

As the Victorian Election on Saturday 24 November gets closer, the VHA will provide updates on the latest policy announcements in the VHA Update every fortnight in the new Victorian Election Alert segment.

In this edition, further analysis is available on the largest hospital funding infrastructure announcement to date in this campaign, the Coalition's support for care in the community, as well as a look at the first health funding promise revealed by the Green Party. All health announcements, so far, are displayed in a table; this will continue to be updated in every edition by the VHA.

Please let the VHA know if you would like further information on any of the policies, or feedback to the VHA on any concerns that you may have on the policies. Contact Ben Rogers via [email](#) or phone 03 9094 7714.

Party	Announcement	Funding	Members Impacted	Notes	Source
Green	Restore funding to mental health. This includes \$200m over 4 years for community mental health services for those not NDIS eligible	\$270m	This will benefit providers of community mental health, as well as the state's hospitals if it can reduce emergency mental health admissions.	Labor recently announced \$70m over 2 years for community mental health. It is not yet certain which organisation will operate the new facility, or how dedicated youth clinical services will be chosen for funding.	Green Party
Labor	National Centre for Farmer Health	\$4m	Local services as well as wider regional members will be impacted.	This is similar to an election announcement made in 2014 and delivered in the first Andrews government's budget.	Premier

Labor	\$50M Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Development Fund	\$50m	All services who employ nurses will be impacted.	400 new postgraduate scholarships for nurses and midwives.	Premier
Labor	Advocacy funding to allow disability advocacy organisations to help an extra 300 people a year	\$6m	Services that provide disability services will be impacted.		Labor
Labor	Re-development of Frankston Hospital	\$562m	Local services will be impacted.		Labor
Labor	Help implement Victorian Carer Strategy 2018-22	\$53.5m	Community health services will be impacted.		Premier
Labor	Expansion of the Latrobe Regional Hospital at Traralgon	\$217m	Local services will be impacted.	A \$79m expansion was only opened this year, which improved emergency service provision.	Premier
Labor	Expansion of the Angliss Hospital at Ferntree Gully	\$170m	Eastern Health will be mainly impacted, but the healthcare hub for older people could help wider older person healthcare providers.		Premier
Labor	Build new Footscray Hospital	\$1.5bn	Western Health and its other sites will mainly benefit, but this could also benefit other		Premier

			Melbourne hospitals.		
Coalition	National Centre for Farmer Health	\$4m	Local services as well as wider regional members will be impacted.	The policy was originally announced by Labor before being announced by the Liberal Party. It is welcome to see both supporting the same policy, so it could happen in other healthcare areas	Mary Wooldridge
Coalition	Fund the Bowel Cancer Action Plan	\$2m	Health services that provide colonoscopy services will be impacted.		Liberal
Coalition	Supplying free flu vaccines for all Victorian children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years	\$7m	Health services that provide primary health services such as immunisation will be impacted.		Liberal

Coalition	Mandatory drug and alcohol treatment for young people whose offending or risky behaviour is a result of severe substance abuse	\$30m to create new facilities, \$20m annually thereafter to run the facilities	There has been no information supplied about who will run the facility.		Liberal
Coalition	Brighter Futures fund to establish integrated children's centres in Victoria's most disadvantaged rural and regional areas	\$80m	Rural and regional health services, particularly community health services if they can tender, will be impacted.		Nationals
Coalition	Community based palliative care in Victoria	\$140m	Services that provide in community palliative care will be impacted.		Liberal
Coalition	Upgrade the Sandringham Hospital through investing in new outpatient facilities	\$2.5m	Local services will be impacted.		Matthew Guy

Coalition	Expansion of home and community care and support for Victorians with chronic disease and other conditions	\$175m	All services who provide hospital in the home services will be impacted.		Liberal
Coalition	Build a new West Gippsland Hospital, new theatres and emergency department at Warrnambool Hospital	\$300m	Local services will be impacted.		Liberal Press Gazette
Coalition	Build a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre for Mildura	\$7m	Local services will be impacted.		Nationals
Coalition	Develop a comprehensive state-wide health workforce strategy	\$1m	All services will be impacted.	A policy from the VHA's 2018 Victorian Election Positions.	Liberal
Coalition	Expanded mental health support for members of Victoria Police, emergency services and ambulance workers	\$6m	Members with ambulance services will be impacted.		Liberal

Coalition	Support for children with autism	\$50m	Members who provide childhood disability services will be impacted.		Liberal
Coalition	Purchase four new public robots located at Austin and Mercy Health, Monash Health, Western Health and Bendigo Health	\$20m	Local services will be definitely impacted. But, any hospital member could benefit if they choose to try and be involved.		Liberal
Coalition	Rebuild Swan Hill Hospital	\$44m	Local services will be impacted.		Matthew Guy
Coalition	Stroke Ambulance to be based at Monash Medical Centre	\$6m	Local services will be impacted. It will also alleviate pressure on the current Stroke Ambulance based at The Royal Melbourne Hospital.		Liberal
Coalition	New 32 bed ward expansion at Mildura Base Hospital	\$20m	This will benefit Mildura Base Hospital and local services, including Sunraysia Community Health Service.	Mildura Base Hospital is the only publicly-owned, privately-operated hospital in Victoria. Labor has launched a consultation on whether it should be returned to public operation.	Peter Crisp

New Footscray hospital promised as parties compete on hospital infrastructure

Announcement: On Sunday 14 October, the Labor Party announced that a newly-elected Labor Government would invest \$1.5bn to build the new Footscray Hospital, revealing the preferred site for the new hospital at Victoria University's four-hectare Footscray Park campus.

The promised 504 bed hospital is expected to treat almost 15,000 additional patients each year, as well as almost 20,000 additional emergency department admissions. It will also allow up to 17,000 western suburbs residents to be redirected from inner-city hospitals back to their local area each year, taking pressure off other hospitals.

The new Footscray Hospital will continue to be a major tertiary and training hospital and hub for specialist health services in the west and will also include a major expansion of mental health care.

Reaction: The VHA welcomes this announcement, and it is positive news for Western Health, however we urge all parties to develop a transparent and needs based strategy to guide investment in public hospitals as set out in our own Election Positions. This is the same as we have repeated after each new hospital funding announcement made during this campaign, with the range of announcements showing why the strategy is needed.

Analysis: Over the course of the campaign there have been major health infrastructure announcements by the two largest parties, which have largely focused on a number of hospitals promised improvement or expansion, accounting for the bulk of the funding promised so far. Yet, not one of these projects has been jointly agreed by the Labor or the Coalition. This is why the VHA has called for an infrastructure strategy to transparently guide hospital investment. Hospital funding promises have so far been the focus of the campaign, with little suggesting that this will change as the election gets closer.

More care in the community after funding announcement by Coalition

Announcement: On Thursday 16 August, Shadow Minister for Health Mary Wooldridge at the VHA Conference unveiled the Coalition's proposed \$175m expansion of home and community care. The commitment is broken down into:

- a 'Home Hospital' expanding by up to the equivalent of 200 acute beds, with Hospital in the Home services supporting an additional 6,000 patients each year;
- home visiting and community support services for up to 5,000 people per year living with multiple chronic diseases to help manage their diseases and prevent or delay hospital readmission;
- further support for young people with chronic disease transitioning to adult services;
- small grants for local chronic disease peer support groups, including online groups;
- the development of a state-wide plan for chronic disease management including approaches which prevent people from being admitted to hospital.

Reaction: The VHA [welcomed](#) the announcement at its annual conference, acknowledging the benefit of having increased care in the community and ensuring that people are not unnecessarily in hospital, easing pressure on the health system.

However, the VHA looks forward to receiving greater detail in relation to this initiative, as the public and community health sector should be at its core, with the 52 existing Hospital in the Home programs operating in public health services around Victoria expanded.

Analysis: This announcement is, so far, the only election promise to focus on treating more patients in the community and on ensuring that those with chronic conditions are able to manage their diseases without hospital admission; as seen above, a lot of attention has been on hospital care, not keeping people out of hospital. This is welcome, and it is hoped that other parties will also recognise the benefit of funding and encouraging more proactive care in the community, easing hospital demand. However, while it would benefit the health system, there needs to be more detail how this announcement would work in practice; otherwise it is hard to ascertain what the exact impact would be.

First Green Party health funding policy of the campaign

Announcement: On Wednesday 10 October, World Mental Health day, the Green Party announced their \$270m commitment to restore funding to mental health, marking their first health funding announcement of the campaign. This commitment is broken down into:

- \$200m, over 4 years, to restore funding to community mental health services to provide care to people who are not NDIS eligible.
- \$10m to embed sexual safety practices and reforms in mental health services.
- \$12m to construct a new youth dedicated clinical prevention and recovery care facility.
- \$48m, over four years, for dedicated youth clinical services.

Reaction: The VHA welcomes the support for community mental health funding, which echoes demands in the VHA's 2018 Victorian Election Positions for appropriate care in the right place, at the right time, shifting care to suitable community locations.

Analysis: This announcement would impact members that offer community health services, particularly integrated and registered community health services, while it would particularly benefit those that offer youth mental health services. It may also benefit hospitals as it should help to ease the mental health burden on emergency departments.

While the Green Party will not form Government to implement this policy, their position as a potential 'kingmaker' in supporting a new Labor Government means that this policy could help to steer future Government policy. Only recently, the Andrews Government additionally funded \$70m, over two years, to support community mental health; the Green Party promise offers a longer-term approach.