



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

ABN 91 028 693 268

AMA(SA) 2024-25 Budget Priorities

The President of the Australian Medical Association in SA (AMA(SA)) is urging Premier Peter Malinauskas's government to increase funding to reduce inequities in access to care and increase health system capacity in the 2024-25 State Budget.

AMA(SA) President Dr John Williams said this week's 'code yellow' emergencies in public hospitals are adding to the delays already affecting South Australians' capacity to access the world-class care they need, expect and deserve.

'The cancellation of planned, essential surgeries will make many people physically sicker and magnify the impact of their conditions on their mental health,' Dr Williams said.

'The Premier won the 2022 election largely because of his party's promises to fix ramping, which is one sign of a failing hospital system. While no one expected ramping to disappear overnight, he has now had two years to demonstrate his policies are making a difference.

'This past week, we have been shown the level of dysfunction across the entire health system.'

Dr Williams said AMA(SA) priorities for Budget spending align with objectives for a health system better equipped to manage patients' needs across the state:

- **Keeping people out of hospital – increase system efficiency and eliminate barriers to connected primary and hospital care**
- **Building a sustainable health workforce.**

Dr Williams said the lack of access to primary care and the absence of services to connect all levels of care continues to affect hospital system capacity.

'Our hospitals will continue to be in crisis unless funding is directed at the core problems that ultimately lead people to emergency departments: a lack of services in rural areas, severely underfunded mental health services, and people who can't find affordable GP appointments,' he said.

AMA(SA) priorities for State Government spending on health in 2024-25 are summarised below.

A. Keep people out of hospital – increase system efficiency and eliminate barriers to connected primary and hospital care

1. Boost connections between general practice and hospitals

- Through Preventative Health SA, explore and implement ways to support general practice as the foundation of healthy people and communities.
- Examine opportunities to expand virtual and telehealth services across the state, to care for people in their homes, reducing the burden on emergency departments.
- Capitalise on emerging IT systems and tools and maintain up-to-date patient records from hospitals, Urgent Care Clinics, testing service providers, pharmacies and other health services in My Health Record.
- Through the Commission on Excellence and Innovation in Health (CEIH), use AI and other tools to improve data collection, analysis and sharing in relation to access to

system capacity, including private/public system use and LHN-based and state-wide approaches to delivering care.

- Reduce short-term reliance on private hospital beds and the impact of this on private health by providing more public infrastructure.
- Increase resources in public hospitals and Local Health Networks to cut essential surgery waiting lists.
- Reduce the pressure on the Royal Adelaide Hospital by delivering long-awaited upgrades in the Northern Adelaide LHN (NALHN) – i.e., Lyell McEwin Hospital.

2. Reduce inequities in access to world-class care

- Provide the same access to hospital and community health services – including after-hours care, hospital beds, surgical services, telehealth, acute and sub-acute mental health support and addiction treatment and care – for all South Australians.
- Invest in rehabilitation, respite and step-down care beds around the state.
- Require all LHNs to develop, maintain, measure and report on indigenous health policies and outcomes.
- Increase palliative care services, including for the aged and for children and adolescents, linked to primary care providers and in line with community demand.
- Expand access to chemotherapy and other treatments in regional hospitals, reducing the burden of travel for regional residents and reducing the PATS budget.
- Monitor the impact of pharmacy prescribing of UTI and other medications on individuals and community anti-microbial resistance.

B. Build a sustainable health workforce

- Attract talent through making South Australia a leader in ‘sustainable health’, including the implementation of ‘green’ builds, systems and practices.
- Roll out the single employer model in all local health networks to attract medical students and trainee doctors to and keep them employed in regional medicine.
- Increase the number of clinical academic positions/appointments in public hospitals and invest in research activities to attract and retain world-class talent.
- Research and implement evidence-based models to prevent bullying, harassment, sexism and racism and their impacts on junior doctor health and safety.
- Work with AMA(SA) to identify the needs of international medical graduates and implement a state-wide system to support and retain them across the state.
- Support new training positions in psychiatry, especially child and adolescent, to provide a pipeline for more psychiatrist in the state.