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BUSINESS AS USUAL BUDGET NEGLECTS NON-COVID HEALTH NEEDS

The claims of record spending on health in tonight's Federal Budget mask a failure to tackle stress in the health system, though continued spending on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic is welcomed says the AMA.

With tonight's Budget announcements promoting a \$7.3 billion increase in Medicare funding and a \$9.8 billion increase in hospital funding, the AMA said the amounts did not represent expanded health funding.

"The Medicare and hospital funding in tonight's Budget amounts to little more than usual recurrent spending and planned growth, not the new injection of funds our health system desperately needs," AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid said.

"Pleased as we are to see tonight's Budget finally acknowledge the Ten-Year Plan for Primary Care, we can see no plan for how its implementation will be funded.

"This Budget was the last chance for the Government to show it is serious about primary care reform by delivering the extra funding needed to improve patient access to high quality General Practice.

"While the Health portfolio has been spared funding cuts, the Government's focus on cost of living has overlooked quality of life, particularly for the thousands of Australians languishing on hospital waiting lists," Dr Khorshid said.

The AMA launched the "[*Clear the hospital logjam*](#)" campaign to show the cycle of crisis gripping our public hospitals. The budget fails to acknowledge this crisis and will do nothing to address ambulance ramping or elective surgical waiting lists.

Dr Khorshid said: "The Budget re-states the Commonwealth will only meet 45% of usual hospital costs, and that the 6.5% cap on hospital funding growth will remain."

"Yet hospital Emergency Departments are full, ambulances are ramping, and the AMA estimates the waiting list for essential (elective) surgery has blown out by a further 190,000 surgeries with COVID-19 elective surgery pauses, on top of the existing wait lists.

"The next Government will need to act. The major parties are on notice we will be pushing this case all the way to polling day because Australians are clearly saying they want a focus on healthcare, and they expect a health system which is able to meet their family and community's needs," Dr Khorshid said.

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