



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health
WA Cancer and Palliative Care Network

Our Ref: LM/hih

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Via Email: icpac@parliament.wa.gov.au

Ms Lauren Mesiti
Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Public Administration
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Ms Mesiti

Inquiry into the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme in WA

I write on behalf of the WA Cancer and Palliative Care Network, Psycho-Oncology Collaborative group. As a group of clinicians and allied health professionals dealing with the psychosocial impact of cancer across a range of disciplines, we strongly support the need for a review of the current Patient Assisted Transport Scheme and commend the Government's initiative to hold a parliamentary inquiry.

The need for psychosocial and practical support during the time of cancer diagnosis and treatment is a crucial factor affecting an individual's psychological well-being and future health outcomes. Patients who must travel long distances to obtain treatment are often faced with the difficult decision to forgo the emotional support of family whilst in the city due to the high costs of travel and accommodation. Lack of access to this support is a significant risk factor associated with the development of co-morbid anxiety and depression.

Navigating the demands of the current PATS system is a significant additional burden for individuals and families in rural and remote areas struggling with cancer diagnosis and treatment. The inefficiency of the current system and requirement for complex paperwork can be an additional source of distress for those already fatigued due to the effects of treatment and travel.

It is hoped that improving access to PATS funding via improving funding for carers, increasing the monetary value of subsidies in real terms and stream-lining access to payments will reduce the burden associated with at least one aspect of this chronic disease.

Yours sincerely

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