

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Medical Research



Friday, 5 May 2023

SUPPORTING NEW MUMS, BABIES AND OUR MIDWIVES

New mums and babies deserve the best possible care which is why the Andrews Labor Government is expanding maternity services and recruiting the next generation of midwives.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Kilmore District Health to celebrate International Day of the Midwife and open their new maternity ward.

Previously combined with the acute unit, this new dedicated space now provides parents and newborns with specialised care and facilities in what is one of Victoria's fastest growing communities – away from other patients.

Supporting on average 230 births a year, the new maternity ward was delivered to support our midwives meet the demand for maternity services, as part of a \$13.2 million package to help them deliver the very best and safest care.

Across Victoria, we're upgrading maternity units and birthing suites with the new maternity unit and birthing suite now open as part of our \$230 million redevelopment of Shepparton Hospital and construction underway on the new \$500 million Barwon Women and Children's Hospital.

We know that new babies have the best start to life, when they receive the best possible care, and a strong midwifery workforce is essential for that – this is why we're supporting the Royal Women's Hospital undertake a pilot aimed at retaining the critical experience of late career midwives while upskilling our newest midwives.

Nursing and midwifery is a physical job and the 12-month Late Career Nurses and Midwives pilot will support senior nurses and midwives, work a day a week off the ward and in turn use that day and their experience to help to develop new midwives and nurses through education support, professional development and mentorship.

As Victoria continues to boom, we know we need to grow our midwifery workforce and our Registered Undergraduate Students of Midwifery (RUSOM) is doing just that - Last year we invested \$9.8 million to expand the program, which has now supported more than 300 midwifery students take up work on maternity wards while studying.

Working under the supervision of experienced midwives, RUSOMs deliver care and support to new and expectant mums and their babies and are also provided a range of training to assist them in their studies and give them the most contemporary skills and expertise in patient care.

The RUSOM program has seen participants become more likely to complete their degree, develop greater levels of confidence, require less support once they graduate and seen a third of them receiving ongoing employment at the same health service after graduating.

The Labor Government has grown Victoria's midwifery workforce by 6.1 per cent since 2019 to almost 9,500 registered midwives and to expand the workforce even further, our landmark \$270 million *Making it Free to Study Nursing and Midwifery Initiative* is supporting the recruitment and training of another 17,000 nurses and midwives.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"Our midwives deliver new mums and babies the best care every single day and we're delivering them the extra support they need."

"Across Victoria, we're expanding maternity services, upgrading birthing suites, recruiting more midwives and making it free to study or retrain in midwifery."

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