



MEDIA STATEMENT

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SA Labor Party's paramedic services funding pledge a welcome step forward in expanding paramedic support to regional communities

The Australasian College of Paramedicine welcomes the South Australian Labor Party's pledge to prioritise budgetary support for the state's health system and its recognition of the urgency needed to address the pressing issues of hospital overcrowding and ambulance ramping that have plagued health systems across the country, including in South Australia.

With ramping peaking in October 2021, the proposed investment in country health and hospitals, including boosting ambulance services and paramedic numbers, reflects the necessity of providing greater support for frontline health workers and the embattled health sector.

Labor's funding commitment includes the recruitment of 54 paramedics across peri-urban and regional areas experiencing significant population growth, along with investment in supporting infrastructure.

The proposed funding allocation is aligned with the College's position that more must be done to address the issues of ramping and access block within the state's health system, as elaborated in our [recent submission](#) to SA's parliamentary review of House of Assembly Petition No 84 of 2021 - SA Ambulance Service Resourcing.

Our submission included four system-wide recommendations that span the wider implementation of Community/Extended Care Paramedics, more comprehensive telehealth services, the expansion of the Urgent Care system, and the introduction of a Chief Paramedic Officer to oversee better utilisation of the paramedic workforce within South Australia.

With elections planned or expected in the coming months in South Australia and the Commonwealth, we would encourage all political leaders to heed the expert advice of Colleges and focus funding commitments on those areas most likely to deliver meaningful outcomes for patients and communities.

Rather than focusing on ramping as an isolated issue - one that is generally a symptom of in-patient hospital services unable to meet patient demands - the College supports putting in place a range of interventions to help address this and other health access issues, including the introduction of alternative service delivery models such as Community Paramedicine/Extended Care Paramedics, in which paramedics apply their training and skills in non-traditional community-based environments outside of the usual emergency response/transport model.

Labor's planned recruitment of additional paramedics and the construction of a new Mount Barker ambulance station are positive steps forward in addressing the health service challenges routinely

faced in rural areas and will help address health professional shortages in communities that have long struggled to attract a full complement of health care practitioners.

Paramedics are a highly skilled and versatile workforce capable of undertaking a variety of roles within the health system, and in rural and country areas can be utilised across the health service, providing an emergency response ambulance service, supporting volunteer ambulance officers, and working with local GPs and health clinics, and country hospitals.

The College hopes the slated deployment of additional paramedics in communities of need marks the dawn of a new era of more widespread utilisation of paramedics across SA's health system.

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