



RACGP 

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Advocacy

Healthy Profession.  
Healthy Australia.

# South Australia

## 2026 state election policy platform



## At a glance: general practice across South Australia



# 3129

GPs working at  
**464** practices  
– **1603** males  
– **1526** females



# 106 GPs

(FTE) per 100,000 including:  
(national average 111.4 per  
100,000)



# >1.6m

South Australians are supported  
in more than 11.3m episodes of  
GP care per year

## About the RACGP



**60+ years** as  
the voice of GPs



**50,000+ members**  
across Australia



**6113 doctors** in  
RACGP training  
programs



**4 out of 5**  
rural GPs are RACGP  
members (around  
10,200 in MMM2-7)

## South Australian GPs in training



# 421

GPs in training including  
• **134** in inner metro  
• **104** in outer metro

• **183** in rural, regional and remote areas



# 207

active GP training  
supervisors



# 127

general practices had  
an active registrar in  
term 1 2026

# A message from Dr Siân Goodson, RACGP's South Australia Faculty Chair

There has never been a more important time for the South Australian Government to invest in primary care and general practice.

Spending on the state's health system continues to increase rapidly. An ageing population and an epidemic of chronic disease are driving demand for more intensive and costly care. These pressures are contributing to an increased burden on emergency departments and our hospitals. The state performs well below national benchmarks in emergency department performance, including ranking last in the percentage of emergency patients seen within recommended timeframes.

General practice is the most cost-effective health system investment a Government can make to reduce preventable hospitalisations and emergency department presentations. A strong, well supported general practice sector that supports people to see a specialist GP who knows them and their history improves the general wellbeing of South Australians.

General practice delivers unique value through its patient-centred and ongoing model of care, which facilitates opportunistic preventive care and strengthens patient engagement. Sustained GP-patient relationships enable more targeted support for individuals with chronic and complex conditions, while also increasing patients' understanding, confidence and capacity to navigate their care options.

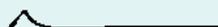
Whilst there is clear need for investment and support throughout the South Australian health system, the most impactful area to improve outcomes and reduce overall health spending is via primary care. Every \$1 spent in the primary care system provides around \$1.60 in healthcare system benefits. Despite this strong cost to benefit ratio, general practice nationwide receives an average of \$1 for every \$8.29 invested into hospitals.

Patients who regularly see the same GP report high levels of satisfaction with their care. Continuity of care is associated with lower mortality rates, rates of hospitalisation, emergency department attendances and hospital re-admission rates.

The RACGP is calling on the next South Australian Government to:

- Support South Australians to access GP care
- Be innovative with South Australia's healthcare system
- Ensure the sustainability of South Australia's GP workforce

There is simply no substitute for high-quality general practice care delivered by a GP who knows you and your history.



**Dr Siân Goodson**  
Chair, RACGP South Australia



# Policy priorities

Priority	Ask	Benefits
<b>Support South Australians to access GP care</b>		
After hours GP care access trial	\$12m through 2027 to trial 40 clinics increasing opening hours to deliver specialist GP care outside of regular hours	Improved community access to South Australian's local GP, reducing emergency department presentations and hospital admissions
Metro to rural practice program	\$500,000 annually to embed metro GPs in rural practices	Improved access to continuous care in areas with GP workforce shortages
<b>Innovate South Australia's healthcare system</b>		
South Australian Centre of Excellence in Neurodiversity	\$20m to establish a South Australian Centre for Excellence in Neurodiversity	New and improved access to innovative, multi-disciplinary, holistic care for neurodiverse South Australians
GP support for vulnerable children	\$898,000 per annum to support 1,000 vulnerable children to access four GP appointments per year	Easing pressure on the South Australian Women's and Children's Hospital and increasing the wellbeing of vulnerable children by providing continuity in care
<b>Ensure the sustainability of South Australia's GP workforce</b>		
Support for international medical graduates (IMGs) to relocate to South Australia	\$800,000 to develop support programs for international medical graduates and \$2.8m per year to fund GP attraction grants	Immediate increase to GP workforce in areas of need to improve access and reduce waiting times for South Australians

## Support South Australians to access GP care

### After hours GP care access trial

Quality care from a GP who knows you and your medical history is the best form of primary care, but there are often times when people need care outside of normal business hours.

Many South Australians can't take time off work for essential preventive health and other vital health appointments with their GPs. Many GPs are willing to work extended hours to provide this care however the increased overheads, particularly penalty rates for practice staff, mean that patients would face increased fees.

Costs include after-hours wages for practice staff, on call allowances, and facility costs associated with keeping practices open for extended hours. Medicare rebates unfortunately don't currently cover these costs.

**Policy proposal:** Fund a trial program that would enable 40 participating GP clinics to open late on weeknights and on Sundays by covering the additional overheads associated with operating after hours.

## Metro to Rural practice program

Rural and remote communities currently face extreme health workforce shortages. While the increasing numbers of junior doctors choosing to specialise in general practice will significantly increase GP numbers in the medium term, innovative solutions are required to bridge the gap.

Rural practices are often forced to rely heavily on locum doctors to fill staffing gaps and while locums play a vital role in our health system, they aren't able to provide the same type of continuous care that a regular GP can.

A program that enables metro-based GPs to work a regularly scheduled roster in a regional practice and associated support hospital where required, would help ensure South Australians living in regional and rural communities can access high-quality specialist GP care. These practice shifts could also be complemented with telehealth options with the GP, when city based, to further promote continuity of care.

**Policy proposal:** Fund a program that would embed participating metro GPs in a rural practice on a consistent rostered basis and support these GPs with additional training to enable them to better care for rural and regional patients.

# Innovate South Australia's healthcare system

## South Australian Centre of Excellence in Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity covers a broad range of conditions, all of which exist on a wide spectrum of severity. They include intellectual disabilities, motor and communication disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), learning disorders, foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and others.

The prevalence of neurodiverse conditions is increasing faster than any other health issue and is expected to reach epidemic levels over the next 30 years. Too many South Australians living with neurodiverse conditions find themselves on long wait lists in both the public and private health systems and face large out of pocket expenses for diagnosis and care.

Patients deserve holistic care that encompasses all neurodiverse conditions. All South Australians, regardless of their circumstances, should have fair and equitable access to high quality care for neurodevelopmental disorders.

**Policy proposal:** Fund a South Australian Centre of Excellence in Neurodiversity where a range of services delivered by GPs, Psychiatrists, Paediatricians and allied health professionals will be available to South Australians for the diagnosis and holistic management of neurodiverse conditions.

## GP support for vulnerable children

Children and young people who frequently attend South Australian emergency departments often present with common, minor, non-urgent health issues such as viral infections, asthma, minor injuries, and mental health concerns. These children and young people are more likely to come from lower-income households, have chronic health conditions and be involved with Child Protection Services.

South Australia's emergency departments are world class; however, they're not the most appropriate places for providing the ongoing, coordinated care these children require. These frequent minor, non-urgent presentations also divert time and resources from emergency doctors who need to focus on acute, life-threatening conditions.

Many of these children and young people are in foster care or are in contact with Child Protective Services and most do not have a regular GP. Research shows consistent and regular engagement with a GP can be extremely beneficial for these young patients, their

carers, and the wider health system and lead to fewer emergency department presentations, fewer hospital admissions, reduced use of after-hours services, and lower readmission rates.

**Policy proposal:** Fund a trial to ensure vulnerable South Australian children connected to Child Protective Services can receive four long consults annually with a trusted GP. These GPs would be supported with additional training to allow them to manage the unique needs of these children.

# Ensure the sustainability of South Australia's GP workforce

## Support for IMGs to relocate to South Australia

South Australia has one of the lowest rates of GPs per capita of any state or territory. The increasing prevalence and complexity of chronic health issues requiring specialist GP care means there is an urgent need to increase the number of GPs living and working in the state.

Whilst the RACGP is training record numbers of GPs, there is also a need for innovative solutions to rapidly bolster our South Australian GP workforce.

Many overseas-trained specialist GPs want to live in Australia and work in our health system. This helps Australia attract significant numbers of GPs from countries with comparable health systems. However, South Australia is currently attracting far fewer overseas trained GPs when compared to other states.

Attracting more of these GPs will immediately increase the number of GPs living and working in South Australia making it easier for South Australians to get an appointment with a GP and improve workforce sustainability, but they need support to relocate.

**Policy proposal:** Develop peer support programs that enable existing South Australian-based GPs to assist IMGs in the relocation process and provide financial incentives to help IMGs cover the associated costs of training and relocating to South Australia.