Contents

Foreword 2
Our history 3
SA Pathology – at a glance 4
Opportunities and challenges 5
Our vision, mission and values 6
Our strategic priorities 7
Financial sustainability 8
Customer focused 10
Systems, processes & technology 12
Organisational development 14
Foreword

SA Pathology plays an important role in the delivery of public health care in South Australia, with 70% of all conditions and diseases requiring pathology diagnostic services to identify and manage.

We know health and wellbeing are essential to a person’s quality of life. We are committed to working with the South Australian Government to achieve their vision of reducing the burden of disease by protecting and promoting health and wellbeing, as well as preventing disease.

As the state’s own comprehensive provider of public pathology services, we are recognised for our exceptional clinical capability and knowledge in the early detection and management of disease. We develop and help retain pathology expertise through the specialised training we provide, and through our cutting-edge research into the identification, treatment and prevention of disease.

We are an integral part of the South Australian health system and have framed our strategy to fully align with SA Health and South Australian Government strategic priorities, including the State Public Health Plan.

Demand for pathology services is growing as a result of our ageing population, the increasing prevalence of chronic disease and technological developments is producing a greater diversity of available tests. However, competition is high, and the rising cost of health care is a critical factor in the long-term sustainability of public pathology services. As a result, we know SA Pathology must focus on continuous improvement in how it operates.

Our Strategic Plan for the next four years focuses on improving our financial and operational performance. To do this, we will change our service delivery model to improve service levels, grow revenue, create lean internal processes to improve efficiencies and remove waste, and develop our workforce’s capability and capacity to successfully manage our transformation and deliver performance improvement.

We will be tailoring our services to meet the needs of various customer groups to add even greater value to the public health system. We will harness the increasing demand for pathology services through strategic marketing, forming stronger strategic alliances in new industry sectors, and where feasible, we will adopt new technology to provide greater access to more efficient services.

Our Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023 is the result of broad consultation with our staff, customers, and key stakeholders. We thank all who have contributed to its development. Your contribution, together with this plan, will focus our efforts on achieving long term sustainability as a public pathology provider while continuing to deliver high quality services for the better health of all South Australians.

SA Pathology has a long and rich history of providing diagnostic pathology services for South Australians for over 80 years.

In the late 1930s, the early origins of SA Pathology were formed in the establishment of the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science (IMVS). A branch of the then Royal Adelaide Hospital’s laboratories, the IMVS was formed to provide diagnostic pathology services, research and training within the public health service.

Over the ensuing decades, change has occurred to align with the needs of the South Australian population. Skills and capabilities were expanded to include forensic pathology and biology services in the 1970s, along with stronger relationships with the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the University of Adelaide in the 1980’s, further diversifying activity across emerging areas of pathology.

In the 1990’s, the Hanson Institute was established to further expand scientific research and increase integration within the hospital.

In 2008, SA Pathology was established as the result of a merger with two other public hospital pathology departments, the Women’s and Children’s Hospital’s Division of Pathology and the Flinders Medical Centre’s South Path.

Adhering to the original vision for the organisation of integrating pathology with clinical training and medical research, we have continued to interact with the public and private sectors, providing high quality patient services while attracting research grants. This ensures we stay competitive, efficient and relevant in the services we provide.

We are part of world-class programs of innovative research, making breakthrough discoveries in the fundamental causes of cancer, and translating these discoveries into new ways to prevent and treat this group of diseases.

Translation of new discoveries into clinical practice has been strengthened by the co-location of laboratories, as well as proximal and close collaboration with the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the University of South Australia, the University of Adelaide, the Centre for Cancer Biology and South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI).

Today, we are a key part of Statewide Clinical Support Services, providing services to all Local Health Networks and the whole of South Australia. We are valued for our exceptional quality, capability and expertise in pathology services and we play an essential role in SA’s public health system in fighting and eliminating disease. With laboratories and collection centres across metropolitan and regional South Australia, we provide universal access to affordable pathology services for all South Australians.
The demand for pathology services in South Australia is growing. The state health system is facing the challenges of an ageing population, with increased incidence of chronic disease driving greater demand for services, workforce shortages, and ageing infrastructure.

Healthcare professionals rely on pathology practitioners and specialists to help diagnose and treat their patients, and because of their community’s needs, they are referring more. In general, patients are visiting their doctors more frequently, and technological advances in pathology tests have provided a greater range of tests to assist diagnosis.

We occupy a unique position, working across the entire health system state-wide, and have a wealth of valuable data that will enable proactive management of at-risk cohorts and individuals in the future.

Greater demand is also driving the need for more convenient and accessible pathology services, such as co-location with general practice clinics and point of care testing, where doctors can operate equipment in their offices without clinical laboratories. Harnessing these changes in demand will create benefits to clinicians and their patients and provide opportunities to diversify revenue sources and minimise impact of any future reduction in Medicare rebates.

In South Australia, the public health system continues to change, with the recent creation of an additional five Local Health Networks and the implementation of a new model of governance and accountability with the introduction of Local Health Network governing boards. These changes, together with the rising cost of public healthcare as a proportion of the government’s budget, are critical challenges we face over the next four years.

As the market leader of public health pathology services in South Australia, there is increasing pressure within Local Health Networks to reduce pathology costs, yet obtain the best value for service where possible. Services must be affordable, patient-centred, high quality and provided in a timely manner.

In 2019, an independent review of SA Pathology recommended fundamental changes to the operating and business model to deliver services more cost effectively and to improve the overall performance. We have subsequently led the development and implementation of several initiatives which have already produced improvements in business performance.

Further organisational development will continue to contribute to reducing the cost of delivering public health care in South Australia.

Our strategic priorities are founded on addressing these opportunities and challenges, to ensure we can achieve our vision of ‘better health for all South Australians’.
Our vision, mission and values

Better health for all South Australians
Delivering South Australia’s own comprehensive, affordable and accessible diagnostic pathology, research, training and public health services for all South Australians

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<th>Respect</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Integrity</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Continuous Improvement</th>
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<td>We value every individual.</td>
<td>We are willing to take responsibility for our own actions.</td>
<td>We act truthfully, consistently and fairly.</td>
<td>We provide highly valued services.</td>
<td>We strive for excellence.</td>
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Our value proposition

Community
- We ensure all South Australians have access to affordable, quality, comprehensive diagnostic testing services performed locally.
- We provide health practitioners with access to the state's own comprehensive, integrated and accessible pathology service. Working in partnership, we provide information to improve disease management, keeping patients healthy and out of hospital.

Public health
- Working as part of the clinical team and integrated within our hospitals, we provide timely results and specialist expertise to diagnose and manage disease. We also implement new tests driven by clinical need to provide evidence-based health care.
- We analyse, interpret and provide valuable clinical pathology information to help keep patients out of hospital, shorten length of stay, reduce system demand and cost of public health care.
- We provide Local Health Networks with access to comprehensive pathology data, driving quality and efficient use of pathology.

Research
- Our research drives early implementation of cutting-edge diagnostics to help identify, treat and prevent illness and disease, retaining essential medical and scientific expertise in South Australia.
- Our research today becomes our tests and treatments of tomorrow.

Public provider responsibilities
- We protect all South Australians through the early detection and management of health risks.
- We are the state provider for identifying potential epidemics, disease outbreaks, environmental health risks, performing screening programs, providing valuable information to improve health outcomes.
- As the predominant pathology training provider in South Australia, we are essential in building the future workforce that will provide diagnostic service expertise for the state.

Commercial
- We are South Australia’s trusted primary facility providing over 50 years of respected independent testing, cost-effective testing services, expertise and integrity for the South Australian Department of Health and Wellbeing, local businesses, national and international commercial industries.

Our strategic priorities

Financial sustainability
- We will strive to have a sustainable operational model that continues to meet our customer and market needs.

Customer focused
- We will strive to have highly valued and trusted relationships.

Systems, processes and technology
- We will strive to have the right systems, processes and technology in place to underpin our future.

Organisational development
- We will strive to have the right people and structure for growth.
Financial sustainability

We have a sustainable operational model that continues to meet our customer and market needs

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<th>GOAL</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
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| Achieve financial sustainability through operational efficiencies and cost reduction strategies. | 1.1 Quantify the costs to meet the Government’s public health obligations.  
1.2 Quantify the true cost per diagnostic test undertaken by SA Pathology.  
1.3 Establish a program to recover the true cost of diagnostic services provided to hospitals and Local Health Networks across the comprehensive spectrum of tests undertaken.  
1.4 Embed commercially focused procurement practices.  
1.5 Establish effective management, reporting and monitoring processes for labour expenditures.  
1.6 Develop and implement cost optimisation programs to embed a culture of cost-consciousness.  
1.7 Invest in continuous improvement of organisational billing systems and capabilities. |
| Achieve financial sustainability through pursuing revenue and growth opportunities | 2.1 Recover revenue for private sector diagnostic services that are currently undertaken at no cost to the consumer.  
2.2 Strategically source funding for research undertaken by SA Pathology (either directly or indirectly) over the next four years to define a priority research agenda.  
2.3 Pursue new opportunities in the research sector through contract for services.  
2.4 Establish new research partnerships directly with funding bodies such as philanthropic organisations to generate longer term funding.  
2.5 Establish pricing model and commercialisation strategies to reflect the organisation’s strategic, financial and business goals.  
2.6 Develop a framework to assess the organisation’s capability, and the feasibility of pursuing new market opportunities to grow diagnostic testing services.  
2.7 Investigate the feasibility of expanding existing Point of Care Testing (PoCT) services. |
Customer focused

We have highly valued and trusted relationships

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| Strengthen our market position within the community health sector. | 3.1 Reposition our brand in the SA market through a strategic communications plan.  
3.2 Review current customer service practice and implement a customer service improvement program based on findings to maintain a patient focused diagnostic service.  
3.3 Investigate the feasibility of using our data set to target specific at-risk chronic diseases to minimise hospitalisation.  
3.4 Establish a clinician and practice engagement strategy, including a program of education for community practices focused on identification of patients at risk of hospitalisation.  
3.5 Research community test report and ordering preferences and provide support and services to meet these needs.  
3.6 Explore connections with the South Australian community and consumers to inform policy development, service design and delivery. |
| Strengthen our market position within the public health sector. | 4.1 Increase our involvement in clinical trials.  
4.2 Improve the quality of our test reporting and associated decision making reports.  
4.3 Develop a stakeholder engagement framework to guide and improve engagement within the public health sector, private sector, universities, consumers and other stakeholders to build strong trusting relationships.  
4.4 Continue to work with Local Health Networks to establish best practice ordering patterns (quality use of pathology) and to implement equitable service level agreements. |
### GOAL STRATEGIES

**Internal systems and processes support our needs, are lean and drive efficiency.**

- **5.1** Develop annual business plans to support the sustainable achievement of our Strategic Plan.
- **5.2** Develop a performance management framework to actively monitor against SA Pathology's key performance indicators.
- **5.3** Invest in continuous improvement and performance of lab information systems.
- **5.4** Invest in systems to provide self-service operational reports and improve accessibility of tests and reports.
- **5.5** Adopt digital imaging technology and processes to optimise resources, improve turnaround times, and improve analysis.
- **5.6** Implement a single quality management system (QMS) and remove duplication of work practices (e.g., safety learning system (SLS, QPulse)).
- **5.7** Review and improve safety and quality performance, introducing new evidence-informed service models to meet emerging health issues.
- **5.8** Implement secure messaging to enable greater efficiency in sharing private/sensitive information for diagnostic purposes.
- **5.9** Investigate the feasibility of implementing an automated stock control system.

**Harness technology to improve the services we provide to our customers.**

- **6.1** Investigate and where feasible adopt technology that supports improved customer service, communication and interaction.
- **6.2** Implement online collaboration tools like Lync, Skype to enable screen sharing and remote support for regional customers and staff.
- **6.3** Harmonise test ordering catalogues and care sets across various clinical management software platforms within Local Health Networks.
- **6.4** Improve the test ordering capability in Sunrise Electronic Medical Record system.
- **6.5** Implement real-time specimen tracking.
- **6.6** Enhance electronic ordering capabilities of clinicians in ordering pathology.
## Organisational development

### We have the right people and structure for growth

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| Improve our services and how we work. | 7.1 Optimise our laboratory and collection centre footprint, including non-urgent and specialised services.  
7.2 Maxitimise the productivity and output of our collection centres.  
7.3 Optimise logistic services to reduce costs and turnaround times.  
7.4 Review the suite of diagnostic testing services. |
| Our structure and culture will enable us to meet our customer and market needs. | 8.1 Realign our organisational structure to deliver on our Strategic Plan and remove silos.  
8.2 Establish an ongoing program to strengthen agreed values and embed a desired culture.  
8.3 Develop and implement a workforce plan and ensure the right people are in the right job with the right skill mix.  
8.4 Design and deliver a customised training strategy to upskill and build the capacity of our people.  
8.5 Establish an ongoing management mentoring program.  
8.6 Establish a robust change management program to ensure business changes are successful.  
8.7 Review and improve internal staff communication and engagement mechanisms. |
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