

# TAMMY FRANKS.

## Member of Legislative Council

David Walters  
Chair, SA Regional Committee  
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons  
PO Box 44  
North Adelaide SA 5006

Monday, 05 March 2018

Dear Mr Walters,

### RE: RACS 2018 Election Issues

Thank you for the invitation to respond to the RACS 2018 Election Issues, and for the opportunity to communicate with your members the Greens' vision for a strong, public health system.

The Greens acknowledge the important work that RACS does year round in the sector and the substantial effort that has been undertaken to collate information from various political parties in the lead-up to the 2018 State Election. We sincerely appreciate the time and effort your organisation puts into advocating for reform on these vital issues.

We believe that access to a comprehensive, high quality health care system is a basic human right, and that a public health system is the best way to deliver health services. Governments are responsible for ensuring that all people have access to the resources and opportunities essential for good health. Health service provision should be equitable, socially just and responsive to changing needs. Individual health outcomes are influenced by biological, social, economic and environmental factors, and these must be addressed as part of a comprehensive health care system.

First and foremost, I would direct you and your members to our state and national websites where all of our policies can be found, and in particular our health policies:

<https://greens.org.au/policies/sa/health>

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THE  
GREENS

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

The Greens are deeply concerned at the lack of consultation and evidence behind Transforming Health, and have repeatedly raised this issue both in the Parliament and in the media. I was also an active member of the select committee of inquiry that gave support to non-Government voices on Transforming Health. The Greens, therefore, recognise the stresses upon staff and resources, as well as the adverse flow on effects for patients, that have come as a result of these changes to the health system. We support greater investment in both our public hospital system and preventative health measures that will keep people out of hospital, thus reducing such pressures.

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

We support the RACS's call for an expansion of the Lyell McEwin and Modbury Hospital services (including additional resources for the NALHN in general) as a response to the failures of the new centralised mode of care and in the interest of improving outcomes for patients and staff.

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

The Greens strongly support evidence-based health policy and see great value establishing a clinical advisory group as a pathway to greater transparency in the operation of our health system, where evidence and clinical expertise drive decision making rather than political agenda and spin, as well as fostering a culture of mutual respect.

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

The Greens want guaranteed internship positions for all local graduates, with increased numbers of postgraduate positions in line with increasing numbers of graduates, and have previously raised this in Parliament. We believe it is important to stocktake the number of training positions available across the health system to allow for better future workforce planning, and we strongly support training positions in country hospitals, as well as in the private sector. The Greens also support the preservation and unhampered use of special purpose funds for research, while improving governance arrangements where appropriate.



**5. How does your party plan to build the surgical workforce of the future to address South Australia's ageing population and health needs?**

As well as recognising that there has been a net reduction in the number of training positions in South Australia, the Greens support an overall increase in surgeon numbers, particularly in specialist areas in order to secure our future health needs.

**6. What will your party do to ensure that public patients have access to the highest quality surgical technology?**

The Greens support the resourcing of new technologies where there is evidence of benefits to patients and the health system.

**7. Does your party remain committed to the development of a hybrid operating theatre at the RAH, and if so are you able to provide a timeline for when the facility will be available?**

It is a shame that a hybrid operating theatre was not included in the original RAH plans and the Greens support the RACS request to retrofit the facilities there. Whoever forms government after the election, we will call for this facility to be established as soon as practically possible.

**8. What is your party's position on the development of a second hybrid operating theatre at Flinders Medical Centre?**

The Greens are also supportive of a second hybrid theatre to be subsequently developed at Flinders Medical Centre.

**9. 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 your party that a further three years funding will be supported.**

The Greens recognise the importance of this program in understanding and reducing the number of surgical deaths. With the current contract expiring later this year, we support its funding for a further three years.



## **10. What are your party's policies to address alcohol-related harm?**

The Greens support working with all stakeholders to consult with consumers and carers to review the South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy 2011-2016. We want a whole-of-government response to alcohol and other drug use that addresses the disproportionate harm from substance misuse within vulnerable population groups.

The Greens believe that the response to illicit drug use is best addressed within a health and social framework, and that a harm minimisation approach is the most appropriate way to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of drug use, for both the individual user and the community.

All Australians with a substance abuse problem should have access to a range of evidence-based and regularly evaluated treatment and recovery services. Information and education programs should be available to enable informed debate about the effects of all drugs, including prescription, non-prescription, legal and illicit drugs.

We believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must control, to the greatest extent possible, the development and management of harm minimisation policies and treatment and recovery programs in their communities.

## **11. Commitment to recognising 12 months' of continuous service in the public hospital system in Australia for eligibility, rather than service in any one particular state or territory?**

The Greens agree that this is a matter that should be dealt with as a priority, recognising that the currently arrangements discourage women from choosing surgery as a career. We want to see a commitment from governments across all states and territories to adopt such a change.

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

Both nationally and in South Australia, the Greens have advocated for great flexibility across the workforce. We therefore agree with the RACS, that flexible training models enabling and normalising part-time have benefits for both surgeons and patients.

I hope this letter provides you and your members with some more information as to where the Greens stand. If you or your members have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at [franks.office@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:franks.office@parliament.sa.gov.au) or on 8237 9296.

Kind regards,



**Tammy Franks MLC**

Greens Member of the SA Legislative Council  
Lead Greens Candidate at the SA Election