



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INC**

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**Commonwealth elective surgery money welcome;
spending it the challenge: AMA(SA)**

AMA(SA) President Dr Peter Ford cautiously welcomed today's announcement of an additional \$13.6 million in Commonwealth funding for elective surgery, whilst stating that the public should not underestimate the challenges involved in performing it.

The AMA(SA) is pleased with the money announced today, said Dr Ford.

In the scheme of things, the additional money is modest, but welcome nonetheless. The \$13.6 million of the \$150 million of Commonwealth money is broadly consistent with SA's share of the national population - the AMA(SA) can have no quibble with that.

Performing the extra elective surgery is not as simple as turning on a tap. Extra money is important but there are many other elements which must be in place too. The critical thing is to have the surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and theatres available to tackle the backlog. I see the state government rightly recognises this as a challenge.

Our state government in fact acknowledges that doctors and nurses in SA are running flat out at the moment, meaning these challenges are only heightened.

We are keen for dialogue with Health Minister Hill as to how the additional elective workload can be met, and to be briefed on the breakdown of expenditure on how and where the procedures will be performed.

Dr Ford also said that while the extra funding was welcome, long term funding as part of the Australian Health Care agreement was critical.

We still need more beds and more resources for our public hospitals. Without this commitment, our waiting lists will quickly blow out again.

Prior to the federal election the AMA called for a commitment to indexation of 8-9% annually in the next Australian Health Care Agreement, and an immediate injection of \$3 billion nationally for our public hospitals.

Hospital funding must be addressed in a broad and comprehensive long-term plan. Australians deserve nothing less than the best standard of health care available, concluded Dr Ford.

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