

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**  
Acting Premier  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Mental Health



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## **NUTRITIOUS AND DIVERSE FOOD FOR VICTORIAN HOSPITALS**

Victorian public hospital patients will have access to higher quality, more culturally diverse and locally sourced food, with new standards for our health services to be introduced by the Andrews Labor Government.

The new nutrition and quality food standards will be finalised and put in place by the end of this year.

Delivering on another key election commitment, the Labor Government had a panel of experts in clinical and food service dietetics, food service management and procurement review the current standards and make recommendations to better serve Victorian patients and residential aged care residents.

The review recommended that any nutrition and quality food standards consider the diverse needs of patients, as well as longer-term aged care residents. We know food provides a sense of wellbeing and emotional comfort for patients and residents, which is particularly important for those in longer-term care.

The new food standards will have a particular focus on taste, appearance and variety of meals. They will also ensure health services respect and celebrate different cultures through their meals – such as kosher or halal food.

Nutrition standards will also be developed specifically to meet the special needs of our youngest Victorian patients who have to spend time in hospital.

While much of the fresh food purchased through our hospitals is already produced in Victoria, and for regional health services, often locally – the Labor Government will explore ways to support health services to purchase even more foods from Victoria for their patients and residents.

This will not only provide the highest quality food to patients but support Victorian producers and local economies wherever possible.

Victorian health services will also be required to meet healthy food and drink guidelines for their vending machine and in-house managed cafes, however commercial retail food outlets located inside our hospitals will not be included.

We know most health services are already serving up high quality, safe and nutritious meals but these updates will ensure nutritious, high quality food is consistently delivered in our hospitals and aged care facilities.

For more information visit: [health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/quality-safety-service/healthy-choices](https://health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/quality-safety-service/healthy-choices)

### **Quotes attributable to Acting Premier James Merlino**

*“People who are patients in a hospital or residents in care can often be at their most vulnerable, and we know food can provide an enormous sense of comfort at that time.”*

*“This is about making sure our patients and aged care residents are offered the highest quality, nutritious meals that reflect the diverse food culture we enjoy here in Victoria.”*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley**

*“Victoria’s produce is celebrated worldwide. It’s our plan to look at what is needed to enable public hospitals and aged care facilities to serve even more local food, supporting our Victorian farmers and producers.”*

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