

## Minutes

## Board

15 April 2025 | 1.00pm-4.00pm Microsoft Teams

### Attendees

Nigel Lyons (Chair), Cathryn Cox, David Currow, Gayle Murphy, John Roach, Carmen Rechbauer, Michael Legg, Yvonne Weldon, and Nicholas Hawkins.

**Apologies:** Nil

**In Attendance:** Vanessa Janissen (Chief Executive), David Brown, Jean Frederic-Levesque, Tammy Boone for Item 3, Tammy Boone, Yasmin Fashik For Item 4, Cain Byrnes for Item 5, John O'Connor for Item 6, Lyn Baker for Item 7, and Juliana Iles-Mann for Item 10.

**Secretariat:** Tanya Dunn

### Welcome, Acknowledgment of Country and Emergency Management

The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed all attendees.

### Attendance and Apologies:

A quorum of Board members was in attendance and the meeting proceeded with business.

### Declarations of Conflict of Interest

The Board Chair requested that all attendees declare any conflicts of interest.

David Currow declared his role as Chair of the Regional, Rural and Remote Clinical Trials Executive Committee, which may be relevant to the research discussion.

### Confirmation of previous Minutes and Review of Action Log

- The draft minutes of the Board meeting held on the 26 February 2025 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.
- The action log was reviewed, highlighting completed items and ongoing tasks. The next Board meeting is scheduled for the 25 June in Liverpool, with a regional meeting scheduled for the 22 October. Potential locations for the regional meeting are being considered.
- It was noted that a private ruling regarding salary packaging at Forensic and Analytical Science Services (FASS) was not pursued, and this decision has been communicated to staff.

**Moved:** Gayle Murphy

**Seconded:** David Brown

**Chief Executive Update**

The Chief Executive report was taken as read.

**Key points discussed:**

- Pathology services at Hawkesbury District Hospital, currently provided by Australia Clinical Labs (ACL), will transition to NSWHP by the end of October. Discussions with ACL are in progress, and communications have been made to staff. A concern was raised around the management of private collections at Hawkesbury Hospital and the potential implications for other areas, such as Northern Beaches. It was noted that the focus is on maintaining services within the hospital while assessing the feasibility of enhancing community collections based on ACL's commercial decisions.
- Concerns were raised over QR codes that directly link to specific providers, limiting patient choice, and that this issue is subject of discussion with the Commonwealth through PPA.
- An update was given regarding the ongoing industrial relations action. Applications for Technical Officers and Scientific Officers Award are now in progress, with 309 out of 515 eligible applications accepted. Negotiations with the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) are ongoing, focusing on fair and reasonable conditions within the interim award. This includes laboratory requirements as well as workforce mix. Discussions with the Ministry of Health regarding funding supplementation are ongoing. A concern was raised over the limited representative group of five individuals being utilised to determine outcomes for a larger group of 100. The five representatives will assist in establishing define criteria for assessment, the remaining cases will continue to be assessed individually.
- Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation's strike action took place on the 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> May, involving 75-80 staff from pathology, including both senior and junior medical staff. NSWHP's focus was on managing business continuity and associated impacts, particularly in Anatomical Pathology. It was mentioned that several staff specialists expressed appreciation for how NSWHP handled the industrial action. The Board acknowledging the importance of ongoing conversations with medical teams to ensure effective structures, processes, partnerships, and support. The recent internal Town Hall meeting highlighted the effective collaboration between Local Pathology Directors and Senior Operations Managers.
- Highlighting the achievements of the Aboriginal Workforce Team, and the success of the traineeship program, with 43% of participants from Aboriginal backgrounds and 23% from marginalised groups. It includes mentoring and enhanced resources to support and assist trainees and managers. As well as an increase in sessions on Respecting the Difference training. The team is mentoring trainees to address challenges to improve retention, and to ensure a supportive environment. Yvonne Weldon, Board member indicated an interest in supporting those leading the

Aboriginal workforce initiatives as required. The Board Chair and the Chief Executive welcomed Yvonne's involvement and appreciated her offer of support.

The Board **NOTED** the update provided in the Chief Executive report.

### **Supporting Research In NSW Health Pathology and Overview of NSW Health's Research and Innovation Strategy**

- Jean-Frederic Levesque, Chief Executive of the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) and Deputy Secretary for Clinical Innovation and Research at NSW Health, along with Kim Sutherland, Executive Director of the Office for Health and Medical Research (OHMR), presented the NSW Health Research and Innovation Strategy.

The NSW Health Research and Innovation Strategy encompasses the following:

- Focus on enhancing care delivery, system efficiency, and health outcomes through a coordinated, collaborative, and inclusive research and innovation ecosystem.
- Six strategic directions: thriving ecosystem, strategic investments, open assets, place-based foundation, pipeline approach, and inclusive research.
- The establishment of a Research and Innovation Council and collaborative groups to reduce competition and address missed opportunities.
- The adoption of a matrix approach for investments to address deficiencies and enhance areas of excellence.
- The strategy promotes an open assets philosophy to enhance collaboration across research entities, industry partners, and NSW Health. It includes transparent rules of engagement and targeted assessments to facilitate rapid approvals.
- Highlighting the need for ongoing discussions regarding the support of research within NSWHP and its role in the broader system. Along with acknowledgement of the role of pathology in the research and innovation ecosystem.
- Tammy Boone, Acting Director People and Culture (Director, Corporate Governance) presented an overview of research activities in NSWHP and outlined NSWHP's future research strategy. Highlighting a commitment to provide high-quality support and foster collaboration with Local Health Districts, NSW Health partners, universities, and research institutes to enhance the value and accessibility of research.
- In 2024, 74 collaborative projects and over 800 service agreements were approved.
- Efforts to develop a statewide service model, reduce turnaround times, and standardise workflows are ongoing. Noting the launch of an online portal for service requests, improving process alignment and efficiency.

- Challenges and future directions include managing multiple lab information systems, balancing research with diagnostic demands, integration with the statewide Biobank, and the facilitation of clinical trials in rural and regional areas.
- The approach and strategy highlights the importance of pathology in supporting research through data, biobanking, and specialised services including genomics and digital pathology.
- The NSWHP Research Strategy will be revisited as part of the new NSWHP strategic plan, ensuring alignment with the NSW Health Research and Innovation Strategy and the NSW Health Future Health Strategy.
- The next steps include both internal and external consultations. Develop the research strategy document with a focus on process improvement initiatives. Ensure broader implementation and effective governance of the strategy.
- It was mentioned that the next phase of consultation should focus on leveraging NSWHP's research strengths, rather than attempting too many initiatives without achieving excellence.
- A suggestion was made to develop a 10 year strategy with three horizons to avoid frequent revisits and reassess with the overarching direction.
- The Board requested input into the development of the NSWHP Research Strategy.

The Board **NOTED** the updates presented and appreciation was extended to Jean Frederic-Levesque, Kim Sutherland, and Tammy Boone for their contributions.

#### **Action**

- Review the NSWHP Research Strategy to ensure alignment with the new strategic planning process and the NSW Health Research and Innovation Strategy.
- Revisit the NSWHP Research Strategy with feedback from the Board.

#### **Our People Strategy Implementation Plan & Our People Strategy Scorecard**

- Tammy Boone and Yasmin Fashik provided a progress update on the People Strategy implementation plan. Launched in early 2024, this strategy is the first for NSW Health Pathology, outlining six priority outcomes. A two-year rolling implementation plan tracks initiatives against these outcomes, with progress monitored through the People Strategy Scorecard, reported quarterly to governance groups.
- The strategy has been in implementation for 12 months, with significant progress made. Key activities and initiatives are on track, with some already completed and others underway.
- Highlighted work around psychological safety including training sessions for leaders and staff, with around 900 staff members participating. Positive feedback was received, and there has been an improvement in PMES (People Matter Employee Survey) scores.

- Targeted campaigns have been undertaken to address excessive leave and enhance staff well-being.
- There has been increased engagement and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, as well as staff with disabilities.
- The People Strategy has shown positive cultural impacts, evidenced with improvements in staff perceptions and engagement metrics.
- The People Strategy includes initiatives aimed at enhancing manager capability, such as the Scientific Officer Development Program and the Senior Hospital Scientist Program, both of which have received positive feedback.
- Ensure that the reporting within the Scorecard is consistent with all other NSWHP performance reporting particularly around colour categories.
- Board members acknowledged the challenging external environment, including industrial actions and system-level changes.
- Board members conveyed their appreciation for the progress made and highlighted the importance of maintaining a continued focus in supporting staff, along with ensuring regular updates, and monitoring to maintain alignment with strategic initiatives.

#### **Update on ex TC Alfred Cyclone Debrief & Lessons Learned**

Cain Byrnes provided an update regarding the response to Tropical Cyclone Alfred, highlighting local knowledge, collaboration, and staff support during the emergency.

- An Incident Management Team (IMT) was established, with primary contacts designated to facilitate communication, decision-making, and the effective management of the response.
- Local staff had the authority regarding decision-making, utilising their knowledge and expertise to manage the situation effectively.
- Collaboration with other agencies, including NSW Ambulance and the Red Cross, to coordinate blood supplies, and manage a potential measles outbreak.
- Staff support was prioritised, including providing food and care packs, and ensuring the safety of staff. Mental health and trauma services were also offered.

The Board **NOTED** the update provided.

#### **Finance and Performance Committee**

The Finance and Performance Committee report was accepted as read.

John Roche and John O'Connor, Director, Finance and Corporate Services discussed the financial forecast, highlighting the challenges in achieving efficiencies and the need for budget realignment.

#### **Key points discussed:**

- The financial forecast indicates a projected unfavourable position, due to challenges in achieving efficiencies, the impact from the Technical Officer and Scientific Officer (TO&SO) dispute and the loss of North Shore Private revenue. Discussions are in progress with the Ministry of Health to seek assistance for these financial challenges.
- The need for budget realignment was discussed to ensure clarity and manageability.
- The discussion addressed challenges in achieving efficiencies, differences in planning and execution, as well as the impact of the industrial context. Initiatives are underway to address these challenges and improve efficiency outcomes.
- Highlighting the importance of robust billing processes to capture all potential revenue.
- Insights and learnings from this year's challenges will be used to improve budget planning and execution for the next financial year.
- Discussed the reduced activity levels and the significance of stewardship work.
- Review the operational KPIs in the Statement of Service to ensure they are current and aligned with the most recent performance measures.

The Board **NOTED** the update provided.

**Action: Vanessa Janissen and John O'Connor to meet with the Ministry of Health to discuss and seek approval for budget realignment.**

#### **Audit and Risk Management Committee**

Lyn Baker, Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC), provided an update on the ARMC meeting held earlier today. Noting progress on the internal audit plan, statewide billing recommendations, and the Fusion project.

- The internal audit plan is progressing as scheduled, and the Committee conveyed confidence in the detail and assessment of internal audit processes and risk management.
- Progress on implementing statewide billing recommendations was discussed. While initial audit findings are under control, further work is required, indicating a phase two effort.
- Juliana Iles- Mann provided a comprehensive report on the Fusion project. Despite the project's complexity and inherent risks, it is being managed effectively, and risks are well-controlled.
- The Committee is preparing for an early close and has scheduled meetings to review financial statements.
- The appointment process for an independent member of the Committee is in progress, overseen by Sarah Balk, Acting Director, Corporate Governance.
- Discussed the importance of detailed and targeted reports, ensuring the Committee receives the necessary information. The Committee is satisfied with the current state of the ARMC processes.

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.

- The QPoint system is progressing well, with positive feedback from participants. The system is scheduled to go live at the end of June 2025.
- Two critical incidents were discussed. Both incidents highlighted issues with communicating critical results. A concern was raised on the increasing reliance on technology for urgent communications. The Committee aims to ensure that learnings from critical incidents related to the communication of critical results are shared throughout NSWHP and the broader health system to improve future practices.
- David Brown declared a conflict of interest due to his involvement in the investigation of one of the incidents.
- Concerns regarding specimen traceability and the loss of specimens was discussed. Noting, that the AKUNA system monitors and tracks specimens between laboratories. The complexity of the process, involving numerous transitions, was recognised as a challenge. It was recommended to enhance traceability inside laboratories to reduce and prevent loss of specimens and maintain consistency. The standardisation of processes and documentation, along with consistent workflows, was suggested as a solution.

## **Clinical Council**

Report only by exception.

## **Medical Staff Executive Council**

- David Brown, Chair, Medical Staff Council, provided an update, noting that industrial matters have been a significant focus.
- Agreed continued engagement with medical staff to address their concerns and provide regular updates.

## **Medical and Dental Appointments Advisory Committee**

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

- Nigel Lyons, Chair, Medical and Dental Advisory Committee provided an update on progress of the recredentialing process for senior clinical staff holding joint appointments.

The Board **NOTED** the updates provided.

## **Fusion and SDPR Update**

### **Pathology Integration Steering Committee.**

Juliana Iles-Mann provided an update regarding the Pathology Integration Steering Committee, outlining the principles for integrating external pathology results into the Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR).

- The Committee is developing governance and principles for the acceptance of results from external pathology providers into the SDPR. The initial meeting occurred on the 6 March 2025, where several principles were reviewed and endorsed, with some requiring further refinement.



- An overview of the principles was provided. The principles highlighted patient-centered care, the support of a single health system, the acknowledgement of public pathology's value and commissioner of public pathology, and the assurance of appropriate governance and quality standards.
- The discussion focused on the discovery phase, integration challenges, project updates, and governance.
- Differentiate between public pathology commissioning with private providers and patients undergoing private tests. Incorporate clear principles to manage these situations and prevent ambiguity.
- Upcoming efforts include finalising the discovery phase exploring the current state within NSW Health, to understand the scale and scope and identify necessary collaborations. The Discovery phase is to determine the method for integrating private laboratory data into the SDPR.
- Aim for coordinated management of integration to avoid multiple interfaces. Avoid manual entry of results into the SDPR to ensure safety and quality. Highlighting electronic integration to minimise risks.
- The Board highlighted the importance of collaboration and interfacing with other laboratories.
- The Board requested to be kept informed on the development of the discovery phase.
- Juliana Iles-Mann provided an update regarding the Fusion project. The Fusion project progressing well. There are risks related to contractor timelines and the scope of data migration.
- BBI and IMCS projects are experiencing delays due to contractor timelines and configuration issues.
- Access to eHealth resources to facilitate testing with the billing solution is delayed. Mitigation plans are being established for all identified risks and issues. Continuous oversight and management initiatives are in progress for projects experiencing delays.
- The overall progress is favourable, with the budget aligned as planned.

**Items without Notice****Board Evaluation**

Board members provided feedback on the meeting and the topics discussed during the board meeting.

**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.



**Quality and Clinical Safety Committee Meeting Minutes**

Noted for Information.

**Clinical Council Committee Meeting Minutes**

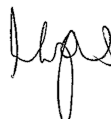
Noted for information.

**Medical Staff Executive Council Committee Meeting Minutes**

Noted for information.

**Meeting Closed**

Endorsed by Nigel Lyons. Board Chair, NSW Health Pathology

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nigel Lyons".

## Action Log NSW Health Pathology Board

Topic	Action	Due	Accountability	Status	Update
Item 2. 15/4/25 Budget Stabilisation	Vanessa Janissen and John O'Connor to meet with the Ministry of Health to discuss and seek approval for budget realignment.	Apr 25	Vanessa Janissen John O'Connor	Ongoing	Conversations are ongoing.
Item 3. 15/4/25 Research Strategy	Review the NSWHP Research Strategy to ensure alignment with the new strategic planning process and the NSW Health Research and Innovation Strategy. Revisit the NSWHP Research Strategy with feedback from the Board.	Aug 25	Tammy Boone	Ongoing	Aug 25
Item 10.3 26/2/2025 Recredentialing process	Learnings from the re-credentialing process are being documented and will be shared with the Board.	Aug 2025	Marco Chan Nigel Lyons	Ongoing	Aug 25 Marco Chan to prepare a brief for the Aug 25 Board meeting
Completed Actions					
26/2/2025 Item 5. Strategic Plan	Board recommends considering the timeline for board meetings in April and June to ensure timely review and feedback on the strategy.	Jun 2025	Nicole Tripney	On agenda	Completed
24/4/2024 Item 6. Paediatric Pathology	The Board requested a progress update on the paediatric pathology recommendations in six months at the October Board meeting. *A Paediatric Pathology Community of Practice has been established to take carriage of the recommendations. Currently working through the alignment of SCHW and NSWHP in preparation for Fusion. A report will be	Jun 2025	Cathryn Cox Vanessa Janissen	On agenda	Completed On the Jun agenda

## Action Log NSW Health Pathology Board

Topic	Action	Due	Accountability	Status	Update
	provided to the Board in the New Year. * Deferred to June 2025.				

