

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Crashing out: \$600 million investment needed in Queensland's mental health sector

AMA Queensland has called on the state government to deliver \$600 million in additional mental health funding in this year's budget or risk more people falling through the cracks.

Doctors are also advocating for an additional 2000 community mental health workers, plus delivery of 350 new psychiatric beds and the refurbishment of 250 existing beds.

"Chronic under-investment has left the sector under-staffed and under pressure," AMA Queensland President, Associate Professor Erica Gannon said.

"Without a fast and focused boost to our capacity, staffing and infrastructure, we cannot meet the rising demand for mental health care at all levels."

Associate Professor Gannon said a \$600 million investment for statewide services would reduce dangerous delays and improve continuity of care.

"Emergency departments should not be default mental health crisis centres, and yet this is increasingly common," she said.

"As an emergency doctor, I know the impact acute episodes have not only on public health services, but on patients themselves and their families and communities."

The call for increased funding comes after a Queensland Audit Office review found the state's mental health levy had raised \$1.2 billion between January 2023 and June 2025 and is projected to raise half a billion dollars more than forecast by 2028.

"This means Queensland has the money we need not only for more acute inpatient psychiatry beds and staff in our public hospitals, but also more community mental health, and alcohol and other drugs services," Associate Professor Gannon said.

"This budget is the best opportunity for the government to show how it will return that money to Queenslanders in the form of better mental health care."

Associate Professor Gannon said the budget needs to make clear how it will attract and retain specialists in the mental health sector, particular in rural and regional Queensland.

"We've been advocating for 18 months for the government to implement recommendations from our own Workforce Action Plan, and this is another reason why," she said.

"The mental health workforce has to come from somewhere, and the budget should state those pathways clearly."

AMA Queensland has also called on the government to reverse its stance on harm prevention measures that have left gaps in prevention, early intervention and treatment.

"The scrapping of pill-testing and the watering down of drug diversion programs have been huge blows to evidence-based care," Associate Professor Gannon said.

## Australian Medical Association Queensland – Media Release

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“Substance-related harm is on the rise, particularly among young people and vulnerable communities, and walking away from proven harm-reduction strategies will only cost more down the road.”

Doctors also warn mental health cannot be separated from the conditions in which people live.

“Climate events, housing insecurity and chronic disease all compound psychological distress,” Associate Professor Gannon said.

“Mental health prevention must be embedded in Queensland’s long-term health planning.”

AMA Queensland also called on the state government to restore access to evidence-based gender care for people under 18.

Doctors remain concerned that the government’s decision to ban stage 1 and 2 gender hormone treatment for patients under 18 years until 2031 undermines medical best practice and have called for genuine consultation with the LGBTQIASB+ community and their families.