



AMA

TASMANIA

MEDIA RELEASE – 31st July 2009

AMA Tasmania concurs with the sentiments expressed in Health Minister Lara Giddings' Press Release of 30th July.

“Tasmania needs to be able to recruit and retain a high quality medical workforce” said AMA Tasmania President Chris Middleton. “This requires doctors working full time in the State’s public hospitals having access to terms and conditions competitive within the Australian market.”

The State Government has for the last 4 years has offered a Salary Package to full time Medical Specialists which consists of a car, education allowance and mobile phone. Despite this, salaried doctors working in Tasmania have a package at the bottom end of the Australia wide market.

Mr Whiteley has concerns about so called luxury cars forming part of this package. These vehicles cost well below the luxury car tax threshold of \$57,180 and models include Honda Accord, Subaru Liberty and Holden Calais. The European brands also offered are of comparable value but generally have a lower emission rating and thus more adequately fulfil the government’s greenhouse commitments.

Overseas travel by Medical Specialists must have Ministerial approval. This travel is funded by an education allowance as part of the salary package. The Tasmanian public would want its specialists to be abreast of the latest international advances in health care and the costs of flights and the conference are covered by this education allowance.

If Mr Whiteley expects Tasmania to attract and retain specialists then a competitive package is required. It is important to remember that Tasmania has some of the highest rates of chronic diseases within Australia.

Having said this it is important to differentiate between expenses related to Medical salary packages and those incurred by the DHHS on behalf of departmental officials and others.

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