

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



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MORE SUPPORT FOR VICTORIANS WITH EATING DISORDERS

Victorians experiencing eating disorders will get the care, support and treatment they need – earlier and faster.

Minister for Mental Health James Merlino today visited Box Hill Hospital to open their new 9 bed, Adult Mental Health Unit and to announce that the Andrews Labor Government would invest \$2 million to ensure people with eating disorders are getting the care they need.

The new \$6.3 million unit at Box Hill Hospital will boost the number of beds within the area ensuring the mental health needs of individuals, families and the community are met.

While the Royal Commission into Mental Health will deliver its final report in February we are responding to the mental health needs of Victorians now.

The \$2 million in new funding for Victorians with eating disorders comes following a significant increasing in eating disorder presentations since the pandemic with child and youth mental health services in metropolitan Melbourne experiencing the highest impacts.

The new funding includes \$500,000 for Eating Disorders Victoria (EDV) to continue deliver programs that improve quality of life for clients with an eating disorder and reducing hospital readmission rates.

EDV will also use the funding to create a new dedicated program for people with severe and enduring eating disorders, who have disengaged from treatment and have extremely poor quality of life, including social isolation.

A further \$1.5 million to be invested across six metropolitan health services to provide specialist mental health clinicians to care for young people with eating disorders.

Eating disorders are a serious mental illness that have the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric illness. Many people experiencing an eating disorder suffer from depression and anxiety with rates for anorexia 32 times higher than the general population.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* is investing \$868.6 million to ensure Victorians get the mental health support they need when they need it. This investment will fund the rollout of the interim recommendations from the Royal Commission into Mental Health.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Labor Government has invested more than \$220 million into mental health services, to help Victorians during and after the pandemic.

Too many lives including young lives, are being lost to suicide in our state. That's why the Victorian Government established the first Royal Commission into Mental Health.

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"We know that people with eating disorders respond best when mental health supports are provided early, these programs will give people the support they need to recover."

"The Royal Commission will prompt significant reform of our mental health system but ahead of that we are working to get Victorians affected by eating disorders the support they need for recovery."

Media contact: Harry Adam 0448 505 876 | harry.adam@minstaff.vic.gov.au