

# Media Release

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



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## IMPROVING ABORTION ACCESS ACROSS MELBOURNE

The Allan Labor Government is making it safer and easier for women to access abortion services closer to home – with additional public health services now operating in Melbourne’s east.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas and Member for North-Eastern Metropolitan Region Sonja Terpstra last week visited Eastern Health to mark the start of new surgical termination services.

Improved access to the surgical termination of pregnancy procedure (also known as STOP) means for many women, travel to inner city Melbourne to access care is no longer required, with services made available closer to home. Peninsula Health are also commencing STOP and Western Health will offer the procedure soon.

Undertaking any medical procedure can be a stressful experience, and with improved access across Melbourne, more women will be able to access this critical healthcare option at their local hospital – ensuring they are closer to the support of friends and family, while also reducing the cost and time of travel.

This month marks eight years since the Labor Government passed critical legislation to introduce safe access zones around abortion providers, ensuring all Victorian women can access lawful medical services safely and privately, and free from unnecessary harassment and intimidation.

This year, Victoria also marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the decriminalisation of abortion – the introduction of *Abortion Law Reform Act* in 2008 – ensuring women accessing the procedure were protected by the law.

Improving access to abortion services is just one part of the Labor Government’s record investment in women’s health – with more than \$153 million in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* to improved and expand services.

This includes an additional nine sexual and reproductive health hubs across metropolitan and regional Victoria, adding to the 11 already established – offering free or low-cost services and advice related to contraception, termination of pregnancy and sexual health testing and treatment.

Further work is also underway to improve access to women’s healthcare services, including establishing 20 new comprehensive women’s health clinics that will offer free, comprehensive care and support for Victorians experiencing conditions like endometriosis, pelvic pain, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).

More information on abortion services in Victoria is available at [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/abortion-in-victoria](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/abortion-in-victoria) and [1800 MyOptions](https://www.1800myoptions.vic.gov.au).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

*“It has been 15 years since abortion was decriminalised in Victoria, meaning thousands of women have been able to make the best choice for themselves.”*

*“We are proud to continue expanding these safe and accessible abortion services to all women across the state – including the additional STOP produces through Eastern Health, Peninsula Health and Western Health.”*

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**Quote attributable to Member for North-Eastern Metropolitan Region Sonja Terpstra**

*“Accessing abortion care at these additional health services means more women can get critical healthcare and support closer to home, for a less stressful experience and an easier recovery close to friends and family.”*

**Quote attributable to Member for Box Hill Paul Hamer**

*“This is an important service and with access to STOP now available at Box Hill Hospital, it will make a huge difference for many women being much closer to home.”*