



Australian Conservatives

...a better way for South Australia

Response to the AMASA Election Priorities 2018

1. Clinician-Led Decision Making

The Transforming Health debacle highlighted the need to ensure that clinical-led decision making is a priority within our health care system. Clinicians are best placed to make important decisions regarding the needs and priorities within our health system, with appropriate insight into the issues faced within the system and ways to improve patient care and hospital efficiencies. There is a place for bureaucracy as well however, it is imperative that frontline staff, the ones who know what goes on each day, are consulted when decisions are being made that ultimately affect them and their patient's wellbeing.

We agree that a culture of openness, accountability and mutual respect needs to be fostered and that a strong priority be placed on clinician-led and evidence-based decision making. We would support the trialing and implementation of a clinical senate and a clinical analytics unit to provide independent strategy and clinical advice to Government. Frequent and transparent reviews of our hospital system and an in-depth independent review of the EPAS system are necessary and we fully support a system where Government is accountable to the people it is there to serve.

We support expanded service delivery at the Modbury, Noarlunga and Queen Elizabeth Hospitals and an urgent review must be conducted and informed by clinicians to ensure that hospital services reflect the needs of the community and that any vulnerabilities are both identified and rectified. We will continue to pressure the

Government to make the necessary changes to ensure that hospitals function efficiently and effectively.

We support a co-located Women's and Children's Hospital at such time that the project can be paid for and implemented appropriately. We do not want to see another nRAH debacle. Separating to two divisions within the hospital is not appropriate and raises access issues with women who are admitted as patients in one hospital whilst their child is admitted at another. Additionally, the potential medical complications due to not having on-site access to services, raises genuine concern as to whether patients will be able to access efficient services when needed should the current Government proposal proceed.

2. Integrated Hospital and GP Services

Australian Conservatives are extremely concerned by bed blockages and the potential that raises for people's treatment to be delayed or in less serious cases, to be denied assistance because the system is overrun and unable to cope. We support a collaborative approach to care between GP's, nurses and hospitals but also note that many country and rural GP's simply do not have appropriate infrastructure, resources or funding to manage the health demand in their areas which leads to additional and unnecessary clogging of emergency departments. We strongly support appropriate funding at both the State and Federal level to ensure that there is sufficient access to health care for all.

A clinician designed referral pathway inclusive of communications protocol should be established to ensure timely information regarding patient care be communicated between differing health care services and to effectively support transition between services. It is entirely reasonable that clinicians design this pathway as they are the ones who are acutely aware of what information needs to be relayed to other practitioners. We do note that Government reporting and statistical requirements may require Government oversight and input in this process where necessary, however the majority of the pathway design should be clinician-led.

3. Resources for Rural and Remote Health Care

Australian Conservative's remain very concerned about rural and remote health care. We have heard countless stories from clinicians and patients alike regarding understaffing and resourcing. The rural and remote areas have seen a significant increase in mental health issues without satisfactory services across the board and it is imperative that changes are made quickly to ensure that appropriate support is available. Additionally, overworking of medical professionals is unacceptable and appropriate funding must be provided to ensure safety of all concerned as well as to increase the scope of services offered by country hospitals. Australian Conservatives believes it is disgraceful that people living in rural and remote areas need to be transferred to metropolitan hospitals for services which could reasonably be provided at their nearest hospital.

Australian Conservatives will lobby for the establishment of a committee, informed by clinicians and the community needs to determine what services are most needed in rural and remote areas. Funding for mental health, lack of support services, availability of qualified staff and available facilities would form part of this inquiry. The Mental Health committee would be required to report their findings and recommendations to a newly established Rural and Regional Standing Committee and to parliament. We strongly support increasing necessary infrastructure and services as the regions have been neglected for too long.

4. Commitment to Training and Research

Australian Conservatives supports the position of the AMA in relation to Training and Research.

5. Better facilities for people with Severe Mental Health issues

In South Australia, the total expenditure on mental health in 2015-16 was \$439,722,000. The Mental Health Coalition states this figure approximately 6% of the total health budget. Simply put the current funding model does not meet the burden of mental health in our state.

The Mental Health Coalition estimates that there are 160,000 people with severe mental illness in South Australia who will need psychosocial support outside of the NDIS, indicating that we need to specifically address this issue as a matter of urgency.

In South Australia there were 135.1 mental health related presentation to our emergency departments per 10,000 people in 2015-16. There must be an increased focus on getting people the help they need in a timely manner with a goal to a quick and maintained recovery. Lack of funding for mental health in SA is part of the failure of Labor's health plan. Australian Conservatives believes that creating specialist services for mental health will prevent the unnecessary clogging of emergency services and best serve this vulnerable section of South Australians.

Australian Conservatives remain acutely aware of the need to act now to ensure appropriate funding for mental health infrastructure and support is allocated so that any increase in patients requiring assistance over the next 10 years will be provided for and not unnecessarily burden an already struggling system. We welcome best practice and evidence based models to appropriately support and provide training to those who have or care for those who have mental or severe mental health issues. We strongly support the implementation of a mental health registry to further mental health policy and patient outcomes.

6. Funding for Palliative Care

Australian Conservatives believes that all people should have access the best palliative care available, whether at home, in hospital or under the care of a hospice during the last stages of their illness. Palliative care should be as close to home as possible. We are committed to investment in palliative care for South Australians. We do not support Euthanasia but believe best practice health care can look at a patient's circumstances and provide the best support and comfort possible.

It is unacceptable that funding has not been committed to make this happen. The best end of life care should be equally accessible to all members of the community regardless of their economic circumstances or geographical location. More resources

must be made available and those resources must be shared in a way that brings equality for people in rural and regional South Australia.

We believe with proper funding, palliative care industry representatives (Palliative Care South Australia), medical specialists in the field, and the South Australia's Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) could collaborate to develop a system of best practice palliative care initiatives that would make South Australia world experts and leaders in the field.

When parliament returns in 2018, Australian Conservatives will be moving for the adoption of this cross sector model of representation and the funding necessary to make it happen.

Australian Conservatives also support the call by Palliative Care SA for the parliament to invest \$24.5 million to improve access to palliative care services:

- \$14m a year to support people in their final stage of life at home, with the help of their GP and a community of palliative care nurses.
- \$4m a year to make sure this care is available 24/7 not just during office hours.
- \$6m a year to integrate palliative care into chronic disease clinics; and
- \$400K a year to provide up-to-date, reviewed information about palliative care to the community.

7. Support for Doctor's Wellbeing

Australian Conservatives remain concerned about the pressures placed on doctors and nurses within our health care system and strongly advocate for better working conditions whilst ensuring that patient care is in no way compromised. We believe it is imperative that appropriate action be taken if a clinician's health or behavior is adversely affecting patient outcomes however we are also very mindful that working conditions for clinicians are extremely stressful and can lead to various psychological outcomes. Clinicians should be actively encouraged to seek appropriate early intervention and professional help without fear of career consequences. We would support further investigation into an appropriate system to ensure both the health and welfare of the clinician and patients' needs are adequately balanced and addressed.

The Australian Conservatives have actively campaigned for appropriate anti-bullying laws to be implemented in South Australia which would protect health care workers and the community at large. The culture of bullying within the public sector must end and all appropriate measures to ensure this behavior stops must be taken. Australian Conservatives takes an active role in supporting clinicians in this state and we will continue to do so to ensure that those caring for our community, also receive the care and protections that they deserve.