

Toxic Heavy Metals Taskforce Tasmania

Media Release

Tuesday 16th February 2010

GROUP CALLS FOR MINISTER GIDDINGS TO STAND DOWN DR ROSCOE TAYLOR AND DR CHRISSIE PICKIN

The Toxic Heavy Metals Taskforce Tasmania has today written to the Attorney General and Minister for Health Lara Giddings calling for Dr Roscoe Taylor, Director of Public Health and Dr Chrissie Pickin, Deputy Director of Public Health to be stood down.

Spokesperson for the Taskforce, Kay Seltitzas today said “We have asked the Minister for Health, Lara Giddings to stand down Dr Roscoe Taylor and Dr Chrissie Pickin because of their **woeful and biased handling of the heavy metal poisoning cases in Rosebery.**

It is now quite clear to us that even before any investigations commenced the Department of Health and Human Services formed a view that heavy metals could not be the cause of our illnesses and that **Drs Taylor and Pickin were prejudiced against us.** More importantly, **these two Health Department doctors did not use any tact, or professional skills in their dealings with us as very ill people. But we have been proved right.**

Instead of keeping on “open mind” about our complaints, the Departments went into **defensive mode.** As a result, they came to take a very biased attitude to genuine complaints. We suddenly became ‘Second Class Citizens’ not to be taken seriously.

The investigation, chaired by Dr Chrissie Pickin was a complete waste of taxpayer’s money as **the investigation never really examined the issues involved.**

The best example of this attitude was shown when **the department ‘set up’ the investigation** without any real attempt to see it as a ‘Medical’ problem. Instead of concentrating on our signs and symptoms, the main focus of the Public Health Department was to **‘shoot the messengers’.**

The first step should have been to arrange for us to have access to specialists who were experienced with poisoning cases in such circumstances.

So far as we were concerned, the first thing that needed to be examined was “Is this a case of serious poisoning from exposure to really toxic metals such as Arsenic, Cadmium and Lead and probably a cocktail of such chemicals”? **They were obsessed with their own theories of “plausible pathways” for our heavy metal poisoning rather than objectively looking for medical answers.**

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Moreover, when the residents sought specialist medical advice from an Occupational Health Physician, **Dr Pickin saw fit to resort to a shameful and cowardly attack on the residents and the Doctor.**

In a statement to media, Dr Pickin suggested that the Rosebery residents **doctor shopped** by continuing “to look for somebody” who would “help” us with our “belief”.

Dr Pickin also implied that the doctor concerned in some way entered into a conspiracy against the Department. **Both statements are seriously offensive, untrue and very demeaning for a person in Dr Pickin's position to make.**

Everyone knows that the doctor involved has a very high reputation for many years and is known for giving professional advice in a very impartial manner.

Dr Taylor appeared on ABC Stateline on 5th February and his comments in relation to the diagnosis of residents being heavy metal poisoned **“At this point in time it's implausible” are further evidence of his continued bias in the case.** Again, his comment reported in the Mercury on the 7th February that **he has serious doubts over the group's poisoning claims** were comments made even before he had received any feedback from the investigation which he announced. **Enough is enough.**

The Minister must act now by standing down the Director of Health, Dr Roscoe Taylor and his Deputy Director, Dr Chrissie Pickin on the basis of bias shown in their public statements and mismanagement of the DHHS assessments of the residents of Rosebery who are suffering from heavy metal poisoning.” said Kay Seltitzas

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