

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



Thursday, 27 November 2025

BRINGING LIFECHANGING HEARING CARE TO REGIONAL VICTORIA

The Allan Labor Government is delivering more lifechanging specialist care in regional Victoria, with Goulburn Valley Health becoming the first regional public health service in the state to offer cochlear implant surgery.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today visited the health service to celebrate the game changing surgery that will transform access to hearing support for patients across northern Victoria.

This breakthrough means locals in Shepparton and the surrounding region, living with severe hearing loss, will no longer need to travel to Melbourne for cochlear implant procedures, making life-changing treatment more accessible, closer to home.

Cochlear implants are lifechanging for patients, bypassing damaged inner ear parts to restore hearing for people with severe loss who cannot benefit from hearing aids.

Delivered by Goulburn Valley Health in partnership with the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, the service will also strengthen Victoria's Cochlear Implant Program, ensuring consistent, multidisciplinary care and professional development for audiologists across the state.

The partnership will enhance collaboration and integration between metropolitan and regional services, with demand closely monitored as awareness and referrals grow.

The Eye and Ear is Victoria's largest public provider of ophthalmology and ENT services, delivering more than half of the state's public eye surgery and until now, all public cochlear implants.

The Labor Government continues to make record investments into Victoria's health system, with \$31 billion delivered to health services this year alone.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"This procedure is a first for regional Victoria – and with collaboration between the Eye and Ear Hospital and Goulburn Valley Health, we can expect it to make a massive difference to locals needing care for hearing issues."

"This service will change lives across regional Victoria, bringing world-class hearing care closer to home and strengthening our public health system for the future."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"This is a gamechanger for regional Victoria – the partnership between GV Health and the Royal Ear and Eye will mean that more Victorians can access the specialist care they need, without travelling to Melbourne."