

North Queensland

Kidney Transplant Service

Kidney Transplant Social Work Booklet

My Social Worker is:

My Advance Health Worker is:



The **North Queensland Kidney Transplant Service** acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waters, and seas on which our health facilities are placed.

We pay our respects to Elders past present and recognise the role of the current and emerging leaders in shaping a better health system.



Welcome to your transplant journey.

This booklet will provide you with important information and helpful tips for you and your family get ready for a kidney transplant at the Townsville University Hospital (TUH).

The call for a transplant can come at any time, you may wait a few years, or it may be a few weeks, which is why it is important to start getting ready now.

We hope that this booklet answers any questions and helps you feel ready and in control when you receive the call.

What's inside this booklet

Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme	2
Travel	6
Accommodation	8
Associated Costs	10
Carers and Support	12
Legal Matters	14
Social, Psychological and Emotional Well-being	17
Helpful Links	18

Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS)

What is the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme?

- The Scheme provides financial support for you to get specialist medical treatment when the service is not available within 50km of your closest public hospital or public health facility.
- Eligible patients can apply for travel and/or accommodation subsidies to help with the costs of getting to and from the closest public hospital or public health facility that provides the specialist medical treatment.
- Patients who need help when travelling can also apply for a patient escort to travel with them.
- The PTSS does not cover the full costs of travelling for specialist medical treatment. Any costs incurred in addition to approved subsidies are at the patient's expense.
- Allow the travel office to book travel and accommodation, this ensures the patient can maximise the subsidy scheme.

Am I eligible for PTSS?

- You must be a Queensland resident and be eligible for Medicare to receive PTSS subsidies.
- You must also have a valid referral for an approved PTSS specialty, that is not available within 50km of your nearest public hospital or health facility.

What subsidies are available?

Travel and accommodation subsidies are available for eligible patients and their patient escort. Patients should apply for PTSS as early as possible prior to travel.

Examples of the subsidies available include:

- 30 cents/kilometre subsidy if traveling in a private vehicle to and from TUH
- A return flight, train or bus fare for the patient and an approved carer.
- Eligible patients can submit one retrospective application for assessment for travel undertaken in the last 12 months.
- The approved travel subsidy is for the most clinically appropriate and cost-effective mode of transport available, and is calculated using the rates on the table to the right.



If you need support reach out to the NQKTS Social Worker or the Advance Health Worker on (07) 4433 7076.

Your guide to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS)



Step

1

Referral

Have you received a specialist referral located more than 50 km from your local public hospital or public health service?

Check if you are eligible for a travel subsidy using the Eligibility Checking tool online or ask your doctor for more information.

To register, complete three simple forms:

Form A: Patient Registration

Patient Vendor Banking Details form

Form B: Travel Referral – ask your doctor to help fill this out

Submit these forms for assessment:

Online (Form A only)

To any Queensland public hospital or public health service in person via email, fax or post

Step

2

Assessment

Your application is assessed against the PTSS Guideline to decide eligibility or alternatives to travel.

You will be notified of the outcome of your PTSS application.

ASSESSMENT
COMPLETED



Step

3

Booking

After you have received confirmation of approval via email, you can book your travel or accommodation.

- If you need support contact your local public hospital or public health service to help book your travel or for accommodation assistance.
- If you choose to book your own travel or accommodation, remember to keep all your tax invoices.



Step

4

Attendance

When you attend your appointment, ask the specialist or a representative to fill out **Form C: Appointment attendance**.

If you are staying with family or friends, complete and sign **Form D: Accommodation confirmation**.

Remember to keep these forms to submit a claim later. If you need assistance booking your return travel home, contact your local public hospital or public health service.



Step

5

Make a claim

Gather the following documents to make a claim:

A completed and signed **Form C: Appointment attendance**

All tax invoices for travel and accommodation bookings

Submit these documents for assessment:

To any Queensland public hospital or public health service in person, via email, fax or post

Please ask your local travel team for further information.



Subsidy payment

Subsidy payment should be received within 30 business days of submitting all necessary and correctly completed paperwork.

Final step

6



For more information visit:

www.health.qld.gov.au/ptss or call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
Open your smart phone's camera and point it at the QR code.



Queensland
Government

Your next steps

- **Talk to your local hospital's travel office to learn how PTSS works in your area.**
- **Talk to your local Transplant Coordinator or Social worker to find out what forms you need to sign to register.**
- **Check the PTSS website for up-to-date travel support info: PTSS QLD Government**
- **Download the TUH Accommodation Guide to look at local accommodation options that might be covered by PTSS: Search "Townsville Hospital accommodation guide" or visit Support services | Townsville HHS.**

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Travel



What hospital will you go to?

Townsville University Hospital (TUH) is one of two hospitals in Queensland doing adult kidney transplants. When a kidney becomes available, you will get a phone call from your kidney doctor, which may come at any time of the day or night, and you will need to prepare to travel to Townsville.

How will you get to Townsville University Hospital?

If you choose to fly to Townsville, you will need to arrange transport from the airport to the hospital.

Townsville University Hospital is approximately 22 minutes away from the Airport, so you will need to either catch a taxi, hire a car, or organise a lift from the airport if you have friends or family who live in the area.

Useful information:

- Taxis are available at the airport (costing approx \$40).
- If you choose to drive to Townsville, the hospital has car parking available. A TUH parking pass can be purchased at the main entrance of the hospital.
 - \$5 for 24 hours
 - \$10 for a 7 day pass
 - \$50 for a 3 month pass. This pass can be renewed for \$30 every 3 months.
- TUH volunteers offer a free buggy service if you require assistance, that runs during business hours to assist you and your support person to move around the hospital grounds.

After your discharge from hospital

You will need to go to the hospital to see the transplant doctors each day for approximately 2 weeks, then 2-3 times per week for the next 4 weeks.

- It is important to have a plan for how you will get to your appointment as you will not be able to drive for 4-6 weeks after your transplant
- Taxi vouchers are not available at TUH however if you have a **Taxi Subsidy Card**, this can be used. If you want to know more about the **Taxi Subsidy Card – Search Taxi Subsidy Scheme QLD government**.



Consider applying for a Taxi Subsidy Card now if you meet eligibility criteria, as this process takes time for approval.

Your next steps

- **Talk to your transplant coordinator can help you make a travel plan that best suits you, and because sometimes things don't go to plan, talk to them about a Plan B.**
- **If driving, plan your route. Know where to park and have a backup plan incase things change.**
- **If using taxis or rideshares, plan for how you will cover the costs.**

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Accommodation



After your transplant, you will need to stay in Townsville for approximately 6 weeks. There are limited accommodation options on the TUH grounds, and they are subject to availability.

Before leaving home, you should make your accommodation booking directly with the accommodation facility of your choice, unless your booking has been made in advance by your local hospital's travel office.

- Staying with family or friends is a practical option if available after your transplant.
- The **Townsville University Hospital Accommodation Guide Booklet** provides a list of recommended accommodation options. Remember to discuss your Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme eligibility with your local transplant coordinator as part of your transplant plan.



Your next steps

- Talk to your local hospital's travel office to learn how PTSS works in your area.
- Contact your preferred accommodation to explore out of pocket expenses.
- Plan for out-of-pocket costs and how you will pay for this.

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Associated Costs



Kidney transplant is publicly funded in Australia; however, you will still need to pay for things such as transport to appointments, parking, medications, food and drink and accommodation.

- If you don't have access to paid leave, you may qualify for a short-term sickness allowance. If you are eligible, the NQKTS Social Worker can assist you with Centrelink applications and medical certificates.
- Medication costs generally stay the same after transplant - the PBS Safety Net Scheme helps to limit out of pocket expenses for people who need a large number of medicines. Speak with your local Pharmacist to see if you are eligible.
- If your health improves after your transplant, or your carer no longer needs to help you full time, you will need to contact Centrelink as it may change your eligibility for disability support or carer payments.
- Hospital staff cannot assist you to pay bills or manage your money, this needs to be organised ahead of time to ensure this is looked after.
- Ensure you and your support person have a working mobile phone to ensure contact can be maintained throughout the hospital transplant journey.
- Consider setting up a transplant savings plan and automatic payments for bills such as rent, electricity and phone to avoid feeling stressed while you are away from home.
- If you have private health insurance, income protection or superannuation insurance, be sure to check your policies to understand your coverage and if there are any gap fees or extras.

Your next steps

- Talk to your employer about your leave options and entitlements as part of your planning.
- Plan for expenses and set aside money in preparation for your transplant.
- Setting up a transplant savings plan, this can be as little as \$1 a week. This can help pay for transport, accommodation gaps.
- Contact your private health insurance, income protection or superannuation companies to understand your coverage or fees.
- Set up automatic payments for bills. This can include payments like rent, electricity or phone bills.
- You can seek financial counselling early to ensure you are prepared – services like Lifeline or Salvation Army can assist for free or visit MoneySmart online for budgeting tools and tips.
- Enquire about PBS Safety Net with your pharmacist to help reduce costs for medications.

Carers and support



If you do not have anyone who is able to assist you as a carer in the weeks after the transplant, please speak with the NQKTS Social Worker.

The carers' role in the first few weeks after transplant is important and is to provide everyday support and practical care and assistance.

You may wish to share the care responsibilities with other family members and friends by splitting up days/weeks or daytime/overnight care responsibilities. Their help is most needed after being discharged from hospital.

A carer can help you with managing day to day activities like:

- Cooking and shopping
- Home maintenance
- Transport
- Emotional support
- Travel and accommodation,
- Managing calls and messages
- Getting you to your daily clinic visits.

Carers will need to take time off work or other commitments during the first few weeks or months following your transplant. If a letter is required for an employer to confirm the patient's circumstances and post-transplant care requirements.

Your next steps

- Think about who might be an appropriate carer for you during this time, chat to family and friends about this.
- Be prepared for a change of plan – have a plan B.
- Consider options for carer supports: Support for carers – QLD Govt.
- Chat to the NQKTS social worker or your local dialysis social worker for further information and guidance.

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Legal Matters



It is important to make sure any legal matters are up to date, and that you have discussed your documents with your doctor before your transplant.

There are three key documents to consider before undergoing kidney transplant surgery, the NQKTS Social Worker can help explain these documents to you:

1

Advanced Health Directive

Directions about what your wishes are for your future health care.

2

Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA)

Allocation of decision-making powers if you are too unwell to decide for yourself.

3

Will

What happens to your money and belongings if you pass away.



You can change your documents at any time, but you will need to get help from a Solicitor, Public Trustee or Justice of the Peace (JP) - available on a Tuesday, next to the information desk at Townsville University Hospital.

Your next steps

- **Start planning early, don't wait to review and finalise these documents.**
- **Seek assistance from a Solicitor, Public Trustee or JP when creating legal documents.**
- **Make sure you have a copy of your legal documents and share them with your GP and hospital.**

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Social, Psychology and Emotional Well-being

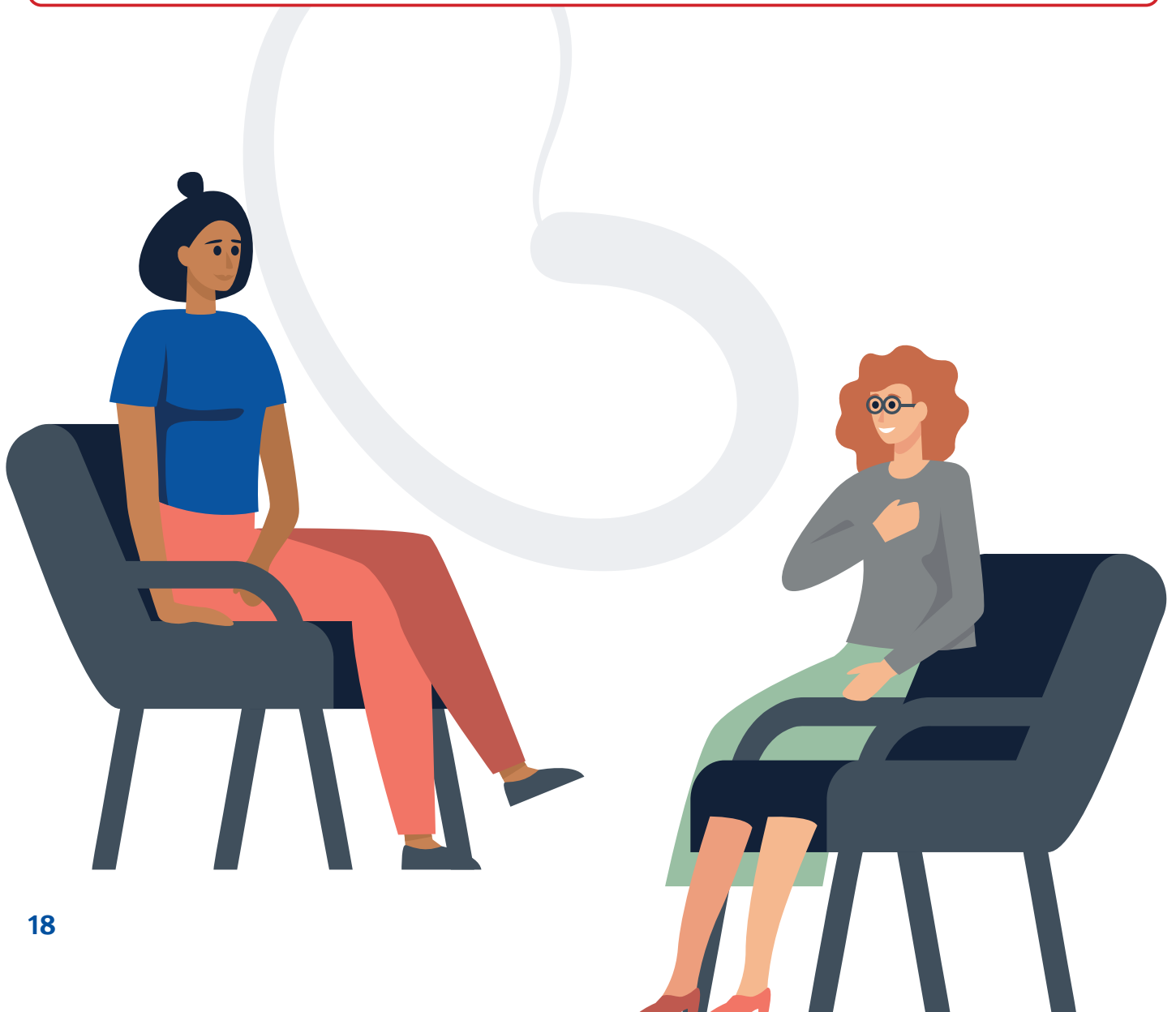


Transplants can improve your health and life, but the process of being referred for a kidney transplant, waiting for a transplant, navigating the Townsville Hospital, having transplant surgery, and then coping with everything afterwards can create a feeling of mixed emotions.

- Donor correspondence (contact with the deceased donor's family anonymously) is available after your transplant. We understand that there can be a range of emotions tied to this matter. If this is something you would like to do after your transplant, the transplant coordinators will give you information and guidance on how to write your letter.



Reach out for assistance – if you're feeling overwhelmed, please feel free to speak to the NQKTS social worker or psychologist.



Your next steps

- **Talk to your doctors and the transplant coordinators about what to expect on your transplant journey. Having a clear plan will help to make the experience less stressful.**
- **Utilise supports and resources such as the transplant seminar, support groups or websites such as Kidney Health Australia, Queensland Kidney Transplant Service and Donate Life.**
- **Start creating a plan for your transplant and your future afterwards.**

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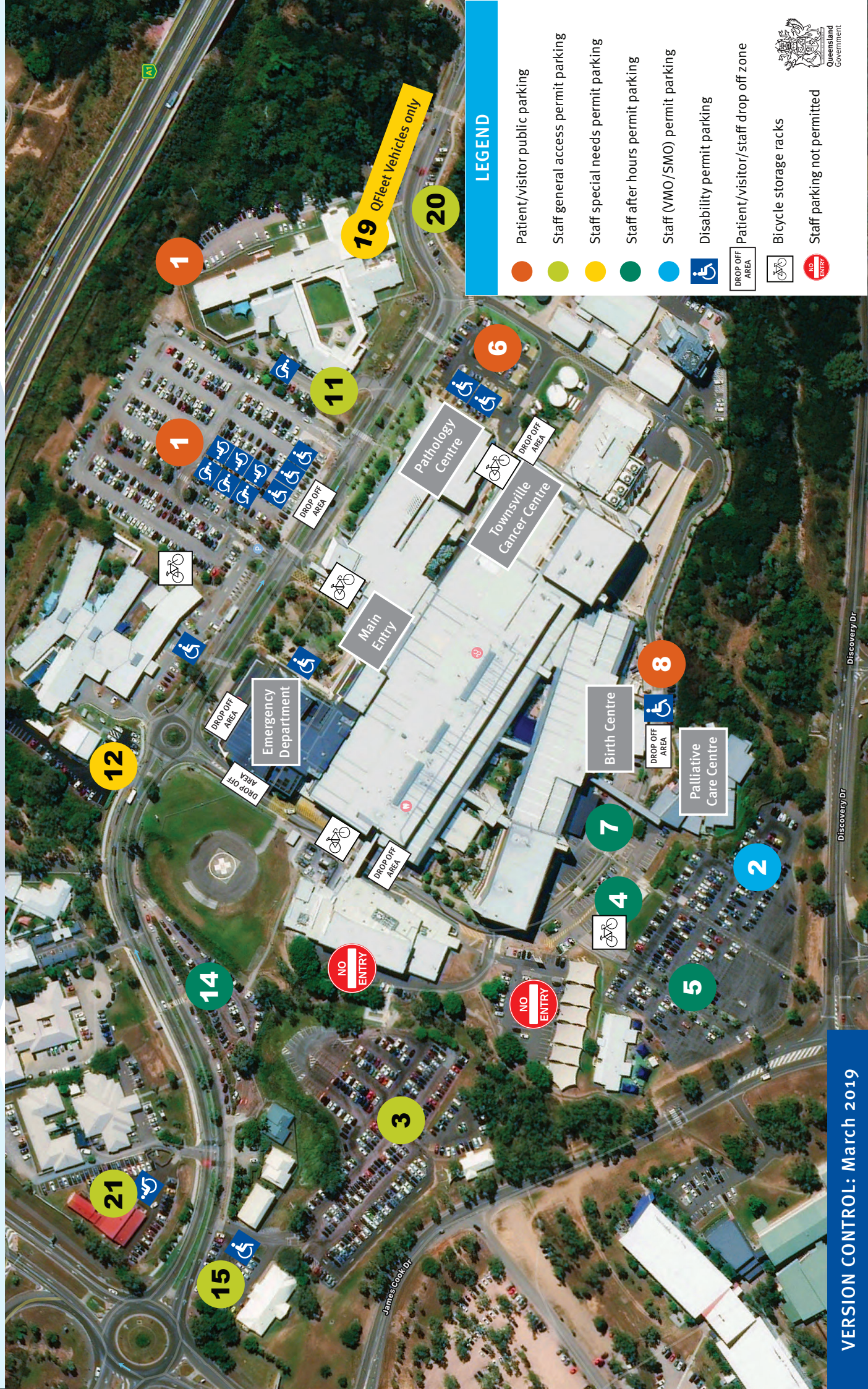
Helpful links

Ask Izzy A useful website: food, money, public toilets, accommodation, emergency housing, legal, and more. Website: askizzy.org.au	Life Options - to help people with kidney disease Website: lifeoptions.org	Lifeline - for personal and financial counselling Phone: 13 11 14 -24 hours Website: lifeline.org.au
Transplant Australia Website: transplant.org.au	Kidney Support Network Phone: 1800 358 797 The Queensland support association for people with kidney disease, and their families. Website: ksn.org.au	Home and Community Care Excellent information about supported care housing options, local respite centres, community care agencies such as Blue Care, Anglicare and Ozcare; and other sources of help at home: Website: qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/community-home-careservices/community-care-program Website: myagedcare.gov.au
Best and Smart Money Advice Tools and ideas – for savings, retirement, budget planners: Website: moneysmart.gov.au	Meals on Wheels Phone: 1300 90 97 90 Website: qmow.org	Gourmet Meals Phone: 1300 112 112 Website: gourmetmeals.com.au
Lite N Easy Phone: 13 15 12 Website: liteneasy.com.au/healthy/index.asp	Diet Factory Phone: 1800 065 255 Website: dietfactory.com.au	Help at Home for People in the Community Website: qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/community-home-careservices
Help with Disabilities Website: qld.gov.au/disability/adults/getting-help website: ndis.gov.au	Help for Depression and Mental Health Website: qld.gov.au/health/mental-health/help-lines Website: BeyondBlue.org.au Website: depression.com.au Website: askizzy.org.au	Relationship Support Website: raq.org.au
Salvation Army Website: salvos.org.au	St Vincent de Paul Website: vinnies.org.au	Volunteering Website: volunteeringqld.org.au

Townsville hospital is local to the following locations:

- 20 minutes from the CBD
- 5 minutes from Stockland Shopping Centre
- 6 mins to Centre link in Aitkenvale
- 4 mins to Earthcare Dry Cleaners laundromat (Shop 3 Riverside shopping centre, Douglas).

Townsville University Hospital Campus Car Parking Map



LEGEND

- Patient/visitor public parking
- Staff general access permit parking
- Staff special needs permit parking
- Staff after hours permit parking
- Staff (VMO/SMO) permit parking
- ♿ Disability permit parking
- DROP OFF AREA Patient/visitor/staff drop off zone
- BICYCLE Bicycle storage racks
- NO ENTRY Staff parking not permitted

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