

MEDIA RELEASE

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Boosting Community Health Infrastructure: A Smart Investment for a Healthier Victoria

IPC Health welcomes Infrastructure Victoria's call for increased investment in community health infrastructure, recognising the vital role that fit-for-purpose facilities play in delivering integrated, person-centred care to communities across Melbourne's west.

With community health services reaching around 12–13% of Victorians each year, Infrastructure Victoria's call for a \$150–\$300 million boost over five years, just 1.5–3% of the State's annual health infrastructure budget, highlights the strong return on investment this sector can deliver.

IPC Health says the proposed funding could transform the environments where care is delivered, improving health and wellbeing outcomes for thousands across the state. In addition, community healthcare is proven to reduce emergency room presentations and hospitalisations, making more prudent and effective use of the state's overall healthcare budget.

Better infrastructure equals better client experience

IPC Health notes that clients report a better experience at campuses leased privately, with more recent upgrades, than campuses leased from the VIC Department of Health, awaiting modernisation. Feedback highlights that more recently upgraded privately leased facilities deliver a noticeably better experience for clients, with Net Promoter Score ratings about 10% higher than those at older government-leased sites (IPC Health, 2025).

Infrastructure that supports holistic, integrated care

IPC Health's "Well for Life" philosophy is built on a model of care that integrates physical and mental health, social wellbeing, prevention, education, and personalised care coordination.

"Purpose-built local health services are more important than ever," notes Jayne Nelson, CEO of IPC Health. *"Better facilities mean we're able to deliver more integrated multi-disciplinary health services for our clients and a more inspiring and productive working environment for our staff. Every dollar invested in community health infrastructure delivers multiple dollars back in avoided hospital costs and healthier communities."*

One IPC Health client, KL, saw important improvements in her health and wellbeing since receiving multi-disciplinary services and through the support of a Wellbeing Coordinator, reducing risks associated with chronic health conditions.

"Being able to have a team of people support me close to home, in Wyndham Vale, really made a difference to me. It takes a lot of time and effort making appointments at different places and having to repeat your story. And trying to see private doctors would be just something I couldn't afford. It would be great if there were more places like this."



RH, a parent of a child who has accessed services from the partnership at the Brimbank and Melton Children's Health & Wellbeing Local, finds the idea of creating more integrated community health infrastructure encouraging.

"If there were more places where there's more than one service in the same location more families could get the kind of support we've got. The fact that we can see people in one place makes it so much easier. When your child has complex needs, you need a lot of support. My family didn't have any good options before we found the Local."

[Both KL and RH may be available for interviews on request.]

The Brimbank Melton Children's Health & Wellbeing Local is a multi-disciplinary service run together by IPC Health, the Royal Children's Hospital and Western Health for children up to 11 years and their families. The Local provides mental health, wellbeing and health care all within one service and can also refer families to other IPC Health or external services as required.

Evidence-based health improvements

International evidence supports the link between infrastructure quality and health outcomes. A systematic review found that integrated care models, often enabled by co-located, purpose-built facilities, can reduce emergency admissions by up to 50%, hospital readmissions by 30%, and average hospital stays by 1–7 days. (Damery, Flanagan, & Combes, 2016)

OECD health system comparisons show that countries with strong primary care infrastructure, such as the Netherlands and Norway, consistently achieve lower hospitalisation rates for chronic conditions, higher patient satisfaction, and better continuity of care. (OECD, 2023)

"We know that infrastructure isn't the only factor in health outcomes; provider quality is key," said Jason Hodge, General Manager, Operations and Clinical Care at IPC Health. *"And when you combine skilled integrated care with modern, well-designed facilities, the environment supports better access and better staff retention. That's especially important as we serve diverse growing communities that face unique barriers to accessing affordable high-quality healthcare."*

Better use of budgets

As noted in the Infrastructure Victoria report, based on estimates from the Productivity Commission, community health can help reduce emergency department presentations and save money. In 2023–24, there were 546,000 emergency department visits in Victoria that could have been avoided if managed in primary or community health settings. These avoidable visits represent an estimated \$554 million in potential savings for Victoria's public hospitals annually.

Presentations to emergency can often be reduced through prevention and early intervention. Nationally, around 38% of chronic disease was found to be preventable by reducing modifiable risks like tobacco use, obesity and alcohol use (AIHW, 2021). A systematic review found a median

return on investment of about 14:1 for every dollar spent on health promotion and preventive interventions (Masters et al., 2017). Modern community-based health facilities are the enabler for delivering these prevention programs at scale and in communities where they're needed most.

Community health reduces pressure on our hospitals, with over 58% of clients reporting that the help they receive has reduced their frequency of hospital visits. (Community Health First, 2023)

Responding to growth and maximising community impact

Improved infrastructure aligns with IPC Health's strategic goals — including attracting fee-paying clients, recruiting and retaining top talent, and transitioning to hybrid models of care that combine digital and in-person services. It also support equitable access to healthcare in communities experiencing significant socio-economic disadvantage, such as within the LGAs of Brimbank, Wyndham and Hobson's Bay, where IPC Health operates its six campuses. Growth and disadvantage are similar in the adjacent LGA of Melton, which we also serve.

The Western Growth Corridor (including Wyndham, Melton, Brimbank, and Hobsons Bay) is projected to experience substantial population growth by 2036 (Planning Victoria, 2023):

- The combined population of these LGAs is expected to grow from approximately 730,000 in 2021 to over 1.1 million by 2036.
- This is an increase of around 370,000 people, or more than 50% growth over 15 years.

This level of growth places significant pressure on local infrastructure, including community health services, and reinforces the need for strategic investment in fit-for-purpose facilities.

"We're seeing more families accessing community health services for the first time due to cost-of-living pressures," said Nelson. "We need spaces that can flex with demand, facilitate multi-disciplinary care and reflect the professionalism of the services we provide. We also require funding to drive digital transformation initiatives that will ultimately improve access, outcomes and productivity."

IPC Health welcomes the opportunity to partner with the Victorian Government and sector leaders to ensure infrastructure investment delivers lasting benefits.

"By building modern, adaptable community health facilities, we can keep people healthier, reduce pressure on our hospitals, and ensure every community has access to the high-quality care they deserve," Nelson said. "This enables us to continue delivering holistic, coordinated care that supports clients, communities and staff to be well for life."

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