



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

### **POLITICAL PARTIES CRITICAL HEALTH FUNDING FOR TASMANIA COMES UP SHORT**

With Saturday's federal election looming a review of the health policy announcements from the major parties in this election campaign, including announcements in last month's Federal Budget and Budget Reply once again leaves Tasmania short.

President of AMA Tasmania, Professor Dr John Burgess said that while there were some very welcome policy announcements from the Coalition, Labor, and the Greens, including the lifting of the freeze on Medicare rebates to patients and increased activity based funding to hospitals, sadly there were also some glaring omissions, the most obvious being the lack of any commitment towards the next stages of the new Royal Hobart Hospital.

"Promises continue to be made on issues like elective surgery, which are politically popular, but do nothing to help to invest in the long term staffing and infrastructure needed to have a sustainable health care system which can cope with the growing demand on our hospitals, evident with the pressures we see in our emergency departments.

"It's particularly disappointing that, throughout this campaign, no party has committed to the next stages of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, Tasmania's only tertiary hospital.

"There remains an urgent need for the next Federal Government to commit significant partnership funds to help the Tasmanian state government undertake the much-needed hospital redevelopment based on the RHH masterplan.

"While 'hundreds of millions will be required for the building of the next stages of the plan, at the very least, a commitment towards the cost of the planning process for stage two and three would have signaled ongoing support from the Federal government towards this much-needed development.

Professor Burgess has previously made it abundantly clear that the AMA is hugely concerned that "our acute care hospitals are bulging at the seams with growing demand and existing staff stretched to the limit dealing with the increasing number of patients in inadequate hospital facilities.

"Tasmanians deserve high quality, accessible public health services, and political parties must support long term strategies that focus on this outcome and not just short-term one-off funding boosts in some areas.

"Our health care staff must be supported in delivering frontline care at a time when complications from chronic disease are on the rise, and our population is aging faster, increasing pressures on all parts of the health system."

**ENDS**

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