

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ageing
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SCHOLARSHIPS TO SUPPORT A STRONG MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

The Labor Government is continuing to build a strong and skilled mental health workforce – with nearly 300 scholarships and grants to upskill and further their careers.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today visited the Alfred Hospital to open the next round of *Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Scholarship Program* – which is available to mental health nurses, allied health professionals, alcohol and other drug (AOD) practitioners and lived and living experience workers.

The scholarships are critical to retaining and recruiting the workforce, particularly in the specialist mental health sector, helping to further develop their skillset and deliver high quality, evidence-based patient-centred care.

The program is a priority of *Victoria's Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy 2021-2024* which sets out the approach to growing a diverse, skilled and multidisciplinary workforce needed to fulfil all recommendations from the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*.

More than 1,200 workers are already benefitting from the program which has helped Victoria's public mental health workforce to grow by 17 per cent between 2021 and 2023.

The Labor Government invested almost \$3 billion into mental health in this year's *Victorian Budget 2024/25* – making it easier for Victorians to get the mental healthcare they need and deserve.

This investment includes \$16 million to deliver a new mental health early career and graduate program in Victoria's network of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals – helping build the pipeline of trained professionals.

Since handing down the Royal Commission the Labor Government has invested more than \$6 billion in mental health and wellbeing – the largest investment in mental health in Victoria's history – with work underway on 90 per cent of the report recommendations.

Scholarship applications are now open for 2025 course enrolment. For more information, including eligibility requirements and to apply, visit health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-nurse-scholarship-program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"This scholarship program is about building a strong and skilled mental health workforce and means better treatment, care and support for Victorians."

"We are delivering hundreds of opportunities for our dedicated mental health workforce to take the next step in their career – making it easier and more accessible to upskill with financial assistance."

Quote attributable to Member for Southern Metropolitan Region John Berger

"Victoria's strong and supportive mental health and wellbeing system relies on the dedication of our workers – and we're making sure more people can study and upskill to keep making a positive impact on people's lives."