

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



Wednesday, 12 March 2025

## HELPING VICTORIANS ACCESS PLANNED SURGERY SOONER

The most urgent surgery is being delivered faster in Victoria than any other state or territory in Australia – made possible by significant investment and reform by the Allan Labor Government to get people the care they need.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas visited the Blackburn Public Surgical Centre which was established by the Labor Government to slash surgery wait lists – to announce an additional two theatres are now open.

Taking the centre to a total of four theatres, the new spaces are providing further capacity to deliver more surgery and help cut surgery wait times.

Delivered alongside the Frankston Public Surgical Centre – the centres have the capacity to provide more than 14,700 planned surgeries every year.

The two new theatres at Blackburn will help dedicated staff to undertake procedures across a range of specialties including same day endoscopy, orthopaedics, plastics, gynaecology, urology, and ear, nose and throat.

It comes as the Labor Government also announces two new grants programs as part of ongoing, long-term reform to how planned surgery is delivered in Victoria.

More than \$4 million has been delivered to 16 health services to expand access to same day surgery – helping reduce wait times by allowing for a higher volume of care without compromising quality and safety.

While an additional program – *Better Access for Vic Kids* – is delivering \$780,000 in grants to six health services to ensure patients under 18 have shorter wait times for surgery.

Eastern Health will receive funding to support high intensity theatre wait lists focused on paediatric ear, nose and throat cases – particularly in the school holiday period with a focus on tonsillectomy and grommets.

The health service will also receive funding for a more staff to assist with conducting audits of paediatric waitlists to identify vulnerable children to ensure they get their surgery sooner.

These latest investments come as once again, quarterly data shows that 100 per cent of Category One planned surgery patients were treated in the clinically recommended timeframe between October and December.

It follows data released this month by the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services that shows Victoria is the only state or territory to treat all Category One planned surgery patients on time.

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

*"Our public surgical centres in Blackburn and Frankston, along with other reform including our Patient Support Units and grants programs for health services, are helping us deliver Victorians faster, safer care when they need it."*

*"The pandemic put health systems around the world under unprecedented pressure – Victoria was no different and with a clear plan to catch up on planned surgery, we have been able to deliver remarkable results for Victorians."*

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**Quote attributable to Member for Glen Waverley John Mullahy**

*“With more theatres now available at Blackburn Public Surgical Centre, locals can be assured that the surgery they need will be delivered faster, closer to home.”*

**Quote attributable to Member for Ashwood Matt Fregon**

*“Our investments into planned surgery have already made a difference to locals across Ashwood, and with these new theatres and grants, Eastern Health will be able to deliver even more care, faster.”*

**Quote attributable to Member for Box Hill Paul Hamer**

*“Faster care is better for everyone – it means less pressure on our hospitals across the city’s east and getting people back on their feet sooner.”*