

**EMBARGOED until 12noon 3 September 2019**

## **Recommendations to improve South Island Neurosurgery Service**

The establishment of a National Clinical Network for Neurosurgery is one of 13 recommendations released as part of an independent review into the South Island Neurosurgery Service (SINS).

The review was commissioned by the South Island Alliance to explore how effectively the recommendations made in the 2010 Report of the South Island Neurosurgery Expert Panel have been implemented and to identify further opportunities to improve the service.

The final report and recommendations were presented to the SINS Board and South Island Alliance Leadership Team in June this year, where they were discussed in depth.

Of the 13 recommendations, one was rejected, which was the decoupling of the service from the University of Otago. Another regarding on-call rosters has already been implemented. To ensure neurosurgeons are on-call no more than one week in three, Christchurch Hospital is providing additional on-call services when there is no neurosurgeon available in Dunedin.

In response to the recommendation for a National Network for Neurosurgery, the SINS Board is exploring its feasibility with the Ministry of Health and neurosurgery services nationally.

The review team interviewed 84 people engaged in the delivery of neurosurgery services for the South Island population and reviewed all available documents for the last decade. Overall, they found that although a number of the 2010 recommendations had been achieved, from a practical perspective many of the issues identified in the previous review remain problematic, in particular the recruitment and retention of staff.

The South Island district health boards remain committed to the one-service, two-site model, explains Chris Fleming, SINS Board Chair and Southern DHB Chief Executive Officer, and these new recommendations will help us to find sustainable ways of continuing to deliver services. "The review team effectively identified the Service's weaknesses, while providing a platform to bolster its strengths.

We are fortunate in the South Island that we all share the same goal and we look forward to implementing these recommendations to further improve the quality and sustainability of the South Island Neurosurgery Service."

[Click here to access the South Island Neurosurgery Post Implementation Review.](#)

## **Background**

The South Island Neurosurgical Service (SINS) was established in 2011 in response to the recommendations made in the 2010 [Report of the South Island Neurosurgery Expert Panel](#). Following a 2014 report on the service, governance shifted from the National Health Board (then a division of the Ministry of Health) to the South Island chief executives.

# Media Release

# South Island Alliance



In line with the 2010 recommendations, the South Island Neurosurgical Service was established as a one-service, two-site model (i.e. a South Island service delivered in Canterbury and Southern DHBs, with Capital and Coast DHB also providing services to Nelson Marlborough DHB).

Eight years after the establishment of the Service, the South Island Alliance Leadership Team, at the request of the SINS Board, decided it was timely to explore how effectively the 2010 recommendations have been implemented and look for further opportunities to improve the South Island service.

In order to get a balanced, informed and objective review, a review team was convened that brought together a diverse range of experience, expertise and knowledge. It comprised a lead clinician, neurosurgeon, senior nurse and senior health manager. The Review Team adopted the same guiding approach used by the 2010 Expert Panel, considering service to the community, sustainability, linkages, clinical leadership, operation and implementation.

The review team interviewed 84 people engaged in the delivery of neurosurgery services for the South Island population and reviewed all available documents for the last decade, including reports and meeting minutes. All the available information was considered by the review team in the preparation of the final report with associated recommendations.

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