



SMHS Board Communiqué

Excellent health care, every time

June 2022 Meeting

This Communiqué highlights key discussions of interest at the South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) Board's Board meeting which was held at Fiona Stanley Hospital on Monday 27 June 2022.

Makuru Season of fertility



Board members noted that the Board meeting was being held during the Noongar season of Makuru – the season of fertility. Makuru is June to July, which is the coldest and wettest time of the year. Traditionally, this was a time to move inland from the coast as the winds bring the cold weather and rain. Makuru is when animals pair up in preparation for breeding in the coming season. 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.

Board members noted that the Board meeting was being held during the Noongar season of Makuru – the season of fertility. Makuru is June to July, which is the coldest and wettest time of the year. Traditionally, this was a time to move inland from the coast as the winds bring the cold

Each month, a Board member is asked to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which the Board meets and this month, Sue Le Souef reflected on a panel that she had attended during [National Reconciliation Week](#), hosted by the SMHS Aboriginal Health Strategy team. Like a number of Board members, Sue is an Aboriginal Health Champion. Sue highlighted the origins of and importance of Reconciliation Week as well as reflecting on some of the issues discussed by the panel, including cultural safety, language difficulties and tokenism. As a result of Sue attending what she described as a 'positive and inspiring session', Board members have been invited to join some of the SMHS Aboriginal health workers on their visits to the community.

The Board was privileged to receive a patient story this month directly from a patient who has benefited from the development of a new SMHS app for spinal patients, developed by the SMHS Innovation team and the spinal rehabilitation team. The patient was receiving care in the State Rehabilitation Service (SRS) at Fiona Stanley Hospital (FSH) when he agreed to participate in the trial of the new app which arose from an idea put forward by the nursing team within SRS in the very first SMHS Innovation 'Shark Tank.'

Extensive education and resources are embedded in the app, including educational videos. These are updated depending on the stage of the patient rehabilitation journey. The patient's timetable allows easy access to information for both the patient and their clinical team about their daily tasks and schedule. The patient said, *"I really like having the education on my phone. I am busy doing care and therapy during the day and now I can do my learning in the evenings and on the weekends."*



Another highlight for the Board was an inspiring presentation by Dr Emma-Leigh Synnot on environmental sustainability and climate change. Dr Synnot is the SMHS Medical lead for Climate Health and Environmental Sustainability. Dr Synnot highlighted the important work already being done by SMHS, such as the elimination of the chemical desflurane, as well as targets and future aspirations. She discussed the components of a good strategy around environmental sustainability – leadership, campus, clinical care and community engagement – and discussed local, national and global targets. The SMHS Board heard that the

organisation has already shown significant leadership in this work and is looking to continue to build on the great work already done.

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

- Peel Health Campus - The Executive Director for Peel Health Campus (PHC) Transformation provided the Board with a presentation about the ongoing work to transition PHC to SMHS from August 2023. The project will also see the redevelopment of the existing public hospital and a new private hospital built to be co-located with PHC.
- The recent Fiona Stanley Fremantle Hospitals Group (FSFHG) accreditation survey against the National Safety Quality Health Service Standards and the National Standards for Mental Health Services. Board members provided their congratulations on FSFHG's excellent results.

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

- An update on the continued management of COVID-19 including staffing matters, emergency department testing and plans for testing clinics on hospital sites.
- The continued development towards the election commitment of a mental health emergency centre (MHEC) for Rockingham General Hospital (RGH). The proposed facility is likely to be a combined ten bed unit comprising eight MHEC beds and two behaviour assessment unit beds.
- An update on the recent Estimates briefings held for the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council, which the Chief Executive attends.
- Welcoming Youth Reach South, a new service joining SMHS from the 1 July 2022. The service is based in Cockburn and provides mental health services to members of the community for 13 to 24 year olds.
- A reflection on the new framed *Apologies to Australia's Indigenous Peoples* that have been donated and are now displayed in the reception areas of Fiona Stanley and Fremantle hospitals.
- The launch of the SMHS Leadership Alumni program, held on 24 June 2022.
- The launch of the SMHS Plastic Free July campaign on 27 June 2022, championing some key initiatives around environmental sustainability including the reduction of the use of 'blues.'
- A reflection on the premiere screening of the new documentary about the emergency departments at FSH and Perth Children's Hospital. The series is a wonderful celebration of the services provided by SMHS.



As part of my Chair's report, I thanked our outgoing Board member David Rowe for his many years of service. David was a member of the SMHS Governing Council prior to appointment to the SMHS Board. David has long been a strong advocate for high quality local health services and effective financial management being Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee. During his tenure as Committee Chair, SMHS turned around a significant deficit. David's contribution has been greatly appreciated by me as Chair and Board members.

I also talked about the SMHS Compassionate Care Awards which are celebrated each year to recognise staff who have undertaken their roles with kindness, compassion and understanding. SMHS received 35 nominations this year across a range of disciplines from both consumers and colleagues. Pictured right are staff at the Murray District Hospital Compassionate Care Award morning tea held on 9 June 2022.



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 recent FSFHG accreditation as well as serious incidents of concern. The Committee also discussed [the SMHS Research Report](#) which was published in early June.
- The Finance and Governance Committee discussed the finance, activity and staffing reports, reviewed contract management reports and the finance and governance risks.

- The Audit and Risk Committee considered the SMHS Audit Log, corporate risks, internal audits, plans for the 2022/23 internal audit program and the quarterly work health and safety reports.



Finally, I wanted to mention the four staff memorial services that were held on 21 June 2022 – Winter Solstice. Staff across SMHS hospitals came together once again to take a moment out of their day to reflect upon the challenges we have all faced over the past year and to remember colleagues who have passed away. Led by the FSFHG Pastoral Care team and executive members, staff stood shoulder to shoulder by the trees that were planted last year, to place a wreath of remembrance.

It was an honour to attend the four services and I appreciated having the opportunity to thank staff for their dedication and hard work for our patients. I recognise it takes a great deal of courage to face personal sadness as well as work stress, and still show up for work every day. These services were a reminder that we really are all in this together. You can watch [a short video about the *Light after Dark* services here](#).



After the regular Board meeting, the SMHS Board was delighted to host a meeting with the Minister for Health, the Hon. Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss some of the key priorities and challenges for both SMHS and the whole health system. The Minister provided her congratulations to all staff within health on the outstanding way they have managed through the COVID-19 community surge, maintaining a high standard of services for those in our care.

The next regular meeting of the SMHS Board is scheduled for Monday 25 July 2022 at Fremantle Hospital.

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