

# far north queensland hospital foundation

AUTUMN 2025



Mareeba Hospital OPERA NUM Michelle Sutherland, ED NUM Kristen Mete, East Ward Acting NUM AnneMarie Gillman, DONM Michelle Bombardieri, seated Mareeba and Dimbulah Financial Services chair Rhonda Stevens, Mareeba Friends of the Foundation treasurer Deanna Acha and Mareeba FOF President Tom Braes.

## \$183,000 health boost

**HEALTH** care in Mareeba has received a significant boost, with more than \$183,480 worth of extra medical equipment now in place, thanks to the generosity of local donors and community organisations through the Mareeba Hospital Friends of the Foundation.

From advanced rehabilitation tools to life-saving emergency department monitors, this investment is directly improving patient care and outcomes across multiple departments.

- Philips Monitors, \$44,312, Mareeba Hospital Emergency Department, allows nurses to monitor isolated patients remotely while providing continuous observation for critically ill patients. This reduces staff workload and enhances patient safety. These were partly funded by Bendigo Bank's Mareeba & Dimbulah Community Grants Program.

- \$34,000 Giraffe Infant Warmer, funded by the Bendigo Bank's Mareeba & Dimbulah Community Grants Program, provides newborns with a state-of-the-art micro-environment to improve clinical outcomes. Equipped with in-bed scales, cardiac monitoring, and resuscitation capabilities.

- New dental chair, \$35,000, Mareeba School Dental Clinic, improves patient comfort and treatment efficiency funded by the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation.

- LUCAS Chest Compression System (\$22,902), Emergency Department, automates high-quality chest compressions, ensuring uninterrupted CPR for prolonged resuscitation attempts through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund.

- A \$15,350 Omi Vista Interactive Mobile Projector, funded by the Mt Emerald Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund, transforms

therapy for OPERA (Older Persons Evaluation Rehabilitation Assessment) patients. The projector encourages movement, cognitive stimulation, and social interaction, ultimately helping patients regain mobility and coordination in an engaging and meaningful way.

- \$16,805 Birthing Simulator to train midwives and medical staff in critical birthing procedures, helping improve emergency response times and maternal care

- Video otoscope (\$2494) for Mareeba Child and Family Health Service, enabling parents to view their child's ear drum in real time and improving diagnosis and treatment engagement.

- Vesticam Infrared Video Goggles (\$3384) revolutionise dizziness and balance disorder assessments at Tablelands Allied Health.



# Trail runners join Arrow

Walkers in the annual BDO Arrow Experience will be joined by trail runners in 2025, as the event partners with the Great Barrier Reef Masters Games to introduce a trail run event alongside its existing walking challenge.

This exciting collaboration brings together two well-loved community events, offering participants the chance to test their endurance and enjoy the breathtaking scenery of Mt Whitfield Conservation Park.

As part of the Masters Games program, the trail run will add a competitive element while maintaining the inclusive and community-focused spirit of the BDO Arrow Experience.

Hosted by the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation, the Arrow Experience is now entering its fifth year, with CEO Gina Hogan saying the partnership was a natural fit.

"Our team has worked closely with Cairns Regional Council for quite a few years in hosting this event and we're delighted that they have embraced the concept of adding the trail run to the Masters Games repertoire.

"The BDO Arrow Experience has always been about promoting health and wellbeing, and this partnership allows us to showcase our event to a broader audience while raising vital funds for healthcare in the region," Mrs Hogan said. "Adding a trail run means even more people can challenge themselves while supporting a great cause."

Cairns Regional Council Mayor Amy Eden welcomed the collaboration, highlighting the importance of events like these in encouraging active participation across all ages.

"The Great Barrier Reef Masters Games is a fantastic celebration of sport, and we're thrilled to see the BDO Arrow Experience included in the program," Mayor Eden said.

"It's a brilliant way to get out, enjoy our natural environment, and take part in an event that benefits the wider community."

The BDO Arrow Experience Trail Run and Walk will take place as part of the Great Barrier Reef Masters Games on May 31, 2025.

Participants of all fitness levels are encouraged to sign up, whether they're looking to push their limits on the challenging trails or enjoy a scenic walk with friends.



Funds raised will support the Foundation's Donate for DaNi campaign – an ambitious but achievable project to bring a surgical robot to Far North Queensland, introducing a previously unseen level of health equity to the region.

You can register for the Arrow Experience Trail Run and Walk as competitive or non-competitive. Learn more and register at [www.arrowexperience.org.au](http://www.arrowexperience.org.au) or [gbrmg.com/sports/trail-running](http://gbrmg.com/sports/trail-running)

The Great Barrier Reef Master Games will be held from 29 May to 1 June at venues across the region, with 24 sports available. Learn more about the games and register for a sport at [gbrmg.com](http://gbrmg.com)



## SATURDAY MAY 31, 2025



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Audi Centre Cairns





# Riding for remote hearts

**THOUSANDS of cardiac patients in remote parts of Cape York and the Torres Strait will have better outcomes because cyclists rode their bikes to Cooktown.**

More than \$147,342.16 worth of equipment for cardiac outreach has been provided to a team of clinicians who regularly conduct clinics throughout the Far North, ensuring care for those who can't easily travel to Cairns.

Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service Cardiac Outreach Service Clinical Coordination Manager Karyn Greensill said cardiac outreach throughout the Far North happens almost every day.

Equipment provided includes a dedicated car, ultrasound carts for echocardiogram machines, specialist cardiac ultrasound beds, and a new ECG machine.

Some of the equipment will travel with the clinicians while other devices will stay in some of the remote areas in Thursday Island, Weipa, Bamaga, Cooktown, Atherton, Mareeba, Yarrabah, and Innisfail. This equipment will be available for use by other clinicians when not

used by the cardiac outreach service.

"Providing cardiac service and diagnostic tests closer to home reduces the need for the patient to have to travel long distances to Cairns, providing care closer to home wherever we can also free up resources in Cairns to provide more acute services," Ms Greensill said.

"Staff that travel to outreach can include cardiologist, registrars, nurses, sonographers and cardiac scientists. Diagnostic tests include echocardiograms and pacemaker checks," she said.

"We have a very high attendance reviewing more than 3000 patients last year in outreach. We have provided care in 36 locations from Mission Beach to Yorke Island and west to Georgetown covering an area of more than 270,000km – We have the highest number of patients seen by any cardiac outreach service in the state and I'm sure this year will be no different.

"Providing this equipment ensure communities receive high level care. This permits rapid, accurate and non-invasive diagnosis across a broad range of cardiovascular pathologies. More than 1400 patients had an

Torres and Cape outreach clinical nurse Meghan Draper, Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service outreach clinical nurse Karyn Greensill, cardiologist Dr Steve Sutcliffe and Foundation CEO Gina Hogan.



Echocardiogram (saving 1400 trips to Cairns Hospital). We're incredibly grateful to the QSuper Cardiac Challenge for this equipment that we know is making a difference to patient outcomes every single day. It means we're able to diagnose and monitor conditions and hopefully manage them more quickly leading to better outcomes.

"Far North Queensland has higher than average rates of heart disease, including coronary artery disease, heart failure and RHD compared to urban areas. We're extremely proud of the role that the whole outreach team plays in improving access to Cardiac care for rural and remote residents across the far north.

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far north queensland  
**hospital foundation**

# Ultrasound makes veins visible

**Children who become patients to the paediatric ward at Cairns Hospital will find cannulation a much easier process, thanks to the generosity of the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation.**

With a significant donation of \$38,454, the Foundation has bought a cutting-edge Sonosite ST ultrasound system, now offering life-changing relief to children who require intravenous (IV) treatments.

Cairns Hospital Director of Paediatrics Dr Neil Archer said in many young patients, who are acutely unwell or have a chronic condition and need cannulation for IV fluid or medications, which might include chemotherapy for the treatment of cancers or some life-changing modern therapies for conditions like arthritis or inflammatory bowel disease.

"Cannulations can be very challenging not only for the child but also for their families. When a child is very unwell their body redirects blood flow away from superficial veins making a smaller target. Unfortunately, finding veins often becomes more challenging over time for young people with chronic conditions, as

veins will tend to become harder to access as they are repeatedly used," Dr Archer said.

The new ultrasound system, now fully operational in the paediatric ward and for paediatric day procedures at Cairns Hospital, has significantly enhanced the experience for these vulnerable children. Paediatric doctors, now trained in ultrasound-guided cannulation, can accurately locate veins in the children for whom cannulation is difficult, improving the chances of a successful first attempt. This not only reduces the number of needle insertions but also minimises the trauma associated with painful procedures.

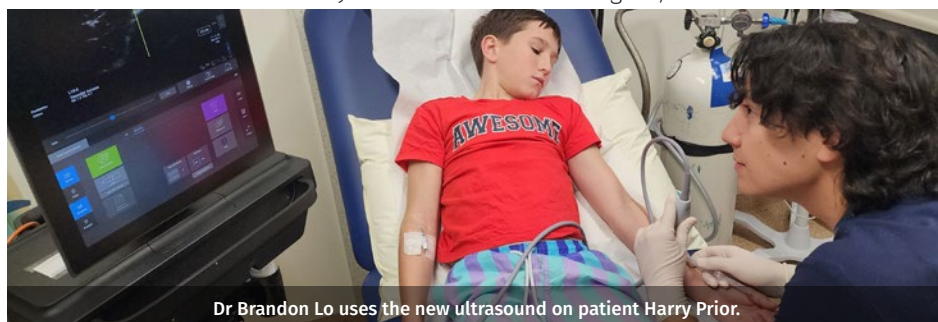
Foundation CEO Gina Hogan said it was important that as much as possible, paediatric patients in the Far North have the same standard of care as they receive in

Brisbane.

"With this new system in place, children in Far North Queensland can continue to receive high-quality care and our paediatric patients will have a much better experience with their cannulation," Mrs Hogan said.

"This new equipment represents a significant step forward in providing compassionate, child-centred care to the region's youngest patients which we believe we will support their future experiences with health care. It underscores the critical role that donations and community support play in improving the experience for families in Far North Queensland.

improve the experience for more children making their hospital experience just that little bit brighter," Dr Archer said.



Dr Brandon Lo uses the new ultrasound on patient Harry Prior.

## Parking supports health care

**Did you know? The Foundation operates the multi-storey car park at Cairns Hospital.**

The Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation proudly operates the multi-storey car park in the E Block building.

You'll find it on the corner of Grove and Digger Streets, with entry via Digger Street. Just drive in - there's no need to collect

a ticket. The system uses licence plate recognition (LPR), so your number plate is automatically logged as you enter.

When you're ready to leave, visit a pay station on Level 2 or the ground floor. Simply enter your licence plate number and pay with either cash or card. Prefer to pay at the exit? That works too.

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at any pay station or exit gate - our friendly team is ready to help.

The best part? As one of the Foundation's vital social enterprises, all parking revenue helps support the Foundation, so 100% of donations can go directly to improving health care services in Far North Queensland.

Thank you for choosing to park with us and supporting our community.





# Fish gift nets \$14,000

**In a remarkable display of Far North Queensland's community spirit, an unexpected donation has rippled into an extraordinary fundraising success for local health care.**

When the Wren Group surprised the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation with an incredible 1.6 tonnes of premium Karumba-caught mackerel, the team sprang into action. Within minutes of receiving this extraordinary news, their creative minds were buzzing with possibilities to maximise this generous gift's potential.

The domino effect of community support was immediate and heartwarming. John from Portsmouth Ice, our camera-shy local hero, didn't hesitate to lend his ice trailer – the same one that supports the QSuper Cardiac Challenge. Our amazing “Purple Angel” volunteers – Tony, Kay, Pete, and Jude – stepped forward to manage the loading, unloading, and selling operations.

The impact continued to multiply as we reached out to our health care partners. The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service kitchen team eagerly accepted boxes of fish, perfect timing for enhancing patient meals during the Easter period. The Foundation's Sea Breeze Cafe at Cairns Hospital also embraced the opportunity to create delicious specials for staff and visitors.

After securing necessary approvals from the Fisheries Department for commercial sale, the team launched our community fish sale initiative. The response was nothing short of

extraordinary – the Far North Queensland community rallied around this initiative with incredible enthusiasm, helping raise an impressive \$14,000 for local health care improvements.

This heartwarming story perfectly illustrates what we mean when we say we're “putting the pieces together for a healthier north.”

Particular thanks to Portsmouth Ice's John Eldridge for donating his freezer trailer for the weekend, without which the sale could not have happened.



## Relay raises thousands

**What a fantastic day at the CLAMS Charity Swim Relay at Tobruk Memorial Pool in March.**

The event brought our community together with swim challenges, exciting races, and a 24-prize raffle — all in support of a great cause.

A huge thank you to Masters Swimming

NQ (CLAMS) for organising such a great event, to all the participants who gave it their all in the pool and to everyone who supported through the raffle and donations.

Congratulations to the Reef Sharks team for their outstanding performance and for defending their title for the second year in a row.

Together we raised more than \$7000 for the Donate for DaNi, the surgical robot campaign. This figure was boosted via an online raffle with a 75 inch LG television donated by Hansen Yuncken.



# friends of the foundation

## Supporting our community

## Atherton

**AN anonymous local donor has paved the way for improved outcomes for Atherton cancer patients.**

Atherton Hospital Day Oncology Nurse Unit Manager Leonie Jennings said the generous benefactor approached her, asking what he could do to help make a difference for others. Stunned, she replied that an ultrasound to help cannulate patients with weak veins, and four extra chemotherapy chairs, would be of huge benefit.

"He donated the full amount of \$104,000 to the



Atherton Hospital Friends of the Foundation which was incredibly generous," Ms Jennings said.

"The ultrasound means our trained nurses can cannulate patients themselves, without having to wait for a doctor from another department, and the new chairs give us greater flexibility and this is a great win for patients – they come with charging stations, which is important when you're having treatment for up to eight hours," she said.

The Atherton South Ward also has benefited from the local community's generosity, with the arrival of new hospital beds, specifically for palliative care patients.

The four additional beds feature scales, integrated air mattresses and can even transfer a patient from lying flat to a fully upright position.

Purchased by the Atherton Friends of the Hospital Foundation, the beds also enable staff to gently and smoothly tilt the patient with minimal physical effort, helping prevent pressure injuries.

At a cost of more than \$96,000, Atherton FOF branch president Mary Fitzsimons said the beds were purchased with the proceeds from



the Atherton auxiliary, auction of aged hospital equipment, cent sales, Atherton Rotary donation and other fundraising activities.

"It's really rewarding when we see the benefits of our hard work come to fruition like this. We're making a difference in our local community – it could be us, our loved ones or our neighbours who use this equipment and we're grateful for the incredible support we receive.

"Kudos too to our amazing ladies who run bingo every week at the Atherton International Club – week in, week out they are not only providing a great service to the community, but helping fundraise for equipment such as this," Mrs Fitzsimons said.

The Atherton Friends are a subsidiary of the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation, a registered charity that fundraises for local hospitals from Tully to the Torres Strait.

## Tom Draper

**AN Atherton local's personal hospital experience has resulted in him donating \$20,000 to buy a new ultrasound machine.**

The skin on Tom Draper's hand was peeled back when a lump of timber fell on it, so being a practical sort of bloke, he drove himself the short distance to hospital.

"They saw me walk in and we kept walking – one was behind me getting all my details and then I was in a hospital bed before I knew it," Mr Draper said.

"You could see all the tendons and everything but I said to them, do you reckon we could peel that skin back over? So that's what they did, it was pretty amazing," he said. "I was back working again in a fortnight."

"They reckoned if we hadn't done that, I'd have been out of action for six months."

The former mechanic, Ford dealership owner, Grand Hotel owner, father, grandfather and great-grandfather said he felt "maybe I should make a contribution on behalf of my family who were all born here including myself", in gratitude for the care and support he received.

He and wife Laura, a retired nurse, donated the gift to the Atherton Hospital Friends of

the Foundation, a subsidiary of the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation, which bought the ultrasound for the Atherton Hospital Day Surgery unit.

"This way, the whole community gets the benefit which is something I think is pretty important. You don't want to need it, but it's good to know it's there if you do," he said.





# friends of the foundation

## Supporting our community

### Innisfail

**Babies being born through to elderly patients, will benefit from more than \$21,000 worth of new equipment that will enhance care for patients using Innisfail Hospital, thanks to generous contributions from the Friends of the Foundation and John Cole Toyota.**

Equipment bought will cater for patients across all spectrums, from birth to the aged.

Innisfail Hospital Associate Midwifery Unit Manager Holly Grant said the Cassowary Hub Maternity Service has seen great success with two new Comfortable Upright Birth (CUB) aides. "These devices provide women with a smoother, more comfortable labour and birth experience," Ms Grant said.

"The two CUBs have been a great addition for our women giving birth. They help to facilitate

a smoother, more comfortable labour and birth experience and have been used to great effect."

In addition, a perineal suturing lamp has been introduced to provide better lighting for midwives and doctors when suturing tears post-birth. The Medela portable breast pump will further support women by enabling midwives to offer breast-pumping assistance in the home, particularly for families facing financial barriers.

For Ward 2, patient safety remains a priority, particularly for older or high-risk patients. The addition of a Cura Alarm System and an Umano Medical 'ook snow' bed ensures better care and fall prevention for inpatients. Ward 2 Nurse Unit Manager Kim Humphry said the Cura Alarm System uses wireless bed and chair pads connected to a nurse call system, alerting staff to potential falls. The Umano Medical Low-Low Bed offers advanced functionality, including a 25cm low

height and built-in bed exit alarm, ensuring safer environments for vulnerable patients. "Ward 2 wishes to thank the Friends of the Foundation and John Cole Toyota for their generous support in providing this fantastic equipment."

John Cole Toyota, a proud supporter of the Friends of the Foundation, played a key role in helping fund the new Low-Low Bed for the hospital. General Manager Toni Rawson highlighted the company's deep commitment to the Innisfail community.

"We believe in driving positive change - not just on the roads, but within our communities. That's why we're proud to support the Innisfail Hospital Friends of the Foundation. This vital equipment ensures our local hospital can continue providing exceptional care to our region."



# Tech tackles deadly stingers



**The latest technology to extract venom from box jellyfish and Irukandji has arrived in the Far North – helping researchers combat injuries caused by the stingers.**

The \$25,000 bead mill homogeniser funded by the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation will allow James Cook University's world-renowned jellyfish expert Prof Jamie Seymour and PhD candidate Emily O'Hara to extract venom in greater quantities than before.

"Far North Queensland is home to two of the most dangerous species of jellyfish in the world – the big box jellyfish possesses venom capable of killing an adult human in less than two minutes," Ms O'Hara said.

She said the team at JCU's Tropical Australian Stinger Research Unit, is currently the only organisation in Australia that regularly collects and extracts big box jellyfish (*Chironex fleckeri*) venom and the only scientists in the world extracting venom from Irukandji jellyfish (*Carukia barnesi*), supplying both venoms for in-house and external researchers as well as for anti-venom production.

"We supply the only company developing box jellyfish antivenom, and our team leader and senior researcher Professor Jamie Seymour has many clinical research collaborations with Cairns' health care professionals, all stemming from the venom we collect. This includes developing novel sting treatments and most recently, using a compound of box jellyfish venom to treat arthritis," she said.

She said the equipment currently involved in the venom extraction process has limitations, inducing significant heat build-up within the venom which can affect the biological activity of the venom components.

"More technologically advanced equipment is now available which maintains the venom at a stable cold temperature throughout

the extraction process. This will yield more biologically intact venom, increasing the medical accuracy of all associated research," said Ms O'Hara.

She said the team would use an attached cryo unit to obtain a more biologically active and medically accurate venom by preserving volatile molecules within the venom.

"The beauty of this is the equipment will be continually used for years into the future, benefitting all subsequent years of jellyfish venom research."

Foundation CEO Gina Hogan said Ms O'Hara's grant formed part of \$218,000 funded by the Foundation in 2023.

"We have now contributed almost \$2 million to research in the region since 2007 and we're keen to grow this aspect of our support," Mrs Hogan said.

"Together with the hospital, we're on a quest to achieve tertiary status and you can't have that without undertaking a lot of research. Our grants range from \$50,000 to \$5000 and they are highly competitive and sought after. As well as JCU researchers, we are proud that our grants are now sought-after by hospital staff wanting to grow their knowledge and research capability."

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# Community mourns losses

The Foundation team and broader community has been mourning the recent loss of three extraordinary individuals who profoundly impacted our community.



Joyce Swinton, our cherished supporter and recipient of the 2024 Cairns Regional Council Lifetime Achievement Award, passed away after a brief illness. First appearing in 2017 with a \$300,000 donation split between cardiac and cancer services, Mrs Swinton went on to contribute \$1.2 million to health care initiatives. Her generosity, inspired by personal tragedy - having lost her daughter, husband, son-in-law, and granddaughter -

sparked matching donations from others, including a \$250,000 gift for the Cancer Care Hub that John Richardson matched. A familiar face at the QSuper Cardiac Challenge, her humble spirit and incredible impact will be deeply missed.



Former CEO Tony Franz, who led the Foundation from 2004-2019, was instrumental in transforming the organisation into the region's leading charity. His vision established successful commercial operations ensuring 100% of donations directly benefit health care. Tony's warmth, humour, and dedication to the Foundation's vision created lasting relationships throughout Far North Queensland's communities. His legendary

practical jokes, including the famous lamington bake-off, brought joy to all who knew him.

Kevin Davies, a devoted Rotarian since 2008, lived by the motto "Service Above Self."



Born into the Rotary family, his passionate commitment to community service and infectious smile touched countless lives. He is survived by his wife Pauline, sons Bradley and Liam, mother June, and brothers Cedric and Peter.

Their legacies will continue to inspire and shape healthcare improvements across our region.

WAKE UP WITH

# Johnny & Inkie



# Cafe Chat

**Name:** Jess

**Which café do you work at?** Mostly I work out of Sea Breeze but I am café manager of them both and you will often see me floating between the two.

**Have you always lived in FNQ? If not, where did you come from and how long have you been here?** I am originally from Victoria, but I've been in Cairns for more than 13 years. I love it! Cairns is my home.

**What date did you start with the Foundation:** September last year.

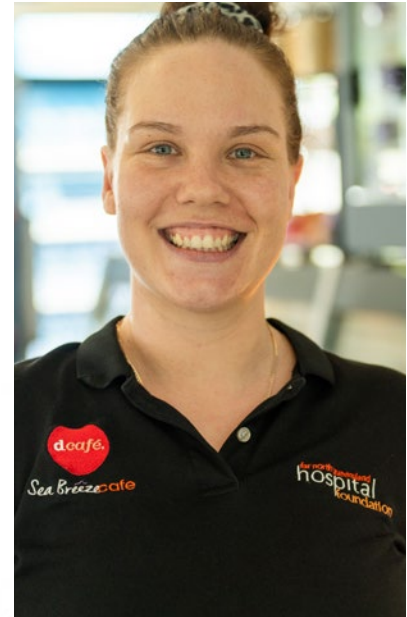
**Star sign:** Scorpio

**Interest, hobbies, past times:** I enjoy camping, fishing, dining out and the beach

**Tell us about your family – kids, grandkids, great grandkids?** Most of my family are back in Victoria, my sister and I are the only ones up here. No kids – no plans for kids. I have two nieces, and my partner has a couple also. That's all we need.

**What do you do with yourself when you are not working with us?** If I have no plans I will normally just be relaxing – beach walk or just hanging out at home having some me time

**What do you enjoy most about working with us?** It's a great place to work. Good vibes only.



## Bringing the Easter joy

**Being sick in hospital is the last thing anyone wants on special occasions such as Christmas or Easter.**

It's tough on patients, but we're also always thinking of their caregivers - the amazing doctors, nurses, cleaners, electricians, kitchen hands, occupational therapists - everyone who makes our hospitals the amazing places they are.

Our long-time supporters Cairns Central donated 85 adorable Easter bunnies, which we split between Paediatrics and Emergency, and we know they brought plenty of joy to patients.

As well, our friendly Purple Angels donned their bunny ears and cotton tails for some special deliveries of 1800 Easter eggs around Cairns Hospital.





# Vollie Q&A

**Name:** Tom Bennett

**Age:** 27

**Have you always lived in FNQ? If not, where did you come from and how long have you been here:** Yes, I have always lived in Far North Queensland

**Volunteer role:** Working on a computer

**When did you start volunteering with us?** Sometime in 2024

**How did you come to start volunteering with us:** I learnt of it from Carol

**Star Sign:** Capricorn

**Interest, hobbies, past-times:** Writing poetry, writing stories, reading books, going to cafes, playing board or card games

**What do you do with yourself when you are not helping us?** Going to a café or two, buying ingredients, cooking dinner

**If you could describe your volunteering experience in three words, what would they be:** rewarding, noisy, entertain

**How has volunteering impacted your life:** Volunteering has given me something to do for 2 mornings of the week

**What advice would you give to someone thinking about volunteering:** To go and do it. While it may take time to adjust, it is worth it

To become a volunteer, visit [www.fnqhf.org.au/volunteer](http://www.fnqhf.org.au/volunteer) or email [volunteer@fnqhf.org.au](mailto:volunteer@fnqhf.org.au)



## Reef art calms kids

**NEW artwork at the Cairns Hospital Emergency Department waiting area is helping provide a colourful distraction for children waiting to be seen.**

Produced by local artist Melanie Hava in conjunction with the Department's Cultural Safety Reference Group, the artwork features a huge array of marine life including fish, turtles and coral – that all could be seen in the Great Barrier Reef.


ED Clinical Nurse Consultant Emma Warburton, co-chair of the ED Paediatric Working Group, said many had commented that the fish were very calming, and the artwork took their minds off the reason for their hospital visit.

"We've had some great feedback from

children and their families that it really helps take their mind off whatever might be happening with their health at that time. There's lots to look at and we believe it helps calm the patient for when the clinician sees them," Ms Warburton said.

Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation CEO Gina Hogan said the Foundation was delighted to fund the \$6300 works. "As a parent myself, I know ED can be a tricky place to navigate with young children and we knew this would make a difference to the parent journey," Mrs Hogan said.





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