

INVESTING IN CANTERBURY'S HEALTH

Labour will -

- ensure that the health sector gets enough new funding each year to overcome inflation and population cost pressures with additional spending to boost services, including retaining access to afterhours care throughout the region.
- invest \$12.5 million in health hubs in Rangiora and Akaroa that the current government has failed to fund
- invest \$1 million in community-based mental health services provided by NGOs to help people affected by the earthquakes and the rebuild
- double the number of nurses working in the CDHB school-based mental health team to help affected children in the post earthquake recovery

Labour will ensure Cantabrians get the healthcare that they need.

Labour will invest \$12.5 million to build new health hubs in Rangiora and Akaroa that the current government has failed to directly fund, and we'll ensure that after hours GP services are available.

This will mean that Canterbury DHB will not be forced to absorb the cost for these much needed investments, and the people of Canterbury can have certainty that the facilities will be available.

Labour will be the first New Zealand government to set aside money to make sure the real value of spending in health and education isn't eroded by inflation and population growth.

Labour will also address the ongoing mental health issues in Canterbury by investing \$1 million into mental health services provided by local non-Government organisations. These groups have been at the forefront of helping Cantabrians to cope with the stress and impact of the last few years but they are at the end of their financial tether. Labour will throw them a life-line.

We will also double the number of mental health nurses working in Canterbury schools to help kids affected by the earthquakes and their aftermath. Such a traumatic event for children has a lasting effect, and we need to invest early to ensure that the children of Canterbury are able to move on with their lives.

THE ISSUE

People in Canterbury are still dealing with the ongoing health impacts of the earthquakes. As has been seen in disaster zones right around the world, health impacts of earthquakes are long lasting, especially when it comes to mental health, as years of stress and anxiety begin to take their toll.

The Canterbury DHB reports that since the earthquakes, referrals for mental health services have increased by over 20%, with a 40% rise in referrals for young people. School councillors from around the region report that years of worry and uncertainty are leading to large increases in self harm and suicidal feelings amongst teens.

Compounding this issue of rising need is a shortage of capacity, as funding for health services in Canterbury has not kept up with rising demand. As well as having to try and stretch existing services to cover increased need, local healthcare providers have also had to pay for costly repairs to facilities damaged by the earthquakes.

The result of this is that a lack of access to healthcare, especially mental health care is making it hard for some Cantabrians to recover from this disaster.