



AMA SA health debate will put patients top of the ticket

Media Release – 5 February

The Health Minister and Shadow Health Minister will go head-to-head on the issues that matter to South Australian patients when the Australian Medical Association in South Australia (AMA SA) hosts *The Health Debate* on Wednesday, 11 February at the Capri Theatre.

This will be the first political debate of the 2026 election campaign and the only forum where doctors will directly ask the tough questions of the state's political leaders.

AMA SA President Associate Professor Peter Subramaniam will serve as moderator of the debate.

'We're putting health at the top of the agenda – health remains a critical issue for doctors and the community this election,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'Doctors are on the frontline of care delivery. We see where the system is failing South Australians, and we see the impact those failures have on patients and their families.'

'On behalf of the medical profession, and the communities we serve, we will ask both sides the necessary questions and challenge them to provide the public with concrete policies. This debate is about people, not politics.'

Debate questions have been developed with input from AMA SA members across the state and will explore several key topics including:

- Ambulance ramping
- Delays to essential surgery
- Mental health services
- Aged care pressures
- Access to GP-led care in the community
- Regional healthcare

'South Australians are being told that the Government is "building a bigger health system", yet patients continue to face unacceptable delays: record ambulance ramping, long emergency department waits – sometimes lasting days – and essential surgery backlogs that often drag on for years,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'Access to GP appointments is also increasingly difficult, with some patients in the state's South East forced to travel across the border for care.'

'These are just some of the issues we will interrogate with the Health Minister Chris Picton and Shadow Health Minister Heidi Girolamo.'

'We'll be asking them what they will do differently, and we'll be seeking details to ensure their policies are costed, evidence-based and able to be implemented in a way that delivers genuine improvements for the health system.'

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Ahead of the debate, both leaders have been provided with [AMA SA's 2026 Election Priorities](#). The document has also been released publicly today.

The platform, developed with input from AMA SA members and other clinical and health professionals across the system, outlines implementable, evidence-based recommendations to improve access to care, build a resilient medical workforce and promote community wellbeing.

'This election must be a turning point for health in our state. We're calling on all sides of politics to confront the problems honestly and work with clinicians to deliver innovation, reform and investment to ensure South Australians receive the care they need now and into the future,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'We thank Minister Picton and Ms Girolamo for their willingness to participate in *The Health Debate* and outline their vision for health for the next four years and beyond.'

***The Health Debate* will take place at 6:00pm on Wednesday, 11 February at the Capri Theatre. The event is open to AMA SA members only, and media are invited to attend.**