



A Message from **Cheryl Vardon AO**
Board Chair



Board Communique - 2023

20 December, 2023

As we move towards the end of 2023, the North West Hospital and Health Board is pleased to share an update.

This year, the Board has thoroughly enjoyed visiting our many Health Centres across the North West, and our activities are well documented on North West HHS Social Media and the Board Communication page of the [website](#).

I would like to thank all staff for their continued passion and dedication to supporting our communities, and I look forward to continuing to listen to their experiences first-hand as we move into 2024.



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The Board has continued to focus on building relationships with community leaders and stakeholders. These connections have contributed to increased stability across the region as we work with long-term and new partners including Western Queensland Primary Health Network (PHN), Gidgee Healing, North West Queensland Region of Councils (NWQROC), Better Health Queensland, Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC), North and West Remote Health (NWRH), Lifelight, North West Minerals Province Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the Mount Isa Lead Health Management Committee.



As we approach the end of year and festive season, reflecting on our successes and challenges is important. I note the catastrophic floods across the Gulf at the beginning of the year and continue to be in awe of the resolute spirit and community-mindedness displayed. Staff at these affected centres remained brave and patient-focused. In some instances, even opting to stay while community members were evacuated to ensure care could still be provided to those who chose to stay with their homes. Our thoughts and prayers are with friends and colleagues across Far North Queensland currently experiencing a similar situation.

Participating in several celebrations this past year has been very special for Board Members. The official Welcome to Country for Health Service Chief Executive Sean Birgan, the Staff Service Recognition Awards and the Staff Values Awards were all particular highlights. Congratulations to all recipients, and thank you for your unwavering commitment to living, working and serving the communities of our unique region. This year, I also participated in my own special celebration when I was announced as one of three Queenslanders recognised in The King's Birthday 2023 Honours List and appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO). I am humbled to receive such recognition and thank my North West colleagues and connections for the many kind and congratulatory words I received.





Another highlight in 2023 was the Board and Executive Leadership Team coming together to revise the North West HHS Strategic Plan, which is currently out for consultation. The groups worked together productively, focusing on embedding country-centred thinking and insights from the Health Equity Strategy and reviewing the current values, strategic vision, purpose and priorities.



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North West Hospital and Health Board has a robust Committee system for oversight of the work of the Hospital and Health Service, and I acknowledge the work of the Chairs of each of these Committees:

- Professor Eleanor Milligan, Board Deputy Chair and Chair of the Safety and Quality Committee
- Bill Armagnacq, Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee
- Dr Marco Giuseppin, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee
- Cath Brokenborough, Chair of the Stakeholder Engagement Committee.

Thank you to Sean Birgan, HSCE, for his strong leadership and to Carrie Baxter, Board Secretary, for keeping the Board program of work on track.

The North West Hospital and Health Board continues our commitment to work closely with communities to improve the delivery of high-quality healthcare across the region for the remainder of the year and into 2024.

We wish you and your families a safe and joyous festive season.

Kind regards,

Cheryl Vardon AO

Health Service Board Chair

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