



As the October 19 ACT Election looms it's time to rate the parties' health policies. AMA ACT has asked a mix of Canberra's doctors to rate each major policy. With so many patients struggling to access timely and affordable GP and non-GP specialist care, it's no surprise that many policies are aimed at increasing the medical workforce. So, how have the parties fared? Check below to find out.

SUMMARY

55
/100
PASS

ACT LABOR

55
/100
PASS

ACT GREENS

63
/100
CREDIT

CANBERRA LIBERALS

79
/100
DISTINCTION

INDEPENDENTS FOR CANBERRA

Strong Independents: commended* Fiona Carrick: commended*

CANBERRA LIBERALS www.canberraliberals.org.au

| Policy | /10 | Background |
|---|-----|--|
| Independent evaluation of nurse-led Walk-in Centres | 9.4 | AMA ACT has long-called for such an evaluation. |
| Exempt GPs from payroll tax | 9.8 | AMA ACT has campaigned for payroll tax to be abolished. |
| Increase education allowances and protected training time for registrars and senior registrars | 6.8 | Encouraging young doctors to train in Canberra is a key element of addressing workforce shortages. |
| Conduct a royal commission into the ACT Health System | 4.6 | - |
| Provide affordable housing for key workers like nurses and midwives | 5 | - |
| Build a multi-story car park at the Canberra Hospital | 4.4 | - |
| Put GPs in existing Walk-in Centres, add imaging to West Belconnen and South Tuggeranong | 4.6 | How many GPs will there be, where will we get the workforce and what will the triage process be? |
| Incentivise general practices to provide after-hours services | 7.1 | The incentives would need to cover the costs of the GP, practice staff and other operating costs. |
| Pay up to \$100,000 of HECS debt for up to 30 new GPs for a 5-year commitment to practicing in the ACT | 8.2 | This is a well-targeted policy to address the shortage of GPs in the ACT. |
| Boost funding for a research chair for general practice at ANU Medical School | 6.9 | Sensible policy that could be effective in addressing the GP workforce shortage when combined with other measures. |
| Provide legislative reforms and training for GPs to prescribe and diagnose ADHD | 7.1 | Many GPs support this policy in the ACT, especially given the long wait for appointments with non-GP specialists. |
| Expand the scope of practice for pharmacists | 1 | Fragmentation of care and the related potential for missed diagnoses are concerns. |
| Conduct 70,000 elective surgeries in the next term, through contracting a private provider to deliver at least 10,000 surgeries | 7 | Whether or not contracting is the right answer, more must be done to reduce the elective surgery waiting list. |

INDEPENDENTS FOR CANBERRA www.independentsforcanberra.com

| Policy | /10 | Background |
|---|-----|--|
| Implement a co-designed retention and burnout prevention strategy for existing GPs and offer an incentives package to attract new GPs | 8.6 | AMA ACT supports all measures to support general practice in the ACT. |
| Independent evaluation of nurse-led Walk-in Centres | 9.8 | AMA ACT has long-called for such an evaluation. |
| Clear 75% of the elective surgery waitlist within 12 months of being elected | 6 | Policy lacks detail, though the commitment is welcome. |
| Deliver above-average aged care assessment turnaround times | 7.4 | AMA ACT welcomes the commitment to change this, however the policy lacks detail. |
| Develop a long-term strategic vision for providing fully integrated care and making Canberra the best place in the country for a career in health | 7.6 | AMA ACT welcomes big picture thinking on integrated care. |



ACT LABOR

www.actlabor.org.au

| Policy | /10 | Background |
|---|-----|--|
| Employ 800 more health workers. | 5.3 | The promise lacks specificity about what health staff, or how it will make Canberra Health Services an attractive place to work. |
| Build the new Northside Hospital in Bruce | 7.7 | It is well established that Canberra needs a second hospital. |
| More nurses and more services at Walk-in Centres | 2.4 | The Walk-in Centre model is long overdue for an independent evaluation. |
| A new \$11 million fund to support new bulk billing practices or expansion of existing practices | 5.1 | While it's good to see the ACT Labor offering incentives to general practices, it remains to be seen whether its incentives will be large enough to ensure ongoing practice financial viability if increased bulk billing is implemented. |
| Establish four new health centres for specialised health care across Canberra | 4.3 | These centres will need to work collaboratively with patients' GPs or lead to further fragmentation of health care. |
| Expand the Women's Health Service to more locations and offer more services. | 4.6 | While the investment in Women's Health Services is welcome, AMA ACT would like to see more support for existing general practices to deliver an expanded array of women's health services, for instance, incentives to employ practice nurses. |
| Establish a high-risk breast cancer clinic at the North Canberra Hospital | 7.3 | This policy is supported. AMA ACT would like to see detail on how the service will attract and retain the clinicians to support the service delivery. |
| Introduce advanced practice mental health nurses and mental health nurse practitioners in Walk-in Centres | 4.5 | The Walk-in Centre model is long overdue for an independent evaluation. AMA ACT would like to see a pilot funding nurses to work in existing general practices. |
| Expand the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service & the High Care Paediatric Unit | 6 | Canberra Health Services will need to address existing barriers to recruitment and retention, including the Enterprise Agreement. |
| Expand community paediatric services through the new hub at Molonglo. | 6 | The success of this policy will depend on the level of integration with patients' usual GPs. |
| Establish a \$4 million Professional Development and Wellbeing Fund for GPs | 7.9 | AMA ACT supports this measure. |
| Expand the scope of practice for community pharmacists | 1 | Fragmentation of care and the related potential for missed diagnoses are concerns. |
| Upgrade TCH campus in Woden. New, multi storey carpark on Yamba Drive and new acute palliative care ward. | 5.7 | Overlaps with Canberra Liberals on car park. Acute palliative care ward is welcome. |
| Expansion of home-based palliative care and hospice services at Clare Holland House. | 9 | Much-needed upgrade of palliative care services. |



THE ACT GREENS

greens.org.au/act

| Policy | /10 | Background |
|---|-----|--|
| Establish four bulk-billing GP clinics across the ACT, with eight full-time doctors | 3.2 | Workforce again the issue and care would need to be taken to ensure the model does not further undermine the viability of existing general practices. |
| Establish four new mental healthcare centres (Safe Havens) across Canberra to deliver free and accessible mental health support | 5.1 | These centres should have clear communication protocols with a patient's usual GP. |
| Make emergency ambulances free | 7.8 | This policy would help reduce the burden for those that cannot afford, but need ambulance transport. The ACT Greens need to ensure that the policy addresses the paramedic workforce attraction and retention too. |
| Open a supervised overdose prevention service and permanently fund CanTEST | 7 | If introduced in a controlled manner, funded and evaluated appropriately, harm minimisation measures may reduce harms and improve outcomes for users and society at large. |
| Establish a freestanding midwife-led option, separate to the hospital campus | 4.2 | AMA supports continuity of care in obstetrics and also supports women making their own decisions based on their own values and preferences. Models of care should not result in situations where obstetricians only become aware of a labour problem once it has become acute and/or serious, or where there is potential delays in emergency care due to the distance between a standalone centre and theatres. |
| Establish a dedicated Centre for Neurodivergence | 4.5 | While AMA welcomes efforts to address the waiting list for specialist care, stand-alone services can lead to fragmentation of care. A better model is to support existing general practices to deliver a broader range of services. |
| Provide additional funding to GPs who provide bulk-billed care for musculoskeletal and mental health issues | 6.5 | Additional investments in general practice are welcome. However, given the volume of consultations that relate to mental health issues, the policy details need to be clearer. |