



## New RAH set to fail sleep test: doctors' warning as community petition tops 2000 names in 2 weeks

The AMA(SA) is speaking out as the future of Sleep Services at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital sit under threat.

“The Government and SA Health undertook that the RAH’s Sleep Lab would not be lost when the old RAH closed,” said AMA(SA) President A/Prof William Tam. “But the future of the RAH Sleep Lab has hung under a cloud as the health bureaucracy has obfuscated around this important service, and abandoned its promise.”

“Our clinicians are dumbfounded by this short-sighted decision, as are their patients, and most experts in Australia who are watching this huge mistake unfold in our new \$2.4 billion hospital.”

“The RAH clinicians were promised that the Sleep Lab would be moved to the new RAH, and have worked tirelessly to make this happen, but now management appear to have changed their mind. We are completely perplexed by this backflip, which does not make sense for patient care, or even on the basis of costs. The Sleep Lab will provide excellent clinical care in sleep problems for the community for years to come. It is a life-saving service. Make no mistake, people die in their sleep,” A/Prof Tam stated.

“Patient care at the RAH for patients with respiratory failure during sleep, and other similar problems, will be harmed by any decision that removes the necessary inpatient assessment beds. It’s simply not logical that the government doesn’t keep its promise to move this service.”

“The new RAH must provide a comprehensive model of care for patients with respiratory problems, and fracturing the unit is another example of poor decisions by management that do nothing to improve patient care.”

“In fact, the RAH risks losing its accreditation for training respiratory physicians if the Sleep Laboratory is not transferred there – it is a critical piece of the service and the accreditation depends on it. That would be a major problem. Preserving the training of tomorrow’s specialist doctors in this important area of medicine, that affects so many patients, is critical.”

“Having a four-bed sleep lab at the RAH does not remove setting up a sleep service elsewhere such as at TQEH, but patients should not be shuttled across sites when critically unwell and receiving treatment at the RAH because of management’s lack of understanding of the best care available.”

“Again, we see further examples of management not listening to senior clinicians, but this time it is also not listening to the College of Physicians, who will remove accreditation, and a host of other professional and consumer groups. They are all being ignored.”

Such is the concern on this that a community petition to be delivered to Health Minister Stephen Wade today has gained over 2000 signatures in just two weeks. The petition was started by the Sleep Health Foundation with Sleep Disorders Australia, Narcolepsy Australia and Hypersomnolence Australia.

“The AMA(SA) has spoken directly with the Minister about this important issue, that can be fixed quickly and at only a marginal cost,” said A/Prof Tam. “We urge the Minister to intervene in this situation, which has been dragging on for too long.”

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