



**\*\* EMBARGOED UNTIL 12.01 AM SUNDAY 2 JUNE 2019 \*\***

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE AMA TASMANIA FOR BUDGET ESTIMATES 2019**

What is the true picture of resourcing, governance and service provision in the Tasmanian Health Service?

AMA Tasmania believes the answers can be found through the 2019 Budget Estimates process commencing on Monday 3 June 2019. The recently released Auditor General Report into Emergency Department performance in our public hospitals confirmed the dire state of the Tasmanian Health System.

Many serious questions regarding the governance and operational performance of the THS were raised by the report. When combined with inadequate provisioning for health in the 2019-20 State budget and the recurring capacity crises in Tasmania's public hospitals, particularly at the Royal Hobart Hospital, the Auditor General's report has highlighted the need for answers from Government and the Tasmanian health bureaucracy.

Consequently, AMA Tasmania has taken the unprecedented step of preparing a series of detailed questions, the answers to which will finally provide public transparency regarding the THS and surface the truth about what's really happening in Tasmania's health system.

### **THS BUDGET - HOSPITALS**

- 1 What is the operating budget for each of the Royal Hobart Hospital, Launceston General Hospital, and the North West Regional Hospital and by how much will each increase in absolute terms in 2019-20 compared to actual expenditure in 2018-2019?
  - 1.1 Will hospital management at the RHH, LGH, and NWRH be asked to make cuts to budget expenditure in 2019-20 relative to actual spending in 2018-19?
  - 1.2 Will management of hospital be required to reduce staff - if so, how many FTE's from each hospital and will any of these be staff with a role in direct patient contact? (including nurses, doctors, allied health, cleaners, sitters or admin clerical staff who are in direct contact with patients, or administrative clerical staff who provide direct support to front line clinical teams in hospital clinical departments) Will the Minister guarantee that all staff with direct patient contact and clinical support roles in each of Tasmania's public hospitals be exempt from any and all FTE reductions?
- 2 What was the actual operating budget expenditure for THS administrative bureaucracy outside of the RHH, LGH, NWRH, and MCH in 2018-2019, and what will it be in 2019-20?



2.1 Will it be required to make cuts to its non-hospital budget expenditure in 2019-20 relative to actual expenditure in 2018-19 and what will the absolute reduction in funding be?

2.2 Is the efficiency dividend of 0.75% being applied to the THS? How much is the THS expected to save within its budget and how many FTE will the central THS bureaucracy be required to reduce in 2019-20?

2.3 If Government wages policy is 2% and Wages are at least 70% of the cost of running our public hospitals is any absolute increase in budget enough to cover these wages?

## **STAFF**

- 1 How many FTE of permanent medical staff positions are vacant, unfunded or and requiring locum or temporary cover at RHH, LGH, and NWRH and in what specialties and areas are these vacancies located?
  - 1.1 What evidence exists to show clinical performance or patient safety is compromised by medical staff vacancies or inability to fill positions with permanent staff?
  - 1.2 Are patients requiring interstate transfer due to any medical staff vacancies and if so, what is the cost related to such transfers and are there any adverse clinical outcomes as a result of local service unavailability and the need to transfer patient's interstate?
- 2 What objective evidence exists as to the current level of morale and work satisfaction for clinical staff (doctors, nurses, and allied health) at each of the RHH, LGH, and NWRH? If you have none, will you undertake a professional survey of staff to understand the level of morale and address any issues that may be undermining it?
- 3 Following on from the Auditor-General's report, what change management processes will you implement to help improve the culture and break down the silos approach?
- 4 Are there vacancy control measures in place? Is it a fact that there are approved established FTE roles that are not being filled due to being "unaffordable"? Can you explain what the difference between Established FTE and Affordable FTE is?
- 5 The Executive Director of Medical Services position at the RHH has been vacant for some time now and has been filled by a variety of locum appointments and acting positions as this is an important leadership position when do you plan on it being filled permanently by an appropriately qualified person?



## BEDS

- 1 How many extra nursing staff above 2018-19 levels will the minister require the THS to employ in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19?
- 2 At maximum capability, how many overnight bed spaces equipped with adult beds (excluding short stay recliner chairs) suitable for acute and subacute patients are there at RHH, LGH, and NWRH in 2018-19?
  - 2.1 How many at each of these were effectively staffed with permanently, temporarily and locum/agency employed nursing staff during 2018-19 and what is the nursing FTE at each hospital required to staff 24-7 these potential bed spaces fully?
  - 2.2 How many additional new fully equipped overnight bed spaces will be available at each of RHH, LGH and NWRH in 2019-20 and how many additional new permanent FTE will be employed to open additional bed capacity at each hospital in 2019-20? When will recruitment be authorised?

## ELECTIVE SURGERY

- 1 What is the total number of patients are both the surgical and endoscopy waiting lists?
- 2 What is the breakdown of the Clinical Urgency Categories of these patients?
- 3 What are the waiting list numbers, breakdown of clinical urgency categories, and percentage of over boundary patients of the following surgical specialties;
  - a. Cardiothoracic Surgery
  - b. Neurosurgery
  - c. Plastic Surgery
  - d. Urology
  - e. General Surgery
  - f. Vascular Surgery
  - g. Paediatric Surgery
  - h. Gynaecology
  - i. Gynaecology Oncology
  - j. Ophthalmology
  - k. Orthopaedic Surgery
  - l. Ear Nose and Throat Surgery
  - m. Oral Maxillo Facial Surgery



- 4 What are the surgical waiting list and endoscopy procedural waiting lists in total and for each of the RHH, LGH, and NWRH as of April 2019 and how does this compare to the same point in 2018 and 2017?
  - 4.1 Have patients experienced any serious or reportable adverse outcomes as a result of waiting longer than recommended time in waiting lists?
- 5 How many elective surgery cases have been funded for 2018/19?
- 6 How many were category 1, 2, or 3? And how does this compare to 2017/18?
- 7 How many elective surgery cases will be funded for 2019/20?
- 8 Can the Minister give his assurance that no surgical training program positions will be at risk due to a lack of purchased elective activity?

## **EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT**

- 1 When will planning begin on the expanded Emergency Department and who will be doing this work?
- 2 If it is the Redevelopment team, what additional resources will be provided to the team to ensure this work does not stall while moving into K Block and dealing with the inevitable teething problems?
- 3 Will the extra Emergency Department Registrar and Medical Registrar working on evening and overnight shifts be permanent appointments? If not, for how long are they funded?
- 4 How many patients wait in greater than 8, 16, 24, 48, 72, and 96 hours in the emergency department for an inpatient bed? Can you break down these numbers for each hospital?

## **TRAUMA RETRIEVAL**

- 1 Is Tasmania's Trauma and Retrieval Service currently fully staffed with doctors, nurses, and administrative support staff, and how does this compare against relevant nationally accepted benchmarks?
  - 1.1 How many FTE of medical, nursing, and support staff related explicitly to the Trauma and Retrieval Service are currently fully and permanently funded and are any positions vacant or in jeopardy of becoming vacant?



## **ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**

- 1 How many people are on the methadone program? How many people are waiting to be put on the methadone program? What was the wait list in 2018 as a comparison?

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

- 1 What is the total number of mental health patients seen in the states emergency departments that require inpatient admission?
- 2 How many of these mental health patients wait in greater than 8, 16, 24, 48, 72, and 96 hours in the emergency department for an inpatient bed? Can you break down these numbers for each hospital?

---

## **CONTACT**

Professor John Burgess – President AMA Tasmania – 0417 302 803

Lara Giddings – CEO AMA Tasmania – 0400 417 160