



Good Omen Goodeze

2025/26 Health Impact Statement

Good Omen Goodeze (GOG) has made an extraordinary contribution to the experience of patients, families, carers and healthcare staff across the ACT.

Throughout 2025/26, GOG has continued to strengthen its partnership with Canberra Health Services, ACT Ambulance Service, and ACT Pathology, providing handmade comfort items that bring **warmth, reassurance, distraction, connection and kindness** to patients during some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.

The impact of GOG is increasingly evident in the way its handmade items have become part of the healthcare experience—not simply as gifts, but as **practical therapeutic and relational tools** that can help reduce distress, support engagement, provide distraction and create opportunities for healthcare professionals to build trust with patients and families and to meet National Health Care Standards.

ACT Walk-in Centres – creating a more welcoming healthcare environment

In 2025/26, GOG completed its collection of handmade mascots for all five ACT Walk-in Centres. The final additions were **Walter the Wombat and Colin the Croc at Weston Walk-in Centre**, completing a much-loved collection of GOG characters across the Walk-in Centre network.

These mascots have become much more than decorations. For children entering an unfamiliar healthcare environment, a friendly and recognisable character can provide an immediate point of connection and familiarity. A child may be frightened by the clinical environment, unfamiliar people, equipment, waiting and uncertainty about what will happen next. Having a familiar GOG mascot can provide a **visual focus, distraction and conversation starter**, helping children feel more comfortable and giving healthcare staff another way to engage with them.

The mascots also represent something important about the relationship between the community and healthcare: children entering a Walk-in Centre can see that their community has thought about them and created something specifically for their comfort.

Gungahlin Walk-in Centre – The Distraction Box

GOG has also supported a Service Improvement Project at Gungahlin Walk-in Centre by creating sensory and distraction items specifically for consumers waiting for care.

Waiting can be particularly difficult for children, people experiencing anxiety, neurodivergent consumers and those who find unfamiliar healthcare environments overwhelming. The **Distraction Box** provides healthcare staff with practical resources that can be offered during periods of waiting or clinical assessment.

These handmade sensory resources provide opportunities for **distraction, grounding, sensory regulation and engagement**, helping consumers manage stress and anxiety while waiting for care. Importantly, the resources give patients an active strategy to use rather than simply being asked to tolerate a stressful waiting experience.

For healthcare staff, the items provide another practical tool to support communication and rapport while remaining within the clinical environment.

Paediatric consumers – choice, creativity and self-control

GOG's partnership with **RKDN and the development of the Gogster Maker App** has created another meaningful connection between community creativity and healthcare.

Paediatric consumers in ICU and Hospital School have been able to design their own personalised Gogster, with GOG volunteers then creating the requested character.

For a child experiencing illness or prolonged hospitalisation, this provides an opportunity to exercise **choice and control at a time when many aspects of life may feel outside their control**.

Rather than simply receiving an item selected by somebody else, children can actively participate in deciding what their Gogster looks like. This supports **self-determination, active decision-making, creativity and a sense of ownership**.

The finished Gogster then becomes something personal—a tangible reminder that their ideas, preferences and individuality matter.

For children experiencing lengthy or difficult healthcare journeys, these seemingly small opportunities to make decisions can provide an important sense of agency and normality.

Special occasions – bringing normality into healthcare

Throughout 2025/26, GOG continued its Christmas, Easter and Valentine's Day deliveries to ICU and Walk-in Centres.

Special occasions can be particularly poignant for people spending time in hospital or attending healthcare services. Handmade seasonal items bring a sense of **normality, celebration and connection** into environments that can otherwise feel clinical and unfamiliar.

For patients and families, these gestures communicate that they have not been forgotten. For healthcare staff, they provide opportunities to create moments of joy and connection with patients during difficult circumstances.

These small acts can have a disproportionate emotional impact because they acknowledge the person behind the patient and help preserve a sense of ordinary life within an extraordinary healthcare experience.

International Nurses Day – recognising the people who care

For the sixth consecutive year, GOG continued its tradition of creating handmade blue flower brooches for nurses across Canberra Health Services.

In 2025/26, the brooches were presented to nurses at **Clare Holland House**, recognising the compassion, skill and dedication demonstrated every day by staff caring for people approaching the end of life.

The initiative provides an important reminder that GOG's impact extends beyond patients. **Healthcare workers also need to feel valued, recognised and connected to their community.**

A handmade gift carries a different meaning from a generic token. It represents time, creativity and deliberate effort by community volunteers to acknowledge the contribution of healthcare workers.

Canberra Private Emergency Department – extending the comfort-care partnership

In 2025/26, GOG commenced discussions with **Clarke Finn Chapman, Nursing Unit Manager at Canberra Private Emergency Department**, to explore the establishment of a comfort-care project.

This represents an important expansion of the GOG health partnership and demonstrates growing recognition that compassionate care and patient wellbeing are shared responsibilities across the public health sector and into the private sector

Emergency departments can be stressful environments. Patients may be experiencing pain, uncertainty, fear or distress, while families and carers may also feel anxious.

A dedicated comfort-care project has the potential to provide healthcare staff with additional resources to support **reassurance, distraction, comfort and therapeutic engagement**, complementing clinical treatment.

ACT Pathology

GOG continues to support **ACT Pathology at Gungahlin and Belconnen** with handmade comfort items for paediatric patients undergoing venepuncture.

For many children, having blood collected can be an intimidating experience. Handmade distraction and comfort items can provide something positive for the child to focus on before and during the procedure.

This can support **distraction, engagement and emotional regulation**, while giving pathology staff another way to establish rapport with a child.

The significance is not simply that a child receives a handmade item. It is that the item can become part of a more child-centred approach to a procedure that may otherwise be associated with fear or distress.

Stitching for Wellbeing – supporting the wellbeing of healthcare workers

GOG has also recognised that the health and wellbeing of patients is intrinsically connected to the wellbeing of the healthcare workforce.

Through **Stitching for Wellbeing**, GOG supported critical care frontline staff to participate in crochet as a practical wellbeing activity designed to encourage connection, mindfulness, creativity and resilience.

Sessions also incorporated the therapeutic contribution of **Alison Ware, therapy harpist**, creating opportunities for staff to pause, connect and engage in activities outside the intensity of the clinical environment.

Importantly, staff feedback demonstrated the value of the initiative, with **100% of participants reporting that the sessions were helpful**.

For frontline healthcare workers working in high-pressure environments, creating protected opportunities to pause, learn something new, connect with colleagues and focus on a creative activity can provide a meaningful counterbalance to the demands of clinical practice.

GOG has therefore demonstrated that its contribution to Health is not limited to patient care—it also extends to **healthcare worker wellbeing and workplace connection**.

Special projects – personalised comfort at end of life

One of the most profound aspects of GOG's work is its ability to respond to individual requests and create **made-to-order items for patients approaching the end of life**.

These projects recognise that end-of-life care is about more than clinical treatment. Patients and families need comfort, dignity, connection and opportunities to create meaningful memories.

A personalised handmade item can become something that belongs specifically to that person and their family—a tangible expression of love, care and community support.

For families, receiving something made specifically for their loved one can provide comfort during an incredibly difficult time and can become a lasting keepsake and source of solace.

Patient Transport Service – comfort beyond the hospital

GOG also continues to provide handmade comfort items for the **Patient Transport Service**, extending the reach of its work beyond hospital and clinic walls.

For people requiring patient transport, journeys can be associated with illness, uncertainty, vulnerability or anxiety. A handmade comfort item provides warmth and reassurance and offers patients something tangible to hold onto during the journey.

It is a simple intervention, but one that communicates an important message:

You are not travelling through this experience alone.

ICU Patients Day

Good Omen Goodeze made a significant contribution to ICU Patients Day by presenting the impact of handmade comfort care items on patients and families experiencing critical illness.

The presentation highlighted how something as simple as a handmade blanket, sensory item or comfort object can provide warmth, reassurance, distraction and a sense of connection during an experience that can otherwise feel frightening, unfamiliar and overwhelming.

Importantly, the presentation brought the patient experience to the forefront, demonstrating that comfort care is not simply an additional gesture, but can become a meaningful part of the therapeutic environment and support the emotional wellbeing of patients and their families. Former ICU patients who returned for Patients Day provided a powerful reminder of the journey beyond critical illness and the lasting significance of compassionate care. Their presence reinforced for staff how small acts of comfort can be remembered long after discharge. For healthcare staff, hearing about the patient impact of GOG's comfort items provided an opportunity to reflect on the difference these handmade gifts can make at the bedside and reinforced the importance of holistic, person-centred care alongside clinical treatment. GOG's presentation helped connect community generosity with the lived experience of critical illness, demonstrating how compassion, creativity and human connection can continue to support patients and families throughout their ICU journey and beyond.

A growing role in clinical care

Across these initiatives, a consistent theme is emerging. GOG's handmade items are increasingly being incorporated into everyday healthcare by nurses, paramedics, pathology staff and other healthcare professionals.

Blankets, sensory items, wristbands, toys, pillows and personalised Gogsters can support:

- distraction;
- grounding and sensory regulation;
- emotional reassurance;
- communication and engagement;
- development of trust;
- patient choice and autonomy;
- reduction of distress;
- connection between patients, families and healthcare staff; and
- a more person-centred healthcare experience.

Healthcare professionals feedback that these items are **more than gifts**. They can become practical resources that assist clinicians to connect with patients and support them through assessment, treatment, waiting and difficult healthcare experiences.

Moving from kindness to evidence

Perhaps the most significant health development in 2025/26 is the progression from anecdotal observations to formally examining the impact of GOG's work.

Canberra Health Services, Good Omen Goodeze and the University of Canberra have commenced a research partnership examining how patients, families and carers experience GOG items, how healthcare staff observe their use and where these resources may have the greatest value across health services.

The use of QR-coded tags to capture consumer and staff experiences provides an opportunity to hear directly from the people who receive and use the items.

This represents an important milestone for GOG.

For years, healthcare workers, patients and families have described the difference these small handmade items can make. In 2025/26, the health system has taken the next step—**working with GOG to better understand and build an evidence base around compassionate, non-pharmacological approaches to comfort and wellbeing.**

The broader health impact

GOG's contribution to health also extends beyond the items delivered into healthcare services.

Its workshops, school programs, community groups and volunteer network create opportunities for people to learn new skills, connect with others, contribute to something meaningful and reduce social isolation.

Through purposeful making, volunteers are not simply producing an object. They are contributing their time, creativity and care to someone they may never meet.

This creates a powerful cycle:

community connection → purposeful contribution → handmade kindness → patient connection → improved healthcare experience.

A partnership built on humanity

From Health's perspective, the true impact of Good Omen Goodeze cannot be measured simply by counting blankets, toys, sensory items or other handmade goods.

Its impact can be seen in the child who becomes less frightened before a procedure; the patient who feels remembered; the family who receives comfort during an uncertain or heartbreaking time; the person waiting in a Walk-in Centre who finds something grounding; the paramedic who has another way to reassure a distressed patient; the nurse who is reminded that their work matters; and the healthcare worker who finds a moment of connection and calm through Stitching for Wellness Program.