

# Media Release

**The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP**  
Minister for Mental Health  
Minister for Ambulance Services  
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples



Wednesday, 26 April 2023

## EASING HOSPITAL PRESSURE THROUGH SPECIALISED CARE

The Andrews Labor Government is giving Victorians who are seeking urgent mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment the tailored, specialised and fast-tracked care they deserve, while easing pressure on emergency department resources and existing inpatient services.

Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams today visited St Vincent Hospital's mental health AOD emergency department hub – which has treated more than 3,600 patients since opening in March last year.

The hub is part of the Labor Government's \$32 million investment in six hubs across the state - providing specialist and integrated assessment, treatment and post-discharge support for people aged 16 years and over who are experiencing co-occurring mental health and AOD issues.

The hub is staffed by a specialised team of mental health and AOD workers and clinicians, whose expertise provides a more effective road to recovery for consumers – reducing trauma, distress and stigma often experienced by consumers in conventional EDs, with inclusive and safe space that reduces waiting times for treatment.

Further integrating mental health and AOD care, the hub network provides an enhanced referral process via a specialised stream of emergency care aimed at reducing repeated readmissions.

Hubs are already operating at Barwon Health's University Hospital Geelong, Western Health's Sunshine Hospital, with Monash Health's Monash Medical Centre and Royal Melbourne Hospital hub opening mid-2023 and a Peninsula Health Frankston Hospital hub to open in 2025.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* invested a further \$10 million to deliver extra emergency department hubs for regional Victorians with a hub at Latrobe Regional Hospital and planning for three further hubs in Ballarat, Bendigo and Shepparton – giving them wraparound healthcare in a dedicated section of the hospital.

Last year's Budget also invested more than \$42 million over four years to boost integrated services for Victorians living with co-occurring mental health and addiction or substance use issues.

The Labor Government has started work on delivering 90 per cent of Royal Commission recommendations, with over \$6 billion invested in Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system, including AOD services, since 2020.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

*"The St Vincent's hub has already supported nearly 4,000 people with mental health and alcohol and other drug issues – not only providing tailored and effective treatment, but also alleviating stress on our emergency workers."*

*"The Royal Commission recommended an integrated system for both mental health and alcohol and other drug treatment – these new hubs are providing specialist, evidence-backed care for Victorians as soon as they need it."*