

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**  
Leader of the House  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Health Infrastructure  
Minister for Ambulance Services



Monday, 14 October 2024

## **NEW TASKFORCE TO STRENGTHEN VICTORIA'S MATERNITY SERVICES**

Victoria's maternity and newborn services are already some of the safest and highest quality in the world – and this will be strengthened through the Labor Government's new maternity taskforce.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced a taskforce will be established with a focus on ensuring hospitals have the best workforce and models of care in place – so families have access to safe, reliable care as close to home as possible.

The taskforce will identify opportunities and address known complex challenges that can have an effect on the service delivery of Victoria's world-class maternity care, including workforce recruitment and retention.

Victoria has 52 maternity health service providers, including 33 in regional areas and the taskforce will have an initial focus on rural and regional areas – so they can continue to deliver the best care now and into the future.

The taskforce will be made up of nursing and midwifery experts – including the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) Vic Branch and representatives from regional and rural health services.

A targeted expression of interest process to join the taskforce is underway, with work to review Victoria's maternity system to identify strategies for improvement commencing shortly.

The taskforce will work with health services, community and experts to consider models of care that support women to have choice in their pregnancy and birth experiences, while strengthening rural and regional maternity workforces.

The Labor Government continues to make record investments including delivering a massive 28 per cent pay rise to Victoria's nurses and midwives.

This is on top of a \$270 million boost to the workforce, investing in scholarships up to \$16,500 for more than 10,000 nursing and midwifery students, and creating more post graduate opportunities for practicing nurses and midwives.

The Nursing and Midwifery Graduate Sign-On Bonus was also delivered by the Labor Government, offering a \$5,000 bonus to eligible graduates who then go on to work at a Victorian public health hospital.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas**

*"Victoria has some of the world's best and safest maternity and newborn services in the world – this taskforce is an opportunity to continue improving these services, so women receive the best support during pregnancy and birth."*

*"It's so important to ensure all of our maternity health service providers whether they are in the city or the most remote areas of Victoria – the taskforce experts will help to implement the changes we need to see."*

### **Quotes attributable to ANMF (Vic Branch) Assistant Secretary Madeleine Harradence**

*"ANMF is looking forward to contributing to this critical taskforce's work through our expert maternity services officer Nicole Allan who is deeply connected to our 6,000 midwifery members throughout Victoria and will ensure their voice is heard."*

*"We know there are multiple ways of working that result in sustainable and professionally satisfying workforce outcomes and enable women to access maternity care close to home."*

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