

HEALTH SERVICES ACT — GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Statement by Minister for Health

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [1.09 pm]: The Health Services Act 2016 commenced on 1 July 2016 and provides a legal framework for roles, responsibilities and accountabilities at all levels of the WA health system. Importantly, it enacts a devolved model of governance that enables decision-making closer to service delivery and patient care. On 17 January 2022, cabinet approved a governance review of the WA health system and the appointment of an expert panel to conduct this review, headed by Kym Peake, former secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services Victoria. The purpose of the governance review is to examine the operational and practical effectiveness of governance structures set out in the act and their impact on patient experience and outcomes.

The panel has submitted its final report and made 55 recommendations to strengthen accountability for outcomes, improve strategic alignment, and drive delivery of strategic initiatives. Consultation was fundamental to this review. The panel consulted widely across the health workforce, consumers and carers, and the wider public. The panel commissioned the Health Consumers Council to engage with consumers, carers and families and found that although there are examples of good consumer engagement across the system, feedback identified that these experiences are not always valued. A change in culture is needed and I am personally committed to ensuring that change.

Overall, the panel's findings reinforce the value of the health service provider model, and it is pleasing to hear that these boards are fit for purpose and largely working well. The recommendations comprise clearer mandates within the system for the delivery of major projects, ICT and procurement; formalising collective accountability for health system performance; strengthening of system-wide leadership; better use and sharing of data, information and innovation; consistency in staff employment and training; and structured mechanisms for clinical, workforce and consumer engagement. The panel recommended that the system manager focus on strategic workforce initiatives that both ensure a fit-for-purpose health workforce for the future and further enhances the current workforce experience.

The review also outlines future considerations regarding the delivery of mental health services. I acknowledge these findings and would like to reassure Western Australians that we are committed to ensuring improved access to mental health services and that lived experience is at the heart of our mental health system. We know early intervention and community-based services are key, and we are already implementing important reforms such as the recommendations of the *Final report—Ministerial taskforce into public mental health services for infants, children and adolescents aged 0–18 years in WA* to better meet the needs of Western Australians experiencing mental ill-health and their families.

The state government welcomes the report and will consult stakeholders in the development of a formal response. The independent governance review is a significant body of work, and I would like to thank the panel members for their important contribution to the future of our health and mental health systems. I table the report.

[See paper [1614](#).]