



Media Release
Sunday, 9 March 2014

RHH Helipad Delays put Tasmanian Lives at Risk

The State Government has delayed plans to build a helipad onsite at the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) as part of the proposed redevelopment, risking the lives of Tasmanian patients and jeopardising the state's commitment to provide fast access to the highest level of specialist emergency care for all Tasmanians wherever they live.

In the lead up to the State Election on March 15, the Australian Medical Association (AMA) Tasmania is now calling for a commitment from all political parties to pledge their support to reinstate construction plans for the RHH helipad in Stage 1 of the Redevelopment.

AMA Vice President A/Prof Tim Greenaway said the omission in the latest version of the proposed RHH redevelopment reneged on the government's initial pledge to build the helipad in the first stage of construction.

"The helipad was supposed to be built at the first opportunity in the RHH redevelopment, based on the 2007 Sharley report advising the Government to build the helipad as a matter of urgency, which is what Tasmanian medical practitioners still want," A/P Greenaway said.

"In a 2008 Response the Government confirmed it would commit to building the helipad in the first stage of the redevelopment. However DHHS documents lodged with the Hobart City Council (HCC) now show that initial plans to install the helicopter in stage 1 of the redevelopment have been pushed back to an unspecified time in the future."

A/P Greenaway said the State Government's decision to delay construction of the helipad poses serious risks to Tasmanians in need of emergency care, particularly young and elderly patients in the North and North-West regions of the state.

"Without the helipad, patients transported to the RHH by air, land at the Queens Domain, adding significant additional transfer times to get them to the emergency treatment they need, and using much needed ambulance services to transport the patients," he said.

"The time factor is crucial to a patient's wellbeing, and in some cases, survival.

"A significant number of patients from all over Tasmania are air-lifted to the RHH every year, including new born babies, and with increasing demand for a quick and efficient air service to help regional and rural patients in times of crisis, the need for an RHH helipad is crucial."

The ongoing delay of the proposed helipad joins a growing list of issues of concern in Tasmania's public hospitals, which A/Prof Tim Greenaway said the AMA was pursuing as the 2014 election approaches.

"During the state election period the AMA is calling upon the Tasmanian Government and opposition parties to make a commitment to addressing the performance of Tasmania's public hospitals to ensure they can meet the needs of all Tasmanians," A/Prof Greenaway said.



AMA

TASMANIA

**PHOTO/INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY:
AMA Vice-president A/P Tim Greenaway will be
available for interviews TODAY (Sunday, 9 March) at
11am at the helipad on Queens Domain (behind the
Cenotaph), Hobart.**

For a copy of the AMA Tasmania 2014 State Election Priorities visit
www.amatas.com.au/assets/AMA_2014_v2.pdf

ENDS

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