

Professor Paul Smith
ACT Committee Chair
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons ACT
Email: College.ACT@surgeons.org

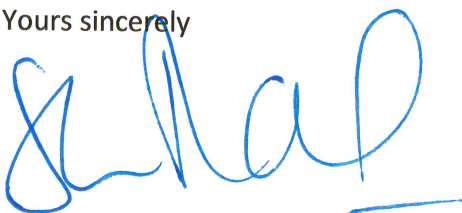
Dear Professor Smith

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons ACT.
I am responding on behalf of all endorsed Liberal candidates for the 2020 election.

Please find attached a response to the survey from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons ACT.

Thank you for taking the time to seek our views.

Yours sincerely



Josh Manuatu
Campaign Director

RESPONSE TO ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS ACT

The Canberra Liberals are committed to making Canberra the best place to live, work and raise a family.

The Canberra Liberals will ensure our health system becomes a national leader in health outcomes. We believe that as the national capital, we should have nation-leading healthcare that raises the bar across Australia.

A Canberra Liberals Government will hire more nurses, halve waiting times, and provide greater access to specialists and gap-free GPs.

The Canberra Liberals will fix Canberra's health system by investing in more doctors and nurses, and delivering the critical health infrastructure Canberra desperately needs. We will have a results-based health system that delivers reduced emergency and elective surgery waiting times, and better access to healthcare across Canberra.

Specifically, Our Plan for Better Access to Healthcare includes:

- 400 more health workers, including 200 more nurses;
- Halving waiting times within the first term, with a boost in elective surgery and emergency department capacity;
- More surgical operating theatres as part of the Canberra Hospital Expansion;
- Greater access to pharmacists and gap-free GPs in all parts of Canberra;
- Improved access to specialists;
- A record investment in community and preventative healthcare; and
- More staff and patient hospital parking.

As a key part of our vision for health, we will also reform the health system to ensure better and more accountable management and planning that is focused on outcomes, not on process.

The Liberals will get on with the job of delivering an enhanced and expanded surgical and emergency centre, which will be better positioned and with additional surgery capacity. We believe there is a better way.

Medical Education and Training Facility

Compared with the medical education and training facilities in other states, the ACT lacks essential features like wet labs and appropriate theatres for training, observations and demonstrations. Successive accreditation reviews by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons have highlighted this deficiency, and the ACT government has been put on notice that accreditation could not be maintained unless it was addressed.

 chq@canberraliberals.org.au

 [CanberraLiberals](#)

 [CanberraLiberals](#)

 voteliberal.org.au

The Canberra Liberals are committed to a health service that is supported by pre-eminent training facilities that will maintain and improve our training accreditation. Working with the tertiary education sector, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and other key stakeholders, we will establish a multi-disciplinary and properly-resourced and equipped surgical training facility, including full wet lab facilities, with flexibility to cater for training in other related disciplines such as anaesthetics, and surgical and ICU nursing. The guiding principles will be accreditation criteria.

Culture in the ACT Health System and engagement with clinicians

The Canberra Liberals will extricate from the current mire of bureaucratic process the implementation of the recommendations of the review of workplace culture in the ACT's public health system. We have been very concerned that there has been little progress so far, and there appears to be evidence emerging that workplace culture is not improving to any significant extent. This will be a high priority issue for an incoming Canberra Liberals government.

Zero tolerance for bullying

Canberra's health system has suffered from a toxic culture of bullying. This makes it more difficult for the ACT to attract and keep talented staff.

The Canberra Liberals will never tolerate bullying in the workplace. Proven cases of systemic bullying will result in termination.

Working with the leadership and management teams, we will put in place more rigorous education, training and human resources systems to stamp out the culture of bullying with health.

Pay audit

There have been numerous complaints from junior doctors and other health staff not been receiving their overtime payments promptly and accurately. These issues have been the subject of complaints by the Australian Medical Association and the Health Services Union.

A Canberra Liberal government wants to ensure that all health workers are paid appropriately and promptly through an efficient payroll system. We want to identify any underlying liability, and forestall any possible legal action.

A Canberra Liberal government will immediately commission an independent audit of the TCH pay system to ensure that junior doctors and some other health workers are being paid their salaries and overtime properly.

The independent audit would be conducted out of the existing health budget.

Keeping our frontline workers safe

The Canberra Liberals will provide greater protections for our frontline health staff by increasing the penalty from two to five years for assault against these staff.

Nurses, doctors and other staff are at increasing risk of violence in our hospitals. There are now almost two assaults on frontline health staff every single day.

The Canberra Liberals will also boost security at the hospital to improve safety for staff in all areas, including staff walking between the hospital campus and car parking areas at night.

SPIRE

Only the Canberra Liberals will get on with the job of future-proofing our health system.

The planning process for the Canberra Hospital Expansion and the surgical and emergency centre has been chaotic, and the current position and layout of the planned site is not ideal. We do not believe that emergency vehicles should access a major emergency department by a suburban street with a primary school on it.

The surgery capacity will also fall short of what we need as Canberra grows, with the development delivering only 9 new net operating theatres. This means it will be at capacity shortly after it is built.

The Canberra Liberals will double the new surgery capacity of the surgical centre with an additional 8 hybrid operating theatres, bringing the Canberra Hospital's total number of theatres to 30. We will also improve the positioning and layout to allow for access of emergency vehicles directly to and from Yamba Drive, rather than Palmer Street.

These design and capacity enhancements will be finalised with the Early Contractor Involvement Partner during the design stage.

Only the Canberra Liberals will get on with the job of delivering an enhanced and expanded surgical centre within the term of government to future-proof the Canberra Hospital.

A Canberra Liberals Government will also prioritise the development of a master plan for the ACT's health needs over the next 5, 10 and 50 years. This process will engage fully with interested stakeholders and the community.

We will also ensure sufficient capacity to manage existing and new assets for the long term. This would include a review of the status of ACT Health's asset management capability in the context of the findings and recommendations of Donald Cant Watts Corke's damning July 2016 report on ACT Health's strategic asset management framework development.

The Canberra Liberals will deliver 1,100 staff car parks at the old Woden CIT site as a temporary solution to the Canberra Hospital's parking pressures. As part of the master plan, we will factor in long-term solutions to patient and staff parking at the Canberra Hospital.

Alcohol Related Harm

The Canberra Liberals believe drugs and alcohol should be addressed together in a single policy framework, which will require significant input, including from clinical professionals and the community sector. We will work with those groups to develop a comprehensive plan to address drug and alcohol problems, including from overdoses of prescribed medicines. In the meantime, we believe there are some fundamentals that can be enhanced in the short term, such as residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs. A Canberra Liberals government also will activate fully the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm.

COVID-19

The Canberra Liberals have worked constructively with the ACT and Commonwealth governments throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the Canberra Liberals believe these extraordinary times require extraordinary scrutiny. The Canberra Liberals successfully pushed for a special committee to scrutinise the ACT Government's response, including the Garran Field Hospital.

There was clear evidence of our health system being in crisis under Labor and the Greens before the pandemic. The need for this expensive facility demonstrates the failures of Andrew Barr and successive Labor-Greens governments to deliver on the promises to expand Canberra Hospital and invest in our health system.

The Canberra Liberals support the field hospital remaining for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency now that it is built; however, we do not believe it should remain any longer than necessary.

Elective Surgery

Canberrans wait far longer for their elective surgery than the average Australian, with many patients waiting one year or more for their hip or knee replacement. These waits can blow out by years when the time taken to see a specialist is factored in.

Under Labor, additions to the elective surgery waiting lists far outnumber the surgeries performed each year. Labor boasts of completed 54,000 elective surgeries over the past four years, but fail to mention that there were over 63,000 additions to the waiting list during this time. As a result, Canberrans are left waiting far longer than they should.

The Canberra Liberals will boost our surgery capacity and halve waiting times. With an injection of a further \$95m into additional surgeries and capacity across the public and private system, we will conduct over 70,000 elective surgeries over the term of government.

Road Trauma

The Canberra Liberals support initiatives that promote road safety and reduce the potential road trauma incidents. We will invest in road safety campaigns, and support programs for young and inexperienced drivers that provide opportunities to learn to drive safely on our roads. We will work the peak industry bodies on data collection and utilisation of road trauma incidents. We will put evidence at the forefront of decision making and ensure Canberrans' best interests are prioritised.

The Canberra Liberals will be making further policy announcements in the coming weeks. If you would like to stay up to date, you can follow the Canberra Liberals Facebook page: facebook.com/CanberraLiberals

Our comprehensive health policy is also available on our website: voteliberal.org.au/health

28 September 2020