

Managers Memo



August 2026



Read time: 5+ min



Audience: Managers



For: Information

The [Our Metro North – Stronger Teams, Better Care culture plan](#) has been shaped by feedback from more than 2000 people across our organisation.

Through the Have Your Say survey, culture diagnostic activities and co-design with different professions, services and locations, what we heard was consistent — people want clearer decisions, leaders who are visible and follow through, fewer barriers and permission to solve problems close to where the work happens.

The focus isn't on creating another program, it's about improving how work gets done every day. And because culture is created locally through the way we lead, communicate and work together — every people leader has a role.

Our Metro North
Stronger teams, Better care
2026-2028

The culture plan at its core

Together we will help one another be at our best, for each other, our patients and our communities. When it comes to culture we will focus on:

- Collaboration to leverage the best of Metro North Health.
- Patient centred, high quality and sustainable care.
- Transparency and visibility to build trust.
- Empowering and supporting our people.
- Safety and space to improve, innovate and learn.

First 90 days of Stronger Teams, Better Care plan

The first 90 days of implementation (May to August) have been focused on practical changes that will improve how work happens day-to-day.

Clearer local decision making

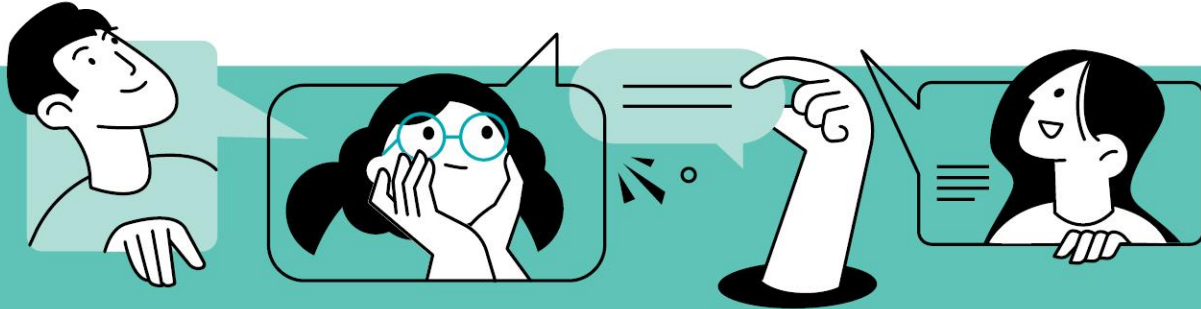
Leader visibility

Reducing friction

- Clarify decision ownership
- Reduce unnecessary escalation
- Support confidence to act locally

- Visible leadership presence
- Respond to concerns raised by staff
- Close the loop with staff

- Identify barriers impacting teams
- Improve practical workflows
- Simplify where possible



Your role in shifting culture

The Our Metro North plan is NOT:

- A new program of work owned by someone else
- Additional reporting or tasks
- Something that can be delegated to others

The Our Metro North plan IS:

- How leaders lead on a day-to-day basis
- How decisions are made and communicated
- How teams are engaged and supported
- How barriers are addressed

REMINDER: Leader Practice Pulse Check extended

All people leaders were invited via email to take 5 and answer 5 — a quick pulse check to understand what behaviours managers feel they lead with now, and what might be challenging when it comes to the three focus areas above. The survey will close on 21 August.

Take 5 to answer 5 now

How to improve local decision making

- Clarify who decides and **enable decisions to be made by those closest to the work.**
- Reduce escalation by **resolving issues locally** and escalating only when required.
- **Coach rather than rescue** by supporting others to work through options.

Leaders and teams are expected to apply these behaviours within their delegation and risk settings, using the Metro North Performance and Accountability Framework as guidance to make informed decisions rather than defaulting to escalation.



Check out the [Local decision making guide](#) for simple changes you can make to enable this behaviour change.

Shift your language when addressing decision making within your team.

Instead of saying:

- "Send it to me and I'll decide."
- "Why'd you make that decision?"
- "Escalate anything risky."
- "There's nothing we can do about that."

Use language like:

- "What's your recommendation?"
- "Talk me through your thinking."
- "What support do you need to proceed confidently?"
- "I'll support you while you work through this."
- "What can we learn from this experience?"
- "What part of this can we move forward?"



Leader Reflection



One thing that's made a real difference for our team has been getting clear about which decisions genuinely need me and which can confidently be made by others.

Rather than have routine rostering decisions be held up with me, we've established clear expectations so these decisions can be made when I'm not there.

It keeps things moving, reduces unnecessary escalation and, most importantly, demonstrates trust in the capability of our team.

I'd encourage leaders to think about: What decisions are sitting with you today that could safely be delegated to someone else with the right support and clear expectations?

- Lisa Kane, Medical Director Paediatrics, Caboolture

OUR ESCALATION & DECISION-MAKING PRINCIPLES



Keep decisions close to the work

Empower teams and leaders to solve problems close to the work



Work with others while retaining ownership

Escalate when local options don't work or system support is required



Back people to use good judgement in decision-making

Support reasonable decisions made in good faith, using opportunities for learning and improvement while maintaining accountability

Visible leadership isn't just about being seen more often

The term visible leadership is thrown around a lot, but it's not just about being seen on the floor. This is part of it where possible, but other things you can do to help staff feel more connected to your leadership are:

- Where your team is geographically dispersed, ask your people what **online huddles, meetings or forums** you can join or schedule to ensure you feel part of each other's work.
- **Ask for input.**
- **Listen** to understand.
- **Explain decisions** by outlining what is happening and why.
- **Close the loop** — consistently follow up on what you hear and keep staff informed on progress and outcomes.



The Metro North [Values in Action page](#) contains resources for all staff to support values-based behaviours and workplace culture. Check out the suite of manager-specific tools to assist you in embedding the Values in Action Framework in your team.

Shift your language to become more accessible and involved with your team.

Instead of saying:

- "Let me know if there are any issues."
- "That's been escalated."
- "Decisions have been made."
- "Things seem fine from what I'm hearing."
- "I'll take that away." (and not closing the loop)
- "It's harder to stay connected with teams at different sites."

Use language like:

- "What is getting in the way?" or "What's making your work harder right now?"
- "Here's where that's up to, and I'll keep you updated until it's resolved."
- "How are teams interpreting this, not just receiving it?"
- "Here's what I've done with your feedback, and what will happen next."
- "I'm consistently present - even if it's virtual."



Leader Reflection



In 2025, I introduced the 'Walk in Your Shoes' initiative, spending time alongside staff to experience a snippet in their day-to-day work firsthand.

It has been an incredibly valuable insight and created opportunities for meaningful two-way conversations about what's working well and where we can improve.

- Dale Dally-Watkins, Executive Director, STARS



Reducing friction makes work easier

Ways to reduce friction:

- Identify and **remove unnecessary approvals and duplication** where possible.
- **Solve issues locally** where possible.
- Address what makes work harder and ask – 'what is getting in the way?'

Feeling stuck on how to solve an issue? Access the below:

- [Solving Problems Closer to the Work - A Practical Guide for Leaders](#)
- [1:1 coaching and coaching skills development](#)
- [HELIX Essentials Workshops – Problem Discovery, Disinvest to Reinvest](#)



Use language that enables barriers to be identified and removed.

Instead of saying:

Use language like:

- "Just submit the request and wait."
- "That's not our area to fix."
- "Just work around it for now."
- "We've always done it this way."
- "Too many approvals are required."

- "Let's see what we can solve locally first."
- "Who should we involve to move this forward?"
- "Let's fix the root cause, not just the workaround."
- "Is there a simpler way to do this safely and appropriately?"
- "Which approvals actually add value?"



Leader Reflection



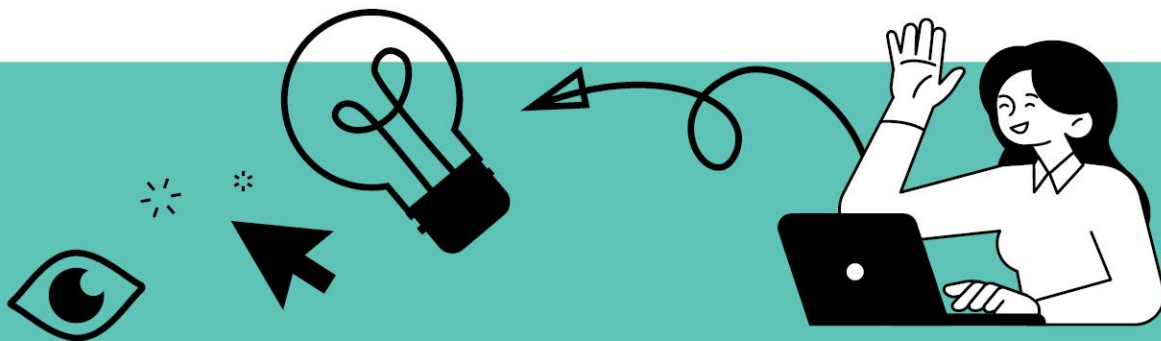
I don't go to meetings that have no clear purpose, agenda or action coming out of them. If the only outcome is that somebody tells me something, email is best.

Meetings should be used to discuss, decide or act. Otherwise, they take time away from the team.

I protect time to be visible, work clinically and talk to staff. I can only do that if I am disciplined about the things I agree to attend.

My team is my priority. Everything else has to compete with that.

- Elizabeth (EJ) Marsden, Clinical Director OPEN



Why this matters

Culture is experienced in the everyday — how decisions are made, whether staff feel heard and supported, how easy it is to get work done and whether people feel safe to speak up and try new things.

By changing these everyday experiences we aim to:

- Improve employee engagement and experience.
- Support safe, high quality and sustainable care.
- Improve patient access and consumer experience.
- Strengthen relationships and trust.

- Grow the next generation of leaders.

We hear time and time again that workplace culture at the team level is the most impactful — whether positive or negative. Metro North is focusing on enabling this behaviour change on the ground while looking at system-wide barriers.

We all have a role to play in improving how work gets done and allowing our staff to work to top of their scope. Let's work as one big team to make Metro North a great place to work, visit and partner with.

Is your work already positively impacting culture change?

The focus is on strengthening and better connecting innovative work already happening.

Has your team made an improvement that could be scaled at a larger level? We'd love to hear from you to support this and help share the news.

Share your story and we'll be in touch

We want to recognise staff role modelling the behaviours at the heart of the Our Metro North – Stronger Teams, Better Care culture plan

Nominations are open now for the Metro North Staff Excellence Awards coming up on 13 November.

If you know someone or a team already bringing these behaviours to life, nominate them for one or more of the 10 award categories. The awards are open to all staff across all streams and locations.

It's easy. Find out more on [QHEPS](#) and [nominate from any device](#).



Please [contact us](#) if you would like to include some news in the Managers Memo.

Let us know Manager Memo feedback

