

## PATHWEST Board Communiqué

*This Communiqué highlights key discussions and considerations from the February 2023 Board Meeting.*



The February 2023 Board meeting was held at the QEII Medical Campus in the Harry Perkins Building, during the Noongar season of Bunuru. The hottest time of the year, it is traditionally a time for living and fishing by the coast, rivers and estuaries and a season when white flowering gums bloom – native Jarrah, Marri and Ghost gums.

Photo reference: Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, Macrozamia Fraseri.  
Content: Australian Bureau of Meteorology.

### KEY MATTERS:

#### Visit – Hon. Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA, Minister for Health

The Honourable Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA, Minister for Health, joined the Board at the start of its meeting in its role as the governing body of PathWest. The Board and Minister had an informative discussion on the Minister's priorities for the Health portfolio for 2023 and key challenges, including for PathWest. Other matters discussed included the Independent Review of WA Health System Governance and cyber security and the Department of Health, with the Board sharing information on significant advances in research including in Cancer Genomics, Digital Biology and Artificial Intelligence.

The Board would like to thank the Honourable Minister for an open and insightful discussion and the contribution that this provides the Board in meeting its governance role.



Photo: Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA, Minister for Health, the PathWest Board and Mr Sash Tomson, Acting Chief Executive

## [Presentations](#)

### [Living Our Values](#)

The PathWest Board receives presentations from internal business units that demonstrate how PathWest is meeting the values underpinning its Strategic Plan.

Dr Anmol Rijhumal, Head of Department, Anatomical Pathology, presented on the discipline's adoption of a Subspeciality Model which has facilitated the development of subspecialist expert Pathologists in areas of Anatomical Pathology. The model is driven by rapid change in the clinical environment which has introduced considerable complexity to the discipline. The model has facilitated delivery of a best practice State-wide service, providing optimal care for the community and has resulted in PathWest becoming a major referral centre for Anatomical Pathology in Western Australia.

The PathWest Board would like to thank Dr Rijhumal for a highly informative presentation and for highlighting the work undertaken by Anatomical Pathology to achieve excellence and care in service delivery.

### [Rules of Engagement](#)

The Board is strongly committed to improved governance performance and recognises that the relationship between the Board and Executive is key to its success. To enhance this relationship a highly interactive session between the Board and Executive was conducted during the meeting that considered issues that may impact the effectiveness of, and enhance, the relationship between the two parties. Rules of Engagement to guide the relationship, initially developed in 2021, were revisited and strengthened.

### [Strategic and Operational Plan update](#)

A draft Operational Plan for 2023/24 will be tabled at the May 2023 meeting. The current draft plan will be refined to ensure deliverables are prioritised in consultation with key stakeholders, against common goals or 'key success factors'.

### [Acting Chief Executive Report](#)

The value of Subject Matter Experts in the development of the Laboratory Information System rollout and business as usual settings was acknowledged. The Board requested a status update on the Laboratory Information System Infrastructure Modernisation Program, including risk mitigation in the System's delivery.

Covid-19 continues to have an impact on PathWest staffing, predominantly close contacts, although changes to facilitate close contacts returning to work with a negative RAT test and no ill health symptoms, should achieve a reduction in furloughed staff.

PathWest is currently in discussions with Peel Health Campus which is transitioning from private to public management regarding provision of a Pathology service at the facility and is now represented on the Transition Team.

Acting Chief Executive thanked everyone involved in the flood effort in the Kimberley Region. PathWest testing facilities have remained open, with the WA Country Health Service providing support to PathWest staff.

### [Finance Report](#)

The Board and PathWest Executive are working to streamline its monthly Finance Report to enhance readability and understanding of key financial risks and PathWest's cash position forecast. PathWest's financial position continues to be impacted by Covid-19 expenditure, and increased demand in regional and Pre-Analytical services, and the Laboratory Information System rollout.

## **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

The People and Culture Committee reported from its 8 December 2022 meeting on strategies for attracting and retaining Medical Scientists in regional areas, including opportunities for a Return to Metropolitan Policy and allocation of positions in Tertiary Laboratories. Workforce noted the positive work of the recently employed Aboriginal Workforce Coordinator in promoting Aboriginal employment

at PathWest including at Aboriginal events, through partnerships with other Health Service Providers including the Aboriginal Youth Coalition and Aboriginal Cadetship program, Aboriginal Scholarship in Pathology Collection Program and an expression of interest process for Aboriginal art. PathWest intends to employ an Aboriginal Family Liaison officer to improve the experience of Aboriginal clients utilising PathWest services. Disability inclusion in PathWest workforce remains a challenge that requires further planning and targeted actions.

Considerable work has been undertaken to enhance work health and safety statutory compliance, with further compliance actions underway. PathWest achieved improved performance in hazard inspections and injury management in Q1, 2022.

#### **MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR**

This month I chaired a session with Board Members on review of the Skills Matrix. The Matrix, completed by each Board member, is key to ensuring that the PathWest Board has the relevant expertise and diversity. It assists in determining gaps in skills, knowledge and experience so that professional development can be tailored to need and is a useful tool for succession planning. The session identified that the Board had a reasonable balance of skills and experience and identified areas that could be strengthened across skills and diversity.

Other matters included meetings regarding recruitment of a new Board member and participation in the Annual Review of Board Membership and Constitution by the Department of Health under the *Health Services Act 2016*.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled Board meeting will be held in Geraldton on 2 March 2023.



Ms. Angie Paskevicius  
**Chair, PathWest Board**  
2 February 2023