

Gold Coast 3rd Annual Palliative Care Conference 2024 Allied Health and Nursing

Inspiring Continuous Learning through Practical Application

Friday 14th June - Presenter Biographies



Key-Note Speaker

Venerable Tsultrim (Carla Pearce), Spiritual Care Practitioner/Counsellor, Karuna Hospice

What is Spiritual Care – and why it can be of value to anyone

Tsultrim has been a student of Buddhism since 1998 and was ordained in the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition in 2009 at Chenrezig Institute on the Sunshine Coast. She has spent time in India and Nepal over several years, taking teachings across the main Tibetan Buddhist lineages, doing numerous retreats and pilgrimages and leading courses and workshops on Buddhism, mindfulness and meditation in India, Nepal and Australia.

Tsultrim's working history includes Counselling for over 20 years; General Manager of Lifeline in Caboolture for almost 7 years; CEO of Community Action for the Prevention of Suicide (CAPS) now Suicide Prevention Pathways for 6 years; and facilitated suicide prevention training for many years. Tsultrim has been a Spiritual Care Practitioner at Karuna Hospice for the past 4 years. Tsultrim has Undergraduate degrees in Counselling and Social Policy and a Master Degree of International Studies, with a major in peace and conflict resolution. She has a strong conviction in the practice and benefits of mindfulness and meditation to ease suffering of the mind and heart.



Tracey Norling, Nurse Practitioner, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Master of Ceremonies

Tracey is a Nurse Practitioner in the Specialist Palliative Care Service. Tracey has an extensive background in oncology, haematology, and palliative care nursing. Her focus is on delivering compassionate clinical care, empowering nursing through education, and providing nursing leadership that drives system and quality improvement initiatives and change management.



Dr Jessica Maskell, State-wide Clinical Lead SPaRTa Grief and Bereavement

Master of Ceremonies

Dr Jessica Maskell (BSW, B Pub Hlth, PhD) is the state-wide clinical lead for Grief and Bereavement with the Specialist Palliative Care Rural Telehealth Service (SPaRTa). Assistant Director of Social Work at Gold Coast University Hospital. Dr Maskell has over 20 years' clinical social work experience working in paediatric and adult services in public hospitals both in Australia and the United Kingdom and more than 8 years in Operational Management managing a large team. Dr Maskell has led numerous quality improvement and change management projects and is currently responsible for the implementation of the SPaRTa Grief and Bereavement Model of Care. She has over 10 peer-reviewed publications, has supervised PhD candidates and has presented at National and International Conferences.



Emerald Brewer, Yugambah Region Aboriginal Corporation Alliance (YRACA)

Welcome & Acknowledgement to Country

Emerald is a Kombumerri-Noonuccal Traditional Custodian of the Gold Coast and North Stradbroke Island and is the youngest grandchild of Dr Graham Dillon OAM and Marilyn Dillon. Emerald is also a mother of four children aged between 4 and 14 years and works in Child Safety and lives on Country on the Gold Coast with her young family. Emerald has an Undergraduate Degree majoring in Psychology and is currently competing her Masters in Teaching (Secondary), where she hopes to become a History Teacher. Emerald's passions are in connecting with and educating people about Aboriginal history, community and culture.



Laureen Hines, Director, Healthcare Improvement Unit, Department of Health

Roll out of the Statewide Palliative Care Reform – The Changing Face of Palliative Care

Laureen has over 25 years' experience in nursing and leadership across the care continuum and within the Department of Health. As an executive leader within the Healthcare Improvement Unit, she has extensive experience in clinical service redesign and healthcare transformation. Using her formal and experiential training, Laureen has been instrumental in working with clinicians to improve access to high quality care for Queenslanders.



Lorna Chess-Williams, Senior Pharmacist, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Should we use the ladder one step at a time? The WHO Analgesic Ladder Examined

Lorna is a senior pharmacist in the Gold Coast Specialist Palliative Care Service. Lorna has extensive experience in palliative care both in the UK and Australia and is passionate about supporting patients and their families to achieve the best care possible through the optimisation of medications for management of their symptoms. Lorna's focus is on resource development and education as well as driving new service initiatives to develop the service now and into the future.



Julie Barnes, Nurse Practitioner, Specialist Palliative Care in Aged Care (SPACE), Gold Coast Health

Should we use the ladder one step at a time? The WHO Analgesic Ladder Examined

Julie is a Nurse Practitioner in the Specialist Palliative Care Service, with a passion for evidence-based practice. With a wealth of experience and a commitment to compassionate practice, Julie serves as a mentor, guiding healthcare professionals in delivering quality end-of-life care. Julie has a strong focus on holistic care and continuous learning and her leadership and expertise epitomise excellence in palliative care.



Mary Job, Radiation Therapist, Mater Health Services

The Evolving Landscape of Palliative Radiotherapy

Mary is an Advanced Practice Radiation Therapist at Radiation Oncology Princess Alexandra Raymond Terrace (ROPART) Brisbane Australia. She has over 30 years' experience as a radiation therapist, and she has been keenly involved in her specialty of palliative radiotherapy for 12 years. She was part of the interdisciplinary team that developed the nationally unique Advanced Practice Palliative Radiation Therapist role at ROPART and has worked in the role since its inception 12 years ago. She has presented and published on this topic both nationally and internationally. As well as her clinical role she is actively involved in research and education.



Kanwal Sandhu, Registered Nurse, Radiology Special Procedures, Gold Coast Health

Neurolysis in Interventional Radiology for Pain Management

Kanwal specialises as an Angiography/Interventional Radiology Registered Nurse and has had the opportunity to work in the Cardiac Catheterisation Lab and Angiography for 9 years. Kanwal is fascinated by the wide range of procedures in IR that help patients with a vast variety of conditions through minimally invasive techniques using X-Ray guidance.



Collette Morris, Senior Psychologist, Specialist Palliative Care and Persistent Pain Team, Gold Coast Health

Non-pharmacological Pain Management

Collette Morris is a Senior Health Psychologist working across the Palliative Care Unit and Interdisciplinary Persistent Pain Centre at Gold Coast Health. She graduated from the University of Queensland in 2015 and holds an area of practice endorsement in Health Psychology.

She has worked at Gold Coast Health for the last 8 years across neurosurgical/orthopaedics, rehabilitation, acute and more recently persistent pain and palliative care. Collette believes it is a privilege to walk alongside our patients during their palliative care journey and support their emotional health and wellbeing.

She has a passion for helping those with chronic health issues through psychological and lifestyle interventions. She also has a particular interest in trauma and how this impacts physical health outcomes.



Emily Mitchell – Advanced Occupational Therapist, Specialist Palliative Rural Telehealth Service (SPaRTa)

Matters of Life: Facilitating Meaningful Engagement in Palliative Care Rapid Fire Session

Emily Mitchell is an Advanced Occupational Therapist in the Queensland Specialist Palliative Rural Telehealth Service (SPaRTa) and the Chair of the Statewide Palliative Care Occupational Therapy Collaborative. Emily has had the opportunity to transform her experience as a rural generalist into specialist palliative care services to deliver statewide workforce capacity building strategy along the care continuum. Emily's primary focus is empowering clinicians to deliver values based, locally accessible specialist palliative care services through leading innovative service delivery change management and clinical education initiatives.



Renae Kelly, Advanced Clinical Advisor, Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) Palliative Care Equipment Program (PCEP)

Equipment Prescription: Exploring the Continuum of Care - Oncology to Palliative Care

Renae Kelly has been the Advanced Clinical Advisor Palliative Care Equipment Program (Occupational Therapist) at Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) since 2021. Prior to this, she was the Principal Project Officer for the Palliative Care Equipment Project, which was successful in obtaining recurrent funding. She was also an Advanced Clinical Education Officer at MASS. Renae is an Associate Lecturer in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Queensland. She has co-authored 2 papers on PCEP, both published in BMJ, with 2 more in draft form.

For over 10 years she has practiced in a Community Chronic Disease Team, with a focus on Respiratory, Cardiac and Diabetes. This team supported the Princess Alexandra Hospital Motor Neurone Disease Clinic from establishment, with over 5 years of working with clients and their families, from diagnosis to palliation and bereavement. She has presented on a variety of topics, both nationally and internationally.



Zara Hoskinson, Senior Occupational Therapist, Gold Coast Health
The Effects of Virtual Reality Interventions on Occupational Participation and Distress from Symptoms in Palliative Care Patients

Zara has been an Occupational Therapist for Queensland Health for 8 years, working across Metro South and Gold Coast Health Service. Zara specialised in palliative care acute and community for 4 years in her career. Zara successfully led a pilot study looking at the effects of virtual reality interventions on occupational participation and distress experienced by palliative care patients. The success of the pilot study and research paper has prompted further review and trials within other clinical areas. Zara strives to ensure world class equitable care is provided to all individuals across the continuum. Zara is a peanut butter addict, loves dogs, the beach and travelling.



Russell Plumbridge-Jones, Senior Occupational Therapist, Gold Coast Health

The Effects of Virtual Reality Interventions on Occupational Participation and Distress from Symptoms in Palliative Care Patients

Russell Plumbridge-Jones has been an Occupational Therapist with Gold Coast Health for 12 years working across acute and community services. Russell worked in the palliative care inpatient and community teams across 6 years of his career. He was successful in obtaining a grant for cuddle beds to ensure intimacy at end of life. This initiative has now been rolled out across many centers throughout Australia and worldwide. Russell has a passion for hospital avoidance, safe expedited discharges from hospital to ensure high quality care and quality of life regardless of where this is in their life expectancy. Russell has a passion for travel and all things Disney.



Aine McCann, Occupational Therapist, Gold Coast Health
Palliative Rehabilitation – PCU Occupational Engagement Student Project
Aine is an Occupational Therapist and has been working with the Specialist Palliative Care Service for the past few years. Aine loves working in the palliative care space and helping people to engage in meaningful occupations throughout the final stages of their lives, with a special interest in supporting individuals with brain tumors, and their families.



Tayla Shepherd, Occupational Therapist, Gold Coast Health
Palliative Rehabilitation – PCU Occupational Engagement Student Project
Tayla is an occupational therapist within the Gold Coast Health Service and has been an OT since 2017 with experience in a range of areas within Queensland Health, NSW Health and Community Paediatrics. Tayla has an interest area in working with patients and their loved ones to achieve goals that are meaningful for them particularly in the palliative care area.



Daniel Del Dot, Senior Oncology Pharmacist, Gold Coast Health
Nib's, Mab's and More - New Palliative Therapies
Daniel is a pharmacist who has worked in a variety of hospital and health service environments over the past 15 years – including in metropolitan, rural and interstate practice. His specialty is in the treatment of cancer and blood disorders, with a particular interest in the inpatient management of haematological conditions. He also has experience in the organisation of clinical trial pharmacy services both within and outside the oncology-haematology space. Daniel is currently combining his passions of teaching and digital health working as a clinical trainer within Gold Coast Health.



Dr. Dean Vuksanovic, Psychologist, Gold Coast Health
Dignity Therapy and Life Review

Dr Dean Vuksanovic is a senior clinical psychologist at Gold Coast Health. He is experienced in working with people with cancer and blood disorders and specialises in Dignity Therapy and conducting Life Reviews with patients approaching end of life. Dean also has a research interest in other psycho-oncology topics such as survivorship issues and is assisting in building a research capacity at Gold Coast Health.



Kylie McPaul, Statewide Social Worker, QLD Youth Cancer Service
Adolescent and Young Adult Legacy and Memory Making

Kylie McPaul is the Senior Social Worker for the Queensland Youth Cancer Service statewide team. She has been working within Queensland Health since 2014. Kylie has a special interest in adolescents and young adults (AYA) with cancer and is passionate about all patients having ongoing access to AYA psychosocial support. Her interests are exploring the psychosocial needs of AYAs receiving end-of-life care and further developing consumer engagement strategies.



Matilda Nicholson, Senior Social Worker, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
Holding Space, Not Judgement: A Guide to Trauma Informed Practice in Palliative Care

Matilda is a Senior Social Worker in the Supportive & Specialist Palliative Care Service at the Gold Coast Hospital. Matilda graduated with a Master of Social Work & Bachelor of Human Services through La Trobe University in 2013. Matilda has spent most of her career working in the northern metropolitan areas of Melbourne, working across community mental health, aged care, homelessness and health sectors. Matilda moved to the Gold Coast in 2023 and has been working with Gold Coast Health since, beginning in oncology outpatients and is currently in community palliative care. Matilda is studying for a graduate diploma of palliative care through Flinders University and is keen to continue to build on her palliative care passion, knowledge and skills to support patients and their loved ones.



Dawn Leigh, Social Worker, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
Empowering Choices: Advance Care Planning in Palliative Care

Dawn has been working within the Supportive and Specialist Palliative Care Team for the past four years as a social worker. Dawn previously worked in NSW Health in a rotational position including the Emergency Department and ICU. She is a highly motivated social worker with a passion to support patients and their families through the adjustment process of illness and poor prognosis. She demonstrates commitment to holistic and psychosocial care at end-of-life empowering patient's decision making and choices through a lens of respect, dignity, and compassion.



Kath Furnell, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Nursing Rapid Fire Session Facilitator

Kath is a Clinical Nurse Consultant working within the Specialist Palliative Care Community Team at Robina Hospital. Kath has over 20 years' experience in oncology, haematology and palliative care nursing both within Australia and abroad. Kath has worked in various managerial, educational, and frontline roles. Kath's passion for palliative care was realised very early on in her career with a focused interest in the ongoing development of the Community Service through education, research, and collaboration with other teams. Kath is a strong advocate for patients within the community setting, delivering ongoing support and compassionate care to patients and their families.



Lisa Tranter, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Managing respiratory secretions at end of life: it's your problem not theirs

Lisa works in the Specialist Palliative Care Service on the Gold Coast as a Clinical Nurse Consultant in the consult liaison role across the two hospitals – Robina and Southport. Lisa studied nursing on the Gold Coast and after working at Greenslopes Hospital during her graduate year, travelled to the UK and worked in London for 6 years. This was predominantly in the community setting where she found her passion for Palliative Care. On return to Australia in 2008, Lisa continued community Palliative Care on the Gold Coast and enjoyed assisting in the grief recovery programs while gaining a Graduate Certificate in Palliative Care. Since 2015, Lisa has loved working in her current role in the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service and enjoys sharing knowledge with her hospital colleagues in the acute care setting and ensuring patient's needs are met at one of the most difficult and precious times in their life.



Kylie Wolski, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Specialist Palliative Rural Telehealth Service (SPaRTa)

A Queasy Farewell: Navigating Nausea at end of life

Kylie is the CNC/Nurse Educator in the Gold Coast Hub of the Specialist Palliative Rural Telehealth Service (SPaRTa) and has Masters in Leadership/Management and Education. Kylie grew up in rural Southeast Queensland and has extensive experience working in rural communities as a generalist and specialist palliative care nurse, which has granted Kylie a unique perspective on the challenges encountered by rural clinicians and communities. Dedicated to ensuring access to exceptional and equitable palliative care for all, Kylie champions education, innovation, and multidisciplinary collaboration as essential components to achieving this goal.



Samantha Passek, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold coast Health

Let's talk about poo, baby: Bowel Management

Samantha currently works within the Specialist Palliative Care Service on the Gold Coast as a Clinical Nurse Consultant within the SPACE (Specialist Palliative Care in Aged Care Project) and Community Teams. Samantha, originally from Victoria, completed her nursing studies in Geelong and after completing a rotation in community palliative care and during her graduate year developed a deep passion for caring for those at the end of their life. For the past 7 years Samantha has worked on the Gold Coast in both oncology and palliative care. Currently Samantha is enjoying working within the SPACE Team, sharing her knowledge to improve quality of end-of-life care provided within residential aged care homes.



Jennifer Bradd, Acting QLD Manager, The Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach (PEPA)

Workplace & Experimental Learning in Palliative Care: PEPA Program

Jennifer has recently joined the PEPA Qld Team and is the Acting PEPA Qld Manager. Jennifer has worked as an administrator for over 30 years and in private medical practices for 19 years. Jennifer prides herself in providing the best customer service to others and enjoys being a part of the learning and growth journey of people she works with.



Aurora Hodges, Principal Learning & Development Manager, Centre for Palliative Care Research & Education (CPCRE)

Workplace & Experimental Learning in Palliative Care: PEPA Program

Aurora was recently promoted to the Principal Learning and Development Manager for the Centre for Palliative Care Research and Education (CPCRE) after working as PEPA Queensland Manager for 12 years.

Aurora is passionate about palliative care being provided for all people regardless of geography or circumstance and this drives her to ensure palliative care education is available to all disciplines throughout the state.



Christie Wilkinson, Senior Occupational Therapist, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

PEPA Placement Experience

Christie is an Occupational Therapist with 12 years' experience working as a rural and remote generalist and aged care clinician across the East Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia, the Northern Territory, the Torres Strait Islands and Gold Coast. Christie is currently completing post-graduate studies in Palliative Care with Flinders University.



Dr Shanthi Sarma, Psychiatrist, Gold Coast Health

Psychedelics Drug Assisted Therapy

Shanthi Sarma is the Conjoint Associate Professor of Mental Health at Bond University and Director of Neurostimulation and Mood Disorders at the Gold Coast Health Service. She is a fellow of Psychiatry of Old Age, has a clinical and academic interest in neurostimulation and is passionate about teaching. In addition to developing the ECT service she has established a public TMS, tDCS and ketamine service at the Gold Coast University Hospital. She is involved in ECT, TMS and ketamine research and is a CI on NHMRC funded multisite RCTs. She chairs the Queensland ECT committee and is an executive committee member of the RANZCP Section of ECT and Neurostimulation. She provides ECT training for doctors and nurses all around Queensland and was involved in the production of a series of freely available educational videos about ECT for consumers, carers and clinicians which have had over 175 000 views on YouTube.



**Dr Sigrun Gutjahr, Psychiatrist, Gold Coast Health
*Psychedelics Drug Assisted Therapy***

Dr Sigrun Gutjahr, is an experienced consultant psychiatrist and psychotherapist who has practiced on the Gold Coast for over 20 years in both public and private settings.

She has worked for many years with patients struggling with self-harming behaviours and runs Project AIR, a personality disorder service at Gold Coast Health.

Over the past 5 years her interest in psychedelic assisted psychotherapy increased while searching for improved treatment response in the large patient group with anxiety and depression. She trained with trainers from the Monash trial on Psilocybin assisted psychotherapy for anxiety disorders and with the principal investigators for the St Vincent trial in Psilocybin assisted psychotherapy in terminally ill patients. This study looked at death anxiety, adjustment to end of life as well as mental health. She will shortly commence as a therapist in the 3PAP trial, a multicentre trial run by Swinburne University, examining psilocybin in treatment resistant depression.

She sees patients for dynamic psychotherapy. Her special interests are treatment of personality disorders, anxiety, depression, medically unexplained symptoms and complex trauma patients.

She holds a Masters in psychotherapy and is a member of the Faculty of Psychotherapy of RANZCP.

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