

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



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CARE THAT KEEPS MORE MUMS AND BUBS TOGETHER

The Allan Labor Government is providing an \$8.1 million boost to maternity hospitals across Victoria.

The investment is all about helping babies with additional care needs to stay with their mums in post-natal wards.

Why we're acting

The period immediately after birth is one of the most critical times for both mother and baby.

Some newborns require closer observation and clinical care, which can require admission to special care nurseries.

That's why we delivered the *Neonatal Postnatal Support Nurse* pilot program – and it's why we're expanding it.

Through this program, these nurses work with midwives and focus on caring for newborns who may need treatment, like antibiotics to treat infection or light therapy for jaundice.

By avoiding special care nursery admission, it helps keep mums and bubs together in those precious first moments.

The hospitals already running this program have reported positive results, like fewer hospital readmissions of neonates, and fewer complications like hypothermia and hypoglycaemia.

Expanding the Neonatal Postnatal Support Nurse Program

Our investment boosts the program across the state and doubles its workforce from 32 to 65 nurses.

The program currently operates at Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital, University Hospital Geelong and Werribee Mercy Hospital.

It will now be expanded to three additional hospitals:

- Royal Women's Hospital
- Mercy Hospital for Women (Heidelberg)
- Monash Medical Centre (Clayton)

Funding will also be extended to continue the program at the three original pilot sites, for continuity of care.

These are the six hospitals in Victoria that deal with the most complex maternity cases.

Building a stronger workforce

The program also strengthens Victoria's long-term maternity workforce.

By working alongside midwives, registered nurses gain hands-on experience in newborn care and exposure to the profession of midwifery – actively encouraging more nurses to go on to study as midwives.

Like every Australian state or territory, Victoria needs more midwives, and this program is a direct pathway to growing that workforce sustainably.

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Victoria's First Chief Midwife

The Labor Government has appointed Elisa McDonald as Victoria's first-ever Chief Midwife.

An experienced clinician who has worked across hospital services and Safer Care Victoria, Elisa will provide dedicated, statewide leadership for maternity and newborn services.

The creation and appointment to this role reflects our commitment to elevating the voice of midwifery at the highest levels of health.

Labor's record of investment in maternity care

We're proud of our track record of investment in maternity services.

The *Victorian Budget 2026/27* invests an additional \$249 million to boost maternity services across Melbourne's western suburbs – one of Victoria's fastest-growing regions.

We have hired 17,000 additional nurses and midwives and delivered a record pay rise – because they earned it.

Jess Wilson's Liberals will cut \$40 billion in services – that means cuts to hospitals, cuts to nurses, cuts to care.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"Labor is making sure mums and bubs can stay together and get the care they need."

"Having these extra pairs of hands means less newborns need to go to the special care nursery, so they can stay with their mums for bonding and breastfeeding during these precious early moments of life."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Harriet Shing

"We're expanding this program because it's made a world of difference to new mums and bubs, and created more options for Victorian nurses across our public health system."

"The Liberals have a plan to cut \$40 billion from the state budget, which means they won't build anything, and they won't support public healthcare - because you can't cut \$40 billion without sacking nurses and midwives. They've done it before, and they'll do it again."