

# LESSONS LEARNT FROM OUR INAUGURAL VIRTUAL GRADUATE NURSE PROGRAM

Yvette James – Nurse Educator [BN, MA Nursing]

**Feedback was sought from participants and key stakeholders to evaluate the inaugural 12-month graduate nurse program. A vital element to improve the standard of nursing education programs is to regularly seek formal feedback to enable content review. Providing a quality learning experience will ultimately build a capable workforce which will impact patient outcomes positively.**

## Our goal

To identify the strengths and weaknesses of a virtually delivered Graduate Nurse induction program, with the aim of redesigning and delivering an exceptional program.

## What it is

The 12-month graduate nurse program run throughout our Australia wide outpatient facilities, commenced in February 2023, with a small cohort of six nurses based at six sites throughout Queensland and South Australia.

Formal evaluation of the program consisted of surveying Nurse Managers, Preceptors and Graduate Nurses at two critical time points, 12 weeks and 16 weeks.

## Our Results

### Feedback received from Graduate Nurses:

- Holding difficult conversations with patients
- Delivering patient education
- How to stay connected with their fellow graduate nurses

### Feedback received from Nurse Managers/Preceptors:

- All sites identified that the program was comprehensive and wanted to re-employ their new nurse graduate at completion
- Concerned with having time to complete competencies

### Feedback from Nurse Educator leading Graduate Nurse Program:

- Ensuring program content is in alignment with critical clinical competency time points
- Difficulty with maintaining connection with Graduate Nurses and Preceptors
- Limited interaction by Graduate Nurses at education sessions

## Outcomes

### Changes to the 2024 Graduate Nurse Program:

- Additional practical sessions focusing on difficult conversations and patient education
- One-on-one virtual support to be offered to Preceptors and Graduate Nurses to assist with competency completion
- Weekly mandatory TEAMS meetings with Graduate Nurses
- Live discussion boards at the end of each education session

**The purpose of the evaluation process and program review ensures that the Graduate Nurse Program meets the needs of the learner and support staff. A high-quality program will build confident and competent graduate nurses who are able to be retained by the organisation.**

## Icon Group's Graduate Nurse Program offers a comprehensive specialised training and development opportunity for new nurse graduates.

### For the first four weeks:

Our Graduate nurses undergo two days a week of theory lessons and three days are spent working clinically at their dedicated Cancer Centre. The theoretical content complements the competencies being signed off during their practical experience.

### After the first four weeks:

The graduates work on the floor full time – learning, gaining new skills and finding their way in working more independently as a Registered Nurse, while having regular check-ins with their managers. The Icon Cancer Centre site and lead nurse Educator continues to provide strong clinical supervision and mentorship.

### A four-week rotation in radiation oncology:

Throughout the year, the graduate nurses work primarily in Icon's haematology and medical oncology centres. Toward their six-month milestone, they are provided with the opportunity to undertake a 4 week rotation into radiation oncology. This well-rounded view into the world of oncology nursing ensures a broader skill set and comprehensive understanding of the various treatment modalities and patient care approaches and setting them up for a career in the oncology setting.

## Let's hear from our team

### A supportive team...

I couldn't ask for a better team at South Brisbane, from the nurses to the doctors, they all have been so welcoming and supportive. I have enjoyed every single moment with Icon, the team is very caring and compassionate towards all patients.

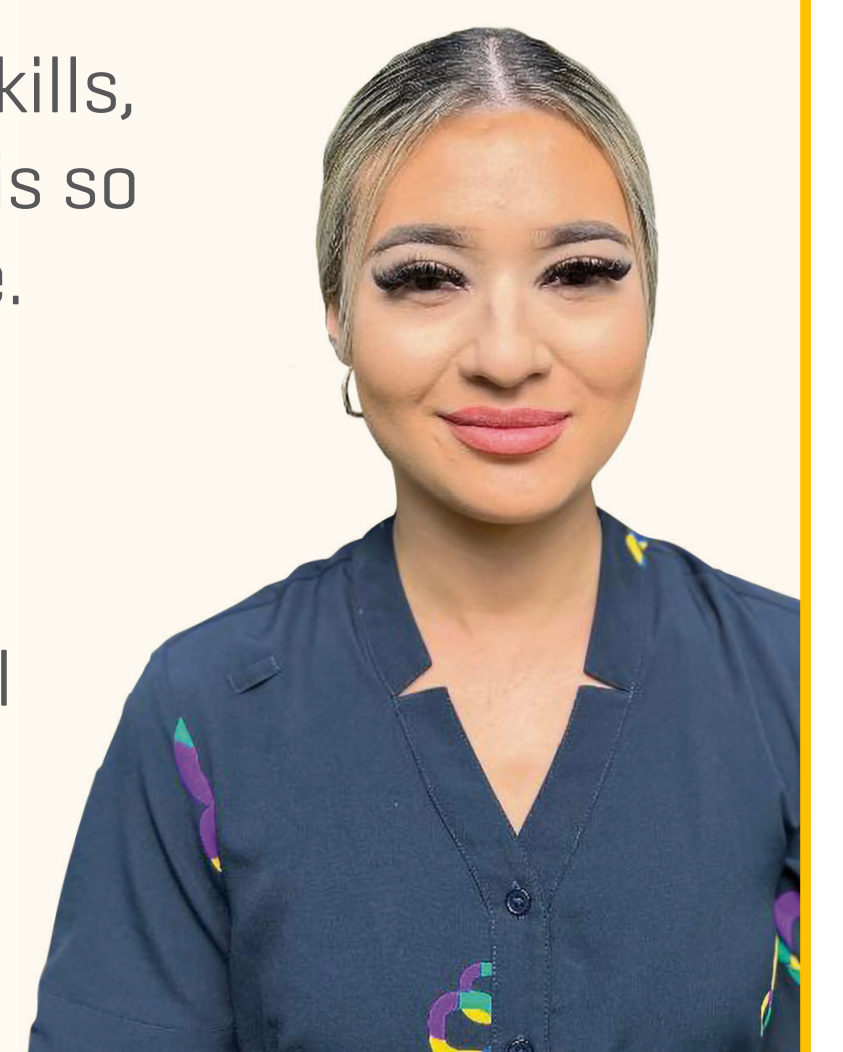
### A highlight and key learning from the program...

This year has been full of highlights, from advancing clinical knowledge and skills, to having patients appreciate the care and support you give to them – which is so special. I will definitely be taking on all my learnings into my career as a nurse.

### Some advice...

My advice for graduates and new nurses is give everything a go and ask heaps of questions. At Icon, everyone from the education team, nurses and doctors all are willing to help and educate you to either advance your skills or knowledge.

Angela Barlow, South Brisbane, 2023 Nurse Graduate



### A supportive team...

I have worked in a very supportive team at The Wesley, which ultimately made my transition from student to Registered Nurse [RN] not so scary. Everyone has been so patient with me as I learn – and I ask a lot of questions, so their patience has been very appreciated. The team at The Wesley work towards a "team-first" motto – no one hesitates to lend a hand when it is needed.

### A highlight and key learning from the program...

A highlight for me is the relationships I have built with both my patients and my colleagues. I feel my biggest takeaway was time-management. I have taken a grasp on this and hope to keep this up. I learnt about finding a routine/groove which works for me and then rolling with it.

### Some advice...

Oncology nursing can be really tough and highly emotional, but it is so rewarding and definitely worth it. My advice to new and graduate nurses is:

1. Don't be afraid to ask questions – what you don't know you don't know.
2. Seek feedback from peers or mentors.
3. Take any and every opportunity to learn and develop your skills.
4. Take time to reflect at the end of each day.
5. Adopt a good self-care routine.

Annie Kennelly, Wesley, 2023 Nurse Graduate



## Collaboration

Thanks to the 2023 Graduate Nurses for their dedication, feedback and support.

Thanks to the support from the Associate Director of Nursing – Education – Leisa Brown for her leadership, fellow nurse educators: Danny Kokanovic, Amanda Connolly; Jade Fitzgerald; Jenn Manning, Nurse Managers, Clinical Facilitators, site staff and the external presenters.