

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for the Coordination of Health and Human Services – COVID-19

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



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BOOSTING PARAMEDIC RECRUITS ON CORONAVIRUS FRONTLINE

The Victorian Government will fast-track the recruitment of 120 extra paramedics to boost the frontline of Victoria's coronavirus response and help ensure all Victorians get the health support they need when they need it.

Minister for Ambulance Services Jenny Mikakos said the new paramedics would be brought forward from the next financial year, to hit the ground from next month.

This means Ambulance Victoria will have the resources it needs to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and flu season, while still providing the very best care to all Victorians, no matter what their condition is.

The boost will also increase capacity in Ambulance Victoria's specialist areas including the secondary triage service, where expert nurses and paramedics assess and provide advice to less serious cases.

Ambulance Victoria has started the selection process and is aiming to recruit 60 staff in May and June.

Seriously ill patients who need transport to access appropriate medical care – particularly those in regional areas – will also benefit from additional resources for Ambulance Victoria's Adult Retrieval Victoria.

The patient transport service will expand its 24-hour telephone advice service to provide round-the-clock tele-health, regional clinical support, co-ordination and critical care retrieval for the next six months.

The expansion means extra patient transport officers, administrative support officers, medical consultants, medical coordinators and critical care registered nurses so patients are fully supported.

The Victorian Government has invested a record \$1 billion to deliver more paramedics, more vehicles and more stations. This includes a big \$299 million boost in the *Victorian Budget 2019/20*.

The latest data shows Victoria's ambulances transported a massive 78,820 code 1 emergency patients in the three months to the end of December – 4,513 more than a year earlier.

Despite this massive increase, our dedicated paramedics reached 82.5 per cent of Code 1 cases across the state within the benchmark 15 minutes, with an average response time of 11 minutes and 29 seconds.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ambulance Services Jenny Mikakos

"We will need our paramedics more than ever over the coming months, but we don't want to have a situation where they have to choose between coronavirus cases and other serious conditions such as heart-attacks and strokes."

"These new recruits will help us deal with increased demand on our health system due to coronavirus, while ensuring all Victorians continue to receive the lifesaving care they deserve."

"We are boosting the paramedic workforce to help cope with this unprecedented challenge, but we all have a role to play in protecting our health system and saving lives. If you can stay at home, you must stay at home."

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