



Views of the Medical Practitioners of the Yarra Valley

Healesville Hospital is:

- A recognised Rural Health Service. The providers of health care in the area are also recognised federally as Rural Health Providers.
- As indicated previously by Sheryl Treen, the hospital was funded and built by the local community

1. What did Healesville Hospital have when I commenced practice in the town 28 years ago at a time when around 5,000 – 6,000 people lived in Healesville?

- An Active Accident & Emergency facility
- Maternity and inpatient ante-natal and post natal care.
- GP Inpatient acute care, social care and transitional care.
- Surgery including Paediatrics, Dental, Orthopaedics, Gynaecology, General Surgery and Endoscopy. The surgery, and in particular the endoscopy was extremely efficient, managing a dozen patients in a morning, a number that commonly takes all day to do at other sites.
- Palliative Care
- Community Health Services

2. What does Healesville Hospital have now which services a population in the immediate area in excess of 10,000?

- Surgery with only 1 general surgery list and endoscopy, which is still very efficient to this time compared to other sites. All other surgery has NOT BEEN maintained
- Palliative Care
- Community Health Services
- Eastern Health Repository for long term and post-op patients.

3. What have the services changed?

An aspect can be attributed to natural attrition, i.e. Aging medico's, but primarily it is due to Eastern Health policies directed at funding reduction and consequent loss of service provisions, as evidenced by:

- a. Refusal to employ and suitably remunerate visiting surgeons.
- b. Deliberate alienation of local doctors in favour of Eastern Health employed Ward Doctors

- c. Alteration of admission criteria to diminish access by patients and doctors to Hospital Care. Obstetrics was a prime example.
- d. Refusal to accept and accommodate the reality that the hospital is ideally suited to provision of social and transitional care, especially of the elderly, in a location that is convenient and familiar for community residents. This doesn't mean Eastern Health discharged patients from other sites; it means local people who have a non acute need for admission to receive medical and nursing care. These patients may not satisfy the funding criteria Eastern Health operates by, but neither the less, need inpatient care locally.

4. What needs to be done?

- Much more surgery such as Gynaecology, which only a few years ago sustained three lists per fortnight, Orthopaedics, Urology and more.
- Inpatient ante-natal and post natal care.
- GP inpatient care, including social and transitional care.
- Community health maintained and strengthened
- Readiness to fund and develop additional community medical needs as they present.
- Consideration of restoration, or at the least, a readiness to re-open maternity services as new obstetric providers come to the area and support provision of such services in a meaningful and positive way.

5. How can this be done?

The choice is one of two options:

1. Eastern Health retains management of Healesville Hospital and Yarra Valley Community Health, however, adequately funds and services the community's needs.

OR

2. Healesville Hospital becomes a recognised Small Rural Health Service, centrally funded and locally managed.

11/2/2013

Healesville doctors' response to Eastern Health draft plan 2012.

We, the doctors of Healesville, representing the doctors of the Yarra Valley, and whom most associate with Healesville Hospital, have the following comments in regard to Eastern Health's plan for changes at Healesville Hospital.

It is clear that the changes planned are financially driven and not aimed at improved, relevant services to the Yarra Valley community.

In particular, closure of the operating theatre, necessitating patient travel to distant Eastern Health sites, joining the unacceptably long waiting times associated with this; is short sighted and will greatly inconvenience many in the Yarra Valley and beyond.

It needs to be acknowledged that the patient base for Healesville Hospital covers large and distant areas. These include the bush fire affected regions of Kinglake and Marysville, as well as Warburton, Powelltown, Buxton, and Toolangi, with Healesville and Yarra Glen as the most central of the locations.

These are not urban, rather they are rural areas.

What is required of Eastern Health is the following-

1. Recognise that Healesville Hospital serves a rural area and therefore fund and provide services relevant for these communities.
2. Continue operating theatre services. Reinstate the services to where they were a year ago, to once again include gynaecology and plan to provide for other surgical services, as are provided at other rural hospital locations in Victoria.
3. Desist from the process of alienation of local doctors at Healesville Hospital, which has been the case for several years now. It is unmistakeably clear to all, that Eastern Health, through bureaucratic staff at the hospital, has actively discouraged local doctors

from admitting and caring for patients, preferring to direct admissions under the care of salaried Eastern Health doctors ,or referral to urban centres. This is again a short sighted, financially and politically driven action, with good community care of residents as a low priority.

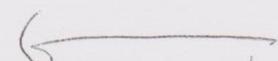
4. Provision of financially well funded services like

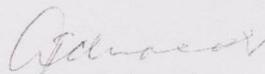
haemodialysis are primarily an attempt to access greater funding for Eastern health, and seemingly, a short sighted attempt to 'buy off' local community.

Haemodialysis would only be useful as an addition to current clinical services and would need to be properly staffed by specialist medical and nursing personnel knowledgeable in managing the complications associated with renal failure.

The doctors of Healesville reject Eastern Health's draft plan and call for Eastern Health to liase with us about community health issues that are relevant to our rural area and provide services that are appropriate.

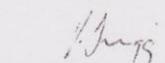
If Eastern Health is unwilling to do so, it should communicate this to the community and provision of services to the Yarra Valley through Healesville Hospital may be better provided by an alternate health provider.


Dr Peter Carruthers


Dr Elroy Schroeder

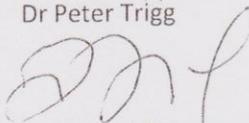

Dr Ken Tate

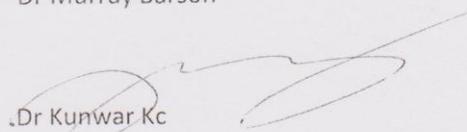

Dr Graham Stephens

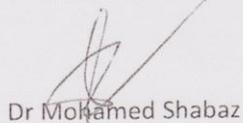

Dr Peter Trigg

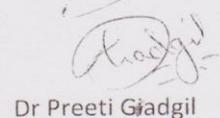

Dr Murray Barson


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