

Executive Message

Metro North Health



Summary:

- Priorities for 2026
- CKW update

Message feedback

Acting Chief Executive Nick Steele



Audience: All staff



Read time: 5+ min



For: Information

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to 2026! I hope that many of you had the opportunity to relax, reset and recharge for what will be another busy year in Metro North. For those staff who worked during the Christmas-New Year period, thank you for your commitment to ensuring our patients received the care they needed during this time.

Your efforts are acknowledged and appreciated by all of the Metro North Senior Executive Team and Board, and most importantly, by the patients who benefitted from your care.



Priorities for 2026

Strengthening clinical service delivery through collaboration

A key focus this year will be on how we work together better as a health service—as One

Metro North. As Australia's largest public health service, we possess a unique service mix that enables us to provide a diverse range of general and specialist health care services to the people of Metro North and beyond, supported by a workforce that has considerable expertise.

We know that for Metro North to reach its potential as a health service, we need to look at new ways to capitalise on these assets in order to strengthen our clinical service delivery.

During my first few months with Metro North, I had many conversations and meetings with staff about what we do well and how we need to improve our performances across a number of areas.

One of the major issues highlighted was the need for greater collaboration and networking across hospital facilities, rather than working as five separate hospitals. Some ideas around how we can do this, were shared by staff via the [Metro North SMART](#) initiative last year. To date, 109 ideas have been submitted from across the health service. Key themes include AI and integration, patient flow and access, staff development and training, equipment replacement and maintenance, workforce planning, models of care, policies and process, scope, research and innovation, and finance and procurement. Due to the number of submissions and people keen to be involved, we are developing an implementation strategy which I will provide advice on in the coming weeks. In the meantime, I encourage everyone to continue giving feedback through this channel. You can submit your ideas [here](#).

In considering this, one of our major priorities is to undertake a formal piece of work that will help identify and maximise opportunities to build a more collaborative, streamlined, and patient-centred system. This is not about removing local identity or autonomy; it's about creating consistency in our processes and systems to achieve quality outcomes for patients. There will be a number of facets to this work including how we can standardise policies, procedures and processes across Metro North to reduce variation and ensure high reliability healthcare.

In addition, we will also shortly be presenting our Metro North Health Health Services Plan 2026 to 2041 to the Board and commencing a process to refresh MN32.

Improving organisational culture

Improving organisational culture is another top priority for Metro North. We know that workplace culture matters to our staff. It is the day-to-day ways our systems, decisions, leadership behaviours and ways of working that shape staff experience, safety and patient care.

Getting organisational culture right is essential as we continue to strengthen how we work as one Metro North. We know that how we work together across services, professions and systems matters just as much as the structures we put into place.

This next stage of work responds to what staff have consistently told us through Have Your Say, the culture diagnostics undertaken as part of this work, and other workforce data. It allows us to go deeper into understanding how staff experience systems, leadership and ways of working.

The focus is on better understanding what helps or hinders our people to do their best work and using staff insights to define what a healthy and sustainable culture looks like for Metro North.

I want to assure everyone that this is not a new program or another layer of initiatives. It is a system-focused, evidence-led approach to addressing the underlying issues that make it more difficult for staff to do their best work. Importantly, this culture enhancement work aligns with other priority initiatives including actions from HYS feedback and the One Metro North Master Plan.

What we've done so far

Nearly 2,000 staff participated in the Culture Fitness Diagnostic survey, alongside targeted interviews and frontline group discussions, including staff and clinical council representatives.

This has given us a strong, consistent evidence base across professions, services and roles. While analysis is not finalised, some early themes are emerging around leadership visibility and consistency, system friction that slows down staff, and perceived tension between financial pressures and valuing people. The results of the analysis will be shared more broadly with staff soon.

What happens next

The next phase will involve co-design sessions with staff and leaders, focusing on delivering what the future state of our organisational culture should look like, and what needs to change in our systems and ways of working to support this. An expression of interest for participation closed this week, with strong representation and clear interest from across our workforce. Our first co-design session will kick off on 21 January. This phase will conclude with a Strategic Executive Team checkpoint to confirm priorities and endorse an implementation approach by the end of February.

As a leader who values openness, transparency and meaningful change, I am committed to providing staff with clear regular updates on the progress of this work and visible evidence that feedback is translating into action.

I am again looking forward to getting out and about across our facilities to meet with more staff, talk about the great work you do, and understand more about how we can continue to improve Metro North.

Some of the best and most productive conversations occur informally, so if you see me around at your facility, please come and talk to me about what's on your mind and share your ideas.

Patient care milestone

I am pleased to share that we recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of Australia's first female triple organ transplant recipient. Lucinda Simpson, who underwent her lifesaving transplant surgery at TPCH in 2005 went on to give birth to her son, thanks to the collaborative care efforts of TPCH lung transplant service and RBWH Obstetric team. This is a fantastic milestone and an example of the tremendous care provided by our clinical teams across Metro North. You can read more about Lucinda's journey as well as other Metro North patient-care initiatives [here](#).

Finally, I encourage everyone to take care of themselves during this year. While the new year is a time to start fresh and take charge, working in health care is challenging no matter what time of year. So while you are busy caring for others, please take time to look after your own health and wellbeing and check in with those around you.

Take care.
Nick

Chief Operating Officer

Stephen Eaton



Audience: All staff



Read time: 1 min



For: Information

Dear colleagues,

It is with regret that I inform you that, following a period of illness, Karlene Willcocks has made the difficult decision to leave CKW to focus on her wellbeing and other opportunities.

Karlene has made a significant contribution to the Caboolture, Kilcoy, and Woodford communities, and has been a strong advocate for all these communities and the staff of the CKW Clinical Directorate.

We extend our best wishes to Karlene for her future endeavours.

In the interim, Dr Ted Chamberlain has agreed to cover the CKW Executive Director role while we consider longer-term coverage of the role.

Regards
Stephen

Metro North Health



We uphold our commitment to health equity through our Values in Action
Respect | Integrity | Compassion | High Performance | Teamwork



Metro North Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Land upon which we live, work and walk, and pay our respects to Elders both past and present.

Metro North Health's vision

Creating healthier futures together—where
innovation and research meets compassionate
care and community voices shape our services.



**Queensland
Government**

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