

HEALTH

Health

Family First believes the health of the nation starts with the health of each family.

Health is fundamental to a person's total well-being. The Party recognises that health means more than mere absence of disease and encompasses a state of wellbeing that is physical, psychological and social. Accordingly, whilst Family First will promote and support measures to improve the accessibility and quality of healthcare for all Australians, it will also seek to promote health in its broadest sense across the range of sectors that can impact health outcomes.

Family First agrees with the fundamental conditions and resources for health as outlined in the Ottawa Charter.

Family First believes that good health begins in the community and in each family, recognising that health is strongly affected during early development. Family First believes every person is entitled to just and equitable access to quality health services and is committed to providing opportunities for all families, particularly underprivileged, isolated and aged persons, and those in remote and rural centres to receive appropriate medical care.

Family First sees the supportive and robust social unit of the family as the crux of better wellbeing for all Australians. The Party is committed to promoting the ideal that the duty of health carers is to promote health, relieve suffering and to safeguard life. Thus Family First is committed to supporting palliative care.

Specifically

1. Family First is committed to ensuring Australia's health system is accessible, affordable, fair, safe and of the highest quality in the world by:
 - Supporting the retention and improvement of Medicare to ensure that every Australian has access to necessary health services
 - Creating innovative partnerships between business and the health sector to foster improved efficiencies and capacity in the private sector of the health system
 - Supporting the increase in medical school places in an efficient and cost effective manner as matter of urgency to address the shortage of doctors

 - Family First will promote respect for all stages of human life and upholds the fundamental responsibility of members of the medical profession to safeguard human life

2. Family First believes that every Australian should have access to affordable dental health care.

3. Family First acknowledges the wide range of research showing that healthy early childhood development is crucial to longer term health; therefore Family First supports interventionist strategies that promote health from an early age.

4. Family First believes every Australian, including Indigenous Australians should have access to first world health care. Family First will:
 - Work to bridge the health provision gap to Indigenous Australians particularly in rural and remote centres

- Improve the co-ordination of the delivery of essential services and infrastructure to the whole Indigenous community not only those in remote communities
 - Work to address substance misuse in Aboriginal communities with an emphasis on early intervention
5. Family First believes those with intellectual and /or physical disabilities and those who care for them should be given respect as full and equal members of Australian society and will take steps to ensure their support in the community by:
- Supporting improvements to existing health services to improve health care and support for those with disabilities
 - Working to achieve adequate and realistic income support and respite care for family carers and adequate services for those with severe disabilities to ensure a fulfilling life with adequate opportunities for social, recreational and creative activities
6. Family First will take measures to support those with mental illnesses in the community by:
- Supporting early intervention programs for mental health
 - Increasing the provision of services that provide respite care to family members
 - Supporting changes to Medicare funding to improve the provision of health care to the mentally ill
 - Supporting measures to improve the capacity of the health care system to cater for the needs of patients with significant illness for adequate professional care or supported accommodation
7. Family First will fight for better strategies to address the health of the aged by:

- Encouraging programs that integrate the elderly into society through flexible options for paid and voluntary work, mentoring and social activities and recreation
- Ensuring the provision of appropriate care that promotes healthier ageing and improved quality of care during the latter stages of life
- Working to improve the levels of funding and address structural problems within the Aged Care Sector. Family First will work to establish greater security and safety in the care of the frail aged through provision of greater choice in housing, nursing home accommodation and improved standards within Aged Care Facilities

8. Family First believes a balanced and comprehensive strategy is needed to combat the increasing problem of substance misuse and abuse. The Party believes Australia's response to illegal drugs and health in general should primarily be preventative through educating the public as well as supporting rehabilitation services.

9. Family First rejects harm minimisation as the primary strategy for combating substance abuse. The Party favours prevention, rehabilitation and avoidance as more acceptable primary strategies.