

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



Friday, 21 March 2025

## 500,000 CALLS MADE TO AUSTRALIA'S FIRST VIRTUAL ED

Australia's first ever virtual emergency department is marking a major milestone – providing more than half a million consultations to Victorians in need with free around-the-clock urgent care, in the comfort of their own home.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today visited the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) to catch up with the dedicated team of doctors and nurses currently delivering more than 550 consultations every day.

Starting as a pilot in October 2020, the VVED rolled out statewide in April 2022 and has provided clinical assessments, medical advice, treatment and referrals to Victorians of all ages, right across the state.

In the past year, the service helped 83 per cent of patients who would have otherwise gone to the hospital avoid an unnecessary trip to the hospital when they needed urgent care.

With health services busier than ever, demand for the VVED is high with almost 22,000 calls in December 2024 alone – making it busier than any other emergency department.

The service is also helping alleviate pressure on paramedics, with around 79 per cent of patients referred by a paramedic receiving virtual care at home – avoiding paramedics driving them to hospital and freeing them up to return to the road and assist patients with life-threatening emergencies.

The Allan Labor Government backed VVED with a \$235 million funding boost last year to continue the critical service and double its capacity, so it can assist more than 1,000 Victorians with consultations directly from home or work.

It will also support more direct referrals from aged care, paramedics in the field, primary health networks, the Nurse on Call service and self-referrals from the community – helping take further pressure off the health system.

The VVED is just one of the many initiatives established by the Labor Government to support the busy health system and give Victorians more choice in where and when they get their care.

This includes the 29 Urgent Care Clinics – staffed by GPs and nurses who can treat a wide range of conditions, such as burns and sprains. Since launching in September 2022, the clinics have seen more than 650,000 visits.

If faced with an emergency, Victorians should still call Triple Zero or present to their closest emergency department.

To access the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department, please visit [vved.org.au](https://vved.org.au).

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Ambulance Services Mary-Anne Thomas**

*“With more than 500,000 video consultations, the VVED has become a service Victorians rely on – and it is all thanks to the hardworking doctors and nurses who support patients 24/7.”*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Mill Park Lily D'Ambrosio**

*“Congratulations to the Northern Hospital team for leading Australia's first Virtual Emergency Department which has received 500,000 calls from Victorians with free, 24/7 urgent care at home.”*

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**Quote attributable to Member for Yan Yean Lauren Kathage**

*"My daughter had one of the 500,000 consultations with the VVED. Speaking to an emergency doctor from home is a game-changer for families. I'm proud to be part of a Labor Government that delivers care close to home."*

**Quote attributable to Member for Thomastown Bronwyn Halfpenny**

*"Despite record demand, VVED doctors and nurses have taken more than 500,000 video consultations from Victorians in the comfort of their own home, congratulations to all involved."*