

**Abridged WAHTN Executive Board Minutes for WAHTN Website
No. 02/2019 held on 12 March 2019**

Attendees:

Mr Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC, Chair

Ms Pip Brennan, Consumer Advocate

Dr James Williamson, representing the WA Department of Health

Professor Peter Leedman, representing the Medical Research Institute members

Professor Eeva Leinonen, representing the member universities

To be appointed, Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia

Professor Gary Geelhoed, Executive Director WAHTN, ex officio

Executive Officer: Dr Tanya Tuffrey, WAHTN

By Invitation:

Dr Debbie Turner, Chief Operating Officer WAHTN

Professor Peter Thompson AM, Deputy Director WAHTN

Apologies and Executive Board Membership

Apologies - Professor Shirley Bowen, Professor Neale Fong

The Executive Director noted that neither of the two apologies for this meeting had been able to find a replacement from the area they represent. Board members are reminded that if they are unable to attend the meeting, they must ensure that a suitable representative attends. Eeva Leinonen has noted that she will be away for the meeting on 14 May, but that she will find a representative.

The Executive Board has until now been unsuccessful in finding a representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Chair of the Board met with Professor Dan McAullay on Monday 11 March, and he has expressed an interest in joining the Board. All Board Members present agreed that an invitation be sent inviting Professor McAullay to join the WAHTN Executive Board – ACTION ITEM.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the second meeting of 2019.

2. Declarations of potential or perceived conflicts of interest

None

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board 29 January 2019

3.1 It was resolved that the Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting of WAHTN Executive Board held on 29 January 2019 were Approved.

4. Management Committee

The Minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on 19 February 2019 were noted.

5. Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA)

AHRA is in the process of raising their profile, and has launched their website. As this progresses, they will include links to all AHRA members on their website.

- AHRA Networks and Initiatives:
 - The Indigenous Research Capacity Building Network Initiative held a meeting on 14 February, which was attended by Glenn Pearson and Debbie Turner. The researchers in this initiative have produced some useful documents and are currently positioning themselves to work more closely with AHRA to build Indigenous Researcher capacity, in particular to build up and support that workforce. The meeting was held prior to the announcement about the Indigenous Research Funding. The question for this initiative now is how they will position themselves in order to be able to access those research funds.
 - Consumer and Community Initiative Project – this project is ongoing and is now focusing on how to convert the broad parameters from the workshop late last year into something more meaningful. This will involve working more closely with Consumer groups as well as Commonwealth government.
 - WAHTN has recently been made aware of a new group, called CT: IQ (Clinical Trials: Innovation and Quality) who is working with ACTA. WAHTN has joined this group at low cost. CT:IQ have put out a tender to produce a toolkit for those involved in clinical trials. WAHTN will submit a proposal for this tender.
 - Wound Care Initiative – a document outlining the approach has been prepared. The Executive Director met with Bruce Robinson (Chair of the National Health and Medical Research Council Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce) and discussed Wound Care. Professor Robinson suggested that WAHTN prepare a submission which includes comprehensive plans on the work which can be implemented, and that it also be submitted to Minister Ken Wyatt. The Executive Board approved this strategy. ACTION ITEM – submit wound care application.
 - There was a discussion about a number of large Medical Research Future Funds (MRFF) grants which had been awarded outside of the standard application processes in the areas of stem cell research and cardiovascular research. This approach makes it very difficult for planning of grant applications.
 - AHRA and Australian Clinical Trials Alliance have prepared a Clinical Trials Initiative submission for a \$50M grant over 5 years – the outcome of this application is not yet known.
 - The Women’s Health Network – WAHTN is not leading this initiative, but does have two representatives – Jacqueline Frayne and Roger Hart – this initiative has held workshops and has decided on nine priorities. ACTION ITEM – Gary Geelhoed to put Pip Brennan in touch with Jacque Frayne.

6. Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

To date WAHTN has received two funding tranches from MRFF. Most of the first tranche was awarded to 11 Early Career Research (ECR) Fellowships. The recipients of the ECR fellowships will be presenting at the Science on the Swan conference, where they will also receive award certificates.

For the second tranche of money, funds were set aside for projects of interest to the Area Health Services (AHS), as well as the private sector partners, PathWest and the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA). Applications for the funds have closed and the AHS are to send their four best proposals to the review committee. 12 applications have been received from the private sector, including PathWest and WAPHA. The selection meeting will take place on 16 April.

(This initiated a discussion around excessive charges that PathWest has introduced for researchers who wish to use small tumour samples for single cell sequencing. The researchers

doing this work do not have access to these sorts of funds per sample. ACTION ITEM – Executive Director to write to PathWest on behalf of the WAHTN Executive Board about reducing this fee.)

7. Governance and Operations

7.1 Joint Venture Agreement (JVA), Centre Agent Services Agreement, WAHTN Executive Board Terms of Reference and WAHTN Management Committee Terms of Reference were circulated OOS. Final draft to be ratified by the Board.

The Chair questioned whether it would be better to combine the JVA and Centre Agent Agreement so that signature is only required on a single document. ACTION ITEM – Chair to liaise/meet with Joanne Margo (Legal Office UWA).

The Board requested that clause 6.4 (c) be altered such that termination of the Executive Director would be at the request of the Board or under direction of the Board. ACTION ITEM.

James Williamson queried why The University of Western Australia had been nominated as the Centre Agent, and it was agreed that it was probably on a historical basis. There was also a query about whether the terms for the Centre Agent could be shortened to three years. The possibility of WAHTN being an incorporated entity was raised. Eeva Leinonen pointed out that having a centre agent is advantageous because of the services that are then accessible at no cost. ACTION ITEM – Eeva Leinonen to contact the other Universities to ask if they wanted to be the Centre Agent for WAHTN.

7.2 Partners and Associate Membership update:

- The Perth Radiological Clinic membership application was circulated to the Board. The membership application was the result of discussions with the Executive Director after meetings about the National Imaging Facility - National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy. The Board felt that the application would have more merit if the submission was from the research arm of the organisation i.e. the PerthRadClinic Foundation. ACTION ITEM – Executive Director to write to Perth Radiological Clinic requesting they re-submit their application from the foundation.
- David Playford from the Mount Hospital has also approached the Executive Director about the possibility of applying for membership to WAHTN.

All new memberships need to be approved by National Health and Medical Research Council.

It was agreed that a policy needs to be drawn up for assessing new membership applications. This needs to include, amongst others that the research being done is of an international standard. ACTION ITEM - all ideas/suggestion regarding this policy to be sent to Gary Geelhoed. The Executive Director to liaise with the other AHRTCs if they have such policies in place. There also needs to be clarity of what representation members are entitled to.

- Written request from SilverChain to join as Partner – Executive Director is still awaiting acceptance of suggested contribution. The application was received a long time ago, but there has since been a change in CEO.

7.3 Strategic plan. “Straw plan” under development. Board half day workshop being planned for late April.

8. Initiatives and Activities

- The Executive Director has had meetings with several Senators, and has spoken about the challenges in representing WA nationally. Of the past three Senators who met with the Executive Director, only Senator Pratt had heard about WAHTN. It was suggested that the Executive Director meet with Celia Hammond, Julie Bishop’s likely replacement.
- Meeting with Wayne Martin regarding the Guardianship Act.
- WAHTN attended the Ethics and Governance meeting in February. This was the inaugural meeting of this group, who used to meet under the Department of Health in the past. The meeting was chaired by Child and Adolescent Health Service and attended by ethics and governance administrators from the Department of Health, North Metro Health Service, South Metro Health Service, East Metro Health Service and WA Country Health Service. Attendees from WAHTN were Gary Geelhoed and Katherine Coltrona, who was part of the original group in the Department of Health. The terms of reference and focus were established for future meetings, with value placed on collaboration and reporting of outcomes to the Directors of Research. The value of WAHTN’s attendance was agreed on consensus. Positive work efficiencies were highlighted, and opportunities for improvement were identified and targeted for future meetings. The focus of the next meeting will be on safety reporting and sharing of resources.
- A meeting was held to discuss the money needed from WA partners in order to access the Commonwealth Funding available for the National Imaging Facility. There is a possibility of accessing Lotterywest support for some of these funds. A statement showing support (with no financial commitment) is being sought from the Chief Executives of the area health services. An Imaging in Research Strategy for the next 5-10 years needs to be drawn up. Volunteers for a steering committee have been sought. This is a very good opportunity to get a dedicated infrastructure for imaging research.
- CCRN medicine in Canada is an exemplar of regenerative medicine and stem cell research, and has resulted in the creation of a number of spin-off companies. There is now a CCRN in Australia, and the CEO of the Canadian group, Dr Michael May, will be visiting on 23 and 24 May 2019 and will be participating in a workshop. There will be an opportunity for those attending this workshop to pitch their ideas and gain feedback from Dr May. James Williamson, Darren Gibson and Gary Geelhoed will have a meeting with him preceding the workshop.
- Heath Economics – Telethon Kids Institute and the Mindaroo Foundation brought David Bloom to Perth for two weeks. During this time, he attended meetings and workshops aimed at building health economics. It is hoped that a scheme similar to that for the biostatisticians may be set up for health economics. The Executive Director will meet with Suzanne Robinson and Elizabeth Geelhoed. The Ear Science Institute had previously set aside funds for the salary for a health economist but no appointment was made. These funds are still available and there is the possibility that these funds could be used to contribute to such a scheme.

9. Financial Reports

- 9.1 The WAHTN Financial Report was circulated and the new format of the report was approved by the Executive Board.

10. Platforms

- Clinical Trials Data Management Centre – the Biostatisticians service is progressing and an outline for the preceptorships is currently being drawn up. The aim is to begin the service by mid-June, with the junior biostatistician being employed by the host institutions, probably at a university, but paid for by WAHTN.
- Research Education and Training Program – UWA legal has been consulted regarding the RETP trademark infringement. The way forward will be discussed and implemented once the response has been received from the legal team.
The WAHTN Research Education and Training Program will prepare a joint funding submission to the WA Department of Health with the Research Education Program housed at the Children’s and Adolescent Health Service.
- Community and Consumer Health Research Network (CCHRN) – Deb Langridge has commenced in the role as head of CCHRN, and Anne McKenzie is now at the Telethon Kids Institute.
- Australian National Phenome Centre (ANPC) – Jeremy Nicholson has presented talks about Phenomics to a number of people, but usually as an overview and aimed at the general public. WAHTN has requested that Jeremy Nicholson present a more technical meeting, aimed at researchers who may be interested in collaborating with the ANPC. It is anticipated that this will comprise a 90 minute talk, including a Q and A session.

11. Executive Director’s Quarterly Report

The Executive Director’s Quarterly Report was attached to the Agenda of this meeting, with the items covered within the Agenda.

12. Other Business

- 12.1** James Williamson had met with the Attorney General and the State Solicitor about the delays in resolving the issues about the Guardianship Act. The State Solicitor is unaware of consumer involvement in research. This is a critical period, and the issues need to be resolved quickly. It was suggested it may be helpful for the Attorney General to have discussion with consumer groups. The Chair offered to attend a meeting if it was agreed that this may help resolve the issue sooner. ACTION ITEM.
- 12.2** Potential Trademark Infringement.
The Research Education and Training Program platform will need to abide by the advice provided by the UWA legal team.
- 12.2** Email response regarding Funding Coordinator
In response to an email from Neale Fong regarding the Management Committee recommendation not to employ a funding coordinator. It was agreed that this could be held over and form part of the strategic discussion at the upcoming planning session. Such a person could possibly be included in the Lottery west application currently being prepared.
- 12.3** Department of Health WA
James Williamson noted that he would be receiving the Department of Health WA scoping document (WA Health Research and Innovation Fund) by the end of the

week, and that this would be used to inform future health strategies, and would include consumer involvement.