

Call for inquiry into east metro radiation therapy equity

Access to cancer care should never depend on a patient's postcode, yet this is exactly what continues to occur for people living in Perth's East Metropolitan region and the Perth Hills who require radiation therapy.

AMA (WA) President Dr Kyle Hoath has written to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs in the Legislative Council affirming his strong support for the committee to undertake an inquiry into this matter.

In the letter to Hon Sandra Carr MLC, Dr Hoath said:

"The AMA (WA) represents doctors working across both public and private health systems, including clinicians directly involved in the delivery of cancer care. This issue is a longstanding and unresolved inequity in access to an essential component of modern cancer treatment. Radiation therapy is routinely delivered daily over extended periods and frequently combined with other treatments that impose significant physical and psychological burden on patients.

"Access to care closer to home is therefore not a matter of convenience, but a clinically important determinant of treatment adherence, patient wellbeing and carer support. In some cases, it can be a matter of life or death.

"We note suitable radiation oncology facilities already exist in the East Metropolitan region and have the clinical capability and capacity to treat additional patients. The barrier faced by public patients is not a lack of infrastructure, workforce or quality, but the absence of policy and funding arrangements, between the State and Commonwealth Governments that allow equitable access without out-of-pocket cost. Comparable public-private models operate successfully in other parts of WA and nationally, demonstrating that workable solutions are available where there is clear intent to address the problem."

Dr Hoath said the preference was that this situation be addressed in the upcoming 2026-27 State Budget; but failing this, that an inquiry be held. ■

