

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Healthy bodies, healthy minds, healthy lives: investment needed in Queenslanders' future

### AMA Queensland Budget Submission 2025-26

With 2025 marking one quarter of the way through the 21<sup>st</sup> century, AMA Queensland has called on the state government to set ambitious goals for what we want the next 25 years to look like.

This will require prioritising urgent health care needs, such as boosting the medical workforce in the short term, while also planning for the long term with a focus on preventive health measures.

"We know affordable, accessible and appropriate health care is key to creating a happy, healthy Queensland," AMA Queensland President Dr Nick Yim said.

"This not only means boosting access to primary care but also increasing investment in preventive health measures including water fluoridation, family violence prevention, evidence-based substance related harm strategies, and environmental sustainability.

"Investing in these areas is critical to reducing future pressure on our health care system.

"It will also mean children being born now will have better health outcomes as they grow into adulthood.

"AMA Queensland supports the continued investment in immunisations, as this will improve access and help reduce pressure on our hospitals, especially during the cooler months.

"Untreated dental decay is the most common health condition worldwide, largely due to access and equity issues, making preventive measures like fluoride even more crucial.

"However, the estimated 72 per cent of Queenslanders who have access to fluoridated water is mostly thanks to councils in the southeast, in areas of higher socio-economic status, meaning it is once again our regional, rural and remote communities who are missing out.

"As misinformation surrounding fluoride continues to rise, more of these communities are removing it from their water due to misplaced concerns, broadening the population at risk of dental disease.

"We continue to urge the government to reinstate funding for water fluoridation across the state – a simple and effective public health measure that will preserve Queenslanders' smiles into the future."

AMA Queensland has also repeated its calls for evidence-based strategies on substance-related harm.

"We are extremely disappointed by the government's rescinding of pill testing, an evidence-backed strategy to reduce potential harm caused by illicit drugs, which are often counterfeit pharmaceuticals," Dr Yim said.

"We are also concerned drug diversion legislation introduced just last year may not be continued, potentially funnelling thousands more people into the criminal justice system rather than treating minor drug use for what it is – a health issue.

## Australian Medical Association Queensland – Media Release

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“Early indications suggest the scheme is working well, with more than 7,000 people being diverted into treatment support by November 2024, saving significant expenditure on police and court costs.

“Medicinal cannabis reform is also needed to ensure appropriate prescribing, and to crack down on unethical business models used by some suppliers.

“The rapid rise of medicinal cannabis use in Queensland is alarming, particularly as patients with no previous history are presenting at emergency departments with psychosis after using it.

“Our government must make preventive health a priority to minimise otherwise avoidable trauma and illness and reduce pressure on our already overworked emergency departments.”