

Transcript: AMA President, Dr Omar Khorshid, at Parliament House post-budget doorstep.
Tuesday 29 March 2022.

Subject: AMA reaction to the Budget

AMA PRESIDENT DR OMAR KHORSHID: “If you scratch the surface of this Budget it’s easy to see the lack of vision for Australia’s healthcare and the lack of intent to address any of these issues that are affecting our healthcare system right now and which will be increasing problems into the future.

The AMA has four main asks of the Government’s Budget round and unfortunately none of these has been delivered.

Public hospitals where we see extraordinary levels of ambulance ramping, people stuck in Emergency Departments and cannot get into hospital; the hospital system is completely jammed up.

There is nothing there to solve that problem. There is no solution for the blame game between the Commonwealth and the States on funding.

On primary care, thankfully, there is finally acknowledgement of the Ten-Year Primary Care plan- the Government’s own primary care plan.

But there is no funding to deliver it and yet again General Practitioners will be feeling let down by a government that does not have any vision for healthcare.

We asked for some attention to be paid to our private health system – a product that is key to Australians’ quality of life and cost of living because premiums have been going up and up over many years.

Although premiums this year are lower and that is simply because of the pandemic and nothing to do with the Government’s actions in fixing the affordability of our private health insurance product.

Yet again there is no plan for the future.

And the AMA is always pushing for prevention to be on our agenda. We have made a simple and well-supported idea for a sugar-sweetened beverage tax and there is no sign that it is anywhere in the Budget.

As we go forward to the election campaign this is a pre-election Budget, a very generous election Budget, we need to see vision from both our major parties on what they are going to do on health.

At the moment that is sadly lacking and we are looking forward to hearing what Labor’s view is for health.

And the AMA will continue to push the Government to come up with solutions to these problems that are affecting the lives of thousands of Australians every single day.

JOURNALIST QUESTION: about a move to a more equitable 50-50 funding share between the Commonwealth and states and territories, and removing the 6.5 per cent funding cap that constrains the ability of hospitals to meet community demand.

AMA PRESIDENT DR OMAR KHORSHID: It's something that Labor has in the past supported in its policy platform. We have not heard anything from their plan for public hospitals.

Seeing that the Government has missed the opportunity to address public hospital funding, we are very interested in to talking with Labor and hear what their vision will be to address the public hospital funding crisis. (ENDS)

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