

# Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Inquiry into 2019-20 Financial and Performance Outcomes

Professor Euan M Wallace AM  
Secretary, Department of Health

# To achieve the best health, wellbeing and safety for all Victorians, so they can live a life they value

## 2019-20 Victorian Budget highlights



A further \$2 billion to build new hospitals and upgrades to existing hospitals:

- \$1.495 billion Building a better hospital for Melbourne's inner west (Footscray)
- \$59.5 million Building a new rehabilitation centre for Bendigo
- \$31.4 million Royal Children's Hospital expansion (Parkville)
- \$81.58 million Wantirna Aged Care Redevelopment
- \$60 million Engineering infrastructure and medical equipment replacement program (2019-20) statewide
- \$123 million through the early parenting centres expansion and upgrade program More help for Victorian mums and dads (statewide)



\$59.4 million funding announced in April 2020, to respond to interim findings of the Royal Commission in Victoria's Mental Health System:  
170 extra youth and adult acute mental health beds



\$322 million investment in school dental program at primary and secondary schools – 'Smile Squad' dental vans visited 24 schools in terms 3 and 4 before COVID-19 struck.



\$136 million for an extra 500,000 specialist appointments for regional and rural Victorians, allowing patients to spend less time travelling to access specialist care, and more time with their loved ones.



\$100 million boost to the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund supported 96 projects to provide safe and efficient care to rural and regional communities.

# The department's performance against outputs

**Due to the bushfires and COVID-19, 2019-20 is a mixed picture of deferred care but successful provision of urgent and most needed care.**

While the number of patients admitted from the Elective Surgery waiting list fell by 15.7% in 2019-20, **100% of Urgent (Category 1)** patients were admitted within 30 days and 95.3% of Non-urgent (Category 3) patients admitted on time, 0.3% above the target of 95%.

Overall, the number of emergency patients treated within clinically recommended 'time to treatment' fell by 8.2%, but **100% of Emergency Category 1** patients were treated immediately.

Aged care assessments fell by 10.4%, but 95.8% of high priority clients were assessed within time, up by 6.4% and above target of 90%.

Total hospital separations fell by 7.6%, but palliative care separations were up by 3.2%, reflecting continuity of medical / pain management, and support for patients (and their families) nearing end of life care.



# The department's performance against outputs

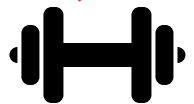
Number of phone contacts from family members seeking support from drug prevention services fell by 25.3%, client engagement with the Needle and Syringe Program increased by 28.2%, and the number of telephone, email, website contacts and requests for information on alcohol and other drugs, exceeded the target, up by 144.3%



Despite the proportion of emergency patients admitted to a mental health bed within 8 hours falling by 32%, the number of mental health clinical inpatient separations increased by 0.8%, community service hours by 2.5%, and the new case index by 6.4%, indicating mental health services remained busy, there was good throughput, and services were able to reach more new clients.



The number of persons completing the Life! – Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease Prevention program fell by 17.9%, community health service hours achieved target of 1,060 hours, ambulatory services admission rates for Aboriginal Victorians with a chronic condition achieved target of 14.4, and community referrals via the electronic referral system achieved target of 75,000, reflecting continued community health service delivery to meet the health and wellbeing needs of local communities.



Further evidence to support continuity of high quality and safe care in the community in 2019-20, is reflected in Post Acute Care performance outcome, where clients accessing Post Acute Care services did not require an acute readmission: 93.7% against target of 90%, up by 4.1%.



# Response to the Victorian Bushfires

In 2019-20, DHHS played a central role in the coordination of health and mental health response, and relief and recovery efforts, during and immediately following the 2019–20 eastern Victorian bushfires.

This included implementation of the \$14.4 million Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program which provided support coordinators to work with local residents providing practical support, housing, health and mental health services, financial assistance, and social connection support in regional areas.

A preliminary evaluation of the health burden of bushfire smoke in Victoria reported that health services managed and extra:

- 331 hospitalisations for cardiovascular problems
- 585 hospitalisations for respiratory problems
- 401 emergency department presentations for asthma.



# 2019-20: six months of COVID-19

In 20 March 2020, the Victorian Government released the COVID-19 pandemic plan for the Victorian health sector, with five key objectives:

**Objective 1: Reduce the morbidity and mortality rates associated with coronavirus (COVID-19)**



**Objective 2: Slow the spread of coronavirus in Victoria through rapid test, trace, and isolate**



**Objective 3: Empower the Victorian community and health professionals to ensure a proportionate and equitable response**



**Objective 4: Support containment strategies through accurate, timely and coordinated communication and community support**



**Objective 5: Mitigate and minimise impacts of the pandemic on the health system and broader community**



# Response to the COVID-19 pandemic



In March 2020, the department began redeploying its staff to support the full breadth of the COVID-19 response including:

- contact tracing
- finding housing for people experiencing homelessness
- pop-up testing sites
- community engagement
- utilities relief
- welfare checks and other supports.

In April 2020, the Victorian Government announced an investment of \$1.9 billion in four hospitals to prepare to respond to COVID-19.

- Bendigo Health: 45 new beds in operation and the new hospital has built-in capacity for 20 additional intensive care beds if required
- Baxter House Geelong - rapid renovation to provide a new Acute Respiratory Assessment Clinic, with 50 new beds and consulting rooms
- Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre - 84 beds.

## **Other COVID-19 investment:**

- \$40.2 million in family violence
- \$23 million to support Aboriginal self-determination
- \$17 million disability services
- \$412 million in measures to support high risk dwellings
- \$13.3 million to support children and young people in care

# Innovation – better and safer health outcomes for Victorians

## Agencies working to provide better, safer care

Safer Care Victoria ran 44 wide-ranging improvement projects - from targeting high chronic obstructive pulmonary disease rates in one regional centre, to a state-wide collaborative that reduced preventable stillbirths.

Safer Care  
Victoria



The Victorian Agency for Health Information has continued to enhance quality and safety reporting in 2019-20, including clinical incidents and occupational health and safety incidents, enabling benchmarking of like services and the identification of areas for continuous improvement

Victorian Agency  
for Health  
Information



*Mental Health Reform Victoria* was established in February 2020 to lead the implementation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System reform recommendations to achieve better mental health outcomes for all Victorians.

Mental Health  
Reform  
Victoria



## Reducing deaths resulting from misuse of prescription medicines

- ✓ *SafeScript* – the comprehensive real-time prescription monitoring system - is now fully implemented
- ✓ The Victorian coroners' data report from 2019 showed prescription medicine overdose deaths decreased for the first time in a decade from 405 deaths in 2019 compared to 424 in 2018.