

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for Mental Health



Wednesday, 11 November 2020

## **BUILDING OUR RECOVERY WORKFORCE TO SUPPORT OUR STATE**

This has been the most challenging experience many of us will have ever lived through. We've had to stay home and spend time away from those we love the most in order to stay safe.

But supporting us the whole way through – our mental health professionals, family violence specialists and child support workers – professionals that were there for us every day, wherever and whenever we needed them.

This year's Budget is dedicated to increasing support for these hardworking Victorians, creating better pathways to roles in these vital sectors and recruiting more positions, part of Victoria's Recovery Workforce.

The Andrews Labor Government will invest \$235 million to build our Recovery Workforce to create 500 new jobs across mental health, family violence, health and child protection. We will also generate new accelerated training pathways and internships for around 875 people, growing the pipeline of workers so Victorians have access to the support they need as we recover from this pandemic.

In mental health this includes additional positions for child and youth psychiatry registrars, and funding for new part-time positions and cadetships for people with a lived experience of mental health – providing opportunity for these Victorians to use their experience and expertise to support those in need. This was also an interim recommendation made in the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

The Government is also increasing the number of available mental health nurse graduate positions across Victoria with \$4.3 million so we have more workers on the ground caring for Victorians.

Recognising the incredible skill, ability and knowledge of our carers, the Labor Government will provide \$4.6 million to support pathways into employment in the community services, disability and aged care sector.

This includes relief to assist carers to get assistance with their caring responsibilities while they study and during their placements, helping with the cost of study materials, mentoring and additional supervision and support.

Victorians on a waiting list to access residential AOD services or who disengaged from treatment during the pandemic will receive more support with \$25.62 million to employ new specialist alcohol and other drug workers.

As the Labor Government continues to lead the way with family violence reform, the package includes \$8.1 million to build our family violence and sexual assault support workforce, supporting the coordination of up to 240 traineeships across the state.

To ensure Aboriginal communities have access to the services they need to recover from the pandemic, \$40 million will support a service delivery fund for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health organisations to boost services that will provide targeted support.

The package also includes \$3.7 million for a new child protection student employment program, which will give students on the job experience, providing a future pathway to employment and financial support while they finish their studies.

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In addition to this, the Budget will deliver \$106.7 million over four years to recruit 239 new child protection practitioners, which will include graduates and experienced professionals who will be placed around Victoria to protect our young people.

A further \$22.5 million will employ up to 48 staff to take some of the workload off our child protection practitioners, helping with administrative support, working with children checks and a centralised subpoena unit.

They will also assist with supervised visits, ensuring children and families can see each other.

**Quotes attributable to Deputy Premier and Minister for Mental Health James Merlino**

*“As our state rebuilds, we are building a recovery workforce – to stand by every Victorian who needs our help.”*

*“Now more than ever, we know how vital a family violence and mental health system is to keeping Victorians well and safe – and our work will continue to fix the cracks.”*

**Quote attributable to Minister for Child Protection and Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan**

*“By recruiting more child protection workers, and also helping our unpaid carers build on their experience and access work, we’re creating a stronger, more diverse workforce to support the most vulnerable members of our community.”*

**Quote attributable to Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams**

*“We’ll continue to work with community service organisations to design programs, that deliver jobs and build a strong and resilient workforce, so they can help those who need it most.”*