

# Media Release

**Martin Foley MP**

Minister for Housing, Disability & Ageing

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Creative Industries

Minister for Equality



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## **NEW JOINT CLINICAL AND POLICE RESPONSE TO HELP PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN MELBOURNE'S NORTH-EAST**

The Andrews Labor Government will provide \$226,250 this financial year to introduce a new Mental Health and Police Response (MHaP Response) partnership between Austin Health and Victoria Police in the north-eastern suburbs.

The MHaP Response will deliver a more targeted and timely response to people needing urgent mental health support in the community, while also reducing pressure on police, ambulance and emergency departments. Under the program, Austin Health's mental health clinicians will travel with police to call-outs.

Many police and ambulance call-outs involve people in a critical state due to mental illness. MHaP Response will ensure that people with a mental illness receive the most appropriate and the least-restrictive care in a timely way, minimising harm to the person and their family.

Mental health clinicians will provide additional clinical support to the service when not involved in responding with police as part of MHaP Response.

The MHaP Response, with ongoing funding from the Labor Government, is being progressively introduced across all of Victoria's 21 Area Mental Health Services.

The MHaP Response draws on previous pilot projects in Area Mental Health Services as well as through Eastern Health, Alfred Health and Northern Health.

The trials, variously known as PACER, NPACER or PARTS, brought mental health practitioners together with police to respond to a mental health crisis, rather than it escalating unnecessarily and involving an emergency department.

Evaluations of the pilots found that people suffering an episode of mental illness were less likely to end up in the local emergency department and that police units could be released to other duties more quickly.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley**

*"The MHaP Response has proven to be effective in other areas of Victoria in helping people with a mental illness outside a clinical setting."*

*"The MHaP Response at The Austin will ensure people with a mental health issue get help in their own community rather than be taken off to hospital."*

*"This initiative will ease pressure on emergency departments and police."*

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