

MEDIA RELEASE

THURSDAY 24 MAY 2007



BROAD DIRECTIONS IN STATE HEALTH PLAN WELCOMED BUT WILL COME AT A COST - GENERAL PRACTICE TASMANIA

General Practice Tasmania has optimistically welcomed today's release of the Government's framework for the reform of the State's health system. At the same time, the organisation representing general practice in this State, has urged the Government to maintain its resolve by implementing the changes and demonstrating its commitment to the plan in the upcoming State Budget.

Chair of General Practice Tasmania Dr Patrick O'Sullivan said General Practice Tasmania was pleased to see clear recognition of the key role of general practice and a willingness to look beyond the public hospitals for solutions.

"There also appears to be a commitment to increasing the emphasis on health promotion and illness prevention that is long overdue. However this philosophical commitment must be matched by a resource commitment in the State Budget and this of course remains to be seen," he said.

"Early indications are that the plan includes long-term strategies to address issues of access to services, coordination between services, workforce and service sustainability."

"There is a clear outline of how services are to be distributed across the State even though there may be areas in which we disagree. The Minister is to be congratulated for her commitment to deliver a sustainable health system and for seeing the process through." He also added that "the development of Tasmania's Health Plan needs to be seen as the beginning and not the end!"

Key initiatives that the General Practice Tasmania Network will be looking for in today's plan and in the State Budget are:

1. A demonstrable commitment to increase investment in primary care, health promotion and illness-prevention programs;
2. An investment in information and communications technology infrastructure to support communication between the public health system and general practice;
3. Appropriately-resourced transport systems including emergency response to support equitable access to services; and
4. A commitment to meaningful and genuine partnerships with general practice, other professions and the broader community in planning the implementation of these key reforms.

Contact Details:

General Practice Tasmania Chair, Dr Patrick O'Sullivan, will be available for comment following the launch of the Plan after 2pm today.

The Chairs of each of the Network organisations will be available for a media conference at 10:30 am on Friday 25 May in the Executive Board Room at the Salamanca Inn Hobart.

The General Practice Tasmania network is a unique statewide infrastructure that supports contemporary general practice in Tasmania by linking GPs with each other, by supporting all members of the general practice team and, increasingly, by employing or supporting allied health professionals such as physiotherapists, dieticians and psychologists to be part of the primary care team. General Practice Tasmania is also a proud member of the Australian General Practice Network.

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Specific comment regarding regional or workforce issues should be directed to the relevant member organisation from the General Practice Tasmania Network:



GENERAL PRACTICE SOUTH
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Chair: Dr Graeme Bleach
Executive Officer: Ms Sue Moir

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GENERAL PRACTICE NORTH
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Chair: Dr Judith Watson
Chief Executive Officer: Mr Phil Edmondson

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GENERAL PRACTICE NORTH WEST
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GENERAL PRACTICE WORKFORCE
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Chair: Dr Fiona Joske
Chief Executive Officer: Mr Peter Barns

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