

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier

Victorian
Labor

**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Thursday, 15 November 2018

BUILDING THE BEST HEALTHCARE ACROSS THE BARWON REGION

Families across the Barwon region will be able to count on the quality care they need, when they need it, closer to home under a re-elected Andrews Labor Government, with a boost to the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund (RHIF).

When your kid gets sick or there's an emergency, it's not too much to ask that there is good healthcare nearby – so you don't have to drive to the closest major town or even Melbourne just to get the treatment you need.

That's why the Andrews Labor Government established the landmark \$250 million RHIF – the largest fund of its kind in Victorian history. From new operating theatres for more life-saving surgeries to quality facilities for staff, the RHIF has changed the face of healthcare in our regional centres and rural towns.

In Geelong, the RHIF has funded many projects including the installation of an integrated wireless cardiac monitoring system at University Hospital Geelong, refurbishment of the Mental Health Care Unit and a hydro pool at Barwon Health.

Across the electorate of Polwarth, the RHIF has also funded operating theatre lighting at Colac Area Health, an upgrade of the Urgent Care and X-Ray Unit at Otway Health and Community Services, and the replacement of the emergency generator at Timboon and District Healthcare Service.

These are just some of the 283 projects all over Victoria funded through the RHIF – part of our promise to make sure Victorians have a health service they can count on, when they need it most.

We've repaired the Liberals' billion dollar cuts to health, ended the ambulance crisis and backed our doctors and nurses by building them the state-of-the-art hospitals they need to do what they do best – but there's more to do.

Labor will provide a \$100 million boost to the RHIF, so even more health services in Geelong can build new facilities or complete the upgrades they need.

It means better care for patients, peace of mind for families and more jobs for local construction workers across Barwon.

We're growing healthcare in rural and regional Victoria, and delivering 500,000 more specialist medical appointments in regional communities over four years – including 49,900 in Geelong and the Barwon Region – so patients don't have to spend hours away from loved ones to get the care they need.

The Liberals cut health every chance they get, and leave rural and regional healthcare in ruins. The Federal Liberal Government is proposing to short-change Victorian hospitals by \$2.1 billion over 5 years. For the Geelong region that means a \$100 million cut to our hospitals - the equivalent of 334 doctors, 797 nurses or 16,047 elective surgeries.

Only Labor will stand with regional and rural Victorian patients and staff – and ensure they get the best care, no matter where they live.

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Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"I grew up in regional Victoria, and I know how important good healthcare is to local families when someone gets sick. We're upgrading regional and rural hospitals around the state, so the best treatment is just around the corner."

"Regional and rural Victorians are proud of their hospitals and health centres – and proud of the hard-working doctors, nurses and staff who run them. We'll stand with them, and help them do what they do best."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"Across Geelong a little investment can go a long way. This will ensure health services have the equipment and resources they need to care for our community and help them recover."

Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville

"We are proud of our hospitals and health centres across Geelong and the Bellarine – and proud of the hard-working doctors, nurses and staff who run them. We'll stand with them, and help them do what they do best."

Quote attributable to Member for Lara John Eren

"It's only Labor that backs our regional doctors, nurses and health professionals, giving them the very best facilities they need to save lives."

Quote attributable to Labor Candidate for South Barwon Darren Cheeseman

"Regional Victorians simply cannot risk a return to the Liberals and their savage cuts to health."

Quote attributable to Labor Candidate for Polwarth Doug Johnston

"Whether it's upgrades for theatres at Colac Health or improvements to urgent care at Otway Health, only Labor is backing our regions rural health services, so our health professionals can do what they do best, which is saving lives."