



The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Women

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BAC-CO-62357

Robert McDonald
Clerk of the Legislative Council
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Via email: council@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr McDonald

Thank you for providing the petition regarding the future of the Colorectal and Pelvic Reconstructive Service (CPRS) at the Royal Children's Hospital.

The Colorectal and Pelvic Reconstruction Service was a program delivered through a time limited funding grant between the Royal Children's Hospital and the Commonwealth Government. The funding from the Commonwealth Government made possible the establishment of a new model of care for colorectal patients.

Many of the developments, improvements and achievements of the project will have a long-lasting impact. These include the complex colorectal clinics, expanded stomal therapy capacity, a specialty-focused medical team and the family support resources, including fact sheets, information brochures and videos, which remain valuable and available to all families.

For many decades the Royal Children's Hospital has treated patients with complex colorectal and pelvic conditions within the Department of Paediatric Surgery. This work is and will continue to be operationally funded by the Victorian Government. This funding approach is consistent with the highly specialised care delivered to patients at the Royal Children's Hospital with other complex conditions.

As Commonwealth Government funding for the program was time limited and has now ceased, the program has transitioned to be delivered through the Royal Children's Hospital centralised teams. I acknowledge and respect that this has been a challenging transition for many families receiving care.

Victorian Government funding has not been reduced and along with all health services, the Royal Children's Hospital received a year-on-year funding uplift as part of our \$11.1 billion boost to hospital funding.

The RCH has agreed to continue to work with impacted families and has made the following statement:

Statement from the Royal Children's Hospital

The Royal Children's Hospital is committed to delivering the highest quality, evidence-based care to children and families across Victoria.

We recognise that models of care must continue to evolve. As clinical practice advances and community expectations change, we have a responsibility to ensure that our services reflect contemporary standards and make the best use of the expertise of our staff across specialties and subspecialties.

Since July 2025, the hospital has convened a Colorectal Care Consumer Advisory Group to partner with families and better understand their experiences, priorities and unmet needs. This group has played an important role in informing how we strengthen care in this area and in identifying opportunities to improve coordination, resourcing, and support.

Any new or future models of care will continue to be carefully considered and reviewed within the broader context of the Hospital's overall service delivery responsibilities. Decisions regarding implementation and funding will be made in line with our commitment to sustainable, equitable and high-quality care for all Victorian patients.

I acknowledge the ongoing work and advocacy of the Royal Children's Hospital's Colorectal Care Consumer Advisory Group. This group will provide feedback directly to the Royal Children's Hospital. Should petitioners wish to discuss feedback or participate in the advisory group please contact the Consumer Liaison Office via email: clo@rch.org.au or by phone (03) 9345 5676.

I thank impacted families including Ms Alex Ellis, Co-Chair of the Colorectal Care Consumer Advisory Group, for discussing their concerns directly with me.

I have also met with Dr. Peter Steer, Chief Executive Officer of the RCH and senior clinical staff, to discuss family priorities and concerns. I support their commitment to continue working with families to strengthen care and improve coordination for complex colorectal patients.

Yours sincerely



The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

24/03 2026

cc: Hon. Ingrid Stitt MLC, Minister for Mental Health