



Board Chair's overview

On behalf of the South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) Board, I am proud to present the SMHS annual report for the 2022–23 financial year.

I wish to extend an enormous thank you to staff and acknowledge the past year has been tough, particularly for frontline staff. The SMHS Board recognises the dedication, strength and expertise demonstrated by colleagues each and every day. We know there is so much to celebrate, despite a challenging year.

At SMHS, we talk a lot about **excellent healthcare, every time** but what do those words mean? For me, it means providing compassionate and competent care to our patients. It means looking out for each other and demonstrating support to our colleagues. Most importantly, it means doing no harm to patients.

Each month, SMHS Board members visit patient care areas as part of the Board to Ward program and we consistently see these qualities demonstrated. While there are always learning opportunities from these visits, we are overwhelmingly impressed by patient and carer



feedback and our staff's devotion, kindness and compassion. Hearing and listening to the consumer voice as well as that of our staff remains a priority for both the Board and the wider organisation.

As a Board, we are conscious that our health service has a duty to contribute to the health of individuals, to the health of communities and to support a healthy environment. It was my absolute pleasure to launch the SMHS Sustainability Strategy 2023–26 in June. SMHS has been at the forefront of this agenda and while we have made good progress in some areas, we know there is much more to do. The new strategy will ensure there are tangible changes in the way our organisation impacts the environment through the establishment of ambitious targets.

In May, I was delighted to join the Minister for Medical Research and

the Chief Executive in launching the SMHS Research Strategy 2023–33. Over the next ten years, this strategy will guide SMHS research to improve both the quality of care and life for our patients, as well as contributing to international knowledge and addressing social and health inequalities.

At SMHS, we aim to champion equity and equality, close the health gap and build relationships to improve Aboriginal health and wellbeing. This is being achieved through many initiatives including increasing Aboriginal cadetships and nursing and midwifery graduate placements, development of the Aboriginal health practitioner role, and continuing to grow our Aboriginal Health Champions program to increase cultural competency. The Board takes seriously our responsibility to undertake meaningful action on behalf of our Aboriginal patients and staff and has recently formally endorsed the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

In 2022–23, SMHS has taken a cautious approach to financial management that will continue into the next financial year. Meeting our financial obligations to the Western

Australian (WA) Government and the people of WA remains a priority, as well as improving emergency and elective access for our community.

I wish to recognise the SMHS Chief Executive Paul Forden and the Executive team, as well as my fellow Board members, including Karen Brown who commenced in July 2022. The success of our health service relies on effective governance and skilled leadership. Their enduring dedication to the safety and quality of care we provide to our patients is acknowledged. I also wish to recognise and thank the Director General of Health, Dr David Russell-Weisz and the Health Executive for their collaborative support.

Once again, and on behalf of the SMHS Board, I extend my profound gratitude to our valued workforce. The care and compassion our staff provide to patients and their families is commendable and appreciated.

It is a privilege to be part of this health service and an honour in my role as Board Chair to endorse the 2022–23 annual report.

**Adjunct Associate Professor
Robyn Collins
Board Chair**

Chief Executive's report

A lot has changed over the past 12 months and I have no doubt there has been a lasting impact on our staff and the communities we serve as a result of the pandemic.

My heartfelt thanks go out to all SMHS colleagues for their ongoing dedication and hard work throughout what have been challenging times. When I am out and about at our sites, I am constantly impressed with the way our staff go the extra mile for those in our care.

Despite the challenges, it has been a busy and productive year with a lot to be proud of. We have launched 'Put it to the People' – a platform for consumer involvement, progressed our Clinical Excellence Unit, continued to roll out leadership training programs, such as Care to Lead, and SMHS led the way as the first health service in WA to appoint a Chief Wellbeing Practitioner.

Two years ago, we launched our updated SMHS Strategic Plan 2021–25 which drives us to deliver on our vision. Achievements include establishing twinning links to share clinical expertise, practices and innovations with international health



services including SingHealth, and establishing the SMHS Biobank, a first for WA. SMHS also commenced consumer involvement in clinical incident reviews and established a quality improvement faculty.

We established strong, ongoing engagement with the Peel Mental Health project which is taking a 'no wrong door' approach for young people seeking mental health support in the Peel region. Pioneering initiatives such as virtual immunology, the musculoskeletal emergency department diversion service and the CoNeCT service have continued to improve service delivery. SMHS has taken a visionary approach to the development of community services and continued to champion the hospital in the home program.

We have opened a number of new beds this year across our hospitals including the Moordibirdup ward at

Rockingham General Hospital (RGH) and neuro rehab beds at Fremantle Hospital (FH). RGH implemented a digital medical record in May and SMHS is the first health service to have the digital medical record across all sites.

Our Kaartdijin Innovation team has an abundance of projects in the pipeline, underway or completed including the establishment of a surgical school as part of the LifeFit SurgFit program and a voice-to-text trial for real-time dictation of clinical documentation. We continued our outstanding Dream Big innovation pitch panels for staff.

New initiatives across SMHS have cemented our status as an environmental sustainability leader as we know that having a focused SMHS Sustainability Strategy is critical to our future, not only as a health care provider, but to us as people.

We know now is the time to look optimistically towards the future. One of the most important tasks ahead is significantly improving emergency, elective and outpatient access for our community and getting patient flow right across our hospitals and community services. We will continue to focus on providing the right care

for our patients in the right place at the right time, within our allocated budget.

I am also committed to addressing our workforce challenges and continuing to build on the initiatives we have put in place to recognise staff and support their wellbeing. Although we are continually recruiting, we know we need contemporary solutions to managing our workforce pressures which may include new and different ways of working, opportunities to explore alternative models of practice and partnerships.

I extend my thanks once again to Board Chair Robyn Collins and the SMHS Board for their leadership and robust approach to governance. I also acknowledge and thank my executive colleagues for their strong, strategic leadership.

I am proud to be able to say a sincere thank you once again, on behalf of the SMHS Executive team, to all our staff for upholding the SMHS' values of care, respect, integrity, teamwork and excellence and a constant commitment to deliver **excellent health care, every time.**

Paul Forden
Chief Executive

Celebrating our 2022 SMHS Excellence Award winners

Held annually, the SMHS Excellence Awards celebrate and reward high achieving staff who exemplify the SMHS values of care, integrity, respect, excellence and teamwork in their service each and every day. The awards align with the organisation's strategic priorities and recognise our commitment to excellent clinical care, great patient experiences, an engaged workforce, strong community partnerships and innovation.



**Chief Executive's commitment to excellence award
– Dr Vanessa Clayden**

Through her role as head of the Fiona Stanley Hospital (FSH) emergency department (ED), Vanessa has provided outstanding leadership, clinical governance and operational and strategic oversight to deliver excellent patient care in one of Australia's busiest EDs. An inspiring leader and fierce advocate for her team, Vanessa's engagement across the organisation has been vital in addressing emergency medicine challenges, nurturing system improvement and driving innovative frontline initiatives.



**SMHS Board award
– Nola Naylor**

Nola Naylor's leadership has engaged and empowered the SMHS workforce to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people in acute care and the community. Nola is an outstanding leader and mentor who led implementation of the SMHS Aboriginal Health Strategy and the Aboriginal Health Champions program, advocating for cultural security.



**SMHS Board award
– Anthony Collier**

Since joining WA Health as a social worker in 1984, Anthony Collier has focused on ensuring the community can access fair, equitable and consumer focused mental health treatment. Anthony is an experienced mental health services leader and a passionate mental health service advocate who has championed improved staff wellbeing and consumer involvement and consultation.





Excellence in clinical care award – Virtual immunology clinic

Chronic immunological conditions often require lifelong care coordination between hospitals and general practitioners (GPs) which can be challenging due to service capacity and can result in lengthy wait times for patients. To help alleviate these pressures and improve the patient experience, the establishment of the FSH Immunology Service telehealth clinic doubled the service's capacity to deliver care more efficiently and closer to the patient's home.



Excellence in improving the patient experience award – Cultural safety in the emergency department

After identifying a need for improved culturally responsive care, this RGH project created a more inclusive and safer environment for Aboriginal ED patients and families while connecting non-Aboriginal patients and hospital staff to culture. Aboriginal health liaison officers (AHLOs) and ED staff at RGH partnered with Aboriginal community members and health consumers to embed a culture with increased security for Aboriginal patients, decreased 'did not wait' rates, improved support and direct feedback pathways for Aboriginal patients.



Excellence in developing and engaging our staff – SMHS Medical Workforce team

A commitment to continuous improvement and customer satisfaction guided the growth of this engaged and inclusive team and its strong customer service focus. A streamlined COVID-19 reporting service assisted junior medical officers to navigate leave entitlements, work remotely where possible and access rosters. The initiative created a new SMS system to contact doctors to fill critical vacant shifts and a walk-in service to support medical staff.





Excellence in strengthening partnerships and Southern Star Award – Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Care Navigator Service

The nurse-led service advises and supports patients, families, networks and care providers on voluntary assisted dying (VAD), providing individualised care and equity for consumers across WA. Even before the legislation was implemented, the service worked extensively to develop strong, collaborative, respectful and enduring relationships across public, private, aged-care and community-based providers. Within the first year of operations, more than 170 Western Australians accessed this end-of-life choice, well above the modelling of 50–70 people.



Excellence in innovation – Mobile app for spinal rehabilitation patients

Developed by spinal ward clinicians at FSH in consultation with past and present patients, Your SMHS Mobile Care is the first app worldwide to directly support spinal cord injury patients throughout their inpatient care and healthcare journey. The app features 29 programs to support patients' daily schedules, provides education through images and videos, and engages patients to set goals and champion their own rehabilitation.





Volunteer of the Year – Pauline James

After close to 40 years of voluntary service with the RGH Auxiliary, Pauline's commitment to improving the experience of patients, staff and visitors is well respected. During this time, Pauline has supported the Auxiliary through 25 years as a committee member, and also rolled her sleeves up to offer frontline support to emergency department patients and staff, Elanora's gift shop and Elanora's café.



Researcher of the Year – Professor Dickon Hayne, Head of Urology

Professor Hayne's commitment to improving treatments and outcomes for bladder cancer – a difficult-to-treat condition with decreasing survival outcomes – is widely acknowledged. His contribution to clinical knowledge and translation into clinical practice, along with demonstrated evidence from multiple national and international trials, may be key to changing clinical practice for bladder cancer patients.

