

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Medical Research



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## DELIVERING BETTER CARE AT HOME

The Andrews Labor Government's massive expansion of the *Better at Home* program is supporting thousands of Victorians to get the care they need, in the comfort of their own home – freeing up thousands of hospital beds for the sickest Victorians.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today visited the Northern Hospital to announce the expanded initiative has helped free up 374,000 hospital bed days in the past year, and given more Victorians the chance to get better at home with loved ones.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$810 million to establish and expand the initiative - so thousands of patients across Victoria can benefit from the flexibility of in-home and virtual care.

It allows Victorians to be visited by experienced nurses, clinicians and allied health professionals at home, as part of a more convenient and tailored experience - where patients can avoid the physical deterioration, sleep disruption and social isolation that can sometimes be associated with extended hospital stays.

More than 45 health services are delivering in-home and virtual care programs through *Better at Home*, covering a wide range of specialities and treatments that meet the specific needs of their communities.

Northern Health's Maternity in the Home and Medical Obstetrics at Home programs have contributed to a 50 per cent reduction in hospital readmissions with care in the home provided care for more than 1,450 women last year.

Austin Health has delivered cancer therapies at home to more than 1800 patients through its Day Oncology at Home program, and Peninsula Health has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the nearly 1,800 patients who have received care through *Better at Home*.

St Vincent's has also expanded its home care, with the launch of *Cancer Care at Home* and *Palliative Care at Home* – reducing the need for cancer patients to attend the Chemotherapy Day Unit in person and allowing palliative care patients to receive the critical care they need without having to leave their homes and loved ones.

Grampians Health's *Home Base Cancer Care* service freed up 786 bed days in February alone, with work underway to expand the program even further.

Barwon Health also launched two new services in July last year – a specialist midwifery post-natal care program which has supported the home recovery of more than 500 women from caesarean sections at home, and a *Rehab at Home* service which has seen close to 100 patients meet their rehabilitation goals at home.

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

*"Giving Victorians the option of in-home treatment allows them to get better in the comfort of their own home while also freeing up beds back at those hospital for those who really need them."*

*"It doesn't matter whether you're in Melbourne or regional Victoria - we expanded Better at Home for all Victoria because clinicians and patients all agree - you recover better at home."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Thomastown Brownyn Halfpenny

*"It's fantastic to see Better at Home delivering better care, at home to women across Melbourne's north."*

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