



WAAMH

**Western Australian Association
for Mental Health**

MEDIA RELEASE

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**State Government's ongoing commitment to the Mental Health Commission
a positive sign for mental health reform**

THE Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) welcomes the State Government's response to the Review of Clinical Governance of Public Health Services announced today, and particularly commends the ongoing commitment to the important leadership role played by the WA Mental Health Commission (MHC).

WAAMH has advocated strongly for the ongoing preservation of the MHC and was pleased to see this first secured as an election commitment in 2017 from the McGowan Government, and reinforced in today's announcement.

This is a great step towards a balanced and sustainable mental health system, as also underpinned in the recent Sustainable Health Review.

WAAMH president Kerry Hawkins said WA was uniquely placed across the country to show leadership in progressive mental health reform by changing the narrative around mental health in our community and creating the balanced mental health system envisaged in our State's unique 10-year vision.

"WA has demonstrated real leadership that genuinely values and encourages the voice of lived experience and social interventions to address the various determinants contributing to people's mental health and wellbeing," Ms Hawkins said.

"We look forward to continuing to engage with the Government on how the lived experience leadership will be represented within public health services, to complement the existing clinical expertise."

The outcome of the Review has also meant the appointment of a new Chief Medical Officer, reporting directly to the Mental Health Commissioner, and the introduction of a new mental health executive committee.

This role will provide clinical expertise, contribute to strategic planning and policy development, strengthen consumer and community focused clinical care, and liaise with non-government services to support system integration across WA's public mental health, alcohol and other drug services.

"We recognise the need to build clinical expertise within the Commission and support good working relationships with the public mental health systems and community sector, so this is a positive development," Ms Hawkins said.

One of the key elements of the new committee will focus on improving partnerships with the community sector, and strengthen the consumer-focus, ensuring lived experience is central to policy development and service delivery.

"We were pleased the Review panel consulted across the mental health sector and sought input from a combination of clinicians, consumers, carers and family representatives," Ms Hawkins said.

Seeing it first-hand, Ms Hawkins agreed with findings from the State Government that WA's mental health system was under significant strain from increasing demand.

"We commend the Government's messaging around needing to boost community-based services, provide alternatives to hospitals, strengthen prevention and work on system improvements in order to relieve the increasing pressure on acute services," Ms Hawkins said.

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Peak body representing the community-based mental health sector in WA.

"We look forward to working alongside Government, clinical services and the community towards an integrated and strengthened mental health system for the future."

Read the full Review of the Clinical Governance of Public Mental Health Services here: <https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au>

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