Dear Minister

I am writing on behalf of the Governing Council members of Tasmanian Health Organisation – North (THO-N) to contribute to the One State, One Health System Green Paper process.

The Governing Council discussed their submission to the Green Paper process at the meeting on 28 January 2015.

THO-N is in the fortunate position of coming to the realisation of its capital works re-development midway through 2015. The extensive re-development at the Launceston General Hospital (LGH) represented an opportunity to future proof the current clinical requirements of the northern community, which will stand the Tasmanian Health System (THS) in good stead. In particular the LGH will be able to play a significant role as part of a state wide system to address state-wide demand for operating theatre capacity and intensive care beds, as the State manages the impact of the re-development at the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH).

At the conclusion of the re-development, the LGH will have physical capacity of nine operating room suites – one of which is occupied by the hybrid theatre, eighteen intensive care beds, a short stay surgical unit, a medical day procedure unit and a decanted ward (i.e. Ward 4D).

The move to the THS will facilitate easier access for clinicians, those managing the RHH redevelopment planning/decanting and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) as System Purchaser, to continue to meet the demands of continued clinical services of the entire State, in particular by accessing the extra physical capacity at the LGH.

One area of concern identified by the members of the Governing Council was the future of accreditation under the new THS structure.

THO-N would respectfully suggest that the THS will need, following 1 July 2015, to quickly turn its attention to accreditation under the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards.

The Standards require the organisation being accredited to have sufficient evidence of a well-defined governance structure, highest level of governance reporting, clear accountability, responsibility of clinical practice, policy, incidents, complaints, risk management etc.

The governance structures and accountability framework will require a particular focus early in the operation and planning of the THS.

Without a focus on governance and accountability clearly documented together with expectations of integration outlined in relation to organisational systems it will be difficult to demonstrate compliance with the National Standards.
It has been the experience of some THO-N staff who have worked in other jurisdictions that where there have been a Local Health Network model of local general managers and one chief executive for the Local Health Network in place, each of the organisations under that Local Hospital Network kept their own identity, programs and governance structures but with a collective oversight from an area perspective, which may facilitate the current accreditation process, at least on an interim basis.

Presently each of the Tasmanian Health Organisations have separate timelines and contracts for their current accreditation cycles which would need to be examined in detail to be properly integrated.

One of the NSQHS standards that THO-N has invested significant effort in is Standard 2 Partnering with Consumers.

THO-N has engaged an external firm to undertake patient and staff satisfaction surveys. The patient satisfaction survey commenced in the last quarter of 2014 and is already revealing a wealth of information. The staff satisfaction survey was release to staff for their feedback in February 2015.

THO-N also has an active Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) and a register of consumers who are willing and able to participate in projects where THO-N is undertaking planning or a change agenda and the views and experiences of our patients and their families will enhance the outcome of the process.

The Governing Council expects that the THS will continue with a formal community engagement strategy given the positive experience THO-N has experienced from the CAC and the participation of our consumers.

The THO-N Governing Council would welcome being a part of the transition process as we move towards 1 July 2015 and the commencement of the THS.

Yours sincerely

John Ramsay
Chair
Tasmanian Health Organisation – North

20 February 2015