
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
MEDIA RELEASE



CEO's resignation a symptom of a health system under severe pressure – SA surgeons

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The resignation of Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) Chief Executive Officer, Brian Rousseau, was further evidence of a health system struggling to cope during a period of significant but poorly planned change, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has said.

The College's South Australian Regional Chair, Mr Peter Subramaniam, said that while there is little value in speculation as to the reason for Mr Rousseau's resignation, the College, along with other representative organisations, was aware of the tension between the drive to cost saving within the CALHN and the reality that the new Royal Adelaide Hospital may well fall short of delivering the capacity that would justify the planned and significant downgrade of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH).

"Central to this is the planned closure or downgrade of the Intensive Care Unit at QEH which will have significant downstream impact on emergency, acute care and elective surgical services at this hospital," Mr Subramaniam said.

"While the plan is for this capacity to be taken up by the new Royal Adelaide and an expanded Lyell McEwin Health Service, the College of Surgeons remains profoundly concerned about the feasibility of achieving this within the current economic climate.

"The College has also explicitly expressed its concern to the Minister and the CEO of SA Health about the impact of the planned reconfiguration of hospital services on the viability of high quality surgical training posts to meet the anticipated demand for specialist surgeons in South Australia. This includes concerns about the possible reduction in outpatient services within the public system, where there appears to be a clear drive towards treating and billing as many patients as possible under Medicare – a step that the College fears may be the thin edge of the wedge towards privatisation of these essential services," he said.

Mr Subramaniam said that at a time when South Australian hospital services were struggling to cope with change that seemed to be driven more by hope than careful planning, the College of Surgeons remained committed to engaging the SA government on issues relating to the provision of high quality surgical care to the South Australian public.

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