

**Transcript:** AMA Vice President Dr Chris Moy on 3AW with Tony Jones, Thursday, 14 April 2022, 9:22 AM

**Subject:** The logjam in public hospitals

---

TONY JONES: Joining us on the line now is Chris Moy, Vice President of the Australian Medical Association. Good morning, Chris.

CHRIS MOY: Good morning, Tony

TONY JONES: Well, it's a real problem, isn't it? And I know that we talk about this time and time again, and we need to talk about it time and time again until the message actually gets through to those running the joint that it's got to be fixed. How can it be fixed?

CHRIS MOY: I mean, unfortunately, that story, and my condolences to the family of this man, but this story is being repeated again and again. It was repeated in the recent SA election and actually almost decided the election because one party decided to focus on health and the other one didn't. Essentially, the problem is that across the country due to years of underfunding, which have just been exacerbated by COVID, we've ended up, you know, like with a health system which is just completely chock-a-block, and we call it a logjam.

So the hospitals are full. So that's why you can't get in, because of the ramping and being unable to get into the emergency department because the hospitals are full because of lack of funding over a long period of time. Not enough beds, not enough staff and also problems with the NDIS and things like that where patients are stuck in there, and we've ended up with hospitals that you can't get in. And the problem is the real reality is this is a matter of life or death. I mean, this is a matter of life or death. So, it's something that we're seeing across the country.

And look, what I do suggest to your listeners is the AMA have set up a website called [hospitallogjam.com.au](http://hospitallogjam.com.au), where you can actually go on this website and put in your postcode and look at your local hospital and it will give you the report, your odds of actually being seen in an emergency in time, and also getting surgery in time, and actually give you an idea of, you know, whether you're going to live or die. And from there you can actually tell your own story if there's a problem, but also directly email your local MP to actually indicate your dissatisfaction if that's a major problem.

But, look, the reality is it is a matter of life or death for a lot of people and we need to fix the hospital system. The AMA has a position that very clearly both the states and the Federal [government] need to stop the blame game, fund it 50-50. States need to keep on their funding level. We need to stop this silly cap that the Federal Government gets away with, which basically means they just say, oh, after this, we can't be bothered funding, and really get to the point where we fund it to the amount that's required to provide care.

Because for the average punter out there - I mean, we've got all these debates about other things - but for the average punter, when you're really sick and you can't get care, this is a matter of life or death and you're not going to be worried about all these other things.

TONY JONES: Yeah. So what's that website again, I think a lot of people will be sort of grabbing a pen and writing that down, so we'll give that again. So it's hospitallogjam, one word...

CHRIS MOY: [Interrupts] hospitallogjam.com.au, and on there you can first up put your postcode and actually look at how the report of your local hospital will tell you, you know, whether your hospital is -- and give you the percentage of being seen in the recommended time for an emergency or to be seen for surgery. And you can write your own story. And from there directly, you can actually email your MP to actually tell them that health is an important thing. Because I think both parties at the moment -- first up, the Federal Government keeps on throwing out all these numbers about their health spending, but it was all COVID funding. It's actually the hospitals and general practice [which] really have not actually had increased funding. We're just really stuck in the same place we were. And also, the Labor Party, of what we've seen so far, have just come up with some small things, but they're really tinkering around the edges. And really, this is something that really matters to people.

TONY JONES: So with the - sorry - you just mentioned the Labor Party, so is the Labor Party plan, now just correct me if I'm wrong because I haven't read this forensically, are they advocating that more GPs and local surgeries carry out operations and the like, are they?

CHRIS MOY: No, they've got this proposal, which is called the Urgent Care Centres. They're saying they're going to fund 50 practices across Australia to become, sort of, look after some of the low level emergency department cases so that it slightly unclogs emergency departments. Now, the problem is that that's not a coherent plan for general practice. I mean, we do need to fix general practice because the way it's funded at the moment is just, you know, it's sort of funded for a conveyor belt-type medicine. And what we need is to be flexible to be able to do after hours care, do home visits, to look after the elderly -- they are the ones that end up coming into

emergency and ending up in hospital. And the main problem in the hospitals is the fact that the hospitals are so full. So, you know, even if you end up there and you can't get up to the ward, well, if you've got a full hospital, you're still in the same position. So, look, the proposal they've just put out today is really tinkering around the edges. Look, it's a nice try, but it's nothing like what we need. And, look, what we've got at the AMA, we'll be putting out a report card, you know, get all the spin out of it. Give a report card for both parties at the end of this, and we'll get to see who really is the real friend of Medicare, because both of them keep on saying they're great friends of Medicare.

TONY JONES: Well, as it stands at the moment, if you were doing a report card, because I mean, obviously your report card's not going to come out until after 21 May. But if you were doing a report card now based on what you know from the two parties, who do you give an A to?

CHRIS MOY: Neither. Oh no, they'd both be fail at the moment. Neither of them have actually come up with any coherent policy. Basically, they're both playing small target on this and really, the Budget came out and they threw out all these numbers, but they were essentially COVID funding and recurrent funding, the funding that they were going to do anyway. So, they threw out all these numbers. And the Labor Party, I think in the meantime, keep on saying we've got to increase access and that sort of thing, but really, they've done very little. In fact, they've had a couple of small announcements, but really nothing -- like, everybody knows we need to change this. There's a thing, for example, called the 10 Year Primary Care Plan, which is really about improving general practice to be able to look after a lot of patients better so they don't end up in hospital especially with chronic illnesses. And everybody knows we need to go down this way, but neither party has really put their money where their mouth is. But it's more about the willingness to modernise and change the way-direction we need to change.

TONY JONES: Right. Okay. And this will be when we head into the state election?

CHRIS MOY: No, no, no. We're going to be giving a report card...

TONY JONES: [Interrupts] No, but when we do the state election, will you be doing a report card on...

CHRIS MOY: [Talks over] Oh no, so both of these things -- so the report card for both parties in the federal election will be before the election. So, once they've come out with all their announcements, we're giving a report card so we can give it to you. But the other thing is that we've got ongoing campaigns in these areas because I think, ultimately, I think there's this real need. A lot of people really want to see past the spin and actually see what's really been on the table to improve their care. Because

again, I get back to this thing. You want to know that, you know, when you're having a heart attack or you're having something serious that you're going to be seen and they're going to look after you because we're in a first world country and it's crazy that we can't at the moment.

TONY JONES: Absolutely. Alright. Well, look, hopefully they listen to you because they're not listening to anyone else. And I don't know how many stories we need like the tragic story that was coming out of regional Victoria about the gentleman who died while waiting on a gurney. So it's - you know - you talk about funding, just pour more into it. I mean, you look around at some of the funding and you think, don't worry about submarines for the moment, let's get the hospital system right. Chris, thanks very much for your time this morning. Always appreciate it. Chris Moy joining us, Vice President of the Australian Medical Association.

**Ends**

---

14 April 2022

CONTACT: 02 6270 5478 0427 209 753 [media@ama.com.au](mailto:media@ama.com.au)

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: [http://twitter.com/ama\\_media](http://twitter.com/ama_media)

Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>

Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>

---