

31 July 2019

20 – Year State Infrastructure Strategy – Discussion Paper – June 2019

SASMOA Infrastructure SA Submissions

Thank you for providing South Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association (SASMOA) with the opportunity to present a submission in response to the 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy Discussion Paper.

SASMOA represents all doctors employed in the South Australian public health system. This allows a broad range of views to be surveyed regarding many issues impacting on doctors in the State including infrastructure strategy.

SASMOA has sought feedback from our members on the matters contained within the discussion paper. Although, members have only had a short time to respond several proposals for future infrastructure have been raised for inclusion in this submission.

Our members feel that as an Industry, 'Health care and social assistance' has grown more than any other industry as a share of the South Australian economy. We feel that this reflects our increasing and aging population. Our population is forecast to continue to increase and age, which in turn will increase the demand for health services. It is foreseeable that the importance of the health sector will continue to grow and community expectations will increase along with this growth.

Currently, the South Australian hospitals have insufficient capacity to meet current demand from the community. The lack of capacity has created ramping, long waiting lists for the community, staff shortages and difficulties retaining and recruiting, a high-quality medical workforce in a competitive global environment.

Investment in public health creates jobs, economic activity and improves quality of life for everyone in our State.

It is South Australia's ambition to have 'world class' hospitals and health care systems, which should be strongly supported. Our future health care system therefore will need to be appropriately resourced to achieve the goals determined by Government and expectations of the community. We cannot mandate 'world class' health standards and infrastructure on a tight and inflexible budget.

One issue currently impacting on our capability to provide health care, particularly in hospital Emergency Departments, is the lack of mental health services and infrastructure for these patients. SASMOA has raised this concern with the Australian Human Rights Commission, and our members feel strongly and passionately about the discrimination faced by mental health patients in this State. Some of these issues could be addressed through infrastructure including the

provision of more accessible services for the community and improved treatment facilities.

Woodleigh House which is an acute adult mental health two-storey facility situated at Modbury Hospital and is the oldest building, built in the 1970s, SASMOA understands, on any hospital site. Members advice is that it is no longer fit for purpose, and with a history of suicides because of the outdated infrastructure, this must be a priority for the South Australian community.

Better infrastructure to tackle drugs and alcohol in this State is also a priority. There is an ever-increasing need for the community and their families to access these services.

Working in the field, our members have suggested ways in which infrastructure could be improved in some of our hospitals. The Flinders Medical Centre is a 43-year-old building and will need replacing/renewal in the next decade.

Developing Lyell McEwin Hospital into an "FMC" for Northern Adelaide with all services to support level 1 trauma (such as neurosurgery) will be essential given the growth in this location and the country locations which sit alongside the metropolitan health services in the north.

In any future infrastructure decision making the impact of the environment needs to be considered. Climate change and its impact on the health of South Australia is underestimated. Climate change is predicted to increase the risk of infectious disease transmission in Australia. Warmer temperatures and increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere can increase the production, potency and release of allergens such as pollens and spores, aggravating allergic diseases including asthma. Severe weather events associated with climate change can damage infrastructure essential for good health, including sewerage management and safe drinking water supply. Aside from its effects on physical health, climate change may adversely affect the mental health of many people in Australia. Extreme events such as cyclones, floods, droughts and bushfires cause psychological distress due to trauma, illness, loss of loved ones, and destruction of property. Given the uncertainty of future environmental factors and infrastructure for health needs to consider this change.

SASMOA feel that infrastructure is the key to a functioning health system. It enables our clinicians to effectively do their best work and meet high demands. SASMOA would encourage Infrastructure SA to strongly consider our submissions, to provide our state the best medical care available.

Should you wish to discuss any of the abovementioned please do not hesitate to contact the writer.

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SASMOA, Principle Industrial Relations Advisor