

Media release
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State Budget prompts call for community action on health

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (SA Branch) said the entire South Australian community must stand up to protect its health care system following the release of the State Budget this afternoon.

ANMF (SA Branch) CEO/Secretary Adj Assoc Professor Elizabeth Dabars AM said it was crunch time for the South Australia's health care sector and the wider community.

“Successive governments have lauded our health system as amongst the world's best, but in this economic environment, we no longer have the benefit of being able to sit on our hands and hoping that will continue,” Ms Dabars said.

“South Australians now need to determine whether we want a first-class health care system and whether that is worth fighting for.”

“While the State Government had increased its spend on health care this year it will not cover the cuts made by the Commonwealth Government over the coming 3 years, we are confronted by the need to consider how we fund our health care system into the future and, at the same time, to debate how it can be transformed given the limits to funding.

Ms Dabars added that while the State Budget signalled much-anticipated cuts to the health budget in the coming years, the move to consult with voters and health care professionals about where to find savings was a positive step.

“This consultation process needs to include of health professionals and consumers, be evidence-based and seek consensus on directions. It also needs to look at potential sources and forms of revenue and not simply to assist the state government in implementing federal government cuts,” Ms Dabars said.

“If, as the Federal Government claims, there is a need to address the availability of funding to support the system, we also need to re-examine the income streams available to the system through taxation - for example, some of the measures recommended by the Henry review and levies (such as Medicare) - at both the national and state level.

“Any measure should protect the low paid, those on benefits and other vulnerable citizens, and be progressive in their impact. The decision in this budget to increase the Emergency Services Levy to protect health services is a very positive first step in this direction.”