



MEDIA RELEASE

RUTH FORREST MLC

PO BOX 104, WYNYARD TAS 7325 TEL: 03 6443 8600 FAX: 03 6443 8603

ROSEBERY HEALTH PLAN NOT A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

The Primary Health Plan released by the Minister for Health last week, according to Murchison MLC Ruth Forrest, will not address the future needs of Rosebery and surrounding areas.

The Primary Health Plan is focused on health services in rural and remote areas of Tasmania and is most often the first point of call for a person seeking a health service including rural hospitals, community and allied health services, health promotion or general practice.

Ms Forrest believes that the Primary Health Plan doesn't fully address or understand the needs of the West Coast, in particular the threat to the Rosebery Hospital that provides a service for the growing population of Tullah, Rosebery, Zeehan, Trial Harbour, Granville Harbour and Strahan.

"We are constantly reminded that Tasmania has an ageing population with high rates of chronic disease and whilst there are a number of older residents in the Rosebery region, the demographic of this area is changing. The West Coast shouldn't be considered part of Tasmania's ageing demographic that this health plan is focusing on" Ms Forrest said.

"The mining industry will be employing in excess of 1000 new workers over the next twelve to eighteen months and they will not be employing 70 and 80 year olds. The health service needs of the increasing number of West Coast residents, including many new young families, will have different needs from many other rural and remote areas of Tasmania that do have an ageing population" Ms Forrest stated.

"The extended hours for consultation and on call 24 hour medical cover that is to enhance an expanded community health service does address some issues, but ignores concerns of workplace safety for nursing staff and patients where limited services are provided in the hospital and more are focused in the community" Ms Forrest stated.

“The loss of the option for overnight inpatient beds to treat sub-acute and short term patients, is not in the best interests of the growing community in terms of health services and recruitment of skilled workers to the booming mining industry and must be reviewed” Ms Forrest stated.

“High quality, 24-hour emergency management is essential and has been committed to, but transport including urgent and non-urgent patient transport and community transport has not been addressed.”

“Access to services for patients and relatives must be addressed prior to any changes to services” Ms Forrest said.

A project team will be established to guide the Primary Health Plan consisting of the Project co-ordinator, DON Manager Health West, HR Relationships representative and Business Support representative, who are to work with the Rosebery Hospital staff and community.

“The project team established to oversee the implementation of this plan doesn’t even have any community or local health staff representation and must be amended to ensure the local community needs are considered” Ms Forrest stated.

30th May 2007

For further information phone 0419 879 524