



Thursday, 24 June 2021

## Private hospitals willing and able to care for SA patients

The Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA) SA branch has welcomed the South Australian Government's commitment to 'fast track' elective surgery in this week's Budget.

APHA SA President and sportsmed hospital CEO Alan Morrison said waiting lists for elective surgery had blown out across the country.

"Private hospitals are willing and able to help state governments meet the demand for elective surgery. It is not uncommon for public hospitals to enlist the assistance of the private sector to deliver much needed care to patients. While 'elective' might suggest the surgery isn't urgent, if you can't walk because you are waiting for a hip replacement, 'elective' becomes 'urgent' very quickly," he said.

The South Australian government committed to 'fast-tracking' elective surgery – which APHA supports, however a change in process with improved longer-term demand management planning in consultation with the private hospital sector would deliver more benefits to South Australian patients.

"Our members tell us that these promises would be easier to deliver with improved longer-term planning. As with many things, the amount of money invested sounds significant, but if it's not delivered well, people will continue to miss out.

"It is easy to predict that in winter we will see an increase in public hospital admissions. That will mean elective surgery is bumped. If private hospitals were scheduled to perform those elective surgeries, which they are happy to support public services to do, with plenty of notice to prepare and set aside theatre time, all would run much more smoothly.

"At the moment short notice periods have meant the private hospital sector hasn't been able to support the public system as we would have liked but the sector remains committed to partnering for the benefit of the community."

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The Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA) is the largest peak industry body representing the private hospital and day surgery sector. The private hospital sector treats 4.6 million patients a year, including treatment of more than a third of chemotherapy, about 60 percent of all surgery, 60 percent of all elective musculoskeletal surgery.