

For  
the  
Future

A NEW  
Mount Barker  
Hospital



South  
Australian  
**Labor**



Photo: Google

#### Acknowledgment of country.

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians whose ancestral lands we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and respect their deep spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country. We also pay our respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their nations in South Australia, as well as those across Australia.

# Foreword

Equipping our health system for the next generation means securing quality health care for the most rapidly-expanding parts of our state.

Mount Barker has seen a massive population increase in the past decade, and it's about to swell even more over the next 10-15 years.

The Mount Barker Hospital has just 34 beds. It's far from adequate to meet growing demand in the area, and it's showing.

Mount Barker more than doubled its patient intake in the eight years from 2012 to 2020 - with the emergency department experiencing a 30% increase just in the last year.

Local paramedics are transporting patients from Mount Barker to the city, because the care these people need simply isn't available locally - and then getting stuck on city ramps, leaving the Hills community uncovered.

We need to do something about this.

**Labor will build a brand-new Mount Barker Hospital, tripling the size of the current hospital from 34 to 102 beds.**

Building capacity in Mount Barker means more Adelaide Hills residents can get care closer to home - in turn easing pressure on city hospitals and reducing ramping.

We're doing this because our policies aren't just about the next four years, but about the next generation.



Peter Malinauskas MP  
SA Labor Leader





## WHY WE'RE DOING THIS

**Mount Barker is one of South Australia's largest cities, set to grow dramatically in coming decades after already experiencing significant population growth over the past 10 years.**

The Mount Barker region's population was 37,000 as at 2020, and predicted to grow to 56,000 by 2036.

Mount Barker Hospital admitted 7,592 patients in 2019-20 compared to just 3,293 patients in 2011-12 – more than doubling its intake – without the beds and resources to keep up.

Attendances at the local emergency department grew from 14,812 to 19,224 – a 30% increase – in the 12 months between July 2020 and July 2021 alone.

The hospital has just 34 beds to cover a population approaching 40,000.

This means that many people in the Adelaide Hills must travel to the Royal Adelaide Hospital or Flinders Medical Centre for treatment, increasing pressure on those hospitals and further heightening the ramping crisis.

Paramedics are fatigued and overworked spending vast amounts of their shift transferring patients from Mount Barker to city hospitals, and then getting ramped.

Even with Labor's significant commitment for additional Adelaide Hills ambos, this problem won't go away without establishing more locally-based health services.

The Adelaide Hills' health Governing Board meeting minutes show an urgent need for massive upgrades to the hospital. The Board noted an "extreme" risk for the local community continuing to grow with the current lack of health services.

The Government has failed to commit to additional services at the hospital beyond an emergency department upgrade.

The Mount Barker Mayor and former nurse Ann Ferguson has warned repeatedly that there is a need for an entirely new hospital, not just a piecemeal approach.

The local Federal MP, Rebekha Sharkie has stated there is an identified \$200 million need including for additional inpatient beds, expanded surgery and theatres, and additional chemotherapy.



"...it's common practice at the start of our shift that the Mount Barker, Woodside and Stirling ambulances ... will head towards the local hills hospitals and transfer them down to the Adelaide hospitals where we are then ramped for several hours at a time leaving the entire Adelaide Hills area uncovered or inadequately covered for the next emergency that comes..."

Adelaide Hills paramedic Nick

3 November 2021

Doctors and nurses have suggested that 100 beds are required to meet the growing population's needs.

Clinicians have further identified the need for on-site imaging and pathology, a key reason why more complex cases can't be treated at Mount Barker and instead get transferred to the city.

Mental health services are sorely needed, with the Mount Barker community already experiencing tragedies following a lack of local access to support.

As the Adelaide Hills population ages, there is an increased demand for additional health care catered to older South Australians, allowing them to exit acute hospital care or prevent them needing that care in the first place.

And as more young couples and families move into growing suburbs like Mount Barker, there is a clear need for additional maternity care.

## HEALTH EMERGENCY

The number of ambulance crews in the Hills has not increased in more than 20 years which is creating a dangerous situation that is putting lives at risk, local paramedics have warned.

Mount Barker Courier | 15 September 2021

## 'Game of roulette': Paramedics call on state government to end Adelaide Hills ambulance crisis

There's only one ambulance to serve a growing Hills community and paramedics say they are forced to 'roll the dice' on who will get care.

Messenger Adelaide Hills | 9 November 2021

## ED on divert

Ambulances were diverted away from the Mt Barker Hospital's emergency department one night last week, as a paramedic says the region's planned new emergency department may still be under pressure when it opens.

Mount Barker Courier | 22 December 2021



**A Malinauskas Labor Government will:**

# BUILD A NEW MOUNT BARKER HOSPITAL

**COST: \$220 million**

**A Malinauskas Labor Government will deliver a brand-new 102-bed Mount Barker Hospital, tripling the size of the old hospital.**

The new site will increase the size of the current hospital from 34 to 102 beds, with construction set to commence in the next three years.

The hospital's bed numbers are increasing in line with community population growth and in comparison to hospitals in other large regional towns.

The additional beds will be subject to extensive community consultation, but will include:

- ✔ A new 12-bed mental health unit, introducing inpatient mental health services to the hospital for the first time;
- ✔ Rehabilitation beds targeted at helping older South Australians needing longer-term care outside the emergency department;
- ✔ Maternity beds, enabling the hospital to provide care for the substantially increased demand on its birthing services;
- ✔ Additional medical and surgical beds, expanding the hospital's capacity; and
- ✔ Palliative care beds for end-of-life care closer to home.

The new hospital will feature on-site pharmacy, pathology and radiology services, upgraded outpatient clinics and modern operating theatres.

Chemotherapy equipment will be upgraded with consultation undertaken to consider increasing Mount Barker's chemotherapy services from low to medium complexity, allowing Adelaide Hills residents to access more cancer care close to home.

All services available at the current hospital site will be continued at a minimum.

The hospital's emergency department will have expanded 17-bed capacity as a bare minimum, with community and clinician consultation to determine if there is a need for further expansion. The new hospital is expected to be completed by 2027, with \$95 million of the \$220 million total cost in the forward estimates up to 2025/26 and the full project budget by 2026/27.

The new hospital will factor in capacity for further expansion, future-proofing the hospital to meet the community's needs decades from now.

Planning for the new hospital will begin immediately with local clinician and community input being sought in 2022 on the site location, service structure and model of care.

