

8 Cliffden Court

East Devonport, 7310

May 6, 2015.

Comments on Exposure Draft (after attendance at forum in Devonport and receipt of the draft, May 5, 2015).

Background: we purchased our present home for ready access to the Mersey Community Hospital; I have had extensive medical services over the past 4 years and am living proof of the quality of staff throughout the State, especially in Launceston and the Mersey; and my working life included roles in senior administration applying policies set by politicians.

To Minister Ferguson:

At the forum, you impressed by your apparent consultative approach and the evident logic (as opposed to politics) in your quest for changes.

The session itself, plus perusal of the White Paper, leads me to endorse your perceived intention to focus on Service (the best availability of care to Tasmanians), Safety (meeting needs that best ensure survival and well-being for Tasmanians) and Cost – Effectiveness (addressing these needs in a manner that makes best use of available funding (e.g. it came across that locums, at established stipends plus associated costs, are not as cost-effective as regular, full-time specialists)). Focus on these 3 factors has led to a design based on one system for the State, with specialisation, as required, assigned to particular sites.

Assurance that the MCH will continue to provide general hospital services along with its role in the statewide network (draft, page 7), must be enshrined in policy to assure MCH users about the future. Furthermore, I urge that policy provides guidance for senior administrators responsible for its implementation, to operate with ongoing attention to minimising travel needs for regular/routine visits by people to the nearest hospital, including, but not limited to, the MCH. If this is a stated intention in policy/regulations, it will serve as a directing principle for senior administration and as an important reassurance to those people who often fear the worst from changes.

To the Health Council of Tasmania:

I understand that your role is to serve as key advisers to the Minister. According to the White Paper Exposure Draft, you will be assisting him in setting priorities and articulating policies and directions.

I respond to the request for feedback by urging you to include in policy, as appropriate, and in operational guidelines/regulations (for senior staff implementing changes), the principle that all Tasmanians should be required to undertake minimal routine/regular travel to access hospital services (while recognizing the reality that this will not be practical/cost-effective in all cases). Under this general principle, routine maternity service should be included at MCH.

Respectfully submitted

Brian Frankcombe