



**The Hon Tony Simpson MLA
Minister for Local Government; Community Services;
Seniors and Volunteering; Youth**

Our Ref: 49-10392

Ms Rosalinda Fogliani
State Coroner
Coroner's Court
Level 10, 501 Hay Street
PERTH WA 6000

PERTH CORONERS COURT

08 FEB 2016

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Dear Ms Fogliani

INVESTIGATION INTO SUICIDES CONNECTED TO THE ALMA STREET CENTRE

As the Minister for Community Services, I was interested to read the findings and recommendations of your inquest into the deaths of five people connected to the Alma Street Centre's psychiatric unit that occurred between March 2011 and March 2012.

The State Government recognises that carers are vital to supporting the delivery of person-centred care. I therefore support your recommendation that the Department of Health develop policies and procedures to implement Carers' Plans, which will enable carers to better access patient information and facilitate their involvement in admission, treatment and discharge planning.

As you may be aware, the Western Australian Government has a long history of recognising and supporting carers. Western Australia was the first jurisdiction to introduce carer-specific legislation – the *Carers Recognition Act 2004* and the Western Australian Carers Charter – which are administered by my Department of Local Government and Communities.

The Act applies to the Department of Health, the Disability Services Commission, and the organisations they fund to provide services. It requires these organisations to take all practicable measures to comply with the requirements of the Charter.

The Charter requires that carers must be included in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of services that impact on them, and that their views and needs, along with the views, needs and best interests of the person they care for, must be taken into account when decisions are made that impact on them.

Applicable agencies and organisations are required to report their compliance with the Act to me on an annual basis. The Mental Health Commission voluntarily reports on its compliance.

My Department is developing the State's first Carers' Strategic Framework as the next step toward greater community recognition of and support for Western Australian carers. The draft framework – which is currently available for public comment – identifies the inclusion of carers as partners in care as a priority. It acknowledges that the active engagement of carers in the design and delivery of care and services is likely to result in better outcomes for them and the person they care for, and suggests strategies and actions for involving them.

There is a clear complementarity between your recommendation and the work of my Department, which I hope will lead to greater involvement of carers in admission, treatment and discharge planning in order to deliver better outcomes for patients and minimise the risk of preventable adverse events.

I encourage you to review the draft Carers' Strategic Framework, which is available online at dlgc.wa.gov.au, and have enclosed a copy of the Carers Recognition Act, which includes the Carers Charter at Schedule 2, for your information.

Yours sincerely

HON TONY SIMPSON MLA
**MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT; COMMUNITY SERVICES;
SENIORS AND VOLUNTEERING; YOUTH**

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- 2 FEB 2016