

A woman with long brown hair is sitting on a bed, wearing a grey knitted sweater. She has her hands pressed against her head, suggesting distress or mental anguish. The background is a simple room with a white bedspread and a blue object on the right. The image is overlaid with geometric shapes in red and light pink.

For
the
Future

98 more
mental
health beds

South
Australian
Labor



Acknowledgment of country.

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians whose ancestral lands we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and respect their deep spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country. We also pay our respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their nations in South Australia, as well as those across Australia.

Foreword



There's something that's become abundantly clear to me after years of listening to doctors, nurses, paramedics, and other health workers:

We can't fix the ramping crisis, without responding to the mental health crisis.

Under the Liberals, ramping is the worst it's ever been – it has more than quadrupled.

The cause of ramping is “bed block” – patients stuck in the emergency department or on wards because there's nowhere else to go.

And a substantial number of those patients waiting for hours and even days on end, are mental health patients.

It's an extremely expensive and inhumane way to treat people experiencing a mental health crisis – and it's a major cause of ramping.

We need beds where South Australians experiencing a mental health crisis can fully recover.

And we need community services that help people stay well, stopping them going to hospital in the first place.

That's why Labor will invest in 98 more mental health beds – the most significant investment in mental health for over a decade.

This is the first major announcement out of an investment of 300 more beds, a major part of our plan to fix the ramping crisis.

We take mental health seriously – and we're committed to fixing the ramping crisis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Malinauskas'.

Peter Malinauskas MP
SA Labor Leader

WHY WE'RE DOING THIS

The cause of ramping is “bed block” – patients stuck in the emergency department, blocking those on the ramp or in the waiting room from accessing a bed. And a major cause of “bed block” is mental health presentations.

Too many South Australians are cycling in and out of hospital experiencing severe mental ill-health, with a lack of longer-term rehabilitation beds meaning these South Australians never get the care they need to recover.

Hospital doctors estimate up to 50% of emergency department beds are frequently occupied by mental health patients with nowhere else to go.

The Australasian College of Emergency Medicine conducted an analysis of emergency department waits, specifically looking at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

They found 100% of the 20 “access blocked” patients (waiting 8+ hours) were mental health.

Hundreds of mental health patients are stuck for days on end in ED, a practice doctors have described as unethical and a breach of human rights.

Lengthy stays drastically worsen the condition of mental health patients. It's far from a therapeutic and calming environment and can lead to an increased use of medical or physical means to control the patient – when it didn't need to get to that point.

Only 57.3% of South Australians seeking urgent mental health care at emergency departments get seen on time – the worst result of any mainland state.

And 10% of South Australian mental health presentations are waiting to be seen in EDs for longer than 143 minutes, compared to a national average of just 101 minutes.

A report from the Chief Psychiatrist found that 1 in 3 mental health patients are ramped.

Extreme waits for mental health patients have increased 350% under the Liberals' watch – from 327 in 2017, to 1503 in 2020.

Up to 60% of calls to the Mental Health Triage – the key hotline for responding to South Australians experiencing a mental health crisis – are going unanswered.

The problem is only worsening under the impact of COVID-19, with many South Australians facing uncertainty, job loss, and social isolation.

Instead of increasing beds, the Liberals closed 30 mental health beds across the western and southern suburbs in January.

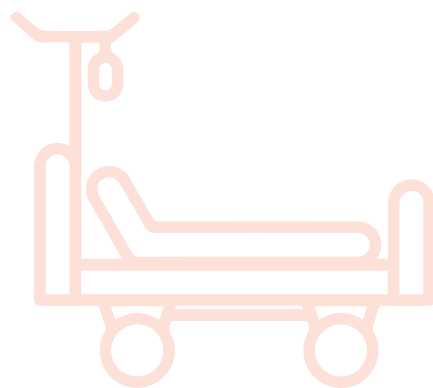
And the Marshall Government commissioned a savings report from KordaMentha which last year recommended closing other mental health beds.

The Liberals' failure to address the mental health crisis extends far beyond our hospital doors, and into community services.

The Marshall Liberal Government axed millions of dollars in funding from non-government organisations running mental health programs that were keeping people out of hospital.

The Federal Productivity Commission shows that in SA mental health funding was cut by \$5.3 million and nine community mental health beds were axed from 2018-19 to 2019-20.¹

¹ ROGS 2022, Table 13A.6, 13A.14



24-hour bed wait in emergency departments for 1446 mentally ill SA patients

The Advertiser | 5 May 2021

We must act: Mental health chief's emails warned of dysfunction and lack of resources crippling SA's mental health system

Jacqueline Cosgrove is haunted and angry. This grieving mum is the face of SA's mental health crisis, as a sacked whistleblower warns the system faces "utter chaos".

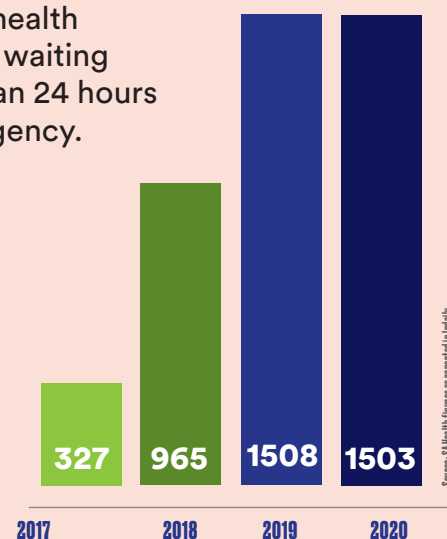
The Advertiser | 9 April 2021

SA ED wait times for mental health patients branded 'worst in world'

InDaily | 18 June 2021

Patients waiting > 24 hours

Mental health patients waiting more than 24 hours in emergency.



300 MORE BEDS

A Malinauskas Labor Government will establish 300 more beds over the next five years.

Labor can do this because we're scrapping the Liberals' \$662 million basketball stadium and investing every single dollar into health.

98 EXTRA MENTAL HEALTH BEDS

Labor commits \$182 million to establish 98 more mental health beds over the next four years.

This represents the biggest investment in mental health in over a decade.

72 MORE METRO MENTAL HEALTH BEDS

COST: \$158 million

Clinicians tell us what's most urgently needed to address long, and often harmful, hospital stays and bed block leading to ramping, are more mental health rehabilitation beds.

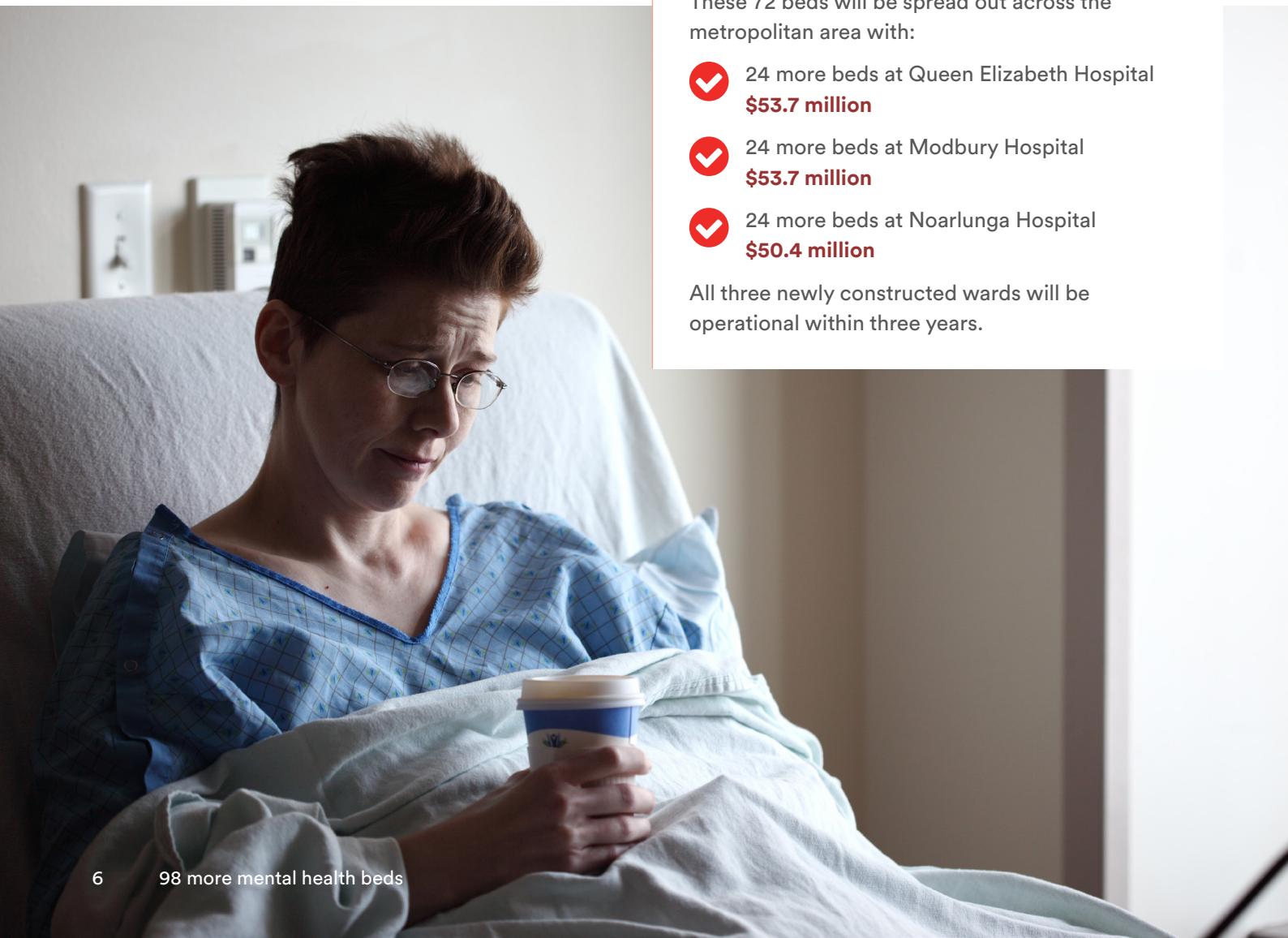
These are beds targeted at more complex mental health conditions; South Australians who need several weeks of care to stabilise and receive the help they need.

Labor will build and open 72 new mental health rehabilitation beds, so that more people can get the treatment they need, without being stuck for days in emergency departments contributing to ramping.

These 72 beds will be spread out across the metropolitan area with:

- ✓ 24 more beds at Queen Elizabeth Hospital
\$53.7 million
- ✓ 24 more beds at Modbury Hospital
\$53.7 million
- ✓ 24 more beds at Noarlunga Hospital
\$50.4 million

All three newly constructed wards will be operational within three years.





20 NEW MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY BEDS

COST: \$12.7 million

Labor will significantly boost funding to community mental health hospital-in-the-home care and extend program funding contracts to three-year terms.

This investment will establish 20 additional mental health community beds, providing care in the home for those who need it.

This boost to community mental health will help keep more South Australians out of hospital, further reducing ramping.

These 20 additional community mental health beds will be in operation in 2023.

SIX MORE REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH BEDS

COST: \$11.4 million

The Limestone Coast has been crying out for additional mental health support, but Mount Gambier Hospital has just six mental health beds to manage a significant demand.

Clinicians warn they are frequently and substantially above their six-bed capacity, treating mental health patients in other areas of the hospital and overburdening staff.

Labor will further invest \$11.4 million into building and then operating six mental health beds at Mount Gambier Hospital, doubling the size of the hospital's mental health unit.

