



SA Election 2018: AMA calls for urgent health remedy

With just 44 days until the SA state election, the AMA (South Australia) is disappointed with all sides of politics' lack of answers to resolve our current health system failures.

"The major and minor parties' health announcements so far have failed to address the real concerns of the public," said AMA South Australia state president A/Prof William Tam.

The Association is calling for a 'people-first' strategy for South Australia, publicly releasing today a summary of some of the key measures in its election priorities to provide for a better and more functional health system.

"We are asking all parties and independents to commit to these measures prior to the election," said A/Prof Tam.

"Access to quality healthcare is the most important priority to most South Australians. At present, the community is questioning why it takes so long to see a doctor in a public hospital. Why is the waiting list so long? How long do I have to wait to have my procedure? We have not seen any policies that address these valid public concerns, which are shared by doctors.

"We must have confidence that our health system and services will care for the sick, whoever and wherever they are," A/Prof Tam stated.

"If you were to ask me, what is the mood on the ground now, at the hospitals, in EDs, among our members, I'd say people are hurting. Doctors are not able to deliver the care they should. Waiting lists are too long. Morale is low. Stress is high. Working conditions are verging on dangerous."

"The AMA's national *2017 Public Hospital Report Card*, which covers data from 2001-2016, highlighted declining numbers of urgent ED patients seen in the recommended time, and increasing elective surgery waiting times. Data reported from a recent productivity commission report also points to issues with overdue elective surgery, ambulance response times and ED waits.

"Over the past months, we have heard about significant and unacceptable system failures. Our political leaders must not simply paper over the worst problem areas with quick fixes or another building announcement."

"We need a real commitment to a healthy system. Not just bricks and mortar, but people and services. Not just winding back some of the more unpopular elements of the 'Transforming Health' cuts. Not just a few nice ideas or cash boosts. We need to see some vision for the future."

"We urge all South Australians to put that question to anyone seeking your vote in this election. What would their party deliver for your care?"

The Association is calling for a range of measures in our Election Priorities. Key priorities include:

- An independent Clinical Data Analytics Unit to provide true robust data on the state of our health system's outcomes. Too much time is wasted arguing about data; we need

a trustworthy and skilled data collection and analysis process to bring health policy decision-making into the 21st century and reduce our waiting lists and access block for necessary procedures.

- A co-located Women's and Children's Hospital with a full suite of clinical services for women and infants, located on one site with the new RAH.
- Significantly increased clinical services in our larger rural hospitals, to increase services to our rural community. This would require expanded training and workforce planning for country hospitals to reduce the demand on our metropolitan hospitals, that are unable to meet current demand, and allowing patients to be treated within their own community where possible.

The Australian Medical Association (SA)'s 2018 Election Priorities contains the wishlist the AMA(SA) gave politicians in December last year. The Association also put the spotlight on leaders' health credentials at its Political Leaders' Breakfast in November, with Premier Jay Weatherill, Opposition leader Steven Marshall and SA Best's Nick Xenophon. Read the full Election Priorities document at the AMA(SA) website: amasa.org.au

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