

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Thursday, 12 November 2020

## PUTTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF VICTORIANS FIRST

This has been the toughest year many of us have ever lived through.

As we begin our state's slow recovery, this year's Budget invests in the health and wellbeing of our loved ones, by continuing the fundamental rebuild of Victoria's mental health system.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* includes \$868.6 million to ensure Victorians have the mental health support they need as we get on with fixing a broken system.

This includes funding the rollout of the interim recommendations from the Royal Commission into Mental Health, including \$492 million to deliver 120 mental health beds in Geelong, Epping, Sunshine and Melbourne. This is an addition to the 24 Hospital in the Home beds announced earlier this year bringing the total to 144.

An additional \$18.9 million is provided for 35 acute treatments beds for public mental health patients in private health services.

The Budget invests \$21.4 million to support the statewide expansion of the Hospital Outreach Post-Suicidal Engagement (HOPE) service, with individual, intensive and one-on-one support for Victorians as they rebuild their lives. Completion of the statewide rollout will deliver services in Albury-Wodonga, Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Broadmeadows, Box Hill, Clayton, Epping, Heidelberg, Mildura, Parkville, Shepparton and Warrnambool.

As we begin the work to rebuild our system, learning from the lived experiences of Victorians is vital. It's why \$2.2 million will help design the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing, a new centre dedicated to bringing together the experts on our mental health system – researchers, academics and those who've experienced it firsthand.

A further \$16 million will help those same Victorians use their own very real and personal experience to support and champion for others in need – with new training positions, education and opportunities for employment. This includes \$7.3 million for a service designed and delivered by people with lived experience.

The Budget also includes \$8.7 million to establish a residential mental health service, specifically designed and delivered by those with lived experience. This service will deliver short-term care and support in a residential community setting, designed as a true alternative to acute hospital-based care.

The Budget includes additional training opportunities to support students and job seekers looking to pursue a career in the mental health sector. It includes \$1.9 million for allied health, nursing and medical undergraduates to work part-time in community mental health settings while completing their studies. A further \$3.1 million will support experienced general nurses to retrain as mental health nurses; and \$7.7 million for specialist training roles in child and adolescent psychiatry to address the shortage of trained psychiatrists in these roles, including in regional areas.

A further \$7.7 million in funding is provided to begin to address workforce shortages in the mental health sector, to support future expansion of the workforce. This includes funding to increase the annual number of junior medical officer psychiatrist rotations, graduate nurses and postgraduate mental health nurse scholarships.

The Budget also delivers \$20 million towards upgrading state-owned facilities across Victoria. The Budget will also deliver an extra 19,000 hours for community mental health support

Supporting the mental health of our young people will remain critical as we begin our recovery, with this year's Budget investing \$47.8 million dedicated to early intervention support for young people – recognising that sometimes the most important help is the earliest help, as well as \$7 million to support critical research into youth mental health and operations at the Orygen centre.

Other key Budget investments include:

- \$19.4 million to support mental health clinicians at the Victorian Fixed Threat Assessment Centre and deliver specialised services to meet the needs of people referred by the Centre
- \$4.4 million to improve culturally appropriate support for Aboriginal Victorians
- \$3.9 million for providing mental health and wellbeing support for asylum seekers
- \$152 million to support and provide mental health services in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews**

*“Our mental health system is broken. For far too long we’ve seen the patient instead of the person.”*

*“As we recover from this pandemic, we can’t lose sight of what matters most – the health and wellbeing of our families, friends and communities.”*

**Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino**

*“This year’s Budget supports the recovery of our state and the fundamental rebuild of our system, delivering new beds, more staff and dedicated early support for young Victorians.”*