

41ST PARLIAMENT



Education and Health Standing Committee

Report 3

ANNUAL REPORT 2021–22

Presented by
Mr C.J. Tallentire, MLA

October 2022

Committee Members

Chair	Mr C.J. Tallentire, MLA Member for Thornlie
Deputy Chair	Ms L.L. Baker, MLA Member for Maylands
Members	Mrs L.A. Munday, MLA Member for Dawesville
	Ms C.M. Collins, MLA Member for Hillarys
	Mr K.J.J. Michel, MLA Member for Pilbara
Co-opted Member	Mr S.N. Aubrey, MLA Member for Scarborough (from 16 June 2022)

Committee Staff

Principal Research Officer	Ms Catie Parsons
Research Officers	Ms Sylvia Wolf (from 11 April 2022) Ms Rachel Wells (until 27 May 2022)

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Presented by

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Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly on 20 October 2022

Chair's Foreword

This is the second annual report of the Education and Health Standing Committee in the 41st Parliament. Over the past 12 months the EHSC has worked solidly, with much of our effort focussed on the inquiry into the response of Western Australian schools to climate change, culminating in our report 'Making Hope Practical'. More recently our attention has shifted to the inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities.

Parliamentary committees perform an important role in our Western Australian democratic system. The WA Parliament's 'A Guide for Ministerial and Departmental Staff' states that:

Committees are a tool to assist the Houses of Parliament in their functions to legislate; monitor and review legislation; review public administration and expenditure; gather information; and publicise issues

The EHSC has delivered on all the functions noted in the guide. I would especially like to highlight how grateful the committee is for the efforts of those who have helped us gather information. To the submitters and witnesses: your contributions have been essential to our published evidence-based findings and recommendations.

Sound advice to government that leads to better decision-making and policy development needs reliable information, gathered from a range of sources. For people with expertise and longstanding experience, submitting to, or appearing before, a parliamentary committee is an avenue for informing the parliament in a comprehensive way that allows for extended discussion and analysis.

I am most grateful for the work of fellow Committee members, Deputy Chair Lisa Baker MLA, Mrs Lisa Munday MLA, Ms Caitlin Collins MLA, Mr Kevin Michel MLA and co-opted member Mr Stuart Aubrey MLA (from 16 June 2022, for the duration of the inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities). Finally, my deepest thanks go to the Committee's principal research officer, Catie Parsons, and research officers, Rachel Wells and Sylvia Wolf. Their hard work and diligence have been essential to the success of the Committee.



MR C.J. TALLENTIRE, MLA
CHAIR

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Chapter 1

Committee Activities

Introduction

- 1.1 This report covers the work undertaken by the Education and Health Standing Committee of the 41st Parliament during the 2021-22 financial year.
- 1.2 During the course of this reporting period (Table 1.1), the Committee:
- conducted the inquiry into the response of Western Australian schools to climate change
 - began the inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities
 - held 22 deliberative meetings
 - took evidence from 51 witnesses at 16 public hearings, and held two closed hearings
 - met with 19 people at five briefings, including three school site visits
 - tabled two reports.

Table 1.1: Summary of the activities of the Committee, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022

Description	Activity
Deliberative meetings	22
Formal evidence hearings	18
Witnesses appearing (public hearings)	51
Briefings	5
Reports tabled	2
Report findings tabled	29
Report recommendations tabled	24

Portfolios

- 1.3 The four portfolio areas of the Committee as determined by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly are:
- Education and Training
 - Health
 - Mental Health, and
 - Medical Research.

Public Hearings

- 1.4 Pursuant to Assembly Standing Order 264, the Committee has power to send for persons, papers and records. During the period 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022, the Committee conducted 16 public hearings, taking evidence from 51 witnesses to assist with its investigations (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2: Public Hearings of the Committee, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022

Date	Witness	Position	Organisation
4 August 2021	Dr David Russell-Weisz	Director General	Department of Health
	Dr Denise Sullivan	A/Assistant Director General, Public and Aboriginal Health Division	
	Dr Duncan James Williamson	Assistant Director General, Clinical Excellence Division	
	Mr Rob Anderson	Assistant Director General, Purchasing and System Performance Division	
6 August 2021	Dr Tarun Weeramanthri	Independent Consultant Inquirer, Climate Health WA Inquiry 2019-20	
11 August 2021	Prof Peter Klinken AC	Chief Scientist	
11 August 2021	Ms Jennifer McGrath	Commissioner	Mental Health Commission
	Ms Kim Lazenby	Head of System Development	
22 November 2021	Ms Samantha Schofield	Vice President	State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia
	Mr Geoffrey Holt	Committee Executive Member	
22 November 2021	Ms Jennifer Blair	Senior Vice President	Western Australian Council of State School Organisations
	Mrs Anne Fairbanks	Vice President	
22 November 2021	Ms Catrina Luz Aniere	Chief Executive Officer	Millennium Kids
	Miss Isabella Poll	President, Youth Board	
	Miss Amelia Turk	Member, Youth Board	
22 November 2021	Dr Jennifer Pearson	President and Convenor, WA Chapter Chair Chair	National Australian Association for Environment Education Inc. Australian Sustainable Schools Alliance Little Green Steps
	Dr Rachel Sheffield	Associate Professor, STEM Education Co-Convenor	Curtin University Education Committee United Nations Association of Australia, Western Australian division

	Ms Hannah Von Ahlefeld	Co-author, Submission	Australian Association for Environmental Education
	Ms Nadia Aurisch	Environmental Scientist	MCC Environmental
	Mr Geoffrey Holt	Executive Member, Committee Teacher	State School Teachers' Union of WA Busselton Senior High School
	Ms Peg Davies	Waste Educator	Lessen with Peg: Rethink Waste
	Ms Donna Nelson	Member	Pioneers Aboriginal Corporation
	Miss Jasmina Nikolovski	Student	Australian Association for Environmental Education
24 November 2021	Ms Lisa Rodgers	Director General	Department of Education
	Mr Jay Peckitt	Deputy Director General, Education Business Services	
	Mr Rob Thomson	Executive Director Infrastructure	
	Mr Martin Clery	Executive Director, Statewide Services	
	Mr William Carroll	Manager Strategic Projects, Sustainability Unit	
	Mr Allan Blagaich	Executive Director	School Curriculum and Standards Authority
	Mrs Louise O'Donovan	Principal	Beeliar Primary School
18 February 2022	Professor David Blair	Emeritus Professor	Einstein- First Project: University of Western Australia
	Dr Jyoti Kaur	Research Fellow	
	Mr David Wood	Adjunct Senior Research Fellow	
	Dr Elaine Horne	Project Research Associate	
	Ms Kyla Adams	PhD Student	
18 February 2022	Dr Debra Sayce	Executive Director	Catholic Education Western Australia
	Mr Wayne Bull	Deputy Executive Director	
	Ms Laura Allison	Team Leader, Psychology Safety and Wellbeing	
18 February 2022	Mr Justin McKirdy	Executive Director, Urban Mobility	Department of Transport
	Ms Michelle Prior	Director, Active Transport and Safety	

	Ms Helen Ginbey	Manager, Travel Behaviour Change	
18 February 2022	Mr Aaron Compton	Acting Director, Waste Avoidance and Resource Division	Waste Authority
	Ms Jennifer Weston	Acting Program Manager, Communication and Education, Waste Avoidance and Resource Division	
	Mrs Gabrielle Migliore	Lead Customer Education	Water Corporation
	Mr Damien Postma	Manager, Demand Delivery, Environmental Scientist	
18 February 2022	Ms Rosemary Lynch	Chairperson	Environment House
	Mr Alan Benn	Energy Auditor	
	Mrs Alex Ellis	Volunteer Coordinator	Environment House Gardening and Sustainability
23 February 2022	Dr Vanessa Rauland	Founder and Chief Executive Officer	ClimateClever
	Ms Kathy Anketell	Schools Program Delivery and Support	
23 February 2022	Dr Catherine Baudains		Murdoch University

Briefings

- 1.5 In addition to the formal hearings, the Committee held a number of briefings and site visits (Table 1.3).
- 1.6 The Committee visited three metropolitan schools to gather information in relation to the inquiry into the response of Western Australian schools to climate change. These schools were identified as engaging in a high level of sustainability activity and adopting a whole-school approach to sustainability.
- 1.7 The Committee also held two briefings in relation to the inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities. One was with a registered psychologist who advised the Committee on using a trauma-informed approach in conducting the inquiry. The other was with representatives from the Department of Health and the Mental Health Commission to gain an early understanding of the existing legislative and regulatory frameworks relevant to the inquiry.

Table 1.3: Briefings provided to the Committees, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022

Date	Name	Position	Organisation
20 October 2021	Mr Paul Westcott	Principal	Coolbinia Primary School
	Dr Elaine Lewis	Cross Curricular Coordinator	
	Ms Michelle Brinkworth	Senior Project Officer, Sustainability Unit	Department of Education
27 October 2021	Ms Jessica Shepley	Science Teacher	Baldivis Senior College
	Ms Jessica Wilkins	Science Teacher	Department of Education
	Ms Michelle Brinkworth	Senior Project Officer, Sustainability Unit	
10 November 2021	Mr Adrian Lee	Associate Principal	Bob Hawke College
	Ms Nicole Cooper	Manager Corporate Services	
	Ms Anne Sashegyi	Science Teacher and Sustainability Team Leader	
	Mr Matthew Titmanis	Head of Science	
	Peter	Student	
	Mr William Carroll	Manager, Sustainability Unit	Department of Education
11 May 2022	Ms Jessica Roper	EAP Counsellor Registered Psychologist	Access Wellbeing Services
18 May 2022	Dr Tina Bertilone	Executive Director, Patient Safety and Clinical Quality	Department of Health
	Ms Lynda Campbell	Manager, Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit	
	Mr Lindsay Hale	Deputy Commissioner	Mental Health Commission
	Ms Dace Tomsons	Manager, Country Services	
	Ms Lina Lombardini	Assistant Director, Support Services Management	
	Mr Ian Hill	Director, Treatment Services	

Conferences

- 1.8 From 28 to 30 September 2021, the Committee secretariat attended the Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) Biennial Conference 2021, *Mandjoogordap: Changing Tides*, in Mandurah. This provided an opportunity to promote the inquiry into the response of Western Australian schools to climate change amongst conference delegates, identify key stakeholders and attend conference sessions relevant to the inquiry.

- 1.9 Mrs Lisa Munday MLA, Member for Dawesville, also delivered an opening address at the conference on behalf of the Minister for Environment and Climate Action.

Reports Tabled

- 1.10 The Committee tabled two reports during the period 1 July 2021–30 June 2022:

- Annual Report 2020-21 (tabled on 16 September 2021)
- *Making Hope Practical*: Report of the inquiry into the response of Western Australian schools to climate change (tabled on 23 June 2022)

***Making Hope Practical*: Report of the inquiry into the response of Western Australian schools to climate change**

- 1.11 The inquiry into the response of Western Australian schools to climate change reviewed the current frameworks governing climate action and sustainability in schools and identified areas for improvement. The report also sought to ‘make hope practical’ by collating evidence on the co-benefits of climate action in schools and featuring examples of successful and cost effective responses to climate change in schools.
- 1.12 The report found that the many and varied co-benefits of climate action in schools provide a strong justification for promoting and funding climate action in schools. Leadership from both the Department of Education and within schools is critical to implementing a whole-school approach to sustainability and climate action, which encompasses both material and immaterial responses.
- 1.13 The Committee made various recommendations on how the Department of Education and other government agencies can fully support climate action in schools, including additional funding and building capacity in teachers and other staff through targeted professional development. The government response to the recommendations was tabled on 18 October 2022.

Other Activities

- 1.14 The Committee conducted several other hearings to review the outcomes and administration of the agencies within its portfolio responsibilities, and to gather information to inform possible future inquiries.

Department of Health

- 1.15 The Committee conducted an agency review hearing with the Department of Health on 4 August 2021. Matters discussed included Western Australia’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, implementation of the recommendations of the sustainable health review and the climate health inquiry, and the evaluation of the health promotion strategic framework.

Dr Tarun Weeramanthri

- 1.16 The Committee invited Dr Weeramanthri to a hearing on 6 August 2021 to give evidence on the findings and recommendation of the world first Climate Health WA Inquiry, which was completed in November 2020. This inquiry reviewed the current planning and response

capacity of the health system in relation to the health impacts of climate change, and considered areas for improvement in respect to climate change mitigation and public health adaptation strategies. Dr Weeramanthri's evidence was influential in the Committee's decision to undertake its inquiry into the response of Western Australian schools to climate change.

Professor Peter Klinken AC

- 1.17 The Committee invited Professor Peter Klinken AC, Chief Scientist of Western Australia, to discuss challenges facing the education sector, including Western Australia's universities, the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the future health research and innovation fund.

Mental Health Commission

- 1.18 The Committee conducted an agency review hearing with the Mental Health Commission on 11 August 2021. Matters discussed included the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, governance changes within the commission, alcohol consumption and youth mental health services.

Work in progress

- 1.19 On 7 April 2022, the Legislative Assembly requested that the Committee commence an inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities. This was in response to complaints and allegations concerning the faith-based women's residential rehabilitation facility that were reported on in the media and brought to the attention of the Hon Simone McGurk, Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services.
- 1.20 The inquiry will consider the complaints and allegations from former residents, staff and volunteers, and the adequacy of actions taken by the organisation to address those concerns. It will also consider relevant regulatory and legislative frameworks to determine how oversight of unregulated private health facilities could be improved.

Chapter 2

Financial Statement

2.1 The 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.

2.2 The Committee's expenditure for the financial year 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (in accordance with Standing Order 276) is detailed below:

Table 2.1: Expenditure items of the Committee, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022

Expenditure Item	Amount (\$)
Advertising	6,843
Conference Fees	1,684
Printing	549
Member and staff amenities	191
Staff travel	74
TOTAL	9,340

2.3 Notes:

- Figures rounded off to nearest dollar.
- Salaries of committee staff are not included.
- Costs of shared administrative expenses, including lease costs for committee accommodation, not included.



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CHAIR



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