



The Hon Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health

Tuesday 24 November 2020

SUPPORTING THE HEALTHCARE WORKERS THAT SUPPORT US

Our healthcare workers have been our last line of defence this year, working tirelessly to keep us safe. We have all been reminded of what matters most: the health and wellbeing of our families, our friends and our communities.

This year's Budget is about looking after those we love and supporting the healthcare workers who have supported us throughout 2020.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/2021* will deliver more than \$5 billion in 2020-21 and \$9 billion over the next four years – including Commonwealth funding – for services and critical infrastructure that will help keep our healthcare workers and loved ones safe.

As part of Victoria's pandemic preparedness, hospitals across the state had to wind back elective surgery. Now, having driven the numbers down, the Andrews Labor Government will ensure Victorians can get the surgeries they need, when they need them, with a massive \$300 million elective surgery blitz.

An extra \$136 million for Ambulance Services will see more ambulances arriving on scene quicker than ever, leading to faster and more efficient treatment for Victorians. This includes \$10.4 million that will also ensure year-round ambulance services for Nagambie, and a 24-hour service for Diamond Creek.

It also includes \$21.6 million for Victoria's innovative Mobile Stroke Unit and the Victorian Stroke Telemedicine, ensuring life-saving treatment is delivered to patients as fast as possible – saving lives and avoiding disability in the critical hour after a stroke.

To build on Victoria's position as a leading cancer research and treatment centre, we are investing \$33.1 million for vital research to improve cancer outcomes for all Victorians.

As tough as this pandemic has been, the need to protect staff and patients from coronavirus (COVID-19) has led to innovative ways of providing treatment and care. Health services made less than 2,000 video calls longer than five minutes in February, by September this number exceeded 72,000. Even after the pandemic is over these services will remain and improve access to healthcare, no matter where you live.

That's why the Budget includes more than \$121 million for the Better at Home initiative, to meet growing demand for delivery of hospital services in the home. This includes dialysis, chemo and palliative treatment – making sure these patients can receive care in the comfort of their own home.

Through Better at Home, up to 50,000 chemotherapy appointments could be delivered in living rooms across Victoria, or 50,000 days Victorians previously spent in hospital recovering or undertaking rehabilitation can be done from the comfort of home – freeing up around 160 hospital beds.

The Budget will also deliver a \$32.5 million boost to healthcare in rural areas, with new and dedicated funding for better prevention and treatment, and improved recovery from cardiac, stroke and cancer conditions – ensuring no one is disadvantaged by their postcode.

The funding will also improve access and participation in cancer screening for regional Victorians – ensuring we can catch this devastating disease sooner.

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The Labor Government is also investing \$51.4 million in drug treatment and rehabilitation, helping more Victorians turn their lives around.

This includes \$3.4 million for 80 new alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation beds in Corio, Wangaratta and Traralgon – making them accessible to the local community and allowing people to be treated close to home, family and friends.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

“2020 has reminded us what really matters – the safety and wellbeing of our family, friends and community”

“Whether it’s the dedicated care of a nurse or a paramedic at your side in an emergency – we’re ensuring every Victorian has the care they need, and our incredible frontline workers have the support to provide it.”