



# SMHS Board to Ward program overview 2022

## Purpose

The governance and leadership role of the South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) Board includes overseeing continuous improvement in safety, quality and service provision. Through the **SMHS Board to Ward program**, Board members undertake conversations with staff, patients and their families in relation to the care provided and received, and in doing so, make a public commitment to service improvement. Board to Ward visits also allow Board members to put a human face to the data and reports they receive in their meetings and be reflective in their Board and committee deliberations.

The SMHS Board to Ward program is not a means of detecting incidences of patient or staff dissatisfaction, but rather a mechanism to promote a blame-free culture where reporting is used as a tool for service improvement. The program allows Board members to gain an understanding of how patients, carers and staff feel about the care provided and presents opportunities to increase consumer and staff confidence in the governance role of the Board.

Hearing first-hand examples of successes, concerns and issues enables Board members to demonstrate their appreciation of the care and excellent service being provided at the various SMHS sites. While feedback was predominantly positive in 2022, there were some concerns

raised at site visits that have since been considered and managed. The Board believes it is important to listen and is committed to following up when issues are identified.

In addition, the program endeavours to reinforce and embody the five SMHS strategic priorities:

-  **Excellence in the delivery of safe, high quality clinical care**
-  **Provide a great patient experience**
-  **Engage, develop and provide opportunities for our workforce**
-  **Strengthen relationships with our community and partners**
-  **Achieve a productive and innovative organisation which is environmentally and financially sustainable**

Board to Ward visits demonstrate to the Board members how SMHS staff constantly strive to exemplify the SMHS values of **care, integrity, respect, excellence and teamwork**.





## Visits

Due to strict COVID restrictions in hospitals during 2022, Board members participated in a reduced total of four Board to Ward visits which enabled them to visit:

- The Fremantle mental health hospital in the home service and Hampton House residential mental health rehabilitation service in Fremantle
- Day surgery and theatres at Fremantle Hospital
- Obstetric services at Rockingham General Hospital
- Paediatric and neonatal services at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

Each two-hour visit was attended by a clinical and a non-clinical Board member.

These visits offer Board members an opportunity to meet with and gather feedback directly from patients, carers and staff about the patient experience and patient safety. Board members then share their feedback and discuss issues raised during their visit with the relevant executive director. Written reports are also provided to the site's executive team, with responses to findings and actions monitored by the SMHS Board Safety and Quality Committee.



# Outcome highlights

Through the SMHS Board to Ward program's meaningful engagement with staff and patients, visiting Board members regularly note high satisfaction from our patients about the services provided and a high degree of pride and job satisfaction amongst staff.

The SMHS Board appreciates the importance of directly engaging with the community and staff to identify opportunities for improving access to, and delivery of, health services. These are highlighted in the excerpts below.

## Mental Health Hospital in the Home and Hampton House, Fremantle

### Board member comments and findings

The Hospital in the Home (HiTH) staff are a professional team who work well together to improve clients' lives. The team members were happy in their jobs and felt they had the resources and referral pathways to meet client needs. They acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 and particularly looked forward to increased opportunities for further education and professional development when the pandemic impact lessened. Board members were impressed by the holistic approach to client wellbeing which included connecting clients to couple's counselling and similar services.

Hampton House residential mental health rehabilitation service is a heritage listed dwelling bequeathed to Fremantle Hospital in the early 1900s. It is a stunning facility that has been recently renovated but retains much of its original features and has a very homely feel.

## Day surgery and theatres, Fremantle Hospital

### Board member comments and findings

The visit to Fremantle Hospital was informative and pleasant. The general impression was of a positive work culture where staff feel safe and supported and are happy in their respective roles despite challenging circumstances at times. Staff morale seemed high and it was evident that there is a strong spirit of collaboration between staff members at all levels.

Board members were impressed with the contribution made by the patient support assistants in theatres who are trained on site at Fremantle Hospital and are skilled at multi-tasking to keep the theatres running smoothly. Board members were also impressed with the 'grow our own' approach to developing graduate nurses in theatres. Staff commented they felt very much part of the SMHS workforce and have a real can-do attitude. Staff reflected positively about the local leadership on site.





## Paediatric and neonatal services, Fiona Stanley Hospital

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### Board member comments and findings

Staff in both wards were professional, positive and clearly passionate about their work. Senior staff acknowledged the recent recruitment of additional staff will improve their ability to meet increased workloads. Both nurse unit managers spoke about the impact of COVID on staff morale but praised their teams for working flexibly and with determination to meet the needs of patients. Neonate staff also highlighted the exceptional skill and professionalism of the nurse educator on the ward. Both teams noted the access to and support of the senior management team.

Board members met with a mother of twins who was extremely positive in her commentary about the quality of care she had received during the birth and the ongoing care being provided to her twins. She also noted the care provided to her extended family by staff.

## Obstetric services, Rockingham General Hospital

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### Board member comments and findings

We spent just under two hours meeting with a range of staff, two parents and a newborn. Staff members were friendly, approachable, and happy to have a chat. Morale was good, with positive comments regarding teamwork among midwives and having each other's backs. There was very good feedback about the effectiveness of the new Head of Department and the Co-Director Midwifery. The feedback from patients was extremely positive, with lots of compliments for the quality of care. Patients stated they were treated fantastically with good follow up from the team each day and particularly felt they were treated with respect and empathy.

