



# BOARD COMMUNIQUÉ

## Quarterly update – February 2024 to May 2024

This communiqué highlights key discussions from three WA Country Health Service (WACHS) Board meetings held in the first quarter of 2024.

### 23 February 2024

The first Board meeting of 2024 was held in Perth on Friday, 23 February 2024 at WACHS' offices at Grace Vaughan House (GVH) in Shenton Park.

The Board reflected on previous discussions at the December 2023 meeting regarding strategic objectives of the organisation to inform the WACHS Strategic Plan 2019-24 refresh, and key reforms to strengthen place-based and person-centred care models. The Board discussed key drivers of service delivery including equity of access and pathways to care, safety and quality, workforce and workplace safety, value and sustainability, and partnerships, collaboration and innovation. The session concluded with the Board affirming the objective to strengthen WACHS as a global leader in healthcare.

The Board discussed and approved the WACHS Medical Workforce Strategic Plan 2024-2029 which outlines workforce strategic priorities with a focus on attraction and retention, employee experience and development, fostering diversity, inclusion, and safe work environments, and optimising workforce models and costs. The Medical Workforce Strategic Plan 2024-2029 aligns with the *National Medical Workforce Strategy 2021 – 2031* and the workforce recommendations of the *WA Sustainable Health Review*. The Board acknowledged achievements made to date to develop the rural medical workforce and its commitment to strengthen this further.

The Board acknowledged WACHS and the Department of Health WA has jointly developed the Access and Equity for Country Residents policy. The policy sets out the requirements for Health Service Providers (HSPs) to provide appropriate public health services to country residents when and where they are needed and with minimal financial and access hardship. The application of this policy demonstrates the shared responsibility and accountability of HSPs for country residents. The policy is a mandatory requirement for HSPs under the Clinical Services Planning and Programs Policy Framework pursuant to section 26(2)(a)(b)(c) of the Health Services Act 2016.



The Board also acknowledged Dr Andrew Jamieson for his contribution to WACHS as Executive Director Medical Services. After 12 years leading teams across country WA, Dr Jamieson will be joining the Department of Health WA as the Deputy Chief Medical Officer. A Fellow of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, Dr Jamieson has held clinical leadership roles that touch upon medical executive services, innovation and development, telehealth, workforce enhancement and chronic disease management. Under his leadership, the medical services team has welcomed record numbers of medical interns, increased the number of medical students undertaking their final year at regional hospitals and broadened accreditation pathways. In the interim while a recruitment process is underway, Dr Kath Atkinson will be Acting Executive Director Medical Services.

## Members attending

Dr Neale Fong (Board Chair)  
Ms Wendy Newman (Deputy Board Chair)  
Mr Peter Campbell  
Dr Catherine Stoddart  
Mr Paul Fitzpatrick  
Mrs Jodi Johnston  
Mr Colin Holt  
Dr Diane Mohen

## In Attendance

Mr Jeffrey Moffet, Chief Executive  
Mr Rob Pulsford, A/Chief Operating Officer

## Apologies

Mr Alan Ferris  
Mrs Shaneane Weldon

## Key Matters for Decision

- The Board approved WACHS' response to the Minister for Health's Statement of Expectation for quarter two (2) for 2023-24.
- The Board approved the WACHS Medical Workforce Strategic Plan 2024-2029.

## Key Matters for Discussion

- The Chief Executive provided an update on workforce management initiatives, intake of new medical interns, the Ministerially led Health Skills delegation to India, and key meetings with the Mental Health Commission, Minister for Health and Department of Health.
- The Board discussed key strategic initiatives including the progress of the Country Health Sustainability Taskforce, the transition of Silver Chain services to WACHS, and service delivery partnerships with Royal Flying Doctor Service and Indian Ocean Territories Health Service.
- The Board discussed service delivery matters occurring across the organisation including financial performance, and workforce and service continuity matters.

## Summary of Standing Items for Discussion and Noting

- An update from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee from the February 2024 meeting, noting internal work plans for audit and risk areas.
- An update from the Chair of the Finance Committee from the February 2024 meeting, noting work on budget outcomes and submissions.
- An update from the Chair of the Safety and Quality Committee from the February 2024 meeting, noting Committee Chair had met recently to discuss quality and safety matters across HSPs.

## Items for Noting

- The Board received an update on work, health and safety.

## Next Meeting

The next Board meeting was to be held in the South West on 22 March 2024.

## 22 March 2024

The Board travelled to the South West for the first regional engagement trip of 2024. The visit provided the Board with the opportunity to visit sites at Harvey, Bunbury, Busselton, and Collie. Whilst at those sites the Board met with local staff, community members, local government representatives, service partners and other stakeholders, and took the opportunity to discuss emerging regional priorities and challenges, as well as the various projects and initiatives underway to improve service provision to local communities in the South West.



The Board attended the Edith Cowan University South West (ECU SW) campus where Board members were welcomed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Regional Futures, Professor Cobie Rudd and ECU SW staff. The Board discussed the innovative work program underway at ECU SW, and future partnerships to strengthen the regional workforce in the South West. The Board were also provided a tour of the state-of-the-art education and training facilities on campus.



The Board visited Busselton Hospice Care Inc (BHCI) and were welcomed by BHCI Board Chair Ms Jenny Monson, Board members, Chief Executive Officer Mr James Jarvis, and staff. WACHS has partnered with BHCI for over 20 years to support palliative care services to the community, which includes a purpose-built four bed hospice ward following the Busselton Health Campus redevelopment in 2015. The Board experienced first-hand the wonderful services BHCI's volunteers provide through an interactive demonstration.

The Board meeting was held at Busselton Health Campus on Friday, 22 March 2024. At the meeting, the Board acknowledged the excellent work of the South West team for facilitating and hosting the Board's meeting and staff and stakeholder engagements over the two-day visit.

Of special note, the Direction General (DG) Dr David Russell-Weisz attended the Board meeting to provide a farewell address. The Board acknowledged and thanked the Dr Russell-Weisz for his support since the formation of the WACHS Board, and improvements to rural and remote services through his guidance and leadership. Dr Russell-Weisz reflected on the close working relationship with WACHS through his tenure, the collaborative approach to inform the Minister for Health (MfH) on rural and remote service delivery needs, and thanked the WACHS Board for their contribution towards the sustainability of services and workforce models. The Board presented the DG with a letter of thanks and certificate in recognition of his service and contribution to rural and remote health care.



### Members attending

Dr Neale Fong (Board Chair)  
Ms Wendy Newman (Deputy Board Chair)  
Mr Peter Campbell  
Mr Alan Ferris  
Mr Paul Fitzpatrick  
Mrs Jodi Johnston  
Mr Colin Holt  
Dr Diane Mohen  
Dr Catherine Stoddart  
Mrs Shaneane Weldon

### In Attendance

Mr Jeffrey Moffet, Chief Executive  
Mr Rob Pulsford, A/Chief Operating Officer

### Apologies

Nil

### Key Matters for Decision

- The Board approved initiatives to support the transfer of 11 Silver Chain sites to WACHS, and partnership with Curtin University Research and Innovation Alliance.

### Key Matters for Discussion

- The Chief Executive provided an update on Executive movements, meetings with the Department of Health WA and MfH, the launch of the WACHS Security Control Hub on 8 March, the ongoing partnership with Rural Health West to recognise the incredible achievements of the rural workforce, and progress of key operational and management initiatives.



- The Board discussed the progress of the Country Health Sustainability Taskforce, achievements to date, and key areas for future consideration.
- The Board discussed the progress of major capital projects at Geraldton Health Campus and Bunbury Regional Hospital.

### Summary of Standing Items for Discussion and Noting

- An update from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.
- An update from the Chair of the Finance Committee.
- An update from the Chair of the Safety and Quality Committee noting Board members' Dr Diane Mohen, Ms Wendy Newman and Mrs Shaneane Weldon attended at Department of Health WA led workshop on improving data utility and reporting across the health system.

### Items for Noting

- The Board received updates on operational and strategic initiatives including work, health and safety, workforce, and contract negotiations.

### Next Meeting

The next Board meeting was to be held in Perth on 24 May 2024.

## 24 May 2024

The Board meeting was held in Perth on Friday, 24 May 2024 at WACHS' offices at Grace Vaughan House (GVH) in Shenton Park.

The Board continued discussions regarding the strategic objectives of the organisation to inform the WACHS Strategic Plan 2019-24 refresh, and consultation and engagement strategies with key stakeholders and staff.

The Board were provided with an overview of the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) program implementation by Ms Judith Stewart, Executive Director Program Delivery, and Dr Hannah Seymour, Clinical Lead. The EMR Program has been established to digitally transform WA Health's clinical information management systems by delivering a state-wide EMR solution for the WA community. A priority under Recommendation 22 of the Sustainable Health Review, the EMR is identified in the WA Health Digital Strategy 2020-2030 as the digital keystone to modernising and improving healthcare across Western Australia. The Board discussed the implementation plan for the EMR program, with specific consideration of implementation in rural and remote sites.

The Board met with Health Consumers' Council (HCC) Executive Director, Ms Clare Mullen. HCC is an independent, not for profit organisation that provides an Individual Advocacy Service to help consumers navigate our health system, as well as systemic advocacy for the WA Community. The Board discussed Health Consumers' Council's key approaches and advocacy priorities, and opportunities to strengthen consumer advocacy and partnerships with service providers. The Board supported further collaboration with HCC to strengthen consumer advocacy initiatives across country WA.

The Board discussed key strategic initiatives such as the draft WACHS Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy 2024-2028 which has been developed in consultation with consumers, clinicians, regional communities and service partners; and aims to strengthen high quality palliative and end of life care services across country WA. Another key initiative discussed was the progress of the Rural Psychiatry Training Program WA (RPTWA). Led by WACHS, the Australian-first program has seen doctors kickstart the next chapter of their careers in the regions. The program allows them to live, train and practice in country WA from internship through to fellowship. Accredited by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP), the program is the first dedicated rural training zone in Australia or New Zealand.



The Board welcomed John Quinn who commenced as Chief Operating Officer Rural, a role that covers the Great Southern, South West and Wheatbelt. With more than 30 years' experience in frontline and senior executive positions, John joins WACHS from the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK – most recently as Chief Operating Officer at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in North Central London. With a background in clinical pharmacy, John is also a Member of the General Pharmaceutical Council and Royal Pharmaceutical Society Great Britain.

### **Members attending**

Dr Neale Fong (Board Chair)  
Ms Wendy Newman (Deputy Board Chair)  
Mr Peter Campbell  
Dr Catherine Stoddart  
Mr Paul Fitzpatrick  
Mrs Jodi Johnston  
Mr Colin Holt  
Dr Diane Mohen  
Mrs Shaneane Weldon

### **In Attendance**

Mr Jeffrey Moffet, Chief Executive  
Mr Rob Pulsford, Chief Operating Officer Remote  
Mr John Quinn, Chief Operating Officer Rural

### **Apologies**

Mr Alan Ferris

### **Key Matters for Decision**

- The Board approved the Deed of Variation 1 to the Mental Health Commission Service Agreement 2023-24 with WACHS.
- The Board approved initiatives to strengthen maternity and newborn services in country WA.
- The Board also approved updates to internal audit plans and financial management matters.

### **Key Matters for Discussion**

- The Chief Executive provided an update on workforce management initiatives, key meetings with the Minister for Health and Department of Health, service delivery matters, and the progress of key ICT infrastructure and projects.
- The Board welcomed presentations and discussion on the Electronic Medical Record program implementation, and Health Consumers' Council.
- The Board continued discussions on the progress of the WACHS Strategic Plan refresh and strengthening person-centred service delivery models.
- The Board discussed key strategic initiatives including the WACHS Palliative and End-of-Life Care Strategy 2024-2028, the Rural Psychiatry Training WA program, and outcomes of the 2024-25 State Budget.

### **Summary of Standing Items for Discussion and Noting**

- An update from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee from the 16 April 2024 meeting, noting the Board Audit and Risk Committee Quarterly Report for quarter three (3) of 2023-24.
- An update from the Chair of the Finance Committee from the 22 April 2024 meeting, noting the Finance, FTE and Activity Dashboard standing report.
- An update from the Chair of the Safety and Quality Committee from the 18 April 2024 meeting, noting the Board Safety and Quality Committee Quarterly Report for quarter three (3) of 2023-24.

### **Items for Noting**

- The Board received updates on strategic and operational initiatives including contractual matters, work, health and safety, workforce and services, and governance matters.

## Next Meeting

- The next Board meeting will be held in Perth on 28 June 2024.

**Dr Neale Fong**  
**BOARD CHAIR**  
May 2024