

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSIONER — APPOINTMENT — MAUREEN LEWIS

Statement by Minister for Mental Health

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Mental Health) [1.11 pm]: It is my pleasure to inform the house of the appointment of Ms Maureen Lewis as the new Mental Health Commissioner for Western Australia. Ms Lewis is an experienced senior executive and accomplished leader with a proven track record of leading and driving mental health strategy and reform in complex service delivery environments in Western Australia, New South Wales and the commonwealth. Ms Lewis is currently the executive director of child and adolescent mental health services at the Child and Adolescent Health Service, and recently played a key role in developing new models of care and working towards the implementation of the infant, child and adolescent mental health task force recommendations.

Ms Lewis' career in mental health began as a psychiatric nurse working at the coalface of mental health service delivery in Western Australia more than 30 years ago. In the late 2000s, she became coordinator of mental health at the women's and newborn's hospital, and then director of acute child and adolescent mental health services. Ms Lewis went on to fulfil senior executive roles, including assistant commissioner for policy, planning and strategy at the WA Mental Health Commission; deputy and interim chief executive officer at the national Mental Health Commission; and deputy and acting executive director of NSW mental health directorates in the New South Wales Ministry of Health, where she led the Premier's priority for Towards Zero Suicides in New South Wales.

Several reviews of the WA mental health system, including the Independent Review of WA Health System Governance carried out in 2022, have identified opportunities for better collaboration, strategic coordination, and clear accountability within the mental health and alcohol and other drugs systems. I am determined that these key findings are addressed to ultimately improve the lives of people engaging with the system.

I am confident that with Maureen Lewis's extensive clinical expertise and senior executive leadership in mental health, she has the experience and insight required to drive coordination, accountability and outcomes across the sector. This includes continuing to ensure lived experience is embedded into the work of the Mental Health Commission and across the mental health, alcohol and other drug sectors, while implementing the government's priorities, including improving access to community-based care.

I thank the acting Mental Health Commissioner, Lindsay Hale, for his term of service. Acting Commissioner Hale has guided the Mental Health Commission through a challenging time with a steady hand, and I thank him sincerely for his leadership and level-headedness and dedication to his staff. Ms Lewis's term will commence early July 2023.