

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Friday, 22 July 2022

## MAJOR BOOST FOR PATIENTS IN BALLARAT

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering another boost for regional Victoria's health system, as part of a comprehensive plan to make sure patients are getting the quality care they need while there is record demand on the national health system.

As a challenging flu season and the emergence of the Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 variants causes a rise in hospitalisations across Australia, the Government is delivering more support for our healthcare workers as part of an ongoing plan to reinforce health services through winter and beyond.

Premier Daniel Andrews today visited Ballarat Hospital to meet with nurses and other hospital staff who will benefit from the additional resources and staff announced as part of the latest \$162 million health support package – to make sure patients are getting the quality care they need.

Ballarat Hospital is one of 12 new hospitals that will benefit from the initial rollout of these additional positions, joining University Hospital Geelong and other major Melbourne hospitals.

These additional roles are targeted to the specific needs of the hospital and will support staff across the hospital to liaise with patients to ensure they get the support they need when they leave hospital, give patients in the ED care faster and ensure patients return home after care sooner.

The package will also deliver extra healthcare workers that can provide patients with specific needs the specialised care they require including children, the elderly and people with a disability.

These staff will also work together to help offload, assess and treat patients faster and help progress patients more efficiently through their care journey – be it emergency surgery, admission to a ward or being discharged home.

As part of this package, we are building on the success of the Virtual Emergency Department by doubling its capacity and expanding its eligibility criteria – allowing up to 500 patients per day to access a video consultation with an emergency doctor or nurse from their own home.

This will mean for the first-time paramedics will be able to support residents across Ballarat and regional Victoria to access the service and reduce unnecessary hospital transports. The service will also be available to all aged care residents and Victorians in the *COVID Positive Pathways* program, including those across regional Victoria.

Ballarat Hospital will also benefit from additional staff to support ambulance offload, joining other regional hospitals including Wonthaggi Hospital (Bass Coast) and Latrobe Regional Hospital to help paramedics can get back on the road faster.

The Government is investing in infrastructure to let doctors and nurses deliver Victorians the care they need, with works progressing well on the \$541 million redevelopment and expansion of Ballarat Hospital.

The redevelopment will deliver a new emergency department, a women and children's hub, a state-of-the-art theatre suite and an extra 100 inpatient and short stay beds.

A new and expanded critical care floor will bring together operating theatres, procedure rooms, the intensive care unit, endoscopy suites and consulting rooms – delivering capacity for 4,000 additional surgeries, 18,000 more emergency patients and 14,500 extra inpatients every year.

**Media contact:** Nadia Dimattina 0438 701 306 | [nadia.dimattina@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:nadia.dimattina@minstaff.vic.gov.au)

Every Victorian can also play their part in supporting our health system this winter by staying up to date with vaccinations, wearing a good quality face mask, maintaining good ventilation indoors, getting tested if feeling unwell and discussing antiviral treatment options with their GP if they know they're at risk.

**Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews**

*"Healthcare systems across Australia are under pressure as we battle new variants and other respiratory illnesses – these investments are part of our plan to support our healthcare workers and get Victorians the care they need."*

*"As one of busiest hospitals in our state, the team at Ballarat do a fantastic job caring for patients and this package is about giving them the specific support they need to keep doing that work."*

**Quote attributable to Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle**

*"These extra patient flow roles will allow Ballarat Base Hospital to get patients the care they need faster and free up much needed capacity in the hospital."*

**Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison**

*"Ballarat's nurses, doctors and paramedics do an amazing job and giving them an extra pair of hands will ensure Victorians get the care they need faster as Australia faces a difficult winter."*