

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Medical Research



Friday, 1 September 2023

IMPROVING HEALTHCARE ACCESS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN MILDURA

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering on our election commitment to establish more sexual and reproductive hubs with Mildura to be home to a new dedicated hub.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced a new hub will be established at Sunraysia Community Health Service to provide critical healthcare services and improved access to sexual and reproductive healthcare for women and girls across Victoria's north west.

Focused on breaking down the barriers and stigma that some women and girls can face when accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare, it will offer free or low-cost services and advice related to contraception, medical termination of pregnancy, referral for surgical termination of pregnancy and sexual health testing and treatment.

Delivering care closer to home, the hub will also help patients avoid long-term health issues by reducing delays in treatment – also alleviating pressure on local health systems by decreasing presentations and demand on hospitals.

Services will scale up to full capacity by mid next year and will be open to all women, girls and gender diverse people.

Delivered as part of the Labor Government's \$153 million investment in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* million to completely change the way women's health issues are treated in our state. Mildura is the first of nine additional women's health hubs to be established across the state.

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

The Labor Government also funds the *1800 My Options* website and phone line, providing a free and confidential information service for advice on women's contraception, termination of pregnancy, and sexual health options.

For more details, please visit betterhealth.vic.gov.au/sexual-and-reproductive-health-hubs.

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"This new hub will deliver equity in healthcare across the Mildura region – providing access to the information, advice and services women, girls and gender diverse people need to get the sexual and reproductive healthcare that is right for them."

Quote attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

"Unfortunately, for some women, their access to sexual health and reproductive healthcare is hindered by economic, social and cultural disadvantage, making these hubs an incredibly important part of our healthcare system."