

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

Minister for Multicultural Affairs



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AGED CARE STUDY TO TEST VIRUS FIGHTING TECHNOLOGY

The Allan Labor Government is backing a world-leading study assessing the efficacy of germicidal ultraviolet light technology in a real-world setting to help reduce the level of COVID-19 and other airborne viruses in aged care residences.

Minister for Ageing Ingrid Stitt today visited Boyne Russell House in Brunswick – where the first ultraviolet lights were installed – to announce a \$16.8 million investment to deliver the trial, including in residential aged care facilities across Melbourne and Geelong.

The final lights will be installed in other facilities in coming weeks before the study led by the Burnet Institute formally commences.

Established in direct response to the severe impact the pandemic had across the aged care setting, this will be the first time the technology is measured in a clinical study to determine if it reduces the burden and impact of airborne diseases.

Completely safe for residents and staff, the technology works by shining an invisible, ultraviolet light across the ceiling with the purpose of neutralising particles of airborne viruses in the room.

Following a pilot last year, the scientific team expect that this study will give a clear answer as to whether this technology can improve the safety of aged care homes and protect the health of residents, staff and visiting loved ones during COVID-19 and flu peaks.

Upon completion of the trial, a successful outcome could pave the way for a wider rollout of this technology in other health settings.

This year's *Victorian Budget 2024/25* continues to strengthen Victoria's public sector residential aged care with \$31.2 million to provide high-quality care and maintain nurse to resident ratios.

The Budget also includes \$38 million to extend the state's specialist palliative care services, providing vital support for Victorians at the end of their life, particularly in aged care homes.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ageing Ingrid Stitt

"Aged care services are home to some of our oldest and most vulnerable Victorians and this study could help us deliver more innovative and effective methods of keeping residents, staff and visitors free from illness."

"This trial is about new ways of reducing illness in our aged care facilities – reducing infections and improving the pressure placed on aged care and hospital workforces during peak COVID-19 and flu season."