

CONSTITUENT QUESTION

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Kristie Johnston MP
Independent Member for Clark

ANSWERED BY: Hon Jacqui Petrusma MP
Minister for Health

QUESTION:

My question is on behalf of a constituent in Glenorchy. His mother has just been diagnosed with lung cancer, but she has been told she has a wait of approximately four weeks for a biopsy to determine the appropriate treatment course. Worse still, she faced a lengthy wait for results after that due to chronic understaffing in pathology services. The Australian Medical Association (AMA) also recently raised concerns about this publicly.

Minister, you would understand that with aggressive cancers, every day matters, and she is facing an unacceptable delay in receiving treatment. How is this acceptable? What are you doing to urgently address the pathology backlog? Or is my constituent's mother a casualty of your government's vacancy freeze, and failure to manage the state's finance responsibly?

ANSWER:

The Tasmanian Government is committed to providing timely access to biopsy results to ensure the best outcomes and experiences for patients across the State.

We understand the anxiety patients and their loved ones can feel as they await information and results and empathise with anyone experiencing delays in receiving their diagnosis.

The Royal Hobart Hospital is committed to ensuring all funded positions are filled and maintained to optimise workflow and efficiency. These positions are frontline and essential.

Importantly, all patient results are prioritised based on the clinical need, with processes in place for all requesting doctors, including GPs, to urgently request results if concerned.

The Department of Health has launched the *Statewide Public Pathology Transition Plan 2025-2028* (the Transition Plan) which sets out a pathway and actions to transition to a new state-wide pathology service by creating a unified, high-quality and sustainable model that better serves the needs of Tasmanian communities.

A state-wide pathology service offers an opportunity to address historical inefficiencies, workflow challenges and productivity; adapt to growing demand and deliver a system that ensures all Tasmanians have access to consistent, high-quality pathology services.



Hon Jacquie Petrusma MP
Minister for Health

Date: 21/5/25

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