



BOARD COMMUNIQUE

This communique highlights key discussions from the recent WA Country Health Service (WACHS) Board meeting and regional engagement visit.

27 – 28 October 2022

The Board travelled to the Pilbara region for the second regional engagement visit of the year.

This regional engagement visit provided the Board with opportunities to discuss emerging regional priorities and explore key themes whilst visiting regional sites, and engagement with staff and community stakeholders at Karratha and Port Hedland.

The Board held a targeted deep session into Aboriginal health in country Western Australia in Karratha on 27 October 2022. Key regional Aboriginal health stakeholders and local Traditional Owners were invited to participate in this session, to explore and listen to local perspectives on Aboriginal health and wellbeing issues in country WA.

Within this session and through listening to the stories shared by local Aboriginal stakeholders, the Board sought to understand how the strategic policy landscape influences the delivery of health and wellbeing services for Aboriginal people in WA and the perspectives of local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in delivering these services; how to appropriately embed the WACHS Cultural Governance Framework in order to improve safety and quality health outcomes for Aboriginal people in country WA; to explore opportunities to further enhance and embed Aboriginal health and wellbeing priorities across WACHS and the broader health system, and to ensure funded programs are meeting the priority needs of Aboriginal people.

The Board were deeply appreciative of the time spent with the local Aboriginal stakeholders, and their commitment to sharing their stories time and again to support WACHS in exploring how to best deliver and enhance services to improve health outcomes for our Aboriginal patients in rural and remote WA communities.

Site tours and engagement with staff and key local engagement also occurred at Karratha Health Campus, Roebourne Hospital, Hedland Health Campus and Karlarra House across the two-day visit.

The Board meeting was held in South Hedland on Friday 28 October 2022 at Hedland Health Campus.

Staff, visitor and contractor safety across WACHS is a key organisational priority and the Board received detailed advice from General Counsel and the Work Health Safety team on the focused work program underway.

The Board spent time with Paula Chatfield (ED Mental Health) and the Rural Psychiatry Training WA team and received a presentation of the significant program of work underway to increase rural psychiatry placements in WA. The Board congratulated Paula and the team, led by Dr David Townsend and Stephen Blefari, and noted the significant achievements of WACHS receiving provisional accreditation with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, and with WA becoming the 20th RANZCP training zone, a first for rural zones.

The Board Finance, Audit and Risk, and Safety and Quality Committee Chairs provided briefings to the Board on recent Committee meetings held in the months of September and October.

Members attending

Dr Neale Fong (Board Chair)
Ms Wendy Newman (Deputy Board Chair)
Mr Alan Ferris
Mr Paul Fitzpatrick (by MS Teams)
Dr Daniel Heredia
Mr. Colin Holt
Ms. Kelly Howlett
Dr Diane Mohen
Ms Mary Anne Stephens

In Attendance

Mr Jeffrey Moffet (Chief Executive)
Mr Robert Pulsford (A/Chief Operating Officer) (MS Teams)

Apologies

Mrs Shaneane Weldon

Key Matters for Decision

- The Board provisionally endorsed the 2023 meeting schedule.

Key Matters for Discussion

- In his report, the Chief Executive provided an update on Executive recruitment, resumption of key whole of health projects (Sustainable Health Review and Electronic Medical Records), the appointments of new Chief Executive Officers for St John Ambulance and RFDS, and a recent ministerial announcement on developing technology solutions to improve health outcomes for Pilbara residents.
- Discussions also focused on workforce and service continuity matters, COVID-19, credentialing requirements for general practice, management of WEST performance, obstetric and maternity services across WACHS and the upcoming NSQHS accreditation program across the WACHS regions.
- The Board discussed and endorsed updates to the organisation's strategic risks and Risk Appetite Statement.
- High level updates were also received on WACHS' performance across the Business Performance, Workforce, Safety and Quality, Finance, Business Services and COVID areas, and WACHS' progress with the COVID-19 vaccination program.

Summary of Standing Items for Discussion and Noting

- WACHS Organisational Standing Reports including:
 - Health Service Performance Report, August 2022
 - Safety, Quality and Clinical Performance Report, September 2022
 - Workforce, Assurance and Compliance Report, August and September 2022
 - WACHS Finance, FTE and Activity Report, September 2022
 - Risk Review Report, September 2022
 - Progress Summary against the Audit Plan, September 2022

Items for Noting included

- The WACHS Annual Report for 2021-22
- WACHS submission to the Select Committee into Child Development Services
- An update on the Aeromedical Inquiry
- Services WACHS provides for patients with complex care needs, and the Complex Care Coordination Program
- Remote Area Nursing Posts within WACHS

Next Meeting

The next Board meeting will be held in Bunbury on 24 November 2022.

Dr Neale Fong

BOARD CHAIR

17 November 2022