



GOVERNMENT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Health and Disability Services  
Complaints Office

# 2016 -17 Annual Report

## Statement of compliance



GOVERNMENT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Health and Disability Services  
Complaints Office

**Hon Roger Cook MLA**

**Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health**

13<sup>th</sup> Floor, Dumas House

2 Havelock Street

WEST PERTH WA 6005

In accordance with section 63 of the *Financial Management Act 2006*, I hereby submit for your information and presentation to Parliament, the Annual Report of the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office for the financial year ended 30 June 2017. The Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 2006*.

Yours sincerely

**SARAH COWIE**  
**DIRECTOR**

3 October 2017

## About this report

Welcome to the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) 2016-17 Annual Report. This report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Office in the resolution of complaints about health, disability and mental health services provided in Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories. It also details the work undertaken in educating and training the public and service providers in the prevention and resolution of complaints.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Western Australian Public Sector Annual Reporting Framework, as well as our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). It was created using in-house staff resources. The report is available in printable and electronic viewing formats to optimise accessibility and ease of navigation. It is downloadable from our website [www.hadsco.wa.gov.au](http://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au). On request, this report can be made available in alternative formats to meet the needs of people with visual impairment. Requests to reproduce any content from this report should be directed to the Strategic Communications and Engagement Manager on (08) 6551 7620 or [mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au](mailto:mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au). When reproduced, content must not be altered in any way and acknowledgements must be appropriately made.

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# 1.

## Office overview

In this section we provide information about the role, functions and structure of the Office.

### 1.1 From the HaDSCO Director

It is my pleasure to present my second Annual Report as Director of the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO).

HaDSCO provides an important role for members of the community who wish to make complaints about the provision of health, disability and mental health services in Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories. HaDSCO also has a role in educating and training the public and service providers in the prevention and resolution of complaints. We strive for excellence in delivering these services.

The 2016-17 year has been a period of significant activity for HaDSCO. We released our new Strategic Plan 2017-2021 which sets our strategic priorities into the future in the areas of complaints, education and training, governance and responding to changing environments. This report provides details of outcomes and achievements in all of these areas.

During 2016-17, HaDSCO received 2,697 complaints, representing a 6% increase on 2015-16. Complaint numbers continue to increase each year. The largest increase was in relation to complaints about disability services, where there was a 19% increase compared to the previous year.



It is important that we continue to review our complaint management practices to ensure our services are accessible, that they are delivered in a timely manner, and result in quality outcomes. During 2016-17, we implemented an internal Complaint Handling Continuous Improvement Program which has resulted in positive outcomes.

We continued to collect complaints data from health and disability service providers and developed infographics to highlight complaint trends within each sector.

We developed a new Stakeholder Engagement Strategy January 2017-June 2018 to guide the delivery of stakeholder engagement programs and outreach. Details of our achievements under this strategy are set out in this report.

There has been a strong internal focus on developing a sound governance framework. A new Code of Conduct has been put in place. Enhanced records management and stronger compliance controls have been achieved in finance and human resources. In addition, we have introduced a Risk Management Framework and Policy.

Responding to our changing environments is key to ensuring efficient and effective service delivery into the future. We have been developing a policy framework to underpin the implementation of the National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers in Western Australia. Additionally, we continued to engage with the Disability Services Commission in relation to the

implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and with WA Health on health reform programs in Western Australia which impact on HaDSCO's services.

I would like to thank my staff for their support and dedication. In a small office, team work is essential and this year staff have worked together on a number of strategic priorities. Through cooperation and commitment, we have achieved a number of outcomes which are highlighted in this report.



Sarah Cowie  
**DIRECTOR**



***“It is important that we continue to review our complaint management practices to ensure our services are accessible, that they are delivered in a timely manner, and result in quality outcomes.”***

# 2016-17 Key highlights

## Complaints

Received  
**2,697**  
complaints



**144**  
Redress actions  
facilitated for  
individuals



**42**  
Service improvements  
managed as a  
result of HaDSCO's  
involvement



## Educate and train



Released new resources including a joint HaDSCO/AHPRA brochure, an information sheet for the Aboriginal community and infographics, to raise awareness of, and access to, our services

Visited the Indian Ocean Territories to provide a complaints management service and strengthen links with the community

Undertook  
**211**  
engagement activities  
with stakeholders across  
metropolitan, regional and  
remote regions



## Governance



Released our new  
**Strategic Plan  
2017-2021** which  
sets our strategic  
priorities into the  
future



Implemented  
a New Code  
of Conduct  
for staff

Updated and/or  
introduced  
**9**  
human resources  
policies to  
support staff

## Respond to changing environments

Provided input into policy  
initiatives and reforms,  
including for the National  
Code of Conduct for health  
care workers and complaints  
management under NDIS



Commenced a Complaint Handling Continuous Improvement Program to strengthen our role and capacity in managing complaints, resulting in a 68% reduction in aged cases

## 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.

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*.

Our functions 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*. Under these Acts, our main functions 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*

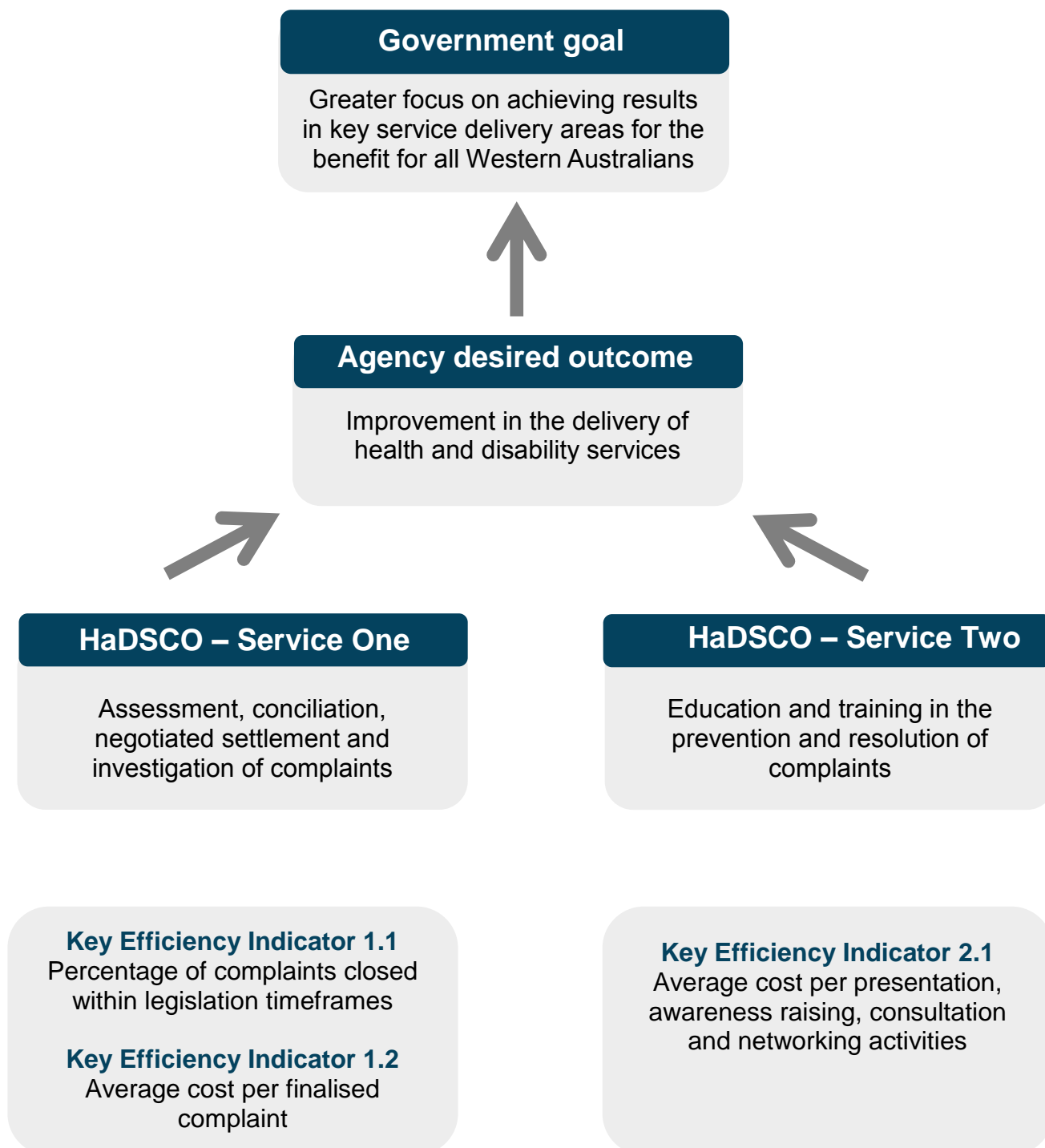
### Responsible Minister

Hon Roger Cook MLA  
Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health.

## 1.4 Performance Management Framework

The diagram below provides a visual representation of how we function as an Office in the Performance Management Framework to achieve our outcomes in the context of the wider Government goals.

We do this to work towards achieving the overarching Government goal – Greater focus on achieving results in key service delivery areas for the benefit of all Western Australians.



## 1.5 Our Strategic Direction

### Strategic Plan 2017-2021

HaDSCO's new Strategic Plan 2017-2021 sets out the Office's vision, mission and values and outlines four areas of strategic focus: complaints, educate and train, governance, and respond to changing environments.

For complaints, the focus is on ensuring our services are accessible and that we manage complaints in a professional, impartial, confidential and efficient manner. We aim to achieve quality outcomes, by working with relevant parties to facilitate redress to individuals, where appropriate, and to identify systemic improvements.

In the area of educate and train, we are committed to informing, educating and empowering the community and service providers to prevent complaints. The Office's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy January 2017-June 2018, guides the delivery of stakeholder engagement programs and outreach activities under six program areas covering communications; regional, remote and diverse communities; health sector engagement; disability sector engagement; mental health sector engagement; and community engagement.

It is important we deliver our services within a sound governance framework. The emphasis of this component of our Strategic Plan is on operating with high level ethical principles and in compliance with public sector requirements. It is important that we have a skilled workforce with a culture that supports team work, professionalism, impartiality and responsiveness, and that we demonstrate our accountability to stakeholders.

A key feature of the Strategic Plan is the Office's ability to respond appropriately to the changing environment. The Office continues to work with stakeholders to identify and evaluate emerging issues. For example, the implementation of the National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers, and the roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Western Australia. We continue to adapt service delivery to meet the needs of our stakeholders including in managing complaints under the *Mental Health Act 2014* following implementation in 2015.

In this Annual Report we provide an overview of performance aligned to these four areas, as defined in our Strategic Plan. Both complaints and educate and train are reported on separately in office performance, given they encompass HaDSCO's Service One and Service Two delivery respectively. Respond to changing environments is incorporated at various stages throughout the report; given our continual focus on ensuring service delivery is responsive to changes in the wider environment. Governance is reported on in disclosures and legal compliance.

Details of HaDSCO's vision, mission, values and strategic priorities identified in our Strategic Plan are set out over the page.



## **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**

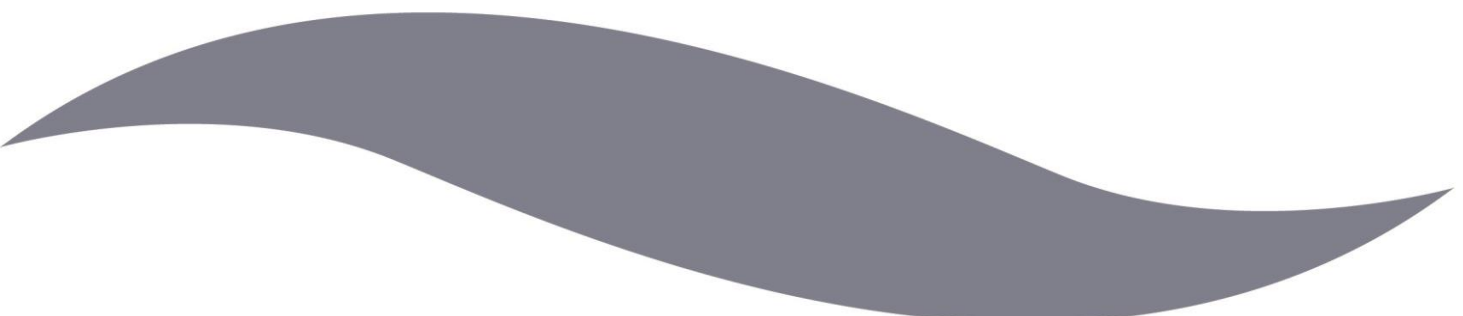
Assessment, conciliation, negotiated settlement and investigation of complaints.

- **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.
- 

## Complaints

**Receive, Resolve, Reform**  
**Manage complaints in a professional, impartial, confidential and efficient manner with quality outcomes**

- We ensure our services are accessible to all individuals who wish to make complaints about services provided by the health, disability and mental health sectors.
- We provide an impartial, efficient and high quality service to resolve complaints through assessment, negotiated settlement, conciliation, and/or investigation.
- We work with the relevant parties to facilitate redress where appropriate and to identify systemic improvement.

## Educate and train

**Engage, Evaluate, Educate**  
**Inform, educate and empower the community and service providers to prevent complaints**

- We contribute towards keeping communities well informed about complaints resolution processes across the health, disability and mental health sectors.
- We monitor and evaluate systemic trends in our complaints to inform opportunities for improvement, including through engagement and education.
- We provide guidance to service providers to assist in the development of appropriate internal complaints management systems that are 'fit for purpose'.

## Governance

**Cooperate, Comply, Communicate**  
**Deliver our services within a sound governance framework**

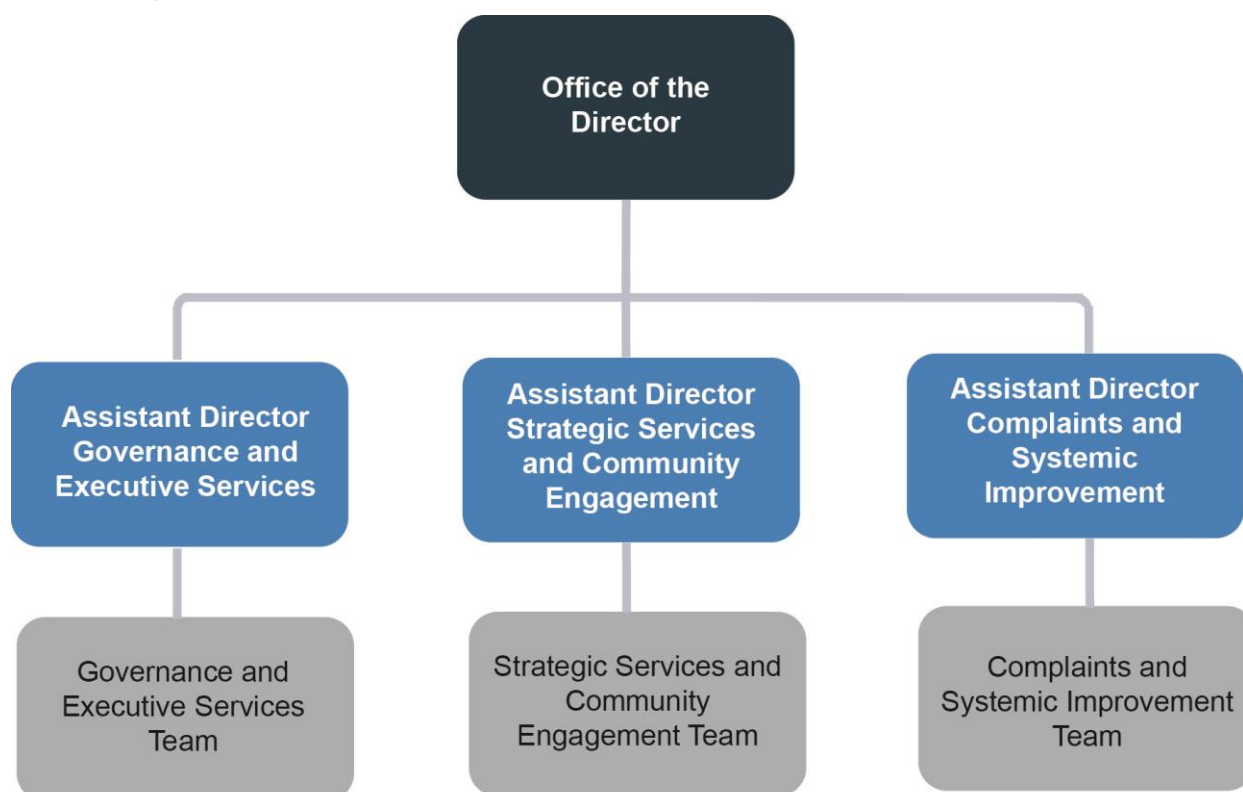
- We operate in accordance with high level ethical principles, abide by all public sector requirements and are respected for our integrity.
- We attract, develop and retain a skilled workforce with a culture that supports team work, professionalism, impartiality and responsiveness.
- We demonstrate our accountability to stakeholders by providing access to the principles, policies and procedures that govern our operations, and detail our commitment to them.

## Respond to changing environments

**Review, Respond, Redefine**  
**Respond appropriately to our changing environments**

- We work with internal and external stakeholders to identify and evaluate emerging issues.
- We embrace and manage change in a work environment that is flexible and innovative in service design.
- We adapt our service delivery to meet the changing needs of stakeholders.

## 1.6 Organisational structure



An overview of HaDSCO's organisational structure as at 30 June 2017 is below:

### Office of the Director

The Office of the Director includes the Director and an Administrative Coordinator to oversee the work of HaDSCO.

### Complaints and Systemic Improvement Team

The key functions of this team are to provide a complaint resolution service through negotiated settlement, conciliation and investigation of complaints and undertake work relating to the systemic improvement of health, disability and mental health services.

### Strategic Services and Community Engagement Team

The key functions of this team are to deliver programs to educate and promote HaDSCO's services and collaborate with stakeholders.

### Governance and Executive Services Team

The key functions of this team are to set the strategic direction and development of high level policy initiatives for the Office, undertake key projects, manage external data collection programs, and provide corporate governance, administration, human resources, records management and finance services across the Office.

### Support Services

Support is provided by the Health Support Services of WA Health in the areas of information technology, procurement, finance and human resources. In addition, an officer from the Department of Health has been appointed to undertake the role of Chief Finance Officer for HaDSCO.