



# BOARD COMMUNIQUE

This communique highlights key discussions from the recent WA Country Health Service (WACHS) Board meeting:

**27 May 2022**

As the number of COVID 19 cases in the community remains high, the Board Chair, Deputy Board Chair, Chief Executive and support staff attended in person, with the remainder of Board members attending via MS Teams.

The WACHS Executive and Ms Josephine Gray, Aboriginal Mental Health Consultant, joined the beginning of the meeting via MS Teams to take part in the Board's recognition of the commencement of [National Reconciliation Week 2022](#), 27 May to 3 June 2022. The purpose of this Week is to acknowledge the determination and resilience of Aboriginal peoples, as well as our shared journey towards true reconciliation. This year's National Reconciliation Week theme is 'Be Brave – Make Change', which calls on each of us to take action in our personal daily lives, be it at work, our personal connections or as part of our communities.

Board member Dr Kim Isaacs, a Yaruwu, Karajarri and Noongar woman, lead the discussion by acknowledging the survivors of the Stolen Generation, where the day before was National Sorry Day where it is important to acknowledge that our communities continue to heal and find their families.

Dr Isaacs advocated for Board Members and the Executive to reflect on the themes of both National Reconciliation Week "Be Brave. Make Change" and NAIDOC Week "Get Up, Stand Up, Show Up" and the means by which those words can be employed to close the gap that exists for Aboriginal people.

WACHS Executive Director of Mental Health Ms Paula Chatfield reflected on the intergenerational trauma caused to Aboriginal people as a result of having their children stolen. Ms Chatfield noted that to employ more Aboriginal people in the WA Health system we must challenge our own recruitment practices and do things differently.

Mr Russell Simpson WACHS Director of Aboriginal Health Strategy challenged the Board and Executive to be brave and make change. He reflected that for the first five years of his life, he was not considered a citizen. He lived on reserves across the Gascoyne region as a small child where housing was nothing more than shacks.

Ms Josephine Gray related a story told to her by an Aboriginal Elder woman from the Kimberley. The story was of her life and loss due to being taken from her family but also about her culture and how it remains strong despite this trauma.

Chief Executive Mr Jeffrey Moffet thanked all contributors for their stories and noted many of the policies that have adversely affected Aboriginal people have been in place in the Members' and Executives' lifetimes. The generosity of Aboriginal people in being willing to reconcile with those who implemented and supported those policies is important to recognise. There is an opportunity for WACHS to have a conversation about what being brave could look like,



including in the context of the full implementation of the WACHS [Cultural Governance Framework](#) launched in June 2021.

Board Chair Dr Neale Fong thanked the speakers and Executive for joining the meeting to recognise this important week.

The Board Finance, Audit and Risk, and Safety and Quality Committee Chairs provided briefings to the Board on recent Committee meetings held in the months of April and May.

#### **Members attending**

Dr Neale Fong (Board Chair)  
Ms Wendy Newman (Deputy Board Chair)  
Mr Alan Ferris  
Mr Paul Fitzpatrick  
Dr Daniel Heredia  
Ms Kelly Howlett  
Dr Kim Isaacs  
Dr Diane Mohen  
Ms Mary Anne Stephens

#### **In attendance**

Mr Jeffrey Moffet (Chief Executive)  
Ms Margaret Denton (Chief Operating Officer)

#### **Apologies**

Nil

#### **Key Matters for Decision**

The Board endorsed the progression of the WACHS Deed of Amendment 2021/22 as well as a suite of Board Governance documents. These documents were reviewed against the Public Sector Commission's updated [Governance Manual for Western Australian Government Boards and Committees](#).

#### **Key Matters for Discussion**

- The Board received an update on the new Work Health and Safety legislation and the programs and strategies underway in WACHS in relation to work health and safety, including the appointment of a Director Work Health and Safety and Wellness.
- Other discussions focused on WACHS workforce and service continuity matters, staff accommodation and a COVID-19 update.
- In his report, the Chief Executive provided an update on staffing, the COVID response, staff safety and patient transport, State budget allocations and the opening of the renal dialysis service in Newman. The Chief Executive reported this was a great event and a culmination of many years of planning and development.
- High level updates were received on WACHS' performance across the Business Performance, Workforce, Safety and Quality, Finance, Business Services and COVID areas, and WACHS' progress with the COVID-19 vaccination program.

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

- WACHS Organisational Standing Reports including:
  - Health Service Performance Report, May 2022.
  - Safety, Quality and Clinical Performance Dashboard Report, May 2022.
  - Audit and Risk Quarterly Report to the Board
  - Workforce, Assurance and Compliance Dashboard Report, March and April 2022.
  - Risk Review Report.
  - Progress Summary against the Audit Plan Report.

#### **Items for noting included:**

- WACHS' submission to the Independent Governance Review.
- Bunbury Hospital Project Development Plan.
- Progress of WACHS' submission to the National Health and Medical Research Council Research Translation Centre for accreditation.

## **Next Meeting**

The next Board meeting will be held in Broome on Friday 1 July 2022.

Dr Neale Fong

**BOARD CHAIR**

14 June 2022