AMA VICTORIA 2026 ELECTION PRIORITIES
Victorian Greens' response

1. End dangerous delays in hospital care

Emergency department stays of more than 24 hours risk harm to patients, and indicate significant stress on the emergency department workforce, but are also an alarm signal that other things are not working elsewhere in our health system. We support mandatory reporting and transparency requirements regarding 24 hour breaches.

Additionally, the Victorian Greens will address access block by:

1. Stopping people needing hospital and helping get them out faster
    a. Investing in health promotion and prevention to stop people needing hospital in the first place
        i. Saving VicHealth
        ii. Spending 5% of the health budget on health promotion and prevention
    b. Supporting and expanding community health and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations
        i. Increasing spending on community health and ACCHO services and infrastructure to at least 3% of the health budget
    c. Making dental free (dental is a major driver of preventable hospitalisations, and the leading cause in children under 10)
        i. Expanding access to public dental care
        ii. Investing in preventative dental care
2. Investing more in mental health
    a. Ensuring a health led response to mental health crises both within and outside of hospital settings
    b. Investing in community based and inpatient addiction support
    c. More community based free mental health services with a one front door approach
    d. Investing in expanding the mental health workforce
    e. Funding culturally safe mental health supports, including Healing Centres, for First Nations people
3. Investing in public housing
    a. Delivering promised funding for housing support for people with complex mental health and psychosocial needs
    b. Investing in supported housing for people with disabilities
4. Supporting hospital workforce
    a. Improving pay and conditions for all health workers including allied health, nurses and doctors to improve safety, workforce retention and morale.
    b. Investing in more allied health workers to help run more services outside of business hours
    c. Establishing a Victorian Taskforce on Occupational Violence in Healthcare
5. Freeing up beds
    a. Investing in more staffed hospital beds, as well as more rehabilitation and aged care beds, so patients who no longer need acute care can free up acute care beds
6. Rural and regional healthcare

a. Establish a parliamentary inquiry into rural and regional healthcare in Victoria
b. Develop a regional and rural health workforce strategy

2. Make specialist care visible and navigable
The Victorian Greens have long advocated for greater access to public specialist care. As highlighted in the recent Grattan Institute report, access to specialist care is patchy and unlinked to local needs.

Additionally, the system is complex to navigate for patients and referrers, with different referral processes within and between health services, duplication, and long wait times.

We support standardised quarterly waiting data, a single clinically appropriate referral, and more public specialist positions and networked services. We believe strengthened public specialist services need to be backed by development of a comprehensive workforce strategy to ensure the specialist training pipeline is planned for and funded.

3. Restore capacity for severe and acute mental illness
The Victorian Greens have strongly advocated for the implementation of the recommendations from the Royal Commission. We know that our systems are currently unable to adequately support people experiencing severe and acute mental illness, and this is contributing to pressure in other parts of our health system, as well as causing stress and burnout for our mental health workforce.

The Greens support the AMA's calls for funding acute, subacute and rehabilitation care with the specialist workforce to run it. We support transparency on where genuinely new beds are operating and on access and outcome data, so the public can see what has actually been delivered and service and workforce planning can be based on real-world data.

4. Give chronic pain proper priority
The Victorian Greens understand that chronic pain presents a significant burden for thousands of Victorians, diminishing their quality of life and ability to participate in society.

Access to care is difficult due to stigma, misunderstanding, and lack of availability of appropriate multidisciplinary models, especially in rural and regional Victoria. We support expanding public multidisciplinary pain services and building the pain medicine workforce that can provide holistic, connected care. We also support adequate and transparent reporting on demand, waits and outcomes.

5. Keep general practice, community health, and private specialist practice viable
The Victorian Greens strongly support greater investment in community health services, and want to see investment lifted to 3% of the health operational and infrastructure budgets.

While we believe that primary care funding needs a fundamental overhaul at the federal level to ensure that it is more sustainable and suited to contemporary population health needs, particularly increased chronic disease and increased administrative needs, given the current settings we support a payroll tax exemption for general practice.

The current payroll tax requirements undermine bulk billing incentives and make it more expensive for people to access healthcare. We are also open to reviewing the settings for specialist practices.

6. Build the medical workforce Victoria needs

We support the current advocacy of public hospital doctors, including doctors-in-training, for fair pay and safe working conditions, and will advocate for a fair and timely resolution to EBA negotiations. We are also advocating for a comprehensive long-term workforce plan that considers the training pipeline.

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

Burnout, fatigue and occupational violence are safety issues for patients as well as doctors. We have previously highlighted the value of "Getting Rid of Stupid Stuff" and support an ongoing partnership and systems that reduce duplication. As stated previously, we support strengthening of conditions to prevent fatigue and exploitation.

We know that overcrowding and long wait times in our hospital services contributes to occupational violence, and our plan for a systematic approach to address access block is a core strategy to reducing the risk of violence. We also support the establishment of a Victorian Taskforce on Occupational Violence in Healthcare.

8. Deliver regional and rural health equity

Rural and regional Victorians should not be denied access to healthcare simply because of their postcode. Yet we know that health outcomes on many metrics, particularly chronic and preventable diseases, some cancers, and sexual and reproductive health, are worse than for Victorians living in metropolitan areas.

The Victorian Greens strongly support a parliamentary inquiry into rural and regional healthcare. We also want to see a workforce strategy that considers the particular challenges of rural training and retention. We support the modernisation and streamlining of digital systems across our health services. We also support increased funding for those who need to travel to access care, with current payments totally failing to reflect actual costs.

9. Protect prevention and act earlier

The Victorian Greens understand that every dollar spent on prevention eases pressure on hospitals later. We are strongly opposed to dissolving VicHealth into the Department of Health. VicHealth provides a crucial prevention education service across Victoria, and their independence means they are willing to take on interests that governments have historically been timid about, like big alcohol, tobacco, and gambling industries. Losing that independent voice would only create worse health outcomes for Victorians and a greater strain on our hospitals.

The Victorian Greens also believe looking after people's foundational needs such as safe and affordable housing, access to nutritious food and limits on gambling and alcohol advertising support better health outcomes. Our broader election platform addresses all of these critical social determinants of health.

10. Connect the system and make reform work

The Victorian Greens support a statewide electronic medical record and interoperable referrals, with clinician-informed reform design. Currently, fragmentation leads to duplication, inhibits communication, and contributes to clinical risk and patient harm. We agree that new models of care must be safe, connected, and properly evaluated, and believe in the central importance of clinical leadership so that these models actually work for end-users. However, we hold concerns about rolling out new technology, particularly AI, without strict safeguards, privacy protections, and evaluation.

You can read more about our plan for Victoria's health system here:
https://greens.org.au/vic/platform/health