COUNTRY LIBERALS
MEDIA RELEASE

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAIL

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A closer examination of the proposed changes to Australia’s health funding arrangements raise critical questions about the value such reforms would have for Territorians – questions Kon Vatskalis needs to answer.

For example, the Federal Government’s background document states:

Over time, the Government will shift from a state-specific price and phase in payment of 60% of a nationally efficient price for each service a Local Hospital Network provides.

In other words there will be one price for hip replacements wherever the procedure is performed.

“The prospect of Tennant Creek Hospital receiving the same federal funding for complex medical procedures as Royal Prince Alfred in Sydney rings alarm bells for me,” says Matt Conlan, Shadow Health Minister.

“The cost of delivering healthcare in the Territory is higher and that sentence implies the Territory taxpayer will be left to carry those higher costs.

“That would be a bad deal and the Minister needs to emphatically rule out that possibility.

“The County Liberals remain committed to ensuring control of hospitals remains firmly located within the Territory - that’s another non-negotiable.

“The Federal Government claims the ‘Local Hospital Network’ component of its plan delivers local control but it’s difficult to see how it would work in the Territory.

“A Local Hospital Network might be an effective structure for large cities with multiple hospitals when patients only need to be shifted across town, but our hospitals are hundreds of kilometres apart.

“Logically each hospital would need its own network which surely would be a hospital board by another name. Of course under the Henderson Government our regional hospitals boards have become dysfunctional.

“It should be noted the Country Liberals support the return of strong local boards.

“I also seriously doubt that splitting the funding arrangements 60/40 between the Federal and Territory Governments will end the blame game.

“That funding arrangement leaves ample room for accusation and counter accusation between Federal and Territory Health Ministers.

“The Territory Opposition awaits comment from the Minister.”

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