

Easier. Safer. More Affordable.

Victorian Budget 2026/27

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Minister for Ambulance Services

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Minister for Mental Health
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The Hon Melissa Horne
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LABOR DELIVERS BETTER, FREE HEALTHCARE

The Allan Labor Government is making it easier, faster and more affordable for Victorians to get the care they need.

This year alone, we are providing more than \$32.3 billion to our health system – the biggest investment ever in frontline care.

Building on our past record investments, the *Victorian Budget 2026/27* invests an extra \$3.9 billion to strengthen our world-class health system – delivering new solutions for more care, closer to home.

Investing in our hospitals

Another \$1.6 billion means every public hospital has the funding they need to keep delivering the world-class care Victorians count on.

We know Victoria is growing – that’s why we’re investing \$284.4 million to open, support and expand hospitals to meet demand in the areas that need it most:

- Werribee Mercy Hospital – to open the new ED and treat more patients each year
- University Hospital Geelong – to uplift the dedicated children’s ED and better support families during challenging times
- Angliss Hospital – to open the new multi-storey building, transforming care for Knox and Yarra Ranges locals
- Community Hospitals – to continue support for the recently opened service in Mernda, expand services at Cranbourne, Craigieburn and open Pakenham Community Hospital in early 2027.

We’ll also deliver critical upgrades at Dandenong, West Gippsland and Wonthaggi Hospitals, backed by a \$370 million investment.

We’re also investing \$7.1 million to operationalise a new PET scanner at Shepparton Hospital.

We’re also helping our health services maintain their facilities and access the best equipment by boosting funding:

- Regional Health Infrastructure Fund – \$75 million
- Metropolitan Health Infrastructure Fund – \$15 million
- Medical Equipment Replacement Program – \$35 million
- Engineering Infrastructure Replacement Program – \$20 million
- Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Capital Renewal Fund – \$10 million
- Minor Capital Works Renewal Program - Public Sector Residential Aged Care – \$7.5 million

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More surgery sooner

Victoria is leading the nation in delivering the most urgent surgeries faster. But we know there's more to do.

That's why we're improving access to planned surgery and specialist appointments for kids.

We're making sure our littlest Victorians get back to kinder or school sooner when they get sick, with 45,000 more specialist appointments and 4,000 more planned surgeries statewide over the next four years.

We're also expanding VicKey – a digital platform that allows clinicians to focus on care and improve coordination of appointments and communication with patients.

Waiting months for a specialist care appointment costs families time and money. That's why we will establish and pilot Specialist Advice Now – giving patients specialist care advice without the wait.

Timely screening detects cancers, including bowel cancer early, and can be lifesaving.

That's why we're investing \$27 million to deliver new equipment and establish Endoscopy Access Teams to support patients and deliver care sooner.

Improving emergency care

The Allan Labor Government will always back our hardworking paramedics.

That's why the *Victorian Budget 2026/27* is delivering a \$50.7 million investment to get paramedics back on the road sooner and deliver faster, more responsive care.

After a Triple Zero call, the system works smarter – ensuring our ambos respond to critical emergencies straight away and others are safely connected to the right care.

\$9.7 million will improve how Triple Zero Victoria calls are triaged, reviewed and classified – ensuring the most time critical emergencies get an ambulance immediately.

A further \$2 million will ensure AV's clinical triage team can continue to support frequent Triple Zero callers by making sure they are getting care that meets their needs while freeing up call takers to respond to incoming calls.

An extra \$28.6 million will continue to boost the service to help Victorians who don't need an ambulance connect with the right care.

A \$10 million investment will continue an existing pilot underway to improve ambulance transfer times during peak periods in EDs.

This is how we free up ambulances, back our ambos – and make sure our sickest Victorians get the right care no matter where they live.

Delivering care closer to home

When you're recovering from illness or injury, there's no place like home.

We're saving Victorians time and money, delivering more world-class care at home or in the community.

More than \$130 million will continue our Better at Home program – delivering care and treatment like rehab and post-surgical care at home.

We'll also deliver more at-home dialysis for Victorians who need it.

The Virtual Hospital pilot is already proving a gamechanger, particularly for regional Victorians – now we're extending the service, backed by an extra \$3.1 million investment.

Treating up to 400 patients by June, it is making it easier for Victorians to get the care they need at home while freeing up hospital beds for our sickest patients.

We'll also continue funding our Urgent Care Clinics which are helping reduce demand on busy EDs.

Victorians can also continue to access free mental health support at home or in their community, without costly GP referrals.

Funding for four Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs in Cowes, Warrnambool, Horsham and Ballarat will mean regional Victorians can continue to access free mental health care, close to home.

We'll also support Victorians living with permanent or long-term disability to help ease cost of living pressures.

This includes \$5 million for the Victorian Aids and Equipment Program and \$22.5 million to maintain the Home and Community Care Program for Younger People and support access to allied health services to help Victorians navigate the NDIS.

This will ensure vulnerable Victorians can continue to access essential supports, equipment and care at home – without facing additional out-of-pocket costs or unnecessary hospital visits.

Backing our health workforce

Our healthcare workers are the backbone of our health system.

That's why we're investing \$91.2 million to build a strong workforce for the future, including:

- An additional 250 graduate nursing and midwifery positions
- A further 250 Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy Student Grants
- Cadetships and scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- A training program for psychology registrars, psychiatry training pathways, and junior medical officer psychiatry rotations
- Support for eligible non-government residential aged care providers to grow their nursing workforce.

Supporting Victorian families

Whether you're starting, growing or raising a family, we're making sure you have the free care you need.

Hospitals in Melbourne's west are welcoming more babies than anywhere else in Victoria, that's why we are backing our growing west with almost a quarter of a billion dollars in investments.

This funding will make sure women can access world-class care throughout their pregnancy by:

- Supporting an additional 1,500 ultrasound appointments
- Creating 32 new postnatal beds
- Adding more special care nursery cots at Joan Kirner Women's and Children's hospital for babies with complex needs.

The cost of private fertility care means too many Victorians are missing out on their dreams of becoming parents. That's why we're investing \$43 million to continue our free public fertility service and public egg and sperm bank. \$6.8 million will deliver specialised support for new parents on the Mornington Peninsula with the opening of the Hastings Early Parenting Centre.

From 1 July 2026, overnight and day programs will connect parents and carers with nurses, midwives, and health professionals – supporting children from birth to four years old.

Keeping Victorians healthy

We're making sure Victorians get the early diagnosis and treatment they deserve, backed by a \$78 million investment.

It includes \$9.2 million for 12 women's health promotion organisations to continue supporting women with preventative sexual and reproductive health advice and cervical cancer screening.

We're also expanding the Care Pathways for Chronic Disease program to more than 4,500 people living with a chronic disease so they can get care.

Delivering Victorians more mental health support

We're making it easier for Victorians to get the mental health support they need.

To meet growing demand, we are investing \$8.4 million to deliver a new Mental Health Hospital in the Home program at Monash Health, increasing capacity in Melbourne's south-east.

It means people living with acute mental health conditions can get hospital-equivalent treatment, close to their family and support networks.

\$9.7 million will continue community-based outreach and free mental health services for young people and families.

This includes the Youth Outreach and Recovery service – the only one of its kind in Victoria for young people aged 16–25 with complex mental health challenges, and parenting programs for families in regional Victoria.

The loss of any person to suicide is tragic and has long-lasting and far-reaching impacts.

That's why we're making sure all Victorians can get the support they need, when they need it and close to home.

We're investing a further \$6.5 million to deliver suicide prevention programs, including the Hospital Outreach Post-Suicidal Engagement (HOPE) program.

HOPE is critical to ensuring patients discharged from hospital after a suicide attempt receive specialist follow-up care and guidance.

We're also supporting groups disproportionately impacted by suicide, to help close this gap.

Mind Australia's LGBTIQ+ aftercare program will receive a further \$1.32 million to improve access to tailored, affirming support to members of the community following a suicide attempt.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention and social and emotional wellbeing initiatives will be boosted, with more than \$2 million to support culturally safe services.

A \$5.5 million investment will strengthen responses to those experiencing mental health crisis, through trialling expanded models of care, and continuing the TelePROMPT program to provide better access to mental health care via Triple Zero.

We're building on our significant investment in Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing since 2021, with a new \$13.2 million service to support infants, children and their families.

Set to be piloted at two locations, The Nest is an Aboriginal-designed and led, culturally appropriate, family-oriented service for children experiencing developmental, emotional, relational and behavioural challenges.

Preventing and reducing the harm of drugs and alcohol

We are continuing to address the impact of alcohol and other drugs across Victoria – saving lives and delivering people the support they need.

\$94.3 million will deliver important harm reduction, treatment and support initiatives including:

- Victoria's health-led response to public intoxication
- Delivering critical pharmacotherapy support across Victoria
- Targeted mental health and addiction support services and programs to give Victorians the best chance at recovery
- Continued delivery of the successful Victorian Pill Testing Service.

Supporting older Victorians

Victoria is the largest public aged care provider in Australia – and we're continuing to back it with a \$35.7 million investment.

These services play a critical role in our health system – supporting older people with complex needs to age with dignity, close to their communities, while also reducing pressure on our hospitals.

We're also investing a further \$17 million to continue our Residential in Reach program.

It brings hospital-level care directly into residential aged care facilities – meaning fewer unnecessary hospital transfers and ambulance call outs, and better care for residents.

And we're continuing the Guardianship in Hospitals program, with \$5.1 million over four years to support timely discharge for older patients without decision-making support.

This Budget is investing to deliver new solutions to make care easier, faster and more affordable.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Harriet Shing

“We’re making it easier, faster and more affordable for Victorians to get the world-class healthcare they need, closer to home, or directly from home.”

“Our world-class health workforce is behind every bed, every appointment, and every ambulance – this Budget backs them, and the extraordinary care they provide to millions of Victorians.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Ingrid Stitt

“We’re continuing to deliver mental health services Victorians can rely on.”

“We’re continuing to support safer, easier and more affordable aged care for older Victorians – so they can age with dignity, close to their families and communities, while easing pressure on our hospitals.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Infrastructure Melissa Horne

“We are building and upgrading hospitals so Victorians can access world-class care, no matter where they live.”

“Our health infrastructure investments are improving hospitals right across the state with faster care and more beds.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

“The first 100 days are crucial for new parents – we’re making sure they can get the help they need, when and where they need it.”