



**Education and Health
Standing Committee**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2001-2002**

Report No. 3
In the Thirty-Sixth Parliament

2002

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Education and Health Standing Committee

ANNUAL REPORT 2001-2002

Report No. 3 In the Thirty-Sixth Parliament

Presented by:
Carol Martin, MLA
Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly
on Thursday, 22 August 2002

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Chair | Carol Martin, MLA Member for Kimberley |
| Deputy Chair | Hon. Mike Board, MLA Member for Murdoch |
| Members | Ross Ainsworth, MLA Member for Roe |
| | Paul Andrews, MLA Member for Southern River |
| | Shane Hill, MLA Member for Geraldton |

COMMITTEE STAFF

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Principal Research Officer | Karen Hall, BSc (Hons) PhD (until 31 May 2002) |
| Principal Research Officer | Erin Gauntlett, BA DipEd (from 24 June 2002) |
| Research Officer | Peter Frantom, BA |

COMMITTEE ADDRESS

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COMMITTEE'S FUNCTIONS AND POWERS

The functions of the Committee are to review and report to the Assembly on:

- The outcomes and administration of the departments within the Committee's portfolio responsibilities;
- Annual reports of government departments laid on the Table of the House;
- The adequacy of legislation and regulations within its jurisdiction; and
- Any matters referred to it by the Assembly including a bill, motion, petition, vote or expenditure, other financial matter, report or paper.

At the commencement of each Parliament and as often thereafter as the Speaker considers necessary, the Speaker will determine and table a schedule showing the portfolio responsibilities of the Committee. Annual reports of the government departments and authorities tabled in the Assembly will stand referred to the Committee for any inquiry the Committee may make.

Whenever the Committee receives or determines for itself fresh or amended terms of reference, the Committee will forward them to each standing and select committee of the Assembly and joint committee of the Assembly and Council. The Speaker will announce them to the Assembly at the next opportunity and arrange for them to be placed on the notice boards of the Assembly.

The general provisions for standing and select committees (Standing Orders 248-281) also apply to the Education and Health Standing Committee.

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

This is the third report of the Education and Health Standing Committee, which was first appointed on 30 May 2001. This report provides an overview of the Committee's activities since its inception. During this time the Committee has shown a keen interest in the challenges faced by the large number of Western Australians who live outside the metropolitan area.

The Committee's first report, entitled '*Adequacy and Availability of Dental Services in Regional, Rural and Remote Western Australia*' was initiated by the Committee following discussions on access to dental services in rural and remote areas of the State. The Committee placed an advertisement in the *West Australian* calling for submissions and from the responses the Committee compiled a list of individuals and organisations with whom to meet and take evidence. The Committee also arranged for a series of briefings to be held in Kalgoorlie, allowing those interested parties who were unable to travel to Perth an opportunity to meet with the Committee.

The Committee's second report was a brief overview of two conferences it attended, the Fifth WONCA World Conference on Rural Health (Melbourne) and the WONCA Satellite Conference on Remote and Indigenous Health (Alice Springs). Entitled '*Rural, Remote and Indigenous Health: Current Issues*', the report focuses on raising the awareness of some of the most important health issues currently facing those who live in country communities and those who deliver health services to these communities.

I would like to thank my fellow Committee members for their individual and collective contributions over this last year and commend the former Principal Research Officer, Karen Hall the current Principal Research Officer, Erin Gauntlett and Research Officer, Peter Frantom, for their professionalism, dedication and hard work. I would also like to thank the Committees' Receptionist, Helen Lünsmann and the Parliamentary Assistant, Glen Whitting for their assistance throughout the year.

CAROL MARTIN, MLA
CHAIR

CHAPTER 1 COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

During the course of this reporting period (Table 1), the Committee:

- Completed one inquiry involving 18 meetings;
- Took evidence and was briefed by 29 persons;
- Made an investigative trip to Kalgoorlie;
- Attended international conferences on rural, remote and Indigenous health in Melbourne and Alice Springs; and
- Attended an international conference on clinical healthcare in Brisbane.

Table 1. *Summary of activities of the Education and Health Standing Committee, 30 May 2001 - 30 June 2002.*

| Description | Activity |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Briefings | 17 |
| Deliberative meetings | 25 |
| Formal evidence hearings | 1 |
| Witnesses appearing | 29 |
| Reports tabled | 2 |
| Report findings tabled | 53 |
| Report recommendations tabled | 15 |

1.2 PUBLIC HEARINGS

Pursuant to Assembly Standing Order 264, the Committee has power to send for persons, papers and records. During the period 30 May 2001 to 30 June 2002, the Committee conducted one public hearing, taking evidence from numerous witnesses to assist with its investigations (Table 2).

Table 2. *Public Hearings of the Education and Health Standing Committee, 30 May 2001 - 30 June 2002.*

| Date | Witness | Position | Organisation |
|-----------|-------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 12-Nov-01 | Dr David McDonald | Oral Surgeon | |
| | Prof Louis Landau | Executive Dean | Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Western Australia |
| | Dr John McGeachie | Head, School of Dentistry | Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Western Australia |

| Date | Witness | Position | Organisation |
|------|---------------------|---|--|
| | Dr Marc Tennant | Director | Centre for Rural and Remote Oral Health, University of Western Australia |
| | Alex Walker | Board member | Council on the Ageing (WA) Inc. |
| | Dr Nick Boyd | President | Australian Dental Association (WA) |
| | David Neesham | Director | Perth Dental Hospital and Community Dental Services |
| | Dr Anthony Lepere | Oral Surgeon | |
| | Suzanne McKechnie | General Manager, General Health Purchasing | Department of Health |
| | Clory Carrello | Purchasing Manager, General Health Purchasing | Department of Health |
| | Susan Binet | School Dental Therapist | Dental Therapy and Hygiene Association of WA |
| | Jennine Bywaters | Dental Therapist | Dental Therapy and Hygiene Association of WA |
| | Helene Platell | Dental Therapist | Dental Therapy and Hygiene Association of WA |
| | Johanna Korczynskyj | Dental Therapist | Dental Therapy and Hygiene Association of WA |
| | Dr Ragbir Rikhraj | Overseas-trained dentist | |

1.3 BRIEFINGS

In addition to gathering evidence during the formal hearing, the Committee received a number of informal briefings. The briefings were used to gain information in relation to the Committee's inquiry as well as other matters (Table 3).

Table 3. Briefings provided to the Education and Health Standing Committee, 30 May 2001 - 30 June 2002.

| Date | Name | Organisation | Location of Briefing |
|-----------|---------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 12-Sep-01 | David Neesham, Director | Perth Dental Hospital and Community Dental Services | Perth |
| 21-Nov-01 | Wendy Duncan, Project Officer | Shire of Esperance | Kalgoorlie |
| | Mel Bell, Vice Chairman | Esperance Health Board | Kalgoorlie |
| | Jane Mitchell, Dental Therapist | Hugh Sharpe's Dental Surgery, Esperance | Kalgoorlie |
| | Mary Smith, Councillor | Shire of Ravensthorpe | Kalgoorlie |
| | Douglas Josif, Manager | Ngaanyatjarra Health Service | Kalgoorlie |
| | Maimie Butler, Member | Health Council Advisory Committee, Ngaanyatjarraku community | Kalgoorlie |

| Date | Name | Organisation | Location of Briefing |
|-------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | Gary Lye, Board Member | Goldfields Esperance Development Commission | Kalgoorlie |
| | Catherine Shepherd, Deputy Principal | Eastern Goldfields Senior High School | Kalgoorlie |
| | Dianne Mantell, Director of Nursing | Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital | Kalgoorlie |
| | David Dunn, Medical Director | Bega Garnbirringu Aboriginal Health Service | Kalgoorlie |
| | Sue Berry, School Dental Therapist | South Kalgoorlie Dental Clinic | Kalgoorlie |
| 13-Mar-02 | Christine O'Farrell, Acting Executive Director, Country Services | Department of Health | Perth |
| | Suzanne McKechnie, General Manager, General Health Purchasing | Department of Health | Perth |
| 20-Mar-02 | Suzanne McKechnie, General Manager, General Health Purchasing | Department of Health | Perth |
| 26-June-02 | Trevor Tann, Assistant Director of Policy and Equity | Department of Indigenous Affairs | Perth |
| | Sophie Underwood, Senior Policy Adviser | Department of Indigenous Affairs | Perth |

1.4 INVESTIGATIVE TRAVEL

On 21 November 2001 the Committee travelled to Kalgoorlie for a series of briefings with representatives from Kalgoorlie and other regional towns. The briefings related to the Committee's inquiry into dental services in regional, rural and remote areas of Western Australia.

During its Kalgoorlie visit, the Committee had the opportunity to speak informally with a small group of Year 11 students from the Eastern Goldfields Senior High. The students' responses to questions about intended post-secondary studies and their thoughts about returning to the Kalgoorlie-Boulder region after completing tertiary qualifications were very enlightening.

Following approval from the Department of Education, the Committee extended this informal survey to a formal questionnaire style survey of a larger sample of Year 11 students from a selection of secondary schools in regional, rural and remote locations throughout the State. A total of 545 students from 12 secondary schools completed the survey, which formed an integral part of the Committee's investigation into dental services in country Western Australia.

1.4.1 Conferences

The Fifth WONCA (World Organisation of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians) World Conference on Rural Health was held in Melbourne between 30 April and 3 May 2002. More than 900 delegates from 40 countries attended. Over the four-day program, delegates had the opportunity to attend 11 keynote

addresses, 20 parallel symposia presentations, 174 paper presentations, 30 facilitated poster presentations, 5 workshops and 7 clinical skills workshops. Delegates were also given the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of recommendations to be included in the WONCA Policy on Rural Health and Rural Practice through involvement in ‘Village meetings’ and the final Plenary Working Session.

The conference provided insight into a number of important issues that are facing policy-makers at both a national and global level. Presentations centred on four major themes:

- Recruitment and retention of the rural health workforce;
- The rural/urban interface;
- Indigenous issues; and
- Gender issues.

1.5 REPORTS TABLED

The Committee tabled 2 reports during the period 30 May 2001 – 30 June 2002.

1.5.1 Report 1: Adequacy and Availability of Dental Services in Regional, Rural and Remote Western Australia.

From its inception, the Committee has shown a keen interest in the challenges faced by the large number of Western Australians who live in regional, rural and remote regions of the State. Health service delivery to rural areas has long been recognised as a major problem throughout Australia and a number of initiatives have recently been introduced, at both State and Federal level, in an attempt to improve services. The inquiry leading to this report was initiated by the Committee following discussions centring on access to dental services in rural and remote areas of the State.

The report is broad in its scope, examining all aspects of oral health and the provision and use of dental services in regional, rural and remote areas of Western Australia. The report included a total of 53 findings and 15 recommendations.

1.5.2 Report 2: Rural, Remote and Indigenous Health: Current Issues.

The second report of the Committee provides a brief overview of two conferences recently attended by the Committee, the Fifth WONCA World Conference on Rural Health (Melbourne) and the WONCA Satellite Conference on Remote and Indigenous Health (Alice Springs). The Committee has a strong commitment to addressing the challenges faced by people living in rural and remote areas of Western Australia. The primary purpose of this report was to raise awareness of some of the most important health issues currently facing those who live in rural and remote communities and those who deliver health services to these communities.

1.6 WORK IN PROGRESS

On Wednesday, 26 June 2002 the Committee resolved to inquire into '*The Role and Interaction of Health Professionals in the Western Australian Public Health System*'. The terms of reference for the inquiry are as follows:

That the Committee examine and report on:

1. emerging models of health care delivery;
2. the adequacy of current training methods;
3. the availability of defined career paths for health professionals; and
4. any other matter deemed relevant by the Committee.

Over the next 12 month reporting period, the Committee will advertise calling for submissions. Once the submissions have been analysed, the Committee will begin to take evidence from various individuals and organisations. Some travel may be required. The Committee will start drafting its report once sufficient evidence has been collected.

CHAPTER 2 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Education and Health Standing Committee does not have its own formal budget and is funded out of the budget of the Legislative Assembly. Approval for major expenditures is required on a case-by-case basis and is entirely at the discretion of the Speaker.

The Committee's expenditure for the financial year 2001/2002 (in accordance with Standing Order 276) is detailed below:

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Advertising | | \$2,100 |
| Conferences Fees | | \$5,200 |
| Miscellaneous | | \$200 |
| Printing | | \$2,200 |
| Protocol (Food, Beverages and Gifts) | | \$600 |
| Travel | | |
| Members' Fares | \$8,800 | |
| Members' Allowances | \$6,700 | |
| Staff Fares | \$3,700 | |
| Staff Allowances | <u>\$1,700</u> | \$20,900 |
| Witness Expenses | | \$600 |
| | TOTAL | \$31,800 |

Notes:

1. Figures rounded off to nearest \$100.
2. Salaries of committee staff not included.
3. Costs of shared administrative expenses, including lease costs for committee accommodation, not included.