



MEDIA RELEASE

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PREVENTATIVE HEALTH FINAL REPORT

The Parliamentary Joint Select Committee inquiring into preventative health has today released a Final Report with seven evidence based recommendations aimed at improving the health and wellbeing outcomes of Tasmanians.

Committee Chair, the Hon Ruth Forrest MLC, said *“it is crucial that successive governments accept the fundamental relationship between the health of Tasmanians and their underlying socio-economic status, housing, education, employment and other factors, referred to as social determinants of health, and that continuous improvement in addressing these determinants be the highest long-term priority of Government.”*

The Committee supports the adoption of a ‘Health in All Policies’ approach to improving the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians.

“This will require an evidence-based coordinated effort across agencies providing guidance and benchmarking on policies to address the social determinants of health. A robust legislative framework is required to ensure the long term sustainability of such a policy,” Ms Forrest stated.

The Committee recommends that the Tasmanian Government adopt a preventative health strategy recognising and resourcing a range of health related areas including, but not limited to, maternal health and wellbeing; the needs of older Tasmanians; support for people living with a disability; the positive relationship between arts and health; mental health and wellbeing; the impact of wood smoke; the impact of allergies; and the importance of active lifestyles, healthy eating and physical activity.

It is important that Government *“proactively address equity of access to health services across both primary and acute health care”* and that *“improving the health literacy of Tasmanians be a priority of Government,”* Ms Forrest stated.

This may be achieved through an increased emphasis on the use of information and communications technology in health care.

It is also important that liveability principles are embodied in all planning decisions.

Ms Forrest said *“funding must be significantly increased for preventative health measures to improve the long term health and wellbeing of Tasmanians.”*

“Government must significantly increase investment in financial and human resources in the area of screening and early intervention to address emerging and current health challenges including mental health, obesity, cancer, diabetes, hypertension and kidney, cardio-vascular and respiratory disease,” Ms Forrest stated.

The Final Report of the Committee is available on the Parliament of Tasmania website at: <http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ctee/Joint/PHC1.htm>.

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