

Media Release

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



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SCHOLARSHIPS TO BOOST THE MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing its expansion of Victoria's mental health workforce, offering 20 scholarships at the Hamilton Centre for workers wanting to specialise in the field of addiction.

Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams said the postgraduate level scholarships would help recipients broaden their ability to work with people receiving treatment, support and care for their co-occurring mental health condition and alcohol and other drug (AOD) use.

Valued at \$10,000 each, the Graduate Certificate of Addictive Behaviours scholarships will be delivered online by Monash University from February to November in 2024.

Established following a recommendation from the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* to improve outcomes for people living with both mental health and substance use or addiction, the Hamilton Centre opened in April this year.

A collaborative network coordinated by Turning Point, the Hamilton Centre's specialised addiction services are delivered by St Vincent's Hospital, Eastern Health, Western Health, Austin Health, and Goulburn Valley Health – playing an important role in guiding best practice in integrated care across metro, rural, and regional Victoria.

To date, the Labor Government has invested more than \$6 billion into Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system to progress towards implementing all recommendations from the Royal Commission, including the roll out of the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy 2021-2024*.

The strategy sets out a coordinated approach to building a diverse, multidisciplinary workforce that supports a transformed mental health system and provides the care Victorians need and deserve.

This funding includes \$97.4 million in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* to grow the mental health and AOD workforce, ensuring an inclusive, safe, and responsive mental health and wellbeing system for all Victorians.

This builds on the record \$372 million in last year's Budget to recruit more than 1,500 mental health workers, including 400 mental health nurses and 100 psychiatrists to deliver Victoria's mental health reform agenda.

Applications for the Graduate Certificate of Addictive Behaviours scholarships close on 1 October 2023. For more information, visit turningpoint.org.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

"Our dedicated mental health and wellbeing workforce is the backbone of reforms to the system; we are ensuring we provide them with the specialist training and support they need to deliver the best care for all Victorians."

"In the past, there has been limited addiction specialists in Victoria – that is why these scholarships are critical to help fill that gap and improve outcomes for Victorians living with AOD and mental health conditions."

Quote attributable to Clinical Director of the Hamilton Centre Associate Professor Shalini Arunogiri

"People living with mental illness and substance use or addiction have struggled to access care and support. Through initiatives like this scholarship program, the Hamilton Centre aims to change this."

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