

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Friday, 22 May 2026

BRINGING CARE CLOSER TO HOME FOR REGIONAL VICTORIANS

The Allan Labor Government is making it easier for regional Victorians to get the care they need, closer to home.

Premier Jacinta Allan today announced the expansion of the Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy Student (SPOTS) grants program.

A \$4.4 million investment will boost access to specialist health care.

The grants support final year students to move to regional Victoria.

More than 250 grants of up to \$15,000 will be available.

The programs help students relocate to regional and rural communities.

It supports them with the costs of moving, cost of living and professional development.

It means more students taking up rewarding careers providing regional Victorians the specialised care they need.

The next round of SPOTS will open in October, with successful applicants announced in early 2027.

Speech pathologists and occupational therapists play a crucial role in helping people improve their everyday communication and participation in daily tasks.

Funded in the *Victorian Budget 2026/27*, it's part of \$91.2 million investment to build a strong health workforce.

The Budget is also delivering more closer to home or in the community – saving regional Victorians time and money.

More than \$130 million will continue the Better at Home program – delivering care and treatment like rehab and post-surgical care at home.

\$3.1 million will extend the game changing Virtual Hospital pilot so more people can receive care and recover at home, while freeing up hospital beds for the sickest patients.

For information on SPOTS, visit vic.gov.au/speech-pathology-and-occupational-therapy-student-grant-program.

Quotes attributable to Premier and Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan

“Labor is delivering new solutions so regional Victorians can get more care, closer to home.”

“These grants are helping grow our regional workforce – and kickstart the careers of young, talented speech pathologists and occupational therapists.”

Quotes attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

“Our healthcare workers are the backbone of our health system, and Labor will always back them.”

“We’re making sure Bendigo locals get the care they need closer to home, reducing the need for travel.”

Media contact: Jennifer Aitken 0467 745 963 | jennifer.aitken@minstaff.vic.gov.au