



Media Release
Thursday, 26 May 2016

Health funding falls short of Tasmania's needs

AMA Tasmania President A/Prof Tim Greenaway said today's State Budget didn't go far enough in addressing Tasmania's failing public hospital system.

Throughout the budget, \$1.59 billion out of a total of \$5.5 billion in funding was allocated to health, approximately 28.9 per cent of total government expenditure from next financial year.

A/Prof Greenaway said while the level of health spending in the Hodgman Liberal Government's budget is on par with other states, it should have been much higher due the Tasmanian population being older, poorer and with higher rates of chronic disease than other states.

"The State Government has not put health as its highest priority despite continued public calls for greater investments in health," said A/Prof Greenaway.

"We should be investing more into health to combat the significant issues faced by Tasmania's public health system."

A/Prof Greenaway said the State Government's claims in regards to reducing waiting list are in no part a reflection on State Government initiative, but instead due to federal funding and patients being flown interstate for operations.

"The AMA notes that the Mersey Hospital will become a dedicated elective surgery facility from July 1 however details on exactly how this will work are lacking," he said.

"To reduce waiting lists, funding needs to be allocated for an appropriate number of beds and an appropriate number of doctors and nurses to staff those beds.

"AMA Tasmania has welcomed the \$2.6 million in preventative health funding however the \$1.6 million allocated to reduce smoking rates and fight obesity lacks detail of how the funding will be used.

"However the AMA does support any measure that reduces smoking rates and notes the government's consideration to increase the minimum legal smoking age to 21, which evidence has shown has worked in the United States.

"We also welcome the investments in student and mental health as well as affordable housing and education to address many of the main social determinants of health.

"It was also pleasing to see a combined \$22.4 million for health centres in Glenorchy and Kingston.

"AMA Tasmania would like to note of the Government's accepted 10.5 per cent pay increase for state politicians while they continue to impose a cap of 2 per cent per annum for public servants, including the public hospital medical workforce, and continue to pay locum doctors extravagant fees for placements in regional areas."



PLEASE NOTE: AMA Tasmania President A/Prof Tim Greenaway will only be available for phone interviews today until 7:00pm and tomorrow (27 May) from 8:00-10:00am.

ENDS

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