

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

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LIFESAVING STROKE UNIT OPENS AT ROYAL MELBOURNE HOSPITAL

Victoria's new lifesaving Stroke Care Unit at Royal Melbourne Hospital has opened its doors for the first time.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today unveiled the \$9.3 million Stroke Care Unit, which will keep Victoria at the forefront in the treatment of one of the world's major health issues.

Stroke is the second-leading cause of death and a leading cause of disability worldwide. Rapid treatment is vital to saving lives and limiting disability, and the new unit ensures the hospital is geared up for immediate response.

The Royal Melbourne Hospital treats about 900 ischemic stroke patients a year and is one of the few stroke centres in the world to treat patients within 20 minutes of arriving in the emergency department.

It is Australia's only comprehensive stroke service and is home to Australia's only stroke ambulance, which can assess patients on the spot to speed up treatment and save lives.

The Andrews Labor Government provided \$7.5 million for the trial of the cutting-edge ambulance, which has already had an impact on survival and recovery rates.

The new unit will further enhance the Royal Melbourne's role as the state-wide provider of acute stroke services.

Since 2015, the Royal Melbourne Hospital has been the designated provider of state-wide Endovascular Clot Retrieval (ECR) services in Victoria. ECR is where the clot formed during a stroke is "pulled" from the brain with a retrievable stent.

It has been shown to nearly double stroke recovery and survival outcomes by quickly restoring blood flow to the brain.

Studies show 70 per cent of patients recover from a stroke when treated with ECR, up from 39 per cent.

While the key focus of the new unit is stroke, it will also care for patients with other neurological illnesses such as epilepsy or Multiple Sclerosis.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"Every minute is vital for people who have experienced a stroke, and this new unit ensures that the Royal Melbourne is always ready to respond."

"Stroke is the leading cause of disability in Australia and causes more deaths than breast cancer in women and prostate cancer among men."

"About one in six people will suffer a stroke in their lifetime, so it's vital that our hospitals and health professionals have the equipment and facilities they need to save lives."