

Media Release



Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Acting Minister for Health
Acting Minister for Health Infrastructure
Acting Minister for Ambulance Services

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CANCER JOURNAL PILOT LAUNCHED AT ECHUCA REGIONAL HEALTH

The Allan Labor Government is ensuring First Nations Victorians living with cancer can access culturally safe and relevant support throughout their treatment.

Echuca Regional Health (ERH) is piloting a cancer journal with funding from the Labor Government's \$7.8 million investment in the *Victorian Aboriginal Cancer Journey Strategy 2023–2028* – the pilot program to inform the development of a statewide journal for all communities to utilise across Victoria.

The journal is an opportunity for cancer patients and their families to understand the stages of treatment and survival, and includes practical areas to maintain records, appointments, symptom tracking, and record any questions and feelings during their treatment journey.

It is a collaboration between ERH and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) who initiated and led the development of the strategy with the aim of helping to close the care gap.

The idea of a cancer journal arose from feedback provided by Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers, suggesting a resource would offer additional supports for community after a cancer diagnosis.

The Aboriginal Cancer Patient Journal assembles vital information into a reliable, culturally appropriate, and accessible resource, for Aboriginal people with cancer, and their families.

The local Yorta Yorta Nation Elders Group gifted ERH with the name 'Wanyarra Mulana', which means 'active spirit', as a dual name for the journal and new Cancer and Wellness Centre, which opened in June last year following a joint investment including \$6 million from the Labor Government.

The *Victorian Budget 2024/25* provided more than \$70 million in funding for initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal Victorians, including important cancer funding to drive down the disproportionate impact.

More than \$13 billion was invested in the state's health system in the latest budget, as the Government works to ensure all Victorians can access the care they need, when they need it, closer to home.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Health Ingrid Stitt

"The journal is an important personalised resource that can help people fighting cancer to understand stages of treatment, survival and journey, and gives them a chance to record questions throughout the process."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jacyn Symes

"Echuca Regional Health is taking the lead on the cancer journal – ensuring this becomes an effective resource to provide safe and supportive treatment and care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians during their cancer journey."

Quotes attributable to Jill Gallagher, CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

"This Community-led initiative champions empowerment and self-determination to provide patients and their families with an avenue to record their learnings and reflections while supporting people to be in control of their journey."

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