

Focused On What Matters Most

Victorian Budget 2025/26

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

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Minister for Health Infrastructure

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BACKING OUR FRONTLINE TO DELIVER FREE AND LIFESAVING CARE

The Allan Labor Government is focused on what matters most: easing cost-of-living pressure by investing in our world-class health system and backing our doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics and all other frontline health workers – so Victorians can get the care they need, when and where they need it.

It's why the *Victorian Budget 2025/26* includes an extra \$11.1 billion for health. This year alone, we are providing over \$31 billion to our health system – the biggest investment ever in frontline care.

This includes a record \$9.3 billion boost for our hospitals – giving every public hospital the certainty to plan for the future and keep delivering the world-class care Victorians rely on.

It also includes \$634.3 million to open and operationalise nine new or expanded hospitals – delivering even better care for local communities.

Many Australians have put off care due to the cost of seeing a GP. It's why with this Budget, we're also delivering new and expanded options to help more Victorians access affordable, timely care, close to home.

Making care cheaper and more accessible

Victorians have greater access to care through our Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs) and Community Pharmacy program – with more than 800,000 visits and more than 45,000 consultations respectively since each began.

We're investing an additional \$48.2 million in these important services – giving Victorians more care options on their doorstep and reducing pressure on our busy health system.

That includes expanding and making permanent the role of our community pharmacists – in helping Victorians access basic advice and treatment, without having to wait or pay for a visit to their GP.

Currently, pharmacists can provide medications like oral contraceptives, treatment for shingles or mild psoriasis, and for uncomplicated UTIs. Under the expanded service, pharmacists will now be able to treat even more conditions usually only available with a prescription including allergies, nausea and high blood pressure.

Delivered in partnership with the Commonwealth – Victoria's 29 UCCs are free, open seven days a week and are accessible without an appointment. Whether it's a sprained arm from Saturday sport or a fever from childcare, our UCCs have got you covered.

Opening and operationalising nine new or expanded hospitals

Since coming to Government, we have delivered new and upgraded hospitals right across the state – from the new Victorian Heart Hospital to the expansion of Latrobe Regional Health and Goulburn Valley Health.

This year is no exception with \$634.3 million to open and operationalise nine new or upgraded hospitals right across Victoria.

This includes bringing online the brand-new Footscray Hospital, Frankston Hospital, and Maryborough and District Hospital – delivering even better care for patients and their families.

This Budget also supports the opening of three community hospitals in Cranbourne, Craigieburn and Phillip Island. Care will be tailored to the needs of local communities and provide families easier access to important everyday health services closer to home.

While construction of Mernda Community Hospital is still ongoing – we will have more to say on its opening soon.

Funding will also support the operationalisation of redeveloped emergency departments at Swan Hill District Health, Albury Wodonga Health and University Hospital in Geelong, ensuring they continue to provide timely care to local families.

We're also investing more than \$57 million for essential building upgrades at the Royal Melbourne Hospital to ensure our highly skilled clinical workforce can continue to provide expert care to Victorians.

We'll also boost our Engineering Infrastructure Replacement Program by \$61.8 million and add \$52.3 million to Victoria's Medical Equipment Replacement Program, ensuring our hospitals always have the best equipment.

Better, faster care in an emergency

Our paramedics are some of the best in the world and we're on their side. An \$84.2 million investment will continue to support their work – including 15 dual paramedic ambulance crews, four peak-period units and four 24-hour ambulance services in rural and regional Victoria.

A further \$58.4 million will help emergency departments see patients sooner – increasing the capacity of access to short stay units for patients requiring short-term treatment, observation and assessment of patients in emergency departments.

This investment builds on initiatives currently underway in hospitals – including new handover standards – to deliver faster care, support staff in busy emergency departments, and get paramedics back on the road sooner.

We will also deliver more funding to make Australia's very first virtual emergency department permanent and ensure more Victorians can access it.

The Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) currently delivers free urgent care to more than 550 Victorians every day – our investment will significantly increase its capacity, enabling the service to handle 1,750 calls per day by 2028 or more than 600,000 calls every year.

The VVED recently marked a major milestone providing more than half a million free consultations to Victorians in the comfort of their own home since it began – while also taking pressure off our busy hospitals.

Investing in mental health

We're continuing to build a mental health system that works for every Victorian no matter where they live.

Funding in this year's Budget will give our mental health services the resources they need to care for more Victorians – and focus on prevention and early intervention, especially for young Victorians and our regional and rural communities.

We know accessing mental health support can be a lengthy and expensive process – that's why we are continuing to make it easier for Victorians to access free care in their community.

This Budget includes \$34.5 million to expand and continue our network of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, which provide free mental health care to Victorians – without the need for a referral or a Medicare card.

This investment will establish seven new locations, adding to the 15 Locals which have already helped more than 20,000 Victorians across our state.

We've already increased the mental health workforce by more than 25 per cent and this Budget ensures we can continue building a highly skilled workforce.

An additional \$47.1 million will deliver the psychology registrar program, continue our Junior Medical Officer psychiatry rotations and strengthen our psychiatry registrar and supports program.

We'll also continue to embed lived and living experience throughout all levels of the mental health and wellbeing system with an extra \$10.1 million to support young carers through the Satellite Foundation and the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council's consumer leadership.

We know early intervention is key when it comes to supporting Victorians – which is why we're delivering \$48.5 million to continue programs like the Perinatal Emotional Health Program, Social Inclusion Action Groups, Rainbow Door, Koori Mental Health Liaison Officers, Responder Assist and more.

We're also investing in support for children and young people through our important Healthy Equal Youth (HEY) Partners, Youth Outreach Recovery Support, Youth Life4Life programs and continued support for youth justice mental health.

Support will also be available to more families with funding to support the establishment the Parkville Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Service, and the continuation of group-based parenting sessions.

The devastating loss of any person to suicide is more than just a statistic, they are a loved family member and friend. This Budget invests in suicide prevention to make sure the most vulnerable Victorians get the support they need.

This includes \$7.5 million to continue funding the Hospital Outreach Post-Suicidal Engagement (HOPE) program, LGBTIQ+ Aftercare support, and Strong Brother Strong Sister and Yarning Safe N Strong for Aboriginal Victorians.

An investment of more than \$300 million will ensure ongoing access to vital mental health beds, providing Victorians with the support that they need – whether it's in-home, in an emergency department, or at hospital.

It also includes operationalising 30 beds in our new regional Youth Prevention and Recovery Care centres in Geelong, Shepparton and Ballarat from July 2026 – supporting young people aged 16-25 experiencing mental health challenges and psychological distress.

We'll also deliver an extra \$10 million boost to the Mental Health Capital Renewal Fund – taking our total investment in the program to \$70 million – helping deliver the mental health facilities and AOD facilities Victorians deserve.

For Victorians facing substance abuse and addiction, we'll continue to give them the best chance at recovery, with more than \$44 million to bolster pharmacotherapy services, deliver outreach programs and support our residential rehabilitation services right across the state.

Backing our health professionals

Every single day our dedicated healthcare workforce is on the frontline – saving lives. They are the backbone of our health system, and their knowledge, care and compassion are what makes them the best in the world.

Over the past decade, the Labor Government has grown the number of healthcare workers by almost 50 per cent – hiring approximately 40,365 extra nurses, midwives, doctors, allied health professionals and other hospital staff in the state's health services.

This year, we're continuing these investments, delivering \$95 million to support more nurses and midwives and healthcare professionals at all stages of their career, including access to education programs and clinical placements for those working in hospitals and health services.

Care for every Victorian

Ensuring Victorians with a disability, mental health condition, or chronic illness can remain independent at home is vital to their long-term health.

That's why we're delivering an extra \$22 million for our Home and Community Care Program for Younger People and more support for people who need allied health assessments to complete their NDIS application.

We are also providing \$2.7 million to boost the Victorian Aids and Equipment Program, providing supports that improve quality of life and the independence of Victorians of all ages.

Our older Victorians deserve to age with dignity and respect, that's why we are continuing to strengthen our Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services – the largest state-funded aged care network in Australia – with \$34.6 million to provide the highest-quality aged care, as well as \$7.5 million to improve facilities across the sector.

We'll also deliver \$7.6 million to support better management of medication in our residential aged care homes.

Protecting the health of all Victorians is our priority, that's why we're investing \$38.3 million to support our Local Public Health Units, ensure safe drinking water across the state and safeguard our important thunderstorm asthma early warning system.

We know when we listen to Aboriginal Victorians, we get the best health outcomes – that's why we're working with Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-Operative Limited (DDACL) and Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation to ensure they can continue delivering culturally safe care to their community.

Funding of over \$13 million will support DDACL fund an upgraded, modern facility to deliver clinical, social and wellbeing services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Melbourne's south east.

As part of our work to make sure all women feel safe accessing care – \$15.8 million will enable ten Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to support mums with culturally safe care before and after their baby's birth.

In Victoria, equality is non-negotiable. That's why we're also delivering \$15.3 million for our LGBTQIA+ communities to make sure they have the specialist healthcare they need.

Continuing our work towards a cancer-free Victoria, this year we are delivering \$8.1 million for our world-class cancer system, including the Victorian Cancer Biobank Consortium and the Monash Partners Comprehensive Consortium.

This Budget is focused on what matters most – making it easier, fairer and cheaper for all Victorians to get the care they need, close to home.

Quote attributable to Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Mary-Anne Thomas

"We're focused on what matters most – opening new hospitals, delivering better care and backing our health workforce – because free, accessible and lifesaving care is what every Victorian deserves."

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Ingrid Stitt

"We are continuing to reform the mental health system and support our public sector aged care services – to make sure all Victorians can access the care they need, when and where they need it."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Infrastructure Melissa Horne

"We're making sure Victorians have access to world-class healthcare by delivering on our record health infrastructure pipeline right across the state."