

Toxic Heavy Metals Taskforce Tasmania

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Group Proposes Terms of Reference for the 'First' Tasmanian Integrity Commission Inquiry into the Health Department and EPA Investigations in Rosebery

The Toxic Heavy Metals Taskforce has today released their Terms of Reference for an Integrity Commission Inquiry which they will take to the new Integrity Commission as soon as it is established.

Kay Seltitzas, spokesperson for the Toxic Heavy Metals Taskforce Tasmania today said “We want the new Integrity Commission to examine the Department of Health and Environment Protection Authority investigations conducted between 2008 and 2010 in Rosebery. The original inquiry in Rosebery was flawed from the start and an absolute farce. Our only option now is to take our allegations to the new Integrity Commission. It is very much in Tasmanians' interests for our Inquiry to proceed so that the truth about the Rosebery investigations can be revealed sooner than later.

From the very beginning the Rosebery residents were treated by the Health Department and EPA as just ‘trouble makers’ despite the fact we were and still are very ill with heavy metal poisoning.

The Health Department inappropriately appointed a toxicologist with no medical training as the 'main' investigator' in the first Rosebery investigation. Although the Health Department did arrange for a Tasmanian Physician to take part in the investigation he only examined two of the group. Although the two residents concerned knew the name of the doctor his name was withheld in the Final Report.

The Occupational Health Physician who eventually diagnosed us with heavy metal poisoning quietly and with great integrity advised the Health Department that he was very concerned about the heavy metal illness in the entire group.

The Department has tried to ‘attack and insult’ us and by inference the Specialist Occupational Physician by suggesting that he was biased in his medical diagnosis of heavy metal poisoning.

As soon as the new Integrity Commission is established we will take our Terms of Reference and extensive documentation and other evidence and request forthwith an investigation be commenced into the DHHS, PEHS and EPA Investigations.

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INTEGRITY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO DHHS, EPHS and EPA ROSEBERY INVESTIGATIONS 2008/2009/2010

The Terms of Reference of this Commission of Inquiry are proposed under the new Integrity Commission Act [2009].

The Terms of Reference for our proposed Integrity Commission Inquiry into the Department of Health and Environmental Protection Authority Rosebery Investigation of 2008/2009/10 will enable a thorough examination of the facts and circumstances surrounding one of Tasmania's most flawed public health investigations.

- **Whether the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Public and Environmental Health Service (PEHS) failed to use the powers in the Public Health Act to establish if there was a need for a population based health survey into heavy metal poisoning in Rosebery?**
- **Whether any members of the Tasmanian Parliament or public officials in the DHHS, EPHS, EPA or Tasmania Police breached any codes of conduct, misused information, acted improperly or unethically during the course of the investigations?**
- **Whether the DHHS, PEHS and Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) defined and restricted the scope of the investigation titled "Investigation into Concerns Regarding Seepage Water in a Rosebery locality 2008/2009" in a manner which adversely affected the adequacy of the investigations and the recommendations contained in the Final Report?**
- **Whether the DHHS/EPHS/EPA failed to appoint the appropriate medical and clinical specialists or scientists to determine the scope of the investigations needed or conduct the necessary research and investigations?**
- **Whether the DHHS and PEHS failed to adequately take into account the relative importance of specific biological markers (for example such as blood, urine, hair, fingernails etc) and other testing methods?**
- **Whether the DHHS and EPHS failed to adequately examine all potential heavy metals, dangerous elements and chemicals likely to be in the environment which needed to be assessed for effects on human health?**
- **Whether the DHHS and EPHS subsequent assessment of pathology procedures and results was fair and rigorous?**
- **Whether the failure of the DHHS and PEHS to appoint medically trained clinical toxicologists with hands on experience with heavy metals hampered the proper clinical and medical assessment of residents involved in these investigations?**
- **Whether the DHHS and PEHS discriminated against the residents by failing to provide them with a Health Advocate?**