



**The Hon James Merlino MP**

Acting Premier  
Minister for Mental Health

**Martin Foley MP**

Minister for Health

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## EMERGENCY MENTAL HEALTH CARE – FOR WHEN IT’S NEEDED MOST

If you’re in need of serious mental health support, the emergency department should not be the only option available to you. And yet right now, that’s the experience of thousands of Victorians.

As part of a \$3.8 billion package in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22*, the Andrews Labor Government is investing \$1.96 billion in mental health acute and emergency care, making sure Victorians are getting the support they desperately deserve.

With this investment, 104 new acute mental health beds will be available for patients across Victoria – including 35 acute mental health beds specifically for Victorian women in need. A further \$10.9 million will deliver five additional acute mental health beds at South West Healthcare in Warrnambool.

An investment of \$349.6 million will also build 82 forensic mental health beds at Thomas Embling Hospital, including a dedicated 34-bed women’s precinct, ensuring access to specialist clinical treatment.

These investments build on the 179 additional beds delivered in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*.

Funding of \$36.262 million will support 24 ‘Mental Health Hospital in the Home’ beds, to continue delivering an alternative to acute hospital-based treatment, providing wraparound care for Victorians within the comfort of their own homes and close to their support network.

This year’s Budget will establish four new HOPE (Hospital Outreach Post-suicidal Engagement) sites, specifically designed and delivered for children and young people.

HOPE, a follow-up and aftercare service for people who attend an emergency department following a suicide attempt, has already achieved remarkable success as a service for adults.

With a \$16 million investment, the new Child and Youth HOPE services will provide individualised, intensive and one-on-one support for younger Victorians who have self-harmed or are at risk of suicide.

The nine recently funded adult HOPE sites will also receive ongoing support, with locations including Box Hill Hospital, Royal Melbourne Hospital, Monash Medical Centre, Austin Health Heidelberg, Adult Psychiatric Inpatient Unit in Broadmeadows, North Western Mental Health in Epping, South West Healthcare in Warrnambool, Goulburn Valley Health in Shepparton and Mildura Base Hospital.

This funding will also expand referral pathways into the program, extend service hours across all existing and new HOPE services and provide additional outreach to regional areas.

This completes the statewide roll-out of adult HOPE services, delivering on a key recommendation from the Commission, and ensuring more Victorians have the one-on-one support they need in their recovery.

Funding of \$5.1 million will develop and trial an intensive 14-day support program for adults who are experiencing psychological distress, modelled on Scotland's Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) program.

Individuals in distress can be referred to the DBI service from frontline workers. The DBI provides a compassionate problem solving and referral intervention, supporting the individual up to 14-days or until specialist support is available.

A further \$7.5 million will commence work to establish Ambulance Victoria as the lead responder to triple zero calls primarily concerning mental illness or psychological distress, ensuring Victorians have access to a health professional when they're experiencing a crisis and need the support of emergency services.

Funding will begin planning for a new Statewide Trauma Service will also bring together mental health practitioners, trauma experts, peer workers and Victorians with lived experience of trauma to undertake research, education and training to support our mental health workforce deliver trauma-informed care.

To further support the mental health needs of young people, \$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.

With these investments we'll make sure that more Victorians are getting the targeted, urgent care they need – when they need it most.

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

*"An emergency department shouldn't be the only place Victorians in crisis can go. These investments will mean more people can get the care they need, when they need it most."*

*"If a Victorian needs help, we need to catch them with both hands. That means more staff, more beds, and more dedicated support to help make sure they recover."*

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

*"We want to make sure we're supporting Victorians before it reaches crisis point – or a hospital ED."*

*"The truth is, our mental health system is broken – and we've let survivors, their families and our dedicated health workforce pay the price. That ends now."*