
Minutes

Special Meeting of the Board of the Far West Local Health District

Date: 13 January 2021

Time: 9.30am CST (10.00am EST)

Venue: Boardroom, First Floor, Broken Hill Community Health Centre

Present:

Mr Wincen Cuy	Board Member
Mr John Harris	Board Member
Mr Paul Kemp	Board Member
Mr Umit Agis	Chief Executive

Videoconference/Teleconference:

Dr Andrew Refshauge	Chairman
A/Prof Lilon Bandler	Board Member
Ms Mariette Curcuruto	Board Member
Dr Michelle Dickson	Board Member
Mr Stephen O'Halloran	Board Member
Ms Sally Pearce	Board Member

In Attendance:

Ms Jenelle Bussell	Board, Committees and Policy Clerk (Minutes)
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Meeting Opened 9.52am CST

Item 1. Acknowledgement of Country

The Far West Local Health District acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands within its boundaries including: the Barkandji; the Muthi Muthi; the Wilyakali; the Ngiyampaa; the Wadigali; the Malyangaba; and the Wangkumara. We acknowledge and pay respects to the Elders past and present and their ancient wisdoms. We also acknowledge the communities of today and the Aboriginal community members who are part of our communities.

Item 2. Apologies

Nil

Item 3. Aboriginal Employment

Item 3.1 Support for new staff and seeking new staff and ongoing support for existing staff

The Board members noted the limited opportunities for Aboriginal people seeking employment and the need for ongoing support received once recruited. Aboriginal people need to be consulted on ways to go about business and how to engage with the Community while doing their job. It was noted staff members can be overloaded as they have high expectations from the Community outside of work hours.

It was also noted there is concern around the lack of respect in relation to cultural sensitivities. New employees need to be informed around what they should expect in their day to day roles and at the same time in the Community.

The Board members discussed racism within the LHD. The need for understanding around cultural pressures should be addressed.

The Board members noted the first steps in a strategy to move forward will be included in the Aboriginal Workforce Plan. Asking the Communities what works and what doesn't would be beneficial. It was suggested that rather than Aboriginal people being asked to go on Committees to consult, it may be more beneficial to change and join one of the Community Working Groups, and to develop that as a protocol across the organisation.

The Board members discussed Community Working Parties noting this was an avenue for showing a genuine need to work through issues. Meetings should be attended on a regular basis.

There is not an equitable distribution of Aboriginal employees across the organisation. Senior roles should be targeted that are not Aboriginal designated positions. Support can then be provided to staff. The Board members noted other LHDs would be dealing with similar issues and maybe models already developed would be useful for the Far West LHD to review.

Item 3.2 Career progression

The Board members discussed the opportunities for career progression for Aboriginal people. A number of factors contribute. Employees in some cases are unaware of reporting processes and who is responsible. It was noted progression is generally through identified positions and this is often limiting. There needs to be progression from identified to non-identified positions.

The Board members discussed the process around the Boards role in the implementation of the Aboriginal Workforce Plan. It was noted the Boards concerns and ideas would be taken into consideration, however, the Chief Executive and Executive members were accountable for delivering the outcomes. The Board would be informed on KPIs and progress on a regular basis.

Item 3.3 Cultural safety at work

Cultural safety within the LHD and in the Community was discussed at length. Staff members that are required to engage in the Community need to take into consideration cultural perspective and read the signs on when is the best time to approach. There is a need for improvement around culture and how to engage with Aboriginal people.

Systems need to be implemented to start change around poor performance and actions. It was suggested cultural safety should be measured and reported on in a similar way that Work Health and Safety is, and to make sure it becomes normal operations.

Item 3.4 Pressure on staff outside work

The Board members discussed pressures for Aboriginal staff members outside of working hours and expectations from Communities. Staff members are on occasion contacted throughout the night for various reasons rather than utilising services provided. Processes need to be implemented on how they can receive support.

It was noted there is a need for the LHD to have colleagues and line Managers who understand pressures faced outside of work hours and are able to show respect for the additional burdens carried. The difficulty arises when the staff member gains Community respect and then is expected to deal with the pressures that go with that gain without support.

Recognition of pressure on staff outside work needs to be recognised as part of the work load and embedded into systems.

Item 4. Final Comments

Paul Kemp thanked the Board members for attending and for their discussion around issues raised. The Chair noted the issues will take time to resolve but the Board members show a willingness to support change. Resources are required for employees to allow them to engage with people in a free manner, and so they can express themselves comfortably and freely.

The Chief Executive advised the Aboriginal Workforce Plan had begun to look at some of the issues raised and will be addressed in the Plan. Developing KPIs around cultural safety will be explored and how they will be monitored and reported on. The Pillars will update the Board in their activities in relation to Aboriginal Health, relevant to its area of responsibility. All issues raised today will be considered in the development of the Strategic Plan.

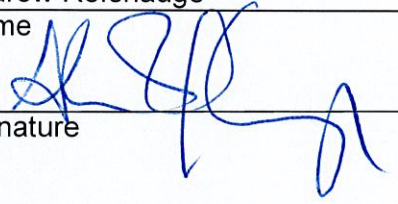
Item 5. Meeting Closed

11.31pm

Next Meeting

Monday 22 February 2021

Certified as a correct record.

Andrew Refshauge
Name _____
Signature  _____
Date _____

