



AMA SA's Budget Test: 'treat the cause, not just the queue'

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The Australian Medical Association in South Australia (AMA SA) has set out a Budget Test to measure whether Thursday's funding announcements will translate into better outcomes for patients.

The test will assess announcements against three criteria:

1. Is it genuinely new?
2. Is it staffed?
3. Does it treat the cause?

AMA SA President Associate Professor Peter Subramaniam says it's critical that 'dollars translate into delivery'.

'The South Australian Government last week announced record spending of \$10 billion on healthcare, an investment which reflects record demand on the system,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'While we welcome the addition of more than 600 beds, the reality is they're filling faster than they come online.

'That's why, despite record spending, we still have patients stuck on ambulance ramps. It's why more than 25,000 people are waiting – often in distress and pain – for essential planned surgery.

'At Thursday's Budget, we'll be looking for detail – including timelines and targets – to make sure the Government is treating the cause, not just the queue.'

Before the state election, AMA SA members – doctors on the frontline of the healthcare system – set out recommendations to address the root causes driving pressure on hospitals. A/Prof Subramaniam says a clear focus was shifting investment beyond hospital walls.

'Every dollar spent in community and preventive care saves around \$14 in other healthcare costs further down the line,' he says.

'That's why AMA SA continues to call for targeted investment in general practice – including incentives for GPs to stay open after hours and provide care in residential aged care.

'We're also calling for increased investment in community mental healthcare. About 70% of mental health patients in South Australia are not getting the care they need, and too many end up in EDs as a result.'

A/Prof Subramaniam says South Australians benefit when their tax dollars are put to effective use.

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'The crisis in healthcare affects the whole state and it needs a whole-of-government response,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'At Thursday's Budget and beyond, we'll be looking for smart investment – backed by real staffing commitments – that targets the underlying causes.

'As always, AMA SA looks forward to working constructively with the Minister and his government colleagues to ensure health funding will deliver the outcomes South Australians expect and deserve.'

For interview requests with A/Prof Subramaniam, please contact media manager Ben Terry on 0478 847 604.

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