

What can government do to support Victoria's healthcare workers?

The VHA is seeking the following workforce-related commitments in its campaign ahead of the 2022 state election. These commitments have been developed through extensive engagement with Victoria's public health and community health services.

Recruit and retain healthcare workers for better care



The VHA has been calling for a large-scale healthcare sector strategy and recruitment campaign to build our domestic workforce.

To address workforce shortages and skill gaps, Victoria needs system-wide solutions spanning the health and community care sector.

The initial pandemic response resulted in initiatives to boost our healthcare workforce, but the approach has been too specific, and many incentives offered to attract and retain workers have been temporary.

A long-term approach is needed to ensure that Victoria has enough healthcare workers to meet the needs of the growing population now and into the future, and that they have the right skills and supports they need to deliver high-quality care.

State Government must support, retain and increase the workforce by:

- creating a large-scale recruitment campaign for the Victorian health and community care sector
- publishing detailed workforce data to support the identification of skills gaps and areas of greatest need across the health sector
- committing to a multi-year program of financial incentives to attract and retain staff, and to empower services to deliver local solutions.

Victorian Skills Plan forecast

The [Victorian Skills Plan](#) confirms Victoria's severe shortage of healthcare workers. The report found Victoria needs 65,000 new workers, including 6,500 nurses, to join the health and community care sector between now and 2025 to meet demand and replace people retiring.



65,000
additional needed

Enable our workforce to deliver more care



We want the next Victorian Government to increase and expand Victoria's 'full scope' workforce programs to ensure clinical skills and expertise are used in the most effective way.

We need to address workforce shortages by using staff to the best of their abilities; this is often called working to 'full scope of practice' – working to the full extent of the profession's recognised skill base and regulatory guidelines.

Roles with expanded responsibilities are already vital for care across Victoria, but they are limited by red tape, regulations, and a disjointed approach. There are a range of roles that could be better utilised across the system, including:

- Nurse Practitioners
- Allied Health Generalists
- Primary Health Care Nurses
- Enrolled Nurses
- Community Paramedics.

State Government must promote further full scope of practice by:

- increasing training and development funds to healthcare services to create more pathways
- streamlining regulations that will enable full scope of practice
- taking a systematic approach to increase workforce skills utilisation.

Flexibility for a modern health workforce



We want to see government, services, colleges, unions and peaks to come together to discuss the future of the healthcare workforce.

Innovative ways of thinking, such as surge workforce models, have shown to be an effective method to alleviate pressure on our health system. State Governments need to take the learnings from these models and use them as a foundation to modernise our workforce.

As we have seen in other industries, being adaptive and flexible has helped to retain staff and attract new workers to the sector. Flexibility in the workplace will improve workforce wellbeing, which is a major issue contributing to severe staff shortages in healthcare. Increased flexibility also supports improved gender equality, which is an important issue for all public and community health services.

The need for flexibility

The recent '[Reset, Restore, Reframe – Making Fair Work FlexWork](#)' report highlighted that workers see flexibility as enabling wellbeing – while more than seven in ten workers rate flexibility to be as or more important than pay. Public healthcare must be a modern workplace – and it must think about things differently.



7 in 10
rate **flexibility**
to be as or more
important than pay





State Government must promote further workforce flexibility by:

- bringing health sector stakeholders together to modernise the workforce
- developing and implementing a review of workforce models to improve flexibility.

Without these commitments from government, Victoria's public health and community health services will continue to face significant workforce pressures, which represent the greatest barrier to the health sector's delivery of care.

If you care about the state of Victoria's healthcare system, **#VoteForHealth**

Take action to support Victoria's public health and community health workforce ahead of the Victorian election 2022.

-  Find out what the major parties are saying about health by following our election commitment tracker <https://padlet.com/VHA2022/voteforhealth>
-  Ask your local MP what they are doing to support Victoria's critical health and community care workers
-  Find out which local candidates are committed to improving access to public health and community health services in your area
-  Write to your local MP to let them know that health is important to you (we've created [this handy resource](#) to guide you)



Read the VHA's full State election platform at www.vha.org.au/policy-and-advocacy/agenda-2022/

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