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Victorian doctors call for urgent action on hospital delays as report warns of growing pressure

Victorian doctors are calling for urgent investment in hospital capacity and care beyond hospital, [following a report](#) warning that Australia's health system is unprepared for its ageing population.

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine's *State of Emergency 2026* report projects a staggering 411 per cent increase in emergency department arrivals among people aged 85 and over by 2050. Nationally, over 53,000 older patients spent more than 24 hours in an emergency department awaiting a bed in 2023–24.

AMA Victoria President Dr Simon Judkins said the report was hugely concerning, with Victorian patients already experiencing dangerous delays.

"Thousands of patients across Victoria are already spending more than a day in emergency departments waiting for a bed.

"We see ambulances ramped, and we see patients suffering complications because of those long delays.

"We have hospital wards full of people who have finished their episode of acute care but cannot move to their next point of care. They need rehabilitation, respite, an aged care bed, or support at home but those services simply aren't available.

"As the Baby Boomer generation continues to age into their 80s, these problems will only become exponentially worse."

Dr Judkins says AMA Victoria is calling on the next Victorian State Government to prioritise funding for additional staffed acute, subacute, and rehabilitation beds in its first budget, along with the workforce and ongoing operating funding needed to run them.

"The reality is we need urgent investment in services that allow patients to leave hospital safely, with joint Victorian and Commonwealth action and funding where responsibilities are shared.

"Every emergency department stay exceeding 24 hours should trigger clinical and executive review, corrective action and public reporting for each hospital.

“We have a very clear picture of the demographic tsunami approaching our healthcare system and hospitals over the next few decades.

“It is absolutely critical the next Victorian State Government steps up to the challenge to make sure we are prepared.”

Media contact: Gabriella White - 0466 435 468

