

MEDIA RELEASE

RUTH FORREST MLC
PO BOX 104
WYNYARD TAS 7325
TEL: 03 6443 8600
FAX: 03 6443 8603

4 YEARS+ FOR HEALTH EQUITY ON THE NORTH WEST

Ruth Forrest MLC for Murchison has welcomed the announcement that after more than four years, the discriminatory effects of Government policy on sufferers of sleep apnoea on the North West Coast, has finally been formally acknowledged by Health and Human Services Minister, Lara Giddings.

Ms Forrest has lobbied Government continuously to address the inequity of service and supply of equipment to sufferers of sleep apnoea on the North West and West Coasts who have had to purchase all consumables and pay an annual hire fee for Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machines when eligible patients in the North and South of the State received all these services at no charge.

"Hardship provisions will be in place for sufferers of sleep apnoea who have difficulty paying for the equipment required to manage their illness, however as North West and West Coast residents have experienced this inequity for many years, one set of replacement consumables per existing patients will be little comfort to the patients who have had to spend approximately \$300 every 1-2 years to ensure effective treatment" Ms Forrest stated.

Regional discrepancies continue to exist in other areas of health including patients who have suffered a spinal injury.

"A review into the equity of access to equipment and clinical support for all areas of health service provision for the people of the North West and West Coasts must be undertaken to ensure these residents are no longer discriminated against or disadvantaged" Ms Forrest said.

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For further information, please phone 0419 879 524.