
Adequate specialist surgical training

Labor is committed to making sure that our hospitals and health services meet the needs of our community.

Training and development of Victoria’s health workforce, including surgical trainees, is an investment in the future of our health system. It is essential that surgical trainees gain their practical experience in settings which provide quality teaching and mentoring, quality infrastructure and guarantee quality care for patients. Labor will continue to invest in programs to support high quality training and development of Victoria’s health workforce, with programs such as the current people in health program.

Labor will also work with universities, health services and specialist colleges to maximise the number of training posts available and will review existing coordination arrangements, such as the Medical Education Planning Group to ensure they are focussed and effective.

As the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) rightly identifies, it is the quality and availability of hospital and health infrastructure that underpins quality training. The Napthine Government has cut $831 million from the health budget, and the Federal Government is cutting a further $1.4 billion over the next four years. This has seen the number of people waiting for surgery hit over 50,000 for the first time in Victorian history.

While we want surgeons and other specialists to get the training they need to deliver world class health services for Victorians, it also important that trainees have fair working conditions, including guaranteed time off and maximum shift lengths. The current EBA for doctor training establishes working conditions for trainees. This is a question of safety for trainees and patients as well as quality of life for trainees.

Alcohol abuse and related violence and trauma

Labor recognises the devastating effect misuse and overuse of alcohol has on the individual, their family and the broader public through poorer health, increased violence, and avoidable injuries and deaths.

Labor believes that a comprehensive and multi-layered approach needs to be taken to address these issues, including education, alcohol regulation and criminal justice responses.

Labor will work in partnership with health services and health promotion bodies to deliver education and support programs that promote healthier attitudes to alcohol and reduce the number of alcohol related hospital admissions.

When it comes to liquor licensing and regulation, the Coalition Government is fundamentally failing in its responsibilities to provide a strong regulatory environment. Labor will fix the disastrous merger by the Napthine Government of the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation and Liquor Licensing Victoria into one body, the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (the VCGLR).
Timely and safe access to surgical care throughout Victoria

The length of time patients wait for surgical care reflects the state of the entire health system. As the RACS highlights, bed shortages, lack of skilled staff and appropriate infrastructure are leading to dangerous over-crowding in emergency departments and blow-outs in surgery waiting lists.

It is clear the system is not working.

Labor is committed to making sure that our hospitals and health services meet the needs of our community. We will work with our hardworking doctors and nurses to rebuild our health system, and give Victorians the health care they deserve.

Despite promising 800 extra hospital beds, the Napthine Government has only delivered an extra 43 beds, and will not say where they are. Labor will appoint respected surgeon and former AMA Victoria President, Dr Doug Travis, to conduct a state-wide census of bed and theatre capacity, and provide recommendations about how to increase the capacity of Victorian hospitals.

This will build on the significant new hospital infrastructure and services which will be delivered by Labor, including:

- Building Australia’s first heart hospital – Monash Heart
- $20 million to build new Intensive Care (ICU) and Short Stay Units at the Angliss Hospital.
- $10 million for cardiovascular service (including an additional cath lab) at Ballarat Health Services

Response to Federal Budget Health Funding changes

The Federal Government is cutting $1.4 billion from the Victorian health budget over the next four years. This, together with the proposed GP co-payment, will have a devastating effect on Victoria’s health system.

Cuts to the National Health Reform Agreement payments to Victoria will reduce bed numbers, reduce activity and blow out patient waiting times. Beyond the forward estimates, there will be a further $12.5 billion cut from Victoria over the next decade.

The Federal Government’s GP co-payment will force Victorians to go to already struggling hospital emergency departments. This added congestion in emergency departments will flow to all parts of health care in Victoria – ambulance services, mental health care and elective surgery waiting times.

These cuts to National Health Reform Agreement undermine the very agreement which aims to end the “blame game” between states and the Federal Government.

While Labor can’t undo these cuts, we are committed to working with our hardworking doctors and nurses to rebuild our health system, and give Victorians the health care they deserve.

Development of a comprehensive surgical research infrastructure throughout Victoria Hospitals

Victorian Labor understands the importance of critical reflection and new research to enhance medical care. We have a strong record of support for biomedical research and delivered more than

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1 Labor will make further health announcements made in the lead up to the election on November 29.
$4 billion to medical and biotechnology research and innovation over the life of the previous Government.

As the RACS notes, the capacity for surgeons to allow time to reflect on their practice and undertake research is limited by pressure on the broader hospital system to deliver basic care.

Labor will work with universities, health services and specialist colleges such as the RACS to support surgical research and ensure specialists are connected with Victoria’s world leading medical research capacity. This includes the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre, the Peter Doherty Institute and support for hospital research.