

**MINISTERIAL TASKFORCE INTO PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR INFANTS,  
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS AGED 0–18 YEARS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA —  
FINAL REPORT**

*Statement by Minister for Health*

**MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health)** [2.21 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the McGowan government has finished its consideration of the *Final report—Ministerial taskforce into public mental health services for infants, children and adolescents aged 0–18 years in WA*. I have said before in this place that promoting better mental health and wellbeing outcomes is something I feel very strongly about and I am committed to continuing to advocate for this on behalf of all Western Australians.

Following the tragic death of 13-year-old Kate Savage in the care of the child and adolescent mental health service, the Chief Psychiatrist undertook a targeted review of her care at the request of the then Minister for Mental Health. His recommendations to address gaps in services needed to help those children who are critically mentally unwell and those who are most in need included the establishment of a ministerial task force to investigate and report on specialist public child and adolescent mental health services. The task force was chaired by Ms Robyn Kruk, AO, and has been guided by more than 100 members from three expert advisory groups including children and their families, mental health staff, and key government and non-government agencies. The task force findings and recommendations have been shaped by extensive engagement with hundreds of people from across Western Australia, through interviews, focus groups, workshops and submissions.

We have heard, very clearly, that it is too hard for families to get help; the current system is not listening to their needs, but also, and importantly, it is not working with them to address those needs. We have a very dedicated, incredibly passionate workforce committed to caring for and supporting children and adolescents who are impacted by the overwhelming demand for their services, which has increased by more than 70 per cent in six years. The current experience for a child and their family seeking help is stark and confronting. We cannot allow this to continue any longer. The task force's final report provides clear guidance supporting a contemporary, evidence-informed model of service and models of care for mental health services that will meet the needs of infants, children and adolescents, and their families, in Western Australia from the time they are born through to their eighteenth birthdays. The reform required is wideranging. It is big and complex, and it will take time. This government is committed to implementing all 32 recommendations in the final report in a staged and sustainable way.

I want to thank the task force and the expert advisory group for their work on the report. I want to give particular thanks to the contributors with lived experience, who have themselves been, at times, let down by the system. They have shown strength and courage in putting together this report, to create change so that others will not experience what they have. To Kate's parents, Meron and Larry, who have shown compassion and courage to commit to and participate in this process whilst mourning the loss of their child, on behalf of the McGowan government and the Western Australian community, I thank you for your commitment to improving the system for all of our children.