

29 September 2023

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Email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

**Re: St John's Park Health and Wellbeing Precinct Masterplan**

I write on behalf of AMA Tasmania to support the St John's Park Health and Wellbeing Precinct Masterplan and to thank your staff for making themselves available to brief our members on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August of this year about the plan. I understand our members feedback that night was taken on board as part of the consultation process.

We note under the Draft Masterplan, the St John's Park Precinct will deliver expanded mental health, alcohol, and drug services, sub-acute, rehabilitation and older persons/geriatric evaluation, treatment and care, palliative care, and complementary community health services in new purpose-built and refurbished facilities across the site. And we welcome the fact the new eating disorders clinic and the replacement for Mistral Place's 15 bed community facility should be completed by 2025. We also note the Masterplan aims to protect the heritage on the site as much as possible.

The need for more built infrastructure has been a hot topic for our members, particularly those in the South of the State where bed-block has led to increased ramping and delays in the Emergency Department. We know that these delays are a symptom of many other problems within the health system some of which requires reform, more staff, and more infrastructure to be able to be addressed effectively. Hence, frustration is mounting for our members around masterplans with thirty-year timetables as is the case with the Royal Hobart Hospital Masterplan 2020-2050, and in the case of the St John's Park Masterplan, twenty years.

We want to see the entire RHH Masterplan brought forward, which means the St John's Park redevelopment too. We cannot afford to wait twenty years to see stage three of the RHH Masterplan, as now seen largely through the St John's Masterplan, finished, noting stage 3 of the RHH redevelopment plan is now broken down into four stages under the St John's Masterplan. We urge the government to start immediately the redevelopment of all stages of the St John's Park plan and commit to a revised timeline so that the entire Masterplan building is completed by no later than 2035. This is in line with AMA Tasmania's policy position to see all acute hospital infrastructure around the state completed by 2035. We need improved facilities and more beds urgently and therefore this concept plan needs to be quickly developed into a real commitment to start to build the required infrastructure now.

In mental health, the sooner a proper mental health facility is built that enables all acute services, that is short stay and inpatient, to be removed from the RHH into properly designed premises with recovery design principles at its core, the better. This will also free up badly needed space for inpatient beds at the RHH. Again, the current 10-to-15-year window for this to occur is far too long.

It is also important that the new facilities at St John's Park are not just replacing existing spaces with new premises but lead to more bed capacity for mental health and sub-acute patients. Sub-acute patients, some of whom are awaiting aged care or NDIS support services, are part of the cause of bed block within our hospitals. These people should not be in acute care beds but being provided with appropriate care in a sub-acute bed or in their own home using the Hospital and GEM-in-the-home programs.

We are also supportive of a new Palliative Care Unit being built at St John's Park that will see a more contemporary and supportive environment for those patients in the last stages of their lives, their families and the staff supporting them.

In relation to the Repat site, we would urge the government to retain this site, as while old, it remains an important decant option while other parts of the RHH site are redeveloped and will always be prime health real estate within the city of Hobart that could be used for the benefit of Tasmanians well into the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of your consultation process.

Kind regards



Dr John Saul  
President AMA Tasmania