

David Walters
Chair of SA Regional Committee
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
PO Box 44
NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006

Dear Mr Walters

Thank you for your letter dated 23 January, in which the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) outlined its specific concerns across seven areas, on behalf of your members, SA Surgical Fellows, Trainees and International Medical Graduates.

Labor recognises RACS and its executive for their important and continued advocacy on behalf of our State's surgical professionals.

Building on our proud record of innovation and progressive reform, we will create new jobs and industries, and make South Australia an even better place to live, work, visit, do business and raise a family. You can read our policies at [Standing Up For South Australia](#) and download our full [2018 Policy Document here](#).

I trust the information below demonstrates the State Government's commitment to ensuring that South Australians have access to world class care and services. A response to each of the questions posed in your correspondence is outlined below.

Kind regards
Stakeholder Response Team
03/03/18

Will you commit to greater investment in our public hospital system, and its workforce?

This Labor Government has and will continue to put the health of South Australians and their families first, and we are committed to building the most advanced and modern health services in the nation.

We are proud of our development of a state-of-the-art health and biomedical precinct on North Terrace, which is home to the world-class new Royal Adelaide Hospital.

But our Hospitals are nothing without our clinicians and that is why we've doubled the number of nurses and more than doubled the number of doctors in our system since we came to Government in 2002.

SA has the equal highest number of hospital beds in our public hospitals per capita, when compared with other Australian States and Territories, and 8 per cent more beds per capita than the national average

Labor has committed more than \$4 billion dollars to upgrade every metropolitan public hospital and every major country hospital in South Australia. This includes a recent investment of nearly \$1.2 billion in our public health system, to ensure it continues to be modern and cutting-edge.

We are continuing to invest in our hospital infrastructure, including key Country Health facilities, to ensure we have the most modern health services in the nation for all South Australians.

Labor will always stand up for South Australians' right to high-quality health care and we will never privatise our public hospitals. Labor will always fight to ensure that South Australians' access to health care is determined by a Medicare card, and not a credit card.

What is your policy regarding the Lyell McEwin, Modbury Hospital and the delivery of services across NALHN?

Since 2002, the Labor Government has invested \$314 million in the Lyell McEwin Hospital. These investments have nearly doubled the size of the hospital and transformed it into a world-class, major tertiary hospital for the north and north-eastern suburbs, treating major emergency patients and providing highly complex care.

While we have significantly invested in health services in the north, the Lyell McEwin Hospital Emergency Department has had significant increases in presentations. Right now, staff in the Emergency Department are having to treat a far higher number of patients than the current configuration was designed to accommodate.

That is why we will spend \$52.5 million to expand the Emergency Department, which will double the number of adult assessment cubicles and increase the number of paediatric

assessment cubicles and resuscitation bays. It will also include a dedicated waiting room for children and families and a separate area for substance abuse patients.

The changes that have been made to Modbury Hospital over the last couple of years have seen some very significant improvements in the care that it provides. For instance, elective surgeries have increased by more than 35 per cent, which equates to around an extra 850 procedures a year.

Similarly, the new state-of-the-art Rehabilitation Centre has enabled the hospital to double the number of rehabilitation patients that it treats daily.

These improvements have had a very positive impact on the lives of many people who live in the north and north-eastern suburbs and far more patients are now being successfully treated at Modbury Hospital than ever have been before.

Nevertheless, there is always more work to be done, which is why the Government undertook a review of services at Modbury Hospital to ensure it provides the right services to the local community and continues to deliver appropriate, high-quality care for patients into the future.

Following this review, the Government announced it would provide:

- \$35.4 million for an Acute Surgical Unit, to enable a wider range of elective surgeries requiring stays in hospital of up to 72 hours, compared to the maximum stay of 23 hours currently available.
- A new \$9 million Extended Emergency Care Unit and a new \$9 million Acute Medical Unit, both located next to the hospital's Emergency Department, to allow most patients to be seen sooner, treated and discharged at Modbury Hospital, with fewer transfers to other hospitals.
- \$15.6 million to create a state-of-the-art purpose built palliative care facility with 16 individual rooms with private bathrooms, to provide contemporary care in a modern setting.
- A \$22.5 million major infrastructure upgrade to improve the building's amenities and upgrade the building's façade.

Work to deliver these commitments has begun and will continue throughout 2018.

The need to improve patient transfers between Modbury Hospital and Lyell McEwin Hospital was strongly reflected in the submissions received from staff, local community members, clinicians and other interested parties during this review.

We are therefore committed to tackling this issue and have requested that SA Health establish a working party to review the current processes for patient transfers and recommend how the efficiency and timeliness of transfers can be improved.

Labor is committed to increasing the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network's self-sufficiency. In recent years, a considerable amount of work and resources have been put into increasing NALHN's self-sufficiency, as we recognise its vital role in our health system.

This investment has yielded good results. Self-sufficiency has increased by 13% and is currently 61%. Labor is committed to continuing this work, with the aim of increasing self-sufficiency to around 80% in total, including areas such as:

- Emergency
- Rheumatology
- Dermatology
- Plastics
- Vascular
- Ear, Nose and Throat

What is your engagement strategy to foster a culture of mutual respect and ensure decision making is clinician-led?

The South Australian Labor Government firmly believes that clinicians need to be engaged in the design and delivery of services within our Health System. We welcome and value clinician engagement and a respectful dialogue to ensure clinicians' advice and views are received and given due consideration.

Labor is also firmly committed to continuous improvement of our health care system to ensure we are able to deliver a contemporary high performing health system

We acknowledge that all clinicians should have the opportunity to provide feedback and cultivate ideas that add value to the health system. As such, Labor is committed to establishing the appropriate processes and structures to harness the knowledge and expertise of clinicians.

That is why, in partnership with SA Health, we have commenced a series of Clinical Engagement Workshops that will engage staff to inform the future mechanism through which clinical expertise and advice will be gathered.

Clinicians working at all levels and across all Local Health Networks, SA Ambulance Service and Statewide Services are encouraged to take part in this process. The findings that arise from these workshops will inform new processes and future pathways for independent clinical advice to be provided by clinicians to the Minister for Health, to better inform future policies and strategies for the provision of health care.

What is your strategy to maintain and increase training posts within the public hospital system?

The South Australian Labor Government is committed to fostering a learning culture within the public health system. As stated in SA Health's recently launched Strategic Plan, training is a priority for the Government.

Over the last decade, we have increased training positions steadily in line with the growth in graduate number and growth and variety of services.

The Government has an excellent relationship with South Australia's universities, who regularly share information with SA Health about medical student numbers. These relationships enable us to meet our commitment under the 2006 COAG agreement to offer all Commonwealth supported medical graduates an internship position.

SA Health, through the SA Medical Education and Training (SA MET) Health Advisory Council, is developing the document 'Medical Education and Training Principles - our strategic priority' which will give clear commitments to ensuring that South Australia continues to have a well-trained surgical workforce. It will also set out the principles that will guide how this will be achieved, such as establishing clear governance systems.

How does the Labor Party plan to build the surgical workforce of the future to address South Australia's ageing population and health needs?

The South Australian Labor Government is committed to the development of a comprehensive Clinical Workforce Plan for the public health system.

We will establish structures for ongoing clinical workforce planning to be prioritised to ensure that we have a surgical workforce capable of meeting the future challenges that will be presented by South Australia's ageing population.

What will the Labor Party do to ensure that public patients have access to the highest quality of surgical technology?

The South Australian Labor Government is firmly committed to continuous improvement to ensure we deliver a contemporary, high performing health system. We are committed to the provision of leading technologies to aid our surgeons in providing world class health care.

In the new Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH), we have the most technologically advanced hospital in the Southern Hemisphere and we will continue to invest in technologies.

Does the Labor Party remain committed to the development of a hybrid operating theatre at the nRAH and if so are you able to provide a timeline when the facility will be available?

We acknowledge RACS's enthusiasm for the instillation of this technology in the Central Adelaide Local Health Network.

The design brief for the new RAH did not include the provision of a hybrid operating theatre, as the technology was not sophisticated or standard practice at the time. The brief did, however, include the requirement to allow the incorporation of a hybrid operating theatre in the future.

The design of the RAH allowed for future-proofing and it is possible for a hybrid operating theatre to be incorporated in the hospital in the future. Detailed work is being undertaken by SA Health to consider this proposal.

It is standard practice to undertake a post occupancy evaluation of a new hospital facility between six to twelve months post relocation, where all aspects of the facility and functionality are assessed. Labor remains committed to a post-occupancy evaluation of the new RAH, which will commence during March 2018, marking six months since we moved into the new RAH. A hybrid operating theatre will be considered as part of this process.

What is the Labor Party's position on the development of a second hybrid operating theatre at FMC?

The installation of appropriate technology at public hospitals is continually under review and the development of a second hybrid operating theatre at Flinders Medical Centre (FMC) is no different.

As at the RAH, any progression to the development of a second hybrid operating theatre at FMC must be considered against the demand for specialist surgeries and follow a comprehensive evaluation of the proposed theatre.

The mortality audit program is part of an effective quality assurance activity aimed at the ongoing improvement of surgical care. The Current contract expires at the end of December 2018. RACS seeks a commitment from the Labor Party that a further three years funding will be supported.

The South Australian Labor Government is fully supportive of the mortality audit program and the impact it has on the continued improvement of surgical care. As is required with all Government contracts, the program will require review before a decision is made on extending its funding.

What are the Labor Party's policies to address alcohol-related harm?

The South Australian Labor Government believes in supporting evidence-based policies for reducing alcohol-related harm.

A re-elected Labor Government will be committed to supporting the South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy 2017-2021.

A copy of the South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy 2017-2021 is available at this [link](#). This strategy articulates a comprehensive response to reduce the impact of alcohol-harm.

Will you commit to raising this matter at COAG to assist in gaining agreement that all states and territories would commit to recognising 12 months' of continuous service in the public hospital system in Australia for eligibility to paid parental leave, rather than service in any one particular state or territory?

The South Australian Labor Government welcomes the opportunity to stand up for South Australia at national forums such as COAG.

We acknowledge the concerns raised by RACS in relation to the issues of training and movement across jurisdictional boundaries and commit to raising this issue for discussion at the next COAG meeting.

Will you work with hospital and health services to create an environment conducive to flexible training for surgical trainees?

The South Australian Labor Government is committed to supporting employees to balance their work, family and personal commitments and training for surgical trainees should be no different.

We welcome the engagement of RACS to identify environments where this is not occurring to ensure we are able to train world class and international leaders in surgery.