



GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

May 2019

Statement of Intent on Aboriginal youth suicide.

A preliminary response to: The State Coroner's Inquest into the deaths of thirteen children and young persons in the Kimberley Region, Western Australia; and Learnings from the message stick: the report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas

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Deputy Premier's Foreword

The State Coroner's Inquest into the deaths of thirteen children and young persons in the Kimberley Region, Western Australia, is the latest devastating inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide. Aboriginal children and young people continue to take their own lives at an unfathomable rate. I extend my deepest sympathies to those families and communities that have been heartbroken by these tragic events.

I would like to commend the State Coroner of Western Australia, Ms Ros Fogliani, for the dedication she has shown in her assessment of this complex, highly emotional issue.

I also express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to those who offered testimony to the Coroner's proceedings, especially family members who shared their stories, and in doing so revisited the unimaginable grief of losing their loved ones. The impact of this Inquest has been felt across the Kimberley, across the state and across the nation.

The Coroner has made 42 clear recommendations for how we can move forward in addressing youth suicide and building strong, culturally and emotionally resilient young Aboriginal people in the Kimberley. The findings cover a range of issues and risk factors, including the harmful effects of alcohol, the need for improved clinical resources and facilities, and better co-ordination and cultural safety of services. They add to, and reinforce the findings and recommendations of the 2016 Parliamentary Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide, 'Learnings from the message stick: the report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas'. They follow on from strategies developed by previous governments in response to findings from a range of earlier reports, including the Gordon (2002) and Hope (2008) inquiries. They also affirm what we have come to understand in recent years, and what Aboriginal people continue to tell us: that Aboriginal youth suicide is not solely a mental health issue – it is an outcome of complex, inter-related factors arising from intergenerational trauma.

While improving clinical services and responses remains essential, our approach must go deeper. By drawing upon the expertise of Aboriginal leadership, our efforts must focus on the vital role of culture in building resilience and hope for children and families. The Western Australian Government will prioritise the capability and resources to respond to those most in need.

Subject to the consultation process, the Government's full response is anticipated by the end of the year. The end result must be comprehensive: informed by community, designed by community and driven by community. As a government united on the importance of this issue, we stand ready to support these efforts for current and future generations.



Hon Roger Cook

Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health



Our Approach

This Western Australian Government Statement of Intent is an interim response on the issue of Aboriginal youth suicide. It arises from the findings of a significant body of reports over the past 15 years. The most recent of these are the State Coroner's Inquest into the deaths of thirteen children and young persons in the Kimberley Region, Western Australia (the Coroner's Inquest), and the former Education and Health Standing Committee's 2016 'Learnings from the message stick: the report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas' (the Message Stick Inquiry). The three main objectives of this document are: to set out our current approach on Aboriginal wellbeing and suicide prevention; to provide clear responses to all of the recommendations of the Coroner's Inquest (42) and the Message Stick Inquiry (44); and to outline a path towards a comprehensive, whole-of-government response on Aboriginal youth suicide.

In alignment with Recommendation 42 of the Coroner's Inquest, we recognise the essential role of cultural identity and resilience in tackling the impacts of intergenerational trauma, and the importance of promoting reconciliation and understanding in the Western Australian community. A whole-of-government response on Aboriginal youth suicide will sit within a broader landscape of change and reform in Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia, which will include our commitments to a refresh of the Closing the Gap agenda (2019-2029), and a State Aboriginal affairs strategy that will prioritise social, economic and health outcomes, with an emphasis on Aboriginal empowerment.

In developing a comprehensive response on Aboriginal youth suicide, the State Aboriginal affairs strategy will focus government effort on the key drivers for change. It will strengthen a commitment to empowering communities through local decision making, enable Aboriginal led solutions through improved service commissioning, prioritise investment in preventative initiatives, and boost economic participation.

A comprehensive response must be led by Aboriginal people and communities. Through proper engagement and meaningful partnerships, we want to build on the many effective initiatives that are already being developed at the community level. This document and the work underway provide a starting point for the conversations we need to have with key Aboriginal stakeholders to help inform a more comprehensive approach.

Improved outcomes will also require collaboration and co-operation between Western Australian government agencies, the Commonwealth, local governments and non-government organisations.

The first part of this document examines the recommendations of the Coroner's Inquest and the Message Stick Inquiry across three main themes. Grouping the recommendations in this way assists both government and community to work together to address the recommendations in a streamlined and co-ordinated manner.

The thematic overviews are complemented by the second part, which provides specific responses to all 86 recommendations—whether the Government accepts a recommendation, accepts it in principle, will require further discussion before responding, or is already in the process of implementing it. In some circumstances, the recommendations may no longer be relevant (superseded).

1. Listening to, involving and empowering Aboriginal people, and the provision of culturally based programs

This theme encompasses all recommendations for programs and structures for Aboriginal youth wellbeing to be designed, led and implemented by, or in partnership with, Aboriginal people.

Setting the policy environment to facilitate Aboriginal self-determination and empowerment is a key aim in the Western Australian Government's approach to Aboriginal affairs. The 25 recommendations in this category examine how government and Aboriginal people and organisations can work together to achieve this aim, emphasising the need to ensure that Aboriginal culture is considered and applied throughout. These recommendations, and ensuing discussions with Aboriginal stakeholders, will inform us in considering how to embed Aboriginal cultural considerations into how we do business.

The Government is committed to building a new relationship with Aboriginal people and communities through partnerships that promote a person-centred approach to the design and delivery of services, valuing shared decision making and accountability. We are looking to address issues impacting the livelihood of Aboriginal people and communities, including intergenerational trauma and ongoing disadvantage, through a holistic approach to services, and the principles of co-design and place-based response.

Since December 2018, the Government has been working in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to progress the Closing the Gap Refresh. Along with improved state-level mechanisms for engagement, commitment to a national partnership with Indigenous representatives will ensure that policy development and program implementation results in a new way of understanding and responding to community priorities and solutions.

The Aboriginal Family Wellbeing Project was launched by the Mental Health Commission in the Kimberley region in March 2019. An example of working in partnership with ACCOs, the project is being piloted across Western Australia, in collaboration with the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA). The Aboriginal Family Wellbeing Project focuses on social and emotional wellbeing as significant factors in suicide prevention.

The Mental Health Commission also supports community-led responses to suicide prevention by providing grants to local governments and registered not-for-profit organisations to implement local prevention, education and training programs.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries supports the maintenance and revitalisation of culture by supporting return-to-country trips, intergenerational skills transfer and recording of cultural stories for archival purposes through its Aboriginal Arts Grants Program. Acknowledgment and support for the important role of organisations such as the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC), which provide culture-focused responses to family wellbeing, is also a central feature of the Government's ongoing commitment to putting culture at the heart of services.

Recommendations relevant to this theme:

Coroner's Inquest	16, 17, 19, 24, 25, 38, 39, 40, 42
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Message Stick	7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
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2. Improved Services and Programs

The factors that contribute to Aboriginal youth suicide are complex and personal. As highlighted in the many reports on this issue, it is critical that the right services are available at the right place and at the right time. This theme identifies the ways in which the Government can enhance Aboriginal wellbeing by improving, reforming, or implementing new ways of supporting the Aboriginal community. This means developing a better understanding of what matters to Aboriginal people, factoring in regional and cultural differences. Some short-term progress may be achieved with small, focused changes, while other priorities will require new approaches. Driving long-term, positive social outcomes will be a key goal when addressing these recommendations.

The Western Australian Government has allocated \$18.23 million (2018/19 – 2020/21) to the Mental Health Commission for the Statewide Specialist Aboriginal Mental Health Service. The purpose of this service is to provide and improve culturally secure mental health, alcohol and other drug services in the community. Aboriginal people experiencing severe and persistent mental illness are assisted by Aboriginal mental health workers alongside, and in partnership with, multidisciplinary mainstream clinical mental health teams.

The Mental Health Commission has invested \$3.5 million into the Suicide Prevention Coordinators program, which supports collaboration across the mental health, alcohol and other drug sectors, and reinforces established relationships with stakeholders in suicide prevention. The Coordinators act as the central point of communication for local suicide-related issues and support the implementation of 'Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can save lives' action areas across agencies and communities within their region.

The Mental Health Commission's Community Mental Health Step Up/Step Down Services allow people to step up from the community and provide additional support for a person to manage a deterioration in their mental health where admission to an inpatient facility is not warranted. Step-Down services allow people to step down from a stay in an inpatient facility and provide additional support in re-establishing themselves in the community.

The Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy is a cross-government approach, led by the Department of Justice, to involve Aboriginal people, communities and organisations in the co-design of place-based initiatives that aim to positively impact the livelihood of young Aboriginal people. The success of the Strategy will be underpinned by leadership, co-ordination and accountability. The Premier has displayed leadership by mobilising relevant Ministers and CEOs to develop the Strategy, which is carried forward by senior Government officers.

Co-ordination of relevant agencies and community stakeholders will assist to operationalise the Strategy to deliver enhanced programs and services, with a key feature being the co-design of a place-based residential facility to act as a community-based option for young people on bail, a court diversion and an alternative to detention. Recognising the trauma experienced by many young Aboriginal people, a trauma-informed approach will form part of a broader holistic approach to the delivery of programs and services that strengthen young Aboriginal people's efficacy in terms of justice, but more importantly, in response to the tragic loss of so many young lives.

The Western Australia Police Force recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Indigenous Critical Response Service (NICRS), a Commonwealth initiative designed to provide culturally appropriate support to Aboriginal families impacted by traumatic events, including suicide. The Agreement formalises and facilitates the expansion of a long-standing relationship, to provide holistic support to Aboriginal families in times of crisis.

The Department of Communities works alongside young people, families, communities and agencies to improve outcomes for at-risk youth. The Department has identified several priority actions for improving its response on Aboriginal youth wellbeing, which include:

- Intensive Family Support Services across the state;
- Safer Families, Safer Communities, a family violence regional plan for the Kimberley, overseen by family and domestic violence project officers, tracked through the family and domestic violence working groups that report to District Leadership Groups; and
- The delivery of suicide-prevention training to child protection workers across the state.

Since 2016, the Department of Education has maintained its focus on suicide prevention and implemented a number of priority actions to strengthen support for children and young people in the Kimberley. There has been a continued focus on suicide prevention by the region's school psychologists, with ongoing access to consultation from the dedicated suicide prevention roles in the School Psychology Service.

The Department's Schools Response Program has facilitated expanded delivery of the Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention Program and Youth Mental Health First Aid training to school personnel, and teen Mental Health First Aid training for secondary aged students. The program facilitates contracted services working in partnership to build resilience and protective factors for at-risk young people. It works towards improving access to appropriate services and support for students, especially following the suicide of a peer.

A Youth Transitions Coordinator position has also been created for the Kimberley, to strengthen the transition of young people exiting custodial sentences into educational programs.

Further Department of Education initiatives in the Kimberley include:

- An increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer positions in the Kimberley from 78 FTE in 2016 to 83 FTE in 2018;
- Expansion in the teaching of Aboriginal languages from 14 Aboriginal language programs in 2017, to 21 Aboriginal language programs in 2018;
- Delivery of the \$25 million Kimberley Schools Project in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Catholic Education Western Australia and the Association of Independent Schools;
- Expansion of the KindiLink program to all schools participating in the Kimberley Schools Project from 2019;
- Development of an online resource hub to provide schools with information, practical strategies and access to support services related to Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD); and
- Seed funding for programs to specifically support Aboriginal girls to engage with schooling.

Recommendations relevant to this theme:

Coroner's
Inquest

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

Message stick

6, 9, 11, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44

3. Increased government leadership, co-ordination and accountability

Responding to the breadth of issues raised will require a public sector that is focused on community needs. The recommendations focus on a range of issues, including a special advisor on Aboriginal children and young people, liquor control, and the co-ordination of services. In considering these recommendations, we will examine the way that business ought to be done and how best to work between agencies to ensure that those who need services can access them when needed. The government's role in providing leadership, co-ordination and accountability will be strengthened by ongoing reforms to facilitate listening to, involving and empowering Aboriginal people. Success on this important issue must be defined by Aboriginal people, with communities involved in the design, development and delivery of policies, programs and services.

Creating an environment to enable the public sector to do its job more effectively is set out in the pillars of the Service Priority Review. A crucial outcome of the Review was recognition of the need for better collaboration between agencies and the replacement of the incumbent 'silo' approach with a co-ordinated, holistic, person-centred approach to service provision.

The Government's Community Safety and Family Support Cabinet Sub Committee is designed to improve co-ordination across portfolios, and focus effort and expenditure on shared outcomes. It is accountable to Cabinet on the progress of policy initiatives against established outcomes and targets. The development of a whole-of-government approach to improve Aboriginal youth wellbeing is being led by the Deputy Premier through this Sub Committee.

In Western Australia there is a commitment to focusing government capacity to solve problems that seem unsolvable. *Our Priorities: Sharing Prosperity* (Our Priorities) is the Government's response to that challenge, providing whole-of-government leadership to deliver better outcomes for all Western Australians. These priorities include improving the health and wellbeing of children in their early years and reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal people in custody. Although not a specific response to the recommendations addressed in this report, they provide timely effort and priority targets on factors that contribute to Aboriginal youth wellbeing.

In addition to state-wide targets, co-ordination mechanisms that address the regional diversity of Western Australia are essential. The Government is working to improve forums for constructive dialogue with community about youth and family wellbeing. District Leadership Groups (DLG) and the Child Safety Director's Group (CSDG) provide a focus on local child, youth and family issues. Trilateral agreements (between Western Australian Government, Commonwealth Government and communities) on mental health services are also being reviewed, to build stronger collaborative practices across agencies.

Additional mechanisms for engagement and co-ordination are provided by the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* (AAPA Act). The Government is committed to maximising the opportunities provided by the AAPA Act to build genuine, respectful and reciprocal relationships between Aboriginal people and the Government to achieve better outcomes. Under the AAPA Act, advice on matters that significantly impact on Aboriginal Western Australians is provided by Aboriginal representatives on the Aboriginal Lands Trust, the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee, and the Western Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council.

Relocating Aboriginal affairs policy to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet continues to enhance the Government's capacity to co-ordinate and collectively address a range of complex issues that require cross-portfolio co-ordination and multi-agency response. Further consideration is being given to how the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee, established under the AAPA Act, can best support strategic efforts.

Feedback from Aboriginal people, and from previous reviews and inquiries, has emphasised that improving the co-ordination of services is crucially important in addressing Aboriginal youth suicide, with prevention and early intervention the priority. With this in mind, WA Police Force and the Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service (KMHDS) are working together to recognise and respond early to at-risk behaviour. When police are contacted, those who engage in, or threaten self-harm are transported to emergency departments for assessment. KMHDS receives a police report and follows up all such incidents.

Where a critical incident response is required the Incident Management Framework ensures that potentially adverse incidents in remote communities are mitigated and responded to in a co-ordinated manner. Chaired by the Police Superintendent or the CSDG Chair, the framework sets out how government and non-government agencies will come together with the aim of supporting communities to respond and recover following an isolated critical incident such as a sudden death or a suicide.

Strengthening the Government's accountability to Aboriginal Western Australians is a priority for improving transparency and better alignment of government services to community identified needs. The Government will be further engaging with Aboriginal people on a proposed statutory accountability office that will also advocate for Aboriginal people's interests in government policy and performance.

Recommendations relevant to this theme:

7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33,
Coroner's Inquest 34, 35, 36, 37, 41

Message stick 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31

4. Next Steps

The purpose of this document is to outline some of our current actions, and our intended actions against each of the recommendations. Following this, we will be working towards identifying the areas where we need to prioritise further effort.

As part of this process, we will be looking at the Coroner's findings and recommendations to assist in improving our services, to ensure that we are adequately supporting the most vulnerable in our community. We must be able to provide the right support, at the right time, within the context of the community and cultural needs of children and young people, and their families.

In responding to the critical issues raised by recent reports, it is imperative that we engage early with Aboriginal people. The Kimberley Suicide Prevention Working Group and Closing the Gap Interim Working Group have been identified as key stakeholders with whom to continue our efforts and develop a more comprehensive response to the recommendations. Engagement with other key stakeholders, including Commonwealth and local governments, will also occur in the coming months.

To ensure that efforts to address the recommendations remain ongoing, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet will continue to provide oversight and co-ordination. Across all portfolio areas there is significant support and commitment to respond meaningfully to the issues, with an acknowledgement that change can only come through the development of Aboriginal-led solutions. This will require our ongoing commitment to listen to, and act on, the voices of the community.

Timeframe

Timeframe	Action
May – August	Consultation with Stakeholders Initial stakeholder groups include: Kimberley Suicide Prevention Working Group; and Closing the Gap Interim Working Group. Further consultation with stakeholders within the State Government and Commonwealth.
September – October	Release draft Aboriginal Affairs Strategy for comment.
December	Publish the ‘whole-of-government’ response to the recommendations concerning Aboriginal youth suicide, incorporating the final State Strategy and an accountability framework.
January 2020 - onwards	Monitoring of progress, reporting and evaluation.

5. Breakdown of recommendations by position

Definitions

“Accepted” – the Western Australian Government agrees with the recommendation and will endeavour to implement it.

“Accepted in principle” – the Western Australian Government agrees with the intent of the recommendation but may endeavour to implement it in a different way, or details of the Government’s response may vary.

“Further discussion required” – the recommendation requires further consideration in terms of its implications, application or impacts; generally, some form of impact study, consultation, or review of the evidence may be required.

“Superseded” – the recommendation is no longer relevant due to events that have taken place since the recommendation was made.

“Not Accepted” – the Western Australian Government does not agree with the recommendation and will not endeavour to implement it in the proposed format.

Status	Recommendations	Total number
Accepted	Coronial Inquest: 6, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 32, 34, 42. Message Stick: 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 26, 34.	22
Accepted in Principle	Coronial Inquest: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 16, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33, 36, 37, 39, 40. Message Stick: 1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 27, 32, 37, 40, 43, 44.	33
Further Discussion Required	Coronial Inquest: 7, 13, 22, 28, 31, 41. Message Stick: 21, 25, 33, 36, 39.	11
Implemented or Being Implemented	Coronial Inquest: 14, 23, 24, 35, 38. Message Stick: 6, 10, 15, 20, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 38.	16
Superseded	Message Stick: 22, 35, 41, 42	4

6. Recommendations of the State Coroner's Inquest into the deaths of thirteen children and young people in the Kimberley

Recommendation 1

a. that there be universal screening for FASD at the following points: during infant health assessments and upon a child entering into the child protection system or justice system for the first time;

b. that all children identified as at risk of neurodevelopmental impairment on the basis of antenatal exposure to alcohol or early life trauma be assessed by a paediatrician for developmental and behavioural impairments at the age of one year and in the year prior to school entry;

c. in respect of a child entering the child protection system for the first time in addition to FASD universal screening:

i. that preliminary assessments and screening be undertaken by Department of Communities' district psychologists;

ii. that referrals be made for comprehensive IQ and functional capacity assessments where and when required by presentation and behaviours; and

iii. that there be referrals to other treatment and therapy services for trauma-related developmental and behavioural issues, including mental health issues, impulsivity, and harmful sexual behaviours, that may or may not include cognitive impairments and neuro-disabilities such as FASD.

Accepted in Principle

The Western Australian Government supports the overall intent of this recommendation and notes that it is consistent with the National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan 2018-2028.¹ However, FASD is a whole-of-community issue. To ensure that all children have access to the necessary screening at required times, any policies, programs or initiatives pertaining to FASD should be part of a broader, state-wide approach and not single out the Aboriginal community.

There is presently no universally accepted screening tool available for FASD, and the accurate diagnosis of this condition requires assessment by a multi-disciplinary combination of clinicians. Appropriate specialist clinical resources and service providers are in short supply and thinly stretched in regional and remote areas. In the same way, there are also limited resources currently available to facilitate follow-up and therapeutic treatment for those diagnosed with FASD and other development-related conditions.

¹ <https://beta.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-fasd-strategic-action-plan-2018-2028>

At present, all children who enter the care of the Department of Communities are referred for a comprehensive health assessment, which considers health and development, oral and dental health, and mental health. A key issue in the Kimberley and other regional areas, however, is a lack of culturally appropriate therapeutic and treatment services for Aboriginal children and young people. Those services that do exist have significant waitlists, struggle to service all referrals, and have limited capacity to transfer referrals if a family moves to other areas or regions. On the basis of all these considerations, therefore, more time is required for the Government to fully consider the clinical, financial and logistical implications of this recommendation.

Recommendation 2

a. that neurodevelopmental impairment (an umbrella term which includes behavioural, developmental and cognitive impairments) incorporating the criteria defined in the Australian Guide to the diagnosis of FASD be recognised as a disability within the National Disability Insurance Scheme (“the NDIS”);

b. that where FASD has actually been diagnosed at the appropriate level of severity, it is separately recognised as a disability within the NDIS.

Accepted in Principle

As of 1 July 2018, responsibility for the delivery of the NDIS in WA has been assumed by the Commonwealth, via the National Disability Insurance Agency. Accordingly, the Western Australian Government will maintain ongoing discussions with the Commonwealth in regard to this matter.

Incorporating neurodevelopmental impairments into the NDIS would provide a more streamlined pathway for treatment. However, this would also likely give rise to a significant increase in requests for formal diagnosis and therapeutic assistance, resulting in considerable impact on present capacity, especially in regional and remote areas. As the waiting times for access to relevant paediatric and multidisciplinary services are currently already extensive, substantial upgrades to current resources would be required.

Recommendation 3

That consideration be given to whether appropriate Medicare Benefits Scheme item numbers ought to be allocated for FASD.

Accepted in Principle

The Western Australian Government accepts this recommendation in principle and will continue to engage with the Commonwealth on this and related matters. While providing Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS) numbers would likely improve capacity to diagnose and assess FASD, alternative funding models would still be needed for more remote locations, where access to Medicare-funded practitioners and economic capacity to meet gap payments may be limited. The Government also considers it preferable to apply MBS item numbers to a broader range of neurodevelopmental impairments; there is some concern that applying new item numbers solely to FASD could increase the risk of over-diagnosis of FASD at the expense of other causes of developmental delay.

Recommendation 4

That consideration be given to additional funding for primary care services in areas with a high burden of neurodevelopmental impairment to increase diagnostic capacity for complex conditions including FASD, and to respond to the diagnosis by way of therapeutic services for children and young people diagnosed with FASD.

Accepted in Principle

The Western Australian Government accepts this recommendation in principle. As the delivery of primary care services is largely a Commonwealth responsibility, the Government will work closely with the Commonwealth Government on this issue. With regard to identifying targeted areas, the burden of neurodevelopmental impairment in children is relatively well documented and regularly reviewed in all jurisdictions across Australia, whereas the overall prevalence of FASD in most areas is largely unknown.

Particular benefits could be achieved by funding co-located multidisciplinary child development services, potentially through partnerships between local Aboriginal Medical Services and NDIS providers.

Recommendation 5

That there be Government funding to extend to other regional centres in the Kimberley the “*Making FASD History*” project that ran in the Fitzroy Valley, adapted as appropriate to the prevailing circumstances of those communities.

Accepted in Principle

We will review and evaluate the outcomes of this project and consider implementing similar campaigns, in collaboration with local communities, across the Kimberley and subsequently across the state.

Recommendation 6

That education campaigns be conducted in all secondary schools in Western Australia to alert students to (i) the dangers of consuming alcohol during pregnancy and (ii) the prevalence of FASD (with a culturally relevant education campaign for Aboriginal children).

Accepted

The Government is committed to supporting schools in delivering alcohol and other drug education by making prevention programs accessible to all secondary schools across the state. The Department of Education’s alcohol and other drug prevention education programs, resources and professional learning continue to be available to all public, independent and Catholic schools in the state. The Department is building on its existing FASD professional learning and resource materials to create a resource hub accessible to all teachers in Western Australia. Additional consideration will be given to designing, with Aboriginal people, region-specific and culturally relevant components.

Recommendation 7

That the State Government appoints a person who is a Special Advisor on matters concerning Aboriginal children and young persons, or considers appointing an additional Commissioner for Aboriginal children and young persons.

Further Discussion Required

The Western Australian Government supports the Coroner's position that oversight and accountability for Aboriginal children needs to be strengthened. Implementing this recommendation requires further consideration of its potential alignment with two ongoing policy projects: a proposed office for accountability and advocacy in Aboriginal affairs; and the establishment of an oversight system in response to recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse. It is anticipated that such a role would work in close alignment with other advocacy and accountability offices, such as the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Ombudsman Western Australia.

Recommendation 8

That there be restrictions on the purchase of take away alcohol across the entire Kimberley Region, but that such restrictions be formulated after there has been consultation with key stakeholders, including affected local Aboriginal communities.

Accepted in Principle

The Director of Liquor Licensing has recently determined to introduce liquor restrictions across the Pilbara which, along with other measures, impose daily limits on the types and quantities of packaged liquor that may be purchased. The Pilbara-wide restrictions will also be supported by the trial of a Banned Drinkers Register, which will prevent the sale of packaged liquor to any person who is on the Register. It is anticipated that the Banned Drinkers Register, in conjunction with restrictions, will provide an effective mechanism to reduce harm and ill health caused by the abuse of alcohol.

Following the trial and subject to an independent evaluation, the use of the Banned Drinkers Register and any required complementary liquor restrictions may be expanded to include other areas of the state. In the meantime, the Director of Liquor Licensing will continue to monitor the impact of packaged liquor on alcohol related harm across the Kimberley and will consider any requests for restrictions as and when required.

Recommendation 9

That the Western Australian Government considers and/or assesses the feasibility of a Banned Drinker Register that is modelled on therapeutic support for those who are placed on it. If the matter progresses to an assessment, that consideration be given to community consultation.

Accepted in Principle

As per Recommendation 8, the trial of the Banned Drinkers Register in the Pilbara will be independently evaluated; therefore, any expansion of a Banned Drinkers Register to other areas of the State will depend on the outcome of the Pilbara trial and will be subject to considerations of the unique circumstances and community feedback in other areas of the state.

Recommendation 10

That in light of the passage of the Liquor Control Amendment Act 2018 relating to the proscription on “sly grogging”, that police be properly resourced to enforce it.

Accepted

Section 109A of the *Liquor Control Amendment Act 2018* will make it an offence to carry liquor in excess of a prescribed quantity in prescribed areas, including the Kimberley. Regulations are currently being drawn up by the Director of Liquor Licensing. Appropriate resourcing for policing of these provisions will be determined by WA Police Force once they take effect.

Recommendation 11

That there be recurrent, or more long-term funding to the various town based patrols in the Kimberley for the provision of diversionary services to those who are abusing alcohol.

Accepted

The Government currently funds five town-based patrols in the Kimberley—in Broome, Derby, Halls Creek, Kununurra and Wyndham—through the Department of Communities. Other diversionary services are supported through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC). DLGSC works closely with local governments, Aboriginal communities and organisations, sporting associations and youth organisations in the delivery of sport, recreation, arts and cultural activities, assisting to build capacity and social capital. Sustainable participation programs, including football, basketball, boxing/fitness, horsemanship, speedway, cycling, aquatics, on-country activities and the arts, have the capacity to divert children and youth away from potentially harmful activities and build positive physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Recommendation 12

That there be the appointment of Local Area Co-ordinators or local Family Advocates in the Kimberley Region who can assist families in need of accessing service providers and that all efforts be made to have such roles filled by an Aboriginal person.

Accepted in Principle

Navigating government services can be difficult, especially if there are cultural and linguistic barriers. It is essential for vulnerable children, young people and their families to be safely connected to the services they need without being overwhelmed. The role of such co-ordinators or family advocates is currently being carried out in the Kimberley by community liaison officers as part of the Commonwealth-funded Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial.

The WA Government will work with the Commonwealth to investigate the feasibility of further supporting and developing this network of community liaison officers, in connection with the Kimberley trials and beyond.

Recommendation 13

That there be consideration of the funding for, and assessment of the feasibility of, the construction of culturally appropriate short term accommodation in Kununurra for Aboriginal persons visiting the East Kimberley Region.

Further Discussion Required

Culturally appropriate accommodation is an important environmental and social determinant of health and mental health. Accordingly, the Government is receptive to any proposal for further infrastructure to support Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley, provided detailed feasibility and demand modelling is undertaken. It is noted, however, that some short-term accommodation already exists in Kununurra for health and education purposes.

Recommendation 14

That the Transitional Housing Project be continued in Broome, Derby, Halls Creek and Kununurra and be extended to other town sites in the Kimberley.

Accepted (being implemented)

The North-West Aboriginal Housing Fund is a \$200 million commitment from the Western Australian and Commonwealth governments to create pathways towards social and economic independence and wellbeing for Aboriginal people in the Pilbara and Kimberley. The Fund's focus to date has been on the transitional housing program, including expansions in the East Kimberley (Kununurra, Halls Creek and Wyndham) and South Hedland, with approximately \$68 million of the fund expended so far. The transitional housing program in Broome and Derby is currently funded until June 2023. New projects that increase suitable housing options and person-centred support services are being sought in 2019.

Recommendation 15

That Aboriginal persons living in the Kimberley Region in public and/or transitional housing are not disadvantaged regarding accommodation in the event of their household exceeding the income threshold for eligibility.

Accepted

The Department of Communities is currently developing a new iteration of its affordable housing strategy, which includes the policy settings for public housing. Income eligibility thresholds are one component of the settings being considered as part of an overall review of policies and barriers faced by people seeking to meet their housing needs.

Recommendation 16

That the Yiriman Project or a model akin to the Yiriman Project be extended across the Kimberley, and that consideration be given to the following matters in connection with the extension:

- a. That the Western Australian government through its various health and justice branches should explore opportunities for the implementation of models akin to the Yiriman Project in other remote parts of Western Australia with priority given to those areas with high rates of Aboriginal youth suicide.
- b. That funding providers for the Yiriman Project and other programs akin to the Yiriman Project should acknowledge the need for key performance indicators that are flexible and reflect the difficulty such organisations have in providing quantitative and qualitative data on the success of individual interventions with at-risk clients.
- c. That the Western Australian government should consider guaranteed funding for the Yiriman Project on a longer term basis, whether through funding provided by the Department for Corrective Services for diversionary programs, through ATSIPEP funding, or through funding co-ordinated through the Mental Health Commission.

Accepted in Principle

The WA Government broadly accepts all three parts of this recommendation, recognising the considerable value of programs such as the Yiriman Project as models for cultural healing, and building strength and resilience in young Aboriginal people. Programs and organisations that promote cultural wellbeing are currently funded through a range of private, Commonwealth and Western Australian Government sources, including the Departments of Justice, Education, and Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. The Department of Justice is currently exploring programmatic options for at-risk young Aboriginal people in the Kimberley region via the Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy.

Each community is different, and warrants its own locally relevant approach. Accordingly, we will need to work alongside a range of Aboriginal organisations and service providers to identify the resources and support systems needed to implement such programs. This will ensure they meet the needs of children and young people, establish long-term sustainability, and develop suitable governance and evaluation processes.

Recommendation 17

That the Government and its service providers continue to ensure that the strategies for addressing Aboriginal suicide be implemented in consultation with appropriate representatives from the Aboriginal community, that the representatives which are appropriate to consult are identified on an ongoing basis, and that such representatives be provided with an opportunity for involvement in the co-design of such strategies.

Accepted

The Government accepts that top-down approaches have had limited impact on the suicide rate of young Aboriginal people in the state. There will continue to be limited success in programs and initiatives for Aboriginal people without substantial input, leadership, and implementation by those who are directly affected by those programs: Aboriginal people themselves.

Moving forward, it is expected that genuine consultation, engagement and co-design will comprise a minimum standard for State-supported projects and initiatives targeted towards Aboriginal people and their communities. In particular, Aboriginal people will be consulted during the planning process for any future suicide prevention strategies, and consideration will be given to relevant frameworks such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP), and the 2013 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention strategy.

Recommendation 18

That measures be introduced aimed at increasing the prospects of complaints of domestic violence being reported and maintained; and as part of such measures, that the State Government consider introducing legislation allowing for visually recorded statements taken from victims of domestic violence to be admitted as evidence-in-chief at a court hearing.

Accepted

The measures addressed in this recommendation will be substantially fulfilled with the drafting of a new Evidence Act, scheduled to be introduced to Parliament in 2019. The new Act will contain provisions for complainant evidence to be taken at the scene, real-time evidence via video-link, and pre-recorded evidence for special witnesses. WA Police Force have also commenced issuing body-worn cameras, which will enhance the process of collecting evidence from victims.

Recommendation 19

That cultural competency training given to service providers who interact with Aboriginal persons is co-designed with Aboriginal persons and delivered in a culturally relevant manner with emphasis on the effect of intergenerational trauma and FASD, and on the importance of cultural wellbeing, and that all service providers be required to be trained and that it be funded.

Further, wherever possible, that cultural competency training be delivered by involving local Aboriginal people.

Accepted

All agencies responsible for matters directly affecting Aboriginal people expect their staff to undertake cultural competency training towards this end. While much of this is conducted online, key agencies will work towards providing location-specific cultural appreciation training for staff working closely with Aboriginal people, especially in regional or remote locations. Wherever possible, this training will be co-designed and co-delivered with Aboriginal people. Where appropriate, this will include insights into the effects of intergenerational trauma and FASD.

Recommendation 20

That Department of Communities' child protection workers and school teaching staff (in the public and private sectors) who have regular contact with Aboriginal children receive appropriate training in suicide intervention and prevention, and that such training be provided at appropriately regular intervals.

Accepted

The Western Australian Government acknowledges the potential benefits of providing specialised suicide prevention training to service providers that have regular interaction with young Aboriginal people.

The Department of Education delivers teen Mental Health First Aid courses to students, enabling them to act as mental health mentors for their peers. This training was delivered to 234 students in government and non-government schools in the Kimberley in 2018.

The Kimberley Education region now also has improved geographic access to school psychology services across the region, through the placement of school psychologists in Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Derby, Kununurra and Broome. This has ensured that services are closer to the point of need and has proven effective in the event of urgent suicide risk assessments or targeted support following a suicide. The Department of Education's school psychologists complement support provided by other agencies and organisations to schools, students and communities.

Recommendation 21

That efforts continue to be made to employ Aboriginal persons in health (including mental health), education, child protection and police and, where necessary or desirable, that consideration be given to introducing bridging courses and cadet programs and/or locally accessible training courses to assist prospective employees to obtain the necessary qualifications.

Accepted

The Public Sector Commission and the Director for Equal Opportunity in Public Employment are committed to increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the public sector and are exploring alternative employment pathways at all levels and across a range of occupational groups to support this outcome. Greater support will be provided to public authorities in developing and implementing equal employment opportunity plans. New targets will be set along with accountability for outcomes.

The Departments of Communities, Health, Education, Justice, and WA Police Force have all implemented variations of this recommendation in recent years. Aboriginal employees account for 12% of the workforce of the WA Country Health Service Kimberley, while the Department of Education's Kimberley Education Region has the largest cohort of Aboriginal employees outside of the metropolitan area, comprising approximately 17% of the Department's Aboriginal employees.

Organisations will continue to work towards increasing their Aboriginal workforce component, especially in regional and remote areas, via agency-specific strategies.

Recommendation 22

That consideration be given to extending an offer of a voluntary cashless debit card program to include the entire Kimberley Region.

Further Discussion Required

Further evidence of the overall benefits of this system are required before the Western Australian Government considers supporting its broader expansion. Western Australian Government agencies are currently participating in a review of the current program, and this will help inform any further discussions. The Government's view is that such a system is only likely to be effective if it is implemented on a voluntary, opt-in basis, has widespread community support, and is part of a broader suite of social reforms and supports. As the implementation of this program is effectively an initiative of the Commonwealth, enabled by federal legislation, further discussions with the Commonwealth Government will also be required.

Recommendation 23

That the use of video-conferencing for mental health assessments be expanded throughout the Kimberley Region, including an after-hours service.

Accepted (being implemented)

Assessment by videoconference is already provided across the Kimberley (and the Pilbara via referral) by the on-call Kimberley psychiatrist, which includes after-hours availability. Child and Adolescent Health Services' Mental Health service also provides comprehensive telehealth assessment and intervention to children and young people from all over the state.

WA Health will also establish a 24/7 Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service in 2019, providing country and rural clinicians with access to specialist mental health expertise to support rapid patient assessment, care planning and decision making for patients with acute mental health and/or substance affected conditions.

Recommendation 24

That mental health treatment plans for Aboriginal persons offer the option of the inclusion of traditional cultural healing, and where that option is accepted, that all efforts be made to work collaboratively for the benefit of the patient.

Accepted (being implemented)

The option of including a traditional cultural healer in a mental health treatment plan for Aboriginal persons is already embedded in the *Mental Health Act 2014*. Relevant agencies will continue to work with Aboriginal health providers to co-ordinate and improve the accessibility of such options.

Recommendation 25

That there be funding by Government for the development of cultural healing projects in the Kimberley Region such as the one being developed by the Nyamba Buru Yawuru Centre in Broome.

Accepted

Cultural healing projects, such as Nyamba Buru Yawuru's Liyan-ngan Nyirrwa Cultural Healing Centre, undertake the critical, culturally secure work of recognising and nurturing the connection between culture and wellbeing. The Government supports the need for such programs, recognising that they are most effective when identified, developed and led at the local community level, rather than by adapting state- or region-wide programs to new localities. The Government will work with Aboriginal communities and organisations to assist with the establishment and continuation of cultural healing projects.

Recommendation 26

That the care or treatment that is provided by service providers to Aboriginal children and young persons in the Kimberley region operate in a trauma informed model, and that service providers take account of the need for trauma-specific care where possible.

Accepted in Principle

The Western Australian Government agrees that consistent, trauma-informed models of care are required, across both government and non-government sectors. State agencies will explore available evidence-based models and programs for trauma-informed practice, in partnership with Aboriginal people.

Recommendation 27

That all health service clinicians in the Kimberley Region have the necessary skills to screen for and facilitate care for patients with alcohol, drugs and mental health issues; Further, that all health service clinicians in the Kimberley Region have access to training in the assessment and management of alcohol, drugs and mental health issues.

Accepted in Principle

WA Health currently provides a number of programs, training modules and resources focusing on brief intervention and comorbidity. The principles of this recommendation are accepted as they align with the Kimberley Aboriginal community's preference that there is 'no wrong door' for individuals in crisis to access services when needed. Further investigation is required to consider the feasibility and resourcing implications of implementing this recommendation.

Recommendation 28

That a facility be built in the East Kimberley Region which incorporates the co-morbid treatment of mental health, alcohol and drug abuse problems, or alternatively that a feasibility study be undertaken with a view to considering the need for, and impact of, such a facility.

Further Discussion Required

The frequent co-occurrence of mental health, alcohol and drug abuse problems is acknowledged, along with the need for services to address these in a holistic, person-centred way. The Government accepts the second part of this recommendation, that a feasibility study be undertaken with a view to considering the need for, and impact of such a facility. In parallel to this feasibility study, other opportunities to improve responses to, and treatment of, people with co-morbidities will be explored.

Recommendation 29

That peri-natal and infant care by health service providers in the Kimberley Region incorporates the treatment of mental health issues and that those clinicians be made aware of the role and resources developed by the WA Peri-natal Mental Health Unit.

Accepted in Principle

The Government accepts this recommendation and notes that it should include both assessment and treatment of mental health issues, and also include alcohol consumption during the peri-natal period. Culturally appropriate peri-natal mental health services in the region are currently very limited. The Government will assess how additional resources and collaboration between services can be provided to address this service gap.

Recommendation 30

That the development or refurbishment of facilities for young persons to meet and engage in activities be undertaken in the Kimberley Region, in consultation with local Aboriginal communities.

Accepted in Principle

Safe and functional recreation facilities are essential to the everyday wellbeing of children and young people. The strategic expansion of Police and Community Youth Centres across the Kimberley, including the potential establishment of Youth and Resilience Hubs in the region, will form a key aspect of the Government's response to this recommendation. The Department of Justice, through the Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy, will also establish a range of services in different locations, including youth hubs or drop-in centres. Further exploration will be undertaken with Aboriginal communities to assess the use of State-owned recreation facilities, including those of the region's public schools, and the activities and services attached to them.

Recommendation 31

That there be a mental health clinician permanently based in Halls Creek, or alternatively, that there be an increase in the visiting capacity of mental health clinicians for Halls Creek.

Further Discussion Required

The Mental Health Commission and the WA Country Health Service are presently reviewing current services in Halls Creek and will consider any variations to service configurations in line with evidence-based best practice approaches.

Recommendation 32

That police stations in the Kimberley Region consider undertaking activities similar to the “Adopt-A-Cop” program in Halls Creek, ensuring these programs are developed in consultation with senior members of the Aboriginal community and that those police efforts be supported.

Accepted

The Kimberley Police District continues to invest in engaging young Aboriginal people across the Kimberley, in collaboration with key stakeholders in towns and communities, acknowledging that what may be effective for one community or region may not suit others. Recent police outreach programs have included the introduction of Youth Crime Intervention Officers in Broome, Kununurra, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek. This initiative has a similar focus to the Adopt-A-Cop program but is not restricted to school premises.

Recommendation 33

That the Elders Reference Group presently in operation in Halls Creek be extended to other Kimberley town sites and that this work be CDP recognised, and that current police efforts continue and be supported.

Accepted in Principle

While the Elders Reference Group is a key structure in Halls Creek, it is important to consider traditional leadership in the context of each community and its needs: supporting existing structures or helping communities identify and develop their own structures. A number of different approaches in the region are showing positive signs in working with young people at risk. Examples of these include the Lore Tree at Bidyadanga, the Ngowerah Oerah representative group in Wyndham, and the Community Panel Group in Kununurra. These types of initiatives are in varying stages of development throughout the Kimberley, and the Kimberley Police District will continue to work with local Aboriginal leaders to develop co-designed approaches to Police-related issues. The Western Australian Government will also explore opportunities with the Commonwealth for such programs to receive CDP recognition.

Recommendation 34

That facilities be developed and funded in the Kimberley Region that specifically cater for the rehabilitation of children and young persons with addiction to drugs and/or alcohol, with step down processes. The development of these facilities should be informed by the principles of self-determination, cultural continuity and empowerment.

Accepted

The Government accepts that further investment into child and youth drug and alcohol issues is required and has provided funding in the 2019-20 budget for the development of comprehensive youth alcohol and drug services in the Kimberley.

Recommendation 35

That early education programs such as Kindilink be maintained for the Kimberley Region, with consideration for funding beyond the period of the pilot, and that programs be developed in consultation with the local Aboriginal communities.

Accepted (being implemented)

KindiLink has operated in seven Kimberley schools since 2016, and is being introduced to an additional 13 Kimberley schools in Semester 1, 2019, increasing the number of Kimberley schools with a KindiLink program to 20. This expansion is being funded through the Government's \$25 million Kimberley Schools Project. KindiLink also operates at 31 public schools outside the Kimberley.

Recommendation 36

That schools within the Kimberley Region be encouraged and resourced to introduce re-engagement classrooms at a primary school level.

Accepted in Principle

Improving student attendance is complex and challenging, and can only be addressed with strong co-operation across government agencies and between schools, families and the broader community. The Department of Education recognises the need to strengthen student engagement and is reviewing its overall approach to improving student attendance, as well as policy and procedures, support for schools, and partnerships with other agencies and providers. The Coroner's recommendation—to introduce re-engagement classrooms at primary school level—is one of a number of options that schools may implement to re-engage children with education. Schools are resourced and encouraged to develop local approaches that best suit the context of their communities, rather than a single, prescribed approach.

Aboriginal and Islander education officers (AIEOs) play a significant role in connecting with Aboriginal communities and supporting improved attendance. Their understanding of local cultural and linguistic contexts, as well as their strong ties with communities, is invaluable in assisting schools to implement culturally responsive approaches to meeting the needs of students. Strengthening of in-school support for Aboriginal students has been reinforced by the Government's commitment to increasing the number of AIEOs across public schools.

Recommendation 37

That high schools in the Kimberley Region be provided with facilities that enable non-academic female and male students to engage in vocational programs.

Accepted in Principle

The delivery of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the Kimberley is affected by a number of complex and interrelated factors, including the availability and appropriateness of the qualifications offered, delivery mechanisms, student readiness, and sufficient enrolments for program viability. VET is an integral part of most secondary school programs in the Kimberley. Of the 456 Year 10-12 Aboriginal public school students in the Kimberley Region in 2018, 79% were enrolled in VET. The Department of Education and the Department of Training and Workforce Development will continue to work collaboratively to address the VET learning needs of young Aboriginal people, including exploring more flexible models of delivery, access to training facilities, and partnerships and links with industry.

Recommendation 38

That the Department of Education introduce or continue to expand the teaching of Aboriginal languages in its Kimberley schools, in consultation with the local Aboriginal communities.

Accepted (being implemented)

The Department of Education supports the teaching of Aboriginal languages in public schools. There has been a continuous presence of Aboriginal languages taught in Western Australian public schools since 1992. As of 2018, there were 21 language programs, with 13 Aboriginal languages being taught to 2,118 students across the Kimberley Education Region. Aboriginal languages are also embedded within the Languages learning area of the Western Australian Curriculum.

The Department provides training for Aboriginal staff who are speakers of an Aboriginal language via an in-school traineeship that focuses on language revitalisation strategies, language teaching methodologies and the development of teaching resources. Course delivery is fully funded and comprises a two year in-school traineeship and a third probationary teaching year. In 2019, 11 participants from the Kimberley region are engaged in this training.

The support and engagement of language-speaking community members is crucial, as many Aboriginal languages in the Kimberley are endangered due to a lack of fluent speakers. The Department will establish an Aboriginal languages cultural and linguistic reference group to strengthen collaboration with all stakeholders and provide direction. Stakeholders will include Elders, community members and language speakers.

Recommendation 39

That the Yiriman Project or a model akin to the Yiriman Project be linked to schools within the Kimberley Region.

Accepted in Principle

The Department of Education supports the practice of schools engaging with Elders, community leaders and Aboriginal organisations to deliver on-country and other cultural initiatives that promote the educational and cultural wellbeing of young Aboriginal people.

The Department will explore potential links with the Yiriman Project, as well as a number of other initiatives based on similar principles that are either in place or being developed, in the Kimberley and elsewhere. Public schools have the flexibility to implement strategies to suit the specific needs of Aboriginal students and their local communities, providing opportunities to be innovative and engage in place-based approaches developed in consultation with their Aboriginal communities.

Recommendation 40

That consideration be given to residential facilities being built for school aged students in the Kimberley Region, after consultation with local Aboriginal communities, and that any such colleges be co-designed and informed by the principles of self-determination, cultural continuity and empowerment. Further that admission is voluntary, with the consent of the parents and/or caregivers, and the consent of the child.

Accepted in Principle

The Government is supportive of engaging with Aboriginal communities to better understand the needs, expectations and aspirations of young Aboriginal people and their families. This is an essential first step in considering future residential options for Kimberley students. The 116-person Broome Residential College, which caters primarily for Aboriginal students, presents a model for further investigation, along with a range of other culturally responsive models. Any proposals would require considerable consultation with the relevant communities and assessment for compliance with legislative requirements for student residential colleges under the *School Education Act 1999* and associated regulations.

Recommendation 41

That a policy be introduced that ensures those who appropriately act as CEOs of their Aboriginal communities are either remunerated for their efforts or, at the very least, reimbursed for expenses incurred in executing that role.

Further Discussion Required

A review of current arrangements for CEO remuneration is warranted, with consideration of broader arrangements and support for community governance. The Western Australian Government will liaise with the Commonwealth to determine the extent to which CDP and other funding sources can be deployed in this context.

Recommendation 42

I recommend that:

- The principles of self-determination and empowerment be given emphasis in initiatives, policies and programs relating to Aboriginal people in Western Australia and that the Western Australian Government introduce measures to enable Aboriginal people and organisations to be involved in setting and formulating policy that affects their communities;
- That in developing such measures, consideration be given to negotiating mutually agreed outcomes, with service delivery responsibilities as between the Western Australian Government and Aboriginal people and organisations; and
- The Western Australian Government develop a state-wide Aboriginal cultural policy that recognises the importance of cultural continuity and cultural security to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people in this State.

Accepted

Acknowledging the vital role of culture in ensuring the long-term wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people, the Western Australian Government will continue to work towards establishing genuine partnerships with Aboriginal people, ensuring that Aboriginal organisations and communities are active participants in the development of policies and programs that affect them.

This will include the development of a state-wide cultural framework focusing on cultural programs that enhance wellbeing, reinforce cultural identity and build resilience. The framework will also encourage reconciliation and understanding by promoting Aboriginal culture and achievement to the broader Western Australian community.

7. Recommendations of ‘Learnings From The Message Stick: the Report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal Youth Suicide in Remote Areas’

Recommendation 1

That Western Australian Government agencies revisit reports listed in Appendix Six and outline their actions of how the intention and recommendations of these reports will be implemented.

Accepted in Principle

The Government acknowledges these reports and the importance of their recommendations. While this Statement of Intent on Aboriginal youth suicide specifically addresses the two most recent inquiries on this issue—Message Stick and the Coroner’s Inquiry—a range of reports, including those identified in Appendix Six of the Message Stick report, will contribute to and inform the Government’s ongoing approach to this issue.

Recommendation 2

That the Premier co-ordinates and provides a response to the recommendations of this Inquiry which have not been directed to a specific agency or Minister.

Accepted in Principle

An interim response to the recommendations of the Message Stick Inquiry was provided in July 2018, while all of the recommendations from the Inquiry have been addressed in this Statement of Intent. Moving forward, the Deputy Premier will lead a whole-of-government response on Aboriginal youth suicide, providing a holistic, long-term approach to addressing its complex inter-related factors, including those arising from intergenerational trauma.

Recommendation 3

That the Premier and each Minister to whom recommendations are directed should report to Parliament at six monthly intervals for no fewer than five years after the tabling of this report on the progress of implementing recommendations made in this report.

Accepted in Principle

The forthcoming whole-of-government response on Aboriginal youth suicide will incorporate regular reporting and other accountability measures.

Recommendation 4

That the Department of the Premier and Cabinet create a centralised database of inquiry recommendations made to Western Australian Government agencies. Further:

- the Department of the Premier and Cabinet retains overall responsibility for maintenance of the database and ensuring government agencies update the database in a timely fashion
- the database should include the government's initial response to recommendations, and be updated at six monthly intervals to advise of progress made in implementing supported recommendations contained in the database. This advice should include detailed information of specific actions taken in response to particular recommendations, and not just whether actions are 'in progress' or 'complete'.
- information in the database should continue to be updated until implementation of a recommendation is 'complete' or superseded, in which case the reasons why the recommendation is no longer being implemented should be stated.

Accepted in Principle

As per Recommendation 3, the principles of this recommendation will be incorporated into the accountability and reporting features identified in the forthcoming whole-of-government response.

Recommendation 5

That Western Australia be mindful of its obligations under international human rights agreements and take all possible measures to ensure these obligations are met.

Accepted

Western Australia acknowledges its obligations and recognises Aboriginal youth wellbeing as a human rights issue. The Commissioner for Children and Young People has a mandate to have regard for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and is engaged in the development of the whole-of-government response.

Recommendation 6

That the Mental Health Commission broadens its scope of suicide prevention for Aboriginal people to encompass all identified risk factors.

Accepted (being implemented)

The Mental Health Commission continues to review and revise the scope of its suicide-prevention approaches, and supports the role and leadership of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in delivering suicide-prevention and family wellbeing services.

An example of this is the contracting of the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA) to implement the Aboriginal Family Wellbeing pilot project. The project involves delivery of a Family Wellbeing program to Aboriginal Medical Services (AMSs), Aboriginal workers and community members across Western Australia. The project acknowledges social and emotional wellbeing as a significant contributor to the prevention of Aboriginal suicide. The course addresses the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual issues that impact on an individual's wellbeing, family unity, and community harmony. Training has so far been delivered to the Central Desert, Perth Metropolitan, Goldfields, Gascoyne/Murchison (Midwest) and South West regions, and will be delivered in the Pilbara and Kimberley in 2019.

Recommendation 7

That Western Australian Government agencies recognise the importance of cultural knowledge as a protective factor preventing Aboriginal youth suicide.

Accepted

The role of cultural knowledge, identity and continuity is accepted as crucial to the mental and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people, and essential to healing and the development of resilience against the impacts of intergenerational trauma. This will form a key principle of the forthcoming whole-of-government response on Aboriginal youth suicide, also reflecting Recommendation 42 of the Coroner's Kimberley report, which calls for a state-wide Aboriginal cultural policy.

Recommendation 8

That the Western Australian Government set aside an appropriate portion of grant expenditure to fund more culture-embedded programs for Aboriginal young people across the state.

Accepted

A number of culture-embedded programs have been, are being and will be identified as part of the whole-of-government response on Aboriginal youth suicide in the Kimberley and elsewhere, with a broader commitment to culture as a crucial component of Aboriginal youth wellbeing.

Recommendation 9

That non-Aboriginal employees of government agencies who are involved in developing strategies for, or delivering programs and services to, Aboriginal people should attend a locally-relevant cultural competency course run by suitably qualified providers.

Accepted

This recommendation aligns with the Coroner's Recommendation 19. All agencies responsible for matters directly affecting Aboriginal people expect their staff to undertake cultural competency training towards this end. While much of this is conducted online, key agencies will work towards providing location-specific, cultural appreciation training for staff working closely with Aboriginal people, especially in regional or remote locations. Wherever possible, this training will be co-designed and co-delivered with Aboriginal people. Where appropriate, this will include insights into the effects of intergenerational trauma.

Recommendation 10

That Western Australian Government agencies use the assessment tools and evaluation framework created by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project.

Accepted (being implemented)

Relevant Government agencies are aware of the ATSIPEP assessment tools and incorporate them into their assessment and evaluation processes. The Mental Health Audit Tool is now complete and in use.

Recommendation 11

The Western Australian Government should foster strategies and programs which contribute to the greater appreciation of Aboriginal culture, including placing a greater emphasis on reconciliation action plans, and providing funding for cultural events attended by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike.

Accepted

A new Aboriginal cultural framework, developed in response to Recommendation 42 of the Coroner's Inquest, will include provisions for the acknowledgement and celebration of Aboriginal culture and achievements. The Government partners with Reconciliation WA to promote truth and understanding for all Western Australians and acknowledge the legacies of past government policies on Aboriginal people and communities, and to understand the impacts of racism, trauma and grief.

All Western Australian Government agencies are expected to implement plans and strategies to acknowledge, respect and value Aboriginal culture within the workplace and the broader community.

Recommendation 12

That the Western Australian Government places increased emphasis on empowering Aboriginal communities in developing and actioning all strategies, programs and services which are relevant to Aboriginal people.

Accepted

This principle will form a fundamental component of the Western Australian Government's whole-of-government response on Aboriginal youth suicide, and complements recommendations 17 and 42 of the Coroner's Inquiry. The Government's Aboriginal cultural framework will emphasise the need for close consultation and Aboriginal participation in all aspects of program design, development, implementation and evaluation, at local, regional and state-wide levels. Ongoing engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders regarding the co-design of place-based service delivery will assist us to develop this approach over the coming months.

Recommendation 13

That the Western Australian Government shifts its focus from government owned and run programs and services for Aboriginal people to Aboriginal owned and run programs. The Committee acknowledges that this will be a gradual process; however, it can begin immediately by designing strategies, services and programs with the aim of empowering Aboriginal communities.

Accepted in Principle

The Government accepts the intent of this recommendation and will work towards shifting the emphasis of programs and services for Aboriginal people from a top-down to a bottom-up approach. This will facilitate and equip Aboriginal organisations and communities to establish and develop local delivery models, and ensure that Government agencies are supporting Aboriginal people and communities to produce local solutions to local issues.

Recommendation 14

That the Western Australian Government implement minimum standards of engagement with Aboriginal people when developing, actioning and funding strategies, programs and services which affect Aboriginal people.

Accepted in Principle

The principle of this recommendation is accepted, and many agencies have already begun to establish such frameworks within key work areas; these will be built upon and expanded. The Western Australian Government will work towards developing broad standards or protocols for government agencies and their contractors to ensure that Aboriginal people are engaged at key points in all policies and initiatives that affect them. A state-wide engagement framework is one possible approach, subject to further discussions with Aboriginal people and organisations.

Recommendation 15

That the Mental Health Commission involves Aboriginal people in the ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the *Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can save lives* strategy.

Accepted (being implemented)

Aboriginal representatives on the Ministerial Council on Suicide Prevention and the Evaluation Reference Group have provided advice on the evaluation of Suicide Prevention 2020, and have reviewed the evaluation progress reports submitted to Treasury. Aboriginal-specific programs funded under Suicide Prevention 2020 receive continued input from service providers and users to ensure evaluation is appropriate and inclusive of the Aboriginal target groups.

Recommendation 16

That the Mental Health Commission provide and fund programs and strategies which emphasise developing the capacity of community members to help youth at risk of suicide.

Accepted

The Mental Health Commission funds several projects under the state-wide suicide prevention strategy 'Suicide Prevention 2020: together we can save lives', which assist in building the capacity of communities to respond to those at risk of suicide. Several of these specifically benefit youth, including the inter-agency Response to Suicide and Self-Harm in Schools Program, peer support weekend workshops for rural and remote communities, and the Children & Young People REsponsive Suicide Support (CYPRESS) service. The most recent round of suicide prevention grants provided \$188,000 to local government, not-for-profit organisations and community groups to deliver evidence-based suicide prevention training, including courses such as Youth Mental Health First Aid. In addition, Suicide Prevention 2020 aims to build capacity in the wider community by funding projects such as the MATES in Construction StandBy Response Coordinator, the Regional Men's Health Initiative, and AHCWA's Aboriginal Family Wellbeing project.

Recommendation 17

That the Western Australian Government support the development of future Aboriginal leaders, by providing support and funding to existing leadership development organisations, funding scholarships and connecting future leaders with secondment opportunities to gain specific skills, and assisting with the early identification of leaders through school based programs.

Accepted in Principle

Government agencies will continue to provide pathways for emerging Aboriginal leaders in the Western Australian Public Sector. The Department of Communities in particular is seeking to build regional leadership capabilities in the Aboriginal community. Other agencies have developed programs designed to cultivate leadership in areas such as education, culture, the arts, and sport.

Recommendation 18

That the Public Sector Commission mandate higher Aboriginal employment targets for Western Australian Government agencies.

Accepted in Principle

This recommendation aligns with Recommendation 21 of the Coroner's report. The Public Sector Commission and the Director for Equal Opportunity in Public Employment are committed to increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the public sector and are exploring alternative employment pathways at all levels and across a range of occupational groups to support this outcome. Greater support will be provided to public authorities in developing and implementing equal employment opportunity plans. New targets will be set, along with accountability for outcomes.

The Departments of Communities, Health, Education, Justice and WA Police Force have all implemented variations of this recommendation in recent years. Aboriginal employees account for 12% of the workforce of the WA Country Health Service Kimberley, while the Department of Education's Kimberley Education Region has the largest cohort of Aboriginal employees outside of the metropolitan area, comprising approximately 17% of the Department's Aboriginal employees.

Organisations will continue to work towards increasing their Aboriginal workforce component, especially in regional and remote areas, via agency-specific strategies.

Recommendation 19

That Western Australian Government agencies should recruit greater numbers of Aboriginal people, relying on section 51 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* if necessary. These positions should not be limited to Aboriginal liaison or cultural advisory positions, but should be generally spread across all positions at all levels in all agencies.

Accepted in Principle

The Government accepts the principle of this recommendation—that there should be greater employment of Aboriginal people in the public sector, and that their employment should be in meaningful positions, with the long-term priority being a competitively upskilled Aboriginal workforce. Particular opportunities arise in regional and remote areas, where the development of Aboriginal-led service delivery has been identified as a priority.

Recommendation 20

That the Western Australian Government establish clear and more attractive career paths for Aboriginal employees.

Accepted (being implemented)

The Public Sector Commission's strategy, 'Attract, appoint and advance: An employment strategy for Aboriginal people', promotes the public sector as a workplace of choice for Aboriginal people. Creating a culturally secure and inclusive working environment that is supportive of Aboriginal employees continues to be an important initiative of this strategy.

Recommendation 21

That the Western Australian Parliament explores the option of employing an Aboriginal liaison officer based on the Queensland Parliament's experience.

Further Discussion Required

This option will be considered in due course.

Recommendation 22

That the Mental Health Commission immediately make publicly available the *Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can save lives* Implementation Plan, Aboriginal Implementation Plan and Youth Engagement Strategy.

Superseded

The 'Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can save lives' Aboriginal Implementation Plan and Youth Engagement Strategy were endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention in 2015. These documents are now considered outdated, due to notable improvements in the quantity and quality of research into mental health, wellbeing and suicidality, which have informed implementation of Suicide Prevention 2020.

Recommendation 23

That the Mental Health Commission should evaluate the success of *Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can save lives*, and report on the outcomes of its evaluations at least annually, including how progress is being measured and what changes in approach have been made based on evaluation findings.

Accepted (being implemented)

The Mental Health Commission continues to monitor the strategy and has completed a number of interim evaluation progress reports, the most recent of which was finalised in September 2018. A final evaluation is currently underway and is due for completion upon the strategy's conclusion.

Recommendation 24

That the Evaluation Reference Group should include at least one Aboriginal member and should engage with Aboriginal communities as part of its ongoing evaluative role.

Accepted (implemented)

Professor Pat Dudgeon, a Bardi woman from the Kimberley, is a member of the Evaluation Reference Group.

Recommendation 25

That the Western Australian Government urge the Commonwealth Government to now release the funds for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Further Discussion Required

The Western Australian Government is engaging with the Commonwealth on a range of issues relating to a whole-of-government response on Aboriginal youth suicide. Funding for a range of programs and initiatives will be raised as part of those discussions.

Recommendation 26

That the Mental Health Commission, as a matter of priority, works with the WA Primary Health Alliance and other stakeholders to establish clear roles and responsibilities for approaching Aboriginal suicide prevention in Western Australia.

Accepted

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Mental Health Commission (MHC) and the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA), to help facilitate the exchange of information and suicide-related data between the agencies.

The MHC has been communicating with WAPHA with regard to the Commonwealth-funded suicide prevention trials in the Kimberley, Midwest and Perth South regions. The Kimberley trial, which focuses on the Aboriginal community, has been planned according to evidence-based practice, including evidence arising from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project report.

Recommendation 27

That the Premier, in conjunction with Cabinet, create or designate a government agency or authority to lead the Western Australian Government's actions in responding to issues affecting Aboriginal wellbeing.

Accepted in Principle

This function is currently maintained by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's recently created Aboriginal Policy and Coordination Unit. The Government is also considering a proposal to establish an independent Commission or Office with an accountability and/or advocacy mandate in matters affecting Aboriginal people. This proposal is subject to ongoing discussions with the Aboriginal community.

Recommendation 28

That the designated government agency responsible for Aboriginal wellbeing is fully resourced and provided with sufficient authority to fulfil its leadership role, and cause other government agencies to take action in accordance with its directions.

Accepted (being implemented)

The machinery-of-government changes implemented by the Western Australian Government in 2017 have created a more streamlined structure, with increased capabilities for whole-of-government responses to issues arising. With the dismantling of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, responsibility for co-ordinating the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio now rests with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, in its function as a central agency. The Department's role is supported by the authority of Cabinet via the Community Safety and Family Support Sub Committee and the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee.

Recommendation 29

That the Western Australian Government redesign its agency structure to achieve an integrated whole-of-government approach to addressing issues facing Aboriginal people in remote areas. The redesign should be led by senior public servants from within each agency which provides services to Aboriginal people in remote areas.

Accepted (being implemented)

A new sub-committee of the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee will be established, with a specific mandate addressing remote Aboriginal communities and town-based reserves.

Recommendation 30

That the Western Australian Government improve collaboration and co-ordination between agencies that develop strategies for, and deliver programs and services to, Aboriginal people in remote areas.

Accepted (being implemented)

The Community Safety and Family Support Sub Committee is supported by a Directors General Implementation Group, which oversees collaboration and co-ordination between agencies to focus efforts on complex policy issues that require cross-portfolio co-ordination and a multi-agency response.

Recommendation 31

That the Department for Child Protection and Family Support in conjunction with the Public Sector Commission prepare a circular outlining the operation of the information sharing provisions under the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* to be circulated to all government agencies.

Accepted (implemented)

New information sharing provisions in the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* have been in effect since January 2016. The Department of Communities has since revised its information guide, 'Working together for a better future for at risk children and families. A guide on information sharing for government and non-government agencies.'

Recommendation 32

That the Department of the Premier and Cabinet co-ordinates and collaborates with the Mental Health Commission and WA Primary Health Alliance to integrate the Mental Health Atlas with the map of local or regional Aboriginal youth services.

Accepted in Principle

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet is presently co-ordinating with all relevant agencies, and the Commonwealth, to develop more accessible and informative mapping of services to assist with the planning, co-ordination and delivery of services.

Recommendation 33

That the Department of the Premier and Cabinet amend the Aboriginal Youth Investment Priority and Principles to allow funding amounts of less than \$300,000 to be granted to Aboriginal organisations.

Further discussion required

The Government is currently investigating opportunities for redirecting funds to Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations for investing in place-based projects aimed at improving the wellbeing of young Aboriginal people.

Recommendation 34

That the Western Australian Government should collaborate with Commonwealth agencies and non-government organisations to strengthen the evidence base to determine the effective ways to prevent Aboriginal youth suicide.

Accepted

The Government accepts that evidence gathering and sharing is essential to the long-term success of Aboriginal youth suicide prevention processes. The Commonwealth-funded suicide-prevention trials in the Kimberley, Midwest and Perth South regions provide a key example of how this is currently occurring. Regular meetings of the Kimberley Suicide Prevention Trial Working Group have been particularly instructive in developing a shared evidence base for further collaboration at all levels of government, along with Aboriginal people and organisations.

Recommendation 35

That the Premier and the Minister for Community Services report to the Parliament on the implementation of Recommendation 6 in the Commissioner for Children and Young People's 2015 report, 'Our Children Can't Wait: Review of the implementation of recommendations of the 2011 Report of the Inquiry into the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in WA.'

Superseded

The Western Australian Government will continue to consider these reports as part of the approach to improving Aboriginal youth wellbeing. Further efforts will focus on recommendations from the Commissioner for Children and Young People's most recent reports.

Recommendation 36

That the Minister for Education increase the number of Child and Parent Centres operating in remote areas.

Further discussion required

Five Child and Parent Centres are currently operating in remote areas, at Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Kununurra, Roebourne and South Hedland, and there are no immediate plans to establish any additional centres in regional or remote areas. From 2019, through the Kimberley Schools Project, the Department of Education will strengthen support for Kimberley schools to engage with the Aboriginal community, and to connect children and young people with services.

Recommendation 37

That the Mental Health Commission implement the postvention recommendations in the 'Solutions that Work: What the Evidence and Our People Tell Us, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project' report and the forthcoming University of Western Australia Critical Response Project report into its dedicated suicide prevention strategy Aboriginal Implementation Plan.

Accepted in Principle

The Mental Health Commission is considering implementing these postvention recommendations in the context of the outcome of the Commonwealth-funded suicide-prevention trials in the Kimberley, Midwest and Perth South.

Recommendation 38

That the Western Australian Government collaborates with the Commonwealth Government to provide accessible 24-hour mental health and suicide prevention services in remote areas.

Accepted (being implemented)

As per Recommendation 23 of the Coroner's Inquiry, assessment by videoconference is already provided across the Kimberley (and the Pilbara via referral) by the on-call Kimberley psychiatrist, which includes after-hours availability. Child and Adolescent Health Services' Mental Health service also provides comprehensive telehealth assessment and intervention to children and young people from all over WA.

WA Health will also establish a 24/7 Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service in 2019, which will provide country and rural clinicians with access to specialist mental health expertise to support rapid patient assessment, care planning and decision making for patients with acute mental health and/or substance affected conditions.

Recommendation 39

That the Western Australian Government collaborates with the Commonwealth Government to train and employ local community members to fill positions in remote areas.

Further discussion required

Creating meaningful employment for Aboriginal people in regional and remote areas is crucial. However, change needs to be systematic, targeted, and service community needs. Creating a sustainable employment platform in regional WA will require dialogue between the Western Australian, Commonwealth and local governments, as well as the private and non-government sectors.

As per Recommendation 21 of the Coroner's Inquiry, the Departments of Communities, Health, Education, Justice and WA Police Force have all increased Aboriginal employment targets in regions with greater Aboriginal populations. For example, Aboriginal employees account for 12% of the workforce of the WA Country Health Service Kimberley, compared to the overall public sector benchmark of 3.2%. Organisations will continue to bolster their Aboriginal workforce component, especially in regional and remote areas, via agency-specific strategies.

Recommendation 40

That the Western Australia Police and the Department for Child Protection and Family Support report to the Parliament on the scope for local cultural authority to be incorporated into the services provided at multi-functional police facilities.

Accepted in Principle

The Government supports a whole-of-community approach to improving outcomes for children and their families. This includes, in-principle, local cultural authority being incorporated into the operations of multifunctional police facilities.

Recommendation 41

That the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs revisit Recommendation 8 of the *Coronial Inquest into 22 suicides – Kimberley*. The Premier and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs should then report to the Parliament on:

- the effectiveness of the multi-function government office in Broome in improving access to and referral of Aboriginal people to appropriate government services; and
- plans to establish any other multi-function government offices in regional centres.

Superseded

While the multi-functional office spaces established by the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs no longer operate on this basis, the Government supports the intent of this recommendation to improve the co-ordination of services, which is outlined in the Service Priority Review.

Recommendation 42

That the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs evaluate the new multi-function Department of Aboriginal Affairs office in Kalgoorlie after one year of operation. The Premier and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs should then report to the Parliament on its effectiveness in improving access to and referral of Aboriginal people to appropriate government services.

Superseded

As per Recommendation 41 above, while the multi-functional office spaces established by the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs no longer operate on this basis, the Government supports the intent of this recommendation to improve the co-ordination of services, which is outlined in the Service Priority Review.

Recommendation 43

That the Premier and the Minister for Mental Health report to the Parliament on the establishment of wraparound services in remote communities.

Accepted in Principle

Wrap-around services, in addition to the 10 suicide-prevention co-ordinators currently employed by the Mental Health Commission, are likely to be a feature of the forthcoming whole-of-government response on Aboriginal youth suicide. This approach embodies a commitment to ensure that young Aboriginal people are offered holistic services that are co-ordinated between government, Aboriginal organisations, and the Aboriginal community.

Recommendation 44

That the Minister for Health report to the Parliament on measures to address the acknowledged gap in teaching and training staff about mental health issues and Aboriginal youth suicide.

Accepted in Principle

The education and training of staff in agencies with primary responsibility for the wellbeing of Aboriginal people will continue to be a significant component of the Western Australian Government's approach to suicide prevention in the Aboriginal community. The Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service led the development of the Kimberley Deliberate Self-Harm Suicidal Behaviours Protocol, resulting in a workshop package that is being delivered across the region to frontline workers.

