

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee  
Inquiry into the 2024-25 Budget Estimates

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Mental Health Portfolio**

**Department of Health**

**Wednesday 22 May 2024**

**Witnesses**

Professor Euan Wallace

Ms Katherine Whetton

Mr Daen Dorazio

**Legend**

All questions are in **red text**.

The context, as per the Unverified Transcript, is in **black text**.

## PAEC Inquiry into the 2024-25 Budget Estimates

## MENTAL HEALTH

**QUESTION:** Thank you, Chair. Secretary, can I ask for you to provide the current implementation plan for the royal commission recommendations, including the status, expected completion date and progress to date? Previously, in 2021, we had the minister provide us with that document. Could that be provided to us on notice?

**Page Number:** 3

**SOURCE:** Not Referenced

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Danny O'Brien

**HEARING:** Mental Health Portfolio

**Responsible Division:** MHW

**RESPONSE****Answer:**

Response provided in the attached spreadsheet: **Attachment 2a - Mental Health QoN - Royal Commission implementation progress - 28 May 2024**

**QUESTION:** Thank you. Minister, in budget paper 2 pages 44 and 45 show that since the royal commission handed down its report the number of psychiatrist vacancies has increased by 2.5 times and the number of psychologist vacancies has increased by 2.6 times what it was then. How many current positions are there in the public mental health system today, and how many vacancies?

If it is not actual numbers, if it could be a percentage vacancy rate, that would be welcome.

**Page Number:** 3

**SOURCE:** Budget paper 2 pages 44 and 45

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Danny O'Brien

**HEARING:** Mental Health Portfolio

**Responsible Division:** HHS

**RESPONSE**

The most recent data set held by the Department of Health from 2023 shows that the vacancy rate in the public mental health and wellbeing system was 15%.

Vacancy data for the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2024 is held by individual health services.

**QUESTION:** The mental health and wellbeing workforce strategy 2021–2024 was released in December 2021. It had a number of priority initiatives to build Victoria's mental health workforce, which it outlined as action areas 1a to 1d on pages 23 to 27. Perhaps to the Secretary or to Ms Whetton, if she has got it: how many of the 1000 relocation subsidies for international workers were delivered each year since they were announced in 2021?

Given the answer, there are all those action areas that I mentioned. Could we get an update on the performance on each of those action areas, taken on notice, Secretary?

So, just to be clear, that is pages 23 to 27 of the workforce strategy, action areas 1a to 1d. That would be wonderful. Thank you.

**Page Number:** 3

**SOURCE:** Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy 2021–2024, 1a to 1d, pages 23 to 27

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Danny O'Brien

**HEARING:** Mental Health Portfolio

**Responsible Division:** HHS

## PAEC Inquiry into the 2024-25 Budget Estimates

### RESPONSE

**Answer:**  
**RESPONSE**

**Answer:**

- 1a: Attracting people to mental health careers
  - The department has a number of programs to support local and international recruitment. This includes the launch of a new attraction campaign for local and interstate clinicians and the International Recruitment Program which supported 3,166 international healthcare workers with relocation packages.
- 1b: Growing graduate, post-qualifying and transition training pathways
  - The department has commissioned a number of programs to increase the pipeline of workers entering the system. This includes (but is not limited to) making 350 scholarships available for nursing, allied health, lived experience workers and AOD professionals, commissioning 400 new mental health nurse positions in area mental health and wellbeing services, commissioning 56 new psychiatry registrar positions, commissioning over 600 new allied health graduate positions including expanded allied health disciplines (e.g. exercise physiology, art therapy, speech pathology) and over 300 new psychology graduate positions.
- 1c: Building emergent and new workforces:
  - The department has made progress against this action area. For instance, the Peer Cadet Program provides students completing a Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work an opportunity to undertake part time paid work at community mental health services for a 12-month period. To date, 50 new mental health trainee positions have been commissioned.
- 1d: Ensuring workforce meets regional needs
  - The department has made progress against this action area. The Regional Mental Health Workforce Incentives program was launched in 2022 and has supported over 120 workers to relocate to Area Mental Health & Wellbeing Services, Mental Health Community Support Services and alcohol and other drug organisations across rural and regional Victoria.

The department does not have visibility of positions filled across the sector until the annual census which is scheduled for completion in the second half of 2024.

**QUESTION:** Thank you, Chair, and Minister, I just wanted to continue on that, but it is a technical question and might be best for Mr Dorazio. The \$15.8 million for growing the mental health and wellbeing locals workforce on page 46 of budget paper 3 – the footnote indicates that there is a Commonwealth contribution. Can you tell me how much the Commonwealth contribution is to that line item, footnote (a)? If Ms Whetton knows it – whoever might be aware.

**Page Number:** 6

**SOURCE:** growing the mental health and wellbeing locals workforce on page 46 of budget paper 3

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Danny O'Brien

**HEARING:** Mental Health Portfolio

**Responsible Division:** HFFI

### RESPONSE

**Answer:**

The Commonwealth provides a 45% contribution.

**Source:**

## PAEC Inquiry into the 2024-25 Budget Estimates

Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority
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<p><b>QUESTION:</b> Thank you. A question probably for Ms Whetton: as part of the statewide action plan with respect to harm reduction initiatives does the department know details of the number of accredited pharmacotherapy prescribers in Victoria by postcode? Do you have that sort of data? I am particularly interested also in those that have more than 50 clients and those prescribers that are aged over 65, if you have that data.</p>
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<b>Page Number:</b> 10
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<b>SOURCE:</b> statewide action plan with respect to harm reduction initiatives
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<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:</b> Danny O'Brien
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<b>HEARING:</b> Mental Health Portfolio
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<b>Responsible Division:</b> MHW
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<b>RESPONSE</b>
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<b>Answer:</b>
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Response provided in the attached spreadsheet: <b>Attachment 2b - 20240522 Unique prescribers by postcode (prescribing events)</b> , shows the number of unique prescribers in each postcode, based on prescribing events that are uploaded to SafeScript only.
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The department does not hold data on practitioner ages.
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<p><b>QUESTION:</b> Speaking of Shepparton, what is the cost per month for the Shepparton, St Kilda and Collingwood sobering-up centres?</p>
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<b>Page Number:</b> 11
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<b>SOURCE:</b> Not Referenced
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<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:</b> Danny O'Brien
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<b>HEARING:</b> Mental Health Portfolio
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<b>Responsible Division:</b> MHW
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<b>RESPONSE</b>
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<b>Answer:</b>
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The Department of Health funds Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation, cohealth, and Rumbalara Aboriginal Corporation for the delivery of a suite of public intoxication response services, including outreach services and the operations of sobering services/place of safety. The cost per month for the Shepparton place of safety and St.Kilda and Collingwood sobering up centres is not currently available.
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# Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

## Implementation progress - May 2024

- Notes** 1. Where recommendations contain subcomponents with different due dates, recommendation subcomponent numbers and their specific due dates are  
2. Lead departments/agencies and lead Ministerial portfolios are subject to change as implementation design is undertaken.

Recommendation		Responsibility		Timing	
Rec No.	Title	Lead department/agency	Lead Ministerial portfolio	Implementation to be completed by (as set by Royal Commission)	Implementation progress
<b>Final Report Recommendations</b>					
1	Supporting good mental health and wellbeing	Department of Health	Mental Health	1.1 End 2022 1.2-1.4 End 2031	In progress
2	Governance arrangements for promoting good mental health and preventing mental illness	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2022	In progress
3	Establishing a responsive and integrated mental health and wellbeing system	Department of Health	Mental Health	3.1 & 3.2.a End 2026 3.2.b. & 3.2.c End 2022 3.2.d. End 2026 3.3 End 2022 3.4 & 3.5 End 2024	In progress
4	Towards integrated regional governance	Department of Health	Mental Health	4.1 Mid 2021 4.2 End 2023 4.3 End 2026 4.4 End 2023 4.5 End 2022	In progress
5	Core functions of community mental health and wellbeing services	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2026	In progress
6	Helping people find and access treatment, care and support	Department of Health	Mental Health	6.1 & 6.2 End 2026 6.3-6.5 End 2022	In progress
7	Identifying needs and providing initial support in mental health and wellbeing services	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2026	In progress
8	Responding to mental health crises	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2024 8.3.c End 2022	In progress
9	Developing 'safe spaces' and crisis respite facilities	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2026	In progress
10	Supporting responses from emergency services to mental health crises	Department of Health	Ambulance Services	10.1 End 2024 10.2 End 2022 10.3 End 2024	In progress
11	New models of care for bed-based services	Department of Health	Mental Health	11.1 End 2026 11.2 End 2022 11.3 End 2026 11.4 End 2031	In progress
12	Developing new bed-based rehabilitation services	Department of Health	Mental Health	12.1 & 12.2 End 2026 12.3 End 2031	To be commenced
13	Addressing gender-based violence in mental health facilities	Department of Health	Mental Health	13.1 End 2031 13.2 Mid 2022 13.3 End 2026 13.4 End 2031	In progress
14	Supporting mental health consultation liaison services	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2024	In progress
15	Supporting good mental health and wellbeing in local communities	Department of Health	Mental Health	15.1 & 15.2 End 2024 15.3 End 2026 15.4 End 2022	In progress
16	Establishing mentally healthy workplaces	Department of Premier & Cabinet	Premier	16.1 End 2022 16.2 End 2026	In progress
17	Supporting social and emotional wellbeing in schools	Department of Education	Education	17.1 End 2031 17.2 End 2022 17.3 End 2031	In progress
18	Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of prospective and new parents	Department of Health	Mental Health	18.1 End 2026 18.2 End 2022	In progress
19	Supporting infant, child and family mental health and wellbeing	Department of Health	Mental Health	19.1-19.4 End 2022 19.5 End 2026	In progress
20	Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people	Department of Health	Mental Health	20.1 End 2022 20.2 End 2024 20.3 End 2026 20.4 End 2022	In progress
21	Redesigning bed-based services for young people	Department of Health	Mental Health	21.1 & 21.2 End 2026 21.3 End 2022	In progress
22	Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of older Victorians	Department of Health	Mental Health	22.1 End 2022 22.2 & 22.3 End 2024	To be commenced

## Mental Health

23	Establishing a new Statewide Trauma Service	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2022	In progress
24	A new approach to addressing trauma	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2026	In progress
25	Supported housing for adults and young people living with mental illness	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	Housing	25.1 End 2031 25.2 End 2022 25.3 End 2024 25.4 End 2026 25.5 End 2022 25.6 End 2031	In progress
26	Governance arrangements for suicide prevention and response efforts	Department of Health	Mental Health	26.1 End 2022 26.2 End 2031	In progress
27	Facilitating suicide prevention and response initiatives	Department of Health	Mental Health	27.1 & 27.2 End 2024 27.3 End 2022	In progress
28	Developing system-wide roles for the full and effective participation of people with lived experience of mental illness or psychological distress	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2031	In progress
29	A new agency led by people with lived experience of mental illness or psychological distress	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2024	In progress
30	Developing system-wide involvement of family members and carers	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2031	In progress
31	Supporting families, carers and supporters	Department of Health	Mental Health	31.1 & 31.2 End 2022 31.3 End 2024	In progress
32	Supporting young carers	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2022	In progress
33	Supporting Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing	Department of Health	Mental Health	33.1-33.3 End 2022 33.4 End 2024	In progress
34	Working in partnership with and improving accessibility for diverse communities	Department of Health	Mental Health	34.1 End 2031 34.2 End 2022 34.3 End 2031 34.4 End 2021 34.5 End 2024	In progress
35	Improving outcomes for people living with mental illness and substance use or addiction	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2022	In progress
36	A new statewide service for people living with mental illness and substance use or addiction	Department of Health	Mental Health	36.1 End 2024 36.2 End 2026 36.3 End 2022	In progress
37	Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of people in contact with, or at risk of coming into contact with, the criminal and youth justice systems	Department of Justice and Community Safety	Attorney General	37.1 End 2026 37.2 & 37.3 End 2022 37.4 End 2024	In progress
38	Providing safe and appropriate mental health treatment, care and support at Thomas Embling Hospital	Department of Health	Mental Health	38.1 End 2026 38.2 End 2031	In progress
39	Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of people in rural and regional Victoria	Department of Health	Mental Health	39.1.a. End 2026 39.1.b. End 2022	In progress
40	Providing incentives for the mental health and wellbeing workforce in rural and regional areas	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2031	In progress
41	Addressing stigma and discrimination	Department of Health	Mental Health	41.1 End 2031 41.2 End 2024 41.3 End 2031 41.4 End 2031	In progress
42	A new Mental Health and Wellbeing Act	Department of Health	Mental Health	Mid 2022	<b>Completed</b>
43	Future review of mental health laws	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2031	To be commenced
44	A new Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission	Department of Health	Mental Health	44.1 & 44.2 Mid 2022 44.3 End 2031	In progress
45	Effective leadership of and accountability for the mental health and wellbeing system	Department of Health	Mental Health	45.1 Mid 2022 45.2 End 2031 45.3 Mid 2021 45.4 End 2031	<b>Completed</b>
46	Facilitating government-wide efforts	Department of Premier & Cabinet / Department of Health	Premier / Mental Health	Mid 2022	<b>Completed</b>
47	Planning the new mental health and wellbeing system	Department of Health	Mental Health	47.1 End 2022 47.2 End 2023 47.3 End 2031 47.4 End 2026	In progress
48	Selecting providers and resourcing services	Department of Health	Mental Health	48.1 & 48.2 End 2031 48.3 End 2022	In progress
49	Monitoring and improving mental health and wellbeing service provision	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2022	In progress

## Mental Health

50	Encouraging national partnerships	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2022	Completed
51	Commissioning for integration	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2031	To be commenced
52	Improving the quality and safety of mental health and wellbeing services	Department of Health	Mental Health	52.1 End 2021 52.2 End 2031	In progress
53	Strong oversight of the quality and safety of mental health and wellbeing services	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2031	Completed
54	Towards the elimination of seclusion and restraint	Department of Health	Mental Health	54.1 End 2031 54.2 End 2022 54.3 & 54.4 End 2031	In progress
55	Ensuring compulsory treatment is only used as a last resort	Department of Health	Mental Health	55.1 End 2031 55.2 End 2022 55.3 & 55.4 End 2031	In progress
56	Supporting consumers to exercise their rights	Department of Health	Mental Health	56.1 End 2031 56.2 End 2022 56.3 End 2024 56.4 End 2031	In progress
57	Workforce strategy, planning and structural reform	Department of Health	Mental Health	57.1 End 2031 57.2 End 2023 57.3 End 2021	In progress
58	Workforce capabilities and professional development	Department of Health	Mental Health	58.1 End 2021 58.2 & 58.3 End 2022 58.4 End 2031	In progress
59	Workforce safety and wellbeing	Department of Health	Mental Health	59.1 End 2021 59.2 End 2026 59.3 End 2021	In progress
60	Building a contemporary system through digital technology	Department of Health	Mental Health	60.1 End 2022 60.2 End 2026 60.3 End 2024	To be commenced
61	Sharing mental health and wellbeing information	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2022	In progress
62	Contemporary information architecture	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2024	In progress
63	Facilitating translational research and its dissemination	Department of Health	Mental Health	63.1 End 2023 63.2 End 2024	In progress
64	Driving innovation in mental health treatment, care and support	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2031	To be commenced
65	Evaluating mental health and wellbeing programs, initiatives and innovations	Department of Health	Mental Health	65.1 End 2022 65.2 End 2026 65.3 End 2031	In progress
<b>Interim Report Recommendations</b>					
1	Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing	Department of Health	Mental Health	Not specified	Completed
2	Targeted acute mental health service expansion	Department of Health	Mental Health	Mid 2022	Completed
3	Suicide prevention	Department of Health	Mental Health	Not specified	Completed
4	Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing	Department of Health	Mental Health	End 2026	Completed
5	A service designed and delivered by people with lived experience	Department of Health	Mental Health	Not specified	In progress
6	Lived experience workforces	Department of Health	Mental Health	Not specified	In progress
7	Workforce readiness	Department of Health	Mental Health	Junior Medical Officers by End 2023, otherwise not specified	In progress
8	New approach to mental health investment	Department of Treasury & Finance / Department of Premier & Cabinet	Treasurer / Premier	Not specified	Completed
9	The Mental Health Implementation Office	Department of Health	Mental Health	Not specified	Completed

Clinic postcode	Unique count of prescribers
3050	53
3011	51
3191	48
3121	33
3977	28
3280	20
3029	19
3875	18
3216	17
3182	16
3000	15
3052	15
3450	15
3460	15
3030	14
3215	13
3220	13
3056	12
3065	12
3181	12
3630	12
3201	11
3550	11
3677	11
3805	11
3199	10
3212	10
3350	10
3672	10
3076	9
3850	9
3931	9
3004	8
3130	8
3153	8
3205	8
3806	8
3909	8
3020	7
3023	7
3081	7
3232	7
3434	7
3960	7
3032	6
3057	6
3107	6
3134	6
3172	6



Mental Health

3226	6
3228	6
3340	6
3355	6
3356	6
3377	6
3444	6
3690	6
3756	6
3810	6
3824	6
3910	6
3051	5
3068	5
3073	5
3079	5
3140	5
3152	5
3170	5
3183	5
3204	5
3224	5
3225	5
3260	5
3337	5
3400	5
3465	5
3500	5
3551	5
3564	5
3730	5
3802	5
3815	5
3820	5
3981	5
3995	5
3021	4
3025	4
3070	4
3072	4
3082	4
3083	4
3095	4
3104	4
3122	4
3123	4
3138	4
3147	4
3155	4
3175	4

Mental Health

3185	4
3190	4
3196	4
3219	4
3370	4
3429	4
3555	4
3585	4
3658	4
3660	4
3722	4
3037	3
3039	3
3046	3
3047	3
3053	3
3058	3
3066	3
3074	3
3084	3
3101	3
3126	3
3136	3
3139	3
3149	3
3150	3
3169	3
3173	3
3178	3
3206	3
3222	3
3231	3
3300	3
3304	3
3305	3
3437	3
3644	3
3737	3
3764	3
3777	3
3803	3
3809	3
3842	3
3976	3
3978	3
3024	2
3027	2
3031	2
3041	2
3043	2

Mental Health

	3048	2
	3055	2
	3075	2
	3088	2
	3103	2
	3105	2
	3125	2
	3133	2
	3135	2
	3143	2
	3144	2
	3146	2
	3156	2
	3163	2
	3166	2
	3171	2
	3174	2
	3189	2
	3192	2
	3194	2
	3207	2
	3214	2
	3241	2
	3250	2
	3264	2
	3331	2
	3380	2
	3393	2
	3610	2
	3616	2
	3699	2
	3714	2
	3752	2
	3782	2
	3807	2
	3823	2
	3936	2
	3950	2
0000		1
	3015	1
	3019	1
	3028	1
	3033	1
	3036	1
	3038	1
	3040	1
	3042	1
	3044	1
	3064	1
	3067	1

Mental Health

3085	1
3094	1
3102	1
3106	1
3108	1
3109	1
3114	1
3128	1
3141	1
3151	1
3160	1
3161	1
3162	1
3165	1
3168	1
3184	1
3186	1
3193	1
3218	1
3223	1
3230	1
3268	1
3284	1
3315	1
3338	1
3342	1
3371	1
3505	1
3523	1
3558	1
3620	1
3666	1
3747	1
3757	1
3779	1
3787	1
3791	1
3796	1
3825	1
3840	1
3844	1
3858	1
3915	1
3939	1
3941	1
3975	1