

- the importance of whole of government support for health and wellbeing;
- access to emergency services;
- pressures on community nursing services;
- the need for electronic health records; and
- the importance of volunteers.



Making Sure These Messages Are Heard

The Primary Health Services site visits are an important part of DHHS' ongoing consultation in relation to the implementation of the Plan.

In addition to the personnel who were involved in the visits and heard feedback directly, the input and ideas we received have been communicated across the rest of DHHS, and to our government and non government partners.

These messages will be taken into consideration during the Implementation of the Plan over the next 5 – 10 years. Priority areas for implementation in 2008 include improvements to transport services and establishing accommodation near the main hospitals, development of plans for ICCs in Launceston and Hobart's eastern shore and the statewide roll out of the Tasmanian CAREpoint trial to provide a single access point for Home and Community Care Services.

Suggested Ways to Keep Up to Date

Many staff and community members were grateful of the chance to meet with managers to discuss issues with them face to face. People were also keen to keep up to date with the directions and progress of the Plan. Many suggested that the site visits should be an ongoing process, held perhaps every six months or yearly. Suggested ways of improving the visits next time around were to include more local content and to advertise them more broadly amongst the community. Newsletters, email and the DHHS Internet and Intranet sites were also seen as good ways of keeping up to date.

Meeting Requests for Further Information

Many staff and community members were put in touch with project officers and other staff within DHHS to discuss these issues with them in detail.



There were also a number of requests for copies of Tasmania's Health Plan and the Primary Health Services Plan. These are available on the DHHS website at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/futurehealth/.

Further Information

A full report on the feedback received during the site visits is contained in the *Primary Health Services Site Visits Report on Feedback March 2008*. This is available on the DHHS staff intranet at <http://intra.dhhs.tas.gov.au/dhhs-online/page.php?id=17183>.

For more information on Tasmania's Health Plan visit: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/futurehealth.



Primary Health Services Site Visits 2008

Summary of Feedback



Tasmania's Health Plan

The Tasmanian Health Plan (the Plan) continues to be the guide and strategic direction for health services in Tasmania.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is working to:

- establish a new system of delivering services;
- find and develop new ways of working; and
- create a new culture around attitudes and values.

Progress has been made in a number of areas since the launch of the Plan by the Minister for Health and Human Services, the Hon Lara Giddings MP.

DHHS is committed to ongoing community consultation throughout the implementation of the Plan.

The Primary Health Services Site Visits

In early 2008 senior DHHS staff visited 32 Primary Health Services sites across Tasmania to host 37 community consultation sessions for staff and local community members.



Primary Health Services include community health centres and rural inpatient facilities. They are located in areas that range from major population centres like Hobart and Launceston, to rural and remote areas such as King and Flinders Islands.

The aim of the Primary Health Services site visits was to provide staff and local communities with an update on the progress that has been made since the launch of the plan and to seek their feedback on local issues.

Well over 500 people attended the site visits. Participants included people from local government, community groups,

non government organisations, health professionals and consumers.

Presenters gave each site an update on progress made towards the implementation of the Plan. This was followed by group discussion on issues and opportunities effecting the implementation of the Plan in the local area.

What We Heard

Issues and opportunities put forward were remarkably similar across sites and a number of key themes clearly emerged. The five most common themes that arose during the Primary Health Services site visits are listed below:

1. Health Workforce Shortages

Shortages in the health workforce were by far the most commonly discussed issue, being mentioned at some 29 sites. This included shortages of GPs, Medical Specialists, Nurses and Allied Health Professionals. Concerns were around current and projected shortages and what strategies government is putting in place to address this.

2. Transport and Accommodation

This was another keenly discussed issue raised at some 25 sites. People were concerned about access to community and emergency transport, and acknowledged that in some areas further pressure is being placed upon these services due to poor public transport.



It was also noted that many people are simply not aware of what transport services are available in their community or how to go about accessing them. Accommodation for carers and family members of inpatients in the urban centres was also frequently mentioned.

Many suggestions for the improvement of community transport were put forward. These included consistently applied eligibility criteria, better coordination between service providers (such as through a central point of contact), 'transit lounges' in urban areas where people can wait to be collected after medical appointments, and the coordination of appointments to cut down the number of times people need to travel.

3. Health Promotion and Chronic Conditions

There was generally strong support for DHHS' focus on health promotion. People were interested in the role of the new Health Promotion and Chronic Disease coordinator positions and how their community could access these services. Many sites discussed strategies for promoting good health in their communities.

4. Tasmanian CAREpoint Trial

Tasmanian CAREpoint is trialling a centralised point of contact for access to Home and Community Care Services. There was a high level of interest in this trial across the state despite the fact that it has only been operational in the southern region. Many staff and community members in the North and North West were keen to see the service extended to their area.

5. Integrated Care Centres

Integrated Care Centres (ICCs) will provide co-ordinated care for people with chronic conditions and those who require complex care.

There was a high level of interest in the role of ICCs, where they are to be located, the services they will offer and how they will work with GP Superclinics. While there was strong support for the proposed role of ICCs, some community members were concerned that they would miss out on accessing these services if they were located in another community.

Other issues that commonly arose during the Primary Health Services site visits included:

- future services at this site/community;
- rural site redevelopment (Ouse, Rosebery);
- working together with the community and Local Government;
- after hours GP access;