



St John WA

Board Communiqué

Kaya. Welcome to St John WA Board sharings of the first-ever Board meeting held in regional WA – on the lands of the Wardandi Noongar people, the traditional custodians of these lands for 45,000 years. The Board, Group CEO and a few executives spent two days in the Bunbury region collaborating with local St John WA team members and stakeholders, while visiting Pinjarra, Harvey, Brunswick and Bunbury sub centres and collecting much feedback on the way. It was a most enjoyable and thought-provoking journey. Thank you to all for having us on Country and enabling the Board to witness first-hand regional St John WA in action.

Role of the St John WA Board

The Group Board's role is in keeping with St John WA's need to pursue its charitable purpose effectively and meet its obligations under the law and has four roles aligned to Australian Institute of Company Directors parameters, being:

Role 1. Group CEO oversight and resourcing

Role 2. Group performance and accountability

Role 3. Group compliance and risk

Role 4. Group strategic direction

It follows the St John WA Constitution, the 10 AICD Governance Principles, the six Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commissions Governance Standards and the appropriate ASX Governance Principles.



Statement on Reconciliation

The Board of St John WA congratulates the organisation's elevated focus on reconciliation action. At St John WA we serve the people of WA, and that reminds us while many before us have driven for meaningful reconciliation change, more is required. At Board level, we are committed to increased reconciliation service.

Acknowledgements

An Acknowledgement of Country: The St John WA Board and evening stakeholders alike were treated to a special Acknowledgement of Country, presented by Non Executive Director Amanda Healy. Amanda shared a dreamtime story of a golden-haired girl and the ever-abundant nuytsia floribunda, or Christmas tree, known in the Noongar language as moodjar.

An Acknowledgement of St John: The Board highlighted that St John in Australia commenced this week 140 years ago, in Melbourne. In Bunbury, which was established as a St John WA entity in 1929, we celebrated through Non Executive Director Jeffrey Williams who shared a heartwarming story of two outstanding contributors in Dermot Foster and Helen Dyer.



Sub centre visits, Order and regional engagement

The Board split into three teams and visited four different sub centres to and from Bunbury. We learned honest exchange regarding rostering, workloads, uniforms, finances, built form, fleet, programs, wellbeing, service standards and contribution of volunteers.



Board member Amanda Healy (second from left) and the Pinjarra team



Board member Craig Heatley (left), Jeffrey Williams (right) and myself with the Harvey team

The Board held its second of four annual Order Engagement sessions, this time from Bunbury with 25 attending (from Collie to Augusta) and 30 joining online. We thanked 73 Order Members who completed the strategic direction survey, or emailed their responses through, from the first Order Engagement session.

Of those who responded, 70 per cent identified as male, 80 per cent were non-voting, most were in their first few years as an Order member, and a slight bias towards those under 30 years of age. The main three themes emanating from this survey were:

- An organisation of choice across both metro and the regions,
- high quality of services and diversified growth in services, and
- a strong culture, volunteers support and values focus.

The Board is grateful for the effort to provide this feedback. At the Order Engagement Session, I shared the update on the Constitution progress and happenings across St John Australia and St John International. Group CEO Kevin Brown also provided response to questions both online and in person.

On the eve of the first day in Bunbury, the Board met with 40 local stakeholders – it was such a pleasure to meet and mingle with like-minded people. Thank you for all those who attended and shared their experiences working alongside St John WA in the Bunbury region. The Board looks forward to doing another regional Board meeting and tour this time next year.



[Click here to Watch the engagement session recording](#)



Agenda items

At the Bunbury Station in a room adjacent 20 people learning first aid, the Board met from 7.30am until 3.30pm. The three big rock items included:

- the approval of the annual budget,
- a delta point investigation into past, present and future culture, and
- the long-term strategic direction of St John WA as a Group.

1. Decisions

The Board oversees a Cohen family bequest and consequently approved the annual distribution after much discussion. (Role 3)

The Board approved the newly-structured clear, coherent, transparent Group Model budget for 2023 to 2024 financial year with the noteworthy milestone as the company ticks over to \$500m annual turnover for the first time. The company's budget was divided by Streams: Preventative, Community, Emergency, and Corporate support. Across the Streams, there are eight priority areas of investment in this budget with the top three being: wellbeing, safety and injury management; IT digital transformation; and procurement maturity, amongst many other items. (Role 2)

2. Board Stakeholder Immersion

The Board tracked and learned from a high number of stakeholder engagement immersion sessions since last meeting including major partners (RFDS, WACHS, DoH and Minister for Health), Order Member engagement sessions, customer and patient feedback. All feedback was discussed including a list of learnings from this regional tour plus the engagements from the previous evening in Bunbury. The Board also discussed development at St John Australia and St John International, including the new highly-governed Trademark Licence Agreement pending this month between St John Australia and St John WA, and other states. (Roles 2 and 3).

3. Team and Culture Delta Point

The Board heard from Tamsyn Howard, Chief People, Culture and Development Officer regarding the past, present and future of St John WA culture, reward and workforce oversight. This high-level presentation was well-received and enabled the Board to consider, with depth, the five elements of AICD Governance Principle number 10.

Culture:

- Past: The Board was presented with culture performance, reviews and measurement processes dating back to 2006, including the effectiveness of all review recommendations.
- Present: The Board was presented with all current culture performance matters, including the findings from the 2022 Parliamentary Inquiry into Service Stream three: Emergency, with the ambulance service. The new real-time Peakon culture measurement mechanism was provided, segmented in alignment of the Group model. The material proved how culture needs to differ across the business. The Board will be better able to do its role 2 (performance and accountability) with this new segmented and real-time culture measurement tool.
- Future: The Board heard initiatives in action to grow a cultural-strong workplace.

Reward and Recognition:

- An audit of all rewards, honours and recognition of workers was presented with the Board prompting equity of recognition across the full St John WA Group.

Team planning:

- St John WA's team consists of paid members plus traditional and spontaneous volunteers. Ten years ago, St John WA consisted of 1135 FTE paid members and 4318 volunteers. At the start of 2023, St John WA had 2160 FTE, 5465 volunteers (traditional) and close to 7000 first responders (spontaneous volunteers).
- The forecast for the end of 2023 is 2818 FTE, 5700 volunteers and 7150 first responders. The ratio of paid to traditional volunteer numbers is changing fast from 19 per cent in 2009, little shift by 2012 at 20 per cent, yet a strong shift to 33 per cent at the end of 2023. This year, 2023, indicates a 24 per cent increase (a near 800 FTE team members).



Demographics:

- The Board was presented with paid, volunteer, age, roles, attrition rates, ethnicity, First Nations demographic biases, and discussed how the organisation is meeting the needs of a future and changing workforce (paid and volunteer).

Values:

- The Board heard, and contributed to, St John WA values modernisation process underway alongside the strategic direction to strategic planning, pathway. (Roles 2 and 3).

4. Governance Advancement Plan

The Board has had a spotlight on governance and integrity since November 2022. A new Company Secretary, an executive support, plus a reputable external independent advisor, have been working alongside the Board to increase its governance standards. At this Board meeting, the Company Secretary team presented a workplan through to October, to enable further governance growth.

A major component of this work includes the update of the St John WA Constitution to comply with the changing regulatory framework in Australia, meet team member and stakeholder governance expectations, and complement the new Trademark Licence Agreement with St John Australia.

The changes forthcoming in the Constitution, pending Chapter agreement at the AGM, include: modernised language, alignment with ACNC Act, transparency, role clarification, Director appointment and remuneration process, the winding up clause, plus the fusion of the Order Statutes. The new Constitution will better define (in appropriate Constitution language) the role of the Voting Members (Chapter) to making four decisions and having four rights, albeit the same ones as before. At this AGM, October 31, the Board will be recommending to Voting Members to make three out of the four decisions (1, 2 and 4 below).

Decision Making role of Voting Members	Rights of Voting Members
1. Approve changes to the Constitution.	1. Receive notices to Member Meetings.
2. Approve or remove External Auditors.	2. To be heard at any General Meetings.
3. Approve the wind-up of the Company.	3. Consider the Annual Financial Statements.
4. Approve, remove and re-elect Directors.	4. To call a General Meeting.

(Role 3).

5. Strategic Direction

The Board firmed up its view on the strategic direction of the organisation in readiness for the Group CEO to release this “direction” at the AGM October 31, this year. The strategic direction work informs St John WA’s strategic plan of 2024 and beyond. The five-hour strategic direction session, in Bunbury, was facilitated by Sia Partners and included key global trends. The 2022 culture survey highlighted that St John WA team members had not been working towards a common vision – this new strategic direction, released in October, will correct this matter. The Board worked through its positioning on the aspiration of the company for 10 years’ time, a three-year impact positioning, and five major themes for the next three years. (Role 4)

Next meeting

The Board was both challenged and stimulated by its regional Board meeting and concluded it will do a regional meeting this time each year going forward. We wish to express our gratitude for many team members who made this activity possible from those in Perth, to many from the Bunbury region – thank you. The next Board meeting, four weeks later, will be a Quarterly Board meeting held within the Great Eastern Highway First Aid building – another first for the Board of St John WA – as it receives a Special Focus presentation on Service Stream One: Preventative.

Closing remarks

During 2022, Antony Smithson ably and passionately stepped up as Acting CEO. During this time, he collaborated with the Department of Health to sign a strong and clear Ambulance Services Agreement. In his nine years with St John WA, he had signed many contracts. Antony has decided to move on from working full time with St John WA and departs on the last day of June. He’s been a valuable member of the leadership team, and the Board members wish Antony all the best on his next adventure. We will enjoy Antony’s continual engagement and input now that he is an Order Member. A sincere thank you, Antony.



At the six-month point of Group CEO Kevin Brown's leadership, the Board acknowledges his capable, dedicated and principled leadership. To add further strength in leadership, Kevin has announced his team of five Chiefs, with two internal and three external appointments. These Chiefs are:

- Chief Preventative Officer: Megan O'Donnell (external)
- Chief Community Officer: Darren Webb (internal)
- Chief Emergency Officer: Brendon Brodie-Hall (external)
- Chief People, Culture and Development Officer: Tamsyn Howard (internal)
- Chief Financial Officer: Martyn Jenkins (external, commencing August 3).

The Board welcomes this Group team, and anticipates working alongside these skilled leaders, along with the existing and capable St John WA team members we all met on tour through the Bunbury region.

Regards all,



Sally Carbon
she/her

Board Chair OAM, OLY, CSTj, FAICD

Attendance

June 2023:

- NEDs Present: Sally Carbon (Chair), Jeffrey Williams, Elisa Fear, Tony Ahern, Craig Heatley, Amanda Healy (in person) and Mike Gurry (online).
- NED Apologies: Andrea LeGuier
- Executives: Kevin Brown, Tamsyn Howard (in person) and Ryan Marshall (online)
- Advisors: Sia Partners
- Company Secretary: Gauri Potdar (online)