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AMA welcomes new health minister and calls for urgent solution to hospital crisis

Australian Medical Association President Dr Omar Khorshid has welcomed the appointment of new health minister, the Hon Mark Butler MP, and called for upcoming discussions on healthcare to address the growing crisis in Australia’s hospital system.

Dr Khorshid said Mr Butler had invaluable experience as a former Minister for Ageing and Australia’s first Minister for Mental Health in the Gillard Government, and as opposition health spokesman.

“I urge the Minister to grasp this opportunity to start a new relationship with the states and territories on reforming the health system,” Dr Khorshid said.

“While we need a long-term funding solution, we also need practical, short to medium-term solutions that can be implemented soon and don’t have any unintended consequences, including extending the short-term 50/50 hospital funding that’s due to expire in September.”

“Covid is not over. We need to work on way to make our society and health system more resient to endemic Covid in order to avoid unnecessary deaths and the huge disruptions to our hospital system. This winter, we need to make sure people with respiratory illnesses are getting the care they need in the right settings.”

Dr Khorshid said the AMA was looking forward to working with the Government on progressing its \$970 million Medicare and general practice reforms and on the new Centre for Disease Control.

“We worked with Minister Butler on the primary care reforms and look forward to working with the Government on the careful design and implementation of those reforms, but there’s also a discussion to be had about what the future looks like beyond the next four years.”

Dr Khorshid said a new Government offered a perfect opportunity for a new approach to working with Premiers and Chief Ministers on a fairer funding model for public hospitals.

“We have detailed the chronic underfunding of our public hospitals, which is putting the public’s health at risk. We need to see 50/50 funding implemented and the 6.5 per cent funding cap scrapped.”

In 2021 the AMA delivered its comprehensive plan *Public hospitals – a cycle of crisis* detailing the need for hospital reform, and it campaigned extensively before and during the election with its Clear the Logjam [campaign](#).

“This is not just a COVID-19 problem. The performance of our public hospitals has been declining for years and after continued neglect they are now at or beyond breaking point.

“We look forward to meeting with the Minister and discussing the plans to address the hospital crisis and reform the health system.”

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