



MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday 20th April 2019

THERE IS NO TIME FOR LATER

Last year the Hodgman Liberal Government offered the health sector within Tasmania, specifically the ED department of the Royal Hobart Hospital a cash injection of \$5 million, while welcomed at the time, in light of today's shocking revelations surrounding the "breaking point" of our clinical staff this was clearly a band-aid solution that is no longer adequate.

The time has come for no more band aids from the government, but real action to solve the crisis that is hitting our emergency department at the RHH.

Band-aid funding fixes are purely that, and once these funding injections run out, the patched cracks begin to widen once again. Recurrent funding needs to be increased to fund more staff permanently at the RHH and Launceston General Hospital, also experiencing growing demand and bed block problems.

The Minister must listen to his Registrars who are warning of the devastating effect patient block and long waiting times are having on patients. Staff morale is being harmed, we are concerned for the welfare of doctors, nurses and paramedics and all staff who are at the frontline dealing with the growing numbers and complexities of patients.

We don't want to see excellent staff end up too stressed to attend work because the government failed to heed their calls for help.

The AMA's state of Public Hospital Report Card released today confirms that waiting times in Tasmania's emergency departments are getting worse with fewer patients been seen within the recommended time.

The median time for elective surgery has declined from 45 days to 42 days, which is good news for people waiting on the elective surgery waiting list. However, it comes at the expense of patients in emergency and other parts of the hospital where bed block is creating a problem for ED.

Resources are needed now in ED – not next year, or the year after that. While the redevelopment of the ED is welcome and necessary – it is not going to happen fast enough to deal with the problems now, especially with the winter flu season starting to hit.

Staff have come up with practical solutions that must be acted on immediately. Some cost no money; some require more staff on duty at critical times to ensure all patients are given the care they need when they need it. At a bare minimum, the AMA calls on the Minister and the government to provide additional resources to the RHH immediately. This will enable both another Senior Registrar and Medical Registrar to be employed over the night shift to assist in patients being admitted to wards which require more beds to be opened.



The logical and immediate solution is to build an appropriately equipped, staffed and funded new emergency department. A department that can support the needs of Tasmania, and the staff charged with delivering care.

For the Minister to indicate beds will expand by 2024 is simply not good enough - we need them now. If that means the government must go into debt to build the infrastructure now, then that is what they should do to ensure urgent improvements to our emergency department infrastructure can happen quickly. >>> **ENDS**

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