



For  
the  
Future

Mental  
Health  
Kids' care

South  
Australian  
**Labor**



Source: Kidspot

#### 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

*\*Warning – some readers may find this story confronting.*

I want to tell you about a formidable woman named Kate.

Last March Kate's 14-year-old son attempted to end his own life, when she was in the room.

Any parent in this situation would take immediate action, and that's what Kate did – her son was found by police after running from the house, then taken to the Women's and Children's Hospital by paramedics.

Despite police telling Kate her son needed to be seen by a psychiatrist and that he wasn't safe, he was sent home by a mental health nurse after five hours of waiting in the emergency department – no psychiatrist in sight.

This would be the first of many occasions Kate's taken her suicidal son to the Women's and Kid's, only to be turned away because there aren't enough beds and staff to see him.

Kate was sick of not being able to get her son the care he desperately needed, so she decided to try a different approach.

Kate founded Parents for Change last year supported by another woman, Anne-Marie, who was moved after reading Kate's story in the media.

Together, they've spent months volunteering their time and resources, finding parents and families who have similar experiences, and bravely sharing their stories with the public.

They wanted us to pay attention to the rapidly escalating child mental health crisis happening in South Australia.

Labor won't stand by and watch kids' mental health deteriorate, some to the point of lives lost, because the support they need isn't there.

A Malinauskas Labor Government will invest more than \$80 million for more hospital beds, services, and support to tackle the growing mental health crisis for SA kids.

For Kate, and for the next generation.



Peter Malinauskas MP  
SA Labor Leader



# WHY WE'RE DOING THIS

**The Women's and Children's Hospital has seen a 49% increase in mental health presentations since the Liberals came to government, with more kids than ever needing urgent help.**

Far too often, children experiencing a mental health crisis are discharged from the emergency department without follow up treatment plans in place.

In November last year, we saw ramping at the Women's and Children's Hospital for the first time ever – a sign the hospital is past breaking point.

The hospital has just 12 dedicated kids' mental health beds, with no planned increase of these beds under the Liberals. Families and clinicians have consistently advocated for these beds to increase but have been ignored.

There is a serious shortage of child psychiatrists in our child mental health system, with less than 20 child psychiatrists across the Women's and Children's Hospital.

This shortage of psychiatrists means that kids presenting to the hospital are often not seen by a psychiatrist before being turned away.

The child psychiatry shortage is exacerbating a general shortage across the state, with less psychiatrists able to enter the system due to a shortage of clinicians able to take trainees through the required child psychiatry training.

The state's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is overwhelmed, with families now waiting an average of 33 days for a mental health appointment and around 150 children on the wait list at any given time.

Community mental health teams are meant to keep South Australians out of hospital – but right now they're inundated with demand, often left with no other choice but to refer patients to emergency departments.

The situation is so dire parents and carers have formed a new advocacy body, Parents for Change, boldly and passionately fighting for better care for South Australian kids.

Mental health groups like the Lived Experience Leadership and Advocacy Network are doing the best they can to be a strong voice for patients and families, but there's only so much they can do on extremely limited funding.

**We can't leave our kids in this state of crisis.**



# 'Derelict system': Parents demand better help for at-risk children

A group of concerned parents has launched a campaign and petition demanding better mental health services for South Australian children, saying suicidal youth are being turned away from the Women's and Children's Hospital.

InDaily | 4 November 2021



InDaily | 15 January 2022


## Mum's desperate plea to Women's and Children's Hospital after son, 10, was repeatedly refused admission to psychiatric ward

change.org

Start a petition My petitions Browse Contributions

Petition details Comments Updates

### Suicidal Children Are Being Turned Away From The WCH!



12,093 have signed. Let's get to 15,000!

At 15,000 signatures, this petition becomes one of the top signed on Change.org!

Parents For Change started this petition to Hon Stephen Wade (Minister for Health) and 1 other

**Parents and young people desperately need your help!**

South Australia's mental health system is failing its young people. The Mallee Ward at the Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) is the only Child and Adolescent Mental Health Inpatient Service in South Australia, but with only 12 beds available it's no surprise suicidal children are being turned away.

First name

Last name

Email

Adelaide, 5000 Australia

Please share my name and email address with Parents For Change, so that I can receive updates on this campaign and others.

Display my name and comment on this petition

Sign this petition



# LABOR'S PLAN FOR KIDS' MENTAL HEALTH



## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS

COST: \$50 million

PART OF OUR  
PLANS FOR  
OUR SCHOOLS

A Malinauskas Labor Government will commit an additional \$50 million to employ a central pool of 100 new mental health and learning support specialists to be deployed to primary and secondary schools.

These specialists will provide the kind of timely support students so desperately need, as well as guidance for school staff on how to provide ongoing assistance for the child.

The program will employ mental health psychologists, speech and occupational therapists, social workers, youth workers and other learning support specialists.

They can 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.

An investment in mental health support for school-age children will benefit everyone in the classroom and prevent those issues becoming more acute over time.

## MORE CHILD PSYCHIATRISTS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS

**COST: \$7.8 million**

A Malinauskas Labor Government will roll out an immediate workforce response to address South Australia's child mental health crisis.

### More child psychiatrists

Labor will urgently attract and recruit at least five additional child psychiatrists to work across our public health system over the next four years.

We will employ paediatric psychiatrists to work in CAMHS providing therapy to patients and working across the Women's and Children's Hospital emergency department, assessing patients and developing discharge plans.

### Psychiatry workforce planning

Labor will partner with psychiatrists, investing \$400,000 to develop a long-term workforce plan addressing critical workforce shortages in psychiatry in South Australia.

This planning will have a specific focus on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, as a key pressure point in our state's ability to train new psychiatrists.

### More child psychologists

A Malinauskas Labor Government will employ an additional 10 child psychologists working in child and adolescent mental health, providing ongoing support to kids.

This recruitment is aimed at significantly reducing the wait time for kids between presenting to an emergency department and gaining access to therapeutic support.



## 10 MORE MENTAL HEALTH BEDS IN THE NEW WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

**COST: \$20 million**

Labor has committed to expanding the new Women's and Children's Hospital by an additional 50 beds, as part of our 300-bed plan to help fix the ramping crisis.

A Malinauskas Labor Government will deliver 10 extra mental health beds, as part of our 50-bed commitment to the new Women's and Children's Hospital.

These 10 extra beds will almost double the number of kids' mental health beds at the hospital, from 12 to 22.

Labor's commitment to the new Women's and Children's Hospital represents a stark comparison between the two parties. The Liberals will deliver a new hospital with 1 less child and adolescent bed – whereas Labor will deliver 50 additional beds.

We will listen to frontline doctors, nurses, health workers and families in the planning of the new hospital, unlike the approach taken by the Liberals where clinicians and patients have said they have been ignored.





## BOOSTING COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**COST: \$3 million**

We will boost funding to our overstretched public community mental health teams, allowing them to reach more South Australians in crisis, including young people.

This funding will enable the hire of additional specialist nurses and support staff.

## A STRONG MENTAL HEALTH PATIENT VOICE

**COST: \$800,000**

Labor believes in a strong advocacy voice for mental health patients.

And we know how important it is that changes to the mental health system are guided by South Australians with lived experience.

Parents for Change are doing amazing work advocating on behalf of their families and all SA families, but they're doing it off their own back – volunteering an immense amount of their own time and resources. We need a strong, dedicated mental health advocacy body lifting up the voices of people who have lived through the system.

Labor will invest \$800,000 over four years to boost mental health voices, with funding for the Lived Experience Leadership and Advocacy Network (LELAN).

This four-year funding guarantee will allow LE LAN to employ more staff and expand their work making sure mental health services put people first.



## 48 MORE DOCTORS AT THE WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

**COST: \$31.6 million**

A Malinauskas Labor Government will add 48 doctors at the Women's and Children's Hospital, making sure our kids get the care they need, including in mental health.

These 48 doctors will include four clinical academics and 17 senior specialists and will improve health services across the hospital.

This recruitment drive reflects the exact levels of staffing recommended from a gap analysis undertaken by frontline workers at the hospital.

## MORE SPECIALITY MENTAL HEALTH NURSES

**COST: \$6.2 million**

Labor will fund an additional 12 specialty nurses to fill gaps in specialty mental health and cancer services at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

These 12 specialty nurses will be funded from July 2022 to meet the urgent need for additional paediatric support.



