



# Reflections

A summary of the Governing Board Annual Report 2022-2023  
Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network



## From the Chief Executive Officer



The past 12 months has allowed us to reset our Local Health Network (LHN) operational planning and management priorities, following an incident focussed management approach managing the COVID-19 Pandemic. The COVID-19 response caused a significant impact upon our operations, most particularly on our workforce.

Sustainability of workforce across most areas of our services delivery has been a significant challenge over this year, not just maintaining essential staffing levels, but also the depth of skill mix and seniority required, to provide the highest level of quality and safe delivery of services.

Whilst health care workforce shortages are not particular to our Local Health Network, there are additional challenges that confront geographically remote health service areas.

We have been exploring and implementing structures and formal partnership agreements for staff rotations from metropolitan hospitals and recruitment through the metropolitan LHNs to include working in the Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network (FUNLHN).

This year we focused on developing a preliminary regional Aged Care Business Plan, which was presented to Minister Picton MP, in collaboration with all other regional LHNs. The FUNLHN plan identified themes emerging across all regional LHNs. The year ahead will require FUNLHN to progress viable service delivery models and infrastructure

## From the Chief Executive Officer *continued...*

planning, change service profiles and create partnerships to move towards contemporary and sustainable business models for the development of aged care in the region.

We have been able to confirm state government funding and finalise tender details for the construction of a new purpose built health clinic at Leigh Creek. It is anticipated that the clinic will be completed by January 2024. We have been able to progress a number of capital and minor works facilities projects across all of our health sites this year.

These include:

- significant upgrades and improvements to the residential aged care facilities at Quorn and Hawker;
- security upgrades at Roxby Downs and Quorn;
- from the new state government election commitment funding:
  - progression of detailed design for substantial redevelopment of the emergency and high dependency units at Whyalla;
  - preliminary planning for upgrades at Port Augusta Hospital.
- Wi-fi upgrades and improvements to our accommodation facilities across all sites.

Pleasingly, government commitment has been confirmed for a full regional implementation of the Sunrise electronic medical record (EMR). Activation in FUNLHN is scheduled for November 2023 and will be a significant project for our LHN over the coming year.



During this year, two of our executive team members retired from FUNLHN – Glenise Coulthard AM, Director Aboriginal Health and Cheryl Russ, Executive Director Community and Allied Health. I thank each of them for their many years of service and leadership in health and to our local health network. We have welcomed Eugene Warrior to the position of Director, Aboriginal Health and Ilse-Marie Foord to the position of Executive Director, Community and Allied Health and look forward to their leadership in our executive team.

It was an honour to hold and attend our inaugural FUNLHN 'Our People, Our Pride' Awards this year. It was a fantastic evening held at the Westland Hotel, Whyalla. I recognise the significant work by many of our staff who planned and arranged this special occasion. I applaud the contribution of our amazing staff and volunteers over the past year. I look forward to this becoming an annual event and an important aspect of our employee recognition program.

I recognise and pay respect to our Health Advisory Councils (HACs) for the important contribution they provide through their provision of feedback from, and their interaction with our communities. I acknowledge and recognise the huge amount of work and commitment by our HAC members, and particularly the HAC Presiding Members, particularly this year when the FUNLHN combined HAC hosted the statewide HAC Conference, which showcased FUNLHN in an exceptional manner.

I am very pleased that FUNLHN has maintained a level one rating against the key performance areas of our service level agreement with the Department of Health and Wellbeing. With the substantial challenges in delivering health services in the current climate, this is an amazing reflection of the commitment by our staff to achieving the best possible outcomes for our consumers and communities.

Community and consumer involvement is essential in FUNLHN and I am grateful to all that have provided input and feedback via committee representation, so that we can continue to provide the highest level of safety and quality care in our health services.

## From the Chief Executive Officer continued...

*"I am very pleased that FUNLHN has maintained a level one rating against the key performance areas of our service level agreement with the Department of Health and Wellbeing."*

The FUNLHN Governing Board has continued to provide stable support to the FUNLHN and welcomed and encouraged the development of opportunities for learnings and research to strengthen and improve our service models. This support is essential for the LHN to meet current and future challenges, address risks, and importantly, to drive opportunities and innovation in our service.

Thank you to all our volunteers, service partners, and our amazing staff in the FUNLHN. I am incredibly proud to lead this organisation and greatly appreciate the leadership that we have across our directorates, sites, and departments to meet the challenges and develop our services to achieve the highest level of care for everyone.



**Craig Packard**

Chief Executive Officer

Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network

## From the Governing Board Chair



Now that the COVID pandemic is largely behind us, we can focus on the other issues that challenge us.

Over the past year, the major issue that confronted us was staffing. Recruitment and retention are a major issue across all LHNs, but more acute for us because of our relative isolation. That being said, we soldier on with our committed and hard working staff as we look for ways to lure health professionals to our part of the world.

This year also marked the end of tenure for two of our inaugural Board Members – Karyn Reid and John Lynch – two outstanding Board Members.

Karyn had carriage of our consumer and community engagement portfolio, which she led with great skill and aplomb. Karyn's expertise, experience, passion and guidance will be sorely missed and presents us with a dilemma of who should now lead this important portfolio.

John had carriage of our finance portfolio – also led with great skill and aplomb. John's sage counsel not only on matters of finance, but also on matters of remote health, will be sorely missed. His steady hand guided us through challenging financial times. I take this opportunity to publicly thank Karyn and John for their wisdom, guidance, generosity and friendship and wish them well in their future endeavours.

## From the Governing Board Chair *continued...*

During the course of the year, we welcomed two new Board Members – Kate Warren and Dr Rohan Ward.

Kate is a proud Wiradjuri woman from western NSW and brings an Aboriginal perspective to our deliberations. Kate has also worked as a nurse, educator and researcher and brings a wealth of knowledge about Aboriginal health.

Rohan is a doctor and has worked in metropolitan hospitals. His more recent passion is information and communication technology and he brings a wealth of knowledge about the use of technology in health care settings.

We also welcome two new Board Members to replace Karyn and John. Ros McRae and Craig Fullerton, both appointed by Minister Picton in June. Ros was former CEO of FUNLHN and has many years experience in health service administration. Craig also brings many years of health service administration, having been CEO of Pika Wiya Aboriginal Health Service. Craig has also worked as a radiologist in regional settings. I have no doubt that their expertise and experience will be invaluable to the work of the Board.

Next year will bring its own set of challenges and, as always, we will rise to them as we always do as we strive to provide safe quality health care to our region.

This report chronicles our achievements over the past year and I commend it to you.



**Mark Whitfield**

Governing Board Chair

Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network



# About Us

## Our Vision

Excellence in health care for everyone, every day, all the time.

## Our Purpose

The Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network delivers culturally safe and high-quality health care services in collaboration with our consumers, enhanced through research and innovation to improve health outcomes for our communities.

## Our Values



We are open, honest, equitable and consistent in everything we do.



We behave with dignity, courtesy and fairness in all that we do.



We demonstrate empathy, care, kindness, support and understanding.



We work together to involve our community.



We have the strength to act, and embrace change for the better.

## Board Members



### **Mark Whitfield** **Governing Board Chair**

Mark Whitfield is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and an Associate Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management. Mark has lived in Whyalla since 2001. He has a strong record of volunteering on a variety of community organisation boards.



### **John Lynch** **Governing Board Member**

John Lynch served with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) for 32 years, and was the Chief Executive Officer of RFDS Central Operations, finishing in December 2018. John brings finance and governance experience along with rural and remote primary health care practice experience.



### **Suzy Graham** **Governing Board Member**

Suzy Graham spent ten years as a solicitor in Adelaide before relocating to Port Augusta in 2007. Suzy grew up in Port Augusta and is proud to again be a part of the local community. She is involved in a number of local committees and associations.



### **Karyn Reid** **Governing Board Member**

Karyn Reid has had an extensive career in nursing across many clinical fields, including experience in high-level clinical governance and executive health management. She resides in Port Augusta and has extensive knowledge of the health sites and population health needs across FUNLHN.



### **Geri Malone** **Governing Board Member**

Geri Malone has had a career with a very strong focus on rural and remote health from clinical roles, management, education and professional development to policy and advocacy. Geri brings rural health practitioner and clinical governance experience to the Governing Board.



### **Shamus Cogan** **Governing Board Member**

Shamus Cogan is a Certified Practicing Accountant of over ten years with significant experience in the health sector. Shamus brings experience in the areas of financial modelling, activity based funding, activity based management, commissioning and performance.



### **Kate Warren** **Governing Board Member**

Kate is a Whyalla local and descendant of the Aboriginal people of the Wiradjuri nation. Kate has broad project management experience. She has been a key developer for a variety of health education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic diseases.



### **Dr Rohan Ward** **Governing Board Member**

Rohan is a qualified medical doctor who trained and practiced in SA before launching his own medical technology business, which was used in hospitals around Australia and the world. With his extensive background in healthcare and technology industries, he offers valuable insights into the intersection of medicine and innovation.

## Key Highlights

### **INCREASED PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES**

employing a Palliative Care Nurse Consultant to provide access to a higher level of clinical care closer to home.

### **COMMENCED STOMAL SERVICES**

across the LHN supporting patients to be discharged from hospital sooner by providing acute, clinical and home based services.

### **DELIVERING SERVICES FOR OUR ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY**

tailored specifically to the needs of local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, including the Aboriginal Family Birthing Program, Aboriginal Environmental Health Worker (Trachoma Project), Step Down Unit and Aboriginal Patient Pathways Officer.

### **DEVELOPED THE ROXBY DOWNS HEALTH SERVICE PLAN**

in consultation with community and key stakeholders detailing how we will align and grow services over the next three to five years.

**DEVELOPED AND  
PROGRESSED AN  
OPERATIONAL PLAN**

against objectives of the  
FUNLHN Strategic Plan  
2021-2026.

**DEVELOPED AN  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

for the FUNLHN  
Consumer and  
Community Engagement  
Strategic Framework  
2022-2026.

**ACHIEVED ALL SA  
HEALTH 'SAFE CARE'  
KEY PERFORMANCE  
INDICATOR TARGETS.**



# Year Snapshot July 2022 - June 2023

## Our Staff

Total number  
of staff:

1,050

4.95%

of Flinders and Upper North workforce  
identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait  
Islander

506

Nurses



331

Public Sector Salaried



19

Medical Officers



179

Health Ancillary



6

people commenced  
the Manager  
Essential Program



9

people commenced  
Enrolled Nurse Cadet  
Program



4

people attended the  
Growing Leaders  
Program



## In our hospitals



**11,753**

same day patients



**6,795**

overnight patients



**383**

babies delivered; including **109** Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander births



**397**

telerehabilitation consults

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## In our communities:



**41,556**

community nursing and allied health services were provided to **10,045** clients



**445**

Aged Care Assessments completed



**NDIS**  
clients

**107** adults  
**130** children



**CHSP**

**1,314** clients



**112**

active Home Care Packages

## Our Local Health Network

The Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network manages the delivery of public hospital services and other community based health services as determined by the state government for the Flinders and Upper North region.

The FUNLHN Governing Board is responsible for the overall governance and oversight of local service delivery by the LHN, including governance of performance and budget achievement, clinical governance, safety and quality, risk management and fulfillment of the Governing Board functions and responsibilities. The Governing Board is responsible and accountable to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing.

The Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network provides care for around 45,000 people living north from the Spencer Gulf to the Northern Territory, including the communities of Hawker, Leigh Creek, Port Augusta, Roxby Downs, Quorn and Whyalla. The Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network is one of ten Local Health Networks including six across country South Australia. The LHN covers an area of 540,190 square kilometres.





## Performance at a glance

### In 2022-23, FUNLHN:

- commenced a review of the executive and directorate structure
- formed a Staff Recognition Workgroup and developed the 'Our People, Our Pride' Recognition Program and successfully held the first FUNLHN 'Our People, Our Pride' Awards Night in 2023
- implemented a Training and Development Officer to provide Crisis Prevention Institute Safety Intervention Foundation Training to FUNLHN staff
- installed significant security upgrades at Quorn Health Services and Roxby Downs Hospital including swipe card access and CCTV
- commenced planning and design works for the Whyalla Hospital Emergency Department and High Dependency Unit redevelopment
- commenced design documentation works for the new purpose-built Leigh Creek Health Clinic in preparation to commence construction in 2023-24
- completed approximately \$1 million of infrastructure upgrades to Multi Purpose Site (MPS) facilities at Quorn and Hawker, including new flooring, kitchen upgrades, fresh paint and widening of resident doorways through the Commonwealth MPS Grants program





- installed Wi-fi at all facilities in the LHN
- finalised the service plan for Roxby Downs Health Service
- redeveloped and rolled out Going the Extra Mile training program, engaging with consumer representatives to co-facilitate delivery
- hosted a state-wide Health Advisory Council (HAC) conference at Port Augusta. This brought together HAC Presiding Members, Governing Board and Executive to provide opportunities to network and promote how the HAC engage with LHNs
- recruited Nurse Practitioners across the two major sites, being Port Augusta and Whyalla
- Whyalla Community Mental Health Team were gazetted as an authorised Community Mental Health Centre in October 2022
- introduced Triage Nurses at Whyalla and Port Augusta Emergency Departments
- awarded a Premier's Excellence Award for Excellence in Service Delivery: Emergency Management for the COVID-19 Aboriginal Contact Tracing Team and COVID-19 Aboriginal and Vulnerable Community Response Team
- developed monthly staff newsletters

## Performance at a glance continued...

- provided care to 33,559 presentations to Emergency Departments across our network, an 8.3% (2,582) increase from 2021-22
- conducted 1,854 elective surgery procedures, a 10% increase (169) from 2021-22 and a further 498 endoscopy/colonoscopy procedures
- cared for 18,548 inpatients in our hospitals, a 3% increase (541) on 2021-22
- increased Palliative Care services, employing a Palliative Care Nurse Consultant providing access to a higher level of clinical care closer to home
- commenced Stomal Services across the LHN, supporting patients to be discharged from hospital sooner by providing, acute, clinic and home based services.
- continued to deliver tailored services for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community including the Aboriginal Family Birthing Program, Aboriginal Environmental Health Worker (Trachoma Project), Step Down Unit and the Aboriginal Patient Pathways Officer
- consulted with the community and key stakeholders to develop the Roxby Downs Health Service Plan detailing how we will align and grow services to meet the needs of the changing Roxby Downs and surrounding communities over the next three to five years
- developed an Implementation Plan for the FUNLHN Consumer and Community Engagement Strategic Framework 2022-2026
- the FUNLHN Governing Board held six meetings in 2022-23.







## Service Improvements

FUNLHN continue to record intended improvements resulting from consumer feedback such as:

- strengthening the referral process for baby checks at Whyalla
- Interpreter Services poster review to ensure posters are displayed across all health units
- review of the size and content of scrolling screens across all health units
- provision of paediatric masks in clinical waiting areas
- multiple upgrades/improvements to the palliative care facilities at Port Augusta
- multiple reviews and/or improvements to environmental standards and equipment upgrades.



Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network  
Address: 71 Hospital Road, Port Augusta SA 5700  
Phone: (08) 8668 7500  
Email: [Health.FUNOCEOCorrespondence@sa.gov.au](mailto:Health.FUNOCEOCorrespondence@sa.gov.au)

**[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/flindersanduppernorthlhn](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/flindersanduppernorthlhn)**

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