
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE



Surgeons push Vic political parties on increased healthcare and infrastructure and action on alcohol abuse

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In the lead-up to this month's Victorian State Election, The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) has identified a number of key areas of health focus.

RACS compiled responses from the Coalition, Labour and Greens, and held a dedicated pre-election Health Forum with all three parties at the College's office in Spring Street, Melbourne.

RACS Victorian Regional Chair and surgeon Jason Chuen said the specific focus areas included better patient access to surgical care throughout Victoria especially in regional areas, better hospital funding, adequate specialist surgical training opportunities and a comprehensive surgical research infrastructure throughout Victorian hospitals.

"Both major political parties have committed to increased hospital infrastructure and upgrades, for example establishing the Monash Heart Hospital – a dedicated cardiac hospital inside the Monash Medical Centre Campus," Mr Chuen said.

"The Coalition said it would also upgrade hospitals such Geelong, Frankston and Ballarat Base hospital, while Labour said it would pour more money into Angliss and St Vincent's Hospitals.

"Nevertheless the issue of ongoing funding for staff and operating costs beyond these brick-and-mortar investments remains unresolved.

"RACS recognises the Coalition's commitment to do more in relation to alcohol related harm particularly in areas such as stricter planning processes for liquor outlets, interlock devices for drink drivers and an extended freeze on late night liquor licences," the RACS Victorian Chair said.

The College believes that raising the barriers to purchasing alcohol is an effective means of reducing alcohol consumption and alcohol-related injury. The College's key messages are to tackle Hours - Outlets - Taxes (HOT).

"As a community and society, we need to reduce the number of 'Hours' alcohol is available, particularly after 2am, reduce the number of 'Outlets' where alcohol can be purchased in our community and we must have an effective alcohol Taxation and pricing policy to bring about behavioural change," Mr Chuen said.

At the RACS Pre-Election Forum, both major parties expressed an intention to reduce financial and workload strain on the public hospital system. Labor proposed diverting a small part of its health budget to reducing hospital admissions and demands and working with Medicare locals to reduce hospital demand, if it won government.

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