



## Annual Report, 2022-23

Innovation for informed decision making and health connectivity

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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT,

## Damian Barry



It is with great pleasure that I introduce the 2022-the Outcome Health Annual Report.

Across 2022-23 we largely said goodbye to the last few years of COVID struggles placed on businesses and in particular people working in the health care sector.

Outcome Health has continued to grow across a number of domains and jurisdictions. We continue to expand our Polar offerings and are engaged in some exciting research with our partners in Academia and Primary Care.

Once again Outcome Health has been at the vanguard helping GPs and our communities more broadly through what has been an extremely difficult period. Our POLAR offerings continue to expand with practices able to use our system to support real time clinical care, decision making and health networks able to use our system to make informed funding decisions.

This has been my fourth and final year as Chair of the Outcome Health board. I have personally been involved with the business for nearly 20 years as it has grown and changed to meet new challenges. I have had the pleasure of working with a dedicated and highly skilled board over that time.

The Board Chair role now passes on to Andrew Howard who for the past 3 years has been Treasurer and has expertly guided our finances through that period. Andrew brings a wealth of expertise, experience and networks across the health and technology sectors and I see Outcome Health growing further under his stewardship.

Outcome Health is an agile, dynamic organisation, well placed to continue to grow and support our community as we further develop our blend of clinical, research and health analytic solutions.

On behalf of the board of Outcome Health I would like to recognise the enterprise and endeavour shown by all our team during what has proven to be another challenging year.

All of this made possible under the direction and leadership of our CEO Adam McLeod who has led OH from its inception to the highly regarded innovative organisations that it is today. Adam stood down from the role during the year but continues to part of the Outcome Health family.

Outcome Health welcomes its new CEO Dr Shainal Nathoo. Shainal brings clinical and executive expertise to the role, and we look forward to Shainal leading Outcome Health in its next growth phase.

**Damian Barry**  
Chairman

# CEO REPORT, Adam McLeod and welcome Dr Shainal Nathoo



Welcome to the 2022-23 Outcome Health Annual Report.

The 2022-23 financial year was another successful one for Outcome Health. With the shadow of COVID now largely behind us, we have seen continued growth and progress.

While we were all personally impacted during lockdowns, as a healthcare organisation, we continued to work on the frontlines of the pandemic through our data, research, and mental health services. Our staff maintained a positive and forward-looking attitude, supporting the community and each other during these unprecedented times.

Our mental health programs persisted throughout COVID, with our Ambulance Mental Health Nurse team handling thousands of calls from people in mental health crises. The program has not only continued to thrive but has also led to a re-contracting with Ambulance Victoria for several more years.

Our Mental Health Nurses continued their excellent work in GP practices, universities, and clinics, with much of our work transitioning to remote telehealth services. While many of these clinics will return to face-to-face operations, telehealth is expected to remain prevalent and normalised, especially in the mental health space, meeting the expectations of our consumers.

POLAR produced a range of new reports examining disease-specific cohorts and updating our older dashboards. Data security remained a significant concern, and we conducted annual security and penetration testing to identify and rectify any vulnerabilities.

In January, the NHMRC and ATO formally recognized the 'Aurora Primary Care Research Institute' as our primary research entity, as we continue to formalise and raise the profile of our research work under 'Aurora.' We also maintained valuable partnerships with universities such as Macquarie and Monash, ensuring that our governance and ethics processes remained sound through organisations like RACGP, our Data Governance, and PHN governance committees.

As we emerge from the shadow of COVID and make further adjustments to how we work, communicate, and collaborate, I want to express my gratitude to all staff for their positive approach and commitment to maintaining high standards on a daily basis.

On a personal note, in August 2022, I stepped down from the CEO role at Outcome Health. It has been a privilege to lead and grow the organisation into a high-performing and community-minded company that has genuinely made a difference in the care of people in Australia. We welcomed Dr Shainal Nathoo to the organisation as our new CEO. Shainal brings with him a wealth of experience and a vision for future growth and expansion.

With our distinctive blend of research, clinical services, health intelligence, and data systems, we remain committed to serving our diverse stakeholders and meeting the needs of our communities. It has been a pleasure working with the dedicated and hardworking members of our board and the Outcome Health team.

**Adam McLeod**  
CEO

# OUR BOARD

## **Dr. Damian Barry (PhD), Chair**

Damian has over 20 years' experience as a company director, and in management and consulting roles in the health, government and higher education sectors covering local and international operations. He has served on boards of private companies and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Damian has qualifications in economics, law, information systems and a PH D in higher education governance.

## **Nikki Jupp**

Formerly a GPSS Board Director, Nikki has managed General Practices in Adelaide, South Australia, and more recently Melbourne, Victoria, over the past 22 years. She is a Member of the Australian Association of Practice Managers and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She has special interests in improving patient outcomes through data analysis and quality improvement and through developing the role of practice nursing within General Practice.

## **Andrew Howard, Treasurer**

Andrew has been working in digital health at the executive level of private sector, State, and Federal agencies for the last 20 years. Andrew is passionate about delivering better healthcare outcomes through digitally enabled service models. Currently, Andrew works for Salesforce in the Public Health Sector team. Andrew's roles prior to Salesforce include Head of Publicis Sapien's Australian Healthcare practice, Interim CEO and Head of the MyHR program at NEHTA, Head of Architecture and Strategy at Bupa Australia, CIO for the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, Interim Country Manager for Orion Health Australia.

Andrew's enthusiasm lies in enhancing patient outcomes and experiences through digital health enablement to streamline support for the care team in their interactions with their clients.

## **Dr Nuwan Dharmaratne**

Nuwan is a general practitioner and practice owner in a well-established practice in north western Sydney. He has a wide range of medical expertise including diabetes and chronic disease management, men's health and paediatrics. He is also a senior medical educator for GP registrars and has played an advisory role for a number of government and not for profit organisations.

Nuwan and his practice have been at the forefront of embracing the Patient Centred Medical Home model of care in an Australian context. He has a keen interest in using data to drive improvement in the quality of patient care within general practice at an individual, practice and population wide level.

## **Dr Angus Henderson**

Angus has a long track record in strategic management and business planning, with a main focus on healthcare and medical technologies. Prior to his current role as General Manager Research Strategy at Monash Health, Angus has held various senior public and private sector positions and has led initiatives to promote business partnering as a way to drive innovation and growth. He is a member and graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

## **Dr Daryl Kroschel**

Daryl has over two decades of clinical experience in health across General Practice, Emergency, Urgent Care and Hospital in the Home (HITH) in Australia and the UK. He is currently the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at Bendigo Health and continues to work part time as a GP. He has completed a Masters in Health Administration and holds Associate Fellowships with the Royal Australian College Medical Administrators and the Australasian College of Health Services Management.

## **Maria Bubnic**

Maria is currently a senior executive with the Victorian Department of Health and has worked in senior roles across state and federal agencies for the last 20 years. This includes leadership roles in health system governance, planning, policy and commissioning, and national health reform and e-health strategies. She previously worked as a clinician and researcher in the mental health sector. Maria is passionate about improving population health and equity, value based health care, and addressing sex and gender differences in health.

# OUR EXECUTIVES

## **Dr Shainal Nathoo, CEO as at March 2023**

Shainal is a qualified medical doctor with clinical experience in both South Africa and Australia. He has completed an Associate Fellowship in Medical Administration and has utilised his problem solving and analytical skills in healthcare consulting, through his work as a Strategy and Operations Consultant for Deloitte and more recently as the APAC Principal Clinical Advisor for Dedalus Health, where his role was focused on enhancing healthcare using technology. He has experience working in hospitals and the community setting, with experience in Mental Health and Emergency Medicine. Additional to his clinical experience he was involved as an adjunct lecturer for Monash University and a published researcher in Mental Health. Shainal is also a Victorian Hospital Board Director, a Board Director for a Not-for-profit Residential Aged Care provider and the Chair of the Australian Institute of Digital Health, Victorian Branch. As a community focused individual, with a unique blend of clinical, consulting and technology experience he looks forward to being at the forefront of enhancing healthcare. As a lifelong learner, Shainal is currently completing his studies at Harvard University in Executive Leadership in Healthcare.

## **Adam McLeod, Consultant**

Adam started his career as a Registered Nurse, moving into community based Drug and Alcohol and Hospital in the Home. After working in leadership positions across HARP, and Community care his passion for digital health emerged and he went on to manage a range IT projects, including programs for the Victorian Office of the CIO, Community Health Services, Monash and Eastern Health. Working as Director of Strategy and Integrated Care at Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local Adam innovated in a range of data, telehealth and digital health programs.

Adam holds a Masters in Health Informatics and created the POLAR system.

## **Jason Ferriggi, Chief Information Officer**

Jason has over 20 years of experience working with IT systems and data in major metropolitan Health Services and the Victorian Department of Health. Having transitioned into the Business Intelligence (BI) and Information Management (IM) sector 15 years ago, Jason has been involved in several successful projects that have innovated the use of BI for the health sector, including systems for data processing, data interrogation and visualisation and data linkage from a variety of health data sources. In his CIO capacity at Outcome Health, Jason has led the development and deployment of Australia's most advanced data analytics platform in over 1,700 practices nationwide.

Jason regularly engages with industry and government around a range of data initiatives of national significance both from a policy and direct practice impact perspective. Jason is a member of the Australian Institute of Management (AIM) and holds a Masters degree in Business Administration from Deakin University.

## **Martin Wilkinson, Director of Clinical Services**

Martin has over 30 years' experience working in the Australian and UK health systems. Martin started out as a Registered Nurse in the Victorian Public Hospital system before moving to the UK to pursue further studies in Renal Dialysis at Nottingham University and City Hospital. Upon his return to Australia he has worked across a number of areas within the Public Hospital system including stints as associate program Director Emergency, General Medicine and Intensive Care at Eastern Health.

Martin moved across to the Primary Health system at the commencement of the Medicare Local program and has been extending his skills and knowledge in this area as Executive Director Primary Health within the Primary Health Networks. Martin brings with him extensive knowledge of the General Practice, Mental Health, AOD sector and has been a great addition to the team.

## **Chris Pearce, Research Director**

Associate Professor Christopher Pearce is a practising clinician in general practice, emergency medicine and anaesthetics. He is also a health informatician, with an international standing in the fields of data, workflow and usability.

At Outcome Health he leads the development of research infrastructure, in the POLAR program, particularly in the area of data governance.

# CLINICAL SERVICES

## Outcome Health's Clinical Services: Empowering Community Resilience

Outcome Health's Clinical Services have played an indispensable role in supporting our community during another challenging year. As a not-for-profit organisation, we remain committed to expanding our mental health support services. This year, we expanded our innovative initiatives such as Indigenous Mental Health support, collaboration with universities, and embedding mental health clinicians with Ambulance Victoria. We also continued our partnerships with General Practices to deliver comprehensive mental health care throughout the Gippsland region.

### Expanding Mental Health Support

Our services have been unwavering in assisting the community in building strength and resilience as we navigate the post-COVID-19 era. Our tailored healthcare responses have been a lifeline for many individuals, ensuring reliable and high-quality services during these turbulent times. With clinicians stationed in over 23 locations across Gippsland and surrounding regions, we continue to empower healthcare providers and others to deliver individually directed collaborative mental health care.

### Partnership with Ambulance Victoria

Our ongoing collaboration with Ambulance Victoria (AV) has been instrumental in supporting Victorians with mental health concerns. Our expert staff has played a crucial role in triaging individuals calling triple 0 for emergency assistance. This unique and customised service offering involves embedding mental health nurses within Ambulance Victoria, working in close partnership with ambulance staff to deliver a highly valued service.

### Nurse Coordinated Clinics in General Practice

For over two decades, Outcome Health has been delivering specialist nurse-led clinics, focused on diabetes, asthma/respiratory care, and complex health management to individual practices on a fee-for-service basis. This enduring commitment to improving healthcare at the grassroots level underscores our dedication to enhancing the well-being of our community.





2022/23 continued to provide POLAR with opportunities for growth and partnership. Western Victoria PHN fully integrated onto the platform, and our work in the Victorian Priority Primary Care Centres (PPCCs) saw Murray PHN join the POLAR family, meaning that POLAR is now in every Victorian PHN.

This year also saw the partnership with Telstra Health formalised through the integrations with Medical Director Helix and Communicare. Both integrations promise to allow POLAR to innovate and move into new sectors through new FHIR Application Programming Interface (API) technologies and Indigenous Health reporting.

On the information security front and after a wave of high-profile data breaches, POLAR again increased its investment in security through additional penetration and brand protection testing. A strategic decision was also made to transition from the Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cyber Security Framework to the ISO27001 accreditation standard. ISO27001 will be in place by early 2024 and connects nicely with our other work on enhancing identity management to secure the platform further.



### Insight

Intuitively visualise and monitor key practice priorities. Identify healthcare trends for your catchment



### Cost Effective

Save costs and time with web-based software, which updates automatically, and requires minimal support



### Contribute

Partner with us to develop custom solutions for your PHN and contribute your insight to ongoing improvements



### Secure

Sleep easy, knowing that your de-identified data is encrypted and stored in our national data warehouse



### Simple

A stress-free approach to implement POLAR across an entire practice in minutes with a single installation



### Ethical

Utilise aggregated de-identified data to support PHN approved research, benefiting the entire community and service system

In October 2022, Outcome Health was announced the winner of the Qlik ANZ 2022 Excellence in Providing Better Community Outcomes with Data Award for its continued and dedicated efforts in designing, developing and deploying POLAR. POLAR was recognised as a critical business intelligence solution to support Commonwealth-funded Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and other community health providers.

The first module of the Business Report has been released for review and focuses on appointment servicing. The appointment servicing view promises to be the first in many business modules to offer POLAR customers another use case for using the platform. Patient flagging/commissioning was introduced to address the problem practices, and PHNs have in identifying patient cohorts outside the Clinical Information System. Use cases are endless; however, this functionality can help both Practices and PHNs keep track of MyMedicare registrations in the interim.

Throughout 2022/23, POLAR has been inundated with projects to enhance the platform. Our project calendar is booked six months in advance and is testimony to our reputation and ability to deliver projects that benefit the primary care sector. The good news is that 2023/24 looks to be following the same trajectory.



Aurora has continued to drive a robust research platform underpinned by PHN engagement and solid relationships across the sector. The breadth of activity across Aurora has enabled Outcome Health to contribute to the richness of the evidence base rapidly expanding primary care research landscape in a way which delivers findings of interest to general practice and enhances patient care.

### Ethics

In 2023, the POLAR platform was granted a five year ethics extension by the National Research Ethics and Evaluation Committee (RACGP). The ethics approval covers the processes and systems for collection, transfer and storage of general practice data across the POLAR platform. Individual research projects leverage the current ethics approval ensuring that all research facilitated by Aurora is conducted according to the highest ethical standards as stipulated by the National Health and Medical Research Council while importantly, being in line with community expectations.

### Research portfolio

Primary care is the gateway to the Australian health system. Analysis of data captured during the general practice encounter provides an earlier and deeper insight into health status than any other health data source. The unique contribution general practice data makes to advancing medical knowledge is demonstrated in the breadth of research areas investigated across Aurora including:

- Stroke;
- Dementia;
- Viral Hepatitis;
- People with lived experience of disability;
- Vaccine safety signals;
- Opioid prescribing patterns;
- Long COVID;
- Hospitalisation risk reduction;
- Postgraduate student projects.

### Aurora Collaborations in 2023

Aurora engages with a broad spectrum of partners, forging connections across academia, government and industry. The breadth of our engagement further testifies to the utility of general practice data to make an indelible contribution to the national conversation both from a research and policy perspective:

- Agency for Clinical Innovation, NSW Government;
- Australian Digital Health Agency;
- Australian Institute for Health and Wellness;
- Doherty Institute;
- Heart Research Institute;
- La Trobe University;
- Macquarie University;
- Monash University;
- Murdoch Children’s Research Institute;
- North Eastern Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service.
- Summer Foundation;
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners;
- University of New South Wales;
- University of the Sunshine Coast;
- University of Sydney;
- University of Technology Sydney.