

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Ambulance Services



Monday, 23 December 2024

## STAYING SAFE OVER SUMMER

With summer in full swing the Labor Government is reminding Victorians of the alternatives that are available across the state, so they can avoid a busy emergency department.

Victoria's world-class urgent care services are ready day and night for the community this summer – including Urgent Care Clinics, the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) and Nurse-on-Call, all of which can be used to seek free advice, care and treatment in urgent situations.

Victoria's 29 Urgent Care Clinics accept both walk-ins and bookings and are staffed by nurses and GPs who can treat a range of conditions such as sprains, broken bones, cuts, and mild infections.

Victorians should call Triple Zero in emergencies, but non-urgent cases may be directed to alternative care, including nearby Urgent Care Clinics – which have handled over 650,000 visits since opening in September 2022.

Nearly 800 pharmacies are also participating in the Labor Government's Community Pharmacist Statewide Pilot, ensuring Victorians are getting the basic care they need like access to the oral contraceptive pill, without having to wait to get an appointment with a busy local doctor.

Another service available to support Victorians needing care in non-life-threatening events is the VVED – an all-hours free service where patients can get care from video emergency nurses and doctors online, freeing up Triple Zero lines and emergency departments for emergency cases.

By using these services for non-life-threatening conditions, Victorians can help free up our hospital staff and paramedics to respond to critical, life-threatening emergencies and save lives.

The Labor Government has invested than \$235 million over four years to expand the VVED, so that it can provide free video consultations to more than 1,000 people every day.

The Labor Government is also urging Victorians to prepare for the heat and avoid an unnecessary trip to the emergency department for heatstroke by staying hydrated, planning activities for the cooler part of the day and critically and never leaving kids in a parked car.

More information on keeping safe in extreme heat and Urgent Care Services can be found at [betterhealth.vic.gov.au](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au).

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

*"Our Urgent Care Clinics and Victorian Virtual Emergency Department are taking pressure off our emergency departments by offering care for Victorian families that need urgent, but not emergency care."*

*"I'd like to thank our hardworking healthcare workers who will be continuing to provide levels of care over Christmas and New Years while many of us are taking a break."*