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## ROYAL HOBART HOSPITAL – FUNDING AND PERFORMANCE

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### Background

The Royal Hobart Hospital is a state treasure that has been allowed to suffer due to Government neglect, over worked staff, under funding and poor career opportunities. Recent funding initiatives are a band-aid approach to acute crisis rather than a long term solution to fundamental issues. The Royal Hobart Hospital is also our only fully fledged tertiary level teaching hospital for the next generation of doctors. This role, too, is being diminished because of under funding and under-resourcing, and poor recognition of its roles by DHHS.

### Key Issues for Patients and Staff

The level of care will not improve whilst there continues to be an over worked medical staff, nursing and allied health. The shortages of specialist doctors had been a long time in the making, primarily due to poor Government health policy, and will take time to rectify. The symptom of the crisis is the long waiting lists and constant deferral of important surgery. As important is the lack of properly constituted departmental structures, poor research outputs and low morale.

The loss of specialists also means that some specialties have lost opportunities and will continue to lose their status to be nationally recognized for the training of junior doctors at the Royal Hobart Hospital. Without this nationally recognized training our junior doctors will find places elsewhere and be replaced by Overseas Trained Doctors. The loss of all doctors impacts on the ability of the Royal Hobart Hospital to support the Tasmanian Medical School. Loss of students means that the Royal Hobart Hospital will become a third world hospital.

### Key Issues for Governments

The Government needs to stop the band-aid approach to the Royal Hobart Hospital and be responsible for fully developing the Royal Hobart Hospital's potential. It needs to understand the complex role of a Teaching Hospital, and support its total contribution to Tasmania. The Government must immediately put in place a system of governance that is independently responsible for the Royal Hobart Hospital's performance in meeting best clinical and management practice and achieving waiting lists targets. In the long term a new hospital site needs to be identified.

The Government needs to devolve authority to the Hospitals and make individuals publically accountable for their performance against published benchmarks. Transparency is of utmost importance.

### AMA Position

The AMA believes that the Royal Hobart Hospital needs a strong reform agenda that includes accountability, good governance and targeted waiting list outcomes. The agenda also needs to decide on and fund a green field site for a new Hospital to meet the current needs of Tasmania in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

All diverse roles of a tertiary level teaching Hospital need support: state wide services, teaching (under and post graduate), research, development of clinical services; as well as provision of general medical services to Southern Tasmania. A comprehensive understanding of this complexity is currently lacking.