



AMA'S PUBLIC HOSPITAL REPORT CARD REVEALS WORSENING LOGJAM IN SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EDs

South Australia's emergency departments (EDs) are performing at their worst levels in recent history according to the Australian Medical Association's [Public Hospital Report Card](#), which was released today.

Just 38% of 'urgent' (category-three) South Australian patients were seen with the recommended 30-minute time frame during 2023-24, well below the national average of 60%.

It's a significant decline from 10 years prior when 65% of 'urgent' patients were seen on time in South Australia.

It's not just 'urgent' patients waiting too long for treatment. AMA's report card indicates that half of all patients in all triage categories were not discharged or relocated to another part of the hospital within the recommended time frame of four hours or less. This represents a 12% decline in the past five years.

The President of the Australian Medical Association in South Australia (AMA SA) Dr John Williams says the figures are distressing, but not surprising.

'The findings of AMA's Public Hospital Report Card reflect the stubborn challenges frontline health staff confront on a daily basis – the overwhelming patient demand, the staffing shortages, the stretched resources,' Dr Williams says.

'Despite the best efforts of our hardworking doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, South Australian patients are not receiving the standard of care they deserve.

'We recognise the South Australian Government's efforts to increase capacity in the public hospital system, but the dial doesn't seem to be shifting – at least, not far enough.'

Dr Williams says AMA has a plan to address the root of the problem.

'There's no quick fix, but the solution starts with smart investment in general practice,' he says.

'General practice is the most effective and crucially the most cost-efficient way to keep patients well and reduce avoidable hospital presentations which clog up our EDs and exacerbate ambulance ramping.

'Every dollar spent in general practice saves the system \$13. We need to invest in general practice to save the health system as a whole. It's a no-brainer.'

Dr Williams has welcomed multi-billion-dollar funding commitments from both major political parties ahead of the federal election but says the money must be spent wisely.

'The government is seeking to make care more affordable by increasing bulk billing incentives. But bulk billing is only part of the picture. We need genuine reform to ensure GPs are supported to provide care that is not just affordable but of the highest quality.

'Right now, Medicare is biased towards short consultations. It penalises doctors who spend longer with their patients.'

'AMA's Modernise Medicare plan calls for a model which supports longer GP consultations so doctors have time to better manage increasing rates of chronic and complex conditions.'

'We're also advocating for more connected care. The AMA is calling on our leaders to support multi-disciplinary models of care which bring GPs and other healthcare professionals together under one roof.'

'Modernise Medicare sets out a vision for the kind of generational reform Australia needs. The AMA stands ready to work with all political parties to make sure those needs are understood.'

[Read AMA's Modernise Medicare plan](#)

For more information or to organise an interview please contact Media and Communications Advisor Ben Terry on 0478 847 604.

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