



**The Hon Roger Cook MLA
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health; Mental Health**

Our Ref: 4-119600

Professor Christobel Saunders
Chair
PathWest Board
christobel.saunders@uwa.edu.au

Dear Professor Saunders

Christobel,

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATION – EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

In the context of the change of governance of PathWest to a board governed health service provider (HSP), I am pleased to provide you with my Statement of Expectation.

As you know, the *Health Services (Health Service Providers) Amendment Order (No. 3) 2020* was published in the *Government Gazette* on 26 June 2020 and the operational provisions of the Order commenced on 1 July 2020. The Director General and the Department of Health (DOH) will work closely with the PathWest Board (Board) and Executive during this transitional period to support and assist with the implementation of this change in governance.

As the governing body of a board governed HSP, the Board is required to perform the HSP's functions and exercise the powers of the HSP as stipulated in the *Health Services Act 2016* (the Act) or any other written law, including the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and *Financial Management Act 2006*. My Statement of Expectation below is to be read in the context of the functions and responsibilities of an HSP as listed in the Act.

The State Government is committed to minimising the impact of COVID-19 on the Western Australian community. Whilst efforts to date have been focused on containing the virus and preventing people becoming seriously ill, the WA health system must also prepare for the recovery phase of this emergency. I expect the Board to commit their full resources to the management of this pandemic and to support the governance structure for health operations established by the DOH for this purpose.

You will be aware of the Government's Sustainable Health Review (SHR) that prioritises the delivery of patient-centred, high quality and financially sustainable healthcare across our state. The SHR contains 8 Enduring Strategies and 30 Recommendations which seek to drive a cultural and behavioural shift across the health system. The SHR serves as the blueprint for the WA health system's recovery from the current pandemic and has been incorporated into the State Health Recovery Sub-Plan.

The State Government is committed to the implementation of this Review. It is my expectation that the Board will ensure the progression and delivery of priority recommendations of the Review in support of the response and recovery, and the reform of Western Australia's health system. Implementation of the Recommendations will require dedication to change that must reinforce the importance of acting together, while holding people accountable for agreed outcomes. I expect the Board to work both independently and as part of the broader health system, in partnership with the System Manager and HSPs in the implementation of the ongoing response and recovery and the SHR.

Your attention is drawn to *Strategy 6: Invest in digital health and use data wisely*, and the implementation of Recommendation 21 to ensure real-time reporting across the system to improve patient health choices. In addition, I highlight *Strategy 7: Culture and workforce to support new models of care*, with the necessary focus on implementing Recommendation 23 to develop workforce culture, Recommendation 26 to build workforce planning capabilities and Recommendation 27 to improve workforce employment arrangements. Full details are available in the Sustainable Health Review Final Report.

I hold a strong expectation that Safety and Quality will be a core focus for the Board. I expect that work to evaluate and consolidate progress regarding the improvement of patient outcomes will be prioritised. This will include work towards the publication of safety and quality information to support a culture of openness and transparency.

I also expect the Board to implement strategies to support the health and wellbeing of the PathWest workforce as a matter of priority. Such initiatives are to enhance organisational culture and address the issues arising from the 2020 "Your Voice in Health" Employee Engagement Surveys. Equally, the Board is 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 permanency, is a high priority.

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 during this pandemic and the recovery phase, the PSLR circulars provide flexibility to address workforce matters. The ongoing reporting to the DOH, the Public Sector Commission and PSLR ensures I am regularly informed of developments.

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

I expect the Board to provide accurate and timely advice to the Government on significant issues in core areas of business including any risk to achieving election commitments as a result of COVID-19.

The Board is to have a focus on meeting designated performance targets.

The Laboratory Information System (LIS) replacement project was initiated to replace the ageing legacy systems with a single state-wide modern integrated system that meets PathWest's requirements and is optimally aligned to the requirements of health care provision into the future. I expect the Board to prioritise the successful delivery of the LIS project, which includes the commissioning of a replacement LIS.

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 in the current environment. Any emerging issues should be discussed with the System Manager as early as possible.

I expect that patients and families will retain current opportunities to connect with their healthcare providers and share their health care experience, including through the Care Opinion system. I expect the Board to promote consumer engagement and patient experience platforms.

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 the Board to develop and institute plans to ensure that PathWest is well placed for this recovery phase of the pandemic. Comprehensive planning will be key to an orderly transition to business as usual operations and the leadership of the Board will be crucial during this time.

Noting current Governance arrangements, the Board is accountable to me as the responsible Minister. In discharging its functions, the Board is obliged to comply with all relevant policy frameworks issued by the Director General. This includes the mandatory requirements outlined in the *HSP Board - Governance Policy* that sits within the *Statutory Board Operations Policy Framework*.

The Board will comply with the board assurance processes and requirement to submit an Annual Governance Attestation Statement to me at the conclusion of each financial year.

I look forward to receiving the Board's 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.

Health service provider boards are essential governance infrastructure for the WA health system during these challenging times. I look forward to working with the Board to ensure PathWest continues its work in supporting the safe, high quality and timely delivery of health services to the people of Western Australia.

Yours sincerely



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

20 AUG 2020