



Safety and Quality Newsletter

WINTER 2026



A message from the Executive Director, Patient Safety and Clinical Quality (PSCQ)

This Winter edition of the PSCQ Newsletter provides an overview of key initiatives, recent developments and opportunities for collaboration. At the heart of our work is a commitment to improving patient experiences and outcomes. The initiatives highlighted in this edition reflect our ongoing focus on supporting informed consumer choice, delivering high-quality care and strengthening the resilience of our health system.

A significant milestone in empowering consumers was the passage of the *Assisted Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Act 2025* through the Parliament of Western Australia in December 2025. Scheduled for implementation from mid-2027, the legislation reflects substantial medical, scientific and societal changes since the original laws were enacted in 1991 and 2008. We have also recently updated the *Consent to Treatment* and *Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration* policies, helping to strengthen consumer involvement in care and provide greater clarity for clinicians.

Our commitment to improving the quality of care is demonstrated through initiatives such as the *Australian and New Zealand Emergency Laparotomy Audit*, delivered in partnership with the Royal College of Surgeons. What began in Western Australia as a collaboration between emergency physicians, anaesthetists, geriatricians, surgeons and PSCQ has grown into a national program, and informed the development of a Clinical Care Standard. It is a powerful example of how collaboration can drive meaningful improvements in patient care.

Building resilience across the health system also remains a key priority. Recent work has included the release of resources to strengthen safety and quality capability, initiatives to enhance Supply Chain Resilience, and the development of an Essential Medicines List to support continuity of care.

This edition also includes information about the proposed revisions to the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards, which are currently under consultation and intended to take effect in 2030. We encourage you to review the information provided and share your feedback.

We are pleased to share these updates and resources with you, and welcome opportunities to work together to improve the safety, quality and sustainability of healthcare in Western Australia. If you would like to collaborate with us, or learn more about our work, please contact us at PSCQ.CED@health.wa.gov.au.

Dr Audrey Koay
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Australia and New Zealand Emergency Laparotomy Audit

Having commenced in 2018, ANZELA-QI is a Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) led clinical quality registry that helps hospitals improve outcomes for patients undergoing emergency abdominal surgery. Through systematic data collection, benchmarking and quality improvement activities, the audit monitors key indicators of care including preoperative risk assessment, timely access to surgery, senior clinician involvement and appropriate critical care admission. Data is collected through a purpose-built REDCap platform which supports high-quality data capture and quality improvement at hospital, state, and national levels.

Western Australia (WA) has played an active role in supporting ANZELA-QI participation and quality improvement initiatives. As of July 2026, Albany, Bunbury, Sir Charles Gairdner, Fiona Stanley, Royal Perth, and St John of God Midland hospitals have elected to contribute data to the ANZELA-QI, with full ethical approval. Derby, Broome, Kununurra, Rockingham and Armadale hospitals are in the process of seeking approvals to participate.

A key strength of WA's approach has been the collaboration between the Healthcare Quality Intelligence Unit (HQIU), participating hospitals, and the RACS ANZELA-QI team. Patient Safety and Clinical Quality (PSCQ) hosts three meetings a year with the ANZELA-QI team, WA's participating sites, and other interested WA sites. These meetings are an opportunity for multidisciplinary collaboration and information sharing, to bring forward best practices and identify common challenges, encourage participation in the registry, and to support sites in their goal to continually improve care and outcomes for patients undergoing emergency laparotomies.

HQIU has worked in partnership with RACS over the last two years to integrate quality improvement methodology into registry reporting, resulting in the incorporation of the 'Making Data Count' approach to support comprehensive reporting by incorporating additional data elements and automated completion monitoring.

Building on these reporting and quality improvement enhancements, RACS released a public ANZELA-QI dashboard on their website on 1 July 2026. The dashboard reports against the [Emergency Laparotomy Clinical Care Standards](#) indicators on timeliness of decision making and surgery, data completeness, patient outcomes and demographic characteristics. Updated weekly, it provides participating hospitals, health services and jurisdictions with timely access to performance data and quality improvement insights. This approach supports transparency and openness of clinical quality registry data, with hospitals able to be identified in the public data release.

Overall, ANZELA-QI provides an evidence-based framework and contemporary reporting tools for improving the quality, safety and consistency of emergency laparotomy care across Australia and New Zealand. ANZELA-QI also demonstrates the value of effective collaboration between clinicians, hospitals, jurisdictional health departments, and professional colleges in driving quality improvements.

To learn more about ANZELA-QI, including the dashboard, visit: [ANZ Emergency Laparotomy Audit – Quality Improvement | RACS](#).



Improving Safety and Quality in Healthcare

Progress on the Safety and Quality Strategic Plan 2024-2026

Improving Safety and Quality in Health Care: A Strategic Plan for Action in WA 2024–2026

provides a three-year blueprint for strengthening safety and quality across WA Health, with a focus on person-centred care, cultural safety and equity for patients, carers and families.

Implementation of the Plan has involved close collaboration with Health Service Providers (HSPs) and system partners to support practical, sustainable change. Over the past year, this work has progressed a range of initiatives that are helping to improve visibility of improvement activity, strengthen capability, support consumer partnership and build a more coordinated approach to safety and quality across the system.

Key achievements include the development of a prioritisation process for statewide clinical improvement initiatives, launch of the [WA Improvement Exchange](#), delivery of the first annual Statewide Healthcare Improvement Summit, and the progression of a standardised approach to safety culture measurement across WA Health.

The Plan has also supported the delivery of the [Quality Improvement Hub](#), establishment of the Clinical Analytics Group, and continued work to strengthen consumer engagement, including early co-design of a Consumer Leadership Capability Framework in partnership with the Health Consumers' Council and Carers WA.

The team is also planning for the Festival of Innovation and Improvement (see page 8).

As the Strategic Plan progresses towards its next iteration (2027-2029), this work will continue to build on system-wide collaboration and shared learning and innovation to support safer, higher-quality, person-centred care for Western Australians.

What Matters to You?

This initiative supports clinicians and services to have meaningful health care conversations with patients, carers and families about what is important to them. Statewide minimum standards and implementation resources have been developed to support a consistent approach across WA Health



to help embed person-centred conversations into everyday clinical practice.

To support local promotion and implementation, a suite of [staff and consumer-facing resources](#) are available to WA Health employees, including posters, consumer explainers, digital screen content and social media tiles. Resources include tailored branding for key consumer groups, and poster and consumer explainers translated in Arabic, Dari, Chinese, Vietnamese and Farsi to support inclusive and accessible communication across diverse communities.

By asking “What matters to you?”, healthcare teams can better understand individual needs, values and preferences, supporting safer and more respectful and responsive care.

The Improvement Exchange

The [WA Improvement Exchange](#) (link available only for WA Health staff) has been launched to provide a central site to showcase safety and quality improvement projects across the WA Health public system.

The platform is designed to improve visibility of improvement activity, reduce duplication and support shared learning by helping teams find, share and build on work already happening across the system.

By connecting people, projects and ideas, the WA Improvement Exchange supports collaboration and strengthens a system-wide approach to healthcare improvement.



Share an improvement project

Healthcare Safety and Quality Capabilities Framework

Conclusion of the Safety and Quality Workforce Capability (SQWoC) Program

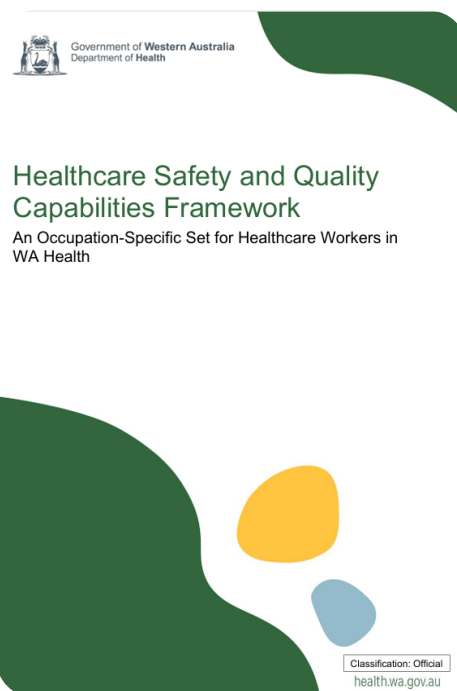
A [final evaluation](#) (link only available for WA Health employees) of the SQWoC Program has been completed, drawing on system-wide data, stakeholder engagement and implementation experiences across WA Health. The evaluation outlines key achievements, lessons learned, and system-level considerations to support ongoing capability development.

Over the past 3 years, the program has worked in partnership with PSCQ teams and Health Service Providers (HSPs) to strengthen capability in patient safety and quality improvement. A key outcome has been the development of the [Healthcare Safety and Quality Capability Framework](#) and supporting resources to enable a more consistent, system-wide approach to workforce capability.

Key resources available for ongoing use include:

- [Healthcare Safety and Quality Capability Framework](#)
- [SQWoC SharePoint](#) including implementation guidance, Organisational Strategy for Improvement Matrix (OSIM), and education materials – link only available to WA Health employees.
- [Take 5 Educational resource for healthcare safety and quality capabilities](#)
- [Safety and Quality Essentials Pathway](#) type the latter into the Catalogue (4 E-Learning courses) – link only available to WA Health employees.

Use of the key resources and evaluation findings will help strengthen workforce development with a continuous focus on improvement.



Supply Chain Resilience

The [Supply Chain Resilience Governance Framework](#) has been developed by the Medicines and Technology Unit (MTU) to support HSPs in strengthening their preparedness, decision-making and response to supply disruptions. The [Take 5: Supply Chain Resilience Governance Framework PowerPoint](#) provides a concise overview of the governance approach, supporting guides and practical tools which are available for all HSP employees via HealthPoint under the Initiatives tab.

The MTU have also collated an Essential Medicines List following consultation and guidance from the Chief Pharmacist Forum. Criteria for medicines to be considered include medicines for treatment of acute critical care patients with a high-volume turnover of stock purchase.

HSPs are encouraged to use these resources to assess their current resilience capability, identify opportunities for improvement; and build local capacity to effectively manage supply risks and disruptions, and take the next step in strengthening their organisation's supply chain resilience.



Introductory document outlining five modular components below



1. Roles and Responsibilities for managing Supply Chain Disruption



2. Risk Management and Escalation Criteria



3. Triaging Supply Disruptions: Managing and Determining the Response



4. Formation of a Short Life Working Groups (SLWG)



5. Coordinated Communication during Supply Disruption

From Standards to Practice

With the consultation on the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards (third edition) open until 25 September, it is timely to reflect on how Clinical Care Standards become embedded into clinical practice, and the feedback you can provide to help shape improved service delivery.

The NSQHS Standards establish the baseline requirements for safety and quality in Australian health services and form the foundation of accreditation under the Australian Health Service Safety and Quality Accreditation (AHSSQA) Scheme. They support clinical governance and provide assurance that systems are in place to deliver safe, high-quality care.

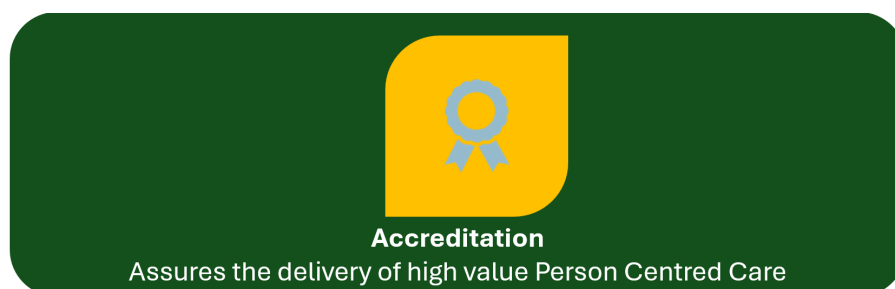
Clinical Care Standards (CCS) complement the NSQHS Standards by outlining evidence-based care for specific clinical conditions and procedures. They help reduce unwarranted variation in care and include quality statements and indicators to support performance monitoring and quality improvement.

Advisories provide formal guidance on the interpretation, implementation and assessment of national standards. They support consistent application of accreditation requirements and, in some cases, contain mandatory requirements that are monitored through accreditation and regulatory processes.

Accreditation Assessment Outcome Data provides a consistent measure of performance against the NSQHS Standards, supports evidence-based regulatory oversight, identifies opportunities for improvement, and enables benchmarking across services and sectors.

In Western Australia, accreditation outcomes are reviewed by the Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit (LARU) as part of its regulatory assurance role. Collectively, these elements provide an integrated framework for assuring safety, quality, accountability and continuous improvement across Australian health services.

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National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards

Establish the baseline requirements for safety and quality in health services.



Clinical Care Standards

Describe evidence-based care and reduce unwarranted variation in practice.



Advisories

Provide formal guidance on the interpretation, implementation and assessment of national standards.



Data Driven Insights

Assessment outcome data supports regulatory oversight, risk-based decision-making and system-wide quality improvement.

Consultation on the NSQHS Standards (third edition)



The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) has released the initial draft of the [National Safety and Quality Health Service \(NSQHS\) Standards \(Third Edition\) for public consultation](#) taking place from 20 July to 25 September 2026.

Participation in the consultation process includes providing a written submission, completing a survey, or attending a forum. Registration to participate is via the Commission's website: [Third edition engagement hub | Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care](#).

The Commission is conducting a National forum for regional health professionals, including WA Country Health Service, on 12 August 2026; and a Jurisdictional forum on 13 August for WA metropolitan health professionals. [Click this link to register for the forums](#).

To assist with providing feedback at the forums, the Commission has prepared a Forum Information Sheet that contains the consultation questions. Participants are encouraged to review the [Standards](#) and [Information Sheet](#) before attending the forum.

To help promote the details of this national consultation, visit the [Campaign webpage](#) to download and share information with colleagues and/or within your health service.

Venous Thromboembolism Prevention Clinical Care Standard consultation

The Commission is consulting on the Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) Prevention Clinical Care Standard. The review is seeking feedback from clinicians, quality professionals, and healthcare leaders on whether the current standard remains fit for purpose and reflects contemporary evidence and practice.

Antimicrobial Stewardship Strategic and Operational Plan 2026-2030

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) continues to pose a significant threat to patient safety, with Australia's antimicrobial use remaining high compared with similar countries. The revised Antimicrobial Stewardship Strategic and Operational Plans outline WA Health's approach to minimise the development and spread of AMR through hospital focused activities and collaboration with primary care in Western Australia.

For WA Health staff, the [PSCQ Antimicrobial Stewardship \(AMS\) Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030](#) and [PSCQ Antimicrobial Stewardship \(AMS\) Operational Plan 2026 – 2030](#) can be accessed via these links and the [Medicines and Technology Unit](#) intranet page.

Assisted Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Act 2025

After passing WA Parliament in December 2025, the *Assisted Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy (ARTS) Act 2025* is expected to commence mid-2027.

The ARTS Act will support more Western Australians to start or expand their family with help from assisted reproductive technology (ART) and surrogacy. Changes to the legislation are required as there have been significant medical and scientific advancements in ART and surrogacy, as well as changes in attitudes to family creation since the initial laws were passed in 1991 and 2008. The ARTS Act brings WA more in line with other jurisdictions nationally.

The ART Legislative Review Unit continue to prepare for commencement which involves finalising policy positions to inform drafting of Regulations, establishing the Assisted Reproductive Technology Advisory and Review Board, and supporting interagency and clinic preparation for commencement.

Mandatory Policy Updates

Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration

The [Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration Policy \(MP 0171/22\)](#) was recently revised, following extensive consultation with Health Service Providers (HSPs), clinical units, acute deterioration committees and relevant Department of Health stakeholders.

Key updates include:

- the use of more inclusive language for support people.
- enhanced guidance for the implementation of electronic medical records and standardised observation charts.
- a new requirement for annual HSPs reporting to strengthen oversight of policy compliance.
- improvements to the policy's structure and supporting documents.

The policy promotes the use of clinical judgement and empowers health professionals, patients, carers, families, and support people to escalate concerns, while recognising both physiological and mental state deterioration as forms of acute deterioration.

Consent to Treatment Policy and Procedure

The [Consent to Treatment Policy \(MP 0175/22\)](#) and [Procedure](#) were recently updated.

Key changes to the policy and supporting documentation include:

- update to reflect legislative changes, including the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1990 (WA)* and *Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023*.
- addition of compliance monitoring requirements.
- addition of Consent to Treatment reporting template.
- clarification of difference between 'substitute decision maker' and 'person responsible.'
- WA Hierarchy of Treatment Decision Makers – inclusion of a note regarding treatment decisions that each decision maker cannot make.
- WA Clinician Consent to Treatment Flowchart – inclusion of treatments a person responsible cannot consent to.

The Executive Office Policies and Projects (EOPP), in collaboration with Child and Adolescent Health Service and Aboriginal Health, is currently developing a resource to support clinicians around obtaining consent for children.



Updated WA Health Facility Engineering Services Guidelines

The Western Australia Health Facility Guidelines for Engineering Services (WAHFGES) have been updated following an independent review commissioned by the Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit (LARU). The review considered contemporary healthcare design standards from across Australia, lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, and emerging clinical technologies.

The revised Guidelines establish minimum engineering requirements for healthcare facilities while supporting a risk-based approach that can be tailored to different facility types, models of care, patient needs, and locations. They also introduce measures to reduce regulatory burden for the private healthcare sector, including a new Declaration of Conformance designed to streamline approvals and compliance processes.

LARU will continue to assess projects with a focus on patient safety, quality of care, and preparedness for both routine and emergency operations.

Training, events and publications



Registrations for in-person attendance at the Festival of Innovation and Improvement sold out in less than 48 hours. Virtual registrations are still available for the big day via the [Registration Portal](#), or you can get on the waitlist should a spot become available to attend on the day.

The draft agenda is taking shape with some keynote speakers and guest presenters locked in – stay tuned for a draft agenda featuring on the on the [Festival of Innovation and Improvement](#) website in August.

The portal for submissions closed on 17 August. Submissions are now being evaluated and successful applicants will be notified of the outcome.

Sub-Acute Care Standards

With increasing demand on the states health system and the need to provide safeguards for emerging models of care, in 2025, the Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit (LARU) was required to develop a set of Standards for monitoring sub-acute/rehabilitation care services in the private sector.

LARU defines Sub-Acute Care as specialised, multidisciplinary care aimed at optimising a patient's functional abilities and quality of life, typically provided to individuals who are medically stable, but require ongoing treatment and rehabilitation following an acute illness or injury.

The Standards are adaptive and reflective of the cohort of patients who require ongoing care and treatment for an undefined period of time, prior to discharge to home, aged care services or supported independent living/disability services.

Recent Publications

ACSQHC

- [Stroke Clinical Care Standard](#)
- [National Consensus Statement | Essential elements for safe and high-quality paediatric end-of-life care](#)
- [Clinical Quality Registries](#)
- [Emergency Laparotomy Clinical Care Standard](#)
- [Revised Open Disclosure Framework](#)
- [Pathology amendment to Requirements for Information Communication and Reporting \(sixth edition, 2026\)](#)
- [New national guidance for the safe, appropriate and sustainable use of intravenous \(IV\) fluids](#)

RACS

- [ANZ Emergency Laparotomy Audit – Quality Improvement \(ANZELA-QI\)](#)