

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Ambulance Services



Tuesday, 19 December 2023

CALL FOR BLOOD DONORS TO GIVE THE ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS GIFT

The Allan Labor Government is urging all eligible Victorians to give the life-saving gift of blood this Christmas to ensure supplies don't run low over the festive season.

With demand for blood and blood products at its greatest level in nearly a decade, Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today visited the Melbourne CBD Blood Donor Centre to encourage Victorians to roll up their sleeves – with the reminder that the need for blood doesn't stop, even over the Christmas and New Year period.

Lifeblood reports the number of donations typically drop off this time of year as regular donors go on holiday, with the most critical time between 22 December and 2 January – A and O blood type the most sought after.

This decline has a serious impact on supplies for some of Victoria's sickest or seriously injured – from road trauma victims, people requiring surgery, women in childbirth and patients receiving cancer treatment.

Over the next two weeks, there are plenty of vacant appointments that need filling at Lifeblood's 18 donor centres across Melbourne and major regional centres.

To make donating as accessible as possible, Lifeblood's Caulfield, Bundoora, Frankston and Melbourne CBD centres are open every day of the holiday season, even on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

There is also a pop-up donor centre open at Highpoint Shopping Centre, making it easier than ever for people to donate while also picking up last minute Christmas gifts.

Red blood cells last just 42 days from donation, and with one in three people needing blood or blood products at some point in their life, every single donation provides life-saving and life-giving treatment to everyday Victorians.

Across Australia, Lifeblood must collect 33,000 donations every week to meet growing demand – needing around 135,000 donations in December alone.

As part of the National Blood Agreement, Victoria – alongside the Commonwealth and other states and territories – delivered more than \$1.5 billion in 2022/23 to ensure LifeBlood has access to blood and blood products when and where they're needed.

The Government also delivers Lifeblood funding for specialised pathology services via the Victorian Transplant Immunogenetics Service, including testing and recruiting, to the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

To find a blood donor centre near you, call 13 14 95, visit lifeblood.com.au or download the Donate Blood app.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"If there is one gift you give this Christmas, let it be the gift of life – donating may not be top of mind in the lead up to the festive season, but the demand for blood never stops."

"Thank you to the hardworking team at Lifeblood and every Victorian donor whose generosity in 2023 has helped save and change the lives of some of the sickest and most seriously injured Victorians."

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