



**AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INC.**

ABN 91 028 693 268

8 December 2022

Dr Michael Cusack
Chief Medical Officer
SA Health

E: health.cpc@sa.gov.au

Dear Dr Cusack

Re: SA Health Outpatient Redesign Workstream – Burns Clinical Prioritisation Criteria

On behalf of CEO Dr Samantha Mead and AMA(SA) Council, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Burns Clinical Prioritisation Criteria (CPC) for adult and paediatric services, as requested in your letter of 12 November 2022. We recognise the importance of ensuring patients are assessed, monitored and can access ongoing clinical care when discharged from hospital into the care of appropriate specialists, and welcome the introduction of guidelines that outline what should occur when a patient is released from hospital with burn injuries, in line with clinical decision-making.

As background to our comments, Council has for many years discussed the blockages that can exist between hospitals and specialists and primary care services during transfers and following discharge from hospital of all patients, not only those with burn injuries. This is particularly apparent in managing the care of patients transferring from regional to metropolitan sites. As such, we recommend that the implementation of this and other CPC policies include directions for telephone or telehealth consultations between clinicians in hospitals and outpatient services – and that such consultations should involve senior clinicians, particularly when managing severe illness or injury. While telehealth discussions between GPs or other specialists and hospital clinicians would be ideal, we note that Medicare does not provide rebates for telehealth consultations unless the patient is in the room.

Council also questions the direction that recommends a patient with significant injuries be seen in an emergency department (ED), when so many other policies across the health system are specifically designed to prevent or at least minimise ED presentations. We suggest that appropriate clinical advice may be enough to manage the problem in the community or plan an OPD review, bypassing the ED and the associated pain and inconvenience for the patient.

It has also been noted by Council that many of their colleagues report difficulties in navigating areas of the SA Health website, and finding others out of date. This is extremely vexing and poses a risk to patients when so much of our information now is stored in and can only be accessed from websites and other digital communication platforms.

Should you wish us to provide more information or clarify any issue, please contact me via my Executive Assistant, Mrs Claudia Baccanello, on 8361 0109 or at president@amasa.org.au at any time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M Atchison', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr Michelle Atchison

BM, BS, FRANZCP, GDipArtHist

President

Australian Medical Association (SA)