

Department of Health

Response to

Tasmanian Health Senate Meeting Report 15 May 2023

Message from the Secretary

On behalf of the Health Executive, Department of Health (DoH) I am pleased to provide a formal response to the Tasmanian Health Senate Meeting Report of 15 May 2023.

The formation of the Tasmanian Health Senate is a commitment and Immediate Action of the *Our Healthcare Future Immediate Actions and Consultation Paper*. The establishment of the Tasmanian Health Senate has been co-designed with interested stakeholders with health knowledge, expertise and lived experience. I thank those who contributed to this valuable process.

The Senate provides a collective voice representing the whole of the health system in Tasmania to actively contribute to informing and influencing the delivery of quality healthcare for Tasmanians now and into the future. This will strengthen both the clinical and consumer voice in health service planning.

The role of the Senate is to provide independent advice through to the Secretary, DoH on system-wide healthcare planning and delivery. Members are encouraged to respect the diversity of the Senate and utilise its broad knowledge, expertise and experience to foster a culture of opportunity and innovation.

The inaugural Tasmanian Health Senate meeting considered the exposure draft of the *Long-Term Plan for Healthcare in Tasmania 2040* which was released by the Tasmanian Government for public consultation from 30 March to 19 May 2023.

I welcomed the opportunity to address Senate members on the day to introduce this topic. I spoke to the major reform work leading to stage two of the health reforms *Our Healthcare Future* and its focus on rebalancing the system so Tasmanians receive the right care in the right place at the right time. I also provided an overview of the development of the Long-Term Plan and its focus on enhancing services in the primary, community and subacute sectors to ensure sustainable services moving forward.

Following Senate deliberations, the Tasmanian Health Senate Meeting Report was prepared and presented initially to me by Co-Chair, Associate Professor Viet Tran and then to the Health Executive of the Department.

The Health Executive has considered the recommendations presented in the Tasmanian Health Senate Meeting Report of 15 May 2023 and provides its considerations in this response.

I congratulate the members of the inaugural Tasmanian Health Senate and its Steering Committee, and I look forward to working with them to improve health services for all Tasmanians.

On behalf of the Health Executive, I would like to thank all Senate members for their contributions and commitment to improve Tasmania's health system.

Kathrine Morgan-Wicks

Secretary, Department of Health

Response to Recommendations

The Tasmanian Health Senate considered the exposure draft of the *Long-Term Plan for Healthcare in Tasmania 2040* and presented six recommendations.

The Health Executive has considered these recommendations and their formal response is below.

Recommendation 1 - Accepted

Investigate how funding silos between the public, private and community can be optimised to generate new solutions.

Response

Tasmania is actively engaging with the Mid-Term Review of the Addendum to the National Health Reform Agreement 2020-25 process. Tasmania will positively engage with the Commonwealth and states and territories to consider the future of national health reform arrangements. Tasmania would like to see a national health reform arrangement with a stable, mixed funding model which supports and incentivises hospital avoidance and community-based care. This would help support many of the key priorities and initiatives within Tasmania's Long-Term Plan.

Action 2.3.1 – Adopt a place-based approach to rural health service planning, implementation and delivery looks to develop a framework in consultation with our partners, to describe placed-based approaches and guide the operational and cultural change required to adopt this new way of working. This will occur in conjunction with co-commissioning with partners such as Primary Health Tasmania, Local Government, Non-Government Organisations and various areas across the Department (like Public Health and Mental Health) to improve efficiency and coordination across the health system.

Action 3.1.1 – Establish a stronger commissioning cycle in particular notes that many strategies outlined in the Plan will be implemented through the Tasmanian Government purchasing services from providers.

It also notes that the Department will strengthen the commissioning process to ensure health services purchased by the Tasmanian Government address the community's health needs in the most effective and efficient way.

This recommendation will be highlighted across various action areas of the implementation plan which spans the life of the Long-Term Plan. Action and progress will be monitored and reported through the implementation plan reporting and reported to the Tasmanian Health Senate.

Recommendation 2 - Accepted

Develop a centralised navigation hub to connect consumers and clinicians to the public, private and community services needed. This would start with creating a map of the one health system.

Response

Developing a map of the one health system in Tasmania will be undertaken as part of implementation process of the Long-Term Plan. This map and actions throughout the Plan will ensure mechanisms to assist consumers navigate the health system and connecting services with consumers and clinicians.

Action 1.1.3 – Develop a services framework to guide the future direction of after hours primary healthcare and urgent care services in Tasmania notes the investigation of the feasibility of a single point of access in Tasmania to support the navigation through afterhours care options.

Action 1.5.2 – Provide enhanced information and navigation tools for consumers is a new action aimed at improving information and online navigation tools available to the community and making them accessible on people's phones and devices. This will empower Tasmanians to make informed decisions about where to access care and navigate the Tasmanian system and ensure that the community and clinicians can see what care options are available.

Action 2.2.1 – Establishing central virtual care navigation hubs to support directing patients to the right care setting to meet their needs will direct people to the right service through the role of a 'Health System Navigator'. Further information is detailed in the response to Recommendation 6.

Other actions also support ways of connecting services such as the roll out of the enhanced outpatient eReferral system enabling GPs and other primary care providers to connect to services to support better patient care and improve quality and timeliness of referrals; and strengthening partnerships between public and private hospitals to integrate health services, deliver services more efficiently and create opportunities for shared infrastructure and resources.

Work within this scope will commence as a priority of the implementation plan. Action and progress will be monitored and reported through the implementation plan reporting and reported to the Tasmanian Health Senate.

Recommendation 3 - Accepted

To provide a strong and supportive peer workforce to compliment the clinical workforce in a Community Health Centre / Community Hub.

Response

Working with local communities to identify their health needs is a key theme in the Long-Term Plan. The Tasmanian Government has committed \$500,000 in 2024-25 to deliver a masterplan for district hospitals and community health centres in line with the place-based approach to rural health service planning.

Action 2.3.3 – Develop a Masterplan for Tasmanian District Hospitals and Community Health Centres is a new action to acknowledge this masterplanning. District Hospitals and community health centres can provide a hub for delivering a range of local health care services and host various community services and activities.

Action 2.3.4 – Optimising rural services delivery note that through using a place-based approach, the Department will partner with rural communities to optimise rural health service delivery in locations where district hospitals and community health centres are located.

More specifically, *Action 6.3.3 – Supporting extension of non-clinical and support staff roles* looks to actively trial and implement new ways of working to increase delegations of non-clinical tasks.

This includes for example a greater use of allied health assistants, pharmacy technicians and medical equipment technicians. The Department will work with TAFE Tasmania and other vocational education and training organisations to grow and upskill the technical workforce and further enhance the capacity of the healthcare workforce.

Work under *Action 6.4 – Approving Workforce distribution* and *Action 6.5 – Workforce Flexibility* will also play an important role to inform and ensure a collective workforce to support local communities. Action and progress will be monitored and reported through the implementation plan reporting and reported to the Tasmanian Health Senate.

Recommendation 4 - Accepted

Enable and support ongoing blended models of person-centred care that identify the appropriate care or support required (such as the option of virtual or face-to-face care).

Response

The Department is actively engaged in positive reforms to provide care and services for patients and clients in the best possible way through an integrated system that is people focused and support individuals and communities to be active in their own health and wellbeing management. For example, GEM@Home in the south extends on the Hospital in the Home program to support the geriatric evaluation and Rapid Access In Reach Service in the North provides patients with rapid access complex community-based support.

Action 1.1 – Strengthening our relationship with primary care was updated to highlight the National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA). The NHRA long-term reform objective to deliver more innovative models of care is a key priority for Tasmania. The Long-Term Plan includes a strategic ambition to provide the right care, in the right place, at the right time. Throughout 2023-24, the Department will prioritise the development of an Intermediate Care Service Model for each region to integrate current siloed services and enhanced models to address any current gaps.

Action 1.1.1 – Co-develop a Primary Health Strategy and Action Plan for Tasmania to focus reforming person-centred primary healthcare as set out by the *Australian Government Primary Health Care 10 Year Action Plan 2022-2032*. The Tasmanian action plan will focus on opportunities to strengthen integrated community-based service delivery models and support multidisciplinary teams to provide appropriate care and support.

Action 1.1.8 – Establish Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Central Intake and Referral Service (CRIS) to support a stepped care model of mental health support to provide people with access to services that are person-centred, evidence-based and comprises of supports across a spectrum of needs.

Action 2.2.2 – Establishing enhanced and integrated community and home-based services is a shift away from a ‘hospital-centric’ model in which people must visit a hospital or stay in a hospital bed to access services. Instead, these enhanced services promote a community-centric based model in which more of the services people need are provided in their own homes, including in residential aged care facilities, supported accommodation for disability or other suitable community-based locations.

This recommendation will be highlighted across various action areas of the implementation plan spanning the life of the Long-Term Plan. Action and progress will be monitored and reported through the implementation plan reporting and reported to the Tasmanian Health Senate.

Recommendation 5 - Accepted

Identify current and future priority consumer populations to target enhanced cultural competence and increased health literacy.

Response

The Department recognises that some population groups including Aboriginal People, people from the LGBTIQ+ community, culturally and linguistically diverse people, and people living with a disability are at risk of poorer health outcomes for a range of reasons such as reduced access to healthcare services, low health literacy rates and socioeconomic barriers to health and wellbeing.

We need to recognise the systemic issues that impact on poorer health outcomes and work to address where these impact on access to health services

Action 2.4.2 – Supporting priority population groups has been updated to:

- recognise priority reforms of Closing the Gap and to ensure genuine engagement, resourcing and long-term commitment with the Aboriginal community
- acknowledge the Improving Aboriginal Cultural Respect Across Tasmania's Health System Action Plan, to ensure health services are culturally safe for Aboriginal people
- commit that healthcare workers in public hospitals and health services will be trained to consider health literacy and cultural safety to ensure care and patient communication is respectful and responsive.
- The Plan also recognises that people can be empowered to take control of their own health, through the implementation of the *Health Literacy Action Plan 2019-2024*.
- This work will commence as a priority of the implementation plan. Action and progress will be monitored and reported through the implementation plan reporting and reported to the Tasmanian Health Senate.

Recommendation 6 - Accepted

Expand and enhance virtual care in key areas that is contextually appropriate and utilises the strengths of virtual care to its full potential.

Response

The Tasmanian Government has committed \$41 million over two years to expand existing successful virtual care programs such as COVID@homeplus and develop central virtual care hubs to keep care in the community. This model will aid the health care system's ability to cope with increased demand and provide improved accessibility to services, flexibility and choice for patients, families and clinicians.

Action 2.2.1 – Establishing central virtual care navigation hubs to support directing patients to the right care setting to meet their needs strengthens and better coordinates the delivery of home and community-based services across a range of care areas, including intermediate care, subacute care and hospital in the home. This service will benefit consumers and clinicians by directing people to the right service, particularly through the role of a 'Health System Navigator'.

This work will commence as a priority of the implementation plan. Action and progress will be monitored and reported through the implementation plan reporting and reported to the Tasmanian Health Senate.

The recommendations noted below relate directly to edits or additions to the Long-Term Plan

Accepted and complete

Ensure partnerships with local government are acknowledged. Accepted

Action 1.7.2 – Collaborating with our partners to build a single, nitrated statewide health system is a new action added to the final version of the Long-Term Plan. It notes that as we work towards a single, integrated statewide health system in which all services work effectively together, we commit to strengthening our partnerships and our working relationships across the Tasmanian health system. We will work together with various key partners, including local government, and organisations to deliver optimal health outcomes for Tasmanians.

Action 2.3.1 – Adopt a placed-based approach to rural health service planning, implementation and delivery has been updated to acknowledge working with key partners, including local government, organisations and health services in communities to achieve a placed-based approach.

Accepted and complete

Provide an opening statement for the action on ‘strengthening our relationship with primary care’ that forms a recommendation to provide context for the key actions.

Action 1.1 – Strengthening our relationship with primary care was updated to provide further context for the action and actions to follow.

Accepted and complete

Remove action 1.1.6 as this should come out of developing the Chronic Conditions Strategy (note updating the term from Disease to Condition).

Action 1.1.6 – Partnering to improve support for people with complex chronic health needs has been removed in the final version of the Long-Term Plan.

The Plan focuses on Tasmania developing targeted initiatives to support people living with chronic conditions and to focus on reducing risk factors associated with chronic disease and partnering with key stakeholders to develop a Tasmanian Chronic Conditions Strategy.

Monitoring and Review

In line with the Tasmanian Health Senate Operational Framework, the Tasmanian Health Senate Meeting Report and the Department of Health Response will be publicly available on the DoH website.

A Departmental representative may attend a Tasmanian Health Senate meeting and respond to the Report. The representative may note which recommendations have been accepted, accepted in principle or not accepted with rationale explained to members.

The acceptance and implementation of recommendations will be monitored by the Department and reported back to the Tasmanian Health Senate.

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