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**Title:**

Press statement: Fee structure SA Govt. Hospitals

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PRESS STATEMENT: 23/12/70.

FROM: CHIEF SECRETARY (MR. SHARD)

Major changes in the fee structure of South Australian Government Public Hospitals were announced today by the Chief Secretary and Minister of Health (Mr. Shard).

For the first time the fees will include the cost of all Government Hospital charges such as drugs, theatre hire, and maternity fees, which are at present regarded as extras.

Mr. Shard said that the Government's move was in line with recommendations made by the Nimmo Committee of Enquiry into Health Insurance, and would greatly reduce accounting procedures of both Government Hospitals and Hospital Benefit organisations. Mr. Shard said, "The new fees would also assist Government Hospitals to meet running costs, which had increased by 54 p.c. over the past two years.

"The new fees will be \$13.50 per day for a standard ward, \$18.00 (Intermediate) and \$22.00 (Private) and will become operative from March 1, next year.

Mr. Shard said that the present fees applying at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital were \$10 (Public), \$13.50 (Share) and \$17.00 (Private), plus an additional 50c. per day for maternity patients.

Mr. Shard said that because the fees were all inclusive people would know for the first time exactly what they would be charged when they entered a Government Hospital.

"In some cases the fees will mean patients will pay less.

"For example, in a case of a heart valve operation the patient at present pays \$10.00 per day for his Public Ward bed, \$16.00 Theatre fees and at least \$250.00 for the valve.

"Under the new fees he would simply pay \$13.50 per day with everything included.

"The only Government Hospital charges not included are those charged for the hire of returnable items such as wheel chairs, crutches and calipers.

Mr. Shard said that the new fees had been fixed in close co-operation with Hospital Benefit organisations which would

adjust their contribution tables accordingly.

"It is expected that their new table of charges will come into operation on the same date as the new fees.

Mr. Shard said that charges to patients in Government Hospitals relating to medical benefits such as pathology and x-ray services would still be raised as they were not part of the Hospital Benefit Scheme.

South Australia is the second State to adopt all inclusive fees for Government Hospitals, the other State is Western Australia.