

## Travis Review: Final Report into Capacity of Victoria's Public Hospitals

August 2015

On 17 August 2015, the Victorian Andrews Labor Government provided its response to the *Travis Review: Increasing the capacity of the Victorian public hospital system for better patient outcomes*.

Dr Doug Travis, surgeon and former Victorian branch Australian Medical Association President, conducted the review in order to provide recommendations to improve health innovation and examples of innovative models of care to facilitate the treatment of more patients with existing funding.

In the findings of the final Review, Dr Travis noted the following in regards to the public hospital system:

- *"The Victorian public hospital system is well equipped in terms of the physical capacity of facilities to meet the immediate challenges of a growing population with increasing demand for health services. However, not all facilities meet community expectations and contemporary standards for hospital facilities."*
- *"In some areas there is a mismatch between facilities, funding and demand."*
- *"It would be helpful if there was a statewide service and infrastructure plan to guide the future allocation of resources."*

Victorian Health Minister the Hon. Jill Hennessy MP described the review as the most comprehensive audit ever undertaken into the capacity of Victoria's hospitals. The Minister said individual health service providers in Victoria are leading the way in delivering innovations to the public health system and that Victorian Government wants to apply these innovations to accommodate the needs of Victoria's ageing and growing population and overall improve patient outcomes.

Minister Hennessy has said Victorian Government would accept all the recommendations of the *Travis Review*. In outlining her response, the Minister made specific references to:

### **Better Care Victoria**

A significant recommendation the Government will adopt is the establishment of *Better Care Victoria* that will build on the accomplishments of the Health Innovation and Reform Council. The Health Minister will be responsible for appointing a board of health experts to oversee this work. Minister Hennessy announced this will be a new organisation to support the whole Victorian public health system, including increasing capacity of the public health system; assess new health initiatives; scale up proven innovations; improving the interface between primary and acute care and; facilitating an evidenced-based approach to ensure long-term sustainability. Specific details about the new organisation will be released at a later date.

In his final report, Dr Travis said, *"A significant block to innovation is the lack of the initial seed money to pay the start-up costs of change,"* and has recommended establishing the Better Care Victoria: Innovation Fund. This fund, described as *"new money,"* will assist in funding the trial of new models that cannot be funded out of current resources in order to create a more sustainable Victorian health system.

Minister Hennessy has said the Government will seek to utilise existing health resources to their full potential and that the *Better Care Victoria: Innovation Fund* will receive an allocation of funding in the 2016-17 State Budget to support Better Care Victoria.

### **Statewide Strategic Services and Infrastructure Plan**

Another significant recommendation to be adopted is the development of a 20-year *Statewide Strategic Services and Infrastructure Plan*. This Plan would seek to address mismatches between hospital capacity and infrastructure and patient needs. The Government has indicated it will release this Plan in 2017.

### **Healthlinks**

In 2016, the Government will launch a trial for a new funding system called *Healthlinks*. Minister Hennessy has said this new system will encourage health services providers to pool resources in order to treat specific high-risk patients, including those diagnosed with chronic disease.

### **Health Reform Summit**

On 18 September 2015, the Health Minister will convene a Health Reform Summit that will bring together around 100 of Victoria's health experts and community stakeholders. The Summit will guide the development of the 20-year Victorian strategic services and infrastructure plan. This work will form part of the COAG national health reform agenda. COAG will consider necessary reforms to strengthen relationships between community-based primary-care sector care providers and specialised health service providers.

### **Previous Andrews Labor Government Health announcements**

The first Budget allocated Budget handed down by the Andrews Labor Government in May 2015 included the allocation of \$200 million towards the *Hospital Beds Rescue Fund* which would see the re-opening of 101 beds and theatres across the Victorian public health system in order to treat more than 19,800 extra patients.

The allocation of these funds was a direct implementation of the recommendations in Dr Travis' Interim Report, released in April 2015 relating to how the funds could be allocated. The allocation of this funding has since seen the re-opening of 61 beds and points of care in Victorian hospitals. The Government has committed to opening the remaining figure within the next six months.

### **Further information**

To view the full Travis Report, click [here](#).

To view a transcript of the Health Minister's speech, click [here](#).