

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF NURSES AND MIDWIVES

The Andrews Labor Government is giving Victorian nursing and midwifery students the hands-on and practical experience they need to support our healthcare workforce now and into the future.

As part of the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*, the Labor Government invested \$59 million to create 1,125 registered undergraduate student nurse positions per year for two years and \$9.8 million to create 75 registered undergraduate student midwife positions.

Today, Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas visited Sunshine Hospital to announce the hospitals and services to benefit from the first 1000 of these positions of registered second and third year nursing and midwifery students.

Across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, these include:

- Albury Wodonga Health
- Alfred Health
- Austin Health
- Bairnsdale Regional Health
- Barwon Health
- Bass Coast Health
- Bendigo Health
- Central Gippsland Health
- East Grampians Health
- Eastern Health
- Goulburn Valley Health
- Grampians Health Ballarat
- Grampians Health Horsham
- Great Ocean Road Health
- Kerang District Health
- Kyabram and District Health
- Latrobe Regional Hospital
- Melbourne Health
- Mercy Health
- Mildura Base Public Hospital
- Monash Health
- Northern Health
- Peninsula Health
- Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
- Royal Children's Hospital
- South West Healthcare
- St Vincent's Hospital
- Tallangatta Health Service
- Western Health

Working under the supervision of a registered nurse or midwife, students help with showering, feeding and transferring patients. Over time, they take on more complex tasks, such as monitoring vital signs, testing blood glucose levels and dressing minor wounds.

The program has already seen 3,000 students work in hospitals across Victoria, providing extra support to more experienced nurses and midwives during this period of unprecedented demand and giving students critical practical experience to support their studies.

The program has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from health services, students and universities. Participants are more likely to complete their degree, develop greater levels of confidence and require less support as they transition to graduates.

Midwifery students are given additional opportunities to help on maternity wards and under the supervision of experienced midwives, deliver care and support to new mums and their babies.

The training offered to students gives them the latest skills and expertise in patient care and builds their confidence within the hospital.

Programs like this one provide immediate support to our existing nursing workforce as they face record demand due to a challenging flu season, the emergence of new variants causing a rise in hospitalisations and an increasing number of unwell healthcare workers – while also investing in the healthcare system for years to come.

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In addition to giving more students this sort of hands-on experience, a targeted \$162 million package was announced last week to help paramedics and hospitals work together to improve patient flow and get patients the care they need sooner – as the nation faces record levels of demand for emergency care.

Every Victorian can play their part in supporting our health system this winter by staying up to date with vaccinations, wearing a 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.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Our nurses, hospitals and universities all agree this student employment model is making a real difference – giving our experienced nurses extra support and giving our students the experience to deliver the best possible care."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"Healthcare systems across Australia are under pressure – providing more opportunities for student nurses to enter the workforce and while they get on-the-job training is just one way we're relieving pressure on the system."