

RACS Aotearoa New Zealand Manifesto for Election 2026 - Responses from political parties

(as at 10.09.2026)

A. New Zealand Labour Party, 31 August 2026

- 1. Commit to planning, growing, and retaining a surgical workforce capable of meeting current and future need for safe, effective, and timely surgical care within an adequately resourced health system.**

Yes – we will reinstate transparent and collaborative workforce planning, to make sure patients get the care they need. We will work to ensure the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 includes workforce objectives.

- 2. Commit to making evidence-based decisions on the allocation of resources to address unmet need for surgical care whilst achieving needs-based equitable access to safe, effective, and timely surgical care for our diverse communities.**

Yes – every New Zealander should have access to care. We're also committed to improving our data and digital systems, to make sure they best serve the needs of patients. Over the long term, the health system needs ways to measure unmet need and make well-informed decisions on prioritisation.

- 3. Commit to planning and accelerating investment in better infrastructure to support the public healthcare system so we can meet current and future demand for surgery.**

Yes – we would like to work with you on how best to achieve this, to ensure we're making the most practical and effective investments for increasing long-term capacity in the public health system. In Government we were investing heavily in data and digital upgrades, as well as hospital infrastructure projects – many of which have been cut and stalled by the current National Government. Labour's track record is to invest in our health system, National's is to cut.

B. Green Party, 1 September 2026:

- 1. Surgical workforce**

The Green Party is committed to a publicly funded health system that can plan for, grow, and retain the surgical workforce needed across Aotearoa. We support long-term workforce planning that includes training more health professionals locally, improving placement and supervision capacity, and creating conditions that keep experienced staff in the public system. That means adequate funding, safe staffing, fair pay, investment in Māori and Pacific health workforce pathways, and practical support for rural and regional services. We also recognise the value of working alongside RACS and others to ensure training, recruitment, retention, and wellbeing initiatives are based on evidence and future demand.

- 2. Evidence-based and equitable resource allocation:**

The Green Party supports evidence-based decisions that direct resources to where they will make the greatest difference for people with unmet need for surgical care. This requires better data collection on unmet need, waiting times, outcomes, and barriers to access, including for Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people, older people, and rural and regional communities. We support transparent decision-making, stronger public health planning, and investment in prevention, diagnostics, primary care, and hospital capacity so people receive the right care at the right time.

1. Infrastructure investment:

A strong public health system requires sustained public investment, not short-term fixes or over-reliance on private provision. The Green Party is committed to accelerating investment in the public health infrastructure needed to meet current and future demand, with long-term capital planning that is transparent, evidence-based, and aligned with current, and projected, population need. We are also supportive of reversing the job cuts in Data and Digital at Te Whatu Ora, to provide enable working digital health infrastructure now, and into the with growth to cover increasing future need.

C. ACT 2 September 2026

1. Commit to planning, growing, and retaining a surgical workforce capable of meeting current and future need for safe, effective, and timely surgical care within an adequately resourced health system

ACT believes that the Ministry of Health should be working with all health stakeholders on a 10-year workforce plan. This would include what roles and training is required in relation the surgical workforce.

2. Commit to making evidence-based decisions on the allocation of resources to address unmet need for surgical care whilst achieving needs-based equitable access to safe, effective, and timely surgical care for our diverse communities

ACT is committed to needs-based healthcare for all New Zealanders. Minister Seymour as the Minister responsible Pharmac has ensured that medicines funding decisions are based on clinical evidence along with cost-effectiveness. We support more healthcare funding decisions, particularly within Health New Zealand, being based on similar evidence.

3. Commit to planning and accelerating investment in better infrastructure to support the public healthcare system so we can meet current and future demand for surgery.

There has not been a substantial improvement in health productivity in New Zealand for many years. New technologies, including AI, have the potential to address this issue. ACT would continue to put in place pathways for the quicker adoption of new medical technologies into our health system.