

Media Release

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



Monday, 31 July 2023

TWO DECADES OF SAVING AMBULANCES FOR THOSE MOST IN NEED

Ambulance Victoria's massively expanded Secondary Triage service is now supporting more than 500 people every day get the appropriate care they need – freeing up hundreds of paramedics to care for the Victorians who need them the most.

Minister for Ambulance Services Gabrielle Williams today visited Ambulance Victoria's Triage Services in Burwood East to meet some of the paramedics and nurses in the Secondary Triage team and celebrate the incredible accomplishments of the service in its two decades of work.

Established 20 years ago, the Andrews Labor Government has massively expanded the service, which since 2021 has tripled in size to more than 270 highly skilled nurse practitioners and paramedics.

Since 2016, the service has connected more than one million Victorians, that did not need an emergency response with alternative care – freeing up our paramedics to respond to urgent patients, reducing demand on our emergency departments and saving hospital resources for the sickest Victorians.

It's estimated that about one in five calls to 000 don't need a lights and sirens response, with 37,825 callers being diverted to the Secondary Triage team in the first three months of 2023.

This has seen patients connected to non-emergency patient transport (NEPT) providers, telehealth services, their GP or an afterhours doctor, and the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED).

With an additional \$13.1 million invested in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24*, Victoria is now home to the largest ambulance led triage in the world.

To keep the pressure off paramedics and other first responders, for non-emergencies, Victorians are urged to visit their GP, local pharmacist, or GP Respiratory Clinic.

If in need of urgent care, Victorians can access the VVED from the comfort of their own home, attend one of the 27 Priority Primary Care Centres across the state, visit one of Victoria's 24/7 Supercare Pharmacies, or call NURSE-ON-CALL 1300 60 60 24 for immediate, expert advice.

Since coming to Government, we've recruited more than 2,200 new paramedics – and we'll continue our strong record with \$277 million invested in this year's Budget to recruit more paramedics, deliver better training and support innovative models of care.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ambulance Services Gabrielle Williams

"For 20 years, the Secondary Triage team has been freeing up our paramedics to respond to the most urgent patients, where every second counts."

"Staffed by highly-skilled nurses and paramedics, patients that are diverted to Secondary Triage continue to receive the very best care – from the comfort of their own home."

"We've backed our Secondary Triage team – tripling it in size since 2021 to become the largest in the world as part of our plan to keep paramedics on the road so they can continue to deliver Victorians the very best care."

Media contact: Harry Adam 0448 505 876 | harry.adam@minstaff.vic.gov.au