



**AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INC.**

ABN 91 028 693 268

24 August 2020

Hon Stephen Wade MLC  
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Dear Minister Wade

**Re: Proposed additions to the Health Care Governance Amendment Bill**

Thank you for your letter dated 18 August 2020 in which you outline proposed additions to the Health Care Governance Amendment Bill (the Bill).

These proposals were made in response to a request that I made on behalf of AMA(SA) for amendments to the Bill that aim to improve the culture of workplaces and therefore the wellbeing of healthcare workers in South Australia's public health system. More specifically, I sought an addition to the Bill that would be **explicit in setting out the responsibility of Local Health Network (LHN) Boards to promote and ensure psychosocial health and wellbeing in the workplaces for which the Boards are responsible.**

You may recall that the need for LHN Boards to have healthcare workers' health and wellbeing at the front of their minds as a responsibility was one of the key points of discussion arising at the AMA(SA) Culture and Bullying Summit, which you kindly attended on 29 February 2020. In addition, the matter of poor culture and bullying in SA healthcare workplaces was a focus in both the recent Parliamentary Inquiry chaired by the Hon Stephen Patterson and an ICAC report by Bruce Lander. Workplace culture is also a widely accepted responsibility of boards in the corporate world but seems to be a consistent omission in health and is not explicit in this Bill.

I thank you for your proposal to make an addition to the Bill that specifies that the functions of the Chief Executive of the Department for Health and Wellbeing includes one 'to develop and issue policies on workforce harassment and bullying'.

While in support of such an amendment to specify the need to develop policies, I am very much of the view that the responsibility and accountability to promote and ensure improved

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workforce culture, and by extension the reduction of bullying, should be made clear in the Bill and that this should be made at the LHN Board level to bring it into line with board-accepted responsibilities in the corporate world.

While we defer the writing of such legislation to legal experts, the AMA(SA) Council is in agreement on this matter and has suggested wording that would be positive in pointing out this responsibility to LHN Boards. I have attached the AICD Guide on Board responsibilities in this area, and also point you to this resources that Michelle Tuckey, Professor of Work and Organisational Psychology at the University of SA, made us aware of: <http://www.prima-ef.org>. Some of the AMA(SA) Council suggestions for amendments to the Bill include:

- 'The LHN Board is required to ensure the health and safety of health-care workers, including their psychosocial health and safety.'
- 'The LHN Board is responsible for promoting a healthy workplace culture and fostering employee mental health wellbeing.'

I have consulted a number of LHN Board members and executives who have indicated strong support for such an amendment as a positive move to encourage constructive endeavors, including the development of key performance indicators, in the area of workplace culture in health.

In addition, in my new role as Vice President of the Federal AMA, I am aware of initiatives on a national level along these lines. It would be wonderful if South Australia could lead the country with this change in legislation.

Once again, I thank you for your consideration of the suggestion by the AMA(SA), which I reiterate is offered to explicitly specify and embed the responsibility and accountability to promote and ensure psychosocial health and wellbeing in the workplace at the level of LHN Boards.

Please contact me at any time if you wish to discuss this matter by emailing me at [president@amasa.org.au](mailto:president@amasa.org.au) or by contacting Executive Assistant Mrs Claudia Baccanello on 8361 0109. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Chris Moy**  
President, AMA(SA)  
Vice President AMA