

The Personal Side of the Tasmanian Health Crisis

I'm writing this because my wife needs surgery. It's not emergency surgery. But it is category one urgent surgery to remove a stricture in her bowel.

Without that surgery she has constant pain, getting through

each day with heavy painkillers. While she waits there is every chance of the condition becoming worse and the surgery becoming more complicated.



We have been waiting for this urgent surgery for six months.

She has been on standby for surgery ~~three~~ ~~four~~ five times and will be, most likely, for many more. It is unlikely she will be given a certain date for some months.

Category one surgery should be dealt with within 30-60 days.

In Tasmania its not. In Tasmania sick people are not able to be treated.

We know we're not the only ones. **There are number of stories being shared on a recently created facebook group – Waiting List Tasmania.**

We don't begrudge the very sick people who have medical priority over us. We don't begrudge the medical staff who have to make difficult decisions with very limited and restricted resource.

We don't think the world owes us something.

But in a place that purports to have universal health care for its citizens, something is broken.

When emergency rooms are full of people who could be seeing a maternal child health nurse, which was cut for budgetary reasons...

When GPs are inundated with sick people needing minor attention for injections and the like, who could be receiving at-home care which was cut for budgetary reasons...

When operating theatres lie silent because other parts of the hospital have run out of beds, or restrictions on working hours means that an operation can not be commenced if there is a chance of it going past knock-off time...

When these things happen we don't have universal health care for our citizens. Incompetence has been covered by dishonesty.

I understand the complexities. Our state has run out of money. The response of the Liberal opposition in this state is full of well-meaning. But everyone is well-meaning!

At the place where the Health Crisis becomes a Human Crisis we don't need motherhood statements or rhetoric, we need a bureaucrat somewhere to tick whatever box is needed for my wife to have surgery. While that bureaucrat is unable to tick that box, she suffers, my children live within a sphere of anxiety, and we are unable to contribute to the economy and the nett quality of life of Tasmania.

What I want, and what I'm endeavouring to find out is why that bureaucrat's hands are tied. I am looking for someone to tell me how this health system is cobbled together, and where the cracks are that people are slipping through. I want to understand the details of our predicament so that I know what to call for, I know what to expect, and I know how to plan my care for my family.

We have been waiting. Now it is time to agitate.