

## **Abridged WAHTN Executive Board Minutes for WAHTN Website Meeting No. 01/2020 held on 15 January 2020**

### **Attendees:**

Mr Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC, Chair  
Ms Pip Brennan, Consumer Advocate  
Dr James Williamson, representing the WA Department of Health  
Professor Shirley Bowen, representing the Private Health Sector members  
Professor Steve Arnott, representing the Medical Research Institute members  
Professor David Morrison, representing the member Universities  
Professor Neale Fong, representing the WA Health Service Boards  
Associate Professor Dan McAullay, representing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people  
Professor Gary Geelhoed, Executive Director WAHTN, ex officio  
Executive Officer: Ms Lauren White, WAHTN

### **By Invitation:**

Professor Peter Thompson, Deputy Director WAHTN

### **Apologies**

Professor Eeva Leinonen, Professor Peter Leedman

### **1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of 2020.

### **2. Declarations of potential or perceived Conflicts of Interest (COI)**

None declared.

### **3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board 9 July 2019**

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the WAHTN Executive Board held on 9 July 2019 were confirmed.

### **4. Management Committee**

The Minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on 13 August 2019; 22 October 2019; and 3 December 2019 were noted.

The next Management Committee meeting will be held on 4 February 2020.

### **5. Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA)**

At the AHRA face to face meeting in November 2019, Gary Geelhoed was elected as Deputy Chair of AHRA and will take on the role of Chair in July 2020. Secretariat support will be provided to the AHRA Chair with operational aspects of the position to be confirmed as it evolves.

The next AHRA face to face meeting will be held in Perth on 20 May 2020, immediately after the Science on the Swan conference.

The development of a Rural Medical Research Alliance initiative being led by Christine Jorm (from the University of New England and in partnership with NSW Regional Health Partners and Central Australian group) is progressing. WAHTN has initiated a meeting between Christine Jorm, Jeff Moffet CE of WACHS and James Williamson Assistant Director General to discuss further.

The Commonwealth Department of Health recently announced a grant of \$2M for the Wound Care Pilot Initiative. WAHTN and Brisbane Diamantina Health Partners have reached out to Melbourne Academic Centre for Health (MACH) and the NSW Regional Health Partners (NSWRHP) together with respective public health networks in their states, as well as Wounds Australia and Silver Chain, who have all agreed to form a consortium to prepare a joint application for the bid (due 29 January 2020). Keryln Carville from Silver Chain has been engaged to work with Jo Wilkie (National Projects Manager) on both the Wounds Initiative and the joint application.

It is intended that both the AHRA Wounds Initiative and the Wound Pilot will be integrated to maximise the potential of both.

## 6. Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

MRFF Round 2.1 Progress Report is due to the Department on 31 January 2020 and will be circulated to the Board once finalised.

Round 2.2 funds have been received. 12 Health Service Translation Project Grants were awarded.

## 7. Governance and Operations

### 7.1 *Joint Venture Agreement*

All WAHTN Partners have provided amendments to the Joint Venture Agreement (JVA). The JVA is currently with UWA's Risk and Legal Department for final review, it will then be circulated to Partners for final endorsement by signatories.

### 7.2 *Strategic Review*

The WAHTN Partners meeting - New Governance Models and Strategic Planning is scheduled on 25 March 2020. Documentation relating to the meeting will be circulated well in advance of the meeting to allow attendees sufficient time to review and provide feedback.

### 7.3 *Lotterywest Final Evaluation Report*

The Final Evaluation report for funding received from Lotterywest (2016 to 2019) will be circulated to Board members out of session for ratification.

## 8. Initiatives and Activities

In addition to the Executive Director's Quarterly Report tabled, the following items were discussed in further detail:

- **Medical Imaging Working Group**

Sufficient matched funding for the current National Imaging Facility (NIF) infrastructure, located in WA, has been confirmed to access Commonwealth funds. The equipment will be utilised exclusively for research purposes with the MRI to be located in the Perron Institute and PET on QEII campus (E Block). The role of WAHTN as the neutral honest broker was integral to this initiative and an example of how WAHTN can coordinate and facilitate a collaborative approach on state-wide initiatives.

Steve Arnott informed Board members that the Neuroscience Strategic Plan was another example of the lead role WAHTN can play to catalyse funding opportunities for the State.

- **Biobanking**

Funding has been allocated to progress the biobanking initiative.

OpenSpecimen software is currently being trialled with samples from the ORIGINS biobank located in Joondalup (in conjunction with the Telethon Kids Institute) to prototype the biobanking

informatics platform. The software has the ability to capture specimens across Western Australia, which has always been a challenge for WA. Talks with Pathwest show they are also keen to participate and are preparing a Business Case to the Health Department. A formal WA Biobank Steering Committee is being organised.

- **Guardianship Act**  
James Williamson informed Board members that the WA Department of Health received a draft of the updated Act in December 2019, amendments were provided, which have mainly been accepted. A final consultation draft will be circulated (including to WAHTN) mid-February 2020. It is not clear whether there will be retrospectivity with regard to currently blocked research.

**Action Item:** The Chair will raise the Executive Board members concerns with The Hon John Quigley; Attorney General of Western Australia.

- **Annual Report / Highlights for 2019**  
The report is currently being drafted and will be circulated to all Partner Members once finalised.

## 9. Financial Reports

The WAHTN Financial Report was circulated – expenditure is within budget.

It was agreed that there is an urgent need to source discretionary funds for WAHTN. Executive Board members raised the following considerations for further discussion:

- Commercialisation of the Science on the Swan conference, to generate revenue.
- Increase revenue via the RETProgram via interstate and international opportunities.
- Opportunities via the Sustainable Health Review (in particular, Recommendation 9).

**Action Item:** due to the urgent need to source discretionary funds, the Chair requested that a business case be presented at the Strategic Review – Partners Meeting on 25 March 2020. This should include what WAHTN has achieved to date and what discretionary funds would be used to accomplish.

## 10. Enabling Platforms

In addition to the Executive Director's Quarterly Report tabled, the following items were discussed in further detail:

- **Clinical Trials and Data Management Centre**  
Two WAHTN Biostatistician Fellowships appointed.

Peter Thompson announced that he would be stepping down as Deputy Director of WAHTN at the end of February 2020. The Chair thanked Peter for his leadership and wealth of experience that contributed to his role, particularly as the Inaugural Executive Director of WAHTN. A letter of thanks will be written to thank Peter formally.

- **RETProgram**  
Funding Agreement received from Department of Health (for the period 1 December 2019 – 30 June 2020).

The new module between the Telethon Kids Institute and Menzies School of Health Research on Improving Aboriginal Children's Lung Health has been launched and is available. A second follow up modules is currently being developed.

The Research Governance Service (RGS) module, funded by the Department of Health, has been released. The module will be advertised widely over the next few weeks.

Currently exploring the development of a broader state-wide WA Research Education platform with the Department of Health, the Area Health Services and our Partners.