



# Rebekha Sharkie MP

*Federal Member for Mayo*



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **CALLS FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE PUBLIC HOSPITAL FUNDING**

South Australian Federal independent MP Rebekha Sharkie is calling on the Government to boost its funding offer for state and territory public hospitals, ahead of Friday's National Cabinet meeting.

"The Commonwealth needs to take a good look at this and pay its fair share. These negotiations have been going on for far too long and while there's no agreement, there's uncertainty.

The Federal Government must take responsibility, because right now it's contributing to the pressure on our public hospitals."

Last week in Federal Parliament, Ms Sharkie asked a question of the Health Minister in relation to the number of older South Australians stuck in Adelaide hospitals, waiting for residential aged care.

"These people are ready to be discharged, but there is nowhere for them to go. There's no aged care bed available. Right now, there are 378 elderly people waiting in Adelaide metropolitan hospitals. It's not good enough. If you look at country and regional hospital, that number is certainly higher.

We know that across the country there are about 3,000 aged care patients stranded in hospitals. The Federal Government is letting them down. It's appalling."

In response to Ms Sharkie's question, Federal Health Minister Mark Butler acknowledged the longer stay of older patients in hospitals was "quite significant" and that rising demand for residential aged care resulted in increased pressure on the public hospital system.

"Mr Butler told Parliament he was hoping to strike a deal before the South Australian Government goes into caretaker mode. The clock is ticking on that, and all the while older patients are paying the price."

Ms Sharkie says the Commonwealth needs to address the underlying issue of the failing aged care system.

"Let's not forget, as well as a critical shortage in residential aged care places, there are also more than 107,000 people waiting for their approved Support at Home package. In some cases, these vulnerable people are waiting as long as 12 months to actually get services."

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**Media Enquiries:** Amanda Bachmann, Media Advisor to Rebekha Sharkie MP  
[Amanda.bachmann@aph.gov.au](mailto:Amanda.bachmann@aph.gov.au) 0438 808 873