

Dr David Walters
Chair, SA Regional Committee
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Dear Dr Walters

I write on behalf of the Liberal Party to provide a response to the key issues identified in the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons' letters of 22 January and 12 February 2018.

Surgical Services

As you will understand the Liberal Party has to operate from a starting point of the existing Health forward estimates outlined in Budget Papers. We will actively pursue efficiencies, particularly through improving quality and reducing bureaucracy. Importantly, all further efficiencies from the health budget will be reinvested in the health portfolio.

A Marshall Liberal Government will redistribute surgical services across NALHN with Modbury Hospital taking a larger volume of low to medium complexity surgery. This redistribution will be driven by clinicians and the new LHN Health Board to be established by a Liberal Government. The distribution will allow people to get care closer to home and ease the overcrowding at Lyell McEwin Hospital.

We will also re-establish a High Dependency Unit (HDU) at Modbury Hospital to:

- reduce the risk to patients with more than one condition, making more procedures possible at the hospital,
- provide a base for a medical emergency team within the hospital,

- ease the pressure on the Modbury Emergency Department,
- reduce the need for ambulance transfers to other hospitals.
- enable patients requiring breathing support to be stabilised before transfer, ease the pressure on Lyell McEwin Hospital.

The re-establishment of an HDU at Modbury is part of the State Liberal Team's commitment to invest [\\$110 million in Modbury Hospital](#).

Clinical Engagement

Health reform in South Australia has been severely and negatively impacted by the failure of both the management of SA Health and the Weatherill Government to effectively engage clinicians and communities.

The Liberal Party considers that health services will only develop as quality, safe, cost-effective services, if clinicians are engaged.

The Liberal Party has already announced key measures to improve engagement with clinicians. These include our commitments to establish a [Commission on Excellence and Innovation in Health](#) and to decentralise the public health system through the establishment of [boards of management for each Local Health Network](#). Importantly, clinicians will be included in the membership of each board and boards will also be required to develop a formal clinical engagement strategy.

Training and Workforce Planning

The State Liberals consider workforce planning, which engages professional and industrial organisations, is vital to ensure we can meet the current and future surgical needs of the SA public health system.

Until we effectively train and recruit the right number and mix of specialists, SA Health will be unable to manage effectively its emergency and elective surgery workload.

The State Liberals are concerned that the closure of the Repatriation General Hospital and the downgrading of three other metropolitan hospitals that occurred as part of Labor's Transforming Health changes have had a significant impact long-term on the training and retention of surgeons and other health professionals.

Under a Marshall Liberal Government, SA Health will engage LHNs in the development and implementation of statewide workforce strategies and plans, including the establishment and retention of training posts.

In addition, our \$20 million investment in the development and implementation of a [Rural Health Workforce Plan](#) includes commitments to:

- allocate teaching hospital funding to country LHNs in recognition of the fact that almost one-third of South Australians live in the regions. This will empower country LHNs to negotiate cooperative shared training arrangements with metropolitan LHNs
- double the number of medical interns in the country
- develop pathways for both rural generalists and GPs with procedural capabilities, with medical student and graduate training opportunities at country general hospitals being supplemented by placements in metropolitan hospitals
- support the recruitment and retention of resident specialists in country South Australia through the engagement of interns, registrars and career medical officers with specialist skills.

A Marshall Liberal Government will work with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the surgical workforce to increase significantly the efficiency and volume of elective surgery in South Australia.

Our investment in this area will include [\\$40 million to tackle the current blowout in overdue elective surgery](#) along with separate funding to address the overdue waiting list for a colonoscopy after a positive faecal occult blood test (FOBT) result.

Surgical Technology

Under a Marshall Liberal Government, a clinician-led [Commission on Excellence and Innovation in Health](#) will play a key role in ensuring South Australian public patients have access to quality procedures and treatments and the technologies required to deliver them.

Formal advice from the Commission will inform cabinet and budget submissions where funding is required for infrastructure and health hardware, including surgical technology.

The State Liberal Team has made a public commitment to undertake a clinical audit of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital if elected to Government on 17 March. The audit will examine the infrastructure at the new hospital, determine whether it is fit for purpose and also identify any gaps in the availability or otherwise of key equipment. As part of the audit, the view of

the Royal Australian College of Surgeons and other professional associations will be sought.

Once completed, the Government will develop a detailed response to address the audit's findings. This will include, if necessary, establishing a timeline for overcoming shortcomings.

A Marshall Liberal Government will consider the need for a second hybrid operating theatre at Flinders Medical Centre.

SA Audit of Surgical Mortality

A Marshall Liberal Government will actively support quality initiatives such as the South Australian Audit of Surgical Mortality. We anticipate that the SAASM contract will be renewed.

Alcohol Related Harm

A Marshall Liberal Government will actively promote responsible alcohol consumption, including through our preventative health initiatives ([Better Prevention for a Healthy South Australia](#) and [Targeted Preventative Health](#)).

Entitlements and Workforce Diversification

A Marshall Liberal Government will commit to discussing the issue of paid parental leave as outlined in the College's Election Issues statement with Federal and interstate Ministers. Before making a commitment on this issue we would also consult all stakeholders so that we are aware of all ramifications of such a decision.

A Marshall Liberal Government will seek to enhance the attractiveness of SA Health services to surgical trainees, including through part-time employment.

Our overarching goal is to recruit and retain a quality surgical workforce. A Marshall Liberal Government will insist that SA Health and Local Health Networks optimise the mix of full-time and part-time roles to meet that goal.

Transparency of Outpatient Waiting Times

If elected on 17 March, the Liberal Party is committed to ensuring GPs, surgeons and patients have access to accurate information on [outpatient clinic waiting times](#).

Specifically, from 1 July 2018 onwards, we will release information on outpatient clinic waiting times on a quarterly basis by speciality and by hospital. Such information will be available online.

Your sincerely,



Hon Stephen Wade MLC

Shadow Minister for Health and Wellbeing

6 March 2018