

# Will Hodgman MP

PREMIER OF TASMANIA



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Dr Stuart Day  
President  
AMA Tasmania  
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Dear Stuart

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the AMA's questionnaire for the 2018 State election.

I am pleased to respond on behalf of all Liberal Members and Candidates.

The Liberal Government has a strong record over the past four years of increased funding for health and delivering improved services, including –

- The progressive opening of 120 additional hospital beds and treatment recliners to meet increasing demand, including the continuation of the John L. Grove rehabilitation centre;
- The establishment of the Community Rapid Response program in the north;
- The recruitment of an additional 300 FTE State-wide health professionals;
- Significantly reducing elective surgery waiting lists and waiting times; and
- Getting the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment finally underway, after it had been promised since 2006.

A re-elected majority Liberal Government is committed to continuing to work constructively with the AMA to deliver our Plan for Better Health care across Tasmania.



All Liberal policies are available at [www.tas.liberal.org.au](http://www.tas.liberal.org.au).

To answer the AMA's specific questions:

- 1. How will your party address the profession's concerns about the governance of the Tasmanian Health Service (THS)?*
  - a. What do you see as the future governance structure of the THS?*
  - b. What are your party's plans for the management structure of the THS and where will the management of the individual hospitals sit? For example, will the RHH, LGH, and NW have autonomy on a day to day basis?*
  - c. How do you plan to restore trust and confidence in the THS management?*
  - d. How do you plan to remove unnecessary bureaucracy?*
  - e. How do you plan to implement a focus on preventive care?*
  - f. How do you plan for THS/DHHS services to integrate with general practice and primary care?*
  - g. How do you plan to improve integration of services for the care of complex chronic disease in the community?*

A re-elected majority Liberal Government will deliver stronger local decision making at Tasmanian hospitals.

We will consult with the clinical workforce, and stakeholders including the AMA, to ensure that hospital leaders are empowered to get on with the job and make the decisions necessary to support patient care.

This will ensure that day-to-day decision-making autonomy is provided at the individual hospital level.

Under these changes, the THS will report directly to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, providing local day-to-day autonomy, whilst providing for statewide service planning and strategic leadership.

The Tasmanian Health Service identity will remain in place, and the THS will remain as a separate legal entity, focused on the delivery of frontline healthcare, with leaner top-level management, returning \$4 million to frontline care over the budget and forward estimates period.

Trust and confidence in local management and improved strategic leadership will be felt organisation-wide, with an improved workplace culture.

We will continue to invest in preventive care, with a re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government committing \$4.4 million over six years to support our *A Healthy Tasmania Five Year Plan*. This will tackle smoking and obesity, two of the major lifestyle factors that lead to poor health outcomes. This is in addition to the existing approximately \$70 million per annum spent on preventive care.

We will also create the \$6.6 million Tasmanian Community Health Fund, which will include support for preventive health initiatives.

This is a clear point-of-difference with the Labor party, which has a policy of establishing a new bureaucratic agency at a cost of \$30 million over a six-year period. We would rather see funding invested into community-led initiatives, and expect the public service to work to include preventive health measures as part of core business of government – without requiring a separate body.

The Hodgman Liberal Government introduced the Community Rapid Response Program in the north of the State, after the Hospital in the Home program was axed by the previous Government.

In our next term, we will provide recurrent funding to make the program a permanent part of the health system in the north of the State.

In addition, we will provide funding and staffing to introduce the program in the south and north-west in a three-year trial in those regions, after which evaluation will occur.

The Program will provide health services for people who need short-term intermediate care that can be safely delivered in the community or at home, and it is estimated the Community Rapid Response Program will deliver more than 25,000 services each year to Tasmanians, across the State over the next three years.

**2. *How will your party address the issues in relation to the Royal Hobart Hospital in its role as the major tertiary referral hospital for the state of Tasmania?***

- a. *How will you ensure sufficient availability of acute beds including ICU and HDU beds in the short term, which is now?*
- b. *How will you ensure sufficient availability of acute beds including ICU and HDU beds in the longer term, accepting that the population of Tasmania is older and sicker and less health literate than the majority of Australians?*
- c. *How will you address the disparity of beds across the state considering that the south of the state has 52% of the population but 45% of the beds? Noting that we are not in any way suggesting a reduction of beds in the North or Northwest.*
- d. *How will you improve access to non-urgent procedures and non-urgent outpatient appointments?*

Under the first term of the Hodgman Liberal Government, we are opening 80 beds and treatment recliners at, and to support, the Royal Hobart Hospital. This includes intensive care beds.

The majority of those beds are now open, with the exception of the new 22-bed ward at the Repatriation Hospital, which will open in the middle of this year and help take pressure off the Royal through the coming winter.

Under our Health Plan, a re-elected majority Liberal Government will invest three-quarters of a billion dollars (\$757 million) into health, to open 298 hospital beds across the State – an increase of more than 20 per cent – over the next six years.

At the Royal, this will mean opening and staffing 250 new hospital beds, including 10 new Intensive Care Unit beds. The focus on critical care is important, reflecting our older sicker population, which is leading to more and more complex care.

There are significantly more beds opening at the Royal than elsewhere in Tasmania, which is because the Royal serves not only Southern Tasmania but the entire state as its major tertiary hospital, and its major trauma centre. The additional beds at the Royal, and the associated staff and funding, acknowledge this role.

A re-elected majority Liberal Government will also retain the 54 bed J-Block Inpatient building, which will provide additional flex space and provide a potential decant solution for future on-site developments at the Royal.

To ensure all Tasmanians get the full benefit of this investment, a re-elected majority Liberal Government will establish and staff Tasmania's first integrated medical and search and rescue helicopter service, with dedicated flight paramedics and specialist retrieval doctors.

This will include dedicated resources, allowing quicker response times and ensuring patients start to receive high acuity care from the moment the helicopter lands, rather than having to wait until they arrive in hospital, and will reduce median activation time from 52 minutes to 10 minutes.

Operating alongside the new helipad at the North West Regional Hospital, those under construction at the Mersey Community Hospital and the Royal Hobart Hospital, and the pre-existing facility at the Launceston General Hospital, the helicopter services will ensure these beds are accessible to all Tasmanians when they need them most.

The increased clinical workforce recruited as part of our \$757 million package will allow for more non-urgent appointments and procedures, bringing waiting lists down. It is important to note that the outpatient waiting list and the average waiting time, at the Royal, has reduced under this Government but we must do more to meet growing demand and ensure people receive the care they need.

It is also important to note that while Government is allocating the resourcing for these beds, it is clinical experts who will determine the best way to use these resources, and the best mix of services, to get the maximum benefit for Tasmanian patients.

This process will commence within 100 days of the re-election of a majority Hodgman Liberal Government, with establishment of a Clinical Planning Taskforce, led by the Department of Health and Human Services, in consultation with senior doctors and nurses, professional organisations, unions, as well as health consumers.

The Taskforce will lead planning for:

- The models of care and clinical planning for the new hospital beds;
- The potential future uses for the j-block inpatient building; and
- Update the rhh master plan, to guide the next stage of the royal hobart hospital health precinct.

Planning will occur in consultation with clinicians, other health professionals and key stakeholder groups including the AMA.

A re-elected majority Liberal Government will also explore the establishment of Urgent Care Centres in the south and north of the State. Under similar models operating interstate and overseas, specialist General Practitioners, supported by hospital specialists, provide care in the community.

We will also fully roll-out secondary triage of Ambulance Tasmania calls, ensuring that patients not requiring emergency intervention or transport to an Emergency Department will be referred to an appropriate health service, keeping paramedic resources available for emergency calls.

These measures have real potential to take pressure off Tasmanian emergency departments and help get people treated sooner and closer to where they live

**3. How will your party address the current and ongoing issues with access to Mental Health services?**

- a. How will you address the issues with acute psychiatric inpatient care given that the current inpatient bed situation within the Royal Hobart Hospital has been highlighted by the coroner as contributing to deaths?
- b. How will you improve outpatient access and support for non-psychotic patients?
- c. What connections will be in place between community care and housing? What systems will be introduced the care for homeless patients?

The Liberal Government developed the *Rethink Mental Health Strategy*, which has bipartisan political support as the blueprint for growth in mental health services across the whole community.

We worked hard, in Government, to keep acutely unwell patients on-site at the Royal and not allow the former Government's unsafe plan to send patients to the suburbs of Hobart to proceed.

We accept we must do more to improve our capacity to care for mental health patients, and a re-elected majority Liberal Government will open 25 new mental health beds in Southern Tasmania, including an expansion of the Mistral Place facility adjacent to the RHH (an additional 10 beds), and a rebuild of the Peacock Centre (to provide 15 subacute care beds).

Clinicians will determine models of care and it's estimated more than 49 additional staff will be recruited, including 26 nurses, more than 2 doctors, 7 allied health staff and 13 operational and administrative staff.

We will also establish a taskforce with representation from the Mental Health Council of Tasmania, AMA, ANMF and other key stakeholder groups to develop a plan for mental health service integration in southern Tasmania.

In the north, we will fully staff and open an eight bed dedicated Adolescent Unit at the LGH, once the Ward 4K redevelopment is complete in 2019, with specialised facilities for mental health care. This will allow the LGH to deliver better psychiatric services to child and adolescent patients and their families from across the North of Tasmania.

Funding is provided for full staffing, expected to comprise 26 additional FTEs, including 18 nurses, 2 doctors and 3 allied health staff.

We must do more to address patients who no longer require acute care, but have no home to go to. In 2017, the Liberal Government partnered with Colony 47 and Baptcare, to provide accommodation at Karingal at St Johns Park, New Town, to provide accommodation and support for mental health patients who were ready to leave hospital, but had no place to go.

A re-elected majority Liberal Government will provide funding of \$500,000 per annum over two years, to trial the Housing, Accommodation, and Support Initiative (HASI) in partnership with Colony 47, which has been successful in NSW in taking the pressure off acute hospitals.

HASI will provide mental health patients with access to stable housing linked to clinical and psychosocial rehabilitation services.

**4. How will your party address the issues with Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) in this state?**

- a. *What is your vision for where ADS will sit from a governance view? Will it remain with Mental Health Services or sit alone as an autonomous government-funded organisation?*
- b. *How will ADS be linked to other services such as Education, Police and Justice?*

While the Liberals remain committed to our single statewide health system, it's clear that decision-making has become too centralised. We have already promised to strengthen local hospital decision-making and introduce legislation to restructure the THS so it can report direct to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

As part of this change, we will consult with the AMA on the best model for local decision-making with statewide planning and clinical engagement, including the delivery of Alcohol and Drug Services, but there are no plans for ADS to sit outside of THS/DHHS.

We are also committed to ensuring we provide drug and alcohol rehabilitation in the community, with a re-elected majority Liberal Government to invest \$6 million for 30 new community-based drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds over the next three years, as well as extending our partnership with the Salvation Army which provides 12 community rehabilitation beds on the North West coast.

We have also committed to provide \$870 000 over two years to the Alcohol and Drug Foundation to expand the successful Good sports program, which provides education and awareness training in local sporting clubs.

These initiatives are complementary to our state-run services and will help more Tasmanians receive the care they need.

5. *How will your party ensure the future of health care in this state?*

- a. *What are your plans and commitment towards creating a strong and vibrant Tasmanian Medical School via an effective partnership with the University of Tasmania?*
- b. *How do you plan to develop Tasmania as a magnet for clinical and healthcare research?*
- c. *How do you plan to address the staff concerns about adequate and equitable remuneration across the state including at the rural facilities?*

Our investment of \$757 million into healthcare in Tasmania will bring with it benefits for clinical and healthcare research, with a significantly increased and better resourced medical workforce supported to undertake these important activities.

We will continue to support the Clifford Craig Foundation in Northern Tasmania, and the Royal Hobart Hospital Foundation in the South, to facilitate world-leading research across a range of specialities.

Providing a vibrant teaching environment is important for recruitment and retention, and this will be considered by the new dedicated Health Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Planning Unit we will establish, as part of the development of a 20-year Future Health Workforce Plan.

The plan will be a first for Tasmania, and will look at current and future training and recruitment, re-training and post-graduate training and recruitment processes.

We will continue to negotiate in good faith with the medical workforce on wages and conditions, and I note the new recruitment and retention allowance currently on offer in the North West, to help retain specialists to the region, as well as helping to decrease the overall health costs by reducing the use of locums.

We will continue to support this initiative, and work with the AMA on any other ways to ensure we have a sustainable medical workforce.

6. *How will your party support the Tobacco Free Generation Bill?*

- a. *Measures*
- b. *Timelines*

The Hodgman Liberal Government's position is very clear – we do not support the proposal to ban smoking for Tasmanians born after 2000.

As a general rule we do not support banning things, we believe in freedom of choice and informing Tasmanians of the harms of smoking and helping them to quit.

During the last term, the Government consulted widely on the concept of changing the legal smoking age and concluded it was not supported by the community or the medical fraternity.

We want to see less Tasmanians smoke because they'd feel healthier and have better health outcomes, which is why a re-elected majority Liberal Government will set a target to reduce smoking rates to below the national average by 2025, and halve the gap between the state and national smoking rates for under 25s.

We will achieve this through education, preventative health programs and targeted quit campaigns. We have also increased the penalties for selling or supplying cigarettes to a child, and tripled tobacco licence selling fees, which is already resulting in a reduction in retail points of sale.

A re-elected majority Liberal Government will continue to invest in the *A Healthy Tasmania 5 Year Plan*, and the establishment of the \$6.6 million Tasmanian Community Health Fund, which will include preventive health measures.

**7. *How will your party address accreditation and recruitment issues?***

- a. Mental health at the RHH, Physician Training at the LGH?*
- b. Speciality training positions generally and the now inevitable generation gap that will occur.*

A re-elected majority Liberal Government will establish a dedicated Health Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Planning Unit we will establish, as part of the development of a 20-year Future health Workforce Plan.

The plan will be a first for Tasmania, and will look at current and future training and recruitment, re-training and post-graduate training and recruitment processes.

We will also continue to work with the AMA on ensuring we maintain a sustainable medical workforce.

With regard to mental health accreditation at the Royal Hobart Hospital, we are strengthening local leadership at the hospital, in consultation with stakeholders. This will ensure the right people are empowered to make the right decisions to maintain and maximise training opportunities.

The same is true of the Launceston General Hospital, and we are continuing to actively pursue additional specialist positions, with the recent successful recruitment of two endocrinologists – ending a drought going back more than a decade – and positive progress towards recruiting new neurologists at the hospital.

Further, as part of our move to strengthen local hospital leadership, we will consult with the AMA on the best model for local decision-making with statewide planning and clinical engagement, which will improve management of hospital accreditation at the local level.

**8. *What Palliative Care measures do you propose both in Hospital and in the community?***

- a. Patient centred outcomes?*
- b. Increase in the Palliative care workforce*

As part of the Mersey Community Hospital \$730 million funding deal, the Tasmanian Government secured \$3.0 million for palliative care, including funding for Palliative Care Tasmania to deliver community development and awareness-raising activities, and for The District Nurses to support better palliative care to be provided in the community.



We are providing additional resourcing for palliative care, including funding for Palliative Care Tasmania to improve community access to palliative care support, and support families in their dealings with the Guardianship and Administration Board, as well as expand their clinician training and development through the GP Education program.

We are also funding Clinical Nurse Educators in each region, and will build and staff dedicated palliative care rooms at the Mersey Community Hospital.

In addition to this measures, palliative care beds will be considered as part of the roll-out of the 298 additional hospital beds funded through the \$757 million boost for health care.

**9. Will you present a transparent funding model for health?**

*a. GST allocations to be included?*

*b. Will your party publish details of allocations made from the grants commission?*

The latest AIHW data, released in 2017, shows recurrent expenditure on health in Tasmania increased to above the national average for the first time since records began in 1998. While this data is from all funding sources, it clearly reflects the high priority the Liberal Government has placed on health.

In real terms, the data shows health expenditure per person in Tasmania increase 3.7 per cent in 2015-16, compared with the previous year (above the national average of 2.1 per cent).

In terms of the Tasmanian Budget, annual health expenditure has grown from \$1,473 million in 2013-14 under the former Government, to \$1,737 million in 2016-17 – with increases every year. This follows a cut to expenditure in 2013-14 by the former government.

This information is shown in the audited Treasurer's Annual Financial reports, published on the Treasury website.

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will spend an additional \$757 million on health care, including a 20% increase in hospital beds.

The Tasmanian State Budget papers fully and transparently detail how health is funded in Tasmania, and the Commonwealth Grants Commission regularly releases reports on how GST funding is calculated.

I note that the GST is provided as an untied grant to the states and territories; it is not hypothecated to a particular purpose. In Tasmania, we have been able to continually invest in health, and go to the next level with a \$757 million funding injection, because we have repaired the state budget.

*10. Will your party support a co-located Public Private Hospital development at the LGH?*

- a. Will your party approach a private company to facilitate?*
- b. What time frames will you apply?*

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will continue to support, in-principle, the development of a co-located private hospital adjacent to the Launceston General Hospital.

We recognise that, done well, as co-located hospital can deliver significant benefits for public patients, with potentially a wider variety of services through better workforce recruitment and retention in Launceston, and lead to shorter hospital waiting times.

We also acknowledge that this can provide greater opportunities for our medical workforce in Launceston, and have positive flow-on effects for hospital training accreditation. Current co-locations in Burnie and Hobart show the benefits Tasmanians received when the public and private sectors work closely together.

There is currently an unsolicited bids process underway, facilitated by Tasmania's Coordinator-General. We support the continuation of that process, and expect that process to proceed as quickly as is possible whilst ensuring appropriate rigour and due diligence.

To do otherwise would not be fair to the party that submitted the bid, and could put the proposal at serious risk.

We are also focused on growing the Launceston General Hospital and the public hospital services it provides, with a commitment to deliver a \$87.3 million site wide redevelopment, to open eight new beds on the Children's Ward 4K and to build and staff a whole new Ward 3D.

*11. How will your party support mandatory reporting? The Tasmanian Government has a professional and ethical obligation to protect and promote public health and safe healthcare as well as care for its employees.*

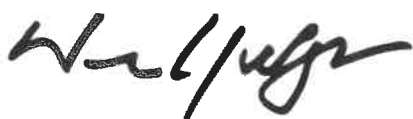
- a. Will your party support the WA model?*

The health of all Tasmanians is paramount for the Hodgman Government.

I am pleased that there has been considerable progress towards a national system that provides support for the mental health of those in the health professions while protecting patients of these practitioners and have agreed on the mandatory reporting of past, present and risk of future sexual misconduct.

Tasmania will be working with other states to resolve this issue quickly.

Yours sincerely



Will Hodgman MP  
**Liberal Leader**