The board of the Central West Hospital and Health Service (Central West Health) was established under the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to provide local control over the delivery of hospital and healthcare services across the region.

The Central West Health Board convened its monthly board meeting at the Longreach Regional Council Isisford board room on Thursday 26 November 2015.

Isisford is served by a nurse-led primary health centre providing emergency care and primary health services to locals and visitors. There are approximately 262 people living in the Isisford service catchment area. The centre is located 117 kilometres by sealed road from Longreach Hospital. In July 2015 nursing levels at the clinic were increased to improve patient safety and expand support for chronic disease management.

A key issue on the board’s agenda was the three year review of the health service’s engagement strategies. The board discussed key findings and considered recommendations, endorsing revisions to both the employee and clinician engagement strategy and the consumer and community engagement strategy. Both strategies will be published on the health service website shortly. The board also endorsed a support package to encourage consumer and carer participation in safety and quality meetings and other management committees in the central west and noted the development of a handbook to guide the functions of community advisory networks.

The board reviewed and endorsed the Western Queensland Collaboration and Integration Protocol developed in partnership with South West and North West Hospital and Health Services and the Western Queensland Primary Health Network. The protocol outlines the shared vision of health and wellbeing across western Queensland and sets objectives through which the parties will work together to undertake joint planning and consultation, share resources, use information and improve health services.

The board rescinded the Protocol Between Central West Hospital and Health Service And Central and North West Queensland Medicare Local, December 2012 following the transition to primary health networks.

The board discussed a submission to the Department of Health to establish a four-bed rehabilitation unit in Longreach that will enable residents to complete rehabilitation programs closer to home. The board noted local hospitals were often unable to accept patients returning from regional hospitals due to a lack of allied health services and access to specialists.

The board decided to delay further action to partner private general practices in Winton and Blackall until the medical workforce in both towns had stabilised. The board noted that the shared medical workforce model and integration of medical records across healthcare sites would not be affected by the delay.

In other business, the board:

- noted progress for the establishment of a clinical training facility at the Longreach hospital in partnership with James Cook University and plans to arrange an official opening in early 2016
received a briefing on disaster and emergency management preparedness and noted action to update plans at all hospitals and health centres

received an update on the construction of the new co-located health and emergency services precinct in Alpha, planning works underway for the CT scanner in Longreach and the dental clinic in Barcaldine

noted the development of a statewide Strategic Health Asset and Infrastructure Plan and ongoing discussions underway with the Department of Health to secure replacements for the Aramac Primary Health Centre and Blackall Hospital

received the safety and quality report that showed solid performance against key quality indicators and progress towards readiness for next year’s accreditation review

noted that the health service was continuing to operate with a small deficit and that an additional allocation of funding was expected in December to cover the establishment of the government’s nursing election commitments, cover staff pay increases and fund minor capital works.

The board met with members of the local community for a healthcare conversation and morning tea, listening to issues and concerns in the community and answering questions raised. The deputy chair thanked Sally Edwards, Cr Jocelyn Avery and Helen McMonagle for their support and assistance with organising the community meeting and venues.

The next board meeting will be held in Longreach on Thursday 17 December 2015.