



Children's
Hospital Foundation

The Raelene Boyle Outreach Program

Impact Report

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Executive Summary

The Children's Hospital Foundation (CHF) and Queensland Children's Hospital (QCH) are deeply grateful to the Sporting Chance Cancer Foundation for their continued partnership and unwavering commitment to delivering the Raelene Boyle Outreach Program.

This vital program supports children with cancer and their families across Queensland and Northern New South Wales. In the 2024–2025 reporting period, a number of new initiatives have been introduced to enhance patient care and quality of life:

- A central line care education package has been developed and implemented, supporting 14 families to confidently manage care at home. This has helped families return home sooner and reduce the number of outpatient visits required.
- An early Bone Marrow Transplant bloods process has been introduced, allowing blood tests to be completed earlier in the day, which in turn reduces the time families spend in the outpatient clinic.
- A parent information resource, Bottom Care for Children Having Chemotherapy, was created in collaboration with the BMT Nurse Practitioner and refined with input from families. This aims to reduce the incidence of severe nappy rash through proactive education.
- A home IV hydration program is currently in development. This will allow patients to begin pre-chemotherapy hydration at home, ultimately reducing the duration of inpatient admissions.

Thanks to the generous support of the Sporting Chance Cancer Foundation, children undergoing cancer treatment are receiving high-quality, family-centred care. Families have peace of mind knowing that their dedicated Outreach Clinical Nurse is just a phone call away, providing expert support wherever they are.

This report has been prepared by Ish Lockwood in collaboration with Nikki Ritchi, Clinical Nurse – Oncology Services, Children's Health Queensland. It outlines the outcomes and impact of the Raelene Boyle Outreach Program between July 2024 and June 2025; a busy and productive year in which more families have been supported than ever before. The program continues to reduce hospital stays and outpatient visits, help families return home sooner, and most importantly, improve quality of life for children with cancer and their loved ones.

The Raelene Boyle Outreach Program

In Australia, more than 1000 children and adolescents are diagnosed with cancer annually. Tragically, cancer claims more young lives than any other illness in the country, resulting in approximately three deaths per week among children and adolescents. Each child lost to cancer forfeits an average of 70 potential years of life, while survivors often endure severe long-term health challenges. Despite these hardships, advancements in medical research have significantly raised survival rates to over 80% (Childhood Cancer Association Australia, 2024).

The CHQ Queensland Paediatric Palliative Care Haematology Oncology Network oversees a vast region stretching from Northern New South Wales (Grafton) up to the Torres Strait, covering over 3000 kilometres of coastline. Most newly diagnosed children with cancer receive treatment at the QCH in Brisbane, where many will remain for the entirety of their care.

However, patients with leukaemia, low-risk brain tumours, or tumours under surveillance can return home for the maintenance phase of their treatment (typically 2 years), depending on proximity to appropriate health services. For families residing in regional and remote areas, the journey to Brisbane for treatments, check-ups, and consultations imposes significant emotional and financial burdens. Adapting to a new routine centred around medical appointments often means prolonged separation from loved ones.

Many families recount the challenges of balancing employment or managing family businesses while needing to be present at the hospital to support their child. Relocating to Brisbane for treatment can adversely affect finances, strain relationships, and impact emotional well-being.



The Raelene Boyle Outreach Program

The Raelene Boyle Outreach Program has funded a Clinical Nurse at QCH, South Brisbane, for many years. This support has played a critical role in easing the enormous burden for Queensland families supporting a child with cancer and working to keep kids at home while undergoing cancer treatment.

The Raelene Boyle Oncology Outreach Program allows children and young people to continue their treatment from their local hospital and health service while maintaining quality of care. The outreach nurse provides direct care and support for regional and remote families through:

- Meeting with and guiding families, assisting both the family and the community to ensure children are comfortably receiving treatment at home for as long as possible.
- Providing education and awareness to families on:
 - Administering medication, line and dressing management.
 - Providing discharge education to families so they feel safe when leaving the hospital and know who to contact if there are any issues.
 - Teaching skills to parents and carers to avoid emergency and outpatient admissions.
- Working directly with regional hospitals to ensure they have the supplies and expertise to support the patient in the community.
- Visiting schools and childcare centres to provide kids with simple ways they can care for and look out for their friends.
- Conducting home visits to children in palliative care, providing the care required to maintain their comfort. Thanks to the Sporting Chance Cancer Foundation, Queensland children are receiving the best possible cancer treatment even after they return home and with the support of the Outreach Clinical Nurse.



Key Activities

Over the past year, Nikki has conducted a large number activities and made significant progress across several initiatives aimed at reducing the burden on families and improving efficiency within the oncology service.

To support the expansion of the home hydration program, work is currently underway to implement pre-hydration at home for patients undergoing chemotherapy. For children with leukaemia, this new process will reduce the need for hospital stays by starting hydration earlier at home, allowing chemotherapy and necessary blood testing to begin sooner. This approach aims to facilitate earlier discharge times and avoid unnecessary overnight stays, which are often required when blood test results are delayed until late evening.

In parallel, a comprehensive and well-structured teaching package for central venous line (CVL) care at home has been developed and successfully implemented. This education program empowers families to take on CVL care responsibilities, easing the pressure on outpatient services. As of June 2025, the program has been offered to 13 families, with 8 already signed off as competent and confidently managing care at home.

Further progress has been made in enhancing the role of the Sporting Chance Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) through meaningful collaboration with families and the broader oncology team. The CNC now leads most of the parent education across various treatment phases, helping to alleviate the workload of the Oncology Liaison Nurses.

Additionally, a new process has been introduced to enable earlier blood testing for bone marrow transplant patients, ensuring results are available prior to medical reviews and reducing time spent in outpatient clinics. These changes have been positively received and are already delivering measurable benefits to both families and staff.



241 Queensland oncology patients and families supported through tailored care coordination and guidance.



154 education sessions delivered, including to rural and remote families, covering medication administration, discharge planning, and device education to enable safe care at home.



149 patients supported in returning to school, through the provision of school packs, phone support, and virtual meetings to ease the transition.



92 patients supported via phone, providing remote guidance and reassurance to families navigating treatment at home.



189 additional support services provided, including home visits, assistance for out-of-state and regional chemotherapy patients, and other forms of practical and emotional support.

Key Activities

Collaboration with the Oncology Liaison Nursing Team and the Bone Marrow Transplant Team has led to several initiatives that have improved the quality of life for families. Stronger relationships have also been built with regional case managers to clarify and extend the scope of the role, particularly in supporting children returning to school. One key achievement was the development of a new parent education resource on nappy care for oncology patients; an area previously lacking clear guidance. Feedback was gathered from parents and carers to ensure the final document was accurate, effective, and easy to understand.

Ongoing partnership with families continues to shape and strengthen the role. Sporting Chance nurses meet annually to share ideas and collaborate on service improvements, with the next meeting scheduled for October in Brisbane. Current efforts include reviewing and updating the patient information package, originally developed by the babies' ward, to ensure it is relevant for oncology families. Additionally, there has been an increase in requests from families wanting to learn how to insert nasogastric (NG) tubes, indicating an opportunity to further expand education and support offerings.





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Thank you

On behalf of everyone at the Children's Hospital Foundation, we extend our heartfelt thanks. Your support is making a meaningful difference in the lives of children with cancer and their families.

Thanks to your generosity, families across Queensland and Northern New South Wales are receiving expert support in their own homes; reducing the need for long hospital stays, easing the burden of treatment, and helping children return to school and family life sooner.

Because of you, children facing cancer are receiving compassionate, high-quality care closer to home. Your support is ensuring families feel confident, connected, and never alone on their journey.

Thank you for being such a vital part of this work. Together, we are helping children live brighter, healthier futures.

