

**Australian Medical Association Limited**

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600; PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604

Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile: (02) 6270 5499

Website: <http://www.ama.com.au/>

President: Dr William Glasson

Secretary General: Dr E. Robyn Mason



**AMA**

**The Hon Alex Somlyay MP**  
Chairman  
Inquiry into Health Funding  
House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACT 2600

**SUBMISSION NO. 54**

(Supplementary to Sub No. 30)

AUTHORISED: 22/06/05

Dear Mr Somlyay

At its meeting in Darwin on 27 May 2005, the AMA Federal Council reviewed the AMA submission to the Inquiry into Health Funding. Pursuant to the discussion at the Council Meeting, I am writing to you to clarify the use of the term 'bed blocker'.

This term is used on page 9 of the submission. The AMA submission argues that this issue spotlights one of the 'disconnects' in the Commonwealth/State arrangements for health care.

The AMA wishes to make it very clear that in using the term 'bed blocker', we are in no way implying that the patients are 'the problem' or that they are in any way to blame for the situation.

On the contrary, they are the blameless victims of a system which is not providing them with the care that is most appropriate to their situation. A 'bed blocker' is a person who has been failed by the system, not a person who contributes to system failure. Upon further reflection, we had some concerns that not everyone might perceive these meanings.

There is a great deal that can be done to improve the interface between the age care, acute care and community care systems so as to improve the patient experience and the health outcomes.

I would be grateful if you would convey this supplementary letter to the fellow members of your committee.

Yours sincerely

Dr William Glasson  
President

27 May 2005

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