



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

## **Health Budget smoke and mirrors exercise**

### **Media Release**

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Murchison MLC, Ruth Forrest has highlighted a significant gap in the health budget, pointing out that it is dependent on reward payments made by the Federal Government which will only flow if certain targets in emergency medicine and elective surgery are met.

Ms Forrest said that during Legislative Council Budget estimates hearings it has become apparent, that in the State Government's haste to enter the new health funding arrangements with the Federal Government, little if any consideration had been given to the detail of the agreement.

"The State Government is relying on a bilateral agreement that is yet to be agreed for \$125.1 m. to flow to the state to get Tasmanian hospitals up to speed to have any chance of the reward payments being received. This is in spite of the fact that according to the Treasurer, Michael Aird the reward payments have already been factored into the forward estimates of the health budget," Ms Forrest said.

"However, it is as yet unclear how these benchmarks will be met and for that matter exactly what is required to meet them, meaning Government has agreed to a deal, but the detail is yet to be filled in by either the Federal or State Governments and significant extra funding will be needed to have any chance of meeting the benchmarks."

Ms Forrest said the move highlighted the inadequacies of the deal entered into with the Federal Government over health funding and served to highlight that under the new 60 per cent federally funded and 40 per cent state funded, the blame game would continue.

"To be frank, we've already seen the blame game and cost shifting in action under the current arrangements for health funding it is difficult to see how this will stop," Ms Forrest said.

"As it stands many challenges with the health budget, if these matters are not resolved and it really shows the State Government is crossing their fingers and hoping that everything falls into place.

"This is no way to run your health budget and just further reinforces the view among many who have looked closely at this years budget that it is being significantly propped up by the Federal Government on the basis of agreements that may or may not be met."

Ms Forrest said given the Federal Government was likely to go into caretaker mode at any time, it was crucial for the State that the details of the health funding agreement were finalised.

"The health and wellbeing of Tasmanian's is too important to have such a large amount of funding left with a question mark over it," Ms Forrest said.

**ENDS**

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