



PERTH CORONERS COURT

3 FEB 2021

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**The Hon Roger Cook MLA
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health; Mental Health**

Our ref: 60-33252

Dawn Wright
Manager Listings
Office of the State Coroner
Central Law Courts
501 Hay Street
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Ms Wright

Thank you for your correspondence of 11 November 2020 regarding State Coroner Fogliani's Inquest into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Key and the associated recommendations.

The tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Key has demonstrated the necessity of services such as the Mental Health Co-Response Program, particularly the Mobile teams, to respond to those with mental health issues who are in crisis.

As you are aware, the Mental Health Co-Response (MHCR) is a joint initiative between Western Australia Police Force (WA Police), the MHC and Health Service Providers (HSP). Funding is provided recurrently by both the WA Police and MHC for the current program (which excludes the regions) of approximately \$11 million per annum.

The Mental Health Commission has advised as follows:

Recommendation One

That the MHCR Program continue to be funded, and that consideration be given to providing the WA Police and the Western Australia Mental Health Commission (MHC) with additional, external funding in order to support expansion of the programme in a way that meets demand.

As part of the 2020-21 Budget process, the MHC worked with WA Police to consider multiple options for an expansion to meet demand. Based on the data collected and evidence, the proposal sought four components to expand the MHCR Program. This was to ensure a complete wraparound service for mental health and co-occurring alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues.

The four components included:

1. Metropolitan Expansion:
 - a. Expanding the positions, days and hours of service at the POC;
 - b. Expanding the number of Mobile Teams (MTs) (from four to eight, with an additional day); and
 - c. Expanding the positions, days and hours of service at the PWH
2. Regional Expansion:
 - a. Establish two regional MTs in Geraldton and Bunbury.
3. Support for Co-occurring AOD and mental health attendances:
 - a. Provide training to all WA Police Officers and the Mental Health Practitioners that work within the MTs both in the metropolitan area and the regions (Bunbury and Geraldton) to appropriately respond to call outs where there is an AOD issue occurring with a mental health issue.
4. MHCR Unit - Project Support:
 - a. Additional Project Officer support.

The WA Police have committed to providing Police Officers to expand the program in metropolitan and regional areas. The MHC will submit a business case as part of 2021-22 Budget process for the clinical components.

Recommendation Two

That consideration be given to providing the WA Police and the MHC with additional, external funding in order to support the expansion of the MHCR in metropolitan areas of Perth.

The MHCR program commenced on 18 January 2016 (Trial Period from 18 January 2016 to 17 January 2018). The initial components of the trial included the Police Operations Centre (POC), Perth Watch House (PWH) and within the North-West Metropolitan and South-East Metropolitan WA Police districts. Following an evaluation of the trial period, in April 2019 the MHCR was expanded.

The expansion included:

- an additional two mobile response teams located at Cockburn and Midland Police stations (expanding from the existing two teams at Warwick and Cannington Police stations), with increased hours (from an eight hour shift to a 10 hour shift) for all four mobile teams, operating six days per week Monday to Saturday;
 - North (Warwick area) (NMHS)
 - South East (Cannington area) (EMHS)
 - South (Cockburn/Murdoch area) (SMHS); and
 - East (Midland area) (EMHS).
- an increase in hours at the POC from an eight hour shift to a 10 hour shift, maintaining one practitioner, six days per week Monday to Saturday; and

- an adjustment of the shifts from the current arrangement (Monday to Saturday) to Tuesday to Sunday, and an increase in shift hours from eight to 10 per shift for the PWH.

As previously stated, a further expansion of the Metropolitan area is proposed in the 2021-22 Budget proposal from the MHC (see response to recommendation one). The WA Police have already committed to this expansion.

Recommendation Three

That work continue on the planning of the MHCR in regional areas of the State, and consideration be given to providing the WA Police and the MHC with additional, external funding in order to support the expansion of the MHCR into regional areas.

There are currently no joint mental health initiatives between HSPs, WA Police and the MHC within the regions. As such, WA Police and the MHC have, together with the WA Country Health Service (WACHS), formed a Regional Steering Group (steering group) in order to consider possible options for a proposed expansion of the MHCR to regional areas.

In response to the Methamphetamine Action Plan Taskforce Report, in 2019-20 the Government committed \$200,000 'to plan for the expansion of the MHCR model to regional areas and to include support for alcohol and other drug issues'. As part of the \$200,000, WACHS conducted a feasibility study (the Study). The Study provides an evidence base to assist the MHC, WA Police and WACHS in determining the most appropriate Model of Service for the possible expansion of MHCR program for regional and remote areas of Western Australia. The study will be used to further build the proposed 2021-22 business case. The MHC, WA Police and WACHS continue to work in collaboration to further develop and refine a model to suit each region.

Thank you again for taking the time to inform me of the report. I look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Western Australians.

Yours sincerely

HON ROGÉR COOK MLA
DEPUTY PREMIER,
MINISTER FOR HEALTH; MENTAL HEALTH

25 JAN 2021