



TASMANIA'S HEALTH PLAN ACTION Issue 13 April 2009



Service standards improve when consumers and the community monitor safety and quality.

Your care, your say consultation

The State Government is asking Tasmanians to play a role in future planning and improving the State's health and human services with the release of a consultation paper *Your care, your say*.

Speaking at the launch of the consultation, Minister for Health, Lara Giddings said: "The Department of Health and Human Services provides services at over 350 sites around the State and plays a vital role in keeping Tasmanians healthy.

"Every year we respond to more than 64,000 ambulance callouts, admit almost 100,000 people to our hospitals, treat more than 120,000 people in our Emergency Departments, and provide more than 850,000 occasions of service for outpatients.

"To keep improving our health and human services system, we are developing a community consultation and engagement strategy. "

The Minister for Human Services, Lin Thorp, said consumer and community engagement was not an end in itself but an important step towards creating more effective health and human care services for all Tasmanians.

"Consumer and community engagement will not mean everyone will get everything they want, all of the time," Ms Thorp said.

"However, it will mean people will get to understand the reasons behind decisions and have a real chance to influence the shape of their services."

Ms Thorp said consumer and community engagement would help inform the far-reaching reforms underway in human services.

"Consumer and community engagement is a two-way process that will benefit reforms in family support, out of home care and disability services. Engagement will help educate policy makers and those who use the services equally," Ms Thorp said.

Both Ministers agree: individuals and communities benefit when they are active in the planning and delivery of their health and human services.

"We are determined to get this right and to ensure that Tasmanians get more of a say in the services which they need both now and into the future," Ms Giddings said.

There is no 'right way' to engage people, and what is practical and provides the best results will differ in each situation.

As a first step, the Department will be asking the public how they would prefer to get involved.

Ms Giddings said the development of a consumer and community engagement strategy in the next few months would be a major Health Plan milestone on the road to significantly better health and human services.

"Who better to tell us how we can continue to improve our services than those who use them?"

For a copy of the *Your care, your say* – consumer and community engagement consultation paper visit: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/future_health or www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/future_communities

Consumers and the public can send comments and ideas by email to susan.stipcevic-webb@dhhs.tas.gov.au or post them to Consumer and Community Engagement Manager Susan Stipcevic-Webb at PO Box 125 Hobart, TAS 7001.

Comment closes **Tuesday 12 May 2009**. THP

TASMANIA'S HEALTH PLAN

Tele-oncology: accessible, accurate information for cancer services

Last month the Statewide Medical Oncology Electronic Record went 'live' at Launceston General Hospital.

The tele-oncology system – which includes a patient electronic health record, videoconferencing facilities, and the development of a Statewide Radiation Oncology Database System, provides better care for oncology patients by improving consistency, accuracy and access to the information recorded across the State.

It is a part of the Virtual Care Program that is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and the Department of Health and Human Services.

As it is 'rolled out' this year, this system will be accessed by all sites that deliver Medical Oncology or Haematology Oncology treatment. [THP](#)

Seeing Health Plan benefits: clearing the cataracts waiting list

A \$2 million cataract surgery program will enable the completion of an additional 437 cataract procedures through the Royal Hobart Hospital, 325 through the Launceston General and 240 in the North West.

Last year our hospitals increased the total number of elective surgery admissions by 15% to almost 16,000.

That included more than 2,000 additional cases funded from the Tasmanian Elective Surgery Improvement Plan and the Commonwealth Elective Surgery Initiative across a wide range of surgical procedures.

However, while the additional surgery was targeted at long-wait cases, at the end of February there were still 2,501 Tasmanians on elective surgery waiting lists who had been waiting for surgery longer than a year.

That is outside the clinically-recommended time frame and the Department has been working with the hospitals on a strategy to by the end of this year offer an operation to as many as possible of these long-wait patients who are ready for care.

With our ageing population it would not be possible to eliminate the waiting list completely, but the ability to see with clarity is vital to the capacity to enjoy life and to reduce the risk of falls and the need for further surgery.

Under Tasmania's Health Plan, we want to see the list as low as possible and the wait for surgery as short as possible. It is our goal to ensure that no Tasmanian patient assessed as ready for care has to wait longer than 365 days for an operation. [THP](#)



Supporting General Practice

Under Tasmania's Health Plan, GP Workforce Tasmania (GPWT) has been funded to boost their efforts to recruit and retain GPs for Tasmania.

This has enabled GPWT to provide increased personalised support to new rural GPs and their families. GPWT staff have provided induction and orientation training to new GPs and assisted them with ongoing professional support and training. They have also provided wider support for the family to assist in the relocation and settlement process, including assisting families with accommodation, education needs, employment needs for spouses and wider community engagement.

GPWT works in partnership with consenting rural GP practices to develop business and clinical processes to help manage patient demand, so reducing the potential for GP burnout and the loss of an essential service to rural hospitals and rural communities.

GP Workforce has focussed on some areas known to be particularly at risk and has achieved significant results.

According to the most recent published data (2007), there were 545 practising GPs in Tasmania representing an increase of 14 GPs or 2.6% in Tasmania since 2005.

Additional funding has resulted in 3 doctors being recruited to rural medical practitioner's vacancies at Scottsdale, Deloraine and West Coast since July 2008. Health Plan funding is also helping to provide ongoing support to 12 rural medical practitioners (international medical graduates) to help them achieve the Australian 'gold standard' of GP qualification.

As a result of Tasmania's Health Plan, vacancies in rural GP practices are able to be more proactively managed to ensure continuity of services.

For more information on GPWT, visit their website www.gpatlas.org.au or contact Peter Barns, Chief Executive Officer on 6334 2355 or pbarns@gpworkforce.com.au [THP](#)

Tasmania's Health Plan

To find out more:

visit www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/thp

email future.health@dhhs.tas.gov.au

call 6233 3964