

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

Minister for Women



Tuesday, 31 March 2026

LABOR PUTS ABORIGINAL MOTHERS AT THE HEART OF CARE

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

This means putting Aboriginal women and their families at the centre of care – making sure it’s free, culturally safe and close to home.

Minister Thomas has announced a \$15.8 million boost to expand Koori Maternity Services.

The funding will support 10 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) right across Victoria.

It includes services in Bendigo, Ballarat, Melbourne, Lakes Entrance and Albury Wodonga.

Aboriginal mothers and their babies deserve the same health outcomes as any other mother and child in Victoria.

The goal of the services is to ensure culturally safe and high-quality pregnancy care, with the following outcomes:

- More Aboriginal women access antenatal care earlier in their pregnancy
- Fewer Aboriginal women smoke during pregnancy
- Fewer Aboriginal babies are born early
- Fewer Aboriginal babies die during pregnancy or soon after birth.

Care delivered by our ACCHOs is grounded in culture, connection and kinship.

It is also delivered by clinicians who understand their community, their needs and their experiences.

Only Labor will deliver a health system that works for everyone.

Jess Wilson's Liberals have an \$11.5 billion budget black hole which means one thing: cuts to hospitals and services.

For more information, please visit health.vic.gov.au/patient-care/aboriginal-maternity-services.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

“We must close health gaps – this means ensuring we have a health system that works for every Victorian.”

“These services are about culturally safe care, connection and community for Aboriginal mothers and their babies.”

Quotes attributable to Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation CEO Dr Jill Gallagher AO

“For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, culturally safe care is the foundation of trust, dignity and healing.”

“VACCHO welcomes this vital funding to support our ACCHOs, as they help set up our Boorais for the strongest start to life.”

The funded ACCHOs include:

- Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Services
- Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative

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- Bendigo and District Co-operative Ltd
- First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing
- Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative
- Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association
- Moogji Aboriginal Council East Gippsland Inc
- Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
- Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative Limited