

Commissioner's message

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Change in the public sector is inevitable. What defines our success is how we anticipate, manage and capitalise on change from within—shaping the way we deliver services to our clients and the community.



Adapting to change

The end of 2015/16 saw the conclusion of our first 12 months of operation implementing legislative changes emanating from proclamation of the *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003* on 1 July 2015. As a consequence the year was one of significant adjustment for the Public Sector Commission (Commission) as we continued to fine-tune the arrangements put in place for the transfer of minor misconduct and misconduct prevention and education functions. I believe we have successfully integrated these functions into our core business and adapted to our new role.

We know that the key to any good organisation is an appreciation and understanding of its clients. In delivering the new functions much of our work has focused on getting to know our new stakeholders and understanding their business. Our jurisdiction has effectively expanded to an additional 40 000 stakeholders, including employees from local governments, public universities and Government Trading Enterprises. Beyond this the new functions have, for the first time, required us to engage directly with the community, which I believe we have embraced and continued to refine over the past year.

The legislative changes necessitated a review of our business, taking into consideration our new functions, our new jurisdictions and our new approach to strategic engagement. As a result the structure of the Commission was streamlined and an acting executive was established. Over time this will enable our services to be more flexible and our employees more mobile. However, our transformation has not

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been without its challenges, with the recruitment freeze and the need to prepare for an Agency Expenditure Review in 2016/17 having significant impact. Going forward this will provide us with further opportunities to make adjustments to the way we do business, to ensure that we are in the best position to meet future challenges.

Assisting with change

Adapting the machinery of government is vital when responding to Government policy priorities, environmental pressures and opportunities for better performance. Over the past year we have seen the transformation of two significant sectors in Western Australia—health and training. I have been pleased to assist the health sector to establish and deliver the new health governance model, as well as the training sector to implement their functional reforms and governance arrangements. We have also worked collaboratively with chief executives undertaking significant reform programs by embedding senior staff within their agencies to assist them in delivering organisational change. This is an approach I have trialled since 2013 with success and one which we will continue to employ in the future.

In January 2016 at the direction of the Premier, the Hon. C J Barnett MLA, under sections 24H(2) and (3) of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, I arranged for a Special Inquiry to examine the system of fire management in the rural area of Waroona during the bushfire that occurred earlier in that month. The Special Inquiry report, entitled *Reframing Rural Fire Management: Report of the Special Inquiry into the January 2016 Waroona Fire*, was tabled in the Parliament of Western Australia on 23 June 2016. The report highlighted the urgent need to effect fundamental changes to the system of rural fire management in order to improve the systems of community safety and bushfire risk management in Western Australia. Looking ahead we will continue to assist the Government to implement the necessary structural reforms to reshape the industry for the benefit of the community.

It is important to remember that with change comes opportunity and I encourage all public authorities to be optimistic about what they can achieve.

Advocating for change

Diversity and inclusion remains an ongoing priority of mine. The progression of the public sector and our service delivery is dependent on ensuring that the diverse perspectives, experiences and backgrounds of the community are reflected in the workforce and what we do. To stimulate this change I collaborated with the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment to develop our joint commitment, *Time for Action: Diversity and inclusion in public employment*. A suite of diversity strategies are to follow as part of this commitment and I will continue to support public authorities as they engage with the diversity and inclusion agenda over the next three years. This will include exploring new approaches to talent supply and recruitment, incorporating diversity and inclusion into relevant system priorities, and providing better statistical and best practice information to agencies.

It is important to remember that with change comes opportunity and after 18 years of representing Western Australia on the Council for the Order of Australia I have now relinquished the role. I thank the State for the opportunity to see first-hand the efforts of our citizens rewarded for their significant service and contribution to the fabric of our society. It has been a rewarding and humbling experience.

Finally, key staff in the Commission have been and will be critical to the achievement of our outcomes and I thank them for their professionalism, integrity and loyalty. We will continue to challenge the way we do things as we strive to deliver better outcomes and I look forward to overseeing how we evolve in the coming year.



M C Wauchope
COMMISSIONER

9 September 2016