

Statement of Priorities

2024-25 Agreement between the Minister for Mental Health and Victorian
Institute of Forensic Mental Health

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Department
of Health

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The department proudly acknowledges Victoria's Aboriginal communities and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life and how this enriches us.

We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards the equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.

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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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2206-7523 (online/PDF/Word)

Available at [The Department of Health Statements of Priorities](#)

<<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/funding-performance-accountability/statements-of-priorities>>

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Background

Statements of Priorities are key accountability agreements between the Victorian State Government and Victorian publicly funded health, mental health, and ambulance services. The content and process for preparing and agreeing on the annual Statement of Priorities are consistent with sections 40G, 65ZFA, 65ZFB, and section 26 of the *Health Services Act 1988*.

Statements of Priorities are consistent with the health services' strategic plans and aligned to government policy directions and priorities. For 2024-25, the Statement of Priorities continues to refer to the *Department of Health Strategic Plan 2023-27* (Strategic Plan), which is refreshed on an annual basis. The annual agreements support the delivery of, or substantial progress towards, the key shared objectives of quality and safety, good governance and leadership, access and timeliness, and financial sustainability.

Statements of Priorities consist of four main parts:

- Part A provides the strategic priorities for the health service to contribute to in the year ahead.
- Part B lists the performance priorities and agreed targets.
- Part C lists funding and associated activity.
- Part D forms the service agreement between each health service and the state of Victoria for the purposes of the National Health Reform Agreement.

Performance expectations and mechanisms used by the Department of Health (the department) to monitor and manage performance are described in the *Victorian Health Service Performance Monitoring Framework 2024-25* (The Framework).

High standards of governance, transparency and accountability are essential. In this context, the Victorian Government commits to publishing the Statements of Priorities each year and presenting data on the performance of our health system in the public domain.

Ministerial Priorities

As noted above, Statements of Priorities are aligned to government policy directions and priorities. In 2024-25, these include the following Ministerial priorities:

For the **overall health system**:

1. A reformed health system, shifting from competition to collaboration between health services, and with strengthened, formalised partnerships between health services and community and primary care services to ensure patients receive the right care closer to home.
2. A growing, skilled, and engaged workforce that is supported to develop professionally. This is achieved through an increased supply of critical roles, world leading employee experience, diverse workforce skills and experience, and a strategic focus on future roles, capabilities, professional development, and improving and promoting workplace gender equality, including meeting Health Service obligations under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.
3. A health system that is grounded in respect and safety, particularly cultural safety, and awareness, achieved through mandatory cultural safety training, anti-racism plans and actions, and employment plans that drive greater representation of First Nations people across all levels of a health service.
4. Improved health equity through a focus on:
 - a. Aboriginal health and wellbeing, achieved through identifying and closing gaps in access to care, and improved discharge planning for Aboriginal patients
 - b. family-centred health models for priority populations
5. A focus on women's health, including improved access to abortion care and public fertility services, and reduced gender health disparities supported through the rollout of comprehensive women's health clinics.
6. A continued focus on innovating and improving the quality and safety of care, including through strengthening clinical governance systems under the Victorian Clinical Governance Framework, and improving access to timely care by implementing strategies that improve whole of system patient flow.
7. A financially sustainable health system reflected in balanced health service budgets.

For the **mental health system**:

8. An improved mental health system, through:
 - a. supporting people to stay well in their communities through prevention and promotion
 - b. growing strong, safe, and supported mental health workforces through the implementation of the mental health workforce strategy
 - c. supporting a system that embeds lived experience at every level
 - d. delivering connected, new, and better community and bed-based services
 - e. supporting better consumer outcomes through performance improvement

- f. elevating consumer rights and supporting cultural change in line with the principles of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022
- g. providing culturally safe services that deliver social and emotional wellbeing models for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Supporting services for older Victorians:

- 9. A reformed health system that responds to the needs of older people to receive the right care in the right place through:
 - a. initiatives that reduce avoidable hospital presentations and length of stay for older people in hospital
 - b. availability of public sector residential aged care.
- 10. A strengthened approach to the delivery of high quality and safe aged care services through:
 - a. continued implementation of national aged care reforms arising from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety
 - b. system stewardship and oversight of public aged care service delivery.

These Ministerial priorities are reflected in 2024-25 Statements of Priorities and the Department of Health Strategic Plan 2023-27 (Strategic Plan).

Part A: Department of Health Strategic Plan

The Statement of Priorities are aligned with the Strategic Plan¹.

Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health will contribute to the Strategic Plan 2023-27 by agreeing to the following priorities:

System Priorities

Excellence in clinical governance

We aim for the best patient experience and care outcomes by assuring safe practice, leadership of safety, an engaged and capable workforce, and continuing to improve and innovate care.

Goals

- Develop strong and effective relationships with partners to drive service improvements.
- Support consumers to access the most appropriate care for their mental illness and/or associated risk factors.

Forensicare deliverables:

- Engage in one or more mental health improvement program of Safer Care Victoria – elimination of restrictive intervention, improving sexual safety, implementation of the zero suicide framework and reducing compulsory treatment.
- Partner with Safer Care Victoria's (SCV) Mental Health Improvement Unit on reform including working toward the elimination of restrictive practices.
- Work with SCV in areas of clinical improvement to ensure Thomas Embling Hospital delivers best care, including working together on hospital acquired complications, low value care and targeting preventable harm to ensure that limited resources are optimised without compromising clinical care and outcomes.
- Refine operating models developed for service expansions and ensure they are aligned with Forensicare's Model of Care 2021-26, and deliver safe, effective, and person-centred care.
- Engage Forensicare clinical staff in translating research findings into clinical education and professional development activities and deliver the Forensic Mental Health Professional Development Program in partnership with the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science.
- Strengthen relationships and work in collaboration with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO), Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) and Justice-related orgs, such as the Aboriginal Justice Forum, to support enhanced connection with community and improve Aboriginal consumer experiences of culturally safe care.
- Work in partnership with Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services and Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals across Victoria to develop, establish and deliver regional community forensic mental health services.
- Develop an appropriate under 26 years model for Forensic Mental Health across Forensicare services. Engage with the Department of Health, the Department of Justice and Community

¹ Link to [Strategic Plan 2023-27](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/our-strategic-plan-2023-27). <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/our-strategic-plan-2023-27>>

Safety and specialist Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Services in the development of an appropriate Forensic Youth Mental Health state-wide system.

Operate within budget

Ensure prudent and responsible use of available resources to achieve optimum outcomes.

Goal

- Development and implementation of a health service Budget Action plan (BAP) in partnership with the Department with a goal to manage cost growth effectively to ensure the efficient operation of the health service.

Forensicare deliverables:

- Work in collaboration with the Department of Health to review budget drivers, changes, and options around funding models. Continue to refine approach for sustainability and alignment with outcomes at the consumer, and community level, across service expansions and further reform.
- Implement actions to improve Business Intelligence, data sharing and integration with partner agencies and the Department of Health in line with the Victorian Digital Strategy 2021-2026 and Victoria's Digital Health Roadmap 2021-2025, and key Royal Commission recommendations around contemporary IT systems.

Improving equitable access to healthcare and wellbeing

Ensure that Aboriginal people have access to a health, wellbeing and care system that is holistic, culturally safe, accessible, and empowering.

Ensure that communities in rural and regional areas have equitable health outcomes irrespective of locality.

Goals

- Address forensic mental health service access issues and equity for rural and regional people to enable comprehensive state-wide approach to service delivery.
- Strengthen programs that support Aboriginal people by addressing the gap in health outcomes by delivering culturally safe and responsive health care.

Forensicare deliverables:

- Implement mandatory cultural safety training and assessment for all staff in alignment with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework, and developed and/or delivered by independent, expert, and community-controlled organisations, Kinaway or Supply Nation certified Aboriginal businesses.
- Enable access to community-based specialist forensic mental health services state-wide via increased efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.
- Establish consultation processes supporting partnerships with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations.
- Implement strategies and processes to actively increase Aboriginal employment.

- Improve identification of Aboriginal people presenting for mental health care, address variances in care, and provide equitable access to culturally safe care pathways and environments.
- Develop discharge plans for every Aboriginal consumer, across appropriate settings.

A stronger workforce

There is an increased supply of critical roles that support safe, high-quality care. Victoria is a world leader in employee experience, with a focus on future roles, capabilities and professional development. The workforce is regenerative and sustainable, bringing a diversity of skills and experiences that reflect the people and communities it serves. As a result of a stronger workforce, Victorians receive the right care at the right time, closer to home.

Goals

- Deliver programs to improve employee experience across four initial focus areas: Leadership, health and safety, flexibility, and career development and agility.
- Support Forensicare’s Strategic Plan 2021-26 to prioritise its vision as a workplace of choice.

Forensicare deliverables:

- Continue to support the implementation of medium and long-term priorities of the *Mental Health Workforce Strategy*.
- Prioritise wellbeing of healthcare workers and implement local strategies to address key issues.
- Develop an approach, in conjunction with the Department of Health, on Core Forensic Mental Health Capabilities, that builds on previous work relating to workforce and leadership development.
- Design and implement workforce strategies relating to gender equality, cultural safety and inclusion in the workplace.
- Develop programs to improve employee experience during onboarding and initial twelve months of employment.

Moving from competition to collaboration

Share knowledge, information and resources with partner health and wellbeing services and care providers. This will allow patients to experience one health, wellbeing and care system through connected digital health information, evidence, and data flows, enabled by advanced interoperable platforms.

Goals

- Partner with Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services, Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals and other relevant stakeholders to improve access and transition pathways for forensic mental health consumers, and those at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

Forensicare deliverables:

- Partner with mental health services in the local region to implement mental health reform.

- Forensicare to build partnerships, via the North East Metropolitan Health Service Partnership Mental Health Reform Stream network, and collaboratively work on agreed transformation actions, with local implementation of state-wide forensic mental health programs.
- Forensicare to work collaboratively with mental health and wellbeing services to deliver Regional Forensic Mental Health Teams, to deliver community-based forensic mental health care in communities where people live.

Part B: Performance Priorities

The *Victorian Health Services Performance Monitoring Framework* (PMF) outlines the Government's approach to overseeing the performance of Victorian health services. Further information is available at the [Funding, Performance and Accountability webpage](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/funding-performance-accountability/performance-monitoring-framework) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/funding-performance-accountability/performance-monitoring-framework>>.

As the PMF states, while the Statement of Priorities sets out the annual high level strategic performance priorities, health services remain comprehensively accountable for quality and safety, good governance and leadership, access and timeliness, and financial sustainability, as defined in relevant legislation. This means that performance against these broader accountabilities will continue to be monitored based on a comprehensive set of quantitative metrics and qualitative intelligence and managed and raised with health services as needed.

High quality and safe care:

Key Performance Measure	Target
Infection prevention and control	
Percentage of healthcare workers immunised for influenza	94%
Adverse events	
Percentage of reported sentinel events for which a root cause analysis (RCA) report was submitted within 30 business days from notification of the event	All RCA reports submitted within 30 business days
Mental Health²	
Mental Health Patient Experience	
Percentage of consumers/families/carers reporting a 'very good' or 'excellent' overall experience of the service	80%
Percentage of families/carers who report they 'always' or 'usually' felt their opinions as a carer were respected	90%
Percentage of mental health consumers reporting they 'usually' or 'always' felt safe using this service.	90%
Mental Health Seclusion	
Rate of seclusion episodes per 1,000 occupied bed days - inpatient ³	≤6

² Mental health measures previously reported at age cohort-level have been aggregated for the purposes of the 2024-25 PMF. In line with recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, performance against these measures will continue to be managed, tracked and reported at a disaggregated level for CAMHS, adults and older persons. Underperformance on the disaggregated measures will continue to be raised with health services, and escalated as needed.

³ The department acknowledges that Forensicare is unlikely to meet this key performance measure in 2024-25 due to its unique issue with rates of seclusion. This key performance measure will be reviewed ahead of 2025-26.

Strong governance, leadership, and culture

Key Performance Measure	Target
Organisational culture	
People matter survey – Percentage of staff with an overall positive response to safety culture survey questions.	80%

Timely access to care

Key Performance Measure ⁴	Target
Percentage of male security patients admitted to Thomas Embling Hospital within 7 days of recommendation for compulsory treatment	80%
Percentage of male security patients discharged from Thomas Embling Hospital to a correctional centre within 21 days	80%
Percentage of male security patients discharged within 7 days of becoming a civil client	80%
Percentage of female security patients admitted to Thomas Embling Hospital within 7 days of recommendation for compulsory treatment.	80%
Percentage of female security patients discharged from Thomas Embling Hospital to a correctional centre within 28 days	80%

Effective financial management

Key Performance Measure	Target
Operating result (\$M)	0.00
Adjusted current asset ratio	0.7 or 3% improvement from health service base target
Variance between forecast and actual Net result from transactions (NRFT) for the current financial year ending 30 June.	5% movement in forecast revenue and expenditure forecasts

⁴ The department acknowledges that Forensicare is unlikely to meet these key performance measures in 2024-25 due to the continuing high demand for Forensicare services in 2024-25. Timely access to care key performance measures will be reviewed ahead of 2025-26, in the context of new capacity anticipated to come online.

Part C: Activity and Funding

The performance and financial framework within which state government-funded organisations operate is described in *The Policy and Funding Guidelines – Funding Rules*. The Funding Rules detail funding and pricing arrangements and provide modelled budgets and targets for a range of programs. The [Policy and Funding Guidelines](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services) webpage <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services>>.

Period 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Table 1 Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health funding summary for 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Funding Type	Activity	Budget (\$'000)
Acute Admitted		
Other Admitted		8,451
Mental Health and Drug Services		
Mental Health Ambulatory	26,083	36,946
Mental Health Inpatient - Available bed days	49,642	63,244
Mental Health Service System Capacity		6,506
Mental Health Other		352
Other		
Health Workforce	3	260
Other specified funding		2,082
Total Funding		117,841
Hospital Victoria investment		6,000
Total		123,841

Please note:

- Base level funding, related services and activity levels outlined within the Policy and Funding Guidelines are subject to change throughout the year. Further information about the department’s approach to funding and price setting for specific clinical activities and funding policy changes is also available from [Health Services](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services>>
- Each funding type row (e.g., “emergency services”) comprises a mix of activity-based funding and block grants. Funding depends on the service profile. For further details, refer to the Policy and funding guidelines for health services (see the above point for the link).
- In situations where a change is required to Part C, changes to the agreement will be actioned through an exchange of letters between the department and the health service’s Chief Executive Officer.

Accountability and funding requirements

The health service must comply with:

- All laws applicable to it.
- The *National Health Reform Agreement*.
- All applicable requirements, policies, terms, or conditions of funding specified or referred to in the Department of Health *Policy and Funding Guidelines 2024-25*.
- Policies, procedures, and appropriate internal controls to ensure the accurate and timely submission of data to the Department of Health.
- All applicable policies and guidelines issued by the Department of Health from time to time and notified to the health service.
- Where applicable, all terms and conditions specified in an agreement between the health service and the Department of Health relating to the provision of health services are in force at any time during the 2024-25 financial year.
- Relevant standards for programs that have been adopted, e.g., the International Organisation for Standardisation standards and AS/NZS 4801:2001, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems, or an equivalent standard.
- Where applicable, this includes the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards ('NSQHS standards') as accredited through the Australian Health Service Safety and Quality Accreditation Scheme.
- Specific to DHSV: in relation to the School Dental Project Plan, as agreed and specified by both parties, including meeting the requirements outlined in the School Licence Agreement.
- Any other relevant, applicable statutory, regulatory or accountability rules, policies, plans, procedures, or publications.

Signing Page

The Minister for Mental Health and the health service board chairperson agree that funding will be provided to enable the health service to meet its service obligations and performance requirements as outlined in this Statement of Priorities.



Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Mental Health
Date: 19/12/2024



Penny Armytage AM
Chairperson
Victorian Institute of Forensic
Mental Health (Forensicare)
Date: 19/12/2024