
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
MEDIA RELEASE



SA surgeons demand genuine consultation process on future of paediatric care

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South Australian surgeons fear that a decision has already been made on the future of paediatric surgical services in northern Adelaide, and that a promised consultation process will be little more than a public relations exercise.

This follows the announcement by Northern Adelaide Local Health Network chief executive Margot Mains that it is SA Health's view that closing the paediatric ward at Modbury Hospital and consolidating services at Lyell McEwin Hospital would "provide the best outcomes for children and their parents".

Paediatric surgeon and Councillor of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Mr Tony Sparnon, said the College's South Australian regional committee was surprised and disappointed to learn of Ms Mains' announcement given that they had met with her last week and had been advised there would be a consultation process around the issue of paediatric care in northern Adelaide.

"At no time was the possibility of closing the children's ward at Modbury Hospital even discussed," Mr Sparnon said. "Yet a week later we learn that not only is this a possibility, it is the department's preferred option. This sounds suspiciously like a fait accompli, and we fear the consultation process will involve little more than going through the motions."

"It is also important to note that Lyell McEwin used to provide a paediatric surgical service, and had done so for twenty years, but it ceased in 2012 due to a lack of funding. Now SA Health is contemplating the reintroduction of a service. This is symptomatic of poor planning.

"Given the importance of providing world class surgical care to sick and injured children in Adelaide's northern and north eastern suburbs, it is imperative that the steering committee established to undertake consultation does so in a genuine manner and not 'steer' the process to a preordained decision.

"It is to be hoped that clinicians, people who actually work in these hospitals, will have input into the process and that this input genuinely informs the committee's consideration of the issue," Mr Sparnon said.

**Media inquiries: Michael Barrett, Manager Media & Public Relations
0429 028 933 or (03) 9249 1263**