

Mookai Mag.

January 2026

Now available online at www.mookairosie.org.au

1986-2026

Celebrating **40 Years** of
Culture, Community and Care.



CELEBRATING NAIDOC WEEK

CHECK OUT WHAT WE GOT UP TO!

R U OK?

EMPOWERING MEANINGFUL
CONNECTIONS - EVERYDAY

OPTIMAL MATERNAL POSITIONING

TOWARDS MORE RELAXED
AND COMFORTABLE BIRTHS

THE BCG VACCINE

PROTECTING OUR KIDS FROM TB

Cover image: WELLBEING MANAGER CARLENE MUNRO, Aunty Norma Teddy, Aunty Lillian Josiah, CEO THERESA SIMPSON, Community Communications and Programme Development Officer SAMANTHA SCHOFIELD, Aunty Monica Josiah, and Aunty Marissa Gilbo IN KOWANYAMA.

Mookai Rosie Bi-Bayan acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and pay our respects to the Elders past, past, present and emerging, the holders of our culture, memories and traditions.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this content may contain images or names of deceased persons.

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Accredited**
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From our CEO

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We're absolutely thrilled by the positive response the first edition of Mookai Mag 2025 received! Thank you to our Mookai community for your engagement and support.

I want to wrap up this year by expressing my deepest gratitude to the Mookai team. Their dedication, hard work, and passion have made a real difference—not just in our workplace, but in the lives of our clients we care for each and every day.

2026 brings new opportunities for us to continue making a positive impact for our clients and their families as we celebrate Mookai Rosie Bi-Bayan's 40th Year. Together, we will build on our successes and strive for even greater outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we serve.

I'm excited for what we'll accomplish together!

*Until the next edition...
Theresa!*

Over the past few months, we've had many clients come and visit us. Here are a few of our Mookai family faces.

OUR FAMILIES



September: Twins Tama and Tony from Thursday Island.



October: Mum Kayoka with baby Kate from Aurukun, and with big brother Latrelle. Kayoka also stayed at Mookai when Latrelle was born!



October: Mum Connie with bub and siblings from Umagico.



November: Mum Savannah with bub Xylaeah from Kowanyama.



November: Mum Jaylene with bub Daniella from Bamaga.

OUR FAMILIES



SPECIAL UPDATE: Mum Nikaela and bub Cassius were featured on the cover of our July 2025 edition with Cultural Birth Worker Jana. This was taken following his birth in April, 2025. We caught up with the family in Aurukun during our December community visits! Just look at how big he's gotten - What a strong and healthy boy!



December: Bub Sofia cradled by Mum from Weipa.



December: Mum Nanette and bub Cressida from Kowanyama.

ACHIEVEMENTS

JULY

Mookai Rosie was chosen as a partner in the CommBank Next Chapter Innovation program for 2025! The Next Chapter program is part of Commbank's broader commitment to help address domestic and family violence (DFV) and financial abuse, to support victim-survivors on their path to long-term financial independence. Over 18 months, Mookai's initiative will create a social enterprise that supports victim-survivor recovery and generates income by harnessing traditional knowledge of plants, to make medicinal healing products, empowering women with both cultural and economic strength. Such an exciting new project!



AUGUST

Congratulations to Sylvia Ah-Wang, Medical Receptionist at Mookai Family Health, for completing Certificate III in Business (Medical Administration)! QAIHC and UNE Partnerships work together to deliver this qualification, helping graduates progress into various roles – strengthening the ACCHO sector and building community health leadership. All 14 students in the workshop completed the course, following two intensive study blocks in Brisbane. Great work, Ibby!



ACHIEVEMENTS

AUGUST

Congratulations to Shirley Ramos, Clinic Team Leader, completing a Diploma of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Management! This is the first time the Diploma has been delivered in Queensland, with all 31 students graduating. Students completed the training over 6 months, participating in 3 intensive study blocks in Brisbane. QAIHC co-designed the model with HIT based on member feedback, ensuring the training was retreat-based, culturally safe, and tailored to the Queensland ACCHO sector. Well done, Shirley!



SEPTEMBER

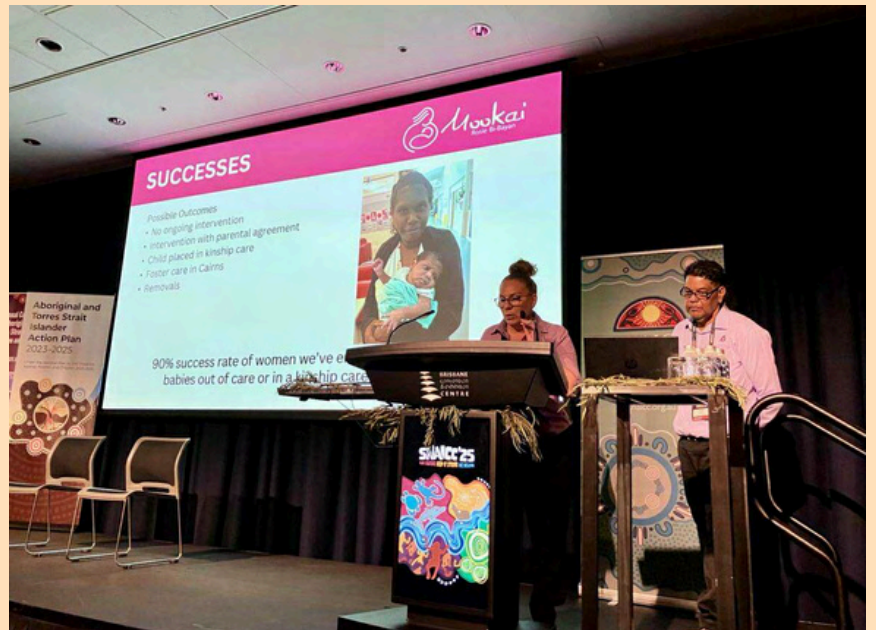
Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service (TCHHS) and Mookai Rosie launched a new Cancer Care Coordination Service! The service is designed to provide culturally safe and appropriate social and emotional wellbeing care to patients from Torres Strait and Cape York undergoing treatment. It will be a great help in supporting our mob navigate cancer journeys away from home, whether that be prevention and early detection, through to treatment, survivorship and palliative care.



ACHIEVEMENTS

OCTOBER

Mookai Rosie was selected to present at the annual SNAICC Conference, a national gathering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and family leaders and experts. With over 2000 people attending, SNAICC'25 was officially marked as the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conference in the world! CEO Theresa Simpson and Quality and Compliance Manager Walter Guivarra attended the Brisbane conference presenting on our program 'Mums and Bubs Together'. 'Mums and Bubs Together' highlights our work in child safety, attracting great interest and support from conference participants. Go Mookai!



Mookai Events



July: Cairns NAIDOC Week



July: Mookai NAIDOC Family Day

ORIGIN!!!

Here in Far North Queensland, we all take our Rugby League seriously, and at Mookai there is no more serious a time in footy than State of Origin. Our staff members even packed a scrum to demonstrate their commitment to the game

Clients and staff members alike get kitted out in the colours of the state they are loyal to, and the banter begins. This year, the mighty Maroons were under pressure after losing the first match, but true to the Qld spirit, they fought back and in games two and three, blasting the Blues off the paddock to win the series and hold that Shield high.

Queenslanders!!!





July: Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) Regional Conference on Waiben (Thursday Island)



August: For Mothers Workshop



September: RUOK Day event at Mookai Family Health



September: South Side Celebration with Hambleton House Community Centre



October: QAIHC Members Conference, Cairns



October: Teddy Bear's Picnic with Hambledon House Community Centre



October: Celebrating Diwali, Hindu 'Festival of Lights' with RN Shamma



October: Strong Families Day Out with QIFLVS



October: SNAICC Conference in Brisbane



November: Verbal De-escalation Training, supported by QAIHC



November: First Cultural Council meeting, facilitated by TCHHS



November: SEWB excursion to Yarrabah



November: SEWB activity with Aunty Yvonne



December: For Mothers workshop



December: Community visits to Weipa, Mapoon, Napranum, Aurukun and Kowanyama



December: Mayor's Christmas Charity hamper deliveries



December: Staff wrapping Christmas presents for accommodation clients



Mookai goes on tour!



Mookai has always been proud to support communities of the Cape, NPA and Torres Strait regions, and for us to best do that, we need to visit!

In December our staff met with communities and key stakeholders in Weipa, Mapoon, Napranum, Aurukun and Kowanyama.

Catching up with clients and seeing how they're doing on their health journeys is very special for us. Especially seeing how mums and bubs are doing after birthing in Cairns!



Community consultation on our services and partnerships has never been more important.

Sitting down face-to-face to yarn with community members, in community, is essential. As is meeting with the team at your hospitals and health centres, seeing firsthand what services are available and what support is needed from us in Cairns.

We know the types of formula available (and the prices) at Aurukun Island and Cape Supermarket, because we go.

We know the cost of fruit and vegetables at ABIS Supermarket in Kowanyama, because we go.

We know how treacherous the road from Weipa to Mapoon can be, because we drive it!

Thank you to everyone who made the time to meet with us. We LOVE seeing you at home.





We're excited to visit more communities soon - where should we go next???

If you see us around, be sure to say hi!

Top: Community consultation in Aurukun

Middle: Meeting with Acting Director of Nursing Weipa Multipurpose Health Service Sharyn Everett and key staff at Weipa Hospital

Bottom: Meeting with Director of Nursing Mapoon and Napranum Samantha Swanson at Mapoon PHC



THE NEXT GENERATION: STRENGTH, VISION & LEGACY

6-13 JULY 2025

Mookai Rosie is proud to share the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in celebrating National NAIDOC Week!

The 2025 theme, "The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy," celebrates not only the achievements of the past but the bright future ahead, empowered by the strength of our young leaders, the vision of our communities, and the legacy of our ancestors.

This week was a busy one for our team, joining events in the community as part of Cairns NAIDOC, as well as hosting our own!

Together, we walk forward, honoring where we've come from and looking boldly to the next generation who will carry NAIDOC and their communities into the future.



Ancestral Lines by Jeremy Morgan Worrall

Take a look at what we got up to!

CAIRNS NAIDOC MARCH



FRIDAY IN THE PARK





FOR MOTHERS



MOOKAI NAIDOC FAMILY DAY











R U OK? aims to empower everyone to meaningfully connect with the people around them and start a conversation with those in their community who may be struggling with life.

ASK YOUR MOB, IN YOUR WAY, R U OK?



Behind every statistic is a story, a family, a life full of promise. Too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families lose loved ones to suicide every year. The pain runs deep – across cities, towns, and remote communities.

Mookai Rosie brought together community and stakeholders as part of its R U OK? Day luncheon on Thursday, 11 September.

Mookai staff, clients, industry partners and community members enjoyed fresh pizzas made by the Mookai kitchen team, mindfulness activities, discussion and support from the SEWB team.

Thank you to QAIHC for helping make this important event possible!



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples share a special connection to Country and to each other, through culture, community and shared experience. Regardless of where we live, or who our mob is, we can all go through tough times, times when we don't feel great about our lives or ourselves. That's why it's important to always be looking out for each other.

If someone you know is doing it tough, they won't always tell you. Sometimes it's up to us to trust our gut instinct and ask someone who may be struggling with life, 'are you OK?', in our own way. You don't need to be an expert to reach out - just a good friend and a great listener.



“The event was about more than a shared meal. We wanted to create a safe and welcoming space to raise awareness about mental health and suicide prevention, and to encourage meaningful conversations within our community.”

CEO Theresa Simpson





If a life is in danger or you're concerned for your own or someone else's safety, please call 000. Family and friends can also call the services below for advice and assistance on how to support someone who is struggling with life.

Other supports include:

13 YARN 13 92 76 13 yarn.org.au
24/7 national crisis support line for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Beyond Blue 1300 224 636 beyondblue.org.au
Call 24/7 for advice, referral and support from a trained mental health professional.

Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au
24/7 free counselling and support for people at risk of suicide, carers and those who are grieving.

Mensline 1300 78 99 78 mensline.org.au
Call 24/7 for telephone and online support for men with emotional health and relationship concerns.

1800RESPECT 1800 737 732 1800respect.org.au
24/7 free counselling and support for people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence.

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 kidshelpline.com.au
24/7 free and confidential phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5-25.

QLife 1800 184 527 qlife.org.au
Phone and online anonymous LGBTIQ+ support and referral. 3pm - midnight local time every day

Lifeline 13 11 14 lifeline.org.au
Text support: 0477 13 11 14
Call 24/7 for crisis support and suicide prevention services. Text support is also available.

You can also yarn with our Mookai Rosie Social and Emotional Wellbeing team.

**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

ruok.org.au/strongertogether

HEALTH ALERT

BOWEL CANCER



Bowel cancer is Australia's second deadliest cancer.

Indigenous Australians are significantly less likely to participate in screening than the non-Indigenous population. This means, many are more likely to be diagnosed at an advanced stage, which is much more difficult to treat successfully.

We desperately need to increase screenings in our communities.

Regular screening can help detect the early signs of bowel cancer, often before symptoms appear. If found early over 90% of bowel cancers can be successfully treated.

YEP, WE SEND POOP IN THE MAIL!

Testing for bowel cancer is simple, private and free.

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program helps with early detection and prevention.

People aged 45 years and over are recommended to complete the free, at-home bowel screening test (called a faecal occult blood test, or FOBT) every two years.

Did you know screening for bowel cancer can be done in the privacy of your own home?

When you receive your free test in the mail, it's important to do it, even if you feel well. Often bowel cancer shows no symptoms.

=> Follow the instructions in your test kit to collect two small stool samples.

=> Post it back using the reply-paid envelope provided.

=> Wait for your results - you'll be contacted with the outcome.

The test will look for traces of blood in your poo, which could be an early sign of bowel cancer or another health condition.

If your result comes back positive, it is not a cancer diagnosis. There are lots of reasons you could have blood in your poo, and most of these are not related to cancer.

It's important to see your local health team as soon as possible so they can discuss your result and get you the right information.

*You can also access the test directly at your local health centre.

WHAT

The bowel connects your stomach to your rectum where waste material (poo) is stored until passed out from the anus (bum).

Bowel cancer develops from the inner lining of the bowel and is usually preceded by growths called polyps. These can become invasive cancer if undetected.

If symptoms do appear, they can include:

- blood in your poo, or in the toilet bowl
- a recent and ongoing change in your toilet habits. This includes looser poos, very bad constipation and/or if you need to poo more often than usual
- unusual tiredness or weight loss
- stomach pain

If you notice any of these symptoms, best to speak with your local health team.

WHO

- If you're aged 50 to 74 you'll automatically receive a free home test kit in the mail every two years to the address listed with Medicare.
- Ages 45 to 49: You can now request a free kit to be mailed to you.
- If you're under 45 but have symptoms, a family history, or concerns, speak with your GP.

If you've delayed or skipped your screening, now is the time to catch up.

If your test kit expires, you lose it, or you never got one, you can reorder online.

You can also access the test directly via your local health centre - just ask! Whatever is easiest for you and your family.

It might be a little awkward, but it's not taboo to talk about poo!

Bowel cancer is not an 'old man's disease'...

1 in 9 new cases occur in people under 50 years of age, with those aged 40-49 accounting for OVER HALF (56%) of total diagnoses.



Your kit contains everything needed to do the test



1 x participant details form



2 x collection tubes



2 x toilet liners



1 x ziplock bag



1 x reply paid envelope

Protect our kids from tuberculosis (TB)



Do we even have TB in Australia anymore?

Actually, yes, we do.

IN 2024, QUEENSLAND EXPERIENCED THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF TB NOTIFICATIONS IN 30 YEARS, A 30% INCREASE FROM 2023. THE AVERAGE RATE OF TB DURING THE 5-YEAR PERIOD (2020-2024) WAS ALSO 15 TIMES GREATER IN FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES.

TUBERCULOSIS (TB) IS A BACTERIAL INFECTION THAT CAN AFFECT ALMOST ANY PART OF THE BODY BUT MOST COMMONLY AFFECTS THE LUNGS. IT IS SPREAD ONLY FROM PERSON TO PERSON AND CAN AFFECT ALL PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, BUT BABIES AND VERY YOUNG CHILDREN (LESS THAN 5 YEARS OF AGE) ARE AT GREATEST RISK.

ALTHOUGH OVERALL CASE NUMBERS ARE RELATIVELY SMALL, THE IMPACT OF ONGOING TRANSMISSION, CLUSTERS AND OUTBREAKS CANNOT BE OVERESTIMATED.

TB TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE, BUT YOUR BEST PROTECTION IS PREVENTION!

THE BCG VACCINE IT IS NOT PART OF THE CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION PROGRAM.

HOWEVER...

IN QUEENSLAND, BCG VACCINATION IS RECOMMENDED FOR:

- ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER NEWBORN BABIES
- CHILDREN AGED LESS THAN 5 YEARS LIVING IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES
- DEPENDING ON THE RISK OF ACQUIRING TB, THERE CAN BE BENEFITS IN VACCINATING OLDER CHILDREN, WHICH CAN BE DISCUSSED WITH A DOCTOR

THE BCG VACCINE DOES NOT PREVENT SOMEONE BEING INFECTED WITH THE BACTERIA THAT CAUSES TB, BUT IT PREVENTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISEASE.

BCG VACCINATION WORKS BEST IN BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN TO PREVENT SEVERE TB DISEASE AND COMPLICATIONS, SUCH AS TB MENINGITIS.

THE BCG VACCINE IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE IN ALL COMMUNITIES. THATS WHY MOOKAI FAMILY HEALTH, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TORRES AND CAPE HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SERVICES HOLD BCG CLINICS ONCE A MONTH! CALL TO BOOK IN!

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BCG VACCINE AND/OR OTHER IMMUNISATIONS, YARN WITH YOUR LOCAL HEALTH TEAM OR OUR TEAM AT MOOKAI FAMILY HEALTH!

OPTIMAL MATERNAL POSITIONING

Maternal Health Program

Part of the training our Cultural Birth Workers undergo is optimal maternal positioning, also referred to as OMP.

OMP focuses on bringing alignment and mobility within the mother's pelvis, enabling the baby's cardinal movements to facilitate labor progress. This means developing tools and strategies to promote an easier, shorter, more relaxed and comfortable birth for our clients!



A more comfortable birth? Yes, please!



Perhaps the most important part of OMP is being able to empower our women to be more aware of bubs positioning and movements during pregnancy and labor, which increases prenatal bonding.

It also supports recognition of labor patterns so both our Cultural Birth Workers and our women are more aware of what is normal, and when and what OMP interventions can be used to optimize the pelvis towards a smoother delivery process.

Our team are guided in this training by internationally trusted birth professional Ginny Phang-Davey.

Through increased knowledge, understanding and confidence, we can empower our mothers to sit in the driver's seat and help steer their own births!

Did you know, OMP is also known to reduce caesarian rates?!?





October 2026

Mookai
Rosie Bi-Bayan

40
years
1886-2026
anniversary

In preparation for our 40th birthday, we're putting the call out to our beloved Mookai community.

If you have photos, memorabilia, or stories, from your engagement with Mookai over the past 40 years, we'd love to hear from you!

Please get in touch with us and we'll set up a time to meet. Thank you for helping us with this very special event.

We're excited to honor and share our history with you, celebrating the achievements of Mookai Rosie Bi-Bayan.

Phone: (07) 4081 7500

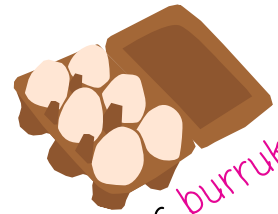
Email: reception@mookairosie.org.au

Yarning with Auntie Rosie

food *mayi*
and
drink *nukal*



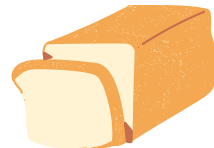
grapes *kangka*



eggs *burrukuy*



milk *kuray-kuray*



bread *burin*



water *bana*



chicken *juki-juki*



tea *jiyi*



pineapple
banabul



potatoes *budida*



banana *jadamu*



sugar *juka*



onion
nganyin



passionfruit
kajinbur



rice *janban*



jam *kalkandil*



pumpkin
bulubarr



meat *minya*



soup *milkul*





Here to

Support

You.

Mookai Family Health is for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Families from Cape York, NPA and Torres Strait communities whilst they are in Cairns.

Culturally safe health care for the whole family - men, women, and children!

**Call 4081 7500 to
yarn with one of
our friendly team
about our services.**

We also offer on-the-day appointments and transport!



105 Balaclava Rd, Earlville QLD 4870
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