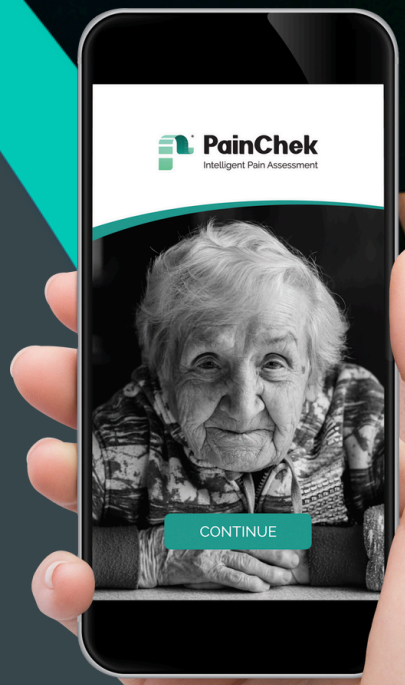
Lutheran Services: Southern Region

Lutheran Services is one of Queensland's longest-established and most diverse aged care and community service providers. It has 11 aged care sites, including six services in the South Queensland region:

- Salem Aged Care, Toowoomba
- Northridge Salem Aged Care, Toowoomba
- St Paul's Aged Care, Caboolture
- Tabeel Aged Care, Laidley
- Trinder Park Aged Care, Woodridge
- St Andrews Aged Care, Tallebudgera

The organisation offers services, support, and accommodation for older people, young people, families, individuals living with disabilities or mental health concerns, and those experiencing domestic and family violence.

Lutheran Services Chief Clinician and Nurse Practitioner Melanie Wagner has been with the organisation for 16 years. She holds master's degrees in Palliative Care and Chronic Disease, and Nurse Practitioner Studies, and has recently embarked on her PhD journey.



PainChek
Intelligent Pain Assessment

"As the Nurse Practitioner for Lutheran Services I collaborate with residents, their families as well as the multidisciplinary health care team," she shares. "The role acts like a clinical concierge, triaging medical/clinical concerns and ensuring timely and adequate follow up as well as requiring escalation. Nurse Practitioners can assess, diagnose, and treat conditions within their specialised field of practice."

Melanie is deeply passionate about ensuring best-practice pain assessment and management for residents in her care.

"Research has shown that chronic pain is a very common health issue in residential aged care, with the Royal Commission reporting the lack of pain assessment and management as a major concern Australia-wide," she shares. "The incidence of cognitive impairment and concerns around adequate communication further complicate pain assessment."

"Pain can negatively impact mobility, ability to participate in social activities, relationships with others, diet, and overall nutrition. Conversely, research has shown that adequate pain management can reduce social isolation and depression."

"Being pain-free is everyone's right and needs to be a top priority when managing chronic and complex health conditions amongst the older population."

Clinical Nurse Llevellys Matauaina looks after 58 residents at Lutheran Services' Trinder Park Aged Care service in Woodridge and agrees that comprehensive pain assessment is vital to providing quality care for all residents.

"Many residents experience pain. This might be due to underlying conditions, diseases, palliation, or previous pain experiences," she says.



"It is important that pain is assessed for all residents, and that a baseline assessment and history is conducted as part of our admission process."

Best-practice pain management supported by PainChek®

Across Lutheran Services' South Queensland facilities, staff complete PainChek® pain assessments on a regular basis as well as following any changes in pain management regimes, or if there are any acute health concerns, such as wounds or falls.

Findings from PainChek® pain assessments inform treatment and management approaches, which consist of a combination of non-pharmacological interventions such as repositioning, application of heat/cold packs, and massage therapy, along with pharmacological interventions such as regular medications and the use of PRN medications.

In cases where interventions aren't effective, PainChek® pain assessments provide clinical information that can be reviewed by the medical team to inform clinical decisions around medication management.

Melanie says that since the initial rollout of PainChek® in 2021, it has become an integral part of Lutheran Services' suite of clinical assessment tools.

"PainChek® is a great tool as it enables clinicians to assess pain even in residents with dementia or other forms of cognitive impairment, and takes into consideration that not all residents present the same way in relation to pain. It has improved clinical outcomes in the form of early recognition, ongoing assessment, and prompt escalation for pain management review."

"PainChek® has had a positive impact on the health care teams and service, particularly in the context of pain assessment and management for individuals with conditions such as dementia or cognitive impairment," Llevellys adds.

"With time and practice, I have become very confident in using the PainChek® app. Our Clinical Leaders meet monthly, and through this forum we have been able to provide feedback to PainChek® through our Clinical Systems Partner regarding any support needs, education, and potential enhancements."

"In addition, PainChek® Analytics allows me to ensure assessments are being completed, and where pain is identified, that there has been appropriate follow-up. It is important that interventions are reassessed, and any additional information is added to the PainChek® chart in our clinical software. This forms part of our clinical documentation."

Enabling resident-focused, shared care

In addition to supporting ongoing pain assessment and management, PainChek® allows the Lutheran Services teams to provide holistic, multidisciplinary care that focuses on the individual needs of each resident.

"PainChek® provides collected data that can be reviewed before initiating or changing the pain management of a resident," Melanie shares. "I can provide this data to GPs, residents, and representatives to demonstrate the effectiveness of current pain management, make recommendations around deprescribing and escalate any increased concerns to relevant stakeholders. This ensures safe and resident-focused practice, particularly in relation to prescribing."

Llevelleys adds:

"PainChek® has improved the quality of life for residents at Trinder Park in several ways, including improved pain assessment, timely interventions, individualised care planning, enhanced communication with families and the health care team, and medication reviews. Overall, PainChek®'s ability to facilitate accurate and timely pain assessments ensures that residents' pain is identified and managed effectively."

If you're interested in implementing PainChek® at your facility, submit your expression of interest today.