AMA Scorecard

1. **End dangerous delays in hospital care.**

Beginning with its first budget, fund the staffed acute, subacute, and rehabilitation capacity needed to reduce access block, require clinical and executive review and corrective action for every emergency department stay of more than 24 hours, and publish results for each hospital.

No patient should spend more than a day in an emergency department waiting for the care they need. These delays are distressing for patients and families and place enormous pressure on health professionals.

We recognise that addressing access block requires staffed beds, a sustainable workforce and better access to rehabilitation, subacute and community care.

If elected, the Liberals and Nationals will establish a $99 million Patient Transit Lounge Fund, which will provide up to 10 new or expanded transit lounges in Victorian public hospitals. This initiative will prioritise hospitals where access block is most severe.

A Liberal and Nationals Government will work with clinicians and health services to identify and address gaps, strengthen clinical governance and accountability to provide timely patient care and reduce length of stays.

We will also work with the Federal Government to identify ways to better manage aged care and NDIS patients.

2. **Make specialist care visible and navigable.**

Publish standardised quarterly waiting data, ensure one clinically appropriate referral is enough, and fund the public specialist positions and networked services needed to reduce delay.

Reducing the elective surgery waitlist is a priority for the Coalition, which is why we will invest $1.27 billion over four years on our Surgery Sooner policy, which will halve the waitlist by delivering an extra 25,000 surgeries per year, utilising unused capacity within the health system, including in private hospitals.

Reporting remains inconsistent and incompatible systems hamper timely referrals and reliable data collection.

It is unacceptable to have the situation that occurred in Mildura, where 150 patient referrals were forgotten in a cardboard box.

If elected to Government, we will examine the barriers to visibility of the ‘hidden waitlist’ of patients referred for surgery but not yet on a surgical waitlist while they wait for a specialist appointment

Reporting should be timely and easy to understand. It should inform decisions, drive improvements across the health system and ultimately deliver better care for all Victorians.

3. **Restore capacity for severe and acute mental illness.**

Fund additional acute, subacute, and rehabilitation care and its specialist workforce, identify where genuinely new beds are operating, and publish meaningful access and outcome data.

We are concerned about the pressures facing Victoria's mental health system. Our announced reforms include an independent review of the implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations, and a new Mental Health Workforce Strategy within 100 days, backed by a $50 million targeted fund.

We will also review the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission to strengthen its independence, powers and system-wide oversight, and publish a Mental Health Reform Blueprint with clear priorities, responsibilities, timeframes, funding and measurable outcomes.

4. **Give chronic pain proper priority.**

Expand public multidisciplinary pain services, particularly in regional Victoria, strengthen the pain medicine workforce, and report demand, waiting times, and outcomes.

We recognise the debilitating impact of chronic pain and the difficulties many Victorians face accessing coordinated specialist care, particularly in regional areas. If elected, we will work with clinicians and health services to identify and address these gaps. Better reporting of demand, waiting times and patient outcomes must inform that work.

Our SurgerySooner program will also help people with chronic conditions access the surgery they may need to reduce their pain, such as hip or knee replacements and gynaecological procedures.

A Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to improving access to healthcare closer to home for regional Victorians. Our plan includes $40 million over four years to establish a Victorian Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme, helping regional hospitals attract and retain doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals, including physios and occupational therapists.

We will also invest in rebuilds and upgrades of hospitals across the state to improve access to services and provide jobs.

5. **Keep general practice, community health, and private specialist practice viable.**

Stop transferring unfunded work, protect community health general practice services for vulnerable patients, and provide a full payroll tax exemption for general practice and private specialist services.

We have listened to GPs about the impact of Labor’s health tax on the viability of practices and that’s why we will extend the exemption of GPs from payroll tax to all consultations – not just bulk billing.

The Labor Government capitulated on its original position that there had been no change to payroll tax assessments and legislated partial exemption (bulk billed services) only after a sustained campaign from the RACGP and the Opposition.

We understand the critical role of GPs in the community.

We are also very cognisant of the role community health plays in our health system in keeping people out of the acute system by managing chronic illness such as diabetes, mental health, cardiovascular disease, renal issues, cancer and respiratory failure.

6. **Build the medical workforce Victoria needs**.

Conclude a fair public hospital doctors' enterprise agreement, fund training places in line with graduate numbers and service need, create sustainable public specialist positions, and publish the data needed for sound workforce decisions.

The Liberals and Nationals are committed to listening to clinicians and working with the sector to build a health system that is sustainable, responsive and focused on delivering better patient outcomes.

Workforce shortages remain one of the most significant challenges facing healthcare services across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria. We need to do more to attract, train and retain health professionals across the system. That's why we have committed to investing $40 million over four years to establish a Victorian Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme, helping regional hospitals attract and retain doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals.

As part of our capital works program, where possible, we will also include worker accommodation in recognition of the rental market barriers affecting many health professionals looking at moving to these regional and rural health services.

We will develop a comprehensive workforce plan with clear staffing targets and delivery timelines. It will identify the gaps and develop a meaningful plan to address workforce challenges, as well as addressing the training and personal development needs of health professionals across the state.

Health workers face unacceptable violence and relentless workloads that drive burnout. A Liberal and Nationals Government will trial PSOs for two years in the seven emergency departments with the highest levels of violence to protect staff, deter aggression and de-escalate incidents.

7. **Give doctors time back and support safe, sustainable careers**.

Make Getting Rid of Stupid Stuff an ongoing partnership, remove duplication, and protect doctors from fatigue, occupational violence, and exploitation.

Labor has failed to fix persistent IT problems that leave health professionals spending more time on paperwork and less time treating patients. Clinicians continue to report frustrating system failures, while experts tell us the Department has rejected proven solutions.

Clinicians want the best patient outcomes possible. We should be enabling them with the tools that can make that happen. We will be guided by the knowledge and experience of those on the frontline on how to best remove duplication and improve systems that lead to better patient outcomes.

The rise in violence against doctors, nurses and other health staff demands action. Our PSO policy would strengthen hospital security, with de-escalation skills central to the role.

8. **Deliver regional and rural health equity.**

Establish a parliamentary inquiry while acting now on extreme hospital waits, medical training and retention, statewide digital access, and the real cost of travelling for care.

Labor have long under-invested in regional and rural Victoria, and this neglect is particularly evident when it comes to health infrastructure.

Under our fair share guarantee, 25% of all infrastructure spending will be made in regional Victoria, because 25% of Victorians live in the regions. We have committed to:

- Hospital redevelopments at Wonthaggi, West Gippsland, Albury Wodonga Health, Bairnsdale, Mildura, Goulburn Valley Cancer Centre, Rosebud and Hamilton
- Upgrades at Colac, Daylesford and Ararat Urgent Care Centres and a modern health and wellbeing hub in Mortlake
- New ambulance stations at Armstrong Creek, Mansfield and Kalkallo

We will also establish a Victorian Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme where doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals will be offered incentives of up to $10,000 to fill critical jobs in rural and regional health services. Victoria is training more health workers than ever before, but too many graduates are concentrated in metropolitan Melbourne while rural and regional health services continue to struggle to fill vacancies at all levels and maintain workforces.

As part of our capital works program, where possible, we will also include worker accommodation in recognition of the rental market barriers affecting many health professionals looking at moving to these regional and rural health services.

The Coalition has long been advocating on behalf of regional Victorians for an increase in the accommodation and fuel subsidies under the Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme, which are the lowest in the country under Labor and had barely moved in a decade. A Liberal and Nationals Government will raise the accommodation subsidy from $49.50 to $125 per night and the private-vehicle rate from 21 to 35 cents per kilometre. We will also review how patient claims are processed. While current guidelines allow up to eight weeks for reimbursement, many people are waiting even longer.

9. **Protect prevention and act earlier.**

Reconsider the dissolution of VicHealth, preserve dedicated prevention funding and an independent public health voice, and improve equitable access to proven programs.

Preventative care is fundamental to a sustainable health system.

In the past 12 years under Labor it has largely been forgotten.

VicHealth has a real role to play in preventative health, which is why we opposed the Government's push to abolish it. We need to invest in keeping Victorians healthy, not just treating them when they become sick. They have a proven track record of preventative and educational campaigns on smoking and obesity that had attracted bipartisan support.

Under the Liberals and Nationals, VicHealth will continue as an independent body. Their work in early intervention and education is vitally important for keeping people out of hospital.

We will also support the work of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute to continue the rollout of their GenV program, which follows almost 50,000 children and 75,000 parents across Victoria to better understand children's health, development and wellbeing.

The vital data collected through Gen V will help researchers identify emerging health issues, improve early diagnosis and develop more effective prevention and intervention programs.

We will also make a substantial investment in the future of the medical research sector in Victoria, with $100m to support the operating costs of our medical research institutes.

And today we are committing $16 million over four years to expand the Brain Perioperative Program (BrainPOP), Victoria's cancer clinical trials program. The funding will support the next phase of BrainPOP, helping to increase innovative clinical trials for brain cancer patients and expand access to precision medicine or novel treatment options.

Additionally, we will roll out the meningococcal B vaccine to all Victorian infants under 12 months and all Year 10 students, as well as a catch up program for children up to two years and young people aged 15-19 years.

10. **Connect the system and make reform work.**

Deliver a statewide electronic medical record and interoperable referrals, put medical leadership at the centre of reform, and ensure new models of care are safe, connected, and properly evaluated.

Labor has failed to act despite repeated system failures and warnings from health professionals. Frustrated clinicians are left navigating fragmented services that too often fail to deliver safe, timely care for patients.

We do not need to reinvent the wheel. Proven approaches in Australia and overseas can guide reform, with frontline clinicians helping determine what will work in practice.

Addressing this issue will be a priority for a Liberals and Nationals Government.