

MEDIA RELEASE

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Working hard but the system's hardly working

AMA Queensland Budget Submission 2025-26

Risks to patient safety, employee wellbeing and quality of care will continue to escalate unless urgent and essential reforms are made to support our health workforce.

In response to this intensifying problem, AMA Queensland is calling on the state government to make addressing workforce shortages a central focus of this year's budget.

"This is a call to action for strong leadership, serious investment and smart implementation," AMA Queensland President Dr Nick Yim said.

"There is no greater crisis confronting Queensland's health system than the recruitment and retention of its workforce.

"Chronic shortages are affecting rural and regional areas where patients are going without essential care due to a lack of doctors.

"We want our health system governed by need, not postcode.

"A crucial first step to addressing this issue is to reinstate and expand the Workforce Attraction Incentive Scheme.

"This program created tiered payments of up to \$70,000 to encourage more doctors to live and work in regional, rural and remote communities where they are needed the most.

"If it isn't urgently reinstated, we risk losing competitiveness in attracting doctors on an international scale, and Queenslanders will continue to suffer from poor health outcomes.

"Productive training pathways must also be developed for recent medical graduates and international medical graduates to ensure early-career doctors can train in their desired specialty and meet the needs of our system across the state.

"This includes incentives to upskill in critical fields like anaesthetics, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, mental health, and general practice.

"Our regionally-based clinicians are in desperate need of long-term workforce solutions that protect them from burnout and enable them to treat their patients safely.

"We know some hospital and health services are operating with vacancy rates of 64 per cent in critical specialties like anaesthetics.

"Such understaffing is plainly unsustainable.

"Doctors have developed sensible solutions in AMA Queensland's *Surgical Wait List Roundtable Action Plan* Group which Queensland Health should consider implementing without further delay.

"Our Workforce Working Group is also considering a raft of solutions which we will release in due course.

Australian Medical Association Queensland – Media Release

“We are relieved that the government is following through on their commitment to expand our hospitals, including increasing bed capacity, but unless we lay the groundwork now to feed more clinicians into the system, we simply won’t have enough staff to operate them.

“We urge the government to release its promised workforce plan to show how it will secure the staff required to run the new beds.

“The LNP also promised to implement key initiatives of the Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032 that align with AMA Queensland workforce priorities, and we hope to see this outlined in this year’s budget.”

[Read AMA Queensland's *Budget Submission 2025-26*](#)