

MEDIA RELEASE

SASMOA releases 2022 State Election Platform

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The SA Salaried Medical Officers Association has released its 2022 State Election Platform, which is headlined by requests for more mental health beds, an increase in staffing for the women's and children's hospital and a range of wellbeing measures for health staff.

The Election Platform can be downloaded here: www.sasmoa4doctors.com.au/election2022

SASMOA says the next State Government must redress an ongoing recurrent funding gap of \$426 million per annum for 'business as usual' public and community health services, a gap that has been disguised by spending on short-term COVID measures.

The real situation was highlighted by the independent **Productivity Commission** in its latest report on Government Services released earlier this month, which showed:

- Recurrent expenditure per person on public hospital services in SA was **8.1% below the Australian average** in the last reporting period (2019/20 - Table 12A.2). That equals a **shortfall in recurrent spending of \$426 million** to reach the national average.
- Available public hospital beds per 1,000 people in SA have **declined by 14.2% over the last 5 years**, with a consistent trend downwards over that period (Table 12A.4)
- Emergency Department presentations have **continued to escalate**, with an increase of 8.4% in presentations in SA over the 12 months (2019/20 to 2020/21 - Table 12A.12)

The Productivity Commission Report can be found here:

<https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2022/health>

SASMOA says the alarming statistics revealed in the Productivity Commission report go a long way to explaining ongoing ramping and Code Whites and Code Yellows in our public hospitals.

"Put simply, there are not enough beds and not enough staff funded under the 'business as usual' model," says SASMOA President Dr Laura Willington.

"This leads to harm for patients and the wider community, and in turn leads to fatigue and burnout in the medical workforce.

"Closing the recurrent funding gap will also help close the credibility gap between 'world-class rhetoric' and 'world-class reality' in relation to our State's health system."

SASMOA says the best places to start closing the spending gap are mental health beds and children's hospital staffing.

The SASMOA document identifies SA is almost 200 beds short across the mental health system, while a shortfall of almost 50 medical staff has been identified in the paediatric services of the Women's and Children's Hospital – staff who are needed to simply provide a basic, safe service, comparable with other similar services interstate, while maintaining staff wellbeing.

Called *Creating Wellbeing*, the SASMOA Election Platform contains 26 specific requests under six headings:

- Medical workforce wellbeing
- Medical leadership
- Mental health funding
- Women's and children's health funding
- Rural and remote health services, and
- Commitment to public ownership.

Other SASMOA policy requests include:

- A 10-hour break between finishing one shift and the commencement of another shift for frontline doctors in the SA public health system
- Amendment to workplace legislation to allow WHS representatives and unions to initiate prosecutions for breaches of the Work Health Safety Act, and
- Ensure each Local Health Network develops, implements, monitors and publicly reports against a standardised series of key performance indicators designed to reduce the instance and impacts of fatigue and workplace bullying.

SASMOA has written to all MPs and candidates asking for their response, which they will publicise prior to the election.