



AMA SA acting to end the health blame game and spearhead solutions

The Australian Medical Association in South Australia (AMA SA) is bringing together healthcare leaders from across the system to address the stubborn problems underpinning bed block and ambulance ramping.

AMA SA President Dr John Williams today launched the 'AMA SA Access to Care Round Table' which will examine ways to help patients navigate an increasingly complex health system and reduce preventable hospital admissions.

'With a federal election imminent, and the South Australian election less than 12 months away, it's time to stop the blame game and work together to find solutions,' Dr Williams said.

'The South Australian Government has taken important steps to increase bed capacity in our public hospitals. But addressing the big problems requires a united effort.

'Our round table is focused on fresh perspectives, not finger-pointing. Now is the time for ideas, innovation and improvement.'

The round table will be staged on 9 May. The Health Minister Chris Picton will attend, along with representatives from SA Health, the South Australia Ambulance Service, the Australian Private Hospitals Association and the Royal Australian College of General Practice.

'AMA SA is the only organisation that stands for all doctors. We're in a position to bring together the decision-makers and innovators who can make a difference,' Dr Williams said.

'We also have a strong track record of leading change. Our 2020 Culture and Bullying Summit led to new legislation to address high rates of bullying and discrimination experienced by junior doctors, by making LHN boards responsible for the psychosocial health and wellbeing of the staff in their workplaces.

'It's our expectation that the Access to Care Round Table will be just as impactful.'

Dr Williams said the AMA's Public Hospital Report Card, released on 28 February, underscores the urgent need to address the logjam in South Australia's public hospitals.

The report card revealed just 38% of 'urgent' (category-three) South Australian patients were seen within the recommended 30-minute time frame during the 2023-24 financial year, well below the national average of 60%. It's a significant decline from 10 years earlier, when 65% of 'urgent' patients were seen on time in South Australia.

During the same period, patients waited an average of 47 days for essential planned surgery – 12 days longer than 10 years ago.

The co-chair of AMA SA's Committee of General Practice, Dr Bridget Sawyer, who is a member of the state's Ramping Task Force, said improving community care is key to easing pressure on our hospitals.

MEDIA RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE

'Problems like bed block and ambulance ramping are symptoms, not the disease,' Dr Sawyer said.

'The treatment lies in well-connected and well-coordinated community care.

'The round table will examine practical measures to improve coordination of community care to keep people well and away from hospitals.

'By bringing together a range of different perspectives in an open and collaborative forum, we can develop actionable, measurable solutions.

'We thank the Health Minister, and all other stakeholders, for their enthusiastic support of our round table and its objectives.'

For more information please contact Media and Communications Advisor Ben Terry on 0478 847 604.

MEDIA RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE