



Adjunct Professor Anthony Schembri AM
Chief Executive
Northern Sydney Local Health District

Dear Anthony

Board Priorities for Chief Executive 2023/24

Congratulations on completing your first six months as NSLHD Chief Executive.

You have made an extremely impressive start in your role. In particular, I wish to call out:

- the comprehensive design and successful rollout of your 'first 120 days' plan
- the deepening of the relationships with our four university partners and the outstanding and exciting work being done with UTS
- the development and completion of the RNSH Master Plan
- the ongoing work on the Herbert Street Precinct
- the review of the governance framework for the NSLHD Senior Leadership Team
- the creation of the Youth Advisory Council
- your unwavering commitment to Planetary Health and Sustainability and to Diversity and Inclusion
- your high level physical and virtual visibility, both internally and externally
- the way you have maintained a strong sense of pride, cohesion and achievement across the district's facilities and services and have quickly and readily supported celebrations of success
- your strong interest in AI and its implications for the district
- the flawless commencement of the voluntary assisted dying service
- the successful completion of the 2023 program of accreditations
- how quickly you have come to understand the issues and challenges with the NBH PPP
- your values and commitment to culture, your personal energy, the decency and common sense that guide you, your deep concern about the wellbeing of our staff and patients and your shared belief that NSLHD is on a journey from 'good to great'

The Board continues to be extremely supportive of your appointment and is looking forward to working with you. The Board emphatically supports your ongoing efforts and energetic focus in the areas of quality and safety; research; engagement with philanthropy; partnerships including with universities, MRIs, industry partners and PHNs; planetary health and sustainability; and diversity and inclusion.

Clearly being aligned in our thinking and with the district's priorities is important. This letter is intended to assist and support you with your deliberations on your own priorities, the development and implementation of subsidiary plans that cascade from the 2022-2027 NSLHD Strategic Plan, the implementation of the 2023/24 Service Agreement and the preparation/updating of your 2023/24 Performance Plan.

In all that you do and to sustain an environment of trust, the Board wishes and expects to have transparency, real-time reporting and real-time disclosure of information and pending decisions; to be consulted on significant decisions and major risks; to have regular, open and meaningful engagement with senior clinicians and staff; and to operate in a no-surprises environment. The

Board is committed to continue to give emphasis to the 'non-negotiable' issues of safety and quality, consumer engagement, clinician engagement and performance to budget.

Whilst the Board is pleased with the ongoing '0' rating of the district and its operational performance, the Board remains concerned about the district's (and in particular RNSH's) financial performance, all the more so in the knowledge of ever-tightening NSW Treasury and Ministry budgets. One of your highest ongoing priorities must be to achieve sustainable financial performance for the district and in particular RNSH, including delivering on the efficiency improvement plans, whilst at the same time maintaining the district's strong operational performance, meeting the Ministry's requirements in relation to the ongoing impact of the pandemic and identifying, communicating and implementing post pandemic arrangements through lessons learnt and the 'new' normal.

As I noted in my letter to you dated 11 September 2023, we are in an era of financial constraint and performance review that few have experienced in the past. It means that inevitably there will need to be cutbacks, sacrifices and the de-prioritisation and disinvestment of services. It also means that we must achieve or come as close as possible to achieving the access KPIs for ED and we must in a timely manner close out overdue elective surgeries. To do these things, we must encourage clinical innovation and support tough and potentially radical decisions in relation to:

- high cost, low value services
- services provided to the community that duplicate offerings from the private and NGO sectors
- streamlining and improving procurement processes
- minimising fee waivers and bad debt write-offs
- proactive management of third-party relationships that are underperforming or not delivering value for money
- consolidating services within the district.

In some of these cases, you may need to do more than simply reduce expenditure. You may need to spend money to achieve long-term benefits: a case of 'spending a penny to save a pound'. The Board understands the logic of this and will support you where the basis for such expenditure is made out. This same logic applies to caring for and being seen to care for the NSLHD workforce and preserving its goodwill and morale; NSLHD will not succeed and will not thrive without a cohesive, dedicated and agile workforce, one that feels valued and respected, and this is a paramount requirement in tough economic times.

To assist you in considering your priorities and so that you better understand the Board's thinking, set out below are a number of major projects and issues currently before the Board, including a snapshot of the status of each and of relevant actions, actions pending and/or Board expectations.

1.	Northern Beaches Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue the successful delivery of all aspects of the project including improving interactions and communications and with a view to minimising future disputes b. Brief the Secretary as appropriate c. Identify and implement actions to ensure no financial detriment to the district
2.	Financial performance and sustainability of the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue in depth analysis of RNSH performance leading to implementation of short-term and long-term improvement strategies resulting in an improvement in its performance rating, supported by effective communications and necessary cultural changes, education and training and by identified innovations b. Continue with the development and implementation of cost control and revenue strategies c. Implement 'road map' and other strategic savings d. Vigorously drive the district's commitment to (including preparing for the achievement of the district's milestones for), and State-wide leadership of, Planetary Health and Sustainability e. Keep the Board, FRAP and BARC informed

3.	Enhance the work of Board and Executive committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Deliver major positive outcomes for the Board and for FRAP, HCQC, CC, RIT and JMO Wellbeing Board committees b. Deliver major positive outcomes for the Executive Research, Digital Health, Planetary Health & Sustainability and AI committees
4.	Third party relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enhance relationships with Sydney University, Macquarie University, UTS, ACU, Sydney Health Partners, SNPN, HammondCare, Royal Rehab, Ramsay, Healthscope and Dexus b. Enhance relationships with neighbouring private hospitals, residential aged care facilities and community housing providers
5.	Internal engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop and implement policies for improved clinician engagement b. Identify, develop and implement strategies for short term and long term improvements to the People Matter survey results, including retaining staff and maintaining and improving staff morale and commitment
6.	Major capital works and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participate in the long-term planning for the Herbert Street Precinct b. Successfully deliver the redevelopment of Ryde Hospital and continue to identify and promote options to address the absence of mental health facilities c. Prepare options for the Macquarie Hospital campus d. Prepare options for the district's community health facilities which whilst functional, are below standard including Top Ryde e. Prepare options for a clinical trials centre f. Ensure consumer input forms a central platform in the planning and delivery of these capital works
7.	CORE values and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enhance female participation in senior clinical leadership roles b. Develop a program for empathy training c. Develop a program for enhanced patient feedback d. Demonstrate resolve and consistency in dealing with those who breach CORE Values, including through the Zero Tolerance Policy and Speaking Up for Safety program e. Support the work of the Champions of Change Coalition Health Group and the work of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Council f. Educate staff in awareness of unconscious bias g. Promote meaningful flexible working arrangements h. In conjunction with the Ministry, develop a program of training for staff to deal better with inappropriate behaviours by patients/carers i. Enhance Speaking Up for Safety and Safe Behaviours Together, including through Schwartz Rounds j. Support the work of protecting the physical safety of staff k. Develop and promote pathways for ATSI and CALD staff into senior and executive roles l. Revitalise the district's Medical Staff Councils and the Medical Staff Executive Council
8.	RNSH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement the St Leonards Health, Research and Education Precinct Plan b. Implement the foundations for the RNSH Master Plan c. Identify options (with HI and Dexus) for rehabilitation of the Brown Building site and improving the ambience and utilisation of existing open spaces d. Lead and constructively engage with the recently formed precinct group including Ramsay and Dexus e. Identify options (with Dexus) to improve the retail areas and their offerings f. Identify options (with Sydney University) to improve the utility and ambience of the Kolling Building ground floor and courtyard spaces g. Ensure consumer input forms a central platform in the planning and delivery of any major developments on the RNSH campus
9.	Kolling Institute & Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support the Director of Research and the COO b. Implement the NSLHD Research Plan c. Participate in the implementation of the strategic plan for the Kolling Institute d. Enhance the district's role and participation in Sydney Health Partners e. Firm up the proposal for the creation of a Functional Wellbeing Centre of Excellence

10.	NORTH Foundation	a. Support the CEO b. Participate in the implementation of the strategic plan
11.	Improved data use and presentation	a. Enhance the district's website and other digital and social media platforms b. Identify opportunities to better capture and utilise data c. Develop and grow the district's capabilities in data analytics in response to both the needs of the Ministry and for the district's own planning purposes
12.	CE Initiatives	a. Enhance reputation and profile of the district* b. Enhance relationships with clinicians* c. Enhance patient experience and staff wellbeing* d. Strengthen research focus and outcomes* e. Planetary Health and Sustainability including Circular Economy initiatives* f. Identify initiatives referable to your own vision and goals
13.	Reporting	a. Report on progress against the Strategic Plan and the 'CE Initiatives' b. Develop plans and other outputs required by the Strategic Plan and the Service Agreement c. Report on a six monthly basis on progress against these Board Priorities d. Report to the Board on risks and risk trends
14.	Ministry Initiatives	a. Work with the Ministry and the Pillars on Future Health strategies and initiatives b. Work with the Ministry on post pandemic learnings and initiatives including workforce planning, virtual care and resumption of 'new normal' health services c. Support rural and regional health colleagues
15.	Other	a. Prepare for the new regime of ad hoc accreditations b. Develop succession plans including for DMS roles c. Develop and implement a plan for enhanced alumni engagement d. Develop and implement strategies for celebrating the district's successes e. Develop a plan for enhancing, streamlining and rationalising the district's community health facilities f. Develop a plan to further enhance the opportunities for RNSH in the Statewide burns service g. Identify and implement opportunities for innovation in service delivery, adoption of new technologies and culture h. Implement the district's Digital Health Strategy i. Work with eHealth in proactively addressing cyber risk j. Work with your Executive Leadership Team on further developing their own skills including through AICD courses k. Respond to the insights and themes in the 2023 People Matter survey results l. Recruit to the role of Executive Director, Research and Academic Partnerships m. Identify opportunities for strategic recruitment of clinical leaders that would fill gaps n. Continue to develop relationships with local politicians at all three levels of government o. Advocate for pilot site roles for Ministry initiatives eg SDPR

* = predecessor's initiative, highly regarded by the Board but open to review and modification by you

In a number of these identified areas, your work will include continuing the activities and efforts already underway.

The Board recognises this is a large slate of work, but I am sure it is no less than you would expect for a district as large, complex and high performing as ours. It needs to be approached methodically and with an understanding of realistic timeframes. Importantly, and to be clear, each of the above major projects and issues will require your input and consideration into how the objectives are delivered. Also, the Board appreciates there are likely to be other areas, both existing and new, that require focus and investment.

The Board is looking forward to you putting put your individual leadership stamp on this program of work.

The Board recognises the importance for you of setting aside time for your own personal needs and wellbeing, developing a program of professional development and building networks to broaden your own experience and perspectives and to enhance the standing and performance of the district. The Board and I are always available to support you in any way we can in this regard and you must not hesitate to seek our support as and when required.

The Board wishes you well now that you are established in your role. The role brings great responsibility but equally, and even with the inevitable vicissitudes, can deliver significant personal development and professional fulfilment. The role also offers enormous opportunity to make a difference to our community and to the lives of our staff.

I wish you every success and look forward to continuing our enjoyable and successful working relationship.

I am available to discuss this letter with you.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Danos AM FTSE
Chair
Northern Sydney Local Health District
XXX January 2024

cc: Susan Pearce AM