

Kathrine Morgan-Wicks
Secretary
Department of Health
Sent via email: ourhealthcarefuture@health.tas.gov.au

11 July 2022

Dear Ms Morgan-Wicks

The University of Tasmania are committed to continuing the critical partnership with the Department of Health and Tasmanian Health Service (THS) to transform health outcomes for the Tasmanian community. Aligning our collective capability is vital for training the future health workforce, attracting and retaining high-quality healthcare professionals and academics, undertaking world-class and innovative research to inform future health interventions and prevention strategies, and ensuring equitable and sustainable healthcare opportunities and services across our regions. The University look forward to continued collaboration on further developing a world-class, innovative, and integrated health system toward 2040.

The University of Tasmania's College of Health and Medicine wish to commend the Department of Health on the *Advancing Tasmania's Health* Exposure Draft. This is a considered and comprehensive document that successfully builds on Stage One and Two reforms. The College propose the following be considered for potential incorporation into the draft.

The Exposure Draft plan relies heavily on a skilled and well-resourced health workforce into the future. The University is the primary provider of the health professional workforce and has an obligation to meet the current and future requirements of the state. The University continually reviews its course portfolio to meet the evolving demands of the Tasmanian healthcare system. Our curriculum focusses on improving workforce system capability to support the prevention of chronic disease, ensuring that the distinctive needs of our regions are met, and supporting emerging areas of healthcare workforce. The University understand the scope of alternative care models, particularly in rural and remote communities, and the possible roles of future nursing, pharmacy and paramedic professionals and how these professions may interact in integrated community-based models of care. The University recognises its role in responding to evidence provided by the Department and THS regarding the requirements of the future health workforce, and recommend that the development of future healthcare models, the University's responsibility to respond to meet future training needs, and the importance of collaboration between our organisations in these areas be further highlighted in the Exposure Draft.

While the University plays a key role in training the future health workforce, it also plays an important role in attraction and retention of key specialist roles for Tasmania. It is vital that the strategic partnership between the Department, THS and University continue through conjoint appointments, but also that the two organisations work together on innovative and contemporary programs with competitive advantage. To enhance competitive advantage, the collective research capability between the two organisations can be harnessed to ensure a rigorous evidence-based architecture for the reform of the system, allowing for deep evaluation and timely implementation of innovative initiatives. Utilising shared capability to deliver on research that identifies current and future skills and where they are required would ensure the system has the capability and capacity it needs and attract high-quality professionals to contribute to this system. The University recommend further consideration

regarding strategic roles, designed to work across both organisations, allowing healthcare professionals to contribute to both primary care and research in a defined and considered health reform environment. The University believe this has the potential for significant competitive advantage for targeted roles and would enhance opportunities for embedded research training, strengthening the research skills and critical thinking ability of the future workforce.

Consideration should be given to the development of a state-wide research plan that highlights how the two organisations will collaborate across the state to improve health outcomes and inform care, and how the University's key research strengths and interdisciplinary connections can be promoted throughout the Tasmanian healthcare system to advance future collaborative opportunities. A state-wide, collaborative research plan would ensure collaboration and boost grant competitiveness for mutual benefit and provide opportunities for a broadened strategic partnership. The University recognise the role of research to assess the evolving needs of the workforce, improve health literacy rates, enhance prevention programs, and evaluate the efficacy of current models of care. The University would welcome enhanced collaboration related to the *National Medical Workforce Strategy 2021-31* and the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021-2031*. Aboriginal health and health leadership is a notable absence from the Exposure Draft. Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and health leadership is a strategic focus for the College of Health and Medicine, and the University would welcome the opportunity to share our collective expertise and strategic vision in this area. The University believe that development of a state-wide Research Impact Plan, incorporating all of the aforementioned elements, is a natural next step for the important partnership between the Department and the University.

Tasmania's population is evolving therefore the future healthcare workforce needs to be contemporised to meet changing demands over time. There are multiple external factors that will impact the health of Tasmania that are not directly addressed in the Exposure Draft, including urbanisation and rising costs of living, that will impact on costs and availability of food and other preventative methods. With Tasmanian Government spending attributed to healthcare predicted to rise, these factors require careful consideration. The importance of prevention and community-focussed care outlined in the Exposure Draft is supported by the University, however it is noted that this shift can be uplifted by important research connectivity and collaboration across the state.

Finally, further collaboration between the Department and the University, as well as other partner organisations aimed at streamlining and reducing process-related burdens would be welcome. Attraction and training of professional and administrative staff at all levels is required alongside the primary health workforce, to ensure facilities, programs, assets, and services are as effective and efficient as possible.

Again, the University commend the Department on this document and look forward to continued collaboration on the important health reforms required to improve health outcomes in Tasmania.

Sincerely,

Professor Tracey Dickson, Associate Dean Research Performance

Professor Luke Bereznicki, Associate Dean Learning and Teaching Performance