



## Government ignores private hospital system in budget

### Catholic Health Australia

The federal government must take action to shore up the struggling private health system after ignoring it in this budget, said Catholic Health Australia.

“The government has ignored a critical part of the health system that performs two thirds of elective surgeries in this country, missing an opportunity to take pressure off public hospitals,” said CHA CEO Jason Kara.

“In the past five years, 71 private hospital services have closed down as a result of workforce shortages and funding from insurers failing to keep pace with soaring costs of providing care.

“Without immediate action, these closures will continue and more private patients will be pushed into public hospitals which are already operating over capacity, impacting patient access to timely care and increasing costs for taxpayers.

“In addition to reducing demand on the public system, private hospitals provide patients with choice and improved access to care, and are therefore a vital component of Australia’s health system.”

CHA is calling on the government to:

- require insurers to fund hospital in the home care, which is desired by 89 per cent of patients
- implement a policy that links premium increases to the amount insurers return to patients
- incentivise states and territory governments to use capacity in the private sector to reduce public sector surgery waiting times
- support private maternity and mental healthcare providers which are struggling the most to remain viable

CHA recently welcomed the Government's recent decision to keep General Use items on the Prescribed List in response to our advocacy. This decision will save patients and not-for-profit hospitals up to \$80 million a year at a time when cost of living is high and private hospitals are struggling to remain viable.

CHA also welcomed the government's commitment of \$882.2 million to support older Australians and take pressure off public hospitals through community outreach, as well as \$90 million to fund the implementation of the health related recommendations of the Kruk Review.

**Notes to editors:** *Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia's largest non-government grouping of health and aged care services accounting for approximately 10 per cent of hospital-based healthcare in Australia. Our members, who are not-for-profit, also provide around 25 percent of private hospital care, 5 percent of public hospital care, 12 percent of aged care facilities, and 20 percent of home care and support for the elderly.*

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