

Revealed: Emergency department wait times to be slashed in Western Sydney

A new model for Western Sydney emergency departments will be trialled later in the year to relieve ‘harrowing’ wait times and ‘frustrated’ health workers.



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Almost 1500 people have been spared from waiting in Western Sydney’s overwhelmed emergency departments under a trial of “urgent care clinics” – a plan similar to the one Labor is taking to the election.

The Western Sydney Local Health district and the Western Sydney Primary Health Network will begin rolling out 12 clinics in the second half of the year to treat serious but non-life-threatening cases as the government looks to slash hospital wait times and ambulance bed blocks.

The announcement comes after The Daily Telegraph revealed the harrowing story of a Covid-positive woman who waited for three hours in a stretched emergency department before she went home against medical advice.

The clinics are funded by a \$10.9m state government grant.

WSLHD Integrated health general manager Jasmine Ellis said Western Sydney had some of the busiest emergency departments in the state seeing 200,000 ED presentations a year.

Ms Ellis said the new structure will ease the burden on frustrated paramedics who are frequently called by patients for non-life threatening cases.

“I’m a former paramedic myself and I know what it’s like to turn up to patients who otherwise struggle to navigate the healthcare clinics and that’s why they turn up to ED,” she said.

The plan is similar to a scheme Anthony Albanese has been promoting in the lead-up to Saturday’s federal election with Labor planning to open 50 clinics across Australia.

Dr Layla Yasmeen is part of the new Western Sydney model and works as both a general practitioner and an urgent care doctor at the first clinic in Wentworthville.



Emergency Department director Dr Matthew Vukasovic and Dr Layla Yasmeen from Urgent Care at Wentworthville Medical Centre. Picture: Richard Dobson

“The doctors who are involved in urgent care services are also trained in emergency medicine. We are quite confident about taking care of our patients,” she said.

“We have a roster system. For the day I’m an urgent care doctor, I’m not a general practitioner. We also have practice nurses, triage nurses, allied health like physiotherapists.”

Dr Yasmeen said the clinic had treated 1400 patients since September.

“We kept 1400 patients away from the emergency departments. On any day we see 20-30 patients and we may send one or two people to hospital who need admission, not outpatient services,” she said.

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