



OFFICIAL

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Hon Meredith Hammat MLA  
Minister for Health; Mental Health  
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Dear Hon Meredith Hammat MLA

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

Thank you for your correspondence dated 25 May 2025 outlining your expectations as the responsible Minister for the Department of Health (Department) and the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) Board as a governing health service provider (HSP).


This Statement of Intent confirms our commitment to meeting your expectations, notwithstanding continuing challenges in delivering health services, particularly in a rural and remote context, and more broadly across the WA Health system.

The Board will continue to work with WACHS management to support service delivery, service development, risk management and innovation, in an environment of financial and workforce pressures in more than 100 different sites across a 2.5 million square kilometre catchment.

## System Management

In consultation with the Board, and in accordance with the *Health Services Act 2016*, WACHS has worked collaboratively with the Department to support and improve statewide management and performance. WACHS is well represented on the WA Health Sustainability Taskforce and has advocated for sustainable and country focused solutions to the challenges facing the wider health sector whilst balancing whole-of-system conceptual thinking.

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Further work to address issues raised by the Board and the Expenditure Review Committee will continue through the Country Health Sustainability Taskforce to consider longstanding sustainability issues, such as enduring workforce and financial pressures for regional healthcare.

WACHS will remain an active contributor in areas of continuous development, system-wide policy and planning lead by the Department to improve better patient access, flow and care both statewide and locally to WACHS operations.

Our WACHS Command Centre was intentionally located with the State Health Operations Centre, (since October 2024) and will continue to work closely them to support system-wide oversight of emergency department demand and system pressures.

### **Emergency Access**

The Board is committed to deliver improved outcomes for emergency department performance and patient flow across the System, including

- delivery and execution of plans to achieve sustained improvement in emergency care access, including Ambulance Transfer of Care (TOC) performance;
- demonstrated progress towards relevant Emergency Access Response (EAR) program milestones and actively contribute to the Ministerial Taskforce;
- a continual focus on early discharge and links with aged care and disability service providers;
- delivery and execution of specific plans to reduce the proportion of over boundary cases on the elective surgery 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.


### **Sustainable Health Review**

The Board remains committed to the Sustainable Health Review (SHR) implementation and continues to be fully engaged with the Department and partners on statewide approaches.

WACHS continues to advocate for equitable access to care for country patients through policy, funding and technology. This includes the WA Health Access to Care for Country Residents policy, which requires health service providers to provide timely access to care for patients consistent with clinical urgency, regardless of their location, and provides safety nets for patient pathways from country to metropolitan sites.

WACHS continues to invest in virtual service and digital delivery capability with a focus on improving equity of access and health outcomes for vulnerable populations, including developing technologies that provide real-time situational awareness of Aboriginal Health performance data and trends.

The WACHS Command Centre supports virtual care and acute patient transfer coordination service delivery, has enabled hospitals and nursing posts with previously limited or no access to medical



support. The capability and growth in delivery of tertiary outpatient appointments to country patients via Telehealth enables specialist outpatient care provided closer to home with significant benefits to the patients and efficiencies for the health system.

WACHS continues to prioritise a program of outpatient reform and improvement (in partnership with the Department and HSPs) to further enable timely and quality access to outpatient services closer to home. A core component of the outpatient reform agenda includes leveraging virtual and digital health capabilities to ensure country people and services can routinely benefit from this very significant opportunity.

## **Financial Performance**

WACHS has a well-established financial and governance framework that tracks, monitors and manages all activity, cash requirements and expenditure of the organisation. The Board acknowledges the need to foster a broader culture of financial stewardship across the organisation; and is working to create greater transparency and accountability for local health districts.

WACHS continues to seek operational efficiencies where possible without compromising quality, or safety of services, patients and staff. A committee structure has been established to drive value in the business through innovative efficiencies.

WACHS has monthly performance meetings with the Department, that have driven transparency and accountability in how WACHS acquires its financial obligations. WACHS will continue to engage with the Department in a proactive and positive way to address activity and/or cost pressures.

## **Workforce**

WACHS continues to implement changes in line with Commissioner's Instruction No. 2, supporting the transition of staff to permanent employment. These efforts also reflect recent amendments to Enterprise Agreements, which now enshrine the Job Security Review (JSR) process as an industrial entitlement under the Industrial Relations Act 1979.

Previously, JSR assessments applied to Fixed Term Contract (FTC) staff after two (2) years, and to casual staff after 12 months. Recent negotiations between the Department and unions have reduced the FTC eligibility period to 12 months, bringing it in line with casual conversion.

In 2021, WACHS along with all other HSPs was a respondent in Industrial Relations Commission matter C20/2021, brought by the Health Services Union, due to non-compliance with the provisions of the Industrial Agreements. To ensure compliance and reflect the Board's commitment to fair and lawful employment practices, WACHS has centralised the JSR process to promote consistency in assessments, communication with eligible staff, and adherence to Commission orders, including external reporting obligations.





## Election Commitments and Key Projects

The Board supports WACHS to work in partnership with the Department, Department of Transport Office of Major Infrastructure Delivery (OMID) and the Department of Treasury to deliver its major projects: the Bunbury Hospital Redevelopment Project and the Geraldton Health Campus Redevelopment Project.

Construction at Geraldton is progressing well, and commissioning activities have commenced. Multiplex Perkins Un-incorporated Joint Venture have been appointed as the Managing Contractor at Bunbury, with design and early construction works tracking to program.

The Board welcomed the approved 2025 election commitments, with work commencing on the expansion of the Albany Health Campus (modular wards), Geraldton Radiation Oncology, Kalbarri Health Centre airconditioning upgrade and the Kalgoorlie Health Campus masterplanning. Encouraging investment in renal dialysis services at Karratha and Geraldton enhances the Board's commitment of care closer to home and the provision of services to vulnerable people, who can now remain in community.

Work for existing election commitments continues, with the Collie Hospital upgrade fully commissioned, schematic design progressing for the Hedland MRI Unit, Meekatharra Hospital design development well advanced, and a project alliance procurement model developed for Tom Price and Paraburdoo. The Albany Health Campus carpark is under construction and main works contracts have been awarded for Laverton and Mullewa.

The Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS) program is expected to transform human resources, payroll and rostering across WA health. Led by Health Support Services (HSS) in partnership with HSPs, WA health entities and Deloitte Australia, the program was initiated to support recommendation 26 of the Sustainable Health Review, which calls for a system-wide, integrated workforce information system to support planning and development.

The program is currently progressing towards this year's HSS deployment. This phase will provide WACHS with valuable insights to support a smoother transition. Recent program enhancements include revised governance, the transition of the Program Management Office from 'Scyne Advisory', implementation of health-wide risk management, and a comprehensive review of Systems, Applications and Products (SAP) and Ultimate Kronos Group (UKG) solutions.

Over the past year, WACHS has seen an increase in consultation and information sharing—an important opportunity to address staff questions and concerns about the system and its impact.

WACHS remains committed to undertaking the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) program of works in alignment with the WA Health intent and approach. WACHS continues to deliver the statewide Digital Medical Record and Single Sign-On projects, and remains actively engaged with the WA health systemwide EMR Program.



## Procurement

The Board will continue to ensure procurement is managed in accordance with the WA Procurement Rules, WA Buy Local Policy 2022, the WA Jobs Act 2017 and the WA Industry Participation Strategy to ensure local businesses and manufacturers have a fair and reasonable opportunity to access WA Government supply contracts.

The Board will ensure the WA Social Procurement Framework is applied to leverage procurement activity to improve social, economic and environmental benefits across the State. Furthermore, the Board will support the appropriate consolidation of purchasing efforts and resources across the system; coordinating with HSS on integration of support functions.

## Advice to Government

The Board reaffirms WACHS commitment to providing the Minister with timely and accurate information, through briefings, advice on critical matters, urgent priorities and responding to ministerial and parliamentary requests.

WACHS actively and willingly works to meet our obligations under the *Health Services Act 2016*, our Service Agreements and contracts, and to deliver on the State Government's priorities.

## Media and Communications


The Board expects a collaborative approach across media and communications channels between the Department and the Minister's office and will work within the requirements of both offices to ensure flow and timely access to information as required.

In closing, I confirm the Board and Executive are committed to our mission of delivering and advancing high quality care for country WA communities, and our vision to be a global leader in rural and remote healthcare.

The Board would like to reinforce its commitment to working with the Minister, Department and other HSPs to address the significant demand issues on all levels of service provision to the best of our ability given the context outlined here, and as articulated in earlier briefs and correspondence.

The Board and Executive remain committed to working hard on service delivery, service development, risk management and innovation for sustainability of delivering country health services, particularly through the coordinated approach to comprehensively examine and address key challenges through the WA Health Financial Sustainability Taskforce and County Health Sustainability Taskforce, with system-wide partnering and support from the Department and State Government.

The Board and Executive appreciates the Minister's support in improving service access and equity for country communities.



We look forward to continuing collaboration with yourself, the Department and other HSPs in achieving the Government's strategic priorities and improvements for the WA health system and to improve the health and wellbeing of our people living in rural and remote WA.

Yours sincerely



Dr Neale Fong  
**BOARD CHAIR**

3 July 2025