



Media Release
Wednesday, 12 March 2014

Parties fall short on AMA Tasmania election agenda

While the Australian Medical Association (AMA) Tasmania has welcomed Labor, Liberal and the Greens health election commitments, the policies still fall short of delivering on all the priorities the AMA had called for to provide better health outcomes for all Tasmanians.

AMA Tasmanian President Dr John Davis said the 2014 AMA election agenda outlined the six key priority areas for the state's health system and it was disappointing that the parties had not committed to more of these health priorities in their respective policies.

"The AMA has called on the creation of a single funding model for health, a long-term health strategy, more frontline staff, better graduate training opportunities, greater efficiency and more coal face consultation with clinicians and general practitioners," Dr Davis said.

"We have on numerous occasions highlighted the need for an urgent redesign of the state's health system, including funding structures at state and federal levels to ensure a sustainable foundation for Tasmania's health sector.

"It is heartening to see the Liberals appear to at least be prepared to consider moving towards a single funding option and while Labor is not opposed to the proposition, we are yet to see concrete proposals on how this would happen from either party.

"It is crucial that we have one funding board, made up of academics, service providers and clinicians, tasked with allocating the state's health funding, rather than the current system which can fall prey to politics.

"Working harder with less means we must coordinate how we spend our health dollars, and having different funding sources spread across state and federal governments, as well as a raft of other bodies in the middle, only results in money wasted.

"Tasmania also urgently needs more frontline medical staff, increased competitive working conditions to ensure doctors stay in the state, as well as improved graduate training and job opportunities for young doctors."

Dr Davis said of the two major political parties, it is the Liberals have acknowledged the most of the number of the issues raised by the AMA, including the development and implementation of a long term health strategy, ensuring general practitioners have a voice in health care design and delivery as well as commitments to staffing levels and graduate training.

"While these moves are appreciated, we await the detail of the propositions should the Liberal be elected to office, but regardless we are keen to work in a constructive fashion with any Government.

Dr Davis said while Labor has revealed little of its reform agenda post-election, pointing to moves such as the creation in 2012 of the Lead Clinicians Group as well as its significant investment in health over many years, they have pledged to continue to work with the AMA into the future.



AMA

TASMANIA

“Commitments from the Greens have included investing in public hospitals, increased access to dental care, keeping health costs down through Medicare and a focus on mental health.

“The AMA would also like to commend all parties for their commitments to key health issues, such as elective surgery, mental health services, preventative health and alternatives to hospital care.

“It’s a pivotal time for Tasmania’s health care system. All political parties must commit to fixing our sick health system, including the removal of politics from health care funding, before it gets worse.

“This election is about the next Tasmanian government committing to all elements that ensure the delivery of high quality health care to all Tasmanians, within clinically appropriate timeframes.”

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

ENDS

**For more information or interviews: Becher Townshend, Font PR
Phone: 0418 370 661 or (03) 6223 3333 or email bechert@fontpr.com.au**