

22 October 2021

Hon Stephen Wade MLC  
Minister for Health and Wellbeing  
GPO Box 2555  
ADELAIDE SA 5001  
[ministerforhealth@sa.gov.au](mailto:ministerforhealth@sa.gov.au)

Dear Minister,

*Re – Ambulance Ramping and Older People*

COTA SA is watching the ambulance issues unfold in the media with great frustration.

In January I had a useful conversation with David Place about older people's use of ambulance services in SA and, in particular, the outcomes for older people attended by SAAS whether they are living in their own home or in an aged care home.

I conveyed to David that there is a view among older people, whether living in their own home or in an aged care home, that they are disproportionately ramped or queued in emergency departments. At David's suggestion, we wrote to him in February seeking data from SAAS about whether age is, in fact, positively correlated with being 'ramped'. We included an outline of the data we thought would be useful. A copy of our letter is attached.

We followed up twice and in July were advised that the SAAS Business Intelligence Unit has been overwhelmed with requests for data and that it had been "necessary to prioritise" tasks.

Given that SAAS is part of the Department for Health and Wellbeing we directed the request to Chris McGowan in July. That letter is also attached. We have not had a reply.

We have tried to work cooperatively with the Department on this but we think an 8 month wait for a response is completely unacceptable. We are very concerned about what the experience of older people in accessing acute health services actually is. We are alarmed that neither SA Health nor SAAS seem to know. We note a mounting number of worrying examples of delayed care in the media.

The health system must work well and be accountable for people of all ages. We are keen to understand the issue of access for older people from all perspectives and to be involved in driving improvements.

Yours sincerely



**Jane Mussared**  
Chief Executive