

19 September 2019

The Honourable Sue Hickey MP
Speaker
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Issued by email only

Dear Madam Speaker

FOUR CORNERS INTERVIEW – CLARIFICATION OF AUDITOR-GENERAL COMMENT

On Monday 9 September 2019, the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* broadcast a Four Corners program titled *Health Hazard* in which I was interviewed about my recent Report on the *Performance of Tasmania's four major hospitals in the delivery of Emergency Department services*.

The program included an extract of a statement made by me relating to the length of stay for admitted patients in the Launceston General Hospital (LGH) Emergency Department (ED). The aired statement made by me was:

'9 out of 10 admitted patients in Launceston were spending close to 40 hours in the emergency department'.

I provide the following information to clarify my statement:

- During the Four Corners interview I provided responses to a number of questions relating to my Report. I was not provided with information relating to the person referred to in the Four Corners program, Mr Novaski, nor was I asked questions relating to his treatment.
- My aired statement was in reference to the 2014-15 performance measure for the length of time until most patients (90%) had departed the LGH ED for *admission* to that hospital, which was 44 hours and 32 minutes. The relevant year relating to Mr Novaski's LGH ED visit was 2017-18. In 2017-18, the length of time until most patients (90%) had departed the LGH ED for *admission* to that hospital was 28 hours and 1 minute.
- The above data relates to a single performance measure and is not representative of the overall performance of an ED. As stated in my Report, the average ED length of stay for patients admitted to Tasmania's four major hospitals, is significantly higher and more than double that of non-admitted patients.

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- The median length of time, being the time until half of *all* patients departed the LGH ED, was 3 hours and 2 minutes in 2014-15 and 3 hours and 11 minutes in 2017-18. The length of time until most patients (90%) had departed the LGH ED was 13 hours and 36 minutes in 2014-15 and 14 hours and 12 minutes in 2017-18.
- Further performance information relating to the LGH ED is contained in my Report. Additional information can also be obtained from the MyHospitals website:
www.myhospitals.gov.au/hospital/612000002/launceston-general-hospital/emergency-department

I respectfully request this clarification be placed on the public record. This clarification will also be published on my Office's website www.audit.tas.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Rod Whitehead
Auditor-General