



Stakeholders are asked to forward submissions to:

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AMA Tasmania Submission in response to the Green Paper: Delivering Safe and Sustainable Clinical Services.

AMA Tasmania supports the overall themes of the paper. In particular, it acknowledges the need for Tasmanians to have access to health care consistent with contemporary best practice. To this end, AMA Tasmania supports the review by Dr Kelly Shaw of role delineation within the Tasmanian Health System. Change in the way care is currently delivered will be necessary if we are to achieve the stated goals of “one state, one health system, better outcomes” but must be informed by robust analysis of available data. The rationale for change must be communicated clearly both to stakeholders and the Tasmanian community more broadly.

AMA Tasmania supports the need for the Tasmanian Health System to provide sustainable, holistic and evidence-based care. It should be noted that national and international accepted practice is that such care is led by academic and health care networks working together to promote teaching, critical analysis, quality improvement and research. AMA Tasmania believes that there needs to be close co-operation between the Tasmanian health system and the University of Tasmania, medical colleges and relevant specialist advisory committees to maintain appropriate Hospital accreditation of training programmes to ensure their ongoing viability.

AMA Tasmania believes that the focus of the Green and White papers should change from purely “hospital” plans to broader “health” plans which emphasise the fundamental role of primary care and general practice in our health system. More use needs to be made of general practice and its roles better integrated with hospital care. The myth that it is difficult for patients to obtain a general practitioner and establish an ongoing therapeutic relationship with one should be dispelled.

Better communication between Tasmanian Hospitals and general practitioners and more timely access to specialist review will be essential in ensuring access of all Tasmanians to better and more integrated care. In this regard, AMA Tasmania believes more use could be made of Telehealth resources particularly.

Synergies between hospital departments exist and should be recognised. The dangers inherent in single practitioner departments should be acknowledged and explained to the community. AMA Tasmania believes it will be important to explain in broad terms to the public the appropriate roles of each part of the Tasmanian Health system.

Furthermore, AMA Tasmania believes that there will need to be rationalisation of services at Tasmanian public hospitals. Access to quality and safe care in all areas of medicine cannot be provided by every Tasmanian hospital. AMA Tasmania notes and agrees with these comments of Minister Ferguson in his introduction to the Green Paper: "If we are to provide safe, effective and sustainable services in Tasmania, we need to shift the discussion from simply 'better access to services', and instead strive towards 'access to better services'. This needs a recognition that we cannot afford – either financially or in terms of the safety and quality of services – to provide all services in all locations. We must determine the best profile of services across the state to ensure equal access to quality services for all Tasmanians, regardless of where they live".

In this regard AMA Tasmania notes with dismay the decision to commission a linear accelerator on the North-West Coast. This is totally inconsistent with the stated aims of the Green Paper, and inconsistent with the Minister's own comments.

A single machine at the North-West Regional Hospital will be neither safe nor sustainable. It will be installed and run at great cost and result in fragmentation of a centre of cancer treatment excellence at the Launceston General Hospital and ultimately result in a reduction in quality care for patients in the North and North-West of Tasmania. If the Government is serious about health reform in Tasmania it must reverse this egregious example of the parochial medical politics which have bedevilled the Tasmanian Health System for decades.

AMA Tasmania acknowledges that patients will be expected to travel to access quality care, therefore procedures for reimbursing the associated costs for patients and their families will need to be simple, fair and efficient.

Finally, the Tasmanian health system needs to be better integrated and more efficient in its delivery of complex patient care. Retrieval services need to be co-ordinated and resourced adequately to respond to emergencies in any part of the state.

Submission by AMA Tasmania, 147 Davey Street, Hobart TAS