

Media Release

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



Thursday, 9 May 2024

NEW CANCER CLINIC DEDICATED TO ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS

A dedicated First Nations Cancer Clinic is now open at Eastern Health's Healesville Hospital – delivering free, culturally safe oncology services to the region's large Aboriginal population.

Parliamentary Secretary for Health Infrastructure Tim Richardson today opened the public clinic which is in an area that is significant to local Aboriginal people who consider Healesville as having a high connection to country, culture and family.

Sadly, research shows that cancer disproportionately affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria, with the five-year survival rate among Aboriginal Victorians 12 per cent lower than non-Aboriginal Victorians.

Providing medical oncology services, the clinic is staffed with oncologists specially trained in treating the most common types of cancer for First Nations Australians such as lung, prostate, breast, and bowel cancers.

Delivered by Eastern Health and Monash Partners Comprehensive Cancer Consortium (MPCCC), the name of the new clinic was chosen by the Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation – *nangnak warr bagora* – aligning with the Government's focus on Aboriginal self-determination and cultural safety.

Operated by Eastern Health, the facility will cater to the medical, social, and emotional wellbeing of patients, with embedded social workers and an Aboriginal liaison officer working to ensure that the clinic addresses the gap in cancer outcomes in the community.

The Labor Government is a key supporter of the MPCCC through the Victorian Cancer Agency, delivering more than \$7 million for research projects, software, and workforce infrastructure.

The soon to be released *2024-2028 Victorian Cancer Plan* and previous funding of \$7.8 million to the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) have also helped in the development and implementation of the Victorian Aboriginal Cancer Journey Strategy.

This year's *Victorian Budget 2024/25* is putting Aboriginal Health into Aboriginal hands – strengthening cultural safety and supporting culture and kinship in Victoria's healthcare system.

Investments include \$10.8 million to continue delivering the *Victorian Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Agreement* – boosting cultural safety in public hospitals and enabling better health outcomes by ensuring Aboriginal Victorians feel safe to seek the care they need.

The Labor Government is also continuing its work to close the health gap with \$4 million for the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, helping to provide better access to specialist paediatric medical and allied health services.

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"We know that when we listen to Aboriginal Victorians, we get the best health outcomes – that's why we are delivering culturally safe health care to ensure people feel safe to seek the care they need."

Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Health Infrastructure Tim Richardson

"This new First Nations Cancer Clinic in Healesville will help us deliver equitable access to cancer treatment, therapies and clinical trials in a culturally sensitive setting."

Media contact: Isobel Loschiavo 0431 963 479 | isobel.loschiavo@minstaff.vic.gov.au