

## **Inquiry into support for new parents and babies:**

### **Response to supplementary question for Professor Alan Hayes**

*Q: Can you provide further information about how Western Australia is utilising and sharing data to monitor, evaluate and link parenting services and supports?*

The *Data Linkage Branch* of Western Australia (WA) sits within the WA Department of Health. This branch has responsibility for overseeing the WA Data Linkage System (WALDS), which was established in 1995. Having operated for more than 20 years, the WALDS has been a national and international leader in the area of population-level data linkage. The WALDS aggregates and links data from multiple government departments and non-government agencies for health and medical research. Core datasets cover health and social issues including hospital admissions, emergency services, and public health; mental health and community services; and other population-level data such as births, deaths, marriages, and electoral information. Other datasets covering a wider spectrum of health, wellbeing, and social care issues are incorporated as needed.

The WALDS is not parenting-specific, though it has contributed to several research projects associated with parenting over the last 5 – 10 years. These have covered a range of topics including parents' mental health; parenting within WA's indigenous population; parenting with intellectual disability; the efficacy and economic benefits of parenting programs; and the effectiveness of child health services for parents.