

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Medical Research



Wednesday, 8 March 2023

## SAFE AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE FOR ALL VICTORIAN WOMEN

Victorian women deserve access to safe and affordable healthcare, regardless of where they live – the Andrews Labor Government is making that a reality, reforming and expanding women’s health across the state.

To mark International Women’s Day, Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Northern Health’s Family Planning Clinic, which is expanding the vital sexual and reproductive health services it provides to local women.

The Family Planning Clinic is improving access to sexual and reproductive healthcare in Melbourne’s northern suburbs, providing comprehensive abortion care for a diverse and growing population – along with counselling and advice on contraception, STI prevention and treatment and general sexual health awareness – at no cost.

To meet growing demand for these services, the clinic is increasing its team of midwives and gynaecologists – and adding a second session for clinical consultations and surgical services each week. This will see the number of women who can access termination services double, from six to 12 each week.

A grant from the Victorian Nursing and Midwifery Trust and the University of Melbourne will also see two midwifery researchers based at the clinic working with patients, staff and the community to co-design a model of care that meets the specific needs of the local community.

Victoria has always been a leader in providing safe, supportive and judgment-free healthcare for women, putting patients and their needs at the heart of every medical decision – but we know there’s more work to do.

That’s why the Labor Government is working to deliver a comprehensive package that ensures all women – no matter where they live or how much they earn – can access the dedicated health services they need.

We will create 20 new women's health clinics that will provide comprehensive care for Victorians needing treatment and advice on issues like endometriosis, pelvic pain and menopause.

Our network of sexual and reproductive health hubs will be expanded, creating nine additional locations – giving more women access to services and advice on contraception, pregnancy and sexual health.

As part of this package, we will double the number of endometriosis and associated condition surgeries delivering an estimated 10,800 additional laparoscopies over the next four years - and we'll provide \$20,000 scholarships for 100 additional women's healthcare specialists - giving Victorian women more specialist healthcare options.

Planning is underway now on each phase of these reforms, and we will continue to work closely with the health sector and community, making sure Victorian women and gender diverse people get the care they need.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas**

*“We’ve come a long way in women’s health, but there is more to do – that’s why we will deliver new women’s health clinics, more sexual and reproductive health hubs and double the number of endometriosis surgeries.”*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Thomastown Bronwyn Halfpenny**

*“All women deserve access to safe, affordable reproductive options and this expanded clinic will ensure just that - so more local women can get the care they need, close to home.”*

**Media contact:** Harry Adam 0448 505 876 | [harry.adam@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:harry.adam@minstaff.vic.gov.au)