

# Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



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## HELPING PATIENTS WITH A DISABILITY GET BACK HOME

More patients with a disability who have been medically cleared but are stuck waiting in hospital for a NDIS plan will be able to go home earlier, with the Andrews Labor Government expanding a program to reduce bed block around the state.

The \$39 million *Pathways to Home* program helps patients with a disability transition home or into home-like accommodation once they are medically fit for discharge from hospital, and while they await their permanent accommodation plans through the NDIS.

The program will free up bed spaces for hundreds of patients – alleviating bed block issues to ease pressure on hospitals and free up healthcare workers and paramedics.

Following a successful pilot in metropolitan Melbourne which saw more than 3,000 hospital bed days freed up, the program will expand into regional Victoria for the first time – helping more people with a disability regain their independence and spend more time with their families.

After years of NDIS neglect from the Morrison Government, delayed discharge times for patients with a disability rose to an average wait of five months, with some spending as long as 600 days waiting for discharge.

The expanded program will now be available through:

- Albury Wodonga Health
- Alfred Health
- Austin Health
- Bairnsdale Regional Health Service
- Barwon Health
- Bendigo Health
- Calvary Health Care
- Castlemaine Health (Dhelkaya)
- Eastern Health
- Melbourne Health
- Mercy Health
- Mildura Base Hospital
- Monash Health
- Northeast Health Wangaratta
- Northern Health
- Peninsula Health
- The Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
- The Royal Children's Hospital
- St. Vincent's Health
- Western Health

The program operates alongside The Summer Foundation, which works in partnership with health services and disability providers to ensure appropriate transitional accommodation is available.

Health services have been enthusiastic in signing up for the next phase of the program, with 13 metropolitan and seven regional services planning to participate.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

*"Speeding up discharge times for patients with a disability doesn't just benefit them, it frees up much-needed hospital beds for others and eases the pressure on our in demand EDs and ambulances."*

*"After years of NDIS neglect by the Morrison Government, hospital bed block is one of the biggest challenges facing our system – so it's vital we do everything we can to help people get discharged sooner."*

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