

Building partnerships

St Stephen's Hospital is launching two major projects to demonstrate its commitment to community engagement

St Stephen's Hospital, Maryborough has long recognised the achievement of its strategic goals requires the engagement, input and participation from the wider community.

According to General Manager Leanne Tones, the desire to achieve community engagement has been encouraged by the 'Partnering with Consumers' criteria of the National Safety and Quality Health Care Service Standards.

In May 2013, St Stephen's publically launched its 'Building Partnerships in our Community' strategy to demonstrate its commitment to the standards.

"This strategy includes a range of initiatives that are designed to encourage and build community engagement and participation," Ms Tones said.

The Community Connections program contains a number of projects designed to invite the community into the hospital environment and to connect with local people by working together.

Two major projects for community involvement are about to be launched.

A patient and family accommodation facility will be constructed in close proximity to the hospital precinct, allowing patients from outlying areas and their families to minimise transport time and costs while accessing hospital services.

Local businesses and community groups will help fund and design courtyards that are patient and family friendly, focusing on creating a "healing" environment.

"Our vision is that these courtyards will also be community places where people can connect with each other," Ms Tones said.



St Stephen's Private Hospital staff at their local NAIDOC week celebrations

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"We also engage with our community through an extensive volunteer program and we have established a consumer advisory group which assists with providing advice from a consumer perspective on how to improve our services," she added.

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St Stephen's is actively involved with its local Indigenous community to ensure participation and reflection in the opportunities that the new hospital will provide.

A working party that includes local Aboriginal elders from the Butchulla people is currently developing an

education and mentoring program to increase employment opportunities.

The hospital is also seeking input to ensure appropriate cultural reflection in the new facility.

"Our Building Partnerships in our Community Strategy has provided our hospital with the opportunity to work together with a wide range of community groups and support networks," Ms Tones said.

"Through these partnerships we seek to improve our service to our community and demonstrate our commitment through our values. It also affords us with an opportunity to share information about our services, both now and in the future, and maximise how our services will best serve our community." 

By Michelle Clunn