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Government of South Australia

Waikerie and Districts Health
Advisory Council Inc.

9th September 2014

Jack Snelling MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse
Minister for the Arts,
Minister for Health Industries
GPO Box 2555
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Minister,

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of correspondence dated 8th July 2014 regarding reform of South Australian government boards and committees.

This correspondence was discussed in detail at our most recent Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. meeting and we wish to put forward the following:

The Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. has a very strong engagement with the community, and the focus to achieve meaningful outcomes to assist the people it represents.

The Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. is resolute in its belief that we are a very strong conduit between the local community and the government.

The Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. undertook a pivotal role in leading and analysing the community and stakeholder feedback and providing oversight of the local planning process for the Waikerie and Districts 10 year local health service plan.

The community, staff and stakeholder feedback was collected by the Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. between September and November 2009 through a comprehensive questionnaire distributed to the Waikerie and Districts community via a postal mail out, focus group sessions and individual interviews with various key stakeholder groups. Personal contact with the community members to bring forward issues would risk being lost if the Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. does not continue in its present form.

Waikerie Health Service has been fortunate to be extremely well supported by way of donations from the local community and this has enabled some significant improvements to occur within our hospital and aged care facility. The community's financial support speaks loudly of its support for the local Health Advisory council. This kind of support would not continue if the Health Advisory Council ceased to operate as a stand-alone, local community entity.

Some of the work that has occurred includes upgrades of resident rooms and ensuites and improved egress by widening doorways to meet occupational health and safety requirements and renovations of the communal areas and hallways, including gyprocking of brick walls and carpeting – this was a collaborative undertaking between the State government, private donations and the Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc.

Refurbishment of hospital rooms with the addition of ensuites, and the newly created bariatric room and ceiling hoist has also occurred.

Future works planned include the addition of ensuites to 18 Aged Care rooms.

As you can see from the scope of works this amounts to hundreds of thousands of dollars of community donated funds to achieve these results. Given the current tight budget environment within CHSA these substantial works would not have been possible without the generous support of the local community.

We take our role as stewardship of community funds very seriously and without the Waikerie Health Advisory Council Inc.- as a separate entity, community goodwill and ownership/responsibility would be lost, thus resulting in community support and funding 'drying up' as a source to fund health service improvements.

The Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. membership is represented by a diverse and dedicated, cross section of the community from all walks of life. This gives the Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. great depth and helps to represent a broader cross section of the community. Most people within the community personally know someone who is on the Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. thus enabling direct communication between the Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. and the community - A key feature that would be lost without a stand-alone Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc.

Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. members willingly '**volunteer**' their time and expertise representing the community so we do not concur that the abolishment of the Health Advisory Councils would be more cost effective or result in improved efficiencies.

The Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. has established good relationships with the other Health Advisory Council's within the Riverland and supports the current structure as it stands.

There are regular scheduled meetings between the Presiding members and they regularly converse via telephone and email.

It is strongly felt that hospitals within this area have different strengths and areas of focus, not to mention the geographic separation, that would not be well served by amalgamations.

The Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. role is to also ensure the regional hospital services, Waikerie Health Service, Riverland General Hospital and others, meet not only Waikerie's requirements but also surrounding areas such as Morgan's and Cadell's requirements and we feel that the Waikerie Health Advisory Council Inc. must continue to be the voice for our local communities.

The Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. have the strong support of the District Council of Loxton Waikerie (*letter of support attached*) to continue as a separate entity and look to explore options with the council for some sort of online presence as we feel this would be another way to engage with the community and also a means to easily disseminate information

The Regional Director provides regular reports to the Health Advisory councils and also regularly attends our meetings. We feel that it may be possible to reduce the Regional Director's workload by attending these meetings less often as the reports provided by the Regional Director are very comprehensive and information sharing particularly via email and telephone occurs robustly.

Perhaps the Regional Director could attend meetings within his region on a rotating basis – thus reducing the number of meetings he attends. Regular attendance by our Director of Nursing and Midwifery, along with comprehensive minutes of our meetings, offers a good pathway for feedback.

The Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. also introduced bi-monthly meetings which has also reduced the workload of the Director of Nursing and Midwifery and the Administration support staff, with opportunity for special meetings to occur at any time, if required.

There is a high level of contact via email and telephone between these staff and the members of The Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. to deal with any issues arising between meetings.

This is an example of how we have been looking to evolve and adjust as required to ensure we remain relevant and function effectively.

In closing we feel that it is a healthy thing to have carried out this review of our structure and the way that we operate as it gives us the opportunity to review, learn, grow, and improve our functioning.

We see a pressing need within our community, and very clear benefits to all involved with the delivery of health services in Waikerie and surrounding districts to The Waikerie and Districts Health Advisory Council Inc. continuing to operate as a stand-alone entity.

There does not in our opinion appear to be any benefits to any sort of amalgamation and we wish to continue to exist, improve and prosper in our role as a separate entity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Justin Loffler', with a stylized, cursive script.

Justin Loffler

Presiding Member

Waikerie Health Advisory Council Inc.

CC: Waikerie Loxton Council, T. Whetstone MP, Peter Blacker Presiding Member CHSALHN Advisory Council (Governing Council) , Stephen Wade - Shadow Health Minister, Wayne Champion Regional Director – Riverland Mallee Cooroong Rural Region.

Attachment; District Council of Loxton Waikerie.



District Council of Loxton Waikerie

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Our Ref: 2.89.2 (14-006327)



21 August 2014

Jack Snelling MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse,
Minister for the Arts,
Minister for Health Industries
GPO Box 2555
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Minister

Council is aware of the recent announcement of the State Government 'Building a Stronger South Australia: A Modern Public Service' policy which outlines a number of ways in which it is seeking to reform the way Government engages and in particular the proposal to initiate reform of South Australian government boards and committees unless it can be demonstrated they have an essential purpose that cannot be met through other means.

The Waikerie Health Advisory Council (HAC) has an essential purpose which cannot be met through other means without severely impacting the current service provided by the HAC to the Waikerie Hospital and also the community it services.

The Waikerie HAC uniqueness and worth is evidenced through its connection with the Waikerie and district communities which has been practically demonstrated both in the past and present by the outstanding and substantial funding support the HAC has sourced from community businesses and individuals, all to the benefit of the Waikerie Hospital.

It is Councils and the community's strongly held position that the Waikerie HAC be permitted to retain its current structure and status on the basis that:

- it provides a unique, required and valuable representative voice for the respective health needs and services of the communities they serve;
- there is a strong likelihood that the local community will reduce its sustained and substantial financial support to the Waikerie hospital if the Waikerie HAC no longer exists or is in another / different form
- The respective communities provided land assets associated with the hospital complex and these are required to be retained by a truly local authority
- For the value generated, the administration / support cost to the Government of a volunteer based Waikerie HAC is a good investment

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Council is aware that the Government is seeking to ensure that those boards and committees that remain post this review are relevant and practically demonstrate their connection and relevance to the communities they serve. Whilst we consider that the Waikerie HAC more than adequately demonstrates its connectivity to the community via the funds raised, Council is open to how we may support the Waikerie HAC in its community communication role through provision of assistance in increased internet or social media presence.

Council therefore strongly and genuinely supports for the continuation of the Waikerie HAC in its current form and urges the State Government and the Premier to reach the same conclusion based on unequivocal evidence of this over a sustained period

Yours sincerely



Peter Ackland
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

cc. Mrs Sally Goode, Presiding Member, Loxton & Districts HAC
Mr Justin Loffler, Presiding Member, Waikerie HAC