

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Equality



Friday, 9 July 2021

MORE SUPPORT FOR VICTORIA'S HARDWORKING MIDWIVES

The Andrews Labor Government will deliver a \$13.2 million boost to support Victoria's hardworking midwives to meet the growing demand for public maternity services.

Minister for Health Martin Foley today announced funding for extra staffing to ensure mothers and their babies can continue to get the very best and safest care during the current surge in births.

This boost will bolster the maternity workforce, with the equivalent of an extra 175 staff funded across the state to help relieve pressure for busy midwives at 38 health services across Victoria.

This package includes funding for increased frontline care on priority shifts such as night duty and to improve rostering across the system.

The Royal Women's Hospital will also be supported to implement new workforce models that will rapidly deploy frontline supports to the bedside where they are needed, supporting mothers and babies of higher need.

This boost builds on the record investments that the Labor Government has made for maternity services across the state every year – including the new Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital.

An additional 1,423 births are expected between April and August this year, compared to the same period in 2020, with some health services especially those in growth areas expecting up to 40 per cent more births.

The increase in birthing numbers has been linked to the extended coronavirus restrictions that were in place across Victoria in 2020.

The global pandemic has also created significant pressures on the healthcare workforce, particularly among midwives, which is why this maternity workforce boost is so important.

The Labor Government and Safer Care Victoria continue to meet with public maternity services and unions to monitor demand for maternity services and to work on initiatives and strategies to support our midwifery and nursing workforce, including the implementation of the \$50 million nursing and midwifery development fund.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* delivered \$7.1 billion to continue improving our hospitals and healthcare system – including \$3.7 billion to support our health workforce meet increased demand.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"The pandemic has had a lasting impact across Australia, including an unexpected increase in birthing activity that is delivering a one-off surge in demand on our maternity services."

"Our dedicated midwives are some of the hardest working in the country and this investment in the maternity workforce reinforces that we will always back them – and the extraordinary work they do."

"All Victorian mothers deserve the very best and safest maternity care. Extra staffing will relieve pressure on midwives, giving them more time to dedicate to mothers and their babies and take the breaks they truly deserve."

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