

New Bundaberg Hospital project

Community Reference Group Terms of Reference

Background

With a growing and ageing population, the new Bundaberg Hospital (NBH) is a vital investment to ensure people living in the region have easier access to health services. By increasing bed capacity and improving access to care, the hospital will help meet the community's needs for generations to come.

The Queensland Government's Hospital Rescue Plan will deliver:

- more than 410 total beds and bed alternatives
- at least 139 new overnight beds
- level 5 services including emergency and maternity
- a new design that transfers all services and beds to the new site
- better planning and consultation to meet clinical needs
- mitigation of flooding risk by moving to the new site
- a multi-storey car park.

Construction will be delivered in stages, with Stage 1 prioritising acute services to boost capacity early and ensure the community begins experiencing the benefits as soon as possible.

Stage 1 is planned for completion in 2031 and will include more than 200 beds and bed alternatives, an expanded emergency department and more operating theatres. There will be a temporary period of operating across two campuses while remaining stages are built. Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (WBHHS) will work closely with relevant teams to ensure care continues seamlessly throughout.

Purpose and role

The NBH Community Reference Group provides a structured forum for consultation and information-sharing between Queensland Health, the NBH project team and the local community. The group ensures that local perspectives, lived experience and community priorities inform the project as it progresses from design into major construction. Its involvement also helps ensure emerging issues and community concerns are identified early and addressed in a timely and effective way.

The NBH Community Reference Group's role relates specifically to the NBH project. Broader precinct planning and development activities are managed through separate processes and are outside the scope of this group.

Role of the Chair

The Chair is responsible for:

- providing leadership to the NBH Community Reference Group
- nominating a delegate to chair meetings when unavailable
- ensuring the group effectively fulfils its purpose
- ensuring meetings are well planned, effectively facilitated and meaningful for members, with support from WBHHS and the project team
- supporting constructive discussion and respectful engagement among members.

Role of the NBH Community Reference Group

The NBH Community Reference Group is responsible for:

- providing local knowledge, insights, lived experience and advice to the project team
- fostering an environment where community engagement is valued, inclusive and meaningful
- supporting clear, two-way communication between the community and the project
- identifying and promoting opportunities to raise awareness and understanding of the project
- encouraging and supporting local residents to participate in engagement activities
- sharing information on local views, priorities and issues, and assisting where possible in resolving community concerns
- providing feedback on matters such as patient and family experience, outdoor and family spaces, wayfinding, arts in health initiatives and emerging community issues.

The NBH Community Reference Group is not a decision-making body. However, it will provide feedback and suggestions on a range of topics to the project team for consideration.

Definitions

For clarity within this document:

- **Project team** refers to Queensland Health and the NBH project staff.
- **Community member** refers to any appointed member of the NBH Community Reference Group who is not a Queensland Health employee.
- **Secretariat support** refers to administrative support provided by Queensland Health, including meeting coordination, minute-taking and distribution of materials.
- **Conflict of interest** refers to any situation where a member's personal, professional or financial interests could influence, or be perceived to influence, their contributions.

Membership

Foundation members:

- Chair, WBHHS Principal Communications and Engagement Officer, Capital Projects
- WBHHS Chief Executive / WBHHS Executive Director, Capital Projects
- Health Infrastructure Queensland (HIQ) Project Director / HIQ Assistant Project Director
- HIQ Infrastructure Communications and Engagement Advisor
- WBHHS Executive Director, Bundaberg and Rurals
- Contractor representative
- *[additional members to be added following expression of interest process].*

Additional members appointed through the Expression of Interest process will be added to this Terms of Reference.

Membership selection

Membership is being sought via an open Expression of Interest process, commencing on 15 October 2026 and closing on 29 October 2026. Applications will be assessed by a panel comprising HIQ and HHS representatives.

Appointments will be based on criteria including (but not limited to):

- representation from local advocates or individuals who represent broader groups accessing health services at the NBH
- representation from individuals who are interested in how the new hospital connects with and contributes to the surrounding community, and/or who may be affected by hospital construction
- a broad cross-section of the community, reflecting diversity in age, interests, culture and needs
- ability to share information through wider community networks.

Appointments will be made by the WBHHS Chief Executive, in consultation with HIQ and HHS project team representatives.

Up to 10 members will be selected. The project team reserves the right to limit membership numbers to ensure balanced representation of community interests and viewpoints.

Membership is voluntary, and no payment will be provided for participation or associated activities.

Tenure, vacancies and removal

Members are appointed for an initial 12-month term, aligned with the group's establishment period.

Members may be reappointed if the group is extended.

Members may resign at any time by notifying the Chair in writing.

If a vacancy arises, unsuccessful applicants from previous rounds may be invited to join without reopening nominations.

A member may be removed if they:

- fail to attend at least 75% of meetings
- breach confidentiality
- behave in a manner inconsistent with the NBH Community Reference Group Code of Conduct
- have a conflict of interest that cannot be managed.

Elected representatives from local councils, state or federal government are not eligible for membership but will continue to receive project updates.

The function and membership of the NBH Community Reference Group will be reviewed in six months from commencement.

Member responsibilities

Members are expected to:

- gather views, opinions and issues from peers outside the group as needed
- objectively present community perspectives, regardless of personal views
- share non-confidential outcomes of meetings with their networks
- promote the work and purpose of the NBH Community Reference Group

- treat all members with respect and uphold principles of integrity
- meet the responsibilities outlined in the Code of Conduct and sign a Code of Conduct covering confidentiality, conflicts of interest and media protocols
- actively engage with local people and advocacy groups who may access health services or be affected by construction
- agree not to use electronic recording devices, cameras or video equipment during meetings without the Chair's consent.

Meeting procedures

Meeting frequency

The NBH Community Reference Group meet quarterly for an initial 12-month period, with the possibility of extension. Meetings will run for up to two hours.

Members commit to attending at least 75% of meetings during the 12-month term.

Meeting location

Meetings will be held at the new Bundaberg Hospital project site, unless otherwise advised. Hybrid or online options may be offered where appropriate.

Agenda and papers

Agendas will be prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair.

Members may request agenda items by contacting the Secretariat.

Meeting papers will be distributed at least five days prior to each meeting.

Minutes will be circulated within 10 working days and confirmed at the following meeting.

Dissolution

If Queensland Health or the group determines that the NBH Community Reference Group is no longer required, Queensland Health may dissolve the group.

Role of Queensland Health

Queensland Health will:

- provide support and advice to members to maximise their involvement
- provide secretariat support
- arrange consultants to explain technical information as required
- invite representatives from relevant agencies or individuals to attend meetings as guests
- follow up requests for additional information or issue reviews, while retaining the right to decline requests that are not feasible
- provide feedback on how the group's advice has been considered.

Communication protocols

Members may raise issues between meetings by contacting the Chair or Secretariat.

Queensland Health will provide regular updates to the group and ensure information flows back to the broader community through appropriate channels.

Members are encouraged to share non-confidential project information through their networks.

Resolving problems and disputes

Consensus is not required on all matters. Any disagreements will be managed respectfully, with a focus on constructive and timely resolution rather than blame. Issues should be addressed early to prevent escalation.

Confidentiality, privacy and conflicts of interest

CRG members must maintain the confidentiality of meeting discussions and declare any conflicts of interest.

If a member believes they have a conflict of interest in relation to a particular issue or item of discussion, they should immediately make this known to the Chair. This may result in exclusion from discussions on that issue and from receiving any further material relating to it.

As commercial matters may be presented to the CRG, the Chair and members are required to comply with the project's agreed conflict of interest and confidentiality requirements.

Members agree not to make statements relating to the views or involvement of others in the CRG, related to the project, or pertaining to any confidential or privacy-related information. Members agree not to publicly name members of the project team or identify them in any way.

Personal information will be handled in accordance with Queensland privacy legislation.

Media enquiries

Members of the CRG are not authorised to speak on behalf of the group to media or external organisations unless they have explicit permission from the Chair and Queensland Health.

Individual members may share personal reflections about the project on their own social media channels, provided they do so from a personal perspective only.

All media enquiries regarding the NBH project must be directed to hqnews@health.qld.gov.au, who will manage responses and approvals directly with the relevant teams within Queensland Health.

Endorsement

The above Terms of Reference were adopted by the NBH Community Reference Group through formal resolution.

On *[to be updated following the inaugural meeting]*, Community Reference Group members approved the Terms of Reference document in its entirety and adopted it for use as the formal Terms of Reference.

This Community Reference Group was formally approved by *[name]*, *[title]* on *[TBC]*.

Signature:

Name: