

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Ambulance Services



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SECOND DEDICATED STROKE AMBULANCE HITS VICTORIA'S ROADS

The Allan Labor Government is boosting the capacity of Victoria's specialist Mobile Stroke Unit (MSU), with a second dedicated ambulance hitting roads across Melbourne's south east.

Minister for Ambulance Services Mary-Anne Thomas today joined paramedics, stroke nurses and radiographers at the Royal Melbourne Hospital to make the announcement, with the new MSU meaning more Victorians can receive the quickest possible diagnosis and treatment in the event of a life-threatening stroke.

The purpose-built, 5.3 tonne ambulance has an on-board CT scanner capable of imaging the patient's brain on the spot and detecting the type of stroke they are experiencing, so that treatment can begin straight away – rather than upon arrival at a hospital.

Each MSU is staffed with two paramedics, including a Mobile Intensive Care paramedic (MICA), a CT radiographer and stroke nurse specialist.

With enhanced technology onboard, the crew will also have access to a virtual stroke neurologist based at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, or the traditional on-board stroke neurologist.

The new stroke ambulance will operate in Melbourne's south east, with Monash Health as the primary receiving hospital – it joins the first MSU which covers an approximate 20 kilometre radius of the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

It follows a successful seven-years on the road for the first dedicated MSU, treating an average of seven patients were treated per day.

Its average treatment time is around 34 minutes which is less than half the treatment time of patients who receive hospital care.

The MSU has also been able to diagnose large vessel occlusion and intracerebral haemorrhage and direct over 200 patients to comprehensive stroke centers, saving valuable ambulance and emergency department resources and ensuring Victorians receive important treatment hours earlier.

In 2022, the Labor Government invested \$12 million to support the implementation of the second MSU to improve access to pre-hospital stroke treatment. An additional \$1.77 million was donated through the RMH Foundation and the RMH Neuroscience Foundation, Victorian philanthropists, the Stroke Foundation and Freemasons.

In addition, the Labor Government provides almost \$3 million per year to support the Victorian Stroke Telemedicine initiative at Ambulance Victoria, linking hospitals to a network of stroke consultants that provide critical treatment advice about patients with stroke symptoms.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ambulance Services Mary-Anne Thomas

"We know how important early intervention is for stroke patients, and this second Mobile Stroke Unit will mean Victorians in need of urgent care can get the specialist treatment even sooner, boosting their chances of survival."

"Our record investment into ambulance services and Victoria's hospitals has delivered the second of these vital units and is just one of the many ways we are giving Victorians better access to the emergency care they need."

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