



# SMHS Board Communiqué

*Excellent health care, every time*

## August 2023 Meeting

This communiqué highlights key discussions of interest at the South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) Board meeting which was held at Fiona Stanley Hospital (FSH) on Monday 28 August 2023.

### Djilba

Season of conception



Board members acknowledge the meeting was held during the Noongar season of Djilba – the season of conception. Djilba is August to September, which is a time of transition, with some very cold and clear days mixed with warmer, rainy and windy days. It brings a flowering explosion, starting with yellow

flowering plants, such as acacias. As the temperatures continue to rise, the flower stalks of the balgas (grass trees) emerge in preparation for the coming Kamarang season. Noongar people traditionally acknowledge six seasons, which are indicated by the changes in local weather, plants and animals.

At the beginning of the meeting, Board member Colin Murphy acknowledged the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and recognised their continuing connection to the land on which the Board was meeting. Colin commended the SMHS Aboriginal Champions Program, which he recently completed. Colin also reflected on the importance of country and sustainability as well as the positive impact on health outcomes of being on country for Aboriginal people.

This month, Board members welcomed the Director General of WA Health, Dr David Russell-Weisz, for a discussion about strategic matters, priorities and challenges. While the Chief Executive and I meet with the Director General on a regular basis, this was an excellent opportunity for all Board members to connect with the System Manager in an engaging and positive conversation.

At each Board meeting, members consider patient stories to ensure the patient is always at the forefront of our considerations. This month, Board members heard from the Head of Social Work at Rockingham General Hospital (RGH) about a complex patient who experienced delays in being discharged due to suitability of appropriate accommodation. Board members recognised the extraordinary dedication of the social work team in advocating for their patients to ensure the best outcome.

In the Board Chair's report, I reflected on the excellent work recently undertaken in renaming the wards at Fremantle Hospital (FH) with Noongar names. I also reflected on a Board to Ward visit I undertook in July to RGH's emergency department and paediatric ward. Board member Liam Roche and I were heartened to hear very positive feedback from staff about working at RGH. I also reflected on the excellent WA Aboriginal Health Executive Roundtable event held on 22 August.

*Pictured right: Staff from Ward D4 at Fremantle Hospital*





On 17 August, Board members Liam Roche, Karen Brown and Colin Murphy undertook a Board Safety Walk at FH. The safety walks are done quarterly to provide an opportunity for direct feedback from staff to the Board's Audit and Risk Committee members and to demonstrate Board's commitment to health, safety and wellbeing.

*Pictured left: Colin Murphy, Liam Roche, Jess Haseltine, CSSD Manager, Fremantle Hospital, and Karen Brown.*

The Chief Executive's report this month included updates on:

- Emergency and elective access across the SMHS' sites.
- The Peel Health Campus (PHC) transition and redevelopment project update.
- A recent Curtin University research study into the impact of COVID-19 on staff wellbeing.
- The SMHS Excellence Awards – being held in November 2023.
- The roll out of new nursing and midwifery uniforms across SMHS.

This month's Board meeting included reports and discussion of the following items:

- A progress update and discussion on the [2021-25 SMHS Strategic Plan](#). The goals within the Strategic Plan are monitored by the SMHS Board committees and reports are provided to the Board by the committee chairs. Board members agreed great progress was being made against the targets.
- Review and approval of the annual governance attestation statement. The SMHS Board is responsible for ensuring an effective governance framework is in place for the organisation and the attestation statement sets out board governance practices and controls in operation within the last financial year.

Chairs and members of the Board Committees provided reports on the issues considered at their most recent meetings and highlighted specific items including:

- The Safety and Quality Committee discussed the importance of the emergency and elective access recovery program and regular safety and quality reports, including the consideration of clinical incidents. They also discussed the Zero Health Acquired Infection Project and the Governing Body Attestation Statement.
- The Finance and Governance Committee discussed the finance, activity, and staffing reports, reviewed contract management reports and risks and discussed the internal budget process for 2023-24.
- The Audit and Risk Committee considered the PHC project update, lost time injury data, the risk register report, audit log, internal audit reports, litigation schedule and integrity and ethics matters. The Committee also approved the Internal Audit Charter update.
- The People, Culture and Engagement Committee discussed the Consumer Feedback Strategy 2023-27, staff and consumer engagement opportunities, the SMHS Disability and Inclusion Plan 2021-25 progress report, communication achievements as well as patient experience and workforce matters. The Committee also approved the Carers Recognition Act compliance report and the SMHS Multicultural Plan progress report.

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 28 September 2023 at FSH.

**Adjunct Associate Professor Robyn Collins**  
**Board Chair, South Metropolitan Health Service**  
**30 August 2023**