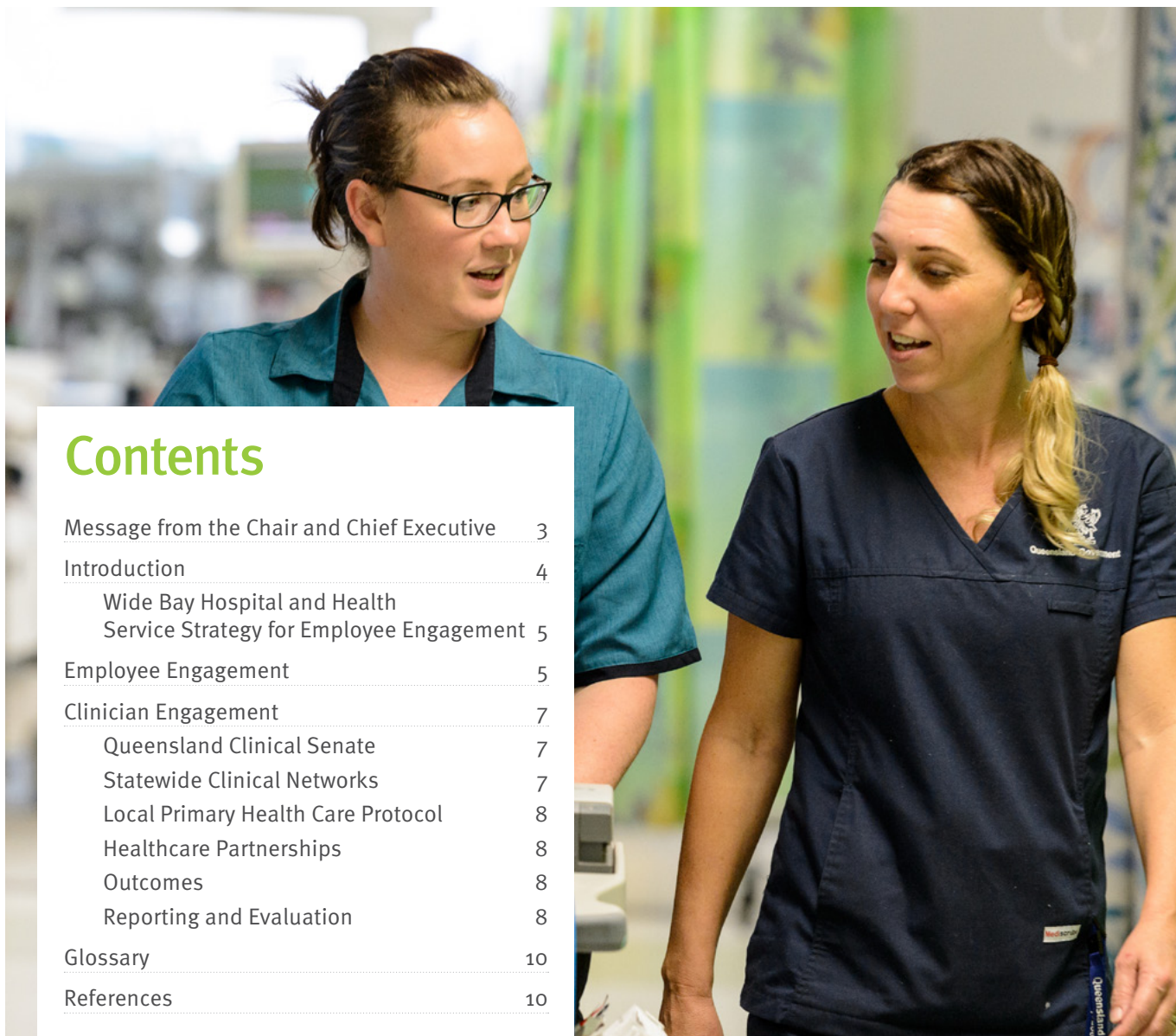


Developing and empowering our workforce

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

VERSION 2.0



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Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service Employee Engagement Strategy

Version control

The first version of the Employee Engagement Strategy and Policy was formally approved by the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Board in 2012. This version was formally approved by the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Board on 6 December, 2017.

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Message from the Chair and Chief Executive

At Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service, our number one priority is safe, high-quality health care.

Underpinning that central goal, we are constantly looking for ways we can strengthen our service delivery and find new and better ways of operating, as we keep advancing along our journey of continuous improvement.

This journey isn't possible without an engaged, productive and passionate workforce.

For any organisation to be truly effective, change, improvement and innovation have to happen as part of a collaborative effort. The people who directly provide care to the communities we serve are best placed to help us identify the improvements we need to make and the strategies we need to make them. We want to be in a constant conversation with you and all our teams to enable us to work together towards improving the health outcomes of the Wide Bay community.

As with any conversation, it's important not just to talk, but to listen. This means our WBHHS leadership must be constantly and effectively engaging with and listening to our employees through an ongoing range of formal and informal platforms.

This strategy aims to identify meaningful and sustained employee engagement activities through open and respectful relationships, as well as to boost clinician engagement and a culture of collaboration in pursuit of safe, effective and patient-centred care.

There are five key planks of the strategy – Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower – all of which interact to ensure our employees influence every aspect of our decision making, from strategic planning through to operational delivery.

WBHHS has been on a sustained and impressive journey of improvement since its inception in 2012, and we want to keep going.

We want to be the best we can be, and we want to help our employees to be the best they can be. Together, we truly can make a difference to the health of the community we serve.



Peta Jamieson

Peta Jamieson
Chair
Wide Bay Hospital & Health Board



Adrian Pennington

Adrian Pennington
Chief Executive
Wide Bay Hospital & Health Service



Introduction

An engaged workforce, which understands and contributes to decision making is a necessary pre-requisite to health service improvement. The value of engaging clinicians and the broader workforce in the planning, delivery, improvement and evaluation of health services leads to increased productivity which results in improved patient care.^[1]

The Wide Bay Hospital and Health Board (WBHBB) sets the strategic priorities through Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (WBHHS) Strategic Plan which outlines how we will meet the needs of our communities over the duration of the plan. The Strategic Plan supports the Queensland Government's objectives for the community to deliver quality frontline services that strengthen the public health system.

WBHHS delivers quality, patient- and family-focused health services to more than 212,000 people across the Wide Bay community, which includes the geographical areas of the Bundaberg, Fraser Coast and North Burnett local government areas, and part of Gladstone Regional Council (Miriam Vale).

High quality family and patient-centred healthcare depends first and foremost on the skill and dedication of staff. WBHHS recognises the contribution of its employees as primary internal stakeholders in the delivery of WBHHS Strategic Plan, and its vision of *"Improving health, together"*. There are significant implications for the workforce in achieving the vision and strategic objectives with challenges such as increasing demands for services, the growing burden of disease, financial pressures and the emergence of new infrastructure and

technology. However WBHHS recognises that people who directly provide services in healthcare are best placed to identify improvements and strategies to maintain service delivery and patient care outcomes. They include both incorporating new roles and functions, and potential changes in employee skills sets and ways of working, which will reshape the employment experience over the coming years.

Following the establishment of Hospital and Health Services in July 2012, the WBHBB released its first Clinician Engagement Strategy 2012–2015. The Strategy recognised that input from clinicians into decision making is vital in reaching our strategic goals. It is recognised that clinical care is only one activity patients are exposed to when they access healthcare services at WBHHS. WBHHS is committed to open, meaningful and bi-directional communication with clinicians to achieve a culture of partnering to shape the direction of health services to achieve patient focused care. It is acknowledged that the outcome of clinical care and the patient experience is also reliant on the role played by other HHS occupational groups. For that reason, this Strategy has been extended to be inclusive of all employees, not diminishing clinician engagement, and has been developed as an Employee Engagement Strategy.

Meaningful and sustained employee engagement takes time and commitment from the executive team and WBHHS staff. The *Employee Engagement Strategy* aims to build upon and strengthen existing clinician and employee engagement to ensure all employees are provided with the opportunity to have a voice to be heard in the planning, implementation and review of services in WBHHS.

Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service Strategy for Employee Engagement

The Strategy will help to ensure that all Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service activities, from strategic planning to operational delivery, are influenced by employees; and that a progressive and sustainable approach to engaging employees is firmly embedded in management practices.

The key aims of the Employee Engagement Strategy are to:

- Involve and empower clinicians and the broader workforce in an inclusive process for the planning, delivery and evaluation of health services, teaching programs and research projects.
- Engagement will be diffuse applying to all rather than a few that will be measured and reported.
- Improve service delivery, quality clinical care and patient care outcomes. Through ensuring staff are aware of the relationships between systems and

performance monitoring and the relationship with consumer outcomes and best practice.

- Increase workforce participation in local decision-making and accountability.
- Ensure clinicians remain connected with the health system and policy development.
- Acknowledge the role that our workforce plays in raising understanding of WBHHS and the health care system in the community.
- Ensure clinicians have access to ongoing professional development, promoting evidence-based practice and best practice patient safety and quality.

This Strategy complements and intersects with WBHHS Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy (2017) and a number of other key documents including:

- WBHHS Clinical Governance Framework.
- WBHHS Strategic Plan.
- WBHHS Local Primary Health Care Protocol (between WBHHS and the Primary Health Care Network).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement “describes the involvement of people at all levels in a positive two-way dialogue and action to deliver the highest quality patient care and create great places to work – where people find their work meaningful and are willing to work together for patients, their colleagues and the futures success of the organization.”^[2]

Currently within Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service, engagement mechanisms exist within a range of various formal and informal meeting processes and structures. Employees are engaged in operational management from team/ward operational and clinical meetings, through to Business Unit and Divisional Management meetings. In addition a range of professional /clinical groups also meet regularly within Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service. These meetings provide opportunities for employees to participate in decision making and advise senior management on issues in relation to governance, planning, service delivery, workforce, safety and quality.

Examples of the current informal and formal mechanisms through which employees are engaged are outlined to the right:

Level	Type
Ward/Team	Team meetings Operational Business Meetings Service Improvement Initiatives Clinical Care Reviews Audits Performance Appraisal and Development discussions Training and development programs
Business Unit/ Facility/ Division	Operational Business Unit Meetings Service plans/profile development Operational planning Professional/Staff Forums Service Improvement Initiatives Workshops/Working groups
Health Service	Professional Forums (e.g. Heads of Department, Nurse Leaders, Clinical Directors)

The models of engagement can be identified according to Table 1 which illustrates engagement is a spectrum from informing, through consulting, involvement and collaborations to empowerment. The table illustrates some of the mechanisms WBHHS uses to engage with employees. With increasing engagement comes increased accountability and responsibility for those involved.

Table 1 Participation Model ^[3]

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	To provide employees with balanced and objective information to promote understanding	To provide opportunities to obtain employee feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with employees in determining preferred solutions.	To partner with employees in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	Allow employees to be heard and to feel ownership over the health service and valued for their contribution in developing it as a high quality regional and rural service
What	Employees are informed and aware of key issues	Employees are asked for their opinion, listened to and their concerns acknowledged. They will be provided feedback on how their input influenced the decision	Employees will be involved to help define problems and identify solutions.	Managers will look to employees for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate that advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	Management will work in partnership with employees to agree on what is implemented
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff induction and orientation • Email • Intranet • Internet • Newsletters • Printed materials • Displays • Showcases • Briefing sessions (eg Heads of Departments) • Screensavers • Annual Report • Events • Safety and Quality Boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Staff meetings • Professional forums • Workshops • Focus groups • Executive walk arounds • Clinical Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety & Quality / Standards Committees • Quality improvement projects and working groups • Integrated risk management processes • Operational Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety & Quality / Standards Committees • Clinical Networks • Strategic Planning • Organisational Change Proposals • Project Working Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety & Quality / Standards Committees • Clinical Council • Strategic Planning

Adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, developed by the International Association for Public Participation

Clinician Engagement

WBHHS is fully committed to establishing a culture that values clinician engagement and maintaining positive and productive relationships, that is part of everyday business as opposed to a separate concept. WBHHS Executive value clinician time and expertise and will ensure engagement is meaningful throughout all phases of any form of change management and procedure or service development. Effective line management is the foundation of clinician engagement. All clinicians have an immediate supervisor; usually a clinician manager, who has the primary responsibility for ensuring effective clinician engagement. However, given the complex nature of modern healthcare and the increasing distance between front line clinicians and executive

decision makers, most high-performing healthcare organisations don't solely rely on line managers to engage clinicians. In addition to the workforce engagement mechanisms in place within WBHHS, the following formal clinician-led structures are in place at local, regional and state levels.

It is acknowledged that the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*, requires that the health service develops and publishes a clinician engagement strategy to promote consultation with health professionals working in the service. The minimum requirements for the clinician engagement strategy are further outlined in the *Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2012, Part 4(12)*.



Queensland Clinical Senate

The Queensland Clinical Senate (the Senate) is the leading clinical engagement body for the State. Established by Queensland Health in November 2008, the Senate is funded by the Queensland Department of Health.

The Senate consider strategic clinical issues and make recommendations to the Department of Health and Hospital and Health Services about how to deliver the best care to Queenslanders. The Senate aims to connect clinicians to improve care and provides strategic advice and leadership on system-wide issues affecting quality, affordable and efficient patient care within the health system in Queensland.

The Senate provides clinical leadership by developing strategies to safeguard and promote the delivery of high quality, safe and sustainable patient care. The Senate is made up of senior clinicians including medical practitioners, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, ambulance officers, and representatives from each of Queensland's Statewide Clinical Networks. Health Consumers Queensland is also represented on the Senate.

Statewide Clinical Networks

Statewide Clinical Networks are a key initiative of Queensland Health to engage clinicians and consumers in decision making about clinical services planning and implementation, clinical practice improvement and quality and safety enhancements.



Local Primary Health Care Protocol

A protocol has been developed to promote cooperation between Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service and the Sunshine Coast, Wide Bay and Central Queensland Primary Health Network (PHN) in the planning and delivery of services. Key Issues for collaboration for the development of optimal patient care outcomes include:

- Identifying and prioritising local health needs.
- Informing joint planning and policy imperatives.
- Aligning outcomes with all relevant strategy documents including but not limited to the organisations strategic plans, and the Queensland Government's objectives for the community.
- Enhancing service access, coordination and integration across the health continuum.
- Respectfully and productively engaging with consumers and the community in the design, delivery, investment and evaluation of health services.
- Influencing and reforming those areas of the health system for which they have responsibility.

Healthcare Partnerships

Meaningful and sustained engagement with clinicians working in other Hospital and Health Services, General Practice, private and non-government health care providers is a core element of providing patient-centred care.

Outcomes

This employee engagement strategy aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Meaningful and sustained employee engagement through open and respectful relationships.
- Clinician engagement that achieves a culture of partnering and collaborations to achieve safe, effective and patient-centred care.

Reporting and Evaluation

Evaluation of the impact and success of this strategy will involve:

- Annual progress reports to the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Board and Executive.
- Annual feedback report to the workforce.
- WBHHS meeting accreditation requirements in relation to the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

**Table 2: Employee Engagement Strategies**

1. Inform – Provide employees with balanced and objective information to assist with understanding problems, alternatives, solutions and opportunities		
Strategy		Performance Indicator
1.1	Publish organisational structure, identifying key personnel, roles and responsibilities	Information on key personnel in Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service and their roles and responsibilities is widely available to all employees
1.2	Inform employees about organizational targets, expectations and performance	Increased knowledge of targets, expectations and performance. Board meeting summaries published and available on-line following all Board meetings
1.3	Employees are provided with key items of news and information on WBHHS initiatives and strategies	Number of staff newsletters, emails available to staff. Number of hits on website/web links
1.4	Employees have access to orientation programs and ongoing professional development, promoting evidence based practice and management practices that help lead and direct the organisation.	Number of staff training courses provided Professional Development Leave taken
2. Consult – Obtain employee feedback on analysis, information and proposals		
Strategy		Performance Indicator
2.1	Executive and senior managers to have a more visible profile by attendance at Divisional and other service level meetings, and by promoting their roles	Number of meetings
2.2	Clinical Directors are provided with the opportunity to meet with the HSCE via a regular forum	Number of forums
2.3	Employees are offered the opportunity to contribute to the development of strategic plans and policies and provide feedback	Consultation sessions conducted for employees
2.4	Employee opinion will be assessed via the annual whole of government survey, as well as other ways such as specific focus surveys and focus groups	Specific WBHHS initiated staff surveys – eg OHS, RMO, Communications are appropriately authorized and actions taken in response to findings. Actions taken in response to Working for Queensland Survey
3. Involve – Work directly with employees throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered		
Strategy		Performance Indicator
3.1	Employees are represented on key groups and forums within Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service	Representatives participation Evidence of feedback in minutes
3.2	Establish a WBHHS Clinical Council as an advisory body to provide clinical opinion and facilitate discussion of issues with the Health Service Chief Executive (and other Executives) and when appropriate the Board	Clinical Council established, and a summary of key issues discussed and decisions made is available to staff
4. Collaborate – Partner with employees in each aspect of decision making to discuss alternatives and identification of preferred solutions		
Strategy		Performance Indicator
4.1	Establish joint protocols with the Primary Health Network and other health providers to enhance clinician engagement	Protocol with the Sunshine Coast, Wide Bay and Central Queensland Primary Health Network (PHN) in place
4.2	Business Unit/Facility/Divisional operational plans will include relevant employee engagement actions as identified and prioritized by the service area	Evidence of employee engagement actions undertaken

5. Empower – Allow employees to feel ownership over the health service and valued for their contribution in developing it as a high quality regional and rural service

Strategy		Performance Indicator
5.1	Encourage clinicians to be active in State, regional and local forums	Representation on Queensland Clinical Senate, Statewide Clinical Networks and PHN Clinical Council
5.2	Devolve greater accountability and autonomy to senior managers for establishing service goals, resource allocation, and evaluating and improving services performance	

Glossary

Clinician ^[4]	Any individual who provides diagnosis or treatment as a professional medical practitioner, nurse, allied health practitioner or other health practitioner
Employee	Any individual who is hired to work for another or for a business, firm, organisation etc., in return for payment
Employee Engagement	The manner in which employees are involved in planning, delivery, improvement and evaluation of health services
Clinician Engagement ^[5]	The involvement of clinicians in the planning, delivery, improvement and evaluation of health services within Queensland Health, utilizing clinicians' clinical skills, knowledge and experience

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