



Media release

Member for Gaven and Minister for Housing
The Honourable Meaghan Scanlon MP

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Queensland's first kidney dialysis bus to provide life-saving treatment

- Queensland's first dialysis bus will provide life-saving treatment to Gold Coasters and visitors at locations throughout the community.
- \$1.6 million in funding for new mobile kidney dialysis service under the Connected Community Pathways program.
- The service is a joint initiative between the Palaszczuk Government, Queensland Health, Gold Coast Health, Kidney Health Australia and the Lions Club of Robina

Gold Coasters and visitors with chronic kidney disease who need regular dialysis will soon be able to access the Gold Coast Big Red Kidney Bus for life-saving treatment.

The Gold Coast Big Red Kidney Bus provides dialysis in the community for Gold Coasters and visitors as well as teaching people how to do their renal treatment at home.

The initiative is a partnership between Queensland Health, providing \$1.6 million funding towards medical operations and Kidney Health Australia providing the refurbished bus and respite management.

The bus service is made possible thanks to \$300,000 of fundraising, almost \$250,000 of which came from the Lions Club of Robina.

The Gold Coast Big Red Kidney Bus includes two dialysis chairs for home haemodialysis training and one for respite, an access ramp, a kitchenette, and individual entertainment units.

The service will operate from August.

Quotes attributable to Member for Gaven Meaghan Scanlon, Minister for Housing:

"The Palaszczuk Government is providing \$1.6 million for the joint initiative between Gold Coast Health and Kidney Health Australia, as part of the Connecting Community Pathways program.

"It builds on a \$2.1 billion investment we've made into health on the Gold Coast in this Budget to help deliver the new Coomera Hospital, GCUH sub-acute expansion, and a \$16.5 million Robina Hospital Emergency Department expansion which will create 20 new beds.

"Each week, more than 250 people receive renal dialysis at Gold Coast Health facilities but now the new mobile dialysis service brings this lifesaving kidney treatment and education closer to their home.

"We know that the number of people requiring haemodialysis on the Gold Coast is growing each year, and going to a hospital for every treatment, three days a week, can be a huge imposition on their lives.

“Thirty-seven per cent of dialysis patients on the Gold Coast carry out their renal treatment at home after three to six months of dialysis education from specialist nurses.”

Gold Coast Health’s Clinical Director of Specialist Medical Services, Dr Carl de Wet quote:

“Home dialysis can offer better life-style advantages, improved flexibility for work, social activities, and quality of life. This initiative will help more patients to self-care.

“The Gold Coast Big Red Kidney Bus will provide a valuable education service for specialist nurses to teach patients how to carry out their own renal treatment at home.

“This service allows us to leave the in-hospital dialysis services for those who are acutely unwell and to provide care, training, and support in the community.”

Kidney Health Australia CEO, Chris Forbes quote:

“The Big Red Kidney Bus is in high demand in Victoria and New South Wales and has been eagerly awaited in Queensland.

“Our Big Red Kidney Bus mobile dialysis program is much loved by our kidney community as it gives them the freedom to move beyond their treating clinic and visit other parts of Australia – a freedom so many of us take for granted.

“It also gives families and carers the flexibility to go on extended holidays while their loved one is provided first-class medical care for free, at the holiday destination.

“We are excited to be working in partnership with the Queensland Government and Gold Coast Health’s expert medical team to support home dialysis training and expand Kidney Health Australia’s respite program into Queensland.”

Quotes attributable to Robina Lions Club Chairman, John McIntyre:

“It has been five years of sausage sizzles, raffles and fundraising efforts to get the Gold Coast Big Red Kidney Bus on the road.

“Kidney disease does not discriminate; it affects the young through to the elderly and our aim is to provide a better quality of life for those living with this devastating disease.”

“This project has been driven by Robina Lions Club in partnership with Lions Club International, Lions Clubs across Australia and our fantastic community support.”

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Background:

People living with kidney disease who are interested in booking the respite chair are encouraged to contact Kidney Health Australia on 1800 454 353 or visit kidney.org.au/bus for more information.

Haemodialysis is a process in which a machine acts as the kidneys and cleans the blood. It requires a cannula, a small tube, into a vein and can take four to five hours each treatment.

Key statistics:

- On average, 66 people in Australia die with kidney disease each day – more than breast cancer, prostate cancer and road accidents.
- People on dialysis spend on average 60 hours a month strapped to a machine to stay alive.
- 1 in 10 Australians have signs of kidney disease. This increases to 1 in 5 for First Nations people.
- 90% of kidney function can be lost without any symptoms – it is a silent killer.
- Chronic Kidney Disease is not curable.

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