

MEDIA RELEASE

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HOSPITAL FUTURE UNITES COMMUNITY

The future of the Rosebery Hospital and health services in the surrounding West Coast region was vigorously and passionately debated at a meeting on 11th April, arranged by Murchison MLC Ruth Forrest who encouraged all interested organisations and individuals to respond to the primary health issues paper by the 16th April, a very tight Government imposed time frame.

“Community sentiment is very strong in the West Coast Community in support for the Rosebery Hospital, as evidenced by the approximately 250 strong crowd that had ‘standing room only’ during the three hour long meeting at the Rosebery RSL Club on Wednesday night” Ms Forrest stated.

The Primary Health Services Issues paper prompted Ms Forrest to seek feedback from the community on what services are utilised, what services are lacking, and what services are essential, to ensure the community that uses and relies on these health services are provided with an appropriate, safe and cost effective service.

The Rosebery and surrounding communities have experienced threats to hospital services on at least two previous occasions and they do not wish see any downgrade of services currently provided, many allied health services have been identified as either absent or lacking in service delivery.

“Not only do members of the community rely on the current services, but the increasing mining operations in Rosebery, Zeehan and surrounding areas and the viability of schools in the region may be threatened if services are downgraded or withdrawn” Ms Forrest stated.

“The mining industry contributes significantly to the wealth and economic growth of Tasmania and the voice of this industry must be heeded” Ms Forrest urged.

“The Zinifex Rosebery mine is working on increasing the life of mine operations and have concerns that if government reduce or downgrade hospital services, this may have significant adverse impacts on the attraction and retention of essential mine employees which would be very disappointing for the mining industry. In addition, Zinifex currently provides an annual financial contribution and ‘in kind’ support to Rosebery Hospital to the tune of approximately \$100,000, and this level of support should not be disregarded or undervalued” Ms Forrest said.

“It is vital that emergency management, rapid response transport and retrieval services, including helicopter transport, palliative care, respite, blood collection, X-ray, nutrition/dietician, diabetes education and drug and alcohol services as well as flexible multipurpose inpatient services are provided at Rosebery Hospital. With considered strategic planning, various funding options can be considered to ensure these services are maintained” Ms Forrest stated.

“The primary health issues paper is short on detail regarding health service provision in rural hospitals and health facilities to the point that it is impossible to ‘compare apples with apples’. Graphs such as those used in the paper, that provide annual costs per occupied bed, do not truly reflect the services

provided at these rural hospitals as there is no information provided detailing occasions of care that do not result in an overnight stay”

“This results in these services being compared unfavourably against other rural services, particularly if cost per occupied bed doesn’t take into account other sources of funding income including federal funding, account write backs, MAIB and Workers Compensation” Ms Forrest said.

The meeting concluded with the passing of a resolution and the establishment of a committee to continue to fight for the retention of services.

The resolution stated that: ‘This community requests that the Government maintain current services provided at the Rosebery Community Hospital, with continual improvement with full, open and transparent consultation with the communities concerned.’

Ms Forrest will be seeking assurance from Government that concerns raised by the communities’ impacted by change to health services will be considered and any change to health services are conducted through an open and transparent process, with fully informed and consulted communities.

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For further information please contact:

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