STATEMENT OF EXPECTATION – EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

In the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, I have reconsidered my recent Statement of Expectation dated 5 February 2020. Your continued exemplary leadership of Health Support Services (HSS) during the current state of emergency, including efforts to facilitate Department of Health (DOH) and other health service provider (HSP) staff to work from home for business continuity purposes, is to be commended.

As the responsible Minister for the governing bodies of HSPs, my Statement of Expectation below is to be read in the context of the functions and responsibilities of a HSP as listed in the Health Services Act 2016.

The State Government is committed to minimising the impact of COVID-19 on the Western Australian community and whilst efforts to date have been focused on containing the virus, the WA health system as a whole must prepare for the prospect of more cases becoming seriously ill. As the governing body for HSS, I expect you to commit your full resources to the management of this pandemic and to support the governance structure for health operations established by the DOH for this purpose.

During this time, I expect that HSS will continue strategies to support the health and wellbeing of the workforce as a matter of priority. Such initiatives are to enhance organisational culture and address the issues arising from the 2019 “Your Voice in Health” Employee Engagement Survey. Equally, you are to ensure there are contemporary strategies and implementation plans to eliminate bullying and provide a safe workplace, particularly in the context of the unacceptable increase in violence being experienced by our frontline staff.
The State Government is committed to direct and permanent employment. The importance of the implementation of Commissioner’s Instruction 23, which includes undertaking assessments for conversion and appointment of fixed term contract and casual employees to permancy, remains a high priority.

In these challenging times I also refer you to Public Sector Labour Relations (PSLR) circulars 6/2020: Leave arrangements for COVID-19 and 7/2020: Government-initiated changes related to COVID-19 – workforce arrangements. To be responsive to rapidly changing environments due to COVID-19 the PSLR circulars provide flexibility to address workforce matters.

The reporting of outcomes to the DOH, the Public Sector Commission and PSLR ensures I am regularly informed of developments.

The State Government remains committed to the implementation of the Sustainable Health Review; however formal progression of this program of work will be slowed or deferred until the current emergency passes. Further advice will be provided in due course.

As part of global efforts to minimise the impacts of COVID-19, I expect you to promote research and innovation opportunities insofar as it is practicable to do so during this period of elevated demand.

HSS is to have a continued focus on meeting designated Performance Targets.

I note that current work to progress the Digital Health Strategy, including the HSS HealthNext Project, may be slowed or deferred as appropriate. Insofar as it is practicable to do so, the Medical Imaging Replacement Program (MIRP#2) and the My Health Record (MHR) expansion program should be continued relative to operational priorities.

All efforts will be made and continue to be maintained to ensure financial costs are managed and minimised where possible. I recognise this will be challenging within the COVID-19 environment. Any emerging issues should be discussed with the System Manager as early as possible.

The public sector will continue to play a vital role in achieving the McGowan Government’s ambition to unlock the potential of the State – economically, socially and environmentally – and ensure all Western Australians share in its prosperity. I therefore expect that HSS will develop and institute plans to ensure that it is well placed in the recovery phase of this current pandemic. Comprehensive planning will be key to an orderly transition to business as usual operations and your leadership will be crucial during this time.
Noting current Governance arrangements, you are accountable to me as the responsible Minister. In discharging its functions HSS is obliged to comply with all relevant policy frameworks issued by the DOH Chief Executive Officer (the Director General). You are required to work towards the change of governance for HSS from a chief executive governed to a board governed HSP which will take effect from 1 July 2020.

I expect HSS to provide accurate and timely advice to the Government on significant issues in its core areas of business and ensure progress is made in achieving the Government’s priorities.

I look forward to receiving your response to my Statement of Expectation in the form of a Statement of Intent as soon as practicable. I request that the Statement of Expectation and Statement of Intent be published on your website.

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the considerable efforts that you are taking to lead HSS through the current pandemic while ensuring the people of Western Australia continue to access world class health care

Yours sincerely

HON ROGER COOK MLA
DEPUTY PREMIER
MINISTER FOR HEALTH; MENTAL HEALTH

16 APR 2020