

MEDIA RELEASE

TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2025

Elective surgery support must reduce wait times

The state government's \$100 million investment in Surgery Connect will help stabilise elective surgery wait times, but fundamental reform of how hospitals are run and funded remains crucial to ensure all Queenslanders have equitable access.

AMA Queensland's *Surgical Wait List Roundtable Action Plan* provided the government with a ready-made road map to fix inequitable access to surgical services in our regional communities, and we continue to urge them to commit to its full implementation.

"We commend the state government for taking a step towards stabilising Queensland's growing elective surgery wait lists in line with our recommendations," AMA Queensland President Dr Nick Yim said.

"Patients in regional and rural communities have been suffering from inequitable access to elective surgery for too long, and we hope this funding boost will provide them with some relief.

"One of our short-term recommendations was to clear the elective surgery backlog by increasing outpatient surgical activity through programs like Surgery Connect.

"However, this must be implemented with our long-term recommendations to ensure wait lists are not only stabilised but reduced.

"Queensland Health data shows there was a 98.4 per cent increase in patients seen through Surgery Connect in the last quarter of 2024 when compared to the same period the year prior.

"However, patients in places like Rockhampton, Mackay, Hervey Bay and even outer-metropolitan hospitals like Caboolture, Logan and Ipswich are still waiting disproportionately long periods to get the surgeries they need.

"This is particularly lengthy for those needing gynaecology, orthopaedic, urology and ENT procedures.

"Our *Action Plan* clearly identifies that the problem is systemic.

"We continue to urge the government to acknowledge the clear need for fundamental, system-wide reform and implement the rest of our recommendations to reduce wait times and ensure no Queenslanders are suffering from inequitable access to essential care.

"This includes expanding operating hours and surgical scheduling to deliver all-day lists and seven-day elective surgeries where workforce permits and enable private patients with private billings to be treated in public hospitals.

"We also need to see the doctors from rural and regional areas prioritised in specialist trainee selection processes and increases specialist and subspecialty training in the regions."

Background

- AMA Queensland established its Surgical Wait List Roundtable in April 2024 to identify practical, affordable actions the state government can take to address inequities in access.
- Senior medical practitioners in the fields of anaesthetics, general surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, orthopaedics and general practice from across Queensland met remotely from June to September to come up with recommendations.
- The Roundtable was based on the AMA Queensland Ramping Roundtable which was formed in 2021.
- You can read the [Action Plan here](#).