

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Ambulance Services



Wednesday, 20 December 2023

MAJOR MILESTONE FOR VICTORIA'S PRIORITY PRIMARY CARE CENTRES

Victorians are continuing to access Priority Primary Care Centres (PPCC) in record numbers, with the Allan Labor Government marking a huge 250,000 presentations since centres began opening in late 2022.

Coinciding with this milestone, Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today launched the state's newest PPCC in Melton – now one of 29 centres helping to relieve pressure on busy emergency departments, reduce wait times and increase affordable, after-hours care options for more Victorians.

The success of this urgent care alternative has seen an extra four centres open in addition to the initial 25 promised – with the latest centres opening in Warrnambool, Monash Children's Hospital and inner Melbourne.

Following the progressive opening of PPCCs since September 2022, more than 6,500 people are now receiving care each week, with 40 per cent of these patients, young children.

53 per cent of patients have reported that had a PPCC not been available, they would have otherwise gone to an emergency department for common ailments such as lacerations, fractures, minor burns, tonsillitis, and respiratory tract infections – all conditions that might require urgent attention, but not emergency care.

PPCCs are also proving a reliable referral option for health care providers with approximately 45 per cent of referrals from GPs, hospital emergency departments, pharmacies, the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department, Maternal and Child Health line, Nurse On Call and Ambulance Victoria.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$90 million to deliver this free service to all Victorians, with or without a Medicare card – more than \$20 million was announced in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24*, with additional investments from the Commonwealth Government.

With too many people unable to secure an appointment with their GP and with bulk-billing doctors now few and far between, PPCCs are delivering Victorians more accessible and affordable care close to home.

If faced with an emergency, people should still call Triple Zero or present to their closest emergency department.

The Melton centre will be open 10am to 8pm, seven days a week, with hours increasing further from mid-January. For further information, please visit betterhealth.vic.gov.au/priority-primary-care-centres-ppccs.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"More than a quarter of a million Victorians have now been treated at our Priority Primary Care Centres – taking pressure off busy emergency departments and giving people another option for non-emergency care."

"It remains difficult for many Victorians to access affordable or timely care from a GP – that's why we have had to step into primary care to ensure people get the treatment and support they need, when they need it."

Quote attributable to Member for Melton Steve McGhie

"This new centre will be boon for our community – it now means locals can be seen and treated quickly and without the stress that comes with waiting in a busy hospital emergency department."

Media contact: Isobel Loschiavo 0431 963 479 | isobel.loschiavo@minstaff.vic.gov.au