



Professor Peter Matthews

Chair, Portland District Health

As we start this new chapter at PDH, our first step is to find a new CEO to lead the amazing team here. We have commenced our search and will fill this position in the next six months.

Our next CEO will be critically important in consolidating reforms at PDH, implementing the Hillis Report recommendations over the years ahead. Finding the best fit for PDH will take time, but we'll work methodically to ensure we get it right.

While this process is underway, Ms Karena Prevett will continue acting in the position. Karena is doing a remarkable job and I thank her for her continued strong leadership at PDH.

It's also wonderful to see Ms Fiona Faulks introduced in this edition, a specialist rural maternity consultant helping us design a new maternity service model customised for Portland. This is exciting news.

The board has penned a joint article in this newsletter, outlining how we intend to address PDH's current unsustainable model. While this is welcome long-term news, PDH will continue to face short term challenges due to our current model and workforce shortages.

I thank and acknowledge the work of our staff, who continue to do remarkable work to keep our community safe.



Karena Prevett

Acting CEO, Portland District Health

I am constantly reminded what a wonderful place PDH is every day. Our staff are doing an incredible job, going above and beyond for our patients, clients and residents.

I personally thank all staff for their hard work in covering our urgent care unit at night a few weeks ago. The absence of a junior doctor for the overnight shift was a real concern, but our staff worked amazingly to maintain high quality and professional urgent care.

I know the Portland community is as proud of the PDH team as I am and I will continue to support their work every day.

Hillis Actions

Three things that will happen this month

1. We will be consulting the community, our staff and senior clinical staff and partners, to investigate a new customised maternity model that best supports sustainable care and caters for the wider Portland community. To register your interest to join the community advisory group please scan the QR code to the right.
2. At its meeting on 5 May 2022, the board appointed a Working Party to oversee the recruitment of a new CEO. This appointment will be critically important in consolidating reforms underway at PDH.
3. We will meet with South West Healthcare to discuss sharing workforces to ensure seamless delivery of services across regional Victoria. This will feed into our broader full-service review and community consultation process around the implementation of the Hillis Report recommendations.



We look forward to updating you on further progress each month, as we implement the Hillis Report.

Your Questions Answered

We know you will have questions about PDH and our future. Please submit your questions via email to pdh@swarh.vic.gov.au and we will look to address these in future community newsletters.



PORTLAND
DISTRICT HEALTH

PORTLAND DISTRICT HEALTH (PDH) COMMUNITY UPDATE

ISSUE TWO: MAY 2022

Welcome to the May PDH community newsletter; a monthly update about how we are working to support safe, quality healthcare in the Portland District.

In this month's newsletter we celebrate our staff and the remarkable work they do. We also outline our continued progress in implementing *Towards a sustainable medical healthcare workforce in Portland* (Hillis Report) recommendations.

Every issue will show three steps we have taken to respond to the report and to improve care at PDH (See 'Hillis Actions' on back page).

BIRTHING SERVICES UPDATE

Portland District Health (PDH) regrets to inform the community that we have extended the temporary pause on birthing suite services up until 1 September, due to the continued national shortage of midwives.

We sincerely apologise to the 10 women affected, their families and our community for the continued disruption and uncertainty.

PDH is determined to bring back birthing services as soon as it's safe to do so and will continually review the situation to return it within the shortest timeframe possible.

The current arrangements will continue, with PDH offering antenatal clinics, birthing classes and domiciliary care. Midwifery staff will also still be available on call for any urgent or emergency births.

PDH is exploring more safe, effective, alternative birthing service models for the Portland community. In line with the Hillis Review, we have appointed Ms Fiona Faulks, a specialist rural maternity consultant, to develop and help implement a new model customised to best meet the needs of Portland and the wider region.

While our recruitment for midwives continues, the appointment of Ms Faulks to explore a new, tailored maternity service model is another positive step forward for PDH.

We are confident we are on the right path to resuming birthing services, for the long term.

Managing a team to success

Staff Profile



Nikki Edwards

Allied Health Manager (AHM), Portland District Health

Nikki Edwards is a qualified podiatrist and has recently stepped into the new role of Allied Health Manager. Allied health professionals provide specialised expertise in preventing, diagnosing and treating a range of conditions and illnesses. Her career at PDH started almost 12 years ago after she moved to Portland and fell in love with the people and the community.

"I have really enjoyed working at PDH alongside a fantastic team, and obviously the community is pretty special," Nikki said.

"I came to Portland to be closer to family over 16 years ago and fell in love with the place."

In late 2021, Nikki stepped into the newly established Allied Health Manager (AHM) position and now leads a team of 21.

"As the Allied Health Manager I manage eight different teams and am responsible for supporting all allied health staff to provide high quality and efficient patient care.

"I was looking for a new challenge – having so many years' experience in the health profession I was ready for that next step in the journey to be able to further my skills and work with others in the team and help build their skills as well.

"They're an amazing team to work with and a group of highly skilled professionals. To be able to manage and lead the team was one of the attractors to this new position. I am excited to see what the future holds."

PDH Governance

Board Member Profile



Professor Michael Bailey

Board member Professor Michael Bailey has called Portland home, ever since moving from Warracknabeal to Portland when he was six months old.

Michael grew up here before moving to Melbourne for university. After 20 years of city life, Michael eventually grew sick of the crowds and hustle of Melbourne and moved back home. Upon returning to Portland, Michael applied to join the PDH Board given his skillset and extensive health experience. He is a Professor of Critical Care Statistics and has worked in hospital data for more than 25 years.

"I work for health researchers all over Australia and analyse their data to help them come up with the most appropriate solutions to current issues," he said.

"I've been on the Board now for five years and the current Board is the most skilled we've ever had – they are brilliant.

"Our purpose is to provide oversight to the hospital. I find doing some research into Governance helps to better understand what the Board actually does.

"Being a part of PDH is an extremely rewarding experience and I love witnessing the passion and commitment of our staff, and in particular the nurses.

"My opinion is biased because my mother was a nurse at PDH for 30 years, so I have a strong affinity for nurses and the amazing work they do.

"Outside of work I love to walk on the Great South West walk and play golf. My main claim to fame is being able to predict the Brownlow medal more accurately than most.

"I love Portland, I love the community and I love PDH. It's an amazing place filled with passionate people.

"I'm excited for what's ahead."

Healthcare for the future

Hillis Report Update from PDH Board

As you are well aware, PDH is currently facing workforce challenges due to the pressures of the global pandemic. These staffing shortages – which is a worldwide problem – has put pressure on PDH's outdated model for delivering care.

According to the Hillis Report findings, the model for how we deliver care must change. This is something that has full commitment from the PDH Board and Executive. These changes cannot be actioned overnight and will take many years to implement.

Just as we are doing with our new maternity model with the help of Ms Faulks, we will undertake a full-service review to understand our strengths and weaknesses and our place in the region. We'll closely follow the Hillis report recommendations and develop a plan to implement its findings – together with neighbouring health services and partners.

To ensure we are best meeting our community's needs, we will be embarking on a comprehensive, three month consultation process commencing in July. We will present our findings and feedback from the community as soon as possible, along with a series of clear recommendations for action over the long term.

We thank the community for their patience as we work to improve the way we deliver care.

PDH's issues will continue until we find sustainable and robust models of care.

Stay tuned for more information on how you can get involved with contributing to a new direction for PDH. We look forward to working with you to find the best outcomes for our community, while supporting PDH's long-term future in our region.

Sincerely,

Professor Peter Matthews
Chair, PDH Board