

## From the Board Chair Cheryl Vardon

Dear North West,

Autumn is a beautiful time of the year in the North West as we welcome cooler weather and a reprieve from the heat. The extremes of mother nature however were evident over the summer months as seen with the unprecedented flooding endured by many of our communities.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank our wonderful staff who displayed such resilience and bravery during this time while continuing to provide high-quality healthcare. I would also like to extend my appreciation to A/Health Service Chief Executive Sean Birgan who led the disaster management effort and ensured staff and patients remained safe.



The Board has been busy since the last edition and has enjoyed continuing to build relationships with staff and stakeholders. Some highlights include:

- Working closely with North West Queensland Region of Councils, Better Health Queensland and the Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre
- Travelling to Cloncurry to meet Mayor Cr Greg Campbell and visit the Cloncurry Hospital
- Strengthening the relationship with Townsville Hospital and Health Service and exploring ways we can build this to improve access to services
- Meeting the Family Advocacy Unit and learning about the vital work they do.
- Spending time in Mount Isa with our Executive Leadership Team, discussing our mutual commitment to safe, quality care and identifying improvement opportunities.

One value that guides the health service's decision-making and actions is 'innovation', and I believe our staff and Executive excel in this area. One example of this innovative thinking is the Midwifery Virtual Reality Program. While in Mount Isa, the Board participated in an interactive experience with this new technology that will provide education via headsets to the remote facilities. We learned the applications for this technology are endless, especially in the context of our remotes, and the possibilities are inspiring.

Innovated thinking will remain a focus for the Board and Executive Leadership Teams as we move into a strategic planning project to reset our expectations and create a shared strategic narrative through engagement and consultation. We plan on being both ambitious and pragmatic as we continue partnering with communities to improve health outcomes by delivering valued, high-quality, sustainable health services across our region.

The publication of the NWHHS Health Equity Strategy, released in 2022, is a wonderful example of partnership and I am pleased the development of the Health Equity Implementation Plan is underway.

Delivering healthcare in a unique rural and remote setting has its challenges and I thank all staff for your continued passion and commitment to supporting our communities.

Cheryl