Ben Carroll
&Labor

23 November 2026

Dr Simon Judkins
President
Australian Medical Association Victoria

Dear Dr Judkins,

Thank you for your letter of 2 November 2026 and for AMA Victoria's continued advocacy on behalf of Victoria's medical workforce.

As Premier, I have put healthcare at the centre of Labor's election campaign because I believe every Victorian deserves access to high-quality healthcare, no matter where they live or how much they earn.

Labor has built 12 new hospitals and hired thousands more healthcare workers including doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals. We are building the capacity of our public health system, making healthcare more affordable and backing the people who care for Victorians every day.

Reducing waiting times and improving access to specialist care

A re-elected Carroll Labor Government will invest $1.5 billion to increase capacity across 12 emergency departments, hire 1,500 additional healthcare workers and deliver 250 more beds – treating an additional 210,000 patients each year and reducing waiting times by up to 20 per cent.

Labor will also invest $1.17 billion to deliver 100,000 more planned surgeries in our public hospitals and halve the waiting list.

We will also invest more than $195 million to deliver 500,000 additional specialist appointments, building on Victoria's Specialist Care Reform Blueprint to improve access and coordination across our specialist care system.

Supporting Victorians experiencing mental ill-health

Labor has undertaken the most significant reform of Victoria's mental health system in generations.

We have delivered more than 180 additional acute public mental health beds, with a further 50 funded through the 2026–27 Victorian Budget.

Labor has rolled out Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals across Victoria – providing free treatment, care and support closer to home. And if re-elected, we will invest $19.5 million to deliver an additional new Local for Wendouree and Ararat.

We have also committed $6 million to plan a new 100-bed acute mental health unit at Casey Hospital – an announcement welcomed by AMA Victoria.

Fighting *for* working people.

Authorised by Steve Staikos, Australian Labor Party (Victorian Branch), 438 Docklands Drive, Docklands.

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A re-elected Labor Government will also deliver two new mental health, alcohol and drug (AOD) hubs in Bendigo and Shepparton. The hubs will give people experiencing a mental health, alcohol or drug crisis their own space and specialist care in the ED. This $84 million investment means every region in Victoria will have a hub – just as the Royal Commission recommended.

Giving chronic pain and women's health the attention they deserve

For too long, women's pain has been misunderstood, dismissed or left untreated.

Labor's landmark Inquiry into Women's Pain heard from more than 13,000 women and girls, delivering 27 recommendations to address the gender pain gap.

We have introduced Victoria's first Women's Pain Standard and delivered 20 free women's health clinics, providing specialist, multidisciplinary care for conditions including endometriosis and pelvic pain.

Labor is also making reproductive healthcare more affordable. We established public IVF and if re-elected, we will invest $120 million to make non-invasive prenatal testing free, benefiting around 60,000 expectant mothers every year.

We recognise the importance of timely diagnosis, coordinated treatment and appropriate care for all Victorians living with chronic pain.

Supporting primary care, community health and prevention

A strong health system extends well beyond the walls of our public hospitals.

Labor recognises the importance of a sustainable general practice, community health and private specialist sector in preventing illness, supporting early diagnosis and improving health outcomes.

Through urgent care services, the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department and expanded community-based care for people living with chronic illness, we are helping Victorians access appropriate care while reducing avoidable pressure on our hospitals.

Building and backing Victoria's medical workforce

None of these reforms would be possible without our dedicated medical workforce.

This year, 965 medical interns commenced their careers in Victoria's public health system, supported by Labor's $203 million investment in our health workforce.

We want doctors spending more time with patients, not navigating unnecessary administrative processes. We also want doctors to have safe, supportive workplaces and rewarding, sustainable careers in Victoria.

I am pleased to confirm that a re-elected Labor Government will continue to work with AMA Victoria in good faith on your priority to give doctors' time back and support safe, sustainable careers.

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We recognise the important work of AMA Victoria and ASMOF Victoria through the *Getting Rid of Stupid Stuff* initiative, which has already informed the development of our statewide Recognition of Prior Learning Framework.

We will build on this work, reducing unnecessary administrative burdens and duplicated training, while recognising the importance of addressing fatigue, psychosocial hazards and supporting flexible career pathways.

No healthcare worker should face violence, threats or abuse simply for doing their job.

That's why Labor will also expand Workplace Protection Orders to hospitals and invest $30 million in practical measures to make hospitals safer.

Delivering better healthcare closer to home

Where someone lives should never determine the quality of healthcare they receive.

Thirty per cent of Labor's additional 100,000 planned surgeries will be delivered in regional Victoria, and our emergency department expansion will deliver significant additional regional capacity.

Through the Victorian Rural Generalist Program and Single Employer Model, we are supporting doctors to train, work and build sustainable careers in rural and regional communities.

Our Local Health Service Networks are also strengthening collaboration between health services, improving coordination and supporting more Victorians to access care closer to home.

Protecting Victoria's public health system

This election presents a clear choice.

While Labor is investing in our public hospitals and growing our healthcare workforce, modelling of the Liberals' $40 billion in cuts puts more than 12,000 public hospital jobs and 1,300 hospital beds at risk.

While One Nation is advocating for hospital privatisation and abolishing the Department of Health, Labor will always stand for a public health system where access to care is determined by clinical need, not the ability to pay or postcode.

I want to thank AMA Victoria and its members for your continued advocacy, expertise and dedication to improving healthcare for all Victorians.

I look forward to continuing to work with AMA Victoria and ASMOF Victoria to build a stronger health system that supports both the Victorians who rely on it and the dedicated medical professionals who make it possible.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Carroll

Ben Carroll MP
Premier of Victoria

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