

ISSUE 1828

“In Support of Progress”

# Newsletter

Date: 4 October 2018

## Hospitals

## Hobart Traffic

## Energy

## GST Payments

## Defence spending

### *Health and Hospitals*

Health, or more specifically hospital management, continues to be a running sore for the government.

The hapless Minister keeps chanting the mantra that “I don't want to play politics but...it was all the Opposition's fault that the hospital system is in crisis” but that argument is now so thin that it is useless.

Acknowledging that the Opposition when in government was aware of impending problems, and did little to resolve them – a point that the Minister is keen to keep making – the Minister has now been the Minister for over 4 years and through two election cycles. So Minister, it is beyond time for you to man up and now own the problem.

Blaming predecessors is one thing, fixing the problem is another.

Shortly after coming into power, the Minister acted to restructure the hospital management system, but has now had to move to dismantle his reforms because they didn't work. This all now lies in a grey zone. Nothing to do with the Opposition.

Both the RHH and the LGH are at crisis level, particularly in their Emergency Departments. True, more beds are needed, and space is at a premium, yet four years on it seems beyond the wit of man or the Minister to resolve it. The system would appear to be relying on the opening of the new K block building next year. And yet the Minister already knows this is not going to solve his problems.

Part of the issue with Emergency is that patients with chronic conditions are reappearing, as in a revolving door. A chronic problem - leads to an acute symptom – patient turns up to emergency, acute symptom resolved, patient goes home until the re-emergence of the acute symptom, re-presents at hospital emergency. It needs a new approach to the treatment of chronic conditions, rather than waiting until acute symptoms re-occur.

It is also obvious that the treatment of mental health patients requires a new approach and possibly a new facility for longer term care. No-one wants to talk about it, but it needs proper consideration.

And even though much money and effort has been spent on refurbishment at the old RHH site, once done there will still only be half a hospital. And eventually it will require a new facility to be built. Let's plan for that now.

The Minister may wish to reflect on the fact that it was his party that argued vociferously against building a new facility, so he must now own the problem of having only half a hospital once the refurbishment is complete.

And while on this matter, a recent comment in the local newspaper regarding the squandering of money set aside for a new hospital by a previous government under Premier Lennon was WRONG WRONG WRONG. At the least I expect an early retraction.

### **Hobart Traffic**

As stated many times before, the issue of traffic in Hobart extends beyond the boundaries of the city. It is a regional problem, and it needs a regional approach. Whether planners like it or not, traffic comes into the city from Glenorchy, Clarence, Kingborough and from further afield and needs to be accommodated.

No-one I suspect wants to turn this traffic away. Work is in the city, services are in the city, retail is in the city – that's just the way it is. Talk of pedestrian and bicycle ways does nothing to ease the present problems, let alone future problems associated with continuing growth in these outer suburbs.

Inner city redevelopment is one thing, Public transport solutions is another, but neither will take the pressure of private vehicles off our roads. And the reason is simple. People want to go to different places at different times, and will require the flexibility to do so.

I recently listened to a professor at the Uni babbling on about the car being "so last century". Well, prof, whether you like it or not, the car is not an outmoded means of transport – and it is here to stay for a long time yet. If you want to be relevant, then get your head out of the clouds

References to traffic management in places like Manchester, London or Copenhagen ignore the reality that Hobart is not like these cities, in size, history, living environments, population density or geography.

Public transport (buses, trains, light rail) is a mass transport system, taking people from A to B and back again. We simply do not live such a lifestyle. Nor do we want to. The outer suburban areas will continue to grow, our population will continue to expand, the need for flexible transport options will only increase.

So we need to get with the real world, and try and solve real world problems. How to manage increased vehicular traffic, without discouraging it. And that requires roadworks and parking stations.

Parking facilities in North Hobart are abysmal, and traders are complaining loudly about the Council's ineffectiveness. The suggestion of a tunnel bypass should be given due consideration and at least a feasibility study should be done to determine what it will involve. Yes it is expensive but so is any meaningful solution.

In the upcoming Council elections, it is simply not good enough for candidates to simply say they are going to "work hard to solve the traffic problems". That is a meaningless statement. And those that argue for more restrictions to be placed on private vehicles are condemning the city to a no growth strategy. And that is silly and self-defeating,

### **Energy.**

It appears the demise of Turnbull as PM has placed the much-touted renewable energy solutions to the country's electricity supply on the back burner.

Snowy 2.0 does not rate much of a mention these days, and nor does Tasmania's "battery of the nation". Hydro Tasmania says that its "battery of the nation" solution is 20% cheaper than Snowy 2.0, but how do they arrive at such a figure before the work has even been done?

Personally, I would like to see Tasmania's energy supply increased (wind and hydro) and a second cable laid across Bass Strait. It makes sense that the hydro system acts as a battery for wind generation. It not only provides greater security for the state, but also greater flexibility.

### **GST**

The Federal Government is entering treacherous waters in deed over the GST distributions. An argument of "fairness" by them overlooks the traditional arrangements for payments to the States. Concerns to shore up WA will be at the expense of the smaller states such as SA and Tasmania.

And such actions will have consequences. Those with an eye to history might well remember the 1979 election campaign, where Doug Lowe argued against Canberra interference with his "I won't stand for it" slogan. It was a resounding success for him, and a huge rebuff to the Feds.

I suspect the government would want to win seats in Tasmania, rather than entrench the existing status quo.

### **Defence**

For those with an eye to the Federal budget and defence spending, it is sobering indeed to read of the myriad problems besetting the strike fighters and the submarines. Huge delays, huge blowouts of budget and serious questions as to their eventual capability are all now in the melting pot. And as stated previously, accountability for this is ZIP. Very worrying.

### **Macquarie Point**

Just noting that the Corporation will now be a site for electric cars to recharge. It's all happening on the Point. Exciting times indeed!

This newsletter is supported by **Tasman Management Services**.  
Further information can be found at [www.julianamos.com.au](http://www.julianamos.com.au).