapid technology developments. Further information regarding our Transformation agenda can be found in the Targets and Challenges section of this report, including reference to the Future Focus program; collection of initiatives to deliver improved patient care.

Safeguarding our health by maximising our capacity to respond to growing demand

To further maximise our capacity to respond to growing demand, Gold Coast Health is working towards several mental health services and programs in response to growing number of mental health related presentations to our emergency departments. Many of these programs further support our strategic plan objective to drive future-focussed change, while working towards our measures of increasing partnerships. Examples include:

Adolescent Day Program

The Yangah Adolescent Day Program at Robina Hospital is a new mental health and education day program for young people with severe, complex and persistent mental illness. Yangah, meaning 'Rise Up' in the Yugambeh language (Gold Coast), offers a range of inter-agency, culturally safe, psychosocial, educational and vocational programs tailored for young people.

Under the \$3.1 million project, the first patient was seen in late July 2020. Since then, 22 patients aged between 13 and 18 years of age have received treatment through recovery-focused rehabilitation and educational/vocational programs while they live at home and remain engaged in their local community. The service is an alternative to hospital admission for young people with persistent mental illnesses and is a collaboration between the Department of Health, Gold Coast Health and the Department of Education.

The Yangah Adolescent Day Program is a key action of the Government's commitment to ensure young people have access to contemporary mental healthcare by enhancing and expanding the range of mental health service options available to young people with severe and complex mental health issues.

Mental Health Peer Workforce

To meet rising demand, Gold Coast Health has expanded its workforce of people with lived experienced with mental illness, substance use challenges and/or suicidality. This approach has had a positive effect in areas such as the Emergency Department at the Gold Coast University Hospital, where Peer Workers significantly improved the experience of consumers and carers by engaging them in therapeutic peer interventions while they were waiting for specialist clinical attention or before they were transferred to inpatient units. In 2021-2022, there are plans to further embed Peer Workers into the staffing profile of inpatient, Emergency Department and Community Health teams.

Joint Regional Plan for Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Alcohol and Other Drug Services

In collaboration with the Gold Coast Primary Health Network, the Joint Regional Plan for Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Alcohol and Other Drug Services outlines a shared understanding of our region's issues, a shared vision for the future, and a joint strategic roadmap for future service provision. Joint governance structures were established to lead and guide this work, with numerous specific consultation opportunities throughout the planning and development process.

The plan's implementation has been focused on building foundations and partnerships: key governance arrangements; better communication between services and across the system; putting in place local arrangements for supporting and networking; collecting the necessary data to demonstrate progress against the plan.

Collaborative Gold Coast Suicide Prevention Activity 2020–2021

The table below illustrates the breadth of services available throughout the Gold Coast community to address key components of the Joint Regional Plan for Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Alcohol and Other Drug Services and how local stakeholders are working together on the plan's strategies.

Strategy	Gold Coast Health	Gold Coast Primary Health Network	Community
Improving emergency and follow up care for suicidal crisis	MH Acute Care Team, Suicide Prevention Pathway Mental Health Co-responder model with QPS and QAS School Based Youth Health Nurse (SBYHN), Ed-LinQ Crisis reform initiative	The Way Back Support Service	Crisis lines: Lifeline, Beyond Blue, Suicide Call Back Service, Bereavement support: Pathways Gold Coast Response Service, Bereavement support group and Bereavement resource, Student Support Services in Schools, Carer Support Program
Using evidence-based treatment for suicidality	Brief interventions e.g. safety planning and Pisani Model Research trials (Dr Chris Stapleberg) Comprehensive mental health service and treatment for co-morbidities	Psychological Service Providers (PSP) – Suicide Prevention stream PSP training with Gold Coast Health	Private Psychologists, Mental Health Professional Network (GCMHPN), University partnerships - Bond University & Griffith Uni
Equipping primary care to identify and support people in distress			Wesley Lifeforce training, ASIST training, Mental Health First Aid Training), Mental health skills training for GPs, Focussed Psychological strategy training for GPs
Improving the competency and confidence of frontline workers to deal with suicidal crisis	Zero Suicide Mental Health Co-responder model (QPS, Gold Coast Health, QAS)	PSP training with Gold Coast Health	Wesley Lifeforce training, ASIST training, Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health First Aid Carer's Mental Health First Aid, Queensland Centre for Mental health Learning training
Promoting help-seeking, mental health and resilience in schools	SBYHN, Ed-LinQEdlinkb, Child and Youth Mental Health Service		HeadSpace in schools, Youth Info Card and App, Ohana for Youth, BeYou, Curriculum/HP programs, Social & Emotional Learning packages (Respectful Relationships)
Training the community to recognise and respond to suicidality		Question, Persuade, Refer training	Wesley Lifeforce Training, SafeTalk, ASIST training, Mental Health First Aid, Indigenous Mental Health First Aid, Marcus Mission (Men)
Engaging the community and providing opportunities to be part of the change			World Suicide Prevention Day, Candlelight Vigil/Out of the Shadows, GC Suicide Prevention Service Finder Card, Youth Info Card and App, Mental Health week, Gold Coast Youth Wellbeing Conference, Headspace Youth Advisory Group, Marcus Mission
Encouraging safe and purposeful media reporting			MindFrame website (national)

Crisis Reform

The Gold Coast Crisis Reform initiative aims to reduce the number of mental health presentations to Gold Coast Health Emergency Departments, particularly mental health inpatient admissions and re-admissions, and improve inpatient and carer experiences while reducing restrictive practices.

In 2020–2021, construction started on a new Crisis Stabilisation Unit to support people experiencing an acute mental health crisis. Gold Coast Health will be one of the first health services in Australia to introduce a mental health crisis stabilisation service. The \$7 million facility will feature eight short-stay beds and 12 treatment chairs. The service will be staffed by people with lived experience and clinical mental health staff and will provide a more home-like therapeutic environment for consumers and their families.

There has been extensive stakeholder consultation with people with lived experience, clinicians, QAS, QPS, the Gold Coast Primary Health Network and other non-government organisations. The facility is set to open in August 2021.

Journey to Zero – Suicide Prevention

The Gold Coast's Suicide Prevention Pathway is the largest clinical implementation of the Zero Suicide Framework (the Framework) in Australia. More than 7000 patients have utilised Gold Coast Health's Suicide Prevention Pathway over the past five years. The Framework's efficacy in ensuring suicidal individuals don't fall through the cracks in busy health facilities was published in the British Journal of Psychiatry. The analysis of the Suicide Prevention Pathway followed 737 suicide attempts by 604 people over six months. The results underline that supporting the patient as well as the people around them, including health workers, can improve outcomes.

The Framework represents a commitment to patient safety as well as the safety and support of clinical staff, who perform the demanding work of treating and supporting people who are suicidal.

Even with increasing numbers of suicide-related presentations to our emergency departments, there was a 35 per cent reduction of suicide for consumers on the Suicide Prevention Pathway.

Norfolk Village State School partnership

The Gold Coast's rapidly changing demographic led to a partnership with Norfolk Village State School to deliver a pilot program for specialised psychology services designed for vulnerable children and families. Following the success of the pilot program last year, the Gold Coast Health Child Development Service officially opened the Health Education Hub in May 2021. The Hub provides rapid delivery of health services in an environment where children and families feel comfortable and secure. It supports students and families of the school, as well as residents of the surrounding area.

Protecting the environment

Gold Coast Health developed a responsible environmental sustainability agenda to make transformational shifts towards low emission and climate-resilient enhancements, in alignment with the Queensland Government key climate commitments.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Gold Coast Health is committed to improving health outcomes to close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We contribute to statewide reporting requirements by submitting bi-annual reports detailing our progress against the key performance indicators and other relevant activities.

On 30 April 2021, the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 was amended to require all Hospital and Health Services (Services) to develop and publish “a strategy (a health equity strategy) to achieve, and to specify the Service’s activities to achieve, health equity for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in the provision of health services by the Service”. This means that a commitment to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes and achieving health equity is embedded in the legal framework guiding the health system. Achieving First Nations health equity requires eliminating the avoidable, unjust and unfair health differences experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by addressing social and economic inequalities, historical injustices, racism and discrimination that lead to poorer health. Health equity strategies will be co-designed, co-owned and co-implemented with prescribed stakeholders, including local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services. Gold Coast Health is fortunate to have Professor Cindy Shannon, a proud descendant of the Ngugi people from Moreton Bay, serving as a Director on the Board. In May 2021, the Board indicated a strong commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a Statement of Reconciliation released on Reconciliation Day.

Through collaboration, Gold Coast Health has developed and continues to implement culturally appropriate and innovative programs, models of care and services.

Our work supports the *Queensland Government’s Making Tracks Towards Closing the Gap in Health Outcomes* along with Gold Coast Health’s *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Plan* and *Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan*.

Gold Coast Health’s commitment to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to 3.5 per cent by 2022 was supported by the Waijungbah Jarjums maternity and child health service. This service employs 13 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives, student midwives, nurses, health workers and administrative staff.

During 2020–2021, Gold Coast Health made advances towards improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes with the exemplary efforts of the Waijungbah Jarjums service, which supplied care to 132 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers. Waijungbah Jarjums is a model of care that is co-designed and co-led by the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. It provides community-based, culturally safe, woman-centred care by a team of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander midwives, nurses and health workers from conception to the first 1000 days.

Key Performance Indicators for 2020–21	Performance to June 2021
Workforce - The Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce strategy employment target is 3 per cent by 2022 for all Hospital and Health Services, with Gold Coast Health setting a stretch target of 3.5 per cent by 2022.	1.52 per cent of workforce – 168 staff across all streams. Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans developed to achieve 3.5 per cent stretch target by 2022.
Increase in the number of completed courses of oral health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult patients in the current financial year to date from the previous financial year.	-28.7 per cent (total of 216) <i>Note: Oral Health services were suspended for a period of the financial year due to COVID-19.</i>
Proportion of babies born of low birthweight to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (<2500 grams at birth).	Total was 3.78 per cent for Waijungbah Jarjums midwifery service. Total was 10.34 per cent for Gold Coast Health in 2020–2021.

Our community-based and hospital-based services

The Gold Coast Health catchment area takes in one of Australia's most iconic holiday destinations. Like our beautiful city, our community is also diverse, in culture, age, race, socio-economic status and healthcare needs. We care for nearly 690,000 people who live in the Gold Coast region and northern New South Wales, as well as approximately 11.1 million visitors each year.

Gold Coast Health delivers a broad range of secondary and tertiary health services across our three hospital sites at Gold Coast University Hospital, Robina Hospital and Varsity Lakes Day Hospital. Services include surgery, trauma, paediatric, general and specialist medicine, maternity and intensive neonatal care, aged and dementia care, emergency medicine, intensive care, cardiology, mental health, oral health, outpatients, environmental health, public health services, and more.

We also deliver a wide range of services in diverse community settings – in our health precincts, community centres, schools, residential aged-care facilities, correctional centres, and in the home. These services include post-birth midwifery visits, home-based palliative care, hospital in the home, and school dental health appointments. Gold Coast University Hospital is the city's premier tertiary-level facility providing world-class tertiary hospital care, with more than 70 per cent of private rooms. It is located (together with Griffith University and Gold Coast Private Hospital) in the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct.

Robina Hospital is a major regional health facility and serves as a patient base for emergency, medical, palliative care and mental health. It is also home to the Clinical Education and Research Centre, a joint project between Queensland Health and Bond University's Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine.

Varsity Lakes Day Hospital features six theatres for endoscopy, plastics, orthopaedic and other surgery, and women's health clinics.

Car parking concessions

Car parking concessions at Queensland Health hospital facilities improve access and affordability of car parking spaces to eligible patients and their carers.

In 2020–2021, Gold Coast Health issued 34,639 one-day concession passes and 43 five-day concession passes. The cost of concessions incurred by Gold Coast Health was \$160,099.

Supporting the sickest and most vulnerable in the community

Gold Coast Hospital Foundation (the Foundation) is a community-minded not-for-profit organisation and the official charity partner of Gold Coast Health. The Foundation relies on community and corporate donations to raise much-needed funds to deliver the vital extras that would not otherwise be available across the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service.

These vital support programs include the Cancer Patient Transport Service, Renal Patient Transport Service, Emergency Accommodation Service, purchasing medical equipment, funding hospital-led health research, improving hospital facilities and patient spaces, as well as providing scholarships for Gold Coast Health staff.

The Foundation works in close partnership with Gold Coast Health, to help support the sickest and most vulnerable in the community through better patient care, early diagnosis, enhanced treatment options and family support.

Since the COVID-19 global pandemic first impacted Queensland, communities on the Gold Coast have also been touched by its effects. Keeping every local and visitor in the wider community healthy and safe remains paramount for the Foundation.

Despite experiencing a challenging year in 2020 due to COVID-19, the Foundation bounced back bigger and better with many successful fundraising endeavours raising \$3,976,726 during the 2020–2021 financial year.

With the overwhelming generosity of its valued supporters, corporate partners, sponsors, community groups and individuals, the Foundation delivered life-changing impact to 100,000 patients, families and clinical staff across the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service. Highlights include:

- The Cancer Patient Transport Service helped more than 2,500 people affected by cancer get to and from hospital for vital chemotherapy, radiation therapy, tests and appointments.
- A new and dedicated transport service supporting the most at-risk renal patients was launched in mid-2020 to provide vital transport to and from Gold Coast public renal treatment facilities for treatment. In the past 12 months, the Renal Patient Transport Service completed approximately 560 trips to hospital and helped more than 120 local renal patients.
- The Foundation's Emergency Accommodation Service provided 137 nights of emergency accommodation close to the hospital so direct family members of patients in intensive care could remain near to their loved ones during recovery from serious illness or critical injury.
- The Foundation funded 52 vital pieces of medical equipment on the wish list valued at more than \$420,000, allowing Gold Coast Health medical professionals to provide an enhanced level of care to patients in hospital.
- Through an investment of \$150,000, the Foundation has assisted the Collaborative Research Grant Scheme to facilitate innovative, collaborative and responsive health research that benefits the Gold Coast community and optimises the healthcare system.
- Two hospital spaces were improved during the 2020–2021 financial year, including a full upgrade of the Children's Outpatients area and the Ring the Bell project, which gives children with cancer a symbolic way to celebrate and acknowledge the end of their treatment.
- Twelve nursing and midwifery scholarships were funded through the Ged Williams Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Program.
- The Foundation welcomed its 900th Gold Coast Health employee into the Workplace Giving program, where Gold Coast Health staff members give regular donations from their pre-tax pay.
- The Foundation held its biggest fundraising appeal on record at its first-ever Giving Day in April 2021. The event raised an incredible \$151,698 in just 12 hours to fund lifesaving equipment across the hospital and health service.
- It was a sell-out crowd at the Foundation's Care for Cancer Lunch in March 2021, with nearly 200 guests coming together to raise more than \$32,000 for vital cancer services and equipment that supports local patients battling cancer.
- The Foundation Market Stall, which sells one-of-a-kind items handmade by talented individuals and community craft groups, raised a record amount of more than \$32,000 this financial year.

Like Gold Coast Health, the Foundation's work aligns with the Queensland Government's objectives for the community, which are built around Queensland's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan, to better support vulnerable people in the community and safeguard the health system to deliver the best possible outcomes for patients and their families.

Through the funding of research, support programs, equipment, facility improvements and scholarships for health professionals, the Foundation empowers the Gold Coast community to safeguard their health through Gold Coast Health.

The Foundation's strategic themes of impact, sustainability, investment, culture, engagement and trust support the focus on safeguarding health, supporting jobs, backing small business, growing the Gold Coast region, investing in skills, backing frontline services, and protecting the environment.

Targets and challenges

Target:

Lead and develop a Gold Coast 'one-system' for healthcare by partnering with, and enabling, other sectors, agencies, partners and providers.

Challenge:

Improve access to referral information, improve referral quality and reduce duplication by developing streamlined systems that connect other agencies and healthcare providers with Gold Coast Health.

Outcome:

Rigorous Referral Management implemented key projects to improve referral management processes, including:

- The Refer Your Patient website (launched in April 2021), designed for general practitioners to improve transparency of Gold Coast Health services and provides guidance on how to refer a patient. The website provides condition-specific guidelines and details the essential information Gold Coast Health requires at the time of referral.
- The Department of Health's state-wide SmartReferrals project, worked on in partnership with Gold Coast Health, to enable faster, more streamlined management of referrals and provide real-time access of referral information at any point in the referral pathway. COVID-19 has impacted the rollout timeframe for SmartReferrals, however through collaboration between Transformation and Digital and Outpatients Department, the project has been re-coordinated to ensure a successful delivery.
- The launch of HealthPathways, a clinically focused resource for general practitioners to assess and manage more than 700 conditions.

Target:

Deliver highly reliable, equitable health care services that achieve optimum health outcomes and excellent system performance.

Challenge:

Global shortages in raw materials saw the reduced supply of clinical items by up to 30 per cent, including sterilisation wraps.

Outcome:

Gold Coast Health implemented a conservation strategy, and the Central Sterilising Department investigated alternative wraps.

Target:

Continue to develop innovative service delivery models that meet community needs and maximise our capacity to respond to healthcare demand - including hospital, community, home and virtual care.

Challenge:

Gold Coast Health saw an increasing demand for maternity services with larger numbers of babies born across the 2020–2021 period (5511 babies born at the Gold Coast University Hospital). In May alone,

there were 530 babies delivered: an increase of 6.2 per cent on last May. With pregnancy referrals increasing, the demand is expected to continue.

Outcome:

Gold Coast Health commissioned the full complement of Birth Suites and Maternity in-patient beds, while also investing in community-based venues for antenatal care and Innovative models of care include:

- Maternity Hospital in the Home
- Waijungbah Jarjums (see page 25)
- employment of a Caesarian Coordinator who, along with the Women's Anaesthetic lead, runs the *Enhanced Recovery following Caesarian Section* program
- employment of an Induction of Labour Coordinator to streamline the induction process (approximately 30 per cent of women use the Induction of Labour program)
- employment of three Maternal-Fetal Medicine Specialists to provide tertiary level care for women experiencing highly-complex pregnancies
- launch of the Neonatal Early Discharge Service to provide care to mothers and their premature babies at home. The service provided care to 118 babies, saved approximately 955 Special Care Nursery cot days, and helped to reduce readmissions.

Target:

Continue to develop innovative service delivery models that meet community needs and maximise our capacity to respond to healthcare demand - including hospital, community, home and virtual care.

Challenge:

Throughout the reporting period, there were occasions where the demand for renal chairs outweighed availability at Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital.

Outcome:

Gold Coast Health partnered with private providers, including Gold Coast Private Hospital and Pindara Hospital, to ensure renal chair demand could be met. The health service region received \$525,000 of funding to provide an additional 12 patients with access to dialysis services. Gold Coast Health also promoted our home dialysis services to encourage service uptake, free up chairs and empower patients with their own care.

Target:

Continue to develop innovative service delivery models that meet community needs and maximise our capacity to respond to healthcare demand - including hospital, community, home and virtual care.

Challenge:

Contribute to a reduction in variation from the optimal access time for patients requiring Aged Care Services.

Outcome:

Gold Coast Health has reviewed the way we care for our elderly patients. This commenced with the formation of an Aged Care Reform working group and the development of a three-year plan to improve the health service's approach to aged care.

One of the initiatives was a new service to help social workers spend more time supporting patients with complex care needs. An external provider, Aged Care Decisions, was engaged to assist patients requiring an immediate placement in a Residential Aged Care Facility. The new service helps alleviate pressure on social workers, discharge planners and other staff involved in residential aged care placements.

Target:

Continue to develop innovative service delivery models that meet community needs and maximise our capacity to respond to healthcare demand - including hospital, community, home and virtual care.

Challenge:

Achieve a 20 per cent increase in-home and/or community-based service delivery (e.g. telehealth, virtual, and in-home services.)

Outcome:

Gold Coast Health set a new record on its virtual health care journey after delivering the 10,000th telehealth appointment to Gold Coasters in less than a year, a four-fold increase on the average number of appointments delivered in the previous five years. Gold Coasters are now among the highest users in the state of video-conferenced care from the comfort of their homes.

Target:

Embed the principles of a resilient, high reliability organisation with a strong transformational culture.

Challenge:

Introduce truly transformative changes to the way technology is leveraged into a better standard of patient care by delivering projects aligned with our future-focused agenda.

Outcome:

The Transformation and Digital division was created, and its inaugural Executive Director, Sandip Kumar appointed, to deliver contemporary solutions to the complex problems faced by our modern healthcare system. The division partners with clinicians and non-clinicians to carefully examine existing challenges, then work together to design solutions to the underlying causes. Embedding sustainable change is the role of the Future Focus program which counts Rigorous Referral Management and the Crisis Now initiative among its many initiatives that will become the new way of delivering care. The Clinical Documentation to Coding initiative is a stand-out success, having exceeded its set objectives.

Contemporary processes such as innovation and change management Communities of Practice are becoming part of our 'business as usual' approach to service improvement. Other practical solutions include the establishment of an Innovation Portal to collect and prioritise ideas and improvements shared by staff working across the health service and on the frontline.

Target:

Embed research and evidence-based practice into health service delivery and patient care.

Challenge:

Increase the number of health service and clinical research projects, and the number of staff engaged in research and education using evidence-based practice.

Outcome:

One hundred and sixty new research projects commenced, and external funding for research increased by 43 per cent compared to the previous year, with a total of \$6.1 million awarded (\$4 million from commercial partners and \$2.1 million from government, not-for-profit organisations, and universities).

The majority of research activities were supported by new and existing partnerships, including 21 commercial companies, 16 universities, ten not-for-profit organisations, 18 government (including other Hospital and Health Services) and eight international partners. In addition, 13 collaborative research groups are active within Gold Coast Health, covering a diverse range of research areas, including emergency care, pharmacy, allied health, maternity and children's health, and patient and family-centred care.

The Clinical Trials Service continued and provided support to 25 principal investigators across 13 departments with 48 active clinical trials. The Anaesthetics Department established two peri-operative clinical trials in the past year. A total of 67 new trials started in 2020–2021, and approximately 2000 patients were enrolled.

Emergency medicine researchers participated in a collapsed lung study which was awarded 2021 Trial of the Year by the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance. This study showed that conservative or 'hands-off' treatment resulted in better health outcomes for spontaneous pneumothorax (collapsed lung) compared to standard interventional treatment. This result will change national and international clinical guidelines in the coming years.

The Centre for Research, Education and Translation in Eastern Australia was established and is helping Gold Coast Health to create and strengthen partnerships. Gold Coast Health is the lead organisation, with the aim of building healthier communities in regional areas through research, education, translation, and innovation in health services. Participating organisations include the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, Northern New South Wales Local Health District, the Gold Coast Primary Health Network, the University of the Sunshine Coast, and Bond, Griffith and Southern Cross Universities.

During 2020–2021, more than 157 Gold Coast Health staff engaged with the Evidence-Based Practice Professorial Unit, a joint initiative between Gold Coast Health and Bond University. Our workforce benefits from modern and innovative educational approaches in evidence-based practice training and research mentorship. In addition, our Collaborative Research Grant scheme, supported by the Gold Coast Hospital Foundation and Bond, Griffith and Southern Cross Universities, provided funding towards ten high-quality collaborative research projects totalling \$680,000.

Reflecting the high-quality research being undertaken at Gold Coast Health, 352 peer-reviewed articles have been published since July 2020, an increase of 8 per cent compared to last year. These publications included research studies that described implementing or evaluating new interventions or changes in practice that led to improved health outcomes.

Managing strategic risks

Gold Coast Health continues to experience an increasing population and demand for public health services on the Gold Coast.

We need to adopt a transformational culture that encourages agility, innovation and rapid knowledge translation if we are to ensure high-reliability healthcare delivery that meets community needs and ensures patient safety. This includes prioritising and balancing financial resources as healthcare demand grows and to respond to emerging or unforeseen local or global challenges to ensure we supply equitable healthcare that maintains and improves health outcomes. We must optimise and grow our infrastructure as healthcare demand grows so we can provide equitable, safe, reliable access to healthcare.

We face some strategic opportunities where we must optimise governance, systems, processes and models of care to underpin organisational resilience, sustainability and reputation. We will need to access, attract, retain and invest in a high-performing, diverse workforce to ensure our capacity and capability to provide world-class healthcare.

This will be achieved through collaborative 'one-system' partnerships (across sectors, agencies, partners and providers) that optimise access for our diverse community to drive equitable and improved health outcomes for the Gold Coast population.