



# 1. Office Overview

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# 1. Office Overview

## 1.1 From the HaDSCO Director



It is with pleasure that I present the 2018-19 Annual Report on behalf of the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office.

This reporting period has seen a number of significant reviews and reforms in the health, disability and mental health sectors which have impacted on the environment in which the Office operates.

In April of this year the Western Australian Sustainable Health Review (SHR) published its Final Report which contained eight Enduring Strategies and 30 Recommendations which seek to drive a cultural and behavioural shift across the health system. The release of the Report provided the opportunity for the Office to review and refocus its services, with particular consideration for the Enduring Strategies of:

- Commit and collaborate to address major public health issues.
- Improve mental health issues.
- Person-centred, equitable, seamless access.
- Culture and workforce to support new models of care.

Throughout the year HaDSCO has continued to collaborate, participate and partner with stakeholders at both a State and National level to further initiatives to support improvements to health, disability and mental health services. This included invited contributions and submissions on reforms taking place in areas which impact our service delivery.

The Office submitted a reference document to the Mental Health Clinical Governance Review Panel's *Review of the Clinical Governance of Public Mental Health*. This provided the opportunity to reconfirm the role and functions the Office plays in the mental health sector. This was further enhanced by the publication in April of the Office's *Guidelines for handling complaints about mental health services*. The Guidelines were developed in accordance with the Australian and New Zealand Standard to assist service providers to develop their own complaint handling systems or enhance existing processes.

HaDSCO's role in the complaints resolution process provides a very important and useful source of information to highlight where there may be gaps in the level of care provided to an individual, as person-centred care continues to be a focus in the health, disability and mental health sectors. From one complaint, there can be redress for the individual and system changes to improve service delivery for many others. Collectively, complaints provide useful information for continuous improvement programs covering broader service delivery and

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systemic issues to ensure safe and high quality services and improve the individual's experience.

This year, the Office received the highest volume of complaints in the health, disability and mental health sectors in a five year reporting period, with a greater number of redress outcomes facilitated for individuals.

With the SHR's recommendation to build workforce capability and behaviour with a focus on system integrity, transparency and public accountability it was fitting that the Office was invited to present to university students in the allied health field. This engagement is part of the Office's efforts to educate practitioners at the earliest stages of their careers about the benefits of person-centred care and communication, and how to deal with complaints constructively and effectively.

Western Australia is due to transition to full implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in July 2020. In 2018-19, during the transition period, there has been a 60% increase in complaint volume compared to 2017-18. The Office has a lead role through its membership of the NDIS Interface Steering Committee, established by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, for relevant actions related to disability complaints during the transition period. This has been, and will continue to be, an important body of work undertaken by the Office for

the transition of the complaints jurisdiction to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

HaDSCO continues to strengthen customer and stakeholder engagement, to ensure that the Office's services are designed to resolve complaints that arise in the most direct and immediate way. During 2018-19, the Office led and participated in a number of stakeholder engagement activities to continue to raise awareness of, and provide accessibility to, our services, including a visit to the Indian Ocean Territories. We also updated a number of our publications and brochures to ensure our messaging is clear, contextual and current.

In what has been another busy and productive year I would like to thank the HaDSCO staff who ensure they carry out the work of the Office in a professional, impartial, confidential and efficient manner. Staff continually produce quality outcomes for the benefit of individuals who access health, disability and mental health services.

Sarah Cowie  
**DIRECTOR**

***“From one complaint, there can be redress for the individual and system changes to improve service delivery for many others.”***

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# Key highlights 2018-19

## Complaints

Complaints Received  
**2,589**



**188**  
Redress actions facilitated for individuals

**34**



Service improvements managed as a result of HaDSCO's involvement

## Educate and train



Developed additional resources including information for young people and for Aboriginal communities about making complaints. Published *Guidelines for handling complaints about mental health services*

Undertook  
**201**  
engagement activities with stakeholders across metropolitan, regional and remote regions



## Governance



Completed staff training in records management; cultural awareness; diversity; and accountable and ethical decision making

## Respond to changing environments



Provided input into policy initiatives and reforms, including for the Review of the Clinical Governance of Public Mental Health Services in WA and Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill

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## 1.3 Who we are

The Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) is an independent Statutory Authority offering an impartial resolution service for complaints relating to health, disability and mental health services in Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories, covering the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

The Office was established in 1996 and, until November 2010, HaDSCO was known as the Office of Health Review. The name was changed following amendments to the *Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995*, and the *Disability Services Act 1993*.

The functions of HaDSCO are set out in our governing legislation; the *Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995*, Part 6 of the *Disability Services Act 1993* and Part 19 of the *Mental Health Act 2014*. HaDSCO's main functions under these Acts are to:

- Deal with complaints by negotiated settlement, conciliation or investigation.
- Review and identify the causes of complaints.
- Provide advice and make recommendations for service improvement.
- Educate the community and service providers about complaint handling.
- Inquire into broader issues of health, disability and mental health care arising from complaints received.
- Work in collaboration with the community and service providers to improve health, disability and mental health services.
- Publish the work of the Office.
- Perform any other function conferred on the Director by the *Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995* or another written law.

### Other key compliance legislation

*Auditor General Act 2006*

*Electoral Act 1907*

*Equal Opportunity Act 1984*

*Financial Management Act 2006*

*Freedom of Information Act 1992*

*Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Act 2010*

*Industrial Relations Act 1979*

*Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*

*Public Sector Management Act 1994*

*Salaries and Allowances Act 1975*

*State Records Act 2000*

*State Supply Commission Act 1991*

### Responsible Minister

Hon Roger Cook MLA

Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health.

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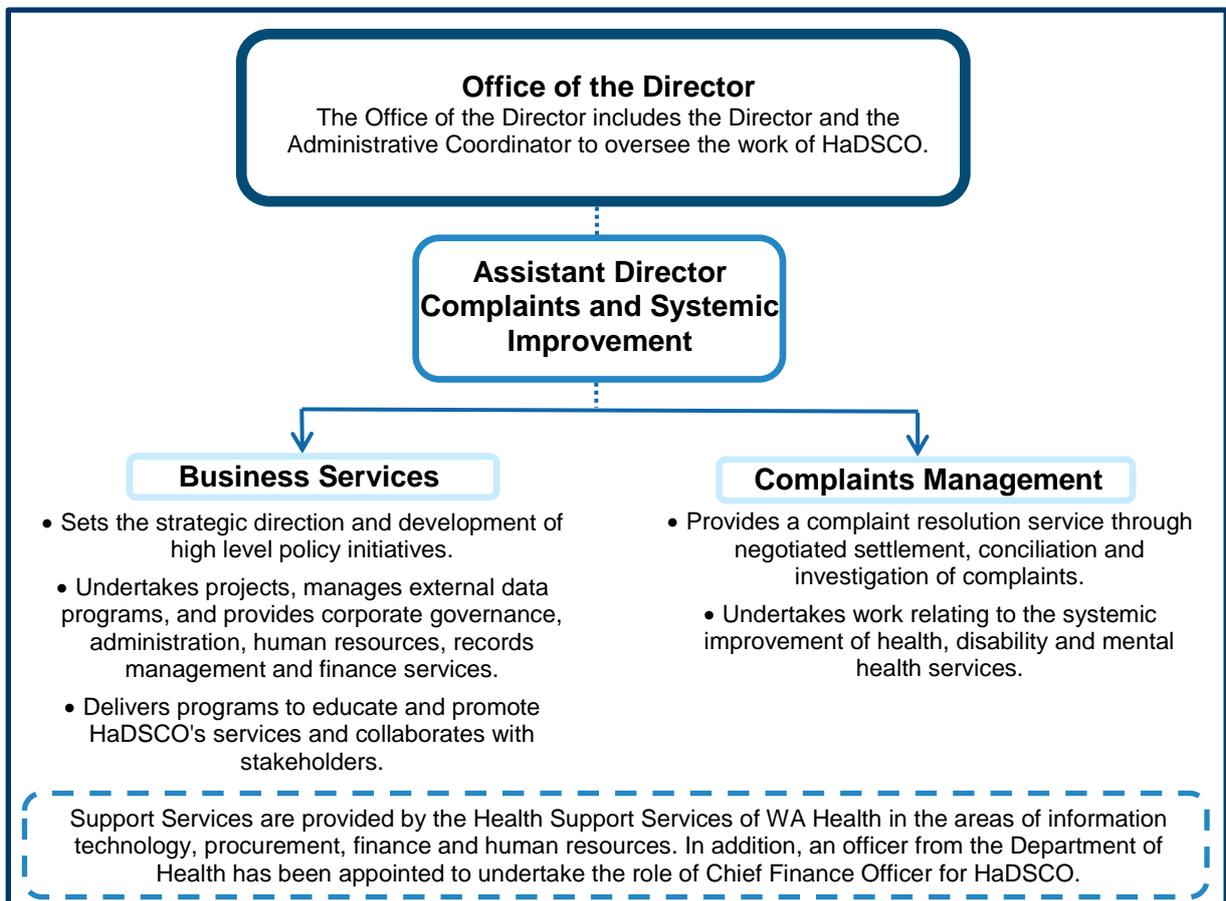
## 1.4 Performance Management Framework

Operates within the Performance Management Framework to achieve services and outcomes in the context of the wider Government goal of *Strong Communities: Safe communities and supported families*.

Government Goal	Agency desired outcome	HaDSCO Service	Key Effectiveness Indicator	Key Efficiency Indicator
Strong Communities: Safe communities and supported families	Improvement in the delivery of health and disability services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment, negotiated settlement, conciliation, and investigation of complaints</li> <li>Education and training in the prevention and resolution of complaints</li> </ol>	Proportion of recommendations resulting in implementation by providers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of complaints closed within legislation timeframes</li> <li>Average cost per finalised complaint</li> <li>Education and training in the prevention and resolution of complaints</li> </ol>

## 1.5 Organisational Structure

HaDSCO's organisational structure as at 30 June 2019 is represented below.





## 1.6 Our Strategic Direction

HaDSCO's Strategic Plan 2017-21 sets out the Office's vision, mission and values, and outlines four areas of strategic focus. Throughout this Annual Report performance is aligned to these four areas.

### Our Vision

Supporting improvements to health, disability and mental health services for Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories through complaint resolution.

### Our Mission

Improvement in the delivery of health and disability services through our two service areas:

- **Service One:** Assessment, negotiated settlement, conciliation and investigation of complaints.
- **Service Two:** Education and training in the prevention and resolution of complaints.

### Our Values

In all our operations and relationships we value:

- **Honesty:** We act with honesty and integrity, providing an impartial complaints resolution service about health, disability and mental health services, and in providing programs to educate and train in the prevention and resolution of complaints.
- **Accountability:** We are accountable for our actions and deliver our services within a sound governance framework.
- **Dedication:** We provide our services with dedication and commitment ensuring we meet the needs of the public, Ministers, service providers and other external stakeholders.
- **Supportive:** We work together as a team and are supportive of our colleagues in the workplace.
- **Confidentiality:** We treat information received with confidentiality and comply with the provisions of our guiding legislation.
- **Objectivity:** We work in an independent Statutory Authority and undertake our work with objectivity and impartiality.

### Our Strategic Focus Areas

- **Complaints (Receive, Resolve, Reform):** Manage complaints in a professional, impartial, confidential and efficient manner with quality outcomes.
- **Educate and train (Engage, Evaluate, Educate):** Inform, educate and empower the community and service providers to prevent complaints.
- **Governance (Cooperate, Comply, Communicate):** Deliver our services within a sound governance framework.
- **Respond to changing environments (Review, Respond, Redefine):** Respond appropriately to our changing environment.

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