

Linda Trompf
President
adminofficer@hcca.org.au

Dear Ms Trompf *Linda*

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 July 2024 and the opportunity to attend Health Care Consumers Association's (HCCA) election forums in July and August. I am writing to provide a comprehensive response to your ACT Election Statement of Priorities to outline ACT Labor's plan for health and community wellbeing in the ACT.

Improving consumer access to specific support and health services

ACT Labor will continue to implement our plan for an accessible, accountable and sustainable health system.

A re-elected Labor Government will:

- Deliver improvements to publicly available health system performance reporting, including publishing outpatient care waiting times and outcomes as part of a monthly reporting program as soon as possible.
- Continue to reform planned care and increase access to specialist outpatient services, elective surgery and other procedures across specialties in line with health system planning and population needs.
- Finalise and implement a new virtual care strategy to support expansion of virtual health care services and enable more people to access health and hospital services at home while being supported by our expert teams.
- Following the implementation of geriatric streaming in the new Canberra Hospital Emergency Department in August 2024 we will continue to work with HCCA to strengthen care of older Canberrans at both emergency departments. We will also develop a broader pathway for older adults as they move through Canberra Health Services, including increasing allied health resources in units dedicated to the care of older people. This will support holistic care, earlier intervention and more effective discharge from hospital.
- Continue to work with the Commonwealth Government to deliver expanded GRACE and RADAR services and the continuation of the SPICE program.
- Expand care closer to home, including delivering four new health centres in South Tuggeranong, Inner South, North Gungahlin and West Belconnen that will integrate care across our health system. This will include connecting with Hospital in the Home services, more specialist support for consumers to safely access care in the community and the introduction of virtual care facilities.
- Deliver a further increase to the North Gungahlin Health Centre to include spaces for community organisations to provide services and establish medical imaging services co-located with the Belconnen Walk-in Centre.

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- Continue to work with the Commonwealth Government to deliver public dental services that support timely access to care. ACT Labor will progress the Canberra Health Services Oral Health Services Reform as a priority and expand public dental service availability in the community through our new Health Centre in the Inner South, including dental services for bariatric consumers.
- Support a project to scope an individual consumer advocacy service to meet the needs of Canberrans when accessing care across the health system.
- Survey consumers and carers to understand their support needs when accessing palliative care and explore the delivery of additional after hours support services for consumers, families and carers.
- Work with the health workforce, consumers and carers to develop community-based mental health services that support consumer-centred care.
- Expand services available at the Brindabella Day Service and continue the Long COVID Clinic at the University of Canberra Hospital, including the partnership with the University of Canberra. We will also investigate expanding the scope of this service to provide ongoing support to people with ME/CFS where specialist support is required.
- Expand services supporting people with chronic and complex pain, including the Canberra Endometriosis Centre, Pain Management Unit, Spinal Pain Unit and Community Care Physiotherapy Service.
- Deliver the ACT Climate and Health Plan and work with the Commonwealth Government to deliver health system-wide actions that address and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

ACT Labor will continue to implement key strategies and plans that we developed in Government including the *ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030*, *Healthy Canberra: Preventative Health Plan 2020-2025*, *Maternity in Focus*, the *Child and Adolescent Clinical Services Plan* and the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan*. We will work closely with consumers, carers and the health workforce to co-design consumer-centred services that will support the health and wellbeing of all Canberrans.

Improving integration of care within the health system

We are committed to improving connections between and within health services to ensure Canberrans can access the right care, at the right time and in the right place.

A re-elected Labor Government will:

- Review the ACT Interstate Patient Travel Assistance Scheme to reduce the administrative burden and upfront costs for Canberrans that need to travel interstate for specialist health services.
- Continue to implement improvements to the Digital Health Record, connecting care and improving consumer experiences with MyDHR, including to allow patients to access appointment booking more easily and to improve DHR access for general practitioners.

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- Continue to implement the Disability Health Strategy and Canberra Health Services' Disability Action and Inclusion Plan to deliver a more inclusive, accessible Canberra.
- Improve health service access for diverse populations through the establishment of a multicultural health care hub in the Gungahlin Community Health Centre that will be developed with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This will include a scoping study that investigates the needs of multicultural communities when accessing health care services in the ACT.
- We will continue to progress key priorities in *Maternity in Focus: The ACT Public Maternity System Plan 2022-2032*, including expanding continuity of midwifery care. Over the term of Government we will focus on our ambition of 50 per cent of women and pregnant people being able to access the midwifery-led continuity of care program by 2028.
- Work with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to co-design and establish a Birthing on Country program for First Nations families.

Support for the community sector to meet demand for services

ACT Labor will continue to map community-based health service infrastructure in the ACT to support the development of a Community Health Infrastructure Master Plan with input from the community sector to ensure we are delivering community health infrastructure that meets the needs of Canberrans.

ACT Labor is aware of the campaign being championed by ACTCOSS with the support of a number of ACT community services. ACT Labor acknowledges the important role of the community sector in supporting Canberrans and as a partner with government. ACT Labor is engaging with ACTCOSS regarding the campaign and how best to support the sector. ACT Labor will be releasing its community sector election commitments in due course and will be considering the matters raised.

ACT Labor will publish its full Health Policy Position Statement closer to the election. Thank you for your continued engagement and advocacy on behalf of consumers in the ACT and I look forward to working with you again if we are re-elected in October.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

30 September 2024