

Transcript: AMA President, Professor Steve Robson's Budget Night, Wednesday, 26 October 2022

Subject: Budget Night comments to media at Parliament House.

AMA PRESIDENT PROF. STEVE ROBSON: We've seen a Budget tonight that is very much as we had expected, and deals with inking a lot of promises that were made during the election campaign by the Government, but Australians are going to be looking to the next Budget next year for real change and real reform.

Around the country, rural and regional Australians are seeing their access to healthcare choked off. People with families and older relatives in our cities are finding it more and more difficult to see a general practitioner to care for their chronic conditions.

We're seeing public hospitals that are absolutely overwhelmed with ambulances ramped outside, and terrible stories of people dying and waiting to be admitted to emergency departments.

We have hundreds of thousands of Australians waiting for surgery that will allow them to work again and allow them to get on, live their lives and contribute to the economy.

So we're seeing so many sectors of the community that are being effected by problems with health at the moment. This is going to take a large investment. We certainly welcome the investments that we've seen tonight - some of the investments that the AMA worked to negotiate with the Government while they were in Opposition.

But this is a Labor Government, the party that delivered Medicare to this country, and significant reform is going to be needed by the next Budget. And now is the time that the Government needs to look to work out how they're going to end the logjam in our hospitals, make general practice accessible and affordable to Australians, and to make sure that Australians in rural and regional communities have the opportunity to get the same access to healthcare as their cousins and relatives who live in our cities.

So a Budget very much as expected, no real surprises in the Budget tonight. But the real work will have to begin for the May Budget next year when major change will be needed. Happy to take any quick questions.

QUESTION: Do you think that the Budget addressed enough of the funding shortfall for regional and rural healthcare across Australia?

STEVE ROBSON: We're certainly seeing a good start in regional healthcare, but it's very much a down payment. And I think Australians in regional and rural communities want to see real injection of resources so they can get the healthcare, the doctors, the psychologists - all of the healthcare teams that they need to provide adequate care in regional areas.

Cheers, thank you.

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