



# STRONG & PROUD

jimbelunga





### **Celebrating 25 years of Jimbelunga Nursing Centre**

From humble beginnings in 1994 to the modern facility it is today, Jimbelunga Nursing Centre boasts a proud history and commitment to providing quality care for all our residents.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) Brisbane co-founder and nursing pioneer Aunty Pamela Mam and her late husband Uncle Steve Mam played a vital role in its establishment.

In the early 1990's work began to rally for an Indigenous nursing centre and along with

her husband Uncle Steve, Aunty Pamela and fellow ATSICHS founders worked tirelessly to advocate for a centre which provided a range of aged health care and support services for the community.

After many years of searching for land, Jimbelunga Nursing Centre was officially opened on 25 November 1994 at Eagleby on Brisbane's southside under the umbrella of ATSICHS Brisbane.

Originally catering to the needs of the Indigenous community, word of mouth travelled quickly in the region. After several years Jimbelunga opened its doors to the wider community.

*Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following publication may contain images of deceased persons.*







*The name Jimbelunga originates  
from the Yugambeh language  
meaning 'a place for friendship'*





# *Our journey*

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When Jimbelunga first opened its doors in 1994 there was a main building Casuarina and three hostels: Jacaranda, Bunya and Wongai all named by Auntie Pam.

The opening of Jimbelunga was a day of great joy for staff celebrating Indigenous culture complete with traditional food including witchery grubs.

In the early 90's the Eagleby region was considered part of the Gold Coast and the population in South East Queensland was booming. Word travelled fast with Jimbelunga gaining a reputation as a leader in the aged care sector.

By its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Jimbelunga had grown to a 55 bed centre and was at full capacity.

Following a funding submission, in late 2013 ATSICHS Brisbane received \$12.5m from the Federal Government to redevelop Jimbelunga.


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Jimbelunga Nursing Centre was affected by the 2017 floods associated with Tropical Cyclone Debbie. Flash flooding caused by the nearby Logan River resulted in many road closures in the area and forced staff to overnight at work. Renee Cole the Director of Nursing, was one of several staff members who slept overnight at Jimbelunga, which was all taken in their stride







This major redevelopment project catered for growth in the area as well as nursing and technological advances in the sector. It resulted in an increase of 19 new beds, growing from 55 to 74. It also included a significant upgrade in showering facilities with every room, whether single or shared, now featuring a separate bathroom.

Residents were able to watch the progress of the construction site from the main dining room and watch the site develop.

In 2017 The Hon Ken Wyatt, the then Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health opened the redevelopment.

**Wongai** ningau, a common name of *Ningaui ridei*, is a tiny carnivorous marsupial native to the arid open grasslands of inland Australia. Their diet is mainly small insects, and occasionally larger prey such as spiders, grasshoppers and cockroaches, which they forage for at the ground and in clumps of spinifex.

The **Bunya** Nut (*Araucaria bidwillii*) is native to south-eastern Queensland especially the Bunya Mountains National Park. The bunya nut tree is a huge tree which bears a crop only after the tree itself is around 100 years old and then it crops once every two or three years.

**Jacaranda** Tree (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*) This fast growing tree is an elegant specimen with soft green foliage which turns yellow in winter before shedding. Flowering occurs in Spring when purple bell shaped blooms are produced featuring stunning purple flowers. They have been growing in Brisbane since the 1800s.

# *A changing landscape*

Great pride was taken from the very beginning to maintain the grounds at Jimbelunga.

Well before the site was developed, Uncle Steve mowed the block of land every fortnight which turned into a family affair with children Mukubi and Rendy in tow.

With a deep and spiritual connection to land, every consideration was taken to the outdoor spaces to meet the needs of our residents and visitors for entertaining areas and general grounds.

Today, all our rooms open up into a private courtyard overlooking landscaped gardens which offer a connection to the country without leaving their room. The high ceilings, big windows and bright colours bring the outside

in, offering natural light and plenty of sunshine.

One of the stand-out features of Jimbelunga is the six acres of landscaped grounds which are fully accessible to all residents. The well-manicured lawns are an inviting spot for relaxation or a pleasant stroll and have been designed with comfortable outdoor seating as well as level pathways. The secure gardens are lovely to walk through and provide a space for family members to gather, have a BBQ or allow grandchildren to play in the playground. There are undercover areas with seating and lighting for day and evening use.

Included was a cultural area with a dry rock river, an array of native plants, a dancing circle and a Kup Murri pit.











# *Aunty Pamela Mam*



Aunty Pamela Mam is one of the co-founders of the Jimbelunga Nursing Centre and a true pioneer in nursing.

Born in the Richmond in the 1930's, she is a descendent of the KuKu Yalanji nation.

Her passion for nursing was realised at a young age and she completed formal training at Townsville General Hospital.

She became one of the first Aboriginal Registered Nurses in Queensland and became a midwife at Brisbane's Royal Women's Hospital and worked at the Royal Children's Hospital.

With over a decade of nursing and midwifery experience, Aunty Pamela was determined and dedicated to provide primary health care to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander community and in 1973 she co-founded the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service.

Aunty Pamela worked tirelessly behind the scenes over the years with fellow Indigenous health workers to establish Jimbelunga, a "home" for the elderly, a place of friendship, with all the support needed, rather than a "nursing home".

She was inspired to establish a welcoming nursing centre after meeting a friend who was left stranded with a disabled daughter in need of urgent health care.

Aunty Pam advocated for the health and wellbeing of all residents at Jimbelunga and while working in management, her mantra was "once a nurse always a nurse".

*“Once a  
nurse  
always  
a nurse”*







With an initial six month management role at Jimbelunga, Aunty Pam was at the helm of Jimbelunga for 14 years as Facility Manager.

Over the following decades, Aunty Pam's wisdom and dedication to healthcare was admired by all staff members and she quickly became a mentor to younger staff members.

In 2018 Aunty Pamela Mam received an honorary Doctorate from Griffith University for her service to Indigenous health and support services.

In August 2019 his Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Her Excellency Mrs Hurley officially opened the Uncle Steve and Aunty Pamela Mam Wing at Jimbelunga in their honour.









## Uncle Steve Mam

Uncle Steve was born at St Paul's Village on Moa Island, in the near Western group of the Torres Strait, in 1938 to parents William Jerimiah Mam and Geripo May Mam (nee Lee).

He played a significant role in numerous Indigenous community organisations and representative bodies and believed a strong foundation for individuals, families and the community was essential.

He was a co-founding member of the Aboriginal and Islanders' Community Health Service (AICHS) Brisbane, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and Black Community Housing Service.

He was elected Regional Councillor of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) from its inception in 1989 until its finish in 2004.

He was a strong and very passionate supporter of autonomy for Indigenous people, self-determination and economic development, and always said it was important to "listen, understand, ask questions and take action".

The turning point in his life was the 1967 referendum when he became a political activist and made the decision to commit himself to helping

Aboriginal and his own beloved Torres Strait Islander people.

He was also committed to fighting for Kupai Omaska, the act of Traditional Adoption, to be recognised legally in Australia.

Uncle Steve was heavily involved in managing Warriors Rugby League team, supporting Brisbane Natives and Kangaroos along with many community organisations, Inna Torres Strait Islanders Incorporation, Born-Free Club, Kambu Medical Centre, Yalangi Preschool, the Dreamtime Cultural Centre, the National Secretariat of Torres Strait Islanders, the National Indigenous Development Alliance (NIDA) and the Wagga Torres Strait Islanders Dance Company.

In 1979 he became a founding member and State Chairperson of the National Aboriginal Conference (NAC) and was a Native Title political supporter during the famous Mabo High Court hearings.

He was named NAIDOC Male Elder of the Year in 2005.

He passed away in April 2016 and is survived by his wife, Pamela, his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.







# Our people

Our people are the heart and soul of what makes Jimbelunga a special place. Whether it's providing specialised nursing care or having a dance or laugh with a resident, we think it's the little things that count and the moments we create.

From the very beginning staff have maintained that working at Jimbelunga is like joining a large family. Over the years our residents have been blessed to have many long serving staff.

Jimbelunga's longest serving staff member is Colleen Tonking, who started on 1 February 1996 as a cleaner. After six months she started a Certificate 3 in Aged Care and moved to the role of Assistant in Nursing (AIN). Over the years Colleen has specialised in caring for people with dementia and also become a mentor to many young staff members.

Current Director of Nursing Renee Cole is another example and one of the many staff members who joined Jimbelunga at the start of their careers. Renee joined Jimbelunga in 2002 as an Assistant in Nursing.

Her career progressed throughout the years as did her dedication to the residents of Jimbelunga.

Renee gained qualifications as a Registered Nurse and today is the Director of Nursing.







*It's not  
a job, it's  
about being  
part of a  
community*

Director of Nursing Renee Cole



As staff members, our look and feel has always been important. Staff uniforms were introduced across Jimbelunga by Aunty Pamela Mam shortly after she started her role as Facility Manager. These were introduced to identify staff and create a sense of belonging and unity for each department.

Much like fashion anywhere, look how these designs have changed over the years.

The first uniform was from Millers clothing store and included polo shirts with each department's name embroidered on the front. Throughout the years Indigenous artwork and graphics were also incorporated in the designs.







The latest staff uniforms were designed by Brisbane artist Casey Coolwell from Chaboo Designs. Casey is a Quandamooka, Nunukul woman from Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) with links to Eulo and the Biri people of Bowen.

Today, the current uniform includes four different leaf designs. Each staff area has a different shirt colour and a dominant leaf design. Non-clinical and managerial staff are the exception with no dominant leaf and a design that incorporates all aspects of Jimbelunga.



# *A place of friendship*



From NAIDOC Week and Christmas, to birthday celebrations and special visitors, coming together to share special events is important to the Jimbelunga community.

Putting together fun and engaging events and activities has always proved a big hit and over the past 25 years Jimbelunga has played host to hundreds of events, big and small.

Led by dedicated lifestyle and activities coordinators, some of the activities include weekly concerts and entertainment, walking groups, arts and crafts, outings as well as religious services for many denominations, Easter, St Patrick's Day and many more.







*Over the years we've had many special visitors to mark major events at Jimbelunga.*

In 2010 Jimbelunga played host to The Diversional Therapy Association of Japan to learn about aged care services in Australia and how different therapies are used to improve the health and wellbeing of residents.



In the late 1990s Bronwyn Bishop, the then Minister for Aged Care paid the centre a visit.



April 2016 former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull visited Jimbelunga to mark the completion of stage one of the new build renovations.











November 2017 Minister for Indigenous Affairs  
Senator Nigel Scullion and Federal Member Bert  
van Manen MP visited Jimbelunga to check out the  
progress of the expansion and to learn about how  
we look after our elders.

August 2017 The Hon Ken  
Wyatt, the then Minister for  
Aged Care and Minister for  
Indigenous Health opened  
the redevelopment.





August 2019 the Governor-General of Australia David Hurley and his wife Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley visited Jimbelunga to unveil the naming of a building wing in the honour of Aunty Pamela Mam and Uncle Steve Mam.





● Sergeant Les Stonestreet with Jimbelunga Nursing Centre resident Phylis Zimsen.

RF525037

## Fundraising benefits

### Visits boost residents

AS part of a new friendship initiative at Eagleby's Jimbelunga Nursing Centre residents will keep in touch with the outside world through regular visits from two community leaders.

Diversional therapist Alwyn

Strong said Federal member for Forde Kay Elson and Eagleby police sergeant Les Stonestreet had "adopted" the residents.

She said the two had agreed to make regular visits to the centre to talk about what was

going on outside the centre gates.

Those who call Eagleby's Jimbelunga Nursing Centre home have also been encouraged to spend more time together outdoors with the planting of a friendship tree.



■ Vietnam Veterans Women's League president Barbara Voss presents equipment to Jimbelunga Nursing Centre residents Gus Chamber and Ruby Swan.

THE Vietnam Veterans Women's League worked hard at its fundraising last year and the residents of

Jimbelunga Nursing Centre, Eagleby, were the beneficiaries.

Thanks to the league's craft

sales, a new tradition of them.



## Women honoured



DT10451  
● Federal Member for Forde Kay Elson, left, with Jimbelunga Nursing Centre resident Averil Barrett.

GOLD Coast leaders visited women at the Jimbelunga Rest Home at Eagleby for International Women's Day celebrations.

The leaders who included councillors, parliamentary representatives and celebrity activists were part of a Cavalcade of Womanhood Cavalcade who visited women in isolated places to thank them for their contribution to the community.

International Women's Day organiser Josephine Tobias said the event gave the women who would otherwise miss out the opportunity to be acknowledged and heard.

"For years now, we've been running fabulous International Women's Day celebrations on the Gold Coast but we're acutely aware that many women cannot join us," she said. "On behalf of us all, the cavalcade will express our gratitude to the women who lived for most of the past century — the women who worked so hard for the rights we enjoy today."

centre



DT62578  
sent to Jimbelunga Nursing

the residents now have  
DVD player and selec-  
of discs to entertain

## Richard's hair-raising waxing



Jimbelunga Nursing Home diversional therapist Alwyn Strong takes a pair of scissors to Nurse Richard Neilson.

EAGLEBY'S Richard Neilson will make the Leukaemia Foundation's annual fundraiser on May 4 to 6. "I've always wanted to do it," he said. "I thought this might help raise a bit of money and it's all for a good cause."

Hyperdome during the annual fundraiser on May 4 to 6. "I've always wanted to do it," he said. "I thought this might help raise a bit of money and it's all for a good cause."

The Shave for a Cure is one of Australia's biggest fundraising events.

Mr Neilson will hold various activities in the lead up to the May event to "rattle the tin". Phone 0424 707 816 to help.



## *Our residents*

Our residents are our reason for being at Jimbelunga and we believe it's a privilege to play such a significant role in their journey.

We strive to make a difference in the lives of our residents and whether it's assessing their healthcare plan, sharing a story and listening to our residents or having a laugh, they are at the core of everything we do.

Our residents vary in ages and health conditions, from high to low care. We also pride ourselves on the fact that our residents have travelled far and wide to live at Jimbelunga.

We consider our residents family and have many residents who have been with us for many years.

Uncle Jeff Broome is just one of our much-loved residents at Jimbelunga who has been with us for the past 20 years. Uncle Jeff is a passionate family friend of Aunty Pam and the late Uncle Steve and works hard to honour their hard work over the years to our community.

Hailing from the local area, Uncle Jeff has always been a dedicated community member and prior to his arrival at Jimbelunga he enjoyed playing an active role with Neighbourhood Watch.

Today he is a true asset and devoted member of the ATSICHS family.













[jimbelunga.org.au](http://jimbelunga.org.au)