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Submission to the Department of Health and Human Services on the Delivering Safe and Sustainable Clinical Services - Green Paper

From the Northern Hospice and Palliative Care Foundation Ltd, PO Box 233, Launceston Tas 7250

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The Northern Hospice and Palliative Care Foundation (the Foundation) is a broad based community organisation working to ensure the establishment of a dedicated hospice facility in Northern Tasmania. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the questions posed in the Green Paper and to highlight the alignment between the hospice model as proposed by the Foundation and the principles outlined in the Green Paper.

Attached is a current proposal from the Foundation providing an overview and rationale for a dedicated hospice facility to be established within the health precinct surrounding the Launceston General Hospital.

The key points to note from the proposal as they relate to the Green Paper are noted below.

- A dedicated hospice facility in a non-acute care setting, is a current gap within the health system providing end of life care to patients. Whilst other end of life care services are provided, **a dedicated hospice** focusing on terminal care, symptom control, carer respite and emphasising quality of life, life closure issues and relief of suffering **is currently the missing link in the end of life care continuum**. The very limited public palliative care beds available in Northern Tasmania are provided within an acute care setting.
- **The hospice proposal supported by the Foundation is a community based and controlled model**. It would necessarily be part of the palliative care health system in the region, and at the same time be community based and supported.
- As such **there is an opportunity to develop a public/community partnership model for the running of the hospice**.
- The model proposed shifts the focus of end of life care for those unable to remain at home from the hospital setting to a non-acute setting, and enables the care to be managed by the patients' GP. **As such it will reduce hospitalisations**. Many patients requiring end of life care currently require frequent hospitalisation, often through the Emergency Department.

With Tasmania's high rates of chronic and cancer related disease, an ageing population and the growing number of single person households the demand for end of life care is expected to continue to increase in the years ahead. There is a high level of expectation within the community for access to high quality, patient centred care during this stage of life, and the Foundation has received broad based support for the proposal attached.

The provision of end of life care services is essential to improving Tasmania's health system. Currently there is a high level of fragmentation within and across end of life care services, as well as significant gaps in North and North West Tasmania. This Green Paper process provides the opportunity for these gaps to be addressed and for a higher priority to be placed on developing an integrated end of life care model which is accessible to the community generally, including those population groups who currently have limited access (eg children, CALD communities).

Attached is the Hospice proposal.