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Hon Colin Barnett MEd MLA

## Changes to machinery of Government

Wednesday, 10 April 2013

- **Changes to Government departments to streamline and improve operations**
- **These arrangements will deliver better government in a range of areas**
- **West Australians will benefit from better service and greater efficiency**

Premier Colin Barnett today announced sweeping changes to a range of Government departments which will improve the delivery of services to the Western Australian community.

Chief among the proposed changes is the merger of Verve and Synergy.

A comprehensive suite of reforms will also result in a new Department of Local Government and Communities established, a new stand-alone Department of Lands created and, as foreshadowed during the election campaign, responsibility for Science will be moved into the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC).

Mr Barnett said he was also keen to get on with his election commitment of splitting the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) into a new Department of Parks and Wildlife and an environmental regulation department which will retain the name DEC.

The Premier said that consideration was being given to subsequently amalgamating the Department of Water with the remaining part of DEC but if this takes place, it would not occur until the end of the year.

Mr Barnett said the Office of Strategic Projects and the Regulatory Gatekeeping Unit from Treasury would be brought into the Department of Finance. The Department of Indigenous Affairs will be renamed the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, in line with requests from the Aboriginal community and the Department for Child Protection will be renamed the Department for Child Protection and Family Support to better reflect the broad scope of its remit.

In order to ensure better integration of the State's network of services relating to prevention, treatment, professional education and training and research activities in the drug and alcohol sector and its support for and delivery of mental health services, the Drug and Alcohol Office will be joined with the Mental Health Commission under the control of a single chief executive.

The Premier said the changes to the Drug and Alcohol Office were in response to the findings of the Stokes Report which highlighted the issues facing the mental health system including the need for 'improved liaison between mental health and drug and alcohol services worker willingness to co-operatively provide care and intervention for patients with dual conditions'.

"The changes will improve service delivery, streamline processes, ensure better transparency and bring greater efficiencies to many government operations," he said.

"They are about building better structures of government and ensuring better delivery of service to the public.

