

# Significant Issues and Trends

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## 3.1 Introduction

HaDSCO has an important role in contributing to improving health, disability and mental health services in Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories. In 2019-20, the Office has worked closely with stakeholders to identify, evaluate and respond to the changing environment. HaDSCO has adapted its service delivery to meet the changing needs of the community, service providers and other stakeholders. HaDSCO has also supported strategic reforms by identifying and evaluating emerging issues to contribute to better outcomes for people.

## 3.2 Significant issues and trends

### 3.2.1 Responding to policy initiatives and reform programs

#### National Disability Insurance Scheme

HaDSCO is continuing to resolve complaints about services provided through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) until the transition to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission).

On 21 May 2020, the Minister for Environment; Disability Services; Electoral Affairs announced that Western Australia and the Commonwealth had agreed to defer the transition of NDIS quality and safeguarding functions to the NDIS Commission to 1 December 2020.

HaDSCO has participated in transition discussions with the NDIS Commission and the Department of Communities. As a member of the NDIS Interface Steering Committee, HaDSCO is continuing to contribute to work program priorities to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent whole-of-government approach to support Western Australians with disability. In 2020-21, HaDSCO will continue to support the NDIS transition and work with the Department of Communities to confirm ongoing arrangements for complaints about State funded disability services post the NDIS transition, to contribute to safeguarding people with disability.

#### Voluntary assisted dying

The voluntary assisted dying legislation was passed by State Parliament in December 2019. Once the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019* comes into operation, HaDSCO will be able to receive complaints about the voluntary assisted dying process, which is expected to be in mid-2021. During 2020-21, HaDSCO will work with the Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Project Steering Committee and the Department of Health regarding implementation of this new jurisdiction.

#### National Code of Conduct for health care workers

Progressing the implementation of the National Code of Conduct for health care workers (National Code) in Western Australia continues to be a key focus for the Office. The preparation for drafting of amendments to the *Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995* to provide for the National Code and for its implementation in Western Australia through regulation is progressing. As implementation will require legislative change, timing for implementation is not currently known. This will be a new jurisdiction for HaDSCO.

### Sustainable Health Review

The Western Australian Sustainable Health Review (SHR) Final Report (April 2019) contains eight enduring strategies and 30 recommendations which seek to drive a cultural and behavioural shift across the health system. HaDSCO continues to embed the enduring strategies into its service delivery in both its complaints resolution and education and training functions.

### 3.2.2 Royal Commissions

The Office continues to contribute to working groups established to respond to Royal Commission recommendations, as well as contributing to Royal Commissions which are currently in progress. HaDSCO is a member of the Independent Oversight Working Group for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and a member of the Western Australian Steering Group for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. In September 2019, HaDSCO provided complaint statistics relating to aged care complaints and other documents in response to a 'Notice to Give' issued by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

### 3.2.3 Contributing to improving health, disability and mental health outcomes

Through complaint resolution and education and training outcomes, HaDSCO endeavours to drive system change and inform continuous improvement programs for service providers. To this end, the Office provides individual Report Cards to public and private health service providers and the Department of Justice (Corrective Services) to assist them to gain an appreciation of the complaints managed by HaDSCO that relate to their services. A summary Report Card covering the five public Health Service Providers is provided to the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health and to the Director General of the Department of Health. The Office also releases complaint trend reports which provide an analysis of the complaints data submitted by external prescribed providers each year. Together, these reports enable HaDSCO to share data to enable providers to identify opportunities for service improvement.

The Office is continually exploring opportunities to promote the learnings from complaints to assist the sectors to develop their workforces for the future. A current focus is collaborating with health education providers to train practitioners at the earliest stages of their careers about the learnings from complaints which highlight the benefits of patient-centred care, improved communication and documentation.

### 3.2.4 Access to services

HaDSCO implements strategies to ensure its services are accessible to all Western Australians and individuals in the Indian Ocean Territories. Areas of focus in 2019-20 were Aboriginal communities; regional communities; children and young people; and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The 2020-21 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will build on these initiatives through targeted and responsive service delivery with stakeholders.

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### 3.2.5 COVID-19 pandemic

The Office has adopted responsive working arrangements during the pandemic to ensure complaints about COVID-19 matters receive priority. A HaDSCO COVIDSafe Roadmap was developed for business operations (shown opposite), together with a Business Continuity Plan and a Pandemic Plan.

Complaint statistics and data trends about COVID-19 matters are reported to the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health, the Public Sector Commissioner and the Director General of the Department of Health in the interest of assisting with response and recovery planning. The Office will continue to monitor these complaints during 2020-21.

### 3.2.6 Governance and accountability

The Office continues to implement strategies to strengthen governance and accountability, building on the new governance framework established in 2016-17. HaDSCO will be established as a separate Budget Paper 2 agency from the 2020-21 financial year. Associated with this, the Office has undertaken a minor review of its Key Performance Indicators which will come into effect in the same period. The Office also established an Internal Audit Committee, which was further strengthened in response to *Treasurer's Instruction 1201 Internal Audit*.

Following funding approval, HaDSCO is implementing a new case management system for improved functionality. The new system will support a more efficient complaint resolution service and strengthen the Office's capability to share data more broadly across the sectors. These initiatives demonstrate the Office's ongoing commitment to strong governance, accountability and transparency.

