



Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network

# Clinician and Workforce Engagement Strategy

## 2021–2024

Our people caring for our communities.



**Health**  
Riverland Mallee Coorong  
Local Health Network

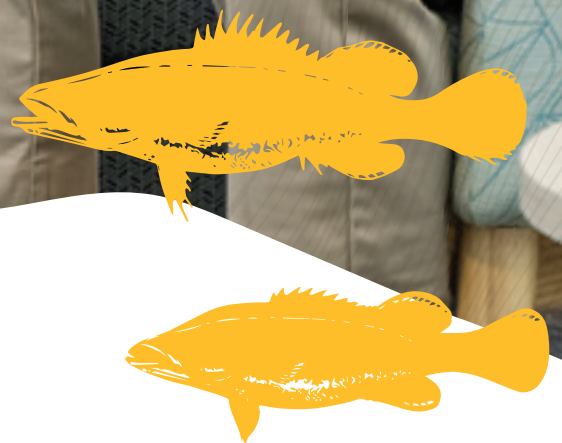




## Acknowledgement

We respect and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and future. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on this land and commit to building a brighter future together.

We acknowledge that 'Aboriginal business is everyone's business' and we will work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve their health and wellbeing. We will work collectively with consumers and the community to ensure Aboriginal people get to enjoy the same, or better, health outcomes than the broader population.



## Message from our Governing Board Chair, Dr Peter Joyner



This Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network (RMCLHN) Clinician and Workforce Engagement Strategy has been designed through the contributions of clinicians, non-clinicians, contractors, volunteers and partners. The Strategy demonstrates our commitment to continuously improving consultation with the providers of our health services and actively partnering with them in areas including the safety and quality of health services, service planning and design, service delivery, and service evaluation.

The *Health Care Act (2008)* Section 33A outlines the requirements for Governing Boards in the development of a Clinician Engagement Strategy. The RMCLHN Governing Board determined that the Strategy should encompass all workers who contribute to the delivery of health services in RMCLHN.

The inaugural Strategy was launched in 2020 and the Governing Board provided a commitment to review the Strategy after 12 months given the maturity of the LHN and the impact of COVID-19. This updated Strategy reflects our new Strategic Plan and will be reviewed every three years.

We recognise and value the significant contributions that clinicians, non-clinicians, contractors, volunteers and partners make, and we are committed to valuing and nurturing genuine partnerships to continually grow and develop health services in RMCLHN.

## Message from our Chief Executive Officer, Wayne Champion



As Chief Executive Officer of the Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network (RMCLHN), I am delighted to share this updated Clinician and Workforce Engagement Strategy 2021-2024 with you.

This Strategy outlines RMCLHN's plan to guide effective engagement with our clinicians and workforce through communicating appropriately and effectively, and partnering in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of our health services.

This Strategy applies to all RMCLHN stakeholders who provide, or contribute to, the provision of services to our communities. This includes clinicians, non-clinicians, visiting medical specialists, Rural Support Services staff, contractors, volunteers and partners.

Our people and our partners are critical to the delivery of safe, effective and reliable services for communities in the Riverland Mallee Coorong Region.

Engaging effectively with our people will inform clinical and corporate governance decisions and improve outcomes for the recipients of our services. This Strategy provides the guidance for enhancing and maintaining our partnerships with our workforce and further embedding clinician and workforce engagement into the culture of our Network.



## Message from our Director Aboriginal Health, Sharon Perkins



Developing our workforce to ensure health care services are culturally safe and meet the needs of Aboriginal consumers is important to RMCLHN.

Aboriginal people experience more life risk factors, poorer health and less acceptable outcomes in a range of life areas when compared with the general population. As a result of these challenges, Aboriginal people are among the most disadvantaged population groups in our community.

Building the capacity of our workforce to deliver quality services to Aboriginal people is essential. Increasing and developing skilled Aboriginal staff within RMCLHN will also have a positive impact on the total workforce in relation to delivering culturally safe services as well as impacting on the care received by Aboriginal people.

Engaging with our workforce and partnering with Aboriginal people in the planning, design and delivery of health care services will enable our services to grow and address health inequalities in RMCLHN.

## Introduction

From 1 July 2019, amendments to the *Health Care Act 2008 (the Health Care (Governance) Amendment Act 2018)* came into effect to decentralise governance of South Australia's public health system through the establishment of Local Health Network (LHN) Governing Boards, responsible for the oversight of local health service delivery. This allows decisions to be made closer to clinicians, consumers and communities, and supports strengthened engagement.

Governing Boards have been established to advise the LHNs on effective clinical and corporate governance frameworks to support the maintenance and improvement of standards of patient care and services.

A key change to the *Health Care Act (2008)* is the requirement for each Governing Board to engage with, and develop engagement strategies for, clinicians, consumers and communities. The Governing Board also has responsibility for advising on the RMCLHN Strategic Plan 2021–2026, which guides the delivery of services for the LHN.

## Scope

The Clinician and Workforce Engagement Strategy (the Strategy) applies to all Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network (RMCLHN) stakeholders who provide, or contribute to, the provision of services to our communities. This includes clinicians, non-clinicians, visiting medical specialists, Rural Support Services staff, contractors, volunteers and partners. Our partners include General Practitioners (GPs) and Statewide Clinical Support Services employees who partner with RMCLHN.

The scope of our services includes acute care, residential aged care and services within the community including in consumer's homes. RMCLHN has developed a separate engagement strategy for consumer and community stakeholders, called the Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy.

The combined objective of this Strategy and our Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy is to ensure effective engagement with all of our stakeholders. We will also appropriately involve and engage with other providers of health services, including providers of primary health care services who are not within the scope of this Strategy (e.g. Primary Health Network, FocusOne Health, Moorundi Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service Inc.).



## Our Purpose

Our people caring  
for our communities.

## Definitions

### Engagement

Engagement is a process of interacting formally and informally with “Our People”. Effective engagement is necessary to determine strategic directions and goals, to design, implement, monitor and evaluate health system improvements and to enhance health outcomes.

### Our People

The term “Our People” refers to our team. It includes partners, volunteers, clinicians and employees, who work together as a team to care for our communities.

### Our Strategy

The RMCLHN Strategic Plan 2021-2026 sets out our organisational purpose, vision and values, outlining our commitment to providing high quality care across the continuum for our Riverland Mallee Coorong communities. It defines four strategic themes that will be the focus of our Network, to provide the backbone for the work we will do over the next five years to support our communities to have the best possible quality of life. The Plan also sets out our goals and priorities across the four themes:

- > Caring for Our Communities
- > Excellence in Clinical Care
- > Local Accountability
- > Investing in Our People

The Governing Board supports and recognises the significant benefits of engaging clinicians as:

- > Clinicians know and understand their services
- > Clinicians deliver care every day in a challenging and changing environment
- > Patients/consumers are at the centre of their health care and clinicians are driven by delivering best patient outcomes and evidence-based care
- > Clinicians understand the complex nature of health care and how changes can be implemented in their clinical environment.

The RMCLHN Governing Board and Executive are committed to a broader approach to engagement recognising that there are people who contribute to, and make a difference in, caring for the communities that we serve.

Whether clinicians or non-clinicians, contractors, volunteers or partners, we are committed to engaging with all of “Our People”. Our People work across all of our services including acute care, residential aged care and in our consumers’ homes. Our People are best placed to assist RMCLHN to maintain and improve the services we provide in caring for our communities into the future.

Meaningful and effective engagement will support and assist the Governing Board:

- > In making well informed decisions
- > To advise RMCLHN on effective clinical and corporate governance
- > To support the maintenance and improvement of standards of patient care and services.

Engagement can occur at various levels ranging from the provision of information to partnership models and decision making.



## Our Purpose

### Our People Caring for Our Communities

We will work together to care for local communities and develop our region as a centre of excellence in rural health care, research and teaching. We will support people in the Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network to have the best possible quality of life, by providing timely, high quality care as close to home as possible, that promotes dignity, respect, choice, independence and social connection.

The term “Our People” refers to our team. It includes partners, volunteers, clinicians and employees, who work together as a team to care for our communities.

## Objective

### We will engage with Our People

- > To ensure the provision of effective health services
- > To ensure and improve the safety and quality of health services
- > In the planning and design of health services
- > In the monitoring and evaluation of service delivery.

## SA Health Directives and National Standards

The Clinician and Workforce Engagement Strategy is underpinned by research and the following SA Health Directives and National Standards:

- > National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards
- > National Aged Care Quality Standards
- > National Disability Insurance Scheme Practice Standards
- > Australian Safety and Quality Framework for Health Care.

## Our Plan

Our plan is informed by feedback from clinicians, our broader workforce and GPs. There are five elements to our plan:

- > **Recognising the benefits** of engaging with Our People
- > Engaging with Our People on **matters of importance**
- > **Engaging effectively** with Our People
- > Ensuring Our People know that **they have been heard and valued**
- > **Continuing and improving upon what Our People have valued so far.**

## We will recognise the benefits of engaging with Our People

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|--|---|
| <b>What this looks like.</b>                 | > Our commitment and the benefits of engagement will be reflected in our Clinician and Workforce Engagement Strategy.           |
| <b>How will we do it?</b>                    | > By listening to Our People and reflecting their views, ideas and preferences in our Strategy in order to maximise engagement. |
| <b>How will we know we have achieved it?</b> | > By implementing, monitoring, reviewing and continually improving our Strategy.  |

## We will engage with Our People on matters of importance

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>What this looks like.</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; We will be aware of and understand what is important to Our People recognising that there will not be a “one size fits all” in terms of what is important to various groups.</li> <li>&gt; We will target engagement to specific groups when this is required.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>How will we do it?</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; We will understand who our different groups are, how they are best engaged and what matters most to them.</li> <li>&gt; We will tailor our approach to meet the needs of all groups/specific groups.</li> <li>&gt; We will adapt our approach to suit the needs of the audience. We will use various means, depending on the situation. For example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; To relay urgent or routine advice or to provide information that might be a resource/point of reference for the future (i.e. to inform) will likely be effectively achieved by written communication (e.g. email or CEO Bulletin).</li> <li>&gt; For high level engagement (i.e. involvement, collaboration and empowerment), an interpersonal approach is likely to be the most effective (e.g. face to face, LHN wide, focus groups, workshops).</li> </ul> </li> <li>&gt; Given our vast geographical area and multiple sites we will also use video conferencing and other electronic means of communication that are appropriate to the situation.</li> <li>&gt; Our People have told us that the preferred methods of communication are generally meetings, internal memos, emails and CEO Bulletins.</li> </ul> |
| <b>How will we know we have achieved it?</b> | > Through feedback from Our People (e.g surveys, anecdotal feedback).   |



## We will engage effectively with Our People

<b>What this looks like.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Timely and meaningful engagement.</li> <li>&gt; Genuine opportunity and sufficient time to contribute.</li> </ul>
<b>How will we do it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; With frequent and honest communication using language that is clear and broadly understood.</li> <li>&gt; By providing technology that is easy to access and use.</li> <li>&gt; By having structured and outcome-oriented meetings.</li> <li>&gt; By valuing the diversity of Our People and the significant benefits that, among other things, different backgrounds, levels of experience, generations and perspectives bring.</li> </ul>
<b>How will we know we have achieved it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; RMCLHN will have improved technology and systems that meet our needs and the needs of Our People.</li> <li>&gt; Information is easily accessible (know where to find it, how to find it and can access it with relative ease).</li> </ul>

## We will ensure Our People know that they **have been heard and valued**

<b>What this looks like.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Our People will be listened to and their views will be heard.</li> <li>&gt; We will provide feedback about how ideas/initiatives have informed and improved outcomes/processes.</li> </ul>
<b>How will we do it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; We will be open and transparent in acknowledging feedback and Our People will feel that they have been heard whether their views are adopted or not.</li> <li>&gt; When we haven't adopted or accepted feedback that has been provided, Our People will know why.</li> </ul>
<b>How will we know we have achieved it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Evidence of Our People shaping what we do.</li> <li>&gt; Evidence of actions and outcomes.</li> </ul>

## Continuing and improving upon what Our People have valued so far

### What this looks like.

- > We will continue to build upon our efforts so far in valuing and empowering Our People.
- > Our People will continue to provide feedback and we will be responsive to this.
- > We will continue to create opportunities to show that we value Our People and empower them so that they are engaged and best placed to make a difference to the quality and safety of care and to the consumers that receive care.

### How will we do it?

- > Recognise and maximise opportunities provided by the size and governance structure of our LHN. As a regional LHN we are much smaller than the metropolitan LHNs.
- > Recognise and seek to overcome challenges associated with our vast geographic area and multiple sites.
- > Continue leadership presence and attendance at our various sites.
- > Continue face to face orientation.
- > Continue "Coffee with the CEO" sessions.
- > Continue to recognise and aim to cater for the different communities that are part of RMCLHN, that is, we will aim to achieve a level of consistency but with the ability to tailor our approach to the needs of the various sites and be responsive to the needs of our various communities.
- > We will seek feedback and review what we do and how we do it in light of the feedback received.
- > We will aim to build an organisational culture of continued and improved engagement.
- > We will be open to specific targeted interventions that contribute to valuing and empowering Our People.
- > We will maximise opportunities to recognise and acknowledge Our People for their efforts, achievements and contribution to serving our communities.
- > We will aim to reduce barriers, red tape and road blocks.  
We will aim to enable and facilitate in the best interests of our consumers.

### How will we know we have achieved it?

- > Our People will tell us they feel valued and engaged.
- > We will receive feedback to let us know what we are doing well and to guide us in those things that can be improved.
- > We will continue to evolve and improve what we do, based on the feedback we receive and as we continue to establish ourselves as a LHN.
- > Evidence of actions and outcomes.



## Monitoring our Strategy

It is acknowledged that expectations in relation to partnering with Our People will evolve, and we are committed to measuring the effectiveness of our engagement and continuously improving our engagement processes.

Ongoing feedback will be sought from Our People to review the contents of the Clinician and Workforce Engagement Strategy and the progress towards reaching our goals. This feedback will be collated and incorporated into improving the Strategy and will form a continuous feedback loop through open lines of communication with Our People.

Through this feedback, we will measure our effectiveness in engaging Our People, evaluate the impact of these activities and consider how the activities could be improved to better meet the needs of Our People.

Activities associated with the Clinician & Workforce Engagement Strategy have been included in the RMCLHN Operational Plan with regular monthly reports being provided to Executive Leadership. Reporting on the overall progress of the Operational Plan will be provided to the Governing Board on a quarterly basis.

The RMCLHN Governing Board will formally review this Strategy every three years.



## For more information

People and Culture

Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network

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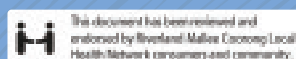
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