

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Medical Research



Thursday, 23 March 2023

FIVE YEARS OF FREE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ADVICE

More Victorian women are accessing free, trusted, non-judgemental information and advice about their sexual and reproductive health - thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today celebrated the fifth anniversary of *1800 My Options* - a free and confidential statewide service available to all Victorian women, providing information on contraception, pregnancy options including abortion and sexual health.

Hosted by Women's Health Victoria, *1800 My Options* operates a telephone and online information service that includes a database of more than 600 sexual and reproductive health service providers across the state.

Since launching in 2018, the number of people using the service has steadily grown with more than 200,000 Victorians accessing their services online, and the phonenumber receiving on an average of 600 callers per month - cementing its role as an integral part of the Victoria's sexual and reproductive healthcare system.

The Labor Government invested more than \$2.7 million to develop, maintain and grow *1800 My Options* – which has expanded its call-taking hours, with the ability to scale up and down to meet the increasing demand.

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 one-stop shop for women 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 options and sexual health.

As part of this package, the Labor Government will double the number of surgeries for endometriosis and associated conditions, with an estimated 10,800 extra laparoscopies over the next four years – as well as \$20,000 scholarships for 100 more women's healthcare specialists - giving Victorian women more specialist 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.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"We're proud to have launched 1800 My Options which for five years has worked to make contraception, abortion and sexual health advice and information more accessible for all Victorian women."

"No matter where they live - Victorian women have access to free and confidential, evidence-based information about sexual and reproductive health thanks to 1800 My Options."