

ANMF (SA Branch) fronts media “deeply concerned” by State Budget

South Australia’s nursing and midwifery workforce can expect more patients, fewer staff and less funding after the 2018-19 state budget was handed down today.

A \$920 million-plus funding cut to our health system over the next four years is just one of the alarming inclusions in Treasurer Rob Lucas MLC’s first budget since 2001.

ANMF (SA Branch) CEO/Secretary Adj Associate Professor Elizabeth Dabars AM addressed media immediately after leaving today’s budget ‘lock-up’ to respond to the State Government’s announcement.

“We are deeply concerned with this budget, we believe these cuts are simply unachievable,” Ms Dabars said.

“This budget describes health cuts starting at around \$80 million this year and rising by an additional \$100 million a year to a staggering \$381 million in 2021/22,” she says. “Yet, the budget contains no solutions and no framework to actually achieve those cuts.”

“We already know our emergency departments and our hospitals are overwhelmed, overcrowded, and overburdened. We know people are banking up in ambulances outside of the Royal Adelaide Hospital with no way of getting into the hospital, but this budget presents no solutions for those problems.

“In fact, it makes the situation worse by making people work harder with less money.”

“The Government is expecting an additional 13,000 patients presenting at our hospitals this financial year, with less money and no solutions to deal with the number of patient presentations already before us.”

And while there are some health funding initiatives put forward, she said many appear to be a case of ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’.

“For example, the Government is promising a \$23-million investment in the Modbury High Dependency Unit the over next four years and at the same time asking the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network to come up with annual savings in the vicinity of \$9 million.”

“One hand is giving out the money, while the other hand seems to be taking it away.”

Ms Dabars also expressed her disappointment at the noticeable absence of any focus on preventative health care.

“This budget doesn’t prescribe funding or solutions around preventative health care, so we have no way of easing the pressure off our over-capacity hospitals.”

On a positive note, Ms Dabars said it was pleasing to see an investment in regional health within in the budget, albeit with Country Health SA also somehow having to achieve budget savings.