

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Medical Research



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IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH ACROSS VICTORIA

The Allan Labor Government is delivering critical support for women's health across Victoria - with grants awarded to women's organisations to establish local support groups across the state.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced the recipients of the *Women's Health and Wellbeing Support Groups and Programs Grants* program to 13 non-government organisations across Victoria to establish local health and wellbeing support groups that are specifically designed by women, for women.

Funded groups will be established in partnership with community groups, including refugees and new migrants, and women from LGBTQIA+, First Nations and culturally diverse communities.

The groups will run face-to face and online sessions in a welcoming and accessible environment and by giving women a place to meet within their community and a chance to share their own experiences, they will help reduce the risk of isolation and loneliness while empowering women to make choices about their own health.

Grant recipients are located right across the state, in both metropolitan and regional areas including Geelong, Mildura, Goulburn North East, Gippsland and Grampians.

Examples of the groups include Women's Health in the South East's *'Mastering Menopause'* program aimed at bringing women together to reduce stigma, facilitate social connection and deliver health literacy programs that address menopause, perimenopause, and mental wellbeing.

Women's Health Goulburn North East will use its grant to establish *'Women Gathering in Goulburn and North East Victoria'*, a project that will help bring together and support the health and wellbeing of regional women – particularly women who have experienced the trauma of extreme weather event.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* invested more than \$153 million to overhaul the way women's health issues are treated in Victoria, ensuring no one misses out because of their background, location, or economic circumstance.

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 will be available at health.vic.gov.au/public-health/womens-health-wellbeing-program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"For many women, the support they'll get from these groups will be life-changing – healthcare should be equitable and by empowering women to understand their own bodies and experiences, we can make a real difference."

"We are giving women the support they deserve – these groups are about listening to Victorian women and making sure no one slips through the cracks."

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