

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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MAKING IT FREE TO STUDY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

The Andrews Labor Government is backing Victoria's healthcare system with free university and specialist training for thousands of nurses and midwives.

In a \$270 million boost to the health system, more than 17,000 nurses and midwives will be recruited and trained as part of a massive hiring and upskilling initiative – building an army of home-grown health workers to care for Victorians.

More than 10,000 students will have the cost of their nursing or midwifery undergraduate studies paid for, while scholarships will be available for thousands more who complete postgraduate studies in areas of need including intensive care, cancer care, paediatrics and nurse practitioner specialities.

All new domestic students enrolling in a professional-entry nursing or midwifery course in 2023 and 2024 will receive a scholarship of up to \$16,500 to cover course costs.

Students will receive \$9,000 while they study and the remaining \$7,500 if they work in Victorian public health services for two years.

More midwives will join the workforce through an expanded postgraduate midwifery incentive program, which will provide scholarships to cover course costs and salary support for 150 existing nurses to continue working while they complete their specialist studies in midwifery.

The initiative, together with the \$12 billion Pandemic Repair Plan brings the number of nurses and midwives being supported to more than 20,000, including funding 13,000 nursing and midwifery positions and scholarships, and funding the upskilling of 8,500 nurses.

The package also includes:

- Scholarships for postgraduate nurses to complete studies in specialty areas such as intensive care, emergency, paediatrics and cancer care – worth an average of \$10,000
- \$11,000 scholarships for enrolled nurses to become registered nurses, covering course costs and boosting the number of registered nurses
- \$12,000 scholarships to support training and employment of 100 new Nurse Practitioners in both acute and community settings
- More than \$20 million to provide more support to the growing numbers of graduates and postgraduates as they transition to working in our hospitals – ensuring they have access to the clinical educators, preceptors and study time they need.

The package recognises that the cost of study is a financial burden for prospective and existing nurses and helps our health services maximise the recruitment of new nurses and midwives in key areas of need.

In the past eight years, the number of nurses in the public system has risen by more than 26 per cent – increasing by 9,400 to more than 45,000 nurses. The Labor Government has overseen a net increase of more than 22,000 healthcare workers in the system since 2014 – up by 27.6 per cent.

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Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“If you’re in Year 12 and you’ve been thinking about studying nursing or midwifery – go for it. We’ve got your HECS fees covered.”

“Every health system in the country is under enormous pressure due to the pandemic. The best thing we can do to support our hardworking staff is give them more support on the ground – that’s why this package will train and hire more nurses than ever before.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

“You can’t deliver a health system with empty hospitals, which is why we are investing in hardworking nurses and midwives that are helping Victorian patients every single day.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney

“By providing more pathways and incentives to education, we’re giving our nurses and midwives the practical support that they need to continue caring for Victorians.”