



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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

Postal: PO Box 134 North Adelaide SA 5006
First Floor Newland House 80 Brougham Place North Adelaide SA 5006
Phone: (08) 8267 4355 Fax: (08) 8267 5349
Email: admin@amasa.org.au Web site: www.amasa.org.au

**AMA(SA) and psychiatrists speak out
for Weight Disorder Unit**

AMA(SA) president Dr Andrew Lavender and Dr Kate Jarvis, the chair of the SA branch of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, have spoken out on behalf of the Weight Disorder Unit at Flinders Medical Centre (FMC), following a public rally to protest its closure.

The patients and staff from the unit were set to be moved to the Margaret Tobin Centre, where the patients would take general psychiatric beds – a move which prompted a number of clinical concerns, which the AMA(SA) and RANZCP raised with SA Health Minister John Hill.

“Eating disorders are potentially lethal illnesses that affect predominantly younger women, but also, increasingly, males,” stated AMA(SA) president Dr Andrew Lavender.

“Best practice treatment requires a holistic approach, with early intervention and family support services being vital – but the acute stages may require hospital admission for intensive care and nutrition.”

“A dedicated unit with dedicated staff is the recognised best-practice approach to this step of care, and the Unit at Flinders provides just that. It is highly regarded internationally and envied interstate, and has been continuously utilised for 30 years.”

“Now that Minister Hill has announced a review of state-wide services for patients with eating disorders, we hope that he will heed the calls to retain this valuable centre of expertise. We will be watching developments closely.”

“Hopefully, what began as a crude cost-slashing measure will now result in the development of a comprehensive service for patients with eating disorders. We need to move forwards, not backwards, in our care for this vulnerable group,” he stated.

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Contact: Dr Andrew Lavender (08) 8361 0109 or after-hours (08) 8361 0100