



Association of Independent Retirees (A.I.R.) Limited

ACN 103 164 385

108 Cameron St.,
Launceston, 7250
26/11/2011.

Ruth Forrest, MLC,
Committee Chair,
Legislative Council Select Committee.

Dear Ms Forrest,

The Association of Independent Retirees is extremely concerned about the major cutbacks being experienced by the Tasmanian health system. At its recent state wide meeting, I was asked to make known our concerns and anger.

Rather than a diatribe on health issues generally, we wish to make just five points:

- We are concerned that our highly esteemed medical faculty at the University of Tasmania will lose accreditation if the ability of our major hospitals to provide fully for practicums is curtailed. There has already been some instability on this issue in the recent past.
- We do not believe that the problems at the Royal Hobart can be overcome by closing the Mersey Hospital. Mersey is operating well and its day surgery is critical for the best functioning of the system.
- We are already at risk of losing eminent surgeons such as Associate Professor Brian Herman at the LGH. We must guard against loss of the outstanding quality of the professionals in our health system.
- We deplore the reductions in provision for those suffering mental problems, believing that the occurrence of these will escalate in such an environment. Older people are more prone to mental problems such as dementia. Research tells us that the onset of disabilities can often be avoided or at least delayed if remedial procedures are available.
- We support local control of hospitals, firmly believing that the best utilisation of tight budgets can happen at the local level, at the 'coal face'. Local administration means greater awareness of particular needs and the most efficient direction of resources to meet those needs. However this only makes sense if other layers of administration and supervision are looked at. It is totally wasteful to be duplicative and professional operators do not need layers of authority restricting their operations.

Yours sincerely,
Dick James,
Tasmanian Division,
Association of Independent Retirees.