

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

Minister for Women



Tuesday, 10 February 2026

DELIVERING A MORE INCLUSIVE HEALTH SYSTEM FOR ALL VICTORIANS

The Allan Labor Government is building a stronger, more inclusive health system that works for all Victorians – no matter where you were born or what language you speak.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas has announced the appointment of a strengthened and expanded Multicultural Health Advisory Committee, bringing together diverse voices to shape health priorities and support engagement between Victoria’s multicultural communities and the health system.

Victoria has one of the most diverse populations in Australia, with people from more than 300 ancestries, speaking over 290 languages and practicing over 200 faiths.

While diversity is what makes Victoria so vibrant, many communities face challenges accessing appropriate health care and information due to social, cultural, faith and language related barriers.

The committee brings together experienced health sector experts from multicultural backgrounds whose lived experience gives them important and unique insights into system issues.

It also includes representatives from key multicultural peak bodies including Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, and Victorian Refugee Health Network.

Chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary for Women’s Health, Kat Theophanous MP, the committee will work to identify gaps and opportunities to build a more equitable and inclusive health system with its first task to support the delivery of a new *Victorian Multicultural Health Survey*, opening in early 2026.

The survey will be an important avenue for multicultural and multifaith Victorians to directly voice their experiences – their stories used to identify gaps and barriers to build a more equitable and inclusive health system.

It will also be an opportunity for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to put forward their ideas for change – because listening to people from all communities means achieving the best health outcomes for all Victorians.

The committee will also add mental health to its remit and advise the Government on the implementation of the *Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing 10 Year Framework*, as well as implementation of the *Multicultural Health Action Plan 2023-27*.

The framework outlines a 10-year vision so all Victorians can access a safe and inclusive mental health and wellbeing system that responds to, reflects, and embraces diversity.

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

“Our health system should work for every Victorian and with the work of the new Multicultural Health Advisory Committee, we can turn this into real action.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Multicultural Affairs Ingrid Stitt

“We’re making sure we listen to our diverse multicultural communities to build a health system that is safe, inclusive and respectful.”

Media contact: Ella Glanville 0434 480 800 | ella.glanville@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Health Kat Theophanous

"This Committee brings together deep sector expertise and lived experience through an outstanding cohort of appointees to strengthen health advice and support fairer health outcomes for multicultural Victorians."

Multicultural Health Advisory Committee members

- Dr Shaymaa Elkadi
- Arun Thomas
- Associate Professor Magdalena Simonis
- Dr Umber Rind
- Dr Vitor Rocha
- Josh Nguyen
- Rana Ebrahimi
- Tigist Kebede
- Vedran Drakulic
- Yue Hu
- Farah Farouque - Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) representative
- Dr Judy Tang - Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) representative
- Dr Shereen Labib - Local Public Health Unit (LPHU) representative
- Gavin Halge - Victorian Refugee Health Network (VRHN) representative