Wednesday 15 October 2026

Victorian doctors to undertake unprecedented 12-hour strike after Government fails to address understaffing, unsafe working conditions and the threat to patient safety

Doctors across Victoria will take an unprecedented 12-hour strike after the Carroll Labor Government failed to address understaffing, unsafe working conditions and the threat to patient safety.

Doctors will begin the stop-work action from 7 am to 7 pm on Wednesday 21 October and will rally outside the Victorian Parliament from 1:30 pm.

Emergency departments and intensive care units will be excluded from the strike, and staffing levels will remain at Saturday levels to protect patient safety.

ASMOF Victoria President Dr Roderick McRae said doctors' extreme frustration with the government's failure led them to undertake this major industrial action.

“After almost a year and a half of making little progress raising their issues with the Government, our doctors have reached the end of their patience, and next week they’ll be undertaking an unprecedented 12-hour strike across Victoria.

“Just last week, more than half of our 10,500 members participated in a ballot on the government’s offer which returned an almost 90 per cent ‘no’ vote, because it failed to address the issues they have raised.

“Each day our doctors across Victorian hospitals face systemic understaffing, unsustainable working hours and excessive fatigue, and collectively these present an unacceptable threat to patient safety.

“We need the Carroll Labor Government to put forward a solution that addresses these concerns.

Dr McRae said doctors wanted a solution which authentically addressed the problems they faced in providing quality healthcare to their patients.

“We cannot address excessive fatigue or unsustainable working hours amongst our doctors without addressing understaffing.

“That requires the government to put forward a solution that includes base rates of pay that attract and retain doctors in Victoria.

“Currently, it is not uncommon for doctors to be rostered on for an 84-hour working week, and to work beyond those hours when emergencies occur. That is clearly unsafe for doctors and the patients they care for, and it has got to change.”

AMA Victoria President Dr Simon Judkins said doctors wanted comprehensive reform that provided sustainable working conditions and safe, reliable healthcare for Victorians.

“The sad reality is that we are putting our doctors in an impossible position. The Victorian health system requires them to work 14 to 16-hour shifts, back to back, sometimes for seven days straight, while expecting them to make extremely important clinical decisions about patients' welfare without error.

“They are utterly exhausted, but are still required to give their very best to the patients under their care. It's unfair and not sustainable.

“The willingness of our doctors to take industrial action and to turn out to public rallies in their thousands demonstrates just how deeply committed they are to change.

“It's now incumbent on the government to step up to the moment and to put forward a solution that effectively addresses their concerns.

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