

22 May 2015

The Hon Michael Ferguson MP  
Minister for Health and Human Services  
GPO Box 125  
Hobart TAS 7001



Dear Minister

### **White Paper Exposure Draft: One Health System**

The Cradle Coast Authority as the peak body of the nine Northwest Tasmanian Councils, provides the following comments in relation to the White Paper Exposure Draft and with regard to its comments of 17 February 2015 on the Tasmanian Government's Health Care Reform.

Further to our previous comments, a fundamental objective of the Authority is to pursue the improvement of 'liveability' in the region, not only to maintain and support the existing population but to support viable and sustainable growth. To many residents both old and new, access to local health care and the retention of the service infrastructure that provides this is a threshold for the liveability of the region.

The Authority believes that it is critical to the Government's long term relationship with the region that it provides additional detail on the impact of the potential service changes on staffing in the region and equally importantly on the benefits of a centralised maternity service, incorporating a response to any concerns raised from within the region to date around patient safety. Additionally, more information is required on the new transport arrangements for patients, along with any associated communication plan to promote the transport options on an ongoing basis.

The Authority encourages the maintenance of proposed changes to the delivery of key services in the North West, avoiding duplication in other regions. Assuming the expansion of an efficient and effective patient transport system, it is anticipated that patients may be required to travel into the North West region for specialist health services, not just from it.

Further, the Government's assurance are sought regarding changes to services delivered at both the North West Regional Hospital and the Mersey Community Hospital will not be subsequently used as a rationale or justification for their downgrading or closure.

The Cradle Coast region recognises that health services are a major area of concern for residents, and while change and improvement to services is vital, the people of the Cradle Coast region must not be further disadvantaged by these reforms.

Representing our councils and their communities as a region  
[www.cradlecoast.com](http://www.cradlecoast.com)



CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL



Latrobe Council

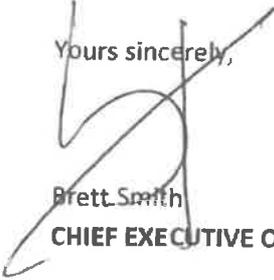




We look forward to the Government providing clear and simple explanation of changes contained within the White Paper and a quantification of the overall benefits to the State and particularly improvements in clinical outcomes for Tasmanians, including in the North West.

The Authority understands the challenges faced by the Government and recognises that reforms of this order can be difficult to achieve. Further to our previous correspondence, we encourage and invite a dialogue with and between our Shareholder Councils. The Authority believes that such a dialogue can assist the Government with its communication with the community on the drivers of the reform and how change is required to make our health care system both sustainable and resilient.

Yours sincerely,



Brett Smith

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

