

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF WA HEALTH SYSTEM GOVERNANCE

Government Response — Statement by Minister for Health

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [1.23 pm]: I rise today to table the government response to the *Independent review of WA health system governance*. The WA Health Services Act 2016 was enacted almost seven years ago. The act delivered devolved governance in our health system, the establishment of the system manager and board-governed health service providers.

In January 2022, the McGowan government commissioned the independent review to examine the operational and practical effectiveness of the governance structures under the act to ensure that they were fit for purpose and operating to positively enhance patient experience and outcomes.

On 24 October last year, I tabled the final report, and further consultation was commenced. The panel found that the devolved governance model is maturing and should be maintained, and noted that key benefits of this model include more sustainable spending in health, with clearer accountability through health service provider boards. Fifty-five recommendations were made by the panel on strengthening accountability for patient outcomes, improving strategic alignment and driving delivery of strategic initiatives across the system.

On behalf of the McGowan government, I would like to acknowledge and thank the panel for its insights. I am pleased to advise the house that the government accepts in principle 49 of the 55 recommendations. Recommendations 14 and 15 propose significant changes to the public mental health system, shifting key responsibilities from the Mental Health Commission to the Department of Health. The panel found there is a need for stronger integration, collaboration and accountability and ensuring a joined up strategy in mental health planning. The government accepts these findings, but acknowledges that to get the governance arrangements right, more consideration is required and, consequently, at this time these recommendations are not accepted as written. I have established a time-limited working group tasked with listening to stakeholders, consumers and carers to work through how a best practice, collaborative model of governance can be established.

Recommendations on introducing a local commissioning model and on changes to the employing authority of chief executives are not supported at this time. Further consideration of local commissioning will be undertaken as part of the statutory review of the act.

Implementation of the recommendations accepted in principle will be led by the Department of Health in consultation with health service providers. Implementation will occur in alignment with the refocused priorities of the sustainable health review and, as always, with patient care and safety at the centre of the reforms. I table the report.

[See paper [1857](#).]