

# The Liberals' Health Policy

*To create a world-leading public health system  
that provides for the health and well-being of the  
people of Western Australia*

MAKING DECISIONS  
GETTING THINGS DONE  
SECURING WA'S FUTURE



## Policy Summary

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In 2008, the Liberal-led Government inherited a health system that was in crisis under Labor. When Labor was elected in 2001 it promised to “fix the health system”, but eight years of stalling and planning without action during a period of unprecedented boom resulted in a health system that had been brought to its knees.

The Liberal-led Government was elected with a plan for better health services which included:

- Better hospitals and more beds
- Better access to surgery and outpatient services
- Reduced pressure on emergency departments
- Valuing our nurses
- Improving access to regional health nurses
- Supporting people with cancer.

The Liberal-led Government has delivered on each of these components of the plan. A record capital works program is under way throughout the State to deliver new and upgraded hospitals, more GPs are being attracted to our regions and the new Four Hour Rule has resulted in our hospitals leading the country in emergency department response.

Only a Liberal Government can realise the benefits of this record investment in health and continue the major reform to our Statewide health system.

A re-elected Liberal Government will:

- Continue and complete its current \$7billion investment to create a world-class public hospital and health system in Western Australia
- Invest \$57.2million to appoint more than 155 full-time equivalent (FTE) additional school nurses to provide health care to WA’s school-aged children
- Invest \$48.7million in 16 Child and Parent Centres across Western Australia to provide health and education services and support to children and their families on school sites
- Finalise a new industrial agreement for our nurses to recognise their vital contribution and make them the best paid nurses of any State



- Increase funding for palliative care by \$20million to a total of \$34million to better support patients in their final days
- Allocate an additional \$30million to foster and support leading medical research through the FutureHealth initiative
- Fund a \$4.2million renal dialysis service for the Wheatbelt region, which will allow clinically appropriate dialysis patients to be treated in their home or local community
- Support residents in the Eastern Goldfields with greater access to quality healthcare close to home thanks to a \$7.2million investment over four years for a Goldfields Emergency Telehealth Service
- Provide \$8million over four years to employ and train additional Aboriginal health workers to identify ear disease in children living in remote Aboriginal communities
- Provide \$474,000 over three years to fund research into foetal alcohol spectrum disorder in the Fitzroy Valley region of the Kimberley
- Continue with the employment of an additional 100 child health nurses to enhance the early identification of health problems and conditions in young children
- Deliver to Western Australian cancer patient's Australia's first Cyberknife.

A re-elected Liberal-led Government will deliver to the people of Western Australia a world-class health system that ensures services are delivered promptly and to the highest standard possible, whilst rebuilding hospitals across the State to ensure that health equipment and infrastructure supports the valuable work of our doctors, nurses and other health workers.

## Redeveloping our Health System

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If re-elected the Liberals will:

Continue and complete its current \$7billion investment to create a world-class public hospital and health system in Western Australia.

Since being elected in 2008, the Liberal-led Government has embarked on an unprecedented redevelopment of the Western Australian health system with a \$7billion infrastructure program. This program has already seen the opening of:

- Rockingham Hospital
- New emergency department (ED), operating theatres, and more beds at Joondalup Health Campus
- New Cancer Centre at QEII Medical Centre
- New Central Power Plant at QEII Medical Centre
- New Intensive Care Unit, South West Radiotherapy facility, and breast screen facility at the South West Health Campus at Bunbury
- Port Hedland Hospital
- New paediatric and mental health units at Broome Hospital
- New ED and palliative care unit at Kalgoorlie Hospital.

A re-elected Liberal Government will continue this investment, with the completion and commissioning of major new facilities to improve frontline health services across the State.

Over the next four years, the Liberal Government will complete:

- \$2billion 643-bed Fiona Stanley Hospital and 140-bed State Rehabilitation Service at Murdoch
- \$1.2billion 279-bed new Children's Hospital in the Queen Elizabeth II Health Campus, next to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
- \$230million expansion of the Joondalup Health Campus to provide 471 beds, 12 new operating theatres, new intensive care, and high dependency and coronary care units
- \$360million 307-bed Midland Public Hospital
- Substantial redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth II Health Campus including the \$58million new Pathwest Centre and a new multi-deck car park, with the \$47.9million new Cancer Centre and \$225million new Central Plant having already recently been completed.



In addition, \$22million of an estimated \$180million redevelopment cost has been allocated to begin the process of planning and business case development for the future Royal Perth Hospital.

In regional Western Australia, major projects include:

- The soon to be completed \$170million 134-bed Albany Health Campus to treat about 55,000 patients every year
- \$55.8million Kalgoorlie resource centre redevelopment
- \$117.9million 64 overnight and 20 same-day bed Busselton Health Campus, including a renal unit, two theatres, procedure room, expanded ED and additional medical treatment and support service
- \$565million Southern Inland Health Initiative, including a \$325million asset investment program and a \$240million investment in enhancing the health workforce and the provision of health services in the South-West of the State
- \$207million major new hospital at Karratha.

## Child Health

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If re-elected the Liberals will:

- Invest \$57.2million to appoint more than 155 full-time equivalent additional school nurses to provide health care to WA's school-aged children
- Invest \$48.7million in 16 Child and Parent Centres across Western Australia to provide health and education services and support to children and their families on school sites
- Employ an additional 100 child health nurses to enhance the early identification of health problems and conditions in young children.

Many childhood health problems are curable and manageable when they are identified early. Intervention from a health professional during early years means better educational and social outcomes for WA children.

School nurses provide ongoing support through school years for children who need it. In older children and adolescents, school nurses often provide health care to those experiencing mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and body and weight issues.

Nurses also provide schools and communities with health education and promotion strategies to ensure parents take up the opportunity for free, public health care for their children.

A Liberal-led Government will invest a further \$57.2million to improve access to health care for children who need it most, and guarantee all children access to an entry health assessment upon starting school.

This is another major investment into the health of our children, adding to \$49.7million to employ more child health specialists such as speech pathologists in 2010, a \$58.5million boost to the State's community health nurse workforce last year, and a \$48.7million investment in 16 new Child and Parent Centres.

Combined with this new commitment, the Liberal-led Government has invested more than \$214million securing the future health of Western Australian children.

Of the new nurses, 110.6 FTE will be located in local metropolitan areas, and 45 will be based in regional WA, bringing the total to 332.6, an increase of 87 per cent.

This investment in nurses for regional schools will particularly help address the high rate of glue ear throughout the State, which is causing hearing loss to a great many WA children.

The number of specialised nurses who assist children with intensive health needs such as tube feeding, special medications and airway maintenance during school will also be increased.

The Child and Parent Centres will be located on school sites in areas of need providing a 'one stop shop' for a range of services and support including, child health nurses, GP services, therapy services and parenting programs.

Centre locations 2014 -2015:

- Challis Early Childhood Education Centre, Armadale
- Neerabup Primary School, Banksia Grove
- Roseworth Primary School, Girrawheen
- Westminster Junior Primary School
- Dudley Park Primary School, Mandurah
- Carey Park Primary School
- South Hedland Primary School
- Brookman Primary School, Langford
- Calista Primary School
- Warriapendi Primary School, Balga

Centre locations 2014-2016:

- East Maddington Primary School
- East Waikiki Primary School
- Gosnells Primary School
- Mt Lockyer Primary School, Albany
- Rangeway Primary School, Geraldton
- Wilson Park Primary School, Collie

In the 2012-13 Budget the Liberal-led Government announced an investment of \$58.5million over four years for community child health services. Under the program, about 100 child health nurses are currently being recruited to bolster services in health across Western Australia, with a target of increasing the number of children having all six health checks prior to the start of school.

Under the program \$18million will be allocated for additional Department of Health child health nurses and \$40.5million for the procurement of services from the not-for-profit sector.

The child health nurse funding is a component of the Liberal-led Government's investment in child health services, and will ensure areas of



need have better access to child health nurses, and, in particular, early childhood health checks.

Many childhood health problems are curable and more manageable when they are identified during early childhood health checks. The provision of additional child health nurses will improve access to important screening and assessment services.



## Nurses' Salaries

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If re-elected the Liberals will:

- Finalise a new industrial agreement with WA nurses to recognise their vital contribution.

Our world-class health system relies on the expertise, training and commitment of every employee in our hospitals and within our health system. Industrial agreements reflecting this contribution have been successfully negotiated for all categories of employee.

The current industrial agreement for nurses expires on June 30, 2013, and negotiations have been taking place regarding a replacement agreement. The critical and important role of nurses in our health system is recognised by the Liberals. A Liberal Government will incorporate in any replacement agreement salary increases over three years of 14 per cent, comprising annual increases of five, four and five per cent.

These increases will ensure that the salaries of nurses reflect the value of the work they do, and will keep their salaries at or near the highest paid in any State.

These increases will apply to all nurses, midwives and mental health nurses employed in the WA public health system.

## Better Services for the Aged and the Ailing

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If re-elected the Liberals will:

- Increase funding for palliative care from \$14million to \$34million to better support patients in their final days.

With an increasing aged population, demand for palliative care has increased across the State. It is the community expectation that every person in WA with a life-limiting illness has the right to a palliative approach to care.

Early in the first term of the Liberal-led Government, the Palliative Services Project Fund was established with funding of \$14million over four years. This resulted in greater capacity to care for palliative care patients who wish to spend their final days in the comfort of their own home.

If re-elected, the Liberal-led Government will renew that previous funding and supplement it with a further \$20million over the next four years to increase and continue the Palliative Service Project Fund, including increasing funding to regional areas and to furthering the care already provided by Silver Chain.

The funding will help patients and their families transition from care in a hospice setting to supported palliative care at home.

The additional funding will provide access to a co-ordinated comprehensive service that will link palliative care systems across the State.

## Expanding Medical Research

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If re-elected the Liberals will:

- Allocate an additional \$30million to foster and support leading medical research through the FutureHealth initiative.

The Liberals are committed to fostering a culture of science and innovation in Western Australia. The FutureHealth WA program will ensure health and medical research is front and centre to that commitment.

A new \$30million investment will be added to the \$58million already committed over the next four years to health and medical research, bringing the total State Government investment to \$88million – an increase of more than 50 per cent.

WA is home to brilliant medical researchers, including Nobel Prize winners Barry Marshall and Robin Warren and Australians of the Year Fiona Wood and Fiona Stanley. WA researchers have also led the way in many fields of research including the development of a vaccine for avian influenza, pioneering clinical trials for therapeutic approaches in muscular dystrophy, and the treatment of mesothelioma caused by asbestos and childhood leukaemia.

Good evidence-based research is the foundation of good decision-making in health by doctors treating patients, or planners, funders and policy makers designing future health services. Ultimately, good medical research drives improved health in our community.

The increased funding is supported by practical improvements to research facilities, including the \$65million integration of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research at the New Children's Hospital, and a State-Government contribution of \$25million to the \$112million WA Institute of Medical Research facility nearing completion at the QEII Medical Centre.

FutureHealth WA will better coordinate and direct the health and medical research effort by combining existing State funds with other philanthropic contributions and puts WA to the fore in Australia with its innovative approach to providing increased and more sustainable funding for health and medical research.

## Regional Health Services

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If re-elected the Liberals will:

- Significantly increase the number of GPs in regional areas through the Southern Inland Health Initiative
- Fund a \$4.2million renal dialysis service for the Wheatbelt region, which will allow clinically appropriate dialysis patients to be treated in their home or local community
- Support residents in the Eastern Goldfields with greater access to quality healthcare close to home thanks to a \$7.2million investment over four years for a Goldfields Emergency Telehealth Service.

The \$565million Southern Inland Health Initiative will increase the number of GPs and improve medical resources and 24 hour emergency coverage across the Southern Inland area, leading to safe and appropriate emergency care. It will put GPs back into country towns and engage them in a new way of working to support the district health network and the changing nature of the workforce and medical practice. The new medical model will be supported by visiting specialists and a team of health practitioners, backed up by e-technology such as Telehealth.

Currently, the Wheatbelt is the only remaining region in WA without dialysis chairs, forcing patients to travel to Perth for treatment.

Many patients in the Wheatbelt requiring dialysis currently travel to Perth for treatment. The majority of types of dialysis are performed three times a week and can take up to four or five hours, and therefore patients who must travel for access to care suffer a significant impact on their quality of life.

This additional funding means that most patients will now be able to receive dialysis either independently in the home, with support in the community, or at a satellite dialysis service in a non-teaching hospital.

A new four-chair Northam service will also cater for up to 16 patients in time and will be scalable to match patient demand in the future.

The service will provide access to renal dialysis services for residents across the Wheatbelt, including the coastal strip of Jurien Bay, inland to Moora, Wyalkatchem, Dalwallinu and surrounds.



Kalgoorlie-Boulder and many major centres in the Eastern Goldfields already have Telehealth capacity but there have not been sufficient suitably qualified physicians to optimise its use. Additional funding of \$7.2million will attract three specialist emergency physicians to Kalgoorlie-Boulder to establish the service. It will also provide two project and administrative support officers.

There is currently a serious shortage of general practitioners throughout the Goldfields. This investment will ensure GPs, nurses and nurse practitioners working throughout the Eastern Goldfields will have more support from specialist doctors in Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Having Telehealth emergency physicians working in regional centres strengthens the entire regional health service. For example, a nurse in Laverton will be able to consult with Kalgoorlie Health Campus via Telehealth, rather than Perth.

Under the Telehealth program, when patients require hospitalisation the doctor already has a relationship with and background knowledge of the patient. The continuity of care and coordination under this model is improved, resulting in better outcomes and experiences for country patients.

## Indigenous Health

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If re-elected the Liberals will:

- Provide \$8million over four years to employ and train additional Aboriginal health workers to identify ear disease in children living in remote Aboriginal communities
- Provide \$474,000 over three years to fund research into foetal alcohol spectrum disorder in the Fitzroy Valley region of the Kimberley.

A re-elected Liberal-led Government will invest \$8million over four years to improve ear health in Aboriginal communities in WA.

A 2009 Education and Health Committee report to the WA Parliament highlighted that Aboriginal children living in rural and remote WA are at a much higher risk of hearing loss due to otitis media.

Under this new \$8million investment, Aboriginal health workers will be trained to screen and assess children at risk of, or with, ear disease.

This investment will aim to reduce the rate of otitis media and reduce the rate of permanent hearing loss for Aboriginal children. These outcomes will also enhance educational outcomes as a result of unimpaired hearing.

A re-elected Liberal-led Government will also invest \$474,000 over three years in foetal alcohol syndrome spectrum disorder research in the Fitzroy Valley, located in the Kimberley region.

This funding will employ a full-time allied health professional, based in Fitzroy Crossing, and cover all other additional project costs. The project will involve collaboration between the Western Australian Country Health Service and a number of not-for-profit organisations.

The project will develop a model of multidisciplinary paediatric and child health care and will be delivered in schools in the Fitzroy Valley. The model will provide a family-focused setting that creates a partnership between parents and health professionals and will improve health and education outcomes for the families involved.

## Latest Medical Equipment to Treat Cancer

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If re-elected the Liberals will:

- Deliver to Western Australian cancer patients Australia's first Cyberknife.

The Liberal-led Government has invested \$9million to be home to Australia's first CyberKnife.

The CyberKnife delivers multiple beams of high dose radiation using a robotic arm and can eventually be used to treat patients suffering lung, head and neck, spine, abdomen and prostate cancers.

The CyberKnife is unique because it delivers radiation to a precise area, in larger doses, and in fewer visits.

The \$9million contract for the CyberKnife, which includes staff training, will enhance Western Australia's reputation of having a health system the envy of the nation.

WA is the only State in Australia to have a CyberKnife. This system is renowned across the world for its ability to treat some cancers and improve outcomes for some patients.

This investment comes on top of the recently opened new \$54million Comprehensive Cancer Centre Stage II at QEII Medical Centre which will house all outpatient treatments for cancer patients and make accessing care easier for more than 7,000 patients who each year use this centre.

Part of the new State Cancer Centre at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital has been purpose designed to accommodate the CyberKnife. The CyberKnife will operate alongside the five linear accelerators already in use and treating patients at the State Cancer Centre.

Eventually it is hoped that the CyberKnife will be used to treat up to 450 patients a year.

## Our Record

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The Liberals have led a Government that has created a health system the envy of the nation.

- The Liberal-led Government has responded to the needs of the health system in Western Australia by launching the biggest hospital building and refurbishment program in the State's history, with an unprecedented \$7billion allocated to hospital projects across the State:
  - Construction of the \$2billion, 783-bed Fiona Stanley Hospital and 140-bed State Rehabilitation Service due for completion in 2014
  - The ageing Princess Margaret Hospital will be replaced by the \$1.2billion new Children's Hospital, a 279-bed facility with paediatric care and research facilities
  - \$360.2million for the 307-bed public hospital as part of the Midland Health Campus, due for completion in 2015
  - \$230million investment into upgrading and expanding Joondalup Hospital
  - Royal Perth Hospital saved from Labor's planned closure and retained as a tertiary hospital, providing emergency medical care at a central location for all of Perth
  - Will build a new public State Rehabilitation Service to replace the aged infrastructure at Shenton Park Rehabilitation at a cost of \$239million.
- Regional health services have also been a core focus for the Liberal-led Government, including:
  - Completion in March 2013 of the new Albany Hospital, a \$170.4million facility with 134 beds and expected to treat more than 55,000 patients each year
  - Establishment of the \$565million Southern Inland Health Initiative to boost regional health and encourage private GPs into country towns.
- \$75million investment in a post-graduate program to create an additional 138 junior doctors by 2013 to ensure our hospitals are properly staffed



- \$30.8million over four years was allocated from the Royalties for Regions Program to revitalise the Patient Assisted Transport Scheme (PATS). This represents a tripling of investment in PATS over the current term of the Liberal-led Government
- Almost doubling funding to \$68.5million over five years to ensure that the Royal Flying Doctor Service has the capacity and resources to properly operate throughout regional Western Australia
- \$149.6million investment in emergency ambulance services by massively increasing funding to St John's Ambulance
- The \$85million Friend in Need Scheme is a partnership between Western Australia Health and the community services sector, providing 24/7 home care services for older and chronically ill patients in the community, as an alternative to the emergency department
- \$8.4million investment into after-hours GP services, resulting in there now being 60 after-hours GP clinics – 45 in Perth and 15 in regional areas – and two Perth locum services
- Recent independent reports confirming that Western Australian hospitals lead the country in the management of emergency departments
- Reductions in waiting times and fewer people on waiting lists for elective surgery.