



Metro North Health

File number: J24/11946

Dr Nick Yim
President
AMA Queensland

Dr Brett Dale
Chief Executive Officer
AMA Queensland

Dear Dr Yim and Dr Dale

Thank you for your correspondence dated 12 September 2024 after our meeting on 12 August 2024 in regard to concerns raised by senior medical officers in regard to interference in clinical decision making and patient safety risks.

I acknowledge and appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of your members as they raise concerns about their work at Caboolture Hospital.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for the commitment and hard work of all clinicians at Caboolture Hospital over a very long time. The community of Caboolture and the Moreton Bay Region has experienced rapid and sustained growth over the past 15 years. The healthcare needs of the community are complex, and the community expects and deserves an integrated healthcare system which is responsive to their needs.

As a public health statutory agency, Metro North Health delivers services which are subject to regulatory scrutiny and public accountability.

The Metro North Board, the Chief Executive and the Executive have specific accountabilities under the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* in regard to the quality and performance of our services including to take action when performance does not meet the expected standard. All hospitals and services in Metro North Health are assessed and have achieved accreditation against the National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards, which considers that effective clinical governance ensures that health service leaders “lean in” as necessary to support clinicians and services in the provision of safe, high quality care to our patients. Further, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care support a team approach to resolving complex clinical concerns, including patient flow and triaging systems, when they say ‘Leaders at all levels in the organisation establish and use clinical governance systems to improve the safety and quality of health care for patients’.

Leaning in and supporting a team approach are principles and ways of working which I use and which I encourage the Metro North executive team to use and embed across all teams in our health service. These principles support us on a daily basis to deliver high quality healthcare which ensures patient safety, and patient and community confidence in our services.

You will be aware that Caboolture Hospital has attracted significant community and media attention recently. This attention is being driven, in part, by underlying concerns that the local community has expressed in regard to their care and their experiences when presenting to Caboolture Hospital. Across the past 12 to 18 months, I have met with many of those consumers personally, and heard their stories. I, and members of my executive leadership

team, have also met periodically with Caboolture Hospital Leadership and emergency department staff.

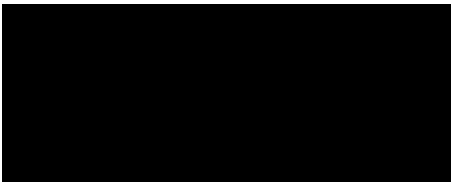
Several recent external reviews refer to operational and cultural issues which have impacted on patient care and the confidence of the community. It is important that we work collaboratively to continue to address these issues to build community confidence in public health services at Caboolture.

Attracting doctors to Caboolture has been an ongoing priority for the past four years. A range of strategies and incentives have been put in place including the junior medical officer (ED registrars) incentive payment, approval for over recruitment of senior house officers (SHO) and registrars, and the continued use of locums including approval to pay above the Queensland Health base daily rate. There are currently 13.1 FTE of registers / principal house officers (compared to demand of 22.5); 23.2 FTE of SHO (demand of 21) and 10 FTE of rotational resident medical officer (RMO) rostered to the ED. Further International Medical Graduate SHO are due to commence on the emergency department roster in the near future.

I look forward to an in good faith meeting with you and your members to further understand and respond directly to concerns and important matters raised in your correspondence on 14 October 2024 and how we can continue to work closely on delivering high quality healthcare for the community of Caboolture. My office has also written to Senior Medical Officers today to invite them to meet on 14 October to discuss the concerns raised and work together to resolve these concerns.

I am available of course at any time to discuss these issues and any other matter of importance to the AMAQ and Metro North Health.

Yours sincerely



Adjunct Professor Jackie Hanson
Chief Executive
Metro North Health

03 / 10 / 2024