



MEDIA RELEASE

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DOCTORS CALL FOR DATA TO SOLVE HOSPITAL RAMPING CRISIS

Queensland medical leaders have urgently called for real-time data from Queensland Health and the Queensland Ambulance Service to help solve the hospital ramping crisis before interstate borders reopen.

Emergency specialists, surgeons and doctors from throughout Queensland will meet for the third time this week – COVID-19 permitting – at AMA Queensland’s Ramping Roundtable to discuss the issue.

Ramping Roundtable chair and emergency physician Dr Kim Hansen said hospital bed access and ramping must be urgently addressed before the inevitable outbreak of the Delta strain in Queensland.

“There is a very real threat of our hospitals that are treating COVID cases becoming overwhelmed as we have seen happen already in New South Wales and Victoria,” she said.

“We need our hospitals at 90 per cent capacity to allow the flow of those in emergency departments through the hospital system. It’s imperative we have an action plan developed this year, but we must be fully armed with data and collaboration.

“We need to have a full understanding of how big the problem is, so we can develop tangible ways to improve the situation.

“Business as usual is the exception to the rule – we barely know what that is. We need real-time data from Queensland Health on the number of beds in each hospital ward across the state for emergency patients with teams to support the patients.

“It’s not the total number of beds overall – it’s the number that are available and staffed for emergency patients that matters.”

The Roundtable has also asked Queensland Ambulance to provide information on the average wait time for patients from the time an ambulance arrives at the ramp at a hospital until the patient starts to receive care in all Queensland public hospitals.

“Off-stretcher time is currently only reported on at the 30-minute mark. We would like to see this reported at the one-hour, 90-minute, and two-hour marks,” Dr Hansen said.

The Queensland Audit Office (QAO) this month called for changes to how emergency department (ED) wait times are measured, finding a lack of reporting on factors affecting how quickly EDs can receive and treat patients, including available beds and staffing of ED and inpatient wards.

The Ramping Roundtable has a number of proposals for key performance indicators to measure the flow of patients outside of emergency departments, including:

- use of day surgery as an option and extend theatre hours
- length of stay in hospital for particular conditions be measured in hours
- criteria led discharge for certain conditions.



International examples have shown that an influx of COVID-19 cases can cause the cancellation of elective surgeries.

“We need innovative collaboration across the public and private sectors to provide elective surgery solutions now, not when we are in a deeper crisis,” said Dr Hansen.

Ramping Roundtable members will meet with Opposition Health Minister Ros Bates and Opposition Leader David Crisafulli later this month.

Press conference with Dr Kim Hansen

Monday 4 October 11.15am

AMA Queensland House, 88 L'Estrange Terrace, Kelvin Grove

Please contact AMA Queensland Media on 0419 735 641 if you are attending.

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