



Missing infrastructure puts RAH patients at risk

Media Release – embargoed until 12.01am, 27 Jan

The Australian Medical Association of South Australia (AMA SA) is calling on all sides of politics to commit to delivering a long-planned hybrid operating theatre (HOT) at the Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH), warning that continued delay is now compounding risk in an already stretched health system.

A HOT enables real-time imaging to occur during surgical procedures, allowing time-critical trauma, vascular and neurovascular procedures to be performed without dangerous delays or patient transfers.

The RAH has operated without a HOT since opening in 2017, despite being South Australia's only verified Level 1 Adult Trauma Centre.

AMA SA President and vascular surgeon Associate Professor Peter Subramaniam says the lack of a hybrid operating theatre at the RAH increases the risk to patients requiring urgent vascular treatment and contributes to elective surgery backlogs.

'This is no longer a future-planning issue – it is a present-day system risk,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'When staff are not equipped with the infrastructure and technology to fulfil the roles of the hospital, patient safety is at risk and system efficiency is compromised.'

'The hybrid theatre was incorporated in the initial RAH design, with dedicated space already identified. Nearly a decade on, that space remains unused while pressure on trauma, stroke and complex surgical services continues to escalate.'

Many comparable hospitals – including Flinders Medical Centre and major regional centres interstate – already operate hybrid theatres as standard infrastructure, reflecting contemporary models of trauma and complex surgical care.

'AMA SA is urging all political parties to commit, ahead of the state election, to a clear timetable and funding pathway to deliver the hybrid theatre as a matter of urgency,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'South Australians expect their major trauma hospital to be properly equipped for modern care.

'This is a long-standing gap, and the current health system pressures make inaction no longer defensible.'

For interview requests please contact media manager Ben Terry on 0478 847 604.

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