

Petition No: LC 24/2015

TABLED 25/6/15
en.

Tabled by
Hon. V. Goodwin MLC



Response to Petition

**Title of Petition: John L. Grove Rehabilitation Unit at
Launceston General Hospital**

Tasmanian Citizens draws to the attention of the House:

John L. Grove (JLG) is a 20 Bed Rehabilitation Unit annex to the Launceston General Hospital (LGH). Through federal funding via the National Partnerships Agreement JLG, over the last 18 months, has been successful in treating a wide range of slow stream rehabilitation patients, 30% of these patients come from the acute surgical wards of the LGH, freeing these beds for surgical cases that in turn goes to reducing the already long Tasmania waiting list for elective surgery. To carry out these vital services JLG employs around 30 Nurses, 11 Hospital Assistants, 8 Allied Health Professionals, 4 Allied Health Assistants and 1 Administration Ward Clerk.

Federal funding for this vital service will cease as of 30 June 2015. The responsibility for ongoing funding of JLG is now firmly in the hands of the State Government. Without State Government funding JLG will close and along with it the vital service that it provides to the people of the North and North West of Tasmania and the jobs of the people providing this service.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the House to ensure the State Government honors their election promise of no loss to frontline services and provide the required funding to keep the vital sub acute rehabilitation service of JLG open.

Government's Position:

- In 2011, the former Labor-Green governments in Tasmania and Canberra signed up to fixed-term funding arrangements for a number of services, including the John L Grove, under the *National Partnership Agreement for Improving Public Hospital Services*.
- Neither signatory to that agreement made any budgetary provision in the future of these services past the planned expiry of that agreement in 2015.
- Subsequent to that, the Australian Government did not allocate further funding to this service in its 2014-15 Budget, and residual funding held by the Tasmanian Government was due to be expended by 30 June 2015.

- The failure by former Governments to provide ongoing funding for the service left the State in a difficult position, and the Tasmanian Government made ongoing representations to the Commonwealth Government about the need for continued funding support past the 30 June 2015 cut-off date put in place by previous Labor State and Federal Governments.
- Working closely with Federal Liberal Member for Bass, Andrew Nikolic, we put together a strong case for continued funding, and the Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Commonwealth Health Minister Sussan Ley responded positively to our request, providing renewed funding of \$5 million per annum for the next two years.
- The renewed funding enables us to plan for an ongoing role for the centre in a statewide health system, while continuing to get the state budget on a sustainable footing so we can invest in essential services into the future.



Michael Ferguson MP
Minister for Health

Date: 19 / 6 / 2015