

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Thursday, 9 June 2022

## MORE SUPPORT FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

With Victoria's healthcare workers continuing to do extraordinary work to protect the community, the Andrews Labor Government is providing more support for the sector as it prepares for the busiest winter yet.

A *Healthcare Worker Winter Retention and Surge Payment*, alongside other practical help like free meals, will soon flow to Victoria's healthcare workers – providing much-needed support and helping to attract and retain critically important staff.

The \$353 million package will offer payments of \$3,000 to all staff working in public hospitals and ambulance services – including nurses, midwives, doctors, allied health professionals, paramedics, ward clerks and patient services assistants.

Thousands of health staff in both clinical and non-clinical roles who have also been working under immense pressure in roles critical to the functioning of our health system will be provided the payment, including those working in cleaning, food services and laundry services.

Over the past few months, health services have experienced challenges in filling night shifts – which is why the package will also include free meals for workers who put their hands up to work overnight from July until the end of the year.

These initiatives – while clearly not ending the ongoing workforce challenges being experienced around Australia – represent a modest but meaningful way to support and retain healthcare workers within the public system.

To be eligible for the full package, workers will need to be employed by a public health service by 1 July and still be employed on 30 September. The payments will be made in two rounds, one after 15 August and one after 30 September.

Those who start between 1 July and 30 September will be eligible for a pro-rata payment, providing an added incentive to help attract more staff to our public hospitals.

More than 440 international healthcare workers have so far joined public hospitals since August last year, while up to 7,000 healthcare workers will be trained and hired under the \$12 billion *Pandemic Repair Plan*.

In addition, the Government is taking pressure off the system through measures such as free flu vaccinations for Victorians throughout June, an expansion of the virtual ED initiative and more funding for treatment at home through the *Better at Home* program.

### Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

*“Our people are our health system’s greatest asset and this is just one way for us to recognise and support their efforts and ensure nurses, doctors, paramedics, allied health and support staff are there when we need them most.”*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

*“Healthcare workers have done an incredible job throughout the pandemic, and I want to thank them for the extraordinary work they continue to do under unprecedented pressure.”*

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**Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Health Steve McGhie**

*“We know the next few months will be tough for our hospitals and paramedics as they continue to battle COVID, the flu and increasing demand. These measures are designed to improve the day-to-day working environment for workers on the frontline.”*