

Minutes for NSW Health Pathology Board

28 February 2024 | 10:00 AM - 01:30 PM, 1 Reserve Road, St Leonards, and Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Nigel Lyons (Chair), Carmen Rechbauer, Cathryn Cox, Darren Turner, David Currow, Gayle Murphy, Michael Legg, Nicholas Hawkins, and Elizabeth Salisbury.

Apologies: Nil

In Attendance: Vanessa Janissen (Chief Executive), Gary Sturgess For Item 5, Nick Dunn, Rob Lindeman and Darren Croese For Item 6, Tammy Boone for Item 7, Deanna Paulin For Item 8, Stephen Braye for Item 13.

Secretariat: Tanya Dunn

Welcome, Acknowledgment of Country and Emergency Management

The Chair opened the meeting with acknowledgement of country and welcomed all in attendance.

The Chair **NOTED** the apologies received.

A quorum of Board members was present, and the meeting proceeded with business. The Secretariat recorded the minutes.

Declarations of Conflict of Interest

The Board Chair requested that all attendees declare or remove any conflicts of interest at the meeting.

There were no new conflicts of interest declared at the meeting.

Confirmation of previous Minutes and Review of Action Log

Board members were invited to comment on the minutes.

The members of the Board **APPROVED** the draft Board meeting minutes of the 13th of December 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: Gayle Murphy

The Action Log was reviewed and noted. The pending actions were reviewed and discussed. Items that are completed or on today's agenda were also acknowledged.

Action Item 7 was discussed, specifically focusing on the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) related to turnaround times (TATs). Noting that the Finance and Performance Committee will retain oversight over the KPI.

Chief Executive Update

The Chief Executive report was taken as read.

Noting:

- Significant efforts are underway to refine priorities, stabilise the budget, and supports required to create labs for the future.
- Ongoing discussions regarding the Technical Officer and Scientific Officer Industrial dispute. Aim to achieve Award reform with a better structure and clearer role definitions.
- The Special Commission Interview Witness Statement was provided to Board members for information. It was noted that the Statement was beneficial and would be useful to incoming Board members.
- Challenges noted in the discipline of Anatomical Pathology. The need for a well-defined model going forward was discussed. A workshop with the Anatomical Pathology Clinical Stream will be arranged to agree the strategy. As demand for precision and personalised medicine continues to grow, it is vital to evaluate the current anatomical services, explore digital solutions and adapt to changing demands.
- The Board requested additional information regarding the removal of Lismore accreditation as it relates to evidence of complex cut up being undertaken out of scope. Credentialing and evidence-based training are critical for competency. All laboratories using non-medical dissection staff must adhere to a well-documented scope of practice. A review is planned, and the Board will be provided with an update at the April Board meeting.
- The Fusion budget is being rebaselined due to changes in sequencing and timings. Increased costs and extended program length are contributing factors. Balancing resources remains critical. The Board will be kept informed of any budget adjustments.
- Potential collaboration with the Sydney Children's Hospital pathology laboratory, Westmead and St Vincents' Hospital, Sydney regarding their involvement in the Fusion program.
- Thank you to Martin Canova and Michael Whiley, who will both be stepping down before the April Board meeting. The Board formally acknowledged Martin and Michael's dedication and contributions to NSW Health Pathology.

Action: A review of the non-compliant high-risk practice at Lismore will be presented to the Board at the April Board meeting.

The Board **NOTED** the update provided.

A case study on NSW Health Pathology

Gary Sturgess, an academic and former public servant, presented a case study on NSW Health Pathology to the Board.

- The study aimed to understand how NSW Health Pathology, a successful public service agency, achieved its outcomes.

- The study highlighted challenges and gains achieved throughout effective management practices and how NSW Health Pathology transitioned from a startup culture to a mature organisation.

Noting:

- The importance of leadership continuity, a strong foundation for decision-making and a high performance culture.
- Clear boundaries and transparency and balancing horizontal and vertical approaches were crucial.
- The significance of customer charters and performance management tools, as well as evolving performance agreements.
- Benchmarking has provided valuable insights and learning from other sectors contributed to success.
- Balancing performance, accountability, and values-based productivity remains an ongoing challenge.
- Thanks to Tracey McCosker, Vanessa Janissen and Alex Eigenstetter for their exceptional support and contributions.
- The Board acknowledged the value of the case study presentation. It provides context, documents NSW Health Pathology's journey and milestones, and is a reference point for understanding NSWHP's evolution. The insights gathered will influence other aspects of work and provide valuable lessons for the future, such as focusing on continuous improvement and challenging assumptions about fixed practices.
- The report will be published shortly, capturing these insights.

The Board noted and thanked Gary for his insightful presentation and for addressing questions from the Board.

The Board acknowledged Gary's dedication and commitment to advancing public-sector management.

Creating Labs of the Future, Our Finances and Focus for 2024

Rob Lindeman, Director, Clinical Transformation, Nick Dunn, Director, Finance and Corporate Services, and Darren Croese, Chief Operating Officer provided a presentation to the Board on Creating Labs of the Future, Our Finances and Focus for 2024.

Noting:

- Focus on addressing budget efficiency targets. The projected savings over the next three years include both recurrent and ongoing recurrent components.
- Eight focus areas were established, each with dedicated working groups. Structural Reform, Service Support Costs, Business Development and Revenue, Labour Management, Annual Leave, Corporate Services, FASS and Procurement.

- Shaping NSWHP's structure for the future and aligning with strategic goals. The approach considers Horizons 1, 2 and 3. The focus is on balancing long-term vision with short-term management of financial pressures.
- Strategies across areas include service redesign and laboratory role changes, testing configuration, pathology stewardship on ordering practices and managing patient care, addressing cost variation across sites, removal of long-term vacancies, reduction of turnover and training burden, improved rostering practices addressing overtime and on-call allowances, billing system centralisation, maximising automation and workflow optimisation, labour management, excessive leave, improved procurement and consumables price optimisation.
- Corporate services analysis has been undertaken. Savings identified to contribute toward achieving the FY24 and FY25 targets.
- Business development and revenue strategies include research, clinical trials, and variations in services across the state.
- The Board noted the next steps, which include further exploration of interdependencies across focus areas and continued collaboration among working groups. Assigning defined financial targets, establishing implementation timelines, and outlining initiatives for next year's budget. Collaborating with Local Health Districts for advice and support.
- The Board expressed appreciation for the ongoing work and confidence in the long-term vision while implementing short-term changes.
- The Board will receive regular updates on progress.

The Board **NOTED** the update provided.

Governance Review | Management Committees

Tammy Boone, Director, Corporate Governance, provided an overview of the government review of NSW Health Pathology management committees.

Noting:

- The governance review aims to provide a single framework to align to strategic refresh and priorities around Creating Labs of Future
- The new governance will replace the existing committee structure. Some committees will be eliminated, while a few targeted new committees will be established.
- The approach is tailored to meet the current requirements while also ensuring long-term viability beyond the current strategy.
- Efforts aim to balance governance and management committees and to move the focus from information-sharing meetings to decision-making and dispute resolution meetings.

- The model was influenced by the Board's focus on key strategic and governance areas which were considered during the assessment.
- Senior management and the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) provided valuable feedback. The identified challenges include decision-making and escalation concerns, redundant reporting, overlaps, gaps, unnecessary consultation, and the requirement for effective projects and program oversight.
- The proposed structure is designed for the next few years. Regular reviews will be required, particularly during strategy planning and clinical services plan development.
- Integration of Fusion governance is a priority as implementation progresses.
- The discussion focussed on strengthening reporting, particularly for clinical governance and patient safety, as well as addressing challenges related to data and IT connections (e.g. Fusion). Noting that improved reporting will improve decision-making and governance.
- The Board noted the next steps outlined; the Terms of Reference for each Board Subcommittee will be updated to reflect the changes, including membership. The Board Chair to provide out of session endorsement of the updated ToR. A review will be conducted in 12 months with an update provided to the Board.

The Board **NOTED** the overview provided on improving efficiency, effectiveness, and alignment across management committees.

The Board provided feedback that this is a decision of management and that the Board will be guided by the direction provided by management.

Culture, Safety and Wellbeing

The Culture, Safety and Wellbeing report was taken as read.

Noting:

- There has been a change in trend for workers' compensation results, specifically related to mental stress. Factors contributing to mental stress include personal and work-related issues. The Employee Assistant Program (EAP) may not be proportionate with the level of stress experienced. Focus on supporting staff and addressing related issues.
- The Board was provided with an update on the Technical Offices and Scientific Officers dispute.

The Board **NOTED** the update provided.

Finance and Performance Committee

The Finance and Performance Committee report was taken as read.

Darren Turner, Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee noted the financial performance.

The highlights of the Scorecard was presented and discussed.

Noting:

- Efforts are being made to address the deficit through budget repositioning.
- Observations related to turnaround times are being closely monitored.
- Workplace injury and harm scores were also discussed.
- Trainee take-up related to Aboriginal workplace engagement. 21 funded trainees as part of a dedicated Aboriginal and Disability trainee program. Recruitment to be completed by 30 June 2024. At a future Finance and Performance Committee meeting an update to be provided on progress and to hear feedback from trainees.
- Vanessa Thomson presented on the Haematology Optimisation initiative.

The Board **NOTED** the updates provided.

Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Audit and Risk Management Committee report was taken as read.

- The Strategic Risk Enterprise Risk Register is being updated to reflect the new strategy and focus on creating laboratories of the future.

The Board **NOTED** the update provided.

Quality and Clinical Safety Committee

Nick Hawkins, Chair of the Quality and Clinical Safety Committee provided an update to the Board.

Noting:

- Judy Kempton-Webb presented on the Akuna Tracking System, which serves as a model for statewide IT system implementation. Lessons learned from this implementation will be valuable for the Fusion roll out.
- Judy Kempton-Webb was recognised for her contributions to patient interactions and collection care. Judy has been appointed as a member to the Quality and Clinical Safety Committee.
- Assessment of the specific non-compliance at Lismore. Understanding the scope of practice and roles for all sites. A deep dive into the causes of non-compliance will provide valuable lessons for broader improvement.
- The change in management committees is expected to improve committee effectiveness.

The Board **NOTED** the update provided.

Clinical Council

Report only by exception. No update provided.

Medical Staff Executive Council

Report only by exception.

- Vanessa Janissen provided an update on the Chief Pathologist's role and responsibilities and the proposed recruitment process.
- Elizabeth Salisbury confirmed her commitment to continue as the Medical Staff Council Chair for another year.
- The Board expressed their appreciation to Elizabeth for her continued commitment and contributions as Chair.

The Board **NOTED** the update provided.

Medical and Dental Appointments Advisory Committee

The Medical and Dental Appointments Advisory Committee report was taken as read.

Report only by exception.

- Nigel Lyons, Chair, Medical and Dental Appointments Advisory Committee will draft a letter to the Chair, Sydney Local Health District Medical and Dental Appointments Advisory Committee regarding the joint recruitment of Senior Medical Officers (SMOs) with dual qualifications and uniformity in evaluating Model Scopes of Clinical Practice (MSoCP).
- The Board were provided with an update on the proposed recruitment process and expectations for the Chief Pathologist role and the Director, Medical Services role, both of which will be advertised consecutively.

ICT Update

- Stephen Braye provided an overview of ICT, including a budget update in relation to ICT services.

Noting:

- Incorporating business analysts and performance team members into the Data Insights Team.
- Finalising the cyber security strategy and plan. Pursuing ISO27,000 accreditation in October 2024.
- An update on ICT Services Management and ICT Clinical Operations.
- An update on the Fusion program.
- The Board **NOTED** the update provided.

Board Vacancy | Expression of Interest

- The Board noted the update provided on the vacant Board position.
- An Expression of Interest has been distributed to the Ministry of Health's Aboriginal Strategic Leadership Group with the purpose of developing an internal pathway for enhancing executive roles and board representation.
- One response has been received, and an invitation to meet has been extended.
- The Board noted that the process for filling the vacant Board position is underway.

Board Evaluation

- The Board noted the proposed Board evaluation regarding a modified approach to Board evaluations.
- Verbal feedback to be provided by Board members at the end of each Board meeting.
- A formal assessment to be conducted quarterly.
- An annual independent evaluation to be conducted every three years.

Items without notice

- With no other business to come before the meeting, the meeting was closed at 1.25pm.

For Information

NSW Health Pathology Scorecard

The Scorecard was provided for information and taken as read.

Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding Witness Statement

Noted for information.

NSWHP Future Health 23-24 Q2 Milestones

Noted for information.

NSWHP Statement of Service Q2 Milestones

Noted for information.

Medical and Dental Appointments Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Noted for information.

Finance and Performance Committee Meeting Minutes

Noted for information.

Audit and Risk Management Committee Meeting Minutes

Noted for Information.

Clinical Council Committee Meeting Minutes

Noted for information.

Quality and Clinical Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Noted for information.





Medical Staff Executive Council Committee Meeting Minutes

Noted for information.

Endorsed by Nigel Lyons, Interim Board Chair, NSW Health Pathology



Action Log NSW Health Pathology Board

26/02/24 Item 4.	A review of the specific con-compliant high-risk practice at Lismore will be presented to the Board at the April Board meeting.	Vanessa Janissen		ONGOING On Apr agenda
13/12/23 Item 7.	A request was made for greater clarity and consistency in the reporting methods used for the Scorecard. It was suggested that the difference	Alex Eigenstetter		COMPLETED
26/10/23 Item 6.	Investigate the salary packaging issues concerning FASS. <i>* NSWHP is working with the Ministry of Health Principal Taxation advisor on the submission to the Australian Taxation Office for a binding private ruling on whether these FASS staff are eligible to salary package. This submission is expected to be lodged with the ATO early in 2024 so we will expect a ruling prior to the end of the financial year.</i>	Nick Dunn		ONGOING Jun 2024
26/04/23 Item 5.	The Board will be provided with a copy of the Minister's briefing and value proposition for information. (Noting Minister visit is still to be scheduled). <i>* Minister and PPA meeting early 2024. Policy Advisors to tour ICPMR, Westmead early 2024.</i>	Vanessa Janissen		ONGOING