



## 2020 ACT Legislative Election

Dear Professor Smith

Thank you for your recent correspondence requesting the ACT Labor's position on matters important to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the wider community.

The ACT Labor Government's focus now and through the next term, if we are fortunate enough to be returned to government, is to protect Canberrans' jobs, provide better healthcare where and when Canberrans need it, and help the community recover from the impact of COVID-19.

A range of groups have recently contacted MLAs and candidates seeking information on our health policies ahead of the election on 17 October 2020. As the ACT Labor Party Secretary and Campaign Director, I am pleased to respond to you and other groups on behalf of the Labor Party, its MLAs and candidates.

ACT Labor has published its [Policy Position Statement](#) online, as well as a comprehensive Health Policy Position Statement, which covers the ACT Labor Government's achievements and the continuing direction in healthcare a re-elected Labor Government would take over the next four years. ACT Labor's [Health Position Statement](#) is also available online. Many sections of these two policy documents go directly to issues of interest to your organisation and its members.

ACT Labor knows that Canberrans rely on our health system. That's why we will hire at least 400 new nurses, doctors and healthcare professionals if re-elected, to provide more healthcare services as our city grows. This will include more than 200 new nurses, and more than 150 clinical staff, including specialists and registrars.

We also know that our nurses and allied health workers can do even more to offer care close to home. That's why a re-elected Labor Government will:

- Employ five more full-time equivalent nurse practitioners across the Walk-in Centres to ensure there is always a nurse practitioner available at each Centre;
- Expand the Walk-in Centres' scope of practice to treat more patients with a wider range of injuries and illness within the scope of practice for advanced practice nurses;

- Establish five new local walk-in health centres, providing access to immediate care as well as appointment-based services, in South Tuggeranong, West Belconnen, the Inner South, Molonglo and North Gungahlin;
- Establish an outpatient focused imaging service (including CT, ultrasound and Xray) at Weston Creek Walk-in Centre; and
- Work with General Practitioners who have embraced the Walk-in Centre model to better integrate with primary health care providers and share the lessons across the sector.

As Canberra's north continues to grow ACT Labor will ensure that our health infrastructure can cater for this growing demand. Combined with the Canberra Hospital Expansion and ongoing planning for a new northside hospital, a Labor Government will deliver a new Northside Elective Surgery Centre in the University of Canberra Hospital precinct as part of our plan to expand health infrastructure in Canberra's north.

As planning for these northside infrastructure projects proceeds, a re-elected ACT Labor Government will also inject \$16 million to upgrade and expand existing endoscopy facilities at the Canberra Hospital. Once complete, this investment will deliver an additional 5,000 endoscopy procedures each year, meeting the growing need for diagnosis and detection of many conditions, including some cancers.

We will also invest an additional \$31 million to deliver around 60,000 elective surgeries over the next four years. This means approximately 6,000 more elective surgeries will be performed over the next four years compared with the four years to 2019.

ACT Labor will also increase access to resources and timely care for young Canberrans experiencing mental health concerns, delivering both expanded services and new forms of support. This includes partnering with Orygen Digital to offer 5000 young people who are supported by Headspace and Child and Adolescent Health Services with access to the evidence-based MOST platform to provide 24-hour a day support between appointments.

To meet the needs of our ageing population, we will fund the full refurbishment of an innovative acute care ward and create a Centre Excellence in care for older Canberrans at Calvary Public Hospital. We will also establish a dedicated palliative care ward at the Canberra Hospital and partner with Palliative Care ACT to establish a respite hub for people with life-limiting illness who wish to die at home.

These are only some of the important initiatives contained within ACT Labor's Health Policy Position Statement, which contains comprehensive policies in areas including maternity services, patient empowerment and coordinated care. I encourage you to share and discuss this document with your members, and other interested community members.

ACT Labor is providing the overall ALP Policy Position Statement and Health Position Statement to interested organisations and publishing it on our website, because we believe it is important for this active, informed electorate to be able to easily read and compare parties' positions ahead of an election.

Thank you again for your interest in ACT Labor's health policies. ACT Labor MLAs and candidates look forward to continuing to serve the community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MJ', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melissa James

ACT Labor Campaign Director