

Big fall in elective ops

Budget cuts force Eastern Health to drop surgeries, increasing wait for patients

Health | Angus Livingston

EASTERN Health will perform about 1000 fewer elective surgeries next financial year as a result of State Government budget cuts.

Hospital data shows Eastern Health will not perform an expected 966 elective surgeries.

Opposition health spokesman Gavin Jennings said 1313 more local patients would be on the waiting list than last year.

Health Minister David Davis's spokesman Nathan Robinson said the Baillieu Government had increased funding to Eastern Health by \$17 million over Labor's last Budget.

Mr Robinson said the Government had allocated a record \$13 billion for health in the 2011 Budget.

"We have managed to achieve this result despite pressures from the Commonwealth reducing GST revenue by \$2.5 billion

and the uncertain global economic environment," Mr Robinson said.

Mr Jennings said patients at Maroondah, Box Hill and Angliss hospitals would be affected.

Eastern Metropolitan Region state Labor MP Shaun Leane said the Government had taken away hospital beds, rather than fulfil its election promise to increase bed numbers.

Australian Medical Associ-

ation Victoria vice president Dr Stephen Parnis said the Government was also holding on to other figures that should have been released.

"The Government has failed to release the results of the last two Victorian Population Health Surveys from 2009 and 2010," Dr Parnis said.

"Given the Government's commitment to make the health system more transparent, this is disappointing."



Joining the Heidelberg Sings choir has been an uplifting experience for members Nan Caple, Chris Butler and Dean Knape. Picture: PAUL LOUGHNAN N29HB500

Finding their voices, with no fear of failure

Community | Stacy Allen

A HEIDELBERG choir is giving singers of all abilities the chance to find their voices.

Heidelberg Sings, which is based at the Austin Hospital, is one of 13 choirs in Creativity Australia's With One Voice program.

Surrey Hills resident Shaun Islip, who has conducted the

choir since it began last year, said the main aim of With One Voice was social integration.

"What it does is to bring together people from very diverse backgrounds and who haven't had the opportunity to try singing before," Mr Islip said.

Prospective members do not need to audition or have any experience in singing.

Choir member Nan Caple had not sung since her school choir days.

"There's no expectation of your ability to sing, just your willingness to enjoy," Ms Caple said.

Dr Barbara Goss, also of East Ivanhoe, joined last year. "I love it, I'd always thought about joining a choir but was turned off by the thought that you might have

to audition," Dr Goss said. The choir performs classical, jazz, opera, gospel, soul and sing-a-long.

Heidelberg Sings meets from 5.30pm-6.45pm on Thursdays from February 2, at the Education Centre, on level 4, Austin Hospital, 145 Studley Rd, Heidelberg

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