



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**
Office of the Director General



Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs Committee
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Ellis

Thank you for your letter of 22 April 2010, in which you invite a written submission on several matters relevant to the above inquiry. My comments follow.

1. *The feasibility of air transport or videoconferencing:*

The Department of Health (DOH) supports the use of Information Technology as an alternative to travel. In health, telemedicine plays a vital role in providing specialist medical care to remote areas. In addition, the use of videoconferencing for educational purposes is increasingly replacing travel. These modalities could be adopted for such processes.

2. *Government action to reduce Indigenous incarceration and recidivism:*

The DOH plays a significant role in this area and is part of a wider Government effort to reduce incarceration and recidivism. Some examples of where the DOH is involved in developing effective programs include:

- improvements in the social determinants of health among Indigenous groups, as a result of Public Health programs that address the problems of substance abuse;
- working with the Western Australian Police and the Director of Liquor Licensing to apply liquor licensing laws, such as restrictions on the sale of packaged liquor in remote communities. The latter has had a major benefit in many communities, such as Fitzroy Crossing and Hall's Creek, in reducing offences and subsequent incarceration; and
- with other Government agencies in the Road Safety Council, ensuring improved access to adequate training and appropriate licensing of drivers of motor vehicles in remote areas.

3. *Amendment to the Coroner's Act:*

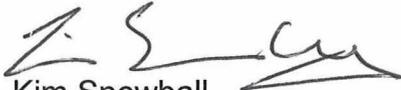
It is appropriate that there is an obligation for Government to respond to Coronial recommendations within a defined timeframe in view of community expectations and the potential for improvement represented by Coronial recommendations. The timeframe needs to be sufficient for Government to adequately consider the recommendations and so a length of 6 months is suggested in the first instance.

189 Royal Street East Perth Western Australia 6004
Telephone (08) 9222 4002 Fax (08) 9222 4314 TTY 1800 067 211
Letters PO Box 8172 Perth Business Centre Western Australia 6849
ABN 28 684 750 332
<http://www.health.wa.gov.au>

4. *Other comments*

The DOH has been working with the Department of Corrective Services to improve the health of detained persons, including a recent review of prison health services, and to address those factors that predispose to recidivism.

Yours sincerely



Kim Snowball
A/DIRECTOR GENERAL

14 May 2010