



## HEALTH POLICY

SFF Tasmania identifies the backlog and deficiencies within our state health system as originating from the withdrawal of health services in rural and regional areas, coupled with the decline in bulk billing options across Tasmania. Consequently, an increasing number of individuals are either compelled to journey from rural and regional locales to urban centres for essential healthcare or are postponing medical attention until conditions escalate to critical levels.

Moreover, there is a noticeable surge in minor ailments presenting at hospital emergency departments as financially constrained Tasmanians find themselves unable to afford local general practitioner (GP) visits due to the scarcity of bulk billing options. These circumstances exert unnecessary strain on urban healthcare facilities, resulting in the congestion of hospital emergency departments with non-urgent cases.

SFF Tasmania proposes the following measures:

Enhancing accessible preventive healthcare services in regional communities and bolstering in-home and local community-based palliative and primary healthcare services. This initiative aims to enable individuals to remain in their residences while alleviating the strain on hospital and emergency beds, which are currently occupied by non-urgent cases.

Implementing an incentive scheme to attract qualified healthcare professionals to regional areas, alongside the adoption of a rural health policy prioritizing prevention and enhancing health literacy.

Expanding patient transport services to cater to rural areas, thereby reducing reliance on ambulances and freeing up ambulance resources for genuine emergencies.

Increasing the availability of bulk billing options for general medical services across the community to ensure affordability of general medical consultations for all Tasmanians.

Establishing a bipartisan committee or board tasked with overseeing both health and child protective services. This independent entity would serve to depoliticize these sectors and could be instrumental in identifying critical deficiencies, devising strategies concerning staffing levels and hospital infrastructure, setting budgets, and formulating a comprehensive 20-year health plan for the future.