

Victorian Medicare Action Group

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Victorian MPs reject Abbott's GP co-payment and reduction in hospital funding

The Victorian Coalition, the ALP and the Victorian Greens all say they don't support the federal government's proposed \$7 co-payment for GP services Amanda Cornwall, Victorian Medicare Action Group spokesperson said today.

'They're also critical of the federal government's decision not to honour a commitment to increase its share of funding for public hospitals' she said.

The statements are contained in letters received as part of a survey of all Victorian MPs by VMAG during October. VMAG asked the MPs their views on the federal government's move not to increase its share of funding for hospitals and the co-payment for GP visits.

'These are important issues for the Victorian election because a GP co-payment is likely to result in more visits to public hospital emergency departments,' said Ms Cornwall.

'With these extra costs and without the extra funding committed by the federal government the Victorian government will have to reduce hospital services or find new funding from elsewhere' says Ms Cornwall.

'Health Minister David Davis, who responded on behalf of the Victorian Coalition, is clearly annoyed that we've raised these issues' Ms Cornwall said.

'He accuses us of being disingenuous for drawing attention to the Abbott government's policies' she said.

Victorian Labor appears pleased with a chance to draw attention to the federal government's hospital funding decision. It says 'the cuts to Victorian hospital funding [that] are going to have a devastating effect on Victoria's health system'.

'Labor needs to tread carefully because it's not blameless on the issue of federal government funding for public hospitals' according to Ms Cornwall.

In 2012 the federal Labor government attempted to cut public hospital funding to Victoria and two other states on the basis of an ABS adjustment in population statistics. They did this despite having agreed to increase the federal government's share of hospital funding to the states from 2014.

Minister Davis's letter describes the Victorian ALP leadership as 'treacherous' for supporting their federal Labor colleagues at the time instead of supporting Victoria.

'Neither Labor nor the Coalition say what they'll do to meet the short fall. The Victorian Greens are the only party that mentions extra investment for Victoria's public hospitals' says Ms Cornwall.

Federal Labor entered an agreement with the states in 2011 to increase the federal share of funding for public hospitals from around 38 per cent to 45 per cent in 2014 and 50 per cent from 2017. The Abbott government announced in the May budget that it would not honour the agreement to increase funding to 50 per cent from 2017.

VMAG's survey report and the letters from the major parties are available [here](#).

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