

ONE STATE, ONE HEALTH SYSTEM, BETTER OUTCOMES

The Latrobe and Kentish Council's Response
to the Green Paper titled

DELIVERING SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE CLINICAL SERVICES

20 February 2015



The Latrobe and Kentish Councils have both consulted with the community over recent times on developing a five (5) year strategic plan for their areas. The major issue highlighted at the various community meetings held throughout their districts was for the Council to be an advocate and display leadership on the retention and upgrading of the **Mersey Community Hospital**.

In line with this commitment given to the community Council wishes to highlight the importance that the Mersey Community Hospital is to the local community.

Instead of responding to the individual questions detailed in the Green Paper the two Councils wish to provide the following overall comments in respect of health reform in Tasmania.

1. The Councils support one state-wide hospital system. This is an opportunity to rationalise systems across the State and breakdown regional barriers.
2. Access to quality services is a priority. **If residents from the North West Coast need to access specialised services outside of the area then transport and accommodation must be easily accessible and affordable.**
3. The Councils strongly support that some specialised services be retained in the North West Coast area utilising the Mersey and Burnie hospitals. The cancer centre in Burnie developing a partnership with Launceston is a good example of what can be achieved.
4. Teleconferencing facilities to enable telemedicine can allow access to some specialised services in other areas, particularly for check-ups following operations.

There is no doubt that within each region there will be specific health issues that have a greater demand for service. We need to pursue a best practice system that enables patients to access the many highly skilled medical personnel and specialists that are available throughout our state and our country, if required.

The retention of the high dependency unit at the Mersey Community Hospital is a basic priority to support medical patients. The initial care of a patient utilising highly skilled HDU nursing personnel and monitoring equipment not provided for in general wards maximises the survival chances of the patient.

Likewise, the retention of the Mersey Community Hospital's extensive range of day surgery procedures is a must, together with the retention of the general surgery capacity, including orthopaedic surgery for hip and knee replacement at the North West Regional Hospital in Burnie.

Throughout all of the discussion to date, it is clear that the underlying aim of our hospital system and specifically the Mersey Community Hospital, is to maintain access to high quality services for the initial care of the patient so that they can be stabilised and treated, and if required, safely expedited to wherever the best service for this condition is available, being in house or external to the admissions location.

The Latrobe and Kentish Councils believe that the community needs to be included in an open and transparent consultation process to ensure that any proposed changes to the Tasmanian health system result in improved health care and access to specialist services for all Tasmanians.