

Specialist Doctors

A close-up portrait of a man with short, light brown hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red and blue striped tie. He is looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus, with some bokeh lights.

RANN
Gets Results
2006

21st Century Hospitals

More Specialist Doctors for our Public Hospitals

Rebuilding South Australia's public hospitals is a key Labor priority.

In its first term, the Rann Government increased health and hospital spending by \$912 million above inflation.

Today, there are 1349 extra nurses and 349 more doctors caring for patients in our public hospitals than there were in 2002. This extra recruitment has been achieved despite a national shortage of medical professionals.

Work has already begun on a comprehensive workforce plan to make sure that our hospitals retain high levels of existing staff, as well as attracting new staff to our public health system. The aims of the plan include:

- increasing the number of South Australian residents undertaking medical degrees
- planning for future recruitment needs and
- assessing education and training requirements in hospitals, including opportunities to allocate time for the teaching of junior doctors.

This comprehensive plan is being developed in consultation with medical staff, the Australian Medical Association, the South Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Association, the Clinical Senate, the Medical Board of South Australia, universities and medical students. Meetings with medical staff have been held in most of our major metropolitan hospitals. It is expected that the medical workforce strategy will be finalised in mid-2006.

To solve the doctor shortage, we need our universities to train enough local doctors to care for our ageing and growing population. There are currently 155 HECS funded places for medicine in South Australia, and it is critical that South Australia gets its fair share of additional medical places.

The Rann Government is negotiating with the Federal Government to allocate at least 46 additional medical places to the University of Adelaide and Flinders University. We are also working to significantly increase the allocation of university places for allied health and nursing.

While we are calling on the Federal Government to play its role, we are acting now to increase the number of South Australians studying medicine – and to tackle the shortage of doctors in South Australia. Up to 30 extra South Australian students will be studying medicine in this State every year through a joint campaign between the State Government, and Adelaide University and Flinders University.

Under this strategy:

- the State Government will annually fund ten new medical places – five at Adelaide University and five at Flinders University – especially for South Australian students who will work in areas of need in country South Australia, and in the north and south of Adelaide. This will cost \$4.2 million.
- Adelaide University will target 20 places in its medical school for “tertiary transfers” that are dedicated to South Australian students studying other courses at the university. This year, they will start with ten places.

The Government is working with Adelaide University to reform its admission process so that local students, who currently account for about half the annual intake, are not disadvantaged. These reforms are already delivering results, with increased numbers of South Australian students admitted in the 2006 intake.

Recruitment requires careful planning to make sure that our hospitals have the right mix of surgeons for the complex demands of emergency and elective treatment. For example, employing more surgeons creates demand for more anaesthetists and pathologists.

The Rann Government is investing now to make sure our hospitals continue to be staffed by the best available medical workforce.

Over the next four years, an additional 44 specialist doctors, and specialist trainee doctors, will be employed in our public hospitals at a cost of \$20 million – funded by an extra \$12 million and the \$8 million already set aside in forward estimates.

These highly trained doctors will include an elective surgery team of speciality surgeons as well as consultants for our hospitals.

This extra medical workforce will include physicians and surgeons in paediatrics, psychiatry, ENT (ear, nose and throat), gastro (diseases of the bowel and stomach), neurosurgery (brain disease and trauma), ophthalmology (eyes), orthopaedic (bones), and general surgery, as well as pathologists and anaesthetists.

Cost:

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	4-year total
Existing	\$2m	\$2m	\$2m	\$2m	\$8m
New		\$2m	\$4m	\$6m	\$12m