

Toxic Heavy Metals Taskforce Tasmania

Media Release

8th January 2010

CALL FOR INDEPENDENT MEDICAL SPECIALISTS TO HEAD UP THE NEW ROSEBERY HEALTH INVESTIGATION

The Toxic Heavy Metals Taskforce has today called on the Minister for Health Lara Giddings to appoint two independent medical specialists to head up the new Rosebery Health Investigation into heavy metal poisoning.

Spokesperson for the Taskforce Isla MacGregor has today said

“Our Taskforce has no confidence in the current Director of Health Dr Roscoe Taylor or his Deputy Director Dr Chrissie Pickin to establish an effective new health investigation in Rosebery given the failure of the previous investigation.

Our Taskforce want to see the appointment of a well qualified physician with experience in neurology and a clinical toxicologist with RECENT “HANDS ON EXPERIENCE” in the examination of patients with diagnosed heavy metal poisoning particularly arsenic, lead and cadmium.

We are aware that specialists with this expertise may not be available in Australia.

THE ADVICE OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO LOCATE SUCH MEDICAL EXPERTS RATHER THAT ‘ACADEMIC’ PROFESSORS WITH NO REAL CLINICAL EXPERIENCE.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF TASMANIA NOW RECOGNISES THAT THE ROSEBERY RESIDENTS ARE SUFFERING FROM SERIOUS ILLNESS.

RECENT SPECIALIST CONSULTATIONS HAVE CONFIRMED THE SERIOUS NATURE OF THE ILLNESSES.

The last investigation in Rosebery was clearly a waste of taxpayers money and given the number of people now diagnosed with serious health effects from heavy metal poisoning any new investigation will need to be fully resourced and appropriate medical specialist appointments made.

It has been unacceptable given the failure of the previous DHHS investigation that Dr Taylor has publicly attacked poisoned residents for not cooperating with the

DHHS investigation.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH APPEARS TO HAVE NO REAL UNDERSTANDING OF HIS DEPARTMENT'S FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND OR RELATE TO THE RESIDENT'S IN A HUMANE WAY.

THE RESIDENTS CONTINUE TO BE DISTRESSED BY THEIR ILLNESS AND THE FAILURE OF THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO COPE WITH AND RELATE TO SICK PEOPLE.

[THERE ARE NUMEROUS REFERENCES AND EXAMPLES IN THE PROJECT TEAM'S "ROSEBERY" REPORT WHICH DEMONSTRATE THE ABJECT FAILURE OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT'S ABILITY TO CARRY OUT A PROPER, MEDICALLY-BASED INVESTIGATION WITH COMPASSION AND MEDICAL EXPERTISE.

If the Rosebery community are to have confidence in any new health investigation in Rosebery they will need to have access to a Health Advocate to ensure that communication with the Department is open and effective. Our Taskforce has made this request to Dr Roscoe Taylor for him to appoint a Health Advocate for Rosebery residents as soon as possible."

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