



**The Hon James Merlino MP**

Acting Premier  
Minister for Mental Health

**The Hon Ros Spence MP**

Minister for Youth

Thursday, 20 May 2021

## **MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

We all want our kids to grow up happy and healthy. And with around three-quarters of common mental health problems emerging before age 25, the early years are critical in ensuring lifelong mental health and wellbeing.

But right now, our mental health system is failing young Victorians – and their families.

It's why the Andrews Labor Government is investing \$842 million in mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people – ensuring we're supporting them and their families as early as possible.

This investment will see two separate streams of care established – one dedicated to infants and children (aged 0 to 11) and their families, and one dedicated to young people (aged 12 to 25).

Support will be delivered through 13 reformed Infant, Child and Family Mental Health and Wellbeing Services, providing care specially designed around the needs of children and their families.

At the same time, this investment will also support 13 dedicated Youth Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services across our state – again, offering support specifically tailored to young people aged 12 to 25.

With funding of more than \$309.855 million, these localised services will be devoted to helping many more infants, children and young people – ensuring every young Victorian receives the treatment, care and support they need and deserve.

To provide care for young Victorians from the very beginning, three new infant, child and family hubs will be established – providing a one-stop approach to children's mental health, health and development, and will be integrated with other services including paediatricians.

These hubs will serve as a recognisable and accessible 'front door' for care, providing tailored support for children and their families, with locations for these three new hubs will be selected by mid-2022.

The *Victorian Budget 21/22* invests \$141 million for five new Youth Prevention and Recovery Care Units (YPARCs), totalling 50 beds specifically for young people aged 16 to 25 years.

Offering a short-term 'step up' from community care or 'step down' from hospital, YPARCs are staffed 24 hours a day, with support offered in a home-like setting, with shared kitchen, dining, lounge room and activity spaces.

These new sub-acute units will be located in Melbourne's North Eastern Metropolitan region as well as the Barwon South-West, Gippsland, Grampians and Hume regions. This funding will also deliver refurbishments of three existing YPARCs in Bendigo, Dandenong and Frankston.

Funding of \$16 million will establish four new HOPE (Hospital Outreach Post-suicidal Engagement) sites, specifically designed and delivered for children and young people who have self-harmed or are at risk of suicide.

Having already achieved remarkable success as a service for adults, the new Child and Youth HOPE services will provide individualised, intensive and one-on-one support for younger Victorians as they recover.

Importantly, these sites will be co-designed with and for children and young people. Sites will be located at the Royal Children's Hospital, Alfred Health, the Monash Children's Hospital and Orygen.

A further \$16.3 million will see our existing Mobile Targeted Assertive Outreach teams, which provide specialised outreach support to young people with multiple and complex needs, expanded to more locations across Victoria.

We know that schools need to be at the heart of our response in supporting young people. It's why \$200 million will deliver a new School Mental Health Fund, enabling schools to deliver tailored mental health and wellbeing support to their students, from therapy dogs to mental health first aid training for staff.

This investment will also see the expansion of the Mental Health in Primary Schools pilot to 90 government schools and 10 non-government schools, while also supporting 100 jobs.

Funding of \$6.4 million will also be provided to Switchboard's Rainbow Door, increasing support for young LGBTIQ+ Victorians, and Satellite Foundation, for our young carers.

Together these investments will change lives, save lives, and give young Victorians the bright future they deserve.

#### **Quotes attributable to Acting Premier and Minister for Mental Health James Merlino**

*"All the research tells us it's critical we give our young people the mental health support they need, early."*

*"Whether that's support delivered in our schools, or one-on-one help for those who need it, this is an investment in our kids – and their futures."*

*"Just as important, this investment sends a clear message to our kids: your mental health and wellbeing matters – and so do you."*

#### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Youth Ros Spence**

*"If a young person is struggling, we want them to know that support is available – and a bright future just ahead."*

*"This investment will deliver something Victoria has never had before – a holistic and dedicated mental health system, focused on the needs of our kids."*