



**Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA  
Minister for Health; Mental Health**

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Our Ref: 76-22094

Dr Neale Fong  
Chair, WA Country Health Service Provider Board

Via email: [neale.fong@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:neale.fong@health.wa.gov.au)  
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Dear Dr Fong *Neale,*

**Statement of Expectations**

As the responsible Minister for the governing bodies of health service providers (HSP), my Statement of Expectations is to be read in the context of the functions and responsibilities of an HSP as listed in the *Health Services Act 2016*.

I expect the WA Country Health Service Provider Board (Board) to report to me on a quarterly basis against the following expectations.

**COVID is the new normal**

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant disruption to the WA health system. I proudly recognise that through collaboration and innovation all HSPs worked to successfully respond to the challenges faced during the pandemic.

Whilst I expect the Board to continue to follow the plans and guidance issued by the Chief Health Officer and the Department of Health on the ongoing management of the pandemic, it is imperative that the appropriate level of COVID-19 response is now integrated into your HSP's business as usual activities, and that any Government priority projects or programs delayed due to COVID-19 are recommenced with a plan to recover lost time where possible.

I expect the Board to build on the learnings of the COVID-19 pandemic to expand innovation and increase collaboration across the WA health system.

**Sustainable Health Review – revised priorities**

The State Government is committed to the implementation of the Sustainable Health Review (SHR). WA Health continues to implement the Strategies and Recommendations of SHR which remains the blueprint for building an enduring health system.

Delivery of all SHR Recommendations will continue with a focus on select tranches of SHR Recommendations. This will enable the system to intensify efforts on achieving SHR outcomes and build momentum.

Over the next one to two years there will be a focus on six SHR Recommendations (Focus Recommendations) addressing timely access to outpatient services, models of care for people with complex conditions who are frequent presenters, funding approaches to support models of care and joint commissioning, 10-year digitisation, culture and innovation and workforce improvements.

Aboriginal cultural governance, Aboriginal health outcomes, mental health outcomes, health equity across diverse and vulnerable population groups, preventative healthcare and partnership approaches will be emphasised and embedded within all Focus Recommendations.

I expect the Board to actively promote and support delivery of the SHR.

### **Safety and Quality**

I have a strong expectation that Safety and Quality will remain the highest priority and a core focus for the Board. I expect that work to evaluate and consolidate progress with regard to the improvement of patient outcomes will be continued. This includes continued work towards the publication of safety and quality information to support a culture of openness and transparency and demonstrated commitment to continuous improvement in service delivery.

### **Deferred care and plan for elective surgery**

The Board is to maintain a continued focus on elective surgery and outpatient performance including:

- delivery and execution of specific plans to reduce the proportion of over boundary cases on the elective services waitlist and progress towards achievement of WA Elective Services Targets (WEST); and
- delivery and execution of specific plans to reduce the proportion of over boundary referrals awaiting a first outpatient appointment.

It is my expectation that elective surgery over boundary proportions will return to pre-pandemic levels by June 2024.

### **Mental health**

Mental health presentations are increasing year on year, putting increased pressure on all parts of the WA health system. I expect the Board to place priority on implementing whole-of-system reforms such as the Infant Child and Adolescent Ministerial Taskforce plan, the Young People's Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Use Priorities for Action and the WA State Priorities Mental Health, Alcohol and other Drugs 2020-2024.

In addition, the Mental Health Clinical Workforce Action Plan (Action Plan) outlines key actions to address current workforce shortfalls, while building the capacity, capability and sustainability of the mental health workforce over the next three years. I expect the Board to commit to implementing the Action Plan and ensure the HSP reports on the activities undertaken for the Action Plan to the Mental Health Executive Committee.

### **Work Health and Safety**

The State Government is committed to health and safety for all workers, as evidenced in the recently enacted Work Health and Safety legislation. In ensuring your HSP is a safe place for people to work, receive medical care and to visit, I expect the Board to work collaboratively with the System Manager, and equally with your HSP executive, to ensure HSP legislative requirements are met, that workplace health and safety is a focus for the HSP and that your HSP works to improve its overall health and safety culture.

### **Increased Job Security**

Increasing job security through offering more permanent positions, reducing the use of fixed term contracts and casual modes of employment is of critical importance to the Government.

I expect the Board to concentrate its efforts to prioritise and ensure compliance with the fixed term contract and casual conversion to permanency provisions within the relevant industrial agreements. I also expect the Board to maximise the occasions of permanent employment and actively minimise insecure, temporary employment arrangements and in particular, the use of rolling fixed term contracts.

I expect the Board to prioritise and support initiatives which facilitate the commitment of 10 percent casual and agency usage for hospital support workers, and four percent casual and agency usage for salaried officers, to be achieved over the life of the relevant industrial agreement. I also expect the Board to maximise the incidences of permanent employment and actively minimise insecure, temporary employment arrangements in particular, the use of rolling fixed term contracts.

### **Procurement**

I expect the Board will manage procurement activity in accordance with relevant Western Australian legislation and frameworks, in particular the *Western Australian Jobs Act 2017*, with a view to maximising value for money and social, economic and environmental outcomes for Western Australians.

It is my expectation that Boards will support HSP executives to ensure local businesses have a fair and reasonable opportunity to access WA Government supply contracts as they arise, and that local manufacturing is appropriately considered.

### **Expenditure and Activity**

The Board is to prioritise management of its financial performance, including delivering to activity targets, operating within allocated budgets and ensuring sufficient cash balances are maintained. Where there are significant pressures on activity and expenditure that cannot be managed, these are to be raised with the System Manager, supported by robust evidence of the drivers, financial impacts and mitigating options and actions.

I appreciate that there will be enduring impacts of the pandemic. It is important that HSPs work with the System Manager to identify these cost drivers to inform sustainable funding options.

It is expected that the Board will prioritise working with the System Manager to identify and evidence any structural costs pressures for WACHS to support the Expenditure Review Committee Cost Driver Review which will recommence as a priority.

### **Implementation of election commitments and key ICT and infrastructure projects**

I expect the implementation of the Government's election commitments key ICT and infrastructure projects to be prioritised, in particular, the Geraldton Health Campus Redevelopment and Bunbury Hospital Redevelopment are key commitments:

- Kimberley Dialysis Investment;
- Collie Hospital Upgrade;
- Acute Mental Health Beds (Geraldton);
- Meekatharra Hospital;
- Staff housing for Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service Staff in Jigalong;
- Geraldton Hospital Co-location Project;
- New carpark for Albany Health Campus;
- MRI Unit for South Hedland;
- Renal Dialysis Centre in Halls Creek;
- Protection for Frontline Security Staff: Duress Alarms;
- Culturally Appropriate Accommodation;
- Paid Paramedics for the Regions; and
- Expansion of Pilbara Health Initiative.

Implementation is subject to regular reporting.

### **Independent Governance Review**

The Independent Governance Review of the WA health system was commissioned to examine the current governance arrangements and make recommendations to Government on further maturing the effectiveness and efficiency of the governance and policy instruments as well as the *Health Services Act 2016*.

I expect the Board to support the accepted recommendations of the Governance Review, and work with the System Manager and Government to ensure the recommendations are implemented in a strategic and timely manner.

### **Advice to Government**

I expect the Board to provide accurate and timely advice to the Government on significant issues in its core areas of business and ensure progress is made in achieving the Government's priorities. Further, the Board will comply with the board assurance processes and requirement to submit an Annual Governance Attestation Statement to me at the conclusion of each financial year. The Board is expected to ensure my office is aware of all critical issues in a timely manner and is briefed appropriately at regular meetings.

**Statement of Intent**

I look forward to receiving the Board's response to my Statement of Expectations in the form of a Statement of Intent as soon as practicable. I request that the Statement of Expectations and Statement of Intent be published on your website.

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank you for the considerable efforts of the Board in leading the WA Country Health Service through the current pandemic while ensuring the people of Western Australia continue to access world class health care.

Kind regards



HON AMBER-JADE SANDERSON MLA  
**MINISTER FOR HEALTH; MENTAL HEALTH**

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