

Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

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Ella Haddad MP

Chair

Standing Committee on Government Administration B

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Dear Ms Haddad,

Thank you for your invitation to provide an update to the Inquiry into the Assessment and Treatment of ADHD and Support Services.

There has been significant progress made to improve access to ADHD services in Tasmania since the Inquiry hearings were held in May 2025. This includes commitments made by our Government through the 2025 State Election, national reform work, and continued progress on priority reforms within the Department of Health.

Further information about these initiatives is outlined below.

## **2025 State Election Commitments**

Our Government is taking the steps to deliver better access to services, so that all Tasmanians can get the care they need. That is why we made a 2025 election policy commitment to enable Tasmanian general practitioners (GPs) to diagnose, treat and manage ADHD for children and adults. This will mean faster access to medication, reduced costs for patients, and better continuity of care.

Through this initiative, paediatricians, psychiatrists, GPs and pharmacists will work together to enable a system that supports increased GP involvement in the diagnosis and initial management of ADHD. We have commenced work with GPS and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to ensure GPs having the training and supervision they need to support Tasmanians living with ADHD from 2026, freeing up wait lists for paediatricians and psychiatrists.

In line with our commitment, we introduced the Poisons Amendment (Interstate Prescriptions) Bill 2025 to Parliament within the first 100 days of Government. I am pleased that this has now passed both Houses (subject to the third reading in the Legislative Council). This legislative reform will enable Tasmanian pharmacists to dispense prescriptions written interstate for medicines, including the psychostimulants commonly used to treat ADHD, increasing access to these medicines.

I am advised the Department of Health has also commenced a comprehensive review and rewrite of the *Poisons Act 1971* and Regulations. The overarching intention of this review is to modernise, streamline and simplify the regulation of medicines and poisons, resulting in an overall reduction of red tape and administrative burden, while ensuring safe access by maintaining appropriate controls where necessary. This full review will provide a timely opportunity to consider any legislative and regulatory recommendations made by the Inquiry in relation to the Poisons Act. Extensive public consultation will be undertaken during 2026 to inform the review.

## **Progress on National Reforms**

Like other states and territories, Tasmania is experiencing increasing demand for specialist assessment of children with behavioural and developmental management issues, including ADHD. As a result, there have been announcements across many jurisdictions in Australia regarding improving access to ADHD diagnosis and prescribing. All Australian Health Ministers, through the Health Ministers' Meeting (HMM), have endorsed the need for national harmonisation of ADHD diagnosis and prescribing practices and work is being progressed on this as a priority.

Together as Health Ministers we have acknowledged that a uniform approach that includes professionals who are appropriately qualified, and with the right safeguards, can improve access and affordability for Australians in need. Health Ministers have also commissioned work, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to develop nationally consistent prescribing rules for ADHD medications.

Our Government welcomes the progression of a national approach and will actively contribute to its design through national working groups. Tasmania looks forward to helping shape this work and to considering how it can further improve access to assessment and treatment for Tasmanians living with ADHD.

In addition to the national harmonisation of ADHD diagnosis and prescribing practices, working together our Government continues to engage in national workforce reforms and reviews to help respond to the health workforce shortages in Australia. This includes the implementation of the Independent Review of Health Practitioner Regulatory Settings (known as the Kruk Review), which found that more internationally qualified health practitioners are needed in the short to medium term while work continues to grow the domestic workforce. The Kruk Review recommendations aim to streamline regulatory settings and remove barriers to international health practitioners working in Australia, including the development of new expedited pathways for registration of appropriately qualified overseas-trained health professionals. This important reform work will help address workforce shortages in key health professions that diagnose, treat and manage ADHD, such as GPs and psychiatrists.

Implementation of the Kruk Review's recommendations has seen the development of an expedited specialist pathway for internationally qualified health professionals. Expedited pathways were opened to specialist international medical graduates with specific, listed qualifications for general practice on 21 October 2024, anaesthetics and psychiatry on 23 December 2024, and obstetrics and gynaecology in March 2025. I am advised, that by 31 August 2025, the pathway had received 473 applications and had registered 290 SIMGs to practise in Australia.

## **Department of Health Service Updates**

Our 2025 election commitment to enable Tasmanian GPs to diagnose, treat and manage ADHD for both children and adults builds on other initiatives already underway, including our newly established ADHD Clinic for children. This clinic was established to provide a specific service for neurodevelopmental assessment and management, with a joint model of care between Paediatrics and Child and Youth Mental Health Services (CYMHS). This pilot model is delivered through the Paediatric Outpatient Department and has been designed to address the paediatric waitlist for ADHD assessments and is part of our Government's commitment of \$3 million over three years to establish a new GP specialist service for children with ADHD.

This service provides a unique opportunity to pilot a statewide joint CYMHS and Women's and Children's Services ADHD Clinic with multidisciplinary staff, including a Paediatrician, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Psychiatrist, and Psychiatric Registrar. Eligible children and young people with suspected ADHD are drawn from the current Paediatric waitlist for neurodevelopmental assessments and treated as appropriate.

We expect this initiative to deliver multiple benefits, including reducing the significant paediatric waitlist for specialist neurodevelopmental assessment, enhancing care coordination, and improving timely access to care that meets the needs of Tasmanian children and their families.

This initiative follows the launch of Kids Care Clinics in 2023 to provide targeted healthcare and support to Tasmania's most vulnerable children and their families, with a focus on early identification of health and wellbeing concerns, including ADHD. Through Kids Care Clinics, we are also trialling parent and school education sessions on ADHD. The first of these two sessions has been trialled in rural communities and if successful, will be further developed and rolled out more widely.

According to the latest available data from the National Health Workforce Data Set, there were 53 paediatricians working across Tasmania's public and private sectors in 2023, including 49 employed in the public sector.

Noting 2023 is the latest available national data, three additional paediatricians have been employed by the Tasmanian Health Service in the past 12 months, reflecting our Government's ongoing efforts to strengthen the paediatric workforce.

As requested in your letter, separate advice will be provided to you in response to the question on notice regarding updated paediatric ADHD waitlist data with a breakdown by age and sex.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide updated information to the Committee on these important initiatives. I look forward to engaging further through the Inquiry and considering its findings and recommendations to further improve access to assessment and treatment for Tasmanians living with ADHD.

Yours sincerely



Hon Bridget Archer MP  
**Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing**