

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Ambulance Services



Tuesday, 20 February 2024

## GREENER HEALTH SERVICES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

The Allan Labor Government is celebrating innovation at our hospitals - as several develop initiatives to make their hospitals more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas praised health services for their efforts in diverting millions of waste items from landfill by recycling and repurposing them – delivering not only world-class healthcare, but a better and greener public health system.

In regional Victoria, South West Healthcare is tackling the problem of plastic waste at their hospital head on - phasing out single use plastics entirely by introducing compostable replacements for items such as injection trays, kidney dishes, and anaesthetic packs.

Replacing these items has so far kept more than 1.5 million pieces of plastic from landfill in the last 12 months – while collaborative efforts with other local health services across the region takes this figure to an impressive 3.7 million pieces of plastic removed from the system.

In Central Victoria, Bendigo Health have also been stepping up their efforts developing a number of recycling initiatives that has seen the service so far recycle 32 per cent of its overall waste.

Its recycling strategies include donating used supplies to local wildlife rescue centres and sending single-use items and old uniforms to textile upcycling company Upparel to repurpose the materials.

In Melbourne, Austin Health launched a soft plastic recycling program in their operating theatres – helping reduce the amount of waste they send to landfill as they work towards achieving net-zero emissions by 2040.

The program at Austin Health so far has recycled more than 6,070 kilograms of soft plastic that would have otherwise gone to landfill, with an expansion to also include additional hospital departments, creating further recycling opportunities.

Last year, the Labor Government announced Medsalv - a medical device remanufacturer will establish a new sustainable manufacturing, research and development site in Victoria that will recycle medical equipment into new products.

Medsalv collect single-use medical devices and remanufactures them for safe use in a process that involves cleaning, testing, inspecting, packaging and relabelling of products to prevent them from going into landfill.

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

*“Cutting down on the volume of medical waste that goes to landfill will help contribute to driving down our carbon footprint.”*

*“Many of these recycling initiatives are staff-led, and it’s a credit to the dedication, talent and resourcefulness of our healthcare workforce.”*

### Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Health Infrastructure Tim Richardson

**Media contact:** Liam Mcallister 0488 771 334 | [liam.mcallister@mstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:liam.mcallister@mstaff.vic.gov.au)

*“It is great to see our health services becoming more sustainable and environmentally friendly while continuing to save Victorian lives.”*