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**Your Ref: 4-200209**

Enquiries: M. Ielati / N Chisholm

Hon Roger Cook MLA  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Health; Mental Health  
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2 Havelock St  
**WEST PERTH WA 6005**

**Via Email:** [ministerials@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:ministerials@health.wa.gov.au)

Dear Minister

## **STATEMENT OF EXPECTATION – PATHWEST STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Thank you for your letter dated 4 June 2021 outlining your Statement of Expectation for PathWest Laboratory Medicine WA (PathWest).

As the Pathwest Board Chair, I provide you with the PathWest Board's commitment to meeting your stated expectations and to ensuring that the Government's key strategic priorities for PathWest are realised. The Board will work to ensure that the community's confidence in PathWest as Western Australia's public pathology provider continues to be strengthened through our provision of high-quality pathology and forensic services. The Board provides the following responses to your Statement of Expectation:

### **COVID-19**

PathWest continues to support WA's public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. PathWest collectors continue to provide reliable, regular swabbing services to the community at quarantine hotels, airports, ports and in the fulfilment of domiciliary requests.

As a Board, we are very proud of the WA health system's efforts in, and the contribution to, WA's response to this pandemic. We acknowledge the continued service of PathWest in responding to COVID-19 across the State. Our staff's dedication and commitment to protecting the WA community is truly inspiring.

### **Safety and Quality**

Safety and quality of services provided by PathWest continue to be a priority for the Board, Executive and broader organisation. Ongoing accreditation by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) continues to be achieved in all areas, noting there has been a revised approach to assessment due to COVID-19 restrictions. Negotiations with NATA continue in relation to the timings of future audit programs.

PathWest contributes laboratory information system data on an annual basis to the Department of Health's *Your safety in our hands in hospital* report (the Report). The Report provides our WA community with information about how the WA health system manages

clinical incidents, consumer feedback and coronial recommendations arising from health care delivery, as well as its mortality review processes. It aims to deliver an indication of the types of challenges affecting patient safety, and to support continual improvement in the overall quality of health care in our State.

During 2021, the governance of safety and quality at Pathwest has been restructured with the clinical stream now reporting directly to the Chief Pathologist. The Chief Pathologist has been working with the Board Safety and Quality Committee throughout the year to continue to develop a strong safety and quality portfolio. A Director, Quality and Safety position has been established to assist in the development of key areas within the discipline.

The Committee is responsible for monitoring PathWest compliance with the *Clinical, Safety and Quality Policy Framework* and all applicable clinical, safety and quality related mandatory requirements. This includes state-wide and PathWest developed safety and quality performance indicators, national safety and quality standards, accreditation and credentialing requirements.

### **Workforce Safety, Wellbeing and Engagement**

PathWest continues to be committed to the health, wellbeing and engagement of our workforce. Our commitment to improvement in these areas will be supported through the recently established PathWest Wellbeing Working Group, the implementation of wellness initiatives and the improvement of our Occupational Safety and Health Services.

Organisational culture and staff engagement remain a strong focus for the Board and the People and Culture Committee. In 2021, PathWest will continue to release a number of key documents, including the PathWest Training and Development Plan, the Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan, and the Leadership Capability Framework to reinforce PathWest's focus on these areas. Actions arising from these key documents aim to improve culture and engagement across PathWest.

In response to the results of the Your Voice in Health 2021 survey, PathWest has established the above noted PathWest Wellness Working Group to address the issues raised by staff. PathWest will continue to work closely with its extended leadership team to identify and commence action plans to respond positively to the survey results. The Committee will continue to prioritise its work in these areas.

PathWest continues to promote its "Speak Up" culture including a review of strategies to identify and eliminate bullying in the workplace.

### **Commitment to Permanent Employment**

PathWest has made notable progress in the review of fixed term and casual contract employees and will continue to prioritise the appointment of staff to permanent positions where applicable. Education and training will be provided to PathWest Managers to promote the use of permanent appointments and to improve the overall recruitment process and experience for staff.

### **Sustainable Health Review**

PathWest is dedicated to the implementation of the Sustainable Health Review (SHR) recommendations accepted by the State Government. PathWest representatives are involved in the SHR's consultative process and will continue to work in partnership with the Sustainable Health Implementation Program Steering Committee. I note and support the

inclusion of implementation requirements into the Chief Executive's performance agreement.

### **Research and Innovation**

PathWest is actively promoting excellence through research and innovation opportunities. In 2021, a key focus has been on the COVID-19 response, which required rapid development and validation of new tests to detect the novel virus and scaling up to ensure we can meet surge capacity.

Further resourcing for research activities is underway to enhance interactions with industry through the introduction of new technologies and the exploration of collaborative ventures which may lead to commercialisation opportunities.

The Board continues to work with the Chief Pathologist and the Office of Research Governance to strengthen the culture of research and innovation at PathWest, to ensure PathWest research is promoted and its researchers are recognised as world leaders in pathology and laboratory medicine research.

### **Election Commitments**

The Board and Executive will continue to prioritise the implementation of, and regular reporting on, the Government's election commitments pertinent to PathWest.

### **Key PathWest Workstreams**

The planning and delivery of the PathWest State Mortuary Upgrade remains a priority for the Board and the Executive with regular reporting on the progress of these works provided by Strategic Projects.

### **Care Opinion**

Pathology plays a vital role in the WA health system and PathWest remains committed to understanding and responding appropriately to patient experiences. Through a variety of mechanisms available across the WA health system including Patient Opinion and our complaints/compliments feedback tools, we use each patient experience to inform the continuous improvement of our services across Western Australia.

Work is underway to streamline the feedback management process currently used by PathWest. One proposal is the development of a centralised customer feedback management system which will allow visibility and the analysis of trends and patterns in feedback for the purpose of compliance, governance and quality improvement.

A review of the communication provided to consumers through the external PathWest website and at all PathWest Collection Centres is also in progress. The proposed outcome is to increase the methods by which information is made available to consumers and clarify what they can expect from us when lodging a complaint and the availability of independent health care complaints commissioners.

### **Financial Performance**

PathWest has met all its 2020/21 financial performance objectives despite the protracted impact of COVID-19, with favourable outcomes in Own Sourced Revenue (including income from other public sector entities) and Net Surplus in comparison to budget and annual estimates. This positive financial performance was achieved whilst continuing to provide high level pathology and forensic services to its stakeholders despite the challenging conditions brought about by COVID-19 and the implementation of the new Laboratory

Information System (LIS). The 2020/21 financial performance also includes improvement in working capital, a stronger balance sheet, and a more secure supply chain. PathWest continues to invest in minor works and stimulus package programs which are being progressively completed in close coordination with the System Manager and Department of Finance Building Management and Works.

The 2020/21 Annual Report is expected to be signed in September 2021 following the completion of the year-end audit by the Office of the Auditor General.

The 2021/22 Interim Service Agreement is currently being used as the reference for this year's budget until such time as the Service Agreement is finalised which is expected to be in September 2021.

### **Recovery**

PathWest has played an integral role as part of the broader WA health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our staff has worked hard to ensure the WA community could benefit from reliable, high level swabbing and testing pathology services at all times despite the often highly challenging circumstances. The Board and PathWest will continue to work together to support WA health and the WA community as the State transitions into business as usual operations. The Board remains committed to providing the support and leadership necessary to ensure PathWest continues to play its role in helping all Western Australians share in our State's prosperity.

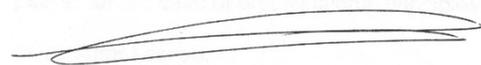
### **WA Health System Governance and Advice to Government**

I acknowledge that as the Board Chair of PathWest, I am accountable to you as the responsible Minister. PathWest will continue to implement and comply with applicable policy frameworks issued by the System Manager, and maintain all accreditation, legislative obligations and accountability requirements.

The PathWest Board will continue to fulfil its functions, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities as outlined in the Statutory Board Governance Policy and as prescribed in the *Health Services Act 2016*. I note that we have recently completed our first Annual Governance Attestation statement, which will be sent to you through the Office of the Director General, Department of Health.

The Board looks forward to continuing its work with you and delivering the strategic priorities outlined in your correspondence.

Yours sincerely



Professor Christobel Saunders

**BOARD CHAIR**

**PATHWEST LABORATORY MEDICINE WA**

13 September 2021