

Media Release

From Shaun Leane MP, Member for Eastern Metropolitan Region



Tuesday, 3 May 2022

PUTTING PATIENTS FIRST IN EASTERN METRO

The Andrews Labor Government is putting patients first in Eastern Metro.

Across our nation – and around the world – the pandemic has put unprecedented pressure on health systems. From a sharp increase of critical COVID patients to disrupted care, resulting in longer hospital recovery time, the last two years have really knocked our health system around.

When we came to government, we put an end to the war on our paramedics. We took ambulance response times from the worst in our history to the best. Now – just like we did before – we'll ease the pandemic pressure on our hospitals and our healthcare workers.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* will invest over \$12 billion to put patients first, with a *Pandemic Repair Plan* for more staff, better hospitals and first-class care.

Our healthcare workers have been on the frontline of this pandemic, and we know how important it is that we support them into the future.

We're backing our healthcare workers with training and the extra pair of helping hands they need, so they can give you the very best care.

That's why the Budget is delivering funding to train and hire up to 7,000 new healthcare workers, including 5,000 nurses.

We'll provide 1,125 new Registered Undergraduate Nursing Positions and 75 new Registered Undergraduate Student of Midwifery roles over the next two years, and we're also recruiting up to 2,000 ex-pat and international healthcare workers through a global workforce recruitment drive.

Right around the nation, demand for emergency services is at an all-time high. Our Triple Zero call-takers and dispatchers are dealing with unprecedented call volumes.

But when you call for an ambulance, every Victorian should have the confidence one will arrive. That's why we're delivering another 90 paramedics – which means we've added 790 extra paramedics to the workforce since we came to government.

And to help our frontline workers reach Victorians who need help faster, we're investing \$333 million to add nearly 400 new staff to increase Triple Zero call-taking and dispatch capacity for Triple Zero services, including ambulances, and training more operators to allocate calls across the state.

We're also going to make sure that every local community gets the health infrastructure and services they deserve. That's why this Budget invests \$2.9 billion to build new hospitals and deliver upgrades to health services in every corner of our state. By expanding our emergency departments, adding more surgical beds to get more elective surgeries done and increasing maternity care services – this Budget will ensure more Victorians get the very best of care, close to home.

As we roll-out our *Pandemic Repair Plan* to make sure people in Eastern Metro get the care they deserve, we're also getting on with delivering the schools, roads and public transport services they rely on.

You can't get a first-rate education, in a second-rate classroom. It's why we're going to invest \$11.2 million in Wantirna College to build a brand-new gymnasium and new music and drama classrooms, because under the Andrews Labor Government, we're giving every child the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Students with special needs should receive the same opportunities as every other student in our state. That's why we are making sure that, since we were elected, every single special school in Victoria will have received funding for a major upgrade. With this Budget, we're upgrading 36 special schools, including \$5.7 million for Eastern Ranges School to bring the Junior and Senior Wings into the 21st century, as well as improving the working and learning spaces in the admin and special buildings. We're also investing \$1.8 million to upgrade and modernise Aurora School.

To make sure every young Victorian gets the education they need for the career they want, the new VCE Vocational Major and Victorian Pathways Certificate will replace VCAL, offering students more choices, a higher-quality curriculum and better workplace experiences – preparing students to jump into further study, training at TAFE or work as soon as they leave school.

The VCAL reforms will save many Victorian families up to \$1,000 by cutting out-of-pocket costs, with students no longer having to pay for essential learning materials for VET studies.

Our government will always deliver the infrastructure improvements to keep Victorians moving on our transport network. Whether it's removing dangerous level crossings, building the Metro Tunnel or upgrading train stations, we're slashing travel times across road and rail so that Victorians can spend less time travelling and more time with their loved ones.

In this Budget, we'll keep investing in upgrading our public transport network, getting our Big Build projects like the Metro Tunnel ready for completion and getting Victorians home sooner and safer. With the Metro Tunnel a year ahead of schedule, a huge recruitment and training program will ensure the tunnel is ready for passengers when it opens in 2025. We'll also get on with delivering the Tram Plan, improving the accessibility and reliability of the network, and we'll construct new train stabling at Flemington to support the transition to Metro Tunnel and Melbourne Airport Rail operations.

Local communities deserve great places to play sport and under an Andrews Labor Government, they will have them. We're investing \$88 million to build, upgrade and renovate community sporting infrastructure. This will deliver bigger, better change rooms, club rooms and community spaces for our community to enjoy. In this Budget we're supporting Blackburn Cycling Club with \$200,000 to install velodrome lights and Ballyshannassy Park with \$250,000 to deliver new smart LED field lighting on three pitches.

We know that many Victorians are still paying too much for their energy bills – that's why we're stepping in to help families get the best deal. We're providing a once-off \$250 payment for all Victorian households that use the Victorian Energy Compare (VEC) website – the Victorian Government's independent price comparator website – to search for the cheapest electricity plan that suits their needs.

Quotes attributable to Member for Eastern Metropolitan Shaun Leane

"The Andrews Labor Government is making it easier for local families to access the healthcare services they need, closer to home. This Budget delivers the healthcare workers we need to look after every single Victorian."

"This funding will open up new opportunities for Blackburn Cycling Club, helping them attract new members and compete with the best."