

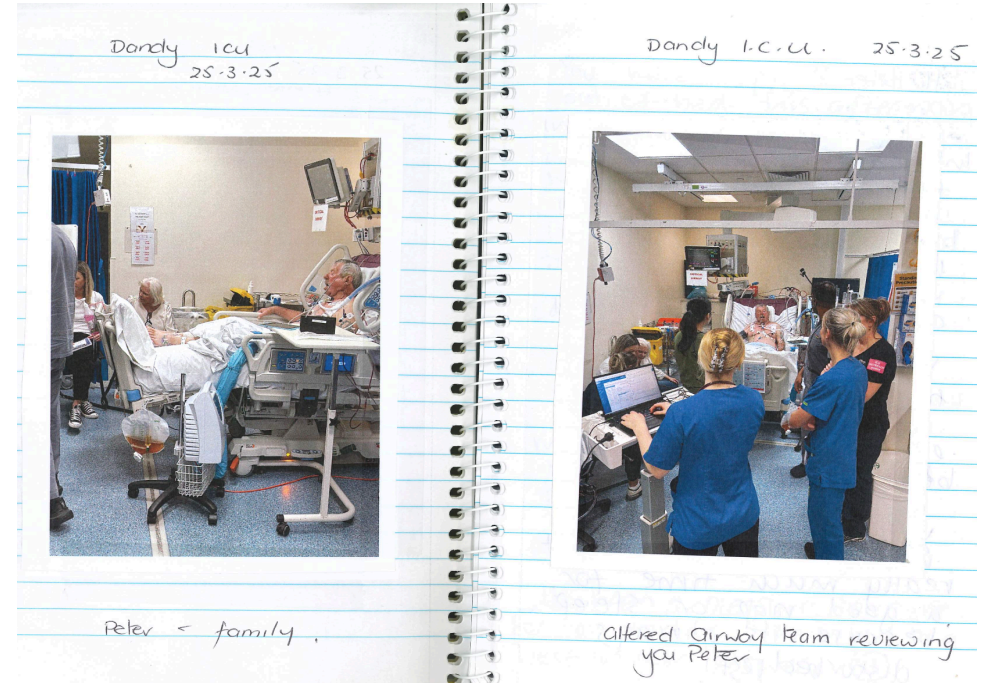
HEAD AND NECK PATIENT DIARY

A Guide Through Recovery When Memories Are Unclear

Improvement opportunity

Head and neck cancer surgery is often life-altering, with recovery presenting significant emotional and physical challenges. During their hospital stay, patients may have difficulty expressing needs and engaging in their care, which can contribute to gaps in recollection.

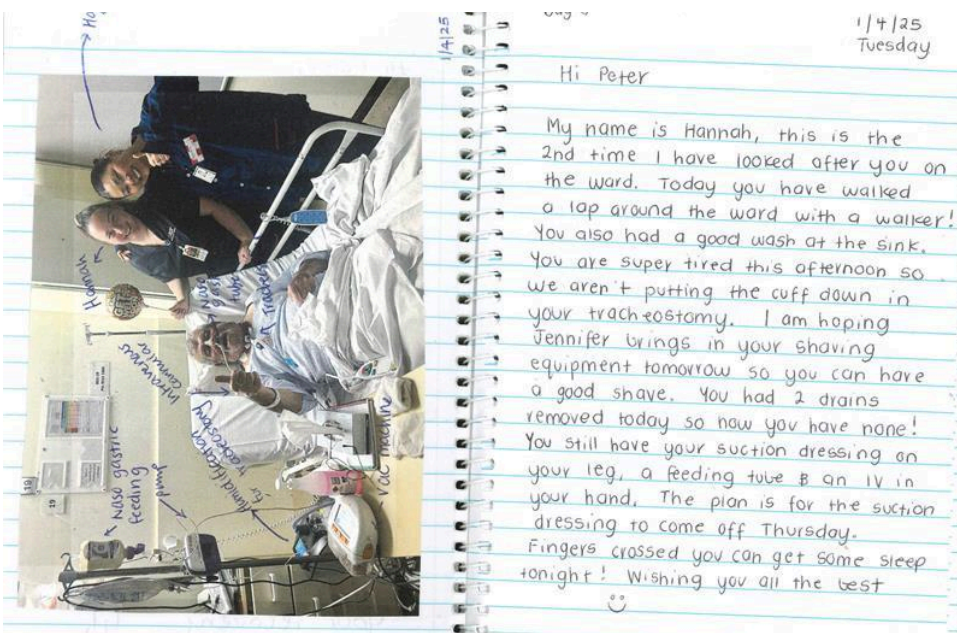
The Head and Neck Patient Diary was introduced to capture key moments and clinical milestones throughout recovery, with input from staff, family, friends, and patients. This initiative supports patient understanding, reduces distress related to memory gaps, and enhances the overall patient experience.



How we engaged consumers

We introduced a Head and Neck Patient Diary in partnership with patients, families, and the multidisciplinary team.

- The diary has undergone consumer review and is supported by clear patient and staff information, including consent processes, to ensure safe, informed, and respectful use.
- It is now available on Prompt, reflecting consumer input and remaining accessible, relevant, and patient-centred from ICU admission through discharge and recovery at home, with patients supported to choose whether the diary is taken home.
- Patients and families are invited to share reflections, questions, personal messages, and photos throughout the care journey.
- Patient feedback is sought at discharge to help identify opportunities for improvement.



What changed

The introduction of the Head and Neck Patient Diary has improved patient and family understanding of, and adjustment to, a life-changing hospital stay.

- Patients are better able to recall periods of lost time, reducing confusion and psychological distress.
- The diary supports acceptance of their experience, helps patients recognise progress, and assists both patients and families to adapt to changes in condition.
- It also supports realistic goal-setting, improving confidence and engagement in rehabilitation.
- Provided patients and families with a shared tool to reflect on the hospital experience following discharge

Future directions:

- Introduce the diary at pre-operative clinic appointments to enable earlier consumer engagement, support informed expectations, and enhance the overall care experience

