

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Tuesday, 20 September 2022

A HOSPITAL PLAN FOR OUR GROWING NORTHERN SUBURBS

A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will deliver better care for families in our northern suburbs with a billion-dollar *Hospital Plan for the North*, with upgrades at the Austin Hospital at Heidelberg and the Northern Hospital at Epping meaning treatment for more than 85,000 extra patients.

The Northern has the busiest emergency department in Victoria, and the Austin has the fourth busiest. There are more than 88,000 presentations at the Austin and 109,000 at the Northern every year.

While our hardworking healthcare workers provide the best possible care, they deserve the best facilities in which to do their work.

The Liberals waged war on our nurses and paramedics. The Austin has survived repeated Liberal attacks, first when they tried to sell off the Austin Hospital to the highest bidder, and then when they wanted to replace our hardworking nurses with “health assistants” – staff without the necessary clinical expertise.

A Labor Government will invest more than \$1 billion to deliver the *Hospital Plan for the North* – redeveloping the Austin and Northern hospitals, delivering an expanded emergency department at the Austin, and a new emergency department and extra beds at the Northern.

At the Austin, the redevelopment will add up to 29 extra emergency treatment spaces, boosting capacity so more patients can be treated, faster.

This \$250-\$300 million investment will support an extra 30,000 emergency patients every year, ensuring the hospital can meet the needs of the growing local population.

The expansion of the existing emergency department will also deliver improved clinical administration and an upgraded short stay unit, creating better services on site for patients, families and healthcare workers. The Austin will also be serviced by a Heidelberg station in a future SRL North project, meaning easy access for staff and patients in the northern suburbs.

At the Northern Hospital, a \$770-\$855 million investment will deliver a new emergency department with up to 70 extra treatment spaces, as well as a new tower for inpatients with more than 100 beds.

The emergency department will include an alcohol and other drugs hub, providing dedicated treatment space. It will be relocated to Cooper Street, taking the number of treatment spaces for emergency patients to almost 200.

A trip to the emergency department can be overwhelming for kids – and incredibly stressful for parents.

That’s why the new emergency departments will include dedicated waiting and treatment spaces for families – delivering calm, compassionate and dedicated care when they need it most.

Under Labor, works on both hospitals will begin next term – creating an estimated 3,000 jobs during the construction period.

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Labor has invested more than \$12 billion in health infrastructure, building the facilities Victorians need. But world-class healthcare is about more than bricks and mortar – so we’re doing what matters by investing in our healthcare workforce, too.

Since coming to government, we’ve recruited 22,000 extra healthcare workers. We’re delivering a \$270 million healthcare workforce package to deliver free degrees, training and upskilling for the next generation of nurses and midwives.

Labor will invest in hospital upgrades all over our state. When these works are finished, the next generation of healthcare workers will have finished their studies and be ready to get to work in brand-new facilities.

Together with our *Pandemic Repair Plan* announced earlier this year, we’re training and recruiting an extra 24,000 healthcare workers into our workforce. We have also invested more than \$8 billion in our ambulance service and hired almost 2,200 paramedics.

Labor is doing what matters – delivering the hospitals, the healthcare and the workforce Victoria needs.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“Our healthcare workers go above and beyond to provide the very best care to Victorians, and they deserve the very best modern infrastructure to match.”

“Only Labor is doing what matters – investing in hospitals, training and hiring thousands of nurses and paramedics and making it free to study nursing.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

“The Austin and the Northern have two of the busiest emergency departments in Victoria, and that demand will continue to grow as our northern suburbs do.”

“The Liberals have repeatedly attacked the Austin Hospital – first trying to sell it off and then undercutting the quality of care. Labor will always protect healthcare from cuts and closures.”