

Media Release

The Hon Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Acting Minister for Health

Acting Minister for Health Infrastructure

Acting Minister for Ambulance Services



Monday, 8 July 2024

SUPPORTING OUR MENTAL HEALTH NURSING WORKFORCE

The Allan Labor Government is prioritising building a strong and skilled mental health workforce, supporting mental health nurses to upskill and remain in the industry.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today announced the next round of the *Postgraduate Mental Health Nurse Scholarship Program* is now open – making it easier and more affordable to continue working and studying.

The program will deliver 117 scholarships to eligible mental health nurses employed or commencing employment and currently completing a postgraduate degree, providing financial support payments of up to \$3,000 to help cover the cost associated with their studies.

More than 300 scholarships have been provided since the program began, with these nurses undertaking courses such as a Master of Mental Health and Graduate Diploma/Certificate in Mental Health Nursing. These scholarships are critical for retaining and recruiting more mental health nurses whose advanced qualifications are helping to deliver high quality, evidence-based consumer-centred care in the specialist mental health sector.

A wider range of mental health workers are also set to receive financial support as part of the \$5 million *Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Scholarship Program* which will reopen later this year for semester one 2025.

The Labor Government is delivering an additional \$109 million in new initiatives in this year's *Victorian Budget 2024/25*, making it easier for Victorians to get the mental healthcare they deserve.

These investments include \$16 million to deliver a new mental health graduate program in our Local Services and build the pipeline of trained professionals we need.

This latest investment in mental health is bolstered by significant funding over the last three budgets since the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* report was handed down.

Work is underway on more than 90 per cent of the Royal Commission's recommendations, with an investment of more than \$6 billion since the report was handed down – the largest mental health investment in Australia's history.

Applications for semester two of the Postgraduate Mental Health Nurse Scholarship Program scholarships are now open until 15 July 2024.

For more information, visit health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-nurse-scholarship-program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"A world-class mental health system needs top quality healthcare workers, and these scholarships are helping to ensure that Victoria's mental health workforce is the best in the world."

"We're getting on with the work of building a mental health system that can deliver to Victorians the quality care they expect and deserve, with more financial support for our mental health workforce."

Quote attributable to Member for Ivanhoe Anthony Carbines

"Now is the perfect time to develop your career in the mental health system and we're making sure students get the support they need to help Victorians to get the mental healthcare they deserve."

Media contact: Max Resic 0435 256 250 | max.resic@minstaff.vic.gov.au