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NEW PUBLIC SURGICAL CENTRES HELPING VICTORIANS

The Andrews Labor Government's two new public surgical centres are giving more Victorians to access the care and treatment they need, already performing almost 2000 procedures since opening late last year.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas and Minister for Ambulance Services Gabrielle Williams today visited the Frankston Public Surgical Centre, which has delivered around 1,600 procedures since opening last September.

The service will expand to a seven-day service in the coming weeks, while the Blackburn Public Surgical Centre has also completed hundreds of procedures since it opened last October.

The two centres, previously operating as Frankston Private Hospital and Bellbird Private Hospital, transitioned to public hands last year and are now run by Peninsula Health and Eastern Health respectively.

The centres are helping to reduce the public surgery waitlist, completing procedures across a range of specialities including same day endoscopy, orthopaedics, plastics, gynaecology, urology and ear, nose and throat. Once running at full scale in 2023-24, they will deliver almost 15,000 procedures annually.

These new centres form part of Victoria's *COVID Catch Up Plan* – a long-term strategy to reform the surgery system and build a better health system for the future so every Victorian can get the care they need, when they need it.

In the face of record demand for services and ongoing pressure from the COVID-19 pandemic, quarterly performance data released today shows Victoria's health system is holding steady, with signs of improvement across key areas.

The planned surgery waiting list has decreased to 82,613, with 45,461 patients admitted from the waiting list. More than three-quarters of patients were treated in recommended timeframes, with median wait times improving by 28 days for Category 3 (non-urgent) patients and six days for Category 2 patients since the last quarterly report.

Despite emergency departments experiencing their single busiest quarter on record, attending to 488,108 presentations state-wide, median waiting times have improved since last quarter with health services implementing a range of strategies to ensure the most time critical patients are prioritised and cared for first.

There continues to be high demand for ambulance services right across the country, and Victoria is no exception – Ambulance Victoria were called to 100,234 Code 1 cases, marking the first time they responded to more than 100,000 Code 1 cases in a single quarter.

To help navigate this period of record demand, the Labor Government's $12 billion *Pandemic Repair Plan* is providing health services with the support they need and setting up a stronger health system for the future.

Since launching the Plan last year, Victoria has trained and recruited more than 4,500 healthcare workers, delivered hospital expansions and upgrades, doubled the Victorian Virtual ED's capacity and boosted primary care services for all Victorians, with 25 new Priority Primary Care Centres progressively opening across the state.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"Our new public surgical centres are not only allowing more patients to receive the care and treatment they need faster, they're playing a critical role in our long-term reform plans to deliver more surgery than ever before."

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"It's these investments that are helping us respond to record levels of demand for care as we get on with the job of building a better health system for Victoria's future."

Quote attributable for Minister for Ambulance Services Gabrielle Williams

"Ambulance Victoria is responding to more Code 1 cases than ever before – that's why we're getting more paramedics on the road so we can connect people with the care they need when they need it most."