

Subject:

Board Bulletin - November 2022



Board Chair Communication

As we move towards the end of 2022, the North West Hospital and Health Board is pleased to share an update.

Soon after being appointed to the role of Board Chair, I was delighted to visit Mount Isa, Doomadgee, Burketown, Karumba and Mornington Island alongside Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, Yvette D'Ath, Director General Sean Drummond, Chief Operating Officer Dr David Rosengren and Health Service Chief Executive Craig Carey. From this initial visit to sites across the North West, the staff's dedication, compassion and commitment towards providing healthcare in our communities was evident.



A shared commitment and priority of the Board has been to be on the ground in the North

West, visiting our health services and talking to the people who live and work across our rural and remote sites. I am proud of the Board, which has visited many sites over the last six months and grateful to the staff who have so generously welcomed the Board and shared valuable insights into healthcare in our region.



We have been fortunate to be a part of the successes and challenges experienced by the Health Service over the last six months, as well as several significant milestones and events.

A particular highlight was visiting Cloncurry and Julia Creek in August. As we travelled, Board Member Linda Ford, a proud Bigambul First Nations woman, who grew up on

Kalkadoon land, pointed out landmarks and points of interest across the beautiful landscape. It was great to learn about the region's rich history.

The Board and the Health Service Chief Executive toured the Cloncurry Hospital, opened the newly installed satellite renal dialysis chairs with Mayor Cr Greg Campbell and attended a Consumer Advisory Network meeting. We spent time in the beautiful garden at the Cloncurry Hospital, and Board Member Jane McMillan noted that the pride staff take in improving facilities across all our sites is commendable.



In Julia Creek, we met with staff and consumers in addition to an insightful meeting with Mayor Cr Philip Curr and Deputy Mayor Janene Fegan. Opportunities like these to speak with consumers who are passionate about improving healthcare services across our region have assisted the Board in understanding the issues faced across all our sites.

Building connections with local stakeholders has been a focus of the Board, and we have

participated in many meetings and forums to achieve this. Working with and learning from Western Queensland PHN, Gidgee Healing, North West Queensland Region of Councils (NWQROC), Better Health Queensland, Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC) and North and West Remote Health (NWRH) has been enlightening, and I am encouraged by the shared passion for high-quality healthcare across the region.

Time spent with our health care teams in Mount Isa is always inspiring, and the Board has enjoyed many visits to various departments to speak with staff and consumers. The warm welcome from Dental, Community Health and Child and Family Health was a highlight. Board Member Professor Eleanor Milligan noted the teams were capable, committed and highly effective, passionate about their roles and demonstrated a positive culture where they clearly enjoyed working together. Board Member Cath Brokenborough was pleased to hear the innovative and pragmatic solutions staff apply to get the best value and impact out of resources allocated and found this particularly impressive.



During an informal introductory session, I particularly enjoyed chatting with our RMOs and registrars about their experiences in the North West. The doctors discussed the challenges of working in the region and the opportunities brought about by new models of care. Board Member Dr Marco Giuseppin commended the group and said the discussed strategies would help junior medical staff retention.

We were fortunate to be a part of the North West Health Equity Strategy Launch in October. The Health Equity Strategy 2022-2025 has been developed in partnership with First Nations people from across our region, with the consultation and community engagement process to continue throughout the life of the strategy. Board Member Cath Brokenborough, a proud Wiradjuri First Nations woman, noted she looks forward to now implementing the Health Equity Plan and working collaboratively to deliver these goals in genuine partnership with communities and the various providers and services.



Board Members participated in the RHD Cluster Coronial Inquest in Doomadgee and Cairns, offering support to staff and families impacted. As highlighted in the Health Equity Strategy, we must reshape our ways of working to ensure our health services are responsive to those with differing needs and levels of advantage to achieve equitable health outcomes. I agreed with Board Members Bill Armagnacq and Dr Mellissa Naidoo when they noted the implementation of the Health Equity Strategy is a positive step toward improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes and a continued commitment to the hard work left to do.



As we approach the end of the year and festive season, it is important to reflect on our successes and challenges. The COVID 19 pandemic was a significant challenge across the North West and the world. Board Member David Keenan applauded the staff for their outstanding efforts during this time, keeping patient care at the forefront always.

Delivering healthcare in a unique rural and remote setting has its challenges, but as noted by Board Member Jane McMillan, the passion and commitment of our staff is evident across all sites. Every valuable member of the NWHHS team contributes a vital role in delivering healthcare to our communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the whole Executive Leadership Team. It has been wonderful to see recently appointed Executive Directors embrace 'outback life' and participate in all the region offers.

The Board is committed to working closely with communities to improve the delivery of high-quality healthcare across the region for the remainder of the year and into 2023. I look forward to continuing to visit our health centres to listen to your experiences firsthand. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to supporting our communities.

Cheryl Vardon

Board Chair

