

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Monday, 30 November 2020

NEW DEPARTMENTS TO DELIVER A HEALTHIER, FAIRER VICTORIA

As we move into the recovery phase of the pandemic, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will be separated into two new departments to allow for a dedicated focus on our health system and on the social recovery of our state.

Throughout this year, the Victorian Government has bolstered the funding and capacity of DHHS and there has been an extraordinary effort across the department in responding to the global pandemic.

However, the ongoing impact of coronavirus will require a more focused approach to the delivery of essential community services during the recovery and beyond.

The new Department of Health (DoH) and the new Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) will commence operation from 1 February 2021 and the Government will work closely with workers and their unions over the next two months to manage the transition.

The Department of Health will be responsible for the Health, Ambulance Services, Mental Health and Ageing portfolios and, importantly, continue leading the Government's public health response to the pandemic with Martin Foley as the Coordinating Minister.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing will include the current DHHS portfolios of Child Protection, Prevention of Family Violence, Housing and Disability – ensuring the delivery of the significant investments from the recent Budget in Victoria's recovery – with Richard Wynne taking on the role of Coordinating Minister.

This new department will also be responsible for the key policy areas of Multicultural Affairs, LGBTQI+ Equality, Veterans, and the offices for Women and Youth – meaning better alignment with other policy areas focusing on the recovery and growth of our diverse communities.

These portfolios are currently served by the Department of Premier and Cabinet and will transfer across when the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing begins operation on 1 February.

Recently appointed Secretary Professor Euan Wallace AM will continue to lead DHHS through the transition period and will helm the Department of Health from 1 February.

Sandy Pitcher will commence work as Secretary of Department of Families, Fairness and Housing from 14 December 2020, establishing the new department ahead of the formal change.

Originally from South Australia, Sandy joined the Victorian Government in 2019 as Deputy Secretary, Higher Education and Skills at the Department of Education and Training and since July, she has been Deputy Secretary for Case, Contact Tracing and Outbreak Management in DHHS.

She previously served as the Chief Executive Officer of the SA Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources and has worked in the Commonwealth public service, the private sector and at the UK Commission for Racial Equality.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“The health response to the pandemic has been our highest priority in 2020. This new structure will mean a greater focus on our recovery, while we remain vigilant in our fight against coronavirus. The appointments of Sandy Pitcher and Euan Wallace will ensure there is strong leadership at this critical time.”

“The Government’s significant reform agenda in housing, child protection and family violence mean this is the right time to provide a dedicated focus to that work.”

“Our diverse communities are part of what makes Victoria so strong and ensuring they have direct connections to services and strong advocacy inside government is vital.”