



# SMHS Board Communiqué

*Excellent health care, every time*

## January 2024 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 29 January 2024.



**Birak**  
Season of  
the young

Board members noted the meeting was being held during the Noongar season of Birak – the season of the young. Birak is December to January, which is a time when the rains ease and the warmer weather begins to take hold. With its almost clockwork style of easterly morning winds and cooler afternoon sea breezes from the southwest, this was the traditional burning time for the Noongar people.

As part of this month’s acknowledgement of traditional owners, Board member Sue Le Souef acknowledged the Whadjuk people of the Noongar lands on which the Board was meeting. Sue reflected on her recent reading of Dr Lowitja O’Donoghue’s biography, and how it was an uplifting and positive experience to learn of Dr O’Donoghue’s contribution to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people.

At each Board meeting, members consider patient stories to ensure the patient and their family is always at the forefront of our considerations. This month, Board members heard about a FSH patient who would have benefited from a more coordinated approach to their care. The second story highlighted a follow-up positive action from a previous patient story, which resulted in more than 400 SMHS staff undergoing an awareness training program.



In the Board Chair’s report, I thanked Board members for celebrating and recognising SMHS staff and volunteers at various events throughout December and taking part in Christmas decorating competitions across all of our hospital sites. I also reflected on the events I attended, including the staff lunch at Fremantle Hospital and the Rockingham Peel Group (RkPG) volunteer function at Peel Manor House.

*Pictured left is Liam Roche, SMHS Board member taking a quokka selfie at the Rockingham General Hospital (RGH) Christmas decorating competition.*

Within the Chair’s report, I discussed the upcoming Board evaluation which is conducted every three years, and I acknowledged the opening by the Minister for Health of Kara Maar, SMHS’ new purpose-built eating disorder service in Cockburn. I also thanked Julian Henderson for representing the Board at the SMHS Care to Lead program graduation event in December, with 128 new members welcomed into the SMHS Leadership Alumni. *Pictured right is Board member Julian Henderson (back row, second from right) with Care to Lead graduates*





In January, I had the privilege of attending the annual RkPG Long Service Awards, celebrating staff who reached 10, 20, 30 and 40-year milestones. A total of 79 staff members were recognised, including Eve Grant who has dedicated 42 years to working at RGH.

*Pictured L-R: Adj. Assoc. Prof. Robyn Collins, SMHS Board Chair; Ms Kath Smith, Executive Director RkPG; Eve Grant, 42-year long service award recipient; and Mr Paul Forden, SMHS Chief Executive.*

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

- Emergency and elective access across SMHS' sites.
- The Peel Health Campus (PHC) transition and redevelopment project update.
- The commencement of the WA-first Hospital in the Home/acute virtual ward initiative.
- The media event held at Fremantle Hospital to mark the construction of 40 additional mental health beds.

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

- A review of the SMHS Board Committees – at the beginning of each year, Committee chairs consider whether the committees are meeting the objectives set out in their terms of reference and the governance requirements. It is also an opportunity to ensure the committee structure is best meeting the needs of the organisation.
- The SMHS Board Charter annual update. The Board Charter documents the role, composition and processes relating to the key governance activities of the Board.
- The SMHS Board Manual annual update. The Board Manual is a requirement of the Health Service Provider Board Governance Policy and contains the localised and tailored processes and procedures for the SMHS Board's operations.
- The SMHS Board governance map annual update. The SMHS Board Governance Map provides an overview of the reports reviewed by the SMHS Board Committees as well as the identified risks.

The Chair of the Board's Safety and Quality Committee presented the SMHS Board to Ward program overview for 2023. Through the program, Board members undertake conversations with staff, patients and their families in relation to the care provided and received, and in doing so, make a public commitment to service improvement. Board to Ward visits also allow Board members to put a human face to the data and reports they receive in their meetings and be reflective in their Board and committee deliberations. You can read the latest Board to Ward program overview on the SMHS website.

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 emergency access recovery program and considered regular safety and quality reports, including clinical incidents and the draft schedule for 2024 Board to Ward visits.
- The Finance and Governance Committee discussed the finance, activity, and staffing reports, reviewed contract management reports and risks and endorsed a service agreement.
- The Audit and Risk Committee considered the PHC project update, lost time injury data, the risk register report, audit log, internal audit reports, integrity and ethics matters and quarterly health and safety reports.

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Monday 26 February 2024 at FSH.

**Adjunct Associate Professor Robyn Collins**  
**Board Chair, South Metropolitan Health Service**  
**1 February 2024**