



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

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## **‘WHERE HAS THE HEALTH MONEY GONE?’ ASKS FRONTLINE DOCTORS**

**The Australian Medical Association in South Australia (AMA(SA)) expects to see measures to alleviate ramping and reduce essential surgery waiting lists in the State Budget to be handed down tomorrow.**

AMA(SA) President Dr John Williams said that as the state’s hospitals shudder under the impact of winter viruses, doctors across the state brace themselves for the wave of worsened conditions and chronic illness caused by cancelled and rescheduled surgical lists.

‘While emergency department staff try to manage overwhelming demand, other staff are taken from treatment duties to reschedule surgeries for upset and increasingly ill patients,’ he said.

‘Outside the hospitals, GPs are doing their best to keep their patients well so they can avoid having to wait long hours for care in EDs. Nursing homes are managing mounting COVID and flu outbreaks.

‘All this on top of what have become everyday issues involved in the delivery of clinical care.’

Dr Williams said the State Government has told South Australian of the billions it has spent on health to fix ramping, as promised in its election commitments in 2022.

‘But two years later, is the public wondering where this money has gone?’ Dr Williams asked. ‘Do South Australians in Port Adelaide and Port Augusta and Port Noarlunga question what will happen if they get sick - where they should go and will they get the care they need?’

Dr Williams said continued spending on health was essential in building a thriving economy.

‘Health is a basic part of our community’s infrastructure,’ he said. ‘Our health gives us a foundation from which to work, build our lives and contribute to flourishing communities.

‘A sound health system is a safety net for us all. We were heartened when this government increased the communication with the AMA(SA) and our members, as the voices of clinical care, in directing the building and maintaining of that safety net,’ Dr Williams said.

Dr Williams said doctors in hospitals, general practice and other private practice, and in services across the state, are best placed to know what is needed to deliver the world-class care South Australians expect and deserve.

‘More information and data are needed to measure programs and initiatives and inform decision-makers about what is and isn’t working,’ he said.

‘We need the State and Australian governments to close the funding divide – to stop the blaming and handballing of responsibility and work out how to work together to deliver world-class care.

'We need to eliminate the gaps between general practice and hospital care – gaps in communication and the sharing of information that is essential to improving patient outcomes.

'And we need to support general practice to keep people out of hospital.

'We are not the experts in managing money. But we are the experts in care, and we are here to help the government spend smarter.

'That means spending on general practice, which is cheaper than hospital care. It means spending on data collection and analysis, to understand where and why people are sick. And it means increasing the system's capacity – beds, surgery and the workforce.

'We ask the government to spend smarter. Investment in health is as much an investment in our future as roads or digging metals out of the ground. It ensures we have the people to do all these things and more.'

**For more information or interview requests please contact Dr John Williams on 0417 804 212 or Media and Communications Advisor Ben Terry on 0478 847 604.**