



Union Factsheet

More doctors, nurses and better healthcare

We need an affordable high quality health system

- All Australians will benefit from Government health and hospital system reforms and measures to strengthen Medicare.
- The reforms will provide more hospital beds, reduced waiting times for emergencies & elective surgery, more doctors, more aged care beds and additional mental health services.
- Nurses and other health unions have helped win \$1 billion from the Labor Government to recruit, train, and increase the skills of workers in aged care and the broader health sector.
- Unions are campaigning to make sure our health system meets the needs of modern working life – to be accessible and provide the best quality for all Australians no matter where we live or how much we earn.
- Unions worked with the former Hawke Labor Government to create Medicare in the first place.
- We strongly support an affordable high quality public health system, not a user-pays one where access to medical care depends on how rich you are.

Healthier system – better hospitals and care

Unions worked with the Hawke Labor Govt to create Medicare

This year the Labor Government has introduced the most significant reforms to Australia's health and hospitals system since Medicare by creating a National Health and Hospitals Network that is funded nationally, and run locally. The reforms will mean:

- **More doctors** - increased training places and opportunities for young doctors will deliver an extra 5,500 new or training General Practitioners, 680 medical specialists, and 5,400 pre-vocational GP training places over the coming decade. (Cost \$640 million)
- **More nurses** - support for around 4,600 full-time practice nurses in GP clinics and more people to train and join the aged care sector and to upgrade the qualifications of our existing aged care nurses and help them stay in the workforce. (\$600 million)
- **More hospital beds** - an extra 1,300 new sub-acute beds by 2013-14 in areas such as rehabilitation, palliative care, and mental health services. (\$1.6 billion)

Better access to health services

The Labor Govt's health reforms will deliver:

- more doctors

- more nurses

- shorter waiting times

The Labor Government's reforms will also give working families better access to health services through:

- **After Hours GPs** - a national after hours GP service where after hours calls to GP practices will go to a call centre where either a nurse or GP will assist – or a coordinated referral made to a local after hours GP service. (\$417 million)
- **GP clinics** - more GP Super Clinics and expanded GP clinics around the country. (\$355 million)
- **Shorter waits at Emergency Departments** - a package to ensure patients are treated, admitted to hospital or referred to a GP clinic within four hours of walking in the door, progressively implemented from 1 January 2011. (\$750 million)
- **Elective surgery** - additional elective surgery procedures with a guarantee that 95 per cent of surgery will be delivered on time from 1 July 2012. Patients who wait longer than the recommended time are seen rapidly in another public or private hospital at no expense to themselves. (\$800 million)

A new national after hours nurse and GP service

- **Diabetes** - improved care for diabetes patients meaning that patients will have the option of a GP clinic to coordinate their care, including help to keep them well and stay out of hospital. (\$449 million)
- **Mental Health** - additional mental health services including services for young people, early intervention, mental health nurses and additional care packages. (\$176 million)
- **Aged care** - a nationally consistent, Commonwealth-run aged care system to provide more beds, extra packages of care and more GP and primary care services in aged care facilities. (\$812 million)

Better outcomes and management

The Federal Government's reforms will also mean better outcomes, by:

New national hospital standards to guarantee quality care regardless of where you live

- **E-health** - In a major revolution for the delivery of healthcare in Australia the Government is investing \$467 million to establish personal electronic health records.
- **New standards** - the Labor Government will introduce clear and transparent performance reporting against high national standards and performance indicators. This includes access times for elective surgery and emergency departments.
- **Funded nationally** - The Commonwealth will become the dominant funder of Australia's public hospitals, funding 60 per cent of hospital activity, new and operating capital, and teaching, training and research costs. For the first time, the Commonwealth will fund all GP and primary care services and all aged care services.
- **Run locally** - Local Hospital Networks will be established – to provide local clinicians and local communities with a greater say in how their hospital services are delivered.
- While 90% of the country is now signed up to these arrangements – the Federal Government continues to discuss options for how this system could be implemented in Western Australia.

Beware of the Liberals' record on health

Under John Howard and Tony Abbott there was a move towards user pays and a downgrading of Medicare

- Liberal leader Tony Abbott was a Minister for Health in John Howard's Liberal Government and he has a record of neglect.
- Under John Howard and Tony Abbott there was a move towards user pays and a downgrading of Medicare and our public hospital and health system.
- Tony Abbott's record in health was less money for hospitals, not enough GPs and no reform agenda.
- Mr Abbott cut \$1 billion from the public hospital system, restricted the number of doctors by capping training places and failed to fix the shortage of nurses.
- Tony Abbott and the Liberal/National Coalition have already announced they would cut \$822 million from the health system – meaning fewer doctors and nurses and less money for hospitals.
- The Liberal Opposition will cancel the e-health program and cancel the upgrading of 425 existing GP clinics.
- Over a decade tobacco companies have given the Coalition \$2.5 million in political donations. The Opposition says they are "legitimate businesses" and have no problem with taking their money.

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