

# GREAT<sup>for the</sup> STATE

BUSINESSNEWS

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SERIES 2 – EDITION 2

**A CARING  
SOCIETY**

12-PAGE LIFTOUT

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Partners



Lee  
Homeless Perth resident  
Photo: Gabriel Oliveira



## SERIES 2 – EDITION 2

# A caring society

Taking action to help Western Australia's most vulnerable should be a priority for everybody.

## OUR PARTNERS – HELPING US SHAPE GREAT FOR THE STATE



### Carmelo Arto

Chief executive officer  
Breast Cancer Research Centre  
WA

Mental health is a key area of our service at Breast Cancer Research Centre WA, where we have just completed Australia-first research providing the evidence to help address patient and family psychological needs.

A cancer diagnosis has significant impact on patients and families, and of course on children. This can be due to changes in the family dynamic and children having to undertake additional family responsibilities, resulting in less time for social activities. Such changes can affect a child's personal development during their formative years and result in high levels of emotional and psychological distress. Adolescence is already a vulnerable stage, so it stands to reason that when an adolescent has a parent going through cancer, they are at higher risk of psychosocial disturbance than a younger or adult child.

(See page 8) ■



### Matt Kelly

Partner, transaction services  
KPMG

A commitment to our communities is one of KPMG's core values and a cornerstone of our culture.

At an international level, we are committed to helping solve some of the key challenges facing the world by working with organisations such as the United Nations (through the Global Compact initiative), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and the World Economic Forum.

Locally there is so much we can do as individuals and through our businesses to help improve the lives of all Western Australians. We can contribute to creating a sustainable future for WA and making sure we don't leave anyone behind.

(See page 9) ■



### Phil Matera

Owner and founding director  
Matera Electrical

Phil Matera started Matera Electrical with friend Dean Kerns in 2003, the same year Mr Matera was named in the AFL's All-Australian team. In the 18 years since, Mr Matera has applied the same dedication he showed on the field to create a highly successful business. Establishing a commitment to training and development from the very beginning, Messrs Matera and Kerns have employed 60 apprentices, including 25 Aboriginal people. Providing their young staff with the STEM skills they need for jobs now and into the future is driving business success and changing lives.

(See page 10) ■



### Paul Flatau

Centre for Social Impact  
The University of Western  
Australia

When it comes to caring, Western Australia is doing well in some areas but faces challenges in others. While the state provides good access to basic services such as health and education, more is needed when it comes to housing access for the homeless and youth unemployment. The Centre for Social Impact at UWA is working hard in both areas in terms of its research and community impact work to shed a light on the problems we face. A pleasing trend in WA is the rise in social purpose-oriented volunteering and this is particularly evident among UWA students through structured student volunteering, internship options and work placement programs.

(See page 11) ■

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## Future issues

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**They've got all these vacant buildings, they could turn them into hostels for homeless people - Jono**

# Complex dynamics drive growth in homelessness

**Not having a place to sleep throws a person's world into turmoil.**

**EFFORT** Jono says he misses working and wants to get back on his feet.

Story by **Matt McKenzie** Photos by **Gabriel Oliveira**

**I**t's getting worse, Jono says of the increasing number of homeless people in Perth.

"There's a lot of people on the streets all the time," he told *Business News* one recent evening on Murray Street.

Aged 40, Jono said he had been homeless for more than five years, and planned to sleep at a friend's place that night.

Homelessness is defined by the community sector to include people sleeping rough on the streets, couch surfing and in crisis accommodation or shelters.

The lack of stability a regular address can provide often has a severe impact on a person's well-being financially, physically, and mentally.

While there's a perception of a deepening crisis in Perth, and updated data is lacking, work is under way across the community sector, and in government, to resolve the complex issues that contribute to poverty.

That has been underpinned by a major change in strategy in the past decade: prioritising housing, with other support around causes of homelessness offered in

addition to an initiative known as Housing First.

It is a change from previous strategies, which sought to address issues around addiction or mental health first as preparation for a tenancy.

There are no easy fixes, however. Jono said he had to leave a labouring job after being stabbed in the arm in a street attack, and now received a disability pension.

"If I get a job and earn too much I can lose my payment; I don't want to lose my payment [but] I want to get a job," he said.

"I want to get back on my feet.

"I don't want to keep doing this. I miss working."

He had sent his resume to a number of businesses, yet had not been offered an opportunity.

Adding to the difficulties, Jono said he had relapsed into a meth addiction after the death of his father, and had opted not to stay at his wife's home because of on-going tension about his employment situation.

On the night *Business News* spoke to Lee (cover photo) on Murray Street near Royal Perth Hospital, he said he was not sure where he'd sleep.

In his 50s, he walks the streets carrying a Street Swag roll-up mattress on his back.

Lee had just visited Royal Perth

Hospital because of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

"My biggest problem is, if I'm medically unwell, I go present myself at triage, and most of the medical people think I'm only there looking for a bed at night," he said.

The hospital's social worker section had closed hours earlier, at 5pm, Lee said.

"Organisations don't deliver what they promote, I call them a mutual admiration society," he said.

"There's a big problem out there and no-one seems to be doing anything about it."

*Continued on page 4*



# Complex dynamics drive homeless rise

Continued from page 3



David (above), Stacey and Jackie (below) are vendors for *The Big Issue*.

The sleep deprivation was possibly the hardest part of sleeping rough, Lee said.

"Most of the time you can find a nice spot to camp, and there will be a security guard, or the police will turn up, torch in your eyes, wake you up, saying 'You've got to move on you can't stay here,'" he said.

Lee said his main income source was a disability pension.

He said he had previously lived in shelters around Australia, and social housing in South Australia, but had left the latter because of frustrations with the property and neighbours.

Both Lee and Jono highlighted the importance of adequate housing as a solution to homelessness.

"We just need more houses to get people off the streets," Jono said.

"They've got all these vacant buildings, they could turn them into hostels for homeless people."

## Hope

Some social enterprises are providing jobs for those who are homeless or at risk, and helping train them for future employment.

One example is **Ground & Co**, which sells coffees outside the EY Building with support from Brookfield Properties, among others.

It was founded by **Katie Liew**, who previously worked in the resources industry and was inspired to take action on poverty after a period in Indonesia.

"I spent time in a garbage dump in Jakarta, I saw kids with no ac-

cess to education, sanitation," Ms Liew said.

"That was a turning point. I needed to do something more impactful with my life."

Valerie works at **Ground & Co** and had been living in a shelter after suffering domestic violence from a partner.

Valerie told *Business News* she had moved from Malaysia to marry the man, and so had a limited network to support her when the relationship turned abusive.

She stayed with a friend, was supported by **UnitingCare West**, and then at **Zonta House**, a women's refuge.

"I'm very thankful for Katie, she gave me a life," Valerie said.

"[Ground & Co] employed me without any work experience.

"I can [now] survive on my own, look after myself ... I'm grateful."

While income from what was her first job in Australia was beneficial, working gave Valerie something to look forward to.

It had helped ease some of the anxiety and fear she suffered after the abuse, she said.

Another social enterprise is **The Big Issue**, a Melbourne-based fortnightly magazine established in 1991 and sold by vendors experiencing disadvantage, who earn half the revenue from all sales made.

Stacey, who has sold the magazine for about 18 months, had been homeless in Perth about two decades ago, after childhood trauma and abusive relationships.

"Becoming a vendor ended up

It gives me purpose, it gives me a reason to get up in the morning

- Stacey







being one of the best things in my life," Stacey told *Business News*.

"It gives me purpose, it gives me a reason to get up in the morning.

"I love meeting people. I look forward to seeing new people every day."

Stacey said she was five years clean from an addiction and was now mentoring others, and in her spare time, knitting scarves and blankets for homeless people.

A big thing she'd like to see changed was longer-term support for women who had suffered trauma, because often services came to an end before a person was fully back on their feet.

Jackie, who has been selling *The Big Issue* for nearly four years, had lived in a refuge after experiencing domestic violence.

Jackie said she had moved into community housing, having spent years on the waiting list.

There were about 14,000 people on the list at June 30 last year, according to Housing Authority data.

Both Jackie and her daughter sell the magazine in the city.

Similar to other vendors, Jackie said she loved to connect with people and that the experience made her feel like part of a big, happy family.

Another positive was that it gave her financial support to do nice little extras, like something special for her daughter's 21st birthday.

David said he had been selling *The Big Issue* around Yagan Square for 11 months, and said it had improved his self esteem significantly.

"The best part of it is meeting people," he said.

"People shake your hand.

"I used to do a lot of begging, around Northbridge and that.

"I kept getting in trouble with the law.

"There's a hell of a lot of homeless people out there."

## Action

The recently launched **End Homelessness WA Foundation**, aims to facilitate philanthropy in this space.

Fremantle Foundation executive officer **Dylan Smith** has played a big role in the [End Homelessness] foundation's creation, and said one of the first projects to gain support was the 20 Lives, 20 Homes initiative in Fremantle.

The two-year 20 Lives program, which has the support of local and state governments, aims to provide housing and wrap-around support to deeply vulnerable people, and follows a similar program in Perth.

"The End Homelessness WA Foundation will encourage corporates and individuals to do-

nate to the foundation to start the building of permanent and suitable housing for people who are without a home," Mr Smith said.

"On any given night in WA, 10,000 people are homeless; it is this staggering fact alone that inspired our involvement with a determination to work towards ending homelessness in a generation."

It's a critical time for philanthropy.

The state budget showed homelessness support services spending will decrease 13 per cent to \$46.1 million over the forward estimates.

There have been moves to rectify this, with \$150 million to be invested in public housing, as per a December 2019 announcement, and \$72 million to support a 10-year strategy on homelessness.

Shadow housing minister **Tony Krsticevic** told *Business News* the challenge was exacerbated by cost pressure on service providers, with wages in the sector rising following a federal Equal Remuneration Order in 2012.

Demand was also rising, he said, with people under mortgage stress and small business owners underwater, and many were reaching out to use social services.

These three factors would mean a funding increase for community service providers particularly was needed, he said.

Mr Krsticevic said he supported the approach of Housing First, which has earned bipartisan acceptance and community group backing.

It's a key part of the strategies developed by the government, with support from key players in the sector.

Community Services Minister **Simone McGurk** launched the government's strategy in December, with work ongoing with stakeholders.

The Strategy recognise that solutions are complex, and unique for each person.

One objective is the 'no wrong door policy', meaning people can get the right help regardless of which department or community provider they connect with.

It means homeless people will be able to get all the services they need regardless of where they turn first.

**UnitingCare West** chief executive **Amanda Hunt** said the organisation would soon start a project at the Tranby Centre in Perth to create an engagement centre, funded by LotteryWest.

"It's about a really radical change in the current approach," Ms Hunt said.



"This is a way of engaging with people who are sleeping rough, have recently become homeless or been at risk of homelessness.

"And having multiple partners co-located."

Those partner organisations would help address issues around financial hardship, domestic violence, or drugs and alcohol.

"It's a way of working where we all work together," she said

"We have to work systemically, a whole of system approach."

Ms Hunt said there were misconceptions about homelessness.

"One of the big myths the whole sector wants to bust is that everyone experiencing homelessness is on drugs or using alcohol," she said.

"Predominantly it's people who are experiencing financial hardship through lack of affordable housing."

An increasing number of women were coming through the doors at the Tranby Centre, with about half of new arrivals now females.

The majority also suffered mental health issues, sometimes driven by financial hardship.

Ms Hunt said improved resourcing for the state's mental health strategy would be critical (see page 10).

**Anglicare WA** chief executive **Mark Glasson** said appropriate housing was the first step in solving other problems.

While building more houses was critical, there were a range of complementary options.

Those included higher rent assistance payments, government underwriting leases for disadvantaged people in private sector accommodation, changes to tenancy laws, and a rethinking of public housing eviction rules.

A pilot project launched by the state government in 2016 called Assisted Rental Pathways helps disadvantaged tenants secure leases in the private market. The government guarantees rent and covers property damage, with tenancies to run up to four years.

Mr Glasson said the government should also reconsider its policies around eviction of tenants in state housing.

"Rather than saying three strikes you're gone, what we'd prefer is one or two strikes and we'll bring



**CONNECTION**  
Valerie (below) works at Ground & Co, founded by Katie Liew.

in support to help those people manage their relationships in the community," he said.

"We're hitting the walnut with a sledgehammer ... we need to be a bit more sensitive with how we apply that policy."

More broadly, housing should not be dependent on successful engagement with other services, he said.

"The existing systems we work within look for quick fixes and easy solutions, they don't exist," Mr Glasson said.

"We're dealing with really complex people, with really complex lives.

"It's going to take time and resources to get them through this." ■

**We're dealing with really complex people, with really complex lives**

- Mark Glasson





# Strong support for battling ad

**WA may need to reconsider the balance between imprisonment and rehabilitation for people suffering drug dependency, according to advocates.**

**You can take the prisoner out of prison, but you need to take the prison out of the prisoner**

*-Peter Lyndon-James*

**ACTION** Peter Lyndon-James founded Shalom House after his own journey with addiction.

Story by Matt Mckenzie Photos by Gabriel Oliveira

**T**he road to addiction started early for Rohan and Tyler, as the escalating chaos and pain in their family lives took its toll.

Both are residents of Shalom House rehabilitation centre in Midland, which helps men struggling with addiction reshape their lives.

Rohan, who is soon to graduate from the centre after nearly three years as a resident, told *Business News* he had tried marijuana before he was a teenager, and started using methamphetamines at 14.

"It consumed me," he said.

"It ended up destroying my life.

"You get on a train, the train just picks up speed.

"I was stealing, dealing ... to support my habit."

Years later, Rohan reflected how events in his childhood, particularly his parents' break-up, had contributed to his situation.

One of the toughest times had been after a back injury, when he used a variety of drugs to treat pain and continue working.

"It just ends with knowing you have an issue, my wife and I knew we needed help," Rohan said.

"I just wanted to be better."

That led him to Shalom House in 2017.

The rehabilitation centre was founded by Peter Lyndon-James in 2012, years after overcoming his own problems with addiction.

Shalom House has butted heads with local government and regulators, but also achieved widespread publicity for its tough love approach to rehabilitation.

There has been debate about data on its effectiveness, however, with reported estimates ranging from 5 per cent to 50 per cent.

It is just one of many services in Western Australia, with varying specialties, including indigenous services, women-only centres, or in-home treatment.

There's ongoing debate about which treatment methods work best, and the effectiveness of rehabilitation compared with outcomes from a criminal justice approach.

While Shalom's tough love seems to contrast with others,

something it shares with organisations such as Harm Reduction Australia is a belief that prison is not the ideal pathway for healing.

The state government did not respond to a request for data about the success of rehabilitation centres in Western Australia.

One thing is absolutely clear though: treating addiction is not easy and no approach seems to be perfect.

"It has actually given me purpose," said Rohan, who now manages the program at Shalom House and helps new residents.

"It has completely changed my life, from top to bottom. I found my direction being here."

Rohan said a long-term approach to rehabilitation would help reduce addiction.

"Stop enabling them [addicts]," he said.

"Stop putting them in prisons and rehabilitate them holistically.

"You need to fix all aspects of their life, clean up the person's heart and give them direction."

He said Shalom worked well because it held people accountable, helped him find work, and offered good support.

It also helped identify the causes of his pain, rather than applying a band aid solution, Rohan said.

Tyler has been a resident at Shalom House for nine months, having flown from Sydney to undertake the program.

Tyler's motivation to head to WA was the fear of losing his relationship with his grandmother, his strongest support.

Tyler said he had been involved in drugs and crime from age 12.

"I lost most of my family through my actions and the way I treated them," he said.

"I was getting into bad stuff with a lot of people.

"I got senseless, I didn't feel anything or care about anyone."

Rehabilitation has changed his life drastically.

"We need to offer more support people can seek out," Tyler said.

"Instead of just hearing them out and sending them on their way, helping them become a different person.



# diction

"Follow through with them, help them get jobs.

"Employment is one of the main things.

"I couldn't get a job anywhere because of all the stuff I was doing.

"That just made me resort to crime because I couldn't get money, I didn't know how to live a working life."

Tyler now works through Shalom House with partner organisations, labouring three days a week.

"Now I'm working; I love it," he said.

**Access Services Group** has been employing men from Shalom House since 2017, and general manager of operations **Henk Oudman** said they had a positive impact on the company's work environment.

Mr Oudman said program participants had excellent work ethic, self-discipline, respect and enthusiasm, and acted in an honest and moral way aligned with the company's values.

"It is important that we encourage programs such as these, and don't make a preconceived judgement based on someone's previous poor choices and life circumstances," he said.

"I have seen first-hand extraordinary changes men make through Shalom House.

"Business can play a role by enabling people to gain further skills

to improve their quality of life, regain their self-worth, dignity and families."

## Generating change

Shalom House founder Mr Lyndon-James told *Business News* there was a need for more rehabilitation centres.

That would not require decriminalisation however.

"In prison you must be somebody that you're not, to fit in with where you are," Mr Lyndon-James said.

"You're programmed, you've got to respond a certain way, act a certain way.

"Kindness is seen as a weakness.

"If you're separated from your children, your wife has to be the father figure ... the children are visiting in jail and aspire to be like their dad.

"I speak in prisons, I've seen three generations together.

"You can take the prisoner out of prison, but you need to take the prison out of the prisoner."

He said his rehabilitation program was effective because it was the strictest in Australia.

Mr Lyndon-James said it was a long program, with residents usually staying more than a year.

In his view, effective rehabilitation meant a need to get deep into their issues and help rebuild their brain to be functional in society.

Former Labor premier **Geoff Gallop** now works as an advocate with Harm Reduction Australia.

In 2004, his government decriminalised the use of cannabis (the Barnett government repealed this law in 2011).

Mr Gallop told *Business News* he believed the criminal justice system was not best placed to deal with drug use.

"We're not tackling a health issue as well as we could because we've criminalised it," Mr Gallop said.

"And the lack of realism in the thinking and policy disturbs me.

"[The] drug laws in place, they're there as a means of discouraging people using drugs.

"They're there on the basis that,



**PATHWAY** Peter Lyndon-James (left), with Shalom House residents Tyler and Rohan.

over time, you can remove drug use from the community.

"Totally ineffective."

By contrast, he said, harm reduction policies such as programs for clean needles had benefits.

"It has been demonstrated very clearly [the clean needle program] led to a significant improvement of the health outcomes of people who use drugs," Mr Gallop said.

"Look at the injection centre at Kings Cross in Sydney, not one overdose death associated with that.

"Harm reduction is definitely adding value to our health system, it accepts the fact people use drugs and says let's minimise the chance that can be dangerous ... and over time hopefully they might be able to overcome addiction.

"Leaving it to the criminal justice system, you're not going to get those health benefits."

Mr Gallop said a number of countries in Europe had tried harm reduction policies, with no significant increase in drug use as a result.

Work by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction shows cocaine, MDMA and amphetamine use fell in the decade to 2016 in Portugal (which

decriminalised in 2001), although cannabis use increased.

About 1.2 per cent of Portuguese aged 15 to 34 reported use of cocaine in the previous year in 2007, falling to 0.3 per cent in 2016.

The opposing evidence includes a survey from the NSW government in 2001 finding 14 per cent of cannabis users would use more frequently if it were legalised.

About 29 per cent of those who did not use cannabis said its illegal

status was the main reason.

Alaska voted to re-criminalise marijuana in 1990, after decriminalisation had led to increased use, according to the United States Drug Enforcement Agency.

"No-one who advocates change in this area is under the misapprehension that drug use can't be problematic," Mr Gallop said.

"The question is, how do you best handle the issue." ■

# 2011

## Cannibis use re-criminalised in WA



# Smarter welfare to en

**A redesign of Newstart and a rethink of how payments are reduced when people re-enter the workforce could make the welfare system more effective for the most vulnerable.**

**PRIORITY** Australia will need to consider how to best allocate its welfare budget to meet the needs of all. Photo: Gabriel Oliveira

**The biggest problem ... is we treat the system as one size fits all**

*-Glenn Fahey*

Story by **Matt McKenzie**

**P**overty remains a key challenge for governments across Australia, despite a \$180 billion spend on welfare programs in the 2020 financial year, an increase of 62 per cent during the past decade.

The Newstart unemployment payment is among the most contentious issues, politically; currently, more than 700,000 recipients earn up to \$559 per fortnight.

**Australian National University** professor **Robert Breunig**, who is director of the Tax and Transfer Policy Institute, said the payment was a one-size-fits-all solution.

"Newstart is tricky. There are people getting Newstart unlikely to get a job any time in the future and may never get a job again," Professor Breunig said.

"If you're 50 years old in an industry shut down by globalisation, it's going to be difficult for you to get a job.

"And Newstart is pretty inadequate to live on.

## SPONSORED CONTENT

# Patient and family support

A caring society takes a holistic approach to looking after people and their families. Mental health can be a complex area for families to navigate. Here at Breast Cancer Research Centre – WA we are developing breast cancer specific health services for patients and their families in the new centre opening July 2020. Breast cancer is the most common cancer affecting women and the most common cause of cancer death in women. In Australia, 49% of newly diagnosed breast cancers occur in women under 60, with 23% of women under 50 at the time of diagnosis. It's likely many of these women have children aged between 14-24 at the time of their diagnosis and during their treatment.

Our philosophy at BCRC-WA, that if we can better understand families' needs during their cancer journey, we can better support them, was the motivation behind our offspring study. Our aim is always to do all we can to ensure patients have the greatest chance of recovery and support.

## Outcomes

The study assessed the psychological needs and distress of offspring of both early and advanced breast cancer patients. It also analysed the demographic and cancer related factors that impact on levels of

distress and unmet psychological needs of offspring.

It was found there was a significant number of offspring with high levels of distress, where distress tends to be greatest soon after diagnosis. Key findings of the study included:

- 31% of the offspring reported high distress
- 10% displayed severe distress, requiring immediate intervention
- Stage of diagnosis is significant in that highest distress for offspring is soon after diagnosis and therefore personnel and programs to address this will be crucial
- Female offspring have higher rates of distress than male.

By defining the level of distress and unmet needs (and identifying factors associated with such increased distress and needs) BCRC-WA is better able to identify families struggling with the impact of a breast cancer diagnosis and tailor programs to address this currently unmet need.

**Carmelo Arto, CEO**  
**Breast Cancer Research Centre – WA**





# gage all

"But if you're 22 years old looking for a job, we want Newstart to be inadequate to live on because we want to push those people to get jobs.

"The biggest period of wage increases is generally in the first 12 years of their lives, so it's really important for those people to be working or studying.

"It's pretty disastrous not to be engaged in economic activity because they get on a trajectory where they can't get jobs later in life."

A solution might be two different types of Newstart, he said, with a bigger payment for those over a certain age unable to find employment.

"It's important to recognise there are real trade-offs," professor Breunig said.

"The evidence from around the world and from Australia is pretty unambiguous.

"Making payments to people out of work more generous

provides a small disincentive for people to work, so at the margin there are going to be some people who end up not working because of that.

"That's actually worse for those people."

**Centre for Independent Studies** research fellow **Glenn Fahey** agreed Newstart could be rethought as separate programs.

"The biggest problem ... is we treat the system as one size fits all," Mr Fahey said.

"We've got a single Newstart payment that goes to all kinds of recipients."

While the number of people on the payments was falling, the average time for recipients was rising, he said.

Recipients of the Newstart payment could be broken down into at least two groups, Mr Fahey said, depending on the time period for which they received payments.

The need to increase payment

rates was not as critical for short-term recipients, he said.

"These people are receiving it for a short period of time and otherwise drawing upon (savings) ... and not at huge risk of being unemployed long term," Mr Fahey said.

He said about 15 per cent of recipients had been on the payment for 10 years or more, and for those people it should be reconsidered if Newstart was effective.

Often there were significant barriers to them finding work, and Mr Fahey said it was probably unacceptable that people would be living on the Newstart amount for that period of time.

"Sometimes in the effort to simplify the system, we've actually removed payments that are better for some people," he said.

**Grattan Institute** budget policy director **Danielle Wood** said the Newstart rate should be lifted by \$75 a week, as it was far too low to put people in a position to become active jobseekers.

A second concern was the rate at which welfare benefits were reduced when people return to the workforce.

In some circumstances, a Newstart recipient moving to part-time

work will keep less than 30 cents of each dollar earned.

"There's a significant drop off [in Newstart] when your income gets above \$25,000," Ms Wood said.

"Essentially you hit a cliff. We should look at the taper ... to provide an incentive for people to go back to work if they can only get part-time work, which is increasingly common.

"[That would] allow them to transition back into the workforce without finding their payment cuts off."

That problem was even more pronounced for women who were second earners returning to work after having children, she said.

## Pressing issues

Professor Breunig said there was a good case for raising rent assistance, particularly for pensioners,

as housing prices had increased in recent decades.

Another issue that needed to be addressed was single parenting payments, Mr Fahey said.

When single mothers re-enter the workforce they pay tax on income, see a rapid reduction in welfare payments, and also have to pay childcare fees.

The single parent payment is \$787.70 per fortnight, and reduces at a rate of 60 cents for every dollar earned if a recipient makes more than \$104 in a fortnight.

"It has a real potential to become a big problem, single mothers taking time off work and facing a high disincentive to return to work," Mr Fahey said.

"The short-term cost is nothing compared to the long-term cost of being out of the workforce." ■

# \$180bn

## Australia's annual welfare spend

### SPONSORED CONTENT

# Leaving no one behind



We are one of the most successful economies in the modern world, but some people are being left behind.

What can we do better on homelessness, poverty, intergenerational unemployment and mental health?

When we become a little too focussed on our own success (that car, the next pay rise) it is a good time to reflect that as a society we can only truly succeed if we bring everyone along with us. There will always be differences, but we cannot allow poverty, homelessness, increasing issues around mental health, disadvantage and lack of opportunity to go unchallenged. We can't just pay our taxes and make it someone else's problem.

I think it's pretty easy to rationalise why it's so important that we each shoulder a little additional collective responsibility in our already busy lives. What goes around comes around. We know from friends or family, or even times in our own lives, where a little extra help was needed. Bad things happen to good people; it's not just about "welfare handouts".

And increasingly this is what we all expect from our employers and with those that we choose to do business.

As a partner of KPMG, I'm proud that our firm has such a strong social agenda position which is both publicly stated and communicated throughout the organisation. We believe that our nation will not realise its full potential until everyone has equal access to opportunity, with business playing a vital role in solving social and environmental issues. This is what our people want and expect from their employer.

As a leader in Corporate Citizenship, KPMG harnesses the energy and capabilities of our people to empower positive change for our community. In 2016, we launched our Social Impact Framework to continue our focus on Australia's most pressing problems and to concentrate our efforts on initiatives where we can have the greatest impact. They align with four of the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

- Reduced Inequalities for Indigenous Australia;

- Climate Action;
- Quality Education; and
- Mental Health.

The same vast array of professional services that we provide to corporate Australia we also provide pro bono or heavily subsidised to assist in the development of those parts of society that are disadvantaged and lack opportunity.

We also create a framework for our staff to volunteer their time and skills at a local level. For many years every staff member has been allocated a day's leave to volunteer their time to a cause close to their hearts. Last spring we added a firm-wide volunteering event. It was incredibly gratifying to join half of our entire workforce on that special day and work in teams on community projects across Australia.

I also look forward to joining the KPMG team and other corporates in the Ride for Youth at the end of this month, where we'll ride for over 4.5 days and more than 700kms to raise funds and awareness for Youth Focus.

We'll be visiting schools in country towns along the way, discussing



the issues around youth suicide, depression, anxiety and self-harm, as well as the support services that Youth Focus provide. For me, the ride also provides a pathway to look after my own mental health and make a contribution to an at risk part of our community.

I hope KPMG is making a difference

not just directly but by inspiring other organisations to embrace opportunities to engage with their people and the communities in which they operate.

**Matt Kelly**  
**Partner, Transaction Services**  
**KPMG**



# Thinking beyond beds for me

**We're actually one of the most inefficient states when it comes to how much money we spend per person and the value we get out of that dollar for outcomes** - Taryn Harvey



**REALIGNMENT** Taryn Harvey says support services for vulnerable patients need more attention. Photo: Gabriel Oliveira

Story by **Matt McKenzie**

**A** sharper focus on employment, housing and support services will have far more impact on improving mental health outcomes for acute patients than building more hospital beds, according to sector leaders.

Western Australian Association for Mental Health chief executive Taryn Harvey said the sector's biggest need was improved community-based support.

"We need to change the conversation about what we require," Ms Harvey told *Business News*.

"The community conversation never seems to get beyond 'lets talk about more beds'.

"But the evidence tells us if we helped people earlier, helped people to stay well in the community, we would actually be diverting them from hospital and reducing their distress."

Ms Harvey said the strategy of improved community services

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Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation**

## Ex-AFL champion using STEM to help young Aboriginal people build strong careers

Ex-champion AFL footballer Phil Matera fully understands the importance of STEM skills in building a successful career and business, and he is now providing similar opportunities to young Aboriginal people.

Through his highly successful business, Matera Electrical, Mr Matera and business partner Dean Kerns have employed and trained more than 60 apprentices since they started the company 18 years ago.

Apprentices complete a Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician, one of the many TAFE courses that provides important job skills in science, technology, engineering and maths, collectively known as STEM.

More than 25 of Matera Electrical's apprentices have been Aboriginal men and women, and they are working on some of the state's biggest projects.

With the support of Woodside, 100% of Matera Electrical's apprentices currently working on the WA company's Karratha Gas Plant and Pluto LNG are Aboriginal people.

Mr Matera said the shared focus on employing Aboriginal apprentices and training them in STEM has been the most exciting aspect of the Woodside contract.

"These people are now skilled tradespeople in their own right,



L-R: Phil Matera, John Morgan, Dean Kerns, Ashley Daniels

and they are becoming the expert, technical workforce the WA economy needs," Mr Matera said.

"Making sure our apprentices undertake electrotechnology study at TAFE is vital to building the skills they need for jobs now and into the future.

"I am very proud that Matera Electrical has been at the forefront of using STEM to improve Aboriginal employment and training – our skilled and employed Aboriginal electricians are evidence of that success."

Mr Matera will feature in a soon-to-be-released state government campaign promoting the importance

of STEM skills for preparing Western Australians for the jobs of the future and strengthening and diversifying the state economy.

A key element of the campaign is to encourage young people to select two or more STEM subjects in Years 11 and 12 or through vocational education and training qualifications.

The state government has reduced TAFE fees by 50% for 34 high priority qualifications, including the Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician.

This fee cut, in place until the end of 2021, is providing more Western Australians with access to STEM training and careers.



# ntal health

## A greater focus on community support and the closure of Graylands Hospital could create better outcomes for Western Australians with severe mental health issues.

was outlined in the state's bipartisan plan for mental health and related services released in 2015.

The focus on support services would help people address the social determinants of mental health, she said, but not enough progress had been made in achieving the targets.

"Support services help patients to maintain their housing, access employment, [and] rebuild their social relationships if those have been under pressure during periods of people's distress," Ms Harvey said.

"They help them to really create those environments and stay well in the community by staying connected to the things that improve all of our mental health.

"They're largely focused on people who have ongoing and persistent experience of mental health issues."

That can be contrasted with the demand-driven approach that

has historically underpinned the system.

"We rely so heavily on waiting for people to become really, really unwell and then requiring hospital help," Ms Harvey said.

"We're actually one of the most inefficient states when it comes to how much money we spend per person and the value we get out of that dollar for outcomes.

"There's a relatively small population of people that use a very large portion of hospital resources because their needs aren't met in the community."

The provision of post-treatment accommodation was an example of the importance of services outside acute hospital beds.

Ms Harvey said recent data showed about 27 per cent of patients receiving mental health treatment were unable to be discharged, when clinically appropriate, because they did not have secure housing and support.

On employment, she said the

association was facilitating a model to connect vocational expertise with mental health services.

"You don't wait until somebody's better before you connect them with employment," Ms Harvey said.

"You recognise employment is actually a critical part of someone's recovery journey.

"We're doing this work with 24 headspace sites ... and public mental health services."

Vocational experts are employed through service provider organisations with a mandate to engage with employers and in the community to create opportunities.

WAAMH has recently submitted a funding application to the federal government for a project to co-locate employment services with a community housing provider.

### Contribute

Debbie Childs is chief executive

of Helping Minds, an organisation that supports mental health carers. She told *Business News* the focus on personal recovery was as important as clinical recovery.

That meant a meaningful life where people could contribute in the community.

"I would like to see a real focus on recovery for people, so basically everybody has the ability to live their best life possible," Ms Childs said.

"The best system we could look for in WA is one of complementary services.

"If you're needing mental health support with a psychiatrist or a psychologist, you also can have recovery-focused support with community mental health organisations.

"That might be counselling or peer group type support, or may also be educational-type support through organisations such as a recovery college."

Helping Minds was one of 12 organisations awarded a contract last year to establish WA's first recovery college, with the WA facility to open in July.

Ms Childs shared the view that simply providing more hospital beds was not a solution.

"It's looking at the system as a whole, identifying whether more beds are needed in hospitals, needed in supported accommodation, needed around [independent] housing.

"If you're homeless, your priority is your homelessness, not your mental health.

"Until you've got a safe place to live you are never going to be able to really focus on your mental health.

"We have a system currently where people are going into hospital and being discharged into homelessness."

*Continued on page 12*

### SPONSORED CONTENT

## What makes for a caring society?



A caring society is one that treats all people with equal dignity and respect, looks after its people so that no one is left behind, ensures they can access basic goods and services to place them on an equal footing with others, rights the wrongs of the past and looks forward to the future to ensure that our kids have the same or better opportunities than we have. A caring society is also one that values, respects and looks after its workers and volunteers who care and support others.

Is Western Australia a caring society?

I believe we do well very well in many respects but less well in others.

For a well-off society we leave too many behind. In our work at UWA on the 100 Families WA project with WACOSS and our community sector partners, we have found very high levels of financial hardship among those being supported by community sector organisations. This translates to hunger, food insecurity, and adverse mental health, physical health and well-being outcomes. In the lead-up to the 200-year anniversary of colonisation in Western Australia, we also need

to recognise the wrongs of the past and walk together, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, on a common platform of Voice, Treaty and Truth to create a better world for the future: one which also has met the challenges of human-induced climate change.

At the same time, we do very well in Western Australia in providing fair access to (some) of our basic services, particularly free access to public hospitals which are the best in the world. We also have free access to public schools, but should bear in mind that too many low-income families face pressure in terms of the hidden costs of schooling. We need to do better though when it comes to access to housing for the homeless and for so many young people in WA in terms of jobs. Our youth unemployment rates have been too high for too long. We have been working hard at the Centre for Social Impact at UWA in both of these areas in terms of our research and community impact work, to shed a light on the problems we face.

And, of course, we must value properly the work done by those whose job it is to care in our society. Past research clearly demonstrates that workers in caring jobs

are paid less than comparable workers elsewhere. That needs to change. However, one very pleasing trend we have seen in WA is the rise in social purpose-oriented volunteering. And this is no more evident than among our students at UWA through structured student volunteering, student internship options in the social sector through the UWA McCusker Centre for Citizenship and other UWA work placement programs. The engagement of our students as active citizens continues after university study through UWA alumni bodies such as our Alumni for Social Impact group. Our students have a strong impetus to care for our society. Through them and many others in Western Australia our future is strong as a caring society.

**Professor Paul Flatau**  
Centre for Social Impact,  
The University of Western Australia



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA



# Beyond beds for mental health

Continued from page 11

## Action

Established in 1909, Graylands Hospital in Mount Claremont is the state's main location for mental health services.

There has been significant maintenance work in the past decade to keep the buildings fit for use.

In April last year, the government announced it would develop a plan to decommission Graylands by 2026.

The Review of the Clinical Governance of Public Mental Health Services in WA, released early this month, said this should be a priority.

"Plans for decommissioning of Graylands appear not to have progressed as planned," the report said.

"[I]t is suggested the governance of the project is not at an appropriate level.

"The project has recently been allocated additional funding to progress planning and it is recommended that this occur as a priority."

WAAMH's Ms Harvey said the organisation supported deinstitutionalisation.

"The closure of Graylands is going to be a really important step, but we have to build alternatives for people before we do that," she said.

"If we don't build alternatives for people, clear pathways for people to have confidence they'll get the help they need when they need it, it's going to make the task of closing Graylands harder for people.

"The whole point of closing Graylands is to support a shift away from an institutional response to mental health, while also making sure there's secure support for people when it's needed."

This would mean secure beds in other facilities, backed with supported accommodation.

UnitingCare West chief executive Amanda Hunt said closing the Graylands site had been discussed for at least 10 years.

"It's really not suitable that people are still in locked wards," she said.

"People need to be as valued as contributing members of com-

**PRIORITY** Planning to decommission Graylands Hospital needs to accelerate.  
Photo: Gabriel Oliveira



munity, in community, but people need to be supported adequately with wrap-around supports in community.

"I absolutely believe that decommissioning Graylands and

supporting people deemed to be vulnerable in the community is the best option."

Ms Hunt said UnitingCare West had run a program to support and house people with mental

health issues reconnecting into the community, which had been successful because of work to engage neighbours and other stakeholders. ■

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# Road safety is everyone's business

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