



Ms Felicity Beaulieu – WA Divisional Chair  
Ms Erin Clinch – WA Divisional Manager  
Occupational Therapy Australia – WA Division  
Email: [erin.clinch@otaus.com.au](mailto:erin.clinch@otaus.com.au)

Dear Ms Beaulieu and Ms Clinch

Thank you for your letter of 4 February 2021 in relation to issues of concern to Occupational Therapy Australia's members.

The McGowan Government's vision is for all Western Australians to have the opportunity to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

### **Mental Health**

Our focus on Mental Health is clear with a record \$1.03B allocated to mental health, alcohol and other drug services in the 2020-21 budget.

At the 2017 election the McGowan Government committed to a range of initiatives which we have been working to deliver over the past 4 years.

Structural initiatives including:

- creating a new position of Chief Medical Officer, Mental Health,
- establishing a Mental Health Executive Committee to bring together health service providers' leadership representatives and the Department of Health Director General,
- establishing a Community Mental Health, AOD Council to further strengthen collaboration between the community services sector, Government and consumers, carers and families,
- reviewing the operating model of the Mental Health Commission to ensure it is in the best position to reform the sector,
- releasing Young People's Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Use: Priorities for Action 2020 – 2025 with more than 40 immediate actions to support young people during COVID-19 and beyond, and
- commencing planning for the statutory review of the Mental Health Act 2014, and
- launching of the Strong Spirit Strong Mind Framework for Western Australia 2020-2025.



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In response to COVID-19, the McGowan Government:

- provided additional support to community mental health and AOD services,
- delivered \$6 million to enable services to adjust to the new conditions, and
- ensured a strong mental health component of the COVID-19 Response and Economic Recovery Omnibus Bill 2020.

Provided prevention services including:

- progressing implementation of the Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-25 including the establishment of region-by-region Aboriginal plans,
- developed a new FASD campaign and established new FASD health worker training, and
- launched the Strong Spirit Strong Mind website containing Aboriginal culturally secure resources.

Developed support services including;

- established a 10-bed Mental Health Observation Area at Joondalup Health Campus adjacent to the main emergency department,
- established a Mental Health Observation Area at Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital,
- established a Mental Health Emergency Centre at Royal Perth Hospital,
- funded development of a Mental Health Emergency Centre at St John of God Midland Public Hospital,
- established the Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service,
- established WA's first Recovery College service to deliver co-designed education and courses,
- developed two Safe Haven Cafes to open in early 2021 in East Perth and Kununurra to operate as alternatives to emergency departments for people in mental health distress,
- opened the 10-bed Bunbury community mental health Step Up Step Down (SUSD) service and the 10-bed Geraldton Step Up Step Down (SUSD) service
- prepared the 10-bed Kalgoorlie SUSD facility for opening in 2021,
- continued funding of the North West Drug and Alcohol Support Program,
- SUSD services are identified as a priority in the Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025,
- appointed service providers for the new 20-bed adult Community Care Unit in the south metropolitan area and an interim 8 to 10-bed youth homelessness service in the east metropolitan area,
- established a ministerial taskforce into children and adolescent mental health and developed a Children's Priority Framework as a result of recommendations from the Chief Psychiatrist's review of the case of Ms Kate Savage, and
- allocated \$25 million to establish a youth mental health, alcohol and other drugs homelessness facility.

This is just a small selection of the work undertaken by the McGowan Government over the last four years to address mental health and AOD issues.

### *Election Commitments*

A re-elected McGowan Labor Government will significantly boost mental health services with a \$361.6 million investment over four years. The package will address critical gaps in the mental health system and includes:

- \$20.2 million to expand the Mental Health Co-Response (MHCR) program to Bunbury and Geraldton, and provide more mobile mental health teams in the metro area,
- \$86.7 million for two new Mental Health Emergency Centres (MHEC) and Behavioural Assessment Urgent Care Centres (BAUCC) at Rockingham and Armadale to ensure patients in crisis are assessed safely, quickly and respectfully,
- \$14.8 million for a new 10-bed Step Up/Step Down (SUSD) in South Hedland, to support people safely in the community and close to their personal supports from family and friends,
- \$4 million of workplace mental health grants to fund organisations that build stronger and more resilient workers, and connect workers to the best available help and support, and
- \$31.6 million expansion of WA's Eating Disorder Treatment, including a WA Eating Disorders Specialist Service (WAEDSS) Hub and community prevention supports.

These new initiatives build on WA Labor's \$64 million commitment to increase psychological support for WA students.

The \$361.6 million package also includes:

Increased support for young people includes;

- \$18.2 million for the Youth long-term housing and support program to provide young people with access to long-term accommodation alongside coordinated clinical, psychosocial and AOD supports to assist them with their recovery and with living independently in the community,
- a new \$10.6 million ten-bed Youth Step Up/Step Down (SUSD) facility in the metropolitan area for young people aged 16-24 years with a mental health issue, and (if applicable) co-occurring alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues,
- \$12.6 million to implement the Child, Adolescent and Youth Forensic Outreach Service (CAYFOS) for young people aged between 10 and 24 with mental health and/or alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues who are at risk of, have been or are currently in contact with the criminal justice system, requiring specialist adolescent forensic support,
- \$10 million to expand the youth mental health community treatment services, more than doubling the funding for flexible, trauma-informed, culturally secure evidence-based multidisciplinary care for young people (13 to 24 years) with complex, severe mental health problems,
- \$35.3 million to expand the Youth Community Assessment and Treatment Team (YCATT) community outreach service to the entire Metro area, a community outreach service that provides developmentally appropriate acute and intensive community assessment, treatment and case management for young people aged 16 to 24,

- \$9.8 million to provide Drug Education Support Services (DESS) workers at Youth Accommodation and Support Services, to provide counselling, support and referrals, education on AOD harm minimisation and protective factors, and family engagement,
- \$9.5 million for Psychosocial support packages for young people to assist more young people living in the community, either independently or in the family home, to increasingly participate in and contribute to community, social, and economic life,
- Support for the WA AIDS Council to continue providing peer-based support and education for youth who identify as LGBTIQ+ across Western Australia, and
- \$6.7 million to expand the Alcohol. Think Again – Parents, Young People and Alcohol Campaign, part of a comprehensive approach in Western Australia that aims to reduce the level of alcohol-related harm and ill-health in Western Australia.

### **Support for school students**

A re-elected McGowan Government is strongly committed to supporting public schools in their provision of high-quality education to all Western Australian public school students.

The 2020-21 budget provides a record \$5.5 billion for education, which is the highest it has ever been. For 2021, Western Australia will provide the highest level of funding for public education across all states in Australia.

The National School Reform Agreement negotiated by the State Government sees Western Australia receiving a fairer share of funding from the Commonwealth. The new agreement reflects a shift in the proportion of funds that are paid by the Commonwealth and the State with the Commonwealth paying a higher proportion than it has before.

A re-elected McGowan Government recognises the importance of access to quality education for students with disabilities.

We expect schools to collaborate with parents to align a student's NDIS goals with their educational goals, for example, teaching financial management to support independent living skills. Where a student's education plan includes the provision of therapy, schools work with parents and therapy providers to facilitate access to these supports during school hours.

The Department of Education has developed draft guidelines in relation to parent-initiated therapy provision on school sites, which aim to enhance this approach.

Consultation sessions in relation to the draft guidelines are planned for Term 2, 2021 with parents, disability advocacy peaks and therapy provider peaks. The sessions will include consultation around additional resources and supporting materials that may enhance interconnected home-school-therapy approaches.

### **Vehicle modifications**

I understand Western Australian Department of Transport (DoT) officers have had recent talks with stakeholders in relation to issues around vehicle modifications for people with disability.

DoT Vehicle Safety Standards officers work closely with Occupational Therapists, modifiers and Eastern States signatories through the established networks they have with these

groups, with regular updates so assessors understand advances in technology such as the Fadiel voice command system and other adaptive controls.

As part of the vehicle assessment process, assessors will have open dialogue with the Occupational Therapists and modifiers regarding any proposed modifications. DoT engineers prioritise these vehicles and generally are able to process already modified as well as new applications quickly. In 2020, DoT processed 118 applications for modifications required by people with disability seeking to drive a vehicle.

Minor modifications don't generally require pre-approval and can be assessed once DoT receive an application for assessment.

Policing of vehicles modified for people with disability without DoT approval or assessment is generally dealt with through WA Police actions and roadside inspections, in the same way that other unauthorised modifications are policed.

I would advise Occupational Therapy Australia continue dialogue with the Western Australian Department of Transport on these issues so that the processes can be continually improved.

Thank you for raising your concerns with me and I look forward to a re-elected McGowan Government working with Occupational Therapy Australia in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark McGowan', with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Mark McGowan MLA  
**PREMIER; WA LABOR LEADER**

02 MAR 2021