

1 September 2017

Ms Natasha Exel
Inquiry Secretary
Tasmanian Legislative Council

RE: Inquiry in to Acute Health Services

Via email: hst@parliament.tas.gov.au

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) is aware the consultation period for this Inquiry closed on 18 August. Unfortunately due to a combination of factors RACS was unable to respond by the proposed deadline, however we are hopeful that the contents of this letter can still be taken in to consideration as part of the Inquiry.

Hospitals and healthcare providers across Australia are facing an increasing demand for services. Overall, funding for health has increased throughout the past decade, as have the cost of delivering care and public expectations about acceptable standards and access to health services.

RACS acknowledges that healthcare budgets are finite, and that the governments are directing considerable efforts to improve the sustainability of Australia's healthcare system. The College has welcomed the opportunity to have direct involvement in a number of policy areas at a national level including the Medicare Benefits Schedule Review and the Choosing Wisely project. RACS has also published [Surgical Variance Reports](#) in partnership with Medibank. The purpose of developing and publishing these reports is to explore, among other indicators, variation in length of stay, transfer to ICU, hospital-acquired complications, readmissions, cost and out-of-pocket fees. This allows surgeons to consider their own practice in comparison to their peers.

RACS appreciates that fiscal responsibility is necessary in the provision of acute health care. However any reconfiguration of the Tasmanian health system must prioritise patient safety and high standards of care. Surgeons and other health care leaders are an important resource and have a key role to play in building a health system for Tasmania that is financially sustainable but does not compromise on outcomes.

Clinician engagement in the review of management structures and processes that govern them is essential, as they are primarily responsible for service delivery.

At this point it is difficult to make comment on any revised approach to Tasmania's Acute Health Services until a model is proposed, but it is imperative that any large scale reconfiguration to Tasmania's health system is clinically driven and keeps a strong focus on high quality patient care.

We look forward to the next steps of this Inquiry and would be happy to provide further advice as required.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Girish Pande, FRACS
Chair, Tasmanian Regional Committee
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons