

Submission: Kings Meadows Community Centre Renal facilities proposal

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Date: 7 May 2025

I am making this submission after my experiences as carer for my husband Peter who started his chronic kidney journey a couple of years ago resulting in starting haemodialysis at King Meadows in May 2024.

As I only learned about the submission process yesterday and only received the final plans today, I have not been able to fully prepare this submission.

In deciding the options available to Peter, we had a tour of the current dialysis centre well before he needed this treatment and also considered home dialysis which wasn't an option in the end due to various factors.

I started my investigation into the poor facilities at Kings Meadows well before the State Election in 2024.

I have met with the following people over 2024/25:

Ms Rosemary Armitage MLC; Mr Michael Ferguson, while he was still Treasurer; Mrs Bridget Archer, past Member for Bass; Mr Guy Barnett, Health Minister; Ms Jacquie Petrusma, Health Minister; Mr Dale Webster, Secretary Health Department; Melissa Snadden, Advisor to Health Ministers. As well as phone and email correspondence with Ms Janie Finlay MP and Ms Cecily Rosol, MP. My letter to The Examiner October 2024 is attached.

I am more than disappointed that neither Ms Petrusma or Mr Webster followed up on promises made at a meeting Peter and I had with them and Melissa Snadden on the 4th December 2024 which only came about when Ms Janie Finlay MP raised questions on my behalf in Parliament.

I am also extremely disappointed that I was not informed of this public meeting by either Ms Petrusma or Mr Webster. I appreciate Ms Jen Butler contacting me last week after her conversation with Ms Finlay. In these days of not many people reading The Examiner, a public notice is easy to miss.

Mr Webster assured me at the December meeting that he would arrange for a patient advocacy group in early 2025 to have input into the proposed new build. This has not occurred and my numerous emails this year have not received a reply.

Questions that have not been answered to date:

1. How can the State Government expect to build a brand new facility with just \$10m that was allocated by Federal Funding in 2019 without any additional State funds being allocated over many budgets since then. The rise in building costs and associated architect fees etc means that there is less money to spend on a proper build that takes renal facilities into the future.
2. I am not clear on the following statement by Mr Barnett in correspondence to Ms Armitage 19 Sep 2024 (copy attached): "I can confirm the 2023-24 Tasmanian Government budget provided \$3.2 million in funding for the 2023-24 financial year and estimated \$6.1m for the 2024-25 financial year. With the release of the 2024-25 budget, the funding profiles have been revised to provide an updated expenditure profile: \$4.1m in 2024-25 and \$5.3m in 2025-26".
3. It would appear that none of these funds above have been added to the increase the budget for the new renal facility and I ask where have these funds been allocated.
4. The proposed number of dialysis chairs does not take the centre into the future with just 18 beds proposed when it is well known that 24 chairs are required now and not as part of a proposed Stage 2 with no details of Stage 2 being provided. Does this mean the additional 6 chairs will be in a completely new section? Will this section need its own water treatment unit and additional nurse facilities? Shouldn't all the dialysis and nursing facilities be under the same roof?

5. Did the architects ever visit the renal facility at Burnie? Peter recently had treatment there and it was a proper facility with the nurses station in the middle with complete visibility of all patients with enough space for emergency situations if needed. This facility follows an emergency department layout with the nurses station in the middle of the floor.
6. Does the proposed facility have enough offices for home therapies i.e. rooms for nurses to instruct patients for home dialysis; social workers; other health professionals eg renal dietitian's/ psychologist's when these professionals come on board?
7. The current centre lacks windows for patients and when patients are sitting in chairs for up to 6 hours, 3 times a week, their mental health is important and they need to have windows and not just the occasional skylight.
8. The final plan to date of proposed parking bays for patients/ carers is a desktop review. Did the planning team ever do a survey of patients to recognise their parking requirements? I do know that with up to 14 people at a dialysis session, there will be a real need for up to at least 8 car spaces in close proximity to the entrance and to suggest that patients and carers park in McHugh St is simply ludicrous as some of the patients are quite ill. I collect my husband in the evenings anytime between 6.45pm to 8.45pm and we shouldn't have to park away from the entrance especially during the winter months. We should also expect staff to have safe, accessible parking especially on dark evenings.
9. How can this proposed facility go ahead to pre-tender without proper patient input?

My computer has just died on me!  
These are my main concerns and I will address them in  
more detail at the meeting on the 12th May.

Yours sincerely,

Gwenyth Fittendge Guttering-

Attorney-General  
Minister for Justice  
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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19 SEP 2024

Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC  
Independent Member for Launceston  
[rosemary.armitage@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:rosemary.armitage@parliament.tas.gov.au)

Dear Ms Armitage *Rosemary*,

Thank you for your email dated 20 August 2024 on behalf of Carolyn Gutteridge regarding Renal Services at Kings Meadows Community Health Centre (KMCHC).

As indicated in your letter the Tasmanian Government has been provided with \$10 million in funding via the Australian Government's Community Health and Hospitals Program for the redevelopment and expansion of the KMCHC.

I can confirm the 2023-24 Tasmanian Government budget provided \$3.2 million in funding for the 2023-24 financial year and estimated \$6.1 million for the 2024-25 financial year. With the release of the 2024-2025 budget, the funding profiles have been revised to provide an updated expenditure profile: \$4.1 million in 2024-25 and \$5.3 million in 2025-26.

To date the project has spent \$506,577 on professional fees, planning & scoping phases which includes architects, site assessments / investigations, building condition reports, functional design briefs and concept design development.

The \$10 million redevelopment plan is progressing with a two-stage approach. The Department of Health has determined that the current funding is insufficient to deliver the full project scope to redevelop and expand the existing facility. As such the project will now be delivered in two stages.

The first stage will involve construction of a new building that will replace the existing Joan Marshall building. This new facility will have an expanded footprint able to provide additional renal service capacity, increasing the number of renal chairs from 15 to 18. The new facility will continue to be known as the Joan Marshall Building and is due to commence providing services in April 2026.

Stage one of the project will also deliver upgrades to the car park including undercover drop-off zone spaces, upgrades to the stormwater drainage system and improved landscaping.

Stage one is well underway with concept designs expected to be complete in September and the tender to be advertised in April 2025.

Stage two of the project will involve the reconstruction of the main Kings Meadows Community Health centre building. It will provide contemporary clinical accommodation for the remaining services currently operating from the Kings Meadows site.

The department is engaging with the Australian Government regarding funding for the second stage of the development.

Thank you for writing to me in relation to this matter.

Yours sincerely



Hon Guy Barnett MP  
**Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing**

*copy Hon Michael Ferguson*



10/10/2024 The Examiner.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# \$10m won't go far for community centre

THE announcement of an upgrade to the community centre at Kings Meadows is long overdue.

Kidney health and provision of dialysis whether in the home or at a health facility is looming as a critical health issue in Tasmania and we are not prepared for the demand.

The proposed kidney dialysis facility requires a much larger footprint than planned to allow for additional rooms in addition to the actual dialysis chairs.

The government is well aware that the current demand is for 24 chairs and not the 10 chairs that will be delivered.

The additional six dialysis chairs will be delivered much later in Stage 2 of the redevelopment.

Quite understandably staff who have been advocating for 24 chairs are not excited with the proposed plans as many patients will miss out on getting treated.

This urgent issue has been on the health agenda for a very long time and the \$10m federal funding was in fact from the Scott Morrison government in April 2019 for a renal and oral health facility at Kings Meadows.

The current State Budget has funding for the community centre but my questions whether this is for renal facilities have not been answered.

The government expects to build a new health facility with just \$10m which may have been the proposed cost in April 2019 but definitely doesn't go very far in 2024/26.

It has taken the government all this time to get to this planning stage which is in stark contrast to the fast tracking of the proposed stadium in Hobart.

Patients are at risk now in the current facility which does not meet health and safety standards and where the dedicated staff work under difficult conditions as they do not have line of sight of all patients as just one

of the problems.

My concerns on behalf of patients and staff have been addressed to Ministers Barnett, Ferguson and the Premier with additional questions including funding for Renal Dietitians and Renal Psychologists for the North and North-West again without any answers.

I look for a government that prioritises the health needs of Tasmanians over the stadium which falls into a "want list" for many.

I would rather have my taxes go towards health and addressing other important issues facing Tasmanians rather than a stadium.

Like others, I welcome a \$120m Heart Health centre for Launceston but why doesn't kidney health have the same priority and the additional funding to build a proper facility which will address the needs of Northern Tasmanians into the future?

Carolyn Gutteridge, Whiddermere

### Not doing its job

IS THE Tasmanian Environment Protection Authority doing its job?

In an article written by Bob Burton for the Tasmanian Inquirer on September 16, the headline read "Trout fisherman finds an inland Tasmanian fish farm with no pollution limits - and few trout downstream".

The Millybrook fish farm on the South Esk river near Mathinna discharges its wastewater into the river and has done so for more than a decade.

The fisherman, Geoff Baker, has been fishing the South Esk for about 10 years and has noticed a decline in fish numbers and other aquatic life below the fish farm outlet.

Water monitoring data submitted to the EPA showed there was a substantial increase in the ammonia, phosphate and total phosphorus between the inlet and the outlet.

Burton reports that the EPA said there were no site-specific water quality standards

for the farm and they left it to the farmer to decide whether the fish farm had a negative impact on life and water quality of the outlet.

The Millybrook fish farm is a Trout Aquaculture, owned by my JBS.

They say they have a biosecurity survey by the results.

The EPA Tasmania's purpose is to protect any of the Tasmanian environment with economic and social needs of future generations.

Sounds great, but if I take an example of what might be, where the EPA is certain

Michael McWilliams,

### Comparing emissions

THE bottom line in reducing greenhouse gases is reducing population. 'per capita' comparisons are meaningless if the population is larger than the population.

Australia more than provides for the world with food, and less people per square km.

It's a laggard with cars and houses but overall already its weight.

The pollution emitted by Europe, the USA and China is a stand-out example to follow.

To be fair, there's more still we are a stand-out example.

Never forget we contribute 10 per cent of world emissions but will have negligible effect on the world.

Gordon Thurlow, Moor...