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FROM THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Tuesday, 5 May, 2009

\$825.9 MILLION TO TAKE ACTION ON HOSPITAL WAITING LISTS

A massive 2009 State Budget injection of **\$825.9 million** will tackle elective surgery waiting lists and boost hospital capacity, the Minister for Health, Daniel Andrews, said today.

Mr Andrews said **\$780.9 million** over five years would significantly boost the capacity for hospitals to provide treatment in key areas of cancer treatment, acute care and sub-acute services; and a further **\$45 million** has been allocated for a one-off waiting list blitz.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action on health to build a social safety net to support Victorian families in tough global times and for the future," Mr Andrews said.

"Our Government is providing the state's hospitals with the funding they need to continue to offer the best possible treatment to Victorians."

The Brumby Labor Government's 2009 State Budget \$780.9 million hospital capacity boost includes:

- \$179 million over five years to expand sub-acute services to improve patient flow, including \$148 million for new sub-acute beds and \$17.4 million to expand the Transition Care Program;
- \$45.3 million over four years for hospitals to increase renal dialysis, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services; and
- \$350 million over five years to expand inpatient services and open a further 100 acute beds.

Mr Andrews said the 2009 State Budget hospital capacity boost included the \$321.5 million beds package announced by the Brumby Labor Government in December, which provided funding for 276 more beds across the health system to treat up to 63,000 extra patients.

"The Brumby Labor Government's \$45 million blitz on elective surgery will build on the advances made under the \$60 million blitz delivered in partnership with the Rudd Federal Government," Mr Andrews said.

"Victorian hospitals performed an extra 13,478 elective surgery operations in 2008, exceeding the target of 9400 extra surgeries set under the joint State-Commonwealth blitz last year.

"Hospitals will be given time to make the appropriate preparations to ensure they can meet or exceed the target of 9000 extra elective surgery operations in the 2009-10 financial year under this \$45 million Brumby Labor Government blitz."

Mr Andrews said the Brumby Labor Government's funding to boost capacity and blitz elective surgery waiting lists meant the state's hospitals could treat an extra 30,000 emergency department patients.

He said critical care services also would be expanded by an extra beds in intensive care units, and new neonatal intensive care unit cots. The 2009 State Budget also delivers \$3 million for more short-stay units, day treatment centres and medi-hotels to improve the flow of patients through to their surgery.

Media contact: Jason Frenkel 9651 5799/0438 361 865

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