

Implementation key to State Budget

The AMA (WA) welcomed the Cook Labor Government's commitment to a record \$9.1 billion investment in health in the 2026-27 State Budget, while cautioning that outcomes for patients will ultimately depend on workforce availability and long-term planning.

The Budget, delivered on 7 May, included significant spending on hospital services, infrastructure and mental health.

AMA (WA) President Dr Kyle Hoath said the scale of investment was urgently needed following sustained pressure on the health system and years of playing catchup when it comes to health expenditure.

"It's hard not to be excited to see the big headline number of \$9.1 billion invested into health. We need this kind of investment in our health system. We've seen what happened last winter. We know what's coming in a few months' time as the months get colder."

Dr Hoath said WA had been operating for too long with insufficient capacity. This investment in bricks and mortar must be matched by investment in our medical workforce. It is vital the Government has a clear plan for recruiting and retaining doctors and other professionals to staff these new facilities. Every additional bed must translate into real improvements in patient care.

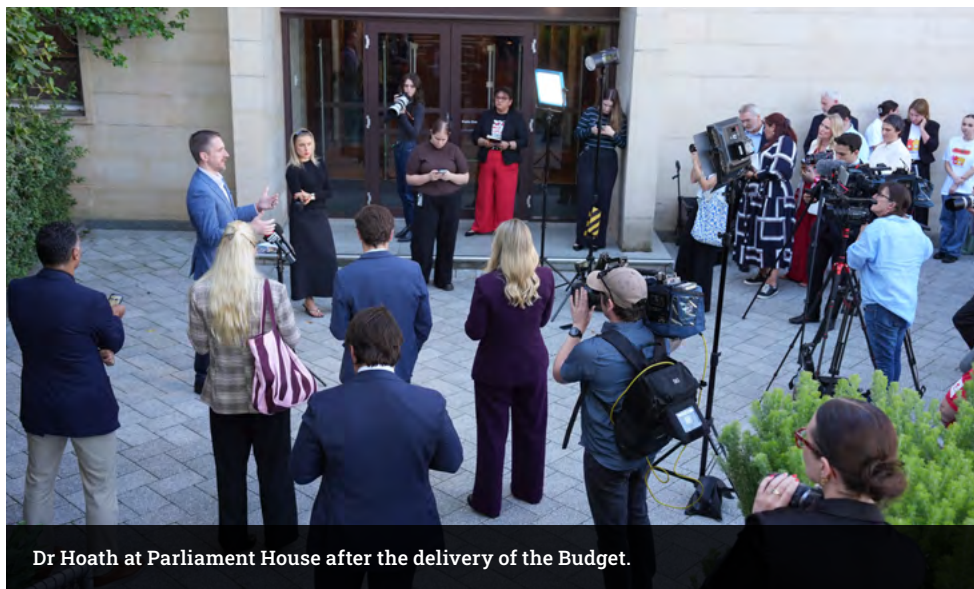
"We've been languishing for a while in a State where we need more hospital beds, and we need more staff to deliver care to the community."

While welcoming funding across hospital infrastructure, staffing and mental health, Dr Hoath stressed that implementation would be critical.

"The devil for us is in the detail... it all comes down to the delivery. And without the people to deliver that care, we will continue to face the same problems."

Dr Hoath warned that a lack of clarity around the future medical workforce posed significant risks.

"Although there are mentions in the Budget of increases in staffing, we really need to see the detail around that... what



Dr Hoath at Parliament House after the delivery of the Budget.

the medical workforce will look like going into the future. If we are opening hospitals without a plan for the staff and infrastructure to support those hospitals, we will just run into the same problem."

The Budget included a \$2 billion Building Hospitals Fund, including the purchase of Mount Lawley Hospital, but Dr Hoath said unanswered questions remain.

"I would love to see some funding allocated to our long-term hospital infrastructure plan. Where is our next big hospital going? I still can't get an answer to that question."

Dr Hoath said future health infrastructure planning should rise above short-term political cycles.

"This is something that should not really be tied to politics. I'd love to see both sides of government work together on what a long-term health sector plan looks like for our State."

Dr Hoath also acknowledged targeted funding to support inclusion and wellbeing. The Government committed \$800,000 for the AMA (WA) to design and deliver training and education that supports medical practitioners to meet the health and wellbeing needs of LGBTIQ+ people.

"The AMA (WA) looks forward to continued engagement with the Government to ensure the record Budget investment results in better working conditions for our members and, in turn, better access to safe, high-quality care for all Western Australians," Dr Hoath said. ■