Thursday 1 October 2026

Striking doctors call on Carroll Government to urgently address fatigue, protect patient safety

Doctors on strike across Victoria today are calling on the Carroll Labor Government to urgently address unsustainable working conditions, acute fatigue and the threat to patient safety.

For the first time in over 25 years, doctors right across Victoria are undertaking a four-hour work stoppage from 1:30pm to 5:30pm, with emergency departments being excluded to protect patient safety.

Doctors will rally outside the Victorian Parliament calling on the Carroll Labor Government to take urgent action to address the crisis.

ASMOF Victoria President Dr Roderick McRae said doctors were deeply concerned about the impact of fatigue on their capacity to provide the quality of care their patients needed.

“Our members are routinely forced to work shifts of up to 14 hours and longer during emergencies, up to seven days a week, back to back.

“They have limited guarantees of consecutive days off without being recalled and are not getting adequate time to recover between shifts.

“That’s leading to acute fatigue and burnout amongst our doctors, and it risks compromising patient safety.

“It’s got to stop, and today we’re outside the Victorian Parliament calling on the Carroll Labor Government to provide answers.”

Senior Medical Registrar Dr Zak Doherty illustrated the daily experience of doctors working in a health system in crisis.

“I’ll start work Friday 8am. I’ll work all day and then at 5pm, I’m on call for the whole weekend. On the Monday I go to work, 8 to 5 again.

“Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, I might be getting 3 or 4 hours a night sleep. In those sorts of conditions, it can be really challenging, and I feel for the patients, when they’re looking at me, they can tell I’m exhausted.

“Unfortunately, the Victorian Government thinks it's appropriate for doctors to work in those conditions, we don’t choose to work those conditions, the government mandates that we do.”

AMA Victoria President Dr Simon Judkins said that despite 14 months of negotiations, over 60 meetings and six months of promises that an offer was imminent, the Government has delivered absolutely nothing.

“Doctors have patiently articulated their concerns to the Department of Health and to three separate health ministers about unsustainable working hours, fatigue and the threat to patient safety, but after months of inaction, that patience has come to an end.

“Doctors do not want to be attending protests. They want to be in their hospitals doing what they’ve dedicated their lives to, and that’s caring for their patients.

“But the reality is, they cannot do that job properly and safely with the unsustainable working conditions and staffing the government has provided.

“That’s why today’s protest and strike action are necessary.

Dr Judkins said that what doctors were asking for was not unreasonable and was consistent with other emergency services.

“What we’re calling for is reasonable and standard practice in other emergency services.

“A 12.5-hour cap on shifts and guarantee of three consecutive days off during a fortnight of work.

“These are basic measures to manage fatigue and to protect patient safety.

“In the interests of protecting the safety and welfare of our patients, our members will continue our industrial action and advocacy until we get the solutions the people of Victoria need.

“We urge the Carroll Labor Government to come forward with an offer.”

Doctors across Victorian hospitals will undertake a work stoppage from 1:30pm to 5:30pm 1 October, Hospital emergency departments will be excluded from the stoppage and staffing across the hospital will remain at Saturday levels to protect patient safety and welfare.

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