



Inquiry Secretary
Legislative Council
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

To Whom It May Concern

RE: Inquiry into Acute health Services in Tasmania

The Rural Doctors Association of Tasmania (RDAT) would like to thank the Inquiry for providing the opportunity for our organisation to make a submission in relation to the resourcing of Tasmania's major hospitals to deliver acute health services, including mental health services to the people of Tasmania.

The RDAT is the peak professional body representing the interests of rural doctors across Tasmania. The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) supports RDAT at a national level.

A key priority for RDAT is for Tasmania to have sustainable rural health services across the state to ensure people living in rural and isolated communities have equitable access to quality and safe health care. It is also important that Tasmania has a strong rural health service system to ensure that the major hospitals have capacity to provide the tertiary level care to Tasmanians.

RDAT continues to strongly advocate for the Tasmanian Government and Health Service to support the development of a rural generalist workforce. RDAT is aware of the significant costs of specialist locums, which are currently used in locations such as the Mersey Hospital, and in some departments of North West Regional Hospital. RDAT's analysis indicates that a rural generalist workforce investment would assist in reducing these costs, and improve the quality of care through the engagement of a permanent workforce. By making a relatively small investment to developing a rural generalist workforce, considering the ongoing costs of locum services, within 3-5 years, these small regional hospitals would undergo a significant transformation.

Without strong rural services, an increasing number of people will be required to travel to access care in the major hospitals, which all has additional costs. Investment to ensure rural doctors and nurses are able to maintain and continue to develop their clinical skills and providing education and training opportunities in rural locations, will support a strong tertiary hospital system.



RDAT recognises the scope of this Inquiry is the major hospitals, however, without consideration to the rural health services, the projection of service need will continue to increase at unreasonable rates. This will increase the waiting times in major hospitals for inpatient and outpatient services, which can also have funding implications under the Hospital Funding agreement.

RDAT would welcome the opportunity to speak directly with members of the Inquiry panel. If you would like further information to wish to arrange a meeting, please contact our support staff on 02 6239 7730 or office@rdaa.com.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. R. Meredith'.

for Dr Eve Merefield
President
Rural Doctors Association of Tasmania