



Working Together

Strategy for Inclusive Employee
Engagement 2022 – 2024

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Jim McGowan AM
Board Chair
Metro North Health



Jackie Hanson
Acting CE
Metro North Health

Foreword by Board Chair and Chief Executive

As Australia's largest public hospital and health service provider and leader in healthcare, research, clinical training and education, Metro North Health recognises that the foundation of any effective healthcare system is an engaged and productive workforce.

Metro North strives to create and uphold an evidence-based, people-first, and values-driven culture by taking a holistic approach to building resilience and wellbeing for our staff. Employee engagement has been critical to the Queensland Health response to COVID-19, with frontline workers across the state working together at a scale and pace not seen before. The pandemic has shown more than ever that people are at the heart of what we do. It has highlighted the need for compassionate leadership and compassion for each other to ensure the wellbeing and motivation of healthcare staff during a time of change and uncertainty.

Successful implementation of the Metro North Working Together for Inclusive Employee Engagement 2022-2024 Strategy will enable Metro North to be an employer known for supporting and developing a highly engaged workforce - a workforce who brings their best selves to work and delivers compassionate care that provides the best quality of life for patients and the highest value of healthcare for the broader community.

Foreword by Combined Clinical Council Chairs

During development of this Strategy our staff have been faced with unprecedented challenges in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Involving staff is vital during these times of change and uncertainty. Empowering employees to contribute and engage by increasing employee voice and feedback mechanisms allow Metro North to make considered, informed decisions that improve employee experience, service design and delivery of care. In alignment with the strategic direction of the Working Together Strategy, Clinical Council aims to ensure that a progressive and sustainable approach to engaging healthcare professionals is firmly embedded in its health improvement initiatives. Active engagement with our staff is a priority and we acknowledge the need to stay connected in more relevant and meaningful ways to strengthen collaboration.

The Metro North Clinical Council (MNCC) is the peak clinical advisory body for the Metro North Health Service Executive Leadership Team. The Council is the major forum for clinical involvement in strategic and governance matters, aimed at providing high quality healthcare and ongoing service improvement. The members of our six directorate Clinical Councils are advocates and representatives of staff from across all levels of the organisation. Members of councils provide leadership, direction and guidance with their respective executive teams and involve staff in the planning, delivery, improvement and evaluation of local health services. We encourage you to read the Working Together Strategy and take every opportunity to engage with Clinical Council representatives and seize opportunities to have your say.



“Putting
People
First”

Introduction

This Working Together Strategy has been written at a time when our staff have been facing one of the most demanding periods of their professional lives: dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic, and recognises the vital contribution staff make to delivering care, challenging the norms of healthcare to innovate and meet demands together. This strategy forms part of Metro North Health’s (Metro North) response to the many challenges it faces. It acknowledges the invaluable role of teamwork in supporting the patient journey and providing connected integrated care. First and foremost, we want employees to feel valued and to feel able to fulfil their potential. If we get this right, we stand a better chance of meeting the many challenges we face right now and into the future.

A great workplace is everyone’s responsibility. At Metro North, we strive to put our people first and to embed strong employee engagement into our service through co-design, planning and improvement cycles. The Working Together Strategy is one of Metro North’s key documents and explains our commitment to our people. Linking closely with the Metro North Health Strategic Plan 2020-2024 and our Strategic Workforce Plan 2020–2025, it is aligned to Metro North priorities and strategic direction for the next 3 years, setting the direction for our people that will ensure a sustainable, flexible, agile workforce that feels supported and empowered to perform at their best.

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to focus on improving employee experience and engagement efforts across Metro North, while allowing staff to identify organisational challenges and devise the right approach for addressing them, empowering employees to contribute to strategic decisions that inform service design.

Created through joint engagement with our staff, clinical councils and executives, this strategy has been informed by feedback received through past and present engagement processes with employees, building on our many achievements and learnings. We are now using this information to focus organisational improvement efforts toward:

- embedding our organisational **VALUES**
- increasing our focus on **SAFETY** and **WELLBEING**
- fostering **TRUST**
- enhancing our **LEADERSHIP** capability across the organisation.

Evidence shows that employee engagement is linked to staff wellbeing, quality, safety and efficacy, patient satisfaction and improved clinical outcomes¹. Put simply, engaged staff deliver better, safer care. As Metro North continues to face increasing service

pressures and financial constraints, senior leaders must see employee engagement as one of their top strategic priorities if we are to deliver safer and higher quality care^{2,3}.

The Working Together Strategy is underpinned by Values in Action (VIA), links with our

commitment to putting people first and aligns with the strategic intention from the Workforce Pillar of MN32. Metro North released its first Employee Engagement Strategy in 2016. Building on previous engagement strategies, this latest Employee Engagement Strategy communicates our current vision and values and is ambitious in its plan to support Metro North Health staff and ultimately its patients.

“Improving employee experience and engagement efforts across Metro North”



Our Vision and Values

Values in Action is our way of working – translating those values into behaviours in the workplace shapes the culture of Metro North and is vital to create a unified and engaged workforce. In doing so we will provide a positive workplace culture where our people can thrive, connect with our vision and purpose, feel professionally and personally fulfilled, feel safe, valued and welcome to contribute.

“Our values represent who we are and what we care about”

Metro North Health is proud to be a values-based organisation, creating a strong foundation to improve our capacity to adapt to the rapidly changing environment in which we live and work. The Values in Action program sits in the ‘our people’ strand of putting people first. As an organisation Metro North values respect, integrity, compassion, high performance, and teamwork. Our values represent who we are and what we care about. At Metro North, we strive to create a culture where our values are at the centre of how we work and interact with one another delivering better experiences for those who use our services and creating great places to work for our staff.



RESPECT



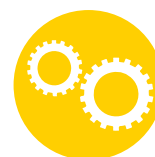
INTEGRITY



COMPASSION



HIGH
PERFORMANCE



TEAMWORK



Employee Engagement in Context

Employee engagement is the connection employees feel towards their work, their team, and the organisation. There is an overwhelming body of evidence to show that engaged staff who feel connected to their teams, love their jobs, and have positive feelings about the organisation deliver better health care⁴. Employee engagement is not the responsibility of our senior leaders alone. Every individual staff member contributes to the environment of those around them and has a role in making Metro North a great place to work. Through the development of a more engaged workforce we will improve

both our workplace culture and the care we deliver ensuring we are optimally placed to deliver on our MN32 objectives.

Engage, consult, reward and recognise our staff

To build the enthusiasm and energy needed for effective employee engagement, Metro North will

strive to create an organisational culture in which all employees are supported to be involved in continuous improvement efforts. By acknowledging that a better workplace is everyone's responsibility, it is important to articulate the practical roles and responsibilities that everyone across Metro North has.

BENEFITS OF AN ENGAGED WORKPLACE FOR EMPLOYERS

- Improved work performance and productivity
- Reduced absenteeism and sick leave
- Decreased frequency and cost of workers' compensation
- Improved staff morale, satisfaction, and motivation
- Improved corporate image and attraction/retention of employees
- Improved employee engagement and employee relationships

BENEFITS OF AN ENGAGED WORKPLACE FOR EMPLOYEES

- Increase in sense of wellbeing
- Improved morale, job satisfaction and motivation
- Greater sense of purpose and meaning
- Greater capacity for problem solving, decision making and responding to adverse events
- Increase use of creativity, lateral thinking and seeking opportunity for innovation and improvement
- Reduced resistance to change

Source: Federal Government Healthy Workers Initiative 2013



Priority Focus Areas

Drawing from ongoing feedback from staff, learnings from the previous strategy and the results of the 2021 Have Your Say staff survey, this iteration of the Working Together Strategy aims to strengthen alignment with the Values in Action Framework, by highlighting three key sections to prioritise as focus areas for the next three years.

The following three focus areas have been identified as the priorities for 2022-2024:



Our People, Our Values



Our People's Wellbeing



Culture of Safety and Respect





Focus Area 1: Our People, Our Values

People development, leadership, talent management and succession planning are essential in addressing workforce challenges and maximising opportunities. Front-line managers have been shown to have the biggest impact on employee's efficiency, productivity, job satisfaction and overall engagement levels. We will support 'engaging leaders' who understand and model a compassionate, collective leadership style at all levels and in all roles within Metro North. With a commitment to making Metro North a great place to work, we will foster a coaching and mentoring culture where staff, and teams, feel invested in and can reach their true potential.

We will encourage effective communication channels, accessible to all staff, through which flows ongoing and timely strategic narrative. We will ensure staff are informed and engaged in what is happening in the organisation, what it means to them and how they can get involved.

A strong employee voice should be encouraged and supported throughout the organisation so that all staff are able to raise concerns, suggest improvements and contribute to organisational decision making. This needs to be supported by both effective lines of communication, and a culture that welcomes and values employee voice.

How we will do this:

- Investing in our staff to develop their capabilities to progress, learn, discover, teach, and translate new findings
- Build on recognition and reward programs designed to encourage high performance, effective leadership, and alignment to the Metro North Values
- Establishment of a MN Coaching and Mentoring Network to improve leadership capabilities and build on our leadership culture
- Empower our employees to make decisions in the planning, design, delivery, and evaluation of services for the benefit of the organisation through Clinical Councils
- Establish Metro North Health as an employer of choice, attracting, retaining, and promoting staff in a values-based inclusive environment

“Unlocking the potential of our leaders and our people”



To make this strategy a success:

MANAGERS CAN:

- Seek opportunities to further develop leadership capacity and capability
- Facilitate productive and meaningful Performance and Development Plan (PDP) discussions to establish a common understanding about performance and behaviour expectations
- Create time and space to identify and support the career aims and objectives of staff
- Connect employees with the 'Why' – translating strategies and alignment to operational objectives for the team, unit, and HHS
- Respond to staff engagement surveys with strategies and action plans
- Model and encourage the expression of diverse ideas and opinions, collaborating with the team so their recommendations are included in decisions that improve service delivery.

I CAN:

- Promote and practice communication which consistently reflects Metro North's Values
- Actively seek opportunities for professional development to unlock my own potential
- Plan and prepare for annual Performance and Development Plan (PDP) in line with the Lominger framework
- Recognise importance of teamwork and the impact of workload on colleagues.
- Understands own contribution to service delivery and openly explore and discuss ideas with colleagues and line managers
- Seek avenues to connect with a member of clinical/staff council to discuss any identified concerns.



Focus Area 2: Our People's Wellbeing

The wellbeing of our people is the responsibility of everyone. Metro North is increasingly invested in our portfolio of health and wellbeing initiatives to support our team's wellbeing and ability to respond to adversity, supporting them to succeed in the challenges they continue to face. To positively influence the wellbeing of our staff, local directorate led initiatives, in collaboration with Metro North level programs, will continue to improve Metro North wellbeing performance outcomes (improved physical and psychological health, reduced injuries, improved return to work, and improved engagement culture), creating environments where employees can thrive and perform at their best.

With a commitment to promote the physical, mental, social and financial wellbeing of our staff, we will address these risks by promoting a model of support for staff that improves distress tolerance, supports recovery from trauma, and enables access to opportunities for growth and working to strengths.

Metro North strives to create and uphold an evidence-based, people first, and values-driven culture by taking a holistic approach to building resilience and wellbeing of our employees.

As an organisation, we acknowledge that the health and wellbeing of our staff is central in the delivery of safe, compassionate patient care. We are dedicated to building thriving workplace cultures that are healthy, safe and engaging, where our people can be their best selves, and realise their full potential.

How we will do this:

- Provide a robust and comprehensive range of health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Promote and deliver safe and healthy workplaces that put the wellness of our people first.
- Communicating Metro North's vision and purpose between clinicians, managers, executive and the Board.

“Caring for you so you can care for our patients”



To make this strategy a success:

MANAGERS CAN:

- Promote and encourage participation in health and wellbeing initiatives
- Show care and connection to the people they lead, through effective people management practices, workload management and job design to ensure fair and equitable workloads
- Incorporate well-being conversations in staff PDP's.

I CAN:

- Contribute to a positive work environment by being a positive influence in my team
- Utilise my strengths and interests to lead wellbeing initiatives in my workplace
- Actively seek health and wellbeing opportunities that align with my interests.



Focus Area 3: Culture of Safety and Respect

Workplace culture is influenced by employees' experiences of work, for example the way people show care for one another, the emphasis on safety, wellbeing and support, the focus on innovation, learning and growth, and leadership behaviours. In this way, culture plays a big part in influencing peoples' levels of engagement, that is, how committed they are to their workplace.

Building strong positive cultures within and between work units and strengthening relationships amongst peers will foster higher levels of inclusiveness, engagement, commitment, performance, and wellbeing. Our VIA cultural improvement programs will continue to support teams to help empower employees to challenge poor behaviours and champion our values.

Metro North is committed to the ongoing work of creating a culture of safety and respect for our people. The Working Together strategy, in conjunction with the Safety and Quality Strategy 2019-2023 and the Health & Safety Improvement Strategy 2021-2023 aims to provide safe and healthy workplaces, equitable environments free from harm, and just cultures that are safe and respectful.

Our continued commitment to building an inclusive and diverse workforce will better reflect the community we serve leading to improved employee and patient experience.

In conjunction with the Metro North Multicultural Action Plan 2021 – 2023, and the Strategic Workforce Plan 2020 – 2025 we are striving to create an inclusive culture that promotes the skills and insights of our people irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, generation, sexual orientation or disability.

How we will do this:

- Progress the aims and objectives of the Multicultural Action Plan 2021-2023 and the MN Health Equity Strategy
- Provide physically and psychologically safe and healthy workplaces underpinned by a system of fair and ethical decision making.
- Ensure our Values are clearly at the forefront of decision making
- Provide robust surge capacity measures, fatigue risk management and, staffing workload strategies
- Keep you informed- fostering communication of timely and relevant information throughout and across the organisation
- Optimise the diversity of our workforce

“Staff feeling supported, and recognised”



To make this strategy a success:

MANAGERS CAN:

- Promote and deepen our understanding of creating an inclusive culture
- Provide safe working environments and the support to get the work done
- Manage unreasonable behaviours by addressing conflict directly and swiftly, creating a culture of accountability
- Manage and support staff to improve performance
- Ensure continuous roll clarity is provided through regular communication of expectations
- Support an inclusive workforce

I CAN:

- Role-model and demonstrate behaviours that encourage physically and psychologically safe workplaces
- Be willing to take accountability and accept responsibility for my actions and their impact
- Record all workplace incidents
- Actively listen to others
- Celebrate and acknowledge the efforts and success of my colleagues
- Value other's perspectives and points of view
- Strive to learn about other's backgrounds and cultures

Strategic Alignment

The Working Together Strategy 2022-2024 is one of Metro North's key documents setting direction and priorities to unite efforts on the initiatives to deliver on strategic directions. The Metro North Health strategic planning framework is outlined below.

Government priorities



Advancing Health 2026



System Outlook 2026

My health, Queensland's future: [Advancing Health 2026](#) sets the vision for Queensland's health system – By 2026 Queenslanders will be among the healthiest people in the world. The key directions are: Promoting wellbeing; Delivering healthcare; Connecting healthcare and Pursuing innovation. [Queensland Health's System Outlook to 2026](#) provides HHSs with direction to deliver on this vision by informing health service planning, funding and delivery by the Department of Health and Hospital and Health Services.

Hospital and health service strategic plan



The [Metro North Strategic Plan 2020-2024](#) sets the strategic direction for the health service and aligns to the priorities of the Queensland Government. The four objectives in the plan are: To always put people first; to improve health equity, access, quality, safety and health outcomes, to deliver value-based health services through a culture of research, education, learning and innovation and to be accountable for delivery of sustainable services, high performance and excellent patient outcomes. The strategic plan directs the strategy development and planning undertaken across Metro North Health.

Strategies



Health services



Safety and quality



Research



Employee engagement

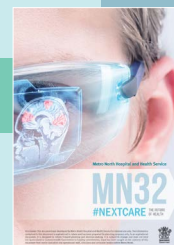


Community engagement



Digital Metro North Strategy

There are six headline strategies for Metro North Health focussing on key functions of Metro North Health. The strategies confirm the strategic directions and objectives of the relevant area and outlines the priority strategies required to achieve the desired outcomes. The Health Service Strategy focuses on health service delivery and links with the other Metro North Health strategies.



Actions

Reporting and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation of employee engagement is essential to improving Metro North Health's services and maximising benefits for our employees and consumers. Monitoring will occur via operational planning reporting cycles. An annual Working Together Strategy Board report informed by the directorates, clinical councils, streams, administrative support and clinical teams will be submitted to the Metro North Board at the end of each financial year.

PRIORITY AREA:	SUCCESS WILL BE DEMONSTRATED BY:
1. Our People Our Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected from the HYS staff survey will see a 5% improvement in our response rate and engagement culture • All staff will complete an annual Performance and Development Plan (PDP) • Participation in leadership skills and development training of our people will continue to increase • Compliance to action plans based on staff engagement survey results for every business unit across Metro North
2. Our Peoples Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of data collected in the HYS staff survey about our culture and our employees will benchmark above average when compared to our benchmarking partners. • The uptake and effectiveness of established, new and refreshed programs/initiatives that support health and wellbeing, education and training
3. Culture of Safety and Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of data collected in the HYS staff survey about our workplaces and our managers will benchmark above average when compared to our benchmarking partners.

The following positions are responsible for reporting outcomes of the Working Together – Strategy for Inclusive Employee Engagement 2022–2024.

Metro North Business Units	Executive Director of the Business Unit
The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital	Executive Director Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital
The Prince Charles Hospital	Executive Director The Prince Charles Hospital
Redcliffe Hospital	Executive Director Redcliffe Hospital
Caboolture Hospital/Kilcoy Hospital and Woodford Correctional Centre	Executive Director Caboolture Hospital
Community and Oral Health Directorate	Executive Director Community and Oral Health
Mental Health Directorate	Executive Director Metro North Mental Health Services
Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service	Executive Director STARS

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