

# TRANSCRIPT

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**Transcript: AMA Queensland President, Dr Nick Yim, ABC Gold Coast, Mornings with Sarah Cumming, Wednesday 23 October 2024**

**Subjects: AMA Queensland Election Commitment Scorecard**

**SARAH CUMMING:** The Queensland branch of the Australian Medical Association says Labor and the LNP are neck and neck in their health promises ahead of Saturday's state election. The organisation has released a report card on the major parties' promises, with both having addressed 13 of AMA Queensland's 17 priority areas. President Dr Nick Yim from the Australian Medical Association Queensland joins you now.

**DR NICK YIM:** So with regards to the AMA Queensland scorecard, it's really promising to see both major political parties commit to healthcare in Queensland. It's quite balanced from a perspective from both major political parties. It seems to be quite neck and neck and it appears that their number one priority is workforce.

**SARAH CUMMING:** Okay. And tell me, how much of a challenge that is for the healthcare sector right now?

**DR NICK YIM:** We acknowledge that Queensland is growing in population. The population is also ageing and along with that comes with chronic disease and a reliance on the hospital and healthcare sector. Both Labor and the LNP have committed to major growth in our healthcare workforce by 2032. That includes doctors, nurses, allied health. But ultimately the devil is in the detail and how it is implemented is key.

**SARAH CUMMING:** Okay. So what do doctors like about Labor's promises?

**DR NICK YIM:** With regard to the Labor promises, we are seeing incentives for general practice. There are incentives to help train junior doctors into specialty general practice which is really promising. But at the same time, from the LNP side, what we are seeing is a fast-track program for high school students to enter medical school and then train into doctors. They're a little bit nuanced, but it's great to see both parties investing into training of doctors.

**SARAH CUMMING:** In terms of high school students choosing to study medicine, why has there been a drop off, do you think?

**DR NICK YIM:** There are many factors as to why high school students are not entering medicine. What we're hearing from across the state is that not enough doctors are in the regions and rural areas. We know that students who come from regions and train in regions are more likely to stay in the regions.

**SARAH CUMMING:** In terms of the LNP, what do you support in terms of the LNP's health promises?

**DR NICK YIM:** One key thing is both sides have committed to the payroll tax exemption for general practice, which ensures stability and clarity for us to move forward and to ensure patients aren't having increased out-of-pocket expenses when they see the general practitioner. So that is really positive.

From the LNP perspective, we have seen them set some targets for ambulance ramping, but we know that ramping is a system-wide issue. It's not just about the front door, it's about ensuring that there's adequate beds and workforce to ensure that flow through the healthcare system. So it is promising to see LNP put commitments to hospital ramping. But ultimately it comes down to where the action is.

**SARAH CUMMING:** Okay, you've mentioned in your report card that you're disappointed in the LNP's position on pill testing. Can you just explain that for us?

**DR NICK YIM:** AMA Queensland is disappointed in the LNP position on pill testing, especially for Schoolies Week on the Gold Coast. Pill testing has been shown to provide an important health intervention for young people who are contemplating taking an unknown substance. From our perspective, it's something where if people are choosing to take unknown substances, it's a good opportunity to have that substance tested. But at the same time, those facilities create a conversation with that young individual.

**SARAH CUMMING:** So in terms of people who are maybe undecided voters, they are concerned about the state of the healthcare system in Queensland, what would you say to those people ahead of the election on Saturday?

**DR NICK YIM:** It's positive that both major political parties have committed to healthcare as one of their big priorities. We have seen a number of commitments and investments into the healthcare sector. It is neck and neck. Ultimately to voters, please review the AMA Queensland Scorecard to form their own individual opinion.

**SARAH CUMMING:** So are you feeling confident at this stage that, regardless of who wins on Saturday, the people of Queensland can expect improvements to the state of the healthcare system?

**DR NICK YIM:** Given the announcements that we have heard from both major political parties, we are confident that we will see change in the healthcare sector. At the same time, AMA Queensland remains really positive about working with our government, whoever wins on Saturday, to ensure the best interests of our community, patients and also the medical profession.

**SARAH CUMMING:** Dr Yim, thanks for your time this morning. So that was Dr Nick Yim, President of the Australian Medical Association Queensland. He says Labor and the LNP are neck and neck in terms of their health promises ahead of Saturday's election. The AMA has released its report card on the major party's health promises. If you've been struggling to keep up with all of the promises, the AMA has released its report card for you.

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