

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## REFORMING THE HEALTH SYSTEM - A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Today's national health reform announcements provide the opportunity for better health for all Tasmanians but only if the Commonwealth acts to strengthen the primary health care sector as well, says General Practice Tasmania spokesperson Dr Judith Watson.

"While General Practice Tasmania welcomes the moves to improve our public hospital system, real change – the prevention of unnecessary illness and reductions in Australia's high hospitalisation rates – will only occur through a parallel strategy to strengthen primary health care based around general practice," Dr Watson said.

Dr Watson stressed the need for the Government to maintain two sectors in health care, hospital and primary, and utilise the relationship crossover these have in regional areas to achieve better service coordination.

"A reformed primary health care system must have general practice at its centre and quarantined funding distinctly separate to the acute sector.

"We know that this system works and by maintaining the same financial processes (quarantined funding) it ensures that the money is not siphoned off into the acute sector.

"Separate Primary Health Care Networks with clear links to the proposed Hospital Networks will give us a sustainable health system," said Dr Watson.

Dr Watson noted that while today's announcement was a good start the government would need to act on these changes and release the other stages of the reform agenda in a timely manner.

General Practice Tasmania looks forward to the remaining announcements about the government's health reform agenda and working with government to secure and improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians.

(ENDS)

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*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.*

