



Chris Picton MP

Shadow Minister for Health and Wellbeing
Member for Kaurua

Michelle Oliver
South Australian Divisional Manager
Occupational Therapy Australia
E: Michelle.oliver@otaus.com.au

17 March 2022

Dear Michelle,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to Occupational Therapy Australia's 2022 South Australian election priorities.

Labor agrees in the vital importance of allied health to the functioning of our South Australian public health system.

Labor is taking to the election a comprehensive plan to fix South Australia's ramping crisis, and a major component of this policy is investing in an additional 112 sub-acute beds across our hospital system at the Lyell McEwin Hospital, Flinders Medical Centre, Modbury Hospital and Gawler Hospital.

Importantly our costings include funding to staff these new beds, and an important component of this staffing will be allied health including occupational therapy.

We condemn the Liberals' cuts to mental health beds, including the closure of 30 Intermediate Care Centre beds in the last few months alone.

Labor will invest in 98 additional public mental health beds across Modbury Hospital, Noarlunga Hospital, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Mount Gambier Hospital.

Our fully-costed policy includes funding to staff these beds, and we welcome the opportunity to explore the role of occupational therapy in staffing these and other mental health beds across the public system.

Labor has further committed \$50 million to recruiting a 100-strong pool of mental health specialists and other learning support specialists to deliver services across public schools.

These staff will be available to be requested by primary and secondary schools in regional and metropolitan Adelaide to provide one-on-one support to students and work with teachers, school support officers and principals to help develop programs that improve the mental health and resilience of the whole school community.

We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss the inclusion of occupational therapy as part of this significant commitment.

Labor recognises the need for workforce planning across all areas of health, including allied health, and commit to long-term workforce planning to address the future needs of the occupational therapy workforce in South Australia.

Regarding public housing, we have announced our policy to boost public housing stocks with a proportion ringfenced for South Australians living with a disability. This additional public housing will be based in both metropolitan and regional South Australia.

More detail regarding these policies can be found at www.forthefuture.com.au

Thank you once again for your correspondence. We look forward to continuing an ongoing dialogue regarding the key priorities of South Australian occupational therapists.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Picton MP

Shadow Minister for Health and Wellbeing