Local Health Service Network narrative for the community

January 2025

OFFICIAL

In Victoria, every community matters. No exceptions.

We are as diverse as we are united and, no matter where we live, we must have access to the highest levels of healthcare as close as possible to our homes. Right now, that just isn't the case.

A recent review into Victoria's health system found that, depending on what part of the state they call home, some people wait longer, travel further and have worse health outcomes than others. This will be no surprise to Victorians living in regional communities, in particular. But it's also no surprise that we can't expect every hospital across the state to provide every level of specialist care. For specialist care to be high quality and safe, it needs to be delivered by people with the right skills and experience.

So, what's the answer?

In short, it's about working together.

Hospitals are collaborating across regions to form Local Health Service Networks (Networks). The purpose of these Networks is to work together to provide Victorians with greater access to health care services, closer to home. The Networks will use their resources to provide more options to patients who need treatment and care that cannot be provided by their local hospital.

Maybe you'll receive complex care at another hospital in your region. Maybe you'll receive the care at a major metropolitan hospital. The point is that, through the Networks, there will be more options and flexibility to make sure you can benefit from the latest technology and treatments across the State. And you won't be disadvantaged because of where you live.

Of course, for your routine care needs, you'll still be able to access your local GP's and hospital. And over time, the Network will be better able to attract and support staff across the region, which will improve your local wait times as well as your individual health outcomes.

We want to keep healthcare local, while providing better access to hospitals beyond local borders if that is what a person needs.

Each Network will team up with a major tertiary, women's and children's hospital.

On Friday 10 January 2025 the Minister for Health announced the final Networks. They are Barwon, Bayside, East Metro & Murrindindi, Gippsland, Grampians, Hume, Loddon Mallee, North Metro & Mitchell, Parkville, South Metro, South West and West Metro. The Networks are grouped according to population growth, community need, clinical capability and distance between services. The final decisions were made following careful consideration of health service feedback.

The bottom line is this is about getting the treatment and healthcare you need and getting you home as quickly and safely as possible. And it's about delivering the right care in the right place for every Victorian community. No exceptions.