

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 28 May 2023

DOING WHAT MATTERS FOR VICTORIAN WOMEN

Women and girls make up more than half of our population – and yet, their health is somehow seen as a 'niche issue.'

We know that women's health has been overlooked and under-diagnosed for too long. For women experiencing many conditions – from debilitating period pain to the symptoms of menopause – it can be draining and demoralising trying to find answers.

The Andrews Labor Government has made important investments in women's health, including funding Victoria's first clinic focused on women's heart health and our state's first ever sexual and reproductive health phone line – but there's still more to do.

That's why the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* invests more than \$153 million to completely change the way women's health issues are treated in our state.

We'll establish 20 new comprehensive women's health clinics to provide free comprehensive care and support Victorians experiencing conditions like endometriosis, pelvic pain, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), and those managing the symptoms of perimenopause and menopause.

The clinics will give women access to specialists including gynaecologists and urologists, alongside specialist nursing and allied health support in one spot – making it easier and faster to access the world-class care women deserve.

With five clinics to be established every year over the next four years across Victoria – including one at the Royal Women's Hospital, as part of the first five – we'll remove the barriers women face accessing the care they need, by giving them specialist services, close to home and at no cost.

We'll also work with Aboriginal-health organisations to deliver a dedicated Aboriginal-led women's health clinic. And because we believe women should be able to get the care they need, no matter where they live – we'll deliver a mobile Women's Health Clinic to visit remote parts of the state.

We'll expand our network of sexual and reproductive health hubs – establishing another nine by 2025, bringing our total number of sites to 20 – to offer information and advice on contraception, pregnancy options and sexual health.

To make sure we have the highly skilled doctors, nurses and allied health professionals trained in providing the best care to women and girls, we'll provide scholarships for 100 extra specialists.

We'll launch an inquiry into women's pain management this year, to examine systemic issues and find solutions, chaired by a panel of experts who will hear directly from women from a range of backgrounds and their experience accessing treatment.

We'll double the number of endometriosis and associated condition surgeries – delivering an extra 10,800 extra laparoscopy surgeries over four years.

And we'll go one step further and embed women's health in Government – establishing Victoria's first Women's Health Advisory Council by July.

It'll give independent advice on the delivery of our women's health package, including how to improve women's health outcomes, reduce gender health disparities, enhance research and strengthen the safety and quality of care.

Media contact: Nadia Dimattina 0438 701 306 | Nadia.dimattina@minstaff.vic.gov.au

We're doing what matters for Victorian women – giving their health the focus, funding and respect it deserves.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“For too long women haven’t been listened to and their health issues have been ignored – this package is about giving women’s health, the focus and funding it deserves.”

“We’re doing what matters – removing the barriers that women face so they can get the care they need, when and where they need it.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

“This comprehensive package to transform women’s health is about ensuring every Victorian woman can access the support and treatment they need and deserve.”

“We’re creating new services, delivering more surgery and training specialised staff to deliver the wraparound care and treatment Victorian women suffering from endometriosis, chronic pelvic pain, and severe menopausal symptoms need.”

Locations for new Women’s Health Clinics

Metro Sites

Alfred Hospital

Mercy Hospital for Women’s/Austin Hospital

Casey Hospital

Footscray Hospital

Frankston Hospital

Maroondah Hospital – the future Queen Elizabeth II Hospital

Monash Medical Centre, Clayton

Northern Hospital

St Vincent’s Hospital

Sunshine Hospital

Werribee Mercy Hospital

The Royal Women’s Hospital (which already runs a clinic – extended to five days per week)

Regional Sites

Barwon Health, Geelong (which already runs a clinic – extended from one to five days per week)

Goulburn Valley Health

Ballarat Base Hospital

Bendigo Hospital

Latrobe Regional Hospital

Mildura Base Hospital

Northeast Health Wangaratta

Warrnambool Base Hospital

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