The Service Priority Review received submissions from the following unions:

- Community & Public Sector Union / Civil Service Association of WA
- Health Services Union of Western Australia
- The State School Teachers’ Union of Western Australia
- UnionsWA
- United Voice
27 June 2017

Mr Iain Rennie CNZM
Chair
Service Priority Review

Via email: servicepriorityreview@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr Rennie

Re: CPSU/CSA Submission to the Service Priority Review

Thank you for your letter of 26 May 2017 inviting the CPSU/CSA to make a submission to the Service Priority Review on the three key themes identified from within the Terms of Reference as shaping the Panel’s work on the Review.

Please find attached the CPSU/CSA’s submission, addressing all three themes of the Terms of Reference. Thank you also to the Secretariat for providing a brief extension.

Please be advised that on behalf of the CPSU/CSA, I would like to exercise the invitation provided by you to discuss this submission with the Panel in person at a further meeting.

Please contact Ms Kylie Turner, CPSU/CSA on 0409 102 063 or at kylie.turner@cpsucsa.org to arrange a meeting time at your convenience.

Yours sincerely

Toni Walkington
Branch Secretary
CPSU/CSA Submission to the Service Priority Review

The Community and Public Sector Union / Civil Service Association (CPSU/CSA) is a West Australian Union representing 630 occupations in over 130 public sector agencies.

We make work life better for over 40,000 people in WA.

We represent public sector staff at the agencies under the consideration of the Service Priority Review.

- We believe that robust, dynamic and quality public services are the foundation of a fair and just society.
- We are vehemently opposed to the privatisation of public goods and services.
- In formulating this report, we have consulted as widely as possible with members given the restrictions of the tight timeline.

The CPSU/CSA welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Service Priority Review, as the key stakeholder representing the workforce of the Western Australian public sector. In making this submission to the Service Priority Review, the CPSU/CSA would also welcome an opportunity for further discussion and presentation to the Panel.

The Service Priority Review is an opportunity for a fresh lens on the sector, to assess the health of the current machinations and functions and ascertain how to better support its workforce who serve the community of Western Australia.

The CPSU/CSA also wishes to identify the inherent difficulty in providing analysis and comment about the Western Australian public sector when it is currently in transition via the Machinery of Government amalgamations, which will commence in July 2017 with some changes already underway. Any analysis or comment about the state of the various public sector agencies and workforce prior to transition may in some cases be resolved in the implementation stages of the amalgamations. In contrast, the amalgamations may also create other issues for the public sector which are not yet anticipated. For this reason, the CPSU/CSA intends to contribute further as the Review progresses, including reflections on the amalgamations and an implementation framework for future Machinery of Government changes as they arise.
Executive Summary

In addressing all three themes articulated in the Terms of Reference circulated to stakeholders in May 2017, this submission is structured as follows:

1. Definitions

2. Reflections on Theme 1 of the Terms of Reference:  
   Customer-focused and Outcomes-based service design and delivery
   - Citizen-centric service design
   - Service design and delivery: Investing in prevention and diversion services
   - Regional issues for service design and delivery
   - Measurements of public sector performance and service outcomes: KPIs vs employee engagement models
   - Cultural change: innovation, creativity and appropriate risk
   Recommendations 1-2

3. Reflections on Theme 2 of the Terms of Reference:  
   Contemporary, adaptable and high-performing workforce
   - Senior Executive Service, the two-tiered system and access to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission
   - Excessive workload
   - Attraction and retention of skilled workforce: resourcing, diversity and mobility
   - Job security: Fixed Term Contract Conversion to Permanency
   - Job security: Preventing involuntary redundancy
   - Labour hire/contracting out/outsourcing
   Case studies
   Recommendations 3-5

4. Reflections on Theme 3 of the Terms of Reference:  
   Efficient and effective systems and processes
   - Delegations Schedules: "7 layers of sign-off"
   - Collaboration: Intra-agency, inter-agency and with the not-for-profit sector
   - Public sector accountability for service delivery
   - Clarity of roles and processes: Sector-wide Code of Conduct and HR policies
   - Machinery of Government: Relocations and Implementation Framework
   Recommendations 6-8

5. Conclusion
6. References
7. Contact
**Definitions**

**Agency:** a department or an SES organisation.

**Citizen-centric service design:** Designing public sector services with the citizen (community member) at the centre.

**Contracting-out:** Paying a corporation or another organisation to undertake a service that was previously provided directly by the government. In this report, outsourcing and contracting-out are used interchangeably.

**Department:** a department established under section 35 Public Sector Management Act 1994.

**Innovation:** Significant improvements to public administration and/or services.

**Job security:** A cluster of attributes that if implemented would protect public sector employees’ jobs, including but not limited to permanent employment being the default mode of employment, restriction of non-essential labour hire, ceasing outsourcing, and no forced redundancies.

**Labour hire:** A labour hire arrangement is one whereby a labour hire company or agency provides individual workers to a public sector client or host with the labour hire company being ultimately responsible for the worker’s remuneration. These workers may be employed directly by the labour hire company, or independent or dependent contractors.

For the purposes of this submission, the definition of labour hire also includes independent contractors with an ABN who have been engaged by a public sector agency on a contract for service basis.

**Non-SES organisation:** an entity which consists of —

(a) a body, whether corporate or unincorporate, or the holder of an office, post or position, being a body or office, post or position that is established or continued for a public purpose under a written law; and

(b) persons employed by or for the purposes of that body or holder under that written law or another written law, and which neither is nor includes —

(c) an SES organisation; or

(d) an entity specified in column 2 of Schedule 1;

**Organisation:** a non-SES organisation or SES organisation

**Place-based approach to service delivery:** A place-based approach is one that seeks to address the collective problems of families and communities at a local level, usually involving a focus on community-strengthening.
Prevention and diversion services: Services designed and/or delivered by the public sector which are targeted towards universal prevention, early intervention and diversion and are broad-reaching in their scope.

Privatisation: Privatisation can encompass the direct sale of Government Assets; Social Impact Bonds, outsourcing, Public Private Partnerships, commissioning, contracting and private finance initiatives.

- Social Impact Bonds: A complex venture capitalist model applied to the provision of social and other public services that relies on the profit motive to get private investors to fund and source the service delivery in order to ensure an agreed social outcome is reached. If the investor is successful, governments pay them a profit of between 15-30%, but if not they do not receive a profit.
- Outsourcing: The delivery of public services by a workforce employed by an employer external to the government agency that is responsible for their delivery.
- Public Private Partnerships: A contract between government and a private company [where] a private company finances, builds, and operates some element of a public service [and] gets paid over a number of years, either through charges paid by users, or by payments from the public authority, or a combination of both.
- Commissioning: “Commissioning is a definitionally fuzzy concept that can mean a range of things to different people. There is no such thing as a definitive definition of commissioning and it tends to be used in a fairly broad way.......In an Australian context this is important — many of the uses of the terminology of commissioning to date have been as a synonym for more contracting out or privatisation. In a number of documents the types of words that appear alongside commissioning are things like "contracting" and "contestability", with the aim of delivering efficiencies through competition-like mechanisms." (Dickinson, 2015)

Public Sector: means all —
(a) the agencies; and
(b) the ministerial offices; and
(c) the non-SES organisations;

Service model: The assumption, systems and structures on which the delivery and design of a service to the community are based.

Senior Executive Service: means the Senior Executive Service as constituted under section 43 Public Sector Management Act.

SES organisation: means an entity which consists of —
(a) a body, whether corporate or unincorporate, or the holder of an office, post or position, being a body or office, post or position —
   (i) established or continued for a public purpose under a written law; and
   (ii) specified in column 2 of Schedule 2; and
(b) persons employed by or for the purposes of that body or holder under that written law or another written law;
**Workforce capability:** The measure of a workforce's ability to achieve the tasks and objectives of their role through the application of skills, knowledge and attributes.

**Workforce capacity:** The present or future measure of how much the workforce can do in an operational situation, referring to availability of appropriately skilled staff (such as absolute numbers) and workforce performance (qualitative elements such as staff engagement and motivation).

**Workforce mobility:** The ability and possibility for both interagency and intra-agency movements of public sector employees, either on a temporary (secondment) or permanent (transfer) basis.
**Theme 1: Customer-focused and outcomes-based service design and delivery**

*Building a public sector focused on community needs and open to new ways of working*

The public sector’s role is to support all three arms of government – the executive, the legislature and the judiciary and in so doing, to support the West Australian community. The public sector can be considered as comprising a number of categories - public service departments, SES and non-SES organisations, other organisations and independent offices. The CPSU/CSA has industrial coverage of the majority of employees in those spheres of the public sector.

When considering how best to serve the community, the CPSU/CSA’s view is that it is necessary to consult with representative bodies who are well placed to articulate the service needs of the community, however ultimately the workforce itself who has the accrued knowledge and experience of serving the community over a number of years, both in terms of service design and delivery.

**Citizen-centric service design**

The CPSU/CSA is interested in the consideration of a shift towards citizen-centric service design, however that is a broad umbrella term encompassing many different service design and delivery models. The key requirement in implementing any service design model is consultation with the workforce who will be subject to any servicing restructure and placing the delivery of the services in their responsible hands, ensuring quality, oversight and public sector accountability.

There is also a distinction which ought to be made between a customer service model, and a citizen-centric service model. In the former, ‘customers’ have to navigate an organisation’s structure to access services on their own initiative as mandated by the discrete organisational structure. By contrast, in a citizen-centric model, decisions and services are designed with members of the public at the centre, such that all the different elements and services of the public sector move around them (Dudley, 2015). In implementing a citizen-centric approach, research has suggested the benefits of place-based models of service delivery, which seek to locate services in a particular location where there is an entrenched need for services and/or a large population which could accommodate a service ‘hub’ (Moore, 2011).

In engaging with citizen-centric and place-based models of service design and delivery, the CPSU/CSA’s view is that the focus should be on utilising the existing public sector workforce to publicly deliver outcomes which serve community need.

*Government’s ability to address disadvantage is fundamental to its legitimacy. Many actors have roles and responsibilities, but governments should and will ultimately be held accountable for the effectiveness of key social services. While this accountability has not changed, the role that government plays in the design and delivery of services has evolved considerably over recent decades – especially due to an increased emphasis on contracted-out service delivery models.* (Farrow, 2015)
The increased reliance of the previous state government on outsourcing models of service design and delivery mirrors a trend visible in other Australian public sector jurisdictions to view the private sector model as the ‘default’:

Policy professionals and service providers have been in constant and sometimes competitive pursuit of the optimum service delivery model. Over recent decades, this process has seen outsourced services emerge as an orthodoxy. This has occurred amidst contradictory or countervailing demands and forces that have compromised the effectiveness of key services. (Farrow, 2015).

The CPSU/CSA’s view is that wraparound services and service integration have a place in the public sector going into the future, however they need to be implemented carefully and involving significant consultation and collaboration with the existing workforce. Often, the limitation of private sector delivery is constrained by the original contract and any additional or different service that may be necessary are still left to public providers to provide. The barrier in service delivery is linked to the payment of that service. It is not in the interests of the private service provider to provide a service just because it is needed, there must be a means to pay for it. This has the potential to create a separation in service delivery and stifle coordinated innovation in achieving outcomes. A role that can arguably only be undertaken by government as it has no profit or cost motive.

Place-based models of service delivery will be suited to some services (such as healthcare and education) however without extensive modelling it is too early to conclude whether it will be suitable for every agency or service. Accordingly, the CPSU/CSA’s view is that it should reflect part of the toolkit whilst other models are also investigated.

Service design and delivery: Investing in prevention and diversion services

At this juncture in time, with a new government and the intervention of the Service Priority Review and stakeholder submissions, there is an opportunity to utilise the planning and projections skills of the current public service to create a model which is suited to the current needs of the WA community 2017-2021 whilst being adaptable and flexible to respond to changes into the future.

CPSU/CSA members overwhelmingly indicate that the prioritisation of preventative and diversionary services in areas such as child protection, corrective services, health and education, as well as high quality frontline services in these and others, will ensure community needs are well represented in the services that are delivered. Further, expenditure on costly public sector services such as youth detention, child protection placements and policing will decrease over time as the societal effects of an investment in prevention and diversion are observed.

Unfortunately, employees’ wealth of experience is consulted very little when it comes to deciding and responding to community needs. Historically, employees have been accused of being inflexible and unwilling to be open to new ways of working when they try to indicate their belief in the design and delivery of frontline services with an early intervention focus. More often, the issue is that employees delivering services (and their representative the CPSU/CSA) are not engaged in the consultation and change management processes in implementing different service models, new
technologies and structural changes in delivery. There is also frequently insufficient training in new theory and practice models, as well as new Information and Communication Technology, as they arise. The link between change, and improvement, is very often lacking and employees are not provided with the evidence and rationale for change which would assist them in trusting that change.

It is true that community needs shift and evolve over time as the community itself changes, however the constant is that there are sectors of entrenched disadvantage in the community which require a coordinated, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary response at the earliest available time. 'Band-aid' service models, particularly when delivered by an increasingly casualised workforce which is losing the accrued knowledge and experience it has previously retained, are costly and less effective than the former.

Unfortunately the cost of the service models increasingly being implemented by the public sector (and outsourced at unprecedented levels) are not always clear. In fact, cost savings has been the rationale for cutting key frontline and preventative and diversionary services in favour of services which are targeted to fixing problems that have already had time to grow. Service models of the latter are often cheaper per service, particularly to deliver. They are often easier to implement too, as they are less sophisticated and are targeted towards a smaller group of the community (as contrasted to prevention and diversion which aims for a larger coverage of the community), so the sector can outsource at very little cost. At first glance it is easy to see how it looks as though savings are being made. However, the cost only appears low if the analysis is rudimentary: a "cost per service" rather than a "cost per outcome" analysis. In short, no matter how cheaply a service can be designed and delivered, if it is ineffective and requires constant repetition, it is wasted public sector expenditure.

Prevention and diversion services have a wealth of evidence-based support (PWC, 2017) and the membership of the CPSU/CSA speak of first-hand experiences of their efficacy in practice. Accordingly, the Service Priority Review should conduct a thorough analysis of services used both now and in the recent past, including services which have been cut, in determining the potential of the public sector to respond to community need, and for medium to long-term savings to be made.

In terms of service delivery, please see the section on labour hire below in addressing Theme 2 of the Terms of Reference.

Regional issues for service design and delivery

The concentration of services in the Perth metropolitan area raises difficulties for regional members of the community as well as employees of the public sector who work in regional areas and/or are trying to service regional areas remotely. Geographical distance, a lack of local infrastructure and inadequate Information and Communication Technology systems cover some of the challenges experienced in the regions when it comes to the public sector.

There is no doubt that across the sector, multiple agencies report inadequate and outdated Information and Communication Technology systems, particularly for corporate services such as payroll and Human Resources. Recent upgrades in areas
such as Health have then experienced difficulties and delays in their rollout. As a result, some agencies are using multiple systems and by the time the rollout is complete, the technology is outdated. This is particularly problematic in regional areas which heavily rely on these technologies to facilitate communication where face to face contact is more difficult, particularly for members of the public.

However, in moving forward and correcting the issues regarding Information and Communication Technology in agencies who are located regionally or who have a regional focus, there is still no substitute for face to face service provision, particularly in areas such as child protection, cultural services and dental health services. There is a tendency for governments to reach increasingly for the automation offered by technology, particularly in regional areas which experience the tyranny of geographical distance. However the public sector's ability to respond to the needs of regional communities will decrease if processes and service delivery become automated and the employees working within the sector gradually deskill as their work requirements shift and narrow.

Regional areas are also at an increasing risk in relation to outsourcing. When regional services are outsourced, public sector capacity in regional areas is diminished. Any funding pressure or necessity to evolve the service creates a risk that the private provider cannot or will not provide the service.

The CPSU/CSA is aware of examples where this pattern has resulted in the discontinuation of services. As the former government cut costs for regional service delivery this laid the groundwork for the argument that the private sector could better and more efficiently deliver a service. With that groundwork laid, the next step is to outsource the service and the contract is then sent to tender. The cheapest option is often taken with small consideration given to the sustainability of that service. In regional areas, the service is contracted to small groups reliant on volunteers or more corporate non-government organisations with a minimal physical footprint in the regional town. The volunteer based groups struggle to provide the service on a shoestring budget while the corporate non-government organisations rely on casual, often untrained staff. This casual workforce is characterised by high staff turnover. Despite the best intentions of the people at the front line, the service is set up to fail irrespective of any needs-based changes to the service. The end result is that the service is at risk of ceasing or failing.

This will ultimately harm members of the public in the medium to long term, even resulting in safety issues in areas such as child protection where appropriate field resourcing in regional areas is key, and will cost the public sector more money later down the track in the costs of rectification.

In terms of the public sector’s ability to respond to issues created by location and geographical distance, it is necessary to examine how services may be coordinated, perhaps in "hub" locations in regional areas, to respond to the needs of local communities. This would enable communities to access public services in close proximity to each other. The West Australian Auditor General’s report (AGWA, 2015) regarding the delivery of services to remote aboriginal communities indicates that weaknesses in coordinating services to communities means there are missed opportunities to reduce costs. Poor contracting and outsourcing models combined
with a lack of oversight, mean that the agencies involved, including Housing, are not getting full value from roles such as the Program Manager with fees of up to $1 million a year. Improved planning, information sharing, communication and collaboration between affected agencies would improve service design and delivery, improve efficiency in travel and on site costs as well as improving service quality and effectiveness.

**Measurements of public sector performance and service outcomes: Key Performance Indicators vs employee engagement models**

In terms of the how to measure the public sector’s ability and effectiveness in responding to community needs, the CPSU/CSA is of the view that measurements need to be sophisticated, accurate, longitudinal and contextual.

There are some important questions that need to be asked in relation to the personal Key Performance Indicators for Directors General and Chief Executive Officers which the government has indicated will be implemented as a key component of their overall project of public sector reform. The general nature of the Key Performance Indicators is of some concern.

The salary figure linked to the successful outcomes on Key Performance Indicators is the same percentage as the loading given to non-tenured Senior Executive Service Officers to compensate for the absence of tenure. This makes it more important to be fair and reasonable in setting Key Performance Indicators.

Further, this market-driven approach to service delivery runs counter to the public service ethos of serving the public and the ethical and professional standards that accompany that ethos. While it is necessary to ensure that public sector leadership works effectively together, it does not follow that community responsibility at one level will be enough to drive the change necessary to address social issues at another.

The CPSU/CSA appreciates that the government is seeking to take significant action on important social issues but the reality is that the West Australian public sector is constituted by a diverse range of agencies and it is not fair and reasonable to ask an agency head working in the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety to meet a Key Performance Indicator that demonstrates a reduction in the rate of type 2 diabetes.

In terms of Key Performance Indicators for personal performance, the CPSU/CSA is therefore of the view that they are unnecessary and not targeted towards community needs or service outcomes. Key Performance Indicators for agency performance and service review is a different matter and have been in existence in the West Australian public sector for over 20 years. They are capable of review, frequently audited by the West Australian Auditor General and agency-specific. In this way, they are able to be adapted according to need and sophisticated enough to truly focus on what needs to be measured, such as the effectiveness of a service to the community. It must also be noted that responsibility for the outcomes which are measured by a Key Performance Indicator (whether personal or agency-wide) ultimately rests with the relevant Minister. This is especially important for the government to consider when deciding whether to implement Key Performance Indicators for heads of agencies, given the role of the public sector is to implement government policy. Further, existing
frameworks for addressing substandard performance are already available at all classifications and levels including upper management. If the Key Performance Indicators for personal performance of Directors General and Chief Executive Officers do go ahead, the following questions need to be asked and the Panel could ensure these questions are answered to their satisfaction:

- Will Key Performance Indicators be implemented with some flexibility for agency heads who are unable to influence targets?
- When will the Key Performance Indicators be set by Cabinet?
- Will the government work with the CPSU/CSA and our Senior Executive Service members to assist in the development, implementation and review of the Key Performance Indicators?
- Will the Key Performance Indicator responsibility be contained to Directors General, Commissioners and Chief Executive Officers?

The need for tools of measurement to be longitudinal as well as contextual, are particularly evident in the areas of child protection, housing, corrections and health. Ultimately the measurement should incorporate how well the community needs, however they have been articulated for a specific project or service brief, are being met over time. It won't be possible to have one tool of measurement, which is another reason that individual Key Performance Indicators do not work well in practice. The choice of appropriate tools and methods will depend upon what is being measured. Some outcomes are visible in a short period of time, others will require a more longitudinal approach and some may not be able to be measured at all, or are intangible. Further, tools of measurement and measurement outcomes cannot be viewed in isolation from each other. For example, a reduction in one area may correspond with growth in another which needs to be examined in its overall context.

Rather than Key Performance Indicators which attach to individual performance which have been demonstrated to be ineffective in elevating performance outcomes, the CPSU/CSA advocates for a more evidence-based approach such as models which focus on employee engagement which can broadly be defined as:

*A positive, work-related cognitive state characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Vigour involves high levels of energy, resilience, and persistence. Dedication requires employees to be enthusiastic, highly involved and to take pride in their work. Absorption involves employees concentrating fully on the completion of work tasks, to the point that time at work passes quickly and employees find it difficult to disengage. (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002)*

More recently, "employee-listening" models are entering the lexicon of performance management and mirror the approach which the CPSU/CSA takes in regularly engaging in discussions with members about the issues which matter to them:

*The concept of a survey-based approach to understanding how employees feel rapidly is being replaced. The new solutions are often mobile apps, open-ended questions, and social tools that let employees see each other’s opinions, vote and comment on other ideas, and freely share their ideas. I like to think of this new world as the “employee listening platform,” and it includes information from surveys, comments, exit interviews, and even ongoing performance reviews. (Bersin, 2016)*
The following graphic from the Australian Public Service Commission’s Performance Management Framework demonstrates the link between employees’ performance and the overall health of the governance and leadership of the organisation:

This demonstrates that a myopic approach which focuses on lifting performance without addressing the governance and leadership of the agency itself will not be effective or sustainable.

Cultural change: innovation, creativity and appropriate risk

The membership of the CPSU/CSA agrees that there is a need for cultural change, though not in terms of how this phrase is ordinarily understood, as shorthand for expressing perceived inadequacies in the workforce. Indeed, the West Australian Auditor General’s 2012 report of the performance of the sector suggests that the public sector workforce is high-performing, uniquely skilled and producing both highly quantitative and highly qualitative bodies of work. Negative perceptions of the workforce expressed as a need for cultural change fail to understand that the cultural change required ought to be top-down, from the relevant Ministers with the support of the Public Sector Commissioner through to executive layers of the public sector and each layer of management, consistent with Part 3A Division 2 of the Public Sector Management Act. Further, the type of cultural change required is not the raising of workforce capability or performance, it is the raising of workforce capacity, in terms of the appropriate resourcing of the workforce, agencies, services and projects to enable outcomes to be achieved by the already-capable workforce.

In terms of innovation and creativity, it is important to look at examples from within the current WA public sector agencies which may not have been published or widely understood at a sector-wide level. Unfortunately the silos and lack of communication and coordination which can separate agencies, means that the free-flow of ideas is hampered and achievements are not widely celebrated and incorporated into the
public sector memory. It may also be worthwhile to look to examples of innovation successes and areas of improvement, from other Australian jurisdictions.

Lastly, it is necessary to look at the industrial framework necessary to support innovation and creativity. As recommended in the Australian Council of Trade Union’s 2017 submission to the inquiry into Innovation and Creativity,

*Government should take actions, such as guaranteeing industrial and economic conditions for workers, investing in research and innovation, creating job opportunities and supporting the growth of new industries, to ensure our economy is well placed to respond to the challenges and opportunities created by technological, economic, climate and demographic change.* (ACTU, 2017)

In terms of a perception of the public sector being risk-averse, this may have historically been the case due to a perceived inflexibility across some agencies in terms of the admission of error. Over time, appropriate risk has been identified by many agencies as important to the service design and delivery of the public sector, and most agencies now implement policies of continuous improvement which operate alongside agency-Key Performance Indicators towards the outcomes identified by the agency. However, there still remains a reticence for decision-makers to take appropriate risks, due in part to the layers of delegations for decision-making contained in each agency’s Delegations Schedule, but also due to employees not being reassured that admissions of error or identifying areas of improvement will not subject them to disciplinary or performance processes. Accordingly if cultural change in terms of appropriate risk is to be fully embodied across the sector, it will require an understanding that policies of continuous improvement require reflection and a tolerance for error. Unfortunately, the existing culture is resistant to admitting errors or room for improvement, which stymies growth and the ability to learn. If the culture is to become supportive of reasonable risk, there has to be tolerance for unavoidable errors which are inherent in that level of risk.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 1:** That prevention and diversion services are prioritised across the public sector when designing services to respond to community needs.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 2:** That Key Performance Indicators should not attach to an individual’s performance and that the Key Performance Indicators measuring the outcomes of agencies are created and reviewed in their agency-specific context and continue to be subject to auditing.
Theme 2: Contemporary, adaptable and high-performing workforce

Reshaping and strengthening the public sector workforce

The public sector as currently constituted and administered, runs the risk of experiencing a casualisation of the workforce, increasing difficulty to attract and retain employees and a gradual deskilling of the existing workforce over time. The factors leading to this will be explored below and include excessive workload, the inappropriate use of labour hire, contracting out, fixed term contracts, and a shift in the work that is being conducted, from frontline service provision to procurement and contract administration.

In terms of cultural change amongst the workforce of the public sector, the tired refrain that a high performing culture needs to be fostered as it is not already present, is untrue and fails to consider issues of excessive workload and insufficient resources which inform the current constraints of the sector and the workforce capacity to deliver quality services to the public. As stated below, the government’s willingness to address excessive workload, increase diversity, guarantee job security, restrict labour hire and support mobility in the sector, will influence whether high-performing candidates are attracted and retained.

Senior Executive Service, the two-tiered system, and access to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission

The Government has recently announced that it intends to operationalise its election commitment to reduce the number of Senior Executive Service members by 20 per cent. The framework for operationalising this outcome has not yet been detailed however the CPSU/CSA has concerns about the scale of this reduction, the need for transition arrangements (particularly given the coexisting large scale public sector reform with the Machinery of Government) and the lack of recourse available to the Senior Executive Service to access the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC).

The current organisational structure of the public sector with the Senior Executive Service as a separate category in relation to access to the WAIRC, creates a two-tiered system which causes division amongst the workforce. The CPSU/CSA's maintains that a review of access to the WAIRC isn't necessary; public sector staff should have equal access to the WAIRC. The CPSU/CSA takes the view that this is an equity measure and that all public sector employees should be treated equally to each other and to private sector staff.

A State Government should act as a model employer and it is unacceptable that public sector employees do not have the same access to the WAIRC as private sector employees on a range of important issues, including bullying and harassment in the workplace. In 2014/15, there were over 200 formal complaints of bullying and inappropriate workplace behaviour within the public sector and according to the State of the WA Public Sector 2015 Report, 10% of public sector workers felt they had been bullied in their workplace (PSC, 2015).
Excessive workload

Throughout the course of the previous State government's two term government, the public sector’s Senior Executive Service expanded while the overall workforce shrunk in some agencies and remained static in others, putting pressure on the frontline services and layers of the workforce who carry out the work. Meanwhile, the population of the state grew and demand for services grew in parallel. Citing economic and budgetary concerns, sector-wide and agency-wide freezes on public sector recruitment were implemented by the government which put further pressure on the existing workforce to continue to deliver outcomes to the community, without being able to meet replacement levels when employees exited to the private and not-for-profit sectors. The Public Sector Workforce Renewal Policy (which is still in operation) further cemented the fate of a shrinking public sector workforce.

Throughout this term of government and into the current state of affairs in 2017, members of the CPSU/CSA have reported unprecedented levels of workload pressure and excessive workload. As an example, the CPSU/CSA has been particularly concerned around excessive workload concerns within the Department for Child Protection and Family Support. In 2009 the Department managed 3,196 cases. As of late 2016, this caseload had blown out to 7,046 yet, Full Time Equivalent positions had only grown in the same period from 659 to 771. The Union surveyed 182 members on workload concerns in November 2016. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents said that the loss of support staff had meant additional tasks had been added to their daily duties. Evidence was also raised with the Union that 0.5 Full Time Equivalent caseworkers were being assigned a pro-rata caseload of 20. A caseload of 15 is the legal limit, with a caseload of 18 allowable in extraordinary circumstances. These issues have been raised at several levels by the membership of the CPSU/CSA: with direct supervisors, team leaders, Joint Consultative Committees, via letters to the Directors General and Chief Executive Officers of agencies, the Peak Consultative Forum, the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission and lastly to Parliament in September 2016 by way of a petition, submission and oral evidence provided to the Committee for Environment and Public Affairs opposing funding cuts to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

Whilst some improvements were made temporarily through these channels in some cases, in mid-2017 the issues of excessive workload are once again at unacceptable levels, with the membership initiating a specific claim item in the CPSU/CSA’s log of claims for the negotiations towards a replacement industrial agreement, with interventions such as regular employee perception surveys, management of workload related OSH issues and referral of workload disputes to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC).

The impact of the issue of excessive workload is multi-faceted. It affects the workforce in terms of creating a disincentive to work in the public sector (affecting attraction and retention), it creates occupational safety and health risks affecting both employees and the employer, and it causes functional issues which may in turn impact on productivity and workflow.
Attraction and retention of skilled workforce: resourcing, diversity and mobility

As will continue to be restated throughout this submission, there are no indications that there are issues in the public sector workforce’s inherent capabilities beyond the constraints on workforce capacity arising from being insufficiently resourced, subjected to excessive workload and becoming increasingly casualised through the overuse of labour hire, casual and fixed term appointments. The current workforce is a skilled workforce. However, the high degree of turnover in some agencies and the low numbers of external applications to positions in others, may indicate there are issues with the attraction and retention of employees in the public sector.

The membership of the CPSU/CSA has indicated that there are a number of available interventions for resolving this issue. Recruitment drives which focus on young people, not solely graduates but people who may have worked for a short period of time in the private sector or the community/not for profit sector, and may be interested in working in the public sector, is one. Another key intervention to retain valuable employees is to ensure the areas in which they are working are appropriately resourced such that the agency’s outcomes can be met and the employees are engaged in servicing the community. This is consistent with the findings of the CPSU/CSA’s Your Union Agreement campaign which has continued to demonstrate that public sector employees value job security and flexible working arrangements above other factors.

The CPSU/CSA is aware that some agencies experience greater issues with attraction and retention than others. In cases of incredibly high turnover, there is a likelihood of underlying reasons to account for that which warrant further investigation as they may be exposing our members to occupational safety and health concerns, bullying or excessive workload. Accordingly, the CPSU/CSA seeks that data on staff turnover within agencies should be maintained and provided to the Union on an annual basis. Currently the Disability Services Commission does this but other agencies where members have estimated turnover in excess of 15 per cent (eg. Department for Child Protection and Family Support) do not currently provide this information to the Union.

Another key component of attracting and retaining a skilled workforce is addressing issues of diversity which continue to pervade the public sector. While recent strides have been made in terms of responding to issues of gender and diversity in the West Australian public sector (including the creation of a Minister for Women’s Interests and the provision of paid family and domestic violence leave in the industrial agreement) Western Australia still has the highest gender pay gap in the whole of Australia (BCEC WGEA report, 2017). As at March 2016 according to data held by the Public Sector Commission, women made up the majority (72.3 per cent) of the Western Australian public sector workforce, however of these women nearly half (47 per cent) were employed on a part-time basis, compared to 15 per cent of men. Women make up most of the public sector workforce at the lower equivalent salary bands (Level 6 and below) with women representing approximately 80 per cent of public sector employees at the Level 1 equivalent salary band (up to $57 376 per annum). At Level 7 and above the percentage of women steadily declines, indicating the glass ceiling which women continue to experience in their professional and salary progression.
Strategies towards gender equality and diversity in general are currently not coordinated at a sector-wide level and are currently being delivered within agencies via a piecemeal approach. Not only does this involve significant duplication but it is failing to deliver the results that are needed in 2017. The Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment is currently in partnership with the Public Sector Commission to develop a gender equality strategy along the lines of the Australian Public Sector’s ‘Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19’ which implements specific targets (including an overarching goal of achieving a 50-50 gender balance at all levels of the sector) as well as steps towards achieving those targets (such as a ‘flexibility by default’ approach to work arrangements). These kinds of interventions are long overdue in Western Australia and the CPSU/CSA’s view is in line with the Australian Council of Trade Union’s, that:

A new approach to gender pay equity is required, one that acknowledges that relying on market forces, the effluxion of time or improvements in women’s human capital will not remedy the intractable gender pay gap or address the structural inequalities that underpin gender segregation across industries and occupations.

(ACTU, 2017)

Accordingly, how such a strategy is to be devised and implemented by the public sector should be an immediate priority of the Service Priority Review.

The CPSU/CSA welcomes the domestic violence leave clause proposed to be entered into the replacement industrial agreement, as demonstrating the public sector’s commitment to an issue which disproportionately affects women and is impacting on their overall representation in the workplace and stifling their ability for upwards mobility to senior executive levels of the public sector. In the federal Community Public Sector Union’s submission on gender segregation in the workplace and its impacts on gender equality it was demonstrated the whilst the overall representation of women in the public sector is high, where agencies have a relatively high concentration of women in their workforce, the classification structure corresponds with a lower level of pay than at agencies which are historically and continue to be male-dominated. The impact this has on attraction and retention of a skilled workforce needs to be rectified in the West Australian public sector with a thorough
gender and diversity plan with identified targets and quotas.

The other major issue impacting attraction and retention, are the frequent recruitment freezes (sector-wide freeze) which have stymied incoming skills and experience and have made the transition between agencies, also known as workforce mobility, difficult or impossible. Members continually inform us that staff morale and the propensity to stay within the public sector is impacted by the culture of the agency and the workplace conditions, but also whether they are able to visualise and be encouraged in moving vertically and horizontally within the public sector to develop their skills and follows paths of interest.

*Job security: Fixed Term Contract Conversion to Permanency*

Job security is undoubtedly the issue of primary importance for the membership of the CPSU/CSA and public sector employees at large and has continually been raised by employees and the Union in a series of forums such as the negotiations for the replacement industrial agreement, the Peak Consultative Forum, the Save our Services campaign and other channels.

The log of claims item in relation to fixed term contracts in the current round of negotiations for a replacement industrial agreement is targeted towards a conversion to permanency clause which would enable employees engaged on Fixed Term Contracts to work towards permanency and would prevent the misuse of “rolling” fixed term contracts which under the current operation of the Commissioner’s Instruction on Filling a Public Sector Vacancy, can deny an employee eligibility for consideration for permanent appointment in certain circumstances. The proposed clause is as follows:

> Employees continuously engaged for a period of 18 months or more, whether on one or a number of sequential fixed term contracts, in the same or a similar role shall be converted to permanency.

> The letter of appointment for fixed term employees shall confirm the prescribed circumstance under the relevant award or Agreement that permits fixed term engagement.

The CPSU/CSA is currently negotiating to attain notifications of the names and workplace of fixed term employees within 28 days of a request. This workplace rights notification has already been enacted in the West Australian Health Services Union public sector agreement.

The inclusion of this expansion of the fixed term contract clause would encourage compliance with clause 8(5) b of the *Public Sector Award 1992* and Commissioner’s Instruction No. 2, aid employing authorities in meeting their industrial obligations to make transparent decisions capable of review, and allow employees to check that employment decisions are fair, equitable and consistent. The benefit that the conversion of fixed term contract employees to permanent provides to the public sector, is a more engaged and cohesive workforce, a reduction in costly contract administration practices, an investment in building the capabilities of that employee for their future in the sector and a reduction in the amount of resourcing for recruitment, orientation and induction of employees.
**Job security: Preventing involuntary redundancy**

Involuntary redundancy still looms over public sector workers as a possible path that could be exercised by the current state government due to the redeployment and redundancy arrangements which came into place on 1 May 2015. These arrangements provide that employees who are "surplus to an agency’s requirements or whose office, post or position has been abolished" become a registrable employee. Registrable employees who are unable to be internally transferred to alternative positions within their agency, are then given one of two choices: they can take a voluntary severance or become registered for redeployment. When employees take the redeployment option, it is by no means guaranteed that a placement will be allocated to them and they bear the onus of securing alternative public sector employment (with some assistance from the agency’s transition team). There is a very small window of opportunity for securing an alternative placement, which is known as the registration period and it is currently six months. Where this is not achieved, the employee’s employment is terminated.

By way of comparison with other jurisdictions, the South Australian model is a useful comparator. It has similarities to the West Australian public sector’s redeployment and redundancy scheme, but is more employee-friendly and onerous on their equivalent Public Sector Commission and employing authorities. As a result, there are no cases of employees being made forcibly redundant under this framework.

In the current round of negotiations for a replacement industrial agreement, the CPSU/CSA has campaigned heavily for no forced redundancies throughout the course of the agreement negotiations. Further, the CPSU/CSA’s view is that where necessary, redeployment is a guaranteed right for affected employees, rather than the onus falling on the employee to secure alternative placements in such a short timeframe before facing redundancy.

The CPSU/CSA is also aware of employees experiencing a stigma which attaches to the label 'redeployee' where assumptions are made that an employees whose position has been made redundant and are awaiting alternative placements are 'troublemakers', 'lazy' or 'don't want to work.' As a result of this stigma, transition teams sometimes fail to discharge their responsibilities in assisting redeployees to find alternative placements and when redeployees are placed, they may experience isolation, bullying and a lack of trust in their abilities. There is a need for top-down cultural change from an executive level throughout the sector to recognise redeployees as valuable assets to any public sector agency and not at fault for the circumstances of their employment.

It is also important to be very clear that the forced redundancy provisions do not relate to performance management processes. Often, debates about whether or not forced redundancies are necessary include performance management as an element.

Section 29(1) of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* requires Chief Executive Officers to evaluate the performance of, and to establish and implement training, education and development programs, for their employees.
A Public Sector Commission report in 2013 found that:

Annual Agency Survey data for 2011/12 shows that less than one third of all public sector agencies had more than 80 per cent of employees participate in an annual performance management process.

It's critical that performance management be better deployed across the sector and that there is also an acknowledgement that the forced redundancy process is not a solution to performance management issues.

There are many employees who may be interested in transitioning to retirement which would ease the load on the redeployment and redundancy pathways, however currently transition to retirement options are limited and not widely utilised by agencies. Where they are utilised it is in a very prescriptive way which doesn't allow for the flexibility of choice and individual circumstances which impact the employee.

**Labour hire/contracting out/outourcing**

Labour hire, contracting out and outsourcing are used interchangeably in this report, as they are across most of the West Australian public sector. In the view of the CPSU/CSA there should be very limited circumstances in which engaging labour hire is justifiable given the extensive requirements of permanent employment being the default mode of employment, as contained within the Public Sector Management Act, Commissioner's Instruction on Filling a Public Sector Vacancy, the Public Service and Government Officers General Agreement and other relevant legislation, regulations and industrial instruments.

The engagement of labour hire across the public sector is currently subject to the Public Sector Commissioner’s Approved Procedure 5. Long-term planning with the aim of retaining an experienced and capable workforce has led to the development of Approved Procedure 5. These rules ensure the public sector does not weaken itself by losing institutional knowledge through a reliance on contracting out. The Procedure is referred to in both the Public Sector Management Act 1994 and the Public Service Government Officers and General Agreement 2014.

Approved Procedure 5 reads:

**Determination of the circumstances where it would be appropriate for the engagement of a contract for service:**

- the appropriate expertise is unavailable in the public sector at the time of need;
- there is a requirement for impartiality and objectivity external to the public sector;
- the required expertise and specialist skills are available only from external sources;
- there arises a need to fill a position on very short notice for which the appropriate expertise within the public sector cannot be readily made available (eg. 1 - 2 weeks). (AP 5)

One of the items on the CPSU/CSA's log of claims for the current negotiations for the replacement industrial agreement, is a narrowing of the scope of engaging labour hire
from its existing scope in the industrial agreement and Approved Procedure 5, along with a request for the provision of labour hire data from an agency to the Union within 60 days of a request. The negotiations are currently still ongoing and this item is a high priority for the membership who are aware that the current overuse and misuse of labour hire arrangements and the frequent outsourcing of services previously delivered by the sector, erodes job security and the ability of the public sector to deliver outcomes to the community.

In recent years, it has become evident to the CPSU/CSA and has been brought to our attention by the membership, that labour hire arrangements are occurring at an unprecedented level and in many cases, the work they are engaged to carry out could be completed by the current directly employed workforce, either by permanent employees or employees on fixed term contracts. Not only does this erode the job security of the workforce and lead to its casualisation, it compromises the quality and accountability of services to the public, is a costly way to engage a workforce and risks losing accrued skills and knowledge which would otherwise have been retained by the sector. It is also concerning in terms of privacy and consumer protection, to have private companies delivering public services. The public's access to information which would otherwise be publicly available via applications made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act becomes subject to confidentiality when outsourcing occurs.

In terms of cost, there is an erroneous perception that labour hire or contracting out services is a cheap model of service delivery. Engaging labour hire or contracting out services at the expense of directly employed staff has many hidden costs such as costs associated with contract specification, the tendering process and ongoing contract management and monitoring. As well as the cost of repetition when a service is ineffective or inefficient in delivering outcomes to the community. In determining whether the engagement of labour hire is justified, all costs should be thoroughly assessed, this is not limited solely to the direct fiscal costs associated with the contract for service, but the costs to the community that are not easily quantified, including the social cost to individuals, families and communities such as “flow-on impacts from shifting to a non-government service delivery workforce with less protections on pay and conditions” (Farrow, 2015).

A 2015 report from independent think-tank, the Centre for Policy Development on whether contracting out has improved the public sector's capability to address social policy, concluded that a predisposition by recent governments (both State and Federal) to outsource human services risks poorer outcomes for the most disadvantaged and erodes public sector capability to design and deliver effective public services (Farrow, 2015). The report which followed a stakeholder roundtable in March 2015 including representatives of the federal branch of the Community Public Sector Union as well as not-for-profits, peak bodies, corporate consultancies and academia, found several aspects of concern in the process of outsourcing, including the gradual deskilling of the public sector workforce and the inadequate resourcing of the sector (both services and workforce) perpetuating an increased need for labour hire to respond to public demand.

There is a concerning link between outsourcing and ‘long-term loss of competencies in the public service’ (McAuley, 2000). The gradual deskilling of the workforce occurs when the public sector’s previous roles in providing the architecture of service design
as well as implementing service delivery, are not used anymore due to outsourcing and the skills and capabilities leave the public sector over time as they are not constantly being practised.

The government’s role in ensuring integrated, flexible and holistic human services is more important than ever. But the capabilities it needs to do so are absent – a challenge exacerbated by delivery models that push government agencies into narrow contract-management roles.

In areas where services deal with many people with profound disadvantage (including employment services), there is a risk that outsourced delivery models not only fundamentally change the nature of the relationship between that state and disadvantaged people, but also erode the skills and expertise needed to achieve and sustain effective services over the longer term. (Farrow, 2015)

In September 2015, the Centre for Policy Development conducted a poll (Essential Research poll, 2015) to gauge the public’s expectations of government capability and the government’s role in service delivery. Respondents were asked “in the long term, how important is it that the government maintain the capability and skills to directly deliver social services, rather than paying private companies and charities to deliver these?” In total, 82 per cent of respondents answered that it was either very important or somewhat important that government retain capability and skills for service delivery:

Table: Importance of government retaining service delivery and capability

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<th>How important</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>18-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>55+</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
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<td>43%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very important</td>
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<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
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<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The poll also asked respondents to rank services provided by the government, the not-for-profit sector and private providers according to a range of indicators of service quality. The results indicate a public perception that government-run services outperform others in terms of their accountability, accessibility and affordability:
At the Centre for Policy Development’s roundtable discussion which informed their report, Community Public Sector Union Federal Secretary Karen Batt described public services as a “continuum” rather than a bundle of fragmented prescribed outcomes” (Batt, 2015). She also observed that services often suffer from insufficient funding, meaning the benefits that they otherwise would have never materialise: “If you’re going to look at outcomes, you have to look at funding models...we talk about having a holistic policy, [but] this isn’t being supported by funding across the board” (Batt, 2015).

It is the CPSU/CSA’s view that this rationale behind appropriate funding also extends to the funding of public sector salaries, as well as appropriate resourcing of the sector and programs delivered by it. If not, the attraction and retention of employees who design and deliver high quality services will wane. Public sector salaries, which have been further restricted by the newly introduced McGowan government Wages Policy (2017) need to be funded appropriately as an investment in service outcomes, and should be viewed as such.

In reviewing the recent history of the WA public sector, it is easily observed that an outsourcing agenda had become the default position of the previous State government. As a result, there is work needed to rectify the damage to the public sector of these years. Viewing the current state of affairs as the status quo instead of the result of many years of the calculated erosion of the public sector, will further incapacitate the sector to respond to the needs of the community.

Commissioning approaches which inform the business cases behind the outsourcing of West Australian public sector services are costly as they include “designing, procuring, reviewing and revising outsourced delivery models, as well as building the public sector capability required to do so effectively” (Farrow, 2015). These costs need to be considered and form part of the overall cost assessment when justifying the introduction or retention of private sector competition into service delivery. A narrow focus on service and contract costs is misleading and underestimates the overall costs associated with outsourcing.

The Centre for Policy Development report identified potential “hazards” for the future of public sector capability and service outcomes include the disability services and corrective services sectors. The former in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the latter in terms of increased privatisation in prison service delivery.
Case study: Labour hire: Cost and efficiency in relation to outsourcing of psychological services in Child Protection

Members in Child Protection have reported various systems and processes of the Department of Child Protection and Family Support outsourcing services to Non-Government Organisations which have a range of negative outcomes for service delivery and efficiency. A specific example provided by members is the outsourcing of psychological services to external providers in the following three categories: therapy, psychological assessments and parenting capacity assessments.

Cost and efficiency

A cost analysis is required on having all psychological services completed by directly employed Department of Child Protection and Family Support psychologists. Not only would this have the potential to be more cost effective, it would also eliminate handover delays and communication difficulties as Department of Child Protection and Family Support psychologists have access to the file, so have a deeper understanding of the child and family’s current situation. This enables regular consultation with caseworkers, and for treatment to be adjusted according to changing needs.

Cost versus quality

There are also concerns with the quality of externally provided reports.

Regarding psychological assessments, external psychologists usually have a lesser understanding of complex trauma and attachment theories and how they interact. As a result, external assessors can often diagnose incorrectly and therefore provide incorrect recommendations. These reports are charged hourly at around $240 or $250 an hour, but each practitioner has their own rates.

In regard to Parenting Capacity Assessments, there are a number of providers who are very low quality, and others who work to a higher standard but charge around $250 per hour. These reports cost between $2500 and $4000 depending on the complexity and requirements of the case. There are instances where the Department has been required to procure second or even third opinions due to issues with reports written by external practitioners. These reports often do not include sufficient proof-reading, or jump to odd conclusions with little to no evidence to support suppositions. To combat this issue, practitioners are selected who the Department have a lot of experience with and whom they believe will provide a good product, but these practitioners charge high hourly rates ($250 per hour or more).

The quality of some of the work of Non-Government Organisations is very poor. For example, the Department funds the Child Sexual Abuse Therapy Service, with the contract being held by the same provider for many years. Many members have reported a reluctance to engage this service because the quality is poor, which then requires a second contract to external psychologists to complete the work Child Sexual Abuse Therapy Service contractors should be doing, to the required standard. This essentially means the Department is paying for services
twice, and paying a premium for the private practitioners who are then engaged at short notice.

Often, Department of Child Protection and Family Support psychologists are choosing between cost and quality when choosing which external provider to engage, whereas if they were tasked and funded to complete the assessments themselves, both cost and quality could be assured, due to a fixed public sector salary and capacity for high quality training and experience.

**Compromising safety and risk**

Members report that the reliable, high quality service providers are often at full capacity due to the demand. In the case of waitlists, risk goes up as many of the children requiring assessment have complex needs such as trauma-driven suicide ideation. Delays in treatment could have the effect of compromising the safety of vulnerable young people as a result.

**Benefits of the Department psychologists delivering what is currently outsourced**

As a result of the above, the role of directly employed Department of Child Protection and Family Support psychologists working within metropolitan and regional offices has begun to resemble contract administrators rather than psychologists, as they often have to act on reports given to them after referring clients to Non-Government Organisations for assessment and treatment. When they are required to provide psychological opinion in their professional capacity it is based on third party reports that they do not always have the time to scrutinise/vet, due to workload issues. This arrangement may fall into theme 3 and potentially others as I am not sure if government is acting efficiently and effectively based on the cost of the contracts with these Non-Government Organisations and the service they get in return.

Child protection work is specialised, and so the key benefit is that the assessments would be completed by a worker with specialised skills and knowledge in this area, rather than by generalist external psychologists. Also, internal workers are available for consultation on the cases, and so provide a richer and more in-depth multidisciplinary perspective on the cases that is not available from external practitioners. Further, external psychologists do not have access to the latest information regarding family functioning, the child’s well-being and functioning, or other relevant information that will impact on treatment or assessment. The internal psychologist is not beholden to a particular contract for treatment, and so can provide intervention for new issues as they come up. Finally, some interventions and assessments require many hours of contact, often at the residential home. External psychologists either refuse to facilitate this or sessions become cost prohibitive, whereas the Department of Child Protection and Family Services are familiar with this requirement and process and their occupational safety and health is more easily assured by the Department who is responsible as their direct employer.
Case Study: Public Sector capability: WA NDIS

Reviews of the parallel trials of two National Disability Insurance Scheme models in Western Australia (the Commonwealth's 'NDIS' and the State Government's 'WA NDIS' models) overwhelmingly demonstrated that the state-run model provided a higher quality service to people, due in part to it being built upon the accrual of decades of public sector capability in disability services, along with the consistency and accountability offered by the local area coordinator model. Despite the clear evidence to recommend the 'WA NDIS' model over its Commonwealth counterpart, the State government has indicated it is considering withdrawing from the bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth government to implement this model and is considering adopting the Commonwealth 'NDIS' scheme instead.

The Centre for Policy Development's report declared that "the role of the Disability Services Commission of Western Australia in this process, particularly its desire to build on existing capability, points to the value of resourcing government departments to act as effective, persistent, policy entrepreneurs" (Centre for Policy Development report, 2015).

If the experience of other states is a guide, adopting a strict National Disability Insurance Agency model for service delivery will result in a loss of Local Coordinator jobs in Western Australia and substantially reduce the pay and conditions for those that remain.

The CPSU/CSA has met with both the Premier and the Minister for Disability Services to express the view of our Local Coordinator members, that any decision in relation to the delivery of the 'NDIS' in Western Australia should be based on what is best for West Australians with disabilities.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 3: That due to the pervasiveness of excessive workload across the public sector, a specialised public sector body is created to assess, review and respond to issues of public sector workload.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 4: That an updated and evidence-based public sector workforce diversity policy and implementation framework is created and rolled-out across the public sector.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 5: That the Panel gives consideration to CPSU/CSA's claim item in relation to labour hire and contracting out, in making a recommendation that all non-essential labour hire and contracting out should cease and that direct employment via permanent and fixed term contracts are utilised to address the resultant workload.
Theme 3: Efficient and effective systems and processes
Enabling the public sector to do its job better

The CPSU/CSA membership has provided a lot of feedback regarding changes which could be made to the internal functions of agencies and the sector as a whole to improve efficiency and effectiveness in systems and processes.

Delegations Schedules: “7 layers of sign-off”

A source of continual frustration for CPSU/CSA membership as well as members of the public, are the lengthy delays which are caused in part by the many layers of responsibility which are prescribed in each agency’s Delegations Schedule. Referred to colloquially as the “7 layers of sign-off”, employees whose Job Descriptions Forms expect and allow them to exercise the degree of knowledge, skill and care required for certain decisions are prevented from working to their capability due to these overly prescriptive and risk-averse Delegations Schedules. The practical result is that completed work tends to reach a roadblock while waiting for approval and when this approval is provided, it is often a case of the relevant decision-maker having to approve multiple bodies of work at once and giving only cursory attention to what is before them. In this sense, the decision-maker with the requisite approval permissions tends to be a nominal title, with the real decision being made at a lower level. In some cases this will be unproblematic, however there is potential for a harmful lack of oversight.

Collaboration: Intra-agency, inter-agency and with the not-for-profit sector

In terms of collaboration, all relevant stakeholders within and between agencies, Union representatives and the not-for-profit sector need to be involved when considering the future direction of the public sector.

It was recently reported by the Productivity Commission that the Western Australian State Government funds the community services and aged care sector in the vicinity of $2.9 billion a year (Productivity Commission, 2016). There are currently about 1,500 service agreements between State Government agencies and the community services sector. The newly created Department for Community Services will have the responsibility for almost half of all those services.

A roundtable was recently held on 16 June 2017 between the Premier and Minister for Disabilities and representatives of the sector including Chief Executive Officers of non-for-profit organisations to further “a collaborative partnership between public and not-for-profit stakeholders in the community services sector” (Department of Premier and Cabinet Media release, 16 June 2017). It is disappointing that the CPSU/CSA, the key stakeholder representing employees delivering community services (particularly within child protection and disability care) was not included in the roundtable to discuss these matters. The public sector has been delivering community services in Western Australia far longer than the comparatively recent not-for-profit providers and has a wealth of accumulated skills and knowledge in service design and delivery.
The accumulated institutional know-how that remains in federal and state departments that have traditionally been oriented towards service delivery should not be undervalued or excluded. It is run down at great expense to the public interest. (Farrow, 2015)

The delivery of quality community services relies on the retention of directly employed public sector workers who have accrued years of experience in delivering outcomes for vulnerable members of the community. If the government cuts public sector jobs, the community services sector will be under further stress and the demand for services will increase.

**Public sector accountability for service delivery**

The diffusion of responsibility which follows outsourcing is a very real concern, affecting public sector accountability for service delivery and narrowing the government’s sphere of control:

> Blurred responsibility for service outcomes has led to the emergence of grand alibis where no one organisation is held accountable for service problems or entrenched failures. (Farrow, 2015)

This is particularly evident within areas such as corrective services and child protection. In the Department of Corrective Services, contracts to run prisons have been awarded to Serco and recently Sodexo, a company with no experience in corrective services within Australia. Since opening, this prison has experienced a flurry of occupational health and safety concerns, amongst other critical barriers to the proper functioning of a corrections facility, culminating in CPSU/CSA members working within Legal Aid refusing to access the facility to visit clients due to unacceptable safety concerns. Since this development, the Department has indicated increased supervision and assistance from the public sector to Sodexo in terms of the functioning of the facility. This example illustrates that any savings that are made are at the expense of wages and become moot when the public sector needs to spend money rectifying the problems caused by the inadequacy of the contractor.

**Clarity of roles and processes: Sector-wide Code of Conduct and HR policies**

Much of the resources of the sector are spent in internal Human Resource processes such as performance management, disciplinary processes, grievances, interpersonal disputes, reclassifications and Job Description negotiations. Each agency has different policies on each, including a unique Code of Conduct which refers to the Public Sector Commissioner’s Public Sector Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics itself is a very brief document with the bare bones underlying how an agency may choose to exercise its disciplinary responsibilities.

As a result of each agency having a unique Code of Conduct and Human Resources policies which are locally enforced and subject to the whims of each internal Integrity, Ethics and Standards directorate and internal Industrial Relations and Employee Relations division, as well as differences in application at the line management stage, there are a plethora of potential outcomes for each Human Resources intervention, whether it’s a substandard performance process, disciplinary process or an application of any number of other policies. Delays are frequently caused by there being
inadequately drafted allegations (in the case of disciplinary matters) or insufficient materials provided to the respondent employee. This then requires follow-up by the employee or Union on their behalf. This lack of consistency applies within agencies as well as between agencies and involves a significant duplication of resources. Some agencies have Industrial Relations professionals including Integrity and Ethics directorates located at every site, dispensing information and advice to managers and enforcing the agency’s policies in relation to its employees. The duplication and wasted resources this involves is astounding given there already exists a sector-wide body involved in the administration of the Public Sector Management Act, in the person of the Public Sector Commissioner. This wastage is worthy of a more in-depth investigation by the Service Priority Review Panel.

The CPSU/CSA’s view is that a sector-wide Code of Conduct and sector-wide Human Resources policies which clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of employees and processes including the disciplinary process, should be created. Public sector employees who were industrially subject to the Public Service and Government Officers’ General Agreement would be subject to the same Code of Conduct (and policies) and if a body such as the Public Sector Commission or similar was tasked to manage its administration, the application of the sector-wide Code of Conduct and policies would be consistent. There wouldn’t be the need for higher levels of industrial relations on each agency’s delegations schedule, to rectify the errors made at lower levels. In the past, these errors have led to employees subject to disciplinary processes being denied procedural fairness and have caused substantial delays in disputes with the Union which have progressed all the way to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission, frequently with findings made against the agency.

In terms of performance management, the CPSU/CSA’s view can be summarised by the following passage from our federal counterpart the CPSU’s submission to the Australian National Audit’s Office audit of managing underperformance in the Australian Public Sector:

*It is the CPSU’s view that having efficient, transparent and equitable performance management systems that are genuinely geared at improving performance in the organisation as a whole will assist both managers and employees, and have a positive impact on productivity.*

*Performance management systems that are forward looking rather than retrospective, or at worst even punitive, are more likely to contribute beneficially to workplace performance and culture. Managing performance in a constructive and positive way is an integral part of ensuring employee satisfaction as well as the professional delivery of quality public services.*

There is a real need for consistency in everyday applications of Human Resources and payroll processes, such as leave entitlements (the public sector currently carries a $2.9 billion dollar leave liability), access to Long Service Leave pro-rata, standardised performance management, and easing employee mobility across the sector via transitions and secondments. The creation of sector-wide policies and procedures and a centralised body to interpret and apply them, would lead to substantial savings as well as a simpler and more functional sector.

In terms of the need for clarity of roles, classifications and job descriptions, the Panel
should give consideration to a centralised database of Job Description Forms which are managed and amended by a sector-wide body such as the Public Sector Commission to ensure consistency and mobility across the sector.

Machinery of Government: Relocations and Implementation Framework

The upcoming Machinery of Government amalgamations which are commencing in July 2017 may resolve some structural issues in the West Australian public sector while creating others. It is too early to reflect on these outcomes (and the CPSU/CSA will provide further feedback on the impact of the Machinery of Government at a later date), however what can be observed at this early stage is that there has been insufficient consultation with the Union and the workforce and an underdeveloped implementation framework.

Amalgamating departments necessarily involves relocating the offices of certain agencies, however there has been lack of consultation with the workforce regarding how these relocations will be effected, both recently and in the former government’s term. Clear examples affecting CPSU/CSA members include the relocations to Joondalup and Fremantle.

For the relocations to Joondalup (Department of Water, Department of Environment Regulation and Office of the Environmental Protection Authority) and Fremantle (new Department of Community Services), there has been no coordinated plan to accommodate employees who live and would prefer to work South, nor employees who live and would prefer to work North, to reduce commuting time. The CPSU/CSA’s view is that the government should facilitate like-for-like job swaps for people adversely impacted by the moves from the Central Business District to other locations, coordinated by a specifically appointed sector-wide Transition Team.

Unfortunately, the Machinery of Government’s transitions (including relocations) are not being handled at a sector-wide level and as such, there is significant confusion and a lack of consistency in their roll-out.

The CPSU/CSA’s membership within the Department of Water, the Department of Environment Regulation and the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority are opposed to the relocation to Joondalup from the Central Business District for several reasons, including the lack of evidence of a thorough business case to justify the efficiency of the move.

Accordingly, the CPSU/CSA recommends that the Service Priority Review incorporates a review of the following:

- building leases involving public sector agencies as either owner or occupier; and
- business cases for leases and office relocations negotiated between affected agencies and the Department of Finance’s Building Management Works.

This information should be published as part of the findings of the Review. Company shareholders of private sector companies involved in these lease arrangements are currently privy to these lease arrangements however is not currently available to the tax-paying West Australian public.
Aside from not being aware of a convincing business case to justify the move to Joondalup, there are concerns from the membership at each of the affected agencies that the move may negatively impact on their ability to perform their roles and responsibilities. For example, the Department of Environment Regulation currently has the responsibility to physically respond pollution related incidents to ensure compliance and enforcement. The capacity to respond in a timely manner from the location of Joondalup is made much more difficult and may cause delays which compromise the safety of employees and the public.

Further, all of the affected agencies are required to frequently liaise with southern and central Local Government Authorities. Locating these offices in the far northern metropolitan suburb of Joondalup will adversely impact on the service provided to and expected by southern and central Local Government Authorities. As major stakeholders in the activities of the three affected agencies, Local Government Authorities have not been consulted about the upcoming move.

In terms of the implementation of the Machinery of Government changes as a whole, there has not been a consistent and coordinated approach by the State government. Unlike the tailored guide for agencies which was provided to Australian Public Sector agencies regarding their Machinery of Government changes (APSC, 2016), there has been no implementation framework for the upcoming July 2017 changes in Western Australia beyond the existing policies for change management and structural change, which are proving unsatisfactory to manage the scope and magnitude of the Machinery of Government amalgamations. Further, consultation with the CPSU/CSA and the workforce has been minimal at best. The CPSU/CSA is of the view that a sector-wide framework is created with the Union’s input as a matter of urgency and that employees are widely consulted regarding their preferences to facilitate a cohesive transition.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 6: That the structural layers of decision-making within the public sector including agencies’ delegations schedules are revised to empower employee capability, risk-taking and the avoidance of delays.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 7: That a sector-wide Code of Conduct and HR policies are created, established, interpreted and administered by a sector-wide body such as the Public Sector Commissioner.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 8: That an implementation framework is designed in consultation with the CPSU/CSA as a matter of urgency for any further Machinery of Government amalgamations and changes and that employees are preferences regarding resultant relocations are given due consideration.

Conclusion

The CPSU/CSA seeks the opportunity to meet with the Panel to further discuss the items raised in this submission, as well as any further lines of inquiry the Panel chooses to pursue in conducting the Service Priority Review and related working groups. Given the tight timeframe for providing a response to this initial deadline and the need to consult broadly with its membership, the CPSU/CSA requests further
opportunities to contribute to the Review by way of written submissions at key points throughout the Review process.

In summary, the CPSU makes the following recommendations to the Panel as part of this submission:

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 1:** That prevention and diversion services are prioritised across the public sector when designing services to respond to community needs.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 2:** That Key Performance Indicators should not attach to an individual's performance and that the Key Performance Indicators measuring the outcomes of agencies are created and reviewed in their agency-specific context and continue to be subject to auditing.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 3:** That due to the pervasiveness of excessive workload across the public sector, a specialised public sector body is created to assess, review and respond to issues of public sector workload.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 4:** That an updated and evidence-based public sector workforce diversity policy and implementation framework is created and rolled-out across the public sector.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 5:** That the Panel gives consideration to CPSU/CSA’s claim item in relation to labour hire and contracting out, in making a recommendation that all non-essential labour hire and contracting out should cease and that direct employment via permanent and fixed term contracts are utilised to address the resultant workload.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 6:** That the structural layers of decision-making within the public sector including agencies’ delegations schedules are revised to empower employee capability, risk-taking and the avoidance of delays.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 7:** That a sector-wide Code of Conduct and HR policies are created, established, interpreted and administered by a sector-wide body such as the Public Sector Commissioner.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 8:** That an implementation framework is designed in consultation with the CPSU/CSA as a matter of urgency for any further Machinery of Government amalgamations and changes and that employees are preferences regarding resultant relocations are given due consideration.
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Service Priority Review

CPSU/CSA Response to the Interim Report of the Panel
CPSU/CSA Response to the Interim Report of the Service Priority Review Panel

The Community and Public Sector Union / Civil Service Association (CPSU/CSA) is a West Australian Union representing 630 occupations in over 130 public sector agencies.

We make work life better for over 40,000 people in WA.

We represent public sector staff at the agencies under the consideration of the Service Priority Review.

- We believe that robust, dynamic and quality public services are the foundation of a fair and just society.
- We are vehemently opposed to the privatisation of public goods and services.
- In formulating this report, we have consulted as widely as possible with members given the restrictions of the tight timeline.

Introduction

The CPSU/CSA welcomes the opportunity to make a response submission to the Service Priority Review following the release of the Panel's interim report in August 2017 and ahead of the final report being delivered in October 2017.

This second submission is focused on responding to items raised in the Panel's interim report, as well as providing more structure around the suggestions and solutions articulated in the CPSU/CSA's first submission of June 2017. This submission is also made in the context of the Government's 2017-18 Budget announcements which have provided some indication of the direction the public sector will be taking, as well as raising more questions for the Panel and stakeholders to consider, particularly in relation to the targeted voluntary redundancies announcement and second stage of the Machinery of Government.

In terms of a response to items raised in the Panel's Interim Report, the CPSU/CSA has provided an overview of the Union's response to items ahead of the Panel formulating their final recommendations for the October 2017 report.

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1. Redundancies announcement: "Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme"
2. Interim Report’s Four Directions for Reform
3. Sector-wide Code of Conduct, policies, processes and data analysis
4. Response and alternatives to Key Performance Indicators
5. Digitisation and ICT framework: considerations, concerns and opportunities
6. Service integration and co-location
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1. Redundancies announcement: “Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme”

**Budget 2017-18**

While not specifically discussed in the Interim Report, the CPSU/CSA wishes to take this opportunity to address the issue of public sector redundancies as announced by the Treasurer when delivering the 2017-18 Budget, as this will have a pronounced impact on issues raised by the Service Priority Review.

The CPSU/CSA was extremely disappointed to hear of the announcement of 3000 FTE voluntary targeted redundancies to be rolled out across the public sector. We wish to restate our opposition to such sweeping, cross sector measures. As a policy setting, the blunt separation scheme instrument will not deliver optimal outcomes that could be achieved more appropriately by the sector and it’s leadership.

The trend of the public sector disproportionately shouldering the burden of “budget repair” continues, with 4 per cent of budget repair measures being made from the public sector.

The CPSU/CSA notes the Panel’s comments in the Interim Report that “fiscal conditions make tough choices inevitable” however would argue that a choice to reduce headcount in the public sector is misguided, as it will dampen economic activity in the medium to long term, by removing those wages from recirculating back into the WA economy. Public sector workers in WA make an average of 1422.50 per week, which is $73,970 per year, their after-tax income is approximately $58,000 per year. With the average saving rate for Australian households at 4 per cent, it’s safe to assume that most of the after tax income is spent. The reduction in headcount of 3000 public sector staff reduces the consumer spending in the Western Australian economy by approximately $175 million per year.

It is difficult to see how cutting 3000 public sector workers could be consistent with the McGowan government’s election commitment to create, prioritise and champion WA jobs, and the targeted reduction in headcount is certainly not consistent with the McGowan Government’s stated aim of providing real improvements to essential services and recognition that this cannot be achieved without an effective, functional and well-resourced public sector.

The voluntary severance scheme is described as “targeted”, with priority to be given to Departments subject to Machinery of Government processes. However the Machinery of Government agencies have not yet settled the second tier Senior Executive Service positions and the structure for corporate service functions and central policy or strategic functions will likely remain unclear during the Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme timeframes, which have modelled the savings to be made during the 2017-18 financial year. This is a very tight timeline for Chief Executive Officers, Directors General and other decision makers to make assessments regarding which positions are surplus and to be “targeted”. Therefore the Machinery of Government agencies will likely offer the package across the whole of their agencies along with non-Machinery of Government agencies.

CPSU/CSA understands that decision-makers have indicated they will approve applications where people have indicated an interest in taking up the scheme. Given this and the absence of criteria in the guidelines regarding how to prioritise applications, the scheme is unlikely to be “targeted” in any meaningful way. The CPSU/CSA is therefore concerned that the scheme’s viability for highly skilled, qualified and experienced employees (who may more easily secure work in the private sector) will mean that valuable accrued knowledge and skill will be lost from the public sector and not easily replaced.
This is obviously concerning, as a large scale reduction of employees across the sector will have an inevitable impact on service delivery, affecting both the workforce and community of Western Australia.

Regarding the adverse impact of this scheme on the community, when administrative and corporate employees are reduced, a “hollowing out” of the sector occurs with the burden of this administrative and supportive work then falling within remaining FTE, such as managerial and direct service provision roles. The result is an impact on service delivery in one or more of the following ways:

- Compromised quality;
- Slower speed, and
- In the most critical cases, non-performance of key duties.

This is obviously inefficient and causes many problems for the sector, including but not limited to legal liability for not discharging their duties to the public.

The 20 per cent of savings to be reinjected into participating agencies for the purposes of workforce renewal will not solve this problem. While the CPSU/CSA supports the employment of entry level government officers which is intended by this measure, their training and induction requirements as well as their salaries will come at a cost to agencies which will not be ameliorated by this reallocation of 20 per cent of the savings.

An often repeated scenario of the many previous rounds of voluntary severance packages saw many individuals re-engaged as consultants or through labour hire arrangements where their specialised knowledge and skills continued to be required. Where the individuals specialised knowledge and skills were not required but the work was still required and could not be absorbed into remaining employees’ jobs, contracting out arrangements were also used. Clearly this limits savings and in some cases incurs greater costs.

The CPSU/CSA notes that the Voluntary Targeted Severance Scheme guidelines refer to “encouraging” Chief Executive Officers and Directors General Agencies not to engage contractors, but the guidelines do not expressly prohibit this practice which is unfortunate and should be rectified through a Premier’s Circular or similar.

The Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme has been approved under regulation 16 of the Public Sector Management Redeployment and Redundancy) Regulations 2014 (the Regulations), however the CPSU/CSA is concerned that recent discussions with the former Department of Commerce (now Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety) regarding the application of these regulations confirms that the current Human Resources workforce within agencies would be under immense pressure to oversee this scheme and ensure its compliance with the Regulations. Under the scheme, agencies are required to advise the Public Sector Commissioner by recording the details on the online Recruitment Advertising Management System (RAMS) of all Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme offers made and accepted, as well as relevant dates and payment sums, “as soon as practicable.” The CPSU/CSA instead recommends that the Voluntary Target Separation Scheme team within the Public Sector Commission is resourced by government to take a more active role in the implementation of this scheme to ensure consistency and compliance with the policy and Regulations and assist in guarding against unintended outcomes of the scheme.

The CPSU/CSA recommends that given the impact of these redundancies on the public sector, the Panel gives consideration to this in conducting their final analysis and making recommendations in the October 2017 report. This analysis should include a discussion of how the scheme will impact the other components of the Service Priority Review and recommendations on how the scheme should be operationalised to limit the adverse impact on the public sector.
Items to consider are removing FTE ceilings from certain departments or units which undertake service delivery, thus quarantining vital services from the impact of the reduction in employees, and simultaneously removing or amending the Barnett government’s Workforce Renewal Policy, neither of which would require legislative change.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 1: That the Service Priority Review Panel gives consideration to the impact of the Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme on the public sector and broader community and makes recommendations regarding the operationalisation of the scheme to limit the adverse impact on the public sector and community of Western Australia.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 2: That the Public Sector Commission should be appropriately resourced to implement the Voluntary Targeted Separation and oversee its compliance with the policy guidelines and Public Sector Management Redeployment and Redundancy) Regulations 2014.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 3: That public sector agencies and units within agencies which provide vital public services have their FTE ceiling removed thus quarantining them from the impact of the Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme and that the Workforce Renewal Policy is removed or amended to minimise the adverse impact on the public sector.
2. Interim Report’s Four Directions for Reform

Service Priority Review Interim Report

The CPSU/CSA thanks the Panel for sharing the Interim Report and wishes to make the following comments on the Four Directions for Reform articulated in the report. The CPSU/CSA notes that the "suboptimal performance" of the public sector referred to under each heading should be viewed in the context of the comparatively short snapshot in time that the Panel has been observing the public sector. This period has been characterised by a significant upheaval of the sector. Following years of compounding change processes under the previous Liberal Government, the Machinery of Government changes announced in April have overlaid a larger process which has lacked a consistent implementation process and rationale causing uncertainty and having the effect of focusing the sector on change management rather than service delivery.

The interim report has not provided specific examples of how the conclusion that the public sector is performing sub-optimally was reached.

1. “Building a public sector focused on community needs”

The CPSU/CSA agrees that the public sector needs to be better able to respond to community needs and as stated in our first submission, addressing workload pressures, understaffing and outsourcing would have a positive effect on the sector’s ability to meet community needs. However, the CPSU/CSA disagrees with the conflation of community needs with customer needs.

There is an inherent difficulty in naming members of the public who are end-users of a public service as "customers" and treating them as such. Firstly, it tends to focus on the individual needs of a consumer rather than collective needs of the community of Western Australia. Secondly, the relationship of customer to vendor is a commercial relationship and implies equal power dynamics, self-awareness of the consumer’s needs and wants, and a reliable measurement of “satisfaction” to determine whether the transaction has been successful.

Conversely, members of the public who are end-users of public services have often been referred to services based on need or their entitlement to use a service, are a diverse cohort of various levels of privilege and disadvantage and the measures of success are more likely to be complex and multifaceted.

A clear example is the area of child protection. People from the community who interact with these services are not always going to reflect positively on them in terms of personal satisfaction, however that is clearly no measure of the quality of the work that is being done to protect children.

This returns to the arguments made in the CPSU/CSA’s first submission about citizen-centric models being the priority, rather than customer service models. Accordingly, when the Panel is formulating their final recommendations in October 2017, those related to “building a public sector focused on community needs” should look to other public sector models as comparators, rather than the private sector. The aim of Government is not to make a profit for shareholders, it is to address disadvantage and provide services that West Australians deem are needed. This is particularly important in areas that protect West Australians and ensure equality of opportunity.

Investing in prevention and diversion services is the yet to be explored answer to medium to long term budget repair. This was explored in some detail in the CPSU/CSA’s first submission to the Service Priority Review. Better Beginnings, a ‘Best Practice Honoree’ in the International 2017 Library of Congress Literary Awards, the State government’s program building literacy into early childhood through a range of initiatives targeted towards parents, proves a $5.64 social value return for every $1 spent, on a social returns on investment analysis. However Parenting WA which provided a range of these programs targeted to addressing specific social issues on a prevention basis, was cut by the former State government and the recent State budget disappointingly did not seek
to rebuild these and similar services, despite their known efficacy and long-term savings potential. Prevention and diversion services ought to be revisited in the Service Priority Review’s final report, with specific recommendations made in support of the investment this provides to the sector and to the community of Western Australia.

The CPSU/CSA will also take this opportunity to restate that where human services provision is concerned, these services are best delivered by the public sector rather than Community Service Organisations. Often these services are limited by the initial contract in terms of services that are delivered and are provided in a fragmented way. Fragmentation exists because contracts are written for an identified need at the time that the contract is negotiated. When those needs change, the contract does not change and service delivery particularly in difficult cases, often defaults to the public sector. It is also difficult for the State or the Community Service Organisation/s to take responsibility for the issues that these contracts are intended to resolve because different services are undertaken with no central point of responsibility. On the 18 September 2017, The Australian reported that 29 Government agencies had spent $53.6 million a single year in Roebourne, for no discernible outcome. These services were delivered by 63 providers delivered 206 services across that period to 789 residents. It is arguable that a better outcome would be achieved by consistent delivery of service by the public sector taskforce reporting to deliverable outcomes, appropriately resourced to achieve those outcomes.

One of the rationales often provided for limiting the public sector’s direct involvement in providing human services, is that funding Community Sector Organisations to do so enables greater choice for the consumer. When the Disability Services Commission were in the now ceased process of privatising group residential homes for members of the community with disabilities, where they and their guardians were provided an option to stay with the existing public provided Disability Services Commission home, without exception the Disability Services Commission accommodation was chosen. The reasons provided for this were the higher quality of publicly provided services, the accumulated skill and knowledge of the sector regarding disability care and the ability for the public sector to put people before profits.

In terms of the design of public services, the interim report referred to liaising with members of the community (particularly in the community sector, regional and indigenous communities) and co-designing services with the relevant members of these communities. The CPSU/CSA certainly agrees that thorough consultation and community involvement and input into services is valuable and that this should be key to developing appropriate and targeted services, however this should not be at the expense of the workforce and the ownership of service design should remain in public hands so that Governments are able to deliver services in accordance with their obligation to Western Australians.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 4: That when the Panel is making their final recommendations, those related to "building a public sector focused on community needs" should look to other public sector models as comparators, rather than the private sector.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 5: Prevention and diversion services ought to be revisited in the Service Priority Review’s final report, with specific recommendations made in support of the investment this provides to the sector and to the community of Western Australia.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 6: That the Panel recommends that where human services provision is concerned, these services are best delivered by the public sector rather than Community Services Organisations and that every effort is made to maintain this service delivery model wherever possible.
2. “Enabling the public sector to do its job better”

The CPSU/CSA’s submission to the CEO Working Group on Public Sector Efficiency described the membership’s response to the issue of red tape reduction. As stated in that submission:

It is often the silos within the public sector which lead to duplication of processes and limit the sharing of best practice processes and information. There are examples in the public sector of where outcomes are championed, regulation reform is led, regulation is simplified and accountability is maintained. The ideal environment for best practice is a public sector that is well resourced and funded, with supportive leadership (from the Director General or Chief Executive Officer), a collaborative and challenging work environment, and job security. The CPSU/CSA accepts that there are opportunities for excessive, impractical and costly regulation to be reduced however this should be achieved through gradual incremental change with frequent review and always through consultation with the workforce.

As discussed in some detail in the CPSU/CSA’s first submission to the Service Priority Review, the risk averse culture and lack of tolerance at a ministerial level for the unavoidable errors of agencies has stymied innovation and led to a culture of process over outcomes. The CPSU/CSA is therefore heartened to see “a political environment that is unforgiving of mistakes” recognised in the Panel’s Interim Report.

3. “Reshaping and strengthening the public sector workforce”

The CPSU/CSA agrees with many of the points raised in this section of the interim report, in particular the lack of shared identity and purpose amongst the workforce, the low levels of employee mobility across the sector, the proportionately low diversity in the workforce, insufficient capability in some occupational areas including information and communication technology, and a greater need for attraction and retention in regional areas.

In terms of areas which require building greater capability, there has historically been a reliance on using labour hire via the Common Use Arrangements which in turn contributes to the deskilling of the workforce as the capability is gradually eroded over time. This was discussed in some detail in the CPSU/CSA’s first submission to the Service Priority Review. An example of this is the area of investigations services for the purposes of disciplinary investigations and Strategic Human Resources. Agency requirements for this work area frequently utilise the Common Use Arrangement, which apart from contributing towards deskilling the workforce and causing a delay in building capability, also causes problems in terms of quality control and accountability. Specifically, if an agency requires a specialist mediation service, cultural change practitioner or investigation service, they tend to draw from outside the agency. If this service then proves substandard in quality, the process must recommence with another practitioner, or the gaps in the service tend to be plugged by internal public sector staff. Internal staff don’t get enough experience conducting mediation or disciplinary processes and the cycle of outsourcing these services continues. The finished product, whether it is a report, or disciplinary outcome, therefore tends to meet standards due to these interventions, such that the original issues are masked and the external practitioner continues to be awarded contracts by the agency. It is an extremely inefficient, costly and risky system.

The CPSU/CSA also notes in agreement the Panel’s observation of “a public sector workforce that is highly professional, ethical and hardworking, with a genuine commitment to improving community experiences.” As the organisation representing this workforce, this has also been our observation, as well as it being a workforce that is ready and able to take on the task of building public sector capacity if appropriately resourced and supported to do so.

It is often the case that when a change is proposed, CPSU/CSA members support the rationale for change but lament that as service-delivery agents, end users or subject matter experts, they were not consulted on the change.
and go on to identify efficiencies, simplifications or additional processes that would reduce waste and better deliver outcomes.

Given current budgetary limitations, as a starting point, focusing on the recruitment of graduates and on the job training and development in fields such as information and communication technology, policy and analysis, strategic human resources and investigations services would begin the cycle of building public sector capability. This will lead to medium to long term efficiency, reliability and quality of services. As stated in the interim report:

Central agencies are already well positioned to address existing capability shortfalls through whole-of-sector collective recruitment processes (including graduate programs), tailored training and the development of meaningful capability frameworks. New talent must be attracted, supported and provided with good quality information to allow employees to take charge of their own careers.

There are aspects of the interim report in relation to reshaping the workforce which the CPSU/CSA disagrees with, namely the references to changing the employment framework in terms of existing provisions in awards and agreements, limitations regarding fixed term contracts and the management of substandard performance.

The current industrial relations framework which applies to the public sector workforce is imperfect, however the rationale behind limitations to fixed term contract hiring and wage setting arrangements are to protect employees’ interests as the more vulnerable party within the employment relationship. If changes were made to "move away from the existing rule-based framework" the public sector workforce would pay the price, as their wages would further stagnate and their ability to collectively bargain for liveable wages and conditions would be undermined by individualistic approaches to employment couched in terms of “flexibility.” The interim report’s comment that the existing regulations and policies “are incongruous with contemporary workforce and business needs” is concerning, as the measure of a successful public sector workplace should not be the extent to which it accommodates business needs or mirrors the private sector.

The CPSU/CSA does agree in principle however that the separation between industrial relations and human resources activities is an artificial distinction and that they are both complementary components of workforce management. The CPSU/CSA welcomes the Government’s recent announcement of the review of the Industrial Relations system which includes in the terms of reference a review of the jurisdiction and powers of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission with the objective of examining the access for public sector employees to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission for matters which are currently excluded, such as Breach of Standards applications under the Public Sector Management Act 1994 and Public Sector Management (Breaches of Public Sector Standards) Regulations 2005 and disputes in relation to the redeployment and redundancy process under the Public Sector Management (Redeployment and Redundancy) Regulations 2014. Expanded access to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission is necessary to provide industrial relations protections to all public sector workers in Western Australia and the legislative reform necessary to achieve this should be pursued as a matter of priority.

In terms of recruitment and procurement practices, there are many opportunities to improve the performance of the sector. As identified in the interim report:

Variable agency recruitment performance, additional ‘layers’ of policy and process being applied to mitigate risk against ‘Breach of Standard’ claims, and inadequate measuring of the quality of hire. The Panel is concerned that current agency recruitment practices may not be attracting the best candidates, which can significantly impact on overall public sector performance.

The streamlining of recruitment to ensure that the best candidate for the position is employed swiftly and that once employed, there is the potential for mobility across the sector will allow for the professional development of
the workforce and ensure that the sector runs more smoothly. Greater mobility of the workforce will also relieve some of the pressure on the redeployment process.

In terms of a genuine need for redeployment, this process should be developed to support employees to transition to new work areas as well as protecting job security wherever possible. One of the options that the CPSU/CSA has begun to explore is the development of a pool arrangement within parts of the sector which offer fixed-term, project-based, casual and relief work (amongst other permutations) to redeployees as a priority, followed by other workers on a needs-basis. This would enable the cessation of costly and unaccountable labour hire and independent contractor arrangements, as explored in the CPSU/CSA’s first submission to the Panel.

The CPSU/CSA has indicated in other fora to Government that we are open to discussions in relation to a transition pathway in relation to labour hire which may involve setting up a public body to directly employ a pool of people in place of former labour hire arrangements.

The CPSU/CSA is aware that the arrangement which currently exists in WA Health in relation to nursing, is that the department established NurseWest in 2003 due to the spiralling costs associated with private nursing agency spending. The initial purpose of NurseWest was to manage private nursing agency costs, firstly by implementing a Common Use Agreement, which provided standardisation and control of costs, and secondly, to develop a public casual nursing pool which would service the whole of WA Health. The implementation of NurseWest has resulted in improvements as compared with the previous practices of engaging labour hire, including improved financial control, value for money and improving the standard of casual nursing services delivered.

NurseWest nurses are directly employed by WA Health on a casual basis, rostered according to need. Being employed by WA Health ensures NurseWest nurses have the benefits of direct employment by a public sector employing authority in regards to wages, conditions and industrial coverage.

A centrally employed pool of public sector workers could also support a structured graduate program and would facilitate the breaking down of public sector silos as staff worked across agencies where required. Such a body would accommodate the transition from labour hire to direct employment in public sector agencies and may be achievable and a mutually acceptable solution to the problem of labour hire, however consideration would have to be given to the parameters, including:

- Eligibility criteria would need to be identified. Unlike nurses, public sector officers do not have a separate registration body, where the registration itself constitutes vetting.
- To limit the scope to a manageable level, the pool may need to be limited to Information and Communication Technology, Human Resources and Administrative staff.
- The pool of directly employed casual public sector workers would need to contain a clear pathway to fixed term contract employment and then permanency for longer term casuals.

The CPSU/CSA also supports the Health Services Union of Western Australia's (HSUWA) submission in relation to the provision of Interpreter Services. The HSUWA are proposing the creation of a standalone centralised service for the provision of interpreter services across Government. Following an extensive review in Victoria, the Victorian Government implemented a Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service which provides: telephone interpreting, on-site interpreting (spoken languages and AUSLAN), translations and video remote interpreting. The CPSU/CSA supports the employment of a pool or pools of such workers employed as Public Service Officers, or Government Officers.

The CPSU/CSA is also committed to a conversion to permanency pathway for fixed term contract employees who have had their contracts rolled over and are suitable for permanent appointment; this would relieve recruitment pressures on the sector and allow employees who are inducted, trained and integrated into their workplace to
continue to contribute to the public sector. Equally, conversion to permanency will maximise the return on investment that an agency and consequentially, the sector has already made in that employee.

The interim report’s figures on diversity (or lack thereof) within the public sector workforce taken from the State of the Sectors 2016 report is a cause for concern and ought to form part of the Panel’s recommendations in the final report. Recently eight new Directors General were appointed to public sector departments. While the CPSU/CSA looks forward to developing productive relationships with all of these appointees and does not doubt they are ideally suited to their positions, it was a source of disappointment that only one of the new appointees was a woman, despite the disparity that already exists in the top tiers of the sector.

Accordingly, progress towards a Western Australian based gender equality strategy with time-based targets along similar lines as the Australian Public Sector’s ‘Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-19’ needs to be demonstrated as a matter of priority.

The Public Sector Commission’s ‘Disability access and inclusion plan 2015-2020’ ought to be revisited and revised in light of the statistic presented in the State of the Sectors 2016 report (and cited in the Service Priority Review Panel's interim report) that the workforce representation of people with a disability in the public sector has fallen to just 2 per cent since 2012, suggesting that either the current policy is not proactive enough, or is not being operationalised.

The current State government’s pre-election Public Sector Policy also promised a new Aboriginal employment strategy with appropriate goals and milestones. So far, the CPSU/CSA is not aware of any consultative efforts underway to develop a new strategy. Accordingly, the Panel should make a recommendation in the final Service Priority Review report towards diversity in recruitment and retention, including the development of a focused Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Strategy with clear and measurable targets underwritten by a clear roadmap on how to achieve these goals.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 7: That the Panel recommends in the final report, that there should be an expansion of access to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission for matters which are currently excluded, such as Breach of Standards applications under the Public Sector Management Act 1994 and Public Sector Management (Breaches of Public Sector Standards) Regulations 2005 and disputes in relation to the redeployment and redundancy process under the Public Sector Management (Redeployment and Redundancy) Regulations 2014.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 8: That there is a recommendation towards the cessation of labour hire arrangements and the establishment of a pool or pools of directly employed workers to correspond to the demands of the sector which had previously been filled through labour hire and independent contractors.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 9: That the Panel recommends the development of a thorough and detailed plan to address diversity in the public sector workforce as a matter of priority.
4. “Strengthening leadership across government”

The CPSU/CSA is largely in agreement with this section of the report. Developing a culture of stewardship and collaboration between agency heads and at a ministerial level, will go far in focusing agencies on cultural change, implementing functional leadership and providing clarity around the role and function of central agencies. As stated in the report:

In Western Australia, the centre of government rests with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Department of Treasury and Public Sector Commission. The Panel’s consultations suggest these agencies are not working together optimally. Current methods of operation tend to reinforce silos and offer few incentives for cross-sector collaboration.

The CPSU/CSA agrees with the above statement and that implementing functional leadership will drive the changes which will benefit the sector by improving cross-departmental work, organisational capability and ultimately, the services delivered. The CPSU/CSA supports in principle the concept of a cycle of agency capability reviews, to determine medium-term priorities, and to help leadership determine where they need to focus their efforts in achieving desired outcomes. It should also be noted that in the case of some agencies, there is more than one responsible Minister. In the absence of a Cabinet reshuffle following the next stage of Machinery of Government changes, these agencies will be particularly in need of a collaborative approach and relationship of trust and confidence between agency heads and the ministerial level.

The CPSU/CSA also agrees that accountability when spending public sector money is always a necessary thing, however disputes that Key Performance Indicators linking to individual performance are the best method to achieve this. An improved relationship of collaboration between Ministers and agency heads, as the interim report identifies, will itself generate accountability as the targets of government become shared goals and each participant is required to deliver. A more developed discussion of Key Performance Indicators and whole of sector targets is contained in Part 4 of this submission.
3. Sector-wide Code of Conduct, policies, processes and data analysis

Consistent application of Human Resources and Industrial Relations practices across the sector

In the CPSU/CSA’s first submission to the Panel, the case was made for a sector-wide Code of Conduct and sector-wide Human Resources and Industrial Relations policies to improve clarity and consistency regarding disciplinary and other processes.

Further to this, an idea was generated by the public sector staff in attendance at a recent Red Tape Reduction workshop on 22 August 2017, whereby a sector-wide Human Resources and Industrial Relations unit could be set up centrally within the Public Sector Commission and part of that could include a Human Resources / Industrial Relations / Investigation Services "flying squad" to consistently respond to departmental needs regarding industrial relations advice, investigation services and other more complex human resources matters. A group of subject matter experts providing assistance and advice to human resources and industrial relations practitioners located within agencies would go some way to improving outcomes and consistency.

This would also, in turn, encourage less reliance on the Common Use Arrangement for Human Resource and Investigation Services CUAHRS2015 which is consistent with the McGowan government's policy to bring services back to being publicly run where possible to do so. As discussed above, the use of this Common Use Arrangement has been observed to be particularly costly and time inefficient, with some departments having to rewrite substandard or incomplete investigations reports and significant delays taking place due to an investigator's pace and the other projects they are completing for clients in the private sector.

Delegations schedules

As discussed in the CPSU/CSA’s first submission to the Service Priority Review, delegations schedules have become documents which entrench inefficiency and a lack of agency for public sector employees. Accordingly, the CPSU/CSA recommended in that submission that departments' delegations schedules are revised to empower employee capability, risk-taking and the avoidance of delays.

Further to this, the CPSU/CSA wishes to add that these delegations schedules should be as consistent across the sector as possible, for the purposes of clarity and in line with the cultural change described by the Panel in the interim report. To this end, the CPSU/CSA recommends that the Public Sector Commission conducts a review of the existing delegations schedules and recommends a template "best practice" schedule to be adapted by agencies to fit their unique purposes. Additionally, the Public Sector Commission should maintain a database of public sector delegations schedules and conduct a regular review of the schedules.

Sector-wide collection, maintenance and application of data

The Service Priority Review Panel's Interim Report outlined that one of the issues in the sector identified by the Panel is that “the lack of a coherent, overarching set of data illustrating the State's aims and its progress towards them speaks of a lack of focus on priorities, consistent narrative and direction." The CPSU/CSA agrees that this is a problem, however part of the necessary solution is that the sector is appropriately resourced to conduct this work, which includes upgrading Information and Communication Technology infrastructure and sustaining a workforce to collate and maintain the data.

Information technology is an area where significant change happens very quickly and in the past decade there has been an increasing trend towards outsourcing this important service because of a perceived lack of capacity. It is the view of the CPSU/CSA that Government needs to take a more enlightened approach to this and seek to invest in an information technology workforce that is able to support current technologies and adapt and integrate new
technologies to ensure that the West Australian government meets the best practice requirements in accessibility and data storage that Western Australians have a right to expect.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 10:** That the Service Priority Review Panel recommends the establishment of a sector-wide Code of Conduct and sector-wide Human Resources and Industrial Relations policies.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 11:** That the Service Priority Review Panel gives consideration to a central Human Resources and Industrial Relations unit within the Public Sector Commission, to provide advice, oversight and specialist HR/IR/Investigations services to departments as required.

**CPSU/CSA Recommendation 12:** That the Service Priority Review Panel recommends that the Public Sector Commission reviews existing delegations schedules, creates a model delegations schedule for agencies to adapt to purpose and maintains a database of departments’ delegations schedules for regular review.
4. Response and alternatives to Key Performance Indicators

Interim report recommendations for whole of sector targets and accountability framework

The CPSU/CSA argued strongly against the development of Key Performance Indicators for heads of departments and other public sector employees in the first submission to the Service Priority Review. However, the Panel’s interim report appears to distinguish between whole of sector targets and the measures used to create accountability regarding those targets. In terms of the former, the interim report refers to a small collection of approximately eight whole of sector targets which would be developed to respond to collective goals of government. An example of a possible whole of sector target, could be increased diversity in the workforce of Western Australia, or progress towards closing the gap of Indigenous outcomes. In terms of the latter, the accountability measures have been described as including Key Performance Indicators to attach to an individual Director-General’s performance.

The CPSU/CSA agrees in principle that there may be benefit in developing a small number of whole of sector targets for public sector agencies to collectively work towards. As identified in the interim report, this may assist in breaking down the silos of public sector agencies as well as supporting innovation and collaboration. The CPSU/CSA is also supportive of measuring progress towards these whole of sector targets given their importance, however disagrees that imposing individual Key Performance Indicators’ tied to the wages of Director-General is effective in achieving accurate measurement and accountability.

As described in the CPSU/CSA’s first submission to the Service Priority Review, employee engagement models are a more effective driver of performance than incentive or punitive measure. The following definition of “employee engagement” is helpful:

A positive, work related cognitive state characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Vigour involves high levels of energy, resilience and persistence. Dedication requires employees to be enthusiastic, highly involved and to take pride in their work. Absorption involves employees concentrating fully on the completion of work tasks, to the point that time at work passes quickly and employees find it difficult to disengage. (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002)

The interim report suggests that the final report will disclose a recommended framework or model for this incorporating in the vicinity of eight whole of sector targets. The CPSU/CSA would agree that some of the work of public sector agencies will not appropriately fit within these whole of sector targets. This is for a variety of reasons which may include the specificity of the work, the level of expertise it may require, or that it is discrete from other targets. In many cases though, a collaborative approach at the Cabinet / Ministerial / Chief Executive level would be beneficial to improving communication and innovation across the sector.

The whole of sector targets will have an effect on CPSU/CSA members both politically and industrially, and Key Performance Indicators would have an additional financial impact. Accordingly, the CPSU/CSA should be consulted and have the opportunity to provide feedback during the process of development, if the proposal for Key Performance Indicators is to go ahead.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 13: That a small number of whole of sector targets be developed with the express input of the CPSU/CSA, as these targets will have an impact on members’ working lives.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 14: That the Panel distinguishes between whole of sector targets and the proposed Key Performance Indicators system of performance pay to attach to individuals, and makes final recommendations against the latter.
5. Digitisation and Information and Communication Technology framework: considerations, concerns and opportunities

Response to interim report’s recommendations regarding digitisation of services

The Panel’s interim report has discussed that one of the directions which the final report will take is making recommendations regarding the digitisation of aspects of the public sector, to increase “customer” satisfaction and lead to greater efficiencies in delivering services.

There are a few different aspects the CPSU/CSA wishes to address in respect of the above. As discussed above, there is an inherent difficulty in naming members of the public who are end-users of a public service, “customers” and treating them as such. One of the outcomes of likening members of the public who are end-users of a public service to “customers” is the tendency to introduce features of the commercial sphere into the public services sphere where they don’t neatly fit, thus compromising the quality of the service.

Frequently, services delivered by Governments require human interaction and engagement for best outcomes. As discussed in a recent piece reported by the ABC:

*Automated systems might be able to handle regular cases. But they can’t yet adopt themselves to exceptional circumstances or even recognise that the flexibility of human intervention is needed.*

*And the problem, from the consumer's point of view, goes further than that. Some situations require not just human understanding and problem-solving, but a level of compassion and empathy.*

*A chatbot can be programmed to adopt a certain style of interaction, but that will still sound oddly out-of-place in unexpected or difficult contexts.*

*There is currently no practical road map in AI research for how to implement something that convincingly resembles human compassion.* (ABC news article, Daniel Polani, 2017)

Further, any cost-benefit analysis which only takes into account the price per service rather than holistically examining all possible costs of a digitised service, is incomplete. Full costs may include the initial capital required to update the Information and Communication Technology infrastructure necessary for the digitised service, the maintenance costs of the program, the costs of rectification when errors are made and potentially legal and political costs if a public service has been found to fall short of community expectations as is more likely to be the case with depersonalised service delivery.

There are also particular barriers to digitisation in regional areas of Western Australia, including cultural reasons and insufficient digital infrastructure. The unreliable state of internet connectability is another major hurdle whose cost to address would far outstrip any savings from digitised services, even with access to federal funding.

The CPSU/CSA agrees with the findings of the interim report that the developments towards a whole of sector portal in the WA Government ICT Strategy 2016-2020 provide “an important step towards improving awareness of an access to WA Government services available online, but until the underlying architecture allows for an integrated user experience, it falls short of true digital transformation.”

Increase capacity of ICT infrastructure

Separate though related to the issue of digitised services, is the need to increase the capacity of the public sector’s Information and Communication Technology infrastructure. The CPSU/CSA’s view is that this should not be to
replace face to face services with digitised services, but to create a more organised and efficient system which speaks to different areas of government and public sector departments and responds to community needs.

As stated in the CPSU/CSA's Submission to the CEO Working Group on Public Sector Efficiency:

In terms of red tape, having outdated Information and Communication Technology infrastructure means that many processes still end up being completed by hand or are duplicated in multiple formats including hard copy files. Agencies have been undergoing a process of working towards being paperless, however without Information and Communication Technology that is up to date and fit to purpose, this cannot be achieved.

The interim report suggests there needs to be an upfront investment in skills and infrastructure in Information and Communication Technology and the CPSU/CSA would agree with this, however is disappointed by the statement that this "may need to be funded through revised priorities within the sector rather than additional or new funding." It is unrealistic to expect that the level of upgrade necessary to put the Western Australian public sector ahead on the technology curve can be achieved through clever accounting and shifting line items on agency budgets, or by cutting back in another area. The recently announced 3000 FTE employee reduction will further put the system under pressure to deliver outcomes within an existing budget or FTE allocation. Additional funding is required from the government to conduct the sort of Information and Technology Communication upgrade proposed. Not only would updated Information and Communication Technology infrastructure allow for the collaboration being recommended by the Panel in terms of whole of sector targets and processes, it would also build capacity in the sector and reduce the need to rely so heavily on costly and broadly scoped private sector contracts.

There are also privacy concerns regarding private sector contracts for ICT services, as identified in the interim report. The CPSU/CSA would support in principle any recommendations which are targeted towards specific legislation to address data-sharing and information privacy. Clarity in this area will allow for a consistent framework for data-sharing between agencies across the sector which can also be controlled and tracked, rather than reliance on the private sector to maintain privacy data. Further, that this legislation will protect the asset of data within the ownership of the public sector. The following comments from the Australian Fabians' 2016 paper on public sector reform outline why this is important:

Digital disruption and technological changes are rapidly changing the way members of the community engage and interact and what they expect from government. And to date, elements of the private sector have been better at meeting these expectations – which is a huge problem for government because increasingly data is the most valuable asset an organisation can have. If government is lagging in IT infrastructure, which it currently is, it increases the pressure on government to hand over vast and valuable databases to the private sector in the, often vain hope, of getting better and cheaper systems. The proposed outsourcing of the Medicare payments system, which will mean handing over vast amounts of medical and financial data to a private company, is a case in point. (Fabians paper, 2016, p. 11-12)

It's critical that Government is at the forefront of the technology curve in the area of information technology. Significant change occurs rapidly and it is worth investing in human and technology infrastructure that places Western Australia in the best position possible to protect the privacy and meet the current and future needs of West Australians.

Government has increasingly outsourced ICT because of a perceived lack of capacity. It is the view of the CPSU/CSA that Government should invest in an ICT workforce and infrastructure that is able to support current technologies and adapt and integrate new technologies to ensure that the West Australian government meets the best practice requirements in accessibility and data storage that Western Australians have a right to expect.
CPSU/CSA Recommendation 15: That any digitisation of services is targeted and takes into account the requirement for human interaction and engagement for best outcomes.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 16: That the Panel recommends government to invest in a whole of sector upgrade of Information and Communication Technology infrastructure to bring the Western Australian public sector to the front of the technology curve in comparison to the other states and territories.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 17: That Government should invest in an ICT workforce and infrastructure that is able to support current technologies and adapt and integrate new technologies to ensure that the West Australian government meets the best practice requirements in accessibility and data storage that Western Australians have a right to expect.
6. Services integration and co-location

Proposed relocation of Department of Water and Environmental Regulation to Joondalup

In terms of services integration and co-location, the interim report talks about wrap-around human services however despite the current and previous government’s interest in developing wrap-around human services. There has been no commitment to carrying this out in any consistent way and it is not currently happening broadly. The Department of Justice’s Youth Justice Services unit has spoken frequently of wrap-around services at its facility Banksia Hill Detention Centre. Despite plans for this to be incorporated through the facility’s transformation project, it was not rolled out and the transformation project has been halted by the McGowan government after various concerns related to implementation were raised, including by the CPSU/CSA. Despite this, the CPSU/CSA is supportive in principle of wrap-around human services which are designed and delivered by the sector with thorough, frequent and effective consultation with the Union and its members.

In terms of the colocation of these services, in part 6.1.3 of the interim report, the Panel states:

*The current or planned physical co-location of State Government agencies, particularly in regional areas, could be an opportunity to test the ‘one stop’ model in WA.*

In terms of the colocation of services which the interim report flags as forming part of its final recommendations, the CPSU/CSA agrees in principle with the proposal that place-based services should form part of the Western Australian public sector’s future. The CPSU/CSA notes that current plans for the colocation of public sector departments do not take servicing the local community into account and accordingly, do not provide a good test case for a "one stop shop" in their currently proposed form.

A vital component of place-based services is their ability to respond to the needs of the local community in which they are located. The CPSU/CSA has concerns that the proposed relocation of the newly amalgamated Department of Environmental Regulation (formerly the Department of Water, Department of Environment Regulation and Office of the Environmental Protection Authority) from a CBD office location to Joondalup, does not meet this requirement. This amalgamated Department frequently liaises with other Departments based in the CBD, as well as local governments for the purposes of licensing which are situated in the inner-northern and inner-southern suburbs which made the CBD location efficient. There is no context for the move to Joondalup beyond a business case which the CPSU/CSA is currently applying for access to via Freedom of Information channels, and suspects does not accurately reflect the true and full costs of the move.

The previous government was nominally interested in looking at hub-based models of service delivery to the community, but this idea was never resourced or realised. Instead, decisions were made to relocate and combine offices in certain urban areas away from the CBD such as Joondalup and Fremantle, with very little analysis or rationale supporting the changes. In many cases, these decisions are now being carried out by the McGowan government in a very different public sector landscape, one that is already the subject of much reform with the first and second stages of the Machinery of Government, the Service Priority Review, Commission of Inquiry and Sustainable Health Review amongst other drivers of reform.

Due to its large population base, particularly of lower to middle class families, Joondalup would be a more logical site for co-located human services or health related services which would respond to the needs of the local community. The Minister for Health has recently spoken publicly about the budget for emergency health clinics to be created to relieve the pressures on hospital emergency rooms, for non-life-threatening matters. This is a welcome announcement and consideration should be given to whether the Joondalup site could provide this facility, or whether it could accommodate allied health services which the government has indicated will be increasingly moved out of hospitals and into other areas in the community. The proposed ‘Medihotel’ could also
use the site the Government is contractually obligated to develop in Joondalup. These are far better options for local service delivery than the re-location of an agency that provides an estimated 5 per cent of their services in the surrounding area.

The geographical location of the available workforce will also need to be taken into account in assessing where to trial the co-location of services. The below table from the Public Sector Commission’s State of the Sectors 2016 report indicates the number of employees in the public sector who live and work in the following regions and how that number has changed as a percentage over the past five years. This data is worth considering when deciding where to locate services and allocate office space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>FTE</th>
<th>% change since 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perth Metro</td>
<td>82,046</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gascoyne</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldfields-Esperance</td>
<td>2448</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Southern</td>
<td>2571</td>
<td>-12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberley</td>
<td>3003</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-West</td>
<td>2680</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peel</td>
<td>2428</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilbara</td>
<td>2291</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>6643</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatbelt</td>
<td>3096</td>
<td>-6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There is nothing inherently objectionable about decentralisation, and the CPSU/CSA agrees that due to Perth’s geographical disparateness, there is a need to co-locate services in sites outside of the Central Business District. However, given the Machinery of Government processes are not yet complete, and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation conducts approximately 95 per cent of its business in the CBD, consideration could also be given to which agencies post-Machinery of Government stage two, may be suitably co-located in Joondalup. This also applies to all relocation proposals that were agreed to by the former government.
CPSU/CSA Recommendation 18: That decisions regarding services integration, co-location and relocation are made in the context of all current and future reforms, including the second stage of the Machinery of Government.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 19: That decisions regarding services integration, co-location and relocation are made in the context of local community needs or client / customer place based
7. Implementation framework for second stage of Machinery of Government

As a result of the current suite of public sector reform, the CPSU/CSA's membership is experiencing a large degree of uncertainty and apprehension regarding their future in the public sector. To a certain extent, the CPSU/CSA appreciates that the current government have been left with the unenviable task of repairing the state's finances after two terms of fiscal mismanagement. However, it is disappointing that the burden of that budget repair is falling disproportionately to the public sector. To assist in mitigating the adverse impact of measures such as the Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme, Service Priority Review and Machinery of Government, the CPSU/CSA is of the view that consultation with the Union and the broader workforce needs to be frequent and thorough and certainly more consistent than recent experience, and that an implementation framework is developed as a matter of urgency and prior to the second stage of the Machinery of Government.

The CPSU/CSA believes that the sequencing of the government's public sector reform is important, particularly given the scale of the reform projects and the tight timelines they are being rolled out over. There has been an artificial separation between different limbs of the McGowan government's public sector reform project, such as the Service Priority Review, Machinery of Government stage 1 and Machinery of Government stage 2, as well as smaller reforms which have been announced throughout the year or in conjunction with the 2017-18 Budget. The CPSU/CSA’s view is that the reforms of this government should be properly understood to be interconnected and that this should inform the way they are communicated to the Union and workforce as well as to the public. Further, that a clear and detailed implementation framework is developed and pursued as a matter of urgency, which provides direction and guidance for all affected employees and their heads of department on all areas of reform.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 20: That the Panel recommends in its final report, that a clear and detailed implementation and evaluation framework for all public sector reform over the forward estimates is developed and pursued as a matter of urgency, to provide direction and guidance on all areas of reform.
8. A Shared Vision for a best practice public sector

For a long time, a public sector was a place where Western Australians could progress a career with the security of permanency and develop their skills for the benefit of the State. In the past decade this has changed markedly due to both internal and external factors. People now change careers and jobs more frequently and significant technological changes have automated or dramatically changed other forms of public sector work. Somewhat insidiously, there has been another shift in the past eight years too. The Barnett Government made no secret of its ideological agenda and sought to undermine the public sector in word, deed and funding. The capacity of the sector has been consistently broken down over time. CPSU/CSA want to continue to deliver valued services to the community they live in. They want to do that in a public sector that values their service.

The Service Priority Review and the CPSU/CSA agree on many things and the look into the future has been a heartening opportunity for this Union to make the case for a best practice public sector and to envision a sector where consistency and fairness in industrial relations and human resource practices allow CPSU/CSA to continue to deliver valued services.

- We want a sector that encourages Western Australian youth to enter the public service as part of a mentored program that transfers the corporate knowledge of Senior public servants as they begin a transition to retirement.
- We want a sector that invests in the public sector staff delivering services and those supporting service delivery. Genuine investment in staff will ensure a committed and adaptive workforce.
- We want a sector that leads from within on information and communications technology to ensure that the sector can readily adapt to new technologies and new needs in the West Australian community.
- We want a sector with a coordinated and collaborative approach to service delivery by Government to ensure that no West Australian is left behind.
- We want a sector that has the capacity to innovate at every level towards the best outcomes for all West Australians.

One of the items that must not pass without comment is the role and work to date of the Public Sector Commission. The Public Sector Commission could play a real role in joining up agencies and practices across the sector. To date, this has been limited. The lack of clarity and consistency across the sector in relation to Codes of Conduct, delegations, human resource practices and industrial relations practices could be guided by the Public Sector Commission and it is worth considering why this has occurred in such a limited fashion.

The office of the Public Sector Commission is a real opportunity to give thoughtful action to a best practice public sector and the CPSU/CSA would welcome the Commission being empowered and enabled to take decisive leadership in this area.
9. CPSU/CSA Recommendations

The following recommendations of the CPSU/CSA have been informed by the Panel’s interim report:

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 1: That the Service Priority Review Panel gives consideration to the impact of the Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme on the public sector and broader community and makes recommendations regarding the operationalisation of the scheme to limit the adverse impact on the public sector and community of Western Australia.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 2: That the Public Sector Commission should be appropriately resourced to implement the Voluntary Targeted Separation and oversee its compliance with the policy guidelines and Public Sector Management Redeployment and Redundancy) Regulations 2014.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 3: That public sector agencies and units within agencies which provide vital public services have their FTE ceiling removed thus quarantining them from the impact of the Voluntary Targeted Separation Scheme and that the Workforce Renewal Policy is removed or amended to minimise the adverse impact on the public sector.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 4: That when the Panel is making their final recommendations, those related to "building a public sector focused on community needs" should look to other public sector models as comparators, rather than the private sector.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 5: Prevention and diversion services ought to be revisited in the Service Priority Review’s final report, with specific recommendations made in support of the investment this provides to the sector and to the community of Western Australia.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 6: That the Panel recommends that where human services provision is concerned, these services are best delivered by the public sector rather than Community Services Organisations and that every effort is made to maintain this service delivery model wherever possible.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 7: That the Panel recommends in the final report, that there should be an expansion of access to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission for matters which are currently excluded, such as Breach of Standards applications under the Public Sector Management Act 1994 and Public Sector Management (Breaches of Public Sector Standards) Regulations 2005 and disputes in relation to the redeployment and redundancy process under the Public Sector Management (Redeployment and Redundancy) Regulations 2014.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 8: That there is a recommendation towards the cessation of labour hire arrangements and the establishment of a pool of directly employed workers to correspond to the demands of the sector which had previously been filled through labour hire and independent contractors.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 9: That the Panel recommends the development of a thorough and detailed plan to address diversity in the public sector workforce as a matter of priority.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 10: That the Service Priority Review Panel recommends the establishment of a sector-wide Code of Conduct and sector-wide Human Resources and Industrial Relations policies.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 11: That the Service Priority Review Panel gives consideration to a central Human Resources and Industrial Relations unit within the Public Sector Commission, to provide advice, oversight and specialist HR/IR/Investigations services to departments as required.
CPSU/CSA Recommendation 12: That the Service Priority Review Panel recommends that the Public Sector Commission reviews existing delegations schedules, creates a model delegations schedule for agencies to adapt to purpose and maintains a database of departments’ delegations schedules for regular review.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 13: That a small number of whole of sector targets be developed with the express input of the CPSU/CSA, as these targets will have an impact on members’ working lives.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 14: That the Panel distinguishes between whole of sector targets and the proposed Key Performance Indicators system of performance pay to attach to individuals, and makes final recommendations against the latter.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 15: That any digitisation of services is targeted and takes into account the requirement for human interaction and engagement for best outcomes.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 16: That the Panel recommends government to invest in a whole of sector upgrade of Information and Communication Technology infrastructure to bring the Western Australian public sector to the front of the technology curve in comparison to the other states and territories.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 17: That Government should invest in an ICT workforce and infrastructure that is able to support current technologies and adapt and integrate new technologies to ensure that the West Australian government meets the best practice requirements in accessibility and data storage that Western Australians have a right to expect.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 18: That decisions regarding services integration, co-location and relocation are made in the context of all current and future reforms, including the second stage of the Machinery of Government.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 19: That decisions regarding services integration, co-location and relocation are made in the context of local community needs or client / customer place based.

CPSU/CSA Recommendation 20: That the Panel recommends in its final report, that a clear and detailed implementation and evaluation framework for all public sector reform over the forward estimates is developed and pursued as a matter of urgency, to provide direction and guidance on all areas of reform.
10. References


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11. Contact

Toni Walkington
Branch Secretary
Toni.Walkington@cpsucsa.org
Our Ref.: HO.120.17

Mr Iain Rennie
Chair, Service Priority Review

By email: servicepriorityreview@dpc.wa.gov.au

23rd June 2017

Dear Mr Rennie

Re: Service Priority Review - Submission by Health Services Union of Western Australia (HSUWA)

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Service Priority Review.

The HSUWA is the trade union that represents more than 16,000 people employed in WA’s public hospitals and health services, including for example administrative staff, clerks, health technicians, physiotherapists, pharmacists, medical imaging technologists, clinical psychologists, social workers, medical scientists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, dieticians, podiatrists, mental health workers, and other health professionals. All play a vital role in providing and / or supporting clinical services in WA’s public hospitals and health services. The HSUWA also have coverage of the same callings in the non-government health sector, aged care, and disability services.

The HSUWA submission is drawn from two sources. Firstly, a survey of our public sector members. Over 640 members responded to the survey, from across the State and each of the health services. Responses from the survey have provided an overview of how members feel about the current state of public health system. Members feedback indicates that recent changes in the health system have compromised patient care and that waitlists have become longer. Nearly 80% of members reported an increased workload, with almost half of that number reporting the increase in workload to be significant.

Further, the top three workplace issues for members are security of employment, reasonable workloads, and salary and benefits. These results reflect conversations we have had with members over the past few months, people are feeling squeezed and anxious about the future. The key findings of the survey and members responses to Q6 are included at Attachment A.

Secondly, the union asked members for further submissions in response to the themes outlined in the Service Priority Review’s ‘consultation themes’. Included at Attachment B are the relevant edited comments provided by members.

We look forward to the opportunity to present further information at any hearing that may be convened by the Committee and once again thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. Please contact the undersigned, or Richard Barlow on (08) 9328 5155 or union@hsuwa.com.au

Yours Faithfully

Dan Hill
Secretary
74% say staff levels too low

59% say poor planning for wait lists

40% say not enough funding

75% say

78% say have increased workload

59% say recent changes have compromised patient care

 surveyed members and this is what you told us

Top 3 workplace issues

1. Secure employment (72%)
2. Reasonable workload (65%)
3. Salary (46%)

Tell your member of Parliament
Health needs more staff and resources, not less.
Are there any changes that the new State Government could make in your work area that would improve the quality of patient care without compromising jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BUREAUCRACY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce admin time to approve filling positions - goes through too many layers of authority, inefficient. Devolve authority to Heads of Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamate Mental Health Commission with Department of Health so that health takes responsibility for mental health and there is reduced duplication of administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devolve budgets to department heads. This would streamline many processes especially contract extensions which are still handled by many, many senior and highly paid staff. The devolution of budgets has occurred in other government departments (education) and is consistent with best financial practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tear up the contracts with the facilities management - an enormous waste of money. Include workers on the hospitals boards. Have a bottom up efficiency review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit the number of managers, make Heads of Service more accountable. Have more allied health representation at upper management level as particularly in mental health our specialist skills/role is being eroded and we are being forced to become generic mental health case managers by nursing and medical staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimising paperwork instead of increasing it. Nurses and admin are spending a lot of time keeping up with new forms as forms are changing rapidly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instead of cutting clinicians and creating boards... how about a review of the over-bureaucratization of health. It's not transparent and there is a culture lacking transparency. We have lost our patient focus and it's all about reducing the debt. Get more frontline staff providing input instead of talk-fest for bureaucrats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUNDING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Less executives making decisions that don't help the staff or patients. Create more positions for all areas ie: clerical and nursing while offering more variable hours to help accommodate staff with families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent employment creates a more cooperative and smooth-running dept and reduces admin workload of renewing contracts which can take up to one month. Remove public service executive level and make all Health posts with involvement with the various institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rid the WA Health Dept of as much ABF drivers as possible, as ABF has just led to poorer patient outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking less at waitlist and throughput numbers and more at outcomes for clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes look into amount of funding given to clients eg some have excess funds available whilst others with very high needs have little left and are paying high additional fees for service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the full payment of the allocation of activity based funding and any supplements e.g. because of remoteness or patient population. Our supplementary funding has been deleted from the budget 2 months before the end of the financial year so that the region will now have a much larger deficit than that projected 3 months ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remove activity based funding. The focus is on funding and NOT individual patient care and recovery in their own time and according to their own social circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes more funding for the agecare...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity based funding compromises patient care.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The way activity based funding has been adopted needs to be reviewed. It's terrible at the moment and is resulting in increased costs and worse patient treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe the health budget will have to keep increasing with the ageing population. I also believe we all need to become more efficient and in my area that means we need more beds because we are forever on hold due to lack of PICU beds which means lack of beds on the wards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure budget consistency without unplanned budget cuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve funding to health department to ensure adequate staffing and services available. Especially with the increased demand on the public health service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give funding for adequate database and Co-ordination of programme... we are the poor cousin of the other states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund our department as we have to fund ourselves and are only just starting to be recognised for the work we do and its benefit to patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuous budget cut will only do more damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding appropriate improvement for PSOLIS system to catch up with the SSCD documents to prevent doubling of administrative work for Clinicians whose time will be better utilised providing client care!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IMPROVED PROCESSES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less paperwork - more time for direct patient care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not focusing on activity based funding but being more client centred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current level of ABF is insufficient to manage waitlist. Don't cut jobs but realise savings elsewhere - for example the public-private partnership for FM services is expensive and inefficient - make it in-house and save money while making the hospital more efficient. Improve administrative processes to make decisions and actions easier and therefore more timely - this will save money. Make hospital systems and processes more efficient, including ICT systems - this will also save money but does require initial expenditure as an investment in future efficiency. Redirect any savings to addressing the waitlist by providing more resources to meet actual demand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABF is simply compromising patient care from a mental health perspective, repeated complications and readmissions demoralise patients, distress families and make providing related psychological care difficult.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**IMPROVED PROCESSES**

Cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase resources for community mental health. In particular, adequately qualified and skilled staff in community mental health clinics to assertively manage high risk consumers with complex issues. So the fragmentation of care where NGOs are contacted to do work for which they don't have adequately trained staff and where they are unable to manage the risks of looking after clients with complex and chronic mental health conditions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>An effective health system requires recognition and investment in the non hospital bits of the system. We need to invest in keeping people out of hospital, child/family health and better coordinating care.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Funding for resources, therapy equipment and materials. 2. Funding to attend work related training/PD. 3. Funding for building or leasing of suitable buildings for Child Development Services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase in mental health and accommodation options for those suffering with mental health issues, homelessness and drug and alcohol rehab to be increased. Increase services and access to support parents. Friends of those affected by drugs and alcohol.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes, conduct an efficient audit for patients on waitlist to establish if they still need to be seen (audit was performed 1.5 years ago, very inefficient, no communication between staff doing the audit and staff in clinics, very frustrating for us staff and patients) Develop appropriate referral templates for GPs and education of GPs to improve referral pattern to Neurosurgery Department increase number of staff (advanced scope physiotherapist) in order to triage patients in Neurosurgery Spinal Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invest in behind the scene corporate based systems and data gathering to better enable working smarter, better and safer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase access to psychological services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to backfill, improved technologies for ohs&amp;is and more training. Cooperative planning between departments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>More access to outpatients facilities, removal of our state wide service from under a single hospital umbrella</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment in electronic infrastructure that supports clinical care whilst meeting the need for data collection and records management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognition that sole practitioner positions in large country hospitals is unhealthy and unhelpful for patients. Impossible to do a VERY GOOD job. Just OK outcomes mostly. Might account for why there is such a significant percentage of pts who return on regular basis. Follow-up and outreach post-discharge is imperative. This model should see an increase of staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus on preventative health strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduce silos and manage referrals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elearning is not time effective. Getting 5 emails a week telling me I am overdue in completing elearning wastes my time and does not enable me to keep up with training needs. Elearning that covers all age areas of mental health when all staff are working in one age group (child, adult or older adult) is time wasting and infuriating. Get rid of elearning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication training for management within CAHS and CAMHS!! Review (and reduce) level of admin required by direct care staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving efficiency by increased utilisation of IT solutions (increased access to computers – e.g. bedside; reduced need for plethora of paper-based forms).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outpatients clinics need to have some admin time factored in as there is an increasing demand on documentation. Electronic record keeping would save duplications of notes and speed up discharge letter writing... prevent a backlog of paperwork... less stress about this</td>
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<tr>
<td>We are a community based service (attached to North Metro HS) so the only improvements are likely to be interfacing with the Health services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allow some professional discretion re provision of services rather than having to meet set limit eg 6 therapy sessions etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remove privatisation of public hospitals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address the problems associated with drug use as drug affected patients are drawing resources away from patients in need of health services</td>
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<tr>
<td>To treat healthcare as a service and not a BUSINESS!!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stop privatisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stop the outsourcing of typing to the Eastern states. We have fully trained secretaries in RPH who are more than willing/able to do the typing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fremantle Hospital - open operating theatres on Saturday and Sunday and try to bring down the elective list blowouts. This will also improve staffing welfare at the hospital.</td>
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<tr>
<td>They could encourage specialist services to reside in Busselton to help with the after hours service so Bunbury Hos doesn’t get the overload of emergencies that Busselton Hospital could easily do</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allow us to have an after hours drug imprest room so that prescription drugs no longer float around the hospital willy nilly regardless of if they are on imprest or not. There is no respect for prescription drugs or their cost. It would save so much of the stuff we throw away every single day and stop nurses tubing drugs around the hospital like candy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>By not closing down essential Mental Health Services, when there are so many requiring help</td>
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<tr>
<td>More Aboriginal Mental health workers are needed at the CAMHS clinics one clinic doesn’t have any.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### IMPROVED PROCESSES

Cont.

- Put pressure on the bureaucracy and management team of FSH Allied Health to listen to senior clinicians.

- Provide an outline of the impact of changes to the Public Health Act and local government is there an impact on WACHS staff

- Open the 4 closed beds on older adult mental health

- Reopening Fremantle Hospital; increasing beds at Bentley and Royal Perth Hospital, anything to improve capacity to cope with growing population needs.

- Changing the new Allied Health service model back to the old system /direct discipline specific management model. Removal of mandatory uniforms for Allied health.

- Establishment of government funded community based specialist services such as chronic disease care model.

- Better funding in mental health. Post discharge support is required.

- Greater resourcing for Oncology Services at RPH to better manage clinical and service demands

- Increase funding for clinical support onsite for Telehealth and Palliative Care across Kimberley and Pilbara

- I would be pleasantly surprised if the government would change things at Armadale hospital. However at the very least I would like an investigation of the current executive teams actions over the last 24 months and all of the current events going at Armadale hospital. I believe something similar has recently happened at Princess Margaret Hospital after staff had finally been pushed too far. Maybe the new health minister could intervene before this situation gets out of hand and get some positive media.

- Review the cno as cco micro management of work practices and employment process that take 6 weeks minimum to get people employed. If fte is x and we can employee in the fte guidelines then it should not need to be signed off by cco. It takes at least 60 8 different people to get 1 person to be approved. Cut red tape. Let people do their job with checks and balances. Human resources department who completes job interviews, paper work induction to health instead of staff who are not trained doing the job. Lack of training in staff when requested to step up. Restructuring of departments taking 6 plus years and still on the merry go round. Understand the work from people on the ground not people in ivory towers that have never done the job or even been to remote areas. Perth makes decision and have no idea if it will work in remote areas no wonder the budget is in the red. The money that is wasted on rework. Finance Department in Bunbury not paying account on time as it is all done from Bunbury who splits accounts out and then loses them. Water accounts not being paid in correct time frames of when due. The waste is unbelievable. The fish rots from the head down and unfortunately the arrogance and out of touch business management practices. The management is in major business has moved past this type of management it back in the 60s

- State wide strategic vision and model of care for the delivery of mental health services. Much stronger focus and strategic framework for increasing and improving community based mental health teams, less emphasis on inpatient care. Much more discussion and planning of youth services in the community. A plan, framework and model of care for tackling ice use and addiction.

### RESOURCES

- Forward planning, ensuring there are adequate buildings to deliver services from. Minimising change. Reducing unnecessary administration this is a huge cost in CAMHS the child part of the system is constantly putting in systems applicable to adults and not young children

- I work in a community mental health clinic. Increased documentation requirements over the past few years results in face to face time with patients decreasing. Work to consolidate documents and make all documents available electronically, across sites (eg through PSOLIS if possible) would improve this. I also find some employers reluctant to grant study leave, and unwilling to consider helping to cover cost of cpd courses. Not supporting staff to complete cpd can of course adversely effect patient care, if staff are not 1. Staying up with current techniques/research and 2. Not having some reflection time/space and returning to work inspired!

- Respect us. Also if CDS is only seeing young children then say that and stop saying we see all children. See children until they have sufficient improvement, not discharging as they have had 4/6 sessions.

- OPH needs to be taken out from under SCGH management as the interference and transfer of resources impedes OPH being a top grade service.

- Development of Pathways for alcohol and drug services. Development of Pathways for Mental Health Services. Reform and Develop Mental Health Service delivery... act on the Mental Health reform

- Stop ward closures

- To achieve goals set by health department, inadequate beds and staffing levels.

- Last winter the black bed status and ambulance ramping was concerning. The population is ageing and it is becoming very apparent in the acute care setting. Beds! beds! beds!

- Having facilities that aren’t out of date. Maintain support for specialist services.

- Funding appropriate FTE; primary prevention funding

- Higher staff levels to address population growth. Funding for long term treatment

- More funding for staffing and stop putting their heads in the sand thinking they don’t have a problem. Nurses are in crisis and the government keeps giving everyone “lip service” saying they are coping!

- More funding to employ more doctors, theatre availability and open more beds to help reduce waitlists.

- Provide adequate resources for effective patient care. Outsourcing health services is a very inefficient way of providing services.

- Increase staff, revised and streamline internal processes and documentation within CAMHS

- Increase permanency employment positions increase outpatient clinical psychology therapy capacity in hospital settings, to reduce readmissions and admission lengths.
STAFF

Better planning and use of staff across all areas, look at areas where duplication of work particularly in administration areas

Properly resourced to enable innovation – take some examples from NSW Health Clinical Excellence Commission.

Yes, reinstate best practice model of care and management for patients undergoing elective joint replacement surgery to ensure their surgical outcome is optimised. Improve the environment for staff working on the ward. Improve the staff clinical knowledge so that patient care is not compromised. Reduce bullying in the workplace and toxic environment. This really affects patient care a lot.

access internal DoH experts on clinical change and reform programs

Reduce the red-tape in filing cost-neutral positions. Meet national guidelines for staffing per population. Mandatory training in management skills for staff in management positions.

Spending money on much needed repairs to our building and providing the IT systems to support patient care

Get better managers

Ask nurses to live in the real world and get back to “hands on” nursing instead of paperwork!!

Stop the bullying behaviours listen to frontline staff adopt a unified approach Govnext is not the answer and won’t save money

Give Australians the permanent jobs not contracts.

Admin staff cuts at PMH/PCH impacting on current staff and their workload.

Increase FTE for direct clinical staff, have KPI’s for direct patient contact.

Stop cutting occ health and safety…you need to look after the workers or the whole system will fall apart!!!

Increase nursing staff and administrative staff so that there is less stress on the staff that are currently trying to do their jobs.

add more remote rural mental health professionals

Value the input of Social Workers as an integral part of the Ward team. Increased marginalisation of Social Workers within the Armadale health service has resulted in overworked, social workers who are relegated to a demountable a long way from the ward, improved consultation and provision of basic tools of trade such as a reliable workspace with a computer available when needed, provision of PENS (yes we are now being asked to provide our own and with lengthy hand written clinical notes this is significant and reflects the petty policies lack of respect for staff). Adequate staffing levels and access to permanent FTE and stability of employment.

review staffing ratio. current staffing agreed to when we were south metro. Have had additional outpatient area coverage and taken on Midland in and out patients under east metro without negotiating new staffing levels to service this. Now difficult to have staff take leave and continue service to patients. I receive multiple telephone calls from staff and patients wanting treatment service and I’m not able provide this with a limited sessional time in EMG/NCS area. I get depressed as there is no solution on the horizon.

More staff

Longer staff contracts and long term contract staff being appointed permanently

outdated equipment. too many staff on fixed contracts.

Ensure no more staff cuts so we can actually give our patients what they need instead of feeling like you are running through your day stretched to capacity

Training

More jobs

Fill vacant positions and give people security of employment

Increase staffing levels to cope with demand

Provide more staff so we can do our jobs adequately rather cutting staff! Improve computer systems and facilities so services can be more efficient.

improved staffing numbers, adequate equipment, change of roster design, a more stable working environment, conditions in old hospital aplusable.

staffing and employment stability

I would love to say increases in staff rather than fussing about infrastructure, which has been the benchmark of the last government. It is nice to have new facilities, but not at the expense of staff

Increase existing staff hours or put on extra staff to cater for the increased workload and training provided for staff

Support patient centred care & allocate staffing resources based on clinical demand

Allow the filling of vacant positions

Not unless they are happy to upgrade the hospital and provide more money in the budget for extra staff across the board
Stop putting unrealistic pressure on doctors, nurses and all staff in hospitals. Stop employing boards and executive to make decisions regarding the workplace when they are so out of touch with the real world.

Firstly happy staff members equals a productive workplace.

Invest in human capital by providing hard working employees job security and invest in their skill development to improve service delivery and efficiency, minimise staff retention.

Staffing nos increased, medical SSS project waste of money, and not improved services.

More clinical staff less executive staff.

Cut red tape and employee more staff.

Stop outsourcing of medical typists. Bring back more admin staff.

Restore fte to previous levels to allow all machines to run at capacity.

Increased staffing.

No privatisation of services promised. Make contract workers permanent. Increased low level supervisory staff. Support for new graduates.

Employ more skilled staff (e.g., psychologists).

More staffing.

Hire more staff to meet demand.

Appropriate staffing of public hospitals.

If we could have 4 full time officers back that we lost it would be a good start.

Employing more staff.

The creation of permanent positions rather than contracts.

Improved recruitment & HR process, especially timeliness.

Increasing staff levels.

Employ enough people to actually allow staff to take leave so that everyone doesn't become a leave liability (this would also improve moral and therefore efficiency).

Employ enough people so that the workloads are actually national standard and not at least 30% above (this is not safe and is causing more sick days of staff which worsens the problem). Pay staff for all work or at least recognise the extra work on call do.

More staff!!!

Increasing staff levels and competencies of staff.

More permanent positions.

Provide job security and development of all (not just clinical staff) staff in the health sector.

Nurse to patient ratio.

Correct staffing for the required expanding workload.

Sort out the current staffing issues quicker so we can all get on with doing our jobs better.

More staff.

Raising staffing levels.

Increase staff numbers.

More staff would increase operation hours, thus decreasing wait times and workload.

Being realistic in our care requirements. 1 person cant do a 2 person job forever. Staff that are less stressed are more productive.

More staff! More permanent jobs! Less changing and restructuring.

Increase permanent jobs. Increase fte.

Allow for substantially vacant positions to be filled (not short term contracts for years on end).

Employ staff to ensure that patients are well taken care of.

Ensure enough junior doctors are employed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAFF Cont.</th>
<th>Equity with workload among the tertiary hospitals in the 5 health services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allow us to hire more staff - we need additional FTE to reduce waitlists, as well as to cover annual leave and sick leave. At the moment, if one person is sick, or on AL, we fall apart. We have high sick leave and stress in the department as we all work so much harder as not to cancel patients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employ more staff to meet staffing levels and meet workloads</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reinstating manpower that has been culled to fit the preferred profile of health. As an engineer there hasn't been any reduction in facilities but the manpower has been cut.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decrease workloads. Increase staffing. Inpatient settings have capped staff-patient ratios based on bed availability (except ED) but community mental clinicians expected to accept new referrals despite very high caseloads and inability to provide timely care.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make sure empty FTE roles are actually filled</td>
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<tr>
<td>More staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>funding new recruitment where there is genuine need for more staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beyond increasing FTE, no.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>proper staff resourcing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase staffing and permanent positions. Advertising to public that acute hospitals cannot solve social problems and is not an appropriate place to present. more education on arrival to hospital on role of the acute hospital to family/careers to help manage expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>More money for more staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listen to staff who know how to care for patients; resource staff at the 'coalface', rather than spending so much time/resources on restructuring for efficiencies and management simply continues to grow, without any benefit to patients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide more budgetised training to staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>With increased patient volumes. We need more staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing the jobs and staffing levels in such a small department. Continuous support for training and professional development. I am a strong believer that if the workplace is going to benefit from the person's increased knowledge/experience, then the workplace should fund this.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Move staff from FTC and casual positions to permanent so their is consistency of staffing, knowledge build and less gaps in staffing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to training, follow up, review &amp; quality improvement of work. Measuring &amp; improving work quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>increasing the number of nurses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess Staff levels.</td>
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<tr>
<td>more training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase maintenance staffing levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>stop casualizing the workforce and give fixed term contracts – job security and less time messing about with HR – more time for clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spend more money on staff and patient care than on paint and carpets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>need more staff to see more new patients to reduce waitlist times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employ more experienced and good quality health care workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>increase staffing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stop the &quot;1 year contracts&quot; which is most of our new placements. Stop the hiring freeze. Realize that continuously compromising quality to meet deadlines will eventually just cost more and compromise patient safety.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase in clerical staff. Our dept has had an increase in medical and nursing staff however a decrease in clerical staff - very busy dept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The only way to improve pt. care is by increasing staff numbers. Nurses are too busy to give pts. the care they deserve. It's not safe!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase FTE, encourage training and professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>increasing the bed capacity . hospital was built to small for the population.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of senior staff reduced from 5 to 2 should be increased to 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>increase number of staff who are dealing with patients on a daily basis. you cant provide a good service if you are trying to do the job of 2 people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employ more clinical FTE and review executive positions so as to provide improved service delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>STAFF Cont.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Back-fill of staff on leave. I work in a community team where pts may not get seen because we don't have enough vehicles to outreach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide a increase in FTE for training in the areas OHS, and infection control skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>More staff – and on permanent or long-term contracts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consolidate permanent workforce. Discontinue the use of vast numbers of Locum Staff recruited from around the world. Provision of airfares, accommodation and hire cars for locum providers travelling back and forth weekly is an outrageous expense. Audit the use of Locum Services in Bunbury Hospital.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have realistic staffing levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>to make sure patient / nurse ratios are safe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing staff levels so current staff are not working under extreme pressure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure people don't work excessive overtime, less meetings and reports (don't achieve much).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree to increase FTE in administrative services to cope with existing and future increases to workloads</td>
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<tr>
<td>not sure – possibly if they offered permanent positions to clerks - this would make a huge difference in job security</td>
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<tr>
<td>review staffing level</td>
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<tr>
<td>more staff per client ratio at the moment we are so busy we cannot provide the quality of care that is required and are unable to spend any social time for clients which is sorely needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure job security. NO FORCED SEVERENCES!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More staff</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer longer term employment and give incentives to retain staff/migration tied to rural placements of a decent length of time 5 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>less stress, better work space/stations, actual chairs that give support etc, having a place to put your stuff. recognising impact of stress on workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>More staff, more work space for clinics</td>
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<tr>
<td>More staff needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase staffing levels – clerical job freeze has had major impact on workloads – i.e. boxes of outstanding patient result filing etc in Cancer Centre is a potential danger</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide job security and enough staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>stop cutting our admin staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>better education for clinical staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>More staffing in Mental Health wards Ratio often same as acute wards, levels of violence etc not considered</td>
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<tr>
<td>People will not apply for positions that don't have a permanent contract. We are finding it difficult to attract and retain staff with specialist Mental Health training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attract the best staff by having full time permanent employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase staffing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stop the use if consultants and privatisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employ more staff and cease privatising transcription services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security that staff freezes will not occur.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job security, permanency quicker, more flexibility</td>
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</table>
From a regional health perspective it has been interesting to watch over the last 5 – 6 years how the FTE and funding in the regions is constantly being reduced to provide funding for FTE at WA Country Health Service - Central Office.

If one was to review an FTE report from 2012 to 2017 identifying the FTE across the WACHS sites, I would be interested to see the change in FTE and where the jobs in WA Country Health Services are being located.

WACHS Central has the highest FTE across WACHS sites – there are no patients at WACHS Central.

Positions and funding are constantly being taken away from the regions for positions in central office, often around the perception of improved governance etc, the fact is that many of the jobs in Central Office could be undertaken in the regions.

The constant battle between clinical and non clinical duties and positions exists however there are non clinical duties that clinicians shouldn’t or don’t wish to perform.

The waste in health is phenomenal, there is potential to improve this situation however sometimes clinical and infection control standards eliminate the potential to improve the situation. For example, sterile scissors have a finite life and if not used within their expiry date they must be disposed of, they cannot be sent overseas, they cannot even be sent to the vets.

My comments are regarding Theme 3 (Efficient and Effective Systems and Processes) – specifically “How could the public sector be better organised to operate more efficiently?”

I believe that the public sector could be better organised by managing staff more effectively; namely to reduce the amount of staff hired on a fixed-term contract basis. I am one such staff member who has been at my current job for almost 5 years on continuous fixed-term contracts. I am an active member of the team who regularly contributes to our KPIs, vision and projects. While I do work with an excellent team led by a wonderful manager who values my place and input, I do feel limited with my own scope in this team and almost have a sense of being “on the outside, looking in”. It is not a very nice feeling and engenders fear and insecurity. I’ve had to seek employment at another public hospital to ensure a little more security (although this is also on a fixed-term contract basis).

At work I always work to my full capacity – however I feel that our organisation would benefit from more permanent staff and less contracts to improve efficiency. This is my number one priority which I would like to see addressed by the State Government – job security.

How can the public sector foster a high performing workforce that meets both government goals and community needs?

Make sure your employees are happy, value them and provide support on a long term basis, so they can be the best version of themselves.

Make WA Health the best employer, so we are known to be a really good employer and people strive to work with us.

Work continuously on Employee’s health and wellbeing and do not get complacent about it. Take stress or mental issues at work serious and educate your Supervisors / Managers & Executives about it. Existing bullying awareness programs are not sufficient.

Performance Management for everyone and a fair go to anyone, that is the believe and feeling that all employees have to feel, to see that the system is fair in its core. At this stage, it isn’t. PDS for all levels staff, no matter the seniority. Real accountability for all.

We have to deal also with the issue of pockets of inconsistency through the new HSP model, where the policies and more so the daily practise can differ from site to site. There needs to be a possibility to all staff to report such inconsistencies across to the System Manager or third party.

Other safe and secure reporting tools need to be implemented as well, to be in particular outside of the system, the system that could be the issue and cannot be the solution.

The professional skills of our leaders should be questionable/reviewed and checked against performance measures if they are still fit for purpose. The current system does not account for review of our leaders skills and if they fit into the landscape the leaders have to manage and lead in.

How can senior officers be better supported to manage their teams more effectively?

With leadership, good leadership.

How can public sector agencies work together to better share and exchange workers’ knowledge and expertise?

Provide a culture and a system around sharing and exchange. Yammer will not suffice for that, as it will need an internal push of need, which means we will need to have an open forum on culture. Asking difficult questions should be encouraged and while asking the “7 Why’s?” to find out why we do not have such a sharing and exchanging culture as a start. Create an information and knowledge sharing culture, promote that culture, build a cross team and give a mandate and resourcing to find and implement a solution to achieve that goal.

In what ways can the public sector draw on the knowledge and expertise of the private sector?

The privatisation issue still is on the table. While that issue is on people’s minds as is mostly seen as a threat and the Government has not removed it from the table, no real effective ground on working together with private sector can be achieved.
What new technologies could be used to achieve better service outcomes?

We need a Health-wide App Portal, which provides all the essential applications to staff to make services for all WA Health employees mobile and accessible. “A Health-Wide Intranet for Apps”.

From there we can start looking deeper into the “Existing Apps” and “Core Needed Apps” and also into more specialised “Needs for APPS” as an example per workforce area like the JMO’s and tailor to their real needs to enable them to manage their own and others’ (med workforce) work better.

Provide a mandate and resourcing to build a cross team to deliver a Health-Wide APP platform and tailor Applications around the need of individuals or groups.

Introduce process mapping initiatives for workforce management (Leave Management), to later create workflows that do reflect the Business Processes of people or a groups.

All of this will need to be available all the time, on mobile devices or tablets or desktops and connectivity is provided as an always on approach, so Internet connected. Security is managed by ICT and all measures are implemented for security of information and data.

Educational institutions have gained very satisfactory results in having successfully introduced a Laptop per student policy.

A Tablet/Laptop per Doctor/Nurse/Health Professional etc could be something WA Health could investigate.

If the business rules are mapped accordingly, creating the workflow and application around it is the easy part.

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Theme 2 – contemporary, adaptable and high-performing workforce

As an older worker with less than 10 years before retirement age, I’m finding there are almost no opportunities for career advancement or even upskilling/training, even though we have a vast wealth of corporate knowledge and skills.

There needs to be a more proactive approach in using staff like me as mentors and trainers, rather than sidelining us because we don’t have some of the technological knowhow as well as the perception that we won’t be around for long.

It’s my belief that there is a huge waste of the public purse, regarding the design and implementation of the building works within the Health Department.

Putting the department of treasury in charge of overseeing the costs of new builds has been a disaster, you just have to look at the blow out costs over and above the original estimates for the projects in the first place.

When you had a Department of Housing and Works the plans would be complete from top to bottom, the build was designed and suited to be a hospital everything was listed in the scope of works that was required to be run and fitted out in every area required, making it easy to quote on if you were the builder or contractor, in this way there should be little or no variations to the original costings.

Also building inspectors would oversee the project as it progressed and put right any mistakes and make sure the quality control was adhered too.

What we have now days are architects wanting to win design awards, and the buildings representing and looking more like high class hotels rather than hospitals.

Instead of a full scope of works and every detail being listed for mechanical services etc., contractors are invited to tender and tell them what is required to be used in some instances, and as this of course is very time consuming and as you may not get the job anyway some just walk away or don’t bother to tender.

The end result in my opinion is that you end up with a new building that is going to cost more to maintain than the one you have demolished in the first place, and this is a terrible waste of our tax payers money, now take for example the new Perth Children’s Hospital it cost a million dollars just to clean the windows and this will increase every year.

The question is why is the government allowing this to happen? Shouldn’t these new builds been more cost efficient regarding the heating and cooling (why are they all glass from top to bottom) solar energy and grey water recycling tanks should have been incorporated into the designs.

Self-cleaning glass, or reversible swivel windows for easy cleaning should have been built into the design to save on maintenance costs.

My prediction is that the maintenance costs for these new builds is going to skyrocket out of hand, and the money will just not be there to maintain them, leaving them to deteriorate a lot quicker than they should have done if a proper self-controlled design had taken place in the first instance.
Theme 2

A measure of job security – with employees being given work contracts beyond ‘casual’.

High performing workforce needs to be acknowledged and encouraged. Sometimes it helps if encouragement comes directly from Senior Management to individuals rather than a group recommendation.

Senior officers need to have training and maybe encouraged to find ways to expand in effective management of teams.

Currently there is no combined forum for agencies to meet together. A combined government agencies meeting needs to take place either on a monthly or two-monthly basis to look at such things as sharing or resources, partnerships, barriers to service delivery, etc.

Increasing the diversity within the workforce isn’t hard – but it is hard to retain workers if positions are fixed term or ‘casual’.

Housing support is encouraged for a sustainable workforce in the regions. Currently no housing assistance is available for workers who may be recruited locally – whereas those who come in from other areas are able to access government housing and/or rent assistance. In the long run, it is the local workforce who keeps the workforce stable in a regional community, and this needs to be appreciated and encouraged.

First and foremost I find the inferences and implications of the questions within the themes, particularly themes 2 & 3, to be offensive, as the not so veiled message is that health workers are not already efficient, accountable or achieving good service outcomes.

I constantly have feedback from patients who tell me that I do achieve very good outcomes for them. My line manager at Fiona Stanley Hospital would not have any idea about my achieved outcomes, as that person is not of my own profession. So, the public sector could be more accountable for service delivery if each professional were to be line managed by someone of their own profession, and achieving that would not cost more! How can accountability be sustained at all, when social workers are managed by physiotherapists, or speech pathologists by occupational therapists?? The FSH allied health leadership model was foisted from above onto clinical staff. Dismantling this model, as I hope will happen, would allow for far improved clinical practice accountability.

Better accountability would be achieved if managers/executive staff were to remain for longer than 5 minutes in their respective positions. I am heartily sick and tired of global email messages which tell of the incessant movements of executive managers from one position to another. The effect of this, is that very few managers hold an overall, chronological long term knowledge of any explicit service area. Thus no manager retains personal knowledge of the impact of their decisions after they have moved on, or indeed knows sufficiently what has gone before, to be taken into account when making far reaching decisions. There is nothing which can replace the depth of knowledge and practice wisdom which is acquired over years of working in the same position, as many of us do at the clinical level. Sadly the same cannot be said at management and executive levels. Can we please have greater staff stability at higher levels?

I am already part of a ‘high performing workforce’ thank you very much, and I already meet government goals and community needs. I work longer hours than I am paid to do, because I am committed to high performance and quality outcomes. I collaborate daily with community based staff from external organisations which are relevant to my own clinical area, and I receive positive feedback from external organisations’ staff regarding my work outcomes.

The private sector has a reputation of actually rewarding and recognising staff achievements and outcomes. The public sector can draw on private sector knowledge and expertise by doing the same, instead of devaluing hard work by presenting the existing themes and questions which clearly infer that we are an inefficient workforce.

Perhaps we could be better organised to operate more efficiently if there were greater stability at executive levels, as I have already said.

As a clinician, I work within a code of ethics and accredited standards which are inherently embedded within my standard practice. All managers should hold prerequisite academic qualifications in management such as an MBA or management diploma. Managerial salaries are high and yet there is no consistent required management qualification. Staff who do not challenge the government’s party line seem to simply rise speedily through the ranks, on occasion with scant clinical experience to draw upon, let alone proven managerial experience and qualifications. Let us turn the review microscope to look more closely at those who draw the highest salaries, instead of making scape goats of the rest of us. What about value for money at the higher levels?

Customer-focused and outcomes-based service design and delivery:

In my 28 years with health in my view the most efficient form of management was via the regional health boards eg Vasse-Leeuwin Health Board. Such Boards comprised local appointed community representatives who were familiar with the local region and were accessible and knowledgeable of local conditions and health anomalies. The present ‘one size fits all’ would appear to have issues when attempting to correlate health to the climate, culture, distance, population, diversity and industry in the north of Western Australia to that in the South.

Whilst Teleheath and IT may enable better health advice, it is difficult to understand how data can effectively illustrate health/staff issues when such is rolled up to one WACHS-wide report, and what may be of concern in the north may not have the same need or priority in the southern part of Western Australia.
Contemporary, adaptable and high performing workforce:

The present “revolving door” on management of staffing in my view has a detrimental effect – both on employees and consumers. It is often difficult to determine “who’s who and in charge of what” of workers. Rotating line managers; nursing rosters; part-time staff; short-term contracts and staff accrued days off impact on the day to day operation of a unit/hospital - especially when line managers are clinical and not replaced when on leave, ADOs etc. Re-introduction of Hospital Administration Managers would address this issue and enable clinical personnel to do their job – caring for the patient rather than being overwhelmed with non-clinical duties.

It was difficult as a consumer for my husband to understand this continual revolving door of care staff at Fiona and Fremantle hospitals. Whilst “nursing handover” should have provided adequate information as to care needs, difficulty in understanding the English language by some staff, coupled with rarely having the same staff member rostered for more than one shift, did not provide a seamless continuity of care (with the exception of the Physiotherapists). Medication errors did occur and it was only that family was at the bedside that such was identified. Continuity of the same staff – whether clinical, support services or administration – enables a better knowledge of a patient’s needs and retention of staff at the coalface is a priority.

Serco staff at Fiona did not assist in opening food packets and for a patient with semi paralysis in his hands from the Guillain Barre Syndrome it was left to the family (myself and my husband’s daughter who flew in from Dubai and we played ‘musical chairs’ for 6 weeks at the hospital from 8.00am to 7.00pm daily) to assist with patient care. Hospital employed staff did assist with daily needs but were often frustrated when outsourced items eg linen and towels did not arrive, thus impacting on their care timelines. Additionally it surprised me that Serco transport vans sat idle at Fiona Hospital whilst Fremantle Hospital had to rely on St. John ambulance transport for appointments back at their “sister hospital” – Fiona Stanley – a costly exercise in time and dollars.

Health is a 24/7 industry dealing with people's lives, and outsourcing vital day to day services hinders the whole operation of the health system. Occupational health and safety in Serco’s supply system with staff trying to manoeuvre overloaded and overweight trolleys was not a good sight.

The concept of being a “care team” therefore cannot be overstated. It does not matter whether the employee is clinical, administration, support services, maintenance etc – all should come under a Hospital Administration Manager who manages the hospital/ward; is available to all staff; is not involved in clinical care; is replaced when on annual, long service or personal leave and “captains” all employees into a team rather than individual professionals being isolated in various silos of health care.

The many layers of management in the health system continually grows whilst employees at the coalface decline. A regional director cannot approve policy – such has to be approved by WACHS Perth and one wonders why such duplication of structure. Country management was centralised in Perth back in the late 1980s – then decentralised – in the southwest to Bunbury – then to Albany – then to Vasse Leeuwil Health Board for Busselton, Marg River and Augusta – then regionalised to SW Area Health Service then to WACHS-SW then for a 6 mth period the south west became Southern Country Health Service then WACHS-SW again and now back to WACHS Perth ie a change every 4 years in name and structure. Such – in my view – does little to enthuse a workforce.

Efficient and effective systems and processes:

IT is an integral component in today’s world – yet in health many IT systems in regional areas do not interact with each other as the systems have grown bit by bit as funding permitted and licenses renewed. Such inefficiency is time consuming and can result in inaccuracies in data collection and reporting. Additionally sectors of the workforce are also not computer literate. Whilst administration/clerical staff have been reduced over the years with the expectation clinical staff will absorb such work, such is not practical when saving lives is the clinical priority. Such change creates stress to staff. For health to operate more effectively requires “horses for courses” – clinical staff save lives; administration reduces over the years with the expectation clinical staff will absorb such work, such is not practical when saving lives is the clinical priority.

The south west became Southern Country Health Service then WACHS-SW again and now back to WACHS Perth i.e. a change every 4 years in name and structure. Such – in my view – does little to enthuse a workforce.

Theme 2: Reshaping and strengthening the public sector workforce.

What can current and future employees expect from participating in the WA public sector workforce?

- Currently a lot of stress, disillusionment and low morale due to lack of permanency, absence of transparency in management positions, use of coercion and duress to perform tasks which compromise clinical and ethical standards.
- Unacceptable clinical demands and caseloads compromising safe and effective clinical service provision.
- Unacceptable requests to dilute clinical practice and professional standards to meet management demands.
- Continuous threats to cut clinical FTE and front line clinical positions, without a commensurate reduction in clinical work. Consequently clinicians are working extended hours with no flexi time / RDO etc
- Autocratic decision making with no opportunity organisationally to raise concerns around safe practice or staff morale. Raising concerns is considered speaking out of line and likely to be threatened with misconduct. Attempts to escalate matters to Risk Registers are thwarted.
- No KPIs around when management would address concerns raised by clinical staff, with accountability only operating from clinical to management level but not in the opposite direction.
- Be part of a culture of acquiescence.
- Numerous positions are being filled by “tap on the shoulder” initially for a 6 month period, but then on rolling 6 month contracts under the premise that recruitment is under way, but this has been occurring in most instances for 18 months+ at times. No intention for appropriate recruitment to occur.
- Often positions at management levels have no EOI or an initial 6 month EOI which leads to the positions being then filled indefinitely, without a competitive recruitment process.
- Known clinicians and managers are promoted at multiple levels.
- Dissemination of professional structure within allied health, with operational managers with no professional or operational experience being appointed and promoted despite substandard performance.

**How can the public sector foster a high performing workforce that meets both government goals and community needs?**

- Merit based assessment and employment
- Commitment to minimum terms by senior executives in crucial leadership roles. Having changes every 6 months or so at the highest level cause ripple effect all the way through executive, senior management and middle management, results in hasty and temporary appointments and a complete lack of drive and follow-through due to staff only in acting roles or having to learn the ropes for a good portion of their tenure.
- Provides no security and direction and leadership or confidence in the workforce.
- Employ people with acceptable skill and experience. How can you get to executive level without proof of relevant qualification (higher degree or relevant qualification) or demonstrated experience at executive level?
- Recognition of the staffing levels required to deliver services; reaction to budget cuts and constant threat or realisation of frontline cuts.
- Commitment to establish appropriate professional leadership positions for Allied Health, commensurate to Medical and Nursing. Professional groups require due clinical and professional coordination, governance and supervision. This cannot be offered by generic operational managers.
- Invest in senior staff, ensure there are research and education officers/ leaders to support workforce.
- Demonstrate respect for staff by allowing flexibility in work practice eg part-time, mothers/fathers to work school hours, access leave without difficult and complex negotiations.
- Appoint leaders who are committed to performance manage and let go of poor performers or people who breach codes of practice.
- Stop protecting higher level managers who breach policies and procedures and public sector standards by moving them across the health service.
- Redeployee management is problematic. Services have to take staff form anywhere that are not best candidate for role or right fit for team and impacts on important and permanent appointments.

**How can senior officers be better supported to manage their teams more effectively?**

- Acknowledge the need for credible professional leadership and structure to enable efficient operational management of teams.
- Health requires a speciality and professional based approach to the management of teams to ensure clinical needs are met.
- Stable leadership;
- Clearly defined organisation values, strategy and KPIS to inform how the leaders manage;
- HR processes that remain stable and don't change and appropriate level of approvals. If a decision to recruit every staff member has to go all the way to the CE the ability to be responsive at senior management level is hampered.

Employ people that have the experience, credentials and are accountable and hold them to account. Do not employ people because they are on your "A team" and are friends!

**How can public sector agencies work together to better share and exchange workers' knowledge and expertise?**

- This is discouraged under ABF as only direct patient contact is costed. Consequently, cross sector consultation, collaboration and case discussions and managed down and not permitted in the costing of clinician activity. This needs to be considered at a health and activity level.

**In what ways can the public sector draw on the knowledge and expertise of the private sector?**

**How could the performance management and accountability framework be strengthened to give incentives for collaboration?**

- There needs to be clear recognition for the need for appropriate professional and clinical support to enable underperformance to be recognised, supported and then managed.
- Clear operational definitions for clinical supervision, professional supervision and performance management.
- Appointing appropriately skilled professional coordinators / managers enable streamlined communications and processes to ensure implementation of performance management and accountability.

**How can the public sector increase diversity within the workforce?**

- Have external HR members in on panels or have random audit and review of selection processes;
- Have clear processes within the public sector standards to support open dialogue and ability to question and discuss rather than look for management teams that just say yes and do what they are told. Current pathway of speaking to your line manager and going beyond your line manager as a performance issue is extremely problematic and at the core of the corruption in the management processes across health.
- Questioning or clarify or demonstrate healthy skepticism - this is discouraged or reprimanded.
- Site HR is not independent but groomed by higher site management.

What is required to support a sustainable workforce in regional WA? - support to metro services for use of telehealth and telemedicine recognising regional needs to link in for both specialist support and access to crucial services not available in regions. Training units funded by the government that support and fund training and education

**Theme 3: Enabling the public sector to do its job better.**

**What process and system changes could help the public sector adapt to new economic and social conditions?**

- Have an open investigation and review of the financial demands on the system created by multiple tiers of high level management.
- Stop cutting front line clinical positions to boost tiers of autocracy and poor performance.
- The fractional FTE cut from front line clinical positions have a significant impact on the clinical services delivered, whilst higher level management positions with no clinical portfolios are on a significant increase. A reduction at this higher level management positions will provide the necessary funds to provide a more sustainable workforce which has direct impact on service delivery
- All clinical management positions to have part time clinical time attached to positions

Have stated and measurable service delivery KPIS's

**What new technologies could be used to achieve better service outcomes?**

**How can the public sector better collaborate – both between agencies, and with the private sector – to operate more efficiently?**

**How can the public sector be more accountable for service delivery?** Stated and measurable service delivery KPIS's for recruitment, retention of staff, performance management processes, HR issues etc.

- Hold higher level management to account and demonstrate credible, open, transparent processes to ensure appropriate governance

**How could the public sector be better organised to operate more efficiently?**

- Model reviews and approved changes to team structure and governance should be done by qualified (ideally external) consultants,
- Benchmarking with services that are high performing efficient financially viable,
- Have a governance structure that is free of bias or conflicts of interest.
- Clinical service planning should be done with professional heads and senior clinicians who work in the clinical area, not generic operational managers who have no clinical training, specialist skills and experience.
- Review processes require independent analysis and decisions made by current managers who are vested in an outcome is corrupt and problematic.

**What skills and tools are needed to ensure better outcomes for the community?**

- The community requires access to credible and safe clinical services.
- Stop diluting the professional workforce, to the point that the services delivered compromise clinical practice
- Appropriately skilled workforce which works within the scope of their practice
- Stop management directing, coercing and bullying staff to work outside of the clinical expertise or compromise their clinical practice standards.
- Look broader for cross collaboration to ensure appropriate funding sources are utilised and stop looking at such a vast debt issue with micromanagement approach of minimal FTE reduction

What obstacles exist and how can the public sector overcome them?

- The current health structure from the highest level down requires serious consideration and review. The levels of redundant management, who are directive and autocratic, who are removed from the front line clinical practice, who do not invest in patient care, but have business and finance review as the primary goal
- Review where the authority sits for the appointment of high level management. How does one justify the reduction of front line clinical FTE by 10-15 FTE, whilst simultaneously announcing a further 5 Co-Directors!

**How can government contracting and purchasing practices be improved to get better results?**

Understanding of how the contractors work, how they set their KPIS's, very careful contract management, and contractual agreements that can be reviewed in a timely enough way to be responsive to the service delivery requirements eg contract management is so complex with Serco and Health at FSH that getting a change to the contract to enable an issue to be addressed can take a year to negotiate. Recognition that some things should not be contracted out to organisations that do not specialise in health or do not have relevant health experienced staff in the team that understand the area they are providing services in. Perhaps have more of a a shared/ collaborative approach - some Health/ Clinical staff responsible jointly for services contracted out eg to Serco staff rather than handing over the whole service to the contractor. Joint/ shared KPIS also

**How can any positive changes made become embedded as standard practice?**

Investing in clear processes and individuals who honour governance structure to promote high quality service delivery.
Our Ref.: HO.180.17

Mr Iain Rennie  
Chair, Service Priority Review

By email: servicepriorityreview@dpc.wa.gov.au

18 September 2017

Dear Mr Rennie

Re:  Service Priority Review (SPR) – Feedback on the Interim Report

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Interim Report issued by the Review Panel at the end of August 2017.

The Union appreciated the opportunity to meet with you on 17th May 2017 and follow up with our submission dated 23rd June 2017. Our submission noted that the top three workplace issues for our members are security of employment, reasonable workloads, and salary and benefits. Our feedback on the Interim Report has focussed somewhat on these three issues.

When we met on the 17th May we discussed the fact that the Government had committed to undertaking the Sustainable Health Review (SHR) and that care needed to be taken to ensure that the work of the SPR and any recommendations in your final report due in October 2017 did not restrict the work of the SHR that is due to report in March 2018 (an extension is likely).

Our specific comments and feedback on the Interim Report follows.

1. In defining ‘the public sector’ (page 5), the Report has applied a very broad definition that goes well beyond that contained within the Public Sector Management Act 1994 (PSM Act). The Union believes that greater attention should be given in the final report and recommendations to differentiating between those that apply to the Public Service as defined by s34 of the PSM Act and those that have wider public sector application.

2. By way of example major governance reforms have been introduced in WA Health commencing with the Health Services Act 2016 (the Act) in July 2016. Implementation of these reforms is ongoing and it is important that they be allowed to take root. The last thing the health workforce needs now is further structural change. Of relevance to the SPR is that the functions of the Department of Health (being a part of the ‘public service’) and those of the board governed health service providers (separate employing authorities and part of the ‘public sector’) have been defined in the Act.

3. The Report includes higher levels of public sector wages compared to other states as contributing to WA’s high debt levels. Greater weight in our view needs to be given to the other factors identified in the Report ie high per capita levels of infrastructure spending and declining general government revenue (including GST distribution). The then Barnett Government added significantly to the wages bill with well above government wage policy increases to nurses during the lead up to the 2013 state election. That level of wage increase was not shared with the wider public sector and public service.
4. The "Public Sector Interstate Salary Comparisons" (Figure 5) create a false impression of overpaid Nurses, Teachers and Police. They are a point in time comparison that does not take account of the bargaining cycles let alone the differing economic circumstances in each of the States. For example, the Nurses comparison with Victoria fails to recognize that the Victorian Nurses Enterprise Agreement has locked in annual increase averaging over 3% per annum through to 2022. If the WA Public Sector Wages Policy limiting increases to $1,000 per annum continues to be strictly applied then by the 2021 WA State Election Victorian Nurses will be paid more than WA Nurses.

5. The Report references the Productivity Commission, 2017 Report on Government Services (page 8) and various other WA Government reports (page 9) in highlighting WA’s apparent inefficiencies in delivering key public services. In relation to health outcomes and performance these reports whilst valuable in themselves often become out of date by the time of publication. Much more needs to be done to develop real time data that is relevant and publicly accessible to measure performance. Health has made some progress with this in relation to national targets such as in emergency access targets, hospital activity levels, surgery waiting lists and waiting times for outpatient clinics.

6. The Union concurs with the Panels observation relating to previous reviews and that "...the public sector has been unable to move from problem identification to action and then to sustained and effective solution." In Health, the March 2004 Health Reform Committee report (the Reid report) is a case in point. The SHR is separately looking at this. In our view, much of the implementation around the health workforce (planning and development) fell away with a change in State Government in 2008. Hence the importance of building in some level of immunity from changing political landscapes.

7. The Union supports the general directions described in "Building a public sector focussed on community needs". As stated previously much of what the SPR has identified under this heading in the Interim Report will need to be examined in the Health context by the SHR. We agree that upfront investment in skills and infrastructure is required to support digital infrastructure but caution against a "robbing Peter to pay Paul" funding approach. In Health, new or additional funding will be essential.

8. Note 18 to the “Reshaping and strengthening the public sector workforce” section states “Some aspects of this section of the report apply only to the public service as defined under the Public Sector Management Act as it relates to workforce management and accountability.” In our view, this blanket note is not sufficient and the final report and recommendations around workforce needs to specify what sections apply and what do not.

9. According to the State Budget Papers 34,336 FTE positions employed directly by Health Service Providers are funded for 2017-18. These are NOT public service positions. Parts 3 and 5 of the PSM Act do not apply. The new Health Services Act 2016 prescribes the employment arrangements for health service employees.

10. The Health Service Providers’ workforce has a long history of industrial coverage and conditions of employment distinct from the public service and other government agencies. The workforce covered by the [WA Health - HSUWA - PACTS Industrial Agreement 2016](#) enjoy salaries and conditions of employment that differ significantly from those applying in the Public Service. The current Agreement and its predecessors have terms and conditions that since 1955 have evolved to meet the needs of Health Service Providers and their employees. HSUWA members expect this to continue.
11. However, there are a number of issues identified in the Report that do apply to Health

- Use of fixed term contracts. Despite employer commitments in our industrial agreement to preference for permanent employment, high levels of fixed term contracts remain.
- Classification system that is outdated and not responsive to the changing health workforce.
- The inflexibility of State Government wages policy. It prevents meaningful bargaining around wages and conditions and acts as a barrier to identifying and implementing efficiency measures.
- Central agency involvement in industrial relations processes including enterprise agreement negotiations is overly bureaucratic and not productive to achieving outcomes.
- Lack of effective workforce planning. As previously stated it is our view that the pathways to workforce planning reform initiated from the Reid Report fell away with a change in Government in 2008.

12. The Report recommends adoption of a whole of government targets approach. Whilst the union can see the value of this for transactional and regulatory type services it is problematic for services to large cohorts such as health and education. Health already has various service delivery targets some of which are national in nature. Funding mechanisms are complex and activity based. Given that this undoubtedly will be examined by the SHR we believe that health should be excluded from any whole of government targets at least until the conclusion of the SHR.

Whilst we have not provided feedback on all aspects of the Interim Report we trust what we have will be taken into consideration by the SPR Panel in your final Report and recommendations.

Should you wish to discuss further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Faithfully

Dan Hill
Secretary
Our Ref.: HO.184.17

Mr Iain Rennie
Chair, Service Priority Review

By email: servicepriorityreview@dpc.wa.gov.au

18 September 2017

Dear Mr Rennie


Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Interim Report issued by the Review Panel at the end of August 2017.

In addition to the general submission addressing specific provisions of the interim report we wish to raise the issue of Interpreters and Translators providing service to the WA State Public Sector. We are particularly focused on Interpreters as Translators generally work online. Interpreters deal with the spoken word, Translators with the written word.

In Summary

The purpose of this submission is to propose that the provision of Interpreter Services in the WA Public Sector should be significantly reformed by creating a standalone Interpreter service modelled on the Victorian Interpreting & Translating Service (VITS.), either as a standalone centralised service or as a part of the already established, wholly government owned, agency for casual and temporary Nurses, NurseWest. NurseWest is a standalone service operated under the auspices of Health Support Services. (For more information on NurseWest go to http://www2.health.wa.gov.au/Careers/Occupations/Nursing-and-midwifery/NurseWest. For details of VITS, see links below.)

We expect this is not a matter that would have come to your attention to date as the matter of the engagement, employment, professional development, and quality assurance of Interpreters is dealt with on an ad hoc basis, notwithstanding that access to vital services and fundamental human rights for people with poor or non-existent English skills, is highly dependent on the work of Interpreters and translators.

Some Numbers

WA is home to people from more than 190 countries, speaking approximately 270 languages and dialects (including around 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages). According to dated information on the web site of the Office of Multicultural Interests, 31% of Western Australian were born overseas, 18.5% speak a language other than English at home. There are approximately 70,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. According to the Western Australian Language Services Policy 2014 and guidelines (Introduction by the Minister) 1.6 % of the general population and 13% of the Aboriginal population do not speak English well or at all. (see
Implications

Failure to engage interpreters and translators can have serious legal implications for State Government agencies.

Failure to properly engage support and pay Interpreters has significant implications for Interpreters and the quality and sustainability of Interpreter and translator services.

We will be raising this issue with Sustainable Health Review (SHR) also. However, while Interpreters provide a vital service in Health Services, they are an important service across the State Government.

Shared Services Do Work

We note in the interim report at page 42 under the heading, Preliminary Conclusion, it is noted:

"... decommissioning of the Office of Shared Services following a failure to meet its aims, seems to the Panel to lead the public sector to regard opportunities for common systems and processes with undue suspicion. This constrains choices in so many domains; opportunities are missed for building better systems, solutions to complex problems remain elusive and economies of scale are passed by."

NurseWest had proven successful in meeting its aims. HSS has worked reasonably well for Health and is currently on an improvement drive. PathWest also works very well as a State Wide public sector centrally managed Pathology service. We believe the State would be well served if it were to create a single service point for Interpreter and Translator services and the employment of Interpreters and Translators.

The issues in summary

The primary users of Interpreter services in WA are WA Health and Justice (in particular the Courts). Police and Education are also significant users of the services of Interpreters and Translators. The Health Services Union of WA (HSUWA) is primarily familiar with Health but also have anecdotal knowledge, through our Interpreter Members, of other work that they do.

In Health there are a small number of directly employed interpreters mainly at Royal Perth Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital (Child and Adolescent Health Services). These are almost entirely employed as casuals. There are a very small number employed on a full time basis, mostly as coordinators of the Language (Interpreting) Services.

Most interpreting services are provided via Private Agencies. The Agencies purport to engage the Interpreters as contractors on contracts for services. While they have never been tested, we believe that if these arrangements were to be tested, they would almost certainly be found to be sham contracts. Such contracts are in fact employment. Sham contracting is proscribed by sections 357 to 359 of the Fair Work Act. This is not only unethical and unlawful, it also creates a political and industrial risk for the Government.

While the numbers of interpreters involved in WA is unclear as there is no central registry, we believe there are between 500 and 800, possibly more. A few years back, NAATI said that there were 750 Interpreters on their books in WA, not necessarily all were practicing. In practice most interpreting services provided to the State Government are provided by a core group of around 350 qualified Interpreters between them covering most language groups.

In hospitals the Social Work Departments are generally responsible for the engagement of Interpreters. In larger hospitals they are engaged via Language Services Co-ordinators. In smaller
establishments, the arrangements appear to be many and varied but often arrangements for interpreters are made by clerical officers.

The ad hoc arrangements for interpreters creates a situation where:

- The vast majority have insecure employment, even in the most common language groups.
- They are often subject to arbitrary and capricious behaviour in regard to their employment including being in effect black listed if a user complains without any opportunity for redress.
- They are excessively dependent on the good will of those who engage them.
- There is a lack of quality assurance and, we are advised, at times unqualified Interpreters provide interpreting services in complex situations.
- Government agencies are reliant on the private agencies to ensure that interpreters are qualified in the languages they are interpreting in and have met the required integrity checks. To the best of our knowledge the agencies do not have any formal processes in place to audit whether the Interpreters supplied meet the required standards.
- There is a lack of professional development and training.
- The lack of formal professional development training and regulation can lead to significant risk in regard to the provision of Health services particularly when it comes to matters, such as, ensuring clinical staff have a correct understanding of symptoms, patients have a correct understanding of diagnosis, that consent is fully and freely obtained in regard to medical procedures and that patients and clients have a full understanding of treatment including their role in treatment, self-administration of medications, exercise activity and the like.. There can be issues in regard to confidentiality and cultural awareness related matters, including matters that lead to nondisclosure of vital information.
- Similarly in Justice, particularly in the Courts, poorly trained interpreters who have not received relevant professional development can lead to a serious miscarriage of justice. We understand through members that the Chief Justice has a number of concerns in this regard.
- Interpreters can find themselves being directed to undertake compulsory training required by public sector employers in their own time, when other employees are paid to complete such training.
- They are forced to work on contracts for service with all that entails where clearly the engagement is employment.
- The opportunity for permanent employment is extremely limited.
- Places the Government in a position of supporting contracting out and sham contracting contrary to Government policy and the law.

We are firmly of the view that an employment model based on a single point of engagement augmented by limited resort to Private Agency supplied staff (ideally, Agency staff should be employees not subcontractors), would overcome most of the above shortcomings. In particular it would:

- Provide a centrally managed one stop shop for Interpreters and Translators including liaison with Private Agencies and specialised services, such as Auslan Interpreter and the Kimberley Aboriginal Interpreter service.
- Eliminate duplication of administration.
- Improve service efficiency and delivery efficiency including potential cost savings.
- Provide a platform for the delivery of proper quality assurance and for the delivery of professional development.
- Improve the confidence of users in the service and the quality of the service for all concerned including Government services and the members of the public who rely on Interpreters and Translators for access and service delivery to them and full access to their rights and opportunities and equality as citizens and before the law.

3.
• Deliver much improved risk management.
• Provide a significant increase in both permanent employment and regular casual employment.
• Provide all of the usual safeguards, fair processes and procedures that are available to employees.
• Deliver a much improved interpreting service across state Government Agencies. Improved both in regard to the outcomes targeted by Government and the quality of the work for Interpreters and Translators.

We have previously tried an employment model in Health without the benefits of a single wholly owned centralised Government service but it was never widely adopted and in any case lacked the benefits delivered by a centralised service. The model also faced disincentives, not the least of which being the ease of getting a Private Agency to find an Interpreter as opposed to having to find one directly. There was also wage competition and undercutting and design problems with the employment model that was not specifically designed for Interpreters.

While our Union’s preference would be for a centralised model based on NurseWest (as it falls within our coverage), we note that, following an extensive review in Victoria, the Victorian Government elected to create an Interpreting Service that is a standalone unit under the auspices of a Public Service Department.

**The Victorian Solution**

The Victorian solution was to create a wholly government owned interpreting service, the Victorian Interpreting & Translating Service (VITS).

**Language Services - human services Vic.**

The department has consolidated interpreting and translation services for human service related program areas. The language services provider is the Victorian Interpreting & Translating Service (VITS).

Services provided by VITS include:

- telephone interpreting
- on-site interpreting (spoken languages and Auslan)
- translations
- video remote interpreting.

To access VITS services, departmental user and funded organisations have been allocated an identification number (PIN) by VITS. The PINs will assist the department to monitor language service usage.

**Relevant Links:**

Interpreting Services – Victorian Department of Health and Human Services


VITS – Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service (Wholly owned Vic Government Service)

[http://www.vic.gov.au/contactsandservices/directory/?ea0_lfz149_120.&organizationalUnit&d949a4ca-9c03-4bbc-a135-979134d551d0](http://www.vic.gov.au/contactsandservices/directory/?ea0_lfz149_120.&organizationalUnit&d949a4ca-9c03-4bbc-a135-979134d551d0)
Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Chris Panizza at the HSUWA.

Yours Sincerely

Christopher Panizza
Assistant Secretary
23 June 2017

Mr Iain Rennie
Chairman
Service Priority Review Secretariat

Via email: servicepriorityreview@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Iain

Thank you for meeting us at the SSTUWA office on Tuesday 16 May 2017 at the SSTUWA with members of your review panel in attendance including Professor Margaret Seares and Mr Michael Dillon. As a follow up to this meeting we would like to provide the following submission in relation to our concerns about the implementation of the Independent Public Schools initiative and the associated inequities created within the public education system between Non Independent public schools and Independent Public Schools. We believe the IPS initiative has also affected the capacity of the education sector to attract and retain school staff across regional WA as is highlighted below.

**Independent Public Schools**

The SSTUWA accepts that the Independent Public School Initiative is well supported by school communities around the state. We also understand that independent reports have found benefits to the WA model, including greater capacity to make school-based decisions in the best interest of students and the capacity for principals to have greater flexibility in hiring staff. However, the increased public profile for IPS has in some instances encouraged a negative perception of non-IPS sites and the IPS system has created inequities in staff placement and redeployment.

For example, the ability for IPS sites to refuse to accept priority transfer teachers, redeployees, graduate teachers, or employees on return-to-work programs has had a major negative effect on employees wishing to transfer, and particularly those teachers in the country seeking to relocate into metropolitan schools after completing their years of service in rural schools.

A significant factor in attracting teachers to both the remote teaching service (RTS) and country teaching program (CTP) prior to the implementation of the IPS was the capacity for a priority transfer back to the metropolitan area. This capacity is now significantly undermined by the current operation of the IPS model, as only RTS staff are transferred in this way now.

The capacity of IPS principals to refuse to accept priority transfer teachers severely restricts the department’s capacity to place redeployees of any kind – whether they be priority transfers, return to work cases, or teachers returning from extended leave. This situation has been significantly exacerbated now that well over half of all public schools are now IPS.
In 2017, there are now only eight secondary schools in WA not operating under the IPS model, including only two in the metropolitan area. This means in the secondary sector it is almost impossible to place those permanent teachers seeking placement. That in turn affects the department’s capacity to attract secondary teachers to the country as they are concerned they will not be able to find a position on their return.

The current policy also places enormous pressure on those non-IPS schools as they manage a significantly higher level of redeployed staff and are pressured to accept teachers who are not necessarily qualified to teach the specific programs that the school is running. This is because the department must place permanent teachers and has a limited number of schools and so it goes on....... 

The IPS model, by focussing on the rhetoric of autonomy and school choice, fails to take into account those schools whose student population or geographical location renders them unable to compete from a position of strength.

These schools are seen as undesirable locations for both students and teachers and thus struggle to attract and retain both.

This has encouraged the perception and experience of a two-tiered system within the public school sector; IPS schools being ‘superior’ to non-IPS.

For instance, school principals have noted on record that, “Parents wanted us to be an IPS even if they don’t understand it completely but they believe we are far freer than we are.”

The SSTUWA believes that all public schools should be great schools and, while the IPS model has enhanced the perception of the public education sector which in itself is positive, it should not come at the detriment of non-IPS students, staff or sites that are often in difficult to staff school locations.

With the closure of some regional offices and the removal of regional support structures and associated resourcing, the lack of on the ground support for school principals continues to be an issue. The reduction in district office level support, the devolution of responsibility to schools, reduction of staff in central office and increased financial management responsibilities on principals have significantly increased the workload and stress levels for school leaders as is reflected in recent Principal Well Being Surveys.

The SSTUWA believes that funding and resources need to be redistributed from an over reliant compliance and accountability approach with very little system level accountability for the operations of schools to one of enhanced system and regional level support structures around all schools. In particular, the employment of school principals within regions specifically to mentor and provide on the ground support to principals in metropolitan, regional and remote locations would be a cost effective level of support which would have the added benefit of ensuring greater numbers of principals enjoy success in their roles.

The SSTUWA further notes that, to date there is no evidence that the IPS model improves student outcomes as highlighted by the WA parliament’s Education and Health Standing Committee inquiry into the Independent Public Schools initiative.
We believe the flaws identified in the structure, support and practices of the current inequitable model IPS and non IPS Schools must be reviewed and addressed as a matter of urgency.

The SSTUWA calls the state government to consider the following through the Service Priority Review:

- An immediate review of current practices involving IPS schools and their implication for the system as a whole:
  - The lack of focus and support for the most critical aspect of the principals’ role which is educational/instructional leadership.
  - The emergence of a two-tier system, between IPS and non-IPS and then within IPS, as a result of schools in more favourable locations or in high SEI areas being more easily able to attract and retain experienced teachers.
  - The availability of support for school principals for the financial management, strategic planning, staffing, and community liaison functions of the principal’s role.
  - The perception and reality of the level of autonomy principals have, particularly in the context of increased bureaucratic compliance requirements.
  - The loss of system ability for capacity building.

- An immediate review of staff placement procedures, with a focus on redeployment protocols, to ensure fair placement for all public school staff.

- A review of the processes and structure currently in place to monitor the operation of IPS sites.

- The implementation of a centrally provided change management process to ensure minimal risk in the introduction of mandated policies and practices.

Attraction and Retention of Staff in Rural / Remote Areas

Regional and remote communities across Western Australia deserve high quality public education, equivalent to the public education provided within the metropolitan area. This requires incentives to attract and retain teachers and school leaders to regional Western Australia. The attraction of quality teachers, school leaders and other staff to schools in rural and remote areas has been an ongoing challenge over many years.

Due to geographic location, job quality or perceived disadvantages, rural and remote schools are not seen as an attractive employment option for the majority of education staff. The SSTUWA believes the state government should be highlighting the benefits of rural employment, ensuring that rural schools are attractive worksites and providing the right incentives to retain experienced staff.

The attraction and retention of school leaders in regional and remote locations also continues to be an issue. As highlighted previously, there is a lack of leadership and support for new school leaders in remote schools. Professional development and coaching for new school leaders is not resourced sufficiently, and often leaves leaders to face situations without experience or the support that was once provided by regional support principals. They would provide the on the ground support to predominantly in-experienced school principals in regional and remote locations.

There are also several impediments, either real or perceived, which contribute to a lack of enthusiasm from education staff to take up positions in regional and remote areas. The current, very limited, staff transfer system offers little incentive or reward for regional school placement and makes transfers back to metropolitan schools challenging given the lack of capacity to be transferred and only within non IPS schools.
This is a major impediment to attracting experienced teachers and school leaders to regional schools. Support for regional schools continues to be an issue. The reduction of district office level support has had a significant impact on the level of support available for regional schools, including curriculum support, professional development, student services, operations management, professionally consultancy, etc. It is recognised that for rural areas the networks model is not suited because of geographic challenges. In particular, SSTUWA members note the lack of relief teacher availability in regional schools. Additionally, funding for maintenance of ageing school buildings and access to tradesmen in rural locations continues to be a challenge.

Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) standards have declined significantly over the last decade. Housing and rent assistance, particularly in regional locations, does not adequately cover rental and living costs. The sale of the GROH portfolio and its assets, as flagged in the 2015 state budget, will further limit affordable housing options. If GROH is privatised, the service will be forced to cut costs in order to ensure a profit, which will further reduce standards.

The large rent increases in 2016 and, for some education staff, further increases from July 2017, are discouraging current teachers and school leaders from staying as is reflected in written correspondence and phone complaints by members to the SSTUWA and will only discourage new teachers and school leaders from working in country regions in the near future. At a time when the private rental market is in decline in country locations, excessive GROH rental increases such as this are hard to justify. Issues with maintenance continue to be a major source of frustration with teachers and school leaders in GROH rentals.

The SSTUWA seeks from the state government through the service priority review a broader policy that aims to attract and retain quality staff in rural schools including:

- Housing and allowances in country locations;
- Incentives;
- Selection process issues in both being appointed to rural areas and returning to the metropolitan area;
- Retraining;
- Attracting experienced teachers and school leaders; and
- Ensuring rural worksites are of high quality.

The SSTUWA calls for the following specific public education policy changes in regard to regional schools, school leaders and teachers:

- Greater flexibility in the staff transfer system to guarantee a pathway of return from regional to metropolitan school placement and the capacity to maintain permanency on return.
- Reinstall tied/compassionate placements.
- A review of the Regional Transfer System application process.
- Permanency offered to all regional teaching appointments.
- A reversal of funding cuts and proposed sale of GROH, and adequate rent allowances for regional teachers that are increased at the rate of the consumer price index (CPI) annually.
- A review of the Tenant Rent Setting Framework Policy, specifically in regards to the calculation of GROH rents based on Perth median rental prices, age of the house, quality of the house, distances from major centres and capped increases.
- Introduction of funded mentor positions for new teachers appointed to regional locations.
• The reinstatement of district office level support to increase access for regional teachers to support services.
• The implementation of a Support Principal role at district office level to mentor, and support aspirational, inexperienced and experienced principals in regional and remote locations.
• Expansion of the relief teacher flying squad to ensure access to relief teachers in regional schools.
• Increased funding for regional school maintenance and greater access to tradespersons in regional areas.
• Parity in allowances for school psychologists in regional areas.
• That the Department of Education investigate the feasibility of salary packaging options, including mortgages, for employees in regional areas.

In concluding, as previously stated, we believe that the implementation of Independent Public Schools initiative has created inequities within the public education system that need to be reviewed and rectified. In addition, it has exacerbated longstanding issues in relation the attraction and retention of staff in regional locations.

The SSTUWA believes the implementation of the above strategies would result in greater incentives to attract and retain experienced school leaders and teaching staff to rural and remote locations which is essential to ensure quality education in all public schools across regional Western Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Byrne
President
The State School Teachers’ Union of Western Australia (Inc.)
23 June 2017

Iain Rennie CNZM
Chair
Service Priority Review
Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street,
West Perth, WA, 6005

Email: servicepriorityreview@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr Rennie

UNIONSWA SUBMISSION ON SERVICE PRIORITY REVIEW THEMES

UnionsWA is the governing peak body of the trade union movement in Western Australia, and the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). As a peak body we are dedicated to strengthening WA unions through co-operation and co-ordination on campaigning and common industrial matters. UnionsWA represents around 30 affiliate unions, who in turn represent approximately 140,000 Western Australian workers.

UnionsWA supports the WA government seeking independent advice on how to deliver different, better and more efficient services to regional and metropolitan populations into the future. Below are our initial responses to the three major themes drawn from the Review’s Terms of Reference.

Theme 1 Customer-focused and outcomes-based service design and delivery

Building a public sector focused on community needs and open to new ways of working

UnionsWA wants the WA public sector to restore balance to the economy in order to build employment, income and wealth for everybody in our state.

To that end, working people in the public sector must have the skills, training and employment conditions that allow them to be flexible, adaptive and innovative in meeting the needs of all Western Australians for health, education and social services.
Where greater revenue is needed, the WA government should not hesitate to raise it. Increases in fees and charges should focus on highly profitable companies, while the costs of living impacts on the public should be kept to CPI inflation or lower.

Many West Australians want to work in the public sector because they want to make a difference and contribute to their communities. The current market-driven approach to service delivery devalues and fragments the public service ethos of actually ‘serving the public’. This is particularly dangerous in the area of human service provision as already vulnerable West Australians stand to lose their access to much needed services.

To ensure high service standards, UnionsWA supports meaningful measurements of services and agency performance being developed in close consultation with public sector workers through their unions. A workforce centred consultative process on developing such measurements would avoid the problems of

- ‘Whole of sector measurements’ that are unworkable and ineffective for agencies with different core functions
- ‘Key Performance Indicators’ for individual employees which do not account the ways in which the public sector differs from the private sector

When the WA government considers opportunities for collaboration with the private and not-for-profit sectors in designing and delivering public services, it should only do so under the following conditions

- When government has entered into long term commitments to service delivery, not short-term contracts to buy those services from the private sector, as these cause shortfalls in service delivery and increased costs
- When government has entered into long term productive partnerships with NFP organisations for service delivery, instead of forcing NFPs into wasteful and unproductive tendering processes.

When considering how public sector service delivery can best meet the needs of regional communities, particular consideration should be given to remote indigenous communities. People who have returned to traditional homelands are often those who were forcibly removed from these lands. As acknowledged by the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, they have a right to live on their land and be provided with services to enable them to do so. While we acknowledge that this may be at a significant cost to government, these people and their families have suffered at the hands of government and we need to ensure appropriate steps are taken to nurture and maintain Aboriginal Peoples connection to country, land and culture.
Accordingly there is a need for innovation in the delivery of services in remote communities. Innovation should include sustainability; especially in terms of essential services like water and power. In order to understand the complexity of service delivery in remote communities, and hopefully not make the same mistakes of previous reviews and reform attempts, we seek that the Service Priority Review undertake detailed consultations in remote communities before finalising any proposals.

Theme 2 Contemporary, adaptable and high performing workforce

*Reshaping and strengthening the public sector workforce*

The WA public sector will need to attract and retain skilled staff through secure employment arrangements, safe and healthy workplaces, and by respecting the need for employees to speak up together for fair wages and conditions.

In order to provide high quality, well-funded public sector services, the public sector employees who deliver them must also have the right training opportunities, and stable employment arrangements. Permanency should therefore be the preferred form of employment in public sector, in order to safeguard its independence and professionalism. ‘Frank and fearless’ advice cannot be delivered under the ongoing threat of involuntary severance.

Insecure forms of work refer to those arrangements where employment provides little social and economic security and where workers have little control over their working lives. The use of fixed term contracts, casual work, higher duties, and labour hire have all become part of a growing trend in the WA public sector.

The resulting loss of corporate knowledge and skills, and loss to continuity of service, when contracts expire, or through work cuts and forced redundancies, has a detrimental impact on the quality of the public service as a whole.

Job security makes a huge difference to the lives of all Western Australians. Evidence shows that the higher the level of job security, the higher the level of productivity. A healthy working environment has been linked to productivity, shown by higher output, lower absenteeism and creativity in the workforce. Further, people in safe jobs cope better with stressful conditions in their working and personal lives, which have a positive impact for the wider community. Therefore the Panel should recommend that there be no involuntary severances as a result of recommendations contained in the Report.

Stable, productive workforces who are not concentrating on where their next pay is coming from will be able to concentrate on service delivery and performance. Workers
in insecure work are less likely to join unions and to speak out on issues in their workplace such as occupational health and safety, pay, and conditions.

The WA public sector should generally have a high standard of industrial relations law and practice, including access to an independent Industrial Relations Commission. The sector should also engage with workers through their unions by respecting the roles of union representatives in workplaces. This will require ensuring reasonable opportunities for employees to access their unions during inductions, and meet union representatives to discuss issues of importance to them and their workplaces.

The aforementioned issues are not simply ‘workplace relations’ issues – they are crucial for fostering a high performing workforce that meets both government goals and community needs. This is because collaborative workplace arrangements are a crucial part of the ‘high road’ to productivity sector, in which long term efficiency gains are delivered though innovation and skills. The alternative, all too often adopted by WA governments, is the ‘low road’ of cost cutting, casualization, forced redundancies, and cuts to working conditions.

‘Workplace reform’ is too often associated with the removal of collective worker protections such as award conditions, and the institution of individualist arrangements that shift the power in the employment relationship firmly towards the employer. This process is often referred to as labour market ‘deregulation’ – although it is more accurately described as the labour market being re-regulated to unfairly favour employers. When workers perceive such unfairness, they will likely sense relative deprivation and feel the relationship between employer and employee has been breached. By contrast, a more collective industrial relations climate means that employees are less likely to engage in forms of individualistic behaviour that may be dysfunctional for the agency and for their co-workers.

Collective workplace arrangements are more likely to deliver better outcomes for both employees and employers in terms of both fairness and productivity.

When considering how the public sector can increase diversity within its workforce, UnionsWA contends that the magnitude and persistence of the gender pay gap, and the historical undervaluing of work within female dominated industries, must be addressed. Proactive public policy to redress gender inequity is needed. Currently according to the ABS male workers on average are paid 23.9% more female workers in terms of average weekly ordinary time earnings; the same figure is 16% nationally.

According to the latest WA ‘State of the Sector’ Report for 2016, the proportion of women in the state public sector over the last five years has increased from 71.9% to 72.6%. Women comprise a much greater proportion of the public sector workforce.
than that of the broader WA workforce (46.9% in June 2016). The Report also shows us that positions at lower salary levels tend to be predominately occupied by women. For example: 95.7% of ‘education aides’ are women while 95.8% of ‘engineering managers’ are men. Diversity, therefore, is not just a question of raw numbers of employees in the sector; it is also an issue of representation at all levels of the sector, particularly senior levels.

To address diversity through gender equity, the WA government should fully fund pay increases within historically undervalued agencies and occupations and require all agencies to formulate pay equity plans (PEPs) to address ways to improve the gender pay gap within their organisation.

The WA government should also address workplace diversity by employing more Indigenous Australians, who constitute approximately 2.4% of the Australian population and suffer from disadvantage across a range of social, economic, and health indicators compared to others, including exposure to racism across contemporary society. Anti-racism strategies should focus on long-term, sustainable employment opportunities in the public sector for those with racially diverse backgrounds. Public sector employees with a culturally diverse background make up a mere 12.4% of workers, and Aboriginal employees make up only 2.8% of the WA public sector.

A disproportionate number of Indigenous employees are employed at entry level and most remain at lower classifications across the service. Consequently, there is a lack of Indigenous representation in more senior management levels. A more effective anti-racism strategy in the public sector will consider the long term benefits of employing and retaining a racially diverse workforce.

Australia has one of the lowest workforce participation rates within the OECD for people with disability. People with disability face particular challenges in gaining access to meaningful paid employment. Where possible, people with disability should be encouraged and enabled to seek jobs in the WA Public sector, both so they can share in the benefits of decent work, and the WA workforce reflects the diversity of our community. Therefore WA government should implement a proactive strategy to recruit people with disabilities. It should also implement measures to assist carers of the disabled and elderly who have been excluded from paid work to re-enter the workforce.

Overall the WA government should be a model employer on these issues and mandate the public reporting of workforce diversity by each government agency. By introducing a culture of reporting this will drive government employers to address gender and diversity concerns within their agencies and embed equity in all employment practices.
Theme 3 More efficient and effective systems and processes

Enabling the public sector to do its job better

UnionsWA argues that reinvestment in core services such as health and education, transport, and law enforcement will be necessary to achieve a fair and cohesive society.

There is a range of research that demonstrates the benefits of investment in public services. There is a direct correlation between well-resourced health and education systems and productivity rates. Investment in other core services such as transport, law enforcement and correctional services all result in positive impacts on the individual and our society as a whole. Another example would be the substantial positive social and emotional impacts of providing childhood early intervention services. Addressing potential crisis situations leads to greater safety for the child, better health, and delivers greater life outcomes. Economically, when a child is healthier, safer, and happier and becomes a productive adult, the costs burden relating to state care is obviously reduced. When preventive, early intervention services are subject to funding cut-backs the short term savings are often exceeded by the long-term costs. This is especially evident when the long term social costs are also considered.

Unfortunately, recent WA governments have not lived up to their responsibilities, as demonstrated by their practice of making inefficient and unaccountable cuts to services, using euphemisms such as ‘efficiency dividends’ or ‘workforce renewal policies’. These are only re-framings of funding cuts to make them more digestible to the general public, and they should cease in order to make the public sector be more accountable for service delivery.

The rise of the term ‘efficiency dividend,’ is but one example of this practice. Since 2008 and throughout the mining boom, the WA Government has embarked on a program of efficiency dividends on all public sector agencies. The reality is this has been death by a thousand cuts to the public sector; a systematic reduction in staff, support, resources and services that occur in small doses but which are cumulatively crippling.

Another such euphemistic term is ‘privatisation’, which the OECD defines as the transfer of ownership and control of government or state assets, firms and operations to private investors. Privatisation can encompass the direct sale of Government Assets; Social Impact Bonds, outsourcing, Public Private Partnerships, commissioning, contracting, private finance initiatives.
Privatising the public sector brings deteriorating job security, with worse wages and conditions. Privatisation also results in elected governments having less authority in relation to the privatised asset and less responsibility when an issue arises in a service that has been outsourced to the private sector. Increased costs or fewer services – or both – are often experienced by end users of the privatised service.

The history of privatisation is also replete with examples of governments selling off services based on a prior assumption that it will lead to lower costs, greater personalisation of service, flexibility and improved outcomes. Invariably there is no proper assessment of existing service levels and how they can be maintained by newly privatised arrangements. Options that involve the better direct resourcing of existing public services are rarely properly explored.

Accountability is the first casualty of this process. The difficulties of measuring the success of new arrangements are often compounded by the commercial-in-confidence nature of the contracts. This makes it impossible to gather comparable data from ‘before’ and ‘after’ the change in order to determine its success. When elected representatives and public sector managers lose control over the quality and delivery of services, and have little or no say in the pay and conditions of workers delivering services, it is difficult to make a meaningful and complete assessment of whether or not those services are being delivered properly and effectively.

If services are being paid for by the State, citizens should be certain of what the costs are, how they are delivered, who they are delivered to, and whether or not they are being delivered at all. For example, if we don’t know how many people are accessing a service, we cannot possibly make an effective comparison about whether that service would be more efficient if delivered by the public or the private sector.

Of most concern is effective responsibility. When a privatised project goes wrong, who is ultimately responsible? Under the Westminster system, a Minister of the Crown is supposed to ensure that nothing goes wrong. Under the privatised model, a government ducks responsibility for the contractor when the system fails.

To identify more efficient and effective processes in the public sector, the WA government should undertake direct consultation with its workforce in accordance with the relevant agreements and industrial awards. That consultation process should be properly resourced, and not conducted with the ongoing threat of forced redundancy hanging over employees.
UnionsWA thanks the Review for the opportunity to provide feedback on these major Themes, and would be happy to provide assistance directly to the Review. Please contact me on 08 9328 7877 or MHammat@unionswa.com.au to discuss matters further.

Yours sincerely

Meredith Hammat
Secretary
United Voice Submission

Service Priority Review

June 2017

About United Voice

United Voice welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on behalf of our members to the Service Priority Review.

United Voice is a union of workers organising to win better jobs, stronger communities, a fairer society and a sustainable future. In Western Australia there are over 18,000 United Voice members working in a diverse range of industries including government education, government and private health, disability support, aged care, early childhood education and care, cleaning, hospitality, security, emergency services and manufacturing.

A large number of United Voice members work in the public sector or in publically funded sectors. Many United Voice members are in low-paid and under-valued employment, and all rely on government to provide access to quality public services to ensure a fair and equitable society.

As the people working in the public sector, and the people using public sector services on a daily basis, our members welcome the opportunity to be involved in this review to ensure the future of quality sustainable public services for the benefit of all Western Australians.
Introduction

United Voice members share with the broader community the desire for a good life and a fair society. Our members believe that the delivery of high quality, well-funded public services should be the first priority of the State Government.

Over the last eight years our members have witnessed with great concern the gross financial mismanagement of the previous Liberal-National state government. Like all West Australians, our members are feeling the strain of higher housing prices, longer waiting times in hospitals, cuts to essential education and health services, bigger class sizes, increased TAFE fees and less investment in public transport.

United Voice is a key stakeholder in the provision of public services in Western Australia. Given the scale and significance of the work that the public sector undertakes, its overall efficiency is clearly important. Of fundamental importance to the delivery of an efficient and effective public service is that government services must be run for the public good, not private profit. Further, the people working in the public sector need to have the skills, training and employment conditions to be flexible, adaptive and innovative in meeting the needs of all Western Australians for health, education and social services.

All West Australians, particularly those most in need, are entitled to access decent health care, schools, public transport and other government services. This can only be done by keeping public assets in public hands, improving coordination and collaboration between agencies and ensuring the Liberal-National agenda of privatisation, outsourcing and funding cuts is not repeated.

United Voice welcomes this important inquiry and the opportunity to make a submission on behalf of our members. We urge the panel to support the recommendations contained in this submission.

For more information on this submission, please contact Carolyn Smith via Carolyn.smith@unitedvoice.org.au or (08) 9388 5400.

Carolyn Smith, United Voice WA Secretary

“We know that privatisation has never worked; previously housekeeping, cleaning and catering were privatised. It was a total mess, especially housekeeping and we had infections at the hospital at that stage. What happened was they bought it back in-house and introduced more cleaners; and of course now everything is running really well. We have to fight; we can’t just lie down and be defeated. We have to fight the privatisation because above all patient care is compromised. That’s the most important thing; it’s not just about us, it’s about the patients.” – United Voice Delegate
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Executive Summary
The delivery of an efficient and effective public sector means all Western Australians will have equal access to quality public services that are delivered by a quality workforce of employees.

United Voice members share with the broader community the desire for a good life and a fair society. Our members believe that the delivery of high quality, well-funded public services that provide quality employment conditions, should be the first priority of the State Government. Our members all rely on government to provide access to quality public services that are appropriately funded and are responsive and flexible to the changing needs of the community.

United Voice membership in Western Australia is comprised predominately of women in low-paid and under-valued employment. Approximately 74% of our members are women and the majority of members are over the age of 45-years-old. While 78% of members reside in metropolitan regions, our membership extends across the entirety of the state of Western Australia. Many of our members are from diverse cultural backgrounds and many work in industries with certificate level entry or industries with no requirements for pre-entry qualifications. At least half of our members are employed directly in the public service and many more work in publically funded sectors such as disability support.

Over the last eight years West Australians have witnessed with great concern the gross financial mismanagement of the previous Liberal-National state government. United Voice members in low-paid employment have felt firsthand the devastating and disproportionate impact that increases in living costs have on low wage workers. Under the Barnett government, our members have been subject to a 58% increase in State Government Tariffs, Fees & Charges and an 81% increase in household debt.¹ Unemployment rates have surged to all-time highs, increasing by over 200% in eight years to 6.2% and wages growth of 1.9% is the lowest on record.²

The impact of these harsh economic conditions on United Voice members has been compounded by significant funding cuts to essential public services across the whole of the public sector. The Barnett Government made funding cuts of over $245 million directly from school budgets and an additional $257 million under the guise of workforce renewal policies. We have seen cuts to 1,000 education assistants, 800 teachers and 110 Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers.³ Public Hospitals have seen cuts to over 1,200 staff, lead & asbestos contamination at Perth Children’s Hospital and services removed from private operator Serco at Fiona Stanley after patients health was found to be put at risk.⁴

The West Australian public services provide important essential services to the community. Given the scale and significance of the work that the public sector undertakes, its overall efficiency is clearly important. Of fundamental importance to the delivery of an efficient and effective public service is that government services must be run for the public good, not private profit. When a service is no longer a foundation service delivered by the state, the delivery of that service is undermined.

² WA, Legislative Assembly, 20 September 2016, p6253f-6268a, page 2
⁴ WA Labor, Putting Patients First, 2016, page 19
United Voice members have seen firsthand the impact of privatisation on working conditions in public schools and hospitals, and the flow on effects for the quality of services for patients and students. The failed examples of privatisation at Royal Perth, Sir Charles Gardiner, Peel and Joondalup hospitals all seem to have been ignored. Access to and affordability of public services cannot be treated as secondary to profitability. It is time we moved beyond the failed policy of privatisation and recognise that health and education as social investments cannot be handed over to profit driven private operators.

Our public services are complex institutions which provide employment to thousands of people, who are entrusted to provide high standards of service delivery to the communities they serve. A public sector that fosters high performing workforce that meets the needs of both government and the community requires a stable workforce of professionally trained, qualified and dedicated workers who are fully supported to provide a service that meets the standards and expectations of the community.

Maintaining safe and healthy workplaces that reflect best practice employment conditions that are devoid of discriminatory practices and celebrate diversity is essential for the ongoing sustainability of quality public services. The alternative to a quality workforce will result in a reduction in the quality of support services that the public receives.

Governments are elected to serve the community and this service should be accountable, transparent, and democratic. Governments should be held to a higher standard than the private sector in terms of providing transparency to the public. Such reporting should ensure management adheres to principles, values and codes of conduct that bring about quality public services which are sustainable and consistent with fair and decent work.

A State Labor Government must ensure all organisations that provide services which are directly contracted to, or funded by the State Government, develop practices and cultures that support the industrial rights of their employees.

WA is a growing state with a range of groups and industries requiring public sector reinvestment. As our economy diversifies following the end of the most recent mining boom, Western Australians will need new skills for new jobs in emerging industries. What Western Australians need is not further cuts to services, but reinvestment in public services and capital works to drive economic growth and employment opportunities.
Summary of Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1: in order to maintain a sustainable public sector that provides access to quality services for the community, the government must ensure all public services are appropriately funded and end the practice of making inefficient and unaccountable cuts.

RECOMMENDATION 2: in order to maintain a sustainable public sector that provides access to quality services for the community, the government must stop the outsourcing and privatisation of public sector services, including creeping privatisation, and where possible return outsourced services to the public sector.

RECOMMENDATION 3: permanency is preferred form of engagement that provides good outcomes for service users and good outcomes for workers. The state government must establish an ongoing process to convert contract employees to permanent employees in all areas of the public service and commit to reducing the use of casual and agency staff.

RECOMMENDATION 4: that the Public Sector Management Act 1994 be amended to provide for more efficient and fairer recruitment processes for workers on low level jobs across the public sector.

RECOMMENDATION 5: the government must provide for competitive and best practice workplace conditions that will attract and retain skilled employees to ensure the sustainability of a quality workforce. Maintaining safe and healthy workplaces that reflect best practice employment conditions that are devoid of discriminatory practices and celebrate diversity is essential for the ongoing sustainability of quality public services.

RECOMMENDATION 6: that the Public Sector Management Act 1994 be amended to specifically recognise the important role that public sector unions have as representative of employees in the workplace.

RECOMMENDATION 7: that government require a higher level of public and transparent reporting from public sector agencies and private operators contracted to provide a public service to ensure they are held accountable for the level of service.

RECOMMENDATION 8: the State Labor Government implements a policy to guide the entire government procurement process which embeds the principals of fairness and representation in the workplace in all government contracts. Clauses should be included in all government contracts for works and services which stipulate that all employees of sub-contractors must have wages and conditions that are no less favourable than those required under the government contract.

RECOMMENDATION 9: the State Labor Government implement reforms to existing procurement policies to increase transparency and accountability in government procurement to require companies tendering or completing for services contracts to make available the details of all sub-contractors engaged.
Theme 1- Quality Public Services

All Western Australians have a right to expect consistent access to quality and appropriately funded health care, schools, public transport and other government services. The vast majority of United Voice members depend on quality public services such as public education and healthcare to ensure their families and themselves receive the support, skills and education they need to succeed in life.

A public sector that is focused on community needs is one that provides access to quality public services that are appropriately funded, provide a consistent quality service and are responsive and flexible to the changing needs of the community. Access to and affordability of public services cannot be treated as secondary to profitability. It is time Western Australia moved beyond the failed policy of privatisation and recognise that essential public health and education, as social investments cannot be handed over to profit driven private operators.

The previous state governments damaging funding cuts and privatisation agenda have compromised the quality of our public services and failed to take into account the needs of the community. Our members as users of public services, and as direct employees in the public sector, have firsthand experience of how service quality is compromised in this environment.

Funding Cuts

Under the last eight years of a Liberal-National state government, West Australians have experienced unprecedented cuts to their essential public services. While these cuts have been widespread across the entire public sector, our members in health and education have raised concern of the impact devastating cuts to services have had on service quality, particularly in a time of significant increases in service demand.

A 2016 analysis of school funding based on My School data, revealed that current government funding for education was wholly unsustainable and was reinforcing educational inequities for students in low socioeconomic areas. From 2009 to 2014, WA public schools saw their real per student funding drop by 10.6% while the staff to student ratios increased from 14.5% to 15.5%. During this same period, funding to catholic schools was up 8.3% and independent schools up 12%. This contrast is particularly concerning as 27.9% of students at public schools are in the lowest SES quartile, compared with just 14.7% at Catholic schools and 9.1% at independent schools. The report also noted that students who have the means are shifting to more advantaged schools, further hardening the divide in school hierarchy along advantage/disadvantage lines.

“The WA Government has abandoned its public schools and delivered cuts which have hit disadvantaged students the hardest... Public schools do the hard work of educating students with the greatest need for support and they need to be funded accordingly so those students can get the help they need.” - Ms Haythorpe, AEU Federal President

Funding and staffing reductions include:

- Over $200 million cut directly from public school budgets in 2014
- $45 million redirected from secondary school budgets to primary schools in 2015

8 http://cpd.org.au/2016/05/unevenplayingfield/
• $257 million cut over 4 years to 2019 under the workforce renewal policy listed in the 2015/16 State Budget
• 110 Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers cut in 2014 (The Barnett government cut $2.3 million dollars from AIEO funding in 2013-14)
• Over 1,000 education assistants cut in 2013/2014/15
• Over 800 teaching positions cut in 2014/15
• 150 central and regional office positions cut in 2013
• A further 200 redundancies for teaching and non-teaching jobs across the sector in 2015
• $36 million from the targeted voluntary separation scheme between 2015-16
• Estimated average reduction in expenditure per student of $520 per year between 2013 and 2015.
• 2016/17 budget increase of 1.7% which is below student growth rate.

**Case Study - Cuts to Education Support Staff**

Between 2014-2015 approximately $245 million was cut directly from public school budgets by the Liberal State Government. In addition to massive cuts to teaching positions, over 1,000 Education Assistants and 110 Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers were cut from our public schools. Cuts to education have meant fewer EAs, teachers and support staff, a loss of funding for specialist programs, increased class sizes, a reduction in resources and less individual attention for our children. These cuts are making it increasingly difficult for public schools to deliver the high quality of education that every child deserves.

Many schools, principals, teachers, EAs and support staff have provided overwhelming feedback that the education cuts have made it more difficult to provide every student with the educational support, flexibility, attention and resources required. Feedback from union members has been that they are forced to spend their own money on classroom resources due to the inadequacies of school budgets.

“The Barnett Government keeps moving the goalposts in education each time we think that we’re resourced, we have more changes and more money taken away. For our schools this new round of cuts means new Education Assistant positions will be cut by 40%. What this does is impact the most vulnerable resource we have and that’s our children’s education. Education is the key and they keep taking from that area.” – United Voice Member

The rise of the term ‘efficiency dividend,’ is simply a new way of re-framing funding cuts using language that is more digestible to the general public. In recent budgets the language has evolved again, with some funding cuts now referred to as ‘workforce renewal policies’. United Voice knows that even in agencies where there are legitimate savings to be found, simply setting arbitrary ‘savings’ targets for departments with no oversight or direction will not drive efficiencies, and will often put further pressure on departments to do more with less.

Similarly the redirection of funds is just another way of communicating a funding cut. In 2015 the government announced $45 million worth of funding for primary schools. While this is funding is clearly a positive outcome for those schools, importantly this is not additional funding for the sector, but funding that has been redirected from secondary schools. **“How could the Department of**

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11 WA State Budget 2015-16
Education possibly think that removing $40 million from secondary schools is benefiting the kids of WA.12 - Carolyn Smith, Secretary United Voice WA

It is immaterial as to how it is named; a cut to the funding of services is a cut to the quality of services the public can expect to receive.

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** in order to maintain a sustainable public sector that provides access to quality services for the community, the government must ensure all public services are appropriately funded and end the practice of making inefficient and unaccountable cuts.

**Privatisation**

The move to a commercial delivery model for public services is notionally to drive efficiencies and reduce the cost of services to the taxpayer. Cuts to staff, programs, positions and funding all contribute to a perception that public services aren’t delivering on expected outcomes. Those services are then slated for privatisation.

The history of privatisation is replete with examples of governments selling off services based on a prior assumption that it will lead to lower costs, greater personalisation of service, flexibility and improved outcomes. Privatising public services is not a solution to the state’s climbing debt and growing deficit. The sale of assets is a short term gain and the transfer of services to the non-government sector merely limits future accountability of the service to its end users and the broader Western Australian community.

United Voice fundamentally believes essential public services should not be operated by for-profit, private companies, but from the public sector which aims to provide the best possible service to the Western Australian community. Experience both in Western Australia and other jurisdictions demonstrate that outsourcing essential public services to the private sector has a detrimental effect on the standards of service that the community receives.

Private providers are confined to the limits of their contractual obligations resulting in an inability to respond effectively to unanticipated changes in services required to the detriment of overall performance of the service.

The previous government’s decision to privatise services is driven by a mistaken ideological belief that then private sector is more efficient and cost effective than the public sector.

“How can we make our hospitals more efficient? In our view, contrary to what the opposition thinks, we can do that through contracting-out some of the work… That will reduce our overall average cost because private hospitals operate more efficiently, in general, than do public hospitals. That is one way to reduce costs.” 13 – Dr K.D. Hames, 21 May 2014

Privatisation it is not always a cost saving measure and the result is often a less accountable and inconsistent service with deteriorating job security and worsening wages and conditions for workers. Introducing competition in public service delivery, and the claimed inherent superiority of the private sector in delivery of basic services, does not necessarily result in improved service quality. The private sector is motivated by bottom line profit, and hence it has an incentive to continually reduce costs and to improve delivery mechanisms, often to the detriment of service delivery.
Case Study – Privatised Hospital Services

Royal Perth Hospital

It is well established that thorough and effective cleaning practices are essential in preventing hospital-acquired infections and limiting the spread of superbugs (antibiotic resistant bacteria). The privatisation of cleaning at Royal Perth Hospital by the Court Government in the 1990s was found to be a key contributor to the VRE superbug outbreak in 2001 which saw 172 people infected and which cost $2.7m to clean up.

The Minister for Health acknowledged that privatisation of the cleaning at RPH resulted in substandard work and infection outbreaks: “There was a significant reduction in the number of staff and an attempt was made to get people who were not responsible for cleaning to do the cleaning it was done improperly and was a significant contributor to the outbreak of infection”.

Fiona Stanley Hospital

At Fiona Stanley Hospital where private provider Serco has been contracted to provide cleaning services, understaffing is widespread and is impacting on cleaners’ ability to do their jobs to the standard required. Workers hold grave concerns for the prevention and control of infections at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

“I always thought we were understaffed. We started with four staff, then over a 6 month period they dropped it to three and now it’s become just two staff from 1am to 6am. The Emergency Department is just unpredictable; sometimes we are flat out busy. You want to make sure you have properly cleaned every room, but we just didn’t have enough time to do it. You probably have about five minutes to clean a room. If the room really needs doing, if you notice blood and stuff, maybe 10 minutes. Sometimes we don’t have the time to clean rooms at all before the nurses push in new patients. The worry with that is, sometimes there is blood left from the previous patient, and it could be between the rails of the bed or on the mattress, so the new patient could very easily have contact with that. You can tell it’s not that person’s blood by how old and dry it is. One time I was asked to clean a room that a patient who was in isolation had occupied. I couldn’t get to it immediately and when I went to clean it there was already a new patient in there. It had never been cleaned. It’s a huge infection control issue.” – United Voice Member (former employee)

A quality public service is one that provides for equal access to public service for all members of the community. Privatisation, however, can limit equitable access to essential services. The privatisation of the Midland Health Campus is a clear example in which a private contractor cannot deliver the full service expected of the community and the financial risk is shifted back onto the government.

By contracting a public hospital to a private operator who does not offer the full range of services you would ordinary expect of a public hospital, the government is complicit in denying the public access to quality health services.

Case Study - Privatisation of Women’s Health Services

In 2012 the Barnett Government awarded St John of God Health Care a $5 billion contract over 23 years to build and run the $360 million Midland Public Hospital (SJGMHC). As a Catholic health care provider, the SJGMHC does not offer a full range of health services at the public hospital. As a

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14 WA, Legislative Assembly, Wednesday, 17 November 2010, p9015b-9032a, page 10
Catholic health care provider, St John of God refuse to offer pregnancy terminations or any sterilisation and contraception services at the hospital or have them offered by another operator on the same site. Under the Catholic Health Guidelines, practitioners are specifically prevented from providing for abortions or referring patients to facilities that might provide this service, including where the patient is a victim of rape, on the grounds that they are morally wrong.\textsuperscript{15}

The Government eventually provided an existing separate clinic with an extra $1.2 million in capital funds for facilities upgrades, allowing the clinic to perform services that should have been offered at the public hospital, were it not for the privatisation of Midland Public Hospital. It remains questionable as to how patients are referred to this clinic given that under the Catholic Heath Guidelines practitioners are prevented from referring patients to an external provider that provides this service.\textsuperscript{16}

“\textit{it is not providing the full suite of services that a publicly run hospital would normally do. This government has traded away those services but it is actually costing it more because it has had to spend around $1 million to upgrade the Marie Stopes International Australia clinic down the road. It has had to provide a contract so that Marie Stopes can provide the services that the government has allowed St John of God Health Care to refuse to provide, which are basic family planning services that are every woman's legal right in this state. That just demonstrates how inept the government is in running this system. It allows itself to get into contracts that cost the taxpayers more.}”\textsuperscript{17} – Ms A.J. Sanderson

The difficulties of measuring the purported success of privatised services are often compounded by the commercial-in-confidence nature of these contracts. It is difficult to make a meaningful and complete assessment on whether or not services are being delivered properly and effectively where there is a lack of public access to relevant information.

\section*{Creeping Privatisation}

The OECD defines privatisation as the transfer of ownership and control of government or state assets, firms and operations to private investors.\textsuperscript{18} A broad definition of privatisation encompasses the direct sale of Government Assets; Social Impact Bonds, outsourcing, Public Private Partnerships, commissioning, contracting and private finance initiatives.

In considering the detrimental impacts that privatisation has on the quality and flexibility of service delivery, we cannot ignore the concerns of creeping privatisation and privatisation by stealth. While these attempts may have impact of minor short term financial gain, United Voice is of the position that this short-term gain does not outweigh the Government’s duty as a provider of high quality public services that values educational and health outcomes over profit maximisation.

\section*{Case Study – PPP Schools}

A clear example of creeping privatisation is the eight public-private-partnership (PPP) schools that the Barnett Government signed in 2015. In 2015 the Barnett Government signed a contract with EduWest, to finance, design and build eight public schools and then maintain them for up to 31

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Catholic Health Australia Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Services in Australia, 2001, page 24
\item http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-03/private-operator-to-provide-abortion-services-in-midland/6067946
\item WA, Council, Thursday, 20 October 2016, p7417d-7429a, page 11
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
This means the State Government does not have to pay the full capital costs of the schools up front, reducing the immediate debt burden on the state’s balance sheet.

The services provided under the PPP contract includes; school cleaning, gardening and grounds maintenance staff.

The case of contract cleaning in public schools during the 1990s can be used to highlight concerns with privatisation of school support services and the detrimental impact on student learning.

Private operators eroded the workers pay and conditions and the quality of cleaning decreased because the square meter per cleaner went up. In an effort to reduce costs, contracted school cleaners were often not provided with the most basic equipment. In a 2004 report on contract cleaning, one in five cleaners had to use the same mops for toilets as other areas and some cleaners were asked to cut sponges in half to save supplies. In the same study, 15% of cleaners were not provided with rubber gloves and were required to provide their own. This inadequate provision of equipment had implications for OHS hazards that extended beyond the cleaning staff.

“I used to work for private contractors and it was awful. There was no extra pay for being a head cleaner, the machinery was old and crappy and we were always pushed for time. People were not very happy. Worst of all, there was no job security. I remember everyone going on holidays one year and coming back to find out they had been sacked. There was no warning whatsoever.” – United Voice Member

Similarly, United Voice contends that the Independent Public School (IPS) model in its current form is an irresponsible devolution of fiscal and managerial responsibility by the government, a cost saving measure and a strategic step towards privatisation and commercial intervention in our public schools.

**Case Study – Independent Public Schools**

The Independent Public School (IPS) model was announced in August 2009 and was rolled out to the public education system in Western Australia in 2010. IPS reform was designed to give schools greater control, and to reduce bureaucracy within the public education system.

The IPS models decentralises decision-making processes and significantly increases the autonomy of individual schools. Under the IPS model, school principals are given power to make local decisions across a range of school operations including student support, staff recruitment, financial management, governance and accountability. Through the IPS model, the operation of public schools becomes closer aligned with private schools, in that it is the responsibility of principals and school communities to manage their schools. Operational risk and responsibility is effectively transferred from government to the local community.

The objective of IPS is that by improving the operational efficacy and effectiveness of schools, this

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19 EduWest is comprised of Macquarie Capital Group Limited, Badge Constructions (WA) Pty Ltd, Perkins (WA) Pty Ltd, and Spotless Facility Services Pty Ltd.

20 Fitzgerald Dr, Scott and Rainnie Professor, Al, ‘Putting the Public First? An Examination of the implications of the 2009 EAC Report Part Two: Independent Public Schools’ July 2011, 4.
will drive a significant improvement in student outcomes.\textsuperscript{21}

There is no conclusive domestic or international evidence that greater autonomy in schools has a positive effect on student outcomes.\textsuperscript{22} Troublingly, evidence highlights how school autonomy can in fact increase social inequity by contributing to greater social segregation in public schools.\textsuperscript{23}

United Voice members across Western Australia have reacted with significant concern at the impact of the Independent Public Schools reform on the equity and efficiency of the public education system. In particular as IPS schools determine their own staffing profile and undertake the selection and appointment of staff members internally. In their quest to achieve efficiency and innovation, there is a danger that school leaders will lose sight of the value of school support staff.

“I’ve been working in schools for almost 20 years. It used to be about the kids and their education. Now it’s about money and budgets. I’ve not seen one single positive outcome from my school becoming an IPS” - Education Assistant, United Voice Member

“We tried to convey our concerns to the education department, but they just sat there and said “It’s got nothing to do with us anymore”. I thought to myself oh my god, yes it does! We are still your employees, you are still providing the money, you are still accountable! How are our concerns not your problem?!” – Education Support Staff, United Voice Member

“As an special needs EA it is very concerning to see our young people suffering educational neglect, impaired by current deficits in the public education institution and disempowering legislative policy. Such is the case with IPS Principals who have the final say in staffing ratios and the perceived justification of withdrawing support from student’s diagnosed with Special Needs.” - Education Support Staff, United Voice Member

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** In order to maintain a sustainable public sector that provides access to quality services for the community, the government must stop the outsourcing and privatisation of public sector services, including creeping privatisation, and where possible return outsourced services to the public sector.

\textsuperscript{23} ; Fitzgerald Dr, Scott and Rainnie Professor, Al, ‘Putting the Public First? An Examination of the implications of the 2009 EAC Report Part Two: Independent Public Schools’ July 2011, 7.
**Theme 2- Quality Workforce**

West Australian public services provide important essential services to the community. Our public services are complex institutions which provide employment to thousands of people, who are entrusted to provide high standards of service delivery to the communities they serve. Maintaining a quality public sector workforce is essential for the ongoing sustainability of a quality public service.

The job design of public sector workers impacts on the quality of the work they perform and therefore the quality of the services the public receives. While there is no single measure of quality that can be applied equally for all government services, the qualifications, skills and productivity of the workforce will have a critical impact on the quality of services that the public receives.

Governments should be examples and promoters of best employment practices, with their own workforce and in their funding and contractual arrangements with the private sector.

A public sector that fosters high performing workforce that meets the needs of both government and the community require a stable workforce of professionally trained, qualified and dedicated workers who are fully supported to provide a service that meets the standards and expectations of the community. Maintaining safe and healthy workplaces that reflect best practice employment conditions that are devoid of discriminatory practices and celebrate diversity is essential for the ongoing sustainability of quality public services. The alternative to a quality workforce will result in a reduction in the quality of support services that the public receives.

**Permanent Employment**

The public service is traditionally characterised by secure working conditions with 'non-ongoing employment being the exception. Under the Barnett government job security has been depleted by increased privitisation and public sector funding cuts, including the Agency Expenditure Reviews, Wages Policy and Workforce Renewal Policy, which created an incentive for employers to move towards employing people in insecure forms of work.

Insecure forms of work refer to those arrangements where employment provides little social and economic security and where workers have little control over their working lives. The use of fixed term contracts, part-time work, casual work, higher duties, and labour hire have all become part of a growing trend in the WA public sector.

Insecure employment in the public sector, as in other parts of the economy, has led to inferior outcomes overall. Job security makes a huge difference to the lives of all Western Australians. Evidence shows that the higher the level of job security, the higher the level of productivity. A healthy working environment has been linked to productivity, shown by higher output, lower absenteeism and creativity in the workforce.\(^\text{24}\) Permanency and job security are fundamentally important to United Voice members. Insecure work, like fixed term contracts, not only impact our financial security, they impact our health and our wellbeing.

A stable, happy, productive workforce who is not concentrating on where their next pay check is coming from is conducive to quality service delivery and performance. In contrast, workers subject to insecure working situations will have a negative impact on overall service delivery. Further, the resulting loss of corporate knowledge and skills and the loss to continuity of service where job security is diminished has a detrimental impact on the quality of the public service as a whole.

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\(^{24}\) ACTU, Lives on Hold: Unlocking the Potential of Australia’s Workforce, 2012
CASE STUDY: Fixed Term Contracts in Education

The most prevalent form of insecure work in the public sector is fixed-term contracts. There are legitimate reasons why a worker may be engaged on a fixed-term contract, such as to cover a period of relief or to work on a short-term project. However, the number of workers presently engaged in fixed-term contracts across the public sector is high, which points to the widespread misuse of contract employment.

The amount of teachers and education support staff on fixed term contracts within the Department of Education can be described as excessive. There are currently over 2,250 education support staff on fixed term contracts. This number does not include permanent staff who have picked up additional hours on a fixed term contract basis. The Union Agreement states that Fixed Term contracts can only be used for very specific reasons such as backfilling for someone on leave. When a position is clear and vacant; EAs, AIEO, Home Economic Assistants, Cleaners and Gardeners should be employed permanently. In the Unions opinion, many of these employees on fixed term contracts should be made permanent.

Job security makes a huge difference in the lives of education support staff, who are already subject to low wages, and can increase productivity in the workplace. Reducing the numbers of permanent staff in public schools, and therefore negatively impacting continuity, has a negative impact on the quality of education received by Western Australians.

“When you are on a fixed term contracts you might be there one week and not the next. The kids don’t know if you’re coming or going, the parents never know who is going to be looking after their children… I applied for permanency because I knew I was doing a position that was vacant, it wasn’t a special project, I wasn’t covering for anyone on extended leave. I fought hard to get made permanent, and when it finally happened I felt elated, I felt the weight taken off my shoulders, I knew I would be having a steady income coming in, that I could support my family.” – United Voice Member

CASE STUDY: Casual Employment in WA Health

The excessive use of casuals in the WA Health sector is particularly troubling. The quality of public health care is jeopardised where service continuity and skills are at risk. Further, these workers have no access to rights and entitlements enjoyed by other public sector workers, such as personal and annual leave and training and professional development opportunities. For many of these workers casual employment is not a stepping stone to more secure employment, but rather an on-going state of insecurity and hardship.

“I started as a casual worker over seven years ago. I fought hard to become a permanent employee and now I am so grateful because I am the sole breadwinner for my family. You never know what the future holds, so I think it’s important to know your rights and that you deserve a secure job. Casual work is tough, they can send you home early even if you need the money and you never know when your next shift is, that really hurts workers. Well trained and permanent staff are vital for public hospitals to function properly.” United Voice Member
### Case Study – Use of Agency Staff

The excessive and inappropriate use of agency staff at Graylands Hospital in Mt Claremont is costing tax payers money and reducing the job security of health employees.

United Voice WA was notified by the Department of Health that in the months of August and September 2016 more than $297,276.00 was paid to Perth Recruitment to hire casual support staff. This amount is equivalent to paying for about 30 full-time Patient Care Assistants. The Union was advised that hiring levels of agency staff has been consistent at the hospital for at least six months.

It has been calculated that almost $900,000.00 has been spent on filling staffing gaps that the Department of Health has created by not offering permanent positions to support workers at Graylands Hospital.

This is wasteful spending and is yet another example of the Barnett Liberal Government’s poor management of our health services. To have a hospital that is dependent on agency staff is not good for patient outcomes and not good for employee job security. WA’s unemployment rate now surpasses the national average, and there are thousands of health workers who are desperate for a permanent and secure job. Health services is not a boom or bust industry, there is always consistent, if not increasing, levels of people who require health treatment.

### RECOMMENDATION 3: permanency is preferred form of engagement that provides good outcomes for service users and good outcomes for workers. The state government must establish an ongoing process to convert contract employees to permanent employees in all areas of the public service and commit to reducing the use of casual and agency staff.

Pursuant to the Public Sector Management Act 1994, agencies are prevented from using current casuals as a pool to fill permanent vacancies. This means agencies must conduct formal recruitment process, including advertising and holding interviews. This can result in unnecessary costs and resource expenditure where there is a pool of casuals already working from which to recruit directly from.

For our members who work in low level positions within the public service, formal recruitment processes, including interviews, are neither appropriate nor reflective of the role they perform. In some instances these formal process can act as a barrier to employment, particularly for workers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds “Sometimes the best people for the job are often not selected during an interview process. Interviews can unfairly discriminate against people who may not have English as their first language. I have seen this happen on many occasions, it is really unfair to these workers.” - United Voice Member

### RECOMMENDATION 4: that the Public Sector Management Act 1994 be amended to provide for more efficient and fairer recruitment processes for workers on low level jobs across the public sector.
**Quality working conditions**

Governments should be examples and promoters of best employment practices. A public sector that fosters high performing workforce that meets the needs of both government and the community require a stable workforce of professionally trained, qualified and dedicated workers who are fully supported to provide a service that meets the standards and expectations of the community.

**Education and Training**

To support economic growth and improvements to public services, it is imperative that public sector workers have access to relevant training. Professional, ongoing training is essential for an individual’s career development. Developing career paths through education and training plans will ensure existing employees have the skills to deliver quality and sustainable public service. Ongoing professional development and formal recognition of competencies where people gain higher level and/or specialist qualifications will establish professional career paths. This in turn, will improve the public perception of the sector as a professional career choice, thereby improving attraction and retention of quality workers.

**Workplace Diversity**

Government employers must take pride in diversity in the workforce. A high quality workforce is central to public authorities being able to effectively and efficiently deliver services to the Western Australian community. To be a truly citizen-centric public sector, a workforce that is also representative of the community we all serve is important. Workplaces that are fair and transparent, and where diverse gender, racial and cultural perspectives are valued, have been shown to produce better organisational performance, productivity and employee engagement.25

Public sector employees with a culturally diverse background make up a mere 12.4% of workers.26 This is not good enough.

Indigenous Australians constitute approximately 2.4% of the Australian population and suffer from disadvantage across a range of social, economic, and health indicators compared to other Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees make up only 2.8% of the WA public sector workforce and 2.2% of the Commonwealth.27 Anti-racism strategies, in particular for Aboriginal Australians, should focus on long-term, sustainable employment opportunities in the public sector for those with racially diverse backgrounds.

A disproportionate number of Indigenous employees are employed at entry level and most remain at lower classifications across the service. Consequently, there is a lack of Indigenous representation in more senior management levels. An effective diversity strategy in the public sector will consider the long term benefits of employing and retaining a racially diverse workforce.28

Supporting the employment of women, CALD, LGBTI, youth and mature age workers in the public sector is also essential to improve the representation of people from diverse groups.

The state government should be a model employer and mandate the public reporting of gender and racial diversity by each government agency. By introducing a culture of public reporting this will drive government employers to address gender and diversity concerns within their agencies and embed gender equality in all employment practices, including recruitment practices.

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Supporting engagement with workers through their unions

Both the public and private sectors will need to attract and retain skilled staff through secure employment arrangements, safe and healthy workplaces, and by respecting the need for employees to speak up together for fair wages and conditions.

Public sector unions are the representatives of employees in the workplace, and the Government must recognise the importance of supporting engagement between unions and workers. This includes; providing workers with reasonable opportunities to access unions during their induction, and to be able to meet with unions during the course of their employment; and ensuring union delegates receive adequate support in terms of time, facilities and skill development.

RECOMMENDATION 5: the government must provide for competitive and best practice workplace conditions that will attract and retain skilled employees to ensure the sustainability of a quality workforce. Maintaining safe and healthy workplaces that reflect best practice employment conditions that are devoid of discriminatory practices and celebrate diversity is essential for the ongoing sustainability of quality public services.

RECOMMENDATION 6: that the Public Sector Management Act be amended to specifically recognise the important role that public sector unions have as representative of employees in the workplace.
Theme 3- Efficient & Effective Systems

Accountability
Governments are elected to serve the community and this service should be accountable, transparent, and democratic. Governments should be held to a higher standard than the private sector in terms of providing transparency to the public. Such reporting should ensure management adheres to principles, values and codes of conduct that bring about quality public services which are sustainable and consistent with fair and decent work.

The difficulties of measuring success of new arrangements are often compounded by the commercial-in-confidence nature of contracts. It is difficult to make a meaningful and complete assessment on whether or not services are being delivered properly and effectively where there is a lack of public access to relevant information.

For example, what we know from the information that is publicly available regarding the Serco-Fiona Stanley Hospital contract is extremely limited. From information provided by union members, we know that the service being provided by Serco isn’t good enough, however we don’t know the extent of the problems. Importantly, we don’t know how often it is failing, the specific nature of the failure or the financial impact of the failure.

Information in relation to Serco’s performance failures is not published on a regular basis or generally made available. The information we do have was only made available as a result of a request for information during budget estimates. Previous requests for information made by Members of Parliament in relation to KPIs have been declined on the basis that the information requested is commercial-in-confidence. If services are being paid for by the State, the public should be certain of how they are delivered, who they are delivered to. Without this information we cannot possibly make an effective comparison about whether that service would be more efficient if delivered by the public or the private sector.

RECOMMENDATION 7: that government require a higher level of public and transparent reporting from public sector agencies and private operators contracted to provide a public service to ensure they are held accountable for the level of service.

Ethical Contracting
A State Labor Government must acknowledge the key role it has as an employer to promote fairness, bargaining and freedom to associate within the workforce. Employees of organisations contracted by the Government to provide public services are ostensibly Government employees. Therefore, the State Labor Government should ensure they be afforded the protections and rights of all other Government employees.

A State Labor Government should ensure all organisations that provide services which are directly contracted to, or funded by the State Government, develop practices and cultures that support the industrial rights of their employees to organise, bargain and resolve issues collectively through their Union.

This is particularly significant in industries with a history of worker underpayment, exploitation and unsafe work practices, such as in the Government contract cleaning sector. Current or existing contracts entered into for the provision of community services such as aged care, youth support,

29 WA, Parliamentary Debates, Assembly Estimates Committee A, 10 June 2015, page 221
children’s services and disability services either by tender or other arrangement should respect the industrial rights of workers, and set a cultural example to the larger workforce.

**RECOMMENDATION 8:** the State Labor Government implement a policy to guide the entire Government Procurement process which embeds the principals of fairness and representation in the workplace in all Government contracts. Clauses should be included in all Government contracts for works and services which stipulate that all employees of sub-contractors must have wages and conditions that are no less favourable than those required under the Government contract.

**RECOMMENDATION 9:** the State Labor Government implement reforms to existing procurement policies to increase transparency and accountability in government procurement to require companies tendering or completing for services contracts to make available the details of all sub-contractors engaged.

**Collaboration**

In April 2017 the Premier announced the first round of Machinery of Government changes for the public sector, as outlined in the Government’s election commitments creating a number of new amalgamated departments. 41 government departments will be reduced to 25 from July 1.

Compared to other states, WA has a significantly high number of government departments, especially considering its relatively small population. South Australia has the second highest number of government departments at 22, while NSW has 10 and Victoria have seven.

“The current arrangement are inefficient, ramshackle, too cumbersome and unsustainable...there wasn’t enough collaboration between agencies, resulting in duplication and ‘silo’ cultures. The changes will improve service delivery, streamline processes, ensure better transparency and bring greater efficiencies to many government operations. They are about building better structures of government and ensuring better delivery of service to the public. These are logical steps in the provision of better government services.”

– Mark McGowan, April 2017

United Voice supports the objectives behind these changes to Government departments as an effort to streamline and improve operations to deliver better government services for the benefit of all West Australians.

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Conclusion

Our members believe that the delivery of high quality, well-funded public services that provide quality employment conditions, should be the first priority of the State Labor Government. United Voice members share with the broader community the desire for a good life and a fair society. Our members all rely on government to provide access to quality public services that are appropriately funded and are responsive and flexible to the changing needs of the community.

The delivery of an efficient and effective public sector requires all Western Australians to have equal access to quality public services that are delivered by a quality workforce of employees.

United Voice members know from past experience that funding cuts, privatisation and downward pressure on working conditions under the guise of making efficiencies can result in poor outcomes for service delivery.

WA is a growing state with a range of groups and industries requiring public sector reinvestment. As our economy diversifies following the end of the most recent mining boom, Western Australians will need new skills for new jobs in emerging industries. What Western Australians need is not further cuts to services, but reinvestment in public services to drive economic growth and employment opportunities.