

Our health system generally delivers a high standard of care at reasonable cost by world standards. It doesn't need major reform but it does need to focus more on better outcomes for patients including reduced risk and best-practice treatment. There is also scope to improve out-of-hospital care, reducing demand for acute care through preventive measures and to address the gaps in services to rural and Indigenous communities.

Government buck-passing in health is unlikely to be solved by Labor's Federal 'takeover' and the current plan still has Commonwealth funding at well less than the original agreement of 50% and the WA State Government still has not agreed. The takeover won't bring down costs of private hospitals and specialists either. It is also questionable whether the \$560m on offer to the states will deliver guarantees on elective surgery

The Labor Government does not have the courage to tackle the huge subsidisation of private health insurance or the junk food and alcohol industries that are wreaking such havoc on health. Nor is it willing to address the huge need for affordable dental health services or give mental health a fair share of funding.

The Democrats have a long history of listening to the experts, the practitioners and users of health services. We have observed the problems first hand and can see the solutions.

..... responding to need on **Health**

Our Plan

- Restoring **the Commonwealth's funding for hospitals to 50%** in real terms, indexed to health costs, and leaving prime responsibility for distribution to a Commonwealth/State Health Commission
- Using the flexibility of **block grants and case mix funding** to ensure individual patients and rural hospitals are not disadvantaged
- Abandoning **Local Hospital Networks** for metropolitan hospitals where they would be unworkable
- Requiring state governments to **report annually** on:
 - nationally agreed hospital standards and performance measures
 - equity of access to care
 - a shift from paying for activity to paying for health outcomes
 - integration of mental and physical health services
 - coordination of community, hospital, rehabilitation and residential care
- Fast-tracking **electronic medical records** and **no-fault reporting** systems in hospitals
- Phasing out private health insurance subsidies** (~\$6b/year) and invest savings in community primary health centres
- Allocating **Medicare provider numbers on a per capita geographic** basis to better serve rural communities
- Establishing a **National Preventative Health Taskforce**, introducing 'traffic light' labeling for food and restricting advertising of junk food and alcohol
- Increasing funding for **Indigenous health** services by \$500m
- Establishing a **national public dental health program** providing free dental check-ups and basic dental treatment for concession card holders

(See also our Plans for Indigenous, Dental and Mental Health)