



The Thoracic Society of Australia & New Zealand LEADERS IN LUNG HEALTH

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Thoracic Society supports pre-election promises to build the New Zealand health workforce.

The Thoracic Society is relieved that political parties now acknowledge that the existing health workforce is woefully insufficient, and that urgent action is needed to remedy this. Hospital wait times are blowing out, and access to primary care and critical specialist services is becoming harder to come by. “We’re hopeful that, come October, the next New Zealand government will deliver on their election promises, and put in place policies that build a sufficient and sustainable health workforce,” says TSANZ NZ Branch President Elect and Middlemore Hospital respiratory physician Dr Paul Dawkins.

“What we are seeing in respiratory care is a postcode lottery where some New Zealanders have little to no access to basic lung functioning tests,” shares Dr Dawkins. “That means that chronic diseases like asthma, conditions that can be effectively managed with accessible and sustained healthcare, are not being diagnosed and treated properly in our most vulnerable populations.”

Yesterday, the Labour government came out promising to build a resilient domestic workforce delivering 335 more doctors each year from 2027, and 700 nursing placements in 2024. “At the Thoracic Society, we support action taken by the next government – whichever party that might be - to invest in a workforce that’s resourced to deliver the patient outcomes we all go into healthcare to provide,” adds Dr Dawkins. “We ask that the party that takes office in October prioritises respiratory care, as good lung health impacts all New Zealanders. This includes making sure there are good education pipelines for trainee doctors, nurses, and allied health clinicians who want to go into respiratory medicine.”

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The TSANZ is a health promotion charity whose mission is to lead, support and enable all health workers and researchers who aim to prevent, cure, and relieve disability caused by lung disease – we have an 1,800-strong membership across New Zealand and Australia. The TSANZ is the only peak body in both Australia and New Zealand that represents all health professionals working in all fields of respiratory health.

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