

# Focused On What Matters Most

Victorian Budget 2025/26

Wednesday, 21 May 2025

## VIRTUAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TO NEARLY TRIPLE IN SIZE

The Allan Labor Government is focused on what matters most – expanding your access to free health care and protecting the public health system you rely on.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced the *Victorian Budget 2025/26* invests \$437 million to massively expand the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department – and make it permanent.

The investment means nearly three times the number of Victorians will be able to access free, 24/7 urgent care through the Virtual ED – reducing pressure on the health system and the dedicated doctors, nurses and paramedics working within it.

Currently, the Virtual ED delivers care to more than 600 callers every day.

The Government's expansion of Australia's first ever virtual emergency department means the service will support more than 1,750 Victorians every day by 2028/29.

The expansion will also support more direct referrals from aged care, paramedics in the field, primary health networks, and Nurse on Call.

Since rolling out statewide in April 2022, the Virtual ED operated by Northern Health has provided clinical assessments, medical advice, treatment and referrals to Victorians of all ages and locations.

It has delivered more than half a million consultations to Victorians – free of charge.

In December 2024 alone, it received almost 22,000 calls – more than the number of patients seen in many hospital EDs in an entire quarter.

In the past year, the Virtual ED has helped 83 per cent of patients avoid an unnecessary trip to the hospital – delivering urgent care in the comfort of their own home while taking pressure off frontline healthcare workers.

The service is also helping alleviate pressure on paramedics, with around 79 per cent of patients referred by a paramedic receiving virtual care at home, freeing up paramedics to return to the road and assist patients with life-threatening emergencies.

The Virtual ED is just one of the many initiatives established by the Labor Government to protect and expand your public health system.

This includes 29 Urgent Care Clinics, which received a boost in this Budget and are staffed by GPs and nurses who can treat a wide range of conditions, such as burns and sprains. Since launching in September 2022, the clinics have seen more than 800,000 visits.

If faced with an emergency, Victorians should still call Triple Zero or present to their closest emergency department. To access the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department, visit [vved.org.au](https://vved.org.au).

### Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

*"We're focused on what matters most: a health system that's free and easy to access, a public service that you and your family can rely on."*

*"The Virtual ED is a miracle."*

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*“It has helped more than half a million people, and we’re almost tripling its capacity so more families can get free, 24/7, world-class health care.”*

**Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas**

*“The Virtual ED is making it easier for Victorians everywhere to access urgent care 24/7 and taking pressure off our busy emergency departments and paramedics.”*

**Quote attributable to Member for Mill Park Lily D'Ambrosio**

*“Our investments in the Virtual ED and Urgent Care Clinics are helping free up emergency health resources and ensure people right across Melbourne’s north can get the care they need, when and where they need it.”*

**Quote attributable to Member for Thomastown Bronwyn Halfpenny**

*“The team at the Northern Hospital have taken this innovative program and expanded it to now become Victoria’s busiest ED – the hardworking nurses and doctors are delivering real results for Victorians.”*

**Quote attributable to Member for Yan Yean Lauren Kathage**

*“The Virtual ED has been a massive success, and the Northern Hospital have done an incredible job supporting more than half a million Victorians to get the care they need.”*