

South Australian 'Transforming Health' Discussion Paper

October 2014

On Friday 17 October South Australian Health Minister the Hon Jack Snelling MP released the *Transforming Health* Discussion Paper. The Discussion Paper aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the health system across metropolitan Adelaide. The Discussion Paper was prepared in partnership with more than 60 of the state's doctors, nurses, midwives and clinical staff and was led by Clinical Ambassador Professor Dorothy Keefe PSM.

The Discussion Paper is available [here](#).

The SA Government currently spends over \$5 billion every year on the public health system, representing around 32 per cent of the entire State Budget. Over the past decade, the SA government has upgraded every major hospital across the state, with the new Royal Adelaide Hospital set to open in 2016.

The Government's new health focus will be the design of an improved health system to match the state's world-class infrastructure. Key to this will be ensuring that it embraces innovation, technology and is flexible enough to meet all future challenges.

The South Australian Clinical Advisory Committees reviewed national and international data and agreed on six quality principles necessary to transform the SA health system. They concluded that a quality, world-class health system is:

1. Patient Centred
2. Safe
3. Effective
4. Accessible
5. Efficient, and
6. Equitable

The Transforming Health Discussion Paper does not describe what the health system will look like in the future – those decisions will be based on the feedback from health staff and the community. However, the Discussion Paper flags some areas for reform. These include:

Quality standards and system implications

The Clinical Advisory Committees developed close to 300 quality standards that need to be applied to SA metropolitan hospital services. More information about these standards is available at www.transforminghealth.sa.gov.au.



Better treatment options

The Discussion Paper noted that not all hospitals can provide the same level of access to specialist treatment and diagnostics; most conditions treated at emergency departments are urgent but not life-threatening. It found that redesigning the health system could help South Australia reduce unnecessary transfers between hospitals and deliver the right care at the right time

Better specialisation

The Discussion Paper found South Australia's population size makes it impossible to provide every specialty at every hospital. To provide the best outcomes for patients, it found it was essential that these specialised services, along with the highly skilled staff, are available 24 hours a day. However, this may mean better services at fewer sites.

Better integration

The Discussion Paper asserts that better healthcare may be delivered through specialisation or, in other cases, by better integrating existing services. By integrating services across appropriate sites, patients can start rehabilitation earlier at locations that can meet their full medical needs.

Better processes

The Discussion Paper suggested separating elective surgery from general hospital functions would avoid many postponements, reduce waiting lists and lessen inconvenience for patients.

Further information

Consultation on the Transforming Health Discussion Paper opens today for 5 weeks, closing on 21 November. A list of community consultation events is available [here](#).

A health summit will be held later this year where the process of Transforming Health will be further discussed.

For more information, or to take part in the consultation process visit www.transforminghealth.sa.gov.au.