

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**  
Leader of the House  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Health Infrastructure  
Minister for Ambulance Services



Wednesday, 8 November 2023

## SUPPORTING THE LIFE-SAVING WORK OF OUR AMBOS

The Allan Labor Government has delivered a new ambulance station in Oak Park, giving paramedics the facilities and support they need to continue delivering world-class emergency care and saving lives across the community.

Minister for Ambulance Services Mary-Anne Thomas today joined the hardworking local branch to officially open the new facility – one of more than 30 ambulance stations delivered across Victoria since 2015, with construction on another 16 currently underway.

Located on Strachan Street, the new two-storey Oak Park ambulance station includes a six-bay garage for ambulances, six rest and recline areas for paramedics to recuperate, training facilities, a fully equipped kitchen, improved security and underground carparking that will enhance station safety.

The project involved knocking down the old station and replacing it with fit-for-purpose amenities to give local paramedics the modern facilities they need and deserve while on the job.

Since 2015, the Labor Government has invested \$279 million to deliver new ambulance stations across the state – providing better working conditions for paramedics and ensuring lifesaving emergency care is available for all Victorians, no matter where they live.

This new station comes as the latest quarterly performance data is released, showing Victoria is on the road to recovery from the once-in-100-year pandemic – recording improvements across the entire health system, including ambulance services, planned surgery and emergency care.

Ambulance Victoria continues to manage huge demand, responding to 96,594 Code 1 cases – its fourth-busiest quarter on record.

To improve response times, the Labor Government continues to invest in Ambulance Victoria's workforce and infrastructure – putting an additional 2,200 paramedics on the road since 2014.

We're already delivering on the promises we made to Victorians at last year's election, with the pledge to employ and train 40 new Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) paramedics fully funded in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24*.

The benefits of the \$1.5 billion *COVID Catch Up Plan* continue to be highlighted across the surgical system, with 51,361 patients admitted for planned surgery this quarter, decreasing the waiting list by a further 3.3 per cent.

All Category 1 patients received their surgery in the clinically recommended timeframes – and median waiting times improved yet again for Category 2 and 3 patients by 21 and 40 days respectively since this time last year.

To support patients on the waiting list, Patient Support Units across 23 sites have now contacted close to 60,000 patients about their surgical care – making sure more than 26,000 patients are better prepared for surgery, helping to reduce their length of stay in hospital and risk of post-surgical complications.

Data shows that Victoria's hospital emergency departments are continuing to experience high demand, having managed 470,798 presentations this quarter.

Despite this, the median waiting time remains at pre-pandemic levels, now sitting at 16 minutes – a significant improvement from 23 minutes this time last year.

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The Labor Government's ongoing investments in the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) and the Priority Primary Care Centres (PPCCs) is helping alleviate some of this demand by continuing to divert patients with less critical conditions from busy EDs, having managed close to 370,000 presentations combined to date.

All Victorians are once again encouraged to help the frontline healthcare workforce by saving EDs and Triple Zero for emergencies only by using the VVED and PPCC services in non-emergencies where only urgent care is required.

Additionally, the Labor Government's new 12-month pilot is also expanding the role of community pharmacy in Victoria with people now able to get treatment and advice for common conditions from their pharmacist – freeing up GPs for patients with more complex needs and saving EDs and ambulances for the sickest of patients.

#### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Ambulance Services Mary-Anne Thomas**

*"We all rely on the expertise, compassion and commitment of our paramedics – that's why we continue to invest in the resources they need to respond when and where they are needed."*

*"Investments like the new Oak Park station are critical to the health system we want to build for Victoria's future and why we continue to make significant investments in our health services right across the state."*

*"This quarter's performance data shows we are making real improvements in how we're delivering care and treatment to Victorians when and where they need it – I want to thank our hardworking frontline health workers for their continued dedication in ensuring Victorians receive the best care no matter where they live."*