

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Ambulance Services



Thursday, 27 June 2024

IMPROVING CANCER OUTCOMES FOR ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS

The Allan Labor Government is supporting a new initiative to improve cancer outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Victoria and to help close the gap in cancer research and care.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced \$3.87 million towards *Framework Respect* – a culturally responsive and safe framework to boost participation in cancer clinical trials.

Led by the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) in partnership with local ACCHOs, the framework will form part of the *Cancer Clinical Trials Program 2024-2028*.

The funding will also support a new culturally safe lung cancer screening pilot set to start in July 2025, delivered in partnership with the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre Alliance.

The framework is a critical step in driving down the disproportionate affect cancer has on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians – who are three times more likely than the rest of the population to develop lung cancer, twice as likely to be diagnosed with any cancer and three times more likely to die from cancer.

This program is just one way the Labor Government is working to address cancer rates including a \$7.8 million plan to support the development and implementation of the VACCHO's *Aboriginal Cancer Journey Strategy 2023-2028*.

It is also consistent with calls for the recognition and embedding of culturally sensitive and ethical practices outlined in *marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri: The Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medical and Wellbeing Research Accord*.

Further support was delivered in this year's *Victorian Budget 2024/25*, with \$4 million for the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service to provide better access to specialist paediatric medical and allied health services.

It also included more than \$10 million to begin implementation of a self-determined cultural safety accreditation scheme in public hospitals and an expanded self-determined Culture and Kindship program.

The Victorian Budget 2024/25 provided more than \$70 million in funding for initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"Equity in healthcare must be a priority, and we can't ignore the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander have worse outcomes when it comes to cancer – this funding will help address that gap."

"These new guidelines will ensure that health services have a clear and consistent framework when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in clinical cancer trials in a meaningful and respectful way."

Quotes attributable to VACCHO CEO Dr Jill Gallagher AO

"The Victorian Aboriginal Cancer Journey Strategy 2023-2028 provides the roadmap for improving cancer outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria."

"This commitment means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have greater access to the latest approaches to detect and treat cancers, with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations providing that access."

Media contact: Millie Spencer 0458 755 274 | millie.spencer@minstaff.vic.gov.au