

**WA Health Translation Network  
Management Committee Meeting No. 01/2021  
Minutes  
Tuesday 2 February 2021, 7.30am to 9am  
via Zoom**

**Attendees**

***Representative Members:***

Chair: Professor Gary Geelhoed, Executive Director WAHTN  
Curtin University: Professor Melinda Fitzgerald  
Ear Science Institute Australia: Ms Sandra Bellekom  
East Metropolitan Health Service: Professor Daniel Fatovich  
Edith Cowan University: Professor John Olynyk  
Harry Perkins Institute: Professor Peter Leedman AO  
North Metropolitan Health Service: Dr Aron Chakera  
Perron Institute for Neurological and Translational Science: Professor Steve Wilton  
University of Notre Dame Australia: Professor Jim Codde  
University of Western Australia: Professor Anna Nowak  
WA Country Health Service: Mr Justin Manuel

***Platforms:***

Clinical Trials and Data Management Centre: Professor Chris Reid  
Commercialisation Representative: Professor Kevin Pflieger  
Consumer and Community Involvement Program: Ms Debra Langridge  
Transdisciplinary Programs Representative: Professor George Yeoh  
Women's Health Representative: Professor Jeffrey Keelan

***Staff:***

WAHTN Chief Operating Officer: Dr Debbie Turner

**Apologies**

Professor Peter Richmond, Dr Darren Gibson, Professor Geoff Stewart, Mr Bill Morgan, Professor David Morrison, Dr James Flexman, Ms Nicola Ware, Ms Janet Zagari, Mr Glenn Pearson, Professor Steve Webb, Dr Angelita Martini, Mr Alan James, Dr Carolyn Williams, Dr Chris Kane, Professor Catherine Elliott, Professor Vera Morgan.

**1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

**2. Declarations of potential or perceived conflicts of interest**

None declared.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2020**

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Management Committee of 24 November 2020 were confirmed.

## **4. Governance and Operations**

### **4.1 Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025**

The Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 was endorsed by the WAHTN Executive Board at their meeting held on 23 November 2020. An Operational Plan will be developed outlining key performance metrics and objectives.

The proposed Governance Structure, which proposes three models of governance is currently being discussed at the Executive Board level, feedback and comments have been sought. The Governance structures will be discussed at the next meeting of the WAHTN Executive Board on 8 February 2021.

### **4.2 Joint Venture Agreement**

The revised Joint Venture Agreement continues to remain un-signed by WAHTN Partners at present. WAHTN are waiting for confirmation from the WA Department of Health, with delays due to the risk cover clause. WAHTN are hopeful this will be resolved as soon as possible.

## **5. Executive Director's Report**

The Executive Director provided a verbal update, which incorporated the following items:

- **Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)**

The Chair provided background to MRFF funding and noted that as recommended in the McKeon Report, MRFF Rapid Applied Research Translation (RART) funding over ten years was put in place to provide funding for NHMRC accredited Translation Centres to better integrate research, academia and clinical service. For the first three years RART funding went exclusively (and was equally divided) to the AHRA Translation Centres, with the expectation that each of the Centres would continue to receive around \$2M a year for the next seven years.

Late in December 2020 we were informed of a change in the eligibility criteria, with the upcoming release of MRFF RART funds now being an open call for project grants to all eligible organisations across Australia. MRFF RART funding will no longer be coming directly to WAHTN and the nine other Translation Centres which may have a potential flow on impact to the WAHTN and AHRA National System Level Initiatives (currently WAHTN co-leads CCI and Wounds projects with AHRA partners). Consideration will need to be given to alternative funding streams for these projects, for example NHMRC partnerships.

While WAHTN will no longer be able to apply directly for funding, some of our partner organisations can (although current criteria precludes the application coming from state government organisations, such as WA public hospitals). The Executive Director wrote to each Partner Organisation strongly encouraging them to submit an application and welcomed the opportunity to discuss how WAHTN may be of assistance in the process. A link to the grant opportunity can be found here: [MRFF 2020 Rapid Applied Research Translation Grant Opportunity | business.gov.au](https://www.business.gov.au/mrff-2020-rapid-applied-research-translation-grant-opportunity)

- **2021 Partnership Payments**

The Chair described the current concerns with regards to WAHTN's lack of sufficient funds to support core business, at present, WAHTN requires additional funds to continue operating effectively (an approx. 36% increase). The WA Department of Health proposed they would provide

50% of the required increase in core funding if this was matched from the other Partners, thus effectively halving the increased amount needed from each Partner. As a result, a letter was sent to each Partner Organisation seeking an 18% increase in partnership payments for 2021. Over three quarters of Partners have responded to date, all positive, with the exception of two Partners who have not agreed to the increase but are prepared to maintain the usual contribution amount.

- **Science on the Swan 2021**  
Science on the Swan 2021 is scheduled for 16 – 18 May, the program will focus on showcasing top WA health research, particularly in the clinical setting.

The 2021 conference will be a 3 day program, with 1 day focusing on COVID-19.

## **6. Enabling Platforms**

A detailed update on WAHTN's Enabling Platforms was attached to the Agenda for information. Key information is summarised as follows:

- **Consumer and Community Involvement Program (CCIProgram)**  
Discussions with the WA Department of Health, Research Innovation Office late December 2020 resulted in a short term funding agreement to ensure the CCIProgram remains in place with the current reduced number of staff until 30 June 2021.

New discussions are underway to align long-term CCIProgram funds with the renewal of the WA Department of Health contract with Health Consumers Council WA. The contract would assist in the delivery of a state-wide CCIProgram that supports the FHRI Fund Strategy. The CCIProgram would remain part of the WAHTN, with funds coming via HCCWA as a potential Centre Agent. Partner Agreements and Fee for Service delivery would continue in parallel with this contract.

- **Clinical Trials and Data Management Centre (CTDMC)**  
The WA Department of Health have agreed in principle to continue providing funding support to the CTDMC for the next three years.

CTDMC will continue to work closely with health services on clinical trials infrastructure, particularly in the area of health economics, biostatistics, secure data management and introducing an independent auditing capability.

- **Research Education and Training Program (RETProgram)**  
The independent external review of the RETProgram is close to being finalised, a draft report was received in December 2020 and indicates positive support of the RETProgram.

The following RETProgram online training courses were released in the latter half of 2020:

- Paediatric Aboriginal Lung Health: Asthma diagnosis and interpretation of spirometry
- Health Economics: Cost Effectiveness for Clinical Trials
- GCP in Australia (Good Clinical Practice)

A link to the entire suite of the RETProgram online courses can be found here:

<https://retprogram.org/training/>

The following RETProgram online training courses are currently under development:

- Good Clinical Practice (GCP) Refresher
- Consumer and Community Involvement
- Navigating Data Linkage
- Biostatistics Repository

## **7. Other Business**

None raised.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the WAHTN Management Committee is scheduled on Tuesday 30 March 2021, 7.30am – 9.00am.