



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

Our Ref: 4-117370

Mr Ian Smith PSM
Chair
East Metropolitan Health Service Board
Level 3, K Block, Kirkman House
10 Murray Street
PERTH WA 6000

By email: ian.smith@health.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr Smith *Ian,*

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATION – EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

In the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, I have reconsidered my expectations of the East Metropolitan Health Service (EMHS) Board (Board) as outlined in my recent statement dated 5 February 2020. The continued exemplary leadership of the Board during the current state of emergency is to be commended, as is the ongoing focus on action and outcomes.

As the responsible Minister for the governing bodies of health service providers (HSP), my Statement of Expectation below is to be read in the context of the functions and responsibilities of a Health Service Provider as listed in the *Health Services Act 2016*.

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

I maintain a strong expectation that Safety and Quality will remain a high priority and core focus for the Board during this period of elevated demand. I expect that work to evaluate and consolidate progress regarding the improvement of patient outcomes will be continued. This includes continued work towards the publication of safety and quality information to support a culture of openness and transparency.

During this time, I expect the Board to continue strategies to support the health and wellbeing of the EMHS workforce as a matter of priority. Such initiatives are to enhance organisational culture and address the issues arising from the 2019 "Your Voice in Health" Employee Engagement Survey. Equally, the Board is to ensure there are contemporary strategies and implementation plans to eliminate bullying and provide a safe workplace, particularly in the context of the unacceptable increase in violence being experienced by our frontline staff.

The State Government is committed to direct and permanent employment. The importance of the implementation of Commissioner's Instruction 23, which includes undertaking assessments for conversion and appointment of fixed term contract and casual employees to permanency, remains a high priority.

I also refer you to Public Sector Labour Relations (PSLR) circulars *6/2020: Leave arrangements for COVID-19* and *7/2020: Government-initiated changes related to COVID-19 – workforce arrangements*. To be responsive to rapidly changing environments due to COVID-19 the PSLR circulars provide flexibility to address workforce matters. The ongoing reporting to the Department of Health (DOH), the Public Sector Commission and PSLR ensures I am regularly informed of developments.

The State Government remains committed to the implementation of the Sustainable Health Review; however, it will be paused until November 2020 as resources are reallocated to the COVID-19 response. Further advice will be provided in due course.

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

Election commitments are currently being reviewed and advice will be provided in due course. Reporting requirements will be minimised where possible. However, I expect the Board to provide accurate and timely advice to the Government on significant issues in core areas of business including any risk to achieving election commitments as a result of COVID-19.

The Board is to have a continued focus on meeting the Hospital Performance Target for Safety and Quality while recognising the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also acknowledge that the Western Australian Elective Surgery Target (WEST) Category 1 patients will not be met during this period.

I expect that patients and families will retain current opportunities to connect with their healthcare providers and share their health care experience, including through the Patient Opinion system. Insofar as it is practicable to do so amid elevated operational demands, I expect the Board to continue to promote consumer engagement and patient experience platforms.

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

The public sector will continue to play a vital role in achieving the McGowan Government's ambition to unlock the potential of the State – economically, socially and environmentally – and ensure all Western Australians share in its prosperity. I therefore expect the Board to develop and institute plans to ensure that EMHS is well placed for the recovery phase of the pandemic. Comprehensive planning will be key to an orderly transition to business as usual operations and the leadership of the Board will be crucial during this time.

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

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

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

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the considerable efforts that the Board is taking to lead EMHS through these challenging times while ensuring the people of Western Australia continue to access world class health care.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Roger Cook', written over a large, stylized blue circular flourish.

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

16 APR 2020