



**ANZCA**  
FPM

President and CEO

Australian and New Zealand  
College of Anaesthetists

2 March 2026

The Hon Mark Butler MP  
Minister for Health and Ageing  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: [minister.butler@health.gov.au](mailto:minister.butler@health.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**Reducing bottlenecks in aged care through perioperative medicine**

We write to you following the ABC News Online article '[3,100 aged care patients stranded in hospitals as states again press Commonwealth for action](#)' published on Friday 13 February.

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), including the Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM), is committed to setting the highest standards of clinical practice in the fields of anaesthesia, pain medicine and perioperative medicine.

ANZCA believes that there are health service solutions that can both free up in-patient beds and reduce demands on residential and other aged care services.

ANZCA has led the development of the [Australian and New Zealand Perioperative Patient Pathway](#), a multidisciplinary, patient centred approach to higher-risk surgical patient care including the elderly. Through this pathway, patients are referred to a perioperative care team as soon as surgery is planned.

This team works with the patient and their broader healthcare team, including their GP, to plan strategies to reduce complications, identify risks up front, and implement cost effective and evidence-based interventions to optimise patients and improve fitness prior to surgery.

Post surgery, the perioperative care team oversees more efficient patient recovery including prevention or early intervention for postoperative complications.

This perioperative pathway results in better outcomes for higher-risk patients and can reduce the need for ongoing care, including residential aged care.

Evidence suggests perioperative medicine is a good economic value proposition, including reduced length of stay, reduced complications, and reduced need for aged care support.

Through collaboration between six specialist medical colleges, including RACGP and ACRRM, Australia leads the world in perioperative medicine.

We believe this significant opportunity presents the 'best buy' to help reduce some of these aged care bottlenecks while improving the quality of life for many older patients after surgery, building upon the more than 20 hospitals across Australia that are already benefiting from perioperative medicine programs.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss perioperative medicine with you in more detail and how our college can assist in this important area of health reform.

Yours sincerely



**Professor Dave Story**  
President



**Dr Lance Emerson**  
Chief Executive Officer