



## The Role of the Department of Health

*Strong governance foundations for a safe, high quality, sustainable public WA health system*

### Why is the role of the Department of Health changing?

- WA Health is too large and complex to operate with decision-making and accountability resting solely with the Director General.
- The *Health Services Act 2016* (the Act) commenced on 1 July 2016 providing a legal framework for clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities at all levels of the system, and a devolved model of governance that enables decision-making and accountability closer to service delivery and patient care.
- The Department of Health, led by the Director General, has been established as the System Manager responsible for the overall management, performance and strategic direction of the WA public health system to ensure the delivery of high-quality, safe and timely health services.
- Health Services have been established as health service providers that are separate board-governed statutory authorities, legally responsible and accountable for the delivery of health services for their local areas and communities.
- Health Support Services (HSS) has been established as a chief executive-governed health service provider that is a statutory authority accountable for the delivery of key support services.

### What is the role of the Department of Health as System Manager?

- Strategic leadership, planning and direction of the WA public health system.
- Recommending to the Minister for Health the amounts that may be allocated from the health portfolio budget to health service providers.
- Overseeing, monitoring and promoting improvements in the safety and quality of health services.
- Entering into service agreements with health service providers outlining budget, activity and performance measures.
- Arranging for the provision of health services by contracted health entities.
- Monitoring performance and taking remedial action when performance does not meet expected standards.
- Managing systemwide industrial relations and setting conditions of employment for health service provider employees.
- The Director General has several mechanisms of remediation:
  - Issuing binding policy frameworks and directions to health service providers
  - Agreeing performance objectives with chief executives of health service providers
  - Evaluation and performance management of a health service provider under the service agreement
  - Assessing compliance, performance, safety, quality, and patient services via powers of investigation, inspection and audit
  - Power to conduct an inquiry into the functions, management or operations of health service providers.

## How will the transition to this role occur?

- To support the alignment to the roles and responsibilities under the Act, a Functional Review and Readiness Assessment of non-clinical functions was conducted across the system.
- Transition of these functions is being managed by senior executives across the system and will conclude by 30 June 2018.

## What are the benefits to patients, our workforce and the community?

- Strong governance foundations with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities will enable stronger system decision-making, operation and risk management.
- Robust system wide policy and standards, aligned to national and international best practice to assure the quality and safety of health services.
- Greater authority and innovation in Health Services in meeting the needs of local communities, including greater local decision-making.
- Strengthened financial management and business intelligence so that resources are allocated fairly and used efficiently to deliver the best health outcomes.

## More information

- Fact Sheets:
  - *Changes to the governance of WA Health – Overview*
  - *The Health Services Act 2016: A Snapshot*
  - *The Role of Health Services and Boards*
  - *The Role of Health Support Services*
  - *Functional Review and Readiness Assessment*
  - *Policy Frameworks*
  - *The WA Health Reform Program 2015-2020*
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