

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Ambulance Services



Tuesday, 9 January 2024

## **PUBLIC FERTILITY CARE NOW AVAILABLE IN CITY'S NORTH EAST**

Women and families living in Melbourne's north eastern suburbs can now realise their dream of starting or growing their family, with the Allan Labor Government's nation-leading public fertility care service now available at the Mercy Hospital for Women.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas and Member for Ivanhoe Anthony Carbines today announced the opening of the new satellite site in Heidelberg, which will deliver support and treatment for locals wanting to access fertility care closer to home – reducing travel times and slashing costs, saving Victorians up to \$10,000.

Offering eligible patients a range of services, including specialist consultations, diagnostic tests and ultrasounds – it is the ninth site to open following the launch of other satellite sites in Epping, Bendigo, Warrnambool, Shepparton, Mildura, Sunshine, Geelong and Ballarat.

Delivered as part of a \$120 million investment by the Labor Government public fertility care will support up to 5,000 people every year – providing up to 3,375 treatment cycles – easing the financial pressure for thousands of Victorians during what is already a challenging experience for many.

This latest service follows the launch of Australia's first public egg and sperm bank in July 2023 at the Royal Women's Hospital which is currently accepting egg, sperm and embryo donations from the community.

Since the roll out of public fertility care in Victoria in 2022 – the landmark service is already making it easier and more affordable for prospective parents to access vital services on their IVF journey, with more than 1,100 Victorians commencing their treatment journey and a total of 60 pregnancies to date.

Access to public fertility care is available through a GP or specialist referral which is sent to the Royal Women's Hospital who then organise eligible patients to receive treatment at their closest health service.

More information is available at [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/services-support/public-fertility-care-services](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/services-support/public-fertility-care-services).

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

*"We know that the fertility care journey can be emotionally challenging that's why we are ensuring that families in Melbourne's north eastern suburbs have access to the best fertility care available closer to home."*

*"Victorians wanting to start or grow their family shouldn't be limited by their address or the number in their bank account – our public fertility care is making it easier and more affordable to access this vital service."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Ivanhoe Anthony Carbines**

*"This is an incredible addition to the public healthcare in our community – giving locals access to fertility care closer to home and nearby the support of their loved ones, whilst also removing financial barriers."*