

PathWest Board Communique

This communique highlights key discussions and considerations from the Board's March meeting as well as other important information.

Member attendance:

Prof. Christobel Saunders (Chair)

Ms. Samantha Elder

Mr. Kevin Taylor

Ms. Michele Dolin

Dr. Sue van Leeuwen

Prof. Tarun Weeramanthri

Prof. Gelareh Farshid

Mr. Robert McPhee

Ms. Angie Paskevicius

In attendance

Mr. Joe Boyle (Chief Executive)

Dr. Miles Beaman

Ms. Jo McCran

Ms. Nicola Chisholm

Dr. Benhur Amanuel

Apologies

Dr. Kim Hames

March 2021 Board Meeting

The March Board meeting was held at Fiona Stanley Hospital on Thursday, 4 March 2021.

Key matters for discussion

Aboriginal Employment, health and wellbeing

As noted in the February Board Communique, this is a key focus area for the Board. The Board is committed to improving the employment of Aboriginal people and likewise, the well-being of PathWest Aboriginal members of staff and ensuring we provide the best health outcomes for Aboriginal Australians.

The Board had a robust discussion which was led by Rob McPhee, Board member; Joe Boyle, Chief Executive and Jo McCran, Manager Workforce. The Board were presented with a number of strategies and 11 recommendations for improving Aboriginal employment opportunities and fostering cultural competency across the organisation.

Following discussions at the Board meeting and a recent People and Culture Committee meeting, the team at PathWest will be developing a costed operational plan for review and approval by the Board. We look forward to the developments of this very important piece of work.

Digital Pathology

As a part of strategic discussions, the Board received a very informative presentation regarding Digital Pathology led by Professor Gelareh Farshid, Board member; Dr. Miles Beaman, Chief Pathologist and Dr. Benhur Amanuel, Service Director, Anatomical Pathology.

The convergence of modern artificial intelligence (AI) with the emergence of digital pathology is yielding advances in medical image recognition. In the research setting, some machine learning algorithms have already approached expert level performance for specific diagnostic tasks, with anticipated scope for further improvements.

The Board noted the following key discussions:

- Estimated that laboratory data contributes up to 70% of the content of electronic health records, with current slide scanners offering capacities of up to 1000 slides per run.
- Digital image files can be viewed simultaneously or at different times and locations, offering flexibility for use in primary diagnosis, education and research. There have been financial savings for Pathology laboratories adopting this process.
- In the United States, the AI healthcare market is expected to grow to \$20 billion by 2025, at an annual growth rate of 40%.

Strategic plan

- The Board noted the initial consultation with the PathWest Extended Leadership Team (ELT) has taken place, with feedback sought on our overarching strategic priorities and goals.
- Further targeted internal and external stakeholder engagement will be conducted this year from May to June.

Committee updates

Risk and Audit Committee

The Risk and Audit Committee held its first meeting for the year on Wednesday, 17 February 2021, with the main discussions relating to:

- Key risks and issues in relation to the State Mortuary upgrade and LIS projects.
- Internal audit.
- Development of a Risk Appetite Statement for PathWest with the Committee reviewing examples from other Health Service Providers (HSPs) and a plan for development.

People and Culture Committee

The People and Culture Committee (led by Dr. Sue van Leeuwen) held its first meeting for 2021 on Thursday, 18 February 2021. The main focus items of the meeting were:

- Aboriginal employment and recommendations for future initiatives (as mentioned above).
- State Mortuary Bereavement package development.
- Minister for Health Your Voice in Health departmental plans with an emphasis on the communications plan for the upcoming Minister for Health 'Your Voice in Health survey in March 2021
- PW Integrity and Ethics Frameworks and reporting procedures.

Forensic Biology Advisory Council (FBAC)

The FBAC (Chaired by Hon. John Chaney) held their second meeting on Tuesday, 9 February 2021. The Board noted the following key discussions:

- For the 2020 calendar year, submissions for volume crime were down by 10% (due to COVID-19); although, submissions for serious crime were up by 16%.
- The WA contribution to the national criminal investigation DNA database (NCIDD) grew by 30,000 DNA profiles in 2020. WA has contributed over 27% of all DNA profiles on the NCIDD.
- High-level overview of the Forensic Biology review provided by KPMG.

Board Walks

Our Board member Kevin Taylor undertook a Board Walk to the Northam laboratory on Wednesday, 3 March 2021. Kevin recounts his visit below:

It is always a privilege as a Pathwest Board member to visit staff in the labs and collection centres, knowing they are taking time out of their busy day to introduce themselves and talk to us about their services, whilst still undertaking testing of patient samples.



Picture: Flooding in the Northam town centre

This privilege was even more evident on a recent visit to the Northam laboratory on a day when the entire region was experiencing a massive deluge of rain leading to flash flooding throughout all areas. The dedication of the staff was evident as they all turned up for work, showing great hospitality to a board member undertaking a visit despite many of their houses being under threat from the floods.

Hearing the experiences of staff working in a regional laboratory along with seeing the improvements to lab instrumentation brought back many memories of the ten years I spent as 'multi scientist' in Geraldton. The "board walks" where Board members have the opportunity to visit front-line staff is a valuable experience providing great insight into our staff and the services they deliver. My thanks to Janet and all the team at Northam for the hospitality extended to me.



Board member Kevin Taylor (second from left) with the staff at Northam laboratory

Next Meeting

The Board will be holding its first regional Board meeting and also conducting a Board Walk on Thursday, 1 April 2021 at Bunbury Hospital.

Professor Christobel Saunders
Chair, PathWest Board
9 March 2021



Christobel Saunders



Tarun Weeramanthri



Sue van Leeuwen



Kevin Taylor



Michele Dolin



Rob McPhee



Samantha Elder



Kim Hames



Angie Paskevicius



Gelareh Farshid