



SMHS Board Communiqué

Excellent health care, every time

March 2022 Meeting

This Communiqué highlights key discussions of interest at the South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) Board's Board meeting which was held on 28 March 2022 with me as the Chair present on the Fiona Stanley Hospital (FSH) site and all other members in virtual attendance via Teams.

This month's patient story was an absolute highlight for the Board. The clinical lead for the WA Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) Statewide Care Navigator Service attended Board to reflect on her recent experience caring for a patient who had chosen to access voluntary assisted dying services. The WA VAD Statewide Navigator Service is available to provide support to anyone involved with voluntary assisted dying in WA, including patients, the family and carers of patients, members of the community, health professionals and service providers. While the service is based in Perth, it is available to patients and practitioners anywhere within WA. The SMHS Board reflected that providing patients with a dignified death that supports their own wishes is such an important part of healthcare. Board members were very moved by the story and the incredible, compassionate and supportive work of the Navigator Service and commended the team for the important work they do. [Read more here.](#)

At the start of each meeting, a Board member is asked to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet. This month, Sue Le Souef reflected on access to health services for Aboriginal people, particularly in remote and regional areas. While health issues, especially in mental health, continue to rise, access to culturally safe services may not have improved. This was considered in the recently released [Ministerial Taskforce report into public mental health services for infants, children and adolescents aged 0-18 years in WA](#), which was also discussed by Board members.

Bunuru

Season of adolescence



Board members also noted that the Board meeting was being held during the last few days of the Noongar season of Bunuru – the season of adolescence.

Bunuru is February to March, considered to be 'second summer,' and is the hottest time of the year with little to no rain. Noongar people traditionally acknowledge six seasons, which are guided by the land. The six seasons are indicated by the changes in local weather, plants and animals.



**Second summer:
February-March**

Coast living and
fishing time.

As part of my Chair's report, I reflected on the recent online presentation SMHS Board and Executive member delegates attended by Debora Picone AO from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. This excellent presentation focused on clinical governance, evidence-based healthcare and NSQHS standards. I reinforced the emphasis of maintaining a good safety culture which is of the highest importance for SMHS.

Other matters discussed:

- Board member mandatory training review – acknowledging the importance of mandatory training for all employees across SMHS, including Board members.

- Board evaluation review – In May 2021, the SMHS Board undertook external evaluation of the Board and Board Chair to review Board performance, strengths and opportunities for improvement, and to ensure appropriate governance practices are in place. The Board reviewed and discussed actions from the evaluation to ensure that they are completed or on track.
- The Board dashboard – each month high level indicators are considered on the areas covered by each Board committee.

The Chief Executive's report this month included the following updates:

- An extensive update on the management of COVID-19, including the opening of additional beds.
- Peel Health Campus transition, including the expression of interest process for the development of a co-located private hospital and engagement activities with staff currently working at the hospital.
- Wellbeing of staff during the COVID community surge, including the initiatives that have been developed and implemented to prioritise staff wellbeing during challenging times.
- Reduction of elective surgery for category 2 and category 3 patients, which commenced as planned from 14 March to reduce the pressure on the WA Health system during the COVID surge.

The Chief Executive was also pleased to brief Board on the completion of the Fremantle Hospital theatres project, which was completed on time and on budget in March 2022. This major capital works project involved upgrades to eight operating theatres and five procedure rooms at Fremantle Hospital. The project has included major upgrades to the mechanical systems supporting the operating theatres and procedure rooms at Fremantle Hospital, with the installation of individual air conditioning units and new major fixtures. In addition to replacing the air conditioning system in the complex, new operating lights and pendants have also been added to enhance the capabilities of the theatres.

Chairs 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 safety and quality monthly dashboard as well as SAC1s of concern and an annual review of the Committee's terms of reference.
- The Finance and Governance Committee discussed the finance, activity and staffing reports, reviewed contract management reports and undertook an annual review of the Committee's terms of reference.
- The Audit and Risk Committee considered the SMHS Audit Log, corporate risks, internal audits, the monthly work health and safety dashboard, workforce health and safety reports and undertook an annual review of the Committee's terms of reference.

The next regular meeting of the SMHS Board is scheduled for Thursday 28 April 2022.

Adjunct Associate Professor Robyn Collins
Chair, South Metropolitan Health Service Board
4 April 2022