

Gold Coast 5th Annual Palliative Care Conference 2026

“The Art and Science of Living Well While Dying Well”

Thursday, 11th June - Presenter Biographies



Laurelle Stalker, Senior Palliative Care Social Worker, Gold Coast Health
Session Chair: Palliative Care Big Picture & Compassionate Communities
Laurelle is a Senior Social Worker in the Specialist Palliative Care Rural Telehealth Service (SPaRTa) at the Gold Coast. Originally from Victoria, Laurelle has extensive experience as a social worker in both the health and community fields, which includes child and family work for child protection and crisis intervention for survivors of sexual assault. She has worked in paediatric and adult hospital settings for many years specialising in oncology, trauma, and palliative care. Laurelle joined the Gold Coast Palliative Care Service in 2022, to continue her passion for delivering specialised palliative care social work to patients and their significant others in the community, and more recently to rural and regional Southwest Queensland, as part of the SPaRTa Team.



Key-Note Speaker
Dr Jo Doran, Senior Staff Specialist, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
Palliative Care Big Picture
Dr Jo Doran is a doctor with over 30 years' experience in palliative care. She currently works for the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service as a Senior Consultant and is also an Honorary Adjunct Assistant Professor at Bond University Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine. Originally from the UK, Jo trained in London and completed her post graduate training in Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney. From 1999-2012 she was Area Medical Director for Palliative Care in Northern NSW.

She has been a strong advocate and champion for palliative care by being involved in policy development and implementation on local, state and national levels. She was co-author of the first National Standards for Palliative Care, and Palliative Care Service Development Models, both documents continue to underpin palliative care service delivery in Australia today.

As well as her leadership role, she is passionate about education in end-of-life care and is highly regarded as a guest speaker and lecturer. She is well known for her entertaining, original and informative talks, and always aims to challenge and inspire others with compassion, playfulness, insight and generosity. In recognition of her contribution to palliative care she was awarded the Palliative Care NSW Leadership Award by her peers, was nominated for NSW Woman of the Year by the Health Service CEO and more recently was nominated as Mentor of the Year in her current role. Her greatest love has always been the bedside care of patients and teaching, which is now the main focus of her work.



**Harpreet Kalsi-Smith, Founder & Managing Director, The Kindness Company
*Compassionate Communities***

Harpreet Kalsi-Smith brings over 20 years working with Migrant, Refugee and First Nations communities across health, healing and social justice. A skilled facilitator and nationally recognised palliative care consumer advocate, she is Board Director of Compassionate Communities Australia and founder of The Kindness Company, supporting communities to live, age and die well.



**Emily Mitchell – Advanced Occupational Therapist, Specialist Palliative Rural Telehealth Service (SPaRTa)
*In Flow: Kawa Model Activity Introduction***

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.



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

Session Chair - The Interprofessional Approach to Cancer Pain Control

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.



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

Giving Control Back: A Patient's Journey with Subcutaneous Analgesia

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.



Heleni Georgiou, Senior Pharmacist, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Giving Control Back: A Patient's Journey with Subcutaneous Analgesia

Heléni is a Senior Pharmacist in the Gold Coast Specialist Palliative Care Service. Heléni is passionate about improving equitable access to medicines, complex symptom management, and enhancing interdisciplinary care. Heléni is actively involved in service development, clinical education, and expanding the pharmacist's scope of practice within 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.



Dr Alex Soobratty, Staff Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
The High Road – A Balanced Review of Once Illicit Pharmacotherapy

Alex Soobratty is a specialist palliative care physician who has a special interest in complex pain management, holistic care of patients and compassion.

His training has taken him across the country to explore work and health conditions in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. This diverse experience has instilled an appreciation of the challenges of rural and regional communities.

Alex has the ambitious goal of transforming the way that analgesia is delivered in cancer-related pain, especially by learning from the examples of others.

Aside from his medical interests, he keeps himself grounded with his hobbies like cooking, rock climbing and a love of all things science fiction.



Tania Alloway, Senior Physiotherapist, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Non-Pharmacology Approaches to Symptom Management

Tania is a senior physiotherapist with over 15 years of experience in oncology and palliative care across the UK and Australia. She holds a Master's degree in Oncology and Palliative Care and is currently undertaking MPhil research in non-pharmacological approaches to symptom management, with plans to transition to a PhD. Tania is a valued member of the specialist palliative care team and is passionate about improving quality of life for patients through innovative, patient-centred care.



Anita Cox, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

The Elephant in the Room – Preparing Young People for the End of Life

Anita has spent 30 years working in paediatric oncology, bone marrow transplant and adult oncology departments in England and Australia in tertiary hospitals, regional hospitals and in the public and private sectors. Although relatively new to specialist palliative care, Anita is passionate about listening to consumer views and improving services and care provision accordingly and encourages patients, families and peers to get comfortable with discussing advanced care planning ASAP.



Julie Jackson, Social Worker, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
Understanding the Different Challenges Faced by Older Adults when Choosing to Die at Home

Julie is a Social Worker in Specialist Palliative Care with the Gold Coast Hospital & Health Service, with experience across inpatient and community settings. She brings a unique lens to her practice, having transitioned to social work later in life from a career in human resources. Known for her authentic and compassionate approach, Julie is passionate about inclusion, belonging, and fairness. Her practice is grounded in person-centred, strengths based, and trauma-informed care, with deep respect for each person's story. Her honours research explored the role of social capital for individuals living with a traumatic brain injury, reflecting her interest in connection, community, and the relationships that support wellbeing.



Dawn Leigh, Social Worker, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
Understanding the Different Challenges Faced by Older Adults when Choosing to Die at Home

Dawn has been working within the Specialist Palliative Care Team for the past six 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.



Tara Quinn, Senior Occupational Therapist, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
Supporting Older Adults with MND to End of Life

Tara is a Senior Occupational Therapist in the Specialist Palliative Care Community Team, and brings an extensive background of knowledge in oncology, palliative care and motor neurone disease. She has worked broadly across adult community and hospital settings and has a passion for delivering specialised palliative care occupational therapy to patients and their families. Tara also has a strong focus on empowering and mentoring junior clinicians within a complex and challenging clinical area and providing them with skills to feel confident in working with those with a life-limiting illness.



Simone Reid, MND Advisor & Support Coordinator, MND Queensland
Supporting Older Adults with MND to End of Life

With nearly six years at MND QLD as an Advisor and Support Coordinator, Simone brings professional expertise and lived experience to her role. After caring for her mother with Parkinson's for over a decade, she understands the emotional, practical, and financial challenges of progressive neurological conditions.

She supports clients and families from diagnosis through to end-of-life, providing guidance, advocacy, and tailored supports to help maintain independence and remain at home where possible. Simone also assists in navigating funding systems, including the NDIS and Support at Home programs.

More recently, she has expanded into the education space, working with providers, particularly within aged care to educate the sector and strengthen the capability of those delivering day-to-day care, improving support for people living with MND in environments where dementia care is often the norm.



Stephen Bode, Senior Physiotherapist, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Palliative Rehabilitation in Practice: Supporting Quality of Life & More Time at Home

Stephen Bode is a Senior Physiotherapist who has worked across a variety of QLD Health services for the past 16 years. He has worked in Cancer and Palliative Care settings for the last 12 years. He specialises in palliative rehabilitation and respiratory physiotherapy. Stephen has extensive experience across inpatient and community palliative care settings within the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service.



Montana Zillfleisch, Senior Occupational Therapist, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Palliative Rehabilitation in Practice: Supporting Quality of Life & More Time at Home

Montana is a Senior Occupational Therapist working part time in the Specialist Palliative Care (SPC) Community Team and part time across the Geriatric Evaluation and Management in the Home (GEMITH) and Hospital in the Home (HITH) Team. She is passionate about community-based care and specialises in supporting individuals with life-limiting conditions, as well as older adults. Her practice focuses on promoting, maintaining, and adapting independence, with the aim of reducing unnecessary hospital and residential aged care admissions where possible. Montana is committed to empowering individuals and their families to live meaningful lives at every stage, while also advocating for occupational balance to support staff wellbeing within the workplace.



Carolyn Mandersloot, Clinical Nurse Consultant – Palliative Care, Charleville Primary and Community Care

Die Laughing

Carolyn Mandersloot's comedy is like having a good biscuit and a cup of tea with your hilarious best friend. Only better. She weaves together a narrative exploring the grand complexities and challenges of the human experience- birth, life, death and parenting teenagers. Carolyn draws her experience of palliative care nursing to deftly hold a compassionate space in which audiences can laugh at both the unthinkable and the undeniable. Carolyn gives us a whole-hearted opportunity to swallow a heaping dose of laughter as the best medicine in the contemplation of our own mortality. Carolyn has performed nationally and will bring her aspects of her show to the audience offering a lightness to the conversation of death and dying.



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

Panel Chair: Interprofessional Practice

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.

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