

VHA State Election Platform 2022

Supporting our public hospitals

Our public health system was designed in a world that no longer reflects what is needed for the future.

Health systems around the world are updating their thinking about how they should be designed to meet current and future demands. This includes making sure that the make-up of the healthcare workforce, the physical and digital infrastructure, and funding models are modernised to rise to the challenge.

The current pressure on the health system shows we need to think differently.

Even prior to the pandemic, Victoria’s public health system was under significant pressure. The successive suspensions of elective surgery, combined with a dramatic increase in presentations and patient acuity, have created record levels of demand on our health system.

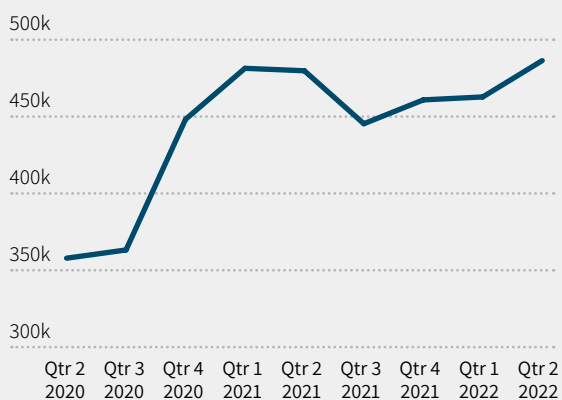
Our pandemic response has shown that innovative and creative solutions can ease the burden on our workforce, prevent hospital admissions, and improve patient care. Such innovations can also improve cost efficiency within the system.

Further support is needed now and into the future to ensure the sustainability of the health sector – we need all levels of government to invest in the public health system to keep Victorians healthy and well.

Extreme demand the new norm

The latest Victorian Health Services Performance report showed that Victoria’s hospitals are managing record demand for emergency care and increasing acuity of patients.

ED presentations



What can government do to support Victoria's public hospitals?

The VHA is seeking nine commitments from the next State Government to support public health and community health services across Victoria. These are:

WORKFORCE

- Enable our workforce to deliver more care
- Flexibility for a modern health workforce
- Recruit and retain healthcare workers for better care

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Maintain our hospital and community health facilities
- Upgrade our physical and digital infrastructure
- A clear and transparent infrastructure roadmap

FUNDING MODELS

- Funding reform to keep Victorians healthy and out of hospital
- Keep health funding above inflation
- A No Gap Guarantee for Urgent Care Centres

These commitments have been developed through extensive engagement with Victoria's public hospitals in metropolitan Melbourne and regional and rural Victoria.

All nine election asks are relevant to Victoria's public health services, with three that have a particularly strong hospital focus.

Flexibility for a modern health workforce



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

Increased demand and systemic healthcare workforce shortages require innovative ways of thinking to ensure Victoria's public health services can continue to deliver high-quality care.

Surge workforce models have shown to be an effective method to alleviate pressure on our health system during the pandemic. The next State Government needs 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 helps 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 staff shortages in healthcare. Increased flexibility also supports improved gender equality, which is an important issue for all public health services.

The need for flexibility

Public healthcare must be a modern workplace to attract and retain workers. The health sector is competing with other industries that are offering greater flexibility to staff.

The recent ['Reset, Restore, Reframe - Making Fair Work FlexWork'](#) report highlights that workers see flexibility as enabling wellbeing. More than 7 in 10 workers rate flexibility to be as or more important than pay.



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A clear and transparent infrastructure roadmap



We want the next State Government to create a public list of major future infrastructure priorities that are funded or under consideration, so that our hospitals and community health services can plan for the future.

With little to no spare cash to invest in major capital projects, our hospitals and community health services rely heavily on government to fund infrastructure. However, there is a lack of clarity on the criteria and timelines on how State Government determines which projects get funded.

Transparency in assessing the needs and funding status of major hospital infrastructure projects is needed to help our healthcare providers plan for the future.

Major funding announcements for healthcare infrastructure should not be considered a political decision and should instead be assessed on evidence and addressing the healthcare needs of all Victorians.

National Infrastructure Priority List offers a potential solution for Victoria

The Australian Government's [Infrastructure Priority List](#) seeks to provide a clear and transparent process for listing infrastructure needs and proposed, unfunded nationally significant projects to guide governments towards infrastructure investments that will deliver the best value for communities.

Keep health funding above inflation



The VHA wants a commitment from all political parties that healthcare funding for public health services will, at least, exceed inflation for the duration of the next term of government.

Providing more high-acuity care at a time of record demand is costly – and with inflation projected to reach seven per cent, funding does not stretch as far.

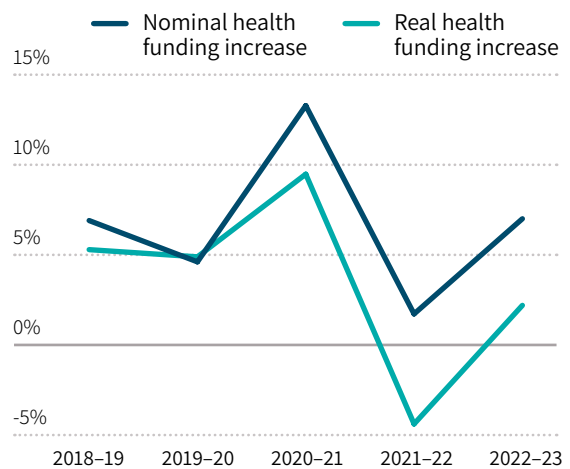
Health funding has increased in recent years due to the pandemic response, but these COVID costs are now business as usual – funding needs to reflect that, and it needs to increase to meet inflation and demand.

To meet this demand, healthcare funding will, at the least, need to exceed inflation for the duration of the next parliamentary term. Only by funding the public health sector above the rate of inflation can public and community health services continue to deliver the quality care Victorians deserve.

Impact of inflation on funding increases

Higher inflation lowers the impact of increased health funding – at a time when increased health funding is so vital.

Nominal vs real health funding increases



Without these commitments from government, our public health services will continue to face workforce, infrastructure and funding challenges.

All Victorians can **#VoteForHealth**

Everyone deserves access to high-quality public healthcare in Victoria.

If you care about your health, and the health of your family, friends and community, take action to support the Victorian health system 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 improve access to health services in your area



Find out which local candidates are committed to improving the quality of health services and the care they deliver



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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