Mr Vince Puccio - Chairman
Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc. (CAPS)
PO Box 69
YARLOOP WA 6218

Via email: caps6218@yahoo.com

Dear Mr Puccio

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – NOTICE OF DECISION – INTERNAL REVIEW
(under the Freedom of Information Act 1992)

I refer to your letter dated 11 April 2018, outlining the amended scope of your request to access records under the Freedom of Information Act 1992 (the FOI Act).

The amended scope related to your email dated 20 March 2018, requesting an internal review of the Department of Health (DoH) Notice of Decision and disclosed documents, remitted to you on 15 January 2018.

The attached report has been provided by the WA Cancer Registry (WACR), after investigation of data relevant to your request, and includes:

- Combined data for Waroona and Harvey local government areas (LGA), which covers the towns of Waroona, Hamel, Wagerup, Yarloop, Cookernup, and Harvey. This ensures that areas immediately surrounding these towns are also included.
- Age-standardised rates for 2001-2016.
- Top 5 cancer types, by cancer incident, for the Harvey and Waroona LGA.

The WACR has confirmed that updated data can be provided to you, without the need to request records through provisions of the FOI Act. In submitting your request, WACR will liaise directly with you to clarify the scope, context and use of the request, and the variables of interest, time periods, geographical regions, etc.

The following contact details were provided to you in the DoH email dated 6 April 2018:
• WACR – wacanreg@health.wa.gov.au
• Epidemiology website – http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/About-the-Epidemiology-branch

If you are not satisfied with the decision of the DoH internal review, you have a right to submit a complaint to the Office of the Information Commissioner, and apply for an external review. Details of the review process are attached.

Should you have any queries about the internal review, please feel free to contact me on 9222 4208.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Louise Brick
Manager Integrity and Ethics (Investigations)
System Governance and Assurance

21 May 2018

Report – Cancer Incidence and rates for Harvey and Waroona Local Government Areas
Cancer incidence and rates for Harvey and Waroona Local Government Areas

This paper presents cancer incidence rates, counts and population growth for the Waroona shire and the Harvey shire. These two local government areas comprise the towns of Waroona, Hamel, Wagerup, Yarloop, Cookernup, and Harvey. The Harvey and Waroona shires were combined ensuring a statistically appropriate and meaningful geographical region were used for epidemiological rate calculations.

Cancer is a broad term for a range of disease types which have many different causes and it is unlikely a single cause will explain increased cases within a population. It is also difficult to associate cancer cases with location as the place of exposure is uncertain due to relocation of the population. The place of residence of people diagnosed with cancer is recorded at the time of diagnosis and cancer may take a long time to develop from exposure, over which time a person may have relocated.

Figure 1 presents age-standardised cancer incidence rates (ASR) from 2001 to 2016, with 95% confidence intervals. Age-standardised rates present trends over time, adjusted for changes in the underlying population. The ASR for Waroona & Harvey combined has been stable since 2001, with no statistically significant increase from 2001 to 2016. There was an increase in incidence around 2009 and 2010 and this is most likely caused by rapid population increase in the region, seen in Figure 2, between 2005 and 2009.

Figure 1: Age-standardised rate for Waroona & Harvey local government areas combined, 2001-2016.

![Graph showing age-standardised cancer incidence rate for Waroona & Harvey LGA regions combined](image)
Whilst the ASR is a useful measure for investigating significant increases and decreases over time relative to the population, Figure 2 presents the raw (actual) incidence count, with the annual population growth for Harvey and Waroona. Cancer is a common disease amongst the general population, with 1 in 3 males, and 1 in 4 females likely to have a cancer diagnosis by the time they are 75 years old.\textsuperscript{1,2} Therefore, in regions that have experienced rapid population growth it is expected that would also be a subsequent increase in cancer diagnoses.

Figure 2: Crude cancer incidence counts and annual population growth, Harvey and Waroona LGAs combined, 2001-2016.

![Cancer incidence in Harvey/Waroona, and Annual population growth (%)](image)

Figure 3 presents the top 5 cancer types for Harvey and Waroona combined, for 2011 to 2016 combined. This aligns with the top 5 cancers in the state which are also prostate, breast, melanoma, colorectal, and lung. Figure 4 presents the age distribution of population in Harvey and Waroona according to the 2016 Census. Highlighted is that these LGAs have a higher percentage of persons aged 50 years and over compared to the whole of WA. As cancers typically affect a higher percentage of older persons than younger adults, it is expected that areas with higher percentage of older persons may experience increased levels of cancer incidence, noting again however that this has been accounted for in Figure 1 which illustrated a stable age standardised incidence rate over time.
Figure 3: Top 5 cancer types, by cancer incidence, Harvey and Waroona LGA combined, 2011-2016

### Top 5 cancer types, cancer incidence, Harvey and Waroona LGA, 2011-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cancer Type</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prostate</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanoma</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorectal</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Harvey and Waroona LGAs (2007-2016)

Figure 4: 2016 Census population by age group (%) for Harvey and Waroona combined against whole of WA

### 2016 Census population by age group (%) for Harvey and Waroona combined, and WA³

- Harvey and Waroona LGA
- WA
Summary

This brief report presents a snapshot of cancer incidence in the Harvey and Waroona LGAs. The stability of the overall age standardised rate, represented by no statistically significant increase from 2001 to 2016, indicates that increased cancer incidence has reflected the growth in population in this region. However, it is worth noting that as population growth has shown a decline in recent years there is value in continuing to monitor these rates in future years. The WA Cancer Registry will continue collecting and monitoring cancer cases across the state and welcomes any request to update the figures in this report on an annual basis.

References

REVIEW AND APPEAL PROCESS
(under the Freedom of Information Act 1992)

1. Internal Review (s. 39-40 and 54)
If you are not satisfied with this decision, you have a right to apply for an internal review. An application for internal review must be lodged with this agency within 30 days after being given this written Notice of Decision, and must be –
  • in writing;
  • provide particulars of the decision to be reviewed; and
  • give an address in Australia.

There is no lodgement fee for an application for internal review, and there are no charges for dealing with an internal review request.

If an application for internal review is received, it will not be dealt with by the person who made the initial decision, or by any person who is subordinate to the original decision maker. The outcome for an application for internal review may result in confirmation, variation, or reversal, of the initial decision under review. You will be advised of the outcome within 15 days.

There is no right to an internal review of a decision made by a Minister or the principal officer of an agency.

2. External Review by the Information Commissioner (s. 65-66)
If, after an internal review has been completed, you are still dissatisfied with the agency’s decision, you can submit a complaint to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner may allow a complaint to be made even though an internal review has not been sought or has not been completed, if you can show that there are good reasons why you should not apply for an internal review, or why an internal review should not be completed.

A complaint must be made in writing to the Information Commissioner. It must include a copy of the notice of decision to which the complaint relates and give an address in Australia to which notices can be sent. Contact details:

Office of the Information Commissioner
Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street, PERTH WA 6000
Phone (08) 6551 7888

If you are seeking access to documents or amendment of personal information, your complaint must be lodged within 60 days after being given notice of the decision.

If you are a third party to an application for access to personal or commercial or business information concerning yourself, your complaint must be lodged within 30 days after being given written notice of the decision.

As a general rule, each party to a complaint pays his/her own costs. However, the Information Commissioner may order a person to pay the costs of another party to a complaint in certain circumstances.

3. Appeals to the Supreme Court (s. 85)
Any party to a complaint may appeal to the Supreme Court on any question of law arising out of a decision of the Information Commissioner, except for a decision as to the deferral of access to a document, the charges to be imposed for dealing with an access application, and the payment of a deposit on account of charges.

The procedures relating to appeals to the Supreme Court are established by the Court.