

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

Minister for Women



Tuesday, 10 March 2026

LABOR BACKS ABORIGINAL KINSHIP TO CLOSE HEALTH GAPS

The Allan Labor Government is building a stronger, more inclusive health system that works for all Victorians.

That means enabling more Aboriginal-led care because we know it delivers better health outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

The best healthcare is not a one size fits all – it's care that suits you, reflects your culture and is shaped by your community.

That's why the Labor Government is investing \$6.3 million to strengthen Aboriginal health and wellbeing through culturally strong, community-led initiatives right across the state.

Minister Thomas today announced that 15 Aboriginal organisations will share funding to continue and expand locally led Culture + Kinship initiatives.

The Culture + Kinship initiatives include an Elders Choir, Cultural Memory and Return to Country Project, Youth Cultural and Diversionary Camps, Transferring Elders Knowledge and Early Years Connection to Country.

Strong culture, connection and kinship are proven protective factors for mental health, resilience and long-term wellbeing, and these initiatives are designed by Aboriginal Victorians for Aboriginal Victorians.

This investment is part of the ongoing delivery of the Victorian Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Agreement.

A successful 2022 pilot demonstrated measurable improvements in social and emotional wellbeing, highlighting the power of Aboriginal-led solutions.

The evidence is clear: when care is culturally safe and community-controlled, health outcomes improve and lives change.

This is another step towards closing health gaps by backing Aboriginal leadership and building a healthcare system that truly works for everyone.

While Jess Wilson's Liberals have an \$11.1 billion budget black hole which only means cuts - Labor is investing in equal healthcare for all Victorians.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"We're working hard to close health gaps by strengthening culture, connection and community for Aboriginal Victorians."

"If we want the best health outcomes, we must back Aboriginal-led care, our ACCHOs and VACCHO."