

41ST PARLIAMENT



Education and Health Standing Committee

Report 5

ANNUAL REPORT 2022–23

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Presented by  
Mr C.J. Tallentire, MLA

September 2023

## *Committee Members*

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Chair	Mr C.J. Tallentire, MLA Member for Thornlie
Deputy Chair	Ms L.L. Baker, MLA Member for Maylands
Members	Mrs L.A. Munday, MLA Member for Dawesville  Ms C.M. Collins, MLA Member for Hillarys  Mr K.J.J. Michel, MLA Member for Pilbara
Co-opted Member	Mr S.N. Aubrey, MLA Member for Scarborough (until 1 December 2022)

## *Committee Staff*

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Principal Research Officers	Ms Catie Parsons Ms Sylvia Wolf (13 February - 19 May 2023)
Research Officers	Ms Sylvia Wolf Ms Franchesca Walker (13 February - 2 June 2023)

Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
4 Harvest Terrace  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Tel: (08) 9222 7494

Email: [laehsc@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:laehsc@parliament.wa.gov.au)  
Website: [www.parliament.wa.gov.au/ehsc](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/ehsc)

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# Education and Health Standing Committee

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## Annual Report 2022-23

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Report No. 5

Presented by

**Mr C.J. Tallentire, MLA**

Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly on 21 September 2023



## Chair's Foreword

This is the third annual report of the Education and Health Standing Committee in the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament. The nature of our work is to focus on a particular inquiry topic, our current focus being an inquiry into support for autistic children and young people in schools. There is a vast range of topics within the education and health portfolios warranting inquiry by the Committee but it's essential to the delivery of quality reports that we be selective and focussed.

The first half of the reporting period was dedicated to the inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities. The inquiry and its terms of reference were referred to the Committee by the Legislative Assembly. Our work concluded with Report No. 4, *Report of the Inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities*. It is notable that the WA Government immediately committed to implement Recommendation 5 regarding the prohibition of conversion practices. All other recommendations have received support and are at varying stages of implementation.

An issue the Committee has been exploring concerns the governance of Western Australia's public universities. The Chief Scientist, Professor Peter Klinken AC, discussed this with the Committee early in the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament. It is pleasing that the Minister for Education has announced the State Government's commissioning of the University Sector Review Panel to examine the structure of WA's public university sector. The review is already underway and being chaired by Emeritus Professor Sandra Harding AO.

The Committee scans the horizon for looming issues. Our hearing with Nobel Laureate Professor Barry Marshall, WA Ambassador for Life Sciences and Director of the Marshall Centre for Infectious Diseases Research and Training, gave the Committee a view of emerging threats and opportunities. During a subsequent visit to the Marshall Centre at the University of Western Australia, the projection of antimicrobial resistant infections becoming the most common cause of death in our hospitals in the next 30 years, was outlined.

Enabling Western Australians to live as well as possible for as long as possible is a sensible articulation of the objectives of our health services sector. Good fortune, especially in relation to genetic make-up, plays an enormous role in achieving the objectives, but there are three essential controllable elements for which each of us can take personal responsibility: eating, sleeping and exercising well.

In relation to the first element of eating well, the Committee has committed to delivering a discussion paper on alternative proteins. The development of an alternative proteins sector could have a beneficial health impact while also reducing the environmental impact of the food production sector. In this regard, we are grateful to Professor Dora Marinova, Professor of Sustainability at Curtin University, for her appearance before the Committee. Additionally, the affordable supply of healthy, tasty alternative proteins could deliver enormous animal welfare benefits by reducing the need for intensive animal production systems.

I am most appreciative of the efforts of my parliamentary colleagues and Committee members, Deputy Chair Ms Lisa Baker MLA, Mrs Lisa Munday MLA, Ms Caitlin Collins MLA, Mr Kevin Michel MLA and co-opted member Mr Stuart Aubrey MLA (for the duration of the inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities). On behalf of my fellow Committee members, I would like to express our deepest thanks to principal research officer Catie Parsons, acting principal research officer and research officer Sylvia Wolf, and research officer Franchesca Walker.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chris Tallett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE, MLA  
CHAIR

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# Chapter 1

## Committee Activities

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### Introduction

- 1.1 This report covers the work undertaken by the Education and Health Standing Committee of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament during the 2022-23 financial year.
- 1.2 During the course of this reporting period (Table 1.1), the Committee:
- completed the inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities
  - commenced the inquiry into support for autistic children and young people in schools
  - held 22 deliberative meetings
  - took evidence from 21 witnesses at 11 public hearings, and held nine closed hearings
  - tabled two reports
  - undertook one site visit.

**Table 1.1: Summary of the activities of the Committee, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023**

Description	Activity
Deliberative meetings	22
Formal evidence hearings	20
Witnesses appearing (public hearings)	21
Reports tabled	2
Report findings tabled	42
Report recommendations tabled	5

### Portfolios

- 1.3 The four portfolio areas of the Committee as determined by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly are:
- Education and Training
  - Health
  - Mental Health, and
  - Medical Research.

### Public Hearings

- 1.4 Pursuant to Assembly Standing Order 264, the Committee has power to send for persons, papers and records. During the period 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023, the Committee conducted 11 public hearings, taking evidence from 21 witnesses to assist with its investigations (Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2: Public Hearings of the Committee, 1 July 2022-30 June 2023**

Date	Witness	Position	Organisation
3 August 2022	Ms Sarah Cowie	Director	Health and Disability Services Complaints Office
	Ms Rachel Beard	Deputy Director	
	Mr Kieran Handmer	Project Officer	
3 August 2022	Mx Charlotte Glance	Policy and Project Coordinator, Youth Pride Network	Youth Pride Network; Ending Conversion Practices WA
	Mr Mark Fallows	Chair, Ending Conversion Practices WA	
3 August 2022	Dr Nicole Lee	CEO and Founder	360 Edge
3 August 2022	Mr Alex Arpino	Development Coordinator/Operational Lead	Alcohol and Other Drug Consumer and Community Coalition
	Ms Alexandra Campbell	Systemic Advocacy Officer	
10 August 2022	Dr Robyn Lawrence	Assistant Director General, Clinical Excellence	Department of Health
	Dr Christina Bertilone	Acting Executive Director, Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Directorate	
	Mrs Vanessa MacDonald	Principal Consultant, Licencing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit	
10 August 2022	Mr Lindsay Hale	Deputy Commissioner	Mental Health Commission
	Mr Iain Hill	Director Treatment Services	
17 August 2022	Ms Jill Rundle	Chief Executive Officer, WA Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies	WA Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies; WA Association for Mental Health
	Mr Ethan James	Manager, Advocacy and Systems, WA Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies	
	Ms Taryn Harvey	Chief Executive Officer, WA Association for Mental Health	
	Mr Colin Penter	Projects Lead, WA Association for Mental Health	
15 March 2023	Professor Dora Marinova	Professor of Sustainability	Curtin University

15 March 2023	Professor Barry Marshall	Director	Marshall Centre for Infectious Diseases Research and Training
22 March 2023	Professor Andrew Whitehouse	Professor of Autism Research	Telethon Kids Institute
29 March 2023	Professor Sonya Girdler	Director	Curtin Autism Research Group

## Reports Tabled

1.5 The Committee tabled two reports during the period 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023.

- [Annual Report 2021-22](#) (tabled on 20 October 2022)
- [Report of the Inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities](#) (tabled on 1 December 2022)

### Report of the Inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities

1.6 On 7 April 2022, the Legislative Assembly requested that the Committee commence an inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities. Throughout the inquiry, the Committee received a broad range of complaints and allegations about the Esther Foundation.

1.7 The inquiry found that unacceptable practices occurred at the Esther Foundation which caused harm to residents, staff, volunteers and families. Existing legislative and regulatory frameworks for private healthcare facilities and mental health services did not capture the Esther Foundation to allow for oversight of its operations. The Committee found that the existing self-regulatory model was not adequate for protecting consumers of private mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment services.

1.8 The Committee made recommendations for the establishment of regulatory mechanisms that would capture private mental health and AOD treatment services, as well as increased powers to investigate complaints about health services. The report also recommended the introduction of legislation to prohibit conversion practices and the establishment of a civil response scheme for survivors of conversion practices. The government response to the recommendations was tabled on 14 March 2023.

## Other Activities

1.9 The Committee conducted several other hearings to gather information to inform possible future inquiries.

### Professor Dora Marinova

1.10 The Committee invited Professor Dora Marinova to a hearing on 15 March 2023 to discuss the role of alternative proteins in reducing meat consumption, health outcomes associated with alternative proteins, and the role education plays in influencing dietary choices. Professor Marinova's evidence was influential in the Committee's decision to produce an issues paper about alternative proteins.

**Professor Barry Marshall**

- 1.11 The Committee invited Professor Barry Marshall to a hearing on 15 March 2023 to discuss research occurring at the Marshall Centre. Professor Marshall gave evidence about the development and distribution of vaccinations, infectious disease surveillance, antimicrobial resistance, the impacts of COVID-19 on medical research, and insights into how medical research is translated into healthcare outcomes.
- 1.12 Following the hearing with Professor Marshall, the Committee undertook a tour of the Marshall Centre on 18 April 2023 where the Committee observed the work of researchers and was able to learn more about their work. A presentation on the Centre’s research highlighted that antimicrobial resistant infections are predicted to be the most common cause of death in our hospitals in the next 30 years.

**Professor Andrew Whitehouse**

- 1.13 The Committee invited Professor Andrew Whitehouse to a hearing on 22 March 2023 to discuss issues impacting autistic Western Australians, including school supports for autistic students. Professor Whitehouse gave evidence about the work of the Telethon Kids Institute, some of the challenges and successes for research being put into practice, and the emergence of autism strategies in other jurisdictions. Professor Whitehouse’s evidence was influential in the Committee’s decision to undertake its inquiry into support for autistic children and young people in schools.

**Professor Sonya Girdler**

- 1.14 The Committee invited Professor Sonya Girdler to a hearing on 29 March 2023 to discuss issues impacting autistic Western Australians, including school supports for autistic students. Professor Girdler gave evidence about the work of the Curtin Autism Research Group (CARG), some of the challenges and successes for research being put into practice, and collaborations occurring between CARG and international researchers. Professor Girdler’s evidence was influential in the Committee’s decision to undertake its inquiry into support for autistic children and young people in schools.

**Work in progress**

**Inquiry into support for autistic children and young people in schools**

- 1.15 On 18 May 2023, the Committee commenced an inquiry into support for autistic children and young people in schools. The inquiry will consider the prevalence of autism in WA and the availability of support in schools. This will include a focus on how evidence-based practices are implemented across the school system and the significance of co-ordinated service delivery. The inquiry will also consider strategies in other jurisdictions that support school systems to respond to the needs of autistic students. The Committee will table its inquiry report on 21 March 2024.

**Issues paper on alternative proteins**

- 1.16* Separate to its current inquiry, the Committee is developing an issues paper on alternative proteins and will table a short report at a future date.



## Chapter 2

### Financial Statement

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- 2.1 The Committee does not have its own formal budget and is funded out of the budget of the Legislative Assembly. Approval for major expenditures is required on a case-by-case basis and is entirely at the discretion of the Speaker.
- 2.2 The Committee's expenditure for the financial year 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023 (in accordance with Standing Order 276) is detailed below:

**Table 2.1: Expenditure items of the Committee, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023**

Expenditure Item	Amount (\$)
Advertising	3,674
Printing	926
Member and staff amenities	275
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,875</b>

2.3 Notes:

- Figures rounded off to nearest dollar.
- Salaries of committee staff are not included.
- Costs of shared administrative expenses, including lease costs for committee accommodation, not included.



MR C.J. TALLENTIRE, MLA  
CHAIR



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Parliament House  
4 Harvest Terrace, West Perth WA 6005  
Telephone: +61 8 9222 7222  
Email: [laco@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:laco@parliament.wa.gov.au)  
Website: [www.parliament.wa.gov.au](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au)