



MEDIA RELEASE

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AMA CALLING FOR ANSWERS DURING BUDGET ESTIMATES

AMA Tasmania is taking unprecedented action in providing questions to the government and the opposition parties to be put during the budget estimates process concerning funding, governance, and future planning in the Tasmanian Health System.

Professor John Burgess said the time had come for more openness and transparency around the budget and the government's priorities in the health system.

"The recently released Auditor General's report on Emergency Department access in Tasmania's public hospitals is a wake-up call to all who care about the future of our public hospitals and the care we expect them to offer to patients.

"Tasmanian public hospital emergency departments have shown deteriorating levels of access and safety over the last few years, so we rightly need clear answers as to why this is and what the Tasmanian Health Service is doing to fix this severe problem."

Professor Burgess said the AMA and the community more generally are right to expect straight answers in response to the type of questions they were making public today.

"After four years of Tasmania's Health Service bureaucracy flipping between different organisational structures that just don't seem able to address the problems faced by the staff and patients in our public hospital system, we clearly believe it's time for the facts and truth of the situation to be put out in the open for the public to judge".

"AMA wants to see the factual answers to basic questions like; how many physical beds spaces are there in our major hospitals; are there enough nurses employed by the THS to keep open the beds we have let alone open new ones; is next year's budget going to be employing more hospital staff and opening more beds or will it result in cuts to staff and service capacity in our hospitals; if there are to be staff cuts in the THS, will these be in the bureaucracy or in our public hospitals?"

Professor Burgess added "there are extremely serious service failures in Tasmania's hospitals that are now publicly documented in the report released by the Tasmanian Auditor General, so we all rightly expect clear and transparent answers about how this could happen, what's practically being done to address the problems and when the community can expect the current health access emergency to end."

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