



**Minister for Health; Culture & the Arts
Government of Western Australia**

Our Ref: 33-33374

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr. *O'Brien Simon*

Thank you for your letter of 10 May 2016 regarding Petition No. 105 (Esperance Hospital Support Services) which was tabled by Hon Dave Grills MLC in the Legislative Council on 1 December 2015. I am also aware of the previous petition tabled in the Legislative Assembly by Dr Graham Jacobs MLA in November 2015 regarding the same issue.

Mrs Congreve correctly draws attention to the increasing incidence of methamphetamine use in the Esperance area, and to the increasing demand placed on medical services in Esperance by users of methamphetamine. Her letter and the petition call for the establishment of a detox unit at Esperance Hospital, on call acute Mental Health services at Esperance Hospital, and increased Drug and Alcohol services in the community.

Esperance Hospital has had 171 admissions since July 2013 where the primary diagnosis was alcohol or drug intoxication. There have been 36 admissions in that time period for drug induced psychosis, 28 of which were for methamphetamine induced psychosis.

Alcohol and drug detox is not an end in itself; rather detox is a step in the process of supporting the drug or alcohol user to recover from their dependency.

The majority of alcohol and drug detox in Esperance do not require hospital admission, but can be safely and appropriately managed in the community, either as a home detox or supervised in the community by a GP. Cases where there is a concern that the patient may develop a significant withdrawal syndrome are currently managed in Esperance Hospital. Esperance Hospital has the capacity to safely manage alcohol and drug detoxes and has been doing so.

Since July 2013 Esperance Hospital has had 39 admissions for inpatient management of alcohol detox, 14 admissions for inpatient drug detox, and seven admissions for combined alcohol and drug detox.

Working in partnership with the Community Drug and Alcohol Team, the Community Mental health team and HOPE, Esperance Hospital has set up a multi-disciplinary team to ensure that all patients who need an inpatient detox as part of their recovery obtain one in a timely manner before transferring them on to rehab.

Esperance Hospital has managed 60 inpatient detox episodes since July 2013. Esperance Hospital is working in partnership to ensure that all patients who are on a recovery program and are assessed as needing inpatient detox, receive it.

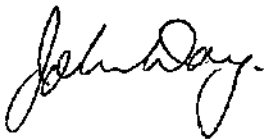
Esperance Hospital has the capacity, within its current resources, to continue managing inpatient detox when this is a necessary component of a patient's recovery plan.

Consequently, there is no immediate or foreseeable need for a separate dedicated specialist inpatient detox unit.

WACHS understands that the Department of Regional Development is considering a project entitled *Growing the Capacity of Drug and Alcohol Detoxification and Rehabilitation Programs in the Goldfields*. WACHS is yet to be involved but would welcome engagement in due course.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Day". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "D".

**JOHN DAY
MINISTER FOR HEALTH;
CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

23 JUN 2016