

# Media Release

**The Hon Colin Brooks MP**

Minister for Housing

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Acting Minister for Health

Acting Minister for Health Infrastructure

Acting Minister for Medical Research



Friday, 13 January 2023

## MORE PRIORITY PRIMARY CARE CENTRES OPEN

The Andrews Labor Government is giving more Victorians a free alternative to visiting a busy emergency department with two new Priority Primary Care Centres (PPCCs) opening in Forest Hill and Maribyrnong this week.

The two new GP led centres are just two of the six PPCCs that the Labor Government has delivered this month, with additional centres in Werribee, Craigieburn, Geelong and Warragul opening last week.

Working in close partnership with local Primary Health Networks, the existing PPCCs have seen more than 6,000 patients – many of whom would otherwise have gone to an ED, despite needing lower-level care.

As health services continue to face record levels of demand, the PPCCs are not only playing a crucial role in reducing wait times in EDs but also providing an alternative local health service for patients who might not be able to see their regular GP.

The centres accept bookings and walk-ins, with doctors and nurses on site to treat a range of conditions like mild infections, fractures and burns, in addition to diagnostic services including pathology and medical imaging.

The Forest Hill PPCC is centrally located on Springvale Road, accepting both bookings and walk-ins, and is expected to take some much-needed pressure off local hospitals, especially the Box Hill emergency department.

The Maribyrnong PPCC, located just a short drive or tram ride from the nearby Footscray Hospital, will be open afternoons and evenings, helping to ease pressure on hospital EDs during the busiest part of their day and also be vital after-hours when many people would otherwise struggle to find a last-minute GP appointment.

Many of the clinics are operating seven days a week and up to 16 hours a day, even over the summer break.

Supporting Eastern Health and Western Health respectively, the opening of the Forest Hill and Maribyrnong sites now takes Victoria to 16 centres in operation across Victoria, with another nine on the way – six of them are on track to open by early February, with work underway to finalise locations for a further three.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$70 million to deliver this free service for all Victorians, with or without a Medicare card – because we know too many people can't get in to see their GP or, with bulk-billing doctors now few and far between, the cost is too high.

Given this lack of access, there is no more urgent priority for National Cabinet than reforming primary care – and the Labor Government will continue to advocate to the Commonwealth on behalf of Victorians.

PPCCs are part of a suite of measures the Labor Government is taking to fill gaps in primary care across Victoria, including an expansion of the Virtual ED and Better at Home programs, the ongoing rollout of Ambulance Victoria's Secondary Triage Service and 30 state-funded GP respiratory clinics.

If facing a medical emergency, people should still call Triple Zero or present to their closest emergency department however the PPCCs are serving as a valuable addition to the primary care system, offering care for patients with urgent medical conditions when their GP is unavailable.

People with non-urgent medical conditions should still, in the first instance, visit their GP for standard care or to get any prescriptions for medications they may require.

**Media contact:** Alex Sheehy 0420 314 221 | [alex.sheehy@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:alex.sheehy@minstaff.vic.gov.au)

**Quote attributable to Acting Minister for Health Colin Brooks**

*“The new PPCCs in Forest Hill and Maribyrnong will not only give these local communities a first-rate, high-quality primary care alternative, but will also ease some of the pressure on busy hospitals and emergency departments across Melbourne.”*

**Quote attributable to Member for Footscray Katie Hall**

*“The new PPCC in Footscray will provide huge relief to our EDs and free up critical resources for those who need it most while giving locals another option for non-emergency care.”*

**Quote attributable to Member for Glen Waverley John Mullahy**

*“These new centres will help to ease some of the pressure on our local hospitals and healthcare workers while also ensuring locals still have access to timely care when they need it.”*