

## **Legislative Council of Western Australia**

### **Child Development Services in Western Australia**

I would like to make this simple submission in regard to the lack of availability of child development services, in my case particularly in the Great Southern Country Health Service.

I won't go into my personal circumstances too much with my own 4 children, however as you know intervention with children needs to occur at the earliest stage for the best possible outcomes.

When a parent is seeking assistance for a child – a waitlist of 2 years results in the child's problem escalating and growing in size, which then draws on further medical resources for longer for both child and struggling parents.

I have experienced considerable wait times and the lack of resources in the country with my own children. Also finding practitioners in Allied Health that have the expertise in treating some of the more unusual diagnosis is extremely difficult and leads to Zoom therapy which for some patients is not suitable as to the lack of engagement with this form. This is also very costly for not overly good outcomes but as a parent's you grasp anything.

I have a 13 year old daughter that was happily attending school and striving to be her best, to now a girl that is upset, and on the point of giving up with her education. I have requested paediatric review however that is likely to be 18 months to 2 years away whilst we wait for an assessment for help. She is currently in Year 8, she can't wait 2 years if she wants to look to a career that requires an ATAR path. Unfortunately driving to Perth and seeing somebody privately is also not an option due to the same waitlist for city residents. In Albany we have only recently (within the last 2 years) received a locally based Paediatric service that was already overwhelmed before the clinic opened.

Recently I had a telehealth appointment with my son (Year 9), each time I see the Paediatrician with him I need to see her for review but the review is always longer than she plans and it means my child is constantly treading water whilst we trial medicine, all the time losing valuable school time while he is unable to concentrate and retain information. I am frustrated by paying private school fees whilst he is unable to concentrate, we all just want our children to be the best they can and it seems the simplest things are blocking the system, I can't increase his medicine as planned because there is no appointment for him at

the recommended time. The medication is also expensive at \$42.50 a fortnight whilst we wait to get to the right therapeutic dose, that has to be done by Paediatrician.

I urge the government to look at ways of allowing General Practitioners with paediatric training to become involved in the assessment of children particularly those with ADHD whereby treatment can be prescribed and monitored within the General Practice clinic. Paediatric trained Child Health Nurses could be upskilled and involved in the assessments that are often undertaken by Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapist using a standard set of activities and specialised computer programs for assessment, as I have watched this occur with one of my own children. Most often Connors assessments are completed by Teachers and parents when assessing for ADHD.

We certainly have a problem and we need to delegate to get immediate help for the children that are our future.