

# Putting Patients First



## Martin Foley MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

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## HUGE REGIONAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE BOOST

Victorian patients will have access to first-class services and the most modern health treatments closer to home, as part of a huge boost to regional health in the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*.

Victorian patients will have access to first-class health services and modern health treatments closer to home, with more than \$1 billion for regional health infrastructure, and a raft of investments in nurses, doctors, ambos and allied health professionals who care for regional Victorians.

Hundreds of regional health projects will be funded through a massive \$300 million boost to the *Regional Health Infrastructure Fund*, taking the total investment in the fund to \$790 million since it started in 2016.

Building on the largest health grants program in Victoria's history, this extra investment will give health services the resources they need to do targeted upgrades, tailoring projects to the needs of their local communities.

The program will deliver a variety of projects across regional Victoria including operating theatre refurbishments, new waiting rooms and hospital beds, accessible paths and ramps, additional consulting rooms, expansions projects and equipment upgrades.

It will build on work already delivered through the program, such as the expansion of the intensive care unit and paediatric services at Mildura Base Hospital and the \$6 million investment in Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative's new stand-alone medical clinic.

In a major boost for residents in and around Geelong, we're investing more than \$500 million to deliver the Barwon Women's and Children's Hospital, which will provide much-needed care for young families as the region's population continues to grow.

Subject to stakeholder engagement and detailed design work, the hospital will feature new paediatric and maternity capacity, operating theatres, special care, and women's outpatient services.

Shepparton families will also have access to more information, advice and support, with \$25 million in funding for a new early parenting centre in the region to give babies and toddlers the care they need for the best start in life.

Regional and rural Local Public Health Units in Upper Murray, Goulburn Valley, Gippsland, South Western, Grampians and Loddon Mallee will share in a statewide investment of \$40 million to allow them to provide community care and guidance as part of the ongoing COVID-19 response, and support local responses to public health issues.

We're also training and hiring up to 7,000 new healthcare workers – including 5,000 nurses – to help relieve pressure on the system and improve care for all Victorians.

When you call for an ambulance, every Victorian should have the confidence one will arrive. That's why we're delivering another 90 paramedics – which means we've added 790 extra paramedics to the workforce since we came to government.

A \$124 million investment will respond to increased demand, including hiring more paramedics and getting more ambulances on the road in regional Victoria.

This boost comes on top of recent initiatives to have new Peak Period Units in Bendigo, Moe, Warragul and Leongatha – as well as making sure more ambulance stations have 24-hour coverage, including in Cobram, Mansfield, Yarrawonga, Korumburra, Ballan and Daylesford.

Residents in Mildura and the Mallee region will get the support they need to recover from drug and alcohol addiction, thanks to a new 30-bed residential withdrawal and rehabilitation centre.

The \$36 million facility will provide structured therapeutic support in a home-like environment, where people can safely withdraw from alcohol and other drugs and address underlying issues to overcome addiction – adding to \$52 million already invested in recently-opened AOD facilities in Corio, Traralgon and Wangaratta.

In the west of the state, patients will benefit from a \$6.5 million investment for robot assisted surgery to be delivered at Ballarat Hospital, to improve surgery and reduce recovery time for regional patients.

The innovative technology sees surgeons remotely control the movements of robotic arms for some procedures, providing a less invasive surgery for patients – potentially leading to quicker recovery times, less scarring and blood loss, and lower risk of infection.

Health services in Ballarat, Traralgon and Geelong will be able to provide better care for cancer patients – with \$11 million going towards new linear accelerators to perform radiotherapy treatment.

There will also be \$17 million for palliative care services, ensuring that regional Victorians can continue to access high quality and compassionate end of life care across a range of community settings – in their homes, residential facilities and through primary care.

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

*“Victorians should get the care they need, close to home, no matter where they live – which is why we’re investing in health services right across regional Victoria.”*

*“We’re recruiting thousands more staff to support our healthcare workforce, investing in hospital expansions and boosting targeted local programs – all to make sure patients across the state get the most modern and effective treatments.”*