

**WA Health Translation Network  
Management Committee Meeting No. 02/2021  
Minutes  
Tuesday 6 April 2021, 7.30am to 9am**

**Location: Harry Perkins Institute, Seminar Room G24, Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, Nedlands and via Zoom**

**Attendees**

***Representative Members:***

Chair: Professor Gary Geelhoed, Executive Director WAHTN  
East Metropolitan Health Service: Professor Daniel Fatovich  
Edith Cowan University: Professor John Olynyk  
Murdoch University: Professor David Morrison  
University of Notre Dame Australia: Professor Jim Codde  
WA Country Health Service: Mr Justin Manuel  
St John of God Hospital: Professor Steve Webb  
Brightwater Care Group: Dr Angelita Martini

***Platforms:***

Consumer and Community Involvement Program: Ms Debra Langridge  
Women's Health Representative: Professor Jeffrey Keelan

***Staff:***

WAHTN Chief Operating Officer: Dr Debbie Turner

**Apologies**

Professor Melinda Fitzgerald, Professor Peter Richmond, Professor Peter Leedman, Mr Glenn Pearson, Professor Anna Nowak, Dr Chris Kane, Ms Janet Zagari, Professor Kevin Pflieger, Professor Catherine Elliot, Ms Nicola Ware, Professor Allan James, Professor Melinda Fitzgerald, Ms Sandra Bellekom, Dr Aron Chakera, Professor Steve Wilton, Professor Chris Reid, Professor George Yeoh.

**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 2 February 2021**

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Management Committee of 2 February 2021 were confirmed.

#### 4. Governance and Operations

The Chair provided a verbal update on the following:

##### 4.1 Governance Review

The Chair reported that the Executive Board members have decided to keep the Governance Structure of the WAHTN unchanged at this point in time.

##### 4.2 Joint Venture Agreement

The process to negotiate a new Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) is still underway. The revised Agreement is still awaiting endorsement from WA Department of Health, it is imperative that this occurs before the end of the year.

##### 4.3 Executive Board Changes

Mr Paul Forden, Chief Executive has been appointed to the WAHTN Executive Board as the representative for the WA Area Health Services. Previously this role was filled by Professor Neale Fong, Chair of WA Country Health Services. The Terms of Reference have been updated to reflect the change in representation of the Area Health Services (AHS) from the level of AHS Chair to AHS Chief Executive.

The membership of the Executive Board will see some turnover at the next meeting with the 2 year term of three Board members coming to a close. In line with the Terms of Reference, the representative positions for the University, Medical Research Institute and Private Hospital sectors will rotate to a representative from another organisation within that sector. In addition to these rotations, the Board Chair has announced he is stepping down when a suitable replacement can be found. The process of filling all vacant positions has begun.

##### 4.4 Role of Management Committee

Noting a drop in Management Committee attendance, the Chair invited suggestions from the members on how best to use this Committee and involve more participation. The Chair suggested the larger Management Committee made up of representatives from the 20 Partner Organisations of WAHTN could meet 2-3 times a year to share information while a smaller sub-committee could be formed to set priorities and make recommendations to the Executive Board for decisions.

Jeff Keelan supported the idea of holding a face to face meeting / workshop 2- 3 times/year for the larger group and a smaller subcommittee be formed to manage, set priorities, and move things along.

Jim Codde, John Olynyk, David Morrison and Angelita Martini all supported this suggestion.

**Action Item:** The Chair will progress this recommendation.

#### 5. Executive Director's Report

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

##### 5.1 Executive Director Contract

The Chair informed Committee members that his contract, which was due to expire in April 2021, has been extended for a further 12 months.

## 5.2 Ethics and Governance

The Chair requested opinions on the two ethics and governance issues detailed below:

### **Issue 1: Ethics and Governance**

The Chair discussed the Brisbane Diamantina Health Partners (BDHP) Research passport agreement which standardises and streamlines the process of low risk research and audits within Brisbane which is planned to be extended across Queensland. As this process currently remains more fractured in Western Australia, Gary Geelhoed suggested that a similar approach may be useful here, with WAHTN playing a role in facilitating this. Gary had discussed this with Assistant Director General Dr James Williamson previously who agreed that this could be beneficial. The Chair asked for input from other members on whether this would be a worthwhile avenue for WAHTN to pursue.

Daniel Fatovich, Justin Manuel, Steve Webb and John Olynyk all acknowledged that Ethics and Governance remains a significant problem area for WA researchers and the policies need updating. All agreed that WAHTN could play an important role in the development of a policy to streamline ethics governance and reporting. It may be feasible to approach the Future Health Innovation Fund for funding to progress this work. It was suggested to look at successful models from elsewhere across Australia and evaluating them as possible solutions for use in WA. It was stressed by several members that it was vital to have support from WA Department of Health and AHS in this process. If Chief Executives from the AHS were unwilling to embrace the idea of a common sign off, then there would be no point progressing a 'passport'.

**Issue 2:** The Chair raised concern that WA researchers are missing out on NHMRC/MRFF funding and invited suggestions for how to improve this situation, such as increased representation in Canberra to hear early of upcoming opportunities and provide strong advocacy for Team WA.

Members present agreed that the universities over east have representation in Canberra while WA does not and as a result, we are missing out on early information regarding funding opportunities. The Committee agreed that a large coordinated effort between stakeholders and the State Government with creation of a clear strategy may be useful to increase WA's profile in Canberra. It was also discussed in addition to representation in Canberra, how we could make research a requirement of working in the industry, elevating standards so that WA can compete with Eastern States applications.

The Committee suggested organising a multi-tiered meeting/ seminar to discuss this issue including the Vice Chancellor's, Minister for Health and University research staff, in addition to the WAHTN Management Committee.

## 5.3 Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

The Chair provided background to MRFF funding and noted MRFF Rapid Applied Research Translation (RART) funding over ten years was believed to be put in place to provide funding for

NHMRC accredited Translation Centres. The Chair explained that MRFF RART funding which previously had gone exclusively to AHRA members had changed. Although NHMRC and MRFF reports were positive, unfortunately this latest round, while open to all eligible organisations across Australia, precludes the majority of Translation Centres from applying directly for funding, as they are unincorporated and do not have their own ABN. This has the unfortunate consequence of making the highly collaborative Translation Centres compete against each other and against their membership base for available funding.

#### 5.4 Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA)

The Chair provided an update on his recent trip to Adelaide to attend the AHRA Face to Face meeting. The discussion was mainly about re-visiting AHRA's role, strategy, focus and values. Several of the National System Level Initiatives (NSLIs) are progressing well and will result in outcomes in line with the current funding timelines and milestones. Some NSLIs will be well placed to apply for funding of their own to continue post the cessation of their current funding under RART 2.2, including the two WA initiatives of Consumer and Community Involvement and Wound care.

- The Chair updated members on the CCI handbook which has been completed utilising MRFF funds and will be released in a few weeks. In addition to the handbook there are three other CCI projects underway: an online Knowledge Hub; Evaluating impact; and International Liaison CCI project.
- Wound Care has 4 streams. The stream WAHTN is responsible for is designing and conducting a survey of wound care at SCGH, Armadale Hospital, a sample of GPs and Aged Care facilities, and possibly Busselton Hospital if funding permits. WAHTN is working closely with Wounds Australia and Brisbane Diamantina Health Partners in this project.

Gary Geelhoed will hand over the AHRA Chair role to Prof Don Nutbeam, Sydney Health Partners, from July 2021.

#### 5.3 2021 Partnership Payments

The Chair described the current concerns with regards to WAHTN's lack of sufficient funds to support core business. WAHTN requires additional funds (an approx. 36% increase) for core staff to continue operating effectively. The WA Department of Health agreed to match half of the required increase in core funding for 2021, leaving partners to find the remaining 18%. Eighteen out of the remaining Nineteen Partners have responded positively to the increase and the Chair thanked all the partners for their support and vote of confidence. A committee will be formed to look at funding and have an agreed approach going forward.

## 6. Enabling Platforms

The Chair provided a verbal update on the following:

### 6.1 Consumer and Community Involvement Program (CCIProgram)

The Chair explained that the WAHTN CCIProgram is seeking a 5year combined contract, from the WA Department of Health, with Health Consumers Council (HCC) WA.

Deb Langridge provided further details regarding the ongoing funding conversations with the WA Department of Health. There will be more information available in the coming weeks. The funded activities will focus on the delivery of CCI embedded in the FHRIF strategy.

DL provided a verbal update to the meeting on work that is underway with partners and external agencies at State and national level, including the set up a Steering committee in the next few months which will involve partners and stakeholders to advise and guide the activities of the CCIProgram.

2021 – 2023 CCIProgram Partnership contracts with the Universities and MRI's are being finalised.

6.2 Clinical Trials and Data Management Centre (CTDMC)

A detailed report was provided at the last meeting. CTDMC is working up a new three year funding proposal through DOH and has some own source income through recent successful grant collaborations.

6.3 Research Education and Training Program (RETProgram)

RETProgram has been experimenting with a small advertising campaign through Google search, which has resulted in a small increase in enrolments and generation of a small corresponding income. DoH funding of RETProgram ceases 30 June 2021. Future funding through DOH is being explored with emphasis on a broader education platform that will incorporate the RETProgram online training, along with other components. Discussions are in progress.

6.4 2021 Science on the Swan Conference

Science on the Swan 2021 is scheduled for 16 – 18 May, the program will highlight research in the WA Area Health Services. The third day of the conference will be focused on lessons learnt from COVID-19. The Minister for Health, The Hon Roger Cook, Director General and Chief Scientist are some of the speakers at the event.

**7. Other Business**

None raised.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the WAHTN Management Committee is scheduled on Tuesday 25 May 2021, 7.30am – 9.00am