



Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding

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Patrick Mullane, Special Counsel
Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding

By email: contact.HFI@specialcommission.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Mullane, Commissioner, and Inquiry team

The University of Tasmania thank you for the opportunity to submit a response to the Special Commission of Inquiry into the funding of health services provided in New South Wales (NSW) and related matters.

The University provides the following submission addressing the Terms of Reference that are relevant to our campus in Rozelle and our partnership with NSW Health. The Rozelle Campus offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in nursing and paramedicine. We note in your correspondence that you are specifically interested in Paramedicine; therefore we offer an outline of our current training options as well as our NSW Ambulance training collaborations to address specific workforce needs.

We are heavily invested in new and innovative training models that broaden the employability prospects of paramedics working outside jurisdictional ambulance services in primary health care area such as emergency departments or urgent care clinics. We are currently involved in developing a training needs analysis for NSW Health Emergency Care Assessment and Treatment (ECAT) program, which aims to reduce emergency department wait times by expanding the scope of nurses and paramedics practice working in emergency departments in rural areas. The consideration of extended scopes of practice for health professionals together with alternative contemporary models of care in current and future health services, particularly in rural and regional areas where health services have low resourcing, creates a more effective and efficient high quality healthcare system for NSW.

With Australia's first and only School of Paramedicine, the University of Tasmania is strongly positioned to co-design innovative models of care to meet the needs of the community addressing healthcare workforce demand into the future. As a discipline Paramedicine is well-positioned to provide community care that ranges from emergency response to chronic disease management and palliative care, directly addressing healthcare workforce shortages and regional and rural health care provision inequalities. There is complexity, however, regarding the future direction of the paramedic profession related to the expansion of clinical scopes of practice. The University proactively engages in national forums focused on expanded scopes of practice, role versatility and agility, and contemporary professional development, and the positive impact and outcomes this will have on the community and acute care sector.

The University currently offers a two-year accelerated undergraduate Bachelor of Paramedicine; with a on campus offering for 120 students annually as well as, in collaboration with NSW Ambulance, a post-employment tertiary model to meet workforce needs. This 'apprenticeship' style collaboration provided training for 200 additional students in 2023 and has successfully provided a much-needed surge workforce in NSW. Due to the success of this new and innovative training model, we hope to continue enrolments/employment on an annual basis.

Healthcare delivery is constantly evolving as it responds to population growth, an increasingly diverse and ageing community, and the digital disruption. We aim to prepare health professionals that have high levels of health system literacy, adaptive and agile leadership capability grounded in collaborative, team-focused, cultures. To achieve these outcomes, the University of Tasmania, in partnership with Sydney Local Health District, have developed a more flexible and agile approach to providing educational offerings for current health professionals.

The postgraduate Advanced Practice course cluster (which includes the Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Master of Advanced Practice) is designed to meet the needs of the health industry and will be the centrepiece of an integrated ecosystem of content that the University offers to the health workforce in partnership with health providers. The Advanced Practice courses will be offered for the first time in February 2024.

The Advanced Practice model allows us to review and evolve our existing postgraduate courses in other areas, such as Advanced Paramedicine. We plan to integrate our existing paramedic-focussed content into the inter-disciplinary Advanced Practice model, which will allow us to provide advanced training for paramedics and other relevant health professionals in primary healthcare and critical care and retrieval.

The Advanced Practice curriculum is intended to align with health professional development pathways, support the development of leadership skills relevant to the health workforce, and to augment the clinical training of health professionals. Advanced Practice offers a pathway for the University and our health partners to foster high quality graduates that form part of a strong and formidable health workforce. Aspects of the content will become short courses and continual professional development (CPD) based on demand, allowing students unprecedented access to the content they need, when they need it, while the structure facilitates recognition of prior learning to encourage students to progress through the course structure over time. Using this model, graduates of the course can continue to study parts of the content to up-skill, re-skill and meet CPD requirements, allowing them to access content across the breadth of the curriculum as it evolves over time.

The Advanced Practice curriculum has been co-designed with health partners (initially Sydney LHD and the Tasmanian Department of Health) and will be managed through a new partnership governance structure with our major health partners. The design of the Advanced Practice course cluster provides health workers with choice and flexibility at each level of the course:

- The Graduate Certificate comprises of two core units and two choice units, allowing students flexibility while addressing key stakeholder needs through the development of critical thinking and leadership skills.
- The Graduate Diploma provides students with a choice of bespoke specialisations designed directly with partners to address specific workforce needs.
- The Master's structure allows students to choose from Research or Coursework pathways.

Shifting our focus to advancing practice through the development of inter-disciplinary knowledge and skills allows the health sector unprecedented access to the broad range of disciplinary expertise offered by the University of Tasmania. The curriculum architecture and bespoke course governance arrangements will allow for the content to be easily reconfigured to meet the needs of the health workforce, and specific health partners. The curriculum will evolve over time to continue to sit at the edge of what is available in undergraduate health curricula/early workforce training and the content the workforce needs to improve the quality of healthcare within their health disciplines and departments. The bespoke course governance arrangements will facilitate the responsiveness and agility required to meet immediate community and workforce needs while supporting the progressive evolution of the curriculum over time.

The University looks forward to contributing to health reforms in NSW. If you wish to discuss any of the elements of this submission in further detail, we welcome the opportunity to meet with you.

Yours sincerely,



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