



St John WA

Board Communiqué

Kaya and welcome. It is nice to communicate with you again. If you wish to communicate back, I provide you with my Board email address; Board.Chair@stjohnwa.com.au.

All stakeholders are invited to track progress of the St John WA Group Board across the year through this new *Group Board Communiqué*, this is the second edition.

The St John WA *Group Board Communiqué* is released eight times per year: after each of the four quarterly and four mid-quarter Board meetings. This *Communiqué* represents a summary of a mid-quarter meeting. The St John WA Board provides governance to the organisation which delivers on its charitable purpose:

‘To serve humanity and build resilient communities, through the relief of sickness, distress, suffering and danger.’

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. St John WA’s Board has four roles:

Role 1. Group CEO oversight and resourcing

Role 2. Group performance and accountability

Role 3. Group compliance and risk

Role 4. Group strategic direction

The role of the Group Board, and its non-executive directors remains delineated from the executive responsibilities, which are delegated to the Group CEO, Kevin Brown, whose role is to run the St John WA organisation.

The Board of St John WA commences this *Communiqué* with a congratulations to the workforce for the release of St John WA’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This plan was released amongst a coming together in Belmont of more than 200 people and was joined with an audience tuning in online from locations across WA. Celebrations included a traditional smoking ceremony, release of St John WA’s reconciliation artwork from Kevin Wilson, singing from the local primary school, plus storytelling and speeches. The Board of St John WA discussed the 2023 Voice to Parliament Referendum at this meeting with much support aligned to the RAP process. As St John is a diverse and inclusive organisation, the Board encourages all St John WA team members and stakeholders to explore their own views on the Referendum and the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

The Board also welcomed two new highly qualified Board members (via vacancies) in Amanda Healy and Craig Heatley taking the Board from six to eight. Details of their appointment are later in this Communiqué.

Acknowledgements

An Acknowledgement of Country: Board member Elisa Fear provided the Board with her acknowledgement focusing on the map of Australia representing the 250+ First Nation language groups. The Board had quite the discussion on this, and new Board member Amanda Healy taught us all there were twice the number of language groups prior to colonisation. Thank you Elisa and Amanda for this learning.

An Acknowledgement of St John: The Board heard a snippet from the to-be-released book ‘100 years of Ambulance’ from one of the authors Tony Ahern. Tony highlighted the uniqueness of the global St John entity, being a Royal Order. He also mapped the progress of St John WA over 131 years indicating how this journey was not a gradual increase, rather one of peaks and troughs.



Agenda items

The first mid-quarter Board meeting (known as a 'yellow' board meeting) covers deeper topics and contains less data and facts than the 'red' quarterly meeting, allowing for more organic discussion. Amongst the agenda, this meeting had three 'big rock' items:

1. Group Strategic Direction – process commencement

This meeting was used to initiate an eight-month strategic direction investigation. The desire is to present this direction at, or around, the AGM/Chapter meeting on October 31 this year. To start this process, the Board investigated St John entities around the globe, and around Australia, focusing on which entities had evolved of late. One group, Hato Hone St John New Zealand, considered the benchmark St John in the world, presented to the Board via an online presentation. This presentation enabled the St John WA Board to witness what 'great looked like' and covered the Order's engagement process, clinical standards, governance improvements, and how it evolved its name, its purpose and values to inspire a future workforce. The NZ Chancellor's measure of success from this work is hearing the workforce team members owning, and repeating back, the new purpose statement.

Highlight messages from Hato Hone St John NZ's presentation included:

- St John NZ officially changed its name to Hato Hone St John NZ in 2022 to strongly recognise the First Nations people of New Zealand as the custodians of the land. The organisation has elevated its efforts to increase health equity for Māori people. Hato Hone is St John in Māori language.
- Hato Hone St John NZ has 4000 full time and 8000 volunteer team members (compared to WA's 2000:6000 ratio).
- In its new strategic direction, it shifted its focus from doing it all itself, to being a better partner, plus shifted away from a 'One St John NZ' model to a 'local solutions' model.
- It created sub-plans under its Strategic Plan, including environment, Māori, volunteering and digital/data plans. We heard that Hato Hone St John NZ is about to have its first electric ambulance.
- It is working out better ways to measure ambulance success rather than just 'response times' with clinical performance, and health impact on the community, being the new sought after measurements.
- Hato Hone's Board and CEO are using real-time data tools to track the organisation's workforce and stakeholder engagement scores.

Hato Hone St John NZ's impressive new strategic direction can be viewed here [Our Strategy – Manaaki Ora \(stjohn.org.nz\)](https://stjohn.org.nz) (Role 4)

2. St John WA Group Model – Corporate Stream

The Board was provided with a situational analysis or audit of the 'Corporate' side of St John WA by Group CEO Kevin Brown in his tenth week at the helm. In the new clear and transparent 'Group Model' the Board can now see with evidence, performance and accountability, risk and compliance of each stream. In this case, the Board was presented with those parts of the 'Corporate' streams which were functioning well compared to those parts which require increased resourcing during the year. In the presentation, each 'Corporate' service was rated according to current service standard and current customer satisfaction (with the customer being the internal Service Streams). Through this presentation, it was apparent that with sustained growth of the last 10 years (in terms of number of people St John WA serves), as well as the acquisition of Apollo Health, the 'Corporate' side of the business hadn't advanced at a commensurate rate regarding people, processes and technology. The Board heard that recruitment was high on the Group CEO's agenda. A secondary discussion took place on 'digital transformation' of which the Board wholeheartedly committed to support. (Role 2 and 3)



3. Board Governance Advancement – Stakeholder Engagement

In keeping with modern-day board performance and accountability, the Board dove deep into Stakeholder Engagement, Principle #8 of the Australian Institute of Company Directors Not-for-profit Governance Principles ([Principle #8: Stakeholder engagement \(aicd.com.au\)](https://aicd.com.au)). This Board session was a good starting point for achievement of this Principle, and further work will be completed to achieve it in full, during the year.

The Board heard that there are a diverse range of stakeholder groups ranging from Order members to private partners, Federal and State Governments, customers, patients and their families, and interest groups St John WA functions alongside. Walking through Principle #8 it was noted:

- Stakeholder matrix: the map indicating which stakeholders the organisation is in connection with across the full Group Model.
- Stakeholder engagement framework: how the new Group Model leaders, currently being placed, will be accountable for their stakeholder partners.
- Stakeholder to Board decision-making; how Board members use stakeholder feedback in making decisions for the organisation. This includes how stakeholders will be engaged during the 2023 strategic direction and strategic planning process.
- Stakeholder complaints and feedback process: that an advanced complaints and feedback process is in progress.
- Working with and protecting vulnerable people: this is an important matter that is under constant review. The most appropriate independent verification is currently being reviewed to then be implemented this year.

A special stakeholder conversation arose as to Order Engagement, with an Order Engagement Plan to be confirmed in April. (Role 2)

The Board noted progress of the St John WA Constitution. Order members will be invited to participate in this journey in the next few weeks.

Board changes

The Board was pleased to welcome new members Amanda Healy and Craig Heatley who joined their inaugural meeting, as casual vacancies from an externally advised search process.

- Amanda was selected to the Board to add value with her Human Resources, business building, and social enterprise wisdom, as well as adding focus to St John WA's reconciliation pathway. Amanda will also shine a spotlight on providing service to vulnerable people, and will join the new Board Health, Safety and Culture Committee.
- Craig is an experienced Non-executive Director, having Chaired national and state-based boards (including Clinical Boards) for many years. He's an assurance partner at PwC and brings a wealth of corporate and Board performance experience to St John WA's Board. He will Chair the Board's Audit and Investment (Finance) Committee.

The Board progressed the appointment for two Co-opted Independent Committee Members joining the newly established Board Clinical Performance Committee. These two clinical experts will support Board member Jeffrey Williams, as Chair on this Committee, to elevate the Board's oversight on clinical performance. The first Committee meeting will take place April 6th; the Board looks forward to being challenged by this new clinical focus. (Role 2 and 3)

Next meeting

The agenda for the next Board meeting, the next Quarterly Meeting, or 'red' meeting, on April 27th, enables the first oversight of the new 90-day planning cycle the Board requested (Role 1). The Board will complete a situational audit into the financial health of the organisation, as it 'Transitions' into the transparent Group Model. The agenda also includes a thorough sharing of the Board Committee findings. Interest will be placed on the Board's heightened stance on health, safety and culture, plus the Board's focus on clinical performance. (Role 2 and 3)



Closing remarks

The St John WA Group Board congratulates the organisation on its efforts towards serving the people of WA. The organisation currently provides the State a near 20 different services now clustered into three clear and transparent Service Streams. At this point in time, and tracking this history since inception¹, the Group Model Service Streams include:

Preventative Services

- First Aid Training (1892)
- Mental Health First Aid Training (2015)
- First Aid Products (1960's kits)
- Defibrillator Network (1995's)
- First Responder App (2016)
- St John Safe (2018)

Community Services

- General Practice (2016)
- Urgent Care (2017) – iterations since 2014
- Dental (2016)
- Urgent Dental (2018)
- Industry Medical Services (1990's)
- Event Health Services (The Brigade 1904)
- Community Transport (2015)

Emergency Services

- Metro Ambulance (1922)
- Country Ambulance (1922+)
- Patient Transport (1995 just after 'Day Ambulance')
- St John WA State Operations Centre (1960's)
- Specialist Operations (such as strokes 2012, helicopter 2009, major incident response from 1960's)
- First Responders (people from 1998)

The *Group Board Communique* is released after each Board meeting (six weeks apart). We value each other's collaboration as we – all 8000 of us - progress St John WA to a high performing and transparent organisation.

Regards, St John WA Board



Sally Carbon
she/her

Board Chair OAM, OLY, CSTj, FAICD

Board Attendance

March 2023:

- Present: Sally Carbon (Chair), Jeffrey Williams, Elisa Fear, Andrea LeGuier, Tony Ahern, Craig Heatley and Amanda Healy, via a virtual meeting.
- Apology: Mike Gurry

¹ Inception dates above are taken from a manuscript on the history of St John WA