

## **EMERGENCY NEEDS URGENCY – AMA QUEENSLAND’S PLAN FOR ACTION**

**Media Release  
9 December 2021**

Exhausted public hospital doctors have called for urgent action to fix ramping and bed block in Queensland’s public hospital system.

Frustrated by the ongoing lack of action from Queensland Health, a group of dedicated doctors have been working for the past eight months on an action plan to resolve the problems plaguing the public hospital system.

“We are stretched to breaking point and it is clear where the problems lie,” Dr Kim Hansen, an emergency physician and Chair of AMA Queensland’s Ramping Roundtable, said.

“We need leadership and accountability, but above all, we need to see action and we need it now.

“Our public hospital system is stretched to breaking point and our staff are worn out.

“There are not enough beds and there are not enough staff. It is as simple as that.

“As we head into summer and cyclone season and with the borders reopening, we have no capacity to handle any surges that might come from COVID outbreaks, natural disasters, or other emergencies.”

AMA Queensland’s Ramping Roundtable today released its five-point action plan to improve patient flow and address bed block in our public hospitals.

It calls for:

1. 1,500 more hospital beds across the State
2. Employing and training enough staff to keep acute hospitals fully functional seven days a week, with extended hours
3. Keeping hospitals operating at below 90 per cent capacity to allow for surges
4. Detailed analysis of patient flow within hospitals, and
5. Supporting alternative ways for patients to enter hospitals instead of through emergency departments (EDs).

“Our EDs operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but the rest of the hospital doesn’t,” Dr Hansen said.

“We can’t move a patient out of ED if we don’t have an open, staffed bed available on a ward for an unplanned admission. When that happens to several patients, the ED gets blocked, and then we can’t bring the next patient off the ramp into the ED, so ramping and long waits develop.

“Hospital patients need to have access to radiology, pathology, allied health, and discharge teams available for extended hours seven days a week to ease the logjam in our EDs.

“Hospitals are not 9-5. Any test, treatment or procedure that can happen in a hospital on a Wednesday morning needs to also happen on a Sunday night.

“The Ramping Roundtable has been looking at how EDs and hospitals are working around the State. Some places do a few of our recommended actions well, and when they do, there are definite improvements. We need to use that work and apply it across the entire system.”

AMA Queensland President Professor Chris Perry said cooperation is needed at all levels of government to fix the issues.

“It should not be up to a group of doctors to do this work. Queensland Health needs to take the advice of the Roundtable and put these actions into place,” Prof Perry said.

“The politics must be put aside and finger pointing and shifting of blame between State and Federal funding must stop. We have to get on with the job now.

“We need at least 1,500 more beds in our hospitals straight away.

“We can free up 685 beds immediately by moving patients who are currently in those beds waiting for NDIS and aged care placements into more appropriate care.

“It’s not good enough for Queensland Health to say that they’ve heard all of these problems before while they continue to do nothing to fix them.

“We are also facing a new health crisis - a mental health pandemic - so we urgently need alternative models of hospital care other than EDs to be able to treat these patients.”

The Ramping Roundtable Action Plan can be read in full here: <https://qld.ama.com.au/advocacy/ramping-roundtable-action-plan>

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**MEDIA NOTE \*\*\***

**DR KIM HANSEN WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT AT AMA QUEENSLAND, 88 L'ESTRANGE TCE, KELVIN GROVE AT 11.30AM, THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER 2021**

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